



## The Arizal on the Parashah

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The central figure of the Kabbalah as it is studied today is Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (1534-1572), known universally as the Holy Ari (“Lion”), the acronym formed by the initials of his title, “the G-dly Rabbi Yitzchak” (Ha-Eloki Rabbeinu Yitzchak), or as the Arizal “the G-dly Rabbi Yitzchak of blessed memory” (Ha-Eloki Rabbeinu Yitzchak, zichrono livrachah).

The Arizal’s teachings cover many topics, including mystical cosmology, eschatology, reincarnation, the anatomy of the soul and the mystical significance of the commandments. This book is a collection of the Arizal’s teachings on the Torah, in which he expounds on the mystical dimension of the stories and laws in the Torah.

The Arizal never wrote a commentary on the Torah per se; in fact, he hardly wrote anything. His teachings were recorded by his disciples, principally Rabbi Chaim Vital (1543-1620). The teachings in the present anthology are culled from several of Rabbi Vital’s works, chiefly Sha’ar HaPesukim, Sefer HaLikutim, and Likutei Torah.

The translations and commentary I present here were originally produced on a weekly basis and circulated via the Internet. It was thought worthwhile at this point to present them in book form, even though there still remains a sizeable amount of the Arizal’s material on the Torah to be translated. Please G-d, when this additional material is ready, we will reissue this book and include a short biography of the Arizal as well as a description of how his teachings were recorded and edited in the generations immediately following his passing.

The translation of the text of the Arizal’s teachings is accompanied by explanatory notes and charts to assist the reader in understanding the text.

Moshe Wisnefsky

***Disclaimer:** the following translations have not yet been checked over for accuracy by any authority on the teachings of Kabbalah. Therefore, although I have rendered and explained the Arizal’s teachings as best I can based on my knowledge and research, there may be passages that I misunderstood and rendered incorrectly. Before publishing these translations in book form they will, please G-d, be examined for accuracy by a competent authority, and any necessary changes will be made then.*

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## *Parashat Bereishit*

The first verse in the Torah literally reads “In the beginning, G-d created the heavens and the earth.” The verb in this verse, “to create,” refers to the second of the four worlds, *Atzilut* (“emanation”), *Beriah* (“creation”), *Yetzirah* (“formation”), and *Asiyah* (“action”).

The Torah does not [here] speak about the world of *Atzilut*, but rather the world of *Beriah*. The Torah is therefore called “the Torah of *Beriah*.” And therefore the Torah begins with the letter *beit*, for the *alef* (which is the first letter) alludes to *Atzilut* [which is both the first world and begins with the letter *alef*], while the letter *beit* (which is the second letter) alludes to *Beriah*, which is [both] the second world and begins with the letter *beit*.

Not only does the verb in the first verse put us squarely in the world of *Beriah*, but this fact is alluded to also in the first letter of the Torah. In the words of our sages, “all is according to the beginning.” This letter, *beit*, refers to the world of *Beriah* both because its numerical value is 2 and because it is the initial of the word *Beriah*.

It is also known that “*Ima* nests in the [world of the] chariot.”<sup>1</sup> This is another reason why the Torah begins with the letter *beit*, for *beit* is the first letter of *binah*.

It is stated in the *Zohar* that *Abba* nests in the world of *Atzilut*; *Ima* in the world of the chariot; *Z’eir Anpin* in *Yetzirah*, and *Nukva d’Zeir Anpin* in *Asiyah*. *Beriah* is called here “the world of the chariot” because the Divine chariot that figures in the vision of Ezekiel is identified with this world. The *partzufim* referred to here are the *partzufim* of *Atzilut*; the meaning is that *Abba* of *Atzilut* nests in *Atzilut*, while *Ima* of *Atzilut* descends and rests in *Beriah*, and so forth.

All this simply means that, although each world possesses its own array of ten *sefirot* (in the form of their respective *partzufim*), each world is nonetheless pervaded by an overall consciousness that is an expression of one of the *partzufim* of *Atzilut*. *Abba* is the *partzuf* of *chochmah*, which is the consciousness of *bitul* (“self-nullification”); a person experiencing a flash of insight is not aware of himself but is rather absorbed totally in the experience of the revelation. This, overall, is the general consciousness of the world of *Atzilut*; the revelation of G-d in this world is so great that it leaves absolutely no room for self-awareness. *Ima* is the *partzuf* of *binah*, which is a consciousness of self-awareness. A person involved in understanding the implications, applications, and ramifications of an insight he has received is very aware of himself and the way he perceives the world; it is precisely this self-awareness that he uses to evaluate the effect of his insight. This self-awareness is what distinguishes the world of *Beriah* from the world of *Atzilut*. In *Beriah*, for the first time, there is such a thing as self-awareness or self-consciousness; the beings that exist in this world are aware of themselves as entities distinct from G-d. The same paradigm applies to *Z’eir Anpin* with regard to *Yetzirah* and *Nukva d’Zeir Anpin* with regard to *Asiyah*.

This is why the world was created in *Tishrei*, which is [an expression of the idea contained in the verse] “His left hand is under my head.”<sup>2</sup> For *Abba* is always [associated with] the right side, and *Ima* the left. The letters of the word for “in the beginning” [*bereishit*, *beit-reish-alef-shin-yud-tav*] may thus be rearranged to spell “on the first of *Tishrei*” [*beit-alef tav-shin-reish-yud*].

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<sup>1</sup> *Tikunei Zohar* 6 (23a).

<sup>2</sup> Song of Songs 2:6.

Although the world was created on the 25<sup>th</sup> of *Elul*, the crown of creation was the creation of man, who was created on the sixth day, or the 1<sup>st</sup> of *Tishrei*. The whole six-day creative process may thus be viewed as a preparation for what happened on the 1<sup>st</sup> of *Tishrei*, and therefore the world may be spoken of as having been truly or fully created in *Tishrei*.

*Tishrei* is the beginning of the cold half of the year, in contrast to *Nisan*, which is the beginning of the warm half. The holidays of *Tishrei* emphasize human effort, to crown G-d king (*Rosh Hashanah*), to achieve atonement for man's sins (*Yom Kippur*), to rejoice in G-d's protection, to achieve joy in His service, and unity in His people (*Sukkot*), and to elicit Divine revelation through the study of the Torah (*Shemini Atzeret—Simchat Torah*). The holiday of *Nisan—Pesach*—in contrast, emphasizes G-d's initiative (in taking us out of bondage). Thus, the cold half of the year (which we have to “warm up” on our own) is characterized more by human effort ascending heavenward, while the warm half of the year is characterized more by G-d “taking over” and our simply being open and receptive to His leadership.

This dynamic in our relationship with G-d is alluded to in the verse, “His left hand is under my head, and His right hand will embrace me.” The left hand signifies *gevurah*, the Divine attribute of judgement and justice, while the right hand signifies *chesed*, the Divine attribute of loving-kindness. *Tishrei* and the half of the year it ushers in is thus clearly an expression of G-d's left hand (cf. G-d as judge on *Rosh Hashanah*, etc.), while *Nisan* and its half-year are an expression of G-d's right hand.

This is also why [in the entire account of creation] the Name *Elokim* is mentioned 32 times. For the 32 pathways of *Abba* are 32 Names *Havayah*, while in *Ima* they are 32 Names *Elokim*.

It is stated in *Sefer Yetzirah* that there are 32 “pathways of *chochmah*.”<sup>3</sup> The simplest understanding of these pathways is that they are the ten *sefirot* and the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, i.e., ideas and their means of expression. The two principle Names of G-d, *Havayah* and *Elokim*, are associated with *chochmah* and *binah*, respectively. This is because the Name *Elokim*, whose numerical value (86) is the same as that as the word for “nature” (*ha-teva, hei-tet-beit-ayin*), signifies G-d as He is manifest in nature, while the Name *Havayah*, being a combination of the words for “was,” “is,” and “will be,” signifies G-d as He transcends nature (i.e., the limitations of time and space). Similar to what we said above, the experience of *chochmah* is transcendent in nature, in which the individual is temporarily abstracted from the context of his own self-awareness, while the experience of *binah* is much more “natural,” in which the individual is firmly positioned in the context of the limits of his own intellect.

Thus, when the revelation of *Abba* enters *Ima*, it is no longer represented by the Name *Havayah* but by the Name *Elokim*.

The word “beginning,” [however,] refers to *chochmah*, as in the verse “the beginning of wisdom.”<sup>4</sup>

This phrase (*reishit chochmah*) can poetically be taken to mean “the beginning is wisdom.” Also, since *chochmah* is the first conscious *sefirah* (as opposed to *keter*, which is sub- or super-conscious), it can rightfully be called “the beginning” of the sefirotic (and thus any) process.

Thus, although the first verse of the Torah seems to revolve principally around *Beriah* and *Ima*, it also contains an allusion to *chochmah* (and thus to *Atzilut*).

This [double allusion to *chochmah* and *binah*] may be seen in the *beit*, [the first letter] of *bereishit* [“in the beginning”]. [The *dagesh* inside the letter] alludes to “the point in its palace,” i.e., [the state in which] *Abba* and *Ima* are equal and together.

The *dagesh* (point) inside the *beit* alludes to *chochmah*, the “point” or “drop” of insight surrounded and encompassed by the three-line (i.e., three-dimensional) letter *beit* itself, alluding to *binah*.

<sup>3</sup> *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:1.

<sup>4</sup> Psalms 111:10; Proverbs 4:7.

As we have mentioned previously, *chochmah* and *binah* have a “symbiotic” relationship. The insight of *chochmah*, if not processed by *binah*, will disappear and be forgotten, since it was not integrated into the individual’s mental structures. On the other hand, if *binah* is left to pursue its analysis unchecked, it is likely to stray far afield from the idea of the initial insight and arrive at spurious conclusions; it must therefore be—at least periodically—reviewed and compared with the original insight. The ideal condition, thus, is for *chochmah* and *binah* to be constantly in a state of “union,” i.e., mutual cross-fertilization. This is referred to in the imagery of the *Zohar* as “the point [i.e., *chochmah*] in its palace [i.e., *binah*].”

Therefore Scripture uses the verb “created,” alluding to *Beriah*, and the Name *Elokim*, which refers to *Ima*. Furthermore, the numerical value of the Name *Elokim* [alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem, 86] is the same as that of the word for “the throne” [*hakisei*, *hei-kaf-samech-alef*], for “*Ima* nests in the [world of the] throne,” as above.

These two words, “created” and the Name *Elokim*, thus refer to *Ima* of *Beriah*—

“Created”—*Beriah*; *Elokim*—*Ima*.

—which nonetheless acts with the power of *Ima* of *Atzilut* that is vested in it. This is the meaning of *Bereishit*, “in [i.e., with (the power of)] the beginning,” the word “the beginning” referring to [*Ima* of] *Atzilut*. The meaning of the entire verse is thus:

*In the beginning*—i.e., with the power of *Ima* of *Atzilut*,  
*G-d created*—i.e., *Ima* of *Beriah* created,  
*the heavens*—i.e., *Z’eir Anpin* of *Beriah*,  
*and the earth*—i.e., *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin* of *Beriah*.

Thus we see, as the Arizal said above, this verse refers entirely to the world of *Beriah*.

[The Torah then proceeds to discuss] the elevation of the [seven] kings [of Edom] that died, for as is known, remnants of these “kings” exist in every world.

As we have discussed previously, the seven kings of Edom who are all referred to as having ruled and died allude to the *midot* of *Tohu* whose vessels broke. The sparks of *Tohu* “fell” into the subsequently created worlds of *Tikun* (the four mentioned above), the most sublime elements remaining in *Atzilut*, the less refined falling to *Beriah*, the even less refined falling to *Yetzirah*, and the least refined falling to *Asiyah*.

This is the mystical meaning of the next verse, “The earth was without form and void,” referring to the shattering of the vessels.

We must therefore read this verse as if the verb were in the pluperfect: “the earth *had been* without form and void,” i.e., the world of *Tohu* had previously collapsed, losing its stability (form) leaving sparks in all the realm of *Tikun*, including the world of *Beriah*.

The next phrase, “and the spirit of G-d was hovering over the waters,” refers to the life force [i.e., “lights,” of the world of *Tohu*] that the vessels could not receive.

In *Tohu*, the lights were too intense and powerful for the vessels to contain; this is why they shattered, similar to the way someone who hears some idea or concept for which he is not prepared becomes disoriented or even suffers a nervous breakdown.

These lights that could not settle in their vessels remained therefore “hovering” over them.

This is the mystical meaning of the crowns atop the letters; they allude to the light that hovers above them.

Letters are vessels, i.e., they themselves are the medium, not the message. The meaning they convey (either as single letters or when combined into words and sentences) is the “light” inside them. However, there is also residual, subliminal meaning to the letters that originates from the source of the vessels in *Tohu*. This is alluded to in the Torah scroll by the crowns affixed to certain letters.

The next verse, “G-d said, ‘Let there be light,’” refers to the supernal *chesed*, i.e., the eighth king, Hadar, through whom [the other seven kings] were rectified.

As we have explained previously, the world of *Tohu* was characterized by an overemphasis on strict judgement; this was rectified by introducing love and empathy into the fabric of creation. This resulted in the world of *Tikun*, the rectified version of *Tohu* in which all the *sefirot* could relate to each other harmoniously.

The first elements to be rectified were the refuse and “shells,” just as we see that the shell develops before the fruit.

A vessel void of its light is an empty shell. The broken vessels of the *sefirot* of *Tohu*, which broke because of their excessive selfhood and judgement, fall and became the “evil” embedded in the worlds of *Tikun*.

These elements were not “evil” in the sense of being sinister; they simply expressed non-G-d-consciousness and selfhood. As such, they became an absolutely necessary and crucial element in the creation of the subsequent worlds, for in order for there to be free choice, there must be an element of “evil,” i.e., non-G-d-orientation available as an alternative to holiness. This aspect of reality became more pronounced with each successive world, until, in our physical world, it became the dominant consciousness: the physical world is a given, G-d must be proven.

In this sense, the “evil” derived from the shells or refuse of the world of *Tohu* is analogous to the shell of a nut or skin of a fruit that develops on the tree before the fruit. Without the shell, the fruit would be exposed to the elements and thus unprotected would not endure. Similarly, without the *a priori* self-consciousness descended from the mentality of *Tohu*, there would be little, if anything, accomplished by the descent of the soul into the body or the creation of this world.

Thus it is written, “Let the water swarm with living creatures,”<sup>5</sup> and similarly the creation of all other aspects of life, until finally, on the sixth day, man was created—the food [inside the shell].

The creation of the physical and biological systems of the earth serve as the backdrop to the creation of man, the purpose of it all and through whom all these other elements find meaning.

It is for this reason that separating the unwanted from the desired<sup>6</sup> is forbidden on the Sabbath, for this is the way the refinement of the world [in the process of creation] occurred.

One of the 39 forms of work prohibited on the Sabbath is “separating” (*borer*), which also means “refining” in the sense of separating and removing the undesirable aspects of something, leaving it purified from its dross or chaff. We are taught that the prohibition consists only of separating the unwanted from the wanted, not the wanted from the unwanted. For example, if there is a bowl of fruit in front of us containing both good and rotten apples, we may not, on the Sabbath, separate out the rotten apples in order to leave a bowl of good ones. Rather, we must select out the good ones (which we may then place in another bowl), leaving a bowl of rotten ones.

This is because separating the bad from the good is a weekday type of work, i.e., one of the types of work the characterized the six days of creation. As we see here, as the worlds were created, one after another, the coarsest

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<sup>5</sup> Genesis 1:20.

<sup>6</sup> literally: the refuse from the food.

refuse of the world of *Tohu* was separated out of the entire mass of sparks. (We could imagine the world as a spiritual fruit bowl, from which G-d removes all but the finest “apples,” placing the rotten ones in another bowl. The bowl of perfect fruit becomes the world of *Atzilut*. The second bowl now contains only grade B, C, and D apples. G-d removes all the grade C and D apples from this bowl, which then becomes the world of *Beriah*, and puts them in a third bowl. The third bowl contains only grade C and D apples. G-d removes the grade D apples, leaving a bowl of grade C apples, which becomes the world of *Yetzirah*. The bowl into which the grade D apples have been placed is the world of *Asiyah*.)

Similarly, in the six days of creation of this world, G-d first created the lower types of creatures, the mineral world. To do this He had to separate out the lowest, coarsest elements from the creation-soup He had to work with from the first day. The creation-soup left was thus “purified” from all the elements so coarse that only the mineral kingdom could be created from them. Next, G-d separated out the coarsest elements remaining in the creation-soup, which resulted in the creation of the vegetable kingdom. The creation-soup was thus left purified of those elements so coarse that only vegetative life could be created out of them. Next G-d separated out the animal elements, and finally, the choicest part left was the human.

(Notice that in both cases the bad is being separated from the good, the progression of creation in the cosmic realm is descending, while on the earthly level it is ascending.)

Separating the wanted from the unwanted, however, is permitted [even on the Sabbath], since this is not the way the world was created.

Separating this way does not therefore reflect the process of creation, which of course did not occur on the Sabbath. It is therefore not considered “weekday” work, and is permitted on the Sabbath.

—translated from *Likutei Torah*

## *Parashat Bereishit* [second installment]

We continue the discussion of the opening passage of the Torah begun in the previous installment.

One could ask: the [account of the] creation of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, as well as in the creation of mankind, is repeated. First, the Torah tell us that “G-d created the heavens and the earth,” referring to *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*. The [account of] the following seven days refers to the seven “extremities” of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, as is known.

Then, on the sixth day, the Torah tells us that “G-d created the man in His image,” and further on, that “G-d formed man out of the dust of the earth,” interrupting these two accounts with [its description of what occurred on] the seventh day, as it is written, “And the heavens [and the earth] were completed....”

In the first account of creation, the Torah mentions both male and female, while in the second account, in [G-d's] command [to create man], the female is not mentioned at all. If the command was to create only Adam, why was Eve created? We see that [even in the second account of creation,] after the command, the female was created, for the Torah goes on to describe how “G-d caused a deep sleep to descend upon the man...” and so forth.

We shall now explain this. From the primordial [world of] *Adam Kadmon*, the 72-Name was not manifest; only the 63-Name began to manifest via the mouth, the nose, etc. This is why [the Torah] begins with the letter *beit*, referring to the 63-Name.

When the 63-Name issued forth [from *Adam Kadmon*], it was manifest as the vowels of the 63-Name, this being the mystical meaning of the primordial kings [of Edom]. This is referred to by the phrase “the heavens and the earth,” which alludes to the seven kings that were broken. Since the letter *hei* alludes to the 63-Name, the letter *hei* is prefixed [as the definite article] in “*the* heavens and *the* earth.”

The definite particle [*et*] is used twice to allude to the *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* of *Asiyah* within *Atzilut* after the rectification, for the root of all of them was here.

And since the primary fall occurred in *Nukva*, the Torah says that “the *earth* was chaos...,” focusing on her. *Z'eir Anpin* is only alluded to [by the prefixed *vav*] in the word “*and* the earth was....”

The following words are “chaos, emptiness, and darkness,” referring to the shattering [of the vessels]. Since there were many levels [of shattering], each [vessel shard] descending further than the next, the Torah [uses various terms to describe the cataclysm,] saying “chaos, emptiness, and darkness.”

The 52-Name was included here [within the 63-Name]. [We see this] from the fact that from out of [the ruins of] this 63-Name whose vessels were shattered was subsequently produced the rectification, via the 45-Name, which was used to rectify reality.

In this way, the dross was removed from the 63-Name. This is indicated by the fact that the word formed by the letters representing the number 63 [*samech-gimel*] form the root of the word for “dross” [*sigim*], as in the verse, “Everyone is dross, completely foul...”<sup>1</sup>

The result of this rectification was that the 52-Name was separated out [of the original 63-Name]. Thus, the 52-Name was latent within the 63-Name.

For this reason, “chaos” is mentioned here twice: [once explicitly, and a second time by allusion] since the initials of the words for “the earth was chaos and emptiness” in reverse spell the word for “and chaos.” One corresponds to the 63-Name and one corresponds to the 52-Name [latent within it].

It is known that the vessels that shattered descended to the level of the world of *Beriah*. This is indicated by the phrase “and darkness was upon the face of the abyss.” The last letters of these words spell the word for “vessels.” There, at the beginning of *Beriah*, is the “face of the deep,” for from this point downward is water.

The phrase “and the spirit of G-d was hovering over the water” refers to the light that the vessels could not contain, and thus only “hovered” over [the level referred to by] “the water.” None of the light descended into the vessels, other than 288 sparks. This is indicated by the word for “hovered” [*merachefet*], which can be read “288 [sparks] died [i.e., descended].”

288 is the sum of 72 and 216.

After the shattering [of the vessels], the 63-Name coupled with the 72-Name above, and produced the new 45-Name, which issued from the supernal forehead [of *Adam Kadmon*], and it was the principle that rectified [reality, as stated above].

This is indicated by the phrase, “And G-d said, ‘Let there be light,’” [“the light”] referring to [the light of] the 45-Name that rectified [reality].

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<sup>1</sup> Psalms 53:4.

“...and there was light” refers to the actual rectification, which occurred during the seven days of creation. [The Torah] therefore says at the end [of the creation account,] “for on it He rested from all His work,” for the “work” took place only in the world of *Atzilut*, inasmuch as all the other worlds—*Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*—are nothing but the seal of *Atzilut*. It is therefore stated that “for on it He rested from all His work.”

Now, up to this point [in the first creation account], man has not been mentioned. [All that has been mentioned is] heaven and earth, above at the level of the 63-Name, and the ensuing days of the rectification, as stated. After the rectification of *Atzilut* was completed, from this point downward man is mentioned, referring to *Z’eir Anpin* of *Beriah*, of *Yetzirah*, and of *Asiyah*.

When [the Torah] says in its account of the sixth day, “And G-d created man in His image,” this refers to the “man” of *Beriah*. The preceding phrase, “Let us make man,” refers to [the “man” of] *Asiyah*, while the following phrase, [“And G-d created man in His image”] refers to [the “man” of] *Beriah*.

In the first phrase, [referring to the “man” of *Asiyah*], it is said, “in our image, after our likeness,” while in the second phrase, [referring to the “man” of *Beriah*], it is said only “in His image.” This is because the words [of G-d] issued from *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* of *Atzilut*, and He was only consulting [with the heavenly court] concerning the “man” of *Asiyah*, who was destined to sin. As is mentioned in the *Zohar*, it was about this that [G-d] consulted [the heavenly court when He made man, saying,] “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” This statement was made by *Ima* of *Beriah* to *Abba* of *Beriah*, via the clothing of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* of *Atzilut* in them.

To be continued...

—translated from *Likutei Torah*

## *Parashat Bereishit* [third installment]

We continue the discussion of the opening passage of the Torah translated in the previous two installments. The analysis centers at this point on the verse, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”

Both the “image” and the “likeness” come from the feminine [aspect of the intellect], *Ima*, who clothes the offspring [she produces]. This [clothing] is the “image.” Thus, the numerical value of the word for “image” [*tzelem*, 160, plus the *kolel*,] is the same as that of the Name *Ekyeh* when spelled out with the letter *yud*, which denotes the feminine principle.

As we have seen, the Name *Ekyeh* is chiefly associated with *binah*, and therefore has a feminine nature.

*Tzelem*: *tzadik-lamed-mem* = 90 + 30 + 40 = 160.

*Ekyeh*: *alef-hei-yud-hei*, when spelled out with the letter *yud*, becomes:

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>	1 + 30 + 80	111
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	5 + 10	15
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	10 + 6 + 4	20
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	5 + 10	15
			161

The difference is that the “image” is what *Ima* gives to the male [offspring, *Z’eir Anpin*] and the “likeness”—which has more of a form—is what *Ima* gives to the female [offspring, *Nukva*].

Because His intention was to [ultimately create the world of] *Asiyah*—and the lower level always possesses the power of everything above it, while the higher level does not possess what the lower one does—He therefore said, “in our image, after our likeness,” all referring to *Asiyah*.

As was stated previously, the verse “Let us *make* man in our image, after our likeness”<sup>1</sup> refers to the “man” of *Asiyah*, while the following verse, “And G-d *created* man in His image,” refers to the “man” of *Beriah*. Thus, the “man” of *Asiyah* contains both the image and the likeness, while the “man” of *Beriah* contains only the image.

Even though it is stated in the *Zohar* that “the ‘image’ exists in the male,” this refers to the “image” in *Z’eir Anpin* of *Asiyah*, and “the ‘likeness’ exists in the female” of *Asiyah*.

The terms “male” and “female” usually refer to *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* of *Atzilut*, but in this case they refer to *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* of *Asiyah*.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 1:26.

Nonetheless, all this occurred through *Ima* of *Beriah* [clothing the *partzufim* of] *Asiyah*, and all of this is the feminine.

Thus, the question was solely regarding the “man” of *Asiyah*.

As was stated previously, the statement “Let us *make* man in our image, after our likeness” was a question posed by *Ima* of *Beriah* to *Abba* of *Beriah* (“Shall we make man...?”). The question was whether to make “man” of *Asiyah*, since his earthly counterpart, mortal man, was destined to sin.

The Torah then states, “And G-d created man in His image.”<sup>2</sup> This refers to the “man” of *Beriah*, which is why the verb is “he created.”

So, after having posed the question as to whether or not to make the “man” of *Asiyah*, we are told only that the “man” of *Beriah* was created. Does this mean that the “man” of *Asiyah* was not, in fact, made?

Regarding the “man” of *Asiyah*, it was not necessary to mention that he was in fact made, for this is obvious. Once he was mentioned in the question, it was enough [for G-d] to talk *about* this act [in the Torah] to make him. This is the meaning of the verse, “By the word of G-d were the heavens *made*,”<sup>3</sup> referring to the “man” of *Asiyah*. No explicit act of “making” was required; rather, the raising of [the issue of his making in] the question and the [subsequent] talking about it was enough.

The discussion now returns to the verse describing the creation of the “man” of *Beriah*, “And G-d created man in His image.”

This verse continues, “...in the image of G-d He created him.” This refers to the intellect that enters [the “man” of *Beriah*] clothed in *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima*, which is called the “image,” as is known.

The *partzuf* of *Z'eir Anpin* of *Beriah* (the “man” of *Beriah*) receives its intellect from *Ima* of *Beriah*. The *chochmah-binah-da'at* of *Ima* are clothed in the *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima*, and in this “package” they enter the *chochmah-binah-da'at* of *Z'eir Anpin*. This “package” is the “image” of *Ima* (referred to by the Name *Elokim* used in this verse) in which the “man” of *Beriah* is created.

There was no commandment given to this man of *Beriah* not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge. For since this world [of *Beriah*] is pure of evil, there was no apprehension [that anything bad would happen by his eating of it] at all.

The problem with eating of the Tree of Knowledge was that by doing so, the person eating it internalizes, that is, subjectifies, his perception of good and evil. In the context of the world of *Asiyah*, where evil is present, this means that the person can be confused whether something is good or evil. In the world of *Beriah*, where evil has no dominion, this possibility does not exist. Knowledge of evil in that context is entirely abstract, or “academic.”

Therefore, [in the context of this “man,”] it is said, “[Behold, I have given you all the all plants that bear seeds that are upon all the earth,] and all trees in which there is tree fruit that bears seeds, they shall be yours for eating.”<sup>4</sup> Meaning, even the Tree of Knowledge in the garden, for with this man there was no apprehension [that anything negative would happen by his eating of it].

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 1:27.

<sup>3</sup> Psalms 33:6.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 1:29.

The Arizal now addresses the following question: We saw previously that the account of the first seven days of creation refer to the seven *midot* of the world of *Atzilut*. Why, then, does the Torah discuss the creation of the “man” of *Beriah* in its discussion of the sixth day of creation, which refers to *yesod* of *Atzilut*, not *Beriah*?

The creation of this “man,” of *Beriah*, is described in [the Torah’s account of] the sixth day, while his creation should have occurred after the seventh day, which expressed the *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin* of *Atzilut*.

But [it is] because the seventh day, which is always the feminine, and the sixth, which embodies *yesod*, are never separated, for *yesod* and *malchut* are never separated. Since this is so, the sixth day includes the feminine principle as well [as the masculine principle].

Thus, in a sense, the entire array of *Atzilut* has already been dealt with by the sixth day, so while still discussing the sixth day, the Torah can go on to discuss what happened in the world of *Beriah*.

Furthermore, the main aspect of the male [*partzuf*] is *yesod*, for the feminine [*partzuf*] is essentially just a receptacle for the [seminal] drop that *yesod* posits in it. She is “an non-shining speculum.”

Since the feminine *partzuf* is essentially a receptacle for the seminal seed of *Z’eir Anpin*, the main aspect of *Z’eir Anpin* is, in this context, *yesod*, the *sefirah* that actual posits the seminal drop in *Nukva*.

The term “non-shining speculum” is used to refer to *malchut*, the *sefirah* “that has nothing of its own” and only reflects or channels what it receives from the *sefirot* above it. Thus, the idiomatic translation of “non-shining speculum” is “mirror,” while that of “shining speculum” is simply “transparent glass.”

Also, the sixth day is prefaced by the definite article, in contrast to the other days.

In the creation account, the first five days are mentioned without a definite article (“one day,” “a second day,” “a third day,” etc.). Only the sixth day is referred to as “the sixth day.”<sup>5</sup>

This indicates that the feminine principle is already rectified [on this day].

Since the definite article is the letter *hei*, which in the context of the Name *Havayah* refers to the feminine *sefirot* (*binah* and *malchut*), *malchut* in particular.

If so, in what way does the seventh day refer to *malchut*?

And the only thing lacking is for [*Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*] to turn face to face in order to couple.

Adam and Eve—and therefore, their spiritual antecedents, *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*—were initially created as one being, attached back to back. In order to couple, G-d “sawed” them apart so they could turn to face each other. This coupling is what occurred (and occurs) on the seventh day, the Sabbath.

This is what is alluded to here. [The *Zohar* uses the expression,] “When the Sabbath *enters*....”<sup>6</sup> This [allegorically] refers to how the Sabbath *enters* the act of coupling, like a bride *enters* the canopy.

The Arizal now returns to the discussion of the creation of the “man” of *Beriah* and the “man” of *Asiyah*.

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 1:31.

<sup>6</sup> *Zohar Chadash*, *Midrash Rut*, 7 Chambers of Purgatory; *Midrash HaNe’elam*, *Bereishit*, *Na’aseh Adam*.

The Torah continues, [after the account of the first Sabbath,] “These are the generations of heaven and earth when they were created, [on the day that G-d made earth and heaven].”<sup>7</sup> It here informs us that when the “man” of *Beriah* was created the “man” of *Asiyah* was also made.

This is because both verbs, “created” and “made,” are used in this verse.

This occurred because the [world of] *Beriah* is alluded to by the letter *hei* [of the Name *Havayah*], and the letter *hei* is always double, spelled as two *hei*’s. The first *hei* refers to *Beriah* and the second to *Asiyah*.

The four letters of the Name *Havayah* refer to the four worlds; the first *hei* refers to *Beriah* and the second *hei* to *Asiyah*.

There are actually three ways of spelling out the letter *hei* (i.e., with an *alef*, a *hei*, or a *yud*), as we have seen. But the most “natural” way of spelling it out is evidently with another *hei*.

The world of *Yetzirah* [alluded to by the *vav* of the Name *Havayah*] had not yet been revealed, for that indeed was the original intention, i.e., that “the woman of valor [be] the crown of her husband.”<sup>8</sup>

Just as the crown is higher than the king who wears it, the woman of valor is higher (i.e., precedes) her husband. In this context, the woman of valor is the final *hei*, *Asiyah*, and the husband is the *vav*, *Yetzirah*. (Recall that the *vav* and final *hei* of the Name *Havayah* also refer to the archetypal husband and wife, *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*.)

This is the permutation of the Name *Havayah* that reads *yud-hei-hei-vav*, the [second] *hei* preceding the *vav*. The two *hei*’s represent *Ima* and her daughter, the latter being the doubled *hei*.

Afterwards, however, because of the primordial sin, the latter *hei* descended below [the *vav*], and [the Name *Havayah*] became *yud-hei-vav-hei*.

This is the meaning of the verse, “These are the generations of heaven and earth...” i.e., of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* of *Beriah*. “...when they were created” clearly refers to the world of *Beriah*.

The word for “when they were created” [*behibaram*] is written with a small *hei* because these [*partzufim*] were created by *malchut* of *Atzilut*, which is indicated by the small *hei*.

*Behibaram*: *beit-hei-beit-reish-alef-mem*.

The *hei*, as we said, indicates *malchut*. The fact that the *hei* is small indicates that it refers to a form of *malchut* that is selfless relative the rest of the context of this verse, i.e., *malchut* of *Atzilut*.

This occurred “on the day that G-d made earth and heaven.” Note that in the account of *creation*, it says “the heaven and the earth,” while in the account of the *making*, it says just “earth and heaven,” without the definite article [*hei*], because

<sup>7</sup> Genesis 2:4.

<sup>8</sup> Proverbs 12:4.

in the *creation* the first *hei* is paramount, while the second [*hei*, referring to] the *making*, the doubled *hei*, which is not pronounced, is hidden.

A *hei* at the end of a word is not pronounced. (The exception to this is when it has a dot [known as a *mapik*] in it). This is true of the Name *Havayah* as much as it is true of any other word.

The Torah opens, “In the beginning of G-d’s creation of *the* heaven and *the* earth.” The definite article, the *hei*, is present here, because what is being described is the *creation*, i.e., the creation of the world of *Beriah*, which is indicated by the first *hei* of the Name *Havayah*.

In the verse describing the *making* of the world of *Asiyah*, the definite article is omitted, alluding to the fact that this world is indicated by the second, unpronounced *hei* of the Name *Havayah*.

This unpronounced *hei* is also the *hei* implicit in the spelling of the letter *hei*, as mentioned above regarding the definite article of “*the* sixth day.”

In the account of creation [of the world of *Beriah*], the heavens are mentioned first, while in the account of the *making* [of the world of *Asiyah*]. This is because the creation occurred by means of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* of *Atzilut* as they were clothed. [*Atzilut*] is a masculine world, so therefore the heavens, the *vav* of the Name *Havayah*, were created first.

*Atzilut* is indicated by the *yud* of the Name *Havayah* and corresponds to *chochmah* (*Abba*), male principles.

*Asiyah* is a feminine world, in which the female rules over the male, so therefore the earth was created before the heavens.

This is another reason why *Asiyah* was made together with *Beriah*, before *Yetzirah*. [*Beriah*] is a feminine world, indicated by the letter *hei*, which is formed of a *dalet* above a *vav*. The *dalet*, which indicates *Asiyah*, was revealed there [in the world of *Beriah*], while the world of *Yetzirah* was not yet [revealed].

The letter *hei* carries within it, so to speak, a *dalet* and a *vav*. The *dalet*, which, as a word, is often seen as a contraction of the word for “which has no” (*de-leit*) from the phrase “which has nothing of its own,” which as we have seen refers to *malchut*, or its corresponding world, *Asiyah*. The *vav* refers explicitly to the world of *Yetzirah*, of course.

Thus, the *hei* of *Beriah* can be seen as pregnant with its two offspring, *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*. But the *vav*, the world of *Yetzirah* is “within” the *dalet* of *Asiyah*, indicating that *Asiyah* will be revealed first, and only then, out of it, will the world of *Yetzirah* emerge.

This is why the schools of Shammai and Hillel differed as to whether heaven or earth were created first.<sup>9</sup>

They each referred to a different verse, the school of Shammai to “In the beginning of G-d’s creation of the *heavens and the earth*” and the school of Hillel to “...on the day G-d made *earth and heaven*.” In the same passage of the Midrash, the sages resolve the issue by saying, “When He created them, He created the heavens first, but when He finished them, He finished the earth first.”

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai said, “I do not understand how they differed.” He meant that they certainly did not differ about this, but that in the *creation* the heavens came first, for the reason we stated, namely, because [*Beriah* was created by *Asiyah*], a masculine world. “When He finished them,” referring to the world of

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<sup>9</sup> *Chagigah* 12a; *Bereishit Rabbah* 1:15.

*Asiyah*, which was the end and conclusion of everything, there the “earth” preceded.

Thus, one sage made one statement, and another made another statement, and they did not actually differ.

—translated from *Likutei Torah*

## *Parashat Noah*

The portion of the Torah read this week describes the famous story of the flood.

We must understand:

1. Why did G-d had to save Noah by means of an ark?
2. Why [did He command Noah him to bring] seven each of the ritually pure animals and of the ritually impure only two each? and
3. Who exactly were the generation of the flood and the generation of the dispersion?

The end of the portion describes the events of the Tower of Babel, the aftermath of which was the dispersion of mankind.

[To answer these questions,] know that Adam, before he sinned, was not physical. His was clothed in light, and he encompassed all [the spiritual] worlds. His head was in *Atzilut*; his [torso, corresponding to the] middle triad [of *sefirot*, *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*] was in *Beriah*; his [lower extremities, corresponding to the] final triad [of *sefirot*, *netzach-hod-yesod*] was in *Yetzirah*; and the crown [of his sexual organ] was in *Asiyah*.

As we have explained previously, the *sefirot* in the world of *Tikun* are positioned as triads. The upper triad is *chochmah-binah-da'at*, the intellect, corresponding to the three lobes of the brain. The middle triad, *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*, corresponds to the right and left arms and torso, respectively. The lower triad, *netzach-hod-yesod*, corresponds to the right and left legs and sexual organ, respectively. The final *sefirah*, *malchut*, corresponds to the glans of the male sexual organ (or in other contexts, to the female).

All souls were included in his. When sinned, his stature was diminished and he became physical, and this caused a blemish in all the souls [he encompassed].

“His stature was diminished” obviously does not mean that he physically shrunk, and that being spiritual is just being giant. Rather, this simply the way the Kabbalists describe Adam’s transformation from a totally spiritual to partly physical being.

However, he [originally] encompassed souls of *Arich Anpin*, and when he sinned, these souls ascended on high.

As we have explained previously, the four worlds correspond to the four lower *partzufim*, while the higher *partzufim* correspond to the higher world, *Adam Kadmon*:

<i>partzuf</i>	<i>sefirah</i>	<i>world</i>	<i>body</i>
<i>Arich Anpin</i>	<i>keter</i>	<i>Adam Kadmon</i>	skull
<i>Abba</i>	<i>chochmah</i>	<i>Atzilut</i>	right lobe of brain
<i>Ima</i>	<i>binah</i>	<i>Beriah</i>	left lobe of brain
<i>Z'eir Anpin</i>	the <i>midot</i>	<i>Yetzirah</i>	arms, torso, legs, sexual organ
<i>Nukva d'Z'eir Anpin</i>	<i>malchut</i>	<i>Asiyah</i>	glans or female

In addition to encompassing souls whose level of consciousness reflected the four principle worlds as detailed above, Adam's soul also encompassed souls whose consciousness was higher than that of the world of *Atzilut* proper. These souls were evidently too sublime to be affected by the sin, and when Adam's being was diminished and therefore no longer spiritual enough to encompass them, they simply flew away from him.

The rest of the souls were eventually rectified, however, as we will [now] explain, please G-d.

These souls left [the diminished being of Adam] by way of seminal emissions, for [as we are taught, Adam] sired evil spirits. This happens when the drop of seminal emission impregnates a female demon. The soul [that has thus become entrapped in evil] must be reincarnated afterwards in order to be rectified.

We are taught in the Talmud<sup>1</sup> that during the 130 years Adam separated from Eve (after the sin until he fathered Seth), he suffered from seminal emissions. (The Hebrew term for "seminal emission," *keri*, applies both to intentional and involuntary seminal emissions. Although voluntary emission is considered a more serious sin than involuntary emission, the individual is considered responsible for involuntary emission as well, since dreams are in most cases the way the mind sorts out the thoughts the individual entertained during his waking hours.)

Any seminal emission implies a recipient of the vital seed. Normally, this is one's wife, who inspires or arouses her husband to transmit his creative flow to her; the result of this being holy spiritual offspring (in the form of increased holy energy in the world) and ideally, physical offspring as well. However, evil can also entice or trick a man to transmit his creative flow to it, by deceiving him into thinking that some holy purpose (or some cheap imitation of the exhilaration and excitement of holiness, i.e., ephemeral excitement or fulfillment) will come of this. In this case, the recipient of his vital seed is a "female demon," whether that be an actual human being, a mental fantasy, or in the most general, philosophical sense, any false ideal or substitute for holiness that man may fall prey to dedicating his energies to.

The result of this unholy union is that, temporarily, vital energy has been added to the side of unholiness, and unholy energy has been propagated. The mechanism G-d set up to rectify this is for this "soul" to transmigrate into an incarnation in which it feels the horror of unfulfillment, as we have explained previously.

Although the Midrash describes a situation that persisted for 130 years and the Arizal describes a process that occurred simultaneously with the sin, this is simply because spiritual processes that occur outside the context of time require time when manifested in the physical plane.

In addition, [Adam] blemished souls that were associated with his own, personal soul-root. These were [intended to be] rectified in the souls of Cain and Abel, Abel rectifying the aspect of *chochmah* and Cain the aspect of *binah*.

All [the souls that originate in the left side,] from *binah* downward, became "shells" [i.e., evil]. In contrast, even the *gevurah*-aspects of [the right side, that] which descends from *chochmah*, did not become "shells," although they did become their life-force.

<sup>1</sup> *Eiruvin* 18a, based on Genesis 5:3.

As we said previously, *binah* is the aspect of the intellect that exercises judgement and evaluates the insight of *chochmah*. Therefore, it is essentially a judgmental force, and as such can serve as the source for unholy judgement and vengeance.

Therefore, when Cain attempted to rectify [reality by offering his sacrifice] he made it worse instead.

Cain exercised the attribute of *binah* incorrectly, and misjudged how G-d would react to his offering. Adam ate the fruit prematurely (it would have been permitted to him on Shabbat), assuming incorrectly that G-d wanted him to “take the initiative” and forcefully bring about the perfection of the world on his own, before the appointed time. Cain, understanding this, felt that to rectify this miscalculation it was necessary to disavow the human side of the equation altogether and live life submersed in the experience of G-d’s absolute unity, leaving no room for self-awareness or initiative from man’s side. This was reflected in his offering, flax, which grows as a single seed on a stalk. Of course, since this perspective precludes man’s purpose on earth, to make the lower realms a home for G-d, it was rejected.

Abel also made things worse. This is the implication of the verse, “And Abel brought, he *also*...,”<sup>2</sup> meaning that he sinned as well.

The fact that Abel’s offering is compared to Cain’s implies that it, too, was defective in some way. Also, the fact that Abel was murdered means that he must have been deserving of death in some way (although this in no way exonerates Cain, of course). Elsewhere, the Arizal states that Abel’s sin was that he “gazed” at the Divine presence.

[The situation remained unrectified] until Moses came and rectified the *hei* of [Abel’s name in Hebrew,] *Hevel* and the *shin* of [Seth’s name in Hebrew,] *Shet*.

Moses in Hebrew is *Moshe*, *mem-shin-hei*. He is thus seen as the rectification of Seth and Abel. In other words, the ultimate tool for rectifying the sin of Adam is the Torah (which was given through Moses).

Some of the souls that went out [of Adam] were rectified [by being reincarnated] in converts.

When an individual converts to Judaism (in accordance with Jewish law), he draws down into his being a Jewish soul that he did not possess previously. Existentially, then, his conversion process represents the transformation of the mundane into the holy.

To explain further: The [original] garment of Adam was the light that corresponds to the [aspect of the soul known as] *nefesh*. This [light] was like the fourth “shell,” which is attached to holiness and is called *nogah* [“glow”], half of which is from holiness and half of which is from evil. When evil prevails [over it], it becomes wholly evil; when holiness [prevails], the opposite happens.

There are four levels of non-holiness: three levels of absolute evil and one level of neutrality. These are referred to in the vision of Ezekiel as “a stormy wind,” “a huge cloud,” “a flashing fire,” and “a glow.”<sup>3</sup> The three levels of evil are envisioned as three “shells” surrounding the edible fruit, or holiness. In between the shells and the fruit is a fourth, softer “shell” or “peel” (e.g., the rind of an orange) that in some cases is edible. This signifies the level of neutrality, which can be subsumed into either evil or holiness, depending on how it is used. Into this category of reality fall all those things that are neither expressly forbidden nor are used for an explicit *mitzvah*.

There are five levels of the soul, signifying five levels of holiness. These stand in opposition to the four levels of non-holiness as follows:

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<sup>2</sup> Genesis 4:4.

<sup>3</sup> Ezekiel 1:4.

level of the soul	opposite level of non-holiness
<i>yechidah</i>	
<i>chayah</i>	third level of evil
<i>neshamah</i>	second level of evil
<i>ruach</i>	first level of evil
<i>nefesh</i>	neutrality ( <i>nogah</i> )

There is no level of evil corresponding to the *yechidah*, since *yechidah* is the soul's total identification with Divinity, and there obviously can be no type of evil that expresses the same quality in the opposite direction, since there is no "evil deity" to compromise G-d's absolute oneness.

The soul of Onkelos, the convert, was from this aspect [of reality].

Onkelos was a Roman who converted to Judaism and is the author of the standard Aramaic translation of the Torah. We have discussed the significance of Aramaic in this context previously.

This is the mystical significance of [the custom of reading the Torah] "twice as in Scripture and once in translation."

The Talmud enjoins us to review the weekly portion of the Torah each week by reading it aloud, each verse twice in the original Hebrew followed by once in the translation of Onkelos.<sup>4</sup> By reading the Hebrew together with the Aramaic, we are subsuming the mundane, *nogah*-shell into holiness.

The *nogah*-principle encloses the light of holiness after midnight.<sup>5</sup>

As we said, the realm of the "fruit" or kernel of holiness is envisioned as existing within the four shells. In this depiction, we may consider the *nogah*-shell as protecting the holiness from the evil shells. (This is true, of course, to the extent that the individual or society has endeavored to consecrate the *nogah*-shell by subsuming their mundane activities into the realm of holiness. Otherwise, the *nogah*-shell comes under the rule of evil and there is no protective layer separating evil from holiness.)

Since this protection is said here to be operative specifically after midnight, we are taught that marital relations are preferably conducted at this time of the night. Thus the couple are assured that their union will be unhampered by the attacks of evil thoughts or confusion.

The sin of Adam was that he caused this [protective] covering to be opened up, and at that opening the forces of evil benefited from the light of holiness.

Adam's sin "punctured" the *nogah*-shell, allowing the forces of evil to invade (like a worm enters a fruit) and "suck" from holiness.

This is the mystical significance of the statement of our sages that Enoch was a cobbler,<sup>6</sup> meaning that he closed that which Adam opened up, and was able to cover the light of *Beriah*.

Enoch was the sixth generation from Adam,<sup>7</sup> and was something of a saint or ascetic who renounced the evil ways of his rapidly degenerating society. In the Midrash it is stated that the phrase describing the end of his life on earth—"and he was no more, for G-d took him," instead of the more usual "and he died,"—implies that G-d made

<sup>4</sup> *Berachot* 8b.

<sup>5</sup> It could be that the proper translation of *chatzot* here is *midday*, and refers to the fact that some consider it preferable to read the Torah portion after midday on Friday, but the context of the rest of the passage seems to indicate that "midnight" is intended.

<sup>6</sup> *Midrash Talpilot*, s.v. *Chanoch*.

<sup>7</sup> Genesis 5.

him into an angel (specifically, the angel Metatron<sup>8</sup>). Metatron occupies a pivotal position in the hierarchy of angels, and serves, among other things, to protect the realms of holiness from the forces of evil.

The word for “shoe” in Hebrew (*na'al* or *min'al*) is derived from the root meaning “to close” or “to lock.” The foot is the interface between man and the earth, or allegorically between holiness and mundane non-holiness. In order that man not be injured by the stones and thorns on the earth, he wears a shoe to protect his foot. Thus, Enoch, both in his earthly life and in his celestial life as Metatron, is involved in rectifying Adam’s sin by protecting man from the injuries and dangers of evil.

He was able to protect the light of the world of *Beriah* from exposure to evil, but not any lower level.

But about the world of *Yetzirah* it says: “And Abimelech looked in through the window.”<sup>9</sup>

When he was staying in the land of the Philistines, Isaac told the ruler, Abimelech, that Rebecca was his sister, for he feared that if he told him the truth, that Rebecca was his wife, Abimelech would kill him in order to take her. But, we are told, Abimelech looked in to their tent through the window and saw them engaging in marital intercourse, and thus discovered that they were husband and wife.

Abimelech signifies the evil of the Philistines; the fact that he was able to observe the union between Isaac and Rebecca means that their level of intercourse was in some way exposed or vulnerable to intrusion by evil.

Isaac engaged in marital relations on the level of *Asiyah*, where there is not intended to be any such intercourse, for that is the level of lesbianism. This is why the snake envied them, for he is on the level of *Asiyah*.

Isaac here was evidently engaging in marital relations in a relatively exclusively physical way, after the manner of the Philistines, known for their excessive sensual indulgence. (This is why the king of the Philistines was able to intrude on their union; he was there anyway, so to speak.) Obviously, marital relations are intended to be a sublime intertwining of the physical and spiritual aspects of the couple’s union, not a mere exercise in physical gratification. When there is no sublime, spiritual union between male and female, with all this implies in terms of the union of the male and female principles in creation (as we have described previously), the sexual act is reduced to the pursuit of raw sensual pleasure. In this way, it is like homosexuality, where the sensual pleasure is paramount and considered the justification for the intercourse and the indication of its “rightness.” The spiritual union between the partners—if there is any—is subordinate to the physical, instead of the reverse situation in proper marital relations.

Once intercourse occurs on this level, the snake, like Abimelech (who was simply playing the role of the snake further along in history) can rightfully argue that he is as fit a consort for Eve as Adam.

Now, Adam is considered to have committed [in the sin of the tree of knowledge] three cardinal sins: idolatry, sexual aberration, and murder.<sup>10</sup>

**Murder:** referring to the souls that left him as seminal emissions.

The sages compare intentional seminal emission to murder, since the individual is squandering his potential to bring life into the world.

**Idolatry:** for he caused the sparks of holiness to cling to the forces of evil.

Giving power to the forces of evil is serving them, which is idolatry.

Those souls who left him as seminal emissions returned as the generation of the flood, and made things even worse.

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<sup>8</sup> It is customary not to pronounce the names of angels that are not also names used for people (e.g., Michael, Gabriel, etc.).

<sup>9</sup> Genesis 27:8.

<sup>10</sup> *Zohar* 1:27b.

G-d sought to wipe out the generation of the flood “for all flesh had corrupted its way on earth,” meaning that they engaged in all kinds of sexual aberrations.

Therefore the floodwaters were required, in order to wipe out all those [corrupted] bodies. The earth, also, was washed away to a depth of three handbreadths. This refers to the *sefirah* of *malchut*, which is called “the earth.” The three “handbreadths” of *malchut* in which intercourse is not to take place were “wiped out.”

*Malchut*, the lowest *sefirah*, is manifest as the ground or earth, while *Z’eir Anpin* is manifest as the “heavens.” Just as the heavens rain on the earth, enabling it to grow fruit, *Z’eir Anpin* (the male) fertilizes *Nukva* (*malchut*, the female).

The three “handbreadths” are presumably the lowest three sub-*sefirot* of *malchut*, corresponding to *Asiyah* of *malchut*; as was stated above, intercourse is not supposed to take place only on the level of mere *Asiyah*. These three handbreadths therefore had to be reconstituted after the flood.

Noah was [a manifestation of the *sefirah* of] *yesod*, and [his three sons,] Shem, Ham, and Japheth corresponded to *chochmah*, *binah*, and *da’at* respectively. They issued by way of *yesod* and were thus rectified because they originated in a high level; the light therefore had to be concealed.

Noah was said to be “a righteous man, perfect in his generation....”<sup>11</sup> The appellation “righteous” (*tzadik*) is associated specifically with the *sefirah* of *yesod* and indicates sexual purity. In contrast to the rest of his depraved and degenerate generation, Noah was holy and guarded his sexuality properly. He was therefore able to elicit proper, rectified consciousness (*chochmah-binah-da’at*, or intellect), as opposed to Adam and his sons, each of whom erred in some way regarding proper G-d-consciousness.

As we said above, holiness has to be guarded and protected from the attacks of evil; therefore, until the world was purified, Noah and his sons had to be concealed inside the ark.

—translated from *Likutei Torah*

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<sup>11</sup> Genesis 6:9.

## *Parashat Noach* [second installment]

Toward the end of *parashat Noach*, the Torah relates the story of the Tower of Babel.<sup>1</sup> According to the oral Torah, the king who masterminded and led this revolt against G-d was Nimrod, who was mentioned in the preceding chapter.<sup>2</sup>

Know that the incident of the tower and Nimrod transmigrated into [the person and career of] Nebuchadnezzar. This is why he erected the statue in the Dura valley.

“King Nebuchadnezzar made a gold statue sixty cubits high and six cubits wide, and erected it in the plain of Dura in the country of Babylonia.”<sup>3</sup> A cubit is about a foot and a half, so this statue was around 90 feet high and 9 feet wide. Nebuchadnezzar was thus a reincarnation of the Nimrod, and the statue was a “reincarnation” of the Tower of Babel.

Just as in the time of Nimrod, everyone spoke the same language and he ruled the whole world, Nebuchadnezzar also ruled the whole world. Thus, it is written, “I will ascend above the clouds; I will be like the Most High,”<sup>4</sup> [the numerical value of the word for “clouds”] alluding to the seventy-two nations.

The verse quoted was spoken by (or reflects the sentiments of) Nebuchadnezzar. The numerical value of the word for “cloud” (*av, ayin-beit* = 70 + 2) is 72. Normally, the Torah speaks of seventy nations; it is not clear what the additional 2 refers to.

[Nebuchadnezzar] wanted the Jewish people to bow down to [this statue] along with [everyone else],<sup>5</sup> and indeed, had Chananiah, Misha’el, and Azariah (G-d forbid) bowed down to it, Israel would not have been able to arise [out of its exile].

Nebuchadnezzar had dreamt that he saw a statue whose head was gold, whose chest and arms were silver, whose stomach and thighs were copper, whose legs were iron, and whose feet were iron and clay. Daniel told him that the components of this statue were the kingdom of Babylonia (the gold head) and the empires that would succeed it in ruling over the Jews. By making a similar statue entirely of gold, Nebuchadnezzar sought to subvert the prophecy and perpetuate the kingdom of Babylonia.

Chananiah, Misha’el, and Azariah (whose Babylonian names were Shadrach, Meisach, and Abednego) were Daniel’s Jewish companions, who refused to bow down to this statue. Nebuchadnezzar punished them by having them thrown into a fiery furnace, but they emerged unscathed.

He also intended to build a tower and a city, as it is written, “Is this not the great [city of] Babylon that I built up [into a royal house with my powerful strength, to glorify my splendor]!?”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 11:1-9.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* 10:8 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel 3:1.

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 14:14.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel 3:3-30.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.* 4:27.

The people who built the Tower of Babel had said, “Let us build ourselves *a city and a tower* whose top reaches the heavens, and we will [thereby] achieve glory.”<sup>7</sup>

He built the statue in place of the tower. He wanted to receive the Divine beneficence via the seventy [celestial] princes, hoping that perhaps in this way Israel would be unable to arise [from its exile] and G-d’s beneficence would be directed toward the forces of evil.

G-d set up the workings of the world such that ideally, His beneficence flows primarily and directly to the forces of holiness and goodness, in order that they have what they need to carry out His purpose. Only a residual flow of beneficence reaches the forces of evil—enough to keep them in existence so that they can fulfill their role in the scheme of things. Evil also does not receive its life-force directly from G-d; rather, each nation receives its Divine flow via its celestial, spiritual archetypal angel (or “prince”). This is why non-Jews are allowed to believe in a certain degree of idolatry, i.e., that G-d shares or distributes His power to other celestial beings.

However, when those who should be acting righteously sin, they forfeit their preeminence and increase the power of evil, allowing it to receive the Divine flow first. The forces of good then have to receive their beneficence via the forces of evil. This is the condition of exile.

He was the *keter* of evil. This is why he was known as the king of Sheshach,<sup>8</sup> for the numerical value of Sheshach is the same as that of *keter*.

*Sheshach* in *at-bash* is *Bavel*, Babylonia.

*Sheshach*: *shin-shin-kaf* = 300 + 300 + 20 = 620.

*Keter*: *kaf-taf-reish* = 20 + 400 + 200 = 620.

G-d, in His mercy, confounded his plan and ruined his intentions, and the statue fell on its face, for it was overcome by Chananiah, Misha’el, and Azariah.

They were saved from the fiery furnace just as our father Abraham had been saved. Similarly, G-d humbled Nimrod before our father Abraham, and he was saved from the fiery furnace.

When Abraham became known as a crusader against idolatry, Nimrod had him thrown in a fiery furnace, but Abraham emerged unscathed.

When Nimrod saw that his scheme [to get rid of Abraham] failed, he gathered four kings and waged war against five kings, all in order to snatch the Divine beneficence from our father Abraham.

After the incident with Nimrod and the fiery furnace, Abraham and his family left Babylonia to eventually settle in the land of Israel. The Torah then relates how king Amrafel of Shinar (another name for Babylonia) joined forces with three other neighboring kings and waged war against five kings of city-states in the land of Israel. When they conquered them, Abraham went to rescue his nephew Lot (who had been taken captive) and defeated this confederacy of four kings.<sup>9</sup> The oral tradition identifies Amrafel with Nimrod.<sup>10</sup>



<sup>7</sup> Genesis 11:4.

<sup>8</sup> Jeremiah 25:26, 51:41.

<sup>9</sup> Genesis 14.

<sup>10</sup> see Rashi on Genesis 14:1.

When Nimrod and his people built the Tower of Babel, G-d said, “Behold, they are one people with one language, and this is what they have begun to do. Now, shall nothing be denied them of all they scheme to do?”<sup>11</sup>

How could G-d say, “shall nothing be denied them?” Even though man does possess free choice, would it be so difficult for G-d to prevent them from fulfilling their evil schemes?

Why, then, does G-d apparently have to do something to ensure that mankind will not be able to do all it wants?

What they were after, rather, was the following. They knew the [mystical] Names of G-d, and employed them for practical use. They were familiar with all the various angels and their positions in the celestial hierarchy, and were able to [control a specific angel by using a Divine Name to] adjure the angel that controlled it.

This is what is meant by the technique of adjuration via the use of holy Names. We know how to use them to adjure a lower angel in the name of the higher angel that influences and controls it. If [the lower angel] attempts to do other than what we have adjured it to do, it will not work at all. [The generation of the dispersion] knew all this.

Thus, it is written, “Then it was begun to call in the Name of G-d.”<sup>12</sup> For in the times of Enosh, they knew how to manipulate G-d’s Names. The explanation given to this verse by the Targum [of Onkelos], that [in this era] mankind began to serve idols [accords with this explanation]. For it means that with the knowledge that they used to manipulate the Divine Names they caused Divine beneficence to descend to idols. Thus, both explanations mean the same thing.

Now, this technique would not have worked had they not known how to combine the letters and Names in Hebrew, for it is impossible to manipulate these Names in any other language. Thus, it is written, “The whole earth was of one language and united words.” The numerical value of the words for “one language” [*safah achat*, plus the *kolel*] is the same as that of the words “the holy tongue” [*lashon hakodesh*].

*Safah achat*: sin-pei-hei alef-chet-tav = 300 + 80 + 5 + 1 + 8 + 400 = 794.

*Lashon hakodesh*: lamed-shin-vav-nun hei-kuf-dalet-shin = 30 + 300 + 6 + 50 + 5 + 100 + 4 + 300 = 795.

“United words” refers to the use of G-d’s Names, for they express His oneness, and [their use involves combining and] unifying them.

The phrase, “And they said, come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower” refers to the idol they wanted to make.

<sup>11</sup> Genesis 11:6.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 4:26.

The phrase, “whose top reaches heaven” refers to the fact that they wanted to give this idol the ability to channel the Divine beneficence to them by manipulating G-d’s Names, as above. For they knew that this idol would be powerless unless it could receive power from holiness.

Their intention was that it would force Divine beneficence to be channeled to them, via their use of these Names, even though they would not behave properly [and earn the Divine blessing]. They wanted to behave as bad as they wished and not submit to the rule of holiness. After all, it takes great effort to deny oneself the material lusts, and they wanted to enjoy the pleasures of this world [unhindered] and have the idol channel goodness to them by force of the Divine Names, as we said.

The one who masterminded all this was Nimrod, for he was the leader of the generation of the dispersion. He was extremely adept at this technique of manipulating [Divine Names].

The same was Nebuchadnezzar’s intention, for he was a reincarnation of the wicked Nimrod. Therefore, the letters that make up their names are similar, [as we will show].

*Nebuchadnezzar: nun-beit-vav-chaf-dalet-nun-tzadik-reish.*

*Nimrod: nun-mem-reish-vav-dalet.*

The [five] letters that spell *Nimrod* can be aligned with the [first five] letters that spell *Nebuchadnezzar*, and the last three letters [of *Nebuchadnezzar*] spell the word for “ruler” [*netzer*].

*Netzer: nun-tzadik-reish.*

The beginning and last letters of *Nimrod* and *Nebuchad* are the same: *nun* and *dalet*.

Thus, *Nebuchadnezzar* can be interpreted as meaning “king Nebuchad,” *Nebuchad* alluding to *Nimrod*.

The idol-statue that Nebuchadnezzar made was intended to fulfill the same function as the city and idol-tower that Nimrod built.

Furthermore, Nebuchadnezzar also built his statue with the power of Divine Names, for he took the headband [*tzititz*] of the High priest, on which was engraved G-d’s Name *Havayah*, and placed it on the mouth of the idol.

The priestly garments, including the High priest’s headband, had been captured by Nebuchadnezzar with the fall of Jerusalem and taken to Babylonia.

Thus, the statue spoke and said, “I am G-d, your G-d.” It was actually speaking the truth, for the Divine Name [on the headband] was speaking, but the people were tricked into thinking that the statue was saying this.

Daniel climbed up to the statue's head with ladders they brought him, because he said he wanted to kiss the statue. When he kissed it, he removed [the headband] from its mouth, and it immediately toppled. It could not stand naturally for it was sixty cubits tall and only six cubits wide; it was only because of the Divine power of the Name *Havayah* [engraved on the headband] that it was able to stand.

About this it is written, "I will punish Bel in Babylonia, and I will remove from his mouth what he has swallowed."<sup>13</sup> Bel was the idol of Babylonia. What was "swallowed" in his mouth was the Name *Havayah*.

[...]

This is the meaning of "Behold, they are one people with the same language," meaning that if they did not know Hebrew, they would not be able to manipulate G-d's Names. But "this they have begun to do," meaning that the sole reason they were able to begin this was because they spoke Hebrew. Therefore, "they will not be withheld," for by using the Divine Names and their power to adjure [angels], they would be able to do whatever they wanted.

The parable for this is that once there was a king who gave the keys to his storerooms to a number of people, who then could enter his storehouses whenever they wanted. In order to prevent this, the king changed the locks, and these people could no longer open them.

G-d did the same here. He changed His Names, as it is written, "Come, let us descend and confound their speech." Furthermore, he confounded their language, so they could no longer speak the Holy language, and even if they would try to adjure the angels in other languages, this would be totally ineffective. He therefore made them forget Hebrew, and thus they no longer knew how to do anything [like this].

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim* and *Likutei Torah*

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<sup>13</sup> Jeremiah 51:44.

## *Parashat Noach* [third installment]

“The water prevailed fifteen cubits above, and the mountains were covered.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, during the flood, the highest mountaintop was submerged 15 cubits.

Let us understand why [the mountaintops were submerged] fifteen cubits, no more and no less. Furthermore, once [the Torah] says that [“the water prevailed fifteen cubits] above,” why must it say that “the mountains were covered”? This is implied in the word “above”!

It is enough to say simply that the water prevailed fifteen cubits above the mountains. What is gained by saying that they were covered?

The answer: The sin of the generation of the flood was wasteful emission of seed. It is known that this act causes above [the same thing, namely,] that the drop [of Divine beneficence] issues from the male [i.e., *Z'eir Anpin*] without being posited in the female [i.e., *Nukva*]. Rather, it is captured by the forces of evil.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “And G-d saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its way on the earth.”<sup>2</sup>

The verb “to corrupt” (*hashcheit*) also means “to waste.” Thus, the phrase “for all flesh had corrupted...” can also mean, “for all flesh had wasted its way on the earth.” This immediately evokes the story of Judah’s son Onan, where we are told that “when he engaged in marital relations with his [dead] brother’s wife, he wasted it on the earth, in order not to give seed to his brother.”<sup>3</sup> The verse describing the state of the earth before the flood thus indicates that wasting seed was rampant.

“The earth” refers to the supernal “earth,” [which was destroyed.] And in what did its destruction consist? “That *all* flesh had destroyed...” i.e., that the supernal *yesod*, which is termed “all,” had “destroyed its way *on* the earth,” and not *in Nukva*.

“Earth” is an appellation for *Nukva/malchut*, which receives the seed of *Z'eir Anpin* and develops into fruition and expression.

In the verse, “To You, O G-d, is the greatness [*gedulah*, a synonym for *chesed*], and the might [*gevurah*], and the beauty [*tiferet*], and the victory [*netzach*], and the majesty [*hod*], for all [referring to *yesod*] that is in heaven and earth, to You, O G-d, is the dominion [*mamlachah*, a synonym for *malchut*],”<sup>4</sup> *yesod* is referred to as “all” because all the Divine beneficence of the preceding *sefirot* flows into it and through it to *malchut*.

In the verse quoted, *yesod* is described as positing its seed *on* the earth, i.e., on the surface of the earth, rather than *in* the earth.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 7:20.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 6:12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 38:9.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Chronicles 29:11.

In this way, [*Nukva*] was “destroyed,” for it could not elevate feminine water at all. Therefore [G-d] brought the flood upon them.

Since the flow from *yesod* was directed toward the forces of selfishness and evil, rather toward *Nukva*, *Nukva* could not elicit the flow of Divine beneficence toward it. “Elevating feminine water” is the allegorical term for arousing or eliciting flow from above.

[Normally, *Nukva* can] elevate her feminine water, which is states of *gevurah*. And when the masculine water mates with her states of *gevurah* [in her feminine water], the states of *gevurah* are sweetened.

As we have seen previously, the feminine principle is constructed out of states of *gevurah*, since it needs to be very judgmental in order to interface with the material world, which is *a priori* antithetical to G-dliness. In order that these states of *gevurah* not leave her with an entirely negative attitude, she must periodically “mate” with the male principle, in which *chesed* predominates. This mitigation of *Nukva*’s *gevurah*-states by *Z’eir Anpin*’s *chesed*-states is termed “sweetening” the *gevurah*.

This is the meaning of “...to work it,” [which, according to the sages, refers to] the active commandments, for [by performing the active commandments] we draw down masculine water upon us. “...and to guard it” refers to the passive commandments, which guarded the garden so that evil could not attach itself.

“And G-d took the man and place him in the Garden of Eden to work it and to guard it.”<sup>5</sup> The sages comment: “‘To work it’ refers to the active commandments, while ‘to guard it’ refers to the passive commandments.”<sup>6</sup> Here, the active commandments elicit the masculine water while the passive commandments are feminine water. The passive commandments are clearly associated with *gevurah*, the judgmentality that guards the garden from intrusion by forces antithetical to G-d consciousness.

But in the present case, [i.e., that of the world before the flood], there was no masculine water at all; rather, there were only severe states of judgment.

Unable to be “sweetened” by “mating” with masculine water (which was diverted into the forces of evil by the sin of wasting seed), the feminine *gevurah* states remained in their full force. This predominance of *gevurah* in the world precipitated the flood.

It is known that the five states of judgment are the five letters of the Name *Elokim*, and that they originate in the *hei* of this Name. Each of these states of *gevurah* comprises ten sub-levels. This is the significance of the *hei-yud* of the Name *Elokim*, meaning 5 times 10.

The Name *Elokim*, we know, is associated with the left axis of the *sefirot*, that of *gevurah*. The *chesed-gevurah-tiferet-netzach-hod* of this Name are inter-included of ten sub-*sefirot* each, giving 50 total sub-states of *gevurah*.

The numerical value of the letters *hei* and *yud* are 5 and 10, respectively.

These are the fifteen cubits [of water depth] that ascended [above the highest mountaintop].

The 15 cubits allude to the 5 and the 10 of the Name *Elokim*.

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<sup>5</sup> Genesis 2:15.

<sup>6</sup> *Batei Midrashot*, vol. 2, *Likutei Midrashim MiKetav Yad* 4; *Yalkut Reuveini* quoting “Midrash”; *Zohar* 1:27a.

The water is the feminine water mentioned above, from which the *hei-yud* had been withdrawn, leaving *alef-lamed-mem* of *Elokim*.

The states of *gevurah* within the feminine water, as stated, could not be “sweetened” by the masculine water and form part of the harmonious functioning of the masculine and feminine principles, so they separated from the feminine water and assumed a life of their own, so to speak. The fifteen cubits of water allude to the absence of the (5 x 10) states of *gevurah* from the feminine water.

This is the mystical meaning of the word “above,” for it can be read to mean “above the *hei*,” [referring to the states of *gevurah*] that were withdrawn above the *hei* [i.e., above the feminine water].

These states of *gevurah* ascended above her head, i.e., to the level of the upper third of *tiferet* [of *Z'eir Anpin*].

We have seen previously that *Nukva* is positioned initially such that the top of her head is level with the line dividing the upper third of *Z'eir Anpin*'s *tiferet* from its lower two-thirds. This simply means that *Nukva* expresses directly only the lower *midot* of *Z'eir Anpin*. *Chesed*, *gevurah*, and the upper third of *tiferet* are the “pure” *midot*; the *midot* oriented toward external expression are the lower two-thirds of *tiferet*, *netzach*, and *hod*. (*Yesod* and *malchut* are technically the drive toward and means of expression of the *midot*, rather than *midot* proper.)

The upper third of *tiferet* is the intellect of *tiferet*; the lower two thirds of *tiferet* are the *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* and *netzach-hod-yesod* of *tiferet*. The intellect of any *sefirah* is oriented chiefly towards its source in the *sefirot* above it, while the *midot* of that *sefirah* are oriented chiefly outwards and downwards, towards expression in the realms below it.

They continued to ascend to the level of *chesed* and *gevurah*, which are called “the mountains,” as opposed to *netzach* and *hod*, which are called “the hills.”

Mountains can be envisioned as protrusions from the earth; the expression of the earth's “desire” or “tendency” to reach beyond itself. Thus, the *midot*, oriented outward toward external reality, are “protrusions” of the *partzuf* outward. Since the intensity of consciousness is greater in *chesed* and *gevurah* than it is in *netzach* and *hod*, the former are called “mountains” relative to the latter, which are called “hills.”

As is known, in the generation of the flood, *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* were back to back. This is alluded to by the two words “mountain,” “mountain,” whose numerical values are that of the Name *Elokim* in regression [plus 5, for the value of the five letters of the Name<sup>7</sup>].

Because of the sins of the generation, *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* could not face each other; they were not oriented toward mutual cross-fertilization, as we mentioned above.

The word for “mountain” is *har* (*hei-reish*):  $5 + 200 = 205$ .

The regression of the Name *Elokim* (*alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem*) is:

*alef, alef-lamed, alef-lamed-hei, alef-lamed-hei-yud, alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem.*

The numerical value of this regression is:

$$1 + (1 + 30) + (1 + 30 + 5) + (1 + 30 + 5 + 10) + (1 + 30 + 5 + 10 + 40) =$$

$$5(1) + 4(30) + 3(5) + 2(10) + 1(40) =$$

$$5 + 120 + 15 + 20 + 40 = 200.$$

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<sup>7</sup> See *Likutei Torah, Shemot*, s.v. *U-Moshe Hayah Ro'eh Tzon*.

Thus, we see that the back-to-back state of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, alluded to by the “mountains” of *chesed* and *gevurah* being submerged in the water, alludes in turn to the regression of the Name *Elokim*, i.e., the withdrawal of the Divine beneficence indicated by this Name from reality.

Thus, [*Nukva*’s] states of *gevurah* ascended to this level. It is known that at this level is where *yesod* of *Ima* [reaches and stops] and is revealed, and that the source of [*Nukva*’s] states of *gevurah* is in *yesod* of *Ima*.

*Yesod* of *Ima*, as we know, is the drive within the intellect for expression. It descends to the level of *chesed* and *gevurah* of *Z'eir Anpin*, for that is as far as the intellect can descend and act as the motivating force behind the expression of the emotions. That is, *chesed* and *gevurah* of *Z'eir Anpin* are the lowest levels that sustain any “memory” of the intellect that spawned them. Subsequent levels must take the inspiration of the intellect but “forget” the idea itself in order to concentrate on getting the conclusion of the idea out into the world.

*Ima*, the *partzuf* of *binah*, is associated with the left axis of the *sefirot*, and thus its drive toward expression is the source of the *gevurah*-aspect of *Nukva*.

This is the meaning of the *Zohar*’s statement that in the flood “the lower waters mixed with the upper waters.” The meaning is also that the states of *gevurah* in her “rain” mixed with the states of *gevurah* in *Ima*.

In the flood, the *gevurah*-states of *Nukva* could not, as we saw, be “sweetened” by her “husband,” *Z'eir Anpin*, so they had to return to their source in their “mother,” *Ima*, to be rectified. The flood was thus the immersion of the world in the original intellect, or idea, that gave rise to it, in order to renew it. True, this was a purification process, just as a return to the original intellectual construct that gave rise to one’s emotional makeup is a purifying experience. However, such a flood of renewing energy can also be destructive, destroying the imperfect, corrupt, degenerate emotional makeup (“world”) that was spawned by that idea but developed along selfish lines.

This is probably why most people tend to avoid facing the real issues in life. Tracing the threads of our existence back to their source offers the promise of renewal, purification, and rejuvenation, but the price is the potential destruction of the “world” or “civilization” we have carefully constructed to serve our own ends.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “all the wellsprings of the abyss split open...”<sup>8</sup> referring to the states of *gevurah* in Rachel [i.e., *Nukva*], “...and the storehouses of heaven were opened,” referring to *yesod* of *Ima*, located in “heaven,” i.e., the top third of *tiferet*.

In this context, the lower waters, the abyss, are the feminine waters of *Nukva*, and the upper waters, the storehouses of heaven, are the waters of *yesod* of *Ima*. “Heaven” is often associated with *tiferet*, as contrasted to “earth,” which indicates *malchut*.

The words for “and the storehouses...” may be seen as 15 + 200, referring to the 200 regressive manifestations of the Name *Elokim*. The rest of the letters, together with the *kolel*, are 15; these are the 15 letters of the regression of *Elokim*.

The phrase “and the storehouses of heaven were opened” is composed of 15 letters. If we consider the *reish* of the word for “storehouses” (*arubot*) separately, this leaves 14 letters. 14 plus the *kolel* (1) is 15.

We saw above that the numerical value of the regression of the Name *Elokim* is 200, and if we count the letters used in this regression we see that they are 15 in number. 200 is the numerical value of the letter *reish*.

This is the mystical significance of the word for “flood” [*mabul*]. They issue via the back of *Z'eir Anpin*, for that is where the regressions [“backs”] of the 72-

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<sup>8</sup> Genesis 7:11.

Name, the 63-Name, and the 45-Name are situated. These use 26 letters; 3 times 26, gives 78, the numerical value of the word for “flood.”

The word used for “regression” in the text is *achorayim*, which literally means “back.” We are bidden to visualize the Name facing away from us, returning upward to its source. We first see the back of the first letter, then the first two, then the first three, and so on.

The 72-Name is spelled **yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-yud-vav hei-yud**.

The regression of this Name is:

<b>yud-vav-dalet</b>			
<b>yud-vav-dalet</b>	<b>hei-yud</b>		
<b>yud-vav-dalet</b>	<b>hei-yud</b>	<b>vav-yud-vav</b>	
<b>yud-vav-dalet</b>	<b>hei-yud</b>	<b>vav-yud-vav</b>	<b>hei-yud</b>

The 63-Name is spelled **yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-alef-vav hei-yud**.

The regression of this Name is:

<b>yud-vav-dalet</b>			
<b>yud-vav-dalet</b>	<b>hei-yud</b>		
<b>yud-vav-dalet</b>	<b>hei-yud</b>	<b>vav-alef-vav</b>	
<b>yud-vav-dalet</b>	<b>hei-yud</b>	<b>vav-alef-vav</b>	<b>hei-yud</b>

The 45-Name is spelled **yud-vav-dalet hei-alef vav-alef-vav hei-alef**.

The regression of this Name is:

<b>yud-vav-dalet</b>			
<b>yud-vav-dalet</b>	<b>hei-alef</b>		
<b>yud-vav-dalet</b>	<b>hei-alef</b>	<b>vav-alef-vav</b>	
<b>yud-vav-dalet</b>	<b>hei-alef</b>	<b>vav-alef-vav</b>	<b>hei-alef</b>

In each case, it can be seen that 26 letters are used in the regression.

*Mabul*: *mem-beit-vav-lamed* = 40 + 2 + 6 + 30 = 78.

The word *mabul* thus alludes to the withdrawal of the Divine life-force indicated by these iterations of the Name *Havayah* from the world.

\* \* \*

When Noah came out of the ark after the flood, G-d re-articulated the seven Noahide commandments to him. Included in this is the prohibition of tearing the flesh off a living animal, which generalizes to causing unnecessary pain to animals.

Regarding killing animals, it is mentioned in the *Zohar*<sup>9</sup> that no creature was created purposelessly.

It is [therefore] forbidden to kill it purposelessly.

As the sages state: “All that the Holy One, blessed be He, created, He created only for His honor, as it is written, ‘All that is called in My Name and for My honor, I created it, I formed it, I even made it.’”<sup>10</sup>

We will see now how the Arizal took this statement to extreme conclusions, conducting himself with extreme piety in this matter.

My teacher [the Arizal] was very careful not to kill any bug, even the smallest and lowliest, such as fleas, lice, flies, and the like, even when they bit him.

We know what the sages say, commenting on the verse, “His enemies will also make peace with him,”<sup>11</sup> that some say this refers to the dog and others say this refers to the snake, and still others say this refers to the flea.<sup>12</sup>

This idea is the answer of Rabbi Elazar to Rabbi Chizkiyah recorded in the *Zohar*,<sup>13</sup> where the mystical meaning of the verse, “Will the snake bite without whispering?”<sup>14</sup> is explained.

Rabbi Elazar and Rabbi Chizkiyah were walking and came across a snake. Rabbi Chizkiyah was about to kill it, but Rabbi Elazar told him not to. When Rabbi Chizkiyah protested, saying that it is a dangerous creature, Rabbi Elazar quoted the above verse, interpreting it to mean that a snake only bites a person if G-d “whispers” to him to do so. G-d created snakes in order to kill certain people and thereby prevent them from doing some evil.

To be sure, we should not kill any creature unnecessarily, but refraining from killing animals that pose a threat to human life (or communicate diseases) contradicts the requirements of Jewish law, and it is doubtful whether any Torah authority would permit this. Indeed, it is permitted to kill harmful snakes on the Sabbath, when killing is otherwise altogether prohibited.

The Arizal, we may presume, did not have to worry about leaving snakes alive because he did not have to fear being stuck down by one to prevent him from sinning. On the other hand, we see that he was bitten by insects and bugs. The question is how the Arizal could refrain from killing snakes and the like and allow them to pose a threat to others’ lives. Perhaps the Arizal only meant that we should not kill snakes in their natural, wild habitat, but that if they venture into heavily peopled areas, we should kill them (or if possible, return them back to the wild).

But all of this is just conjecture. It could just as well be that the Arizal advocated avoiding killing creatures altogether, even at the expense of human life.

It is also not proper to kill or despise lice, which are born and created out of sweat. This is true especially [of lice produced on the heads] of good people. For sweat is the excess [energy] of the person and his dross, and from it these lice are created. This being the case, it is a boon and a rectification for the person when lice are created out of the sweat of his body, for in this way his excess, dross, and evil is excreted. [Since they perform a positive function], we should not despise them.

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<sup>9</sup> 2:68b.

<sup>10</sup> *Avot* 6:11; *Isaiah* 43:7.

<sup>11</sup> *Proverbs* 16:7.

<sup>12</sup> *Y. Terumah* 8:3.

<sup>13</sup> 2:68b.

<sup>14</sup> *Ecclesiastes* 10:11.

\* \* \*

After the flood, Noah became drunk and was castrated by his third son, Ham. His first two sons, Shem and Japheth, covered him. When he awoke, he blessed Shem and Japheth and cursed Ham together with Ham's son, Canaan. "He said, 'Cursed be Canaan, he will be a servant of servants to his brothers.' And he said, 'Blessed be G-d, the G-d of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant. Let G-d grant beauty to Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant.'"<sup>15</sup>

Let us understand why [Noah] used the Name *Havayah* in blessing Shem and the Name *Elokim* in blessing Japheth. Also, [let us understand] why he cursed Canaan and not Ham, who committed the sin.

The explanation: Noah and his three sons in the ark personified *yesod* and its three hues. These [three hues] are *netzach*, personified by Shem; *hod*, personified by Ham; and *yesod*, personified by Japheth.

This is alluded to in the verse, "and Joseph was good looking."<sup>16</sup>

The words for "good looking" are *yefeh to'ar*. When this expression is abbreviated according to the conventions of the technique known as *notrikon*, the word *yefet*, which is also the name Japheth, is formed. Alternatively, the feminine form of *yefeh to'ar*, *yefat to'ar*, is used of Joseph's mother Rachel.<sup>17</sup> The word *yefat* (spelled *yud-pei-tav*) can be vocalized to read *Yefet*, Japheth. In either case, inasmuch as Joseph is always associated with the *sefirah* of *yesod*, it follows that Japheth is also associated with *yesod*.

Now, a higher entity always retains a residue of the lower entities that pass through it, whereas the lower entities do not retain anything of the higher entity [they pass through]. Therefore, the *shin* of *Shem* alludes to the three axes of *netzach-hod-yesod*.

The flow of Divine beneficence flows first through *netzach*, then through *hod*, and then through *yesod* to *malchut*. Of the triad of *netzach-hod-yesod*, *netzach* is the highest, and thus primary one of the three. It retains a residue of *hod* and *yesod* as what will be revealed as their light flows through it.

This is alluded to by the *shin* in the name of *Shem*, the son of Noah associated with *netzach*. The *shin* comprises three vertical "stems" resting on a horizontal base. These three stems allude to the three *sefirot* of *netzach-hod-yesod*.

The numerical value of the initials of Ham and Japheth is 18.

Ham: *chet-mem*; Japheth: *yud-pei-tav*. *Chet-yud* = 8 + 10 = 18.

This is because *yesod* re-includes all three.

In *netzach*, the name *Havayah* predominates, for the numerical value of *Shem* (340) is that of the Name *Havayah* (26) plus that of the Name *Shakai* (314). Noah therefore said, "Blessed be G-d [*Havayah*], the G-d of Shem," using the Name *Havayah*.

<sup>15</sup> Genesis 9:25-27.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* 39:6.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* 29:17.

*Shem: shin-mem:*  $300 + 40 = 340$ .

*Shakai: shin-dalet-yud:*  $300 + 4 + 40 = 314$ .

When expanded consciousness enters [*Z'eir Anpin*], the three Names *Elokim* of constricted consciousness are relegated to *yesod*. These three Names *Elokim* are filled. The first is filled with *yud*'s, producing the numerical value of 300.

The Name *Elokim* is spelled *alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem*. When these letters are spelled out, using the letter *yud* to spell out the letter *hei*, we have:

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef</i>	1
	<i>lamed</i>	30
	<i>pei</i>	80
<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed</i>	30
	<i>mem</i>	40
	<i>dalet</i>	4
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	5
	<i>yud</i>	10
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	10
	<i>vav</i>	6
	<i>dalet</i>	4
<i>mem</i>	<i>mem</i>	40
	<i>mem</i>	40
total		300

[The numerical value of] the second [is calculated as follows]: [We consider first the numerical value of] the Name *Elokim* itself, then the five letters of the Name *Elokim*, and finally the 13 letters used to spell it out. We thus have  $86 + 5 + 13 = 104$ .

The numerical value of the Name *Elokim* by itself is:

*alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem:*  $1 + 30 + 5 + 10 + 40 = 86$ .

It can be seen from the chart above that 13 letters are used to spell out the Name *Elokim*.

[The numerical value of] the third [is calculated by considering] the numerical value of the Name *Elokim* by itself, ignoring the number of its letters, [i.e., 86].

The sum of all this together is the value of Japheth.

$300 + 104 + 86 = 490$ .

Japheth (*yud-pei-tav*):  $10 + 80 + 400 = 490$ .

Thus, we have again established the association between Japheth and *yesod*.

This is why [Noah] said, "Let G-d grant beauty to Japheth," [using the Name *Elokim*].

He did not curse Ham, who is associated with *hod*, because even though it is situated on the axis of *gevurah*, it is still holy. [It remains so until] it extends below and is appropriated by the forces of evil. He therefore cursed Canaan, who issues from [Ham] after it extends below.

All that needs to be cursed of *hod* is its evil “progeny,” represented by Ham’s progeny, Canaan.

—translated from *Likutei Torah* and *Sha’ar HaMitzvot*

## *Parashat Noach* [fourth installment]

The installment continues the translation of the passage begun in the first installment.

When Noah did not possess the mentality required to couple, he was like a corpse, and was therefore hidden inside *malchut*, i.e., the ark.

Noah, as stated previously, personified *yesod* of *Abba*, the organ of procreation. The sages state that “there is no erection without *da’at*,”<sup>1</sup> referring to the fact that in order for procreation to occur, *yesod* must be infused with at least some level of consciousness. Without this presence of mentality, the organ is flaccid, or, in the terminology of the sages, “dead.”<sup>2</sup>

The word for “ark” (*teivah*) also means “box,” alluding to a casket.

[This was] in order that the forces of evil not be able to benefit from him.

As long as he was not inspired by holy consciousness, the danger existed that he could be aroused by unholy consciousness and propagate evil, as happened with Adam.

Indeed, he was forbidden to conduct marital relations [inside the ark], since [during the flood] there was no coupling above, [in the spiritual realms,] for the [upper] three handbreadths [of the earth] were dissolved.

Marital relations were forbidden in the ark because it was a period of crisis and suffering for the world,<sup>3</sup> and this ambiance is not conducive to holy marital relations, which must be conducted in a spirit of optimism and joy.

The upper three handbreadths of the earth signified the upper three *sefirot* of *malchut*,<sup>4</sup> the intellect of *malchut*. The fact that they were being dissolved indicated a lack of presence of mind in *malchut*. Since *malchut*, also, did not have the proper mentality for relations, they did not occur.

Shem, Ham, and Japheth personified the intellect, and emerged via *yesod* in order to rectify [this situation].

Shem, Ham, and Japheth were born in order to reinstate the presence of holy mentality in *yesod* so that proper coupling could occur.

To explain:

The origin of the intellect are the letters *yud-hei-vav* [of the Name *Havayah*].

Usually we consider only the first two letters of the Name *Havayah* to be identified with the intellect, while the *vav* indicates the *midot*. In this context, however, we are talking about what occurs in *Ima*, which is entirely a *partzuf* of intellect; thus, even the *midot* there are the *midot* of the intellect.

Inasmuch as the final *hei* of the Name *Havayah* signifies *malchut*, the means of expression “that has nothing of its own,” it is proper to consider only the first three letters of the Name *Havayah* when discussing the *content* of *Ima*.

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<sup>1</sup> *Yevamot* 53b.

<sup>2</sup> For example, *Mishneh Torah*, *Isurei Biah* 4:11.

<sup>3</sup> Rashi on Genesis 7:7.

<sup>4</sup> In the previous installment I wrote that they signify the *lower* three *sefirot* of *malchut*. This should be corrected to the *upper* three.

[These letters] emerge via *yesod* [of *Ima*] to rectify [*Z'eir Anpin*].

I.e., to introduce holy intellect into it.

The Name *Havayah* becomes vested in the Name *Ekyeh*, the letters *yud-hei-vav* [of the Name *Havayah* becoming vested] in the letters *alef-hei-yud* [of the Name *Ekyeh*].

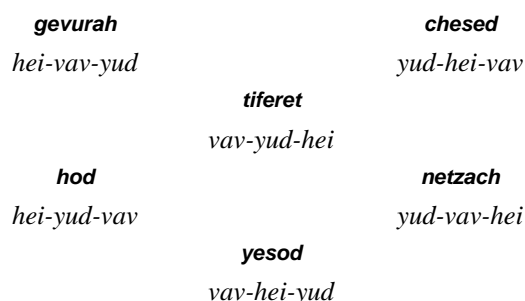
This is the first stage, and as we have seen, the Name *Ekyeh* is associated with *Ima*.

The *yud-hei-vav* [then] extend through the six extremities of *Z'eir Anpin*, which are manifest as the six permutations constructed by the letters *yud-hei-vav*, whose numerical value is 126.

$$Yud-hei-vav = 10 + 5 + 6 = 21.$$

$$21 \times 6 = 126.$$

The six permutations are:



Note that the permutations on the right axis begin with *yud*, those on the left axis with *hei*, and those on the middle axis with *vav*. This is because the *sefirot* above the right and left axes are *chochmah* and *binah*, associated respectively with the letters *yud* and *hei* of the Name *Havayah*.

The six permutations of *yud-hei-vav* comprise 18 letters. [18 is the numerical value of the word] “life” [*chai*], referring to the *ruach* of *malchut*.

$$Chai: chet-yud = 8 + 10 = 18.$$

The *ruach* of *malchut* is the emotions of *malchut*. The influx of intellect from *Ima*, as embodied in the permutations of *yud-hei-vav*, has thus restored the *ruach* of *malchut*.

When 18 is added to 126, the result is 144, the numerical value of the word “before” or “not yet” [*kedem*], which refers to the *nefesh* of *malchut*.

$$Kedem: kuf-dalet-mem = 100 + 4 + 40 = 144.$$

Thus, the *nefesh*, the *netzach-hod-yesod* of *malchut*, has been restored.

The three letters *yud-hei-vav* that are the origin of the intellect of *Z'eir Anpin* and from which are derived these six permutations of *yud-hei-vav*, express the 63-Name. [63 plus] *kedem* [144] equal the numerical value of the word for “light” [or, 206, plus the *kolel*]. This is the *neshamah* of *malchut*.

The 63-Name is associated with *binah*.

$$63 + 144 = 207.$$

Thus, the intellect, the *neshamah* of *malchut* has been restored.

When we consider the 18 letters [which compose the 6 permutations of *yud-hei-vav*] together with the three root-letters [*yud-hei-vav*], we have 21 letters. This number added to 207 yields the numerical value of the word for “blessing” [*berachah*, 227, plus the *kolel*].

$$18 + 3 = 21; 21 + 207 = 228.$$

$$\text{Berachah: } \textit{beit-reish-kaf-hei} = 2 + 200 + 20 + 5 = 227.$$

Thus, the union of *yesod* and *malchut* is blessed, and can occur.

We will now see where these permutations are alluded to in the story of Noah.

The 18 letters of the six permutations allude to the “seven by seven” ritually pure animals, i.e., 14, and the “two by two” ritually impure animals, i.e., 4.

The idiom for “seven by seven” is simply “seven seven,” implying  $7 + 7$ , or 14. The same is true for “two by two,” or “two two,” or 4.

$$14 + 4 = 18.$$

The pure and impure animals are derived from the *hei* of the *yud-hei-vav*.

The letter *hei* is associated with animals chiefly by virtue of the fact that the latter *hei* of the Name *Havayah* is associated with the 52-Name, and 52 is the numerical value of the word for “animal” (*beheimah*). True, we are dealing with the *first hei* of the Name *Havayah*, but in general, the two *hei*’s of the Name *Havayah* are the feminine sides of the two-letter pairs, while the *yud* and *vav* are the masculine sides. The “feminine” here means “recipient” or “means of expression,” and this is the role played by animals vis-à-vis human beings.

[Specifically,] the pure animals are derived from the letters *hei* in the permutations *yud-hei-vav* and *yud-vav-hei*, aligned with *chesed* and *netzach*.

The impure animals are derived from the letters *hei* in the permutations *hei-vav-yud* and *hei-yud-vav*, aligned with *gevurah* and *hod*.

As for what is derived from the permutations *vav-yud-hei* and *vav-hei-yud*, aligned with *tiferet* and *yesod*, these animals are neither pure nor impure. They are alluded to by the phrase, “from the animals that are not pure”; this implies [animals that on the one hand are not pure,] but it does not say “impure” [either].

It is not entirely clear what animals are being referred to here.

To explain:

Whatever extends [too far] below on the axis of *gevurah* becomes evil. This is the “dross of gold” mentioned in the *Zohar*,<sup>5</sup> which is black.

Dross is the rust that forms on the surface of molten metal.

Even though they are derived from *gevurah*, which is red, when they are manifest below, they become black. This is the meaning of our sages statement that “black is a defective form of red.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> 2:203a.

In contrast, the states of *gevurah* that descend on the *right* axis always remain red, and they become the *nefesh* of the evil shells. There are sparks of holiness within them that fell [into them] when the vessels [of the world of *Tohu*] were shattered. These are the *vav-hei* [of the Name *Havayah*], the *vav* being the life-force of the male and the *hei* being the life-force of the female of the evil shells.

Since the right axis is not inherently one of *gevurah*, the *gevurah* within it does not descend as much as the *sefirot* on the left axis can.

When a person divulges a secret to a sinner, he causes [the evil embodied by this person] to couple with the *hei* openly and the forces of evil abduct the offspring [of this union]. This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “Do not reveal a secret to another.”<sup>7</sup>

The “secret” here is the holiness hidden within reality or the inner powers or potentials that we possess to do good. When these are shared with people of evil intent, we are guilty allegorically of spilling our seed, causing our potentials to be diverted to unholy purposes.

To explain:

We have already said that the *hei* of *Atzilut* is manifest in *Atzilut*, and that the *vav* of this *hei* is the masculine principle while the *dalet* is the feminine principle. They are manifest as [the *partzufim*] Jacob and Leah.

The form of the letter *hei* can be seen as a *dalet* with a smaller *vav* inside it. The *hei*, which indicates *malchut* of *Atzilut*, thus alludes to the union of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* that occurs within it.

When someone reveals a secret to a wicked person, he causes *yesod*, which is that *vav*, to channel its effulgence to the powers of evil. This is alluded to by the words “...a secret to another,” for the numerical value of the word for “secret” [*sod*] is 70, referring to the 70 angelic princes [of the non-Jewish nations].

The non-Jewish nations, at least until their rectification in the Messianic future, embody the fallen version of Adam that chose to be associated with the materiality of this world and thus oppose the revelation of Divine will on earth. There are 70 archetypal nations, enumerated in Genesis 10. Their spiritual sources, the angelic “princes,” are personifications of the different mentalities, or cultures, they each express. Each is a different variation (i.e., perversion) of the Torah, each emphasizing or expressing a different angle of it, preserving parts and distorting others.

The “wicked person” in this exposition can be, of course, a Jew just as well as a non-Jew. When a Jew identifies with a particular non-Jewish cultural mindset, he serves as a vehicle for that non-Torah take on life.

When a person reveals a secret to the wicked, he causes *yesod* to channel its flow into these 70 [princes] and they [can then] overpower *malchut*. G-d intended that they should all be subject to *malchut*, under the purview of the Jewish people, but he effects the opposite, giving the forces of evil power over them.

This is the mystical meaning of the sages’ statement, “When wine enters, the secret comes out.”<sup>8</sup> “Wine” refers to the 70 angelic princes [of the nations], likened

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<sup>6</sup> *Nidah* 20a.

<sup>7</sup> Proverbs 25:9.

<sup>8</sup> *Eiruvin* 65a.

to intoxicating wine. When this “wine” enters to receive [flux] from *yesod*, “the secret exits,” i.e., *malchut*, which is the “secret” [*sod*] of *yesod*.

The numerical value of the word for “wine” (*yayin*, *yud-yud-nun* = 10 + 10 + 50) is 70, alluding to the 70 nations. Alcohol intoxicates a person, blurring his perception, just as the non-Jewish cultures are each a “blurring” of the truth of the Torah. Just as blurred perception displaces the sober mentality in a drunk person, when the 70 princes enter to receive from *yesod*, they displace *malchut*.

*Malchut* here is called the “secret” because the word for “secret” (*sod*, *samech-vav-dalet* = 60 + 6 + 4) also equals 70, and *malchut* is the seventh *sefirah* of the emotions (which, when metamorphosed into a complete *partzuf*, can be thought of as possessing 70 sub-*sefirot*). The word for “secret” is also part of the word *yesod*, which can be considered as spelling *yud-sod*, “the secret of the *yud*.” The seminal drop of *chochmah* (the *yud*) is what *yesod* posits in *malchut*.

When a person reveals the secret to someone who is unworthy, he causes [the forces of evil] to receive from *yesod*, and they are warmed by it and produce offspring.

“Warmed” here means “aroused.” This usage is common in the Rabbinic idiom; the choice of it here will be clear now, as it is contrasted to the inherent “coldness” of evil.

This is the dynamic of “coldness,” as we will now explain.

The sages stated that G-d castrated the male Leviathan.

“And G-d created the great serpents [in the water]....”<sup>9</sup> According to the sages, this refers to the Leviathan and its mate. But G-d saw that if they were to procreate, they would destroy the world, so He castrated the male and killed the female Leviathan and salted it; it will be served to the righteous in the meal celebrating the advent of the Messianic era.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, the Leviathan represents a power that if allowed to propagate would overcome the world, i.e., evil. G-d therefore has “castrated” evil, as will now be explained.

[Mystically,] this means that the *yesod* [of the forces of evil] does not connect with their *netzach* and *hod* as is the case in the realm of holiness, for the *netzach-hod-yesod* of holiness function as a unit and are therefore alluded to by the [single] letter *shin*.

The letter *shin* is formed of three vertical lines that join at the bottom. It thus alludes to *netzach-hod-yesod* functioning as a unit. The connection of *netzach* and *hod* to *yesod*, providing it with content, is what makes it potent, able to be “warmed up.”

But [the *yesod* of the forces of evil], being separate [from their *netzach* and *hod*], are alluded to by the letters *kuf-reish*. Thus, the word for “lie” [*sheker*] is formed.

The letters *kuf-reish* spell *kar*, “cold.”

All the letters of the Hebrew alphabet except for these two—*kuf* and *reish*—are “stable.” They either have solid base, or are “balanced,” consisting of a single vertical line (e.g., the *vav*) or have “mass” on either side of the single line they stand on (e.g., the *dalet* or *zayin*). These two, however, are “lopsided,” and appear as if ready to fall over at any minute.

<sup>9</sup> Genesis 1:21.

<sup>10</sup> Bava Batra 74b.

Thus, although by itself, *shin* is a “holy” letter and is balanced, when joined together with the *kuf* and *reish*, its potential lopsidedness (the three lines that it comprises do not join directly below its center of gravity) is added to theirs, and the word for “lie” is formed.

This is the inner meaning of the sages’ statement that “a lie has no feet”<sup>11</sup> or permanence, unless it is joined together with some words of truth.

A good lie always begins with a true statement, which gives it reliability.

To explain:

When [the forces of evil] receive from that *vav* inside the *hei* [of *malchut*], the *vav* inside this *hei* extends downward, forming the letter *kuf*—which was formerly a *hei*. The *dalet* was a *hei* from the *hei* that extends into *Beriah* when [the forces of evil] receive. And from that *vav* that was inside the *hei* is formed the *kuf*.

*Beriah* is the first world where self-awareness exists, and therefore where evil can assume an independent existence. The extension of the *hei*-become-*kuf* into *Beriah* is thus envisioned as a breach of the borders of holiness.

The *dalet* of the *hei* is also [transformed into part of the word for “lie”]: it possesses a *yud* on its back. This is the hinge on which the door rotates. When we remove that hinge-*yud*, the door falls off.

The extension to the right that distinguishes the *dalet* from the *reish* is seen as a small *yud*. The word *dalet* means “door,” so this *yud* can be seen as the “hinge” around which the *dalet* can be imagined to rotate. Without the *yud*, the *dalet* becomes a *reish*, an “evil,” unstable letter, and collapses.

To explain:

*Yud* signifies *chochmah*, which is manifest throughout *Z’eir Anpin* and *malchut* [i.e., *Nukva*], and it is what joins them together.

*Chochmah* is experienced through selflessness, as we have seen previously. Selflessness is what allows two opposites, such as the male and female principles, to unite.

[*Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*] are then called “one” [*echad*]: the brother of the *dalet*, *Z’eir Anpin* being the brother and *dalet* being *malchut*.

The word for “one” (*echad*) is spelled *alef-chet-dalet*. The first two letters of these three form the word for “brother” (*ach*, *aleft-chet*). Thus, the word for “one” can be seen as a compound of the words “brother of the *dalet*.” *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* unite so closely they feel like brother and sister (which in fact, they are, since they are both offspring of *Abba* and *Ima*).

Even though *Z’eir Anpin* and *malchut* are separate *partzufim*, they become “one” because the *yud* joins them.

When the *yud* is removed from the *dalet* [it turns into a *reish*, and] the word for “one” [*echad*] becomes the word for “other” [*acher*]. This is [the “other” in the verse] “Do not reveal a secret to another.”

This also causes the *vav* to couple with the *hei* openly.

“Open” coupling is a violation of the modesty (*tzeniut*) that is supposed to characterize true, holy marital relations. By copulating “in the open,” the secret (the reproductive power, both in the male and in the female) is

<sup>11</sup> *Sotah* 35a.

shared with everyone (instead of only with the beloved), and thus some of it “spills” into the wrong places. Open coupling thus increases the power of evil.

But when the secrets of the Torah are revealed to the righteous, *yesod* directs its flux directly to *malchut*, these two being righteous, and then the *vav* with the *hei* ascend in the world of *Beriah* as “feminine waters” for *malchut*, and cause it to couple [with *Z’eir Anpin*].

This is thus a rectification for the evil coupling, in which the *vav* and *hei* are forced into the lower worlds to copulate there. “Feminine waters” is the Kabbalistic imagery for “arousal from below.”

But when the opposite is the case, it causes a coupling below, and then there is no rectification [for this] until the root of the problem is rectified.

There is a difference between the rectification required for those souls who issued through illicit seminal emission and that required for the *vav-hei*, which are the 11 spices of the incense.

The numerical value of *vav-hei* (6 + 5) is 11.

To elevate the sparks of the *vav-hei*, we give ourselves over to the unity [of G-d] in reciting the *Shema*. When we eat we also rectify [this]. By performing the commandments and studying the Torah we elicit [Divine beneficence] from the source of these above, so that it elevate those below also.

This is how we rectify the unholy descent of the *vav-hei* into the realms of evil adjacent to the world of *Beriah*. As for the souls propagated by Adam’s unholy seminal emissions—

Shem, Ham, and Japheth were the roots of those souls, and came to rectify them. But the Generation of the Dispersion ruined [their efforts], and said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower.”<sup>12</sup> [In effect,] they said that they saw those souls of the Generation of the Flood that did not ascend and that they did not have a body to ascend with. So they said, “Let us make them bodies from the evil shells.” This is alluded to by the word “Come.”

This will be explained presently.

Nimrod said, “Let us build ourselves a city,” referring to *malchut* of the forces of evil, “and a tower,” referring to *yesod* of the forces of evil.

“City” is another appellation for *malchut*, the *sefirah* of expression, inasmuch as letters are called “stones” and words “houses.” The “tower” is a phallic symbol.

G-d, however, foiled their plans, so that these souls not be totally ruined and left without rectification forever.

By confounding their language, or means of expression. Their “city” was thus destroyed.

Then Abraham came and rectified [them] through *chesed*. He revealed [Divine] *chesed* and thereby blinded [the forces of evil] and elevated the sparks of holiness.

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<sup>12</sup> Genesis 11:3.

Nonetheless, he did not rectify [them] that much, so Isaac came and rectified [them] more than he did, using *gevurah*. The *gevurah* [Isaac revealed] struck [the forces of evil] and thereby elevated those souls from the realm of evil.

Then Jacob came and rectified [them] even more.

Using *tiferet*.

And when [his sons, the progenitors of] the twelve tribes came and went down to Egypt, these sparks were refined there and all ascended and were [totally] rectified.

Who was Pharaoh? Nimrod! [This can be seen from the fact that] just like [Nimrod] said, “*Come*, let us build ourselves a city,” so did Pharaoh say, “*Come*, let us be wise with them.”<sup>13</sup>

He decreed against the [Israelites’] sons, saying, “the newborn boys should be thrown into the river,” that is, into the water, so that they could be rectified in the water.

Although the earthly Pharaoh’s intentions were evil, he was unwittingly trying to rectify the souls that had become reincarnated in the generation of the Exodus by immersing them in water, which is a metaphor for the Torah.

But they were not fully rectified until they came to Marah, where they were all fully rectified.

At Marah, the Jews received their first commandments, as a sort of transitional law between the universal laws of the Noahides and the 613 commandments of the Torah.

Moses also rectified the *hei* of Abel’s name [*Hevel*], and thus then everything was rectified.

When Moses received the full Torah and transmitted it to the Jewish people, all the souls that made up Adam’s original soul were finally rectified.

—translated from *Likutei Torah*

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<sup>13</sup> Exodus 1:10.

## *Parashat Lech Lecha*

The portion of the Torah read this week begins: “And G-d said to Abram, ‘Go forth from your land, and from your birthplace, and from your father’s house, to the land that I will show you. I will make you [there] into a great nation...’”<sup>1</sup>

As we have explained in our exposition on the *partzuf* of *Nukva*, it has existed in various states of development and union with *Z’eir Anpin* from the time the world was created until the destruction of the second Temple.

Although *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* are undergoing constant changes regarding their stage and state of development and union, these changes occur in the context of specific time cycles or progressions. There is, for example, the daily cycle, the weekly cycle, the monthly cycle, and the yearly cycle, etc. All the changing natures of these times, which occasion the various religious observances associated with them (prayer, Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh, holidays, etc.) are caused by the changing states of development and coupling of these *partzufim*. *Z’eir Anpin* is the male and *Nukva* is the female; their coupling produces “offspring” in the form of the Divine beneficence that grants existence and proper functioning of reality. The more developed and unified they are, the more the world (and all worlds) are in a state of heightened spiritual consciousness and harmonious, productive functioning.

The Arizal will now discuss the dynamics of the development and relationship of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* in the context of history.

We will now discuss whether *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* coupled before the era of the patriarchs, or during their era.

Before Abraham was born, *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* did not couple, for in those days, *Z’eir Anpin* was in the “nursing”-stage and still consisted only of the six extremities; [mature] intellect had not yet entered it. And as is known, the drop of “male water” [i.e., semen] can be elicited only from the mind. Therefore, there was until then no coupling of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*.

As Rabbi Wolf Ashkenazi points out, the Arizal is here referring to face-to-face coupling, since in order for the world to exist there has to be at least *some* type of coupling, however superficial, between *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*. By way of analogy: if a married couple are not attuned to each other (let’s say, because they are distracted by the exigencies of their careers/occupations) and their love for each other is very suppressed, they *can* still continue to keep their household running on “automatic pilot,” communicating on only the most superficial level. But life in this house during this period will certainly be dull, dreary, and even somewhat oppressive. When their consciousness “matures” and they turn to each other in order to relate on a deeper level, the effect of this heightened type of relationship will spill over into all the elements that make up life in their home.

In any case, until Abraham, *Z’eir Anpin* remained in the “nursing” stage, i.e., selfishly connected to *Ima*, concerned only with its own maturation process. (As we have seen previously, there are three stages of consciousness: fetal-consciousness, nursing-consciousness, and intellectual-consciousness.) The six “extremities” are the six *sefirot* from *chesed* to *yesod*, which, as we know, are the raw material out of which the *partzuf* of *Z’eir Anpin* is built. Its metamorphosis from these six, separate *sefirot* into a full-fledged *partzuf* is marked by its acquisition of “brains,” i.e., mature intellect in the form of the sub-*sefirot* of *chochmah*, *binah*, and *da’at*. The intellect is what allows for a perspective higher than total self-orientation; it is prepared to acknowledge the existence and value of other beings.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 12:1-2.

Thus, only when a certain amount of “brains” has been acquired does a person become fertile. Sexual maturity is the indication of a deeper process, that of at least potential mental maturity, through which the individual should be prepared to behave in an intellectually and emotionally mature way toward another human being. (On an allegorical level, all interactions are “sexual” in nature.) Specifically, the presence of a “female” (i.e., recipient) to receive and reproduce his seminal essence can only inspire a person to couple with that “female” if he is mature enough to sense the value of propagating himself (or his ideas) for the benefit of the outside world.

(Of course, on the absolutely physical level, all this ideal conceptualization of sexuality is subordinated to the G-d-implanted nature of male-female “mating” instincts necessary for the survival of the species. Still, from the way things operate on an animal-physical level we can deduce, especially with the help of the Torah’s insights, the way things are supposed to work spiritually.)

When Abraham was born, there started to be above an arousal toward the supernal coupling [of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*]. This is why he was named Abram, for this name alludes to the coupling of *yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin*, known as the “limb” [*eiver*] with the *yesod* of its *Nukva*, known as the final *mem*.

As the Midrash relates, Abraham was blessed from a very young age with the ability to see through the sham of idolatry that was prevalent in his time, and with a concomitant urge to seek the truth about the world and its relationship with G-d. Inasmuch as our actions in this world can and do influence the dynamics of the upper worlds, this “consciousness-raising” prepared the way for reunion of G-d and His creation, respectively personified in the *partzufim* of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*.

Abram is spelled *alef-veit-reish-mem*. The first three letters spell the word for “limb,” and the last letter is a final *mem*. The “limb” refers to the male sexual organ, which corresponds to the *yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin*, and the final, closed *mem* refers to the virginal female sexual organ. Abram’s name thus alluded to the union of these two principles.

Nonetheless, the supernal coupling did not actually occur until Abraham went to the land of Israel; only then was he able to effect the supernal coupling.

This, of course, is because the spiritual nature of the land of Israel is conducive to G-d consciousness, and Abraham was only able to achieve the level of consciousness required to influence the dynamics of the *partzufim* once he was there.

This is the mystical meaning of G-d’s command to Abraham: “Go forth from your land, and from your birthplace, and from your father’s house, to the land that I will show you, and I will make you [there] into a great nation....” When he went to the land of Israel, he caused *Z’eir Anpin* to develop and mature into the level of “intellectual”-consciousness. It could then couple with its *Nukva*.

Our sages state that “the air of the land of Israel makes one wise.” Thus, the maturation of consciousness that the land of Israel induces in an individual is specifically that of intellect.

It follows that until this mature mentality entered *Z’eir Anpin*, the *partzuf* of Leah was not revealed. This is because Leah emerges [from *Z’eir Anpin*] only as a radiance of his mentality, as is know. Therefore, [until then,] all that was revealed was [the *partzuf* of] Rachel, which is known as “the lower land.”

Jacob’s two wives, Leah and Rachel, personify the two *partzufim* that develop as the *Nukva*, or feminine correlate, of *Z’eir Anpin*. Specifically, we know that *malchut* in general is the principle of expression or medium, as opposed to *Z’eir Anpin*, which is the content of the expression or the message within the medium. We also know that there are three modes of expression: thought, speech, and action. But action—in terms of consciousness—is more removed from the person than are his thought and speech. Thought and speech are literally expressions of the idea in the person’s head, voiced either in mental thought patterns or in vocal words. Action is not as literal; I can perhaps deduce your ideas and philosophies from what you do, and to that extent, your action is an expression of

your idea, but it is not nearly as literal and exact as are thought and speech. (Action of course has its own advantage over thought and speech and is in some ways *more* eloquent, but that does not change the fact that it is less *literal* than the higher forms of expression.) This difference between thought and speech on the one hand and action on the other is seen in the form of the letter *hei*, which signifies expression: the connected upper and right lines correspond to thought and speech while the disconnected left line corresponds to action.

In any case, thought and speech are the two initial and primary forms of expression, and *malchut* develops a separate *partzuf* for each. Leah is the *partzuf* of thought, while Rachel is the *partzuf* of speech. Abraham, evidently, could appreciate or achieve the Divine consciousness that is “spoken” into the world, but could not relate to Divine “thought” until he reached the land of Israel. Only then did he achieve mental consciousness of G-d, and this produced “thought.”

Thus, the meaning of “Go forth from your land” is [that Abraham is to ascend higher than the consciousness of the “lower land,” i.e., the *partzuf* of] Rachel.

Since Abraham’s ascent occurs on the right axis [of the *sefirah*-tree], it is said of him, “Go forth from your land,” meaning the *sefirah* of *netzach* at the bottom of this axis, which is close to *malchut*, which is called “your land,” [as stated].

Each of the three patriarchs personified one of the three axes of the array of *sefirot*. Abraham personified the axis of *chesed*, loving-kindness.

left axis (Isaac)	center axis (Jacob)	right axis (Abraham)
	1. <i>keter</i>	
3. <i>binah</i>		2. <i>chochmah</i>
	( <i>da'at</i> )	
5. <i>gevurah</i>		4. <i>chesed</i>
	6. <i>tiferet</i>	
8. <i>hod</i>		7. <i>netzach</i>
	9. <i>yesod</i>	
	10. <i>malchut</i>	

The lowest station on this axis is the *sefirah* of *netzach*.

This structural array of the *sefirot* enables us to understand certain aspects of their inter-relationships. We note that there are three triads here, *chochmah-binah-da'at*, *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*, and *netzach-hod-yesod*. The role played by each “right-member,” “left-member,” and “center-member” of these triads is similar to the corresponding member in the other triads. In our case, *chochmah*, *chesed*, and *netzach* are all right-members, or “male” principles relative to their respective left-members. In this sense, *netzach* can be considered a projection of *chesed* onto the plane of active relationship; *chesed* can be considered a projection of *chochmah* onto the plane of emotion, and so forth.

He ascended to *chesed*, which is referred to in this verse as “your birthplace.” [*Chesed* is called “birthplace”] because any drop of fertile seed is from *chesed*, which is “hidden in the mouth of *Ima*,” as is known.

Although we said above that intellect is prerequisite for procreation, this does not of course negate the additional necessity for attraction, or ideally, love. In fact, if the intellect is functioning properly and there are no obstructions, it will naturally produce the emotional response appropriate to the intellectual understanding (*Ima*). In this case, the appreciation for the rectification of reality accomplished by “being fruitful and multiplying” one’s Divine self throughout reality, and the essential role played by the “female” in this process will bring the individual to appreciate, be attracted to, and love the “female.”

He then ascended further from “your birthplace,” i.e. *chesed*, to *chochmah*, which is referred to in this verse as “your father’s house” because *chochmah* is the father of Abraham, who personifies *chesed*.

*Chochmah* is situated directly above *chesed* on the *sefirah*-tree since it is the source of *chesed*. Just as *chochmah* is the male-principle of the intellect, *chesed* is the male-principle of the emotions.

Once *Z’eir Anpin*’s mentality of *chochmah* has been developed, Abraham is commanded to “go...to the land that I will show you.” This refers to Leah, the “supernal land,” which only then becomes visible and revealed, and not before the development of the intellect, as mentioned.

Now, as we explained elsewhere, the coupling [of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*] that occurs on *Rosh Chodesh* is only at the level of *netzach*, that which occurs on *Rosh HaShanah* is only at the level of *gevurah*, and similarly with regard to the other festivals, each one being different from the next. It was similar in the days of the patriarchs.

Just like there are different types of coupling between the *partzufim* throughout the cycle of the year, so too, there was a progression in the level and type of sefirotic coupling that occurred parallel to the development of G-d consciousness in the patriarchal family.

For in Abraham’s time, the principle maturation of intellect occurred in the brain of *chochmah*, which is juxtaposed to *chesed*, which is personified by Abraham. Therefore, all the [supernal] coupling that occurred in his time was only in a manner of *chesed*. This is the mystical meaning of the statement, “I will make you into a great nation,” [i.e., only you, *chesed*,] for the maturation [i.e., becoming great] occurred in his times only in the brain of *chochmah*.

Afterwards, in the time of Isaac, the brain of *binah* matured, for it is on the left axis, juxtaposed to *gevurah*, which is personified by Isaac. Therefore, all the [supernal] coupling that occurred in his time was only in a manner of *gevurah*.

Finally, in the time of Jacob, the brain of *da’at* was rectified, and then all three brains were fully mature, and there was complete coupling and reproduction. This is the mystical meaning of our sages’ statement that Jacob’s “bed was perfect,” meaning that the [supernal] coupling that occurred in his time was a complete expression of all three aspects of the intellect.

Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Isaac was worthy to become one of the forefathers of the Jewish people, but Ishmael was not. He personified a fallen version of his father’s *chesed*. This false *chesed* is the desire to please other people for egocentric ends, or excessive indulgence in the delights of this world. Similarly, Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob. Jacob was worthy to continue the line, but Esau personified a fallen version of Isaac’s *gevurah*. This fallen *gevurah* is violence and murder. In contrast, all of Jacob’s sons were considered worthy to carry on the line and serve as ancestors of the Jewish people. This is the simple meaning of the sages’ statement that “his bed was perfect.”

Kabbalistically, the reason Abraham and Isaac produced unworthy offspring was because of their own psychological imbalances. These imbalances did not imply any error on their part, since they each personified necessary stages in the development of the idea of the Jewish people, but their consequences were nonetheless such as they were.

## *Parashat Lech Lecha* [second installment]

This is a continuation of the first installment. It is suggested that the reader review the first installment before proceeding.

[We will now explain] why the letter *hei* was added to Abraham's name and not to Isaac's or Jacob's name. This letter was added [to Abraham's name] for two reasons.

First: *Z'eir Anpin* originally possessed no intellect, and it is known that [its intellect] is first clothed in the *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima*, identified with the first *hei* [of the Name *Havayah*].

Before *Ima* can transfer intellect to *Z'eir Anpin*, this intellect must be contracted and dimmed so that it can be vested in *Z'eir Anpin*. It is thus funneled through the sub-*sefirot* of *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima*, whose function it is to contract the mentality of *Ima* in order to transfer it further.

Therefore, [the name Abraham—here referring to *Z'eir Anpin*—] initially is missing the letter *hei*, and possesses only the letters *alef-beit-reish* and *mem*, signifying the two sub-*sefirot* of *yesod* [of *Z'eir Anpin* and of *Nukva*], as we have explained, but unable to couple [in a face-to-face manner].

After its intellect matures [i.e., is received from *Ima*], the first *hei* [of the Name *Havayah*, signifying *Ima*] is added, as we have explained.

Secondly: The seminal drop of coupling derives from the states of *chesed* that issue from the brain of *da'at*. Thus, when [*Z'eir Anpin*'s] intellect matured and it acquired the brain of *da'at*, it was given these five states of *chesed* that produce the seminal drop[s]. This is the [second] mystical significance of the added *hei*.

Of the three “brains” of the intellect, *da'at* is subjective intellect, or the ability of the mind to apply abstract comprehension to real life and make it relevant. It is thus the focal nexus between intellect and emotion, where intellect translates into emotional response.

Since *da'at* is thus the progenitor of the emotions, it contains within it the potentials for these emotions. These potentials are the five states of *chesed* and the five states of *gevurah* within *da'at*, respectively the forces of attraction and repulsion to an idea as it is applied to reality. *Chesed* and *gevurah* are the primary emotions, which give rise to all the others. There are five states of each because there are five emotions of content: *chesed*, *gevurah*, *tiferet*, *netzach*, and *hod*. *Yesod* is a coalescence of the five emotions that precede it.

As was explained previously, the seminal drop of self-actualization is produced by *Z'eir Anpin*'s “love” of *Nukva*. The appreciation for the rectification of reality accomplished by “being fruitful and multiplying” one's Divine self throughout reality and the essential role played by the “female” in this process will bring the individual to appreciate, be attracted to, and love the “female.”

We have thus give two reasons for the addition of the *hei* [to Abraham's name].

From this [explanation] it will be understood why no additional *hei* was added to Isaac's or Jacob's name. Since any process is determined by its initial manifestation, and the [maturation of intellect] necessary for coupling [alluded to by the addition of the] letter *hei* was already alluded to in [Abraham's name], it is no longer necessary to allude to it in Isaac's or Jacob's name.

As explained previously, Abraham refers to the maturation of *chochmah* of *Z'eir Anpin*, Isaac to the maturation of *binah* of *Z'eir Anpin*, and Jacob to the maturation of *da'at* of *Z'eir Anpin*.

Furthermore, it is known that Abraham, who personified *chesed*, is known [in the *Zohar*<sup>1</sup>] as “the day that accompanies all other days.”

The seven *midot* correspond to the seven days of creation. In the phrase, “G-d will command His *chesed* by day,”<sup>2</sup> the word for “by day” is *yomam*, which can be translated “their day.” *Chesed* is thus seen as the “day,” or *midah*, that accompanies all the other “days.” This means simply that *chesed* is the fundamental emotion, the basis of all the others. Love, or caring, is what engenders all other emotions, for if a person does not care about another person or thing, he will have no emotions toward it, positive or negative.

He is the one that transfers the five states of *chesed* to the mouth of *Ima*.

Although *da'at* and *binah* are separate “brains,” the abstract intellect of *Ima* also possesses latent, innate tendencies toward emotional response. Thus, *da'at* is referred to in the *Zohar* as being present “in the mouth of *Ima*,”<sup>3</sup> poised to be expressed as emotions through speech.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, the five states of *chesed* [of *da'at*] are alluded to in his [name] by the letter *hei* [whose numerical value is 5], and not in the names of Isaac and Jacob.

Since Isaac and Jacob allude to *gevurah* and *tiferet*, which do not fulfill this role.

We will now explain the name of Sarah, [Abraham's] wife.

She personified the principle of the female, alluded to by the Divine Name *Elokim*.

The Name *Elokim* is considered female relative to the Name *Havayah*, since it acts as the medium for its message.

It is known that the numerical value of this Name when it is spelled out with the letter *yud*—signifying face-to-face coupling—is 300, corresponding to the *shin* of *Sarah*.

As we have explained previously, the letter *hei* can be spelled in various ways. When it is spelled out *hei-yud*, and this spelling out is used to spell the Name *Elokim* (*alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem*), we have:

<sup>1</sup> 3:198b.

<sup>2</sup> Psalms 42:9.

<sup>3</sup> *Zohar* 2:123a.

<sup>4</sup> See *The Mystery of Marriage*, pp. 139 ff.

alef	alef	1
	lamed	30
	pei	80
lamed	lamed	30
	mem	40
	dalet	4
hei	hei	5
	yud	10
yud	yud	10
	vav	6
	dalet	4
mem	mem	40
	mem	40
total		300

Inasmuch as *yud* signifies *chochmah*, using this letter to spell the *hei* used to spell the Name *Elokim* signifies full female consciousness, allowing full face-to-face coupling with the male.

*Sarah* is spelled *shin-reish-hei*. The numerical values of these three letters are 300, 200, and 5, respectively.

The numerical value of the simple progressive spelling of the Name *Elokim* is 200, corresponding to the *reish* of *Sarah*.

*Elokim* is spelled *alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem*. The progressive spelling-out of this Name is thus:

*Alef, alef-lamed, alef-lamed-hei, alef-lamed-hei-yud, alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem:*

$$1 + (1 + 30) + (1 + 30 + 5) + (1 + 30 + 5 + 10) + (1 + 30 + 5 + 10 + 40) = 200.$$

The five letters that make up the Name *Elokim* are signified by the *hei* of *Sarah*.

Therefore, when [*Nukva*] was fully rectified and made fit for coupling, it was called *Sarah*, and [when it coupled with *Z'eir Anpin*] it produced Isaac.

We will now once again explain the names Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, for they are all connected.

Know that Abraham personifies the attribute of *chesed*, which is signified by the Divine Name *Kel*, this being the mystical meaning of the verse, “The *chesed* of G-d [*Kel*] is all day long,”<sup>5</sup> as is known.

The fact that the Name of G-d used in this verse is *Kel* indicates the association of this name with *chesed*.

Now, there are 8 Names *Kel* in the supernal faces of *Arich Anpin*. All of these are contained within the name *Abraham*, whose numerical value is 248, the numerical value of these 8 Names.

<sup>5</sup> Psalms 52:3.

*Kel*: *alef-lamed* = 31.  $31 \times 8 = 248$ .

*Abraham*: *alef-beit-reish-hei-mem* =  $1 + 2 + 200 + 5 + 40 = 248$ .

To wit:

It is known that the first rectification of the thirteen rectifications of the beard [of *Arich Anpin*] is called *Kel*, this being the mystical significance of the verse: “G-d [*Kel*], merciful, gracious...”<sup>6</sup> and of the verse: “Who is a G-d [*Kel*] like You...,”<sup>7</sup> as we have explained in our exposition on the thirteen attributes of mercy recited in the weekday morning prayers.<sup>8</sup>

As we have explained previously, G-d’s thirteen attributes of mercy listed in Exodus 34:6 are identified in Kabbalah with the thirteen rectifications of the beard of *Arich Anpin*.

This [attribute] corresponds to the two upper corners of the beard [i.e., the sideburns], one to the right and one to the left. Thus, we have [so far] two Names *Kel*.

It is also known that each sideburn contains three Names *Kel*, i.e., [the manifestation of this attribute in] the three [lower] worlds, that issue from this rectification [of the beard], as we have explained in [our commentary on] the *Idra*.<sup>9</sup> These are: *Kel Shakai*, in the world of *Beirah*; *Kel Havayah*, in the world of *Yetzirah*; and *Kel Adni*, in the world of *Asiyah*.

Two of these Names are found combined this way in the Bible. *Kel Shakai* is found six times; an example of *Kel Havayah* is in Psalms 118:26; *Kel Adni* does not appear in the Bible but is construed based on the other two.

There are thus six such Names *Kel* in the two sideburns.

There are two more Names *Kel* in the seventh rectification, which is the [lack of hair on the] two cheeks, known as “the two holy faces,” as we have explained elsewhere. These are the 370 lights that shine from the face of *Arich Anpin*, corresponding to the two spelled-out Names *Kel* situated there.

*Kel*: *alef-lamed*. When these two letters are spelled out, we have:

*Alef* → *alef-lamed-pei* =  $1 + 30 + 80 = 111$ .

*Lamed* → *lamed-mem-dalet* =  $30 + 40 + 4 = 74$ .

$111 + 74 = 185$ . For the two Names *Kel* on the two cheeks, we have  $2 \times 185 = 370$ .

This yields 8 Names *Kel*, which together equal the numerical value of Abraham.

Six on the two sideburns and two on the two cheeks.

In our discussion of the 175 years of Abraham’s lifetime in *parashat Chayei Sarah*, we will explain this at greater length.

<sup>6</sup> Exodus 34:6.

<sup>7</sup> Micah 7:18.

<sup>8</sup> *Sha’ar HaKavanot*, *Va’ya’avur* 6 and 7.

<sup>9</sup> A passage of the *Zohar*, found in 3:132a. See *Sha’ar Ma’amarei Rashbi ad loc.*

The numerical value of the name Isaac [*Yitzchak*] is 8 times that of the Name *Havayah* [26].

*Yitzchak*:  $yud-tzadik-chet-kuf = 10 + 90 + 8 + 100 = 208 = 8 \times 26$ .

These eight [Names *Havayah*] are the eight states of *gevurah* of Isaac, each one corresponding to one Name *Havayah*. The explanation of this is as follows:

It is known that there are five states of *gevurah*, which are signified by five Names *Havayah*, whose combined numerical value is 130. For just as there are five states of *chesed* signified by Abraham, there are five states of *gevurah* signified by Isaac.

We mentioned the five states of *gevurah* within *da'at* above.  $26 \times 5 = 130$ .

There are another three states of *gevurah* in *yesod*, these being the three states of *gevurah* that are sweetened by the three exposed states of *chesed* [in *yesod*], as we will explain when we discuss the name Joseph. It is known further that *Yitzchak* may be read “the end of the living [one],” which refers to *yesod*.

*Yitzchak* (*yud-tzadik-chet-kuf*) permutes to spell *keitz chai* (*kuf-tzadik chet-yud*), “the end of the living [one].” *Yesod* is called “the living one” since the body part to which it corresponds, the male reproductive organ, appears the properties of “life” (i.e., growth and change) relative to the more static (“inert” or “dead”) limbs of the rest of the body.

We thus have 8 states of *gevurah*, which are 8 Names *Havayah*, which together equal *Yitzchak*. These 8 states are also explained in our exposition of the verse “on the day Isaac was weaned.”

[to be continued]

—translated from *Sha'ar HaPesukim*

## *Parashat Lech Lecha* [third installment]

This is a continuation of the first and second installments. It is suggested that the reader review these before proceeding.

We will now explain the name Joseph, for he is connected with Isaac, as we have mentioned.

We have already explained his [mystical] significance in our discussion of *parashat Vayeishev*, in reference to the dreams of the chief butler and the chief baker.

In any case, the numerical value of *Yosef* [Joseph] is 6 times that of the Name *Havayah*.

*Yosef*: yud-vav-samech-pei = 10 + 6 + 60 + 80 = 156.

6 x 26 = 156.

The significance of these [six Names *Havayah*] is as follows. We have explained in numerous contexts, including that of the commandment of circumcision in our discussion of *parashat Lech Lecha*, at length, that even though the five states of *chesed* spread throughout the body of *Z'eir Anpin*, from *chesed* to *yesod*, nonetheless, the radiance of all the five states of *chesed* is absorbed in *yesod*. The five states of *gevurah* descend into *yesod* as well.

The content of all the *midot* coalesces in *yesod*, where it is prepared to be transferred to expression in *malchut*.

Still, even though all five states of *chesed* and all five states of *gevurah* descend [into *yesod*], their main states the three revealed states of *chesed*, i.e., those present in *tiferet*, *netzach*, and *hod*, as is known.

As we have mentioned previously, *yesod* of *Ima* extends until the upper third of *tiferet* of *Z'eir Anpin*, meaning that the drive of the intellect to express itself is present in the *midot* produced by the intellect as far as the intellectual aspect of *tiferet*. From that point on, the *midot* “take over,” and the dominant consciousness is that of pure *midot*, with the intellectual rationale for the *midot* present only in the background.

The three [revealed] states of *gevurah* are sweetened by the three [revealed] states of *chesed* there [i.e., in *yesod*].

True, all five states of *gevurah* are given to the feminine [*partzuf*, *Nukva*,] i.e., into her *da'at*, as is known. And so too, all the five states of *chesed* are transferred to the feminine [*partzuf*] during the coupling [of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*], as a drop of “male water” [i.e., seed]. Nonetheless, since [the lower three states] are revealed lights, [only] *their* source and radiance remains in *yesod*.

Though all five states of *chesed* and *gevurah* that make up the sub-sefirot of *chesed-gevurah-tiferet-netzach-hod* of *Z'eir Anpin* pass through its *yesod*, what remains in it is the lower *midot*, i.e., the summation of *chesed* and *gevurah* in *tiferet* and the orientation of the *midot* outward in *netzach* and *hod*.

These [states] are the three Names *Havayah* of the [revealed] states of *chesed* and [those of] the three [revealed] states of *gevurah*. [These six Names *Havayah*] are the numerical equivalent of Joseph.

Joseph, as we know, personified *yesod*.

With this knowledge, you can understand why *yesod* is called “the second arbitrator,” for the said reason, namely, that in it the three [revealed] states of *chesed* are intertwined with the three [revealed] states of *gevurah*, which are thereby sweetened.

The first “arbitrator” is *tiferet*, which reconciles *chesed* and *gevurah*. Here, *yesod* reconciles the states of *chesed* and *gevurah* above it.

With this you can also understand why this *sefirah* is called “*yesod*.” The reason is that this *sefirah* tends to the left, this being the mystical meaning of “the live end,” referring to *yesod* tending toward Isaac, which is the left axis.

The name *Yitzchak* (Isaac, *yud-tzadik-chet-kuf*) can be rearranged to spell “the live end” (*keitz chai, kuf-tzadik chet-yud*). The *midot* are also known as the six “ends” or “extremities,” inasmuch as they define the six directions of three-dimensional space. *Yesod* is the “alive” “end,” for it undergoes change (growth and shrinkage), thus exhibiting the properties of life.

The numerical value of the three states of *gevurah* that remain in it, which are three Names *Havayah*, is 78. Together with 1 for each of them, this sums to 81, the numerical value of *yesod* with the *kolel*.

$$3 \times 26 = 78.$$

$$\text{Yesod: } yud\text{-samech-vav-dalet} = 10 + 60 + 6 + 4 = 80.$$

Another reason [this *sefirah*] is called *yesod* is the following. What is written in the *Zohar*<sup>1</sup> about the verse, “Remember the Sabbath day,”<sup>2</sup> concerning the seven Names, is well-known. They are called “seven pearls,” and the Sabbath is called *Kah Adni*.

We have discussed these seven Names (that issue from the Names *Yud-hei-vav* and *Ekyeh*) previously (in the third installment of *parashat Tetzaveh*). We saw there that these seven Names are associated with the seven blessings of the Sabbath *Amidah*, and that the fourth blessing of the Sabbath *Amidah*, which is the only one that refers specifically to the Sabbath, is associated with the Name *Kah Adni*.

It is also known that the Sabbath is associated with *yesod*, which is called the seventh.

Normally, we associate the Sabbath with *malchut*, the seventh *midah*. However, in the context of *Z'eir Anpin*, *malchut* is not truly a separate *sefirah*, but is called “the crown of the *yesod*,” associated physically with the glans of

<sup>1</sup> 2:92a, in *Raya Mehemna*.

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 20:8.

the male reproductive organ. *Malchut* comes into its own only as the full *partzuf* of *Nukva*. Thus, the “seventh” of the *midot* within *Z’eir Anpin*—and therefore, the Sabbath as well—can still be considered to be part of *yesod*.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, the numerical value of *yesod* is the same as that of the Names *Kah Adni*.

*Yesod* = 80, as above.

*Kah Adni*: *yud-hei alef-dalet-nun-yud* =  $(10 + 5) + (1 + 4 + 50 + 10) = 15 + 65 = 80$ .

These two Names correspond to the two aspects with [*yesod*]: *yesod* [itself] and its “crown.” *Yesod* itself is called *Kah*, and its “crown” is called *Adni*.

Furthermore, the *yesod* of *Leah* and the *yesod* of *Rachel* are [signified by] two final *mem*’s, the combined numerical value of which is also that of *yesod*.

*Leah* and *Rachel* are the two *partzufim* of *Nukva*, as we know. The female *yesod*, the womb, is indicated by a final, closed *mem*, which depicts a closed, empty space that will be filled by the male seed. The numerical value of *mem* is 40, so the 2 *yesod*’s of *Leah* and *Rachel* equal together 80, the numerical value of *yesod*.

This indicates that *yesod* couples with the two *yesod*’s of *Rachel* and *Leah*.

Now that we have explained the two names of Isaac and Jacob, and how both are manifestations of the states of *gevurah*, we will now explain how these two names combine and thereby contain all the states of *gevurah*.

The summation of all the states of judgment are the 288 sparks that were rectified by the 32 Names *Elokim*, which were other states of judgment, as is known. All together, these sum to 320 sparks.

As we have seen previously, when the vessels of *Tohu* shattered, 288 general sparks were entrapped in the fallen remains of these vessels. In the account of creation, the Torah refers to G-d exclusively by the Name *Elokim*, and this Name is used exactly 32 times. The creation of this physical world, subsequent to the collapse of the world of *Tohu*, effected a certain rectification in the shattered vessels, preparing them for their further rectification by man.

Now, the combined value of *Yitzchak* [Isaac] and *yesod* is 288. This, too, will be explained more fully in our comments to *parashat Vayeira*, on the verse, “...on the day Isaac was weaned.”

*Yitzchak*: *yud-tzadik-chet-kuf* =  $10 + 90 + 8 + 100 = 208$ . *Yesod* = 80, as above.  $208 + 80 = 288$ .

The numerical value of the Name *Yaakov* [Jacob] is equal to 7 times the Name *Havayah*.

*Yaakov*: *yud-ayin-kuf-beit* =  $10 + 70 + 100 + 2 = 182$ .  $7 \times 26 = 182$ .

These refer to the seven mentalities comprised within *Z’eir Anpin*. We have already explained their significance in our comments to *parashat Vayeitzei*, how these seven mentalities are called “Beersheba,” [literally, “the well of the seven”].

The seven mentalities of *Z’eir Anpin* are its four original mentalities (*chochmah*, *binah*, and the two aspects of *da’at*—the source of *chesed* [attraction] within *da’at* and the source of *gevurah* [repulsion] within *da’at*) and its three secondary mentalities (simply *chochmah-binah-da’at*) that it acquires when it ascends into *Ima* and is vested inside *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima*.

<sup>3</sup> As alluded to in the comments of Rabbi Wolf Ashkenazi on this passage.

Alternatively, *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Abba* becomes vested in the *chochmah-binah-chesed-gevurah* of *Z'eir Anpin*, while the *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima* becomes vested in the *chochmah-binah-da'at* of *Z'eir Anpin*.

The first verse in *parashat Vayitzei* is “And Jacob went out from Beersheba and went to Haran.”<sup>4</sup>

There are in *Z'eir Anpin* three more, immature mentalities, signified by the Name *Elokim*.

In contrast to the seven mature mentalities signified by 7 Names *Havayah*, the immature mentalities are signified by Names *Elokim*.

These are alluded to in the phrase [that continues this verse:] “...and he went to Haran.”

The numerical value of the Names *Elokim* ( $3 \times 86 = 258$ ) is the same as that of “Haran” (*Charan: chet-reish-nun* =  $8 + 200 + 50 = 258$ ).

As we explain there, the Name *Elokim* spelled out with *yud*’s signifies [the *partzuf* of] *Leah*, the Name *Elokim* spelled out with *hei*’s—this being the third spelling-out of the Name *Elokim*—signifies [the *partzuf* of] *Rachel*, and the middle spelling-out of the Name *Elokim*, using *alef*’s, signifies [the *partzuf* of] *Yaakov*, which encompasses both of them, his two wives.

He is therefore called *Yaakov*, for this name can be read “*yud*-heel,” and the numerical value of the word for “heel” [*akeiv*] is that of two Names *Elokim*, i.e., that of *Rachel* and that of *Leah*. There are ten letters in these two Names [*Elokim*], 10 being the numerical value of the *yud* of *Yaakov*. This indicates that this *yud* comprises both Names *Elokim*.

*Yaakov* is spelled *yud-ayin-kuf-beit*; the word for “heel” (*akeiv*) is spelled *ayin-kuf-beit*. Thus, *Yaakov* can be read: *yud*-heel.

*Ayin-kuf-beit* =  $70 + 100 + 2 = 172$ .

*Elokim: alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem* (5 letters) =  $1 + 30 + 5 + 10 + 40 = 86$ .

$2 \times 86 = 172$ .

Let us now return to the general discussion of the three names Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Jacob reconciles the first two, and therefore takes twice as much as they do, as follows.

Jacob signifies *tiferet*, and as we know, *tiferet* reconciles and harmonizes the preceding *sefirot* of *chesed* and *gevurah*.

[The numerical value of] the Name *Avraham* [Abraham] comprises [the numerical value of] the Name *Yaakov* plus [the numerical value of] the Name *Adni* [plus the *kolel*].

*Avraham: alef-beit-reish-hei-mem* =  $1 + 2 + 200 + 5 + 40 = 248$ .

*Yaakov: yud-ayin-kuf-beit* =  $10 + 70 + 100 + 2 = 182$ .

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<sup>4</sup> Genesis 28:10.

*Adni*: *alef-dalet-nun-yud* =  $1 + 4 + 50 + 10 = 65$ .

$182 + 65 + 1 = 248$ .

[The numerical value of] the Name *Yitzchak* [Isaac] also comprises [the numerical value of] the Name *Yaakov* plus [the numerical value of] the Name *Havayah*.

*Yitzchak*: *yud-tzadik-chet-kuf* =  $10 + 90 + 8 + 100 = 208$ .

$182 + 26 = 208$ .

Thus, Abraham took the-value-of-the-Name-*Adni* more than the-value-of-the-name-Jacob, while Isaac took the-value-of-the-Name-*Havayah* more than the-value-of-the-name-Jacob.

But Jacob took twice what they took, i.e., two Names *Havayah* and two Names *Adni*, the combined value of which is the numerical value of *Yaakov*.

$(2 \times 26) + (2 \times 65) = 52 + 130 = 182$ .

—translated from *Sha'ar HaPesukim*

## *Parashat Lech Lecha* [fourth installment]

In this *parashah*, we read how an alliance of five kings rebelled against an alliance of four kings, which then waged war against the alliance of five kings, in the process abducting Abraham's nephew, Lot, and how Abraham pursued and routed the first alliance in order to rescue Lot.<sup>1</sup>

As is known, the kings that ruled in the land of Edom and died<sup>2</sup> were manifestations of *Arich Anpin*, *Abba*, *Ima*, *Z'eir Anpin*, and *Nukva*.<sup>3</sup>

These are the *partzufim* of *Atzilut*, while the kings that died allude to the seven *sefirot* that collapsed in the world of *Tohu*, the version of *Atzilut* that precedes its rectified version, *Tikun*. Also, there were seven kings that died, but only six *partzufim* are enumerated here.

They were all the feminine aspect [of these *partzufim*], which is known as the *malchut* [of each *partzuf*]. That is why they are alluded to by the “kings,” being named after it.

Since the kings that died were the *malchut* of these *partzufim*, they are called “kings,” since *malchut* means “kingship.”

It is known that *malchut* is expressed by the Name *Havayah* spelled out such that its numerical value is 52, i.e., with the letter *hei*.

*Yud-vav-dalet hei-hei vav-vav hei-hei* = (10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 5) + (6 + 6) + (5 + 5) = 52.

As we have seen previously the four spellings out of the Name *Havayah* (72, 63, 45, and 52) are aligned with the four letters of the Name *Havayah* and the *sefirot/partzufim* they signify.

Thus, even though there are seven kings that died, they are really nine, corresponding to the nine letters in the 52-Name *Havayah*.<sup>4</sup>

The seven kings expressed or embodied the *malchut's* of these *partzufim* in *Tohu* and, at the same time, the nine letters of the 52-Name.

As is known, the dross and shells [i.e., evil] were separated out of these [fallen] kings. Therefore, there are nine other kings corresponding to them, which are composed totally of the shells and dross of the nine aforementioned, holy kings.

The nine kings (i.e., the nine *malchut's* of *Tohu*) are extremely volatile, as is everything in that world because the amount of light is out of proportion with the capacity of the vessels to hold it. But everything in *Tohu* is still in the realm of holiness. Only when the vessels of *Tohu* break and their “shards” descend into the lower worlds do they exist as almost lifeless “shells”—pockets of fallen consciousness possessing no holiness other than a tiny spark of *Tohu*-light embedded deep with each one to keep it in existence. Other than that deep kernel of holiness, the whole

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 36:31-39.

<sup>3</sup> *Eitz Chaim* 8:4-5, 9:1-2, 5, 17:3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 8:3.

essence of the fallen “shell” is evil, i.e., selfhood and antithesis to Divinity. (This is what led to the Shattering of the Vessels in the first place.)

These are the kings [mentioned in this episode of the *parashah*], Amrafel and his allies plus the king of Sodom and his allies. This is why they are divided into two groups: the four kings of Amrafel’s alliance are the dross of the four root-letters of the aforementioned Name *Havayah*, while the five kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, etc. are the dross of the five letters used to spell out this Name *Havayah*, i.e., the 52-Name spelled out with the letter *hei*. This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “...four kings against the five.”

The four letters of the Name *Havayah* are thus depicted as waging war against the letters used to spell them out.

The reason for this war, and why it was waged specifically at this point in history, will be understood via our sages’ statement<sup>5</sup> that their intention was actually to capture Abraham himself. By capturing his nephew, Lot, Abraham would come to his rescue, and they would then capture him, too. The mystical significance of this is based on what we have explained in *Sha’ar Ruach HaKodesh* regarding the mystical significance of Lot and Abraham.

In short: Abraham personified the light of the states of *chesed* in *Z’eir Anpin*, which are represented by the Name *Havayah* spelled out with the letter *alef*, and whose numerical value is 45.

$$\text{Yud-vav-dalet hei-alef vav-alef-vav hei-alef} = (10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 1) + (6 + 1 + 6) + (5 + 1) = 45.$$

Lot is positioned opposite the back of *Z’eir Anpin*, being the evil that sucks from [*Z’eir Anpin*’s] back. The numerical value of Lot is thus also 45.

$$\text{Lot: Lamed-vav-tet} = 30 + 6 + 9 = 45.$$

In order to exist, every form of evil must “suck” (i.e., derive its sustenance) from some form of good, of which it is a fallen, corrupt version.

In Aramaic, Lot means “cursed,” referring to this manifestation of evil.

Aramaic, being closely related to Hebrew, is an intermediary between the Holy Language and the other languages of the world. It thus sometimes expresses a fallen version of the allied word in Hebrew, or is seen to “reveal” (Aramaic is used for the sages’ vernacular translations of the Bible) the meaning of the Hebrew. Here, it seems to be understood in both senses.

Lot was therefore Abraham’s close relative, earning his livelihood from him, always traveling with him, as it is written, “And Lot went with him.”<sup>6</sup>

This was when G-d told Abraham to leave Haran and travel to the Land of Israel.

As is explained in the *Zohar*,<sup>7</sup> Lot signifies the evil and the evil inclination within people.

<sup>5</sup> *Zohar* 1:86b; *Bereishit Rabbah* 42.

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 12:4.

<sup>7</sup> 1:79a, 80b.

When Abraham was outside the Land of Israel, there was no coupling between *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, as we have explained before. Therefore, the evil “shell” clung to the holiness and sucked from it, for *Z'eir Anpin* was then in a state of constricted consciousness, signified by the Name *Elokim*.

The Land of Israel is an appellation for *malchut*, as we have seen previously, so if Abraham personified *Z'eir Anpin*, it means that there was no union between *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* until Abraham entered the land. The reason why there is no union between *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* is because they are not ready, i.e., mature enough for it yet. Abraham—*Z'eir Anpin*—still had a “Diaspora”-consciousness, an incomplete mentality vis-à-vis Divinity. This consciousness is expressed by the Name *Elokim*, which signifies Divinity as it is vested and hidden in the forces of nature (the word for “the nature”—*hateva*—having the same numerical value as the Name *Elokim*, 86).

In the absence of this union, *Z'eir Anpin* is exposed to false union with the powers of evil.

The kings and the evil [they personified] were thus sucking their plenty [from Abraham/*Z'eir Anpin*], and there was no war between them.

But when Abraham went to the Land of Israel—which was in order to arouse the supernal union between *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, the latter manifest as the land, as we have said—expanded consciousness entered [*Z'eir Anpin*], and Lot, i.e., this evil, separated from him, as it is written, “Separate now from upon me.”<sup>8</sup>

This was after Abraham returned from a temporary sojourn in Egypt; he and Lot possessed too many herds and flocks to stay together.

It does not say, “from me” [*mi-meni*] but “from upon me” [*mei-alai*], because [Lot] was literally clinging to the back of *Z'eir Anpin*, as mentioned. It was thus as if a heavy burden was on [Abraham's] back.

The unusual choice of words thus alludes to the upper reality.

It is [therefore] then written, “And they separated, each one from *upon* the other”<sup>9</sup> rather than “from each other.”

At this point, the forces of evil and the aforementioned kings lost their [material] bounty. This is why they made war with each other, as we will describe.

Since material bounty is derived from spiritual beneficence, when the latter was cut off, there was a lack of the former, and this occasioned dispute, jealousy, etc.

To explain: Know that in Abraham's time, these nine kings began to be rectified, that is, to metamorphose into *partzufim* with proper vessels to clothe their lights, as we have explained in our exposition on the rectification of these kings.<sup>10</sup>

The rectification of the world of *Tohu* consists of constructing vessels for the *sefirot's* lights. There is an advantage to brilliant, blinding inspiration, but it only fulfills its purpose when it is contextualized within reality, where it can serve to change things and make the world a better place. True, some of the original brilliance and sense of infinity is lost, for by being expressed through specific vessels, the light is *ipso facto* deprived of the potential to express itself through other vessels, in other ways. But that is the price paid for maturity and fulfillment.

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 13:9.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 13:11.

<sup>10</sup> *Eitz Chaim* 11:7, 19:1.

But, at this stage, they were not all rectified yet: only the four root-kings, who manifested the four root-letters of the 52-Name. But the five kings that manifested the five letters used to spell out [this Name] were not rectified yet.

When they all received [material] abundance, they were at peace. But when it became scarce, the five kings wanted to overpower and ascend above the level of the four kings in order to get closer to holiness and procure sustenance from there [directly]. Even though [the five] were derived from [the four], they rebelled against them, because the four kings, who were somewhat rectified, such that their vessels clothed their lights, could not ascend higher than their intrinsic level, whereas the five kings who were as yet unrectified were unrestricted by their “clothes” and were therefore able to ascend above the level of the others.

The vessels “hold on” to the lights they clothe, just as expressing an idea “solidifies” it and concretizes it, depriving it of being expressed in other ways.

Therefore the five kings, even though they were branches [of the four], rebelled and overcame the four root-kings.

But in the end, since [the four] were the roots, they overcame [the five] and subjugated them under their rule.

Now, since the whole dispute was over the lack of abundance for all of them, they therefore “took Lot and all his possessions,”<sup>11</sup> because he was the closest person to Abraham, who personified *Z’eir Anpin*, as mentioned. By capturing [Lot], [they felt that Lot] would take his sustenance from Abraham and they would in turn take theirs from [Lot]. This is what the sages’ meant when they said that the [four] kings wanted to capture Abraham, too. Understand this well.

In this context, the four kings did not want to actually capture Abraham; they just wanted a way to siphon off Divine beneficence from him, a way to “plug into” him. This they saw in Lot.

Psychologically, this episode thus presumably depicts the conflict between the rectified and unrectified aspects of a person’s animal nature. When we are young and our consciousness is devoted primarily to constructing our own sense of self, there is no conflict between these two; in fact, this is because our animal consciousness has either not yet begun to be rectified (i.e., educated for morality and altruism) or is only in the very beginning stages of this process.

But as we approach maturity and develop an awareness of the fact that there is a G-d, and that G-d has charged us with rectifying the world, i.e., doing His commandments and sanctifying mundane life so that His beneficence can flow properly into the world, our animal nature begins to mature as well, realizing it cannot always get what it wants and do what it wants to do. At this point, the unrectified aspects of the animal soul begin to rebel, and the person is plunged into the conflict of adolescence, when his selfish nature goes to war against his rising adult consciousness and tries to bypass it and assert itself. Since it is unfettered by the constraints of adulthood, it initially appears to win, dazzling the more reasoned adult with its youthful energy and power, flying above and appearing to be able to express more holy vitality than the adult nature. But because the adult nature is more careful, more logical, more patient, etc., it eventually wins, and subdues the unrectified aspect of the animal nature.

But animal nature is still animal nature, and even its rectified aspect—especially now that it has absorbed the unrectified aspect within it—wants what it considers is its due. It therefore enlists the evil inclination to make sure

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<sup>11</sup> Genesis 14:12.

that the Divine soul does not neglect it. In the end, the Divine soul recaptures the evil inclination and uses it for its own purposes, rather than letting it serve the animal soul.

—translated from *Sha'ar HaPesukim* and *Sefer HaLikutim*

## *Parashat Vayeira*

The portion of the Torah read this week begins: “And G-d appeared to him [i.e., Abraham] in the plains of Mam-Re, as he was sitting at the opening of the tent in the heat of the day.”<sup>1</sup>

The initials of the words “and G-d appeared to him in the plains of” [*vayeira eilav y-k-v-k be-eilonei, vav-alef-yud-beit*] spell “Job” [*Iyov, alef-yud-vav-beit*]. The initials of the words “G-d...in the plains of Mam-Re” [*y-k-v-k be-eilonei mamrei, yud-beit-mem*] spell the word for “levirate” [*yavam, yud-beit-mem*]. This alludes to the statement of our sages that Job was the offspring of a leviratic marriage.<sup>2</sup>

Now, [G-d had previously told] Abraham: “But you will come to your fathers in peace.”<sup>3</sup> What sort of tiding was this? Rather, as our sages state, [G-d hereby] informed him that Terah, his father, who was then an idol-worshipper, would repent.<sup>4</sup>

The expression “come to your fathers in peace” means that when the individual dies, his soul will repose in paradise with those of his forebears’. Since Terah was an idol-worshipper, what sort of reassurance was G-d offering Abraham here? We must therefore conclude that G-d was telling Abraham that Terah would repent and that his soul would rest in paradise.

The words “in the heat of the day” allude to the statement of our sages that on that day G-d removed the sun from its sheath,<sup>5</sup> this being the equivalent of Purgatory.

Abraham at all times sought guests to host. Since this incident occurred shortly after his circumcision, G-d wished to let Abraham rest, so He made it extra hot so that people would refrain from traveling and no one would be on the road for Abraham to invite into his tent. The sun is envisioned as being encompassed by a sheath that protects the world from its rays. One aspect of the purification process of Purgatory is unbearable heat.

Abraham “was sitting at the opening of the tent,” referring to [our sages’ statement] that he sits at the entrance of Purgatory and keeps whoever is circumcised and sealed with the holy covenant and has not blemished it from entering.<sup>6</sup>

Abraham was the first Jew to be circumcised, and the covenant of circumcision is known to this day as “the covenant of Abraham.” Thus, whoever fulfills the commandment of being circumcised and guards the purity of his sexuality merits Abraham’s protection. Allegorically, this simply means that guarding sexual purity is sufficient merit to be spared the ordeal of Purgatory even if one has sinned in other ways that would have otherwise required that he undergo the purging process.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 18:1.

<sup>2</sup> *Zohar* 2:33a, in the glosses of Rabbi Chaim Vital #3.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 15:15.

<sup>4</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 30:4; Rashi on Genesis 15:15.

<sup>5</sup> *Bava Metzia* 86b.

<sup>6</sup> *Eiruvin* 19a.

Now, this caused Terah be reincarnated. When he returned, he descended as a woman and married according to leviratic law.

I.e., she married the brother of her deceased, childless husband. In such a case, the first child of this union is considered the child of the deceased man.

Although Terah repented of his sin of idolatry before he died, he evidently had to be reincarnated in order to right his sexual sins. He thus descended as a woman—presumably to experience female consciousness and thereby realize the seriousness of having “used” women. As a woman, s/he suffered being childless and losing her husband. S/he then had to marry the deceased husband’s brother.

The key to the rectification of Terah’s sexual sins was the sexual purity and idealism of his son, Abraham. The fact that Abraham (re-)introduced the idea of sexual integrity into the world allowed Terah’s soul to be set straight.

The result of this union was Job.

Job [thus lived] in the generation of Isaac. He was not comforted by the words of any of his [three] friend who came to console him. He was only comforted when he met Isaac, [who is called in the book of Job] Elihu ben Berachel the Buzite.<sup>7</sup> Isaac was called Elihu ben Berachel [literally, “Elihu the son of he whom G-d has blessed”], for G-d blessed him. [Elihu ben Berachel] was “from the family of Ram,” meaning Abraham.

Job, like Isaac, was a grandson of Terah. He lived in “the land of Utz,” and Utz was the son of Nahor, Abraham’s brother.

After G-d inflicted suffering upon Job, his three friends came to console him. But Job was not consoled by their words, since they each tried to convince him that he had done something to deserve this suffering. Only the younger Elihu was able to console Job.

Abraham’s original name was Abram (*Avram*), meaning “the father of Ram.”

This why Job said, “I therefore detest [my words] and am comforted over dust and ashes.”<sup>8</sup> This alludes to Abraham, who said, “I am dust and ashes.”<sup>9</sup> [Job said, in effect:] “Now, because of him, I am comforted.”

Having passed his test, Job completes the rectification of the soul of Terah, initiated by the spiritual accomplishments of Abraham.

This is why his name was Job [*Iyov*], for he was the father of Abraham—who considered himself dust and ashes before his Maker—reincarnated.

The letters that make up the word *Iyov* (*alef-yud-vav-beit*) may be rearranged to spell “his father” (*aviv*, *alef-beit-yud-vav*).

This is also alluded to in the fact that “Job” [*Iyov*] permutes to spell “and he came” [*vayavo*].

*Vayavo*: *vav-yud-beit-alef*.

Job is also alluded to in the verse [describing the reaction of the Jewish people to the splitting of the sea]: “And the people revered G-d, and they believed in G-d

<sup>7</sup> Job 32:2.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 42:6.

<sup>9</sup> Genesis 18:27.

and in His servant Moses.”<sup>10</sup> The initials of the words for “...G-d and they believed in G-d...” [*et y-k-v-k vaya’aminu be-y-k-v-k, alef-yud-vav-beit*] spell “Job” [*Iyov*].

We can now understand why Job’s name is alluded to in the description of the splitting of the sea.

Since Job apparently did not figure at all in this incident.

And also [we can now understand] why G-d delivered him into the hands of Samel.

Samel is an angel identified with the Accuser in the heavenly court, i.e., with Satan. The beginning of the book of Job describes how “G-d said to Satan: ‘Did you notice My servant Job? There is no one like him on earth; a wholesome and upright man, who fears G-d and shuns evil.’ Satan answered G-d, ‘Is it for no reason that Job fears G-d? Have You not set a protective wall about him, about his household, and about everything he owns from all around? ... Send forth Your hand and touch everything that is his, and see if he does not blaspheme You to Your face!’ So G-d said to Satan, ‘Everything that is his is hereby in your hand....’”<sup>11</sup>

The parable our sages use to explain this is as follows: A shepherd once was tending his flock next to a river. [A wolf attacked the flock, and the shepherd threw it a lamb to divert its attention from the rest of the flock.]<sup>12</sup> Now, in the parable, the wolf would certainly be satisfied with one sheep, for he has no desire to eat the whole flock! But in the analogous case, Samel was accusing the entire Jewish people, saying “these are idol-worshippers and those are idol-worshippers!” How, then, would he be satisfied just to receive [permission to inflict suffering upon] Job?

When the Jews were crossing the split sea on their way out of Egypt, at a certain point they had not reached the other side and the Egyptians had entered the sea in their pursuit. At that point, we are told, the heavenly accuser protested to G-d, saying, “Both these and those are idol-worshippers. Why are You planning to save these and drown those?” G-d thereupon “threw Satan a bone,” i.e., suggested that he inflict suffering upon Job. This diverted his attention from the Jewish people, who proceeded to cross over to dry land unimpeded, leaving G-d to overturn the sea on the Egyptians.

Furthermore: why did G-d use Job to ransom Israel? This seems biased, to say the least. “If Tuvia sinned, should Zigud be punished?”<sup>13</sup>

To understand this, we must explore another matter first.

We have seen that at “the covenant between the parts,” G-d said to Abraham, “...your seed will be sojourners in a land not theirs. [They will serve them, and they will oppress them for four hundred years. But I will also judge the nation that they will serve, and in the end they will leave with great wealth. You, however, will come to your forebears in peace; you shall be buried in good old age. The

<sup>10</sup> Exodus 14:31.

<sup>11</sup> Job 1:8-11.

<sup>12</sup> *Y. Sotah* 5.

<sup>13</sup> *Pesachim* 113b.

fourth generation will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite will not be full until then.]”<sup>14</sup>

In this covenant, G-d promises Abraham the land of Israel in exchange for his children going into exile. It is called “the covenant between the parts” since it was “endorsed” by Abraham and G-d (represented by a pillar of fire) passing in between the severed halves of several animals. The idea expressed was: “just as these halves are not complete without each other, so are the two of us not complete without the pact that binds us together.”

Why, [in this passage,] does G-d interrupt [the description of what is to befall Abraham’s descendants] with the statement that Abraham will come to his forebears in peace?

Furthermore, [as we said above,] what sort of tiding is this, seeing that [Terah] was still serving idols, selling them, and through them causing everyone to err?

Know, then, that *chochmah* is what clarifies everything, and the elevation [of the sparks of holiness that fell from *Tohu*] depends chiefly upon it.

The key to differentiating between good and evil—and knowing how to release the kernel of good within evil in order to liberate it—is *chochmah*, or insight. The purer one’s insight, the clearer one will be able to recognize what is good and what is evil, and purity of insight is dependent upon the purity and force of one’s intentions.

By way of analogy: when a blacksmith strikes his hammer on a piece of iron, sparks fly forth from it. If the blacksmith is an expert, he collects these sparks and returns them to their original state.

Apparently this refers to the slivers of iron that break off the larger piece. The skilled blacksmith knows how to “recycle” these splinters and use them.

This is the essence of the sages’ dispute over whether or not a blessing is to be pronounced over unripe fruit.<sup>15</sup> He who contends that we do not recite a blessing over them feels that once they have fallen off the tree and the forces of evil have appropriated them they are not suitable for a blessing.

As long as unripe fruit remains on the tree, it can ripen and become edible. Thus, it potentially can be eaten and thereby elevated into the service of G-d (assuming the person eating the fruit uses the energy and “lift” he gets from eating it for holy purposes). Once the unripe fruit falls (or is picked), however, it has lost its chance to ever become fit for food; it has thus fallen into the realm of evil, and can only become useful again through the roundabout way of decomposing and turning into fertilizer for the next generation of crops.

He who contends that we *do* recite a blessing when we eat them feels that since they issued from the realm of holiness, they still possess some holiness and may therefore be returned to their source. As it is written: “He plans out schemes, so that no one be banished from him.”<sup>16</sup> They are therefore suitable for a blessing.

Thus you will understand that when G-d told Abraham that “your seed will be sojourners...and in the end they will leave with great wealth,” Abraham asked how

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<sup>14</sup> Genesis 15:13-16.

<sup>15</sup> *Berachot* 40b.

<sup>16</sup> 2 Samuel 14:14.

this could be, inasmuch as Terah—the progenitor of the clan—was so depraved? How could he be rectified and rectify others? G-d therefore told him that “you will come to your forebears in peace,” telling him that Terah would repent.

This is also why G-d told him, “the fourth generation will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite will not be full until then.” I.e., Job was amongst them, but was not yet rectified. Afterwards, [when he passed his test and was rectified,] he is called “a ‘finished’ man” [*ish tam*].<sup>17</sup>

Although this phrase refers to Job before he was tested, we are told that after his suffering G-d restored to Job all his previous wealth and happiness. Presumably this means that he did not suffer spiritually either, and remained as “finished” as he was to begin with, if not more so. Or perhaps just by being born, Job signified the completion of the rectification of Terah, who, as we said before, had been reincarnated as Job’s mother.

Nonetheless, Job was a non-Jew, and the “shells” claimed him as their own and his merit protected them.

For all his perfection, Job was not part of the line of Abraham (being descended from his brother Nahor, as we said above), and thus was not a link in the chain of the primogenesis of the Jewish people. We are told that when the spies entered the land of Israel, they found the inhabitants mourning over Job’s passing, since his merit protected them.<sup>18</sup>

The Arizal concludes by saying that this is why Satan considered Job a fair exchange for the Jewish people, and why it was not unjust that G-d offered him as “ransom” for Israel. Before his trial, he was the as yet unrectified Terah, the source of the evil of idolatry that the Jewish people were in the process of uprooting. But whereas the line of Abraham was on the way to receive the Torah, i.e., to replace idolatry with its opposite, the true spiritual path, Job’s task and trial was merely to renounce idolatry and remain true to G-d throughout his test. Since he thus represented the hope and perfection of the rest of humanity, Satan was satisfied to vex him instead of the Jewish people. Unwittingly, he thereby enabled Job, and by extension, all humanity, to reach perfection.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>17</sup> Job 1:1.

<sup>18</sup> Rashi on Numbers 14:9.

## *Parashat Vayeira* [second installment]

“And G-d appeared to [Abraham] in the plains of Mam-Re.”<sup>1</sup>

All that we are required to rectify in this world is only for the purpose of causing *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* to couple. For we receive the means of livelihood, Divine beneficence, and children only from them, who are our [spiritual] father and mother.

G-d has set up the creational order such that He channels our needs into the physical world via the spiritual world. The latter must therefore be functioning properly in order for the channels of Divine blessing to flow properly. In this context, the Divine blessings are the “offspring” of the union of the spiritual male and female antecedents of our own souls.

Thus Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai interpreted the verse, “Your father and mother will rejoice”<sup>2</sup> to mean that “your father” is the Holy One, blessed be He and “your mother” is the Community of Israel.<sup>3</sup>

These are appellations of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, respectively.

Nonetheless, we are also required to rectify, together with them, the coupling of *Abba* and *Ima*, so that intellect descend [from them] to [*Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*] that will enable the latter to couple. Then, [as we said,] Divine beneficence, food, and children and all other needs will descend [into the material world] from them.

In order for *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*—the Divine emotional attributes and their means of expression—to couple fruitfully, they must possess mature, adult intellect. Otherwise their union will be subject to what we might call the vagaries of immaturity, i.e., of undeveloped emotions whose self-orientation will prevent them from interacting smoothly with each other. This maturity they receive from their “parents,” *Abba* and *Ima*, i.e., from the Divine intellect proper. But in order for *Abba* and *Ima* to transfer intellectual consciousness and perspective to *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, they themselves must couple properly.

We must therefore question what our sages, of blessed memory, said, namely, that “The Holy One, blessed be He, will not enter the upper Jerusalem until He will enter the lower Jerusalem.”<sup>4</sup>

G-d “entering” Jerusalem is an appellation for the coupling of the male and female principles, alluded to by “the Holy One” and Jerusalem, respectively. More precisely, Jerusalem is the “home” into which the male principle enters in order to couple with the awaiting female principle. In its plain meaning, this statement refers to the spiritual antecedent of Jerusalem and the physical Jerusalem, but in its mystical meaning, it implies that *Abba* and *Ima* do not couple unless *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* do so first.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 18:1.

<sup>2</sup> Proverbs 23:25.

<sup>3</sup> *Zohar* 3:55a, 61b, 119a, 156a, 240b; *Berachot* 35b.

<sup>4</sup> *Ta’anit* 5a.

This cannot be, for those above [*Abba* and *Ima*] are called “the companions that never separate,”<sup>5</sup> as opposed to those below [*Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*] who are called “lovers,” who do not couple constantly but only on known occasions.

Why, indeed, are [*Abba* and *Ima*] called “companions that never separate?” It is stated in the *Zohar*<sup>6</sup> in reference to the verse, “you shall send away, send away the mother,”<sup>7</sup> that this implies two divorces, that of the supernal *Shechinah* and that of the lower *Shechinah*.

The supernal *Shechinah* (Divine presence) is *Ima* and the lower *Shechinah* is *Nukva*.

This is alluded to [more explicitly] in the words “the mother” [*et ha-eim*]: The direct particle [*et*] alludes to the lower “mother,” which encompasses all the letters of the alphabet, from *alef* to *tav*.

In Hebrew, the direct object (here, “the mother”) is usually preceded by an untranslated particle, *et*, spelled *alef-tav*. Inasmuch as *malchut* (*Nukva*) is the means of expression, i.e., thought, speech, and action, it encompasses the entire language of expression. These are the “letters” of thought, the letters of speech, and the “letters” of action.

*Nukva* is the lower “mother,” the source of the world below it.

The word “mother” [itself] refers to the supernal “mother” [*Ima*].

It thus appears that there is a situation in which *Ima* is “divorced” from *Abba*. How then, can the *Zohar* insist that their union is continuous?

The answer is that there are two types of coupling, one external and one internal. The external one is never lacking and requires no arousal from below, and exists in order to sustain all the worlds. As our sages state, “[marital relations] are good for the woman, good for the embryo, and good for the milk.”<sup>8</sup>

The external, superficial coupling of *Abba* and *Ima* is indeed continuous, and supplies all reality with the minimal life-force it requires in order to continue to exist.

The statement of the sages reads: “During the first three months of pregnancy, marital relations are harmful to the woman and to the embryo; during the middle three months, they are harmful for the woman but good for the embryo; during the final three months, they are good for the woman and good for the embryo.” Presumably, the Arizal is referring to the final trimester, when the woman is most visibly a mother.

The second is for the sake of issuing new souls into the world. It is with reference to this coupling that “The Holy One, blessed be He swears that He will not enter the upper Jerusalem until He enters the lower Jerusalem.”

“New souls” means both literally new souls that will invest physical bodies, and all new spiritual revelations of Divine consciousness.

The meaning is that [He will not enter the higher Jerusalem] until *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* are *ready* to enter. The meaning cannot be to *really* enter, for the purpose of their coupling [i.e., that of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*] is to elicit [new]

<sup>5</sup> *Zohar* 3:4a.

<sup>6</sup> *Tikunei Zohar*, introduction 1b, 21b.

<sup>7</sup> Deuteronomy 22:1.

<sup>8</sup> *Nidah* 31a.

souls from *Abba* and *Ima*, and if *Abba* and *Ima* to do not elicit mature mentality for themselves, how can it descend from them to *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*? The order followed in the transmission of [new] souls is as follows: *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* elicit them from *Abba* and *Ima*; *Abba* and *Ima* elicit them from *Arich Anpin*; and *Arich Anpin* elicits them from *Atik Yomin*, and so on, to the end of all levels, for “the higher one is presided over by a higher one yet, [and there are yet higher ones above them].”<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, the words “until He enters...” mean “until they are *ready* to enter.”

From all this, it follows that our main task is to rectify *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* and cause them to couple, and that the principle coupling consists of the sweetening of the states of *gevurah* [of *Nukva*] by coupling them with the states of *chesed*, i.e., the coupling of *gevurah* with the states of *chesed*.

As we have seen previously, *gevurah* (judgment) is predominant in the feminine archetype, while *chesed* (inclusiveness) predominates in the male archetype.

Know that the states of *gevurah* within the feminine archetype are embodied in the [final] letters *mem-nun-tzadik-pei-chaf*, whose combined numerical value is 280.

These five letters possess final forms, which indicate the stopping of the flow of meaning in the word.

*mem-nun-tzadik-pei-chaf* = 40 + 50 + 90 + 80 + 20 = 280.

With this you will be able to understand a deep secret. Namely, the one who gave Abraham the advice to circumcise himself was Mam-Re, who personified the states of *gevurah*. For the numerical value of his name is 280 plus the *kolel*.

When G-d commanded Abraham to circumcise himself, he consulted with Einar, Eshkol, and Mam-Re. Einar said, “You will make yourself a cripple. The relatives of the kings you killed will come and kill you.” (Another opinion: Einar told him, “You’re already 99 years old; why subject yourself to this pain?”) Eshkol said, “You are old; if you cut yourself you will bleed to death.” (Another opinion: Eshkol said, “Why arouse the wrath of your enemies [who oppose doing anything that promotes Divine consciousness]?”) Mam-Re said, “Your G-d stood by you in the fiery furnace, in the famine, in your war against the kings, and if He asks you to circumcise yourself you won’t listen?”<sup>10</sup>

*Mam-Re: mem-mem-reish-alef* = 40 + 40 + 200 + 1 = 281.

280 signifies, as we saw, the states of *gevurah*, which seek to couple and thereby be sweetened.

<sup>9</sup> Ecclesiastes 5:7.

<sup>10</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 42:8; *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Vayeira* 3. The opinions in parentheses are those of *Bereishit Rabbah*. According to Chizkuni, Abraham did not “consult” with his three friends, for he intended to fulfill G-d’s command unhesitatingly. He merely wished to test their reaction to what he was about to do and found that only Mam-Re had the proper attitude. According to *Da’at Zekeinim* (by the authors of the *Tosefot*), Abraham asked his friends whether or not to circumcise himself publicly or privately, or how to convince his servants to circumcise themselves also. According to the Maharal of Prague (*Gur Aryeh*), Abraham consulted with his friends in order to demonstrate that even if they counseled him against fulfilling G-d’s command he would do it anyway, and to demonstrate that he was fulfilling G-d’s command with full awareness of what he was doing, not impetuously.

As long as Abraham was uncircumcised, he could not couple, for the supernal *chesed* that is revealed in the mouth of *Ima* withdraws when it reaches the foreskin. [Mam-Re] therefore advised him to circumcise himself.

The mouth of *Ima* signifies *malchut* of *Ima*, the expression of the intellect as it passes from *Ima* to *Z'eir Anpin*. If the *chesed* issuing from *Ima* to *Z'eir Anpin* encounters a foreskin, a blockage, in the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*, it recedes back into *Ima*. *Z'eir Anpin* is thus left without the full mentality of *Ima*, and cannot properly couple with *Nukva*.

As we know, Abraham had three friends: Einar, Eshkol, and Mam-Re. Einar personified the states of *gevurah* within *Z'eir Anpin*, which number 320, this being the numerical value of *Einar*.

*Einar*:  $\text{ayin-nun-reish} = 70 + 50 + 200 = 320$ .

Eshkol personified *yesod* [of *Z'eir Anpin*], which is associated with the Name *Shakai* and causes the states of *chesed* within the Name *Ekyeh*, which is associated with *Ima*, to descend. This is indicated by the fact that the numerical value of the regression of *Ekyeh* is 44, as you know, and thus the combined numerical value [of this regression] and the Name *Shakai* is the same as that of *Eshkol* [plus the *kolel*].

*Eshkol*:  $\text{alef-shin-kaf-vav-lamed} = 1 + 300 + 20 + 6 + 30 = 357$ .

*Ekyeh* is spelled *alef-hei-vav-hei*. Its regression is:

*alef alef-hei alef-hei-vav alef-hei-vav-hei*  
 $= 1 + (1 + 5) + (1 + 5 + 10) + (1 + 5 + 10 + 5)$   
 $= 4(1) + 3(5) + 2(10) + 1(5)$   
 $= 4 + 15 + 20 + 5$   
 $= 44$ .

*Shakai*:  $\text{shin-dalet-yud} = 300 + 4 + 10 = 314$ .

$44 + 314 = 358$ .

Eshkol thus signifies the effect of the Name *Shakai* [*yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*] on the Name *Ekyeh* [*Ima*].

This is the meaning of [the Name *Shakai* as the one] “who sustains and provides for all.”

The Name *Shakai*, as we shall see, is explained in various ways. Here, it is taken to mean “who suffices,” “whose Divine power suffices to sustain all reality.”<sup>11</sup>

(It could be that the phrase “who sustains and provides for all” alludes to the name Eshkol, the last syllable of which, *kol*, means “all.”)

This is why [*yesod*] is called *Shakai*, for it is the external dimension of *yesod*, which [participates in] the external coupling, which causes everything [else] to couple and provides for everything, as we explained regarding *Ima*. Meaning: just as *Ima* participates in two types of coupling, so do *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* participate in two types of coupling.

Just as with *Abba* and *Ima*, the external, superficial coupling of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* channels the basic life-force necessary to keep the world functioning.

<sup>11</sup> See Rashi on Genesis 17:1.

These are the states of *gevurah* within *yesod*. As our sages explained, the Name *Shakai* means that [G-d] is the one who said “enough” to His world.<sup>12</sup> [This Name] gives strength and [the ability to] limit to the states of *gevurah*, for the [unhindered] states of *chesed* extend without limit.

If the attribute of *chesed* had operated unchecked during creation, the world would have gone on being created infinitely. The attribute of *gevurah*, powered by the Name *Shakai*, limited and reigned in the attribute of *chesed*.

Thus, the Name *Shakai* describes G-d as simultaneously being powerful enough to provide infinitely, and powerful enough to limit the inherent nature of creation to extend without limit.

They also said [that the Name *Shakai* means that G-d] overrides the natural order.<sup>13</sup> This is [also] done through the states of *gevurah*.

G-d is the only one with the power and ability to override the natural order He established.

Thus, we see that all three explanations of the Name *Shakai* reflect its association with the states of *gevurah* within *yesod*.

Thus, Einar and Eshkol respectively personify the *gevurah*-states within *Z'eir Anpin* as a whole and within *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin* in particular. Neither of these *gevurah*-states are sweetened by the coupling of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*. Only the *gevurah*-states of *Nukva* itself are so affected.

These two, i.e., Einar and Eshkol, are not sweetened by coupling. They therefore did not advise Abraham to circumcise himself, for they would gain nothing by it.

But Mam-Re, whose main sweetening occurs through coupling, did advise Abraham to circumcise himself. For as long as Abraham was uncircumcised, *chesed* withdrew from him and he [i.e., Mam-Re] could not be sweetened. He therefore advised him to circumcise himself.

This is the meaning of “And G-d appeared to him...,” i.e., now that *chesed* has been revealed in the mouth of *Ima*, because Abraham circumcised himself, the *Shechinah* appeared to him, in order to receive these states of *chesed*.

*Nukva* prepared to receive the states of *chesed* that would sweeten her inherent *gevurah*.

And how did the *Shechinah* appear to him? “...in the plains of...,” meaning “in the strength of”: G-d revealed Himself to Abraham in the strength of the states of *gevurah*, which are alluded to by the word “...Mam-Re,” whose numerical value is 280, as we explained. [The states of *gevurah* revealed themselves to Abraham] in order to be sweetened by the coupling [of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*].

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim* and *Likutei Torah*

<sup>12</sup> *Chagigah* 12a.

<sup>13</sup> See Ramban on Genesis 17:1.

## *Parashat Vayeira* [third installment]

This *parashah* includes the story of how Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed.<sup>1</sup>

[We will now explain] the [mystical] explanation of the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. [We will also explain] why the three angels—Michael, who announced to Abraham that Sarah was going to have a child; Gabriel, who overturned Sodom; and Raphael, who rescued Lot<sup>2</sup>—each of whom came to fulfill a separate mission, all came together at once instead of one after the other.

Inasmuch as each of these angels had a separate mission, it would seem that there is no reason why they all visited Abraham at once.

[They did so] because it was necessary.

The angel Michael's mission (to announce to Abraham that he was going to father Isaac) was similar to the missions of Gabriel and Raphael (to destroy Sodom and save Lot), as we will see. Therefore, these two missions had to occur at the same time.

Gabriel's and Raphael's missions are combined into one for this exposition because destroying Sodom was also part of rescuing Lot, as will be explained.

First, the Arizal discusses Michael's mission.

G-d wanted to bring forth the holy seed, the souls of Israel that had been stored away from before Creation until this point. There were two thousand years of *Tohu*, during which G-d was creating worlds and destroying them.

Humanity in general was originally intended to fulfill the role that, after Adam's sin, was reserved for the Jewish people. Thus, the souls that G-d originally intended to send to the world in its first years had to be held back until a proper spiritual setting could be created for them. This setting was the Jewish people.

The sages state that "The world spans six thousand years [before the messianic millennium]. [The first] two thousand years of *Tohu* ["chaos," "disorder"], two thousand years of Torah, and two thousand years of the days of the Messiah."<sup>3</sup>

The year 2000 AM<sup>4</sup> (1761 BCE) coincides with Abraham's 52<sup>nd</sup> year, so roughly speaking, Abraham marked the transition from the period of *Tohu* to the period of Torah, or *Tikun* (since the rectification of reality can occur only through the Torah). Although the Torah was not actually given until 448 years after this, the sages state that the forefathers kept the entire Torah before it was given, and the creation of the Jewish people that began with Abraham was the preparation for the giving of the Torah. Thus, the period of Torah can justifiably be considered to have begun with Abraham.

The year 4000 AM (240 CE) is relatively close to the death of Rabbi Yehudah Nesiah (230-235 CE), the grandson of Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi (recorder of the Mishnah) and the last effective leader of the Sanhedrin. "Although the Sanhedrin [and the position of Nasi] did not disappear altogether, it ceased being the center of Torah for the whole of Jewry, since it lacked the leadership of a Nasi who was a great sage in his own right. And so it was

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 18:20-19:29.

<sup>2</sup> Rashi on Genesis 18:2.

<sup>3</sup> *Yalkut Shimoni*, Isaiah 393; *ibid.* Hosea 522, etc.

<sup>4</sup> *Anno Mundi*, i.e., since Creation.

that the leading sages dispersed, each one establishing his own *beis midrash* that stood side by side with the Sanhedrin. But all these became diminished in standing and authority when compared to the newly arising Torah center that was being established in Babylonia.”<sup>5</sup> Many of the inhabitants of the Land of Israel left at this point.<sup>6</sup> Thus, this year may be considered to mark the point when the emphasis in Judaism shifted from learning Torah toward yearning for the redemption from exile, in other words, for the messianic era.

The sages also state that before the creation of the world, G-d was “creating worlds and destroying them.”<sup>7</sup> In Kabbalah, this is understood to refer to the fact that there were numerous “proto-worlds” preceding the creation of the world of *Atzilut*, the ideal, rectified world (of which the subsequent worlds, including the physical universe we live in, are just an imperfect reflections). Although necessary stages in the progression toward the ideal world of *Atzilut*, these worlds were “scrapped” in terms of being used as the ideal archetype for reality. The main “proto-world” or imperfect precursor of *Atzilut* was the world of *Tohu*.

There is thus a thematic connection between the Kabbalistic world of *Tohu* and the notion of the “two thousand years of *Tohu*” that preceded Abraham, and in fact, the two thousand years of *Tohu* are a manifestation in this physical world of the world of *Tohu* in the spiritual dimension. In other words, the course of history in our physical world mirrors the spiritual course of “history” (in quotes because this “history” occurs outside the creation of time) in the development of the spiritual worlds.

[This is alluded to in the Torah’s account of how] various people fathered children and died, and then [their children] fathered children [and died], and so on.<sup>8</sup> Then He wiped them all out in the flood, and replanted them through Noah until [He began again in] the generation of the Dispersion, when the nations were destroyed and all the evildoers were dispersed. In this way the world of *Tohu* was wiped out, [remaining so] until Abraham rebuilt it [as the world of *Tikun*].

This is the mystical meaning of [our sages statement that in the verse], “These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created,”<sup>9</sup> [the word for “when they were created” is a permutation of the word for] “through Abraham.”<sup>10</sup>

“When they were created” (*behibaram*): *beit-hei-beit-reish-alef-mem*.

“Through Abraham” (*be-Avraham*): *beit-alef-beit-reish-hei-mem*.

The fact that the word for “when they were created” can be permuted to the word for “through Abraham” implies that the creation of the world was in a sense dependent on Abraham, or his merit.

Through the covenant [with Abraham], the world [of *Tikun*] endures—as it is written, “Were it not for My covenant *by day*,”<sup>11</sup> referring to Abraham—despite the presence of impurities, i.e., Ishmael and Esau, as it is written, “For through Isaac it will be called for you seed,”<sup>12</sup> i.e., holy seed.

<sup>5</sup> Z. Yavetz, *Toldot Yisrael*, vol. 6, p. 276, translated and quoted in Meir Holder, *History of the Jewish People: From Yavneh to Pumbedisa* (Artscroll, 1986), pp. 111-112.

<sup>6</sup> Holder, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

<sup>7</sup> *Kohelet Rabbah* 3:14.

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 5.

<sup>9</sup> Genesis 2:4.

<sup>10</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 12:9.

<sup>11</sup> Jeremiah 33:25.

<sup>12</sup> Genesis 21:12.

The sages point out that in the verse, “And there was evening and there was morning, *the* sixth day,”<sup>13</sup> the day is preceded by the definite article, which is not the case with the preceding five days of creation. This, they say, is to connect the sixth day of creation with the day on which the Torah was given, the sixth day of Sivan, 2448. The work of creation (completed on the sixth day) is dependent on the acceptance of the Torah by the Jewish people. Without this acceptance, the world’s existence is unnecessary, or pointless, and therefore until the Torah was given the world’s existence was unstable and precarious.<sup>14</sup> This is indicated in the verse, “Were it not for My covenant by day and by night, I would not have established the laws of heaven and earth,” meaning, were it not for the observance of the Torah by the Jewish people day and night, G-d would have no purpose for the world and its laws of nature.

Here, “by day” is taken to refer to Abraham, since the world was plunged in spiritual darkness until Abraham, and “Abraham began to shine light.”<sup>15</sup>

The covenant G-d made with Abraham was that he would make him the progenitor of the Jewish people and that they would inherit the Land of Israel as the ideal setting for accomplishing their mission, to be a “light to the nations” and disseminate Divine consciousness through reality, making the world into G-d’s home.

The verse “for through Isaac it will be called for you seed” is understood to mean that Abraham’s true seed, the genetic line of the Jewish people, is passed on only through Isaac, and not through Abraham’s other sons, Ishmael and the sons of Keturah.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the word for “through Isaac” in this verse can also mean “in Isaac,” and this is taken to indicate that only part of *Isaac’s* seed will transmit the genetic line of the Jewish people. Thus, only Jacob plays this role, and not Esau, Isaac’s other son.<sup>17</sup>

Then, in Abraham, [G-d] found [a vessel for] all the seed of Israel, and the souls that existed before the world was created existed in him. For until then, the world was in the order of *Tohu*, without the covenant. That is why the world only was able to endure through the covenant of Abraham. This is the [mystical] meaning of the idea that G-d “created them” “through Abraham.” Understand this.

At this point, [Abraham] was informed that he would have Isaac, and that the seed of Israel would all exist in him, as it is written, “for through Isaac it will be called for you seed.” Since this was the case, G-d also wanted the soul of the Messiah to appear and be manifest. [The soul of the Messiah] was also stored away before the world was created, as it is said, “and the spirit of G-d was hovering over the water.”<sup>18</sup> [Our sages said that] this refers to the spirit of the Messiah.<sup>19</sup> It existed even before this.

Since the purpose of the Jewish people—to make the world into G-d’s ultimate home—will be accomplished fully only through the Messiah, the descent of the souls of the Jewish people at this point in history had to be accompanied by the descent of the soul of the Messiah. Otherwise, the Jewish people would lack the sense of direction and purpose necessary for them to accomplish what they were meant to accomplish.

The fact that the “spirit of the Messiah” was “hovering over the waters” at the outset of creation indicates that the world was created for the end to which the Messiah will bring it—that the Messiah is a necessary ingredient in Creation, without which it cannot exist.

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<sup>13</sup> Genesis 1:31.

<sup>14</sup> Rashi *ad loc.*, etc.

<sup>15</sup> *Shemot Rabbah* 15:26.

<sup>16</sup> Genesis 25:1-6.

<sup>17</sup> Rashi on Genesis 28:15.

<sup>18</sup> Genesis 1:2.

<sup>19</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 8:1.

The name of the Messiah is listed as one of the seven things that preceded the creation of the world.<sup>20</sup> (The other six are the Torah, *teshuvah*, Purgatory [*Gehinom*], the Garden of Eden [the abode of the soul in the afterlife], the Throne of Glory, and the Temple. All these are related to the process of achieving the purpose of Creation.)

It had been “lost” in Sodom, as it is written, “I have found David, My servant,”<sup>21</sup> and our sages said that this means that G-d found [the seed of David’s soul] in Sodom, in the person of Lot, Abraham’s nephew.

Lot fathered (through incest with his daughter) Moab,<sup>22</sup> who became the progenitor of the nation of Moab. Ruth, the ancestress of King David, was a Moabite.<sup>23</sup> King David, of course, was the ancestor of the Messiah. Thus, the soul of the Messiah was latent in Lot, who had chosen to live in Sodom.<sup>24</sup>

It was therefore necessary that all three [angels] come at the same time: One [came] to find [the souls of] Israel in Abraham. One [came] to overthrow Sodom, so that Lot could [be extricated from there by the third and] leave there and hide in the cave where G-d had wine waiting for him so David, the [progenitor of the] Messiah of the G-d of Jacob,<sup>25</sup> could be [eventually] be born. Therefore the three came at the same time. Understand this.

Until this point in his life, Lot only had daughters, all of whom were already mature by this time. Therefore, it is unlikely that he would have had sons had he remained in Sodom and not have had incestuous relations with his daughters. Therefore, the incest had to be arranged so he could father the nation that would carry the soul of the Messiah latent within him. Furthermore, the society of Sodom was so degenerate that it presumably could not have “hosted” the soul of the Messiah; therefore, G-d had to extricate it from there.

Lot’s daughters, thinking that G-d had destroyed humanity again, gave their father wine to drink in order that he repopulate the world through them. The sages say that G-d arranged for there to be wine in the cave where they fled in order for Lot to father the two nations of Ammon and Moab.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, just as Isaac issued from Abraham, [the Messiah, the future] Isaac issued from Lot, [as follows:]

The name *Isaac* [*Yitzchak*] can be seen as the combination of the words for “the end of the live one,” referring to the Messiah. This is the [mystical] meaning of the verse, “He asked of You life...,”<sup>27</sup> and of the phrase “David, King of Israel, lives and endures.”<sup>28</sup>

*Yitzchak*: yud-tzadik-chet-kuf.

“The end of the live one” (*keitz chai*): kuf-tzadik chet-yud.

“The live one” refers to the *sefirah* of *yesod*, inasmuch as the male reproductive organ has “dead” (flaccid) and “live” (erect) states. The end of the “live one” refers to the crown (glans) of the organ. As this is the point where the drive of self-actualization is realized, it refers also the Messiah, the one who actualizes the Divine purpose of creation. The verse and phrase quoted both indicate the connection between “life” and the Messiah.

<sup>20</sup> *Tana d’vei Eliahu Rabbah* 31; cf. *Bereishit Rabbah* 1:4.

<sup>21</sup> Psalms 89:21.

<sup>22</sup> Genesis 19:30-37.

<sup>23</sup> Ruth 1:1-4, 4:13-17.

<sup>24</sup> Genesis 13:11-12.

<sup>25</sup> par. 2 Samuel 23:1.

<sup>26</sup> Rashi on Genesis 19:33.

<sup>27</sup> Psalms 21:5.

<sup>28</sup> Liturgy for the sanctification of the new moon.

As we will see presently, this explains why Abraham had to be circumcised to father Isaac.

The Arizal now discusses how Abraham merited fathering the Jewish people.

This occurred because Isaac was born when Abraham and Sarah were old, and had entered the primordial days.<sup>29</sup>

The verse “And Abraham was old, having come into days” occurs after Sarah died, when Isaac was already 37. Nonetheless, the Torah stresses how Abraham and Sarah were (already) old when Isaac was born.

The *Zohar* interprets the phrase “having come into days” to mean “into the primordial days that always renew [a person] like the eagle,”<sup>30</sup> alluding to the verse, “[G-d] renews your youth like an eagle.”<sup>31</sup> The “primordial days” are the six lower *sefirot* of *Atik Yomin* (corresponding to the six *days* of creation). Since *Atik Yomin* corresponds to delight, the source of life, an influx from this level renews a person’s youth. Indeed, after this verse and the ensuing story of Isaac’s marriage to Rebecca, the Torah recounts how Abraham married again and fathered eight more sons.

[As we said,] the seed of Israel was transmitted through Isaac, and [the souls of] Israel pre-existed in [G-d’s] thought, as it is written, “In the beginning, G-d created...,” [and the sages said that this means] “for the sake of Israel, who are called ‘the beginning,’ as it is written, ‘Israel is holy to G-d; [they are] the beginning of His produce.’”<sup>32</sup>

The word for “in the beginning” can also mean “by means of [that which is called] ‘the beginning.’” The Jewish people is one of the entities referred to as “the beginning,” as indicated by the verse from Jeremiah. Thus, “In the beginning G-d created heaven and earth” can be interpreted to mean, “For the sake of the Jewish people, G-d created heaven and earth.”

The point emphasized here is the fact that the Jewish people are termed “the beginning” indicates that they precede the creation of the world. Thus, the sages say that “the thought of Israel preceded everything.”<sup>33</sup>

“His produce” refers to *binah*, whereas Israel ascended in thought.

Meaning that they originate in the highest aspect of thought, *chochmah*, which precedes *binah*.

They therefore did not issue from Abraham until he was old [*zaken*]. [This is alluded to by the fact that our sages say that the word *zaken* is a *notrikon* for the words] “the one who has acquired wisdom.”<sup>34</sup>

“The one who has acquired wisdom”: *zeh she-**kanah** chochmah*. The bolded letters spell *zaken* (*zayin-kuf-nun*).

The proof of this is that when [Abraham] fathered Ishmael, he was 86 years old, in the prime of his years of strength [*gevurah*].

The sages say: “When a person is eighty years old, he acquires *gevurah*,”<sup>35</sup> based on the verse, “The days of our lives are seventy years, or by means of *gevurah*, eighty years.”<sup>36</sup>

At this age, Abraham was thus more connected to *gevurah*, the left side, than to *chochmah*, the right side. He was not yet “old.”

<sup>29</sup> par. Genesis 24:1.

<sup>30</sup> *Zohar* 3:170b.

<sup>31</sup> Psalms 103:5.

<sup>32</sup> Jeremiah 2:3.

<sup>33</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 1:4.

<sup>34</sup> *Sifra*, *Kedoshim* 7.

<sup>35</sup> *Avot* 5:21.

<sup>36</sup> Psalms 90:10.

He was not circumcised [when he fathered Ishmael].

This was because Ishmael was not “the end of the living one,” the consummation of Abraham’s drive to self-perpetuate and impregnate reality with his Divine mission. Therefore, the glans of the reproductive organ did not have to be exposed.

When Isaac was born, [Abraham] was 100 years old and Sarah was 90 years old. This is alluded to in the name *Isaac* [*Yitzchak*].

*Yitzchak*: *yud-tzadik-chet-kuf*. The numerical value of *tzadik* is 90 and the numerical value of *kuf* is 100. The allusions in the other two letters of the this name are as follows:

The *chet* alludes to the eight days [from birth] to circumcision. The *yud* alludes to the *yud* in the name *Chayah*, for that was [Eve’s (*Chavah*’s)] name before the [primordial] sin; only after the sin was she called *Chavah*. Eve was built out of Adam’s side, and when this side was built [into Eve], [Adam’s] helpmate [*eizer*] and enduring seed [*zera*] came into being, to produce holy seed, for “Israel is holy to G-d.”

Before the sin of partaking of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, Eve is not referred to in the Torah by her name, only as “the woman” or “his wife,” etc. Only after the sin does Adam name her *Chavah*, or Eve. This alludes to the tradition that she had a different name before the sin.

Before Eve was made out of Adam’s side, they were connected to each other back to back. They could not couple in this state; only when Eve was separated from Adam could they face each other, engage in martial relations, and produce offspring.

The words for “helpmate” and “seed” are permutations of each other. *Eizer*: *ayin-zayin-reish*; *zera*: *zayin-reish-ayin*. This indicates that the “help” that the female gives the male is the possibility to produce offspring.

The *yud* in Isaac’s name thus refers to the original woman, who was formed into Adam’s wife so they could bear children. As we saw above, these children were intended to be the bearers of the messianic mission that was later given to the Jewish people.

The birth of Isaac to Abraham when the latter was exactly 100 years old is also alluded to in the name Abraham [*Avraham*] itself: it may be read as a combination of the two words for “a son [at] one hundred [years old]” [*bar meiah*], for at the age of 100 [*meiah*] he fathered a son [*bar*], i.e., Isaac.

*Avraham*: *alef-beit-reish-hei-mem*.

*Bar meiah*: *beit-reish mem-alef-hei*.

This is the meaning of [the sages’ statement that] “when they were created” is a permutation of “Abraham,” and that when he was old he ascended to the level of Israel in G-d’s thought.

And the numerical value of the word for “100” [*meiah*] is equal to the combined numerical value of the letters used to spell out of the 72-Name, spelled out with *yud*’s, which signifies *Abba*, i.e., in [G-d’s] thought.

The 72-Name:

*Yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-yud-vav hei-yud*.

The letters used to spell out the Name *Havayah* here are:

*vav-dalet yud yud-vav yud* = 6 + 4 + 10 + 10 + 6 + 10 = 46.

*Meiah*: *mem-alef-hei* =  $40 + 1 + 5 = 46$ .

As we have seen, the four spellings-out of the Name *Havayah* (72, 63, 45, 52) correspond to the four letters of the Name and the four basic *partzufim*. Specifically, the 72-Name corresponds to the *yud* and *Abba*, the *partzuf* of *chochmah*. Here we have an additional indication that the fact that Abraham fathered Isaac at the age of 100 was because only then did he achieve the level of Divine *chochmah* necessary for this.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

## *Parashat Chayei Sarah*

The portion of the Torah read this week begins: “The life of Sarah was one hundred twenty seven years [long], the years of the life of Sarah. Sarah died in Kiryat Arba, which is Hebron, in the land of Canaan. Abraham came to eulogize Sarah and weep for her.”<sup>1</sup>

The numerical value of the word for “was” [i.e., the first word of] this verse [*va-yih yu, vav-yud-hei-yud-vav*] is 37. The mystical significance of this is that since Sarah personified the Divine attribute of *gevurah*, all her life-force was derived solely from the spelling-out of the Name [*Havayah* whose numerical value when spelled out is] 63, which is 37.

As we have explained previously, there are four principle ways the Name *Havayah* (*yud-hei-vav-hei*) is spelled out in Kabbalah, giving the four numerical values of 72, 63, 45, and 52. To arrive at the value 63, the Name is spelled out as follows: **yud**-vav-dalet, **hei**-yud, **vav**-alef-vav, **hei**-yud ( $10+6+4 + 5+10 + 6+1+6 + 5+10 = 63$ ). If we consider only the letters used to spell out the four main letters (i.e., the letters that are not in boldface here), we see that their numerical value is 37.

These four ways of spelling the Name *Havayah* correspond to the four main *partzufim*, *Abba*, *Ima*, *Z'eir Anpin*, and *Nukva*, respectively, which in turn are constructed from the *sefirot* of *chochmah*, *binah*, the *midot*, and *malchut*, respectively. Thus, the 63-Name is associated with the *Ima* and *binah*, which are on the left side of the *sefirah*-tree, and are thus on the *gevurah*-axis of the *sefirot*.

Sarah was the first matriarch of the holy Jewish people, and is thus naturally associated with the *partzuf* of *Ima* (the mother).

The life-force of Sarah [is revealed] when the light of *yesod* of *Ima* is revealed in the first third of its *tiferet*, for it is there that the states of *gevurah* begin to become revealed.

The *yesod* of any *partzuf* is the drive of that *partzuf* for self-actualization. The self-actualization of *Ima* occurs when the mentality it embodies is transferred to the central, pivotal *partzuf*, *Z'eir Anpin*. However, the mental brilliance and intensity of *Abba* or *Ima* is beyond the capacity of either *Z'eir Anpin* or *Nukva* to assimilate, since the latter two *partzufim* are constructed out of the Divine emotional attributes (*chesed* to *malchut*) rather than the intellectual ones (*chochmah* and *binah*). Thus, it is the *midot* of the higher *partzufim* that become the intellect of the lower *partzufim*.

The general analogy for this in everyday life is based on the idea that *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* are considered the “offspring” or children of *Abba* and *Ima*. When someone wants to transmit his value-system or ideals to his children (or students, which are his children in the educational sense), it is a mistake to think that all he needs to do is educate them to intellectually appreciate the value of his philosophy. Rather, common-sense wisdom and experience asserts that serving as a role-model for one’s pupils or children is not only the best way to educate them but the *only* way of educating them. Preaching will almost surely fail if the preacher does not practice what he preaches. Thus, the teacher’s *behavior* (his *netzach-hod-yesod*) become the driving intellect (*chochmah-binah-da'at*) of his charges.

Furthermore, the teacher’s emotional involvement and excitement with the subject he is teaching will ignite in his students their will to dedicate themselves to the cause and pursue its ends. In other words, his *midot* (*chesed-gevurah-tiferet*) will become the will (*keter*) of his charges.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 23:1-2.

Thus, since *tiferet* is the central *sefirah* of the emotions and is the combination of *chesed* and *gevurah*, we are taught that the *tiferet* of *Ima* becomes the *keter* of *Z'eir Anpin*.

Specifically, when the light, or energy, of *yesod* of *Ima* reaches the level of *tiferet*, *tiferet* is imbued with the self-actualization of *yesod* and can then vitally serve as this *keter*, or source of will-to-be, for *Z'eir Anpin*.

Sarah thus becomes the *keter* [of *Z'eir Anpin*]. This is alluded to in her name, since *Sarah* [*sin-reish-hei*, 505] is the same numerical value as the word for “the head” [*ha-rosh*, *hei-reish-alef-shin*, 506] with the *kolel*.

[As an expression of *keter*,] she lived as follows:

One-hundred years [were an expression] of the *keter* of *keter*, since the higher an entity is the greater its numerical value. Thus *keter* expresses the numerical idea of hundreds, inasmuch as all its ten aspects [sub-*sefirot*] are further subdivided into ten [sub-sub-*sefirot*].

Twenty-years [were an expression] of *chochmah* and *binah* of *keter*, since these only express the numerical idea of tens.

Seven years [were an expression] of the seven lower *sefirot* of *keter* [i.e., from *chesed* to *malchut*], these expression only the numerical idea of units.

The relative intensity of the *sefirot* is thus divided into three levels, that of the super-intellect, the intellect, and the *midot*. This relative intensity is reflected in the fact that the first level is represented numerically by hundreds, the second by tens, and the third by units. So we have  $(1 \times 100) + (2 \times 10) + (7 \times 1) = 127$ .

This number thus was the number of years she was destined to live. Once she lived them out, they became the years of her life.

This explains the seemingly redundant phrase at the end of the first verse: “the years of the life of Sarah.”

[In addition,] Sarah embodied the Divine attribute of *malchut*.

*Binah* and *malchut* are of course related, since *binah* is the feminine correlate of *chochmah* and *malchut* is the feminine correlate of the *midot*. *Binah* is called “the higher mother,” i.e., the mother of the *midot*, while *malchut* is called “the lower mother,” i.e., the mother of the subsequent worlds that are created out of it.

The word *sarah* itself, moreover, means “ruler” or “prince,” and is thus thematically related to *malchut*, which means “kingdom.”

The *keter* of *malchut* is the fourfold expansion of the Name *Adni*.

The Name *Adni* is usually associated with the *sefirah* of *malchut*, since it means “my lord” or “my master.” Specifically, however, the most complete iteration of this Name, its fourfold expansion, signifies the highest level of *malchut*, the will to rule or *keter* of *malchut*.

The fourfold expansion of *Adni* (*alef-dalet-nun-yud*) is how this name is spelled in a series of steps, the first step being its first letter and each subsequent step being the addition of another of its letters. Thus: *alef*, *alef-dalet*, *alef-dalet-nun*, *alef-dalet-nun-yud*.

This fourfold expansion comprises four states: *alef*, *alef-dalet*, *alef-dalet-nun*, *alef-dalet-nun-yud*. This is why Sarah died in Kiryat Arba.

*Kiryat Arba* literally means “the town of the four.”

Yet, these four states all compose one unity and combination. This is [why Kiryat Arba is also known as] Hebron.

Hebron (*chevron*) literally means “combination” or “joining.” The iteration of this expansion expresses the unity of the first letter with the subsequent letters, and so forth.

This is [another] reason why Sarah lived 127 years, as an expression of this Name [*Adni*], for this number is the same as its numerical value [i.e., that of its fourfold expansion, 126] plus the *kolel*.

$$(1) + (1+4) + (1+4+50) + (1+4+50+10) = 126.$$

\*       \*       \*

A small number of letters in the Torah scroll are to be written either larger than usual or smaller than usual, according to traditions going back to the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai. The word for “to weep for her” at the end of the second verse (*likvosa, lamed-beit-chaf-tav-hei*) is written with a small *chaf*.

The reason why the letter *chaf* [in “to weep for her,” *livkosah*] is written small is because, as our sages say, “three days for weeping and seven days for eulogizing.”<sup>2</sup> [The small *chaf* indicates that] the days for weeping are less than those allotted for eulogizing.

The seven days of mourning are thus divided into two periods: during the first three days the mourner is to both weep for and eulogize his lost relative, while in the four last days he is to eulogize him but not weep for him. Although, of course, feelings and emotional reactions cannot be legislated *per se*, the point is that there is a progression of stages in mourning, and Jewish practice is designed to help the mourner along these stages and encourage him to progress from stage to stage, thus making the mourning process into a transformational, spiritual growth process.

[As to why specifically the letter *chaf* is diminished,] the esoteric reason is because she [Sarah] was from the lower world, which is alluded to by a small *chaf*. In contrast, the final *chaf* always alludes to *Ima*, for she extends into *Z’eir Anpin*, while the regular *chaf* refers to [the *partzuf* of] *Rachel*.

As we said above, Sarah in her essence personifies *Ima*, but in this world she also plays the role of *Nukva*, i.e., *malchut*. Relative to each other, these two feminine archetypes are called “the upper world” and “the lower world,” just as we said above that they are also called “the higher mother” and “the lower mother.”

Now, *chaf* is the first letter of the word *keter*, and is also shaped like a crown (on its side). It thus typically indicates this *sefirah*. Similar to what we said above, both *Ima* and *Nukva* become the *keter* of the levels immediately following and below them: *Tiferet* of *Ima* becomes the *keter* of *Z’eir Anpin*, and *Nukva* in its role as the origin of the subsequent worlds serves as the *keter* of these worlds. Thus, both “mothers” are also “crowns.”

The two forms of the letter *chaf* allude to these two crowns: the general form alludes to *malchut*, while the final form alludes to *Ima*. The difference between these two forms is that in the final form the bottom, flat base has been bent down to extend below the normative base line of the letters. Thus, in Hebrew, the two forms of the letter *chaf* are often referred to as the “bent” *chaf* and the “extended” *chaf*. The extended *chaf*, which extends below the base line, signifies a descent of a *keter* into a lower realm. Here, this refers to the extension of *Ima* into *Z’eir Anpin*, which we described somewhat above. In contrast, the bent *chaf* refers to *malchut*, or as it is called her, the *partzuf* of *Rachel*. (Sarah is thus here playing the role that will, as an archetype, be most fully embodied in Rachel and therefore known after her.)

The *chaf* of *Rachel* is bent because she folds her legs upwards so as not [to extend them to the point where] the external forces can grab onto them.

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<sup>2</sup> Moed Katan 27b.

Were *Nukva* (or *Rachel*) extend itself downward into the lower realms, below *Atzilut*, as completely as *Ima* does into *Z'eir Anpin*, this would allow the forces of separateness and evil that begin to exist at these levels too much opportunity to derive life force (“suck”) from this revelation.

Nowadays, during the exile, when she is—due to our sins—below, the departure of the righteous from this world causes their souls to elevate her. This is the esoteric meaning of the verse, “And he gathered his feet into the bed.”<sup>3</sup>

The condition of exile is that *malchut* is “caught” in the lower worlds and prevented from returning home into *Atzilut* to couple with her husband, *Z'eir Anpin*. Spiritually this means that our means of expression (thought, speech, and action) exist unnaturally within non-holy contexts, and are deprived of the true holy inspiration that is native to them. The death of righteous individuals, however, who complete their mission in this world, serves to elevate and at least partially extricate *malchut* from this exile.

When Jacob had finished blessing and commanding his sons on his deathbed, “he gathered his feet into the bed, and he expired, and was gathered unto his people.”

Furthermore, [the *chaf* here is small] because [the letter *chaf* signifies *keter*, and since with her death] the attribute of *keter* was removed and lacking [from the world], it is written small.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*, *Likutei Torah*, and *Sha'ar HaPesukim*

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<sup>3</sup> Genesis 49:33.

## *Parashat Chayei Sarah* [second installment]

When Eliezer, Abraham's slave, arrived in Haran looking for a wife for Isaac, he asked G-d that one of the signs identifying the right girl be that "the girl to whom I will say, 'Please tip your pitcher so that I may drink'" will respond "'drink, and I will give your camels also to drink.'" <sup>1</sup> Before he had even finished this prayer, "Rebecca came out...with her pitcher on her shoulder...and she descended to the well, filled up her pitcher, and ascended back." <sup>2</sup>

The numerical value of the word for "pitcher" (*kad*, *kaf-dalet* = 20 + 4) is 24.

As you know, *chesed* of *tiferet* is divided into three parts, each of which is alluded to by the number 24.

By *tiferet*, the Arizal presumably is referring here to the full *partzuf* of *Z'eir Anpin*.

The numerical value of *chesed* is 72 (*chesed*: *chet-samech-dalet* = 8 + 60 + 4 = 72). 72 divided by 3 is 24.

During the exile, [*chesed* of *tiferet*] possesses only one of these three 24's. In the future, the Temple will be rebuilt [and the missing two 24's will be restored, this being alluded to by the fact that] the numerical value of the word for "house" is twice that of the word for "light."

The Temple is the house of G-d; the term for "Temple" in Hebrew is *beit ha-mikdash*, or "house of the sanctuary." The numerical value of the word for "house" (*bayit*) is 412:

*Bayit*: *beit-yud-taf* = 2 + 10 + 400 = 412.

The numerical value of the word for "light" (*or*) is 207:

Or: *alef-vav-reish* = 1 + 6 + 200 = 207.

2 x 207 = 414. Presumably, the discrepancy implies that we are to add the *kolel* for each instance of "light." These two lights refer to the two 24's missing from *chesed* of *tiferet* when the Temple (the "House") is in ruins.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse, "I shall set your window [frames] with ruby...." <sup>3</sup>

The word for "ruby" (*kadchod*, *kaf-dalet-kaf-dalet*) may be seen as the word for "pitcher" (*kad*, *kaf-dalet*) doubled. This verse is part of a prophecy of the restoration of Israel's former glory that will be part of the messianic redemption. Thus, the ruby window frames allude to the restoration of the two 24's to *chesed* of *tiferet* that are missing during the exile.

It follows that Rebecca, who is synonymous with *Nukva*, has one "pitcher" [i.e., 24] inside her head and another "pitcher" [i.e., 24] above her shoulder, which is where the *yesod* of *Ima* terminates.

In this imagery, Rebecca/*Nukva* is seen to be bringing the two 24's back to *chesed* of *tiferet* (i.e., *Z'eir Anpin*), this signaling the end of the exile.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 24:14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 24:15-16.

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 54:12.

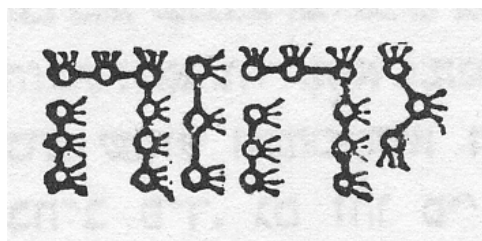
The text of this passage of the Torah [understood mystically] is referring to the moment of redemption, when this “pitcher” [on *Nukva*’s shoulder] will descend to the *yesod* of *Ima*. [Although *Nukva* must *ascend* in order to reach *yesod* of *Ima*,] this ascent is called a “descent” because the light [of *Ima*] descends to her. [*Nukva*] only receives her lights as reflected lights, as mentioned [elsewhere].

As we have mentioned previously, *yesod* of *Ima* is the drive of the intellect to actualize itself; it thus is the point where intellect is transformed into emotion, i.e., feeds *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*. In order for *Nukva*—the *partzuf* of expression—to rejuvenate *Z’eir Anpin*—the emotions—it must return to its “mother,” the intellect.

The Torah thus says, “she *descended* to the well,” i.e., to the *yesod* of *Ima*, which is called a “well.” She then “filled up her pitcher” from the well, the *yesod* of *Ima*, “and ascended,” meaning that these lights reflect back up, causing her and her crown to mature. Thus, she acquires three thirds, just like her husband, *Z’eir Anpin*.

Now, regarding these three “pitchers” [i.e., 24’s], each one refers to another Name *Havayah*. For there are three Names *Havayah* depicted with eyes, each one of which is drawn with 24 circles, giving a total of 72, the numerical value of *chesed*, as mentioned elsewhere. Thus, each “pitcher” is another Name *Havayah*, meaning that there are three Names *Havayah* here.

In the vision of Ezekiel, the angels are described as having “backs, tall and frightening, for the backs of all four were covered all over with eyes.”<sup>4</sup> In the *Zohar*,<sup>5</sup> this verse is interpreted as referring to the “backs,” i.e., the separate strokes, used to write the four letters of the Name *Havayah*. Each stroke is depicted as being formed by three eyes:



We see here that the four letters of the Name *Havayah* are formed by 8 strokes, each here depicted as having 3 “eyes,” giving a total of 24 eyes.

Thus, although we usually associate the Name *Havayah* with the number 26, its numerical value, we see here that “structurally” it can be associated with the number 24.

These three Names *Havayah* are three shades of creative energy used in the restitution of reality being described here.



The following section refers to the story of Elijah the prophet and his contest on Mt. Carmel with the prophets of Ba’al. In order to demonstrate the falseness of this idol, Elijah assembled the people and told the prophets of Ba’al to prepare an offering to it, while he prepared an offering to G-d. Everyone agreed that if one of the offerings would be devoured by fire, it would indicate that the deity to which it was offered was the true G-d.

<sup>4</sup> Ezekiel 1:18.

<sup>5</sup> *Tikunei Zohar* 70 (126b).

Try as they might, the priests of Ba'al could not get him to devour his offering with heavenly fire. When it was Elijah's turn, he first had pitchers of water poured on the altar, in order to demonstrate that the fire that was about to descend from heaven was indeed from heaven and not any trick he was performing. He poured so much water on his offering that it spilled over and filled the trench that he had dug around the altar.

These [Names *Havayah*] correspond to the pitchers with which Elijah the prophet, of blessed memory, filled the trench [around the altar he built]. When he said, "Fill four jars [with water...]," he intended these to correspond to the four letters of the Name *Havayah*. [When he said, "...and pour it over the burnt offering and the wood," he intended this to correspond to the first third of *chesed* of *tiferet*.] When he said, "do it a second time," he intended this to correspond to the second third of *chesed* of *tiferet*. When he said, "do it a third time," he intended this to correspond to the third third of *chesed* of *tiferet*.

By pouring the four pitchers three times over his sacrifice, Elijah was reconstructing *Nukva*, the conglomerate of the souls of Israel, giving it the three "pitchers" (24's) or thirds of *chesed* of *tiferet* it is supposed to possess.

We see from the above exposition that the female is to play a decisive role in the process of redemption. Indeed, at least in this scene, *Z'eir Anpin* is depicted as being helpless and dependent on Rebecca/*Nukva* to restore its broken *tiferet*, or heart. We may perhaps visualize this as the jaded or cynical mood that affects those who have suffered too much and are worn down by the state of exile. Such people need a boost of inspiration to lift their spirits. This is provided, in the present scenario, by *Nukva*, the spouse, who, faced with a languid, uninspired husband, whose *joie de vivre* has been sapped, returns to her wise mother to draw inspiration and direction to revive him.

Alternatively, an individual can try to rejuvenate himself, to mend his broken heart, by reinvesting his action, his means of expression, with new intellectual understanding. Doing so enables his expression to influence his emotion, for "the media" to make "the message," so to speak.

In either case, once the "wife" succeeds in re-inspiring her "husband," she restores him to his original vigor and the redemption can proceed.<sup>6</sup>

Understand this well, for what I have told you is a deep secret.

—translated from *Likutei Torah* and *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>6</sup> As mentioned previously, each of us comprises a male and a female aspect, and therefore the roles of male and female partner as described can be reversed. Since the male aspect obviously dominates in the husband and the female in the wife, however, the usual case is the way it is described in the text.

## *Parashat Chayei Sarah* [third installment]

“And these are the days of the years of the life of Abraham that he lived: one hundred seventy five years.”<sup>1</sup>

Abraham embodied the five states of *chesed* [of *Ima*] that spread through *Z’eir Anpin*, who expresses the Name *Havayah* spelled out with the letter *alef*, whose numerical value is 45.

The four major *partzufim* of *Atizlut* (*Abba*, *Ima*, *Z’eir Anpin*, and *Nukva*) express the four spellings-out of the Name *Havayah* (possessing the numerical values of 72, 63, 45, and 52), respectively.

The five states of *chesed* are expressed by five Names *Havayah*, giving a numerical value of 130.

$$5 \times 26 = 130.$$

When these Names *Havayah*, whose numerical value is 130, are joined with and spread through *Z’eir Anpin*, who expresses the Name *Havayah* spelled out to equal 45, the sum is 175, the number of years in Abraham’s life.

However, the origin of these 175 [years] in particular is as follows.

As we have already explained, Abraham originates in the supernal face [of *Arich Anpin*], which shines forth 370 lights. Therefore, when these five states of *chesed* spread through the *yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin*, they make Joseph “of good form and good appearance,”<sup>2</sup> due to the beauty of the supernal face of *Arich Anpin*, the source of the five states of *chesed*.

Jacob personified *Z’eir Anpin*; his son Joseph personified *yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin*. In this context, Abraham, Jacob’s grandfather, personifies *Arich Anpin*, the source of *Abba* and *Ima*, the “parents” of *Z’eir Anpin*.

As you know, the beauty of the face is the beard, and therefore a eunuch has no “beauty of the face,” i.e., no beard.

The phrase, “You shall stand up in the presence of gray hair, and you shall honor the face of an old person,”<sup>3</sup> may be read, “You shall stand up in the presence of gray hair and the beauty of the face is the beard.” This implies that the beauty of the face of an old man is his beard. We have identified the “beauty of the face” as the 370 lights, the source of the 5 states of *chesed*. These are expressed as the beauty expressed in *yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin*, the “grandchild” of *Arich Anpin*, as we saw with the case of Joseph. A eunuch, whose *yesod* has been castrated, is thus deprived of the expression of the potential beauty of his face (his inner *Arich Anpin*) in his “grandchild” (his *yesod*, his procreative organ), and therefore this beauty is not expressed as a beard.

Now, in this face [of *Arich Anpin*] are expressed 8 Names *Kel*, whose numerical value is the same as that of *Abraham*, who personifies this level.

$$Kel: alef-lamed = 1 + 30 = 31. 8 \times 31 = 248.$$

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 25:7.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 39:6.

<sup>3</sup> Leviticus 19:32.

*Abraham*: *alef-beit-reish-hei-mem* =  $1 + 2 + 200 + 5 + 40 = 248$ .

The Name *Kel* is associated with *chesed*. Thus, the face of *Arich Anpin*, the source of the five states of *chesed*, embodies this Name.

These [8 Names] constitute the first of the 13 rectifications of the beard, which is [the Name] *Kel*.

The 13 rectifications, or parts, of the beard, correspond to the 13 attributes of mercy,<sup>4</sup> as we have explained previously. The first of the 13 attributes of mercy is simply the Name *Kel*, signifying G-d's lovingkindness.

As you know, it possesses 3 worlds,<sup>5</sup> each of which is called *Kel*.

The vessels of *Tohu* collapsed beginning with the *sefirah* of *da'at*. The first of the 13 attributes of mercy rectifies the fallen *sefirot* of *da'at*, *chesed*, and *gevurah*. These three manifestations of the Name *Kel* are the Name *Kel* as it combines with three other Names, i.e., *Kel Shakai*, *Kel Havayah*, and *Kel Adni*.

In this connection, we will quote from our second installment of *parashat Lech Lecha*:

This [first attribute of the thirteen] corresponds to the two upper corners of the beard [i.e., the sideburns], one to the right and one to the left. Thus, we have [so far] two Names *Kel*.

It is also known that each sideburn contains three Names *Kel*, i.e., [the manifestation of this attribute in] the three [lower] worlds, that issue from this rectification [of the beard], as we have explained in [our commentary on] the *Idra*.<sup>6</sup> These are: *Kel Shakai*, in the world of *Beirah*; *Kel Havayah*, in the world of *Yetzirah*; and *Kel Adni*, in the world of *Asiyah*.

Two of these Names are found combined this way in the Bible. *Kel Shakai* is found six times; an example of *Kel Havayah* is in Psalms 118:26; *Kel Adni* does not appear in the Bible but is construed based on the other two.

There are thus six such Names *Kel* in the two sideburns.

There are two more Names *Kel* in the seventh rectification, which is the [lack of hair on the] two cheeks, known as “the two holy faces,” as we have explained elsewhere. These are the 370 lights that shine from the face of *Arich Anpin*, corresponding to the two spelled-out Names *Kel* situated there.

*Kel*: *alef-lamed*. When these two letters are spelled out, we have:

*Alef* → *alef-lamed-pei* =  $1 + 30 + 80 = 111$ .

*Lamed* → *lamed-mem-dalet* =  $30 + 40 + 4 = 74$ .

$111 + 74 = 185$ . For the two Names *Kel* on the two cheeks, we have  $2 \times 185 = 370$ .

This yields 8 Names *Kel*, which together equal the numerical value of Abraham.

Six on the two sideburns and two on the two cheeks.

In our discussion of the 175 years of Abraham's lifetime in *parashat Chayei Sarah*, we will explain this at greater length.

To continue with the present passage:

Thus we have 3 Names *Kel* to the right and 3 to the left. The two Names *Kel* are on the face itself to the right and to the left. We thus have 8 Names *Kel*, whose combined numerical value is the same as that of *Abraham*.

<sup>4</sup> Exodus 34:6.

<sup>5</sup> *Zohar* 3:132.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* See *Sha'ar Ma'amarei Rashbi ad loc.*

However, these two Names *Kel* situated on the face are derived from the two Names *Havayah* situated on the face, one to the right and one to the left. They are spelled out with the letter *yud*. This is the significance of the two Names *Havayah* that precede the 13 rectifications of the beard, as it is written, “G-d, G-d, is a merciful and gracious G-d....”

In the verse listing the 13 attributes of mercy, G-d precedes His proclamation of these attributes by saying His Name *Havayah* twice. “And G-d passed before him, and said, ‘*Havayah, Havayah*, is a G-d [*Kel*] who is merciful and gracious....”

But these two Names *Havayah* [each] possess a front and a back. Each back is manifest as a regressive iteration, as we know.

As we have seen previously, the withdrawal of the Divine beneficence channeled through one of G-d’s Names is indicated by the regressive iteration of that Name. In the case of the Name *Havayah*, this is *yud yud-hei yud-hei-vav yud-hei-vav-hei*.

The numerical value of the regressive iteration of the Name *Havayah* spelled out with the letter *yud* is 184.

The regression of the Name *Havayah* spelled out with the letter *yud* is:

*yud-vav-dalet, yud-vav-dalet hei-yud, yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-yud-dalet, yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-yud-dalet hei-yud.*

Numerically, this translates into:  $4(10+6+4) + 3(5+10) + 2(6+10+6) + 1(5+10)$   
 $= 4(20) + 3(15) + 2(22) + 1(15)$   
 $= 80 + 45 + 44 + 15$   
 $= 184.$

And the numerical value of the spelling out of the Name *Kel* is also 184 [plus the *kolel*, i.e., 185].

The spelling out of *Kel* (*alef-lamed*) is:

*Alef-lamed-pei lamed-mem-dalet* =  $(1 + 30 + 80) + (30 + 40 + 4) = 185.$

We thus see how from the backs of these two Names [*Havayah*] are derived these two Names *Kel*.

Now, the numerical value of two times the spelling out of the Name *Kel* will be 370. These are the 370 lights that shine from the supernal face [of *Arich Anpin*].

$2 \times 185 = 370.$

Let us now return to our derivation of the 175 years of Abraham’s life.

When these two Names *Havayah* that are manifest on the supernal face [of *Arich Anpin*] are transformed [using *atbash*], they produce the letter-combinations *mem-tzadik-pei-tzadik* twice.

*Atbash*, as we have explained, is one of several letter-substitution algorithms used in Kabbalah. In *Atbash*, the first letter of the alphabet (*alef*) is replaced by the last (*tav*), the second (*beit*) by the second to the last (*shin*), and so on. These first two pairs (*alef-tav-beit-shin*) give this algorithm its name.

If we divide them [into four pairs of letters] and spell them out, we have *mem-mem tzadik-dalet-yud* and *pei-alef tzadik-dalet-yud*.

The letter *tzadik* is sometimes spelled out with a *kuf* at the end and sometimes without.<sup>7</sup>

The numerical value of *mem-mem tzadik-dalet-yud* is 184, which is also the numerical value of [the spelling out of] the Name *Kel* [plus the *kolel*, as we saw above].

*Mem-mem tzadik-dalet-yud*:  $40 + 40 + 90 + 4 + 10 = 184$ .

Similarly, the numerical value of *pei-alef tzadik-dalet-yud* is 185, which is again the numerical value of the spelling out of the Name *Kel*.

*Pei-alef tzadik-dalet-yud* =  $80 + 1 + 90 + 4 + 10 = 185$ .

Thus, the transformation of the Name *Havayah* via *atbash* yields two Names *Kel*. Any transformation of a Name indicates a *tzimtzum*, or contraction of the Divine life-force channeled through that Name.

We do the same with the second Name *Havayah*, giving 4 Names *Kel*, which manifest as two sets of 370.

$4 \times 185 = 2 \times (2 \times 185) = 2 \times (370)$ .

For the first 370 [lights] are derived from the two Names *Kel* implicit in the first two letters of both [transformed] Names, i.e., *mem-tzadik*, and they constitute the frontal 370 lights. The second 370 [lights] are derived from [the two Names *Kel* implicit in] the second two letters [of both transformed Names], i.e., *pei-tzadik*, and they constitute the back 370 lights.

With reference to these two sets of 370, it is written, “And a suckling will play over the hole of a viper....”<sup>8</sup>

The word for “will play” (*shi'asha*) is spelled *shin-ayin-shin-ayin*, which divides naturally into two sub-units of *shin-ayin* (=370) each.

For the numerical value of the word for “suckling” [*yoneik*] is the same as the regressive iteration of the Name *Havayah* spelled out to equal 63.

*Yoneik*: *yud-vav-nun-kuf* =  $10 + 6 + 50 + 100 = 166$ .

The Name *Havayah* spelled out to equal 63 is:

*Yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-alef-vav hei-yud* =  $(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 10) + (6 + 1 + 6) + (5 + 10) = 63$ .

The regressive iteration of this spelling out is:

<sup>7</sup> See *The Hebrew Letters* (or *The Alef Beit*), pp. 266-7.

<sup>8</sup> Isaiah 11:8.

<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	10 + 6 + 4	20
<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	10 + 6 + 4	20
<i>hei-yud</i>	5 + 10	15
<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	10 + 6 + 4	20
<i>hei-yud</i>	5 + 10	15
<i>vav-alef-vav</i>	6 + 1 + 6	13
<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	10 + 6 + 4	20
<i>hei-yud</i>	5 + 10	15
<i>vav-alef-vav</i>	6 + 1 + 6	13
<i>hei-yud</i>	5 + 10	15
total		166

Thus, this verse alludes to the *tzimtzum* of the Name *Havayah* (as expressed through its transformation via *atbash*) to produce the two sets of 370 lights.

Why does this verse allude to the Name *Havayah* spelled out to equal 63?

And it is known that the said 370 lights are derived from the Name *Havayah* spelled out to equal 63, for the numerical value of the said 370 lights implicit in these said two Names *Havayah*, together with their 8 original letters, is the same as that of the word for “electrum” [*chashmal*].

The 8 letters of the two four-letter Names *Havayah*, each taken as a unit value, equal 8.  $8 + 378 = 378$ .

*Chashmal*: *chet-shin-mem-lamed* =  $8 + 300 + 40 + 30 = 378$ .

We have discussed *chashmal* in our fourth installment of *parashat Vayishlach* and in our second installment of *Vayakhel*. It is the protective garment around *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, the precursor of the neutral realm of evil (*kelipat nogah*, the “glowing shell”).

And *chashmal* is an allusion to “the light of the face of G-d,” mentioned in the *Zohar*.<sup>9</sup>

The Hebrew for “light of the face of G-d” is *or penei Kel*. This is spelled:

*Alef-vav-reish pei-nun-yud alef-lamed* =  $(1 + 6 + 200) + (80 + 50 + 10) + (1 + 30) = 378$ .

Its numerical value is the equal to that of *chashmal*.

For [*chashmal*] is the light [shining out] of the supernal face [of *Arich Anpin*], drawn down through the two Names *Kel* spelled out as mentioned above. This is the mystical meaning of “the light of the face of G-d.”

Now, the numerical value [of *chashmal*] is the same as that of 6 times the Name *Havayah* spelled out to equal 63.

$6 \times 63 = 378$ .

Thus, the 370 lights are derived from the Name *Havayah* spelled out to equal 63, the numerical value of the regressive iteration of which is the same as that of

<sup>9</sup> 2:247a.

the word for “suckling” [*yoneik*]. This is the mystical meaning of the phrase “A suckling will play.”

It follows from all this that on the right side of the face are manifest 3 Names *Havayah* spelled out to equal 63, and on the left side of the face are manifest another 3 Names *Havayah* spelled out to equal 63.

Thus, the 175 years of Abraham’s life express how the states of *chesed* originating in the shining face of *Arich Anpin* descend and manifest in *Z’eir Anpin*.

G-d promised Abraham, “You will be buried in ripe old age.”<sup>10</sup> Rashi explains this to mean that Abraham’s son Ishmael will repent during his lifetime and that Abraham will die before his grandson Esau commits himself to a wicked lifestyle. In fact, Rashi continues, Abraham died 5 years before he was slated to in order that he not witness Esau go wicked. Esau in fact went wicked the day that Abraham died.

From this it is apparent that the fact that Abraham lived specifically 175 years (and not 180) is connected to seeing *nachas* from children and grandchildren. We have seen here the mystical explanation for this. 175 signifies the five states of *chesed* of *Arich Anpin*—the “grandfather,” or here, Abraham—(i.e.,  $5 \times 26 = 130$ ) manifest in *Z’eir Anpin*—the “grandson,” or here, Jacob (signified by the Name *Havayah* spelled out to equal 45).

As it is written in the book of Proverbs, “the crown of the elderly is grandchildren.”<sup>11</sup> The elderly, the grandparents, are *keter*, and their fulfillment is when their grandchildren, *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, are permeated with their heritage, their five states of *chesed* shining forth from their glowing faces.

—translated from *Likutei Torah* and *Sha’ar HaPesukim*

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<sup>10</sup> Genesis 15:15.

<sup>11</sup> 17:6.

## *Parashat Chayei Sarah* [fourth installment]

In this portion of the Torah, we read about the cave of Machpelah:<sup>1</sup>

Abraham arose and bowed low to the people of the land, the Hittites, and he said to them, “If it is your wish that I remove my dead for burial, you must agree to intercede for me with Efron son of Tzohar, that he sell me the **cave of Machpelah** that he owns, which is at the edge of his field. Let him sell it to me, at the full price, for a burial site in your midst.”

Efron was seated among the Hittites; so Efron the Hittite answered Abraham so the Hittites could hear—all who had entry to the gate of his town—saying, “No, my lord, hear me: I give you the field and I give you the cave that is in it; I give it to you in the presence of my people. Bury your dead.”

Then Abraham bowed low before the people of the land, and spoke to Efron so the people of the land could hear, saying, “If only you would hear me out! Let me pay the price of the field; accept it from me, that I may bury my dead there.”

Efron replied to Abraham, saying to him, “My lord, hear me! A piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver—what is that between you and me? Go and bury your dead.”

Abraham heard Efron’s terms. Abraham paid out to Efron the money that he had named so the Hittites could hear—four hundred shekels of silver at the going merchants’ rate.

So Efron’s field in **Machpelah**, near Mamre—the field with its cave and all the trees within the borders of that field—passed to Abraham as his possession, in the presence of the Hittites, of all who had entry to the gate of his town. And then Abraham buried his wife Sarah in **the cave of the field of Machpelah**, facing Mamre—that is Hebron—in the land of Canaan. Thus the field with its cave passed from the Hittites to Abraham, as a burial site.

The cave of Machpelah is mentioned three more times in the Torah:

And his sons, Isaac and Ishmael, buried [Abraham] in **the cave of Machpelah** in the field of Efron the son of Tzohar the Hittite.<sup>2</sup>

Bury me with my fathers, in the cave in the field of Efron the Hittite, in the cave that is in **the field of Machpelah**, opposite Mamre, in the Land of Canaan, the field that Abraham bought from Efron the Hittite as a burial plot.<sup>3</sup>

And his sons carried him to the Land of Canaan, and buried him in **the cave of the field of Machpelah**, the field that Abraham bought for a burial plot from Efron the Hittite, opposite Mamre.<sup>4</sup>

The question is raised in the *Zohar*<sup>5</sup> as to why once [in this passage] it is written “the *cave* of Machpelah,” another time it is written “the *field* of Machpelah,” and yet another time it is written “the *cave of the field* of Machpelah.”

The *Zohar* explains that the word *Machpelah* refers to *malchut*, for *Machpelah* means “doubled,” and *malchut* is signified by the second *hei* of the Name *Havayah*, the only letter that is doubled in this Name. The “field of Machpelah” refers to the fact that *malchut* is also called “the *field* of holy apples.” Abraham knew that the Divine presence, the *Shechinah*—synonymous with *malchut*, was present in the field surrounding this cave, and that’s why he wanted to bury Sarah there. But he hid this knowledge from the Hittites and referred to the cave simply as “the cave of Machpelah,” not mentioning the field. When the Torah itself describes the area, however it uses the word “field.”

The Arizal now elaborates on this explanation.

The explanation is as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 23:7-20.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 25:9.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 49:29-30.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 50:13.

<sup>5</sup> 1:128b.

Both the higher *Ima* (“mother”), which is *binah*, and the lower “mother,” which is *malchut*, are manifest through a Name *Havayah* spelled out with the letter *hei*, and whose numerical value is 52.

The 52-Name is spelled: *yud-vav-dalet hei-hei vav-vav hei-hei* ( $10 + 6 + 4 + 5 + 5 + 6 + 6 + 5 + 5 = 52$ ).

This [Name] is actually the Name *Havayah* doubled, for the numerical value of the letters used to spell it out is 26, just like the numerical value of the simple, root letters.

*yud-vav-dalet hei-hei vav-vav hei-hei*:  $10 + 5 + 6 + 5 = 26$ .

*yud-vav-dalet hei-hei vav-vav hei-hei*:  $6 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 5 = 26$ .

Thus, the whole 52-Name can be seen as a simple doubling of the Name *Havayah*, 52 being twice 26.

[Furthermore,] each individual letter is doubled numerically. The numerical value of the [first] letter, *yud*, is 10, and the combined numerical value of the two letters used to spelling it out, *vav-dalet*, is also 10. Similarly, the last three letters [of the Name *Havayah*], *hei-vav-hei* are spelled out with the same three letters, *hei-vav-hei*.

The last three letters are spelled out by simply doubling them.

Therefore, this Name in general is called “the Machpelah,” for it is a double [of the Name *Havayah*].

The word *Machpelah* means “double,” from the root *kaf-pei-lamed*.

Now, this Name possesses four *hei*’s, i.e., the two *hei*’s of the Name *Havayah* and the two *hei*’s used to spell them out. These correspond to four subdivisions of the supernal *Ima*, i.e., two states of *binah* and two states of *tevunah*, as we have explained elsewhere.

Elsewhere,<sup>6</sup> however, the Arizal explains that the four subdivisions of *Ima* are as follows: Its *chochmah-binah-da’at* are called “the supernal *Ima*”; its *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* are called “the first *tevunah*”; its *netzach-hod-yesod* are called “the second *tevunah*”; its *malchut* is called “the third *tevunah*.” According to this, there is one state of *binah* and three states of *tevunah*.

In general, *tevunah* is “applied intellect” as opposed to *binah*, which is “abstract intellect.” It would thus make sense that *binah* would only be the *chochmah-binah-da’at* of *Ima*, i.e., the intellect of the intellect, while the other components of the intellect would be its applications to emotion, behavior, and expression.

These are the four *partzufim* within [*Ima*]. Sometimes these join together and are included together, and they are then called the supernal *Ima*, which includes them all within herself.

This is the significance of the 52-Name of the supernal *Ima*, which includes the four aforementioned subdivisions.

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<sup>6</sup> *Eitz Chaim* 14:9, principle 5; 27:4.

In a parallel way, the lower “mother,” *malchut*, subdivides into four distinct subdivisions, corresponding to the four *hei*’s in her 52-Name, which encompasses them all. Understand this well.

Rabbi Chaim Vital notes later, however, that it is not clear what these four subdivisions of *malchut* are.

There are thus three strata in the meaning of the word *Machpelah* as “doubled”: (1) the fact that the *hei* appears twice in the Name *Havayah*, (2) the fact that each of these *hei*’s is spelled out with another *hei* in the 52-Name, giving four *hei*’s, and (3) the fact that there is a 52-Name in both *Ima* and *Nukva*, giving 8 *hei*’s.

Having discussed what the four *hei*’s are in both the 52-Name of *Ima* and the 52-Name of *Nukva*, the Arizal now considers again the original four *hei*’s: the two *hei*’s of the Name *Havayah* and the two *hei*’s used to spell them out.

The first *hei* of them all is the origin, and is called “the cave of Machpelah.” It by itself is called “the cave,” but since implicit within it is the *hei* used to spell it out, it is called “the cave of Machpelah.”

The first *hei* by itself is called “the cave” since it something that has something inside it, just like a cave is a hollow that can contain something else. When it is considered together with its implicit contents, the *hei* used to spell it out, it is called “the cave of Machpelah,” i.e., the cave containing its own double.

The second *hei*, i.e., the spelling out of the first, origin-*hei*, is called “Machpelah” by itself. As it is written, “So Efron’s field in Machpelah...,” for it is the doubled *hei*, as we said.

In this verse, the word *Machpelah* is used by itself, not describing a field or cave. The doubled *hei* is simply called “the double,” *Machpelah*.

The third *hei*, the original lower [*hei* of the Name *Havayah*], is called “the field of *Machpelah*.” The fourth *hei*, the one used to spell out the original lower *hei*, is called “the cave of the field of Machpelah.”

The second *hei* of the Name *Havayah* refers to *malchut*, the *partzuf* of *Nukva*. This *sefirah/partzuf* is synonymous with the Divine Presence, the *Shechinah*, which is also known as “the field of holy apples,” as mentioned above.

The imagery of the fourth *hei*, as a “cave,” seems to be the reverse of the cave-imagery for the first *hei*. Here, the cave is the place where the thing in it is revealed.

There is also a fifth aspect, which is known only as “the cave” without any modifier. This is a manifestation of the letter *hei* spelled out with the letter *yud* or *alef*. In either of these cases, it is not doubled.

Sometimes the Machpelah cave is referred to simply as “the cave.” This refers to the letter *hei* when not doubled, but spelled out with either a *yud* (as it is in the 72-Name and the 63-Name) or an *alef* (as it is in the 45-Name).

The numerical value of this Name is also that of the word for “with everything” [*bakol*], and it is known<sup>7</sup> that the three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, merited “with everything” [*bakol*], “from everything” [*mikol*], and “everything” [*kol*]. Therefore, the three of them were buried in this [cave].

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<sup>7</sup> Bava Batra 17a.

Immediately after Abraham purchased the Machpelah cave and buried Sarah in it, we are told that “Abraham was old, having arrived in days, and G-d blessed Abraham with everything.”<sup>8</sup> The word for “with everything” is *bakol*. The numerical value of *bakol* is 52: *beit-kaf-lamed* = 2 + 20 + 30 = 52.

It is stated in the Talmud that G-d gave the patriarchs a foretaste of the future world while they were still in this world. For Abraham, this is alluded to by the verse just quoted: “and G-d blessed Abraham with everything [*bakol*].”

For Isaac, the allusion is found in the episode wherein Jacob stole the blessings he intended to bestow on Esau. Jacob first fed Isaac some food, and about this food, Jacob later told Esau, “he brought it to me before you came and I ate of all [*mikol*] of it, and I blessed him, and blessed he shall remain.”<sup>9</sup> The sages say<sup>10</sup> that by this Isaac meant that he tasted all the tastes he sought to taste in it, i.e., that it was heavenly food, like the manna. When Isaac smelled Jacob before eating his food, he said that he recognized the smell of the Garden of Eden on him, so we may presume that this was the taste he sought to taste in the food (and did), as well.

For Jacob, the allusion is in the episode of his encounter with Esau after returning from Laban. Jacob prepared a gift for Esau, but Esau tried to refuse it. Jacob persisted, however, and said, “Please take my blessing, which has been brought to you, for G-d has been gracious to me, and I have all [*kol*].”<sup>11</sup> Here also, this “all” refers to G-d’s grace beyond material bounty, the taste of the world to come.

Inasmuch as the Machpelah cave embodied the Divine consciousness of the *Shechinah*, which will be revealed in the future world, the patriarchs were buried there.

This is [also] the mystical meaning of [the sages’ statement that] Abraham had a daughter named Bakol.<sup>12</sup>

The sages say that the verse quoted above, “and G-d blessed Abraham with everything [*bakol*],” also alludes to the fact that Abraham had a daughter named Bakol.

She personified the 52-Name of *malchut*, which is the daughter.

The four Names *Havayah* (possessing the numerical values of 72, 63, 45, and 52) correspond respectively to the four *partzufim* *Abba*, *Ima*, *Z’eir Anpin*, and *Nukva*. *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* are the “son” and “daughter” of *Abba* (the father) and *Ima* (the mother).

The fact that this daughter is mentioned immediately after Abraham acquired the Machpelah cave (even though she must have been born before this, i.e., before Sarah died) indicates that there is a thematic connection between her and this cave. This connection is the fact that the cave expresses the 52-Name of G-d and the numerical value of her name is 52. The Torah effectively tells us that Abraham was blessed with a “daughter,” i.e., with *malchut*, the Divine consciousness of the future world, only when he purchased the Machpelah cave, since this cave embodied this Divine consciousness.

So did the master [i.e., the Arizal] explain this verse, saying that the numerical value of *Bakol* is the same as the 52-Name, spelled out with the letter *hei*. [This Name] is called the daughter of Abraham, our father.

[I, Rabbi] Chaim [Vital], the recorder [of these teachings] would like to add:

The explanation of the aforementioned four subdivisions of *malchut* is not clear to me right now. It could be that [the *partzufim* of] *Leah* and *Rachel* correspond to the upper and lower *hei* [of the Name *Havayah* of *Ima*], which in

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 24:1.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 27:33.

<sup>10</sup> Rashi *ad loc.*

<sup>11</sup> Genesis 33:11.

<sup>12</sup> *Bava Batra* 16b.

turn correspond to *binah* and *tevnah*. Each of these has its own *malchut*, which are two other *hei*'s within the spelling-out of the first *hei*'s.

As we have seen previously, *Leah* originates in *malchut* of *binah*, while *Rachel* originates in *malchut* of *tevnah*. *Leah* is associated with thought, which we use more to think about abstract intellect, while *Rachel* is associated with speech, which we use more to talk about applied intellect.

Or, it could be that all four are within *Rachel*, as we have explained in our exposition of Rosh HaShanah regarding the first blessing of the *Amidah*, with reference to the four beginnings of the year. According to this, there are four *partzufim* within *Rachel* alone, which sometimes combine to form one collective *partzuf*, just like the supernal *Ima*.

Based on the above, it is explained in *Chassidut* that the two *hei*'s manifest in the cave of Machpelah are the lower and upper Garden of Eden, the abode the soul in the afterlife. In the lower Garden of Eden, the soul receives its reward for the physical performance of the commandments it fulfilled in this world, while in the upper Garden of Eden it receives its reward for the intellectual and emotional intentions it invested into performing these commandments.

The two *hei*'s become manifest as the two levels of the Garden of Eden because the form of the *hei* indicates expansion into dimensions: the three lines that make up the *hei* indicate the three dimensions of breadth, length, and depth (the disconnected leg of the *hei* is seen as a line going perpendicular to the plane defined by the two connected legs). In order for the soul to experience Divinity, it has to assume "dimensions," that is, it has to be expressed in a way that a sentient being can integrate it into its own consciousness.

This "translation" of Divinity into a form that the soul can integrate is indicated by the doubling of the *hei*. The second *hei* latent within the first is revelation of the expression implicit within the *hei* itself.

In contrast to the two *hei*'s are the *yud* and the *vav*. The *yud* indicates *tzimtzum* ("contraction"), the initial contraction Divinity must undergo in order for the process of creation to take place. The *vav* is seen as a further type of *tzimtzum*, a *yud* that has been extended downward as a straight line. These *tzimtzumim* are not a "fleshing out" of the Divine consciousness with dimensions: the *yud* and *vav* are not spelled out with the letter *hei*. The *yud* is spelled out with a *vav*, which indicates further *tzimtzum*, plus a *dalet*, which comes close to being a *hei* (and is its source) but still lacks the true relief of three dimensions. The *vav* is spelled out with another *vav*, indicating further *tzimtzum*.

In the ultimate future, after the soul returns from its temporary abode in the afterlife and is resurrected in the rectified physical world, there will be no need for the soul to experience such "processed" Divine consciousness, i.e., there will be no need for the Name *Havayah* to be spelled out. The *hei*'s of the Name will be able to experience the *yud* and *vav* directly, and in fact the *vav* will not be necessary. In the future, the Name *Havayah* will be spelled *yud-hei-yud-hei*, indicating that both thought and speech will be able to express Divine consciousness in its fullest form. This is alluded in the verse, "On that day, G-d [*yud-hei-vav-hei*] will be [*yud-hei-yud-hei*] one, and His Name will be one."<sup>13</sup>

—translated from *Likutei Torah* and *Sha'ar HaPesukim*

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<sup>13</sup> Zechariah 14:9.

## *Parashat Toldot*

In the beginning of the portion of the Torah read this week, Isaac and Rebecca pray for children: “Isaac entreated G-d opposite his wife, because she was barren.”<sup>1</sup>

When G-d’s infinite light descends, it becomes manifest in *Atika*, that is, in *Arich Anpin*. [*Arich Anpin* extends throughout] the entire measure of *Atzilut*; the other [*partzufim*] enclothe *Arich Anpin* [to various extents].

*Atika* means “the ancient one” or “primordial one.” The *partzuf* that develops from the inner dimension of *keter* is called *Atik Yomin*, but the term *Atika Kadisha* (“Holy ancient one”) or just *Atika* (“the ancient one”) refers to the *partzuf* that develops from the outer dimension of *keter*, *Arich Anpin*.

*Arich Anpin* is synonymous with the will. G-d’s will to manifest at any particular level is what is responsible for the existence of that level of revelation, i.e., that world. Thus, the will permeates the entire world that develops out of it, and is the inner force driving all the other manifestations of His powers (i.e., *partzufim*) at that level.

It follows that when this light wishes to extend into *Beriah*, [we would imagine that it would issue from] the feet of *Arich Anpin*, since they reach this far. But this is impossible, for his feet are blocked there, and the light cannot issue forth.

The “feet”—or *malchut*—are the lowest level of the *partzuf* of *Arich Anpin*, so we would assume that they embody the lowest intensity of will in the world of *Atzilut*, which would be appropriate to create the world of *Beriah*. We see, however, that there is no orifice in the feet for any type of “light” to issue through. This basically because the feet, existing as they do at the lowest level, must be insulated in order to prevent any unwarranted flow of Divine light to the powers of evil.

Rather, the light issues forth from *yesod* [of *Arich Anpin*], which is situated above, between the thighs. From there it issues to *Z’eir Anpin*, which enclothes it. When the light issues from the *yesod* of *Arich Anpin*, it is opposite the *da’at* of *Z’eir Anpin*.

The light that issues from *Arich Anpin* in order to eventually create the next world, that of *Beriah*, issues from its *yesod*. As we have explained previously, *yesod* is the drive toward actualization of any particular *partzuf*.

The other *partzufim* of *Atzilut* are smaller than *Arich Anpin* and enclothe only various segments of it. For example, *Abba* and *Ima* enclothe the *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* of *Arich Anpin*; *Z’eir Anpin* enclothes *Arich Anpin* from the lower third of its *tiferet* down to its *malchut*, and so on. Here we see that the *da’at* of *Z’eir Anpin* enclothes *Arich Anpin* opposite its *yesod*. This simply means that the drive within *Arich Anpin* for self-actualization becomes the *da’at*—or subjective knowledge—of the *partzuf* of emotion.

The light that issues from *yesod* is called “morning,” as it is written, “the morning was light.”<sup>2</sup> [*Yesod*] is synonymous with Joseph, who is [also] called “morning,” for light issues from him.

The phrase “the morning was light” occurs in the story of Joseph and his brothers. Due to his sexual purity, Joseph is associated with the *sefirah* of *yesod*.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 25:21.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 44:3.

Now, the light that issues from the beard, via the hairs, is called *mazal*, because it “flows” drop by drop.

The word *mazal* in Hebrew is derived from the root *nun-zayin-lamed*, which means “to flow.” A *mazal* is a spiritual conduit of Divine life force, which flows from it to some other level.

To explain: The light of the Infinite One [first] becomes manifest in the head of *Arich Anpin*, in which are situated the brains. When it then seeks to be manifest [further, down] through the throat, which is narrow, the light bursts forth [through the skin] as hair. This is the origin of the beard.

The transformation of Divine consciousness from the mental to the emotional state is a drastic change, and involves a *tzimtzum*, or contraction of the light. This is the spiritual mechanics behind the anatomical phenomenon of the neck being such a narrow connection between the head and the torso. Despite this contraction, the light descending from the mental faculties is still too intense to be completely funneled through the passageway of the neck/throat, and therefore, the residual aspects of it exude through the pores of the skin as the beard.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse: “[the sound of] the mighty [*adirim*] [waters] that break the sea.”<sup>3</sup> These [waters] are from the hairs, as in the expression “he was entirely [covered] with a cloak [*aderet*] of hair.”<sup>4</sup> When the vessel is pierced and the light issues forth as a hair, this is the cloak.

The word *adir* carries both the meaning of “mighty” and that of a magnificent “cloak” or “mantle,” as a symbol of royalty and power.

Hair is like the letter *vav*, and the light within it is like the letter *yud*, which depicts the point of light within it.

The form of the letter *vav* represents an elongated channel, similar to a hair. The form of the letter *yud* symbolizes the particle of light (photon?) that issues via the hair.

The beard of *Arich Anpin* extends down to its navel, which is opposite the head of *Z’eir Anpin*.

The navel demarcates the division of the torso into its upper two thirds and its lower third. The topmost part of the head of *Z’eir Anpin* enclothes *Arich Anpin* from this point, the lower third of *tiferet* of *Arich Anpin*.

[The lights of the beard issue] in thirteen parts. This is because the light that manifests and pierces via the beard originates in the three brains. These [states of mentality] are three Names *Havayah*, which together possess 12 letters. These together with the 13<sup>th</sup> level that encompasses them all are 13 states of rectification. Therefore, all these 13 states [are channeled] through the beard of this male.

Each of the three “brains” or mentalities (*chochmah*, *binah*, and *da’at*) is a different manifestation of G-d’s creative energy, which is expressed in the Name *Havayah*. *Arich Anpin* is considered a male *partzuf*, and there is no corresponding female *partzuf* that shares its mental states. These can therefore be entirely channeled through its own beard.

But below, there are only nine parts of the beard of *Z’eir Anpin*. For above, in *Arich Anpin*, there is no feminine principle. The three final letters *hei* in the three Names *Havayah* are for the female, and what is left [for the male] is the three

<sup>3</sup> Psalms 93:4.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 25:25.

letters *yud-hei-vav* in each Name. This is why there are nine parts of the beard of *Z'eir Anpin* and 13 parts of the beard of *Arich Anpin*.

When the three Names *Havayah* in the three brains of *Arich Anpin* descend into its torso, there is no feminine principle to absorb the residual light from the final *hei*'s of these Names that pierces through the skin of the jaw and neck. Therefore, all this light can be manifest as a beard. When the similar process occurs in *Z'eir Anpin*, however, there is the *partzuf* of *Nukva* to absorb the feminine energy from these letters. Thus, there are only 9 letters left to manifest in the beard. There is no *kollel* here (as there is in *Arich Anpin*) since the full array is not present.

Of these thirteen [parts of the beard of *Arich Anpin*], two are referred to as a *mazal*, in that Divine beneficence flows downward through them. These are the attributes of “storing kindness” and “and acquits.”

As we have mentioned previously, the thirteen tufts of the beard of *Arich Anpin* are synonymous with the thirteen attributes, or aspects, of Divine mercy:

	Exodus 34	beard
1	mighty	sideburns
2	merciful	mustache
3	and gracious	the lack of hair in the middle of the mustache
4	long-	the hair under the lower lip
5	suffering	the lack of hair in the middle of the hair under the lower lip
6	abundant in kindness	the hair of the jaw bone
7	and truth	the lack of hair on the cheeks
8	storing kindness	the upper layer of the beard
9	to thousands	the short hairs between the upper and lower layers of the beard
10	bearing iniquity	the small hairs near the throat
11	and transgression	the fact that these small hairs are all of equal size
12	and sin	the lack of hair in the mouth
13	and acquits	the lower layer of the beard

It will be noted that these two (#8 and #13) are the upper and lower layers of the beard proper. As opposed to all the other parts of the beard in this table, these two extend downward.

These two *mazalot* couple and bestow beneficence on *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*. This is why it is said that these hairs reach the level of the navel [of *Arich Anpin*], for they impart beneficence to *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, which exist from the level of the navel and downward.

The word for “storing [kindness]” [*notzer, nun-tzadik-reish*] may be permuted to spell the word for “will” [*ratzon, reish-tzadik-vav-nun*].

There is an implied *vav* in between the *nun* and the *tzadik* of *notzer*. This affords an association between this attribute of mercy and *Arich Anpin*, the *partzuf* of will.

This is because *binah* is termed “will,” and it is the attribute of *chesed*. For this reason the high priest was robed in eight vestments. In general, the beard of the high priest is associated with *binah*, the eighth *sefirah*.

The eighth attribute is “storing *chesed*,” and we have just noted that “storing” is a permutation of “will.” There must, therefore, be a connection between “will” and *chesed*. The connecting link is *binah*.

In the verse, “like the beard of Aaron, cascading down over his garments,”<sup>5</sup> we see that the beard is associated with Aaron, the first high priest. The word for “his garments” in this verse [*midotav*] also can mean “his *midot*” or “his emotions.” Thus, we have the image of Aaron the high priest with his beard flowing into the *midot*. In light of what we have seen above, this makes us identify Aaron with *Arich Anpin*, whose beard flows into *Z’eir Anpin*, the *partzuf* of the *midot*.

As we said, *midot* can mean both emotions and garments. However, the high priest wore eight garments, while we usually speak of only seven *midot*. The eighth *midah*, then, is the next *sefirah* in the series, which, if we begin with *malchut* and count upwards, is *binah*. In Aaron, or *Arich Anpin*, we may thus consider *binah* together with the *midot*.

The priest in his service elicits Divine goodwill, as is seen in many verses throughout the Torah.

As we have also explained previously, the priest (*kohen*) expressed the Divine attribute of *chesed*, while the Levite (*levi*) expressed the attribute of *gevurah*.

The beard moreover is a garment, as it is written, “His robe was like white snow, [and the hair of his head was like pure wool]”<sup>6</sup> and the beard is the attribute of “and acquits.”

The verse quoted is a description of “the Ancient of Days,” which, although usually as a term refers to the *partzuf* of *Atik Yomin*, is evidently taken here to refer to *Arich Anpin* (which, after all, enclothes *Atik Yomin* just as the other *partzufim* of *Atzilut* enclothe it). The “robe” in this verse is understood to be a white, flowing beard. The second half of the verse speaks of the hair of the head being like “pure wool.” The word for used for “pure” or “clean” here is *naka*, Aramaic for *nakeh* (the whole verse, like most of the book of Daniel, is in Aramaic), the word for “acquits” in the list of the 13 attributes of mercy.

These two *mazalot* couple as one, [as mentioned above].

Now, these two *mazalot* are the two drops [of anointing oil] that hung at the end of Aaron’s beard, as our sages have said.<sup>7</sup> This is the mystical meaning of the verse: “It is like the precious oil upon the head, cascading down upon the beard.”<sup>8</sup> The oil is the light of *chochmah*, as the sages say, “whoever is accustomed to use oil merits *chochmah*.”<sup>9</sup>

And as we have explained previously, *chochmah* is the seminal drop of insight that enters the conscious mind as a concentrated essence from the super-conscious. This is similar to oil, which is the concentrated essence of the olive.

All the brains are receptacles for *chochmah*, and are called by its name. This is the mystical meaning of [the phrase from the above-quoted verse,] “like the precious oil.”

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<sup>5</sup> Psalms 133:2.

<sup>6</sup> Daniel 7:9.

<sup>7</sup> *Horiot* 12a.

<sup>8</sup> Psalms *ibid*.

<sup>9</sup> *Menachot* 85a.

The meaning is as follows: The order in which the *partzufim* enclothe *Arich Anpin* is that *Abba* enclothes his right arm and [the right] half of his torso, while *Ima* enclothes his left arm and [the left] half of his torso. [Both extend downward and enclothe him] as far as his navel. This is the mystical significance of the *tefilin* that we put on our left hand, for we elevate thereby the *Nukva* into *Ima*, which enclothes the left hand of *Arich Anpin*.

*Z'eir Anpin* enclothes the right thigh [of *Arich Anpin*] up to his navel, while *Nukva d'Z'eir Anpin* enclothes his left thigh up to his navel. This is the meaning of [the statement in the *Zohar*:] “he is with *netzach* and she is with *hod*.”

*Netzach* and *hod* correspond to the right and left legs, respectively.

The beard of *Arich Anpin* extends down to his navel, where is found the head of *Z'eir Anpin*. This is the mystical meaning of the expression “upon the head” [in the verse quoted above], for the Divine beneficence flows onto the head of *Z'eir Anpin*.

The verse thus reads, mystically: “Like the precious oil—i.e., *chochmah*, suspended as drops on the end of the beard of *Arich Anpin*, that is on top of the head of *Z'eir Anpin*.”

But before it reaches the head of *Z'eir Anpin* it “cascades down the beard,” meaning that it ascends to [the eighth part of the beard,] “storing [*chesed*].”

For this attribute of Divine mercy corresponds to the upper layer of the beard proper.

This is the mystical meaning of the [continuation of the verse quoted above:] “running down over his garments.” The word for “his garments” [*midotav*] can be read as “the *midot* of *vav-yud*,” meaning the hairs, as mentioned above. That is why the word “over” [*al*] is used here, for it refers to the hairs themselves.

The *yud* signifies the hollow channel of the hair and the *yud* signifies the light pulsing through it. Thus, the verse describes the light of *chochmah* flowing down the beard.

[Once it has received the influx of *chochmah* from *Arich Anpin* via its beard,] *Z'eir Anpin* then gives it in turn to *Nukva*. This is the mystical meaning of the verse: “Open for me, my bride..., for my head is full of dew.”<sup>10</sup> The dew refers to the light which flows from the hair of his head, whose numerical value is the same as that of the word for “dew” [*tal*, 39].

[This verse continues:] “my locks with the drops of the night.” These [locks] are the hair on the back of the head [of *Z'eir Anpin*], which hang down until they reach the head of *Nukva*, behind him. This is the mystical meaning of “the drops of the night,” i.e., the drops [of *chochmah*] that reach “night,” i.e., *malchut*.

Day and night are masculine and feminine images, and therefore correspond to the male and female archetypes of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*.

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<sup>10</sup> Song of Songs 5:2.

Now, when Isaac and Rebecca were praying [to G-d for children], they were addressing these two attributes [of Divine mercy]. This is why the expression “entreated” is used [instead of the more usual “prayed”]. As our sages say: “Why are the prayers of the righteous compared to a pitchfork? To indicate that just as a pitchfork turns the grain from place to place in the barn, so do the prayers of the righteous turn the mind of the Holy One, blessed be He, from the attribute of judgement to the attribute of mercy.”<sup>11</sup>

The root of the word for “entreat” [*ayin-tav-reish*] also means “pitchfork.”

Isaac was directing his prayers [to G-d] via the [thirteenth] *mazal*, “and He acquits,” for from there he [emulating *Z’eir Anpin*] had to direct Divine beneficence [in this case, fertility] to his wife.

Rebecca, on the other hand, directed her prayers [to G-d] via the [eighth] *mazal*, “storing [*chesed*],” which is the male of the two.

This was in order to elicit Divine mercy upon her husband.

Each one prayed opposite to the other. This is why it says “opposite his wife.”

—translated from *Likutei Torah*

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<sup>11</sup> *Sukah* 14a.

## *Parashat Toldot* [second installment]

This *parashah* contains the story of how Isaac, when he was old, wished to bless his son Esau, and how his wife, Rebecca, tricked him into blessing Jacob instead.

*When Isaac was old and his eyesight failing, he called Esau, his elder son, and said to him, "My son," and he answered him, "I am here." He said, "Look, I have now grown old...so now, please...go out to the field and catch some game for me. Prepare it for me as delicacies in a way that I like...so my soul may bless you before I die."*

*Rebecca was listening while Isaac was speaking to Esau.... Esau went off to catch some game... Rebecca told Jacob, her son, "I have just heard your father speaking to Esau, your brother... So now, my son, listen to me, to what I command you. Go now to the flock and take two of my choice kid-goats, and I will prepare them as delicacies for your father in a way that he likes...so that he may bless you before his death."*

*Jacob said to Rebecca, his mother, "...Maybe my father...will consider me an imposter, and then I shall bring a curse upon myself and not a blessing."*

*His mother said to him, "Let your curse be upon me, my son. Only listen to me, and go take from my [goats]."*

The allegorical explanation of this is as follows: When Adam [and Eve] sinned, in order to be rectified they were reincarnated into the three patriarchs and three Matriarchs.

The sin of the tree of knowledge of good and evil comprised the three cardinal sins that a Jew is commanded to lay down his life rather than transgress: idolatry, murder, and infidelity.<sup>1</sup>

Abraham rectified the sin of idolatry when he was thrown into the fiery furnace in Ur, as it is written, "and you shall burn their Asherah-trees in fire."<sup>2</sup>

The Asherah-tree was an idol. We see here that the destruction of idolatry is by fire, and Abraham submitted to the fire rather than serve idols. He thus rectified this aspect of Adam's sin.

[Abraham was not subjected to this ordeal] because of himself, but rather because of the spark of Ishmael that was still present within him. This is the mystical meaning of our sages' saying, "the righteous are caught in the sin of the generation."<sup>3</sup>

This saying of our sages explains why the righteous are sometimes seen to suffer: sometimes, it is simply because their generation needs to be rectified for some general sin and they, being part of this generation, are considered guilty by association. (Evidently, this means that they failed to exert the influence they could have to keep their contemporaries from sinning, opting instead to tolerate the generation's sin and concentration on their own spirituality.) Mystically, this refers to the fact that a righteous individual can have to suffer because he "hosts" ("tolerates") a pernicious presence within him.

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<sup>1</sup> Zohar 3:111b.

<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy 12:3.

<sup>3</sup> Kallah 6.

Thus, when Ishmael issued from Abraham's body, he revealed his true nature, as it is written, "And Sarah saw that the son of Hagar the Egyptian was making sport."<sup>4</sup> Our sages said that this means that he was serving idols.<sup>5</sup>

When Abraham saw that Ishmael was wicked and had incurred the death penalty [for serving idols], he prayed, "If only Ishmael would live before You,"<sup>6</sup> i.e., would repent. And so it was, that Ishmael indeed repented, as is known.<sup>7</sup>

Subsequently, the spark of goodness present in Ishmael issued from him as Yitra the Ishmaelite, who married the daughter of Nachash. Understand this.

King David was challenged by his son, Absalom. "Absalom appointed Amasa over the army in place of Joab; Amasa was the son of a man named Yitra the Israelite, who consorted with Avigal daughter of Nachash, the sister of Joab's mother Tzeruyah."<sup>8</sup> Tzeruyah and Avigal were David's sisters,<sup>9</sup> so Amasa was his nephew through Avigal, and Nachash was evidently another name for David's father, Jesse.

Yitra is also called "Yeter the Ishmaelite,"<sup>10</sup> for although Jewish, he lived in the land of the Ishmaelites (which is why *they* called him *the Israelite*).

[Abraham then had] Isaac, who was his good spark, but present with *him* was a spark of murder. He therefore laid down his life as a burnt offering upon the altar [to be slaughtered]. Since [this murderous spark] was not his sin but that of someone else [dormant within him], he was spared, and a ram was offered in his stead.

Afterwards, this evil impurity issued from him as Esau. Isaac, too, wanted to bless [his son Esau] and thereby cause him to repent [and be as righteous] as Jacob.

Since Adam had been cursed because of Eve, the blessings were given to Jacob through [the efforts of] his mother [Rebecca], who was a reincarnation of Eve.

By being a conduit of blessing, Rebecca rectified the sin of Eve, who brought a curse upon the world.

They [i.e., the blessings] were not transmitted to him by his father Isaac, for Isaac thought that Jacob had not yet rectified reality. And it is known that "when this one falls, the other one rises." Therefore, [Isaac reasoned that Esau, the personification of] the snake, was fit to receive the blessings.

Since, in Isaac's eyes, Jacob had not done his job by rectifying reality, he was in a low state, and therefore Esau, his nemesis, was in an exalted state, fit to receive and capitalize on the blessings.

Esau, after all, is a reincarnation of Cain, and that is why [Cain] killed his brother Abel with his mouth, as is known.

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<sup>4</sup> Genesis 21:9.

<sup>5</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 53; *Zohar* 1:118b.

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 17:18.

<sup>7</sup> *Bava Batra* 16a.

<sup>8</sup> 2 Samuel 17:25.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Chronicles 2:16.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Chronicles 2:17.

He bit him profusely, not knowing where his soul would leave him.<sup>11</sup> Esau is the image of a wild man “whose game was in his mouth.”<sup>12</sup>

This is the meaning of:<sup>13</sup>

“*He called Esau, his older son...*,” i.e., Esau was like the older of the original brothers, Cain.

“...and he said to him, ‘My son...,’” meaning: you are the reincarnation of Cain, the son of Adam.

“...and he answered him, ‘I am here, ’” i.e., yes, I am.

He then commanded him [to bring him game], for just as Cain took the [untamed] land [while Abel pastured the domesticated flocks], Esau likewise was “a hunter, a man of the field.”<sup>14</sup> He therefore spent his time in the fields killing, as did Cain.

And since Cain came from the impurity of the snake [who had raped Eve], which caused Adam to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, tasting two flavors [i.e., good and evil]—[Isaac] therefore commanded [Esau] to “make me delicacies,” in the plural, implying two flavors. “Just as Adam hungered for two flavors, make me [a dish] of two flavors: good and evil.”

Thus, Isaac was attempting to have Esau rectify the murder-aspect of Adam’s sin by having him bring him a two-flavored dish acquired by killing. Isaac’s eating the two-flavored dish for positive purposes (to bless Esau and thus continue the line of Abraham and the work of rectifying the world) would rectify Adam’s eating a “two-flavored dish” (the tree of knowledge of good and evil) for negative motives.

It is an accepted principle of Biblical exegesis that whenever the Torah uses the plural, it implies two of the referent. This is so because we assume the Biblical text intends to be explicit, rather than vague, and the minimum a plural can imply is two.

For [Isaac] thought that the world had not yet been rectified, [as stated above]. Jacob also thought that the sin of Adam had not yet been rectified. Therefore, he reasoned, if he tricked his father, he would be adding iniquity to the existing [and unrectified] sin [of Adam]. [He was afraid] this would bring a curse upon him, the opposite of what the blessing would bring upon him, i.e., the rectification of Adam’s curse. This is the meaning of what Jacob said: “...and I will bring upon myself a curse and not a blessing.”

His mother then told him that the time had come to rectify this aspect of the sin of Adam. She therefore told him, “Listen to my voice.” In so doing, she was rectifying Adam’s sin [of listening to his wife, as it is written:] “And to Adam, [G-d] said, ‘Since you listened to the voice of your wife...’”<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Zohar 1:54b.

<sup>12</sup> Genesis 25:28.

<sup>13</sup> Genesis 27:1.

<sup>14</sup> Genesis 25:27.

<sup>15</sup> Genesis 3:17.

Adam sinned by listening to his wife for improper purposes. By having her son listen to her for proper purposes, Rebecca sought to rectify this aspect of Adam's sin.

In this context, Rebecca's words, "Upon me be your curse, my son," mean "the curse you suffered in Adam's time is my fault."

"I, in my incarnation as Eve, caused Adam to be cursed. I am now rectifying this."

This also explains why she continues, "*Only* listen to my voice...." [The word "only"] limits her words, [implying that "*this time* you *should* listen, while last time you should not have"] because that was listening for bad purposes.

And because the sin of Adam was that [Eve] squeezed grapes and gave him [to drink],<sup>16</sup> so too, here, "[Jacob] brought [Isaac] wine and he drank." [This was real wine,] not one-day old grape juice with its dregs.

He who understands will understand all this at length. I copied this from the book *Etz HaDa'at* by Rabbi Chaim Vital.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>16</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 19:8; *Zohar* 3:236a.

## *Parashat Toldot* [third installment]

The following is a continuation of the first installment, which we suggest the reader review before proceeding. In short, we learned that there are two *mazal*'s (channels of Divine flow) in the beard of *Arich Anpin*, the eighth and the thirteenth. Relative to each other, these *mazal*'s are masculine and feminine, respectively. Isaac directed his prayers to G-d via the 13<sup>th</sup>, female rectification in order to draw Divine beneficence to his wife Rebecca, while Rebecca directed her prayers to G-d via the 8<sup>th</sup>, male rectification in order to draw Divine beneficence to her husband, Isaac.

An alternative explanation of this phenomenon is as follows:

The word for “opposite” [*nochach*, in the verse “Isaac entreated G-d *opposite* his wife, because she was barren”<sup>1</sup>] is written without a *vav* [to indicate the “o” vowel], and thus its numerical value is the same as that as the word *mazal* [plus the *kolel*].

*Nochach*: *nun-kaf-chet* = 50 + 20 + 8 = 78.

*Mazal*: *mem-zayin-lamed* = 40 + 7 + 30 = 77.

This indicates that Isaac directed his prayers [to G-d] via the thirteenth *mazal*, from which his wife needed to receive [Divine beneficence in order to conceive].

The Torah uses the verb “he entreated” [instead of “he prayed”] because the letters of its root can be permuted to form the Aramaic word for “hair.”

The word for “he entreated” is *vayetar*, which is spelled *vav-yud-ayin-tav-reish*. The verbal root of this word is *ayin-tav-reish*; when these letters are rearranged as *tav-ayin-reish*, they form the root of the Aramaic word for “hair,” *ta'ara* (*tav-ayin-reish-alef*). Beard hair, we have seen, is the metaphor used to describe the Divine energy that issues from *Arich Anpin* when its intellect descends into its emotions.

This “hair” refers to the Name *Adni* spelled out, the numerical value of which is the same as that of this word.

*Adni* spelled out is *alef-lamed-pei dalet-lamed-tav nun-vav-nun yud-vav-dalet*. The numerical value of this is:

$(1 + 30 + 80) + (4 + 30 + 400) + (50 + 6 + 50) + (10 + 6 + 4) = 111 + 434 + 106 + 20 = 671$ .

*Ta'ara*: *tav-ayin-reish-alef* = 400 + 70 + 200 + 1 = 671.

This refers to the *mazal* of “and He acquits.”

The *mazal* “and He acquits” is the 13<sup>th</sup> of the 13 rectifications of the beard of *Arich Anpin*, as we have seen. This is the feminine *mazal*, and is therefore associated with the Name *Adni*, which is associated with *malchut* or the *partzuf* of *Nukva*, the feminine principle.

The *alef* is missing from the word for “and he entreated” because it is split into two, forming two sets of the letters *vav-yud*, one present in [the 8<sup>th</sup> *mazal*,] “storing,” and one present in [the 13<sup>th</sup> *mazal*,] “and He acquits.”

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 25:21.

The letter *alef* can be seen as formed by a diagonal *vav*, or straight line, together with two small *yud*'s connected to it above and below it. If we further envision the middle, diagonal line splitting into two parallel lines, the *alef* splits symmetrically along its diagonal into an upper *yud-vav* and a lower *yud-vav*. The *alef* of *ta'ara* is thus replaced by one *yud-vav* pair, and we thus have all the letters that spell *vayetar* ("and he entreated"): *vav-yud-ayin-tav-reish*. We have said that Isaac was praying via the 13<sup>th</sup> *mazal*; we now see how the verb describing his act of prayer thus alludes to this.

This is the mystical meaning of the word "and he entreated," which refers to the *mazal* of "and He acquits," via which Isaac prayed, as I explained.

Now, there are twelve letters in the spelling-out of the Name *Adni*, which is associated with the *mazal* of "and He acquits" [as we have stated]. These correlate to the twelve [letters] that the *mazal* of "storing" comprises, as we have seen.

The twelve letters that the *mazal* of "storing" comprises are the twelve letters in the three Names *Havayah* that indicate the Divine consciousness of the three *sefirot* of the mind, which manifest as the beard when the intellect descends into the emotions.

Therefore, Rebecca was worthy of giving birth to twelve tribes, but because she said, "what is this [*zeh*] for me?"<sup>2</sup> because of the pain of her pregnancy, and also because Esau destroyed her womb, her son Jacob was privileged to father the twelve tribes [instead of her].

The numerical value of the word for "this" (*zeh*, *zayin-hei*) is 12. So Rebecca's statement can mean, "what do I need the twelve for?"

With the above in mind, we can understand the sages' injunction, "Eat bread with salt."<sup>3</sup> This statement alludes these two *mazal*'s. The [usual] word for "bread" is *lechem*, whose numerical value is the same as that of the three Names *Havayah* [that comprise the masculine *mazal* "storing" and] whose numerical value is that of the Aramaic word for *mazal* [used in the sages' statement regarding *mazal*].

Although the word for bread used in the sages' statement about eating bread with salt is *pat*, the more common word for bread is *lechem*.

*Lechem*: *lamed-chet-mem* = 30 + 8 + 40 = 78.

The numerical value of the Name *Havayah* is 26. 3 x 26 = 78.

The Aramaic for *mazal*, *mazla*, is spelled *mem-zayin-lamed-alef* = 40 + 7 + 30 + 1 = 78.

As we said previously, the Divine energy in the beard hairs derives from the intellect, which comprises three *sefirot* whose Divine energy is channeled via three Names *Havayah*.

"Bread" is the general metaphor for food and material sustenance. The sages state<sup>4</sup> that there are three things in life that are dependent upon *mazal*: children, health and longevity, and sustenance. This statement is in Aramaic, so the word used for *mazal* in it is its Aramaic equivalent, *mazla*.

The word for "salt" [*melach*] alludes also to the three Names *Havayah* that comprise the 12 letters present in the [feminine] *mazal* of "and He acquits."

The word for "salt" (*melach*) is a permutation of the word for "bread" (*lechem*). Its numerical value is therefore also 78.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 25:22.

<sup>3</sup> *Avot* 6:4.

<sup>4</sup> *Moed Katan* 28a.

The union of these two *mazal*'s draws down sustenance.

Sustenance is the “offspring” of the union of the male and female *mazal*'s.

[The sages' statement continues:] “...and drink water with measure.” Water refers to the states of *chesed*, which extend [of themselves] without limit. But “the black candle,” i.e., the five states of *gevurah*, limits them.

“The black candle” (*butzina dekardanuta*) is a Zoharic metaphor for the five states of *gevurah*.

They thus said, “drink water with measure,” as in the verse “[Do no injustice in judgment, neither] with length, with weights, nor with liquid measure.”<sup>5</sup>

The word for “liquid measure” (*mesurah*) is the same as that for “measure” in the sages' statement about drinking water in measure.

The meaning is that *chesed* must be tempered with *gevurah* in order for its goodness to act effectively in the world.

But bread, which is one of the three things [dependent upon *mazal*]*—i.e., children, health, and sustenance—is not dependent upon one's merit, which is an expression of the states of gevurah.*

*Gevurah* is the principle of limitation, i.e., the evaluation of whether or not the recipient is worthy of receiving the beneficence of *chesed*, and to what degree. Thus, the sages' statement can be seen as a contrast between bread and water. Water is apportioned “in measure,” i.e., in accordance with the recipients worth and merits. Bread, however, is not.

For the numerical value of the word for merit [*zechut*] is twice that of *gevurah*, plus the *kolel*.

*Zechut*: zayin-kaf-vav-tav = 7 + 20 + 6 + 400 = 433.

*Gevurah*: gimel-beit-vav-reish-hei = 3 + 2 + 6 + 200 + 5 = 216. 2 x 216 = 432.

These three things [children, health, and sustenance] are needed greatly by the world. They are therefore not dependent on [their recipients'] merits but on the *mazal*'s, i.e., the two *mazal*'s we have mentioned.

The sages listed [these three things] in the order they did [*—children, health, and sustenance—*] because children are associated with *da'at*, which extends down through the spinal cord, while health issues from *Ima*, for life, i.e., intellect, issues from there, and sustenance issues from *Abba*. They thus listed them in ascending order.

Marital relations are carnal “knowledge” (*da'at*) as in the verse, “And Adam *knew* his wife, Eve.”<sup>6</sup>

Intellect is the life-force that enlivens reality. People act with enthusiasm and vitality when they understand the value and purpose of what they are doing, and the constant flow of new understanding keeps life from getting boring. Indeed, the zest for life that accompanies intellect is probably a major factor in health and longevity.

Sustenance issues from *Abba* for selflessness (*bitul*), the experience of *chochmah*, is the prerequisite for success in worldly endeavors. In order to receive the Divine blessing of success in pursuit of a livelihood, we must

<sup>5</sup> Leviticus 19:35.

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 4:1.

dedicate our efforts to G-d's purpose is making the world into His home and conducting our affairs in accordance with His will, i.e., following the Torah's laws and intentions.

These three are dependent upon the coupling of these two *mazal*'s, for the world depends upon them. Were they to be dependent upon [our merit, as expressed in] the states of *gevurah*, the world would be lost. Other aspects of life, however, which are not so essential, are dependent upon our merit.

Thus, even if our merit is insufficient, we can still pray to G-d for these three essentials, relying upon His mercy to override our lack of merits.

—translated from *Likutei Torah* and *Sefer HaLikutim*

## *Parashat Toldot* [fourth installment]

In this *parashah*, the Torah describes how Isaac re-dug the wells that his father, Abraham had dug. The Philistines had stopped them up.<sup>1</sup>

The [mystical] significance of these wells is as follows. Isaac's "servants" are the states of *gevurah* within *Ima*, which dig out the vessel of feminine waters in *Nukva*, making her into a vessel. This is why Isaac exerted himself so much in this digging process.

As we know, the three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, personified the three primary emotional attributes, *chesed*, *gevurah*, and *tiferet*, respectively. Occasionally, they are associated as well with the intellectual antecedents of these attributes, *chochmah*, *binah*, and *da'at*, since the three aspects of the intellect exhibit the properties of the emotional attributes that are derived from them.

The states of *gevurah* within *Ima*, then, are the "servants" of Isaac, i.e., the forces that transmit the *gevurah* in Isaac (i.e., *Ima*) further. Specifically, what is under discussion here is how they "deflower" the feminine *partzuf* of *Nukva*. This is an essential stage in *Nukva*'s development, maturing her into a full-fledged female, capable of arousing the male principle to mate with her and becoming pregnant.

"Feminine waters" is the allegorical term for "arousal from below," the feminine arousal of the male principle.

Now, when *Nukva* is dug out, she is open, like the *hei*.

The word *Nukva* is related to the word for "hole" (*nekev*), alluding to the idea that the feminine principle must be open to receive the input of the male principle. As we know, the *partzuf* of *Nukva* is associated with the final *hei* of the Name *Havayah* (and even more generally, both *hei*'s of the Name *Havayah* are feminine relative to the masculine *yud* and *vav*). The letter *hei* evinces this quality of openness inasmuch as it is distinguished from the similar letter *chet* by the opening in its left side.

But when our sins separate [us from G-d], "the Philistines stopped them up,"<sup>2</sup> and [the *hei*] becomes a *chet*.

The Philistines personified the attribute of over-indulgence in the sensuality of this world. This is alluded to by their name, which is derived from the root *pei-lamed-shin*, meaning "breaking through" or "overdoing it."

Over-indulgence in the sensuality of this world renders a person spiritually closed and "clogged up," impervious to Divine inspiration and insensitive to the inner reality of life and its experiences. This is graphically represented by the letter *chet*, in which the open "hole" of the *hei* has been closed.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse, "the well that the princes dug."<sup>3</sup> [The "princes"] are the father [Abraham] and son [Isaac].

The verse quoted refers to the Well of Miriam. In the plain meaning of the verse, the "princes" are Moses and Aaron, who restored the well with Moses' stick after it disappeared when Miriam died. Allegorically, the "well" is *Nukva*, which was "dug," i.e., made into an open vessel, by the forces of *chesed* and *gevurah*. The forces of *chesed* do not open the well permanently, as is seen by the fact that after Abraham dug his wells the Philistines were able to stop them up. The experience of Divine *chesed*, the experience of being loved by G-d, may serve as an initial inspiration, but it is not strong enough to truly open a person up to the spiritual life in a lasting way. This happens

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 26:15-22.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* v. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Numbers 21:18.

only when we experience Divine *gevurah* also, an experience of G-d's withdrawal of some manifestation of His love because of our unworthiness. This lets us know that we have to be serious about our commitment to G-d's calling.

This is also [gives us] the mystical meaning of the verse, "I am disgusted with my life because of the Hittite girls."<sup>4</sup>

Rebecca said this to Isaac about Esau's wives. It was her reason for sending Jacob away (safe from Esau's wrath after Rebecca and Jacob tricked him out of Isaac's blessings) to her family in Aramea to find a wife.

["My life" alludes to] Isaac, who was the end [*keitz*] of the "live one" [*chai*], i.e., *yesod*. ["Hittite" alludes to] the letter *chet* and the left channel of the [male reproductive organ, associated with] *yesod*.

As we have seen previously, the male reproductive organ is called "the live one" because it "comes alive" (i.e., becomes erect). The "end" of the "live one" is the "crown of the *yesod*" (anatomically, the glans of the organ) that is exposed by circumcision. Circumcision is the sign of the covenant between G-d and the Jewish people, the pact between them obligating us (and enabling us) to always remain "open" and sensitive to spirituality, just as the circumcised sexual organ renders the husband more sensitive to his wife's experience of relations and not focused solely on his own sensual enjoyment.

Isaac (whose name alludes to this sensitivity) is thus the antithesis of the Philistines. This sensitivity to Divinity caused Rebecca, Isaac's feminine side, to be disgusted with Esau's idolatrous wives. The word for "Hittite" is *benot Chet*, which can also be understood to mean, "daughters of the letter *chet*" or "*chet*-girls," i.e., girls who evince the impenetrability of the letter *chet*.

In the male, the urethra serves two purposes: it is the path urine follows out of the body from the bladder and the path the semen follows out of the body from the organs in which it is produced. From the perspective of Kabbalah, the opening of the bladder into the urethra is the "left channel" of the reproductive organ and the openings of the ejaculatory ducts into the urethra are its "right channel."

The closing of the *hei*, making it into a *chet*, is reflected in the "closing" of the right channel of the reproductive organ, allowing it to serve as the urinary channel.

—translated from *Likutei Torah* and *Sefer HaLikutim*

\* \* \*

The following passage is truncated and appears to be not finally edited, but its main purpose appear to be to establish the associations between Isaac's wells and the spellings out of the Name *Havayah*.

There are four wells mentioned in this section of the Torah:<sup>5</sup>

Isaac went away from there and encamped in the Gerar Valley, and settled there. He re-dug the wells of water that had been dug in the days of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had plugged up after Abraham's death, and gave them the same names that his father had given them. Isaac's servants then dug in the valley, and found there a well of fresh spring water. The shepherds of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's shepherds, saying, "The water is ours." [Isaac] named the well **Eisek** ["contention"], because they had contended with him. They dug another well, and they quarreled over that one, too, so [Isaac] named it **Sitnah** ["harassment"]. He moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it, so he named it **Rehovot** ["open spaces"], saying, "For now G-d has granted us ample space and we shall be fruitful in the land."

From there, he went up to Beer-sheba. G-d appeared to him that night and said, "I am the G-d of your father Abraham. Fear not, for I am with you. I will bless you and make your descendants numerous, for the sake of My servant Abraham." [Isaac] built an altar there and invoked G-d by name. He pitched his

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 27:46.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 26:17-33.

tent there, and there Isaac's servants dug a well. Abimelech came to him from Gerar, together with a group of his friends and Phicol, chief of his troops. Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, seeing that you hated me and sent me away from you?" They replied, "We have indeed seen that G-d has been with you, so we said: Let the solemn oath between us now [continue] between us and you, and let us make a covenant with you, that you will do us no evil, just as we did not harm you, and just as we treated you only with kindness and let you leave in peace. From now on, be you blessed by G-d!"

[Isaac] prepared them a feast and they ate and drank. They got up early in the morning and made an oath to each other. Isaac then sent them on their way, and they departed from him in peace. On that very day, Isaac's servants came and told him about the well they had been digging, and they said to him, "We have found water!" He named it **Shivah** ["oath"]. The name of the city is therefore Beer-sheba, to this very day.

Only the first two are mentioned in this passage, plus the phrase "a well of fresh spring water" that precedes and describes the first well, Eisek. The correspondences that will be made are as follows:

Eisek	72-Name
Sitnah	63-Name
a well of fresh spring water	45-Name

The mystical significance of the wells is as follows.

The first state of *chesed* is *keter*, and it was manifest as the well that was named *Eisek*. This state of *chesed* is associated with the 72-Name, which possesses four *yud*'s, whose combined numerical value—when each *yud* is subdivided into another *yud*—is 400.

The reference to the states of *chesed* is not developed in this passage.

The numerical value of *yud* is 10, so  $4 \times (10 \times 10) = 400$ .

When [the value of] the four *yud*'s are subtracted from the 72-Name, the difference is 32. When this value is combined with 28, [the number of letters used in] the spelling out of the spelling out of the 72-Name, the sum is 70. This is the numerical value of the letter *ayin*, the first letter of the name *Eisek*.

As seen in the following chart, 28 letters are used in the second spelling out of the 72-Name.

yud	10	= 4 letters	yud	10	= 10 letters	yud	10	= 28 letters
						vav	6	
						dalet	4	
vav	6					vav	6	
						yud	10	
						vav	6	
dalet	4					dalet	4	
						lamed	30	
						tav	400	
hei	5					hei	5	
						yud	10	
						yud	10	
yud	10					vav	6	
						dalet	4	
						vav	6	
vav	6					yud	10	
				vav	6			
				yud	10			
vav	6			vav	6			
				dalet	4			
				vav	6			
hei	5			yud	10			
				vav	6			
				hei	5			
yud	10			yud	10			
				vav	6			
				dalet	4			
	26		72		610			

Since there are three *yud*'s used to spell out this Name [once], they combine together to produce an [expanded] numerical value of 300, [the value of the letter *shin*]. The *yud* that is part of the original Name produces an [expanded] numerical value of 100, [the value of the letter *kuf*]. Thus, we have the complete name *Eisek*.

*Eisek* is spelled *Ayin-shin-kuf*.

We now proceed to another derivation of the name *Eisek*.

If we take these four *yud*'s together with the 72-Name itself, and subtract the two *kolel*'s, we have *Eisek* a second time.

$$400 + 72 - 2 = 470.$$

$$\text{Eisek: ayin-shin-kuf} = 70 + 300 + 100 = 470.$$

And now, a third derivation:

Finally, the numerical value of the word for “the well” [*ha-be'eir*, 208] is the same as that of the name *Isaac* [*Yitzchak*], and in Isaac there are ten Names *Havayah*, i.e., the 5 states of *chesed* and the five states of *gevurah*. Their combined

numerical value is 260. When this is added to the value of *Yitzchak* plus the two *kolel*'s, the sum is again the numerical value of *Eisek*.

*Ha-be'eir: hei-beit-alef-reish* =  $5 + 2 + 1 + 200 = 208$ .

*Yitzchak: yud-tzadik-chet-kuf* =  $10 + 90 + 8 + 100 = 208$ .

We have seen many times that the five states of *chesed* and *gevurah* within *Ima* are manifest as Names *Havayah*.

$26 \times 10 = 260$ .

$260 + 208 + 2 = 470$ .

This is the [mystical] meaning of the verse, “for they contended with him,” meaning that “together with him they formed the word *Eisek*.”

The form for “they contended” is *hitasku*, meaning “they participated in an *eisek*,” a contention.

Now for another point about *Eisek*.

Three times the value of *Eisek* is 1410.

$470 \times 3 = 1410$ .

This is the [mystical] meaning of what [G-d] said to Moses: “Behold, there is a place *with Me* [*iti*],”<sup>6</sup> meaning, at the end of 1410, which is the root of Moses.

This verse was spoken by G-d to Moses when he was on Mt. Sinai. The word *iti* is spelled *alef-tav-yud*. Since the word *alef* means “a thousand,” this spelling can be interpreted as  $1000 + 400 + 10 = 1410$ .

The allusion to Moses might be based on the passage in the Midrash in which it is stated that Moses came into the world at the end of a thousand generations, just as the Torah was given after a thousand generations, meaning that G-d found no one as suited as Moses to receive the Torah.<sup>7</sup> But this does not explain the extra 410, and how that is related to the “root” of Moses.

Again, if we consider the *yud* apart from the four letters of the Name *Havayah*, the sum is 410.

Presumably, this means considering how each of the four *yud*'s used to spell the 72-Name is subdivided into 10 sub-aspects (corresponding to the 10 *sefirot*). This gives  $4 \times 10 \times 10 = 400$ . On top of this, we consider the original *yud* of the Name *Havayah* separately, whose numerical value is 10. This totals 410.

Then, if we consider how the ten letters [used to spell out the 72-Name] are each divided into another *yud*, the result is 1000.

Each of the ten letters subdivides into 100 subdivisions and 1000 sub-subdivisions.

Together, the sum [of these two operations] is 1410. This is alluded to in the verse, “Behold, there is a place with Me,” as stated.

Furthermore, the numerical value of the spelling out of the spelling out of the 72-Name is 610. The numerical value of the Name itself is 72. If the sum of these two numbers is doubled, the product is 1364.

$2 (610 + 72) = 1364$ .

<sup>6</sup> Exodus 33:21.

<sup>7</sup> *Kohelet Rabbah* 7:40.

Then consider the spelling out of the [72-]Name, which uses 10 letters, and the spelling out of the spelling out, which uses 28 letters, and the 4 original letters. The sum of these three numbers is 42. The three *kolel*'s [for these three values] plus the *kolel* for their sum yields the value of the Name *Adni* [65].

$$42 + 4 = 46.$$

$$\text{Adni: Alef-dalet-nun-yud} = 1 + 4 + 50 + 10 = 65.$$

It is not clear to me how we are to arrive at 65 from this calculation, or what the significance of this in this context is.<sup>8</sup>

The mystical significance of [the second well,] *Sitnah*, is as follows:

Three *yud*'s are used to spell out the 63-Name.

The 63-Name is *yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-alef-vav hei-yud*.

Their combined [expanded] numerical value is 300. [If we add to this] the numerical value of the 63-Name plus the *kolel*, the total is the numerical value of *Sitnah*.

$$300 + 63 + 1 = 364.$$

$$\text{Sitnah: sin-tet-nun-hei} = 300 + 9 + 50 + 5 = 364.$$

Again, consider the three *yud*'s, each of which [when spelled out] forms an *alef*.

The *yud* is spelled out *yud-vav-dalet*. These three letters can be seen graphically as the form of the letter *alef*: The *yud* is the upper arm of the *alef*; the *vav* is the diagonal bar of the *alef*, and the *dalet* (inverted) is the lower arm of the *alef*.

We thus have three *alef*'s, the combined numerical value of which, when spelled out, is 333. To this we must add 30 and the *kolel* to reach 364.

When the letter *alef* is spelled out, we have: *alef-lamed-pei* =  $1 + 30 + 80 = 111$ .

$$3 \times 111 = 333.$$

$$333 + 30 + 1 = 364.$$

Presumably, the required extra 30 in this calculation comes from the values of the three *yud*'s.

Again, consider the three *yud*'s, this time each subdivided into ten. Their combined [expanded] numerical value is 300. They are three *alef*'s, which in turn signify 3 Names *Ekyeh*. When [the combined expanded numerical value of the three *yud*'s] is combined with the numerical value of the 63-Name plus the *kolel*, the sum is 364.

$$300 + 63 + 1 = 364.$$

It is not clear to me why the three *alef*'s, which allude to three Names *Ekyeh*, are mentioned in this calculation.

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<sup>8</sup> On the other hand,  $1410 - 1364 = 46$ , so it could be that these paragraphs were somehow involved in getting from 1364 to 1410 (via 42 plus three *kolel*'s?) and somehow the text got garbled.

We now turn to the 3<sup>rd</sup> spelling-out of the Name *Havayah*, the 45-Name, which is going to be equated with the phrase “a well of fresh spring water” used to describe the first well, Eisek.

The three *alef*'s used to spell out the 45-Name possess the numerical value of 333.

As above, with the “graphically”-produced *alef*'s of the 63-Name.

To this we must add 28 [in order to get 361, as will be seen]. [We arrive at 28 as follows:] Take the value of the 45-Name, subtract from it the three *alef*'s; this leaves 42. Subtract further the ten letters used to spell out the Name and the four original letters; this leaves 28. Add 28 to 333; this gives 361. This is the numerical value of the words for “a well of fresh spring water”<sup>9</sup> [plus the *kolel*].

The words in Hebrew for “a well of fresh spring water” are *be'eir mayim chayim*.

*Be'er*: *beit-alef-reish* = 2 + 1 + 200 = 202.

*Mayim*: *mem-yud-mem* = 40 + 10 + 40 = 90.

*Chayim*: *chet-yud-yud-mem* = 8 + 10 + 10 + 40 = 68.

202 + 90 + 68 = 360.

Again: The three *alef*'s [of the 45-Name] are [through reverse graphics] three *yud*'s spelled out.

Here, we split the *alef* into its graphical components, a *yud*, a *vav*, and a *dalet*, and combine these to spell the word *yud*.

The combined [expanded] numerical value [of these three *yud*'s] is 300. This leaves 6 other letters in the 45-Name, since we have just distributed the original *yud*.

Presumably this means we have used the value of the *yud* (10) to expand the other three *yud*'s. All four *yud*'s are thus used up, leaving 6 other letters in the first spelling out of the 63-Name.

The [expanded] numerical value of 6 is 60, for each letter sub-divides into 10, as above. To [the 300 and the 60] add the *kolel*; this gives 361, which is, again, the numerical value of “a well of fresh spring water.”

Up to here is what I found written in the name of one of the master's [i.e., the Arizal's] students.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>9</sup> Genesis 26:19.

## *Parashat VaYeitzei*

In the beginning of the portion of the Torah read this week, we are told that “Jacob left Be’er Sheva and went to Haran.”<sup>1</sup>

Based on this verse, the Arizal discusses certain details of how *Z’eir Anpin* is developed out of *Abba* and *Ima*. Jacob represents the full development of the concept of “patriarch,” the individual fully fit to become the progenitor of the Jewish people, in contrast to Abraham and Isaac, who represented preparatory stages in this process. Similarly, *Abba* and *Ima*, the intellect, can be considered preparatory phases in the developmental process that leads to *Z’eir Anpin* (and *Nukva*), the emotions, which is the main *partzuf* through which Divinity is manifest on earth.

Abraham and Isaac personified [respectively] the *chesed* and *gevurah* of the *yesod* of *Ima* as it is enclothed in the *da’at* of *Z’eir Anpin*.

*Yesod* of *Ima* is the drive of *binah* for self-actualization. This drive contains an element of *chesed*, or love, as part of its motivation, as well as an element of *gevurah*, or power. *Yesod* of *Ima* becomes enclothed in the *da’at* of *Z’eir Anpin*, meaning that *Z’eir Anpin*’s ability to empathize (*da’at*) is taken from his “mother” (*Ima*). *Da’at* contains within it the twin faces of empathy, *chesed* and *gevurah*, which later emerge as the primary emotions.

Jacob personified the *yesod* of *Abba*, which is enclothed within the *yesod* of *Ima*.

When *yesod* of *Ima* becomes enclothed in the *da’at* of *Z’eir Anpin*, it already has within it the *yesod* of *Abba*. In other words, the drive for self-actualization within *Ima* carries with it the drive for self-actualization within *Abba*. *Abba* and *Ima* are “the two companions that never separate,” always joined in conjugal union, since *chochmah* without *binah* is ephemeral and *binah* without *chochmah* can lose its bearings, as we have explained previously.

Now, it is known that at first there enters *Z’eir Anpin* immature mentality, signified by the Name *Elokim*.

The Name *Elokim* signifies *tzimtzum* (“contraction”) of Divine light. The constricted consciousness of immature mentality is therefore signified by this Name.

Afterwards, when the above-mentioned mature mentality enters [his mind], the original, immature mentality descends into his throat.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, the numerical value of the word for “throat” [*garon*, *gimel-reish-vav-nun*, 259] is equal to three times that of the Name *Elokim* [*alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem*, 86, plus 1 for the *kolel*]. This is also the numerical value of *Haran* [*chet-reish-nun*, 258].

$$3 \times 86 = 258; 258 + 1 = 259.$$

It follows that the *yesod* of *Ima* in the state of mature mentality extends only as far as the chest of *Z’eir Anpin*.

*Ima*’s drive for self-actualization ends once it has become the intellect of the emotions.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 28:10.

<sup>2</sup> The original text of *Sha’ar HaPesukim* has here: “...which is his *binah*,” but as Rabbi Wolf Ashkenazi points out, this is difficult to understand, because elsewhere the Arizal clearly states that only in *Arich Anpin* is *binah* situated in the throat. The corresponding passage in *Likutei Torah*, in fact, does not mention that the throat is the location of *binah*.

However, the *yesod* of *Abba*, which is male and longer, extends further down, down to the level of the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin* itself.

The *yesod* of *Abba* was en clothed within the *yesod* of *Ima*, but it extends further into the reality of *Z'eir Anpin*. This is because it is “male,” i.e., as a drive for self-actualization it extends further. The original insight of *chochmah* carries in it the seed of full manifestation in reality and therefore the drive and power to penetrate reality until the insight has inspired and remade reality in its image to the fullest extent possible. In contrast, the processing of the insight in *binah* mitigates its power, since the whole purpose of *binah* is to *integrate* the insight into the existing reality and world-view. This does, of course, endow *binah* with a certain drive for self-actualization once the new synthesis of old-thinking and new-thinking has been completed, but this cannot compare with the original force of the unprocessed flash of insight.

The *yesod* of *Abba* therefore continues further than the *yesod* of *Ima*, down to the level where *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin* is poised to bring into being *Nukva*. In other words, this may be seen as the drive within any father to have a daughter, and psychologically may account for the affinity between fathers and daughters (whereas the fact that *yesod* of *Ima* terminates in *Z'eir Anpin* may account for the greater affinity between mothers and sons). The female, as we have discussed previously, is the true actualization of any ideal, since she is the embodiment of G-d's will to manifest His Divinity within creation. The male, embodying the inspiration of *chochmah*, is driven toward this ideal, but is incapable himself of actualizing it *just because* of his abstract nature.

A radiance of this extension of the *yesod* of *Abba*—that extends lower than the chest [of *Z'eir Anpin*] and is then exposed—shines outside of *Z'eir Anpin* itself, and becomes the *partzuf* of *Yaakov*.

Once the *yesod* of *Abba* extends out further than the *yesod* of *Ima*, it is no longer en clothed in the *yesod* of *Ima* but is exposed. Its “light” can then shine, and it shines outside of *Z'eir Anpin* itself. From this residual, secondary light is formed a new *partzuf*, *Yaakov*.

Now, we generally speak of six principle *partzufim*: *Atik Yomin*, *Arich Anpin*, *Abba*, *Ima*, *Z'eir Anpin*, and *Nukva*. In this general scheme, *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* are often personified by Jacob (*Yaakov*) and Rachel. However, there is a secondary development of *partzufim* as well, in which some of these split into or give rise to additional *partzufim*.<sup>3</sup> We are introduced here to one of these secondary *partzufim*, that of *Yaakov*, which develops out of the primary *partzuf* of *Z'eir Anpin*.

This, then, is the mystical meaning of the verse: “Jacob [*Yaakov*] left [or: ‘went out from’] Be’er Sheva and went to Haran.” The *partzuf* of *Yaakov* originates, as we have said, from the *yesod* of *Abba* after the extension of the *yesod* of *Ima* and terminated at the chest of *Z'eir Anpin*. At that point [*yesod* of *Abba*] goes forth and is revealed from within the *yesod* of *Ima*, which is termed “Be’er Sheva,” as we will explain.

*Be’er Sheva* means “the well of seven”; its mystical association with *yesod* of *Ima* will be explained presently. The verse thus reads: The origin of *Yaakov*, i.e., *yesod* of *Abba*, went forth from the *yesod* of *Ima*, i.e., Be’er Sheva....

The *yesod* of *Abba*, who is male, is termed the “[male] organ” [*eiver*, *alef-beit-reish*]. It is therefore alluded to in the final letters of the words “Jacob left Be’er...” [*va-yeitzei Yaakov mi-be’er, alef-beit-reish*].

The *yesod* of *Ima*, however, is female, and is therefore alluded to by the inversion of these letters, which yields the word for a “well” [*alef-beit-reish* —

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<sup>3</sup> See, for example, *The Mystery of Marriage*, p. 436.

*beit-alef-reish, be'er*], which is concave and hollow, and into which the male organ is inserted. Therefore the *yesod* of the female [*partzuf*] is always called a “well.”

This is true also for the reason that [the female *partzuf*] causes “female waters” to ascend—just as a well is an upwelling of subterranean water—toward the male organ.

In order to couple, the male and female *partzufim* must mutually arouse each other. The Zoharic terms for these processes of arousal are “the descent of male water” and “the ascent of female water,” respectively. The images evoked are that of rain for the male and the upwelling of spring water.

As to why [the female *yesod*] is called Be'er Sheva [“the well of seven”], this is for two reasons. First, the brains of *Z'eir Anpin* were originally four: *chochmah*, *binah*, and [the states of] *chesed* and *gevurah* [that would later be contained within *da'at*].

“Originally” here refers to before *Z'eir Anpin* emerged as a *partzuf* and was still in the “womb” of *Ima*.

Later, when they descended further and entered the *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima*, they became three brains: *chochmah*, *binah*, and *da'at*—which now included *chesed* and *gevurah* [within it].

Part of the maturation process of *Z'eir Anpin* was the coalescence of *chesed* and *gevurah* in to one power of empathy, *da'at*.

As is known, these mature states of mentality are all Names *Havayah*. Therefore, the two developmental stages comprise seven Names *Havayah* [within *Ima*], and therefore [*yesod* of *Ima*] is called Be'er Sheva.

The second reason is that when the three brains [of *Z'eir Anpin*]*—chochmah, binah, and da'at—*[when it is at the level] of *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Abba* are joined with the four brains [of *Z'eir Anpin*]*—chochmah, binah, chesed, and gevurah—*[when it is at the level] of *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima* it gives seven Names *Havayah*. They are all enclothed within *Ima*, as is known, and therefore her *yesod* is called Be'er Sheva.

The fact that *yesod* of *Ima* becomes enclothed in the *da'at* of *Z'eir Anpin* is just part of a larger picture: the entire triplet of *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima* becomes enclothed in the triplet of *chochmah-binah-da'at* of *Z'eir Anpin*. Similarly, just as *yesod* of *Abba* is enclothed within *yesod* of *Ima* (and therefore, once removed, within the *da'at* of *Z'eir Anpin*), so is the entire triplet of *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Abba* enclothed within the triplet of *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima* (and therefore, once removed, within the *chochmah-binah-da'at* of *Z'eir Anpin*).

For this reason *Yaakov* also comprises these seven Names *Havayah*, whose combined numerical value is the same as that of *Yaakov*. This, then, is the mystical meaning of “Jacob went out of Be'er Sheva.”

*Havayah* (*yud-hei-vav-hei*) = 10 + 5 + 6 + 5 = 26. 7 x 26 = 182.

*Yaakov* (*yud-ayin-kuf-beit*) = 10 + 70 + 100 + 2 = 182.

Now, it is known that these Names *Havayah* that manifest the mature mentality [of *Z'eir Anpin*] spread via the three axes throughout the body of *Z'eir Anpin*. In this process, they pass through the throat, which is termed *Haran*, which

is formed from the three Names *Elokim* that manifest the immature mentality [of *Z'eir Anpin*, as above]. In addition, the *yesod* of *Abba*—which is termed *Yaakov* [because the *partzuf* of this name will develop out of it]—passes through it. This is the mystical meaning of “...and went to Haran,” for Haran signifies these three Names *Elokim*.

The word “to Haran,” however is in Hebrew one word: the word for “Haran” with a *hei* attached as a suffix.

The additional *hei* in the word “to Haran” signifies the five letters of *Elokim*.

The numerical value of *hei* is 5.

The meaning of the word Haran as well indicates [immature or constricted consciousness, for it means] “anger,” which [is caused by] severe stages of judgement, which are called *Elokim*.

The Name *Elokim* indicates G-d’s attribute of judgement and justice, which “incites” His “anger.”

This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “My throat is parched [literally, ‘grew angry’].”<sup>4</sup> For since the throat expresses the Name *Elokim*, it becomes hot and parched, just as the idiom [for “anger” in Hebrew] is “heating of the nostril.” Also, the word for “parched” in this verse [*nichar, nun-chet-reish*] comprises the same letters as the word for Haran [*charan, chet-reish-nun*], and its numerical value is also [naturally] that of the word for “throat” [*garon, gimel-reish-vav-nun*] with the *kollel*. It is all one.

Now, as we have explained elsewhere, these three Names *Elokim* are [the three ways of spelling out this Name:] with the letter *yud*, with the letter *alef*, and with the letter *hei*.

root-letter	spelling out		
<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>		
<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed-mem-dalet</i>		
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	<i>hei-alef</i>	<i>hei-hei</i>
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>		
<i>mem</i>	<i>mem-mem</i>		

The [Name *Elokim*] that is spelled out with the letter *yud* is first, and is manifest in the *partzuf* of *Leah*, which is situated above. The last is the one spelled out with the letter *hei*, and is manifest in the *partzuf* of *Rachel*, which is situated below. The middle one is the one spelled out with the letter *alef*, and is manifest in the *partzuf* of *Yaakov*.

In the secondary array of *partzufim*, the *partzuf* of *Yaakov*, the emotions, couples with two female *partzufim*, *Leah* (thought) and *Rachel* (speech).

<sup>4</sup> Psalms 69:4.

Since *Yaakov* is the middle of the three, he encompasses both of them, the higher and the lower [*partzufim*]. Therefore the numerical value of *Yaakov* is [ten more than] twice that of *Elokim*, i.e., that of the word for “heel” [*eikev*, *Yaakov* without the *yud*].

$$Yaakov (yud-ayin-kuf-beit) = 10 + 70 + 100 + 2 = 182$$

$$eikev (ayin-kuf-beit) = 70 + 100 + 2 = 172$$

$$Elokim (alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem) = 1 + 30 + 5 + 10 + 40 = 86. 2 \times 86 = 172$$

The extra *yud* in *Yaakov* corresponds to the ten letters [in all the names of these *partzufim*], indicating how he comprises them all.

There are three letters in *Leah* (lamed-alef-hei), four in *Yaakov* (yud-ayin-kuf-beit), and three in *Rachel* (reish-chet-lamed), giving 10.

—translated from *Sha’ar HaPesukim* and *Likutei Torah*

## *Parashat VaYeitzei* [second installment]

*Parashat Vayitzei* describes the way Jacob marries Leah and Rachel. In this connection, the Arizal discusses the issue of Divine providence in arranging matches.

In the Midrash on this *parashah*,<sup>1</sup> [it is written that] Rabbi Yehudah bar Simon opened [his discourse by explaining the following verse:] “G-d makes individuals dwell in a house; He brings out the captives in proper ways.”<sup>2</sup> [He continued:] a certain [non-Jewish] matron once asked Rabbi Yosi bar Chalafta, “In how many days did the Holy One, blessed be He, created His world?”

The Midrash continues:

“In six days,” he answered. “And what has He been doing since then?” “The Holy One, blessed be He, sits and makes matches,” he answered, “assigning the daughter of this man to that man, the wife of this man to that man, the possessions of this man to that man.” “If that is difficult,” she scoffed, “I too can do the same. I have so many manservants and maidservants; in no time I can match them up.” Said he to her: “If it is easy in your eyes, it is as difficult before the Holy One, blessed be He, as the dividing of the Red Sea.” Rabbi Yosi bar Chalafta went. She went and took a thousand manservants and a thousand maidservants and lined them up opposite each other. She then said, this one will marry that one and this one will marry that one, and married them all that night. The next day, those who were thus united came to her; this one’s head was injured, that one’s eye was out of its socket, another one’s leg was broken. She asked them, “what’s the matter?” This woman said, “I do not want this man,” while this man protested, “I do not want that woman.” Straightway she summoned Rabbi Yosi bar Chalafta and admitted to him: “There is no god like your G-d: it is true, your Torah is indeed beautiful and praiseworthy, and you spoke the truth!” Said he to her: “Did I not say to you, if it is easy in your eyes, it is as difficult before the Holy One, blessed be He, as the dividing of the Red Sea.” The Holy One, blessed be He, matches them up against their will and to their detriment. What is the proof? “G-d makes individuals dwell in a house; He brings out the prisoners in proper ways [*bakosharot*]. What does *bakosharot* mean? “Weeping [*bechi*] and song [*shiroi*]”: he who desires [his companion] utters song: and he who does not, weeps.

It is proper to understand [the following questions]:

First, what in this verse so troubled Rabbi Yehudah bar Simon that it forced him to interpret it as referring to making matches? The simple meaning of the text is that it refers to Egypt. The Israelites came to Egypt few in number, seventy souls, and G-d made them into “the House of Israel,” i.e., he increased their number. As it is written, “and the Israelites were fruitful and swarmed....”<sup>3</sup> The verse thus means, “G-d made out of the few a multitude and a great House. [The verse then describes what happened] afterwards, i.e., that “He brought them out in proper ways,” i.e., in a time fit for leaving, neither in the hot [summer] nor the cold [winter], but in the [spring] season [i.e., in] the month of Nisan. This is the meaning of the word “in proper ways.”

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<sup>1</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 68:4.

<sup>2</sup> *Psalms* 68:7.

<sup>3</sup> *Exodus* 1:8.

Secondly, why did [the Matron], in phrasing her question, say [“In how many days”] with a *lamed*, [meaning literally] “for how many days,” rather than with a *beit*, which would mean “in how many days?” True, we could say that this is a printing error, for in some of the other sources in which this same story is told<sup>4</sup> the word is written with a *beit*. But it is better to understand it the way it is written, especially since in yet other sources it *is* written the way it is written here.

Another question: Why did [Rabbi Yosi bar Chalafta] bring proof [that G-d made the world in six days] from the verse “for in six days G-d made...,”<sup>5</sup> which is from *parashat Yitro*? In *parashat Bereishit*, the entire account of creation is told in detail: this happened on the first day, that happened on the second day, etc., “and G-d finished on the seventh day.”<sup>6</sup> It would have been better to bring proof from there.

Furthermore: The Matron really intended only to ask the second question, i.e., “from then until now what has He been doing?” The [answer to the] first question is obvious to everyone, i.e., that G-d created the world in six days. So why did she have to preface [her real question] with the first one? Elsewhere, it is implied that everyone admits that the world was created in six days, so what she really wanted to ask could not have been this question but only the second question. So [again,] why did she preface it with the first question?

Furthermore: what kind of question is the [second] question she asked, i.e., what has [G-d] been doing since then? Who doesn’t know that G-d oversees all the details [of life] and sustains and provides for everything “from the horns of the *re’eim* to the eggs of the lice,”<sup>7</sup> that He causes the rain to fall, makes the dew blossom, makes the wind blow, “provides for the needs of every living thing,”<sup>8</sup> and so on *ad infinitum*?

The *re’eim* is a large bison-like animal. The image is that G-d provides for all creatures, from the greatest to the least.

Besides which, our sages stated in reference to the verse “mention not the sins of my youth,”<sup>9</sup> that since G-d created the world, He has been making and fixing delicacies and worlds to bestow upon the righteous in the World to Come. They offered a parable [to illustrate this,] of a king who prepared a great feast and invited the notables of his capital to it, but they were too few to eat the whole meal. So he invited the middle class of people, but they were still too few. So in the end he invited the whole city, great and small, so as not to waste the feast he had

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<sup>4</sup> *Bamidbar Rabbah* 3; *Vayikra Rabbah* 1; *Midrash Shmuel* 5.

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 20:11.

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 2:2.

<sup>7</sup> *Avodah Zarah* 3b.

<sup>8</sup> Psalms 145:16.

<sup>9</sup> Psalms 25:7.

prepared. Thus King David said, “Mention not the sins of my youth and my transgressions, *for the sake of Your goodness*, O G-d,” so that there be [enough] people to benefit from it.<sup>10</sup>

Even if we assume that this Matron, being a non-Jew, did not know this, and Rabbi Yosi did not wish to tell her *this* as an answer because she might not have believed in the World to Come, there are numerous examples [of things G-d is doing] in this world, as we have said. This being the case, what was her question? And why didn’t Rabbi Yosi want to answer her thus, but said instead that G-d is making matches—to which she could reply, “I can also do this?” If he would have answered her by saying what we said—that He is sustaining and providing for everyone from “the horns of the *re’eim*, etc.”—she would not have been able to reply, “I can also do this.”

Furthermore: our sages have said that all souls, from the time they are formed out of their supernal source—out of the place “from whence they were hewn”<sup>11</sup>—emerge as male and female together. Afterwards, each half goes its own way, the male to one [body] and the female to another, and they eventually join in this world, “so-and-so with so-and-so.” We may assume that such a match does not have to be forced, against their will.

Why, then, does the Midrash state that G-d matches them up against their will and to their detriment?

Another question: We have never seen anyone get married against his will or to his detriment. And the most joyous occasion in a person’s life is “the day of his wedding and the day of his heart’s joy.”

At least when people get married, they do so feeling that this is for their good and that they will be happy.

Furthermore: If it is indeed true that G-d makes matches against our will, there should be no reward or punishment for [fulfilling or avoiding] the commandment to procreate. For if a person is married to his wife perforce, why should he earn reward by marrying? And why should he incur punishment for not marrying? He could reply [to the Heavenly Court]: “Why wasn’t I forced by heaven to marry, like you force others?”

We must also understand why, in [the matron’s] question—“since then, what has *He* been doing”—why did she articulate the pronoun “He” explicitly?

In Hebrew, the subject pronoun can be understood from the verb, and there is no necessity to articulate it explicitly.

Furthermore, [Rabbi Yosi also] chose to phrase his answer explicitly, saying, “*The Holy One, blessed be He*, sits and makes matches.” He could have simply

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<sup>10</sup> See *Midrash Tehilim* 25.

<sup>11</sup> par. Isaiah 51:1.

responded, “*He* makes matches.” Why did he mention “the Holy One, blessed be He” explicitly.

The answer [to all this] is as follows. Rabbi Yehudah bar Simon assumed that if the verse “G-d causes individuals to dwell as a house” refers to the Exodus from Egypt, it should have read, “He makes the few into many.” Why does it use the idiom “individuals,” and why does it use the idiom “as a house” to mean “into many?” Furthermore, the verb “He causes to dwell” [—if it means increasing the Jewish people—] does not fit well with the Name *Elokim* [used for “G-d” in this verse], which indicates strict judgment: what G-d did for the Jewish people in [taking them out of] Egypt was pure *mercy*, so it would have been more appropriate to use [in this verse] the Name of mercy, saying, “*Havayah* causes individuals....” Why instead is the Name *Elokim* used?

He therefore says that through [understanding] the argument between Rabbi Yosi bar Chalafta and the matron we will be able to understand this verse properly, i.e., why the Name *Elokim* is used.

And for this reason, he says that it is proper to use the Name *Elokim* in reference to making matches, for [G-d] forces matches to take place, as we will explain further on, please G-d.

As for the matron, even though her main question and intention was about her second question—“Since then, what has He been doing?”—she wisely prefaced this with her first question—“In how many days....” This is because she saw that she could be answered in the way we have described, namely that G-d oversees all the details [of life] and nourishes and sustains “from the horns of the *re’eim*, etc.” She therefore prefaced [this question] with, “In how many days did the Holy One, blessed be He, create His world?” She meant: We cannot say that someone who did such a great act in only six days has, since then, been occupied solely with such miniscule details, for [since He is so powerful, this cannot take Him so much time and] He must still have much time left.

[Rabbi Yosi ben Chalafta] therefore had to answer her that He is busy making matches, meaning that besides all that she knew [G-d does every day,] He does this, too, and it is a difficult task that requires a lot of time.

For G-d has to orchestrate many complicated webs of “coincidences” and fortuitous circumstances to arrange that people meet and marry their proper matches.

This [explanation] accords with the textual reading [in which the matron’s question begins] with the letter *beit*, meaning “*In* how many days...” [In these texts, Rabbi Yosi] also answered her beginning with the letter *beit*, meaning “*In* six days....”

But according to the textual reading in which she asked “*for* how many days,” with a *lamed*, and Rabbi Yosi also responded to her, “*for* six days,” with a *lamed*, her intention was to ask “for how many days was it G-d’s intention that the world last?” Since she was asking about G-d, and in His eyes, “a thousand years are as a day that passes,”<sup>12</sup> and it is known that “the world will exist for six thousand years, and one [thousand years after] it will be desolate,”<sup>13</sup> it follows that she really meant to ask “for how many *millennia* [will the world endure],” for each millennium is like a day in G-d’s eyes.

[Continuing with the matron’s logic in this version of the question:] Since He foresees all that will be, and His original intent was that the world exist for a fixed time, He probably endowed each creature when first He created the world with all the power it requires to exist for its duration. If so, what has He been doing since then? We cannot say that He has been overseeing His creatures, and that He has to provide for everything “from the horns of the *re’eim*,” and so forth, for all the energy they require and all their sustenance has already been prepared, readied, and endowed to them from the moment of creation.

This idea can be better understood by understanding the question raised in the *Zohar*<sup>14</sup> regarding the verse quoted here: “...for in six days [G-d created the heavens and the earth].” The verse literally reads: “for six days...”; why is the word “*in*” left out [and only implied]? The answer given is that G-d made the world in general—heavens and earth—as “six days,” i.e., the six extremities, which are the six supernal “days.”

These are the six *sefirot* from *chesed* to *yesod*. There are six facets to human emotion and character, so therefore G-d took six days to express these in creation. This is because—

It is known that the days [are not just arbitrary units of time, but] are [rather *bona fide*] creations of real substance, similar to angels but more sublime and inclusive, as it is written, “Days will be formed,”<sup>15</sup> and “the days of Israel drew near,”<sup>16</sup> and “the days of David drew near.”<sup>17</sup> The six supernal days conduct the affairs of this world, each one on its [temporal] day [of the week], giving all who ask [for their needs] whatever they require, for G-d the Creator already endowed them with all the energy they require, each one for its time, when He created them.

The six *sefirot* are the channels through which Divine beneficence flows into the world.

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<sup>12</sup> Psalms 90:4.

<sup>13</sup> *Sanhedrin* 97a.

<sup>14</sup> 2:89b.

<sup>15</sup> Psalms 139:16.

<sup>16</sup> Genesis 47:29.

<sup>17</sup> 1 Kings 2:1.

Now, the name of the angel Metatron,<sup>18</sup> who is called “the Minister of the World,” is composed of six letters. These are the six extremities [as they are projected] within him, which are the six powers, [manifest] as the six [supernal] days we have mentioned. The affairs of the world overall are conducted by him, for he is the Minister of the world, even though the aforementioned [supernal] days are superior [to him].

This is because [G-d acting as] the Creator is [His presence in] *Ima*—this being the reason why the Name *Elokim* is used in [the account of] the creation of the world. [As we know,] stern judgment originates in *Ima*.

The Name *Elokim* is associated with *Ima*, the “mother” of the world, i.e., of the six *sefirot* of emotion that govern the world. *Binah* is the power to differentiate between details and implications of concepts in order to accept or reject them as truth. The world is governed by these strict laws of nature, and therefore the Name *Elokim* is used exclusively in the primary account of creation.

[In contrast,] the six extremities of *Z’eir Anpin* are the ones who conduct the affairs of the world.

Thus, the *sefirot* of Metatron (who personifies *Z’eir Anpin*) are of a lower order than the source of the emotions within *binah*.

This is why [the matron] asked “what does He do,” meaning, “I already know there is much to occupy Him, such as feeding the world ‘from the horns of the *re’eim*,’ etc. But all this is taken care of by the supernal days”—as we mentioned—“whereas He Himself, the Creator,”—i.e., the supernal [*partzuf* of] *Ima*—“what does *He* do?”

[Rabbi Yosi ben Chalafta] therefore brought her proof from the verse “[...in] six days...,” for she did not ask him about the creation week, in which case it would have been appropriate for him to answer her [by quoting verses] from the account of creation. Rather, [she questioned him] about the whole world, i.e., for how many “days” [i.e., millennia] will [the supernal days] conduct its affairs. For it will exist only for that many “days.”

He replied, “for six ‘days,’” meaning, “in order for [the world] to endure for six ‘days.’”

She asked, what is the duration of creation, and he answered, six millennia.

This is also why he told her that “the Holy One, blessed be He, *sits*....” He did not mean to imply that G-d literally sits, G-d forbid, for [G-d is not corporeal and] the concepts of standing and sitting do not apply to Him. Rather, the intention was to answer her statement that G-d “sits,” i.e., is idle, [being free] from [running] all the details [of life, these being handled by Metatron, as we said].

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<sup>18</sup> Recall that it is customary not to pronounce the names of angels that are not also names of people.

This is the meaning of his statement that “the Holy One, blessed be He,”—i.e., He himself—“sits”—i.e., occupies Himself solely with—“making matches.”

So, whereas the day-to-day running of the world is handled by G-d’s underling, Metatron, who serves as an organizing principle to funnel Divine beneficence downward, the task of orchestrating the events of life with Divine providence in order to match up couples is handled by *Ima*.

The reason He has to do this is because [matches are arranged] in accordance with [Divine] justice, in accordance with [the parties’] merits, as we will explain. This being the case, no one can do this but Him, [since He alone is the one Judge, and alone can assure] that they will be accomplished fairly relative to the conditions of the hour.

True, when [the embryo is] formed, the soul issues from its source split into male and female, [and therefore the match is intrinsic and no further evaluation of who suits whom should be necessary]. But this applies only to a person’s *first* marriage. Certainly, for such matches no [Divine] effort need be expended, and such matches are not made against the parties’ wishes but rather with their full goodwill.

But here, [i.e., the case the matron was asking about,] we are talking about second marriages, where a person is given a spouse commensurate with [what he has earned by] his deeds. Thus, since a person has free choice to sin against his G-d, G-d has to “scheme all kinds of schemes so that no one pushed away remain pushed away [forever].”<sup>19</sup>

Thus, the verse under discussion describes *second* marriages. And more remarkably, G-d (i.e., *Ima*) occupies Himself since creation with arranging *second* marriages. But the definition of a “second marriage” is broader than simply the second marriage in this lifetime, as we will now see:

Such people become reincarnated, but they do not reincarnate as a couple, for sometimes he is reincarnated in one generation and she in another, such that the reincarnated man needs to be matched up with a different reincarnated woman—who also lacks her [original] mate [in this incarnation]—that is similar to him [in merits]. Matching up such a couple is indeed a very difficult thing inasmuch as they are different in nature [not having originated from the same soul-root]. It is therefore difficult to get them together.

These reincarnates are called “individuals”—[literally, “singles”]—because each one is by itself, separated from its [real] soul-mate. Such marriages are referred to as being done “against the parties’ wills.” This does not apply to the wedding, for then everyone is happy “on the day of their wedding and on the day of their hearts’ rejoicing.”<sup>20</sup> The difficulty lies only in sustaining the marriage.

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<sup>19</sup> 2 Samuel 14:14.

<sup>20</sup> par Song of Songs 3:11.

As to the matches the matron made between the manservants and the maidservants, [we may assume] they first said something [positive], but afterwards they fell into arguments and she could not keep these marriages going.

Therefore [the verse we have quoted] refers to G-d as *Elokim*, for He judges these [reincarnates] according to His attribute of strict justice, in accordance with their deeds, and [thereby] makes these marriages endure. This is why [the verse] uses the idiom [of “making them sit”], for “sitting” implies “remaining,” as in the verse, “And you *dwelt* [literally, ‘sat’] in Kadesh...,”<sup>21</sup> which means they stayed there, for G-d makes these people—who, as we said, are “individuals”—stay in one house, even against their natures.

For their innate nature is to bond with their original soul-mates.

This explains why there can be reward and punishment [for fulfilling or neglecting the commandment to marry and procreate]. For [in a second marriage] the person first couples with his spouse of his own goodwill and volition, and he thereby acquires merit for fulfilling the commandment—and if he does not want to marry, he incurs punishment. It is only *after* the marriage that G-d “forces” the couple to remain together in one house. This is the meaning of the verse, “He causes individuals to dwell in the house,” as we said.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>21</sup> Deuteronomy 1:47.

## *Parashat VaYeitzei* [third installment]

*Parashat Vayeitzei* describes the Jacob's marriage to Leah and Rachel:<sup>1</sup>

Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the older one was Leah, and the name of the younger one was Rachel. Leah's eyes were tender, while Rachel had beautiful features and was of beautiful appearance. Jacob loved Rachel, and he said [to Laban], "I will work for you seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter." ... So Jacob worked for Rachel seven years, but in his eyes they seemed a mere few days because of his love for her. Jacob then said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my time is up, and let me marry her." So Laban gathered together all the local people and made a feast. When it was evening, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to [Jacob], and he consummated the marriage with her. ... When morning came, behold, it was Leah, so [Jacob] said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I worked for you? Why did you deceive me?" Laban replied, "In our region it is not done, to give a younger daughter in marriage before the older. Complete the bridal week of this one, then we will give you that one, too — in return for the work that you will do for me for another seven years." Jacob complied and completed the bridal week of the one, and then [Laban] gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. ... [Jacob] thus also married Rachel, and he loved Rachel even more than Leah. He then worked for [Laban] another seven years. G-d saw that Leah was hated, and He opened her womb, while Rachel remained barren.

The [mystical] significance of Jacob and his two wives, Rachel and Leah, is as follows.

As we have seen previously, Rachel and Leah personified the two *partzufim* of *Nukva*, while Jacob in general personified *Z'eir Anpin*.

Know that Jacob has two names, for he was originally named Jacob, and this [name applies to him] when he had only rectified *Z'eir Anpin* from the chest down. He then personified only that level [of spirituality] and lower. And, as is known, Rachel's stature [relative to *Z'eir Anpin*] is from his chest down.

It is therefore written, "And Jacob loved Rachel," the latter being also termed "the revealed world," as is known. For the revelation of lights is from [*Z'eir Anpin's*] chest down, for it is there that *yesod* of *Ima* ends. Leah's stature, in contrast, is from the chest [of *Z'eir Anpin*] up, for there the lights are covered. She is therefore termed "the hidden world."

*Ima* is the intellect (specifically, *binah*, the full development of the insight of *chochmah*). The emotions (the *partzuf* of *Z'eir Anpin*) function best when the intellectual comprehension that gave rise to them is still present in them in some way. Without this tie to the intellect, the emotions are quickly derailed and diverted by the animal soul to its own concerns.

The *yesod* of *Ima* is the drive within the intellect to actualize itself, and this drive is present in the emotional consciousness as far as the upper third of its *tiferet*—that is, within the emotions' own intellect (*chochmah-binah-da'at*), the primary emotions (*chesed* and *gevurah*) and the intellectual aspect (upper third) of the central emotion (*tiferet*). From that point on, the emotions take on a life of their own, so to speak, and the *yesod* of *Ima*, the thrust of the intellect to actualize itself, is no longer felt.

Thus, the upper half of *Z'eir Anpin* is called the "concealed world," for at this level the emotions are still concealed within the intellect, while the lower half of *Z'eir Anpin* is called the "revealed world," for only there do the emotions fully assert themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 29:16-31.

Thus it is written in the *Zohar*:<sup>2</sup> “Come see, when Jacob served [Laban] for the first seven years, a voice went out and said, ‘From the world to the world,’<sup>3</sup> [meaning] the hidden, supernal world, the Jubilee....” Before this, it is written, “Come see, the Jubilee is everywhere hidden and is not revealed, while the Sabbatical year is revealed.”

According to the *Zohar*, when Jacob had finished serving Laban for the first seven years, and Laban tricked him into marrying Leah, G-d said to Jacob, “It is written, ‘Blessed be G-d, the G-d of Israel, from the world to the world.’” Meaning: “It was Divine providence that you married Leah first, because in order to reveal Divinity in the world [i.e., to ‘bless G-d’], you must first rectify the higher world, which is personified by Leah, and only then the lower one, which is personified by Rachel.”

The *Zohar* also contrasts the Jubilee year with the Sabbatical year. Both of these years are associated with the number seven: the Sabbatical year is the seventh year of the agricultural cycle, while the Jubilee year is the year after seven agricultural cycles of seven years each, the fiftieth year. Thus, the Jubilee year is a more encompassing “seventh” than is the Sabbatical year, a higher perspective and order of consciousness. The fact that the Jubilee is the fiftieth year associates it naturally with *Ima*, for there are “fifty gates of understanding [*binah*].”<sup>4</sup> Based on this, the *Zohar* identifies the Jubilee year with the upper half of *Z’eir Anpin*, where *Ima* is manifest, and the Sabbatical year with the lower half of *Z’eir Anpin*, where *Ima* is no longer manifest. In this imagery, the Jubilee is Leah, the hidden world, and the Sabbatical year is Rachel, the revealed world.

Thus, there is a hidden world and a revealed world.

Now, Leah extends opposite seven *sefirot* of *Z’eir Anpin*: *keter*, *chochmah*, *binah*, *da’at*, *chesed*, *gevurah*, and the upper third of *tiferet*—i.e., until the chest. These [were manifest as] the seven years in which Jacob worked for Leah. They were hidden from him, for he did not think that he was working in order to marry Leah, as is stated in the *Zohar*.

The *partzuf* of Leah, being at the level of the upper half of *Z’eir Anpin*, was hidden from Jacob, because he had not yet reached that level in his own development. He therefore could not realize that his first seven years of work were actually “earning” him Leah.

This is because Jacob had not yet reached this level during this time, so these seven years were thus hidden from him. This is why Jacob hated Leah—he had not yet reached her level.

During the 20 years Jacob spent at Laban’s, he rectified the entire *partzuf* of *Z’eir Anpin*. Only then could he appreciate Leah.

But after he rectified the entire span of *Z’eir Anpin*, he was called Israel, as we have explained on that passage, for the name “Israel” [*Yisrael*] is composed of the same letters as the words for “A head for me” [*li rosh*]. For then, he rectified [*Z’eir Anpin*] all the way up to its head.

*Yisrael*: yud-shin-reish-alef-lamed.

*Li rosh*: lamed-yud reish-alef-shin.

<sup>2</sup> 1:153b.

<sup>3</sup> Psalms 106:48.

<sup>4</sup> *Rosh Hashanah* 21b.

Jacob was renamed Israel on his way back into the Land of Israel, after having completed his stay with Laban.<sup>5</sup>

But in the beginning he was at its bottom—its *netzach-hod-yesod*. That is why he was called “Jacob” [*Ya’akov*], “the heel.”

*Ya’akov* means “he will heel,” from the noun *akeiv*, “heel.”

[Once he reached her level,] he coupled only with Leah, for Rachel had already died. He was also buried [only] with Leah in the [Machpelah] Cave, not with Rachel.

We will now explain the [mystical] levels personified by Leah and Rachel.

Rachel issues from a radiance of *yesod* of *Ima* after it has been revealed, i.e., from the chest down [of *Z’eir Anpin*], [this radiance being] from [*Ima*’s] back. For the front [of *Ima*] is [manifest as] the 63-Name *Havayah*. The simple regressive iteration [“back”] of [the 63-Name] equals 72, and the spelling-out [of this iteration] equals 166.

All that can be revealed from *Ima* into *Z’eir Anpin* is its “back,” i.e., its superficial aspects. The intellect in all its own intensity cannot shine directly into the emotions, for the emotions are by nature non-intellectual. Only a diffused radiance of the intellect, the “memory” of the intellectual inspiration that gave rise to the emotional response, can remain in the consciousness when we switch to emotional mode.

We have seen previously that the four spellings-out of the Name *Havayah* (72, 63, 45, 52) are associated respectively with the four major *partzufim* (*Abba*, *Ima*, *Z’eir Anpin*, and *Nukva*).

The presence of *Ima* within *Z’eir Anpin*, then, is the “back” of *Ima*, or the “back” of the 63-Name. The “back” of a Name is indicated by the regressive iteration of that *partzuf*, where we see the letters of the Name turning their backs to us, one by one, as they withdraw into a higher level. For the 63-Name, this is:

step					
1	<i>yud</i>	10	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	10	
2	<i>yud</i>	10	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	10	
	<i>hei</i>	5	<i>hei-yud</i>	5	
3	<i>yud</i>	10	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	10	
	<i>hei</i>	5	<i>hei-yud</i>	5	
	<i>vav</i>	6	<i>vav-alef-vav</i>	6	
4	<i>yud</i>	10	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	10	
	<i>hei</i>	5	<i>hei-yud</i>	5	
	<i>vav</i>	6	<i>vav-alef-vav</i>	6	
	<i>hei</i>	5	<i>hei-yud</i>	5	
total:		72			

The sum of these two numerical values is that of Rachel [238].

$$72 + 166 = 238.$$

$$\text{Rachel: reish-chet-lamed} = 200 + 8 + 30 = 238.$$

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 32:28.

In contrast, Leah is from a radiance of *yesod* of *Ima* further up, on the level of *da'at* of *Z'eir Anpin*. *Malchut* of *Ima*, which is, at that level, together with [*Ima's*] *yesod*, shines outward behind *Z'eir Anpin's* head, and there it becomes the *partzuf* of Leah, as is explained in *Sha'ar HaMitzvot* on the verse “he shall not have too many wives.”<sup>6</sup>

Present within *yesod* of *Ima* is *malchut* of *Ima*, the intellect's drive for expression. The intellect expresses itself at the level of the emotions' intellect through thought. Thought is thus the way the intellect expresses itself in the intellectual context of the emotions, as opposed to speech, which is how intellect expresses itself in a pure emotional context (or: in the emotional context of the emotions, as opposed to the intellectual context of the emotions).

Leah	thought	intellect expressing itself through the intellectual component of emotions
Rachel	speech	intellect expressing itself through the emotional component of emotions

This is the mystical significance of the knot of the head-*tefilin*, which is called the *dalet*.

The knot of the head-*tefilin* is placed in the nape of the neck, behind the head, and according to the Arizal, should be shaped like the letter *dalet*. The numerical value of the *dalet* is 4, indicating the three *sefirot* of the intellect, *da'at* subdividing into the two origins of *chesed* and *gevurah*. Thus, this knot indicates the emergence of the *partzuf* of Leah—thought—from the back of the head.

[Leah] is a complete *partzuf*, extending from *keter* of *Z'eir Anpin* to its chest.

The reason it is called “Leah” is because [the *partzuf* of] the supernal *Ima* is known as the Name *Elokim*, and is divided into two parts: “who” [*mi*] and “these” [*eileh*], as is mentioned in the *Zohar*,<sup>7</sup> in its exposition of the mystical meaning of the verse, “Who are these that fly like a cloud?”<sup>8</sup>

Although in some contexts, *Ima* is associated with the 63-Name *Havayah*, as we said, in others, it is associated with the Name *Elokim*, inasmuch as it is a *tzimtzum* of the brilliance of the insight of *chochmah*.

The Name *Elokim* is spelled *alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem*. These letters form the two words *mi* (*mem-yud*) and *eileh* (*alef-lamed-hei*). The letters of the word *eilah* can be rearranged to spell “Leah” (*lamed-alef-hei*).

The explanation of this is: From *keter* to the upper half of *tiferet* of the supernal *Ima* is called “who,” while from the lower half of its *tiferet* downward is called “these.” The radiance of “these” issues from the back of *Z'eir Anpin* and becomes Leah.

Thus, the lower half of *Ima*, present in the upper half of *Z'eir Anpin*, becomes Leah. The upper half of Leah remains beyond *Z'eir Anpin*, and is thus represented by a question, “who?”

We will now explain the coupling of *Z'eir Anpin* with Leah. [It is necessary to explain this because its coupling] with Rachel is self-understood, because [Rachel] is below, so that his and her *yesod* can couple. But how can he couple with Leah?

<sup>6</sup> Deuteronomy 17:17.

<sup>7</sup> 2:105a.

<sup>8</sup> Isaiah 60:8.

In fact, this is the very reason why Jacob loved Rachel and Leah was hated: for his coupling with [Leah] was inconceivable to Jacob at first, before he was called Israel, as we said.

This is alluded to in the *Zohar*:<sup>9</sup> “‘And G-d saw that Leah was hated.’ From here [we derive] that a person detests the nakedness of his mother.” The explanation of this is as we have said.

A man naturally recoils at the idea of incestuous relations with his mother. Since Leah manifested *Ima*, the “mother” of *Z’eir Anpin*, Jacob at first recoiled at the idea of marrying her.

But we must first tell you about the *yesod* of Leah and the *yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin* that couples with it, and how this is done.

*Yesod* of *Ima* extends until the chest of *Z’eir Anpin*, as is known. From the two “hinges” and two “doors” in [*Ima*’s] *yesod*, the two breasts on the chest of *Z’eir Anpin* are made, as we have explained in our exposition of the *Zohar*.<sup>10</sup> There, we explained that this is the mystical significance of the verse, “Your strongholds will be powerful.”<sup>11</sup>

The doors and hinges of the womb are understood to be the muscles that open and close it.<sup>12</sup>

The Arizal says the following in *Sha’ar Ma’amarei Rashbi*:<sup>13</sup>

The supernal *Ima* is manifest in *Z’eir Anpin* via the intellect of *Z’eir Anpin*. Only *netzach-hod-yesod* [of *Ima*] is manifest within it. Her *netzach* has three segments [corresponding to the thigh, the leg, and the foot]; these are manifest in the three *sefirot* on the right side of *Z’eir Anpin*: *chochmah*, *chesed*, and *netzach*. The three segments of her *hod* are manifest on the left side of *Z’eir Anpin*, i.e., in *binah*, *gevurah*, and *hod*. Her *yesod*, however, is shorter, and when it is manifest in the middle axis of *Z’eir Anpin*, it reaches only as far as the chest, i.e., in *tiferet* of *Z’eir Anpin*, as we have explained elsewhere, because the *yesod* of *Ima* is an empty space, unlike the masculine *yesod*.... As is known, *yesod* is known as the Name *Shakai* [spelled *shin-dalet-yud*].... It is also known that in the *yesod* of the woman there are two hinges [*tzir*] and two doors [*dalet*], as our sages said. The numerical value of the word for “hinge” [*tzir*] is 300, that of the letter *shin*. When this is joined with one [door/letter] *dalet* we have “breast” [*shin-dalet*]. Similarly, the second hinge and door on the other side produces the other breast, and thus are produced the two breasts on the chest of *Z’eir Anpin*. In this context, the upper third of *tiferet* of *Z’eir Anpin* is called *Shakai* [which means “My breasts”]. This is the meaning of the verse, “Your strongholds [*batzirecha*] will be powerful [*shadai*].” [This may be interpreted to mean: “Because of your hinges, you will be *Shakai*.”]

The *yesod* of Leah is also positioned behind *Z’eir Anpin*, opposite the breasts on his chest.

We will now explain exactly what is the *yesod* that couples with the *yesod* of Leah.

<sup>9</sup> 1:154b.

<sup>10</sup> 3:266a; *Sha’ar Ma’amarei Rashbi* 46a.

<sup>11</sup> Job 22:25.

<sup>12</sup> *Bechorot* 45a.

<sup>13</sup> *Parashat VaEtchanan* (p. 231a in Brandwein edition).

We have already explained<sup>14</sup> that at first, [before it metamorphosed into a *partzuf*,] *Z'eir Anpin* comprised only the six extremities, *chesed-gevurah-tiferet-netzach-hod-yesod*. Later, when it matured, *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* were elevated and became *chochmah-binah-da'at*, and *netzach-hod-yesod* were elevated and became *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*. After this, he developed new *netzach-hod-yesod*. It follows that the origin of his mature *tiferet* is his immature *yesod*. It further follows that the *yesod* of *Ima* and the *yesod* of Leah and the original *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin* are all three at the level of *Z'eir Anpin*'s [mature] chest.

The *yesod*'s of *Ima* and Leah are positioned opposite the *tiferet* of *Z'eir Anpin*, but this *tiferet* was initially *Z'eir Anpin*'s *yesod*. So therefore, it has enough of its original nature still in it to function as a *yesod*, and thus Leah can couple with *Z'eir Anpin*.

When Leah turns around to face him, the *yesod* of *Ima* joins with *yesod* of Leah, inside it, and they fuse to become one *yesod* of a feminine *partzuf*. It is with them that the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin* that is there, at the level of his chest, couples, as mentioned above.

We explain all this in detail in our commentary on the verse, “And Joseph was brought down to Egypt.”<sup>15</sup>

This, then is the explanation of the statement in the *Zohar* that “From here [we derived] that a person hates the nakedness of his mother.” This statement can now be understood literally.

On another occasion, I [Rabbi Chaim Vital] heard from my master, of blessed memory, that *Z'eir Anpin* couples with Leah at the level of his *da'at*, which becomes a form of *yesod* in order to couple with Leah. This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “And Adam *knew* his wife,”<sup>16</sup> for this type of higher-level coupling occurs through *da'at*, and is called “[carnal] knowledge.”

This explains why the verb “to know” is used as a euphemism for marital relations, rather than a verb more explicitly derived from *yesod* (e.g., “founded” or the like).

As is known, the coupling [at the level] of *da'at* is hidden and concealed. This is why Jacob's coupling with Leah on that first night was concealed from him, as is known.

In my opinion, both these explanations are the same, for the *da'at* of *Z'eir Anpin* extends until his chest, and it is the *yesod* of that level.

To be continued...

—translated from *Sha'ar HaPesukim* by Rabbi Moshe Wisnefsky

<sup>14</sup> *Eitz Chaim* 23:1, 23:6, 28:4:5.

<sup>15</sup> Genesis 39:1.

<sup>16</sup> Genesis 4:1.

## *Parashat VaYishlach*

In the portion of the Torah read this week, we are told that Jacob prepared to encounter Esau by sending him a gift. After sending the gift on ahead, “He arose that night and took his two wives and two handmaidens and eleven children and crossed over the Jabok river crossing.”<sup>1</sup>

As you know, the mentality of *Abba* [enters] the mentality of *Ima*, and the *yesod* of *Abba* extends further down than the *yesod* of *Ima*.

As we have explained previously, the insight of *chochmah* is the “raw material” of *binah* and the content that it processes. Inasmuch as this fundamental insight is the original spark of inspiration, its *yesod*, or drive for self-actualization, is greater and extends further than that of *binah*.

Now, the mentality of *Abba* does not fully enter [the mentality of *Ima*] until the immature mentality is expelled.

The purpose of the investment of the mentality of *Abba* in that of *Ima* is in order that they both become transformed into the mental power of *Z'eir Anpin*. As we know, the purpose of any intellectual insight or resulting revamping of one's word-view is in order that this remake him as a person, and the measure of that is the extent to which his emotional relationship and response to reality is remade.

The development of the mentality of *Z'eir Anpin*, however, progresses through three stages: embryonic mentality, nursing mentality, and mature mentality. The progression from one stage to the next is predicated on the displacement of the old mentality by the new one.

The immature mentality is first displaced to the throat. As you know, the immature mentality consists of three Names *Elokim*, while the mature mentality consists of three Names *Havayah*. Each Name *Havayah* rectifies one Name *Elokim*.

The Name *Elokim* denotes *tzimtzum*, or contracted consciousness. Just as in educating a child, the child can at first only assimilate the most superficial aspects of the parents' intellect, so can *Z'eir Anpin* at first only accept a contracted version of the mentality of *Ima* (in which is en clothed the mentality of *Abba*, as we have said). Thus, the manifestation of the three mental powers of *chochmah*, *binah*, and *da'at* in *Z'eir Anpin* is in the form the Name *Elokim*. In contrast, the Name *Havayah* denotes revelation, and therefore the mature mentality is manifest as three Names *Havayah*.

The *yesod* of *Abba* extends beyond both the immature and mature mentalities, descending below the level of the chest [of *Z'eir Anpin*].

The mature mentality of *Z'eir Anpin* is vested in its head, while, as we said, its immature mentality has descended to the level of its throat. However, the *yesod* of *Abba* extends further than either state of mentality. The initial insight, although a primarily intellectual experience, contains within it an element of consciousness that transcends intellect, and therefore is not limited to it.

Now, [the combined numerical value of] *Havayah* and *Elokim* is the same as that of *Jabok*, and this *yesod* [of *Abba*] extends further than both.

*Havayah* (*yud-hei-vav-hei*) = 10 + 5 + 6 + 5 = 26; *Elokim* (*alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem*) = 1 + 30 + 5 + 10 + 40 = 86; 26 + 86 = 112; *Jabok* (*yud-beit-kuf*) = 10 + 2 + 100 = 112.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 32:23.

This, then, is the mystical meaning of the verse “the Jabok river crossing.” After this, [the *partzuf* of] *Ya’akov* issued from [this light] that was revealed from *yesod* of *Abba* [after it extends] outward. This verse refers to him [i.e., this *Ya’akov*].

As we explained previously, a secondary *partzuf* of *Ya’akov* develops out of *Z’eir Anpin*.

Know also that there are four mystical aspects of Jabok:

1. [The combined numerical values of] the Names *Havayah* and *Elokim*, [as we have said].
2. [The combined numerical values of] the Names *Ekyeh*, *Havayah*, and *Adni*.

The numerical value of the Name *Ekyeh* (*alef-hei-yud-hei*,  $1 + 5 + 10 + 5$ ) is 21. The numerical value of the Name *Adni* (*alef-dalet-nun-yud*) is 65.  $21 + 26 + 65 = 112$ .

3. The numerical value of the square spelling-out of the Name *Havayah* is 184. If we subtract 72 from this number, the remainder is 112.

“Squaring” a word in Kabbalah means developing the word from its first letter, progressively adding one more letter at each step. Thus, the “square” of the Name *Havayah* (*yud-hei-vav-hei*) would be:

*yud*, *yud-hei*, *yud-hei-vav*, *yud-hei-vav-hei*.

When these stages are each spelled out (using the letter *yud*), we have:

*yud-vav-dalet*, *yud-vav-dalet hei-yud*, *yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-yud-dalet*, *yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-yud-dalet hei-yud*.

Numerically, this translates into:  $4(10+6+4) + 3(5+10) + 2(6+10+6) + 1(5+10)$   
 $= 4(20) + 3(15) + 2(22) + 1(15)$   
 $= 80 + 45 + 44 + 15$   
 $= 184$ .

If we subtract the value of the spelling-out of the four letters of the Name *Havayah* (using the letter *yud*), i.e., 72, we are left with 112.

4. The numerical value of [first three letters of the Name *Havayah*,] *yud-hei-vav*, when they are spelled out with the letter *yud* in the squared fashion is 112.

The first three letters of the Name *Havayah* are the three unique letters used to spell this Name; the final *hei* is a repeat of the of the first *hei* and is therefore in a certain sense not considered as much a part of the essence of the Name as the first three letters. These first three letters are therefore, in certain contexts, treated as a sort of Divine Name by themselves. Psychologically, this would refer to the powers of the soul themselves (*yud*: *chochmah*; *hei*: *binah*; *vav*: *midot*), not considering their expression (the final *hei*).

The numerical value of the spelling out of the squaring of this three-letter combination is as follows:

*yud-vav-dalet*, *yud-vav-dalet hei-yud*, *yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-yud-vav* ( $10+6+4$ ,  $10+6+4$   $5+10$ ,  $10+6+4$   $5+10$   $6+10+6$ ) = 112.

As we have explained previously, the Jabok brook is associated with the struggle between good and evil, since it was there that Jacob wrestled with the angel of Esau (as is described in the following verses). We have now caught a glimpse of what this means in terms of the mystical dynamics of the universe. Although evil can make

inroads and attempt to gain a foothold via the intellect, the most dangerous confrontation between good and evil occurs at the level of the emotions. Precisely because the emotions are such a pivotal part of the psyche, it is also most crucial that the battle be won at this level.

This, of course, is because the intellect is by nature more abstract and objective. The more subjective nature of the emotions make them the “Jacob’s heel” where evil can gain a foothold. At the emotional level the individual is far more likely to make choices based on “what’s good for me” than “what is good” objectively. This renders him open to self-centeredness, which diverts his consciousness from G-d, which is in turn the source of evil.

Thus, we see that Jacob, the progenitor of the Jewish people, does not come into his own as a *partzuf* until *yesod* of *Abba*, the drive of the initial Divine thought or conception of creation, traverses the intellect and is able to shine out unshielded and unprocessed by the intellect. It is of course crucial that the initial insight of *chochmah* become firmly rooted in consciousness via *binah* and developed into the mentality of *Z’eir Anpin*, precisely because of the struggle that is to ensue once *yesod* of *Abba* proceeds beyond its realm. That struggle is the struggle between Jacob and Esau; Esau does not seek to attack Jacob until he has completed his developmental stage of intellectualization of the insight and has emerged from it ready to enter the land of Israel, the land of the seven pagan nations or native, unrectified emotions, in order to conquer it for holiness. When Jacob left the land of Israel originally he went to study Torah in the yeshivah of Shem and Eber, and our sages also tell us that Jacob studied Torah while tending Laban’s flock as well. Thus, his entire sojourn outside the land of Israel until this point can be envisioned as the process of the maturation of the intellect. This having been accomplished, Jacob turns his attention to the land of the emotions, and it is here that Esau, threatened by Jacob’s usurpation of his hegemony over the emotions, prepares to do battle with him.

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The next verses in the Torah read: “He took them and passed them over the brook, and did the same with his possessions. And Jacob was left alone, and a person wrestled with him until dawn.”<sup>2</sup>

Our sages state that [the reason Jacob did not cross with his family but remained behind was because] he went back to retrieve his small jars [and the like].<sup>3</sup>

As is known, the soul of a righteous individual comprises 248 [spiritual] members, each one of which possesses sparks from a number of the souls of [other] righteous individuals. All the Divine beneficence that is granted to him is given as well for the sake of all [the souls of those other righteous people] who are dependent upon him. This is why righteous people value their possessions, since [they are aware that] it is granted them from above.

According to the sages, there are 248 members (limbs and organs) of the physical body. Inasmuch as the soul possesses powers exactly corresponding to these 248 members, which it enlivens, we may speak of 248 spiritual limbs of the soul, referring to these powers that enliven and govern the 248 members of the body. By fulfilling his G-d-ordained mission in this world, the righteous person is completing the work begun by the righteous people who preceded him, and in this sense may be considered to be actualizing the potentials of these souls and endowing them with a measure of completion and fulfillment they did not realize while they were in their own bodies.

Cognizant of this, a righteous person will realize that all the Divine beneficence granted to him during his life is not merely for the sake of fulfilling his own personal mission in this world, but for completing the mission of others who preceded him, as well. He will value his possessions not only because they allow him to accomplish his purpose in revealing Divinity in the world but also because they allow him to enhance the stature and state of completion of the souls of those who preceded him.

It is not fitting that a righteous person disdain such things, for if nothing could be accomplished by giving them to him, G-d would not have given them to him.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 32:24-25.

<sup>3</sup> *Chulin* 91a.

This is therefore why Jacob returned to collect the small jars [and the like], for had he not returned, it would have appeared as though he did not value them. Everything granted to a person from above must be cared for. He therefore went back for them, in order to show how dear they were to him.

As he prepares to do battle with Esau's angel, Jacob summons all the G-dly energy he needs for this battle. Always cognizant of his own lack of merit, he make sure to enlist the merit of the spiritual energies of all righteous souls in the cosmic battle between good and evil, at whatever level. This is signified by his attention to detail, how he values the elements of other's struggle within his own.

Likewise, in each individual's personal struggle with evil, it is paramount that he recall that he wages the war not on his own merits alone, but that the merits of the righteous of all generations combine with his own and their combined energy outweighs that of evil. Also, the individual should realize the centrality and importance of his struggle; through his efforts the efforts of all generations is given meaning and, hopefully, fulfillment.

—translated from *Sha'ar HaPesukim*, *Sefer HaLikutim*, and *Likutei Torah*

## *Parashat VaYishlach* [second installment]

In the portion of the Torah read this week, we are told that there were eight kings “who ruled in the land of Edom before any king ruled the children of Israel:

“And **Bela ben Be’or** ruled in Edom, and the name of his city was Dinhavah. Bela died—

“And **Yovav ben Zerach** of Batzrah ruled in his place. Yovav died—

“And **Chusham** from the south land ruled in his place. Chusham died—

“And **Hadad ben Badad**—who smote Midian in the field of Moab—ruled in his place, and the name of his city was Avit. Hadad died—

“And **Samlah** from Masreikah ruled in his place. Samlah died—

“And **Shaul** from Rechovot HaNahar ruled in his place. Shaul died—

“And **Ba’al Chanan ben Achbor** ruled in his place. Ba’al Chanan ben Achbor died—

“And **Hadar** ruled in his place, and the name of his city was Pa’u. And his wife’s name was Meheitavel bat Matreid bat Mei Zehav.”<sup>1</sup>

This account is repeated in the Book of Chronicles<sup>2</sup> with minor changes, as will be noted.

We will now explain the mystery of these kings and their deaths. But first, we must answer the following questions:

1. Why, for only some of the kings (such as Bela ben Be’or and Hadad ben Badad), does the Torah mention the name of their cities?
2. Why does it mention the name of the wife only in the case of the last king?
3. Why, in the case of Hadad ben Badad, does the Torah tell us that he “smote Midian in the field of Moab,” but does not tell us similar [historical details] about the other kings?
4. Why does the Torah tell us the names of four of the kings’ fathers, and not those of the other four?
5. Why, in the case of the four kings whose fathers’ names are given, does the Torah repeat the fathers’ names when it tells us that they died in only case [i.e., that of Ba’al Chanan ben Achbor]?
6. Why, in the case of Chusham, doe the Torah mention where he came from, but does not do so for the others?

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 36:31-39.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Chronicles 1:43-51.

7. Why does the Torah note the fact that the kings died, except for the last one?
8. Also, why are there [the following] differences between this passage and the parallel passage in Chronicles:
  - a. The Torah mentions the fact that “Bela ben Be’or ruled...,” but the Book of Chronicles does not mention the fact that he ruled.
  - b. The Torah, in describing the death of Chusham, writes his name without a *vav*, while in the Book of Chronicles it is written with a *vav*.
  - c. The Torah records the name of Hadad’s city as *Avit*, while in the Book of Chronicles it is written as [if it is to be pronounced] *Ivat* (even though it is still read *Avit*).
  - d. In the Torah, it is written that “Ba’al Chanan *ben Achbor* died,” while in the Book of Chronicles it is written that “Ba’al Chanan died,” not mentioning his father’s name.
  - e. In the Torah, the eighth king’s name is *Hadar*, ending with a *reish*, while in the Book of Chronicles it is given as *Hadad*, ending with a *dalet*.
  - f. The Torah does not mention the eighth king’s death, while in the Book of Chronicles it does mention his death.
  - g. In the Torah, the eighth king’s city is given as Pe’u, while in the Book of Chronicles it is given as Pe’i.

Know that the *Zohar* applies the account of these kings to [the state of affairs] before *Arich Anpin* was rectified, and does the same regarding [the state of affairs] before *Z’eir Anpin* was rectified and before *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin* was rectified.<sup>3</sup>

This is because the states of stringent judgment [personified by these kings] issued immediately after *chochmah* and *binah* issued, whether in the case of *chochmah* and *binah* of *Arich Anpin*, in the case of *chochmah* and *binah* of *Z’eir Anpin*, or in the case of *chochmah* and *binah* of *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin*. This is why the *Zohar* quotes the verse “And these were the kings that ruled in the land of Edom” in the case of *Nukva* only after having described [how] its *chochmah* and *binah* [issue]. From this fact you can infer [that the same applies] with the others, for even though in their case, the *Zohar* cites this verse at the beginning [of its

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<sup>3</sup> This is referring to the passage in the *Zohar* (3:127b-145a) known as the *Idra Rabbah*, which details the construction (“rectification”) of the *partzufim*.

discussion of them], it means to apply it only to after their *chochmah* and *binah* have issued forth. In each of these three cases, [i.e., *Arich Anpin*, *Z'eir Anpin*, and *Nukva*,] these kings—who personify stringent judgment—issued only after *chochmah* and *binah* issued.

*Chochmah* and *binah*—insight and comprehension—make up the abstract, objective side of the intellect. The subjective side of intellect is *da'at*. The objective intellect sees things in black and white, so to speak, and therefore engenders a strict outlook on life. Thus, after these sub-sefirot of these *partzufim* have issued, stringent judgment and judgmentality follows.

Therefore, the supernal source of emanation had to rectify the mentalities of each [of these *partzufim*] by means the rectifications of the head and the rectifications of the beard, giving these three [*partzufim*] something of the duality of male and female, in order that male and female subsequently issue from them simultaneously.

The “rectifications of the head” and the “rectifications of the beard” are terms for the arrangement of the flow of Divine consciousness from these *partzufim* to the ones below them. As we have seen previously, these arrangements are identified with G-d's attributes of mercy.

The reason these states of severe judgment issue as soon as *binah* appears is as follows: Strict judgment is aroused in *binah*, as is known. These states of judgment were aroused to issue from it, but they did not endure in the female side, until male and female issued together. Some of them were “made fragrant” on the side of holiness, but some of them were not “made fragrant” and passed to the other side.

Regarding how the kings [that issued] from *Arich Anpin* became null and died, the matter is “deep, deep, who can fathom it?”<sup>4</sup> It is very hidden and not alluded to in the Torah at all. Only by understanding [what occurs] in the lower [*partzufim*] can we understand [what occurs] in the higher ones.

In contrast, the details of how the kings ruled in *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* are alluded to in the Torah and in the Book of Chronicles.

The description of the kings in the Book of Genesis describes their existence in *Z'eir Anpin*, while the description in the Book of Chronicles describes their existence in *Nukva*.<sup>5</sup>

This is why it says in the Torah, “And these are the kings who ruled *in the land of Edom...*,” but continues, “[Bela ben Be'or] ruled *in Edom...*,” not repeating the words “*the land of*.” “*The land of Edom*” signifies *Nukva* of *Z'eir Anpin*, which is called “the land,” while “Edom” [by itself] refers to *Z'eir Anpin*, since [Esau, who is Edom] is parallel to Jacob, as it is written, “He is Esau, the father of Edom.”<sup>6</sup>

As we know, Jacob personified *Z'eir Anpin*.

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<sup>4</sup> Ecclesiastes 7:24.

<sup>5</sup> Comment of Rabbi Wolf Ashkenazi.

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 36:43. In Genesis 36:1 and 36:8 it is stated explicitly that “Esau is Edom.”

The Torah describes the kings who ruled in *Z'eir Anpin*; it is therefore written “[Bela ben Be’or] ruled in Edom” [and not “...in *the land of* Edom”] in order to indicate that these states of stringent judgment existed in *Z'eir Anpin* itself. These kings issued from *binah* of *Z'eir Anpin* and sought to settle in *Z'eir Anpin*, but could not. The Torah therefore says “in Edom,” since [Edom] is [in the words of the *Zohar*:] “where judgment is bound and connected,” referring to *binah* of *Z'eir Anpin*.

This explains why in the *Zohar*, when discussing the kings [who ruled] in *Z'eir Anpin*, quotes as well the verse “And [Bela ben Be’or] ruled in Edom...,” but when discussing the kings [who ruled] in *Nukva*, only quotes the verse “And these are the kings who ruled in the land of Edom.” This is also why the *Zohar* [in the context of *Nukva*] mentions “the place where all judgment is found, and these are the rectifications of the female.”

Proof that the description of the kings within *Arich Anpin* is not alluded to in the Torah is in the fact that no mention of them is made in the *Zohar* [either]; they [the kings] are mentioned only in connection with *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*.

Now that we have demonstrated that these kings allude only to *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* and [as they exist] in *Arich Anpin* they are hidden, all the discrepancies mentioned above in the Torah and the Book of Chronicles will be clear. For the [kings] mentioned in the Torah are those of *Z'eir Anpin* and those mentioned in the Book of Chronicles are those of *Nukva* of *Z'eir Anpin*. Therefore, regarding the kings of *Z'eir Anpin* the Torah says “And [Bela ben Be’or] ruled in Edom...,” while regarding those of *Nukva* the Book of Chronicles does not say “he ruled in Edom” [itself], only that they rule “*in the land of* Edom.”

—translated from *Sha'ar HaPesukim*, *Sefer HaLikutim*, and *Likutei Torah*

## *Parashat VaYishlach* [third installment]

In the previous installment, we began to explain the Shattering of the Vessels, the mystical significance of the eight kings “who ruled in the land of Edom before any king ruled the children of Israel:

“And **Bela ben Be’or** ruled in Edom, and the name of his city was Dinhavah. Bela died—

“And **Yovav ben Zerach** of Batzrah ruled in his place. Yovav died—

“And **Chusham** from the south land ruled in his place. Chusham died—

“And **Hadad ben Badad**—who smote Midian in the field of Moab—ruled in his place, and the name of his city was Avit. Hadad died—

“And **Samlah** from Masreikah ruled in his place. Samlah died—

“And **Shaul** from Rechovot HaNahar ruled in his place. Shaul died—

“And **Ba’al Chanan ben Achbor** ruled in his place. Ba’al Chanan ben Achbor died—

“And **Hadar** ruled in his place, and the name of his city was Pa’u. And his wife’s name was Meheitavel bat Matreid bat Mei Zehav.”<sup>1</sup>

We continue now with this exposition.

The first king [Bela ben Be’or] personified *da’at*, which [issues forth] after *binah*. Opposite [*da’at*, in the realm of evil], issued [the gentile prophet] Balaam ben Be’or. [As the sages state, it is written in the Torah that] “there arose no prophet *in Israel* like Moses,”<sup>2</sup> but *amongst the gentiles* there did arise such a prophet, namely Balaam.<sup>3</sup> Just as Moses personified *da’at* on the side of holiness, so did Balaam [personify *da’at*] on the side of evil, inasmuch as he personified strict judgment.

Bela (*beit-lamed-ayin*) and Balaam (*beit-lamed-ayin-mem*) are spelled exactly the same, except for the final *mem* at the end of Balaam. Thus, they are considered to be the same person, or at least personifications of the same spiritual archetype.

Balaam was the gentile prophet hired by Balak to curse the Jews on the eve of their entry into the land of Israel. He was granted prophecy—even though he misused this gift and was evil—so that the non-Jews could not claim that had they, too, had a prophet like Moses amongst their ranks, they would have accepted the Torah and obeyed G-d’s word.

Moses personified the *sefirah* of *da’at*, subjective knowledge of G-d, and imparted this quality to the Jewish people.<sup>4</sup> Since Balaam was his equivalent on the side of evil, he personified evil *da’at*.

We are taught that G-d becomes angry with the world for one moment each day.<sup>5</sup> The sages say that Balaam’s main prophetic talent was that he always knew this one, precise moment of each day,<sup>6</sup> and could channel this energy to curse whomever he wished. He thus represents evil knowledge, the sensitivity to what is wrong with the world, i.e., judgementality. Of course, a certain amount of this quality is necessary for us to objectively evaluate our progress in life and improve our behavior (and this is why G-d allows Himself to be judgemental for a split second every day), but focusing exclusively on this quality, as did Balaam, is evil.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 36:31-39; cf. 1 Chronicles 1:43-51.

<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy 34:10.

<sup>3</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 14:2.

<sup>4</sup> See *Tanya*, ch. 41.

<sup>5</sup> Psalms 30:6.

<sup>6</sup> *Sanhedrin* 105b.

This is why Balaam boasted that he “knows the supernal knowledge.”<sup>7</sup> He was referring to the *da’at* that precedes the holy *da’at* of *Z’eir Anpin*; this is why he called it “supernal knowledge.” Just as from the third [i.e., posterior lobe of the] brain of *Z’eir Anpin*, which houses its *da’at*, and [in the words of the *Zohar*, sits] “in the third cavity of the skull, there issue a million rooms and halls over which the brain of *da’at* presides and dwells in”<sup>8</sup>—

*Chochmah* resides in the right cerebral hemisphere of the brain, *binah* in the left cerebral hemisphere, and *da’at* in the occipital lobe. 1,000,000 “lights” (states of consciousness) issue from *da’at* and inform the “rooms,” i.e., the *sefirot* of *chesed*, *gevurah*, and *tiferet*, and “halls,” i.e., the *sefirot* of *netzach*, *hod*, and *yesod*.

(*Chesed-gevurah-tiferet* are alluded to by the word “rooms” because the word for “room” in Hebrew, *cheder*, is taken as an acronym for the words *chesed-din-rachamim*. *Din* [“judgement”] is an alternate name for *gevurah*, and *rachamim* [“mercy”] is the inner motivation of *tiferet*.)

*Da’at* comprises five states of *chesed* and five states of *gevurah*, as we have mentioned previously. Each of these ten states is subdivided into ten sub-states, giving 100, and each of these is further subdivided into ten sub-sub-states, giving 1000. Elsewhere, the number 1000 is associated with the intellect, so we have 1000 x 1000 or 1,000,000 manifestations of *da’at* informing the *sefirot* below it.

—so it is with regard to this [evil] *da’at*, which expresses strict judgment and is synonymous with Bela ben Be’or. [Thus, the *Zohar* continues] “it makes decrees of the strictest judgment, and together with it join a million masters of moaning and groaning.”<sup>9</sup>

The “masters of groaning and moaning” are the “kings” of *chesed* and *gevurah* (which we will discuss further on). They join with *da’at* since *da’at* comprises the twin modes of relation, *chesed* (attraction) and *gevurah* (repulsion) and regulates them.

Since the holy *da’at* enters and permeates the torso, “filling the rooms and halls,” this [evil] *da’at* is called Bela, for it is swallowed up inside the torso and the two upper cavities.

*Bela* means “swallowing.”

It is further called “ben [the son of] *Be’or*” [since *Be’or* means “burning,”] because the arousal of G-d’s strict judgment is likened to a great inferno, as in the verse, “For behold, the day is coming, *burning* like an oven...”<sup>10</sup>

This verse refers to the final judgment day.

King Bela was somewhat rectified, and thus made into [the seventh king,] Ba’al Chanan. He thus was pardoned, this being the significance of [the second word in his name,] Chanan.

The letters of the name *Bela* (*beit-lamed-ayin*) may be rearranged to spell *Ba’al* (*beit-ayin-lamed*). The word *Ba’al* means “master of” and the word *Chanan* means “pardon” and “grace,” so *Ba’al Chanan* means “the master of pardon.”

<sup>7</sup> Numbers 24:16.

<sup>8</sup> *Zohar (Idra Rabba)* 3:135b-136a.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 135a.

<sup>10</sup> Malachi 3:19.

[As part of this rectification,] the letter *chaf* was added to [Bela's] father's name Be'or, and thus [Ba'al Chanan] was "the son of Achbor."

Be'or is spelled *beit-ayin-vav-reish*; Achbor is spelled *ayin-chaf-beit-vav-reish*. Thus, the two names are composed of the same letters, except that Achbor also possesses the letter *chaf*.

Now, it is known that "women's knowledge is light."<sup>11</sup> Therefore, the *Zohar*, in its discussion of *Nukva* of *Z'eir Anpin*, mentions only "the rectification of two lobes of the brain," for the third lobe, *da'at*, is light. For the same reason, in the case of this king, who personified *da'at*, kingship is not mentioned in the Book of Chronicles. For [the account of the Edomite kings in] the Book of Chronicles describes *Nukva* of *Z'eir Anpin*, whose *da'at* is light. In contrast, [the account of the Edomite kings in] the Torah, which describes *Z'eir Anpin* itself, who does possess [full] *da'at*, does mention kingship.

As we have explained many times previously, the male approach to life is relatively more abstract, while the female approach is relatively more practical. Thus, the female within us is the drive to consummate the purpose of creation by making the world into G-d's home, while the male within us is the abstract drive for inspiration. In this context, it is clear why "women's knowledge," i.e., their *da'at*, must be "light." *Da'at* is tolerance, the ability to see the validity in other points of view, to compare and weigh the merits of *chesed* and *gevurah* within any entity. There are situations where tolerance is appropriate and situations where it is not. As long as the discussion is abstract, tolerance is acceptable and even laudible, since it enables us to examine all points of a topic objectively and thereby arrive at the truth. But once the truth has been arrived at, i.e., once it has become clear how exactly to accomplish G-d's purpose in this world, tolerance is no longer a positive force; we must become intolerant of anything that opposes this.

A practical example of this would be the field of Talmudic dialectics. As long as the discussion is abstract, all opinions and possibilities are legitimate; "both are words of the living G-d." But once the legal decision is reached, all other opinions become academic and anyone who conducts himself in accord with *them* is in error, *not* accomplishing G-d's will, and even liable to punishment.

Thus, the feminine side of us *must not* have "strong *da'at*," i.e., a generous sense of tolerance, for that would contravene its purpose.

The disadvantage of having "light" *da'at* is that we can become intolerant of the wrong things. If we become convinced of something that is not right, our intolerance can make us unwilling to become unconvinced. Thus, women generally are more in danger of being seduced than are men.

For all these reasons, it is clear why in Kabbalah great emphasis is placed on the union of male and female. Our male and female aspects need to cross-fertilize each other, so that we may always be refining our awareness of truth while simultaneously being single-mindedly devoted to its implementation. The female aspect prevents the male aspect from keeping us in a state of abstract non-accomplishment, while the male aspect prevents the female aspect from being seduced into misguided zeal.<sup>12</sup>

In the Torah, the account of this king is: "And Bela ben Be'or ruled in Edom, and the name of his city was Dinhavah...." In the Book of Chronicles, the corresponding verse reads: "Bela ben Be'or, and the name of his city was Dinhavah..."; there is no specific mention of this king *ruling* (although his kingship is included with that of all the other kings in the opening verse of this passage: "These are the kings *who ruled* in Edom...").

Kingship (*malchut*) is the *sefirah* of femininity, as can be seen from the fact that *malchut* becomes the *partzuf* of *Nukva*, the female archetype. Thus, the absence of (any mention of) kingship with regard to *da'at* in the account of *Nukva* alludes to this inherent deficiency/strength in feminine psychology.

<sup>11</sup> *Kidushin* 80b.

<sup>12</sup> This explanation of "light *da'at*" is taken from that of Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh, who expounded on this subject (most recently) at the English Neshei Chabad convention in Jerusalem, Chanukah 5761.

Thus, we have answered question 8a in the opening of this exposition.

And since this king personifies *da'at*, as we said, and [therefore] comprises all the others, it is stated in the account of his rule that “the name of his city was Dinhavah.” Holy *da'at* draws [the consciousness of] the supernal *chesed*—which is revealed in the mouth of *Ima*<sup>13</sup>—from the supernal mind [i.e., *Ima*, and transmits it] to the bride [i.e., *Nukva*]. [*Nukva*] continuously requests this *chesed* from it [i.e., from *da'at*].

We will see that the remaining kings personify the *midot*; thus, this first one, corresponding to *da'at*, comprises them all.

The “mouth of *Ima*” is the point at which the intellect, *Ima*, begins to express itself. Inasmuch as *chesed* is the first and driving force of all the emotions, the supernal *chesed*—the abstract *chesed* of the intellect—is the potential within the intellect to evoke an emotional response. It is made relevant by *da'at*, which then passes this relevance and motivation to *Nukva*, providing it with the drive to actualize the inspiration produced in the intellect.

The same is true of this [evil] *da'at* of judgment. [The evil *Nukva*] requests G-d's judgment from it, as is stated in the *Zohar*, saying “give judgment” [*din-havah*]. [Thus, we are told the name of] his city, just as we say that the “city of David is Zion.”<sup>14</sup> For “G-d created the one opposite the other.”<sup>15</sup>

Here, the evil *Nukva* requests the insight of how the world is imperfect and needs to be judged. The word Dinhavah is seen as the combination of the two words *din havah*, meaning “give judgment.”

The “city” here is seen as the concretization of the ideals of the person who built it. Just as King David's ideals were concretized in the city of Zion, the focus of the kingdom of Israel, so were the ideals of Bela ben Be'or concretized in Dinhavah.

—translated from *Sha'ar HaPesukim*, *Sefer HaLikutim*, and *Likutei Torah*

<sup>13</sup> See *Zohar* 2:123a; *The Hebrew Letters*, p. 252; *The Mystery of Marriage*, p. 142.

<sup>14</sup> 1 Kings 8:1.

<sup>15</sup> Ecclesiastes 7:14.

## *Parashat VaYishlach* [fourth installment]

In the previous installments, we began to explain the Shattering of the Vessels, the mystical significance of the eight kings “who ruled in the land of Edom before any king ruled the children of Israel:

“And **Bela ben Be’or** ruled in Edom, and the name of his city was Dinhavah. Bela died—

“And **Yovav ben Zerach** of Batzrah ruled in his place. Yovav died—

“And **Chusham** from the south land ruled in his place. Chusham died—

“And **Hadad ben Badad**—who smote Midian in the field of Moab—ruled in his place, and the name of his city was Avit. Hadad died—

“And **Samlah** from Masreikah ruled in his place. Samlah died—

“And **Shaul** from Rechovot HaNahar ruled in his place. Shaul died—

“And **Ba’al Chanan ben Achbor** ruled in his place. Ba’al Chanan ben Achbor died—

“And **Hadar** ruled in his place, and the name of his city was Pa’u. And his wife’s name was Meheitavel bat Matreid bat Mei Zehav.”<sup>1</sup>

We continue now with this exposition.

The second king, Yovav ben Zerach of Batzrah, personified *gevurah*, which is expressed through wailing.

The word for “wailing” (*yebava*) is related to the name *Yovav*. We are speaking here about evil *gevurah*, i.e., unmitigated judgmentality, which causes unjustified suffering.

Since this account describes how these kings, who personified severe judgment [of *Tohu*], preceded [the rectified order of *Tikun*], the [king who personified] *gevurah* preceded [the king who personified] *chesed*.

He is called “the son of Zerach” because, as is stated in the Midrash, “the water conceived and gave birth to darkness.” He was therefore “the son of Zerach.”

In explaining how the Biblical account of creation assumes the existence of certain entities whose creation is not specifically mentioned, the Midrash says that “three things preceded the creation of the world: water, wind, and fire. Water conceived and gave birth to darkness; fire conceived and gave birth to light; wind conceived and gave birth to wisdom, and with these six things the world is maintained: with wind, wisdom, fire, light, darkness, and water. For this reason did David say: Bless G-d, O my soul, O G-d my G-d, You are very great.”<sup>2</sup>

*Zerach* means “shining.” Perhaps this refers to water’s ability to reflect light.

Furthermore, the numerical value of *Zerach* plus the *kolel* is 216, referring to the 216 letters that issue from *gevurah*, whose numerical value is also 216.

*Zerach*: zayin-reish-chet = 7 + 200 + 8 = 215.

*Gevurah*: gimel-beit-vav-reish-hei = 3 + 2 + 6 + 200 + 5 = 216.

His referred to being “from Batzrah,” alluding to the harvesting [*betzirah*] of black grapes, which alludes in turn to strict judgment.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 36:31-39; cf. 1 Chronicles 1:43-51.

<sup>2</sup> *Shemot Rabbah* 15:22. Psalms 104:1. All six things are mentioned in this psalm.

When the grapes are harvested, the black ones are separated out since they are unacceptable.

On the other hand, since this second king is called “the son of Zerach,” it would appear that he personifies *tiferet*. Furthermore, [his name Yovav can be considered] to allude to the *teru’ah*, a trembling wail, which also corresponds to *tiferet*.

The three shofar blasts—*tekiah* (the long blast), *shevarim* (3 broken blasts), and *teru’ah* (the staccato blasts)—

Being “the son of Zerach” associates him with *tiferet* since *tiferet* is associated with the east, as we have said.

The east is called *mizrach*, the direction from which the sun beings to *shine*.

In this context, the numerical value [of *Zerach* plus the *kolel*,] 216 can be seen as 3 x 72, corresponding to the three patriarchs included in it.

72 is the numerical value of *chesed* (*chet-samech-dalet*: 8 + 60 + 4 = 72). The three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, personify the three *sefirot* of *chesed*, *gevurah*, and *tiferet*, respectively. However, since all the *midot* are extensions of *chesed*, the three of them can be alluded to by 216.

The first two kings thus allude to *da’at* and *tiferet*, which are “masculine” *sefirot*. This explains why they are called “the son of so-and-so,” [while the third king is not].

*Gevurah*, in contrast, is a “feminine” *sefirah*, located on the left side of the sefirotic tree.

In this context, the name Yovav alludes to the Name *Havayah*. First of all, it explicitly possesses [two of the letters of this Name,] *yud* and *vav*, which signify *chochmah* and *tiferet*.

*Yovav* is spelled *yud-vav-beit-beit*, and the Name *Havayah* is spelled *yud-hei-vav-hei*. As we have explained previously, the four letters of this Name are respectively associated with the four *partzufim* of *Abba*, *Ima*, *Z’eir Anpin*, and *Nukva*.

<i>yud</i>	<i>Abba</i>
<i>hei</i>	<i>Ima</i>
<i>vav</i>	<i>Z’eir Anpin</i>
<i>hei</i>	<i>Nukva of Z’eir Anpin</i>

*Abba*, as we know, is developed out of *chochmah*, while *Z’eir Anpin* is developed out of the *midot*, the central one of which is *tiferet*.

The two *beit*’s allude to *binah* and *malchut*, the two “houses of Israel.”

The word *beit* means “house.” The two feminine *partzufim* of *Ima* (“mother”) and *Nukva* (“the female”) are the “wives” of the two masculine *partzufim* of *Abba* (“father”) and *Z’eir Anpin* (“the smaller face”). The sages say that “a man’s house is his wife.”<sup>3</sup>

Thus, even though *Yovav* has only two letters out of its four in common with the Name *Havayah*, the other two allude clearly enough to the remaining two letters of this Name. The various Names of G-d are associated with the various *sefirot*; the Name *Havayah* is associated with *tiferet*.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Yoma 2a.

Since [in the name *Yovav*] the masculine *sefirot* are alluded to before the feminine ones, he is mentioned as being “the son of so-and-so.”

Thus we see that this king can allude either to *gevurah* or *tiferet*. As if to complicate matters further, elsewhere the Arizal states that *Yovav* alludes to *chesed*!<sup>5</sup>

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The third king, *Chusham* from the south, personified *chesed*, which is associated with the south.

As we have mentioned previously, the orientation of the Torah is that of someone inside the holy of holies of the Temple, looking outward. He would be facing west, and the south would be to his right. The right side is associated with *chesed*. In particular, the correspondences between the directions and the *sefirot* are as follows:

<i>chesed</i>	right	south
<i>gevurah</i>	left	north
<i>tiferet</i>	front	east
<i>netzach</i>	up	above
<i>hod</i>	down	below
<i>yesod</i>	rear	west

His name, *Chusham*, alludes to the *chashmal*, as mentioned in the *Zohar*.<sup>6</sup>

*Chusham*: chet-shin-mem; *chashmal*: chet-shin-mem-lamed. Thus, the only difference between these two nouns is the letter *lamed*. This will be explained presently.

The *chashmal* is the name of specific Divine energy appearing as part of the vision of Ezekiel.<sup>7</sup> After seeing “a stormy wind...a great cloud, and a flashing fire,” which signify the three realms (or “shells”) of absolute evil, he saw “...a translucent glow [*nogah*] surrounding it,” signifying the neutral shell (*kelipat nogah*). He then continues, “and out of the midst of it, out of the midst of the fire, was something like the *chashmal*.”

He alludes to the foreskin situated over the sign of the holy covenant [i.e., the male procreative organ]. He quickly [removes the foreskin and] reveals the neutral shell. This is alluded to in the word *chashmal*, as it is written, “Joshua circumcised....”<sup>8</sup>

The word *chashmal* is here interpreted as a compound of the words *chash*, meaning “fast,” and *mal*, meaning “circumcise.” The procreative organ embodies—and epitomizes—the neutral shell since it may be used for either good or evil. The presence of the foreskin makes sexual relations more physically titillating but also insulates the individual from his partner’s feelings. It is thus at once the physical manifestation of both selfish, sensual desire and innate egocentricity, and therefore embodies and epitomizes the totally impure shells, the realms of absolute evil. Judaism therefore requires that the foreskin be circumcised.

[However, this king,] who is situated opposite the sign of the holy covenant, grabs this supernal light from the neutral realm, which was intended for the bride, and usurps it for himself.

<sup>4</sup> See *The Mystery of Marriage*, pp. 421-426.

<sup>5</sup> *Eitz Chaim* 8:4-5, 9:1-3.

<sup>6</sup> 3:103b.

<sup>7</sup> Ezekiel 1:4, 1:27, and 8:2.

<sup>8</sup> Joshua 5:4, 7.

*Chusham* thus represents evil *chesed*, or evil, selfish love, which, rather than being a desire to share with and please one's partner, is the desire to experience, take, and hoard pleasure for oneself.

The male procreative organ signifies the *sefirah* of *yesod*, part of *Z'eir Anpin*. The "bride" is therefore *Nukva*. Here, the "evil king" *does circumcise* the organ of procreation, but instead of this making *Z'eir Anpin* sensitive to his bride, Chusham makes him sensitive to himself, or to evil.

Therefore, the account of this king mentions his land, saying "from *the land of the south*."

As we have seen previously, "the land" is an appellation for *malchut* or *Nukva*, the feminine principle. Since this king usurps the role of the female in syphoning off the energy of *yesod*, his land is mentioned. This answers question #6, posed at the beginning of this exposition.

The name of this king, *Chusham*, is missing the *lamed* of *chashmal*, since, in this sublime level of emanation, the sign of the holy covenant has not yet been revealed. Rather, everything was hidden inside *binah*, alluded to by the closed *mem* [of *Chusham*].

As is stated in the Talmud,<sup>9</sup> there are forty gates of *binah*. Thus, the letter *mem*, whose numerical value is 40, alludes to *binah*. The closed, final form of the *mem* thus alludes to a closed, locked up form of *binah*.

And since this light was that of the supernal *chesed*, which, [as is stated in the *Zohar*,] "is revealed in the orifice of the pure organ [of procreation]," and this light was concealed, in its place issued this evil *chesed*.

What is being described here is the situation wherein the insight of *chochmah* and the new intellectual vision of reality it produces in *binah* is somehow being prevented from producing an emotional response in the *midot*. *Ima* is being prevented from giving birth. This unnatural situation allows the forces of evil to divert the normal, intended flow of Divine energy into their realms.

The possible lesson for us here is that we must allow and encourage our intellectual inspiration to affect our emotions, for it will then be expressed in the way we think, speak, and act. As a result, reality will be rectified in accordance with the quality of our initial insight, and the world will be brought accordingly closer to its true fulfillment. If this process is aborted, however, the forces of evil will be able to grab the inspiration for themselves. Prevented from producing holy love and emotion, our intellect will perforce produce evil love and emotion.

We all have certain, unique potentials and creative energies, which G-d gives us in order that we use them to do our part in making the world into His "home," this being the purpose of creation in general and everyone's individual soul-mission in particular. When we stifle these energies and do not allow them their full creative output, this repression causes them to seek to surface in whatever other way they can. Our frustration over how we are failing to affect reality positively makes us seek selfish forms of fulfillment. It follows that if we can learn to interpret our own evils or sins properly, we can trace their origin back to where they were originally derailed and channel this energy properly. The antidote for selfishness and egocentricity is rectified ego, i.e., enabling or allowing ourselves to make our positive imprint on reality in the fullest way possible.

The sexual paradigm for this is just the most graphic illustration of this principle.

—translated from *Sha'ar Ma'amarei Rashbi*, *Sefer HaLikutim*, and *Likutei Torah*

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<sup>9</sup> *Rosh HaShanah* 21b.

## *Parashat VaYishlach* [fifth installment]

In the previous installments, we began to explain the Shattering of the Vessels, the mystical significance of the eight kings “who ruled in the land of Edom before any king ruled the children of Israel:

“And **Bela ben Be’or** ruled in Edom, and the name of his city was Dinhavah. Bela died—

“And **Yovav ben Zerach** of Batzrah ruled in his place. Yovav died—

“And **Chusham** from the south land ruled in his place. Chusham died—

“And **Hadad ben Badad**—who smote Midian in the field of Moab—ruled in his place, and the name of his city was Avit. Hadad died—

“And **Samlah** from Masreikah ruled in his place. Samlah died—

“And **Shaul** from Rechovot HaNahar ruled in his place. Shaul died—

“And **Ba’al Chanan ben Achbor** ruled in his place. Ba’al Chanan ben Achbor died—

“And **Hadar** ruled in his place, and the name of his city was Pa’u. And his wife’s name was Meheitavel bat Matreid bat Mei Zehav.”<sup>1</sup>

We continue with the Arizal’s exposition of the third king. We have seen how Chusham personified evil *chesed*, syphoning off for itself the holy *chesed* intended for *Nukva*.

Since coupling [between *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*] is dependent on the [issuance] of holy *chesed*—as it is written, “it is *chesed*,”<sup>2</sup> and “the throne is established through *chesed*”<sup>3</sup>—and coupling occurs in secret, this king is called *Chusham*, from the word for “secret” [*chashai*].

The word *chesed* in the first verse refers to sexual relations. In the second verse, the “throne” is the symbol of kingship and therefore of *malchut*.

Significantly, only the first two letters of *Chusham*—*chet-shin*—are related to the word for “secret.” The final, closed *mem*, as mentioned previously, denotes the blockage of the flow from *Z’eir Anpin* to *Nukva*. Thus, Chusham signifies how the flow of *chesed*, transmitted in secret, is blocked.

[*Chesed* is issued] for the sake of the bride, to embrace her, as it is written, “and his right hand embraces me.”<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the word “land” is mentioned in his [account].

*Chesed* is associated with the right hand, as we know. As mentioned previously, “land” (*eretz*) is an appellation for *malchut*, the feminine. The fact that Chusham’s goal is to divert the Divine flow away from *malchut* is why the word “land” is mentioned only in his regard.

It thus follows that this king, in the realm of severe judgment, is the opposite of holy *chesed*, whose purpose is to effect the coupling of the groom and the bride and thereby extend the supernal light to her via *yesod*. This [king, in contrast,] comes to channel the light for himself, and prevent her from receiving it.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 36:31-39; cf. 1 Chronicles 1:43-51.

<sup>2</sup> Leviticus 20:17.

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 16:5.

<sup>4</sup> Song of Songs 2:6, 8:3.

[Another indication that Chusham is associated with *chesed* is that] the light of *chesed* is divided into five states of light, [corresponding to the five times “light” is] mentioned in the verse[s describing the creation of light on the first day of creation, beginning with] “and there was light.”<sup>5</sup> The word for “five” [*chameish*], written backwards, spells *Chusham*.

These five states of light are the five states of *chesed*, which we have discussed on previous occasions. The fact that *Chusham* is five backwards indicates that he denotes a reversal or inversion of the purpose these states of *chesed* are meant for.

Furthermore, *Chusham* may be read as “the eight [kings] are there.” I.e., all eight kings are included in this one, just as holy *chesed* is called “by day”—the day that accompanies all the other days.<sup>6</sup>

*Chusham* is spelled *chet-shin-mem*. The numerical value of *chet* is 8, and *shin-mem* spell the word for “there” (*sham*).

In the verse, “G-d shall command His *chesed* by day,”<sup>7</sup> the word for “by day” (*yomam*) literally means “their day.” Thus, this verse is interpreted mystically to mean that *chesed* is the source of and is therefore present in all the succeeding *sefirot*. This is because the essence of love—the inner motivation of *chesed*—is relationship, or caring. All the succeeding *sefirot* are types of relationship. Even hatred is a form of caring. Similarly, the evil *midot* are all rooted in evil *chesed*. In this context, Chusham can be considered the root of all the other kings.

Furthermore, *Chusham* can be understood to mean the senses inherent in each [of the kings].

The word *chush* means “sense”; *chusham* thus means “their sense.”

Specifically: the sense of taste is associated with *chochmah*, since the word *chochmah* can be seen as a compound of the words for “what [does the] palate [taste].”

*Chochmah* is spelled *chet-chaf-mem-hei*. The word for “palate” (*cheich*) is spelled *chet-chaf*; the word for “what” (*mah*) is spelled *mem-hei*.

The sense of hearing is associated with *malchut*, as it is written, “and G-d listened, and heard.”<sup>8</sup>

The sense of touch is associated with *chesed-gevurah-tiferet-netzach-hod-yesod*, which are manifest in the two arms, the two legs, the torso, and the procreative organ.

The two arms: *chesed* and *gevurah*; the two legs: *netzach* and *hod*; the torso: *tiferet*; the procreative organ: *yesod*. The *midot* are the emotions, the means by which we “touch” and relate to others.

The sense of smell is associated with *binah*. This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “And G-d smelled the savory smell.”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 1:3-5.

<sup>6</sup> *Etz Chaim* 25:2; *Pri Etz Chaim*, Sukot 1; see *Zohar* 3:103ab, 191b.

<sup>7</sup> Psalms 42:9.

<sup>8</sup> Malachi 3:16.

<sup>9</sup> Genesis 8:21.

The verse continues: "...and G-d said in His heart..." The heart, the seat of understanding, is associated with *binah*. Smell is the subtle sense of discernment, of distinguishing between good and bad.

The sense of sight is associated with *keter*, the open eye.

Sight is the most direct of the senses, allowing us an immediate perception of the object we see. By virtue of this all-encompassing inclusion, it is associated with *keter*, the enveloping, encompassing *sefirah* that comprises all the others.

All of these are part of *malchut* of *chesed*. This is alluded to by the words "from the land of the south."

As mentioned previously, the south is associated with *chesed*.

Thus, we have the following scheme of associations between the *sefirot* and the senses:

	<i>keter</i> sight	
<i>binah</i> smell		<i>chochmah</i> taste
	the <i>midot</i> touch	
	<i>malchut</i> hearing	

There are other association schemes used in other contexts.

Finally, *Chusham* in *atbash* is *samech-beit-yud*, the numerical value of which is 72, the numerical value of *chesed*.

*Atbash* (the simple reflective transformation) is the substitution system in which the first letter of the alphabet is replaced with the last, the second with the second-to-the-last, and so on.<sup>10</sup> Its name is taken from the first two substitution pairs: *alef-tav* and *beit-shin*. In this system, *chet* is replaced with *samech*, *shin* with *beit*, and *mem* with *yud*.

*Samech-beit-yud*:  $60 + 2 + 10 = 72$ .

*Chesed*: *chet-samech-dalet* =  $8 + 60 + 4 = 72$ .

Here again we see Chusham as being an inversion of true *chesed*.

Now, even though these three kings [—Bela, Yovav, and Chusham—] correspond to *da'at*, *tiferet*, and *chesed*, they do not do so in the same way. [The evil] *da'at* encompasses all the six [*midot*] of *da'at*. Therefore, [in the account of Bela,] the name of his city is mentioned, alluding to the *malchut* of *da'at*.

As was explained previously, the evil *Nukva* requests judgment from Bela, the evil *da'at*.

[The evil] *tiferet* encompasses only *gevurah* of *tiferet*. Therefore, the Torah says that [Yovav was] "from Batzrah," alluding to harvested [black] grapes.

This, as was explained previously, alludes to *gevurah*. *Batzrah* means "harvest."

[The evil] *chesed* encompasses only *malchut* of *chesed*, as alluded to in the phrase "from the south land"—*land* [denoting *malchut*].

<sup>10</sup> See *The Mystery of Marriage*, p. 417.

The Arizal now will address the issue of why in the Torah, *Chusham* is written without a *vav*, while in the Book of Chronicles it is written *with* a *vav*.

Know, that just as *chesed* of *Z'eir Anpin* exists for the sake of *malchut*, and this [evil *chesed*] issued forth opposite it in order to prevent the light belonging to *malchut* from reaching it, so too, the *chesed* of *Nukva* of *Z'eir Anpin* exists for the sake of the male [i.e., *Z'eir Anpin*], in order to cause feminine water to ascend to it.

Both the male's and the female's ability to love exist in order to be focused on their mates. "Ascending feminine water" is the Zoharic idiom for "arousal from below."

This [evil] *chesed* of *Z'eir Anpin* [therefore] died, since it lacked a mate, inasmuch as they had not yet coupled. Therefore, the word *Chusham* in the Torah—which describes the male dynamic—is written without a *vav*, alluding to the female, the lack of whose presence caused this *chesed* to die. In contrast, the word *Chusham* in the Book of Chronicles is written with a *vav*, in order to indicate that for lack of the male this *chesed* of *Nukva* of *Z'eir Anpin* died.

This explanation, however, is not satisfactory.

Possibly [the explanation is] that this [evil] *chesed* issued only as an expression of its *malchut*, thereby expressing the feminine principle. Therefore, *Chusham* is written [in the Torah] without a *vav*, which indicates the male principle. In the Book of Chronicles, *Chusham* is written with a *vav*... [the rest of this thought is missing in the manuscript].

The letter *vav* of the Name *Havayah* indicates the *midot*, or *Z'eir Anpin*. It thus signifies the male principle. (In this context, the letter *hei* signifies the female principle.) The fact that in the Torah, *Chusham* is written without a *vav* would indicate that the male element of this evil *chesed* is lacking in some way.

In the next installment, the Arizal will continue his exposition with a discussion of the fourth king.

—translated from *Sha'ar Ma'amarei Rashbi*, *Sefer HaLikutim*, and *Likutei Torah*

## *Parashat VaYishlach* [sixth installment]

In the previous installments, we began to explain the Shattering of the Vessels, the mystical significance of the eight kings “who ruled in the land of Edom before any king ruled the children of Israel:

“And **Bela ben Be’or** ruled in Edom, and the name of his city was Dinhavah. Bela died—

“And **Yovav ben Zerach** of Batzrah ruled in his place. Yovav died—

“And **Chusham** from the south land ruled in his place. Chusham died—

“And **Hadad ben Badad**—who smote Midian in the field of Moab—ruled in his place, and the name of his city was Avit. Hadad died—

“And **Samlah** from Masreikah ruled in his place. Samlah died—

“And **Shaul** from Rechovot HaNahar ruled in his place. Shaul died—

“And **Ba’al Chanan ben Achbor** ruled in his place. Ba’al Chanan ben Achbor died—

“And **Hadar** ruled in his place, and the name of his city was Pa’u. And his wife’s name was Meheitavel bat Matreid bat Mei Zehav.”<sup>1</sup>

We continue with the Arizal’s exposition of the fourth king.

The fourth king is the [evil] correlate to the holy *yesod*, referred to as “beauty” [*hadar*], expressing the idea in the phrase, “a fruit of a beautiful [*hadar*] tree.”<sup>2</sup> This [type of beauty] is the beauty of the totality of the body, as can be seen from the phrase, “and you shall honor [*hadarta*, lit., ‘beautify’] the face of the elderly.”<sup>3</sup> When it is absent, the beard disappears.

As we have seen previously, the verse, “you shall honor the face of the elderly” (*ve-hadarta penei zakein*) can be read, “the beauty of the face is the beard” (*ve-hadrat penei* [understood: *panim*] *zakan*). We have also seen how proper maturity of *yesod*, the anatomically correlated to the male reproductive organ, determines the presence or absence of the beard.

There are a number of synonyms for “beauty” in Hebrew. We see here that the beauty expressed by the presence of the beard on the face is called *hadar*, and since this beauty depends upon the *sefirah* of *yesod*, it is associated with it.

But in this context, i.e., that of [the emergence of] strict judgment, [*yesod*] issued defectively, and [this king] was therefore called *Hadad*, spelled with a *dalet* [instead of a *reish*].

The word for “defective” or “lacking” is *dalut*, cognate to *dalet*, the letter of the alphabet. *Dalet* and *reish* are almost identical in form, and therefore considered “twin” letters. Changing the *reish* into a *dalet* thus signifies a transformation from fullness to defectiveness.

The numerical value of *Hadad* is 13, which is also the numerical value of the word for “one” [*echad*] and the word for “love” [*ahavah*].

*Hadad*: hei-dalet-dalet = 5 + 4 + 4 = 13.

*Echad*: alef-chet-dalet = 1 + 8 + 4 = 13.

*Ahavah*: alef-hei-beit-hei = 1 + 5 + 2 + 5 = 13.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 36:31-39; cf. 1 Chronicles 1:43-51.

<sup>2</sup> Leviticus 23:40.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 19:32.

[This further indicates that] it correlates to *yesod*, [inasmuch as *yesod* is] known as the place of “oneness,” for all [the antecedent *sefirot*] unite [and coalesce] there, as is known.

And just as [the holy] *yesod* crushes the spiritual “olives” with mercy, in order to produce “pure, pressed olive oil for lighting,”<sup>4</sup> so does this [evil] *yesod* tread down [spiritual] “grapes” in the wine-press, in order to produce intoxicating wine, with strict judgment.

Both oil and wine are here used as analogues for *yesod*, since liquid is produced from both fruits by forcefully squeezing their contents out of them, much the same as the seminal fluid is squeezed out of the male reproductive organ. (We have commented previously on the linguistic connection between “semen” and *shemen*, the word for “oil.”) In general, oil is associated with *chochmah* and wine with *binah*. *Chochmah* is situated on the right axis of the *sefirah*-tree, associated with *chesed* (which is the dominant influence in *tiferet*), while *binah* is situated on the left axis, associated with *gevurah* and judgment. Oil floats over other liquids, indicating the supremacy of *chochmah* over the other *sefirot* and the transcendence of insight over the other aspects of the intellect and emotions. Wine has a good taste, indicating how through *binah* the insight of *chochmah* becomes tangible, understood, and thus appreciable. Wine, however, if drunk in excess, can make a person lose his bearings, just as the logical reasoning of *binah* can lead a person astray if taken to excess.

[This king] is therefore called *Hadad*, as it is written, “No more do the men who trample grapes make wine in their presses; I have made their shouting [*heidah*] cease.”<sup>5</sup>

This name thus phonetically evokes the image of joyful wine pressing.

This is also why he is called “*ben Badad*,” referring to *yesod*, “who dwells alone [*badad*],”<sup>6</sup> inasmuch as the [*sefirot* on the side of evil] do not yet exist as male and female.

The word *badad* means “alone.” *Yesod* serves primarily to bond the male and female *partzufim*, but in the world of *Tohu* the *sefirot* are not yet developed as such.

Furthermore, the word *badad* alludes to “oil belonging to the pressers [*badadin*],”<sup>7</sup> for *yesod* crushes the supernal “olives” in the oil press and extracts oil from them. He is therefore called *Badad*, referring the oil press [*beit ha-bad*] and the small oil press [*bodeidah*].<sup>8</sup>

Since *yesod* is the masculine principle, the word for “son of” is mentioned [in the name of its corresponding king].

[Hadad] is mentioned as having “smote Midian in the field of Moab,” for the holy *yesod* exemplifies peace, and thus “causes strife to cease”<sup>9</sup> in the field of Moab,” i.e., in the field of the supernal father, *chochmah*.

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<sup>4</sup> Exodus 27:20.

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 16:10.

<sup>6</sup> par. Leviticus 13:46; Jeremiah 15:17; Lamentations 1:1, 3:28.

<sup>7</sup> *Shabbat* 19b.

<sup>8</sup> *Shevi'it* 8:6.

<sup>9</sup> par. Proverbs 18:18.

The word for “who smote” is read as “who made cease”; the name *Midian* is interpreted as the noun *madanim*, which means “forms of strife and argument.” Moab is read as *mei-av*, “from the father,” and father refers to *Abba*, the *partzuf* of *chochmah*. When is there strife in *Abba*?

This occurs when the sparks of purity ascend in thought, when the light of *malchut* has not yet been revealed below, she being still [included] within *chochmah*.

*Malchut* (or *Nukva*), we know, is the *partzuf* that actively extracts and releases the sparks of holiness and purity from the realm of evil, allowing them to ascend back to their source in the realm of holiness. But as long as *malchut* has not yet been issued, it remains *in potentia* in its source, *chochmah*. Thus, *chochmah* can only “imagine” the process of elevating the sparks but not experience it yet. This “frustrates” *chochmah*, keeping it in a state of “strife.”

This king spreads out from the entire *sefirah* of *yesod*; reference is therefore made to “the name of his city,” alluding to the *malchut* within it [i.e., within *yesod*].

The *malchut* of any entity is the realm in which the entity acts, its context.

[The city] was called *Avit*, which is derived from the noun “perversity” [*ivut*], as it is written, “He will pervert the ways of the wicked.”<sup>10</sup> This is so because *malchut* of this [evil] *yesod* was perverted in order to channel energy from its second pipeline.

I.e., the “left” pipeline, of urine, as opposed to the first, “right” pipeline, of semen.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “For G-d is righteous; He loves acts of righteousness; the upright will behold His face.”<sup>11</sup> The holy *yesod* is termed “the righteous one, who loves acts of righteousness,” these latter being *netzach* and *hod*. It loves to prepare the supernal semen in them, in order to draw it down to [*malchut*] via the right pipeline.

One of the anatomical correlates of *netzach* and *hod* is the two testicles.

“The upright” refers to right pipeline; “will behold his face” refers to how *malchut* is intended to receive from [*yesod*] via its right pipeline.

However, [the evil *malchut* of *yesod*] channeled energy from [*yesod*] via its left pipeline, and thus “perverted its way.” It is therefore called *Avit*.

Concomitantly, [the evil] *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin* also “perverted its way,” giving from its second pipeline.

I.e., producing urine instead of female seed.

Now, *malchut* of this *yesod* [i.e., of the evil *Z’eir Anpin*] is called “time” [*eit*].

In general, time is associated with the *sefirah* of *malchut*.

The first and last letters of *Avit* are *ayin* and *tav*; together they spell the word for “time,” *eit*. The middle two letters of *Avit* are *vav* and *yud*.

<sup>10</sup> Psalms 146:9.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 11:7.

It will be recalled that the story of the kings of Edom is told both in *parashat Vayishlach* and in the Book of Chronicles. In both versions, the name *Avit* is pronounced the same way. However, in the first version, the middle letters (*vav* and *yud*) are as we would expect them: *vav* followed by *yud*. In the second version, the order of these letters is reversed.

The *vav-yud* [in *Avit* as it appears in *parashat Vayishlach*] is written *vav-yud*, indicating that the *vav* draws down the *yud*, which signifies *yesod*.

The form of the *vav* is a line drawn down from a *yud*. The *vav* thus indicates the content of the *yud* being drawn down to a lower level. As we have seen, *malchut* of *yesod* draws down the “juice” of *yesod* (either semen, on the holy side, or urine, on the evil side) and channels it to the lower levels.

Similarly, in the *malchut* of the *yesod* of [the evil] *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin*, the *vav* draws down the *yud*. But since this is done [here] in an ascending fashion, the *yud* precedes the *vav*.

Since *Nukva* is producing its “juice” upward, toward *Z’eir Anpin*, the “drawing down” is effectively a “drawing up,” and therefore the order of the letters is reversed.

*Yud-vav* thus indicates a descending flow while *vav-yud* indicates an ascending flow. That is why in the former case, *Avit* is spelled *ayin-vav-yud-tav*, while in the latter case, it is spelled *ayin-yud-vav-tav*.

For, as we have seen previously, the account of the kings in the Book of Chronicles is told from the perspective of *Nukva*, the feminine principle.

But we must keep in mind that in the world of *Tohu*, the *partzufim* did not exist as such and therefore there could be no mating between them. Thus—

Since [in this context] *Z’eir Anpin* lacked its feminine counterpart, it retracted its attribute of *yesod* within it, and [instead] transmitted via its left pipeline. And similarly, *Nukva*, lacking its masculine counterpart, retracted its *yesod* within it, and transmitted via its left pipeline.

—translated from *Sha’ar Ma’amarei Rashbi*, *Sefer HaLikutim*, and *Likutei Torah*

## *Parashat VaYishlach* [seventh installment]

In the previous installments, we began to explain the Shattering of the Vessels, the mystical significance of the eight kings “who ruled in the land of Edom before any king ruled the children of Israel:

“And **Bela ben Be’or** ruled in Edom, and the name of his city was Dinhavah. Bela died—

“And **Yovav ben Zerach** of Batzrah ruled in his place. Yovav died—

“And **Chusham** from the south land ruled in his place. Chusham died—

“And **Hadad ben Badad**—who smote Midian in the field of Moab—ruled in his place, and the name of his city was Avit. Hadad died—

“And **Samlah** from Masreikah ruled in his place. Samlah died—

“And **Shaul** from Rechovot HaNahar ruled in his place. Shaul died—

“And **Ba’al Chanan ben Achbor** ruled in his place. Ba’al Chanan ben Achbor died—

“And **Hadar** ruled in his place, and the name of his city was Pa’u. And his wife’s name was Meheitavel bat Matreid bat Mei Zehav.”<sup>1</sup>

We continue with the Arizal’s exposition of the fifth king.

The fifth king was Samlah from Masreikah.

*Malchut* of [the evil] *Z’eir Anpin* is close to *yesod*, and is called “skirt” [*simlah*], as in the verse, “and a skirt sullied with blood,”<sup>2</sup> this being a manifestation of strict judgment.

*Samlah* is spelled the same way as *simlah* (*sin-mem-lamed-hei*).

The verse quoted comes from Isaiah’s description of a typical battle, in which the skirts of the slain are covered with blood.

This is why [this king is] from Masreikah, as in the verse, “to hear the bleating [*sherikot*] of the flocks.”<sup>3</sup> This refers to the three flocks of sheep: *netzach-hod-yesod*. [Specifically, Masreikah] is manifest from *hod* of *malchut* of [the evil] *Z’eir Anpin*, this being also a manifestation of the vowel *shuruk*, which is associated with *hod*.

The word *Masreikah* is spelled *mem-sin-reish-kuf-hei*. The root is *sin-reish-kuf*, and since *sin* and *shin* are essentially the same letter, this root means “to bleat, to wail.” (It is apparently the origin of the English word “shriek.”) In the verse quoted, the prophetess Deborah berates the tribe of Reuben for staying home with its flocks instead of joining her in battle.

*Netzach-hod-yesod* are referred to allegorically as the three “flocks” perhaps because they are the *sefirot* of innate nature, instinctiveness. A person who lives life following his inborn nature is like a sheep dutifully following its shepherd.

In any case, Masreikah refers to *netzach-hod-yesod*. Its phonetic similarity to the name of the vowel *shuruk* indentifies it more precisely with *hod*, since this vowel is sometimes associated with *hod*. And Samlah, *malchut* is derived from this *hod*.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 36:31-39; cf. 1 Chronicles 1:43-51.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 9:4.

<sup>3</sup> Judges 5:16.

Furthermore, [Masreikah indicates the source of the evil *malchut*] since the holy *malchut* is full, as it is written, “I walked away full,”<sup>4</sup> while this one [the evil *malchut*] is empty. This fact is indicated in the word for “from Masreikah” [*mi-Masreikah*], which can be read to mean “completely empty [*mamash reikah*].”

The phrase “I walked away full” was spoken by Naomi, Ruth’s mother-in-law, describing how she left the land of Israel wealthy. The pronoun “I” (*ani*) is often associated with *malchut*.

*Mi-Masreikah*: mem-mem-s(h)in-reish-kuf-hei.

*Mamash reikah*: mem-mem-shin reish-kuf-hei.

When [the holy *malchut*] receives from *yesod*, it is called “Solomon” [*Shelomo*], which can be read as “the full *hei* [*shalem hei*].” This is a manifestation of [G-d’s] mercy. The [opposite] manifestation, i.e., of judgment, [is when the evil *malchut*] is called *Samlah*, which can be read as “the Samael *hei*.”

*Shelomo*: shin-lamed-mem-hei.

*Shalem hei*: shin-lamed-mem hei.

The letter *hei* is here taken to allude to the final *hei* of the Name *Havayah*, which indicates *malchut*.

Samael, as we have seen previously, is a demon. When *malchut* is filled, instead of the holiness of *yesod*, with the emptiness of evil, it is an expression for the demonic forces of evil.

*Samlah*: sin-mem-lamed-hei.

*Samael hei*: sin-mem-alef-lamed hei. The *alef* is one of the letters that often elides, so *Samlah* can justifiably be considered a contraction of *Samael hei*.

The sixth king was Shaul from Rechovot HaNahar. This is [the evil] *gevurah*, which is derived from *binah*, which is called *Rechovot HaNahar* [“the widening of the river”], as it is written, “I am *binah*, *gevurah* is mine.”<sup>5</sup>

In the verse, “And a river went forth from Eden to water the garden,”<sup>6</sup> Eden signifies *chochmah*, the river flowing out of it signifies *binah*, and the garden signifies *malchut*. *Chochmah* is depicted as a wellspring, as in the verse, “the source of wisdom is like a bubbling stream.”<sup>7</sup> *Binah*, as we know, is the expansion of the initial insight of *chochmah*, which surfaces from the supra-conscious mind like water bubbling forth from a subterranean well.

As we have seen previously, *binah* is the source of *gevurah*. In expanding the insight of *chochmah*, *binah* must use discernment and discrimination in order to separate the pure, true insight from the admixture of impurities that accompanies its revelation.

As long as *gevurah* is also used for the same purpose, it remains holy. But when judgment become judgmentality for its own sake, *gevurah* becomes a source of evil.

All these kings are manifestations of the principle of severe judgment, and *gevurah* is the source of all severe judgments. It could therefore not endure, for if its back—which was not as severe a manifestation of judgment as it is—died, all the more so must *gevurah* itself [collapse], inasmuch as it is the intensity of judgment itself and its source.

<sup>4</sup> Ruth 1:21.

<sup>5</sup> Proverbs 8:14.

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 2:10.

<sup>7</sup> Proverbs 18:4.

In the Shattering of the Vessels, it was primarily the back or superficial aspect of the *sefirot*, the vessels, that collapsed.

It therefore had to issue through one of the gates of mercy, which was manifest temporarily from the fifty gates of *binah*. It is therefore called *Shaul* [“borrowed”], as a loan. For *hod* of *binah* extended from its supernal place, on “loan” to *gevurah* below it.

Thus it is written in the *Zohar*<sup>8</sup> that “[Shaul was derived] from [a specific aspect] that extended [and issued] from the widening of the river.” And [this aspect] is spoken of as being “from the widening,” this being how the fifty gates extended until *hod*. This *hod* extended below, down to the *gevurah* of Z’eir Anpin.

The intellect (*binah*) responds to the new insight (*chochmah*) introduced into it. This response is the germ of the emotional response to the new intellect that will issue from *binah* as bona fide emotions. The response thus encompasses the five major emotions (*chesed* to *hod*) in a primitive form. These are the five states of *chesed* and the five states of *gevurah* within *binah*. Each of these five dual-states subdivides into ten, giving the fifty gates of *binah*. The lowest of the five *chesed-gevurah* states is that of *hod*, and this *hod* extended to *gevurah* to keep it from shattering completely, more so that the other emotions of *Tohu*.

Saul [*Shaul*], the king of Israel was from this manifestation; that is why he died without establishing a dynasty. Only David [did this], for he was [the holy manifestation of Meheitavel, and “good looking.”]<sup>9</sup>

Meheitavel was the wife of Hadar, the eighth king, who did not die, since he was the precursor of the world of *Tikun*. *Meheitavel* means “the one made good by G-d.” When Samuel inspected the sons of Jesse, looking for the one G-d intended to be the next king of Israel, David was described as being “good looking.”

Since Saul was derived from the side of *binah*, which is above the structure [of the seven lower *sefirot*], he was tall, as it is written, “from his shoulder upwards he was above all the people.”<sup>10</sup> This is also why the sages said that there was no fault in his kingship, for no fault or blemish reaches up as far as *binah*, as is known.

The seven lower *sefirot* correspond to the seven days of creation, which are sometimes referred to as “the seven days of the *binyan*,” which can mean “of the construction” or of the “building.” *Binah* is thus above this building.

The reason why his kingship [nevertheless] did not endure is because he did not wait seven days to offer his ascent-offering.<sup>11</sup> Samuel wanted to elevate him above [the level expressed by] these seven days, up to the level of *binah*, for then his kingship would endure. But he did not do this, and therefore his kingship was cut off.

Because Saul derived from this spiritual level, the attribute of strict judgment, G-d wanted him at the beginning of his rule to eliminate the [outward

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<sup>8</sup> 3:142a.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Samuel 16:12.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Samuel 10:23.

<sup>11</sup> 1 Samuel 10:8, 13:8-14.

manifestation] of judgment and evil, i.e., to destroy Amalek.<sup>12</sup> This would cause the similar aspect within him to be rectified [“perfumed”] so that he could then ascend to derive sustenance directly from *binah*.

Since he was derived from *hod* of *binah*, he was anointed by Samuel, who rectified *hod*, which had been blemished by Jacob’s limp.

to be continued...

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>12</sup> 1 Samuel 15.

## *Parashat VaYeishev*

Joseph's brothers thought that Joseph was the dregs of the dregs, that is, the shell that was rejected from Abraham and Isaac when Ishmael and Esau left them, and that had still not been finally purified.

Joseph's brothers knew that both in the case of Abraham and Isaac, there were two sons, one of which was worthy of perpetuating the consciousness of G-d in the world, and the other of which was too egocentric to do so. They further knew that in both cases, the unworthy son had to be sent away, i.e., eliminated in some way from the family in order that the purity of the ideal not be contaminated by the poisonous egocentricity of the contender.

Similarly, they perceived Joseph as the unfit contender in their generation. The original light of Abraham had been purified of its impurities by the rejection of Ishmael; when this light was passed on to Isaac it still contained some secondary impurities that had to be (and were) eliminated by the rejection of Esau. Joseph, they felt, was the embodiment of the tertiary impurities of Jacob that similarly had to be rejected. They thus considered it their sacred duty, for the sake of the perpetuation of the Divine message entrusted to Abraham and his descendants, to eliminate Joseph from the picture.

This was in particular because they felt Joseph was blemishing the *sefirah* of *yesod*, diverting it to the left channel, G-d forbid, by slandering them to their father, this being the antithesis of peace.

As we are told in the narrative, "Joseph brought their evil report to their father."<sup>1</sup> Rashi notes: "He told his father that they were eating flesh torn from a live animal, that they made fun of the sons of the handmaidens [Bilhah and Zilpah], calling them slaves, and that he suspected them of illicit sexual relations."

In the idiom of our sages, peace is termed the ultimate vessel for containing blessing. This is clear because acrimony will cause any blessings—whether of health, prosperity, or fulfillment—to be squandered. Thus, peace is associated with the *sefirah* of *yesod*, for *yesod* is the vessel through which the Divine beneficence flows into *malchut*, the spiritual precursor of the Jewish people. By slandering them to their father, Joseph was undermining any chance for peace in the family, and thus sabotaging the chances for G-d's blessings to flow to them.

*Yesod* is also the principle of the tongue, and slander blemishes it.

It is stated in *Sefer Yetzirah* that there are two covenants, that of the tongue and that of the sexual organ. Both organs are instruments through which a person articulates himself to the outside world. They are both very powerful, for both sexual energy and the spoken word possess the power to build or destroy. Unharnessed speech, like unharnessed sexuality, can wreck havoc in a person's life and the lives of all those he meets. Conversely, properly channeled speech and sexuality can elevate an individual to lofty levels of spiritual consciousness and inspire all those with whom he comes in contact. Thus, while *yesod* generally is associated with the sexual organ, it is also—for the same reason—associated with the organ of speech, the tongue. Improper or evil speech blemished the *sefirah* of *yesod*.

[In fact, however,] there are many expounders of the Torah who say that [Joseph's brothers] ate flesh torn from the body of living animals [*ever min ha-chai*] and looked at the daughters of the land. All of this is connected to *yesod*.

It is explained that the motivation for eating flesh torn from the body of a living animal is the ecstatic, even orgasmic pleasure this brings, the ingestion of raw, unrectified (i.e., by ritual slaughter) life-force. This power-high assumes sexual proportions in the mind/body of the one doing this, and is therefore a blemish in *yesod*.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 37:2.

Thus, it was in reality not Joseph who was blemishing *yesod* but his brothers. By reported their behavior to their father, Joseph was in fact trying to safeguard the integrity of *yesod*.

They also derided [their half-brothers,] the sons of the handmaidens, and this is clearly a violation of the principle of peace. They called them slaves when they were in fact free men, the opposite of slaves.

Here again, they were in fact guilty of what they were accusing Joseph of. Of the twelve brothers, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun were the sons of Jacob's first wife, Leah; Joseph and Benjamin were the sons of his second wife, Rachel; Dan and Naftali were the sons of Rachel's handmaiden, Bilhah; and Gad and Asher were the sons of Leah's handmaiden, Zilpah. The six sons of Leah taunted the four sons of the handmaidens as being slaves by birth, i.e., unworthy of being bonafide members of the holy family.

*Yesod* is called "everything," for it includes all the emotional attributes.

In the verse, "Yours, O G-d, is the greatness, and the power, and the beauty, and the victory, and the glory, for all that is in heaven and earth [is Yours],"<sup>2</sup> the first five nouns are the first five emotional attributes (greatness, *chesed*; power, *gevurah*; beauty, *tiferet*; victory, *netzach*; glory, *hod*), implying that the subsequent phrase ("all that is heaven and earth") corresponds to the sixth attribute, *yesod*. Thus, this verse expresses explicitly the notion that *yesod* is the channel through which all the higher attributes coalesce and descend further, into *malchut*.

They thought that they themselves could complete what would be lacking [by excluding Joseph]; that they could supply his attribute of brotherhood. They therefore plotted against him.

As we have seen, the dispute between Joseph and his brothers centered on the *sefirah* of *yesod*, the vessel of peace. Joseph felt that he was the guardian of *yesod*, that he was the long-term peace-maker, while his brothers felt that he was an obstacle to peace. They, of course, were wrong; peace is meaningful only if it is predicated on submission to G-d's will. Otherwise—i.e., if there is any element of self-orientation or egocentricity in the so-called peace—it cannot be true peace and will fall apart sooner or later. This egocentricity will eventually surface, and as soon as it does, petty self-interests will outweigh the motivation for peacefulness. Thus, although the brothers were correct in their vision of peace as being crucial to the perpetuation of the Divine ideal, they were wrong in giving it precedence over the more fundamental issues of Divine service. Peace is a means, a vessel, not an end. Only when recognized as such can it be meaningful, and therefore endure.

They further felt that the ten of them would complete [the spiritual configuration necessary for eliciting] the direct light, and Benjamin would complete [what was necessary to return] the reflected light.

Here, we find the sons of Leah including the sons of the handmaidens as their equals. The six of the former plus the four latter would form a unit of ten, reflecting the ten *sefirot*, and thus serve as the proper and fitting conduit of Divine beneficence into the world. Benjamin, the son of Rachel, whom Jacob loved most, would provide the means through which man's service of love from below could arouse this flow of supernal beneficence.

Their mistake was that even though *yesod* includes the other attributes, it is nonetheless an attribute on its own as well.

It is therefore not enough, as we said, to simply impose artificial harmony on the other attributes; there must be the purity of intention (signified by the purity of sexual energy, the energy of *yesod*) as well.

Furthermore, it is well known that the tribes were not meant to reflect the ten *sefirot* but rather twelve extremities, which exist in *malchut* as the twelve cattle, as is explained elsewhere.

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<sup>2</sup> 1 Chronicles 29:10.

It was known in ancient times that a central prerequisite for establishing the people of the covenant, the family that would develop into the nation that would carry the Divine message to the rest of humanity, was a family of twelve sons, all of whom would be worthy of this mission. Thus, we see, for example, that Abraham and his brother Nachor both sought to expand their families to this number of sons by taking concubines. In fact, however, it was Jacob who was the first to actually father twelve sons who were all righteous, and thus he became the father of the Jewish people.

The reason why 12 is the magic number here is because while the number ten represents the perfection of the archetypal structure of the ten *sefirot* in the world of *Atzilut*, the number 12 represents the way these principles are projected into lower reality, i.e., the worlds subsequent to *Atzilut*. It is in these lower realities that time and space first begin to become real, as the dimensions within which consciousness operates in these worlds. *Atzilut*-consciousness transcends the limitations of time and space; not so consciousness from *Beriah* downwards.

Space is defined by three dimensions (height, width, and length), each of which extends in two opposite directions (up-down, north-south, east-west), giving six “extremities.” These six directions are manifestations of the six emotive attributes from *chesed* to *yesod*. Of course, these attributes exist in *Atzilut* as well, but the overwhelming consciousness of G-d that obtains in *Atzilut* precludes any development of these attributes into a context within which consciousness can be circumscribed. Only in the realms of lesser awareness of Divinity do these attributes assume the role of defining the limits of awareness.

These six directions can be envisioned as a six-sided cube. The number of lines used to draw such a cube is twelve. Thus, the number 12 represents the translation of Divine perfection into a Divinity that can be manifest in a lower reality. As such, this number represents as well the purpose of creation, i.e., of making the lower reality into a home for Divinity.

In Solomon’s Temple, the laver was situated on twelve statues of cattle. Cattle represent the animal soul, which is primarily emotion-oriented, as opposed to the Divine soul, which is primarily intellect-oriented.

Thus, here too, the brothers misunderstood their calling. They envisioned themselves as personifications of Divine perfection; they were shepherds, disassociated from society and the material world in general. Joseph, in contrast, personified *yesod*, the Divine perfection as it penetrates and succeeds finally in ruling even Egyptian society while staying true to its spiritual integrity.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*, and *Likutei Torah*

## *Parashat VaYeishev* [second installment]

In the middle of this week's *parashah*, the Torah digresses from the story of Joseph to tell the story of Judah and Tamar. Tamar was Judah's daughter-in-law, married to his son Er. Er did not want pregnancy to damage Tamar's beauty, so he withdrew before completing intercourse and wasted his seed on the ground. After G-d punished Er for this by killing him, Judah's had his second son, Onan, marry Tamar in order to perpetuate Er's name. (This was in fulfillment of the commandment of levirate marriage [*yibum*].) Onan, knowing that the child of their union would not be considered his, also withdrew before completing intercourse, and G-d punished him also by killing him.

Judah evidently did not know why his sons had died. He had a third son, Shelah, but hesitated to have him marry Tamar, because he was afraid she was the cause of her husbands' deaths somehow or other, and that Shelah would meet the fate of his two older brothers. He therefore gave her an excuse for not having Shelah marry her.

"So Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, 'Wait as a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up,' for he feared lest he also die as his brothers did. So Tamar went to live in her father's house."<sup>1</sup>

"So Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar...." [Tamar] is an allusion to the *Shechinah*, who accompanies us in exile after G-d killed off all the evil generations [among us], who are [alluded to by] Er and Onan.

Some of the Jewish people who lived before the destruction of the Temple were guilty of very heinous sins. The sages state that the first Temple was destroyed because of the sins of idolatry, murder, and adultery, while the second Temple was destroyed because of the sins of baseless hatred and despicement of Torah study.

These wicked people were eliminated in the destructions. The remainder of the people were not guilty of these sins, and whatever sins they committed could be atoned for and rectified by the process of exile.

Even though G-d exiled the Jewish people, His Divine presence (the *Shechinah*) accompanies us, always available to us.

"Wait as a widow...." [This image also applies to the *Shechinah*,] as it is written, "[O, how the populous city now dwells alone, the greatest amongst the nations] has become like a widow."<sup>2</sup> [The Divine presence] has to be like a widow during the exile.

This is opening of the Book of Lamentations, the prophet Jeremiah's dirge lamenting the destruction of Jerusalem. Jerusalem, the seat of the Temple, is seen as the Divine presence incarnate.

Exile is compared to widowhood since in exile, the Divine presence (the wife, in this allegory) must exist without her husband (G-d). The *Shechinah*, the *sefirah* of *malchut* of *Atzilut*, descends into the lower worlds in order to sustain them and is prevented from rejoining with *Z'eir Anpin* of *Atzilut* to renew her inspiration.

"...in your father's house...." This refers to the Holy One, blessed be He.

"...and wait until my son Shelah grows up," implying that he is still young. This means that [she should wait] until [Shelah] is filled with the letter *yud*,

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 38:11.

<sup>2</sup> Lamentations 1:1.

indicating the supernal light. [This state] is alluded to in the verse, “Behold, I have made you small amongst the nations; you are very despised.”<sup>3</sup>

Thus, Shelah refers to the Jewish people in exile.

The *Shechinah* is destined to mate when Shelah attains his mature form, Shiloh. Shelah and Shiloh are spelled exactly the same, except that Shiloh possesses an additional *yud*.

*Shelah: shin-lamed-hei; Shiloh: shin-yud-lamed-hei.*

Shelah remains in exile “until Shiloh will come,” filled [with the *yud*]. This refers to the Messiah, who [will possess the soul of] Moses.

On his deathbed, Jacob prophesied that “The scepter [of rulership] shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from amongst his descendents, until Shiloh is come, unto whom the nations shall gather.”<sup>4</sup> Shiloh, in this verse, is an appellation of the Messiah. Thus, Shelah here is the Jewish people, whose consummate leader and representative is the Messiah.

The sages state that Moses is the first and last redeemer. This means that his soul will in some way be present in the Messiah.

The reason why [G-d] decreed that [the *Shechinah*] should be like a widow is “because He feared lest he die as did his brothers.” Therefore, she would have to remain a widow, without a husband, until the Messiah comes, i.e., until Shelah grows up.

If the *Shechinah* would “wed” the Jewish people—and thus not be in exile—and they would be found unworthy of this union, they would have to die as did their brethren when the Temples stood. Therefore, G-d preferred that the *Shechinah* remain in exile. When living in the Temple’s presence, the standards of behavior are higher, i.e., sinning is more sinful, more of an affront to the open manifestation of Divinity. In exile, the Jews could be rectified gradually and safely.

“...because He feared lest he die as did his brothers.” This is because in every generation a spark of the Messiah comes into the world, in accordance with G-d’s will. If the generation is worthy, [he is revealed as the Messiah]. If not, he dies or is killed as a martyr, as happened to Rabbi Akiva in the time of Ben Koziva, and in many other cases we do not even know about.

Rabbi Akiva was killed as a martyr in the Hadrianic persecutions that came as a reaction to the revolt of Bar Kochba, whom the sages called deprecatively *Bar Koziva*, “the deceiving one.”

But come he must in every generation, either to redeem Israel if they are worthy, or to purify the generation, or to teach them the Torah if the generation is ignorant.

This is why [Jacob] said, “lest he also die,” referring to the one [spark of the Messiah] that comes in every generation. “Do not marry him,” he said, “until he matures. He will then come to redeem Israel by G-d’s will.”

The remainder of this excerpt describes how in the case of the prophet Habakkuk, we see also that G-d said that the time must be ripe for the Redemption to occur.

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<sup>3</sup> Obadiah 1:2.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 49:10.

We also see this in the case of Habakkuk, who, according to some opinions, was the spark of the Messiah in his generation. He said, “I will stand on my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say to me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov’d. And G-d answered me, and said, ‘Write the vision, and make it plain upon tablets, so that he who reads it may run. For the vision is still for an appointed time, and it speaks concerning the end, and does not lie; though it seems slow [in coming], wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not come late.’”<sup>5</sup>

This seems self-contradictory. If G-d told him, “Write the vision, and make it plain upon tablets, so that he who reads it may run [through it],” meaning, so that whoever reads it will understand it immediately, it is obvious that he will write it plainly and clearly. But then, after [G-d] tells him what to write, He says that the matter is cryptic, and that “the vision is still for an appointed time, and it speaks concerning the end, and does not lie; though it seems slow, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not come late,” without saying when. This statement adds nothing to what we have been believing for all generations, i.e., that even if [the Messiah] tarries, we still await him, for “he will surely come.”

The explanation, however is as follows. It is written in the book of Daniel: “Now I have come to make you understand what shall befall your people in the latter days; for the vision is for days yet to come.”<sup>6</sup>

This verse follows the account of how Daniel witnessed frightening and incomprehensible allegories.

Thus, whenever the term “vision” is used, it refers to an allegory.

Therefore, when G-d told Habakkuk, “Write the *vision*,” He was referring to an allegory, which is by nature a riddle.

The expression “and make it plain upon tablets” simply means that [Habakkuk] should write it down [clearly], not that it should be understood, for it is so obscure that the reader will run [through it, not pondering its meaning, since its] meaning [is so obscure].

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>5</sup> Habakkuk 2:1-3.

<sup>6</sup> Daniel 10:14.

## *Parashat VaYeisheiv* [third installment]

In this *parashah*, Joseph is brought to Egypt after his brothers sell him to a passing caravan. This was the beginning of the Egyptian exile, for because of this, Jacob's entire family eventually settled in Egypt, where they were later enslaved. The Egyptian exile is the prototype for all subsequent exiles and for all states of spiritual exile, so understanding its details is prerequisite to understanding the dynamic and flow of spiritual life.

We have to explain now a number of expositions that are included in this exposition, as you will see.

It is known that initially, in its immature state, *Z'eir Anpin* possesses three facets of intelligence, expressed as three Names *Elokim*: spelled out with the letter *yud*, spelled out with the letter *hei*, and spelled out with the letter *alef*. These three letters form the mnemonic acronym *yehei* ("may it be").

The Name *Elokim* always signifies a contracted or constricted state of affairs relative to the Name *Havayah*. *Elokim* is spelled *alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem*. This may be further spelled out as follows:

<i>Elokim spelled with the letter alef</i>		
<i>alef</i>	<i>alef</i>	1
	<i>lamed</i>	30
	<i>pei</i>	80
<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed</i>	30
	<i>mem</i>	40
	<i>dalet</i>	4
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	5
	<i>alef</i>	1
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	10
	<i>vav</i>	6
	<i>dalet</i>	4
<i>mem</i>	<i>mem</i>	40
	<i>mem</i>	40
total		291

<i>Elokim spelled with the letter hei</i>		
<i>alef</i>	<i>alef</i>	1
	<i>lamed</i>	30
	<i>pei</i>	80
<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed</i>	30
	<i>mem</i>	40
	<i>dalet</i>	4
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	5
	<i>hei</i>	5
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	10
	<i>vav</i>	6
	<i>dalet</i>	4
<i>mem</i>	<i>mem</i>	40
	<i>mem</i>	40
total		295

<i>Elokim spelled with the letter yud</i>		
<i>alef</i>	<i>alef</i>	1
	<i>lamed</i>	30
	<i>pei</i>	80
<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed</i>	30
	<i>mem</i>	40
	<i>dalet</i>	4
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	5
	<i>yud</i>	10
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	10
	<i>vav</i>	6
	<i>dalet</i>	4
<i>mem</i>	<i>mem</i>	40
	<i>mem</i>	40
total		300

*Yehei*: *yud-hei-alef*.

Later, when [*Z'eir Anpin*] matures, its intelligence is expressed as Names *Havayah*. When these mature states of mentality enter its consciousness, they expel the immature intelligence and push it downward, as we have explained elsewhere. There we explained that the first place they descend to is *Z'eir Anpin*'s throat.

Now, the following requires an explanation: All a person's other limbs correspond to one or another of the ten *sefirot*. The three aspects of his intelligence correspond to the first three *sefirot*: *chochmah*, *binah*, and *da'at*. The lower seven *sefirot* correspond to [the parts of the body] from the right arm and below, covering the whole length of the body. But there is no *sefirah* corresponding to the throat!

The explanation of this phenomenon is understood from what we just said, namely, that when the three immature states of intelligence are expelled [from the brain] and descend, they descend first to the throat.

Rather than corresponding to a specific *sefirah*, the throat is just the repository of the initial state of the head.

Since [the throat] is a narrow and thin organ, [the immature mental states] get stuck there.

Now, it is known that three vital channels or pipelines pass through the throat: the trachea, the esophagus, and the jugular veins, through which all a person's blood and life-force passes, as is known, and as is stated in the Talmud:<sup>1</sup> "Take care with the jugular veins, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehudah, who said that [the slaughterer] must cut through the jugular veins."

Kosher slaughtering demands that these veins be severed, in order to effect instant death to the animal. If the slaughterer does not sever these veins together, the animal is considered to have been killed piecemeal, not ritually slaughtered, and is thus rendered unfit for Jewish consumption. We see, therefore, that in order to completely and instantly bring the animal from a state of life to death, these vital conduits must be severed.

These three channels are formed from the three aspects of immature intelligence that descend there. Specifically, the trachea is formed from the immature *chochmah*, the esophagus is formed from the [immature] *binah*, and the jugular veins are formed from the immature *da'at*.

To explain: The right lobe of the brain, the seat of *chochmah*, spreads through the trachea, which is on the right side [of the throat]. This is the significance of the statement in the *Zohar*<sup>2</sup> that the lung absorbs all types of moisture. This is a very curious statement, because we know that if even a drop of water enters the trachea, the person will die. We also see that the lower end of the trachea extends into the lungs and the heart, and there is no passageway there through which water that enters the [upper] trachea could exit [elsewhere].

The meaning, rather, is that the *esophagus* carries food and drink and all types of moisture [downward], while the trachea is used only for producing the voice and speech, as is mentioned in the Talmud<sup>3</sup> and in the passage from the *Zohar* in

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<sup>1</sup> *Berachot* 8b.

<sup>2</sup> 3:218b, in *Ra'aya Mehemna*.

<sup>3</sup> *Berachot* 61a; *Zohar* 3:227b.

question.<sup>4</sup> [In this respect,] the trachea is similar to the World to Come, in which there is neither eating nor drinking, etc.

The air that enters the body via the trachea is used to produce sound. Presumably, the sages do not mean to say that the air entering the body via the trachea is not used for any other purpose, such as providing oxygen for the lungs, but merely that it is not used at all for carrying fluids.

Nonetheless, when the fluids and moisture descend through the esophagus and reach the location of the lungs, the intensity of the heat of the fire issuing from the flame of the heart toward the lungs, as is known, causes the lungs to absorb the distilled and pure liquids via the membranes of the esophagus and the lungs. The lungs then pass these liquids to the heart to cool off its intense heat. It is known that the esophagus is attached to the trachea and the lungs until it descends lower, to the location of the stomach.

So therefore the moisture in the esophagus can pass into the trachea via the membranes in their attached walls.

Since the lungs absorb the fluids and water, which are manifestations of *chesed*, the right side, as is stated in *Tikunei Zohar*—that the element of water, which is manifest in the person as the white fluids, originates in the lungs—the immature right [lobe of the] brain, the seat of *chochmah*, therefore extends through the trachea and descends into the lungs.

Water is associated with *chesed* because (1) life is dependent upon it and (2) it flows downward freely. The fact that the lung absorbs moisture means that it is associated with *chesed*, and since the trachea is attached directly to the lungs, it, too, is associated with the right side. Therefore, the right side of the intellect (*chochmah*) passes through it.

The [lobe of the] brain of *binah* extends through the esophagus, which is on the left side, and through which the food passes. As is known, all forms of nourishment originate in *gevurah*, this being the mystical significance of the sages' statement that "[providing] sustenance for people is as hard [for G-d] as splitting the Sea of Reeds,"<sup>5</sup> and as is mentioned in the *Zohar*.<sup>6</sup>

Since nourishment and sustenance is associated with difficulty and obstacles, it requires *gevurah* to overcome these.

The middle [stem] of the brain, the seat of *da'at*, extends via the jugular veins, which are an intermediary between the trachea and the esophagus, and which transport [the blood, the vehicle for] the chief life-force of the person. For the blood, which is [important because it carries] the animating-soul [*nefesh*] of the person, passes through them.

In this view, just as trachea and esophagus carry air and nourishment from the upper part of the body to the lower, the jugular veins carry the "soul" from the head to the rest of the body. We are accustomed to think of life-giving blood as the oxygenated blood that travels through the arteries, while the blood that travels through the veins

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<sup>4</sup> 3:232a, in *Ra'aya Mehemna*.

<sup>5</sup> *Pesachim* 118a.

<sup>6</sup> 2:170a.

is the deoxygenated blood that has been used by the body and is merely in transit back to the heart to be replenished. Here, however, the imagery centers on the spiritual life-force from the soul, rather than the physical life-force from the oxygen, and we are to envision the blood leaving the head through the jugular veins as having been not only depleted of its oxygen but also “charged” or “vitalized” with the animation of the soul, which is manifest first in the intellect in the brain.

We have previously explained, on the verse “Whoever sheds the blood of a person will have his blood shed by another person,”<sup>7</sup> how the *yesod* of *Ima* is signified by the Name *Ekyeh*, and that the numerical value of the regressive iteration of this Name is the same as that of the word for “blood” [*dam*, 44], and that this iteration becomes vested in the letter *vav* of the Name *Havayah* of *Z’eir Anpin*—this being its *tiferet*—when this Name is spelled out to equal 45, i.e., with the letter *alef*. The letter *alef* used in spelling out the *vav* alludes to the Name *Ekyeh* [vested in it].

The Name *Ekyeh* is associated with *Ima—binah*—as we have seen previously many times. The Name *Ekyeh* is spelled *Alef-hei-yud-hei*, and its regressive iteration is as follows:

1	<i>alef</i>	1
2	<i>alef</i>	1
	<i>hei</i>	5
3	<i>alef</i>	1
	<i>hei</i>	5
	<i>yud</i>	10
4	<i>alef</i>	1
	<i>hei</i>	5
	<i>yud</i>	10
	<i>hei</i>	5
		44

The numerical value of the word for “blood” is also 44: *dam*: *dalet-mem* = 4 + 40 = 44.

The 45-Name *Havayah* is:

<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	10 + 6 + 4	20
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-alef</i>	5 + 1	6
<i>vav</i>	<i>vav-alef-vav</i>	6 + 1 + 6	13
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-alef</i>	5 + 1	6
			45

This Name is associated with *Z’eir Anpin*, as we have seen previously. We see now that the *alef* used in spelling out the *vav* in this Name alludes to the presence of the Name *Ekyeh* (which begins with an *alef*) within it.

The blood is therefore the presence of the Name *Ekyeh*, signifying *binah*, in the *vav*, or the *midot*, of the individual. Relative to each other, the intellect is “dead” while the emotions are “alive”; an emotional person is likely to be described as an “animated” person more than an intellectual would. True, it is the presence of the *intellect* in the emotions that makes the latter alive, but pure intellect not vested in emotions is not manifest life.

<sup>7</sup> Genesis

This [presence of the Name *Ekyeh* in the Name *Havayah*] is known as the person's blood, for the *yesod* of *Ima* is the garment of *da'at*, which includes states of *chesed* and *gevurah* that descend via these veins in the form of ten types of blood, as we have mentioned in our exposition of *Pesach* and the Exodus from Egypt.<sup>8</sup>

There are five states of *chesed* and five of *gevurah* within *da'at*, as we have seen previously. These become manifest in the life-force carried by the blood as ten "types of blood," or ten variations of life-force that animate the person.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse, "and the rooms will be filled with knowledge [*da'at*]." <sup>9</sup> [This] refers to the blood, the life-force of a person, which extends throughout the entire body via the veins, which are called little rooms.

The veins are thus filled with the states of *chesed* and *gevurah* originating in *da'at*.

It follows that the blood found in the jugular veins is the immature brain-stem, the seat of immature *da'at*, as it descends there [i.e., to the throat] during maturation, as is known.

So we have now explained the throat and its three channels, and how the latter are formed from the three immature mentalities that descend there, as we have described. This is why this narrow part of the body is called the "throat" [*garon*], for the numerical value of this word is equal to three times the numerical value of the Name *Elokim* [plus the *kolel*], which signify the trachea, the esophagus, and the jugular veins. The throat includes all three, as we have explained in our exposition of *parashat Vayetzai*.

*Garon*: gimel-reish-vav-nun = 3 + 200 + 6 + 50 = 259.

*Elokim*: alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem = 1 + 30 + 5 + 10 + 40 = 86.

3 x 86 = 258.

—translated from *Sha'ar HaPesukim*

<sup>8</sup> ~~*Sha'ar HaKavanot*, 1<sup>st</sup> exposition on *Pesach*.~~

<sup>9</sup> Proverbs 24:4.

## Parashat Miketz

### 41:1 At the end of two years

This week's parsha, MiKetz, alludes to an auspicious date for the advent of the Messiah. Such a date is called a "ketz" in Hebrew, which means literally "an end" – an end to the exile. In the following excerpt the Arizal predicts that the year 1976 would be a "ketz," at least in the higher worlds...

Two years add up to 730. Each [solar] year is 365, and when multiplied by two = 730. Now by adding to this the six letters<sup>1</sup> the sum total comes to 736, which equals the sum of the Name *A-d-n-a-i* spelled simply<sup>2</sup> = 65, together with the same Name spelled with the *milui*<sup>3</sup> = 671. 736 is called above the End of Days.<sup>4</sup>

(Likkutei Torah)

### 41:2 Seven healthy cows

These are the seven *heichalot*<sup>5</sup> of the world of *Beriah*,<sup>6</sup> and this is why the cows are referred to explicitly as *beriot* (healthy). The "seven other cows" [mentioned in the verse following] are the seven *heichalot* of the world of *Yetzirah*. [They are] described as "of evil appearance." This is because in *Yetzirah* there is good and evil, the Tree of

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<sup>1</sup>. Numbers in Hebrew are written in the form of letters. 365 (the days of one year) is written as *shin, samech, hai*. Since the verse refers to *two* years, this would be *shin, samech, hai* twice, making six letters.

<sup>2</sup>. Spelled simply, without the *milui*. Thus *A-d-n-a-i* in simple form is spelled *Aleph, dalet, nun, yud*. See footnote following.

<sup>3</sup>. *Milui*: Every letter can be spelled out in full (and sometimes in different ways). This spelling out or "expansion" of the letter is called the *milui*. **Aleph** is spelled out as *aleph, lamed, peh*; **dalet** is *dalet, lamed, tav*; **nun** is *nun, vav, nun*.

<sup>4</sup>. The apparent intention here is to indicate that the year (5)736, 1976 in the Gregorian calendar, was an auspicious year for the advent of the Messiah.

<sup>5</sup>. *Heichalot*: Literally, "chambers." These are the outermost aspects of a world. See note below.

<sup>6</sup>. Prior to creation, there was only the infinite revelation of G-d that filled all existence. This is called the *Or Ein Sof* – the Infinite Light – which is not G-d Himself, only His Infinite Revelation of Himself. Within this infinite revelation, limited beings could not possibly exist. Accordingly, there was a progressive lessening and constricting of the *Or Ein Sof*, making room for limited existence. This progressive constriction, called *tzimtzum*, brought about various planes of reality – called in Kabbalah the five worlds. Each "world" is a certain level of concealment of G-dliness, of the *Or Ein Sof*. From highest to lowest (i.e. from greater to lesser revelation of the *Or Ein Sof*) they are: The world of *Adam Kadmon* which is the primordial world, or the first level of somewhat finite revelation; the world of *Atzilut*; the world of *Beriah*; the world of *Yetzirah*; and the world of *Asiyah*. The entire physical universe is the lowest aspect of the world of *Asiyah*. In each of the worlds there is an increasingly dim revelation of the Infinite light as it descends further and further and becomes more and more concealed. It is important to note that these worlds do not occupy different geographical places. They are not geographical at all, but descending planes of reality.

Knowledge of Good and Evil. For this reason the verse states that [“they stood ...] on the banks of the river,” but not in the river.<sup>7</sup>

(Likkutei Torah)

#### 41:5 Seven ears of grain... healthy and good

These are also from the world of *Beriah*. Pharaoh is the aspect of *malchut* of *Atzilut*, where “all the lights are uncovered.” *Malchut* [of *Atzilut*] is clothed in *Beriah*, which is the river and the twelve cattle upon which the sea [of Solomon] stands. This is the meaning of “[Pharaoh was] standing over the river.”

The river is also *yesod* of *Atzilut*, the river that pours forth its bounty to Pharaoh,<sup>8</sup> who is the *kaneh* – the single stalk of wheat [mentioned in verse 5]. *Kaneh* together with one for the *kolel*<sup>9</sup> is gematria 156, the equivalent of the gematria of *Yosef*.

(Likkutei Torah)

#### 41:4 The cows ate up

As you already know, all famine and harsh decrees come from the side of *nukvah*,<sup>10</sup> since it rules over *d'chura*<sup>11</sup> and has lost her sweetness. This is indicated by the letters [of the Tetragrammaton] in jumbled sequence. This is alluded to by the Torah in the words of the verse *haparot yefot hamar'eh v'haberiot* (“the cows of good appearance, healthy...”) for the initial letters of this verse spell out *hai, yud, hai, vav*. Note that the feminine letters are placed before the male letters thus ruling over them – the *hai* over the *yud*, and the second *hai* over the *vav*.

This is why there was famine, which is caused by sins which arouse the harsh judgments of *nukvah*. *Nukvah* is called *isha*, woman, the word formed by the initial letters of the verse *et sheva haparot* (the seven cows). For it is from this aspect that famine comes.<sup>12</sup>

(Likkutei Torah; Sha'ar HaPesukim)

41:25, 33 And Joseph said to Pharaoh: “... What G-d is doing, He has told to Pharaoh... Now Pharaoh should seek out a man of insight, a wise person”

<sup>7</sup>. The “river” alludes to *binah* which “nests” [i.e., is revealed primarily in] the world of *Beriah* (*Tikkunei Zohar* 23a; *Eitz Chaim, sha'ar* 47. ch. 2), as will be explained below. The *heichalot* of *Yetzirah* are thus “only on the banks” of *Beriah*.

<sup>8</sup>. *Yesod* feeds *malchut*.

<sup>9</sup>. The *kolel* is an additional 1 added for the word as a whole. The *kolel* indicates that the whole of the word is greater than the sum of its parts.

<sup>10</sup>. The female aspect, the column of *gevurah*.

<sup>11</sup>. The male aspect, the column of *chesed*.

<sup>12</sup>. According to the redactor of *Sha'ar HaPesukim* this excerpt was not recorded by Rabbi Chaim Vital, but rather by one of the other students of the Arizal.

This is difficult to understand. Had Joseph been appointed royal advisor? Yet he said to Pharaoh, “Now Pharaoh should seek out a man of insight, a wise person...” It would have been sufficient for him to do what was asked of him and interpret the dream, as requested. Furthermore, what is the meaning of the word “now” [in the latter verse]? Also, the first verse should have stated, “What G-d **will** do [in the future], He has told...” for at that stage the years of plenty and the years of famine had not yet begun.

However, the answer to all these questions may be found in the statement of our Sages:<sup>13</sup> There are three things which G-d Himself, not an emissary, announces [every day<sup>14</sup>]. They are: Famine, plenty and a proper leader over the community. What is the source for famine? As the verse states, “G-d has called for a famine” (*II Kings* 8:1)...

This is why the verse states, “What G-d **is** doing,” in the present tense rather than in the future, for He is continually announcing the advent of famine or plenty. And so He disclosed these matters to Pharaoh. But since two of the three matters that the Holy One Himself announces were about to be fulfilled, it was proper at this point to also fulfill the third one – and appoint a proper leader over the community. That is why Joseph said, “Now Pharaoh should seek out a man of insight, a wise person...”

(*Sha’ar HaPesukim*)

41:55 Pharaoh said to all of Egypt, “Go to Joseph. Do whatever he tells you!”

Our Sages say<sup>15</sup> that Joseph decreed that all of them fulfill the commandment of circumcision. They went to ask Pharaoh’s advice and he told them to do whatever Joseph had commanded.

As we have explained elsewhere:<sup>16</sup> The 130 years that the Israelites were in Egypt prior to the birth of Moses were spent in gathering in the sparks of holy souls which Adam had discharged by wasting his seed in the 130 years prior to the birth of his son Seth, who was the very same aspect as Moses.<sup>17</sup>

Initially, these souls had been incarnated into the bodies of the people who lived during the time of the flood. However, they wantonly spilled their seed upon the earth, following their roots and the place from whence they were drawn. They were then reincarnated in the generation of the Tower of Babel. [But again they did not rectify the sin of Adam and the following generations]. Now, once again, they had been reincarnated as Egyptians.

Joseph had prophetic vision,<sup>18</sup> and he knew that they were the sparks of souls that had been produced from wasted seed. He therefore decreed that they be circumcised, in order to rectify some of the sin of their initial root (i.e., they were produced by a blemish in the place of the holy covenant). After the circumcision they began to be rectified to a degree, and during the subsequent 130-year period [prior to the birth of Moses] they were reincarnated in as Israelites. It is for this reason that the Israelites were sentenced to hard labor, in order to rectify, refine and purify them, and particularly to rectify the sin of the generation of the Tower of Babel who built the Tower from mortar and bricks.

<sup>13</sup>. *Berachot* 55a.

<sup>14</sup>. In the current printed version of Tractate *Berachot* the words “every day” are not found.

<sup>15</sup>. *Midrash Rabbah*, *Miketz* 90,91; *Yalkut Shimoni*, *Miketz*, *remez* 148.

<sup>16</sup>. *Sha’ar HaKavanot*, *drushei Pesach*, *drush* 1.

<sup>17</sup>. This is explained in *Sha’ar HaMitzvot*, *parshat Shoftim*.

<sup>18</sup>. *Ruach HaKodesh*.

(Sha'ar HaPesukim)

This is what is written, “And [Joseph] relocated the people in cities from one end of Egypt’s borders to the other” (*Genesis* 47:21). Those he relocated were those whom he had circumcised, and he moved them around in order to refine and purify them. These are the mixed multitude (the *eirev rav*) of whom the Egyptians said, “the people of the Children of Israel are more numerous and stronger than us” (*Exodus* 1:9). But a later verse states, “and they [the Egyptians] became dissatisfied with themselves because of the Children of Israel” (*Exodus* 1:12). [In one verse they are referred to as “the people of the Children of Israel,” whereas in the other they are referred to as simply “the Children of Israel.” Why the discrepancy?]

The secret of this is that those whom Joseph circumcised, and who lived in the Jewish cities, observed the customs of the Israelites. Jacob had also converted Egyptians, as our Sages state.<sup>19</sup> All of them also observed Israelite customs. Now Pharaoh noticed [the observances of] those who were called “the people of the Children of Israel,” i.e., those who were not the Children of Israel themselves, but the *people* of the Children of Israel. Therefore another verse states, “he [Pharaoh] said to *his* nation...” (*Exodus* 1:9) i.e., other Egyptians, who were not the people of the Children of Israel. But the verse “and they became dissatisfied with themselves because of the Children of Israel” refers to the Israelites themselves.

Now you can understand to a degree why the Israelites were exiled to Egypt – all of this was for the sake of those sparks which the decadent Egyptians had captured.

This is what is written, “also a mixed multitude (*eirev rav*) went up with them” (*Exodus* 12:38) – mystically, the mixed multitude were the sparks of holiness which had mingled into Egypt, and which Moses wished to elevate. But the Holy One saw that they were not yet rectified and fit [to be elevated], and He did not want to extract them at that point in time. However, there were actually two varieties of mixed multitude – those who are referred to as “the mixed multitude,” and also “the mixed minority” mentioned in the *Zohar*.<sup>20</sup> The mixed multitude derive from supernal *da'at*, which is called great or major, whereas the mixed minority derive from *yesod*, which is called minor. For this reason the *gematria* of *eirev rav* is the same as the *gematria* of *da'at*, for they were those who sinned and uprooted the plantings above, the secret of “the stiff-necked people, as will be explained in *Parshat Eikev*.

(Likkutei Torah)

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<sup>19</sup>. *Bereishit Rabbah* section 4.

<sup>20</sup>. Vol. II, p. 191a-b.

## *Parashat Miketz*

### [second installment]

In this *parashah*, we see how Joseph is reunited with his brothers. Joseph shows particular favor to his full brother, Benjamin. “And he looked up and saw his brother Benjamin, the son of his mother, and said, ‘Is this your younger brother you mentioned to me?’ And he said, ‘May G-d favor you, my son.’”<sup>1</sup>

Know that the numerical value of *Benjamin* is the same as that of the word for “hole” [*nekev*, 152], for that is his spiritual location, i.e., where “feminine water” unites with “masculine water.”

*Benjamini (Binyamin): beit-nun-yud-mem-yud-nun* = 2 + 50 + 10 + 40 + 50 = 152.

*Nekev: nun-kuf-beit* = 50 + 100 + 2 = 152.

“Feminine water” and “masculine water” are the Zoharic terms for *Nukva*’s “arousal from below” and *Z’eir Anpin*’s “arousal from above,” respectively, in preparation for their union.

The fact that the numerical value of Benjamin is the masculine form of the word *Nukva* indicates that he plays a role in this union.

Therefore Joseph said to Benjamin, “What spiritual level do you personify? I know that you embody neither of the two sides [who are party to the spiritual union], for you do not embody any *partzuf* whatsoever, neither masculine nor feminine.”

Benjamin then answered him, “Know, my brother, that I personify the masculine principle, and indeed, I have ascended to the same spiritual level than you did, in order to draw and suckle from the place where you drew and suckled.”

Whereas the other brothers personified various aspects of the six *midot* of *Nukva*, Joseph personified the *yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin*. Benjamin also achieved this level.

This is why *Benjamin* is now written fully, with the second *yud*, for this indicates how he ascended and drew into himself a radiance of the *yud*. He said to him, “Joseph, know that I now personify the masculine principle, and I have a wife and children.”

The name *Benjamin* is usually spelled *beit-nun-yud-mem-nun*, as above. Sometimes, however, it is spelled *beit-nun-yud-mem-yud-nun*.

The *yud* is the principle masculine letter of the Name *Havayah*. (The other masculine letter, the *vav*, is an extension of the *yud*, as we have seen previously.)

Joseph said back to him, “What did you name them?”

Benjamin answered, “I named them after [you,] my brother....”

The names Benjamin gave his sons all refer to some aspect of Joseph’s tribulations or his relationship with his brother Benjamin.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 43:29.

This being the case, it is understood that Benjamin did not conduct marital relations below, at his [original] level, but above, at the level of his brother [Joseph]. This is why he named all his sons after [aspects of] his brother[’s life].

A further proof of this is that he had ten sons, the number of the lights from which he suckled at his brother’s level. This is [also] why his name was originally spelled without the second *yud*, and is here spelled with the second *yud*, indicating that he [now fully] personified the masculine principle.

We see that sometimes his name is spelled with the second *yud*, indicating that he personifies the masculine principle, and sometimes without the second *yud*, indicating that he personifies the feminine principle. In fact, his name is spelled [in the Torah] with the second *yud* only five times, for a known reason.<sup>2</sup>

Five times the numerical value of Benjamin spelled with the second *yud* is 810, alluding to the two Temples that were built in Benjamin’s territory and stood in total 830 years. It is for this reason that his name appears with the second *yud* only five times, as we said.

$$\text{Beit-nun-yud-mem-yud-nun} = 2 + 50 + 10 + 40 + 10 + 50 = 162.$$

$$162 \times 5 = 810.$$

Jersualem was in Benjamin’s territory. According to the Talmud,<sup>3</sup> the first Temple stood for 410 years (833 BCE – 423 BCE), and the second Temple for 420 years (350 BCE – 70 CE). This gives a total of 830 years.

As to the missing 20 in this calculation, the scribe who wrote it down suggests that we add the 17 letters used in spelling out the word *Binyamin* plus the two *kolel*’s for the two Temples, this giving 19, plus another *kolel* for the word *Binyamin* itself, giving 20.

*Beit-yud-tav nun-vav-nun yud-vav-dalet mem-mem yud-vav-dalet nun-vav-nun* -> 17 letters.

The Arizal now backtracks conceptually and lays the groundwork for the above discussion.

Know that all the 12 [progenitors of the] tribes constitute a rectification of the *Shechinah*, and she therefore hovers over them with her full *partzuf*.

The *Shechinah* is *Nukva* of *Atzilut*, which constitutes a full *partzuf*, as we know.

They are: Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, personifying her *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*; Issachar and Zebulun, personifying her *netzach-hod*, Naphtali and Asher, personifying her right knee; Dan, personifying her right heel; Gad, personifying her left knee and heel; Judah personifying her *malchut*; and Benjamin her *yesod*; while Joseph personifies the *yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin*.

The above description moves freely between the actual nomenclature of the *sefirot* and their anatomical correlates. *Chesed-gevurah-tiferet* correspond to the right arm, left arm, and torso; *netzach-hod* correspond to the right and left legs; *malchut* corresponds to the mouth; and *yesod* corresponds to the womb in the female and the reproductive organ in the male.

<sup>2</sup> In our texts, *Binyamin* appears with the second *yud* seven times (Genesis 35:18, 42:4, 43:14, 43:16, 43:29, 45:12, 49:27).

<sup>3</sup> *Yoma* 9a.

This what is alluded to in *parashat Mikeitz*, that Joseph personified the masculine principle and the others personified the feminine principle.

When they all saw that Joseph personified the masculine principle and they all personified the feminine principle, they became very jealous of him. Thus we see that the numerical value of *Joseph* [*Yosef*] is the same as that of the word for “jealousy” [*kinah*, 156].

*Yosef*: yud-vav-samech-pei = 10 + 6 + 60 + 80 = 156.

*Kinah*: kuf-nun-alef-hei = 100 + 50 + 1 + 5 = 156.

[Joseph] suckles from the Divine Name *Kel Kana Havayah*.

The phrase *Kel Kana* (“a zealous G-d” or “a jealous G-d”) appears 6 times in the Torah.<sup>4</sup> The last time is the verse, “For a zealous G-d [*Kel kana*], *Havayah* your G-d, is among you....”

This [Name] signifies the supernal *yesod* of [*Ima*, signified in turn by], the first *hei* [of the Name *Havayah*], also known as the river that issues from Eden.

In the phrase, “And a river went out of Eden to water the garden,” “Eden” signifies *chochmah*, the “river” is *binah*, and the “garden” is *malchut*.

It happened that [the brothers acted on their jealousy] of his father, for he sent him [to check on them], saying, “Are your brothers not pasturing their flocks in Shechem?”<sup>5</sup> By this, he meant [mystically] that some of them are situated spiritually at the level of the arms of the feminine principle, which is the meaning of the word *shechem*, as in “on his shoulder.”<sup>6</sup>

The word *shechem* literally means “shoulder.”

Jacob assumed that since some of them are situated spiritually at the level of the arms [of the feminine principle], they would not be jealous of him nor harm him, for two reasons: First, because the arms are higher than the torso and the procreative organ. “This being the case,” he said, “they are higher than you and will not be jealous of you.”

The arms can be raised higher than the torso, and therefore they are considered higher than it; they embody *chesed* and *gevurah*, while the body embodies *tiferet*.

Even though Joseph personified *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*, which is a higher level than *Nukva*, Jacob either meant that *yesod* in general is a lower *sefirah* than *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*, and in this respect, the brothers (at least Reuben, Simeon, and Levi) were higher than Joseph, or that when *Z'eir Anpin* is vested in *Nukva*, the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin* is situated at the lower extreme of *tiferet* of *Nukva*.<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, [he said,] “their source includes loving-kindness and mercy, so they will have mercy on you, and you need not be afraid.”

*Chesed* and *tiferet* are loving-kindness and mercy, respectively.

<sup>4</sup> Exodus 20:5, 34:14; Deuteronomy 4:24, 5:9, 6:15.

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 37:13.

<sup>6</sup> Joshua 4:5, *et al.*

<sup>7</sup> Gloss of Rabbi Wolf Ashkenazi.

But, they did not act according to Jacob's assumption, but instead "they found [Joseph] in Dotan,"<sup>8</sup> i.e., related to him with the attribute of strict judgment. In the end, however, Reuben, who personified the right arm, had mercy on him,<sup>9</sup> but this did not help since he was a lone voice.

*Dotan* is related to the word *din*, "judgment."

"They cast him into the pit,"<sup>10</sup> this being the attribute of strict judgment, of Isaac, whose numerical value is the same as that of the word for "pit" [*bor*, 208].

In the context of the three patriarchs, Isaac personified *gevurah* or strict judgment, and this is seen by the fact that he devoted great energy to digging wells and pits. Whereas *chesed* and *tiferet* are characterized by downward movement—the "have" giving to the "have-not" and the "higher" having mercy on the "lower"—*gevurah* is characterized by upward movement, the "have-not" judging itself critically and aspiring to ascend to a higher level. This upward aspiration toward purification was expressed by Isaac's well-digging, where dirt (obstructions, evil) is removed so the hidden good (the subterranean well) can be revealed.

Isaac: *Yitzchak*: *yud-tzadik-chet-kuf* = 10 + 90 + 8 + 100 = 208.

*Bor*: *beit-vav-reish* = 2 + 6 + 200 = 208.

Specifically, [they cast him] into the *Nukva* of *Z'eir Anpin*, the attribute of Isaac, to the location of its left arm, where Simeon was spiritually located.

As we know, the masculine principle in general is associated with the right side, that of *chesed*, whiel the feminine principle is associated with the left side, that of *gevurah*. Therefore, *Nukva* can be justifiably called the attribute of Isaac, since Isaac also personified the side of *gevurah*. As was noted above, Simeon personified the left arm of *Nukva*, i.e., the *gevurah* of *Nukva*, which is anyway associated with *gevurah*. Thus, the left arm of *Nukva* is doubly strict.

That is why Joseph acted wisely when Simeon was under his control, and imprisoned him in front of the other brothers,<sup>11</sup> so they would take the hint. But they did not get the hint.

In any case, they later took [Joseph] out of the pit and sold him, and [his purchasers] brought him to Egypt, the "straits of the sea," which is *malchut*—specifically, the back of *Nukva* of *Z'eir Anpin*.

The word for "Egypt," *Mitzrayim* can be read as the two words *meitzar yam*, or "the straits of the sea," and indeed, most of the settled area of Egypt is around the Nile River, a passageway into the Mediterranean Sea. Mystically, the sea is an appellation for *malchut*, since all the other *sefirot* flow into *malchut* just as everything eventually flows into the sea. The "strait" or "constriction" of *malchut* is the back of *malchut*, the side exposed to evil.

Thus, he was now on the [central] axis, that of *malchut* and *binah*.

Having been thrown off-center to the left side by his brothers, he returned in Egypt to the central axis, where he began (as *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*), albeit in a precarious position, exposed to the evil of Egypt.

There is perhaps a phonetic intimation of this in the fact that the word for "jealousy" is spelled *kuf-nun-alef*, while the word for "axis" used here (if I have understood it correctly) is spelled *kuf-nun-hei*, implying that Joseph

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 37:17.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* v. 21 ff.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* v. 24.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 42:24.

went from being rooted in jealousy (an imbalance of forces, having suckled from *yesod* of *Ima*) to being rooted in the balanced, central axis.

This axis is the constriction of “who,” [into that] of the “sea,” which is *malchut*.

The word for “who” [*mi*] is the last two letters of the word for “Egypt” [*Mitzrayim*], just as is the word for “sea” [*yam*]. *Mitzrayim* can thus be understood both as “the constriction of the sea” and “the constriction of ‘who.’”

But the question-word “who” is an appellation for *binah*, inasmuch as its numerical value is 50 (*mem-yud*: 40 + 10), and there are fifty “gates” of *binah*, as we have seen previously. So Egypt is the constriction of *binah* into the constriction of *malchut* (the “sea”), or the flow of the expanded consciousness of *binah* into the restricted and constricted consciousness of *malchut*. This is where Joseph wound up.

“And Potiphar, the eunuch of Pharaoh, bought him.”<sup>12</sup>

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 37:36, 39:1.

## *Parashat VaYigash*

In this *parashah*, Jacob emigrates from the Land of Israel to Egypt. Joseph presents him to Pharaoh, who asks him how old he is. Jacob answers: “The days of the years of my journey [on earth] are one hundred and thirty years; the [quality of the] days of the years of my life have been few and evil, and they cannot compare to the days of the years of my fathers’ lives in the days of their journeys [on earth].”<sup>1</sup>

Why did [Jacob] call [the days of his life] “few and evil”?

To answer: Know that Adam was reincarnated in the patriarchs, and that is why they are called “the fathers,” after Adam, who was the first father.

Adam was the father of all humanity, and the patriarchs were the fathers of the Jewish people, the line of humanity selected to fulfill G-d’s intentions in creation. For this purpose, they were endowed with the spiritual capacities necessary to fulfill this purpose; their creation as a people can therefore be compared to the creation of humanity as a whole, and their progenitors to humanity’s progenitor.

It is explained in the *Zohar*<sup>2</sup> that Adam’s *nefesh* was reincarnated into Abraham, his *ruach* into Isaac, and his *neshamah* into Jacob.

As will soon be explained, the patriarchs rectified the collapse of spiritual consciousness Adam precipitated by his sin. In so doing, they had to reconstruct Divine consciousness from the bottom up. Thus, Abraham began with the lowest level of the soul, the *nefesh*, which is the animating, vital force in the body; Isaac continued with the *ruach*, the emotional life force; and Jacob continued with the *neshamah*, the intellectual life force.

It is also explained in the *Zohar*<sup>3</sup> that Abraham rectified the sin of idolatry, Isaac the sin of murder, and Jacob the sin of sexual licentiousness.

These are the three cardinal sins, which the Torah instructs us to give up our lives for rather than transgress. (If we are given the choice between being killed or committing sins other than these three, we should commit them, unless it is a case of a ruler or government trying to snuff out Judaism altogether, in which case we must give up our lives rather than committing *any* sin forbidden by the Torah.)

Adam, in a certain sense, transgressed all three of these cardinal prohibitions in committing the primordial sin.<sup>4</sup> Transgressing G-d’s command was denying him; this was akin to idolatry. Inasmuch as this sin brought dead upon the whole human race, it was akin to murder. By committing the sin, he plunged the souls of all humanity into the realm of evil; this is akin to adultery—or sexual licentiousness in general—which misdirects reproductive seed or creativity into realms where they are not meant to be.

Abraham rectified the sin of idolatry by smashing his father’s idols and promulgating monotheism in the world. Isaac rectified the sin of murder by submitting himself to be killed by his father. Jacob rectified the sin of sexual licentiousness by working for fourteen years for his wives Rachel and Leah, thereby redeeming their souls from the realm of evil into which they had been cast by Adam’s sin.

It is also explained in the *Zohar*<sup>5</sup> that when Jacob descended to Egypt, it was only then that Adam’s soul was reincarnated in him.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 47:9.

<sup>2</sup> *Tikunei Zohar* 69 and 70.

<sup>3</sup> 3:111b, in *Ra’aya Mehemna*.

<sup>4</sup> *Megaleh Amukot* 144.

<sup>5</sup> *Tikunei Zohar* 2.

Now, Adam sinned by wasting his seed during the first 130 years of his life, as we have explained.

After the sin, Adam separated from Eve for 130 years. Although this was an act of penitence for his sin, it backfired, because during this time he succumbed to sexual fantasies and had seminal emissions, which the forces of evil used to propagate demons.

Wasting seed is described [in Scripture] as “evil,” as in the verse, “And Er, the firstborn of Judah, was *evil* in the eyes of G-d.”<sup>6</sup>

He was called “evil” because he wasted his seed.<sup>7</sup>

It is also written, “And the imagination of his heart’s thoughts are only *evil*, the whole day.”<sup>8</sup>

This verse describes the state of humanity before G-d sent the flood. The generation of the flood was guilty, among other things, of sexual licentiousness.<sup>9</sup>

It is also written, “Woe to the wicked, the evil one.”<sup>10</sup>

In the *Zohar*,<sup>11</sup> this verse is interpreted to refer to someone who does not procreate, that is, does not utilize his sexuality properly.

[As we said,] Jacob set out to rectify the sin of sexual licentiousness, i.e., wasting seed and giving it over to Lilith and Na’amah, who are termed “nakedness,” as is known.

As we have seen previously, these are the archetypal female demons, i.e., the power of evil to receive life force from the realm of holiness. This feminine evil takes the vital force of wasted seminal emissions and impregnates itself with it, producing demons, or forces of evil, i.e., anti-Divine consciousness.

The idiom for “sexual licentiousness” (*gilui arayot*) is literally “uncovering the nakedness” of a forbidden sexual partner.

His first 130 years therefore passed in suffering and exile, as is known.

Until he came to Egypt, Jacob’s life was a long series of troubles. As Rashi lists them:<sup>12</sup> the trouble of Laban [who deceived him and tried to steal from him], the trouble with Esau [who tried to kill him], the trouble with Rachel [his favorite wife, who died in childbirth], the trouble with Dinah [who was raped by Shechem], the trouble with Joseph [his favorite son, who was sold and who he thought was dead], the trouble with Simeon [who was detained in Egypt], the trouble with Benjamin [who Joseph demanded be brought to Egypt].

This is the meaning of “few and *evil*, one hundred thirty years.” Since they were evil due to the suffering [he endured], Adam’s sin of wasting seed for 130 years—termed “evil”—was rectified. When [these years] were completed, the soul of Adam entered him, for [Jacob] had by then rectified [these years].

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 38:7.

<sup>7</sup> Rashi *ad loc.*

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 6:5.

<sup>9</sup> See Genesis 6:1-4; Rashi on Genesis 6:11, 12, 13, 7:4.

<sup>10</sup> Isaiah 3:11.

<sup>11</sup> *Zohar Chadash, Midrash Rut, Piriah veRiviah.*

<sup>12</sup> On Genesis 43:14.

It is then written, “And Jacob *lived* in Egypt for seventeen years.”<sup>13</sup> For at that point the living *neshamah* of Adam entered him. This is alluded to by the words “And Jacob *lived*.”

These words imply that Jacob received a new influx of life force, which, as we have seen, was the rectified soul of Adam.

This lasted for seventeen years, this being the numerical value of the word for “good” [*tov*], indicating that the first 130 years were spent rectifying the evil, whereas the last 17 years were good, without evil.

*Tov*: *tet-vav-beit* = 9 + 6 + 2 = 17. These years were the good years of Jacob’s life, for he was reunited with Joseph and lived comfortably with his family, all of whom were loyal to Judaism.

And this is why Jacob descended to Egypt, for it was there that all the soul-sparks that Adam wasted [during those 130 years] were reincarnated, as we have explained elsewhere.

—translated from *Sha’ar HaPesukim*

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<sup>13</sup> Genesis 47:28.

## *Parashat VaYechi*

This *parashah* begins: “Jacob lived in the land of Egypt for seventeen years.”<sup>1</sup>

As we know, Jacob was also known by another name, Israel. These names—particularly the latter—eventually became the names of the collective entity of the Jewish people. The phrase “the children of Israel” is first applied to the direct sons Jacob, but gradually comes to mean “the Israelites,” i.e., the whole nation, and later, the term “Israel” (without “the children of”) is also used.

Jacob is also referred to as “the choicest of the forefathers,” indicating that his way of serving G-d was in some way superior to that of Abraham and Isaac. As holy as Abraham and Isaac—and their respective ways of relating to and serving G-d—were, they each contained an element of imbalance that eventually surfaces as an imperfection. Unrestrained love can overflow into love of the wrong things; unrestrained fear can overflow into fear of the wrong things. This is indicated by the fact that although Abraham produced Isaac, he also produced Ishmael, and that although Isaac produced Jacob, he also produced Esau. Only Jacob’s sons were all righteous; only mercy, which tempers love and fear, is relatively immune to improper application.

In the following passage, the Arizal analyzes the names of Jacob/Israel and shows how they reflect perfected Divine consciousness.

Know that there are three aspects to Jacob. The first is indicated by the name *Yaakov* written [as it usually is,] without a *vav*. The second [is indicated by the name] *Yaakov* written with a *vav*, as in the verse, “And I will remember My covenant with Jacob.”<sup>2</sup> The third is indicated by [Jacob’s other name,] Israel.

*Yaakov* is usually written *yud-ayin-kuf-beit*. In rare cases, a *vav* is inserted between the last two letters to indicate the “o”-vowel.

[These three names] allude to the three aspects of his soul, *nefesh*, *ruach*, and *neshamah*.

The *nefesh* is the vital, animating soul, the life-force of the body. The *ruach* is the emotional aspect of the soul, and the *neshamah* is the intellectual aspect of the soul.

The *nefesh* is indicated by the name *Yaakov* written without the *vav*. The *ruach* is indicated by the name *Yaakov* written with the *vav*. The *neshamah* is indicated by the name Israel.

The numerical value of the letter *vav* is six, indicating the six emotions.

As you already know, these three are considered one collective entity.

We do not normally experience three entities operating within our consciousness; the division into three aspects reflects the way the soul develops and manifests itself within us.

Similarly, the forefathers are [considered] one, as indicated by our sages’ statement that Jacob was called Abraham, etc.<sup>3</sup>

The Midrash shows how the Torah refers to each of the patriarchs by the others’ names.

We will now see how the three aspects of the soul are connected numerically to the names of Jacob.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 47:28.

<sup>2</sup> Leviticus 26:42.

<sup>3</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 63:3.

You will also find that the numerical value of *nefesh* is the same as that of the two names Abraham and Jacob together.

$$\text{Nefesh: } \text{nun-pe-shin} = 50 + 80 + 300 = 430.$$

$$\text{Abraham (Avraham): } \text{alef-beit-reish-hei-mem} = 1 + 2 + 200 + 5 + 40 = 248.$$

$$\text{Jacob (Yaakov): } \text{yud-ayin-kuf-beit} = 10 + 70 + 100 + 2 = 182.$$

$$248 + 182 = 430.$$

The numerical value of *ruach* is that of the two words “and Jacob lived” together with the unit values for each word.

$$\text{Ruach: } \text{reish-vav-chet} = 200 + 6 + 8 = 214.$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{“And Jacob lived” (Vayechi Yaakov, the first words of this parashah): } & \text{vav-yud-chet-yud yud-ayin-kuf-beit} = \\ & (6 + 10 + 8 + 10) + (10 + 70 + 100 + 2) = 34 + 182 = 216. \end{aligned}$$

The *neshamah* is [numerically] associated with the name Israel as follows: The numerical value of “the *neshamah*” is 400, and that of Israel [*Yisrael*] is 541.

$$\text{“The neshamah” (ha-neshamah): } \text{hei-nun-shin-mem-hei} = 5 + 50 + 300 + 40 + 5 = 400.$$

$$\text{Yisrael: } \text{yud-sin-reish-alef-lamed} = 10 + 300 + 200 + 1 + 30 = 541.$$

Subtract 400 [from 541], i.e., “the *neshamah*,” and 141 is left. Subtract 41 from this remainder and add it to the 400 [of “the *neshamah*”], and the result is the numerical value of the word for “truth” [*emet*]. This is the mystical significance of the verse, “Give truth to Jacob.”<sup>4</sup>

$$541 - 400 = 141.$$

$$400 + 41 = 441.$$

$$\text{Emet: } \text{alef-mem-tav} = 1 + 40 + 400 = 441.$$

100 remains [from the 141 left when *neshamah* is subtracted from *Yisrael*]. [100 is the numerical value of the letter *kuf*]. The numerical value of the letter *kuf* spelled out is the same as that of Jacob with [the four unit-values of] its four letters.

$$\text{Kuf: } \text{kuf-vav-pe} = 100 + 6 + 80 = 186.$$

$$\text{Jacob (Yaakov): } \text{yud-ayin-kuf-beit} = 10 + 70 + 100 + 2 = 182.$$

$$182 + 4 = 186.$$

The result of this arithmetic exercise can thus be summarized as follows:

$$\text{Israel} = (\text{“the neshamah”} + 41) + 100$$

$$\text{Israel} = \text{truth} + 100$$

but

$$100 \rightarrow 186 \text{ (i.e., Jacob spelled out plus its four letters' unit values)}$$

so

$$\text{Israel} = \text{truth} + \text{Jacob}.$$

Now, the numerical value of the letter *kuf* spelled out [186] also equals the numerical value of the word for “place” [*makom*].

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<sup>4</sup> Micah 7:20.

*Makom*:  $mem-kuf-vav-mem = 40 + 100 + 6 + 40 = 186$ .

It is also the numerical value of the square of the Name *Havayah*, as follows: *yud* squared [ $10^2$ ] equals 100; *hei* squared [ $5^2$ ] equals 25; *vav* squared [ $6^2$ ] equals 36; *hei* squared [ $5^2$ ] equals 25. The total equals 186.

$100 + 25 + 36 + 25 = 186$ .

This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “Behold there is a place with Me.”<sup>5</sup>

Based on this verse, the sages stated,<sup>6</sup> “He is the place of the world, but the world is not His place,” meaning that space exists as a created entity within G-d. G-d is not circumscribed by (i.e., exist entirely within) the parameters of space. In this connection, “the Place” (or “the Ominpresent”) is one of the appellations of G-d. This connection of G-d and “place” is given mystically by the numerical association we have just seen.

Thus, we have here a connection between Jacob ( $182 \rightarrow 186$ ) and the Names of G-d.

Now, Rabbi Akiva said that the letter *kuf* alludes to the Holy One, blessed be He.<sup>7</sup> [Mystically, this means that] the numerical value of the [three] Name[s] of G-d is the same as that of Yabok, i.e., the combined numerical value of the Names *Ekyeh*, *Havayah*, and *Adni*.

In the Midrash *Otiot d’Rabbi Akiva*, in which Rabbi Akiva expounds on the midrashic significance of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, he states that the letter *kuf* alludes to G-d, since it is the first letter of the word *kadosh* (“holy”), used to describe G-d in the verse, “Holy, holy, holy is G-d of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.”<sup>8</sup>

Yabok is the name of the river that Jacob crossed on his way back to the land of Israel after spending twenty years with Laban, and was where he wrestled with the angel of Esau. As we have seen previously, it thus signifies the struggle between good and evil, or between mercy and judgment.

*Yabok*:  $yud-beit-kuf = 10 + 2 + 100 = 112$ .

*Ekyeh*:  $alef-hei-yud-hei = 1 + 5 + 10 + 5 = 21$ .

*Havayah*:  $yud-hei-vav-hei = 10 + 5 + 6 + 5 = 26$ .

*Adni*:  $alef-dalet-nun-yud = 1 + 4 + 50 + 10 = 65$ .

$21 + 26 + 65 = 112$ .

It is also the combined numerical value of the two names *Havayah* and *Elokim*.

*Elokim*:  $alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem = 1 + 30 + 5 + 10 + 40 = 86$ ;  $86 + 26 = 112$ .

If we subtract [the numerical value of] Yabok [112] from [the numerical value of] Jacob’s name *Yaakov* [182], the remainder is 70, alluding G-d’s seventy names.<sup>9</sup>

Thus,  $\text{Jacob} = \text{Yabok} + 70 = \text{Ekyeh-Havayah-Adni} + \text{G-d’s 70 Names}$ .

We have now two additional connections between Jacob and G-d’s Names.

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 36:21.

<sup>6</sup> *Pesikta Rabati* 21.

<sup>7</sup> *Otiot d’Rabbi Akiva*.

<sup>8</sup> Isaiah 6:3.

<sup>9</sup> *Bamidbar Rabbah* 14:11; *Midrash Zuta*, *Shir HaShirim* 1; *Pesikta d’Rav Kahana* 3:1; *Pardes Rimonim* 23:13.

The three Names just mentioned—*Ekyeh*, *Havayah*, and *Adni*—allude to the three *sefirot* of *keter*, *tiferet*, and *malchut*, respectively.

These three Names are associated with these three *sefirot*. When G-d is referred to by a particular Name, it means that He is acting through the associated *sefirah*, i.e., manifesting the Divine attribute associated with that *sefirah*.

*Tiferet* is associated with Jacob.

*Tiferet* is the central and pivotal *sefirah* of the six *midot* that metamorphose into *Z'eir Anpin*, who, as we have seen previously, was personified by Jacob.

It is the [heart of] the central axis, which extends from one extreme [of the sefirotic tree] to the other.

The left and right axes of the sefirotic tree do not extend all the way up or down. Only the middle axis extends to the top (*keter*) and bottom (*malchut*).

Abraham is associated with the right axis, that centered on *chesed*, and Isaac is associated with the left axis, centered on *gevurah*. Thus, only Jacob personifies the Divine power to extend to all levels, from the highest to the lowest.

An allusion to this may be found in the word *Esther*, when spelled backwards.

*Esther* is spelled *alef-samech-tav-reish*.

I.e., [the initials of the words for] “head” [*rosh*], “middle” [*toch*], and “end” [*sof*], together with the letter *alef*, spell *Esther* [backwards].

The initials of the words *rosh*, *toch*, and *sof* are *reish*, *tav*, and *samech*, respectively. Thus, the word *Esther* also alludes to the Divine power to extend from the highest to the lowest levels.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “I shall hide [*haster*], yes, hide [*astir*] My face on that day.”<sup>10</sup>

The root of the words for “hide” and “yes, hide” is the same as that of the word *Esther*. The classic interpretation of this phenomenon is that G-d’s presence (or “face”) is hidden during the exile, the context in which the story of Esther takes place. G-d’s Name is not mentioned once in the entire book of Esther.

Here, the emphasis is on the fact that G-d’s face or presence is specifically found in (“hidden” or ensconced within) the Divine ability to extend from the highest to the lowest levels, as alluded to in the word *Esther*.

This is also indicated by the fact that the word *Yisrael* may be permuted to spell “a head for Me” [*li rosh*].

*Yisrael*: *yud-sin-reish-alef-lamed*.

*Li rosh*: *lamed-yud reish-alef-shin*.

This indicates that *Yisrael* embodies the ability to reach the highest levels of Divinity.

[As the sages state,] “Israel arose in [G-d’s] thought.”<sup>11</sup>

This also implies that Israel embodies the ability to reach the highest levels of Divinity.

The seat of the *neshamah* is in the head, i.e., the brain; the seat of the *ruach* is in the heart; and the seat of the *nefesh* is in the liver.

<sup>10</sup> Deuteronomy 31:18.

<sup>11</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 1:4.

The allusion to this is in the word for “king” [*melech*], whose letters are the initials of the words for “brain” [*moach*], “heart” [*lev*], and “liver” [*kaved*].

*Melech: mem-lamed-kaf.* A person whose consciousness descends from his brain to his heart and then to his liver, i.e., whose intellect rules his emotions, which in turn determine the way he acts, is a “king,” i.e., in charge of himself and his body. If the order is reversed, i.e., fulfillment of bodily functions inspires the emotions, which then enlist the intellect to satisfy them, the word spelled is *kelem*, “embarrassment.”

It thus follows that all the worlds are dependent upon the name[s] Jacob and Israel. As the sages said,<sup>12</sup> “In the beginning” implies “for the sake of Israel, who are termed ‘the beginning.’”

The Torah begins: “In the beginning, G-d created heaven and earth.” The prefix *beit* in the word for “in the beginning” [*be-reishit*], besides meaning “in,” can also mean “by means of.” The verse can thus be read, “By means of [that which is called] ‘the beginning,’ G-d created heaven and earth.” The Jewish people are called “the beginning,” as it is written: “Israel is holy to G-d; [they are] the beginning of His produce.”<sup>13</sup>

They are the soul of all creatures, and are termed “Israel is holy.”<sup>13</sup>

The Jewish people, being the reason for creation and the means by which G-d created the world, are the “inner soul” of all creation. All creation finds meaning and purpose only in reference to the Jewish people, who are charged with fulfilling the Divine purpose of creation, making the world into G-d’s home.

This, then is the mystical meaning of the verse, “And Jacob lived....” All the life-force and sustenance of the world is [dependent upon] Jacob.

The word “and he lived” is interpreted here as if it was vocalized to read “and he gives life-force” in the causative.

And he [alone] is destined to remain in the world. He is therefore called *Yaakov*, related to the word “he will follow” [*ya’akeiv*].

The Divine consciousness personified by Jacob incorporates that personified by Abraham and Isaac but balances them. In this way, life-force is prevented from being siphoned off by the forces of evil, and thus Jacob-consciousness can safely descend to the lowest levels of reality and successfully transform them, together with the rest of the world, into G-d’s home.

[Thus,] he was the “a head for Me,” i.e., the beginning of [G-d’s] thought, and he is also the final product of [G-d’s] action, and “that which was is that which will be [in the end].”<sup>14</sup>

This type of Divine consciousness owes its ability to descend so low to the fact that it is rooted so high.

“The matter is ancient,”<sup>15</sup> but the wise will understand. May G-d enlighten our eyes with the inner light of His Torah. Amen, so may it be His will.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

<sup>12</sup> *Tanchuma* (ed. Buber) 3; *Vayikra Rabbah* 36:4.

<sup>13</sup> Jeremiah 2:3.

<sup>14</sup> Ecclesiastes 1:9.

<sup>15</sup> par. 1 Chronicles 4:22.

## *Parashat Shemot* [first installment]

The meaning of *Pesach* and the exodus from Egypt [is as follows]:

As you know, the early [generations of mankind] forced the Divine presence to ascend [out of the physical world] to the seventh heaven, because of their sins.<sup>1</sup>

Adam and Eve caused the Divine presence to ascend from the physical world to the first (i.e., lowest) heaven when they ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Cain caused the Divine presence to ascend from the first to the second heaven when he killed his brother, Abel. The generation of Enoch caused the Divine presence to ascend to the third heaven when they introduced idolatry into the world. The generation of the flood caused the Divine presence to ascend to the fourth heaven because of their social and sexual sins. The generation of the tower of Babel caused the Divine presence to ascend to the fifth heaven by declaring war on G-d. The generation of Sodom caused the Divine presence to ascend to the sixth heaven by their social sins. The Egyptians of Abraham's generation caused the Divine presence to ascend to the seventh heaven.

The [souls of the] Jews of the generation that was in exile in Egypt were derived from the drops of semen that Adam emitted during the 130 years [he was separated from his wife].<sup>2</sup>

After Adam and Eve ate from the fruit of the tree of knowledge, G-d informed them that they and their progeny would eventually die. In remorse for bringing death into the world, Adam attempted to repent for and rectify his sin. As part of this process, and because he reasoned that there was no purpose in bringing children into the world if they were destined to die anyway, he separated from Eve. It was only 130 years later that he realized the faultiness of his logic, by losing an argument with Lamech's wives. During these 130 years of celibacy, Adam apparently was not able to control himself completely, and committed the sin of wasteful emission of seed.

They had previously been incarnated as the generation of the flood, who used to also spill their seed on the ground, inasmuch as they were derived from the same origin.<sup>3</sup>

The generation of the flood was the first incarnation of the Adam's wasted drops. Since they were the first "generation" of this ill-conceived seed, their spiritual makeup was powerfully predisposed toward the same mentality that produced them. They therefore committed the same sin that this mentality led to.

They were eventually wiped out. This is the mystical meaning of the verse, "And G-d saw that man's evil was great,"<sup>4</sup> for wasteful emission of seed is called "evil," and one who wastefully emits his seed is also called "evil," as it is stated in the *Zohar*<sup>5</sup> with reference to the verse, "the wicked will not abide with You."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 19:7; *Etz Chaim* 36:2.

<sup>2</sup> *Eiruvim* 18b; *Zohar* 1:55a.

<sup>3</sup> *Zohar* 1:56b, 66b.

<sup>4</sup> *Genesis* 6:5.

<sup>5</sup> 1:57a.

<sup>6</sup> *Psalms* 5:5.

It follows that the generation of the flood were veritably Adam's evil. This is also the mystical meaning of [G-d's statement before the flood], "I will wipe out the man that I have created."<sup>7</sup>

Inasmuch as the name *Adam* means simply "man," the phrase "And G-d saw that man's evil was great" may be read, "And G-d saw that *Adam's* evil was great," meaning that *G-d saw that* this generation, the physical embodiment of the souls produced by *Adam's evil* emission of seed, *was sinning greatly*, just as he did.

Similarly, the phrase in the following verse, "I will wipe out the man that I have created" may be read, "I will wipe out *Adam*, who I [personally] created," meaning that G-d was planning to wipe out the generation because it was an embodiment of the sin of Adam himself.

They were later reincarnated as the generation of the dispersion. [This generation is also referred to as *Adam's* progeny, as it is written, "And G-d descended] to see the city and the tower that the sons of man had built,"<sup>8</sup> meaning the direct progeny of Adam, reincarnations of his own seminal emissions.

Here, too, "the sons of man" can be read, "the sons of *Adam*."

[They were only figuratively his "sons,"] since they derived from seminal emissions of the male without the female. They also sinned.

After [these two incarnations,] they had to be purified. For as I have already told you, they were holy and powerful souls,<sup>9</sup> but evil's grasp of them spoiled them. Once they would be purified and be rid of the sickness of impurity, they would be manifest as holy souls. As you also know, it is specifically the holiest souls that evil attempts to grasp.

We can perhaps understand this as follows. Rabbi Shalom Dovber of Lubavitch states that someone who has never committed the sin of "blemishing the covenant [of circumcision]" on some level cannot truly relate to the inner dimension of the Torah. Now, the most basic meaning of "blemishing the covenant" is wasteful emission of seed, but it can refer also to any sexual aberration, and more subtly, to any lapse of Divine consciousness resulting from being seduced by some foreign promise of spiritual fulfillment. After all, wasteful emission of seed and sexual aberration in general is a misdirection of a person's potential into the wrong channels, and focusing on anything other than G-d is essentially the same thing. The only difference is that in the first case we are talking about reproductive and/or romantic energy while in the second case we are talking about mental or creative energy; in either case, the potential that should have been used to propagate and promulgate Divine consciousness throughout reality has been squandered.

But what causes a person to do this? If, as the Kabbalah insists, we are all "hard-wired" to fulfill our purpose on earth, to make reality into G-d's home by propagating Divine consciousness throughout it, why would anyone do anything contrary to that end? The answer is that evil temporarily succeeds in convincing the person that the sin it is enticing him to commit will in fact serve this purpose, that the "high" he will get from committing the sin (or from diverting his attention from G-d momentarily) will enhance his life, re-energize him, re-inspire him, or in some other way accomplish something in short order that it would take a long time to accomplish through the normal channels. Evil seduces us with a shortcut, because it knows that we know that the path to true, holy self-refinement is a long, hard, and tedious one. Evil plays on and capitalizes on our Divine imperative and our impatience and frustration over how long it takes us to make real progress.

Hence, Rabbi Shalom Dovber said that anyone who has never fallen for this ruse in some way—even if only in a very abstract, refined way—cannot really relate to the inner dimension of the Torah. This is because the inner

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<sup>7</sup> Genesis 6:7.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 11:5.

<sup>9</sup> *Likutei Torah* (Arizal) on Ezekiel, s.v. *vesod*.

dimension of the Torah addresses not the do's and don'ts that the revealed dimension of the Torah addresses, but the more profound issues in life, such as "what is the meaning of life" and "why is there suffering in the world," etc. If a person has never been bothered and frustrated by these questions enough to fall for the bait of a shortcut to their solution, the inner dimension of the Torah will not speak to him.

So, after all this we can perhaps presume that the seminal emissions produced by the sin of "blemishing the covenant," despite their impure origin, do contain within them sparks of very high potential energy, since they originate—even if only subconsciously—in this frustration over life not being the Divine communion it is meant to be.

The fact that evil seeks to overtake holiness accounts for the law that only Jews are required to wash their hands upon rising in the morning. When a person goes to sleep, most of his soul ascends to heaven to give its account for the day and be re-charged. When it departs from the body, evil senses this and immediately rushes in to take over the body. When the soul returns in the morning, it forces evil out, but some residual evil remains on the hands, since the hands are the interface with the physical world and therefore the part of the body most oriented toward material consciousness. Evil can therefore linger on the hands, and it is therefore necessary to "wash" this evil off by rinsing the hand with water, which is a physical manifestation of Divine wisdom, or the Torah. Since a non-Jew's soul is not, as we have explained previously, oriented toward the holy task of disseminating Divine consciousness in reality, but rather just toward creating a just, smoothly-functioning society, evil is not so "interested" or attracted to the non-Jew's body when he sleeps. He is therefore not invaded by evil and does not need to wash his hands when he wakes up.

Now, all souls come [into reality] with states of *chesed* and *gevurah*, which are derived from *da'at*. Coupling is a function of *da'at*, this being the mystical meaning of the phrase, "And Adam *knew* his wife Eve."<sup>10</sup> Coupling is referred to as "knowledge" because the seminal drop originates in *da'at*.

[This is] also [true of] Moses' generation, as is known, for Moses personified *da'at* and thus his generation was a generation of *da'at*, as we have explained elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> However, they were drawn to evil.

This is evident from the fact that they suffered the oppression of the Egyptian exile and slavery. Some deficiency of theirs caused a blockage in the flow of Divine beneficence to them.

Thus, the whole purpose of the Egyptian exile was to purify these souls. This is why they were subjected to such oppression, and [the Egyptians] "made their lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and bricks," corresponding to the mortar and bricks the generation of the dispersion used [to build the tower of Babel]. Understand this.

Of the generation of the dispersion, it is written: "They said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks and burn them hard.' They had bricks for stone and bitumen for mortar."<sup>12</sup> Thus, the Jews' suffering through mortar and bricks atoned for their sins with mortar and bricks in their previous incarnation.

Now, since their sin was only with respect to *da'at*—for the sparks of their souls originated therein—Moses therefore knew that their exile also derived from there.

For, as mentioned above, and as the Arizal will presently state, it is possible to understand the nature of the blemish being produced by examining the effect it produces. The fact that the Jews were being punished with mortar and bricks indicated that they were atoning for the sin of the generation of the dispersion, who sinned with mortar

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<sup>10</sup> Genesis 4:1.

<sup>11</sup> *Etz Chaim* 32:2.

<sup>12</sup> Genesis 11:3.

and bricks. And that generation had sinned by “blemishing the covenant,” which is a function of *da’at*, the *sefirah* of coupling.

To explain: whenever the Jewish people sin here below and thereby cause some flaw in some Divine attribute or supernal *sefirah* (G-d forbid), evil is able to derive sustenance from this blemish and therefore attaches itself to that point.

We may envision evil as a disease that attacks a weakened immune system.

This is the secret to [understanding] the Egyptian exile, for Egypt and the impurity it embodied derived sustenance from *da’at*. This is particularly so in light for what I have taught you, namely, that Pharaoh and Egypt are positioned in opposition to the supernal neck, which is the back of the supernal *da’at*. This should suffice.

*Da’at* is manifest in the body in the cerebellum, which is located underneath and at the back of the brain, near the neck. The word for “Pharaoh,” as we have noted, permutes to spell the word for “the neck” (*ha-oref*).

Clearly, this exile resulted from all the Divine beneficence [that flows through *da’at*] being siphoned off to Pharaoh and Egypt. Therefore, the Jews of that generation were subject to them. But, as you already know, when there is a flaw above due to the sins of the generation below, the Divine energies depart, ascending [back to their source] in order that the powers of evil not derive [too much] sustenance from them.

When the Divine beneficence is diverted from its natural flow, this “trips a switch” in the spiritual mechanism of creation that shuts off the valve of Divine beneficence.

I have explained this to you with regard to why *Z’eir Anpin* is at first only six extremities and does not ten become full [*sefirot*, i.e., a *partzuf*] until after the rectification process.<sup>13</sup>

Similarly, at that time [i.e., of the Egyptian exile], *Z’eir Anpin* reverted to its original state, that of “three folded within three.” We always refer to this state as “the first impregnation.” It returned to the womb of *Ima*, and was not revealed outside.

Rabbi Meir Poppers insists that the statement that *Z’eir Anpin* returned to the womb of *Ima* must not be taken literally. Rather, *Z’eir Anpin* remained a full, mature *partzuf*, but was informed only by the same level of mentality it possessed when it was *in utero*. This mentality is called in the *Zohar* “three folded within three,” i.e., *chochmah-binah-da’at* concealed within *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* and *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* concealed within *netzach-hod-yesod*. The latter triplet represents the autonomous functioning of the body, which is essentially what is functioning during pregnancy. Physically, this is reflected in the fact that the embryo is postured in the crouched fetal position, its head bent into the knees. This is also why the Pesach sacrifice was to be offered with “its head on its knees and on its innards.”<sup>14</sup>

Thus, we see that transgression in this world causes a blemish in the upper worlds, which backlashes as a withdrawal of Divine consciousness and beneficence in order to prevent evil from taking the opportunity to siphon off this energy for itself. This “exile” of the Divine presence is an immature mentality that must be reconstructed and re-matured in order to restore the optimal consciousness; this is the process of redemption.

<sup>13</sup> *Etz Chaim* 11:6.

<sup>14</sup> Exodus 12:9.

—translated and adapted from *Peri Etz Chaim*<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Sha'ar Chag HaMatzot* 1.

## *Parashat Shemot* [second installment]

This *parashah* begins: “And these are the names of the sons of Israel coming to Egypt, with Jacob, each man and his household came.”<sup>1</sup>

Inasmuch as there are seventy facets to the Torah and one of these is [verbal] allusion [*remez*], [we will expound this verse in this manner]. The descent of the Israelites into Egypt alludes to the embryo while still in its mother’s womb, in between those straits.

The word for Egypt, *mitzrayim*, means “straits” or “confinements.” It is therefore an allegory for the confinement of the soul as it leaves its native milieu in heaven and descends into the confinements of physicality, constrained to experience reality within the parameters of time and space.

The phrase “in between the straits” is paraphrased from Lamentations 1:3.

With this [association] we can interpret the phrase “And these are the names of the sons of Israel” as referring to the faculties of the soul. For just as the body possesses 248 limbs and 365 sinews, so does the soul, these being the faculties of the soul “who came to Egypt.”

If we take “Israel” to refer to the soul itself, the “sons of Israel” are the extensions of the soul, its intellectual and emotional faculties.

The soul, or at least that part of it that is invested in the body, is conceived of as being “tailored” perfectly to the body. (Actually, since the soul comes first, the opposite is the case: the body is constructed so as to clothe the body perfectly.)

“...with Jacob” refers to the fact that they enter the child when it is still inside its mother’s womb, “with Jacob,” who is the good inclination [*yetzer hatov*].

Actually, it is explained elsewhere<sup>2</sup> that the child is born only with the evil inclination, and the good inclination enters only beginning at the circumcision (or at birth, in the case of a girl) and fully at the *bar-* (or *bat-*) *mitzvah*. But as Rabbi Eliezer Nannes (of blessed memory) told my wife, the Divine soul (together with the good inclination) is indeed present at birth, but only becomes manifest gradually, as the child is educated in the ways of the Torah, culminating at the *bar/bat-mitzvah*.

The verse continues “...coming,” rather than “who *came*” [in the past tense], because G-d “forms the spirit of man within him,”<sup>3</sup> as is explained in the *Zohar*,<sup>4</sup> meaning that the more a person continues to mature [spiritually], the more his soul enters [and manifests] within him.

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 1:1.

<sup>2</sup> See *Sanhedrin* 91b.

<sup>3</sup> Zachariah 12:2.

<sup>4</sup> 2:94b.

It is thus stated there: “There is none holy as G-d...”<sup>5</sup> [meaning that] even though Israel are holy, they are not intrinsically holy. Rather, G-d sanctifies them. This is the meaning of [the continuation of this verse:] “...for there is none other than You,” [meaning:] His holiness is not derived from others, but is intrinsic, while Israel’s holiness is [not intrinsic, but rather] derived from none other than Him.

[This verse continues:] “...and there is no rock like our G-d.” Our sages interpreted this to mean “there is no artist like our G-d.”<sup>6</sup>

The word for “rock” (*tzur*) is cognate to the word for “artist” (*tzayar*).

For someone who draws a picture [of a person] on paper cannot [at the same time] draw internal organs, such as the stomach, intestines, heart, liver, or spleen, while G-d does not only this but draws the form of another [person] inside the abdominal cavity, i.e., the embryo inside its mother’s womb. And inside the embryo are more internal organs as well as its spirit.

This is the meaning of the verse, “He forms the spirit of man within him,” implying that the more the embryo develops and grows, the more the soul enters it. Our verse therefore says “coming into Egypt” [in the present, indicating an ongoing process of entering], for the soul’s faculties enter little by little.

Afterwards, at birth, when [the embryo] has become a person, i.e., a fully developed body, [the Torah can refer to] “each man and his house,” referring to the body, which has become a “house” for the soul.

[The next word,] “came,” indicates that at birth all the soul’s faculties full enter the body.

After listing the sons of Jacob and describing how they all died off, the Torah continues:

“And a new king arose over Egypt...”<sup>7</sup> This refers to the evil inclination, who is the “old and foolish king.”<sup>8</sup>

The verse from Ecclesiastes reads: “A poor and wise child is better than an old and foolish king.” The Midrash expounds: “The ‘poor and wise child’ is the good inclination. Why is it called ‘a child?’ Because it only pairs up with a person from the age of thirteen on. And why is it called ‘poor?’ Because not everyone listens to it. And why is it called ‘wise?’ Because it teaches people the upright path [in life]. The ‘old and foolish king’ is the evil inclination. Why is it called ‘a king?’ Because everyone listens to it. And why is it called ‘old?’ Because it pairs up with a person from birth until his old age. And why is it called ‘foolish?’ Because it teaches a person the evil path, until he no longer knows how to be careful, and he doesn’t know how much pain and suffering come upon him [for following it].”

Thus, relative to an individual’s experience of them, the good inclination is “younger” than the evil inclination.

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<sup>5</sup> 1 Samuel 2:2.

<sup>6</sup> *Berachot* 10a; *Megilah* 14a.

<sup>7</sup> Exodus 1:8.

<sup>8</sup> Ecclesiastes 4:13; *Kohelet Rabbah* 4:9.

“...over Egypt” means when the person is in the womb.

We thus see that the Arizal teaches that the good inclination actually precedes the evil inclination in utero. The evil inclination, even in utero, is called “a new king [who] arose over Egypt,” i.e., who usurped the rulership over the embryo from the good inclination, so that at birth, it is the sole conscious source of motivation.

“...who did not know Joseph.” This refers to the Holy One, blessed be He.

The evil inclination is conscious only of the reality of this world.

“And he said to his people...,” i.e., to the powers of impurity—

“...‘Behold, the people of the children of Israel...,’ i.e., the faculties of the soul—

“...are more numerous and powerful than we are.” So what did he do? [He enslaved them—]

“And they built store cities for Pharaoh...,” i.e., for the evil inclination.

The word *Pharaoh* is composed of the same letters as is the word for “the neck” [*ha-oref*].

*Pharaoh*: pei-reish-ayin-hei.

*Ha-oref*: hei-ayin-reish-pei.

The “store cities” are the body, [which the evil inclination seeks to orient toward materialism] so that it serve as a means for the evil inclination to strengthen itself.

“...Pithom...” refers to the mouth, for it is there that all the sensual lusts of eating and drinking, which strengthen the evil inclination, [are expressed]. Thus, the word *Pithom* can be seen as formed of the words for “the mouth of the abyss” [*pi tehom*], for [the evil inclination] says “Give! give!<sup>9</sup> [more] to eat and drink!” And the abyss swallows without end.

“...and Raamses” can be seen as formed of the words for “an evil stomach” [*ra meses*]. The stomach digests the food, and it thus acts as an evil stomach.

The stomach fills the mind with sensations of satiation and complacency, making the person insensitive to spirituality.

“But the more they...,” i.e., the powers of impurity and the evil inclination, “...afflicted them...,” i.e., the powers of the soul, “...the more they multiplied and the more they spread forth,” for the more the body develops, the more the soul manifests itself within it, as we have stated.

Despite the evil inclination’s hold over the body, the Divine soul and the good inclination gradually manifest themselves as the person grows up. Ideally, the child receives a proper Jewish education, so by the time he or she has reached the age of *bar-* or *bat-mitzvah*, he or she has learned how to control the evil inclination. The Divine soul is then fully manifest in the body and the child is therefore obligated to perform all the commandments.

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<sup>9</sup> par. Proverbs 30:15.

If this is not the case, however, and the child is not educated properly, the manifestation of his or her Divine soul will be stunted, and its full manifestation will have to wait until later on in life. But nonetheless, the very fact that the body develops is enough to obligate the person to full performance of the Torah's commandments at the age of *bar-* or *bat-mitzvah*, for physical development brings with it a minimal measure of spiritual development no matter what. In other words, the normal psychological development and maturity that accompanies physical development is enough to give the growing child the ability to think for himself or herself and contemplate his or her role in society, and if the child were to use this ability properly, he or she could (theoretically, at least) arrive at the conclusion that G-d exists, He has a law for humanity to follow, and so forth. Every thirteen- (or twelve-)year old is thus obligated to fulfill the commandments, no matter what.

The exodus from Egypt is analogous to birth. The ten plagues also have their analogues in this context.

The first plague was that of blood, for the womb cannot open without bleeding first. For if the blood would not come out first, the child would choke and drown in the blood, which correlates to the powers of impurity.

Blood issuing from the womb is associated with the powers of impurity since their issuance always causes the woman to focus on herself, and self-awareness is the antithesis of Divine consciousness, as we have explained previously.

Next was the plague of frogs. The word for “frog” [*tzefardei'a*] can be seen as constructed of the words for “a bird of knowledge” [*tzipor dei'a*]. These are the seventy voices of the woman giving birth, which correspond to the seventy words in Psalm 20, which begins, “May G-d answer you on the day of pain.” [These voices] are thus alluded to by a bird, referring to the [sounds women make like] birdcalls and chirps when giving birth.

[The analogue of] the plague of darkness [is as follows]. It is known that during the first trimester, the fetus is in the lower chamber [of the womb], during the middle trimester, it is in the middle chamber, and during the last trimester, it is in the upper chamber. At birth, it rolls down and dwells in darkness and great pain.

Darkness was the ninth plague.

The plague of the firstborn corresponds to the subjugation of the [evil inclination's ancillary] powers of impurity that ruled within the womb. If this would not occur, they would kill the fetus. Even though they made the fetus grow, thus is their way: they descend to entice and ascend to accuse.<sup>10</sup>

After having encouraged the fetus to develop with materialistic consciousness, the forces of evil ascend to the heavenly court to accuse it of evil.

Afterwards, at birth, “the first one came out ruddy,”<sup>11</sup> referring to the evil inclination.

This verse refers to the birth of Esau, who embodied and serves as the metaphor for the evil inclination.

For although all the other powers of impurity are killed off [at birth], the evil inclination remains, just as in the plague of the firstborn all the firstborn were

<sup>10</sup> par. *Bava Batra* 16a.

<sup>11</sup> Genesis 25:25.

killed off except for Pharaoh, the greatest of them, who personified the evil inclination [itself]. Similarly, the evil inclination remains with the child, for this is G-d's intention, that a person should possess an evil inclination. As it is written, "sin crouches at the opening."<sup>12</sup>

This verse refers to the fact that although the evil inclination is with a person from birth, "you can overcome it."

This is why the verse [describing the birth of Jacob and Esau] reads, "and the *first one* came out ruddy," for the first one is the evil inclination, who enters the person's [consciousness] as soon as he emerges from his mother's womb. For the good inclination does not enter [a person's consciousness] until he is thirteen years and one day old.

[The evil inclination is described as being] "ruddy," for it is a shedder of blood.

The evil inclination descends to entice, ascends to accuse, and then descends again as the angel of death to execute the judgement.

Thus, the birth [of the Jewish people, the exodus from Egypt] occurred in the month of Nisan, when of the seven planets—Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon—Mars is ascendant.

Mars is red.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 4:7.

## *Parashat VaEira*

In the beginning of the portion of the Torah read this week, the Torah details the geneology of Moses and Aaron. “These are the names of the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kehat, and Merari.... And the sons of Kehat: Amram, Yitzhar, Hebron, and Uziel.”<sup>1</sup>

“And Amram took his aunt Jochebed for a wife, and she bore him Aaron and Moses....”<sup>2</sup> It is fitting to explain here the transmigrations of the soul of Aaron.

I have already identified his original root many times, including [in my comments] on the verse “And a new king arose over Egypt,” in the exposition of [the three children of Amram,] Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. [I explained there] how both Aaron and Moses originate in the *yesod* of *Abba* as it is present in *Z’eir Anpin*, and how both of them are aspects of Abel, the son of Adam.

It has also been explained in [my comments on] the *sidrah Noach*, on the verse “and Lot the son of Haran his grandson,” that Abel’s name [*Hevel, hei-beit-lamed*] is alluded to in the initials of the words “Lot the son of Haran” [*Lot ben Haran, lamed-beit-hei*]. This implies that [the souls of] both Lot and Haran were aspects of [the soul of] Abel. As I have explained on the verse “And a new king arose over Egypt,” all the [primordial] souls began to be rectified by [the souls of] Abraham’s family.

Abraham, as well, was an aspect of Abel, and Haran, Abraham’s brother, possessed [in his soul] an admixture of great holiness, although he did not rectify [the aspect of Abel’s soul within him] as much as his brother Abraham did. And it is known that he was burned for the sanctification of G-d’s Name, albeit not wholeheartedly, since he waited [to consign himself to the flames] until he saw that Abraham was [miraculously] saved from the furnace.

“Terah complained about Abram his son before Nimrod for crushing his idols; so he [Nimrod] cast him [Abram] into a fiery furnace, and Haran sat and thought, ‘If Abram is victorious, I am on his side, and if Nimrod is victorious, I am on his side.’ When Abram was saved, they said to Haran, ‘Whose side are you on?’ Haran said to them, ‘I am on Abram’s side!’ They cast him into the fiery furnace and he was burned.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, Haran threw himself into the flames thinking he would be saved, and therefore his act did not qualify as a public “sanctification of G-d’s Name” as did Abraham’s. Nonetheless, his act was motivated out of recognition of the truth of G-d. The fact that he recognized this truth and was willing to take something of a chance for it indicates that he did possess some level of holiness.

[Haran] subsequently was reincarnated as Aaron, whose name [*Aharon, alef-hei-reish-nun*] possesses the letters of his name [*Haran, hei-reish-nun*], with the addition of the letter *alef*. Since he did not throw himself into the furnace in

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 6:16, 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 6:20.

<sup>3</sup> Rashi on Genesis 11:28, from *Bereishit Rabbah* 38:13.

Abraham's days until Abraham was saved, and did not sacrifice himself for the sanctification of G-d's Name as he should have, this act did not help him, for he only threw himself in because he thought he would be saved as was Abraham.

Therefore, when he was reincarnated as Aaron, he was faced with the situation of the golden calf. G-d presented him with the people's request "Get up and make us a god,"<sup>4</sup> which he should have refused and on account of which been killed, [thus sanctifying G-d's Name in public].

This in fact is exactly what Hur, Miriam's son, did. [His soul] was a soul-spark that was intermixed with the soul of Haran, even though [the soul of Haran] was not actually its source. (It has been explained that soul-sparks can intermix with one another even though they do not derive from the same root.) [Hur] understood in his prophetic inspiration that he had to rectify this sin [i.e., that of Haran], and therefore [protested the building of the golden calf,] and gave himself over to be killed [by the mob on this account].

This accords with the statement of our sages<sup>5</sup> on the verse "And [Aaron] built an altar before him":<sup>6</sup> "Aaron understood from he who was slain before him."

The word for "And [Aaron] built" is *va-yiven*, which may also be interpreted to mean "and he understood." The word for "altar" is *mizbeiach*, which may also be read *mi-zavuach*, meaning "from the one who was slain." The sages thus indicate that Aaron understood from the fact that the mob had killed Hur for opposing the building of the golden calf that it was pointless for him to oppose it as well, since they would then simply kill him, too, and proceed to make it anyway.

Our sages derived this from the word "and he built," but in truth, [had this word been meant to merely imply that Aaron saw that it would be pointless to resist the mob,] it should have said "and he *saw*." Rather, the [deeper] implication [in our sages' words] is that he *understood* in his prophetic vision that he should have rectified the aforementioned sin of Haran by giving up his life to publicly sanctify G-d's Name. But he thought that since Hur—who was an aspect of Haran, as we said—had already offered his life to rectify this sin, it was no longer necessary for him to do the same inasmuch as the sin had already been rectified by Hur. But he erred in this.

Therefore it is written, "And G-d was angry at Aaron, and sought to wipe him out,"<sup>7</sup> and death was decreed on his sons. As it is written, "And [G-d] intended to wipe them out, [and would have done so] were it not that Moses, His chosen, [stood before Him in the breach to return His wrath from destroying]."<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, "returning wrath" implies that the wrath had already had some effect,

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<sup>4</sup> Exodus 32:1.

<sup>5</sup> *Sanhedrin* 7.

<sup>6</sup> Exodus 32:5.

<sup>7</sup> Deuteronomy 9:20.

<sup>8</sup> Psalms 106:23.

and this was indeed the case here. Our sages state that “‘wiping out’ implies destroying progeny,”<sup>9</sup> and Moses’ prayers turned back half of the decree. Thus, of Aaron’s four sons, Elazar and Itamar remained, and only Nadav and Avihu died. Our sages point out that this is the meaning of the verse “And [Moses] became angry at Elazar and Itamar, [Aaron’s] remaining sons.”<sup>10</sup>

The reason why specifically Nadav and Avihu died is that they, too, sinned with respect to foreign fire.

The Hebrew term for “idolatry” is “foreign service,” i.e., any act that expresses devotion to something or someone other than G-d. When the Tabernacle was inaugurated, Nadav and Avihu brought an incense offering on their own, in addition to the offerings G-d had explicitly required. This unsolicited incense thus fell into the category of “foreign fire,” which is forbidden to be brought onto the altar. Even though their intentions were worthy, they brought their offering as an expression of their own ecstasy rather than as fulfillment of G-d’s will. Thus, their act was in effect more one self-service than of Divine-service, and therefore could be considered in a subtle sense an act of “foreign service” or idolatry. In this sense, they were perpetuating their father’s sin of not opposing idolatry at all costs.

Still, they would not have been liable to death by burning on account of their sin alone, but [being Aaron’s sons] they were liable to be burnt on account of his sin in not submitting himself to be burnt [in the incident of the golden calf]. The combination of both [their own sin and their father’s] caused their death, and thus G-d’s wrath found its place to rest. In the case of Elazar and Itamar, however, who did not sin, Moses’ prayer was effective.

Understand this, as well: Just as Haran was burnt and died during the lifetime of his father, Terah, so did Nadav and Avihu die during the lifetime of their father, Aaron, by fire.

After Aaron died he was reincarnated as Yaavetz, who is mentioned in the book of Chronicles.<sup>11</sup> The reason why he was called this is because the curse of Eve was “in sadness shall you bear children,”<sup>12</sup> and that of Adam was “in sadness shall you eat it.”<sup>13</sup> In the *Zohar*<sup>14</sup> it is said that the phrase “in sadness shall you bear children” is the mystical meaning of “sin crouches at the door,”<sup>15</sup> referring to the shells [*kelipot*] of the world of *Asiyah*, which are called “sadness” and “sin that crouches at the door.” And it is known that the *kelipot* have dominion only in the world of *Asiyah*.

The name Yaavetz (*yud-ayin-beit-tzadik*) includes the letters that compose the word for “sadness” (*eitzev*, *ayin-tzadik-beit*).

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<sup>9</sup> *Vayikra Rabbah* 10:5.

<sup>10</sup> Leviticus 10:17.

<sup>11</sup> 1 2:55.

<sup>12</sup> Genesis 3:16.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 3:17.

<sup>14</sup> 2:219b.

<sup>15</sup> Genesis 4:7.

The result of the primordial sin was that the world descended to the level of *Asiyah*, where the forces of evil (*kelipat*) have dominion. These are the forces of sadness and its result, sin.

As we have explained elsewhere, Nadav and Avihu were the aspect of *nefesh* of the soul of Adam. This sadness ruled over them, and they therefore died in the sin of their father, Aaron.

*Nefesh* is the lowest aspect of the soul; Nadav and Avihu were thus the embodiment of the lowest aspect of the soul of Adam, that which experienced the fall in the greatest degree. It is interesting to note that these two sons of Aaron both personified the sadness that results from the existential fact of being under the domain of the forces of evil as well as the inspiration born of Divine ecstasy as evidenced at the inauguration of the Tabernacle. Historically, many if not most of the most poignant and moving works of inspiration and art have born out of the artist's sense of depression and melancholy. It is, of course, most noble to be touched by the exile of humanity (and the Divine presence) from its natural abode, but the proper response to this is submission to G-d's will in order to rectify the wrong, rather than some form of heroic expression of personal angst.

Therefore Yaavetz prayed: "And Yaavetz called to the G-d of Israel, saying, 'If You bless me and increase my border, and Your hand is with me that You save me from harm, so as not to sadden [*eitzev*] me...'"<sup>16</sup> In other words, he prayed that his sons should no longer die in his lifetime, as they had when he had been incarnated as Aaron [and Haran]. [The verse continues:] "...and God fulfilled that which he had requested." His children and students endured, as our sages have pointed out.<sup>17</sup> For this reason he was called Yaavetz.

Now, Yaavetz made vows, as we see from the above-quoted passage. Even though he fulfilled his vows, it is written, "it is better that you not vow."<sup>18</sup> He was therefore reincarnated as Tola ben Pua, who is mentioned in the book of Judges. He thus rectified his prior sin of vowing too much. This is why he was called Tola, for this name alludes to his previous mistakes. He was like a "worm" [in Hebrew: *tola'at*] whose power is vested in its mouth, as our sages have said.<sup>19</sup> He, likewise, used his [the power of his] mouth to vow, and thus was his prayer received.

In this incarnation he damaged things in another way as well: It is fitting that the judge of the generation travel from city to city to judge the people in righteousness. For if two people have a case between them and cannot afford to travel to the city of the judge, it will result in justice—which is one of the three pillars on which the world stands—not being served. It is written about Tola that "he dwelt in Shamir, in the mountain of Ephraim."<sup>20</sup> Our sages teach that this means that he settled there and did not circulate from city to city.

He was therefore further reincarnated as the prophet Samuel, in whose lifetime he rectified this sin. As it is written, "And from year to year, he would set forth, and go around to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpah, and he would judge Israel

<sup>16</sup> 1 Chronicles 4:10.

<sup>17</sup> *Temurah* 16a.

<sup>18</sup> Ecclesiastes 5:4.

<sup>19</sup> *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Beshalach*.

<sup>20</sup> Judges 10:1.

in all these places. And his return was to Ramah....”<sup>21</sup> Moreover, even though this was for their benefit, he did not even take one donkey [to ride on] from them, as Scripture testifies, unlike any other judge. He did all this in order to rectify the sin [of Tola] with all his power.

Still, you must realize that the main [component of the soul of] the prophet Samuel was [derived from] Nadav and Avihu. This is alluded to in the verse [said by Samuel’s mother, Hannah:] “and you will give your maidservant the seed of *men*.”<sup>22</sup> But an aspect of the soul of their father Aaron joined with them, that is, the aspect of Tola ben Pua, to rectify his sin, as we have explained.

Thus we see that in Samuel Aaron and his sons began to come together. This was not the case with Yaavetz and Tola, in which Aaron was reincarnated by himself. But in Samuel, although he was mainly [a reincarnation of] Nadav and Avihu, Aaron joined with them.

After this, Aaron by himself was reincarnated as Uriah the Hittite, the arms-bearer of Joab ben Tzeruah. In his name [*Uriah, alef-vav-reish-yud-hei*] included the first three letters of the name of Aaron [*alef-hei-reish*] to indicate this. Now, it is known that the army of David, and especially the 39 greatest of them, were called “the camp of G-d,” and all of them were chiefs of the Sanhedrin. This was certainly true of Uriah, since he was the greatest of them, being the arms-bearer of Joab, the head of [King David’s] army. In the *Zohar* it is stated that he was only called “the Hittite” because he came from that place; it is not to imply that he was a convert.<sup>23</sup>

Now, at this point, there were still two sins of Aaron that had not yet been rectified: the first being that he had not thrown himself into the furnace [properly] in the time of Haran, the brother of Abraham, and the second being the sin of his sons who died in his sin, as we have said. For it is known that when a person causes another person to die, the first has to be reincarnated and die [before his time] or be killed, as it is written in *The Letters of Rabbi Akiva*.<sup>24</sup> When a person [such as Aaron] dies he is punished, and asked: “Why did your sons die in your lifetime?” He is responsible for their death, as if he had killed them with his own hands.

Therefore King David killed Uriah the Hittite. In this way Aaron achieved atonement for the death of his sons. After this had been accomplished, he and his sons could join together, and the three of them together were reincarnated as Uriah

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<sup>21</sup> 1 Samuel 7:16-17.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* 1:11.

<sup>23</sup> *Zohar* 2:107a; *Kidushin* 76b.

<sup>24</sup> s.v. *Nun*. This is a midrash, and the word “letters” in the title refers to the letters of the alphabet, not to correspondence.

the priest in the generation of King Yehoyakim. This is why specifically *three* letters of the name “Aaron” are present in the name “Uriah.” Also, this latter Uriah was a priest, just as was Aaron.

The reason why Aaron’s sons had to be reincarnated [into Uriah the priest] was because they had first been reincarnated by themselves into the prophet Elijah, as we have explained elsewhere. In this way they rectified their “turning away from evil,” [i.e., their sin,] by atoning for their sin in offering unsolicited incense through Elijah on Mt. Carmel, when he caused fire to descend from heaven in order to sanctify G-d’s Name.

Nadv and Avihu had offered a sacrifice (incense) in an “illegal” manner, as an expression of their own ecstatic feelings. In Elijah’s day, he also offered an “illegal” sacrifice when he contested the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel, since it is illegal to offer a sacrifice anywhere other than in the Temple (once the Temple has been built). But since Elijah did so in order to sanctify G-d’s Name in public, his act was not only not considered an infringement of the law, but as well rectified the sin of Nadav and Avihu. Offering the “illegal” sacrifice for G-d’s sake rectified their offering of an “illegal” sacrifice for their own sakes.

Nonetheless, [they still needed to rectify] the lack of fulfillment of positive commandments that they should have fulfilled in the rest of their natural lives, and similarly the commandment of being fruitful and multiplying that they did not fulfill—as it is stated, “and they did not have children,”<sup>25</sup> for they were single. They therefore were reincarnated now into Uriah the priest in order to rectify this. Still, the main aspect of Uriah the priest’s soul derived from Aaron, who was reincarnated into him in order to rectify his second sin that still had not been rectified, that is, to be killed in the sanctification of G-d’s Name. Nadav and Avihu joined with him in a temporary sort of way for the said purpose.

Thus Uriah the priest was killed by King Yehoyakim, and Aaron was totally rectified of both his sins. Nadav and Avihu, who were there only incidentally, did not feel the pain of the murder at all, only Aaron. They joined up with him only because since Aaron caused their death, it follows that he was also responsible for the fact that they did not fulfill all the positive commandments they were supposed to in their lifetimes. It was therefore necessary that they be rectified by him, and for this reason they joined with him in this incarnation.

After Aaron had been completely rectified in the murder of Uriah the priest, he then had the power to rectify his sons properly. Before this, however, while he himself still needed to be rectified, he could not do this.

Thus, the three of them were then incarnated again into Zechariah ben Yeverechyahu, who was also a priest, just as the three of them were. Aaron then rectified his sons completely, when the three of them were together in this incarnation. This is the mystical meaning of the verse: “And I will call to testify for

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<sup>25</sup> Numbers 3:4.

Myself trustworthy witnesses, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Yeverechiah.”<sup>26</sup> What have these two to do with each other? They did not even know each other, inasmuch as they were in two different generations. But for the reason we have given, that they were both rooted in the same incarnation, they are called G-d’s “witnesses.” Since in Uriah Aaron was not rectified completely, he prophesied about the destruction of the Temple, as it is written: “Zion will be plowed like a field.”<sup>27</sup> But when he had been reincarnated in Zechariah he was rectified completely. He therefore prophesied about the tranquility and rebuilding of Zion, as our sages have commented on the verse quoted.<sup>28</sup>

We will now explain the verse “And Aaron took Elisheva the daughter of Aminadav, the sister of Nachshon, for a wife, and she bore him Nadav, Avihu, Elazar, and Itamar.”<sup>29</sup>

By understanding the incident of Bath Sheba, King David’s wife, who was married first to Uriah the Hittite, we will understand [this verse] better. For just as Aaron married Elisheva the daughter of Aminadav, so too, when he was reincarnated at Uriah the Hittite, he married Bath Sheba. It follows that Elisheva and Bath Sheba were of the same essence. Both of them personified *Rachel*, the *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin*, who is rectified by the *sefirah* of *chesed*, which is personified by Aaron, who is therefore called “the escort of the bride,” as mentioned in the *Zohar*.<sup>30</sup>

There is, however, a difference between them. For Bath Sheba was initially unrectified. As our sages say of King David, “he partook of her before she was ripe,”<sup>31</sup> as we will explain later. Elisheva, in contrast, contained in her name the letters *alef-lamed* [spelling *Kel*, a Name of G-d], indicated that she was initially already rectified by the *sefirah* of *chesed*, which is identified with the Divine Name *Kel*, as it is written: “the *chesed* of G-d [*Kel*] is the whole day.”<sup>32</sup>

—translated from *Shaar HaPesukim*

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<sup>26</sup> Isaiah 8:2.

<sup>27</sup> Jeremiah 26:18; Micah 3:12.

<sup>28</sup> *Makot*, end of chapter 3.

<sup>29</sup> Exodus 6:23.

<sup>30</sup> Addenda, 1:266b; 3:20a.

<sup>31</sup> *Sanhedrin* 107a.

<sup>32</sup> Psalms 52:3.

## *Parashat VaEira* [second installment]

The latter part of *parashat VaEira* records the first seven of the ten plagues; the last three are covered in the beginning of the following *parashah, Bo*.

We must now explain briefly the order of these ten plagues that the Holy One, blessed be He, visited on the Egyptians in Egypt. The plagues were: blood, frogs, lice, the horde of animals, pestilence, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and slaying the firstborn. They correspond, in ascending order, to the ten [sub-]*sefirot* of *Nukva*, otherwise known as *malchut*.

To explain:

**1. Blood.** As I have told you, the numerical value of the simple progressive iteration of the Name *Ekyeh* is 44, that of the word for “blood” [*dam*].

*Ekyeh*: *alef-hei-yud-hei*. The simple progressive iteration (*achorayim*) of this Name is:

*alef alef-hei alef-hei-yud alef-hei-yud-hei*:  $1 + (1 + 5) + (1 + 5 + 10) + (1 + 5 + 10 + 5) = 44$ .

*Dam*: *dalet-mem* =  $4 + 40 = 44$ .

This plague issued from the *malchut* of the holy feminine principle [i.e., the *partzuf* of *Nukva*] and smote the evil *malchut*, i.e., *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin* in the realm of evil. [Specifically,] this plague attacked her outside her head.

Meaning, her skull (*gulgolta*), signifying *keter* of the evil *Nukva*.

**2. Frogs.** The sum of 320, the number of states of strict judgment, as is known, plus the numerical value of the simple progressive iteration of the Name *Adni*, which is 126, plus the *kolel* for both of them, is the numerical value of the word for “frog” [*tzefardei’a*, 444].

According to Rabbi Shalom Sharabi, the *kolels* here should be added to the numerical value of the word “frog” (444), giving 446, the sum of 320 and 126.<sup>1</sup>

*Adni*: *alef-dalet-nun-yud*. The progressive iteration of this Name is:

*alef alef-dalet alef-dalet-nun alef-dalet-nun-yud*:  $1 + (1 + 4) + (1 + 4 + 50) + (1 + 4 + 50 + 10) = 126$ .

*Tzefardei’a*: *tzadik-pei-reish-dalet-ayin*:  $90 + 80 + 200 + 4 + 70 = 444$ .

This plague issued from the *yesod* of the holy feminine principle and smote the brains of the evil *Nukva*.

This is the mystical meaning of the word for “frog” [*tzefardei’a*], which can be seen as a combination of the words for “bird” [*tzipor*] and “knowledge” [*dei’a*], referring to the *da’at* [of this *Nukva*]. As you know, the brains of [this *Nukva*] are

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<sup>1</sup> This is also implied in the parallel passage in *Pri Etz Chaim*.

manifest as two birds, as mentioned in the *Zohar*<sup>2</sup> and as we have explained elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

**3. Lice.** The numerical value of the word for “lice” [*kinim*] is 120. This is the numerical value of the Name *Elokim*, 86, plus the number of letters in the second iteration of the Name *Adni*, 34.

*Kinim*: *kaf-nun-yud-mem* = 20 + 50 + 10 + 40 = 120.

*Elokim*: *alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem* = 1 + 30 + 5 + 10 + 40 = 86.

The second iteration of the Name *Adni*:

simple spelling	first filling	filling of filling
<i>alef</i>	<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>
	<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed-mem-dalet</i>
	<i>pei</i>	<i>pei-alef</i>
<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet-lamed-tav</i>
	<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed-mem-dalet</i>
	<i>tav</i>	<i>tav-vav</i>
<i>nun</i>	<i>nun</i>	<i>nun-vav-nun</i>
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav-alef-vav</i>
	<i>nun</i>	<i>nun-vav-nun</i>
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav-alef-vav</i>
	<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet-lamed-tav</i>

This plague issued from the *hod* of the holy feminine principle—for as you know, *Ima*’s influence extends until *hod*—and smote the highest part of the skull encompassing the head of the evil *Nukva*, the location of the hair on the head. [This plague] also [smote] the *malchut*—the final [sub-]*sefirah*—of the evil *Z’eir Anpin*, otherwise known as Samael, the husband [of the evil *Nukva*]. As is known, lice nest in the hair of the head.

*Ima*, intellectual inspiration, extends its influence as far as *hod*, the last of the *midot* with original content. *Yesod* and *malchut* are just the coalescence and expression of all that has preceded them. Thus, this plague, although issuing from *hod*, is primarily a “head” plague.

It appears to me, Chaim [Vital], that this is also the mystical meaning of the verse, “And G-d will smite the skull of the [wayward] daughters of Zion with lesions,”<sup>4</sup> that He infested their heads with families of lice, as our sages explain.<sup>5</sup>

The homily is based on the fact that the word for “smite with lesions” [*sin-pei-chet*] is also the root of the word for “family” [*mishpachah*, *shin-pei-chet*].

<sup>2</sup> 1:218

<sup>3</sup> *Sha’ar Ma’amarei Rashbi*, *VaYechi*; *Etz Chaim* 48:2; *Mevo Shearim* 6:2:5:6.

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 3:17.

<sup>5</sup> *Yalkut Shimoni*, *Yeshayah*, 247, 267.

**4. Horde.** In Hebrew, this word [*arov*] is written without the [expected] *vav*. It thus expresses the simple progressive iteration of the Name *Havayah*, whose numerical value is 72, plus the simple progressive iteration of the Name *Elokim*, whose numerical value is 200. Their sum is the numerical value of the word for “hoard” [272].

*Havayah*: *yud-hei-vav-hei*. The progressive iteration of this Name is:

*yud yud-hei yud-hei-vav yud-hei-vav-hei* =  $10 + (10 + 5) + (10 + 5 + 6) + (10 + 5 + 6 + 5) = 72$ .

*Elokim*: *alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem*. The progressive iteration of this Name is:

*alef alef-lamed alef-lamed-hei alef-lamed-hei-yud alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem* =  $1 + (1 + 30) + (1 + 30 + 5) + (1 + 30 + 5 + 10) + (1 + 30 + 5 + 10 + 40) = 40 + 2(10) + 3(5) + 4(30) + 5(1) = 40 + 20 + 15 + 120 + 5 = 200$ .

*Arov*: *ayin-reish-beit* =  $70 + 200 + 2 = 272$ .

This plague issued from the forehead [i.e., *netzach*] of the holy feminine principle and smote the *yesod* of the evil *Z'eir Anpin*, i.e., Samael.

The word for “forehead” is *metzach*, etymologically related to *netzach*. Also, *netzach* (“victory”) signifies resolve, which we express by contracting the skin on the forehead.

**5. Pestilence.** The numerical value of the word for “pestilence” [*dever*] is equivalent to the combined numerical values of two Names *Elokim*, 172—the numerical value of the word for “heel” [*Eikev*]+plus the number of letters in the second spelling-out of the Name *Adni*, 34. 172 plus 34 equals 206, the numerical equivalent of the word for “pestilence.”

*Dever*: *dalet-beit-reish* =  $4 + 2 + 200 = 206$ .

As above, the numerical value of *Elokim* is  $86 \times 2 = 172$ .

*Eikev* = *ayin-kuf-beit* =  $70 + 100 + 2 = 172$ .

We saw above that the number of letters in the second spelling out of *Adni* is 34.

This plague issued from the *tiferet* of the holy *Nukva* and smote the *hod* of the evil *Z'eir Anpin*.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse, said in connection with this plague, “behold, the hand of G-d is...,” indicating how the Name *Havayah* written in its natural sequence [*yud-hei-vav-hei*]+which signifies *tiferet*, the inner motivation of which is mercy—is inverted to *hei-vav-yud-hei*, signifying strict judgment.

In this verse, we first see the Name *Havayah* spelled in its natural order of letters, followed immediately by the word “is”—which is usually left out in Hebrew. This word is spelled *hei-vav-yud-hei*, which of course is a rearrangement of the letters that spell the Name *Havayah*. Thus, evil behavior changes G-d’s natural mercy into judgment.

**6. Boils.** This plague issued from the *gevurah* of the holy feminine principle. Now, the numerical value of *gevurah* is 216. From *gevurah* on down to *malchut* are manifest five more [sub-]sefirot, each compounded of ten [sub-sub-sefirot], giving a total of 50 [sub-sub-sefirot]. 216 plus 50 equals 266. When 102 is added to this number, we have 368, the numerical value of the word for “boils” [*shechin*].

102 is the sum of the numerical values of the three spellings-out of the three Names *Havayah* whose total numerical values are 72, 63, and 45, these being 46, 37, and 19, respectively. 46 plus 37 plus 19 equals 102. They signify the states of judgment that extend to the realm of evil, as we have explained elsewhere,<sup>6</sup> in our explanation of the passage of the Mishnah that begins, “the stump-legged person can go out with his stump.”<sup>7</sup>

*Gevurah*: gimel-beit-vav-reish-hei =  $3 + 2 + 6 + 200 + 5 = 216$ .

*Shechin*: shin-chet-yud-nun =  $300 + 8 + 10 + 50 = 368$ .

As we have learned previously, there are four principle ways in which the Name *Havayah* is spelled out (based on how we spell out the letters *hei* and *vav*), which produce four separate numerical values. The first three of these are 72, 63, and 45. When we consider only the letters used in the process of spelling out (the *milui*), we have:

letter	1 <sup>st</sup> spelling out			2 <sup>nd</sup> spelling out			3 <sup>rd</sup> spelling out		
<i>yud</i>	vav-dalet	6 + 4	10	vav-dalet	6 + 4	10	vav-dalet	6 + 4	10
<i>hei</i>	yud	10	10	yud	10	10	alef	1	1
<i>vav</i>	yud-vav	10 + 6	16	alef-vav	1 + 6	7	alef-vav	1 + 6	7
<i>hei</i>	yud	10	10	yud	10	10	alef	1	1
			46			37			19

The passage of the Mishnah cited states that a person with a stump-leg is allowed to walk in the public domain on the Sabbath, and this is not considered carrying for him (which would be forbidden). The numerical value of the word for “stump” (*kav*) is 102.

[As stated,] these states of judgment issued from the *gevurah* of the holy *Nukva* and smote the *netzach* of the evil *Z’eir Anpin*.

[As for these states of judgment], the *shin* of *shechin* signifies the 300 states of judgment and severity. To these, add the numerical value of the Name *Havayah* spelled out to equal 52 (i.e., with the letter *hei*), plus the number of letters in the Name *Adni* (4) and the number of letters used to spell it out (12). This gives 368, the numerical value of the word for “boils.”

According to Rabbi Shalom Sharabi, the 300 states of severity are the three *sefirot* on the left axis of the *sefirah* tree (*binah*, *gevurah*, and *hod*), each sub-divided into ten sub-*sefirot*, which themselves are then subdivided into 100 sub-sub-*sefirot*, giving 300.

The Name *Havayah* spelled out to equal 52:

*yud-vav-dalet hei-hei vav-vav hei-hei* =  $(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 5) + (6 + 6) + (5 + 5) = 52$ .

The Name *Adni* is spelled out with 12 letters:

*alef-lamed-pei dalet-lamed-tav nun-vav-nun yud-vav-dalet*

$300 + 52 + 4 + 12 = 368$ .

<sup>6</sup> *Etz Chaim* 19:2.

<sup>7</sup> *Shabbat* 6:8.

**7. Hail.** The numerical value of the progressive iteration of the Name *Elokim* is 200. Adding to this the number of letters in the Name *Elokim* (5) plus the *kolel* gives 206. This is the numerical value of the word for “hail” [*barad*].

*Barad*: *beit-reish-dalet* = 2 + 200 + 4 = 206.

This plague issued from the *chesed* of the holy feminine principle, for hail is made of water, which derives from and expresses *chesed*. But it was commingled with flaming fire, originating in *gevurah*. It smote the *tiferet* of the evil *Z'eir Anpin*.

**8. Locusts.** This plague manifests four Names *Elokim* spelled out. This Name spelled out in two iterations uses 52 letters. These four spellings-out are called the four “sons of G-d.” There are two that originate in *chochmah* and two that originate in *binah*. Their combined number of letters is the same as that of the word for “locust” [*arbeh*]. These locusts were an impure species, signifying strict judgment, as opposed to the pure species of locusts [permitted by the Torah]. “The Torah spoke of four sons”;<sup>8</sup> these are the four Names *Havayah* spelled out with the letter *hei*.

The Name *Elokim* (*alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem*) spelled out twice:

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<sup>8</sup> The Passover *Hagadah*, referring to the four times in the Torah where G-d describes how we are to teach our children about the exodus from Egypt.

alef	alef	alef
		lamed
		pei
	lamed	lamed
		mem
		dalet
	pei	pei
		alef
lamed	lamed	lamed
		mem
		dalet
	mem	mem
		mem
		dalet
	dalet	lamed
		tav
hei	hei	hei
		yud
	yud	yud
		vav
		dalet
yud	yud	yud
		vav
		dalet
	vav	vav
		yud
		vav
	dalet	dalet
		lamed
		tav
mem	mem	mem
		mem
	mem	mem
		mem

As we see, the Name itself is 5 letters, the first iteration uses 13 letters, and the second iteration uses 34 letters.  $5 + 13 + 34 = 52$ . This number is the numerical value of the word for “son” (*ben*: *beit-nun* =  $2 + 50$ ); thus, the double spelling-out of the Name *Elokim* is, so to speak, the “son” of *Elokim*.

$$4 \times 52 = 208.$$

$$Arbeh: alef-reish-beit-hei = 1 + 200 + 2 + 5 = 208.$$

As we have seen, the numerical value of the Name *Havayah* when spelled out with the letter *hei* is also 52. This spelling out of this Name can thus also be considered a “son” of *Havayah*. Since the Name *Elokim* signifies judgment, the “sons” of this Name are the forbidden, non-kosher locusts. The four “sons of *Havayah*” are the kosher species of locusts.

They issued from the *binah* of the holy feminine principle, and smote the *gevurah* of the evil *Z'eir Anpin*.

**9. Darkness.** This is alluded to by the well-known 325 states of judgment, which we explained elsewhere. These states of judgment are the 320 powerful sparks, the states of judgment of the Egyptians. The additional 5 are actually states of mercy that sweeten the said 320 states of judgment, this giving a total of 325. These 5 [states of mercy] were the light that shone for Israel during the days of the Egyptian darkness, as it is written, “and there was light for all the children of Israel

in their habitations.”<sup>9</sup> And thus, “light” is mentioned five times in Torah’s description of the first day of creation. The *alef* of the word for “light” alludes to the three *alefs* that complete the calculation to 328, the numerical value of the word for “darkness” [*choshech*].<sup>10</sup>

*Choshech*: *chet-shin-chaf* = 8 + 300 + 20 = 328.

It will be recalled that in the plague of frogs, the 320 states of judgment operated without any such mitigation [from the 5 states of mercy].

The 3 necessary to bring the calculation from 325 to 328 are derived from the letter *alef* when graphically split into two down the middle of its middle stroke. When drawn this way, the *alef* splits into two combinations of the letters *yud* and *vav*. The combined numerical values of these four letters is 32, corresponding to the 32 pathways of wisdom, i.e., *Abba*. As is known, the 320 states of judgment are rectified through thought, i.e., *Abba*.

The split *alef*: *yud-vav-vav-yud* = 10 + 6 + 6 + 10 = 32.

These [states of judgment] issued from the *chochmah* of the holy feminine principle and smote the *chesed* of the evil *Z’eir Anpin*.

**10. Killing the Firstborn.** This plague issued from the *keter* of the holy *Nukva* and smote the three highest [sub-]sefirot of the evil *Z’eir Anpin*. The initials of these three sefirot—*keter*, *reishit chochmah*, *binah*—spell the word for “firstborn” [*bechor*]. This is similar to what is explained in the *Zohar*<sup>11</sup> regarding the word for “blessed” [*baruch*] and the name of the River *Kevar*.

*Chochmah* is referred to as *reishit chochmah* (“the beginning of wisdom”) based on Psalms 111:10: “The beginning of wisdom is the fear of G-d.” Also, *chochmah* is the first conscious sefirah, and is therefore known as “the beginning.”

In summary:

	plague	smiting sub-sefirah in the holy <i>Nukva</i>	evil sub-sefirah smitten
1.	blood	<i>malchut</i>	<i>keter</i> of <i>Nukva</i>
2.	frogs	<i>yesod</i>	brains of <i>Nukva</i>
3.	lice	<i>hod</i>	skull hair of <i>Nukva</i> and <i>malchut</i> of <i>Z’eir Anpin</i>
4.	horde	<i>netzach</i>	<i>yesod</i> of <i>Z’eir Anpin</i>
5.	pestilence	<i>tiferet</i>	<i>hod</i> of <i>Z’eir Anpin</i>
6.	boils	<i>gevurah</i>	<i>netzach</i> of <i>Z’eir Anpin</i>
7.	hail	<i>chesed</i>	<i>tiferet</i> of <i>Z’eir Anpin</i>
8.	locusts	<i>binah</i>	<i>gevurah</i> of <i>Z’eir Anpin</i>
9.	darkness	<i>chochmah</i>	<i>chesed</i> of <i>Z’eir Anpin</i>
10.	firstborn	<i>keter</i>	<i>keter-chochmah-binah</i> of <i>Z’eir Anpin</i>

<sup>9</sup> Exodus 10:23.

<sup>10</sup> Ammended according to v.l. cited by Rabbi Shalom Sharabi.

<sup>11</sup> *Tikunei Zohar* 70 (119b).

If we consider all this, we see here yet another overturning of Victorian stereotypes. Here, the female is the attacking warrior, and she attacks not only her opposing female principle but also—and chiefly—the evil male. In this tour de force of feminine power, *Nukva* seems to be mustering all her possible sources of Divine energy, based on various combinations of Divine Names. Thus, we see why the ten plagues first of all had to be ten, and secondly, why they took the specific forms they did: each plague expressed a different combination of Divine power channeled by *Nukva* to destroy its evil opponents.

According to how we have defined the male and female components of consciousness previously, this makes sense: if the female is the drive to concretize Divinity in the world, it should specifically be the female that gets incensed over the forces that oppose this drive, namely evil.

—translated from *Sha'ar HaPesukim* and *Pri Etz Chaim*

## *Parashat VaEira* [third installment]

This *parashah* begins: “G-d spoke to Moses, and said, ‘I am G-d. But I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as “G-d Almighty,” and did not make known to them My Name G-d.”<sup>44</sup>

It is true that what we say—that Abraham [personified] *chesed* and Isaac [personified] *gevurah*—does not refer to the arms of *Z’eir Anpin*, as most of the [earlier] authorities of Kabbalah think. For if this were so, they could not couple, for how can two arms [of the same *partzuf*] couple?

One of the innovations of the teachings of the Arizal is the description of the *sefirot* as *partzufim* that couple, etc.

Rather, Abraham [personified] the states of *chesed* within *Ima*, which descend into *Z’eir Anpin*, while Isaac [personified] the states of *gevurah* within *Ima*. In this way, each is an independent *partzuf*.

Since they are both within *Ima*, it is difficult to understand how they can be considered independent *partzufim*. As Rabbi Shalom Sharabi writes on this passage, “I did not merit to understand the question or the answer.”

Jacob [personified both] the states of *gevurah* and the states of *chesed* within *Abba* that are present within *Ima* and descend into *Z’eir Anpin*. Moses [personified] the exact same phenomenon. But whereas Jacob personified *Ima*, which acts as an external garment around *Abba*, Moses expressed the internal aspects of *Abba* himself.

As will be developed further, the forefathers’ achieved only a superficial consciousness of G-d relative to what Moses achieved. This is because the forefathers perceived G-d as He is revealed in the world, which is only a superficial revelation compared with the way G-d is revealed in the Torah, which is what Moses apprehended.

Notwithstanding, [Moses personified] the back of [the internal aspects of] *Abba*, inasmuch as all [aspects of *Abba* and *Ima*] that enter inside *Z’eir Anpin* are their backs, and the [way the supernal *partzufim*] conduct weekday affairs is only derived from their backs.

G-d runs the world (during the workweek) by infusing the seminal Divine consciousness of *Abba*, through its development in *Ima*, into the source of human consciousness, *Z’eir Anpin*. As we have seen, only a diminished version of the Divine insight of *Abba* can be transferred into the lower *partzufim*; this is referred to as its “back.”

On the Sabbath, the world’s Divine consciousness ascends and is not processed through the lower *partzufim*.

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<sup>44</sup> Exodus 6:2.

Thus, you will note that the sum of the numerical value of the back of the 72-Name, 184, plus 161, the numerical value of the front of the Name *Ekyeh*, is equal to the numerical value of “Moses” [*Mosheh*, 345].

As we have seen previously, the four ways the Name *Havayah* is spelled out are associated with the four principle *partzufim*. The 72-Name is associated with the *partzuf* of *Abba*.

$$Yud-vav-dalet\ hei-yud\ vav-yud-vav\ hei-yud = (10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 10) + (6 + 10 + 6) + (5 + 10) = 72.$$

The “back” of this Name is the following, “disappearing” iteration:

<i>yud-hei-vav-hei</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet hei-yud</i> <i>vav-yud-vav hei-yud</i>	$(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 10) +$ $(6 + 10 + 6) + (5 + 10)$	72
<i>yud-hei-vav</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet hei-yud</i> <i>vav-yud-vav</i>	$(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 10) +$ $(6 + 10 + 6)$	57
<i>yud-hei</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet hei-yud</i>	$(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 10)$	35
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	$(10 + 6 + 4)$	20
total			184

The “front” of the Name *Ekyeh* (*alef-hei-yud-hei*) is the simple spelling out of this Name, as follows:

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>	$1 + 30 + 80$	111
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	$5 + 10$	15
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	$10 + 6 + 4$	20
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	$5 + 10$	15
			161

The Name *Ekyeh* is associated with *Ima*. Thus, Moses is the sum of the back of *Abba* as present in *Ima*.

All of this applies during the weekdays, but on the Sabbath, [Moses] reaches [the consciousness of] the shining of the face [of the *partzufim*].

This is the significance of the numerical value of the Name *Mosheh*. For all that the forefathers reached was [the consciousness of] the Name *Kel Shakai* [“G-d Almighty”], referring to the *yesod* of *Abba* or *Ima*, but “My Name [*Havayah*]”—as it was revealed to Moses—“I did not make known to them.”

The Name *Havayah* is G-d’s “proper” Name, or as it is called further on, His “explicit” Name. It thus indicates His real presence, His interest, focus, and purpose in creating the world, His “inner” desire. In contrast, the Name *Kel Shakai* (“G-d Almighty”) refers to G-d the creator of the world. The sages note that the word *shaddai* can be interpreted to mean “He who [*sha-*] said ‘enough’ [*-dai*] to the expansion of the world [at the end of the creation week].”

You will note that the initials [of the forefathers’ names] also indicate that they only reached [the consciousness of] *Kel Shakai*, in two ways:

First: The sum of the numerical values of the initials of the names Abraham [*alef*, 1], Isaac [*yud*, 10], Jacob [*yud*, 10], and Israel [*yud*, 10] is the same as the numerical value of the Name *Kel* [31]—

$$1 + 10 + 10 + 10 = 31.$$

$$\text{Kel: } \text{alef-lamed} = 1 + 30 = 31.$$

—and the final letters of the names Abraham [*mem*], Isaac [*kuf*], and Jacob [*beit*], transform via *atbash* into *Shakai*.

$$\text{Shakai: } \text{shin-dalet-yud}.$$

$$\text{Mem} \rightarrow \text{yud}; \text{ kuf} \rightarrow \text{dalet}; \text{ beit} \rightarrow \text{shin}.$$

Second: If you add the numerical values of the *alef* from Abraham, the *lamed* from Israel, the *hei* that was added [to Abram] to form Abraham,<sup>45</sup> the *shin* [which is substituted in the book of Psalms for the *tzadik*] of Isaac,<sup>46</sup> which is written [there as] *Yischak*, the *vav* that is added [on occasion] to Jacob,<sup>47</sup> together with the three unit values of the three names [of the patriarchs], the total is the numerical value of *Kel Shakai* [345].

$$\text{alef} + \text{lamed} + \text{hei} + \text{shin} + \text{vav} + 3 = 1 + 30 + 5 + 300 + 6 + 3 = 345.$$

$$\text{Kel Shakai: } \text{Alef-lamed Shin-dalet-yud} = (1 + 30) + (300 + 4 + 10) = 345.$$

Thus, you have in these two calculations two allusions to *Kel Shakai*, referring to *yesod* of *Abba* and *yesod* of *Ima*. It was to these levels [that the forefathers] reached. But as to the inner aspect of “My Name, *G-d*, [i.e., *Havayah*], I did not make [it] known to them.”

Furthermore, you will note that the numerical value of the initials of Abraham [*alef*, 1], Isaac [*yud*, 10], and Jacob [*yud*, 10] is 21, the numerical value of the Name *Ekyeh*, which is associated with *Ima*. This further indicates that they did not reach [consciousness of] the inner dimension [of these *partzufim*,] i.e., the Name *Havayah*. Only Moses did this.

$$\text{Ekyeh: } \text{alef-hei-yud-hei} = 1 + 5 + 10 + 5 = 21.$$

If you consider [the patriarchs’ four] names—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Israel—stripped of their first and final letters, the numerical value of the remaining letters is 976, the value of the phrase “the explicit Name” [*hashem hameforash*].

“The explicit Name” is one of the ways the Talmudic sages refer to the Name *Havayah*.

$$\text{Abraham (Avraham): } \text{alef-beit-reish-hei-mem} \rightarrow \text{beit-reish-hei} = 2 + 200 + 5 = 207.$$

$$\text{Isaac (Yitzhak): } \text{yud-tzadik-chet-kuf} \rightarrow \text{tzadik-chet} = 90 + 8 = 98.$$

<sup>45</sup> Genesis 17:5.

<sup>46</sup> Psalms 105:9.

<sup>47</sup> Leviticus 26:42; Jeremiah 30:18, 33:26, 46:27, and 51:19.

Jacob (*Yaakov*): *yud-ayin-kuf-beit* → *ayin-kuf* =  $70 + 100 = 170$ .

Israel (*Yisrael*): *yud-shin-reish-alef-lamed* → *shin-reish-alef* =  $300 + 200 + 1 = 501$ .

$207 + 98 + 170 + 501 = 976$ .

*Hashem hameforash*: *hei-shin-mem hei-mem-pei-vav-reish-shin* =

$(5 + 300 + 40) + (5 + 40 + 80 + 6 + 200 + 300) = 976$ .

This indicates that the inner dimension of what the patriarchs perceived—G-d’s presence in the world—was what Moses perceived—G-d’s revelation in the Torah.

It is this [explicit Name of G-d] that Moses reached in all its aspects, which are [indeed] alluded to by the Name *Havayah*, [as follows.] You will note that in this Name, the sum of its front and its back is 976, which alludes to the levels [of Divine consciousness] that Moses achieved. This level is called “the explicit Name.” To wit:

The *yud* [of the Name *Havayah*] is associated with the 72-Name, the *hei* with the 63-Name, the *vav* with the 45-Name, and the final *hei* with the 52-Name. The sum of the numerical values of the “fronts” [simple values] of these Names is 232.

$72 + 63 + 45 + 52 = 232$ .

The numerical values of the “backs” of these Names are *yud*—184, *hei*—166, *vav*—130, and *hei*—144.

We saw above that the numerical value of the “back” of the 72-Name is 184. If we perform the same calculation on the other spellings-out of the Name *Havayah*, we have:

For the 63-Name:

<i>yud-hei-vav-hei</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-alef-vav hei-yud</i>	$(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 10) +$ $(6 + 1 + 6) + (5 + 10)$	63
<i>yud-hei-vav</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-alef-vav</i>	$(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 10) +$ $(6 + 1 + 6)$	48
<i>yud-hei</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet hei-yud</i>	$(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 10)$	35
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	$(10 + 6 + 4)$	20
total			166

For the 45-Name:

<i>yud-hei-vav-hei</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet hei-alef vav-alef-vav hei-alef</i>	$(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 1) +$ $(6 + 1 + 6) + (5 + 1)$	45
<i>yud-hei-vav</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet hei-alef vav-alef-vav</i>	$(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 1) +$ $(6 + 1 + 6)$	39
<i>yud-hei</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet hei-alef</i>	$(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 1)$	26
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	$(10 + 6 + 4)$	20
total			130

For the 52-Name:

<i>yud-hei-vav-hei</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet hei-hei</i> <i>vav-vav hei-hei</i>	$(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 5) +$ $(6 + 6) + (5 + 5)$	52
<i>yud-hei-vav</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet hei-hei</i> <i>vav-vav</i>	$(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 5) +$ $(6 + 6)$	42
<i>yud-hei</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet hei-hei</i>	$(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 5)$	30
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	$(10 + 6 + 4)$	20
total			144

To summarize:

letter of Name <i>Havayah</i>	corresponding spelling-out	value of “back”
<i>yud</i>	72	184
<i>hei</i>	63	166
<i>vav</i>	45	130
<i>hei</i>	52	144
total		624

The total numerical of these “backs” is the same as that of the word for “will tread” [*tidroch*], as in the verse, “Every place upon which your feet will tread.”<sup>48</sup>

*Tidroch*: *tav-dalet-reish-kaf* =  $400 + 4 + 200 + 20 = 624$ .

Thus, the sum of [the front and back of these Names,] 232 and 624, is 856. But, as is known, if we count these Names, which correspond to the four letters [of the Name *Havayah*], together with the ten letters used to spell [each of] them out, plus the *kolel*, we have [an additional] 15.

As we have seen, 3 letters are always used to spell out the *yud* of the Name *Havayah*, 2 letters to spell out the *hei*, up to 3 letter to spell out the *vav*, and 2 letters to spell out the final *hei*.  $3 + 2 + 3 + 2 = 10$ .

We thus can add 15 for each of the four Names, or 60, to 856.

The same applies to the backs of these Names—

We can add another 15 for each of the four Names, or another 60.

—such that the 8 Names give  $8 \times 15$ , or 120. When this is added to 856, we have 976, the numerical value of “the explicit Name” [*hashem hameforash*], of which Moses achieved Divine consciousness in all its aspects, that is, its inner aspects.

In contrast, [as we said,] the forefathers only reached [consciousness of] the Name *Kel Shakai*, referring to *yesod* [of *Abba* and *Ima*]. The custom [of this Name] is to extend outward.

*Yesod* is oriented outward, toward expressing its content to the lower levels.

<sup>48</sup> Joshua 1:3.

[They did not achieve consciousness of] the Name *Havayah*, which is hidden inside, as G-d said, “This is My Name forever.”<sup>49</sup>

The sages point out that the word for “forever” (*le’olam*) is spelled so that it can be read “to hide” (*le’aleim*), meaning that the Name *Havayah* is hidden.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>49</sup> Exodus 3:15.

## *Parashat Bo*

The portion of the Torah read this week begins with the description of the final three plagues, that of locusts, darkness, and the slaying of the firstborn. The first verse reads: “And G-d said to Moses, ‘Come to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, in order that I place these signs of Mine within him.’”<sup>1</sup>

Pharaoh did not know about [the aspect of G-d signified by] the Name *Havayah*, and in fact denied [the aspect signified by] this Name (G-d forbid), as it is written, “I do not know G-d [*Havayah*].”<sup>2</sup> However, he did recognize [the aspect of G-d signified by] the Name *Elokim*, as it is written, “It is the finger of G-d [*Elokim*].”<sup>3</sup>

The Name *Havayah* signifies transcendent G-dliness, the aspect of Divinity that is not limited by the laws of nature. *Elokim*, in contrast, signifies the aspect of Divinity that G-d uses to run the world and is thus subject to the laws of nature. The numerical value of *Elokim* (86) is the same as that of the word for “nature” (*ha-teva*). Pharaoh was the ruler of Egypt, the Hebrew word for which (*mitzrayim*) literally means “limitations.” Pharaoh and Egypt knew only of G-d as present in the limited functioning of nature, the laws of cause and effect, survival of the fittest, and so on. He was therefore the archtypal antithesis to the Jewish notion of G-d the creator and therefore master of nature.

This is because Pharaoh received his sustenance [and consciousness] from the neck of *Z’eir Anpin*, in which are present the three immature mentalities, known as [Pharaoh’s] chief butcher, chief butler, and chief baker.

The consciousness of intellect is altogether different from that of emotion, so in order for an idea to give birth to an emotion, the intellect-consciousness must be greatly reduced. When this happens, and only the synoptic conclusion of the intricate intellectual development of the idea remains, the individual’s consciousness is free enough of its prior intellectual preoccupation to react emotionally to the concept. However, this contraction process entails an inherent danger: that the full intellectual realization that was present when consciousness was focused on the idea will be *forgotten*. If this happens, then the person is vulnerable to all sorts of spurious ideas and distorted emotional responses.

Anatomically, this passage from the head to the heart is manifest as the throat. Just as the intellect must be contracted in order to become emotion, so are the head and torso bridged by the narrow neck.

The front of the head—particularly the face—reflects the full expression of the intellect (as it is written, “the wisdom of a man lights up his face”<sup>4</sup>). The neck, being the back of the head, is out of touch with this full consciousness and therefore signifies the danger of forgetting the full import of the idea as the idea travels from the head to the heart. Thus, the Hebrew for Pharaoh (*pei-reish-ayin-hei*) is composed of the same letters that make up the word for “the neck” (*ha-oref, hei-ayin-reish-pei*).

The three main channels descending through the throat are the trachea, the esophagus, and the jugular vein. These three are the physical manifestation of the contraction of the three mentalities of the intellect (*chochmah, binah, and da’at*) that allows for emotional response, as we have said. Inasmuch as they “feed” the mentality of

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 10:1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 5:2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 8:15.

<sup>4</sup> Ecclesiastes 8:1.

Pharaoh, i.e., that of constricted Divine consciousness, they are personified by his three henchmen, the chief butcher, the chief butler, and the chief baker.

The three of them are Names *Elokim*.

The Name *Elokim* signifies the contraction of Divinity into the context of nature, as we said.

Since Pharaoh did not receive his sustenance from the expanded consciousness [of the intellect], which is [three] Names *Havayah*—for whenever they are manifest the forces of evil are annihilated—he did not know them.

As long as the full, properly developed intellectual conception of a Divine idea is retained in an individual's consciousness, there is no chance for evil to make inroads into his thinking. It would be totally incongruous for evil to suggest transgressing G-d's will or focusing on oneself when the individual's mind is filled with Divine awareness. Only when the revelation of Divinity (signified by the Name *Havayah*) has been occulted (this being signified by the Name *Elokim*) can evil stand a chance of derailing the individual from his intended path.

Now, even when Pharaoh acknowledged [the existence of the Name *Havayah*] due to the plagues that were visited upon him, he still only wanted to acknowledge the aspect judgment of the Name *Havayah*. This is alluded to in the verse, “This time I [admit that I] have sinned; G-d [*Havayah*] is the righteous one, and my people and I are the wicked ones.”<sup>5</sup> In this verse, the initials of the words for “this time, G-d is the righteous one, and I” [*ha-pa'am YKVK ha-tzadik ve-ani, hei-yud-hei-vav*] spell [a permutation of] the Name *Havayah* [*KYKV*], in which the first *hei* precedes the *yud* [which it normally follows], and the second *hei* precedes the *vav* [which it normally follows].

The Name *Havayah*, derived from the verb “to be” and thus carrying the meaning of “to bring into being,” signifies the process through G-d creates and sustains the world. The four stages of this process (contraction, expansion, descent, expansion) are represented by the four letters of the Name. When the Name is written as it usually is, this indicates the normal orderly progression of creativity. A permutation of the Name signifies some variation on this normative progression. Here, the first pair of letters of the Name are reversed and then the second pair are also reversed.

This [permutation of the] Name *Havayah* is the feminine [manifestation, that] of judgment, as is known, in which judgment prevails over mercy.

As we have explained previously, the feminine principle in creation is that which is driven to reveal and manifest Divinity in the world. Since pursuing this objective entails a certain amount of danger to the individual's Divine consciousness, the feminine elements of creation are endowed with a heightened sense of judgment and discernment, which enables them to identify evil in all its disguises.

This allusion also alludes to the fact that it was G-d's attribute of judgment that smote them.

Now, G-d wanted to subdue [Pharaoh's] heart and nullify him in order that [the forces of evil] not gain a foothold through him, and in order that the Jewish people be able to be freed from his dominion. Therefore, it was not enough that he acknowledged the Name *Havayah* only in its manifestation in judgment.

Pharaoh had to acknowledge the masculine aspect of the Name *Havayah* as well, i.e., the aspect of mercy, which is openly supernatural.

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<sup>5</sup> Exodus 9:27.

Therefore it is said, “...in order that I place these signs of Mine within him.” [The word for “sign” (*ot*) also means “letter.” The word for “signs of Mine” (*ototai*) may be split into the word for “signs” (*otot*) and the letter *yud*. Since the numerical value of the letter *yud* is ten,] the mystical meaning is thus: “...in order that I place these ten letters within him.” This refers to the full spelling-out of the Name *Havayah*, in which there are [usually] ten letters. For G-d sought to fill in the Name *Havayah* that Pharaoh acknowledged with its inner letters, giving a total of ten letters.

The spelling-out of the Name *Havayah* indicates the full manifestation and revelation of this Name. Pharaoh would thus be forced to acknowledge the full spectrum of meanings in the Name *Havayah*, and not only its aspect of judgment.

Pharaoh identified with the judgemental aspect of the Name *Havayah* since—even though the Name *Havayah* in general indicates G-d’s transcendent power that is not limited to the bonds of nature—judgment in any case implies a harsh submission to the rule of law, leaving no room for overturning the established order. When this Divine attribute functions independently of its complement, mercy, there is clear danger of degeneration back into the constrictions of the natural order. This is what Pharaoh sensed—as does evil in general. This is what necessitates the extra precautions against evil attaching itself to holiness that apply to all feminine elements of all creation.

As you know, Pharaoh attaches himself [to *Z’eir Anpin*, i.e., holiness] at the level of the Names *Elokim* of constricted consciousness. When the Names *Havayah* manifest themselves within these Names *Elokim*, the latter are nullified. This is the mystical meaning of “...within him”: within Pharaoh himself.

The conventional translation of these words is “in his midst,” or something similar. The literal translation is, however, closer to the mystical meaning of the verse.

To return to our subject: G-d wanted to smite them from this point on using the power of the spellings-out of the Names *Havayah*. Now, the plagues that were going to occur after this point were that of locusts, that of darkness, that of killing the firstborn, followed by the splitting of the sea. Corresponding to these four are the four different methods of spelling-out the Name *Havayah*, in ascending order: The locusts came from spelling out the Name *Havayah* with the letter *hei*, giving a numerical value of 52. The darkness came from spelling out the Name with the letter *alef*, giving a numerical value of 45. The smiting of the firstborn came from spelling out the Name such that its numerical value is 63, and the splitting of the sea from spelling out the Name with the letter *yud*, giving a numerical value of 72.

As we have explained previously, there are four principle ways in which the Name *Havayah* can be spelled out, giving four different numerical values:

	<i>yud</i>	<i>hei</i>	<i>vav</i>	<i>hei</i>	
the <i>yud</i> -filling	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	<i>vav-yud-vav</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	72
the combined filling	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	<i>vav-alef-vav</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	63
the <i>alef</i> -filling	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	<i>hei-alef</i>	<i>vav-alef-vav</i>	<i>hei-alef</i>	45
the <i>hei</i> -filling	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	<i>hei-hei</i>	<i>vav-vav</i>	<i>hei-hei</i>	52

To explain: If you picture every letter *hei* as composed of three letters *vav*, the spelling-out that equals 52 will then equal 104.

In place of every *hei* (= 5) substitute three *vav*'s ( $3 \times 6 = 18$ ). Thus:  $52 - (4 \times 5) + (4 \times 18) = 52 - 20 + 72 = 104$ .

Now,  $2 \times 104$  (which is the numerical value of *Yitzchak*) is [208,] the numerical value of the word for “locust.”

*Yitzchak* (“Isaac”): *yud-tzadik-chet-kuf* =  $10 + 90 + 8 + 100 = 208$ .

*Arbeh* (“locust”): *alef-reish-beit-hei* =  $1 + 200 + 2 + 5 = 208$ .

This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “I multiplied [Abraham’s] seed and I gave him Isaac.”<sup>6</sup>

The word for “I multiplied” (*arbeh*) is the same as the word for “locust.” Presumably is this because locusts travel in swarms.

Together, [“Isaac” and “locusts”] produce the numerical value of the word “brow” [*kadkod*]. They represent two spellings-out of the Name *Havayah*, each having the numerical value of 52 and being spelled-out with the letter *hei*, as we have illustrated. This is the mystical meaning of the verse “...and as the brow of the consecrated one of his brothers,”<sup>7</sup> which [Jacob] said of Joseph, who was the child of his old age.

To explain: When the Names *Havayah* that signify expanded consciousness enter into those Names *Elokim* that signify constricted consciousness, the latter descend into the throat. These three Names *Elokim* possess 15 letters [ $3 \times 5$ ], 15 being the numerical value of the Name *Kah* [*yud-hei*,  $10 + 5$ ]. These subsequently descend as far as the *sefirah* of *yesod*, which is personified by Joseph. There they become manifest as three times the Name *Havayah* spelled out to equal 52, three times 52 being [156,] the numerical value of “Joseph” [*Yosef*: *yud-vav-samech-pei*,  $10 + 6 + 60 + 80$ ].

No more was found of this manuscript.

—translated from *Shaar HaPesukim* and *Likutei Torah*

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<sup>6</sup> Joshua 24:50.

<sup>7</sup> Genesis 49:26.

## *Parashat Bo* [second installment]

The first verses of this portion of the Torah reads: “And G-d said to Moses: Come to Pharaoh, for I have made his heart heavy, and the heart of his servants, that I may place these signs of Mine in his midst, and so that you can tell your children and grandchildren how I mocked Egypt, and about My signs that I placed in them, and so that you can know that I am G-d [*Havayah*].”<sup>1</sup>

We should ask:

1. Why does this verse not read: “that I may place these *plagues* of Mine in his midst?” Why does it refer to “these *signs* of Mine?”
2. Why does it read “...in his *midst*” instead of “upon him”?

[In order to answer this,] know that the four exiles differed one from the other. In one, evil enveloped the “head” of holiness; in one, it enveloped the “torso”; in one, it enveloped the “feet.” The common denominator, however, is that in all exiles, evil envelops holiness and conceals it. The allusion to this is in the verse: “The wicked crowns the righteous.”<sup>2</sup>

Each exile obstructed a certain aspect of holiness, keeping it from shining and spreading its corresponding level of Divine consciousness into the world. By surviving and overcoming these exiles, the Jewish people neutralized the corresponding powers of evil to oppose holiness.

The word for “crowns” in the verse quoted (*machtir*) also means “surrounds,” just a crown surrounds and encompasses the head.

You might think that there are five exiles—Egypt, Babylonia, Media, Persia, Greece, and the present exile—so how can we speak of only four? The answer is that Egypt and Babylonia were equivalent, equally deep and of the same nature. Our sages indicated this by saying “*Pishon* refers to Babylon”;<sup>3</sup> “*Pishon* refers to Egypt.”<sup>4</sup>

The four rivers that originated in the river that watered the Garden of Eden express the conscious of Divine oneness present in the Garden splitting into the consciousness of plurality that informs reality outside the garden. Thus, they epitomize the idea of exile, i.e., the state of lower or non-G-d-consciousness that leaves us with the impression that the world is governed by a plurality of opposing forces. This gives rise to the disorientation and confusion that characterizes the state of exile.

Homiletically, the verse “A river went forth from Eden to water the garden; from there it divided and became four *heads*”<sup>5</sup> is taken to allude to the four archtypal empires.

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 10:1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Habakkuk 1:4.

<sup>3</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 16:4.

<sup>4</sup> Rashi on Genesis 2:10.

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 2:10.

In the Egyptian exile, evil clothed the “neck” of holiness, i.e., the three highest *sefirot* all at once. In the Babylonian exile, evil clothed the “head” [of holiness], as it is written, “You are the head of gold.”<sup>6</sup> Of this it is written, “Her [i.e., Jerusalem’s] enemies were the head,”<sup>7</sup> meaning that they clothed the [holy] head. Thus, these two exiles were equivalent; that is why they are counted as one.

The Book of Daniel opens with the story of Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, in which he saw a great statue, the various parts of which represented the empires that would dominate the exiles. The head represented Babylonia, the torso and arms represented Media and Persia, the torso represented Greece, and the legs represented Rome.

Media and Persia [clothed] the “arms” [of holiness]; this is why they are counted as two, inasmuch as there are two arms. Greece [clothed] the “torso”; it is therefore counted as one. [In] the present exile [evil clothes] the legs [of holiness], there are therefore two [aspects to it:] Edom and Ishmael, corresponding to the two legs and feet.

The former Roman empire (Europe and North Africa) was inherited by Christianity and Islam.

This is alluded to in the verse: “...who have defamed the heels of your messiah,”<sup>8</sup> since this exile is that of the feet. That is why it is written, “And [the stone] smote the image on its feet.”<sup>9</sup>

This exile is the final one before the advent of the messiah. Both Christianity and Islam have corrupted the doctrine of the messiah.

The downfall of the whole stature/statue of exile will be a blow to its “feet,” i.e., to this final exile.

The Egyptian exile is referred to as [encompassing] the throat, for Pharaoh was situated on the neck of holiness, which is opposite the throat.

The word *Pharaoh* (*pei-reish-ayin-hei*) permutes to spell “the neck” (*ha-oref: hei-ayin-reish-pei*).

This is because evil can never face holiness directly, for [holiness] is a great light, and this blinds evil. This is the mystical meaning of our sages’ statement that “the wicked do not greet the *Shechinah*,”<sup>10</sup> for they cannot face it directly. Rather, they are attached to it from the back, facing the *Shechinah*’s back, and this is how they derive their sustenance.

In Hebrew, the idiom for “to greet” is literally “to receive the face of.”

If we imagine the forces of evil as cosmic leeches or other such sucking creatures, the imagery of them sucking off the back of the body conveys the idea that they receive only minimal life force from holiness. The front of the body houses much more vitality and sources of higher-quality life-force.

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<sup>6</sup> Daniel 2:38.

<sup>7</sup> Lamentations 1:5.

<sup>8</sup> Psalms 89:52.

<sup>9</sup> Daniel 2:34.

<sup>10</sup> *Sotah* 42a.

Pharaoh was facing the neck, sitting and feeding off it. There are three channels of sustenance in the neck: the trachea, the esophagus, and the blood vessels.

“The blood vessels” are probably the two common carotid arteries, which supply blood to the brain.

These are the three Names *Elokim*, whose numerical value [plus the *kolel*] is the same as that of the word for “throat” [*garon*, 259].

*Elokim*: alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem = 1 + 30 + 5 + 10 + 40 = 86. 3 x 86 = 258.

*Garon*: gimel-reish-vav-nun = 3 + 200 + 6 + 50 = 259.

The Name *Elokim* signifies contraction (*tzimtzum*), in this context, the contraction of life force flowing from the head to the torso.

Joseph manifested the “covenant of the tongue,” which includes them all. [This is] also [evident from the fact that] the numerical value of the word for “tongue” [*lashon*, 386] is that of two Names *Elokim*, one simple (86) and one spelled out with *yuds* (300).

The “covenant of the tongue” is first alluded to in *Sefer Yetzirah*,<sup>11</sup> being mentioned as opposite the other covenant, that of the sexual organ. These two organs—those of speech and sexuality—represent the individual’s potential to influence the outside world. Since they are the two main locations of exchange and contact between the individual and his environment, possibly unrectified world, they must be guarded, their holiness preserved. Hence, the two covenants.

These two covenants are mutually dependent. If a person’s sexuality is unrectified, so will be his speech, and *vice versa*. Thus, Joseph, who usually personifies sexual purity, here plays the role of purity of speech, the opposite of the degenerateness of Egypt.

We see here how unholy speech has the effect of blocking the passage of holy energy from the intellect (the head) to the emotions (the body).

*Lashon*: lamed-shin-vav-nun = 30 + 300 + 6 + 50 = 386.

*Elokim* spelled out with *yuds*:

Alef-lamed-pei lamed-mem-dalet hei-**yud** yud-vav-dalet mem-mem =

(1 + 30 + 80) + (30 + 40 + 4) + (5 + 10) + (10 + 6 + 4) + (40 + 40) = 300.

This is why [Joseph] was sold to the chief butler, for [this aspect of] evil comprises three facets, corresponding to the trachea, the esophagus, and the blood vessels, which were embodied by Pharaoh’s three deputies: the chief butler, the chief baker, and the chief butcher [respectively].

We are using the term “chief butler” to translate the Hebrew “the deputy in charge of drink.” (“Chief bartender” sounds too undignified.)

The chief butler corresponded to the trachea. True, no liquid can enter the trachea, so how can we assert that the chief butler corresponds to it? The answer is that the lungs are particularly hot, and therefore exemplify *gevurah*. As it is stated in the *Zohar*, “the lion faces the right,”<sup>12</sup> the numerical value of *gevurah* being the

<sup>11</sup> 1:3.

<sup>12</sup> *Zohar* 2:80b, 120a, 3:241a, etc.

same as that of the word for “lion” [*aryeih*]. It tends toward the right in order that [*chesed* and *gevurah*] inter-include. Therefore, since it is so hot, it draws to itself all types of moisture and thereby cools off, and then fans the heart. This is why the chief butler corresponds to the trachea.

We exile hot air, indicating the the lungs are naturally hot. Heat and fire exemplify *gevurah*, power and strength. The lion, the strong beast, also exemplifies *gevurah*, yet in Ezekiel’s vision of the chariot,<sup>13</sup> it is on the right side, the side of *chesed*. This signifies rectified *gevurah*, i.e., *gevurah* tempered by *chesed*.

*Gevurah*: gimel-beit-vav-reish-hei = 3 + 2 + 6 + 200 + 5 = 216.

*Aryeih*: alef-reish-yud-hei = 1 + 200 + 10 + 5 = 216.

The chief baker corresponds to the esophagus, which in turn corresponds to *gevurah*.

The baker bakes bread, the staff of life, the main food, swallowed by the esophagus.

The chief butcher corresponds to blood vessels in the middle [of the neck]. There are two [such blood vessels], leaning in either direction.

The butcher slaughters the animal, draining its blood. He therefore is associated with the blood vessels.

Joseph [—as we said—] corresponds to all these aspects [on the side of holiness].

This is the meaning of the verse, “Do not interpretations [of dreams] belong to G-d [*Elokim*]? Please tell me [your dream].”<sup>14</sup> Since interpretations come from Joseph, he therefore said, “Please tell me.” He meant: since you derive your sustenance from and governed entirely by the Name *Elokim*—this being the meaning of “Do not [the] interpretations [of *your* life] belong to G-d [*Elokim*]”—you, Pharaoh, have no conception of the Name *Havayah*, only of the Name *Elokim*. And, indeed, [Pharaoh] said, “I do not know *Havayah*.”<sup>15</sup> He had no connection to this Name. On the contrary, when this Name is revealed, [Pharaoh and the evil he personifies] is completely destroyed.

[Pharaoh and the Egyptians therefore] did not recognize that this Name is what was attacking them [in the plagues]. Only at the sea did they finally recognize this, as they said, “I will flee the Children of Israel for *Havayah* is fighting for them.”<sup>16</sup> This implies that until then, they thought that the plagues came from the Name *Elokim*. They therefore did not fear them, for they, too, had a connection to the Name *Elokim*. But once they realized that the plagues originated in the Name *Havayah*, they said, “I will flee,” because it threatened to destroy them completely.

This is why God now said to Moses, “Come to Pharaoh...in order that I place these signs of Mine....” That is, “do not think that I am going to relate to him

<sup>13</sup> Ezekiel 1:10.

<sup>14</sup> Genesis 40:8.

<sup>15</sup> Exodus 5:2.

<sup>16</sup> Exodus 14:25.

through the Name *Elokim*, and that the plagues are going to originate in the Name *Elokim*, to which he has some connection. Rather, I am going ‘to place these signs of Mine in his midst,’ meaning My Name *Havayah*.” This also explains the use of the phrase “in his *midst*,” [referring to the way G-d is going to relate to Pharaoh].

The word for “signs” (*otot*) is similar to the word for “letters” (*otiot*), inasmuch as letters are symbols for the sounds they represent. Thus, mystically, this phrase may mean: “in order that I place the letters of My true Name [*Havayah*] in his midst.” His “midst” means “in his consciousness.”

This is what Joseph meant [in his reply to Pharaoh]: “G-d relates to you [presently] only through His Name *Elokim*, and this is why the interpretation of your dreams is through this Name. Therefore, please tell them to me, since I comprise all these levels and I can therefore interpret them.”

As said above, Joseph, epitomizing the covenant of the tongue, comprised all the holy aspects corresponding to the deputies of Pharaoh.

Thus, when the chief butler related his dream, it was all in proper order. He said, “the vine had three branches,”<sup>17</sup> these being the three deputies. The word for “deputy” [*sar*] represents two Names *Elokim*, one in the progressive iteration and the other spelled out with the letter *yud*.

*Sar*: *sin-reish*. The numerical value of the letter *sin* is 200; that of *reish* is 300. We have seen above how the Name *Elokim* when spelled out using the *yud* has the numerical value of 300. The progressive iteration of the Name *Elokim* is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{Alef alef-lamed alef-lamed-hei alef-lamed-hei-yud alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem} = \\ & 1 + (1 + 30) + (1 + 30 + 5) + (1 + 30 + 5 + 10) + (1 + 30 + 5 + 10 + 40) = \\ & 5(1) + 4(30) + 3(5) + 2(10) + 1(40) = 5 + 120 + 15 + 20 + 40 = 200. \end{aligned}$$

Thus, the word for “deputy” implies the Name *Elokim*, and the three deputies were three Names *Elokim*, as above.

[Joseph] interpreted his dream: “You will put Pharaoh’s cup....” He hoped that he would be connected to him and be on the right [side], and thereby be rescued through him.

After interpreting the chief butler’s dream and saying that he will be spared, Joseph asked him to remember him to Pharaoh and have him freed from jail.

But at this point, he was connected to the chief butcher, who was in the middle. That is why he [later] married his daughter.

Joseph mistakenly thought to connect himself to *chesed*, when in fact he was connected to *tiferet*. Joseph, personifying *yesod*, is firmly grounded in the middle axis of the *sefirot*. It was thus not proper for him to seek salvation from someone associated with the right axis. Sexual fidelity and purity is about balance, not leaning toward one extreme.

Joseph married Osnat, the daughter of Potiphar, the chief butcher.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Genesis 40:10.

<sup>18</sup> Genesis 41:45, 37:36.

The chief baker began his dream with the word, “Even” [*af*]. This signifies the addition of *gevurah* and strength. Even though he also mentioned three wicker baskets, signifying the three deputies—as they each inter-include the others, this being why he mentioned all three only after he said the word “even”—[Joseph] turned his dream upside down, and interpreted it to mean that he would die.

This was evidently because the word “even” indicated that the chief baker emphasized *gevurah* too much.

Since the exile [of Egypt] was at the level of the throat, from which issues speech, Moses [the redeemer from this exile] had “uncircumcised lips” and could not talk [well]. This is the meaning of the verse, “...my throat is parched,”<sup>19</sup> for the throat is parched during its exile.

In order to redeem the Jewish people from exile, Moses had to experience it himself. This he did by being hard of speech.

The five letters of the Name *Elokim* signify the five states of *gevurah*, and produce the 120 permutations in *Z’eir Anpin*. This number is the numerical value of the word for “shadow” [*tzeil*].

The Name *Elokim* is composed of 5 letters. 5 letters permute in 120 ways:  $5! = 5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 = 120$ .

*Tzeil*: *tzadik-lamed* =  $90 + 30 = 120$ .

The word for “shadow” [*tzeil*] is related to the word for “image” [*tzelem*].

*Tzelem*: *tzadik-lamed-mem*. Thus, *tzelem* is *tzeil* with the addition of a final *mem*. This letter usually indicates sealing off, since its form is a closed square.

The word for “shadow” [*tzeil*] signifies these 120 [permutations of the Name] *Elokim*, which are male in nature. The word for “image” [*tzelem*] signifies these 120 [permutations in their] female [version]. [The latter] are sealed within [*Nukva*], appearing as two doors [closing it off] so that evil cannot derive any sustenance from him.

We thus look at the word *tzelem* as the word *tzel* in essence, with the incidental addition of the final *mem*.

We therefore find the word for “shadow” in the plural, as in the verse, “The shadows have fled.”<sup>20</sup> This refers to the 120 male [permutations] and the 120 female [permutations]. But the word for “image” appears only in the singular, not in the plural, for the final *mem* is affixed only in the female.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse [“G-d prepared a *kikayon*-plant, and it rose up over Jonah to give shade upon his head.”]<sup>21</sup> To explain: the Book of Jonah [allegorically] describes the [descent of] soul [into the body], and in fact we see that the numerical value of the word *Yonah* [71] is 45 plus the numerical value of the Name *Havayah* [26].

<sup>19</sup> Psalms 69:4.

<sup>20</sup> Song of Songs 2:17.

<sup>21</sup> Jonah 4:6.

Yonah: yud-vav-nun-hei = 10 + 6 + 50 + 5 = 71.

26 + 45 = 71.

The text does not explain at this point what the significance of the number 45 is in this context.

To explain: [The soul of] a person comprises its “image” [*tzelem*] and its *nefesh-ruach-neshamah*.

As we know, the soul comprises 5 levels: *nefesh*, *ruach*, *neshamah*, *chayah*, and *yechidah*. The latter two are the soul’s “image.” In short, the *nefesh* is the animating soul that enlivens the body. The *ruach* is the emotions. The *neshamah* is the intellect. The *chayah* is the will. The *yechidah* is the Divine spark.

The “image” enters [the body] at conception. As is explained in the *Zohar*,<sup>22</sup> would the mother and father merit, they would be able to see [their child’s “image”] when they copulate [and conceive the child], the *nefesh* when it is born, the *ruach* when it turns thirteen, and the *neshamah* when it turns twenty.

Jonah—that is, the soul—descends [from its source], enters *Z’eir Anpin*, descends via his spinal cord, enters his body—symbolized by the ship—and from there descends to the thighs, represented by the lower parts of the ship.

The child’s father is the earthly representative of *Z’eir Anpin*; his mother is the earthly representative of *Nukva*. The soul’s journey through his future father is the process by which the spiritual soul becomes invested in the physical seed.

The idiom in Hebrew for “the lower parts” of the ship is “the thighs” of the ship.

Then it meets the large fish, signifying *yesod*, which swallows it up, and from there, it is given to the female. The three days and three nights Jonah was inside the fish correspond to the three days it takes for the male seed to be properly absorbed [into the womb].

This [feminine] “shadow” [mentioned above] is strength, meaning the states of *gevurah*, as we have explained. [These states of *gevurah*] guard [the soul] from harm. For opposite this “shadow” there is an evil “shadow.”

In this context, the two “doors” (120 permutations of the Name *Elokim*) sealing off *Nukva* and protecting it from evil would perhaps correspond anatomically to the cervix or the labia minora. The evil female “shadow” refers perhaps to the feminine evil forces that seek to appropriate male seed for themselves. The traditional amulets and inscriptions (*Shir HaMa’alot*) placed around women in and after childbirth are intended to ward off these evil forces by identifying the woman and her child as allied with holiness.

This explains the statement in the *Zohar* that “the more [the Name *Havayah*] extends the better,”<sup>23</sup> for it always remains holy. But this is not the case with the states of *gevurah* [of the Name *Elokim*], for the limit of holiness is the final of these 120 [permutations] of the Name *Elokim*. From that point on is the realm of evil, called “other gods” [*Elokim acheirim*]. They are called “other” [*acheirim*] because they derive their sustenance from the back [*achoraiyim*].

<sup>22</sup> 3:43a, 104b.

<sup>23</sup> 2:96a.

A certain amount of *gevurah*, of contraction, is necessary in order for the world to exist in its finite form. However, if the force of contraction is allowed to progress beyond its proper limit, the Divine energy becomes so limited that even evil can derive sustenance from it.

As we have explained previously, it is especially crucial to guard the female principle from this tendency toward excessive contraction and limitation. Due to its drive to actualize Divinity in the material world, the female principle may overestimate the need to allow worldliness to exist. This is an open invitation for the forces of evil to stake their claim.

We can now explain the verse. For Ham, the father of Egypt,<sup>24</sup> embodied the power of the [five] states of *gevurah*. Shem personified *chesed*, Ham personified *gevurah*, and Japheth personified *tiferet*. That is why [the latter] is called Japheth [yafet, “beautiful”], for [tiferet] is a blend of the two colors white and red.

Shem, Ham, and Japheth were the three sons of Noah.

The name “Ham” (*Cham*) means “hot”; hence the association with *gevurah*. Egypt is thus also associated with *gevurah*.

Now, when the 5 letters [of the Name *Elokim*] produce 120 permutations, each letter produces 24. Thus, Ham took the power of 2 letters, which produce 48 permutations. That is why he was called Ham [*Cham*, the numerical value of which is 48].

$120 \div 5 = 24$ . Thus, each letter of the Name *Elokim* may be considered to be associated with 24 of its permutations.

*Cham*: *chet-mem* =  $8 + 40 = 48$ .

Ham, we just said, is associated with *gevurah*, which in turn is signified by the Name *Elokim*. Since the numerical value of Ham’s name is 48, he may be considered to be associated in particular of 48 of the permutations of the Name *Elokim*. Since each letter of the Name produces 24 permutations, Ham may be considered to be associated with 2 of the 5 letters of the Name *Elokim*.

In a similar way, we can understand what is written of Rebecca, “and her pitcher was on her shoulder.”<sup>25</sup> She was holding one letter of the 5 states of *gevurah*, i.e., one letter of the Name *Elokim*.

The numerical value of the word for “pitcher” (*kad*) is also 24.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse “Let not the lowly return embarrassed,”<sup>26</sup> the initials of which spell the Name *Adni*, which signifies *malchut*, which takes 24 units from the Name *Elokim*.

“Let not the lowly return embarrassed”: *Al yashov dach nichlam*. The needy “lowly one” is *malchut*, “who possesses nothing of her own”<sup>27</sup> but owes all her contents to the *sefirot* above her. The numerical value of the word for “lowly one” (*dach*) is also 24.

Rebecca also signifies *malchut*. These verses thus describes how *malchut* is constructed out of one of the five states of *gevurah* originating in the Name *Elokim*.

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<sup>24</sup> Genesis 10:6.

<sup>25</sup> Genesis 24:15.

<sup>26</sup> Psalms 74:21.

<sup>27</sup> Zohar 2:215a.

Thus, Ham, the source of the states of *gevurah*, produced the 5 states of *gevurah*. These are 4 sons, for 3 states of *gevurah* are sweetened and can therefore combine with 3 states of *chesed*. The other 2 cannot be sweetened. Similarly, when they were born, it was after this fashion, 3 [sons] matched with 3 [states of *gevurah*], and 1 [son] matched with 2 [states of *gevurah*] that join together, i.e., the last two letters of the Name *Elokim*.

Ham had four sons.<sup>28</sup> But if he, personifying *gevurah*, produced the five states of *gevurah*, we would have expected that he have five sons. This is solved here. The first three letters of the Name *Elokim*, *alef-lamed-hei*, signify sweetened states of *gevurah*, i.e., those states of *gevurah* that serve a positive purpose in creation. These three were personified by three of the sons of Ham. The last two letters of the Name *Elokim*, *yud-mem*, were not sweetened, and were combined together in the fourth son (presumably Mitzrayim, i.e., Egypt).

It is for this reason that the first plague was that of blood, for [the plagues] took place in the throat [of holiness], which is a narrow part [of the body]. It is therefore called “Egypt” [*Mitzrayim*], meaning “the constriction [*meitzar*] of the *yud-mem*.” Since [Egypt] took the place of the two states of *gevurah*, which is the place where the blood gathers and its source, they were smitten accordingly.

The Hebrew for Egypt, *mitzrayim*, can be read *meitzar yud-mem*, “the constriction of the letters *yud-mem*,” i.e., of the last two letters of the Name *Elokim*.

One of the three channels of life-force in the neck, we said, is the set of two blood vessels the supply the brain with blood. These evidently signify the two states of *gevurah* embodied in Egypt. Since the forces of evil seek to appropriate the holy life force in these blood vessels, they were smitten with blood.

Of the plague of lice, the sorcerers of Egypt said, “it is the finger of G-d,” because the numerical value of the word for “lice” [*kinim*] is 120, corresponding to the 120 [permutations of] the Name *Elokim*. Since they could not produce them, they said that this plague was from the Name *Elokim*.

Perhaps this means that they understood that here, too, they were being deprived of their power, which originated in the Name *Elokim*.

This is also why the sea of reeds [*yam suf*] is called thus, for these two letters from the Name *Elokim* spell the word for “sea” [*yam*] and go after evil, signified by the end [*sof*] of this Name, smiting it.

The word for “sea” (*yam: yud-mem*) is composed of the same two final letters of the Name *Elokim*. The word for “reeds” (*suf: samech-vav-pei*) is the same as the word for “end” (*sof: samech-vav-pei*). The “sea of reeds” thus alludes, as well, to the last two letters of the Name *Elokim*, the unsweetened *gevurah* taken by Egypt. The Egyptians therefore had to be smitten there, as well.

Thus, we have three instances of the Egyptians being smitten by the Name *Elokim*. The plague of blood smote the Egyptian evil personified by the chief butcher and the blood vessels of the throat. Presumably, the plague of lice and the splitting of the sea correspond to the other two deputies of Pharaoh and their anatomical correlates, but this is not stated explicitly in the text.

We now return to the verse quoted in the beginning of this exposition.

Thus, the verse reads “in order to place these signs of Mine in his midst.”

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<sup>28</sup> Genesis 10:6.

The word for “these” (*eileh, alef-lamed-hei*) can be seen as a combination of the Name *Kel* (*alef-lamed*) and the feminine suffix *hei*, whose numerical value is 5. The word for “these” is also the first three letters of the Name *Elokim*.

The Name *Kel* signifies *chesed*. The *hei* receives [Divine beneficence] from *chesed* and transmits it to *gevurah*. This is the meaning of “these signs of Mine in his midst.” The Name *Kel* plays the role of the male, while [the Egyptians, represented by Pharaoh] were connected to the sea, signifying the female, represented by the letter *hei*. Therefore, [these signs] had to enter him.

The Egyptians fed off the last two letters of the Name *Elokim*—unsweetened *gevurah*—as we saw above. In order to prevent this, unsweetened *gevurah* had to be overcome by sweetened *gevurah*, signified by the first three letters of the Name *Elokim*. Thus, the phrase “in order to place these signs of Mine in his midst” can be mystically interpreted to mean: “in order to put the letters *alef-lamed-hei* of My [Name *Elokim*] into him [i.e., into the last two letters of My Name *Elokim*, from which he is trying to derive sustenance].”

(Although above, we said that “these signs of Mine” refer to the letters of the Name *Havayah*, here it seems that these words are being referred to the first three letters of the Name *Elokim*.)

In terms of *sefirot*, the three letters *alef-lamed-hei* indicate the flow of *chesed* into *gevurah*, sweetening it. The numerical value of the letter *hei*, 5, indicates the distribution of the *chesed* into all five states of *gevurah*.

This is the mystical meaning of our sages’ statement that “every plague was really 5 plagues in one, and some say 50 plagues in one,”<sup>29</sup> alluding to the two final letters of the Name *Elokim*.

The numerical value of *yud-mem* is  $10 + 40 = 50$ . The sages said that every plague was really 5 to indicate that through the plagues all five states of *gevurah* were sweetened, and that every plague was really 50 to indicate that the final letters of the Name *Elokim* were sweetened.

The 5 refers to the 5 letters of the Name *Elokim*. This is why the exodus from Egypt is mentioned 50 times in the Torah, in order to disengage [the Jewish people] from the two final letters of the Name *Elokim* to which they were connected.

The first exile was “these signs of Mine”; the second was “in order that you tell...and you know that I am *Havayah*,” for when the Name *Havayah* is revealed [evil] is annihilated completely. They did not recognize this until the [splitting of the] sea, as we explained.

This explains the verse well. [This is as much of the manuscript that I found.]

The first exile, Egypt, was taken care of by putting “these signs of Mine,” i.e., the sweetened first three letters of the Name *Elokim*, into the last two. It appears that the continuation of this exposition was an explanation how the continuation of this verse alludes to the rectification of the subsequent exiles.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. the *Hagadah shel Pesach*.

## *Parashat Bo* [third installment]

In this *parashah*, G-d tells Moses, “This month will be for you the first of the months; it will be for you the first of the months of the year.”<sup>1</sup> Since this communication occurred two weeks before the Exodus,<sup>2</sup> this verse establishes that the month of the Exodus, *Nisan*, is to be counted as the first of the twelve months. This verse thus establishes the basis of the Jewish calendar. As Rashi puts it,<sup>3</sup> “[G-d] showed [Moses] the new moon and said, ‘When you see the moon renewed [like this], consider that day the first of the month.’”

Furthermore, *Nisan* is always supposed to be in the spring.<sup>4</sup> However, since the Jewish calendar is based on lunar months, it is necessary to intercalate the year when the lunar year lags behind the solar year.

Know that all the months are [manifestations of] *malchut* [i.e., *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin*]. There are two aspects to this [relationship]: the first is the way [*malchut* relates to the months] intrinsically, and the second is the way [it does so] by virtue of its relationship with the male [*partzuf*, *Z’eir Anpin*], as we will explain with G-d’s help.

The Jewish calendar is, as we said, a lunar calendar, and the moon is one of the physical manifestations of the feminine principle, *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin*. The moon reflects the light of the sun, just as *Nukva* receives its inspiration from *Z’eir Anpin*. In general, *Z’eir Anpin* is associated with the three dimensions of space (the six *sefirot* from which it is constructed correspond to the six directions) and *Nukva* is associated with time.

[This relationship between *malchut* and the months] beings with the month of *Nisan*. Now, know that all the months are called the “head” month, because they all are [in some way] a beginning. And therefore, every month has the larger number of days, i.e., 30.

The order [of the association between the months and the various aspects of *malchut*] is as follows:

In the following section, the six months of each half year are associated with six of the seven organs of the head—skull, 2 ears, 2 eyes, nose and mouth. The association between these seven organs (excluding the skull and splitting the nose into the 2 nostrils) and the seven days of the week, the seven visible planets, the seven blessings of Divine beneficence, and the seven letters of the Hebrew alphabet that can take a *dagesh kal* is given in *Sefer Yetzirah* 4:7-14. There are, however, differing versions of this text.<sup>5</sup> The Arizal’s system is given in *Eitz Chaim* 5:6.

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 12:2.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* 12:6.

<sup>3</sup> on 12:2.

<sup>4</sup> Rashi on Deuteronomy 16:1.

<sup>5</sup> See R. Aryeh Kaplan edition of *Sefer Yetzirah*, pp. 178-179.

<i>beit</i>	<i>chochmah</i>	right ear
<i>gimel</i>	<i>binah</i>	left ear
<i>dalet</i>	<i>netzach</i>	right eye
<i>kaf</i>	<i>hod</i>	left eye
<i>pei</i>	<i>tiferet</i>	right nostril
<i>reish</i>	<i>da'at</i>	left nostril
<i>tav</i>	<i>malchut</i>	mouth

As we said, in the following system, the nose is considered as one entity and the skull is considered.

*Nisan* is associated with the *gulgalt* [of *Nukva*].

The *gulgalt* (“skull”) of a *partzuf* is its *keter*, which in psychological terms is the will to actualize the content of the *partzuf*. The exodus from Egypt was and is an act of will, as we see from the fact that those Jews who did not want leave Egypt remained there, perishing in the plague of darkness.

*Iyar* and *Sivan* are associated with the two ears [of *Nukva*].

*Iyar* is the month of counting the Omer, the preparation for the giving of the Torah, which occurred in *Sivan*. These two months are thus focused on hearing the word of G-d. In the chart above, the two ears are *chochmah* and *binah*, the *sefirot* of the intellect used for learning the Torah.

*Tamuz* and *Av* are associated with the two eyes [of *Nukva*]. This is why the Temple was destroyed in the months of *Tamuz* and *Av*, as an expression of the verse, “My eyes, my eyes, flowed with water,”<sup>6</sup> [the repetition] alluding to the two eyes.

Now, when we understand what these eyes are, [we know that] they are manifestations of *netzach* and *hod*. Therefore, the destruction occurred mainly in the left eye, the month of *Av*. This is the mystical meaning of the phrase, “...sick the whole day.”<sup>7</sup> [The word for “sick,” *davah*,] when spelled backwards, spells the word *hod*.

*Netzach* is located on the right axis of the *sefirah*-tree and *hod* on the left. These two *sefirot* are associated respectively with *Tamuz* and *Av* and the right and left eyes. *Netzach* and *hod* are associated with prophetic insight, the Divine consciousness promoted by the Temple.

*Davah*: dalet-vav-hei. *Hod*: hei-vav-dalet.

Both these verses are from the Book of Lamentations, the prophet Jeremiah’s dirge over the destruction of the first Temple.

*Elul* is associated with the nose [of *Nukva*].

In the associations above, the two nostrils are associated with *tiferet* and *da'at*, which define the middle axis of the sefirotic tree, just as the nose is on the central axis of the face. In *Sefer Yetzirah*, *Elul* is associated with sexuality, carnal “knowledge” in the Biblical idiom.

This leaves the mouth, which is not associated explicitly with any month, but whose presence [in this array] is hidden.

<sup>6</sup> Lamentations 1:16.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.* 1:13.

The mouth, the organ of speech, is associated with *malchut*, the *sefirah* of expression.

This same order applies to the [association between *Nukva* and the months due to its relationship with the] male, [*Z'eir Anpin*]:

*Tishrei* is associated with the skull of the male.

Just as *Nisan* is considered the first year of the month from the seasonal perspective, *Tishrei* is considered the first month in that years are counted from it.

It is explained in *Chassidut* that our ongoing process of self-refinement is more dependent on our own initiative during the “male” half of the year, i.e., from *Tishrei* to *Adar*. During the “female” half of the year, i.e., from *Nisan* to *Elul*, G-d takes the initiative and our job is just to capitalize and respond to this initiative. The clearest indication of this is the festival of *Pesach*, in which we were pulled out of Egypt by G-d Himself. Similarly, the springtime renewal of nature that occurs in *Nisan* practically forces us to undergo a similar renewal of inspiration, and all we have to do is respond to it and ride the wave of renewal.

In contrast, the male half of the year begins in the fall, as night becomes longer and the forces of evil represented by darkness gain more and more control. During this half of the year, we have to summon more of our own inner strength to progress in our Divine self-redefinition; hopefully we have stored up this strength during the spring and summer months, just as we eat during the winter from the food that has grown and been harvested in the spring and summer. The clearest expression of this dynamic is the High Holidays of the month of *Tishrei*, in which we work on ourselves intensely in order to establish a higher and more profound relationship with G-d for the coming year. This process involves awakening our deep, innate desire and will to relate to G-d and accomplish His will, which, as we said, is synonymous with the skull.

*Cheshvan* and *Kislev* are associated with the two ears [of *Z'eir Anpin*].

*Cheshvan* possesses no festivals; this reflects the male abstraction of *chochmah*. The festival of *Kislev* is Chanukah, in which the intellect of the Torah vanquished Greek pagan philosophy.

*Tevet* and *Shevat* are associated with the two eyes [of *Z'eir Anpin*].

*Adar* is associated with the nose [of *Z'eir Anpin*].

Here, too, the mouth[’s place in this array] is hidden.

[The fact that the mouth is hidden] is the mystical reason behind the commandment of sanctifying the new month, in which the judges [of the rabbinical court] are required to verbally sanctify the month.

Astronomically, a lunar month is a fraction of a day longer than 29 days. Since calendar months can only be composed of full days, a calendar month can be either 29 or 30 days long, depending on when the new moon is sighted. When witnesses testified before the central court in Jerusalem that they had seen the new moon, the court declared that day the first day of the new month. This is called “sanctifying” the month, for once the first day of the month is determined, the day on which any holidays that fall in that month is also determined.

By using their mouths to verbally articulate the sanctification of the new month, the judges mystically complete the array of associations between the face-organs of *malchut* and the months.

Now, since the mouth is missing from the male [array], the only month that may be intercalated is *Adar*.

As we said, in order to keep the holiday of *Pesach* in the spring, i.e., after the vernal equinox, it was sometimes necessary to add a thirteenth lunar month to the year. The only month Jewish law allows to be doubled in order to do this is *Adar*.

The mystical reason for this is that in the array of face-organs, the order is: skull, ears, eyes, nose, mouth. Since the mouth follows the nose—which is associated with the month of *Adar*—the only place the mouth can be used to insert another month into the array is after (the first) *Adar*.

This was the mistake of King Hezekiah, of blessed memory, who intercalated a second *Nisan* in the month of *Nisan*. His mistake was that we must only intercalate a second *Adar*, for it takes the place of the mouth of the male, and thus forms part of the preceding year, completing [it with] the mouth. *Nisan*, in contrast, is part of the next year.

In the beginning of his reign as king, Hezekiah restored the service of G-d to its full force, after his wicked father, King Achaz, had suspended it. “Hezekiah then sent word to all of Israel and Judah...to perform the *pesach*-sacrifice to G-d, the G-d of Israel. For the king and his officers...decided to perform the *pesach*-sacrifice in the second month, for they could not perform it in its time [i.e., in *Nisan*], for not enough priests had sanctified themselves yet, and the people had not been gathered to Jerusalem by then.”<sup>8</sup> In order to give the repenting populace time to purify themselves before offering the *pesach*-sacrifice, King Hezekiah decided to add an extra month to the calendar. According to one opinion in the Talmud, he made this decision in the month of *Nisan*, and added a second *Nisan* so that the festival of *Pesach* could be postponed. According to other opinions, he did intercalate a second *Adar*, but he did this on 30<sup>th</sup> day of *Adar*, which is forbidden by the sages. Since the 30<sup>th</sup> day of *Adar* can potentially be proclaimed the 1<sup>st</sup> day of *Nisan* (if witnesses testify that they saw the new moon on that day), the sages declared that this potential sanctity disqualifies it from being declared the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the intercalated *Adar*. In other words, we may not declare the month that would have otherwise been *Nisan* to be a second *Adar* on the very day this month could have become *Nisan* (had we not decided to intercalate). When King Hezekiah did this, he was interfering with the proper order of the months.<sup>9</sup>



Regarding the [order of the] months, we have already explained (in our exposition of the prayers of *Rosh Hashanah*) that [the months] from *Tishrei* to *Adar* [are associated with] the six extremities of the male [*partzuf*, *Z'eir Anpin*]. In this context, *Adar* is associated with the nose of the male, and *Nisan* with the mouth of the male, which becomes the skull of the female. This is because the breath issues from the mouth of the male [in order] to [become] the skull of the female.

The month of *Nisan* thus plays both roles of male mouth and female skull. The words of the male inspire the female, transforming into her will.

Thus, *Nisan* is used both by him and by her. This is why we intercalate the month of *Adar* and none other, so that the intercalated month may assume the association of the mouth of the male. For the same reason, [the court] must sanctify the month verbally and proclaim, “Sanctified!” as it is written, “[these are the festivals of G-d...] that you shall proclaim in their [proper] times.”<sup>10</sup> For through the breath [of the judges] the skull [of *Nukva*] is formed.

The judges here act as the mouth of *Z'eir Anpin*, sanctifying time (i.e., *Nukva*), inspiring the collective source of the souls of the Jewish people to bring Divinity into reality through sanctified islands of time (the festivals), each of which grants us a unique and essential aspect of Divine consciousness, which we then transfer into our daily lives.

The text now proceeds with a sentence that Rabbi Chaim Vital argues is incorrect from a philosophical or semantic perspective.

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<sup>8</sup> 2 Chronicles 30:1-3.

<sup>9</sup> *Sanhedrin* 12ab.

<sup>10</sup> Leviticus 23:4.

There are also six [months] from *Nisan* to *Tishrei*, in which scheme *Elul* is the female nose and *Tishrei* her mouth and his skull.

If this is true, then the same process works in reverse. But—

It appears to me, Chaim [Vital], that the mouth can only be associated with *Nisan* [and not with *Tishrei*], when his mouth becomes her skull. But *Tishrei* is only his skull, and not her mouth. For his skull cannot be formed from her mouth, and the proof of this is that [if it were so] we would intercalate *Elul* just like *Adar*.

Since we don't, it means that there can be no second *Elul* to assume the association of the mouth of the female. The mouth of the female therefore, in this paradigm, remains hidden, and does not become the skull of the male. What this essentially is saying is that there is a difference between the male and female archetypes, and that they are not simply inverses of each other. True, the female can inspire the male, but then she is manifesting her male aspect.

—translated from *Ta'amei HaMitzvot*

## *Parashat Bo* [fourth installment]

In this *parashah*, G-d gives Moses the commandment: “Sanctify to Me every firstborn, the one who opens every womb of the Israelites, of man and animal; it is Mine.”<sup>1</sup> This is followed by the verse: “And Moses said to the people, ‘Remember the day on which you went out from Egypt, from the house of slaves, for G-d took you out of here with a strong hand, and leaven shall not be eaten.’”

We should be very surprised regarding this passage, for G-d commanded [Moses], “Sanctify to Me every firstborn,” but Moses neglected to convey this commandment to the Israelites after he heard it. Instead, he gave them a different commandment, as it is written, “And Moses said to the people, ‘Remember the day on which you went out from Egypt....’”<sup>2</sup> Later, in the passage that begins, “And it will be, when He brings you in...,”<sup>3</sup> he returns [to this commandment] and tells them: “...you will transfer every one that opens the womb to G-d....”<sup>4</sup>

After reporting that G-d gave this commandment to Moses, the Torah reports that Moses gave the Israelites instructions concerning the observance of Passover and the commandment of *tefilin*. Only after this, in the next passage, does Moses instruct them about the firstborn (following it with more details about *tefilin*).

The reason for this is—as we have explained previously, on the verse, “And a new king arose...”<sup>5</sup>—that [the souls of] the mixed multitude are sparks of the souls [that were produced by] the wasted seed of Adam, [which he produced] during the 130 years [after his sin, in which he separated from Eve].

When the Israelites left Egypt, a “mixed multitude” of non-Jews accompanied them,<sup>6</sup> which Moses intended to convert. We see here that he was actually planning to rectify the lost souls that had been produced in consequence of Adam’s sins.

[These sparks] had not yet been rectified. Since they originated in the *da’at* of *yesod* of *Abba*, which was personified by Moses, he made great efforts to rectify them and bring them out of Egypt, as is mentioned there at length.

This, however, was not G-d’s intention, for they were not fit for this. G-d therefore commanded him, “Sanctify to Me every firstborn, the one who opens every womb *of the Israelites*,” for they also originate in this supernal *da’at*, which is termed “the firstborn.” The [spiritual] blemish caused by the sin of wasting seed reaches [up] to this level, as is known.

The essence of *da’at* is connection, which is why the word “knowledge” is used to refer to marital relations. Although the sin of wasting seed occurs at the level of *yesod*, it causes a blemish in *da’at*, since it results from the individual being focused on things he should not be focused on.

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 13:2.

<sup>2</sup> v. 3.

<sup>3</sup> vv. 11-16.

<sup>4</sup> v. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 1:8.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 12:38.

Thus, the souls of the mixed multitude were blemished in this regard, being the results of Adam's misuse of his *da'at*. Inasmuch as Moses personified the holy *da'at*, the proper focus and consciousness in life, he knew that he was uniquely suited to rectify them.

(Presumably, this *da'at* is termed "firstborn" since it is the *da'at* of *yesod* of *Abba*, and *chochmah* is often termed the "firstborn" inasmuch as it is the first conscious *sefirah* to emerge from the womb of the pre-conscious *keter*, i.e., from faith, delight, and will.)

Therefore, of the Israelites, who were already rectified of this [G-d told Moses,] 'Sanctify Me every firstborn' of *theirs*, but not the firstborn of the mixed multitude, who are not yet rectified and not yet worthy of this commandment.

Moses saw that if now, at the beginning of G-d's giving of the commandments—this being the first of them after that of the rites and festival of Passover—he would immediately tell them about *this* commandment, and the mixed multitude would hear the words "Sanctify Me every firstborn...of the *Israelites*" (and not of the mixed multitude), they would throw off the yoke [of the commandments] and revert to their former [idolatrous] ways, seeing that they are of lower status.

[This is] especially so since, [we must remember,] the Jews had not yet left Egypt. It is written, "And G-d did not take them [out of Egypt by the way of the Philistines] for it was close, for G-d said, 'Lest *the people* relent [when they see war] and return to Egypt.'"<sup>7</sup> The words "the people" in this verse refer to the mixed multitude. All the more so was this a concern at this point, when they were still at home. As we see later, when the mixed multitude saw the pillar of cloud traveling in front of the Israelites and not in front of them, they said, "Arise, make us gods that will go before *us*," as taught in the *Zohar*.<sup>8</sup> [This was the incident of the Golden Calf.]

Thus, Moses was justified in taking the reaction of the mixed multitude into consideration, for we see that G-d also took it into consideration when choosing the escape route from Egypt, and that their resentment of their secondary status precipitated the sin of the Golden Calf.

Thus, since it was Moses' goal to bring them under the wings of the Divine presence, and that they should not rebel against G-d, he therefore began by teaching [the mixed multitude] the commandment not to eat leaven on Passover, which begins, "Remember the day on which you went out from Egypt," and is a commandment that includes both the Israelites and them. Also, this explains why it is written [immediately before this], "And Moses said to *the people*..." for this means the mixed multitude. This is also why this passage is couched in the plural: "...on which *you* went out from Egypt"; "Today *you* are going out..."<sup>9</sup>

The words "you" in these verses is in this word's plural form, referring to the mixed multitude.

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 13:17.

<sup>8</sup> 2:191b.

<sup>9</sup> Exodus 13:4.

Indeed, [the first of these verses] continues: "...from the house of slaves," meaning, "you have left Egypt, which is called 'a house of slaves' because the Jews were enslaved there, although *you* were not enslaved there." The Torah therefore does not use the idiom "from *being* slaves," but rather, "from *the house of* slaves."

[Rabbi Shmuel Vital (Rabbi Chaim Vital's son) notes here: This is explained also by the fact that our sages say that the Egyptians were called "slaves" since they were descendants of Ham, who was called a slave. (Therefore, "the house of slaves" means simply "Egypt.")]

This is also alluded to by the words, "[for G-d took you out of here] with a strong hand..." for the demonstration of G-d's strong hand was necessary not for the Jews but for them, as it is written, "...[in order to show you My power] and in order to tell of My Name in all the world."<sup>10</sup>

These words were spoken to Pharaoh.

Were it not for [the demonstration of] the power of G-d's hand, Pharaoh would not have let [the mixed multitude] go. Whereas with regard to the Jews, Pharaoh did not care that much, and Moses had a legitimate claim: "Send forth My children so they can serve Me." It was therefore not necessary [for G-d] to demonstrate [the power of] His mighty hand [to convince Pharaoh to release them]. But as for the mixed multitude, who were Egyptians just like Pharaoh, were it not for the demonstration of G-d's power, Pharaoh would not have released them. This is why the Torah says, "for G-d took *you* out of here with a strong hand..." and not "[for G-d took] *Israel*..."

Since this is the case, [i.e., since G-d brought both the Jews and the mixed multitude out of Egypt], "...leaven shall not be eaten," i.e., neither by you nor by the Jews.

Now, after [Moses] eased them with these words, the mixed multitude became convinced thereby that the Holy One, blessed be He, loves them.

He then apologized [to them] regarding what he was about to do, that is, the commandment regarding the firstborn. This is the sense of the following verse, "This day *you* [pl.] are leaving, in the month of the spring."<sup>11</sup> It introduces the following passages, and is as if to say, "Look, I gave you and the Jews one commandment in which you are both equal, for the reasons mentioned. Now, I want to give the Jews a private commandment, in which you have no part. But this is not because of any lack in G-d's great love for you, for in the first commandment you [and the Jews] were all equal, as mentioned. The reason is just that you have no obligation in this commandment, because you—the mixed multitude—are leaving *by day*, and not at midnight as the Jews did." As it is

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 9:16.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 13:4.

written, “And Pharaoh arose at night...[and called for Moses and Aaron that night, saying ‘Arise, get out from amongst my people, both you and the Israelites...].”<sup>12</sup> This was after the smiting of the firstborn of the Egyptians, and in recognition of this the Jews became obligated to consecrate *their* firstborn, who caused them to leave Egypt *at midnight*, when the smiting of the [Egyptian] firstborn [occurred].

[Moses continued to the mixed multitude:] “But *you* are leaving *by day*, not by night, and thus you are exempt from this commandment I am about to transmit.”

After he eased their minds, he turned to the Jews, and addressed them in the singular, for “Israel is a nation of oneness on earth.”<sup>13</sup> As it is written, “[And it will be,] when He brings *you* in...,” in the singular, [and so is] the entire passage written. [In effect,] he said to [the Jews]: “I have already given the mixed multitude the commandment not to eat leaven; I will now give you this commandment, as well. The reason I did not address you and them together is because the reason [you perform this commandment] is not the same for both of you. The reason they observe it is, as said above, because [G-d took them out] with a strong hand. But the reason you observe it is different: You shall tell your child [on that day, saying,] ‘It is because G-d did *this* [i.e., freed me] for *me*, when *I* left Egypt, and not for the mixed multitude, for they were not enslaved as I was, [that I do not eat leaven on Passover]. Therefore, [my observance of this commandment] is because of my exodus from Egypt.’” As it is written, “when *I* left Egypt.”

After [Moses] equated both [the Jews and the mixed multitude] in the performance of this commandment [although the reasons they observe it are different], and the minds of both were eased, he addressed the commandment of “Sanctify Me every firstborn” to the Jews alone, in the singular. [As it is written,] “And it will be, when He brings *you* in...,”<sup>14</sup> “...*you* will transfer every one that opens the womb to G-d...,”<sup>15</sup> “...And it was, when Pharaoh was obstinate in letting *us* go...”<sup>16</sup>

The word for “you” in these verses is in its singular form.

This reason applies only to the Jews, who left at midnight when the firstborn of Egypt were killed, and not to the mixed multitude, who left later, during the day, as we said above.

—translated from *Likutei Torah* and *Sha’ar HaPesukim*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 12:30-31.

<sup>13</sup> 2 Samuel 7:23.

<sup>14</sup> Exodus 13:11.

<sup>15</sup> v. 12.

<sup>16</sup> v. 15.

## *Parashat Beshalach*

The following is a pleasing [mystical] interpretation of the Exodus from Egypt, as an allusion to the departure of the soul from the body [at death].

*[13:17] When Pharaoh sent the [Jewish] people forth...*

This refers to when the soul departs the body. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, is the neck, for [the body] is stubborn. [Stubbornness] rules over the body, which is Egypt.

The Hebrew word for *Pharaoh* (*pei-reish-ayin-hei*) is composed of the same letters as the word for “the neck” (*ha-oref, hei-ayin-reish-pei*), as we have explained previously. The idiom for “stubborn” in Hebrew is “stiff-necked.” The body may be described as “stubborn” since it insists on imposing its gross, material perspective on the soul. “Egypt” (*mitzrayim*) means “constrictions” (*meitzarim*), an apt term for the body, since it limits the powers of the soul to those of this world, forcing it to conceive of everything in terms of time and space.

*[14:8] G-d hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he pursued the Children of Israel.*

[When the soul leaves the body,] the powers of the evil inclination set out to chase the soul in order to harm it. This is because the evil inclination is also the accusing angel. After taking the soul [from to body], it pursues it in order to harm it and take vengeance on it.

As the sages have said, the evil inclination (*yetzer hara*), the angel of death (*malach hamavet*), and the accusing angel (*satan*) are all one.

*[14:9] He overtook them while they were camping by the sea...*

The sea refers to Purgatory [*gehinom*], known as “the river of fire.”

When the soul leaves the body it must first be purged of the existential crust of materialism and negativity it acquired during its stay in the physical world. Only then can it proceed to experience the pure spirituality of Paradise.

*[14:10] As Pharaoh drew near—*

—to give the soul over to the agents of damage and inflictors of pain to torture them—

*the Children of Israel raised their eyes and caught sight of the Egyptians advancing at their rear, and they became very frightened. So the Children of Israel cried out to G-d.*

In order for the soul to be purified of its worldly, material crust it must be made to experience the extent to which this materialism is antithetical to truth and spirituality. This is an agonizing, torturous awakening.

*[14:11] They said to Moses—*

—i.e., to the good inclination—

—“Was it for want of graves in Egypt that you brought us to die in the desert?—

—i.e., “Now that you see all this pain and suffering these powers of evil are inflicting upon me, this battering in the grave [*chibut ha-kever*], was it not enough pain that I had to be buried and suffer inside the body and constrictions of the physical world, that I must now experience as well the pain of this grave”—this refers to how the soul is battered inside the grave—“and I have been taken to die [again] in the desert?” i.e., in Purgatory, the desolate abode of the forces of evil. Here is where vengeance is extracted from the soul.

The soul refers to its birth into a physical body as being “buried” inside a “grave.” Death is not seen as a cessation of existence, but rather as a descent from one spiritual level to a lower one. It is enough, the soul complains, that I had to live a full life in this grave of the body; why must I suffer further?

The image of the soul being “battered” in the grave refers to how it is existentially “shaken” of its materialistic encrustation, as above.

*“What is this that you have done to us, taking us out of Egypt? [14:12] Is this not the very thing we spoke to you about in Egypt, saying, ‘Leave us alone and let us serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!”*

I.e., “it was better for me in the body. I may as well have submitted to the evil inclination in the physical world; at least then I would not be suffering the pain I am suffering now.”

By being shown the truth and the splendor of spirituality, the soul is rudely awakened to the triviality of all the things the body convinced it to be important in this world. This realization of the futility and emptiness of the material life of the physical world is more painful than any pain than can be experienced in the physical world itself.

The opposite is true of the *tzadik*; he yearns for death from this world in order to go on to live in the world of truth.

As the sages say, “against your will you are born, and against your will you live.”

*[14:13] But Moses said to the people, “Have no fear...”*

The good inclination tells the soul, have no fear of this punishment, for it is for your own good. Through it, you will be rid of these inflictors of pain and be spared the ordeal of Purgatory. All the powers of impurity will remain there in this sea, i.e., the river of fire.

*“Stand firm and witness the deliverance that G-d will perform for you today...”*

By means of the purification process of Purgatory you will be cleansed of your sins.

*“...for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see again.”*

For they will remain in Purgatory.

*[14:24] Toward the end of the night G-d looked down upon the camp of the Egyptians with the pillar of fire and cloud...*

This refers to the descent of the soul to be judged in Purgatory. When this is over—

*...He threw the camp of the Egyptians into confusion.*

This refers to the powers of the evil inclination, who are cast into the “sea,” where they remain.

*[14:29] But the Children of Israel had walked on dry land in the midst of the sea, while the water formed a wall for them, on their right and on their left.*

The word for “wall” is *chomah*, which is written the same as the word for “anger” [*cheimah*].

The powers of evil are angry as the soul departs Purgatory purified of its material dross.

*[15:22-23] Moses then caused the Children of Israel to set out from the Sea of Reeds and they went out into the Desert of Shur. They walked for three days in the desert without finding any water. They came to Marah, but they could not drink water at Marah, for the water was bitter; that was why the place was named Marah [“bitter”].*

After the soul departs Purgatory, it starves for three days, since it spends three days without learning Torah. Torah is the nourishment of the soul, enabling it to endure Purgatory before entering Paradise.

*[15:24] The people complained against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?”*

I.e., “since we have not learned any Torah. The Torah is a tree of life to those who hold fast to it.”

*G-d showed [Moses] a tree; he threw it into the water and the water became sweet. It was there that He gave [the people] a statute and a law, and there He tested them.*

I.e., [the good inclination] shows the soul the reward awaiting it in the world to come.

The idiom “statute” also means “provision”; the word for “tested” also means “lifted up.” As it is about to enter Paradise, G-d prepares the soul by telling that it is about to experience the true value of the *mitzvot* it performed while in the body. This sweetens the water of Torah, which it may have experienced as bitter deprivation in the physical world.

*[15:26] He said, “If you diligently heed the voice of the L-rd your G-d and do what is upright in His eyes, carefully listening to all His commandments and observing all His statutes, then none of the sicknesses that I brought on Egypt will I bring upon you, for I am G-d Who heals you.”*

I.e., G-d promises the soul that since it observed the Torah [during its life in the physical world] and underwent its purification process in Purgatory, it will no longer experience any of the negativity and depression of evil, for it has been cured of all these.

In other words, the future tense of the verse should be read as the past: “Since you diligently heeded the voice...” etc.

*[15:27] Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy date palms, and they encamped by the water.*

There are twelve rivers of pure, spiritual water surrounding Paradise, corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel. Every [soul of each] tribe immerses in its respective river in order to be cooled from the fire of Purgatory and healed of its wounds.

*[16:1-2] They moved on from Elim, and the entire community of Israel came to the Desert of Sinn, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth of the second month after they had left Egypt. There, in the desert, the entire community of the Children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron.*

I.e., after all this, [there is one more stage before the soul enters Paradise]. It immerses again to be judged in “the flame of the revolving sword,” referred to here as the Desert of Sinn.

When Adam and Eve were banished from Paradise, G-d placed the flame of the revolving sword at the entrance to guard it. This purifying fire is a much more subtle one than that of Purgatory, and is necessary in order to remove the subtle materialism that still remains after the preliminary purification accomplished there.

This may be compared to the two stages of circumcision: after removing the thick foreskin, the thin mucous membrane must be peeled back as well. Neglecting to do this invalidates the circumcision. Similarly, in the “circumcision of the heart” there are two stages as well.

*[16:3] The Children of Israel said to them, “If only we had died by the hand of G-d in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread! But you have taken us out to this desert, to starve this entire congregation to death!”*

The soul complains about this more subtle punishment as well. But it undergoes it, and when it passes this stage and wants to enter Paradise, G-d tells it:

*[16:4] “I am going to rain down bread for you from the sky.”*

I.e., here in Paradise you will eat a lot of the bread of the Torah that you studied while you were in that world; this Torah is the nourishment of the soul. It is the 248 limbs and 365 sinews [of the soul], which are the 613 *mitzvot* that form the soul’s garment. The Torah itself [—as distinct from the *mitzvot*—] is the soul’s nourishment. If someone did not occupy himself with the study of Torah day and night in the physical world, he has nothing to eat in the world of the souls, even though he may have something to wear, formed by the *mitzvot* he performed.

*“The people will go out and gather each day’s portion...”*

In Paradise, the soul collects its daily reward and nourishment....

*[17:1] The entire community of the Children of Israel moved on from the Desert of Sinn on their journeys, according to the word of G-d.*

I.e., after receiving its reward in the lower level of Paradise, the soul goes on to the upper level of Paradise, referred to as Sinai, in order to receive [new levels of] the Torah from the mouth of G-d. The letter *yud* is added to *Sinn* to give *Sinai*.

*They encamped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink.... [17:8] Amalek then came and fought against Israel in Rephidim.*

But before it ascends to the upper level of Paradise, there is another type of Purgatory, more subtle than the river of fire, that it must traverse, in order to burn away those “sins” of the righteous that are as tenuous as a thread of hair. The gross sins had already been rectified by the lower Purgatory.

The higher one ascends in spirituality, the more the previous levels he was on appear to be gross and crass. Thus, at a higher level, a person may come to consider a way of thinking or behaving he had previously considered “spiritual” or “good” to be egocentric or “childish.” In order to proceed to the higher perspective of reality, he must rid himself of the lower one, which he now finds embarrassing or even shameful.

This is why G-d judges the righteous “to the breadth of a string of hair”: their higher standard of being makes attitudes or actions that would be normally considered innocuous or even meritorious look depraved in context.

This higher Purgatory is called Rephidim, which alludes to the righteous who “whose hand-grasp of the commandments was weak.”

According to the Talmud,<sup>1</sup> the implication of the name *Rephidim* is that there the Jews “loosened their hand-grip on the study of the Torah,” for the word *Rephidim* is derived from the root *rafeh* (*reish-peí-hei*), which means “loose” or “weak.”

This means that [in Rephidim] the Jews did not perform G-d’s commandments properly, but in laziness and unwillingly. Similarly here, the soul has already gained entrance to the lower level of Paradise, but in order to enter the upper Paradise it must have performed *mitzvot* [in the physical world] in love, with great desire and will. It receives its punishment for not having done this in this upper Purgatory, which is synonymous with Amalek, the highest level of impurity, the subtle fire that is perennially at war with Israel. Thus, “Amalek then came and fought against Israel in Rephidim” means “because of Rephidim.”

Amalek is synonymous with uninspired, unenthusiastic performance of G-d’s commandments, as it is written, “Amalek...who cooled you off on your way [to receive the Torah].”<sup>2</sup>

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>1</sup> *Sanhedrin* 106a.

<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy 25:18.

## *Parashat Beshalach* [second installment]

When the Jewish people left Egypt, “Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for [Joseph] had adjured the children of Israel, saying: ‘G-d will deliver you, and you will bring up my bones from here with you.’”<sup>1</sup>

As you know, our sages tell us that when Pharaoh told the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph and do whatever he tells you,”<sup>2</sup> Joseph required them to circumcise themselves.<sup>3</sup>

After storing up food during the seven years of plenty, the Egyptians found that when the years of famine began, it had all rotted. They went to Pharaoh, who advised them to go to Joseph and ask him for food. Joseph told them that he would distribute food to them only if they circumcised themselves. Pharaoh advised the Egyptians to comply with his demand, for “he [evidently] decreed that the produce should rot; what happens if he decrees that we should die?”

[In so doing,] he converted a number of souls and [therefore] circumcised them. These were the “mixed multitude” that left Egypt with the Jewish people.

When the Jews left Egypt, “a mixed multitude also left with them.”<sup>4</sup> These were converts from a number of peoples—including Egyptians.<sup>5</sup>

Moses also wanted to accept them and take them in under the wings of the *Shechinah*.<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, since Joseph began this deed and was the first one to convert them to Judaism, [it is appropriate that] Moses took him with him [personally].

In the Talmud,<sup>7</sup> the sages point out that “whereas all the [other] Jews were occupied with the spoil [of Egypt], Moses occupied himself with the commandments,” i.e., with fulfilling Joseph’s wish to be exhumed and taken to the holy land. The Arizal gives a thematic explanation of why this was so.



Further on, we are told that Pharaoh relented that he had let the people go, “and Pharaoh took six hundred choice chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, manned by militia.”<sup>8</sup>

[Mystically, this means that] the patron angel of Egypt summoned his entire chariot to prosecute [the Jewish people].

Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, was the earthly manifestation of the “guardian angel” of Egypt, the spiritual distillation of the evil(s) embodied in Egypt. The imagery of the chariot (Hebrew: *rechev*) evokes that of the celestial chariot (*merkavah*, from the same root *reish-kaf-beit*) Ezekiel saw in his famous prophetic vision. There, the

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 13:19.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 41:55.

<sup>3</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 91:5.

<sup>4</sup> Exodus 12:38.

<sup>5</sup> Rashi *ad loc.*

<sup>6</sup> See Rashi on Exodus 32:7.

<sup>7</sup> *Sotah* 13a.

<sup>8</sup> Exodus 14:7.

“chariot” depicts the array of spiritual forces of holiness that were departing from reality as the Divine presence was being banished from Earth with the destruction of the Temple. Here, the earthly chariots of Egypt that Pharaoh summoned represent the array of evil forces the patron angel of Egypt summoned to do battle with the Jewish people.

[There were] six hundred [angels] in order to opposed the six extremities.

The six hundred “choice chariots” correspond to the evil angels (or forces) that opposed the six holy *midot* (i.e., *chesed* to *yesod*). These inter-include all ten *sefirot*, and these sub-*sefirot* again inter-include, giving  $6 \times 10 \times 10 = 600$  sub-sub-*sefirot*.

“All the chariots of Egypt” opposed *malchut*.

“All the chariots of Egypt” means all the other, non-choice chariots.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the words “of Egypt” are taken to mean “contracted,” indicating a lower-grade evil force. Since *malchut*, as we know, does not possess its own intrinsic content, the force evil had to muster to battle it did not need to be as intense. Still, “all the [other] chariots of Egypt” presumably numbered more than the “six hundred choice chariots,” in which case we could infer that although *malchut* embodies less qualitative intensity, it does embody more quantitative power.

“Manned by militia” opposed the first three *sefirot*, i.e., the intellect, which is subdivided into thirty [aspects].

The Hebrew for “militia” (*shalishim*) can be understood to mean “thirty” (*sheloshim*).<sup>10</sup> The words for “manned by” (*al kulo*) literally mean “over all of them.” Thus, this phrase refers to the thirty that govern the *midot* and *malchut*, which are obviously the intellect. As we know, intellect comprises the three *sefirot* of *chochmah-binah-da’at*, which by virtue of their inter-inclusion comprise in turn thirty sub-*sefirot*.

We have seen previously that higher levels of inter-inclusion (by tens, hundreds, etc.) are associated with higher orders on the sefirotic tree. Here, the opposite is the case.

But the Holy One, blessed be He, “removed the wheels of his chariots.”<sup>11</sup>

G-d lured the Egyptians into the sea, and they were followed by the pillar of fire which boiled the sea water, causing the wheels of the Egyptian’s chariots to fall off.<sup>12</sup>



[Another] interpretation: Pharaoh took deducted the number 6 from the numerical value of the word for “chariot” [*rechev*, 222] leaving the numerical value of the word for “choice” [*bachur*, 216] in holiness.

The phrase “Pharaoh took six hundred choice chariots” can be read “And Pharaoh took six from the letter[s] of the word] chariot, [leaving] choice.” This is because the word for “hundred” (*mei’ot*) can be read “from the letter” (*mei-ot*).

*Rechev*: *reish-chaf-beit* =  $200 + 20 + 2 = 222$ .

*Bachur*: *beit-chet-vav-reish* =  $2 + 8 + 6 + 200 = 216$ .

G-d then subtracted another 1, leaving the numerical value of “cast” (215), which became: “He *cast* the horse and its rider into the sea.”<sup>13</sup>

The word for “cast” is *yarah*: *yud-reish-hei* =  $10 + 200 + 5 = 215$ .

<sup>9</sup> Rashi *ad loc*.

<sup>10</sup> Especially since there is no *yud* between the *lamed* and the second *shin*, allowing the word to be vocalized as the word for “thirty.”

<sup>11</sup> Exodus 14:25.

<sup>12</sup> Rashi on Exodus 14:24 and 25.

<sup>13</sup> Exodus 15:1.

The phrase quoted is from the first verse of the Song of the Sea, which the Jew people sang upon seeing the miraculous destruction of the Egyptians (and the evil they embodied) at the sea. By subtracting 1 from the power Pharaoh left in holiness, G-d caused his downfall, beating him, so to speak, at his own game.

The significance of the number 216 will become apparent presently.

The initials of the words for “G-d will fight for you”<sup>14</sup> are *yud-lamed-yud*. This is the holy seal of the face of the ox in the [Divine] chariot, the second of the 72 Names derived from the three verses “He moved...,” “He came...,” and “He stretched...”

“G-d will fight for you”: *YKVK yilachem lachem*.

The three consecutive verses Exodus 14:19-21 each contain 72 letters, an obviously rare phenomenon. The letters of these three verses can be arranged as 72 triplets of letters. But we are taught in Kabbalah that if we reverse the order of the letters in the middle set, the 72 triplets become 72 “Names” of G-d. The following chart is read horizontally, from the upper right to lower left corner. The first letters of every triplet are taken sequentially from the first verse, the second letters in reverse order from the second verse, and the third letters sequentially from the third verse.

וְהָיָה	יְיָ	סִימָן	עֲלֵם	מַחֲשֵׁה	לֵלֶה	אֲבָא	כֹּהֵן
חַי	אֱלֹהִים	לֹא	וְהָיָה	יָלֵךְ	מִבֵּה	וְהָיָה	הַקֶּסֶם
לֹא	כִּלְיָהוּ	לֹא	פֶּה	נִכְךְ	יִי	מִלֵּה	חַי
נִתְּנָה	הָאֵל	יָדָה	שָׁמָּה	רִי	אִם	לִכְבֹּד	וְשָׁרָה
יָדָה	לֵהָרָה	נֹקֶה	מִנֵּה	אֲנִי	חֶסֶם	וְהָיָה	יִי
וְהָיָה	מִיֵּךְ	וְהָיָה	יָלֵךְ	מֵאֵל	עָרִי	עֲשֵׂה	מִיָּה
חַי	דְּנִי	וְהָיָה	עֲמֹם	נִנָּה	נִתְּנָה	מִבֵּה	פִּי
נִמְסָה	יִי	וְהָיָה	מִנֵּה	וְהָיָה	יָדָה	עָנָה	מִיָּה
דִּמְסָה	מִנֵּה	אִיעֵה	חֲבִי	רָאָה	יָכֵם	הָיָה	מִסָּה

We have explained this previously,<sup>15</sup> as follows:

In the story of the exodus from Egypt, three consecutive verses describe G-d's power as manifest just before He split the Sea of Reeds, which the Jewish people passed through on dry land while the Egyptians were drowned:

“And the angel of G-d who had been going ahead of the camp of Israel now moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud went from in front of them and stood behind them. Thus [the pillar of cloud] came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel, making it cloud and darkness [to the Egyptians], but it gave light by night [to the Jews], so that the one came not near the other all the night. Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and G-d drove the sea back with a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land; thus the waters were divided.”<sup>16</sup>

In Hebrew, these three verses each contain 72 letters. In the *Zohar*<sup>17</sup> it is stated that these three verses refer in sequence to the Divine attributes of loving-kindness (*chesed*), severity (*gevurah*), and mercy (*tiferet*). The harmonious blending of these three principle emotive attributes forms the basic paradigm of how G-d relates to the world. Thus, they together form a composite “Name” of G-d, since a “name” is a means by which one is made known to others, i.e., manifests his attributes.

<sup>14</sup> Exodus 14:14.

<sup>15</sup> in our comments on *parashat Nitzavim*.

<sup>16</sup> Exodus 14:19-21.

<sup>17</sup> 2:51b.

The fact that each verse contains 72 letters means that they can be aligned in parallel, forming 72 triplets of letters. In this configuration, the *Zohar* states, the first verse is to be written in its proper order, since it represents G-d's loving-kindness, or a direct revelation of G-d's goodness. The second verse is to be written in reverse order, from the last letter to the first, since it represents G-d's severity, which is an indirect revelation of His goodness. Although *tiferet* is a blend of both *chesed* and *gevurah*, the third verse is not to be written half in the proper order and half in reverse order, as one might expect. There are two reasons for this: (1) in *tiferet*, *chesed* dominates over *gevurah*, and (2) as the ideal blend of *chesed* and *gevurah*, *tiferet* is a direct revelation of G-d's goodness and glory rather than an indirect one.<sup>18</sup>

The Name we are concerned with is the second of the 72. It presumably is associated with *gevurah* since it is the second. The four faces of the beasts that carried the Divine throne in Ezekiel's vision were that of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle. The lion-face signified *chesed*, the ox-face *gevurah*, the eagle-face *tiferet* (and the *midot* below it), and the man-face *malchut*. Thus, this Name (*yud-lamed-yud*) and the ox-face are related by virtue of their mutual association with *gevurah*.

The difference is that in [the initials from] this verse, the *yud*'s are ascendant. They indicate the force of *chesed*. The *lamed* is left to be last. It indicates *Ima*, the source of judgment that battles with Egypt.

In the verse from which these initials are taken, the order of the initials is *yud-yud-lamed*. Thus, although this Name indicates *gevurah*, it is a *gevurah* motivated by *chesed*. *Yud* is associated with *chesed* because when the Name *Havayah* is spelled out with *yud*'s, its numerical value is 72, the numerical value of *chesed* (*chet-samech-dalet* = 8 + 60 + 4 = 72).

The *lamed* originally was in the middle verse (and column), which as we said, is associated with *gevurah*. The *lamed* is associated with *Ima* since in its form it towers above the other letters, just as *binah*, embodying the intellect in general—presides over the *midot*.<sup>19</sup> The intellect is the three *sefirot* of *chochmah-binah-da'at*, which inter-include to produce 30 sub-*sefirot*, as we mentioned above. 30 is the numerical value of the letter *lamed*.

This [manifestation of *gevurah*] is followed by [a manifestation of] mercy, as it is written, “smiting Egypt and healing Israel.”<sup>20</sup>

[The verse continues:] “...and you will be silent.” G-d told them to be silent since it was not proper that they awaken the face of the ox, inasmuch as they would later sin [by worshipping] the [golden] calf. They thereby unhitched one of the four animals of the chariot.<sup>21</sup>

It would not be proper for the Jewish people to invoke the power signified by the ox when they themselves would misuse this manifestation later on. In the zodiac, the bull (Taurus) follows the ram (Aries). The exodus took place in the month of Nisan, the zodiacal sign of which is Aries. The Passover sacrifice was a ram; by sacrificing it, the Jewish people subdued the astrological power ascendent at that time. The mixed multitude, seeing that the sign of Aries had been overcome, thought to invoke the next icon, the bull.<sup>22</sup>

By abusing the ox, the Jewish people neutralized, so to speak, its power. The Midrash uses the imagery of a four-horsed chariot, one of whose horses has been unhitched. Since they weakened G-d's power through their sin, it was not proper that they try to invoke that very power, G-d's *gevurah*, to judge the Egyptians.

<sup>18</sup> This array may be seen, *inter alia*, in the standard editions of the *Zohar*, volume 2, p. 270a.

<sup>19</sup> *Tikunei Zohar* 55 (89a).

<sup>20</sup> *Zohar* 2:36a, based on Isaiah 19:22.

<sup>21</sup> *Shemot Rabbah* 43:8.

<sup>22</sup> The Egyptians worshipped the ram-headed god Khnum as the creator. He was also one of the gods of the Nile. There was also an Egyptian bull-god, Apis, an incarnation of the creation-god Ptah. “The priests at Memphis kept a real bull that was thought to be the god's living image. The bull lived in luxurious accommodations near the temple of Ptah, and at regular festivals the Egyptian upper classes were allowed to come and view the bull. When the bull died, it was mummified in a solemn ceremony and buried in underground catacombs” (Philip Wilkinson, *DK Illustrated Dictionary of Mythology* [London: Dorling Kindersley, 1998], pp. 31, 35).

Rather, [G-d] acted with mercy at the sea, and judged [the Jews] only according to their deeds at that time.

Thus, the word for “will be silent” is written without [an expected] *yud*, so that it may be read, “the ox descended,” i.e., in order to assist in their salvation.

In fact, in our text of the Bible, the word for “will be silent” (*tacharishun*) is written with a *yud*. Ignoring the *yud*, however, the word can be seen as a permutation of the two words for “ox” (*shor*) and “descended” (*nachat*):

*Tacharishun*: tav-chet-reish-(*yud*)-shin-vav-nun.

*Shor*: shin-vav-reish.

*Nachat*: nun-chet-tav.

—translated from *Sha’ar HaPesukim*, *Likutei Torah*, and *Sefer HaLikutim*

## *Parashat Beshalach* [third installment]

When the Egyptians realized that they were being attacked by supernatural forces at the Red Sea, they said, “I must flee from the presence of Israel, for G-d [*Havayah*] is fighting for them against Egypt.”<sup>1</sup>

As you know, Pharaoh derived sustenance entirely from immature Divine consciousness [*mochin d'katnut*], which is alluded to by the word “End.”

The words usually translated as “Red Sea” (*yam suf*) really mean “Reed Sea,” and can also be read as if they were vocalized *Yam Sof*, meaning “Sea of the End.” The “end” is the final *sefirah*, *malchut*, which descends into the lower worlds, i.e., the lower levels of Divine consciousness. Relative to its native environment, these lower levels of consciousness are “immature” or “constricted.”

This is the significance of [the fact that] the snake puts its tail in its mouth.

Pharaoh personified the primordial snake.

The mouth should properly utter words of Divine wisdom. But when the tail, the lowest level of the body, is placed in the mouth, the mouth is misused to utter words of “immature,” constricted consciousness, i.e., awareness of Divinity only as it is expressed in creation and nature.

This elevation of material consciousness to the status properly reserved for true Divine consciousness, i.e., awareness of G-d as outside and unbound by the laws and limitations of nature, is the essence of the primordial snake.

In the *Zohar*,<sup>2</sup> the imagery of the snake putting its tail in its mouth is used to illustrate the sin of “the evil tongue,” i.e., slander, a gross misuse of the power of speech. People commit this sin when material consciousness gets the better of them. As is explained in the *Tanya*,<sup>3</sup> those who give their bodies preeminence over their souls see only the outer shell of their fellow man, which differentiates between people, and are oblivious to the inner souls. They thus fall into the sin of hatred, which leads to slander.

This being the case, Pharaoh was both a head and a tail, in the idiom of the verse, “G-d will cut off from Israel both the head and the tail...on one day.”<sup>4</sup>

Pharaoh, here signifying the evil inclination in general, acts as the tail, the lowest consciousness of the Jew, and as the head, i.e., the tail elevated to and usurping the role of the head, proper Divine consciousness.

This also alludes to the [primordial] snake. Originally, he was the tail and Adam was the head, but [because of the primordial sin] this was inverted and the snake became the head and Adam the tail.

Adam here personifies the good inclination, or Divine consciousness. Sin consists of reversing the hierarchy between Divine and material consciousness.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “He will hit you on the head and you will bit him in the heel.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 14:25.

<sup>2</sup> 3:205b.

<sup>3</sup> ch. 32.

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 9:14.

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 3:15.

Man hits the snake on the head because the snake has usurped man's role as the leader; the snake bites the heel because by sinning man has become the heel/tail instead of the head.

For the same reason, the snake gives preeminence to the tail, carrying it above his head, and licks the dirt.

He puts his head in the dirt instead of his tail. He thus embodies the upside down order caused by sin.

Pharaoh was the image of the snake; he was “the great serpent.”

Ezekiel prophesied against Pharaoh: “Thus said G-d: ‘Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great serpent that crouches inside its rivers, who has said, “My river is mine, and I have made myself.”’”<sup>6</sup>

The river of Egypt, the Nile, was also the god the Egyptians worshipped. The Nile provided Egypt with water to irrigate its crops by overflowing regularly. It thus represented the immutable laws of nature, whereas the irregularity of rain encourages reliance upon G-d.

Thus, Pharaoh became synonymous with his river, his god, his philosophy of denying G-d's active involvement in life.

Therefore G-d was angry with Pharaoh, and He exacted retribution from him—i.e., from the Nile river, changing it to blood—using the very letters of the Name *Havayah* that he denied.

When Moses first approached Pharaoh, he told him to release the Jews from slavery, saying, “Thus says G-d [*Havayah*], G-d of Israel: ‘Send out My people, that they may celebrate for Me in the desert.’” But Pharaoh replied, “Who is G-d [*Havayah*], that I should listen to Him and send out Israel? I have not known G-d [*Havayah*], and I will not send out Israel.”<sup>7</sup> Pharaoh was acquainted with *Elokim*, G-d as nature, but not with *Havayah*, G-d above nature.

With the *yud* [of His Name, whose numerical value is 10], He struck him with ten plagues. He began with that which made him into the head—the Nile—and changed it into blood.

Corresponding to the first *hei* [of the Name *Havayah*, whose numerical value is 5], He said, “Behold, the hand of G-d [is upon your cattle...],”<sup>8</sup> [the hand] comprising five fingers.

Pestilence was the fifth plague.

Regarding the hand, [Rabbi Yosi the Galilean] said,<sup>9</sup> “With how many [plagues] were [the Egyptians] struck by [G-d's] finger? Ten plagues! [Thus, you must conclude that in Egypt they were struck by ten plagues]”—this is because the finger forms one *yud*, representing ten plagues—“and at the sea they were struck with 50 plagues”—corresponding to the first *hei* [of the Name *Havayah*].

When the Egyptian sorcerers could not reproduce the plague of lice, they declared, “This is the finger of G-d [*Elokim*].”<sup>10</sup> As the Arizal states in the present passage, this characterized the Egyptians' awareness of G-d throughout the ten plagues. Thus, the overall effect of the ten plagues is considered that of the “finger” of G-d.

Even though the expression “Behold, the *hand* of G-d is upon your cattle...” was said with regard to the plague of pestilence, one of the ten plagues, the Arizal here is interpreting it as a portent of the blow the Egyptians

<sup>6</sup> Ezekiel 29:3.

<sup>7</sup> Exodus 5:2.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 9:3.

<sup>9</sup> *Haggadah*, quoting *Mechilta* on Exodus 14:31, *Midrash Tehilim* 78:15, *Shemot Rabbah* 23:9.

<sup>10</sup> Exodus 8:15.

were to suffer at the sea. In this, he is basing himself on the above-quoted passage of the *Haggadah*, in which it is pointed out that the idiom “the hand of G-d” is used also to describe the scene at the sea: “Israel saw the great hand that G-d laid against Egypt.”<sup>11</sup>

Since “the finger of G-d” alludes to the ten plagues, and the hand possesses five fingers, the effect of the “hand of G-d” was the equivalent of fifty plagues.

Corresponding to the *vav* [of the Name *Havayah*] is the staff of G-d [that Moses used to begin the plagues and split the sea]. The *vav* is beneath the [first] *hei*, which is divided into a beginning, a middle, and an end, i.e., three *vav*’s.

The vertical line form of the *vav* signifies the downward channelling and flow of the mental content of the *hei* into the emotions. The *hei* is composed of the three lines: a top horizontal line and right and left vertical lines. These three lines can be visualized as three *vav*’s.

[The three *vav*’s of the *hei*] also form an allusion to the three [consecutive verses that begin with] *vav*’s, i.e., “And it traveled...,” “And it went...,” and “And he extended...,”<sup>12</sup> each of which possess 72 letters, and with which [Moses] split the sea, i.e., the “sea of the end,” which is the latter *hei* [of the Name *Havayah*].

We have seen previously that these three verses form 72 three-letter Divine Names.<sup>13</sup>

Inasmuch as the *vav* produces another *vav* [when spelled out, as *vav-vav*], it alludes to the twelve paths that appeared in the sea when [Moses] split it.

The numerical value of *vav* is 6, so twice *vav* is 12. We are taught that a dry pathway through the sea appeared for each of the twelve tribes.

What struck this *vav* in order to transform it into three *vav*’s? The power of the *yud* of the Name *Havayah*, above the *vav*.

The intensity of the insight-experience of *chochmah* is what serves to produce an emotional response to the intellectual abstraction of *binah*, transforming its three inherent *vav*’s into an actual *vav* of emotion.

Thus, at the sea, the entire Name *Havayah* was mobilized against the consciousness of Pharaoh.

This [is the meaning of the fact that Pharaoh’s constricted consciousness was only that of] the Names *Elokim*, while of the Name *Havayah*, which signifies expanded, mature consciousness, he knew nothing. As it is written, “I have not known G-d [*Havayah*].”<sup>14</sup>

The Egyptians reasoned that [the plagues] were nothing more than the finger of *Elokim*, and therefore were not worried, because [they felt that] their existence was not threatened.

Now, however, [at the sea], they saw that events were being conducted by the Name *Havayah*, so therefore [Pharaoh] said, “I must flee [from the presence of Israel, for G-d [*Havayah*] is fighting for them against Egypt].”<sup>15</sup> G-d was fighting

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 14:31.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 14:19-21.

<sup>13</sup> In our comments on *parashat Netzavim* and the 2<sup>nd</sup> installment of *parashat Beshalach*.

<sup>14</sup> Exodus 5:2.

<sup>15</sup> Exodus 14:25.

the Egyptians with His Name *Havayah*. This is why the Name *Havayah* is used here, and not the Name *Elokim*.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

## *Parashat Yitro*

The portion of the Torah read this week begins with the story of how Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, went to meet the Jewish people on their way out of Egypt as they reached Mt. Sinai. When Moses originally returned to Egypt after marrying Jethro's daughter Zipporah, he had planned on taking her and their two sons with him. Aaron met them on the way, however, and convinced Moses to leave his wife and sons with Jethro. "Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back [to him], as well as her two sons—the first one's name being Gershom...and the other one's name being Eliezer. Now, Jethro and [Moses'] sons and wife...came to Moses, to the desert wherein he was encamped, at the mountain of G-d."<sup>1</sup>

It is necessary to know that Cain and Abel personified aspects of the two *yesods* of *Abba* and *Ima* as they are manifest within *Z'eir Anpin*. Cain derived from the *yesod* of *Ima* concealed [within *Z'eir Anpin*], while Abel derived from the *yesod* of *Abba* concealed [within *Z'eir Anpin*], before it becomes revealed further down.

As we have explained previously, *yesod* is the drive for self-actualization that the preceding *sefirot* assume as they are about to be transmitted to the next *partzuf* and thus fulfilled. Specifically, both *sefirot* of the intellect, *Abba* (*chochmah*, insight) and *Ima* (*binah*, understanding) possess their individual *yesods*, which enter and nurture the development of the *partzuf* of the emotions, *Z'eir Anpin*.

Thus, the numerical value of Cain [*Kayin*, *kuf-yud-nun*, plus the *kolel*] is 161, which is also the numerical value of the Name *Ekyeh* when spelled-out with the letter *yud*.

*Ekyeh* ("I will be") reflects G-d's will to be manifest in creation. This Name is spelled *alef-hei-yud-hei*. When it is spelled out, and the *hei*'s are spelled out with the letter *yud*, we have:

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>	1 + 30 + 80	111
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	5 + 10	15
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	10 + 6 + 4	20
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	5 + 10	15
			161

The letter *yud* is associated with *chochmah*, so this spelling out of this Name represents the will within *chochmah* to be manifest in creation.

Now, Moses is [the reincarnation of] Abel, and Jethro is [the reincarnation of] Cain. [Jethro] came [to Moses] in order to rectify his having killed Abel.

Our sages teach us that Cain killed Abel in order to take the extra twin-sister that was born with him. This extra twin is alluded to by the fact that in the verse describing the birth of Abel, "And she gave birth as well to his brother [*et achiv*],

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 18:2-5.

Abel [*et Havel*],”<sup>2</sup> the direct object [*et*] appears twice, while in the verse describing the birth of Cain, “And she gave birth to Cain [*et Kayin*]”<sup>3</sup> it appears only once, implying that he was born with only one twin-sister.

Although Hebrew grammar technically requires that a direct object be preceded by the word *et* (which has no equivalent in English), this rule is often disregarded. Furthermore, the word *et* also occasionally means “with.” Therefore, when it is used to identify the direct object, it is often taken to allude to some additional entity implied together with the direct object. In this case, it implies that a twin sister was born with each of the two brothers, and since it appears twice in the verse describing the birth of Abel, we infer that two twin sisters were born together with him. (The fact that these twins were sisters may be indicated by the fact that the word *et* can also be read *at*, the feminine form of the pronoun “you.”)

These girls became the wives of Cain and Abel.

The mystical meaning of these twins is as follows: The *yesod* of *Ima* within *Z’eir Anpin* shines into *malchut* of *Ima*. [*Malchut* of *Ima*] emerges behind *yesod* of *Ima*, and is called *Leah*. This is the twin-sister of Cain, who, as we said, also issues from the *yesod* of *Ima*.

A twin of *yesod* of *Abba* similarly issues from the light of *malchut* of *Abba* [and is situated] behind the *yesod* of *Abba*. A second twin is formed when the light of *malchut* of *Abba* strikes the *yesod* of *Ima* [but it is situated] behind the *yesod* of *Ima*. These are the two twin-sisters of Abel, who is derived from the *yesod* of *Abba*.

Thus, whereas *Ima*’s *malchut* produces one twin of its *yesod*, *Abba*’s *malchut* produces two twins of its *yesod*. But since the second twin produced by *malchut* of *Abba* is produced when its light hits that of *yesod* of *Ima*, this second twin takes its place not behind *yesod* of *Abba* where it “belongs,” but behind *yesod* of *Ima*, where was created.

Psychologically, this (presumably) means that *chochmah* realizes that it must actualize itself as itself and also as the presence-of-*chochmah* within *binah*. As we have explained previously, *binah* must always carry something of the presence of *chochmah* within it, or else the intellectual development it carries out on the initial insight of *chochmah* is apt to go too far afield from the meaning of the initial insight. In contrast to this, *binah* needs only one self-actualization.

Now Cain felt that the second twin, who was produced when the light of *Abba* struck the light of *Ima*, should be his, for the *yesod* of *Abba* produced her by means of the *yesod* of *Ima*, even if she was in essence derived from the light of *Abba*. Cain therefore rose up against Abel and killed him. Jethro, the reincarnation of Cain, came to rectify this [error].

*Binah*, whose task it is to develop the flash of insight that is *chochmah* into a full-fledged intellectual development, must evince a measure of self-orientation, or what becomes—in later contexts—ego, in order to do its job. In contrast, the experience of *chochmah* is that of total self-abnegation in the face of the higher realization and insight being opened up. The danger of *binah* is that it take its selfhood too far, and appropriate not only its own intellectual development but the presence-of-*chochmah* within it as well. The consequences of this, as we have noted, can be dire: the whole initial insight of the message of *chochmah* can be lost in the overblown, out-of-control development of *binah*. This, evidently, is what happened with Cain. His distorted logic convinced him that the proper thing to do was to eliminate Abel, for the good of humanity. The G-dly message the world’s second generation was entrusted with—and to which Cain thought he was being loyal—got lost in his unchecked reasoning.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 4:2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 4:1.

Now [Moses' wife] Zipporah personified this [second] twin, who was positioned behind the *yesod* of *Ima*. She was therefore born to Jethro, for she issued from the light of *Abba* that struck the *yesod* of *Ima*, and Jethro—who was [the reincarnation of] Cain—issued from the *yesod* of *Ima*.

He therefore brought her to Moses, who was [the reincarnation of] Abel, in order to demonstrate that she was rightfully Moses', and thereby rectify that which he ruined the first time. This is the mystical meaning of the verse, "And Jethro...took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back [to him]": After Moses, who is Abel, i.e., the *yesod* of *Abba*, sent this light to the *yesod* of *Ima*, it was therefore properly Cain's and not Abel's (since it had been sent to *yesod* of *Ima*). But [Jethro] nonetheless brought her back to Moses.

When [Jethro mentioned their two sons], he called them "*her* sons," and not Moses' sons, because both of them were derived from the *yesod* of *Ima* and not from the *yesod* of *Abba*. The first one was named *Gershom* [*gimel-reish-shin-mem*], the numerical value of which [with the *kolel*] is 544, the value of the posterior of the Name *Ekyeh* when spelled-out with the letter *yud*.

As we have seen previously, when one *partzuf* descends and is en clothed in a lower one, it is only the external, or lower aspect of the first *partzuf* that enters the second. This is simply because the second *partzuf*, being a lower level of consciousness, cannot sustain the higher level of consciousness operative at the higher, intrinsic level of the first *partzuf*. All it can accept and assimilate is the part of the higher *partzuf* that is already oriented and aimed at being manifest on the lower level.

This lower, external aspect of the higher *partzuf* is called its "back" or "posterior." The way a Divine Name associated with a *partzuf* is manipulated in order to produce this "posterior" manifestation is considering first its first letter, then its first two letters, then its first three, and so on, until all the letters of the Name have been iterated. The value of all these iterations are then summed. In this way, the number produced represents the gradual issuance of that Name on its way "down" into the lower *partzuf*.

In our case, the "posterior" of *Ekyeh*, the Name associated with *Ima*, is as follows:

*Alef, alef-hei, alef-hei-yud, alef-hei-yud-hei.*

When these letters are spelled-out (with the letter *yud* used to spell-out the *hei*'s, as above), we have:

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>	1 + 30 + 80	111
<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>	1 + 30 + 80	111
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	5 + 10	15
<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>	1 + 30 + 80	111
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	5 + 10	15
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	10 + 6 + 4	20
<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>	1 + 30 + 80	111
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	5 + 10	15
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	10 + 6 + 4	20
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	5 + 10	15
			544

This numerical equivalence thus demonstrates that Gershom is solidly related to *Ima*, and not *Abba*.

Similarly, the numerical value of *Eliezer* [*alef-lamed-yud-ayin-zayin-reish*] is 318, for *Ima* is associated with the first *hei* of the Name *Havayah*, which is in turn associated with the Name *Havayah* as it is spelled-out such that its numerical value is 63, as is known.  $5 \times 63 = 315$ , and the numerical value of the *hei* itself is 5, giving a total of 320. These are the 320 states of judgment in *binah*. [In our case,] these were lacking their two upper roots, which sweeten all 320 states of judgment, so all that were manifest were 318, the numerical value of *Eliezer*.

As we have explained previously, the Name *Havayah* can be spelled-out in various ways, depending on whether we use a *yud*, a *hei*, or an *alef* to spell-out the *hei*'s and *vav*'s. Of all these possibilities, there are four that are actually used: those whose sums are 72, 63, 45, and 52. These four spellings-out of the Name *Havayah* are then themselves associated with the four letters of the Name; in this scheme, the spelling-out whose numerical value is 63 is associated with the first *hei* of the Name *Havayah*. We have also noted previously that the four letters of the Name *Havayah* are associated with the four principle *partzufim*: *Abba*, *Ima*, *Z'vir Anpin*, and *Nukva*. Thus, the first *hei* and the spelling-out whose numerical value is 63 are both expressions of *binah*.

Since the numerical value of *hei* is 5, the full manifestation of *binah* is  $5 \times 63$ , or 315. The value of the *hei* itself is added to this number, akin to a *kolel*, i.e., to include the general, overall consciousness of the letter together with its iteration via the Name associated with it. This gives us 320.

This number is significant as the number of states of judgment within *binah*. As we know, *binah* must evince the property of judgment as it methodically constructs a complete world-view out of the seminal insight of *chochmah* as it impinges on the intellects previous world-view. Every detail of the previous world-view is evaluated in light of the new insight, and modified, accepted, or rejected, depending on how it measures up to the new truth that has been attained. This is the process of judgment.

(Presumably, the two upper roots that were lacking in *Eliezer* were *yesod* and *malchut* of *Abba*, which were “disconnected” from the second twin of Abel when Cain appropriated her. By sending *Eliezer* together with *Zipporah* and *Gershom* back to *Moses*, *Jethro* was “filling in” these elements missing from the proper manifestation of *Ima*).

—translated from *Likutei Torah*

## *Parashat Yitro* [second installment]

This portion of the Torah opens with the story of how Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came to meet the Jewish people in the desert. "Jethro, the priest of Midian, the father-in-law of Moses, heard all that G-d had done for Moses and Israel, His people, that G-d took Israel out of Egypt.... Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came together with [Moses'] sons and wife, to Moses, to the desert where he was encamped, at the mountain of G-d. And he said to Moses, 'I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you, with your wife and her two sons.'<sup>1</sup>

Let us understand: If [Jethro] was talking to [Moses] personally, how could he say [in the present], "I, your father-in-law Jethro, *am coming* to you?"

Notice, however, that the initials of these words spell the word for "my brother."

The initials of the words for "I, your father-in-law Jethro" (*ani chotench Yitro*) are *alef-chet-yud*, which spell the word for "my brother" (*achi*).

This is because Jethro was a reincarnation of Cain, while Moses was the principle of Abel. He therefore hinted to him that he was [in a sense] his brother.

Because [when] Cain [slew Abel he] repudiated the principle of justice, saying "there is no justice and no judge,"<sup>2</sup> he now [as Jethro] said he was coming to [Abel's reincarnation, Moses] in order to rectify this. And indeed, he is responsible for innovating the institution of the judicial system, as we have explained elsewhere.

The rest of this chapter describes how Jethro, seeing how overburdened Moses was with judging all the disputes the Jewish people brought to him, suggested that—subject to G-d's approval—Moses appoint a hierarchy of courts and judges to handle the simpler cases.

Jethro was also called "the priest of Midian," because he was the first contender in history, when he was Cain, as it is written, "and Cain rose up against his brother, Abel."<sup>3</sup>

The word *Midian* comes from the root meaning "to argue, to contend" (*mem-dalet-nun*).

He was returned [again] in Korach, who "took a bad portion for himself," meaning that the soul of Cain became vested in him.

The story of Korach begins with the words "And Korach took...."<sup>4</sup> but it is not stated explicitly *what* he took. Mystically, this is interpreted to mean that he "took" the evil of Cain into him in order to contend with Moses.

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 18:1,5-6.

<sup>2</sup> This expression is found in *Bereishit Rabbah* 26:6, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 4:8.

<sup>4</sup> Numbers 16:1.

It is therefore stated that “[Korach and his associates] *arose* before Moses,”<sup>5</sup> just as “Cain *arose* against Abel.”

And just as [when Cain slew Abel, G-d said to him,] “The voice of your brother’s blood is calling out to Me from the ground,”<sup>6</sup> [when G-d punished Korach and his associates,] “they and all they possessed descended alive into the pit,”<sup>7</sup> “screaming, ‘Moses is true and his Torah is true, and we are imposters.’”<sup>8</sup>

This also rectified [the fact that Cain] had said, “there is no judgment and there is no judge.”



Furthermore, we must understand why Jethro did not come to Moses by himself [but instead announced his arrival so Moses would come out to greet him].

The explanation is based on what we have said, that Jethro was a reincarnation of Cain and was now coming to [Abel’s reincarnation, Moses] to rectify [what he had damaged].

Our sages disagreed over whether Jethro came to Moses before the giving of the Torah or after it.<sup>9</sup> They all agree that man’s chief rectification is through the Torah, as it is written, “all the sayings of G-d are pure,”<sup>10</sup> meaning that [the Torah] purifies and refines us. Their argument is that according to those who maintain that Jethro came before the Torah was given, he came in order to be rectified by the Torah. According to those who maintain that he came after the Torah was given, he was only able to come because the Torah had been given.

I.e., according to the latter opinion, it was the spirituality of the Torah in the world that inspired Jethro to come, or that gave him the spiritual power to overcome his evil side and join the Jewish people.

This accords with our sages’ statement that when the Jewish people stood around Mt. Sinai [and received the Torah], their defilement was removed,<sup>11</sup> for the Torah purifies everything.

The defilement referred to here is the defilement of subjective ego that was introduced into the human psyche when the primordial snake raped Eve. By accepting the Torah, the Jewish people were cured of this primordial psychospiritual disability, and remained in this condition until the sin of the golden calf.

Evidently, the Jewish people’s acceptance of the Torah affected the world at large as well, enabling Jethro, the arch-idolator (our sages state that he had worshipped every type of idol), to join the Jewish people.

The Arizal will now discuss the evolution of the primordial sin.

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<sup>5</sup> *ibid.* 16:2.

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 4:10.

<sup>7</sup> Numbers 16:33.

<sup>8</sup> *Bava Batra* 74a.

<sup>9</sup> *Zevachim* 116a.

<sup>10</sup> Proverbs 30:5.

<sup>11</sup> *Shabbat* 146a.

In the beginning, the first damage occurred when the moon accused [G-d].

“G-d made the two great luminaries—the greater light to rule the day, and the smaller light to rule the night.”<sup>12</sup> The sun and the moon are first called “the two great luminaries,” implying that they were originally the same size (i.e., they were both equally “great”). But, the sages tell us, the moon immediately protested over having to rule jointly with the sun, so G-d diminished it, leaving “a greater light to rule the day, and a smaller light to rule the night.”

Obviously, the sages do not mean to tell us that the moon was petty or jealous in the conventional sense. Rather, what we are witnessing here is part of the process through which G-d established the duality in creation between male/female (or giver/recipient). He intended from the outset that there be a greater and a smaller luminary, one radiating and one reflective. Since both are necessary components of creation, there is no *intrinsic* superiority of one over the other; from G-d’s perspective, they are both “great luminaries.” Still, in the context of creation, there is an *implied* superiority of the giver over the recipient, and, in order for the creative drama to unfold, creation’s perspective must be allowed to prevail over the Creator’s. Thus, as soon as it was created, the moon was immediately diminished.<sup>13</sup>

This “sin” of the moon and its subsequent banishment from the daytime is seen as the precursor to the sin of Adam and Eve with the fruit of the tree of knowledge and their subsequent banishment from the Garden of Eden.

Thus, it is written, “Let there be luminaries [in the heavenly sky],”<sup>14</sup> the word for “luminaries” being written without the expected *vav*’s, so that it may be read “curse,” as in “The curse of G-d is upon the house of the wicked.”<sup>15</sup> And immediately after this, [the luminaries] are referred to as being “greater” and “lesser.”

The word for “luminaries” (*me’orot*) is usually spelled *mem-alef-vav-reish-vav-tav*. Here, it is spelled *mem-alef-reish-vav*. It may be read as the construct of the word for “curse” (*me’eirah*: *mem-alef-reish-hei*).

The spelling of the word for “luminaries” thus alludes to the inherent proto-defect of self-awareness implied by the duality of male-female.

This defect could have been easily rectified, since it was not caused by human beings [but rather by G-d Himself]. And had Adam kept his one commandment, he would indeed have rectified it. But this did not happen; rather, Adam came and made things worse.

Adam’s one commandment was not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil for three hours, i.e., until the Sabbath, when it would have become permitted.

Cain and Abel also damaged [reality]. [Not only Cain but also] Abel “gazed and damaged.”

According to the sages, when Abel offered his sacrifice to G-d, he gazed on the Divine presence and therefore became incurred the death penalty (which is why it was Divine providence that Cain killed him). Gazing on the Divine presence means experiencing Divine consciousness for selfish intentions. The individual considers himself an independent agent who may rightfully pursue his own satisfaction. Having chosen to sunder himself from G-d, the source of life, he forfeits life—even if the object of his satisfaction is none other than the Divine glory!

<sup>12</sup> Genesis 1:16.

<sup>13</sup> *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 30, pp. 8-15.

<sup>14</sup> Genesis 1:15.

<sup>15</sup> Proverbs 3:33.

This is the mystical meaning of the phrase, “And G-d paid heed to Abel and his offering.”<sup>16</sup> We would have expected this phrase to read: “And G-d paid heed to Abel’s offering.” The meaning of G-d turning to Abel here is that He allowed him to gaze [on the Divine presence].

Abel should have demurred, aware that it doing this would cause him to experience G-dliness as one separate from it. Indeed, when Moses realized that the burning bush was a revelation of G-d, he “hid his face, for he was afraid of gazing at G-d.”<sup>17</sup>

“But to Cain and to his offering [G-d] paid no heed.”<sup>18</sup> G-d did not accept Cain’s sacrifice, and did not allow him to gaze [on His presence].

Just as in the preceding verse, the unexpected phraseology “...to Abel *and* to his offering” implies that G-d allowed Abel to gaze, in this verse, the unexpected “...to Cain *and* to his offering” indicates G-d’s response to Cain’s desire to behold His presence.

But in accepting Abel’s offering, [G-d allowed him] to gaze. By [succumbing to] the temptation [to do so, Abel incurred the death penalty and] was killed.

Now, [in Moses’ generation,] when [Cain] came [to be rectified], all that generation were aspects of [the soul of] Abel. The only ones related to [the soul of] Cain were Nadav and Avihu.

The soul of Cain looked for a kindred soul to latch onto. But since the leader of the generation was Moses, who was a reincarnation of Abel, all his followers, i.e., the entire Jewish people, were Abel-souls. The only exception were the two elder sons of Aaron, Nadav and Avihu.

This is also the meaning of the verse, “The priests, also, who approach G-d, must stay pure.”

When G-d was about to give the Torah, He instructed Moses: “Warn the people not to break through [the barrier] to G-d to gaze, lest many of them perish. The priests also, who approach G-d, must stay pure, lest G-d break out against them.... You will ascend, and Aaron with you, but the priests and the people should not break through to ascend the mountain, lest G-d break out against them.”<sup>19</sup> These verses are understood to mean that during the giving of the Torah, Moses had his own station on the mountain, Aaron had his own further down the mountain, the priests had their own even closer to the foot of the mountain, and the rest of the people did not ascend the mountain at all.<sup>20</sup>

Who exactly are these priests, since Aaron ascended the mountain part way? We must say they were Nadav and Avihu.

They are meant in the verse, “And [Moses] sent the *youths* of the children of Israel to offer burnt offerings and bulls as sacrifices to G-d.”<sup>21</sup>

This verse also describes the preparations for the giving of the Torah. These youths were obviously priests, since only priests offer sacrifices.

However, at this stage in Jewish history, the descendants of Aaron had not yet been designated as the priests. The priesthood was at this time the firstborn. Only later, after the sin of the golden calf, would the tribe of Levi be

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<sup>16</sup> Genesis 4:4.

<sup>17</sup> Exodus 3:6. Comment of Rabbi Shalom Sharabi.

<sup>18</sup> Genesis 4:5.

<sup>19</sup> Exodus 19:21-22, 24.

<sup>20</sup> Rashi on Exodus 19:24.

<sup>21</sup> Exodus 24:5.

designated as the officiants of the Temple and Aaron and his line designated as the priests. Nonetheless, Nadav and Avihu can still be referred to in these verses as “the priests”—

For they were *both* firstborn. [Their souls] were of the same aspect [of spirituality]. After them, Elezar and Itamar, [the other sons of Aaron,] were of another aspect.

Thus, even though Avihu was born after Nadav, they may both be considered Aaron’s firstborn. Thus, they were priests.

Of this, it is written, “the firstborn, Nadav, and Avihu...”—this was one aspect [of soul]—“...Elazar and Itamar.”<sup>22</sup>

This verse is taken from the census of the Jewish people. The simple understanding of the verse connects the word “the firstborn” simply with “Nadav,” the word following it. However, since Avihu is joined with Nadav by the conjunction “and,” while Elazar is joined with Itamar the same way, we may see Nadav and Avihu as one unit and Elazar and Itamar as another unit.

Of this, it is written, “the building of youths is destruction,”<sup>23</sup> for [Nadav and Avihu] did not succeed at what they tried to do.

When the Tabernacle was dedicated, almost ten months after the giving of the Torah, Nadav and Avihu offered incense on their own initiative, and were consumed by a fire that issued from the inner chamber of the Tabernacle. Although they were inspired by holy ecstasy and sought to do something exceptionally holy, they instead caused great tragedy.

They wanted to rotate [the *partzufim*] to face each other at the level of *netzach* and *hod*—for this was the [spiritual] position of Nadav and Avihu—but [instead] they caused destruction.

We have explained previously that the ideal coupling between the *partzufim* occurs when they are both facing each other. Then, they can share their innermost essences with each other and achieve true union. (As we know, the word for “face” [*panim*] is related to the word for “innermost” [*penimi*], since the face expresses the inner feelings of the heart and mind.)

Before they face each other, however, the *partzufim* are initially situated back to back. This is also a type of relationship, but a very external one, more of a truce than true sharing. “We get along fine: I don’t bother her, and she doesn’t bother me.”

*Netzach* and *hod* are the level of the sefirotic tree where prophecy originates.

Had they merited, they could have effected this with their incense.

This is similar to what we find in relation to Moses [and Solomon. Of Moses] it is written: “And there never arose again a prophet in Israel like Moses,”<sup>24</sup> but of Solomon it is written, “And he was wiser than all men,”<sup>25</sup> meaning that he was wiser even than Moses! Similarly, Moses’ name was missing the *lamed* of Solomon’s, which [mystically] means that the coupling [of the *partzufim*] that Moses caused was back-to-back, while that which Solomon caused was face-to-face.

<sup>22</sup> Numbers 3:2.

<sup>23</sup> *Megilah* 31b.

<sup>24</sup> Deuteronomy 34:10.

<sup>25</sup> 1 Kings 5:11.

Moses in Hebrew is *Mosheh* (*mem-shin-hei*) and Solomon is *Shelomo* (*shin-lamed-mem-hei*).

If you say: how could Solomon accomplish what Moses could not accomplish? The answer is that Moses found [reality] sunk in the depths of evil and exile, and with [his] great [spiritual] power brought it out and rectified it [such that the *partzufim* were positioned in holiness, albeit only] back-to-back. Then, when Solomon came, he found [reality relatively] rectified; all he had to do was rotate [the *partzufim*] to face each other, and this is done easily.

It is much harder to bring reality from evil into holiness than it is to bring it from holy indifference to holy mindfulness. Thus, Moses' accomplishment was greater; Solomon simply built on it.

Nadav and Avihu would have accomplished this same coupling [i.e., that of face-to-face] with their incense had they been married.

They themselves were not married even though they were of age. This indicates that they were too self-oriented. (In our own contexts, this would be like a man who keeps putting off getting married with the excuse that he is looking for the "perfect girl"—which usually means he is looking for someone to massage his ego. Our pursuit of our idealized soul mate must be balanced by our humble awareness of our own imperfections and lack of merit, which then focuses us on our obligation to G-d to marry and raise a family.)

If they were not selfless enough to marry, they certainly did not possess the spiritual wherewithal to effect the "marriage" of the *partzufim*.

[...]

Yitro, who, as we said, was an aspect of Cain, now came to join [the forces of] holiness. Cain damaged Abel in three ways: he killed him, he took his twin, and shed the blood of his descendants.

Twin sisters were born with Cain and Abel and were intended to be their wives. When Cain killed Abel, he took Abel's twin sister and married her. By killing Abel, Cain also "killed" all his future possible descendants.

He therefore now sought to rectify all three. This is alluded to in the initials of the words for "I, your father-in-law Jethro," which spell the word for "my brother," as mentioned above. [Jethro] meant to hint [to Moses]: "You should have mercy on me like a brother, even though I sinned against you, because I am coming to you and wish to repent. As for how I sinned by taking your twin sister, here I am now bringing you your wife." This is why he called [Zipporah] "your wife" and not "my daughter," as if to say, "this is your original, intended wife." When he said, "and her two sons," he meant: "here are the descendants I deprived you of, returned to you. Please accept them."

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

## *Parashat Yitro* [third installment]

In this *parashah*, G-d gives the Ten Commandments, the second of which reads, “You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a graven image, nor any likeness of anything in the heavens above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them and you shall not serve them, for I, G-d, your G-d, am a jealous G-d, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those that hate Me, but doing kindness to the two thousandth generation of those who love Me and keep My commandments.”<sup>1</sup>

All souls are composed of good and evil, due to the sin of Adam, as we have explained.

When Adam ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, good and evil became intermingled in his soul (and in reality in general). Prior to this, the difference between good and evil was clear, and man’s soul contained no admixture of evil, meaning that his perception was totally clear and unclouded by subjective ego.

But [this is true for every soul] in accordance with its level. There are those [whose souls] are mostly evil and contain only a little good, and there are those in whom the opposite is the case. There are many gradations within this spectrum, but “there is no righteous person on earth that does good and never sins,”<sup>2</sup> for everyone is composed of [both] good and evil, as we have said.

One who is mostly evil is termed “wicked,” and one who is the opposite is termed “righteous.”

Now, a wicked person, in every incarnation [his soul] undergoes in order to be refined, increases the [proportion of] evil [in his soul] beyond what it was in his previous incarnation. Therefore, the refinement process [of wicked people] is completed [relatively] quickly, i.e., in only four “generations.”

Each incarnation is called a “generation.” The purpose of reincarnation in this context is let the wicked person run the course of his wicked path, so the refinement and separation of good from evil can be accomplished.

Thus, the good in them is separated out and is given to one who is worthy of it, becoming part of the root of [this latter person’s] soul, as our sages said, “If he merits, he takes both his portion and his fellow’s portion in the Garden of Eden,”<sup>3</sup> and [only] the complete evil remains in him, all of which is pure refuse. He [thus] is doomed to destruction, and has no hope whatsoever, since he [no longer] possesses any spark of goodness.

But of those who are mostly good, i.e., righteous people, the inverse is true. Each time they are reincarnated, they become purer than they were the previous

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 20:3-6.

<sup>2</sup> Ecclesiastes 7:20.

<sup>3</sup> *Chagigah* 15a.

time. But since perforce, they must commit some new sin in each incarnation, they must be reincarnated [many times] until they fulfill all 613 commandments and correct all the sins they committed in their previous lifetimes. Therefore, the number of incarnations they must undergo gets drawn out, up to 2,000. This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “He visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation,”<sup>4</sup> meaning that G-d leads them through up to four incarnations. In the second incarnation they are termed the “children” of the first incarnation, [and so forth]. [By the end of the process] they require no more rectification at all.

I.e., the good in them has been totally extracted and given to someone worthy of it.

But all this applies only to “those who hate Me,” i.e., to those who are completely wicked. For the righteous,<sup>5</sup> even though they sin, G-d does them this kindness, that he lets them be reincarnated up to 2000 times. It is to this that the verse, “[but doing kindness to the two thousandth generation of] those who love Me and keep My commandments” refers.

The Arizal will now explain the significance of the number 2000 in this context.

Regarding these two thousand [generations], their significance is found in what we explained in *Sha’ar Ruach HaKodesh*<sup>6</sup> regarding a specific meditation based on the verse, “preserving kindness unto two thousand generations.”<sup>7</sup> We explained there that “the depths of the sea,”<sup>8</sup> i.e., the realm of evil, draw sustenance from two Divine Names that both begin with the letter *alef*, namely: *Adni* and *Elokim*, which are the forces of the sources of judgment.

*Adni* and *Elokim* are associated with the *sefirot* of *malchut* and *binah*, respectively.

*Binah* is the principle of judgment in the intellect, which sifts through the implications, applications, and ramifications of the insight of *chochmah*, evaluating them in terms of the mind’s existing mentality and deciding which of them should be accepted or rejected (as illusions), and which aspects of the existing mentality have to be revised or discarded in wake of the new insight.

*Malchut* is sovereignty, or the power to rule over the lower world that is born out of this *sefirah*. Creating and sustaining a lower world is a process of limitation of the preceding world.

When, because of ego, judgment is taken beyond its useful limit, it becomes intolerance or anger, which produces evil results.

The word *alef*, in addition to being the name of the first letter of the alphabet, means “thousand.” Thus, the two *alef*s that begin these two Names can be seen as two thousands. In the phrase, “preserving kindness unto two thousand generations,” the word for “two thousand generations” (*alafim*) literally means simply “thousands.” Thus, the two “thousands” alluded to by the two *alef*s that begin these two Names refer to the 2000 generations of which we have spoken.

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<sup>4</sup> Exodus 34:7.

<sup>5</sup> Emended according to gloss of Rabbi Shalom Sharabi.

<sup>6</sup> *Sha’ar HaYechudim* 3; *Sha’ar HaKavanot*, introduction to the discourses on *Rosh HaShanah* 90b.

<sup>7</sup> Exodus 34:7.

<sup>8</sup> Micah 7:19; Psalms 68:23.

In holiness, their manifestation is called “the thousands” and is referred to in the phrase “preserving kindness unto two thousand generations.” The righteous are judged from these Names.

In evil, their manifestation is called “the depths of the sea,” or “appallingly [*pela'im*].” The descent of the completely wicked there [to be destroyed] in evil is referred to in the verse, “and she sank appallingly,”<sup>9</sup> the opposite of “thousands.”

*Pela'im* is spelled *pei-lamed-alef-yud-mem*.

The word for “thousands” (*alafim*) is spelled *alef-lamed-pei-yud-mem*.

The *yud-mem* that ends these two words is a suffix that makes the word the masculine-plural. Thus, the main, first three letters of these two words are the inverse of each other. The opposite of the holy two *alef*'s is the adverb “appallingly,” which describes the descent of the completely wicked person into destruction.

It should be noted that the Arizal here has said a few times that what he describes as happening to the wicked happens only to the “completely wicked.” That is, the whole four-incarnation process that serves to rid the wicked person of any residual good so that he can be destroyed completely only begins once a person has already exercised his free will and chosen the path of explicit evil. This is the person described in ch. 11 of *Tanya* as the “completely wicked person,” “who never regrets and to whom thoughts of repentance never occur...for the evil in his soul is all that remains, inasmuch as it has so overcome the good that [the good] has departed from within him and only hovers over him from above,” so to speak. Having exercised his free choice to do only evil, the wicked person is simply led down the path he has chosen.

So it is clear that such a person is rare, indeed, and it could be argued that such people don't even exist nowadays, since most people who choose to defy the Torah's definition of good do so out of ignorance or socially ingrained prejudice against religiosity. Even in the classic case of a “completely wicked person,” however, the situation is not so absolute. The classic case of a person who chose wickedness and was punished by being made to choose more wickedness was the Pharaoh of the Exodus. But even in his case, the Rebbe points out that had he exerted himself to choose good, repent, and overcome G-d's decree against him, he could have. Even in the extreme case described in the *Tanya*, the “completely wicked person” still has some connection to goodness that “hovers over him from above” and is therefore in some way accessible to him.

It could be that, since the process the Arizal describes here only takes four incarnations, that such evil people have already all been dealt with and are an extinct species, so to speak. Finally, we are taught that in the final Redemption, no one will be left behind, as it is written, “who makes plans so that no one may be kept banished.”<sup>10</sup>

\* \* \*

[I also heard] from the Rabbi [i.e., the Arizal] a different way [of explaining this,] as follows:

Know that the word for “visiting” in the phrase “visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children” is written without a *vav*, and its numerical value is thus equal to that of the regressive iteration of the 72-Name, i.e., *yud-vav-dalet*, *yud-vav-dalet hei-yud*, *yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-yud-vav*, *yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-yud-vav hei-yud*.

The word for “visiting” (*pokeid*) is spelled:

*Pei-kuf-dalet* = 80 + 100 + 4 = 184.

The regressive iteration of the 72-Name is:

<sup>9</sup> Lamentations 1:9.

<sup>10</sup> 2 Samuel 14:14.

step				
1	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10	
2	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10	
	hei:	hei-yud	5	
3	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10	
	hei:	hei-yud	5	
	vav:	vav-yud-vav	6	
4	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10	
	hei:	hei-yud	5	
	vav:	vav-yud-vav	6	
	hei:	hei-yud	5	
total				

This is also alluded to in the verse, “the voice of my Beloved knocks.”<sup>11</sup>

The word for “knocks” (*dofek*) is spelled *dalet-pei-kuf*, and is thus a permutation of the word *pokeid*.

If you add this Name to the regressive iteration of the 63-Name, i.e., *yud-vav-dalet*, *yud-vav-dalet hei-yud*, *yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-alef-vav*, *yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-alef-vav hei yud*, whose numerical value is 166, their combined numerical value will be the numerical value of the word “My Name” [350]. This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “I will raise him up, for he has known My Name.”<sup>12</sup>

The regressive iteration of the 63-Name is:

step				
1	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10	
2	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10	
	hei:	hei-yud	5	
3	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10	
	hei:	hei-yud	5	
	vav:	vav-alef-vav	6	
4	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10	
	hei:	hei-yud	5	
	vav:	vav-alef-vav	6	
	hei:	hei-yud	5	
total				

“My Name” (*shemi*): *shin-mem-yud* = 300 + 40 + 10 = 350.

<sup>11</sup> Song of Songs 5:2.

<sup>12</sup> Psalms 91:14.

On the other hand, if you add the regressive iteration of the 72-Name, which equals 184, to the spelling out of the Name *Ekyeh* using *yud*'s, i.e., *alef-lamed-pei hei-yud yud-vav-dalet hei-yud*, which equals 161, the sum will be the numerical value of the name Moses [*Moshe*, 345], or with the *kolel*, the numerical value of the word “His Name” [*shemo*, 346].

The spelling-out of the Name *Ekyeh* is as follows:

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>	$1 + 30 + 80$	111
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	$5 + 10$	15
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	$10 + 6 + 4$	20
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	$5 + 10$	15
			161

*Moshe*: *mem-shin-hei* =  $40 + 300 + 5 = 345$ .

*Shemo*: *shin-mem-vav* =  $300 + 40 + 6 = 346$ .

As Rabbi Chaim Vital's son, Rabbi Shmuel Vital, explains this, the name *Moshe* and the word for “His Name” are alluded to in the verse, “What is His Name, and what is His son's Name?”<sup>13</sup> The word for “His Name” is mentioned explicitly. Moses is alluded to by the word “what” (*mah*), for we are taught that the name *Moses* (*Moshe*, *mem-shin-hei*) can be seen as an abbreviation for the first three words in the verse “What was is what will be”<sup>14</sup> (*mah she-hayah hu*), alluding to the teaching that Moses is both the first and the final redeemer. So Moses is somehow intimately connected to these two Names of G-d (the 72-Name and *Ekyeh*), alluded to by the numerical value of the word “His Name.”

This connection is as follows: The numerical value of “His Name” is also that of the word for “goodwill” (*ratzon*, *reish-tzadik-vav-nun* =  $200 + 90 + 6 + 50 = 346$ ), which is allied with the concept of forgiveness, both thematically and because the word *ratzon* permutes into the word for “preserving” (*notzer*) in the phrase “preserving kindness for two thousand generations.”<sup>15</sup> Kindness (*chesed*) is associated with the 72-Name of G-d, since the numerical value of *chesed* is 72 (*chet-samech-dalet* =  $8 + 60 + 4 = 72$ ). The numerical value of the spelling out of *Ekyeh* (161) is also the numerical value of the word *alafim* (“thousands”): *alef-lamed-pei-yud-mem* =  $1 + 30 + 80 + 10 + 40 = 161$ .

The significance of combining the regressive iterations of the 72-Name and the 63-Name to equal “My Name” is not fully explained here, however.

Perhaps the point here is the contrast between “My Name” and “His Name,” i.e., looking at G-d's Name from His perspective vs. from our perspective. In the former perspective, G-d initiates the return of the fallen person (“I will raise him up, for he has known My Name”), while from the latter perspective, we must initiate our *teshuvah*, albeit relying on G-d's thirteen attributes of mercy (from which the verse “preserving kindness unto two thousand generations” is taken). *Chassidus* might say that when the Jew identifies with his Divine soul (such that he looks at G-d's Name from G-d's perspective, since he identifies with his own inner G-dliness), his *teshuvah* occurs spontaneously, by itself, without conscious effort on our part. When we look at G-dliness as something outside of us (*His Name*), we must pursue *teshuvah* consciously.

—translated from *Sha'ar HaPesukim* and *Likutei Torah*

<sup>13</sup> Proverbs 30:4.

<sup>14</sup> Ecclesiastes 1:9.

<sup>15</sup> Exodus 34:7.

## *Parashat Mishpatim*

The portion of the Torah read this week begins with the law of the Jewish bondsman: “If you buy a Jewish bondsman, he will work [only] six years; in the seventh he will go free....”<sup>1</sup>

Why did G-d decree that the Jewish bondsman should work no more and no less than six years? And why may the Jewish bondsman marry a Canaanite slave-girl? This is a heinous sin, [as it is written,] “he consorted with the daughter of an alien god.”<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, why is the law of the Jewish bondsman different from that of the Jewish handmaiden? For our sages said<sup>3</sup> that “a Jewish bondsman serves the [master’s] son but not his daughter, [while a Jewish handmaiden serves neither the master’s son nor his daughter].” A Canaanite slave, we find, serves everyone [in the master’s household], as it is written, “And you shall pass them on to your children after you.”<sup>4</sup> The Canaanite slave is only obligated to perform those *mitzvot* that [Jewish] women are obligated in.

I.e., all passive (i.e., “negative”) commandments and those active commandments not required to be done at specific times. Although the Canaanite slave is a non-Jew, his acquisition by a Jew is a semi-conversion of sorts, and he becomes thereby obligated in the performance of *mitzvot* to a certain degree.

The mystical explanation of all this is as follows. Every person possesses [at least] a soul [*nefesh*] from the world of *Asiyah*. Even if this soul is derived from a higher level of the world of *Asiyah*, it is still no more than a *nefesh*. This soul is called “the *nefesh* of *Atzilut*,” or “the Canaanite slave-girl.”

The five levels of the soul, in ascending order, are *nefesh* (active soul), *ruach* (emotional “wind” or “spirit”), *neshamah* (“breath” of life), *chayah* (“living being”), and *yechidah* (“unique one”). In general, these five levels are associated with the five worlds of *Asiyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Beriah*, *Atzilut*, and the *keter* of *Atzilut*, respectively. In particular, however, each of the five levels exists in each of these worlds. Thus, one can possess, in addition to the basic level of *nefesh* of *Asiyah*, a *ruach* of *Asiyah*, etc. But since these are all aspects of *Asiyah*, they are all considered, generally, on the level of *nefesh*.

These “souls” or “levels of soul” are levels of consciousness of G-d and the relationship with G-d that results from this consciousness. The world of *Asiyah* (“action”) is the world where action is paramount; everything is evaluated and conceived of in terms of action. A person whose G-d-consciousness (“soul”) is on this level relates to G-d in a very behaviorally-oriented, perhaps even just perfunctory way. He has a *nefesh*, he is alive, but not much more than that. He is not emotionally and certainly not intellectually involved in his service of G-d. He serves G-d like a Canaanite slave-girl, perhaps not altogether against his will, but if it were up to him he’d rather be doing something else.

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 32:2.

<sup>2</sup> Malachi 2:11. The full text of this passage is: “Have we not all one Father? Did not one G-d create us? Why do we break faith with one another, profaning the covenant of our ancestors? Judah has broken faith; abhorrent things have been done in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has profaned what is holy to G-d—what He desires—and espoused daughters of alien gods.”

<sup>3</sup> *Kidushin* 17b.

<sup>4</sup> Leviticus 25:46.

Now, there are three spellings-out of the Name *Ekyeh*, whose numerical values are 130, 140, and 122. The sum of these three is the same as the numerical value of the word for “slave-girl” [*shifchah*] with the *kolel*.

The Name *Ekyeh* is spelled *alef-yud-hei-yud*. The two *hei*’s of this Name can be spelled-out either with *yud*’s, *hei*’s, or *alef*’s. Thus, if we consider only the numerical values of the letters used to spell-out the Name (ignoring those of the letters of the Name themselves), we have three possible sums:

letter	1 <sup>st</sup> spelling out			2 <sup>nd</sup> spelling out			3 <sup>rd</sup> spelling out		
<i>alef</i>	<i>lamed-pei</i>	30 + 80	110	<i>lamed-pei</i>	30 + 80	110	<i>lamed-pei</i>	30 + 80	110
<i>hei</i>	<i>yud</i>	10	10	<i>hei</i>	5	5	<i>alef</i>	1	1
<i>yud</i>	<i>vav-dalet</i>	6 + 4	10	<i>vav-dalet</i>	6 + 4	10	<i>vav-dalet</i>	6 + 4	10
<i>hei</i>	<i>yud</i>	10	10	<i>hei</i>	5	5	<i>alef</i>	1	1
			140			130			122

The sum of these three is  $140 + 130 + 122 = 392$ .

*Shifchah* = *shin-pei-chet-hei* =  $300 + 80 + 8 + 5 = 393$ .

The Name *Ekyeh* means “I will be,” an assertion of selfhood, and is usually associated with *binah*, the *sefirah* of the intellect that must assume its own selfhood in order to fulfill its function of processing the insight of *chochmah*. But since *malchut*, in order to fulfill its function of transmitting the reduced consciousness of its home-world to the world below it, must also evince a certain selfhood, the Name *Ekyeh* is sometimes associated with it as well.

[These] three Names *Ekyeh* are present in *malchut* [of *Atzilut*]. *Malchut* [of *Atzilut*] “nests” in *Asiyah*, and therefore its three spellings-out descend into *Asiyah*.

It is said in the *Zohar* that each of the four principle *partzufim* of *Atzilut* “nests” in one of the four worlds. *Abba* (*chochmah*) nests in *Atzilut* itself; *Ima* (*binah*) nests in *Beriah*; *Z’eir Anpin* (the *midot*) nests in *Yetzirah*; and *Nukva* (*malchut*) nests in *Asiyah*. By “nests” is meant that the *partzuf* in question becomes the dominant consciousness of the world in which it nests. Thus, the dominant consciousness of the world of *Asiyah* is that of the *sefirah* of *malchut*, which, as we know, is principally that of actualizing the residual consciousness of the preceding levels. Like *malchut*, *Asiyah* is the realm in which actualization and action are paramount.

The spelling-out of any Name of G-d expresses how that Name is manifest. Since *malchut* of *Atzilut* is manifest chiefly in the world of *Asiyah*, its three spellings-out descend into this world. This explains why in the above calculation we considered only the letters used to spell out the Name and did not consider the letters of the Name themselves.

*Ruach* is associated with the world of *Yetzirah*, no matter what level thereof. [A *ruach* of] *Yetzirah* is called a [Jewish] bondsman.

One who attains the Divine consciousness (“soul”) of *ruach* lives in the experience of the world of *Yetzirah*, i.e., in an emotional relationship with G-d. His service is no longer that of the Canaanite, but of the Jewish bondsman, who although a servant, is at least emotionally tied to and involved with his master (since they are both Jews). This type of Jew serves G-d out of genuine concern, love, and awe of Him.

The mystical allusion to this is that the word for “bondsman” [*eved*] may be read *ayin-beit* [= 72] *dalet* [= 4]. To explain: The Name *Havayah* alludes to *Z’eir Anpin*; *Z’eir Anpin* “nests” in *Yetzirah*. Therefore the posterior of the Name *Havayah*, whose numerical value is 72, descends into this world. The 4 represents the four letters of the Name itself.

All of G-d's Names are associated with specific *sefirot*. The Name *Havayah* is associated with *tiferet*, the "heart," the central *sefirah* of *Z'vir Anpin*. As we have explained previously, the "posterior" of any Name is formed by considering its first letter, then its first two, then its first three, etc., until all the letters have been considered. These iterations are then summed. Similar to the "spelling-out," the posterior iteration of a Name indicates how that Name descends to be enfolded in the level below it. The posterior of the Name *Havayah* is derived as follows:

yud	10
yud	10
hei	5
yud	10
hei	5
vav	6
yud	10
hei	5
vav	6
hei	5
	72

*Neshamah* is associated with the world of *Beriah*. [Such a soul] is called a [Jewish] maidservant.

*Beriah* is the world of the intellect, since *Ima* (*binah*) "nests" in it. Someone who has risen to this level serves G-d with the full commitment of his intellect.

The mystical allusion to this is as follows: The numerical value of the first two letters of the word for "maidservant" [*amah*, *alef-mem*, 41] is the number of letters required to iterate the Name *Ekyeh*, its spelling-out, its second spelling-out:

alef	alef	alef
		lamed
		pei
	lamed	lamed
		mem
		dalet
	pei	pei
		alef
hei	hei	hei
		yud
	yud	yud
		vav
		dalet
yud	yud	yud
		vav
		dalet
	vav	vav
		yud
		vav
		dalet
	dalet	lamed
		tav

hei	hei	hei
		yud
	yud	yud
		vav
		dalet

This is the Name *Ekyeh* in *Ima*, which “nests” in [*Beriah*, the world of] the Throne. The *hei* [i.e., the third letter of the word *amah*] signifies the *hei* of *Ima* itself.

This Name *Ekyeh* is that associated with *Ima*, as opposed to the one associated with *malchut*, discussed above. The world of *Beriah* is the location of the “heavenly throne of glory,” as explained in the *Zohar*. In the correspondence between the four letters of the Name *Havayah* and the four principle *partzufim* of *Atzilut*, *Ima* is associated with the first *hei*.

Besides these levels of soul, one may attain [a soul] from the world of *Atzilut* [itself, and not just from a manifestation of *Atzilut* in the lower three worlds]. [He may attain] a *nefesh* from *malchut* [of *Atzilut*], a *ruach* from *tiferet* [of *Atzilut*], a *neshamah* from *binah* [of *Atzilut*], or a *chayah* from *chochmah* [of *Atzilut*]. [We see that *chayah* is related to *chochmah*, for] about it it is written, “and wisdom enlivens those who possess it.”<sup>5</sup> This was the level of the soul of Moses.

The process of ascending the ladder of Divine consciousness and service leads through the four worlds of *Asiyah* (behaviorism, action), *Yetzirah* (emotional involvement), *Beriah* (intellectual involvement), and *Atzilut* (subsumption of the self into the reality of G-d). Once in the world of *Atzilut*, the soul is no longer termed a “servant” of G-d but has so merged with Divinity that it is termed a “son” of G-d.<sup>6</sup> This is the level of Divine consciousness that defines a *tzadik*.

Within this level of Divine consciousness, there are again levels of ascent, as one identifies with G-d as Ruler of the universe (*malchut*, *nefesh*), G-d’s emotional attributes (*midot*, *ruach*), G-d’s intellect (*binah*, *neshamah*), or G-d’s super-intellect, His original insight that gave rise to creation (*chochmah*, *chayah*). This is the source of the Torah, and the level of Divine consciousness attained the Moses, who served as the conduit or channel through which the Torah was given.

[Higher yet, one may attain] a *yechidah* from *Arich* [*Anpin* of *Atzilut*]. This is the soul-level of *Mashiach*, of whom it is written, “He will ascend and be exalted and uplifted exceedingly.”<sup>7</sup> Our sages said this verse means that “*he will ascend—higher than Abraham, be exalted—higher than Isaac, be uplifted—higher than Jacob, exceedingly—higher than Moses.*”<sup>8</sup>

*Mashiach*’s soul is the collective *yechidah* of the Jewish people, their total identification with their Divine dimension. This consciousness transcends the limitations of the Torah as it was revealed through Moses, and is that of the Torah’s inner dimension.

Returning to the previous discussion,

This is why the Jewish maidservant, the *neshamah* that descends from the Throne of Glory, serves neither the [master’s] son nor his daughter. She is

<sup>5</sup> Ecclesiastes 7:12.

<sup>6</sup> See *Torah Or*, beginning of p. *Mishpatim*.

<sup>7</sup> Isaiah 52:13.

<sup>8</sup> *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Toldot* 14.

subservient neither to *Z'eir Anpin* nor to *Nukva*, they being the “son” and “daughter,” but only to *Abba* [their “father”]. She therefore only serves the master.

The *ruach*, however, being from *Z'eir Anpin*, which was blemished and descended as the Jewish bondsman, does serve [his master's] son, for he is subservient to *Z'eir Anpin* [the “son”]. Still, he does not serve [his master's] daughter, for he is not subservient to *malchut*.

The Canaanite slave, which is a soul that left the realm of holiness and was blemished and then ascended back to enter the world of *Asiyah*, serves all [members of the master's household], for it is at the level of *malchut*, which is subservient to all [the levels above it].

The Canaanite slave is a mentality that has opted out of Divine consciousness altogether in favor of worldly, mundane consciousness. When it first repents and submits once again to the order of holiness, it must begin at the bottom, first assuming the role of the simple slave.

This is why [the slave] is only obligated to perform those *mitzvot* that women are obligated in—he/she has so far progressed only so far as the level of *malchut*, the feminine principle.

Of course, the orientation of the Canaanite slave and the Jewish woman are the exact opposite. The woman is exempt from many *mitzvot* because she is “busy” manifesting feminine consciousness, which, as we have explained previously, is the drive to actualize Divinity in the concrete reality of this world. The Canaanite slave is moving in the opposite direction; he is ascending out of his former absolute identification with the concrete reality of this world into the more abstract world of holiness. Thus, for different reasons, they both are obligated only minimally in *mitzvot*.

As to why the master is allowed to give [the Jewish bondsman] a Canaanite slave-girl, this is because *yesod* copulates on three levels. The first is above, in the world of *Atzilut*, as it is written, “These are the generations of Jacob: Joseph.”

“Jacob” is an appellation of *tiferet* of *Atzilut*; “Joseph” of *yesod* of *Atzilut*. This verse thus describes the coupling of *yesod* at the level of *Atzilut*.

The second is [alluded to in the continuation of the above citation]: “and he was a youth,” referring to when [*yesod* of *Atzilut*] becomes vested in the “youth,” i.e., the world of *Yetzirah*, and copulates with its feminine counterpart [i.e., *malchut*] of *Yetzirah*, or when it descends and copulates at the level of *Asiyah*, at which the forces of evil are able to exist.

*Yetzirah* is emotion-consciousness, i.e., that of an immature youth. Since in *Asiyah* the dominant consciousness is that of behavior and action devoid of inspiration, evil can gain a foothold.

Since the Jewish bondsman was blemished and descended into *Yetzirah*, then, just as [*yesod* at the level of] *Yetzirah* [sometimes] copulates below, at the level of *Asiyah*, so may his master give him a Canaanite slave-girl.

The Jewish bondsman having intercourse with the Canaanite slave-girl is thus enacting how *yesod* of *Yetzirah* sometimes descends to copulate at the level of *Asiyah*.

From all the above it becomes clear that the different types of servants and bondsmen the Torah describes are different states of Divine consciousness. The Jew's soul's natural home is in the world of *Atzilut*, completely

submerged in Divinity. The fact that he is not consciously at this level is due either to the simple circumstance of his soul being born into a physical body or because of some failing in a previous lifetime that he has now to overcome. Life, in this context, is thus a progression through the varied states of Divine consciousness embodied in these levels of servants and bondsmen, and finally through the various levels of *Atzilut* itself, until the individual is able to reveal, on his level, his own “spark of *Mashiach*” every Jew possesses.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

## *Parashat Mishpatim* [second installment]

The portion of the Torah read this week includes the laws of damages.

“When two people have an argument, and one hits the other with a stone or his fist...”<sup>1</sup>

“If an ox gore a man or a woman...”<sup>2</sup>

“If a man open a pit or dig a pit and not cover it...”<sup>3</sup>

“If a man lets his cattle ruin a field or vineyard, whether by letting it walk or graze in [someone] else’s field...”<sup>4</sup>

“If a fire breaks out and sets fire to thorns, devouring a stack of grain, standing grain, or a field...”<sup>5</sup>

A person’s liability for damages is different for each of these cases, and much of Jewish civil law is concerned with distilling these cases into their underlying principles. Thus, the sages state that “There are four principle categories of damage: the ox, the pit, the destroyer, and the fire.”<sup>6</sup> As we shall see, the “destroyer” may refer either to man or to a grazing animal.

Let us discuss the laws of the four principle categories of damage: the Ox, the Pit, the Destroyer, and the Fire. These four are the four levels of evil [*kelipot*]. They correspond to the four holy fathers [of the Jewish people]: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David.

The Hebrew term for “principle categories” is *avot*, which literally means “fathers,” since the principle categories give rise to “offspring,” i.e., secondary or derivative categories. Hence the analogy between the “fathers” of damages and the fathers of the Jewish people.

The Ox corresponds to the attribute of Isaac, i.e., *gevurah*, as it is written, “the face of the lion to the right, and the face of the ox to the left.”<sup>7</sup>

Left is the side of *gevurah*. The verse quoted is from the prophet Ezekiel’s vision of the Divine chariot, the image of the sefirotic array in the spiritual worlds. The holy “ox,” holy *gevurah*, is power harnessed in the service of G-d. The evil ox is power misused in order to cause damage.

The Pit corresponds to [the attribute of] Abraham, who was “the well of living water.”<sup>8</sup> The pit, [however,] is “a pit of raging waters, slimy mud.”<sup>9</sup>

The attribute of Abraham was *chesed*, which is associated with life-giving water. Evil water is water that causes damage, whether by drowning, causing one to slip, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 21:18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 21:28.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 21:33.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 22:4.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 22:5.

<sup>6</sup> *Bava Kama* 1:1.

<sup>7</sup> Ezekiel 1:10.

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 26:19.

<sup>9</sup> par. Psalms 40:3.

The Destroyer corresponds to [the *sefirah* of] *tiferet*, according to the opinion that the “destroyer” refers to man,<sup>10</sup> as it is written, “it is the *glory* of a *man* to sit in a house.”<sup>11</sup>

There are two opinions in the Talmud regarding the meaning of the term used for the third category of damage (*maveh*). According to one opinion, it means a man causing damage. According to the other opinion, it means a grazing animal (and the category of “Ox” means only a *trampling* animal). According to this opinion, the “four principle categories” enumerated by the sages are only categories of damages done by a person’s *possessions*, not by a person himself.

*Tiferet* means “glory”; hence the connection between *tiferet* and “man” given in the verse quoted.

The word for “destroyer” [*maveh*] alludes to two Names [of G-d]: the 42-letter Name and the Name of 72.

The 42-letter name is formed by the initials of the liturgical poem *Ana B’cho’ach*.<sup>12</sup>

The “Name of 72” is the Name *Havayah* spelled out such that its numerical value is 72:

*yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-yud-vav hei-yud* = 10 + 6 + 4 + 5 + 10 + 6 + 10 + 6 + 5 + 10 = 72.

*Maveh*: *mem-beit-ayin-hei* = 40 + 2 + 70 + 5 = 42 + 75.

The discrepancy between 75 and 72 is now explained:

The remainder from 75 indicates *tiferet*, which blends the right and left [axes].

*Tiferet* is the third *sefirah* of the emotions, the synthesis of the preceding two (*chesed* and *gevurah*), and thus may be rightly alluded to by the number 3, the difference between 75 and 72.

The numerical value of the word for “pit” [*bor*] is the same as that of four of the letters that make up the name Abraham, leaving out the *mem*, which signifies water, for this “pit is empty, it has no water.”<sup>13</sup>

*Bor*: *beit-reish-vav* = 2 + 200 + 6 = 208.

Abraham (Avraham): *alef-beit-reish-hei-mem*. Leaving out the *mem*, we have 1 + 2 + 200 + 5 = 208.

*Mem* signifies water since it is phonetically related to the word for water, *mayim*. The form of the *mem* also represents the enclosing womb. The flood lasted 40 days, the numerical value of *mem*.

The Fire corresponds to *malchut*, for it is the great fire that ate and devoured everything, this being the mystical meaning of the turquoise fire [that descends from heaven to devour the sacrifices].<sup>14</sup>

The word for “turquoise” (*techeilet*) is related to the word for “devour” (*kilayon*, *mechaleh*). *Malchut*, the *Shechinah*, would descend from heaven in the form of a fire and devour the sacrifices on the altar. In *Chassidut*, this is explained as the fiery enthusiasm of the Divine soul (a spark of the *Shechinah*) that, when ignited by appropriate meditation, can consume the individual’s animalistic tendencies, purifying his animal soul and making it fit for serving G-d.

<sup>10</sup> *Bava Kama* 3b.

<sup>11</sup> Isaiah 44:13.

<sup>12</sup> *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 22.

<sup>13</sup> par. Genesis 37:24.

<sup>14</sup> *Zohar* 3:29b.

The numerical value of the word for “and the fire” [*vehahever*, 288] alludes to the Name of 72 and the number 216, [alluding to the three primary emotions] comprised within *malchut* below.

*VeHaHever*: *vav-hei-hei-beit-ayin-reish* = 6 + 5 + 5 + 2 + 70 + 200 = 288 = 72 + 216.

216 is three times 72, alluding to the presence of the three primary emotions (all being a continuation of *chesed*, whose numerical value is 72) in *malchut*.

*Chesed*: *chet-samech-dalet* = 8 + 60 + 4 = 72.

Thus, the four categories of damages in evil are opposite the four fathers in holiness. For “G-d also created the one opposite the other.”<sup>15</sup>

Thus:

category of damage	archetype	<i>sefirah</i>
pit	Abraham	<i>chesed</i>
ox	Isaac	<i>gevurah</i>
destroyer	Jacob	<i>tiferet</i>
fire	David	<i>malchut</i>

According to the opinion that the “destroyer” is the tooth [of a grazing animal], which is sometimes revealed and sometimes concealed, it manifests the 32 paths [of wisdom] reflected in the 32 teeth of the supernal mouth. These obstruct the tongue, which manifests the higher *tiferet*. Corresponding to this below, in the realm of evil, is G-d’s statement: “I shall destroy [*biarti*] the house of Jeroboam, as one completely sweeps away [*yeva’eir*] dung.”<sup>16</sup>

The word for “destroyer” (*maveh*) is seen to be related to the word for “sought out” (*nivu*),<sup>17</sup> indicating something that is usually hidden but occasionally revealed, such as teeth.

G-d created the world through “32 paths of wisdom”<sup>18</sup> (often understood as the 10 *sefirot* and the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet). Just as *chochmah* is the contraction of infinite intellect into a finite flash of insight that can revitalize a person’s mind, the teeth break down food into digestible particles that can be of use to the body.

Evil teeth, however, obstruct speech. Although *tiferet* is generally associated with the heart or torso, in the context of the mouth it is associated with the tongue.<sup>19</sup>

In the verse cited, the root emphasized [*beit-ayin-reish*] is the same as the one the Torah uses in the verse describing damage caused by a grazing animal.

Thus, all agree that the “destroyer” corresponds to *tiferet*; they argue only over whether it manifests its upper or lower facet.

The one who maintains that the destroyer is man understands the word *hever* to refer to the lower half of *tiferet*, whereas the one who maintains that the destroyer is the tooth understands the word *hever* to refer to the upper half of *tiferet*.

<sup>15</sup> Ecclesiastes 7:14.

<sup>16</sup> 1 Kings 14:10.

<sup>17</sup> Obadiah 1:6.

<sup>18</sup> *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:1.

<sup>19</sup> *Etz Chaim* 25:2.

The ox, [as we said,] alludes to *gevurah*, and the attribute of *gevurah* is very strong, as it is written, “Who can articulate the powers of G-d?”<sup>20</sup> These powers are channeled through the three *sefirot* of *gevurah*, *hod*, and *malchut*. Accordingly, the general principle of the “ox” sub-divides into three sub-principles: the horn, the tooth, and the foot. The initials of the words for these three spell the word for “lie” [*sheker*], for they are, after all, forms of evil.

*Hod* is situated directly under *gevurah* on the sefirotic tree, indicating that it is a lower manifestation of *gevurah*. *Malchut* is the channel for all the *sefirot*, but it has a special affinity for *gevurah* since, as we have explained previously, *malchut* is constructed out of the aspects of *gevurah* of the other *sefirot*.

The totality of the evil of the Ox is falsehood.

We now proceed to analyze the three derivatives of the Ox.

The horn corresponds to *malchut*, as [we see] in the blowing of the horn in the Jubilee year.

The jubilee comes at the end of seven periods of seven years, and *malchut* is the seventh of the *midot*. Thus, the horn is common to both of them. Also, *malchut* is expression and communication, and the horn is a musical instrument. The evil Horn, however, is goring. Perhaps this includes speech used as a weapon.

The foot corresponds to *hod*, which corresponds to the thighs, the two supports [of the body].

The two legs correspond to *netzach* and *hod*.

The tooth corresponds to *gevurah* itself, this being the mystery of the 32 times the Name *Elokim* is mentioned in the account of creation. This is the principle of *gevurah*, corresponding to the 32 teeth.

G-d is referred to exclusively by the Name *Elokim* in the account of creation, and this Name is mentioned exactly 32 times in the course of this section of the Torah. As we said above, the 32 teeth manifest the 32 pathways of wisdom. Both the contraction that produces *chochmah* and the grinding action of the teeth are acts of *gevurah*, limitation and severity.

Thus:

sub-category of ox	sefirah
tooth	<i>gevurah</i>
foot	<i>hod</i>
horn	<i>malchut</i>

When an ox causes damage with its tooth or foot in public domain, its owner is not held responsible, since it is expected to graze and walk around, and people should therefore be careful about leaving their things in a public domain. If, however, the ox roams into someone’s premises other than its owner’s and causes damage, its owner is liable for the full value of the damage done.

In contrast, if an ox causes damage in the public or private domain with its *horn*, by goring, its owner is liable for half the value of the damage done. Since we do not expect an ox to gore unprovoked, the owner cannot be held fully responsible no matter where it causes damage.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Psalms 106:2.

<sup>21</sup> Bava Kama 2:5.

damage caused by	in public domain	in private domain
tooth	exempt	full damages
foot	exempt	full damages
horn	half damages	half damages

The Arizal will now discuss the mystical implications of these laws.

Now, these three lower, evil categories sometimes cause a blemish in holiness, i.e., in the holy sparks of *malchut* [of *Atzilut*]. This [is a damage caused in] the private domain.

The world of *Atzilut* is the allegory for the “private domain,” since the consciousness of *Atzilut* is that creation has only one owner, G-d. The three lower worlds allegorically are the “public domain,” since the consciousness dominant in these worlds is that there is such a thing as independent existence.

At other times, they cause a blemish in levels below it, i.e., in the realm of impurity itself, which receives its life force through the “other gods.” This [is damage caused in] the public domain.

“Impurity” is the self-awareness that exists in the lower worlds. The “other gods” are the angels and other channels through which Divine energy flows into these worlds. It is the fact that they are not created and informed “directly” from G-d that leaves room for “creature-consciousness,” i.e., self-awareness.

When the damage is caused by the horn, i.e., the evil opposite *malchut*, it cannot cause damage to *malchut* [completely] or to anything below it, but [rather can damage] only its lower half, i.e., its *netzach-hod-yesod*. This is the mystical meaning of King David’s words: “Do not bring me up in the middle of my days,”<sup>22</sup> for the damage caused by the horn—which corresponds to *malchut*—reaches only up to that level.

King David was a manifestation of the *sefirah* of *malchut*.

For the same reason Ahasuerus asked Queen Esther, “What is your question and what is your desire, up to half the kingdom?”<sup>23</sup>

Queen Esther was another manifestation of the *sefirah* of *malchut*. King Ahasuerus here signifies the evil of the horn. “Half the kingdom” means, mystically, “half of *malchut*.”

For the evil of the horn—which corresponds to *malchut*—reaches only that high. He meant to say: “If you desire the attribute of *malchut*,” which in its entirety is called “what”—this being the meaning of [his words:] “*what* is your question...”—then, “up to half of *malchut*”—for that is the extent of evil’s rule, as we have said—“it shall be done,” meaning: evil shall be removed from [the upper] half of *malchut*.

Therefore, damage by the horn obligates its owner to pay only half the value of the damage, corresponding to [its dominion over] half of *malchut*.

<sup>22</sup> Psalms 102:25.

<sup>23</sup> Esther 5:3, 6, 7:2.

This, however, is true only when the blemish does not persist, but is repeated only twice or at most three times.<sup>24</sup> These three [times] correspond to *netzach-hod-yesod* [of *malchut*]. This is why [such an ox] is called an “unblemished” [*tam*] one, as in the verse, “My dove, My unblemished one,”<sup>25</sup> who, only when able to unite with and be adorned with these three [*sefirot*], can be called “unblemished.”

The verse cited depicts G-d calling His beloved Jewish people His “unblemished one.” Even though they have sinned, He considers their sins not serious enough to compromise their inherent purity, just as a limited number of gorings does not disqualify an ox from being considered “unblemished.”

Jacob, her husband, is called “an unblemished man”<sup>26</sup>; thus, [male] unblemishedness is [in *tiferet*,] above *netzach-hod-yesod*. When *tiferet*—the “unblemished man”—unites with these three, the word for “truth” [*emet*] is formed. This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “Give truth to Jacob,”<sup>27</sup> for “Jacob is the unblemished man, dwelling in these tents.”<sup>28</sup>

Jacob signifies *tiferet*, as we know (or here, *tiferet* of *malchut*).

*Tam*: *tav-mem*. *Emet*: *alef-mem-tav*. The difference between these two words is thus the letter *alef*, whose numerical value is 1, signifying the one *sefirah* of *tiferet* that unites with the lower three of *netzach-hod-yesod*, which in this context represent the female. Thus, the union of the unblemished male and female produces enduring “truth.”

However, when the blemish persists, due to the sins of the generation, and is repeated four times, the ox becomes classified as an aggressive one, and the blemish spreads to all the [sub-*sefirot* of *malchut*], and the ox’s owner has to pay full damages.

Once an ox has proven itself to be aggressive by having gored three times, its owner must assume responsibility for its actions, and pay full damages when it causes damage.

These evils are situated in the realm of death. Therefore, the word for “unblemished” [*tam*] is formed from two of the letters used to spell the word for “death” [*mavet*], and the word for “aggressive” [*mu’ad*] also possesses two letters used to spell the word for “death.”

*Mavet*: *mem-vav-tav*. *Tam*: *tav-mem*. *Mu’ad*: *mem-vav-ayin-dalet*.

“Death,” the opposite of Divine life, is synonymous with self-awareness and ego.

But as long as the damage has not extended beyond these three [i.e., *netzach-hod-yesod* of *malchut*], it is called “half of the kingdom.”

[It will be observed that] when we combine the *mem-vav* from the word for “death” with the word for “until” [*ad*], we have the word for “aggressive” [*mu’ad*]. For “until” alludes to *tiferet*, as in the verse, “until the desires of the ancient

<sup>24</sup> *Bava Kama* 2:4.

<sup>25</sup> Song of Songs 5:2, 6:9.

<sup>26</sup> Genesis 25:27.

<sup>27</sup> Micah 7:20.

<sup>28</sup> par. Genesis 25:27.

hills.”<sup>29</sup> When the blemish occurs the fourth time, [evil] reaches the *tiferet* [of *Nukva*]. Then the letters *mem-vav* combine with the letters *ayin-dalet*—which signify *tiferet*—and the ox becomes *mu’ad*.

*Tiferet* here, although strictly referring to *tiferet* of *malchut* (i.e., of *Nukva* of *Atzilut*), also refers to the *partzuf* of *Z’eir Anpin*, as if the sub-sefirot of *Nukva* are arranged as sub-*partzufim*.

The word for “until” (*ad*) is seen to be related to the word for “gathering” (*va’ad*), and therefore signifies *Z’eir Anpin*, the *partzuf* formed by the gathering together of the six *midot* (six being the numerical value of the letter *vav* that is added to *ad* to form *va’ad*). The “ancient hills” signify *binah* and *malchut* (*Ima* and *Nukva*): *Ima* desires to impart its blessing on *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* desires to cohabit with it. Mystically, this verse thus reads, “*Tiferet* [*ad*] is the desire of the ancient hills [*Ima* and *Nukva*].”<sup>30</sup>

There are five aspects of the Horn, [two being aspects of] the main category and [three being] its derivatives. [The two aspects of the main category] are: goring and pushing; [the three derivatives are:] biting, laying down, and kicking.<sup>31</sup> These five correspond to the five states of *gevurah* in *malchut*.

Since the aspects of evil opposite *gevurah* and *hod*—i.e., the Tooth and the Foot—are on a higher level than the aspects of evil opposite *malchut* [i.e., the Horn], they cannot cause damage in the public domain, [the earthly manifestation of the levels] below [*malchut* of *Atzilut*], i.e., *malchut* of *Beriah*. They are therefore not liable for damage they cause there, since that is their natural abode and natural behavior.

*Malchut* of any word is the “field” or “domain” of that world. Thus, while in a general sense we speak of all the three lower worlds being the “public domain,” in particular, this refers to the *malchut*s of these worlds.

As will be explained presently, the three aspects of the Ox (the Tooth, the Foot, and the Horn), in addition to corresponding to *gevurah*, *hod*, and *malchut* of *Atzilut*, correspond to the three lower worlds, as well. In other words, these forms of evil originate as corruptions of the three channels of *gevurah* of *Atzilut*, but “settle” in the three gradations of creature-consciousness, i.e., the three worlds. Since the Tooth and the Foot originate in the higher two of the three *gevurah*-channels of *Atzilut*, they “settle” in *Beriah* and *Yetzirah*. Since this is their natural abode, whatever harm they do there cannot be considered exceptional damage, just as an ox grazing or trampling things in the public domain cannot be considered exceptional damage.

In contrast, the Horn, which is a lower form of evil, does not naturally ascend even to this level, whereas these [other two] abide there naturally. This is because the three [sub-categories of the ox] correspond to [the three lower worlds,] *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*, and specifically, the Horn corresponds to the world of *Asiyah*. It therefore causes damage when it ascends higher than its natural abode. The Tooth and the Foot, however, correspond to *Beriah* and *Yetzirah* [respectively], and thus it is their nature [to roam about in the public domain].

Thus:

<sup>29</sup> Genesis 49:26,

<sup>30</sup> Zohar 1:50a.

<sup>31</sup> Bava Kama 2:5; Y. Shabbat 47a; Y. Bava Kama 2a; cf. Tosefta, Bava Kama 1:6-7.

sub-category of ox	origin in Atzilut	habitat
tooth	<i>gevurah</i>	<i>Beirah</i>
foot	<i>hod</i>	<i>Yetzirah</i>
horn	<i>malchut</i>	<i>Asiyah</i>

When an ox gores, thus, it goes out of the bounds of its natural behavior. This is the equivalent of creature consciousness ascending into *Nukva* of *Atzilut*—outside its normal abode of the three lower worlds—and causing damage there. Or, perhaps the intention is that *Asiyah* is a lower level even than the “public domain,” i.e., the realm of evil, where it is natural for an ox to gore. When the goring ox gores in *Beirah* or *Yetzirah*, however, the more docile “public domain,” it is exhibiting behavior out of context for this relatively safe environment, and therefore its owner is liable, at least for half the value of its damages.

But when they [the Tooth and the Foot] ascend to cause damage in the domain of the plaintiff, i.e., in *malchut* [of *Atzilut*], they will cause damage (G-d forbid) in its entirety. They therefore [make their owner] liable for [paying] full damages.

Since they originate above *malchut*, they have more power to cause damage than the horn does.

—translated from *Ta'amei HaMitzvot* and *Sha'ar Ma'amarei Razal*

## *Parashat Mishpatim* [third installment]

This *parashah* contains the commandment to celebrate the three festivals, Passover, *Shavuot*, and *Sukot*. “You shall celebrate for Me three festivals a year.”<sup>1</sup> The word for “festivals” in this verse is *regalim*, the plural of *regel*, which also means “leg.” On the other hand, the root of the verb “to celebrate” (*lechog*) is *chug*, “to rotate” or “encircle,” emphasizing the yearly cycle of the holidays, giving also *chag*, another word for “holiday.” This word is related to the word for “compass” (*mechugah*)<sup>2</sup> and gave rise to the rabbinic usage of *machog* for “gesture.” It thus carries the association of a hand-movement.

The first three [*midot*]*—chesed, gevurah, and tiferet—*are termed the “hands,” while the second three [*—netzach, hod, and yesod—*] are termed the “legs.”

In Kabbalah, *chesed* is associated with the right arm, *gevurah* with the left arm, *tiferet* with the torso, *netzach* with the right leg, *hod* with the left leg, and *yesod* with the reproductive organ.

To explain: *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* are identified as the two arms, and the general harmonizing principle, which is *tiferet* between them, is also called a “hand,” since it functions as one hand that includes the two other hands, *chesed* and *gevurah*.

Thus, although the torso is not a hand, since it serves to unify and harmonize the two real hands, it can be considered a figurative “hand.”

This is the mystical meaning of “the great hand,”<sup>3</sup> “the strong hand,”<sup>4</sup> and “the uplifted hand”<sup>5</sup> between them, as mentioned in the *Zohar*.<sup>6</sup>

The “great hand” is *chesed*, a synonym for which is *gedulah* (“greatness”). The “strong hand” is *gevurah*. The “uplifted hand” is *tiferet*.

Corresponding to these are *netzach-hod-yesod*, the three legs. For *netzach* and *hod* are the two legs, and they are included together in their harmonizing entity, *yesod*, which thus functions as the third leg.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “You shall celebrate for Me three festivals a year.” For *malchut* is termed “the holiday [*chag*] of the bride,” as mentioned in the beginning of *Tikunei Zohar* in manuscript.

*Malchut* is the bride, the mate of *Z’eir Anpin*, the groom. In the *Zohar*, *malchut* is described as receiving the flow from the three *sefirot* of *netzach-hod-yesod*, which are associated with the three festivals.<sup>7</sup>

And it is conjoined with *netzach-hod-yesod*, as we have stated.

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 23:14.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 44:13.

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 14:31.

<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 3:24, 7:19, 11:2, 34:12.

<sup>5</sup> Numbers 33:3.

<sup>6</sup> 1:23a, 3:246b, 283a; *Tikunei Zohar*, introduction (9a), 58 (89a), 69 (101b), 70 (130a).

<sup>7</sup> *Zohar* 3:257b; *Tikunei Zohar* 21 (45b, 58b).

It follows that these three [i.e., *netzach*, *hod*, and *yesod*,] shine to her three times a year, and through their power the three holidays are produced on these three occasions.

Now, the three holidays [actually] originate in *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*, but *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* shine down through *netzach-hod-yesod*, and through *netzach-hod-yesod* they [i.e., *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*] shine into *malchut*.

This explains the obligation to appear [at the Temple] on the festivals.

Passover, *Shavuot*, and *Sukot* are called “pilgrim festivals” because on them most of the populace is required to travel to Jerusalem and appear at the Temple in order to offer specific sacrifices.<sup>8</sup>

To explain: The commandment to appear [at the Temple] is that the individual ascend on the three festivals to the court of the Israelites in order to appear there. This obligation only applies to adult males.

The “court of the Israelites” is the easternmost 11 cubits of the courtyard (*azarah*) surrounding the Temple.<sup>9</sup>

The [mystical] reason we are required to ascend there on foot is to give [spiritual] power to the supernal “legs,” i.e., *netzach-hod-yesod*, on these three festivals. This is why they are not called, [for example,] “three appointed times,” but “three festivals,” in order to allude to the fact that the light from these three festivals shines via the supernal “legs,” *netzach-hod-yesod*, into *malchut*, as embodied in the court of the Israelites.

For the word for “festival” (*regel*), as we know, is the same as the word for “leg.” These three holidays are thus three “leg-holidays,” holidays on which it is necessary to strengthen the supernal “legs” by using our own legs for holiness, i.e., to travel to Jerusalem and appear at the Holy Temple.

In truth, the height of the stature of the women’s court is up to the *yesod* of its *malchut*, while the height of the stature of the Israelites’ court is up to the *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin*.

The women’s court (*ezrat nashim*) is the additional courtyard outside the courtyard of the Temple proper. (It is not called the women’s court because women cannot enter any further, for women can indeed enter the Israelite’s court—and even the priests’ court—when they need to present a sacrifice. It is called the women’s court because the women’s gallery is above it, looking down into it.)

The various sections of the Temple, as one enters on the east and proceeds westward, carry increasing holiness, meaning that only those purified from increasingly refined forms of defilement (*tumah*) may enter them. In mystical terms, this means that a westward progression within the Temple precincts corresponds to an ascent through succeeding higher realms of spirituality.

But on the festivals, [*Nukva*] is face-to-face with *netzach-hod-yesod* [of *Z’eir Anpin*], this being the mystical meaning of the phrase, “and they will not see My face empty-handed.”<sup>10</sup>

Although this verse appears in the context of Passover, it is understood to apply to all three pilgrim festivals, referring to the obligatory offerings (*chagigah*) that must be offered on these festivals.

<sup>8</sup> Exodus 23:17, 34:23; Deuteronomy 16:16.

<sup>9</sup> *Mishneh Torah, Beit HaBechirah* 5:12.

<sup>10</sup> Exodus 23:15.

Here, the phrase means that *Nukva*'s "face" is not "empty," i.e., not facing nothing, but facing her mate, *Z'eir Anpin*. The womens' court ascends to the level of the Israelites' court, indicating that the Jew (whose soul hails from *malchut*) must also ascend to the Israelites' court on these festivals.

Therefore the obligation [of the pilgrimage] on these festivals is dependent on the legs, and for this reason lame and blind people are exempt, as mentioned in the Talmud, based on the expression "leg-festivals" (*regalim*).<sup>11</sup>

Even a minor who can make the trip on foot must be educated to do so. For he personifies *Z'eir Anpin* in its youth, as Jacob, which is only in the form of a *vav*. At this stage, too, we must draw down light from the legs of that level.

"Jacob" is the name of the immature version of the *partzuf* of *Z'eir Anpin*.

Nonetheless, these levels are still only courtyards, "external houses,"<sup>12</sup> for only unto such levels can the soul ascend, as mentioned in the *Zohar*, on the verse, "Who can ascend [God's mountain,] and who can arise in His holy place?"<sup>13</sup> — "[ 'God's mountain' is the Temple mount, and 'His holy place' ] is the Israelites' courtyard."<sup>14</sup>

—translated from *Ta'amei HaMitzvot*

<sup>11</sup> *Chagigah*, ch. 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 5b.

<sup>13</sup> Psalms 24:3.

<sup>14</sup> *Zohar* 2:195b.

## *Parashat Terumah*

The word *terumah*, which is usually understood and used to mean “donation,” literally means “elevation.” By donating something to the Holy Temple or to some other holy use, one is elevating it from the domain of the mundane to that of the sacred. This week’s *parashah* (Exodus 15:1-27:19) begins with a discussion of the various items the Jewish people are asked to donate to the construction of the Tabernacle (*mishkan*), the portable Temple that accompanied them throughout their trek from Mt. Sinai into the promised holy land of Israel. Although G-d asked the Jews to make this donation and specified exactly what was needed, it was left up to each individual if he would donate and how much and what he would donate: “from each person whose heart moves him” (Exodus 25:2). Thus, this donation was an expression of each individual’s feelings about his relationship with G-d. As such, the concept of donating as described in the opening of this *parashah* is a deep, spiritual experience, which strikes at the most profound levels of the heart of both the individual Jew and the collective Jewish community.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the concept of donating and the word *termuah* in particular are subject to detailed analysis in the classic Torah commentators in general, and in the corpus of Jewish mystical writings in particular. What follows is one of the several analyses the Arizal offers of this concept.

### Know that *terumah* indicates the feminine [principle].

In discussing the dynamics of the spiritual dimension of reality, the Arizal makes frequent use of the male-female metaphor. This is because the basic concept of creation is duality, beginning with the fundamental duality of the Creator and His creation. G-d is one, but He has created a world that appears to exist outside of Him, and this automatically sets up a tension between the existential consciousness of creation as being a separate, independent reality and its consciousness (or lack of consciousness) of its origin in and dependence upon Him. G-d and creation yearn to reunite with each other, since this reunion expresses the original, perfect state that existed prior to creation. Yet both G-d and creation are conscious of the fact the world was created for a purpose, and the “business” of this situation must be attended to in order for the ultimate union of G-d and creation to occur on an even deeper level than existed originally. Along the way, however, besides the underlying yearning for ultimate fulfillment that informs the entire process of life, there are the ups and downs of periods of partial reunion followed by renewed enforced estrangement. Thus, the underlying dynamic of life is one of yearning, passion, and romance.

In the dynamic of duality, G-d assumes the role of the male and creation that of the female. The male is “trapped” in His consciousness of the ideal, original state of reality. His challenge in working toward the reunion is “get out of his head,” to realize and yearn for the superior fulfillment that is possible only through uniting with what the female represents. The female, in contrast, is “trapped” in her consciousness of perfecting created reality. Her challenge is to remember the goal towards which she is working, to reveal the subconscious yearnings of her heart to transcend created reality.

Although, as we said, G-d is generally assigned the role of the male and creation that of the female, the male-female dynamic is replayed throughout all levels of created reality. In other words, every level of creation has its male and female aspects—the part of it that represents the orientation towards abstract perfection and the part of it that represents the orientation towards concretizing and manifesting perfection in reality. The final, lowest manifestation of this duality is, of course, man and woman in our physical world.

There are two aspects of the feminine principle: Leah and Rachel. These are indicated by the two *hei*’s of the Name *Havayah*.

The idea of donation is feminine concept, since it expresses the desire to take something physical, something that is initially part of the mundane world, and elevate it, make it spiritual. This, as we said, is essentially the underlying pathos of reality in general: taking the created world and reuniting it with its original consciousness as part of the pervasive Divinity of all reality.

Now, the Arizal notes, there are two aspects of femininity. These are represented by the two letters *hei* of G-d’s four-letter Name (referred to as “the Name *Havayah*”), which is spelled *yud-hei-vav-hei*. (The *yud* and the *vav* represent the two aspects of masculinity.)

It is taught in Kabbalah that the Hebrew alphabet is the means through which G-d created the world. The form, name, and numerical value of every letter embody the different energies; by blending these energies together in words, G-d created the world. Specifically, we are taught that G-d created the world using His Name *Havayah*, which means that the creative process is reflected in the order and “personality” of the four letters that compose it. We thus have here a clear indication that the male-female dynamic is the existential underpinning of all reality: The world was created through the Name *Havayah*; thus, all reality reflects the structure and dynamics of this Name; and this Name itself reflects two levels of union between male and female, *yud-hei* and *vav-hei*.

The four letters of the Name *Havayah* are associated with the ten *sefirot* or channels of Divinity through which G-d created the world. These ten *sefirot* are manifest in all aspects of creation. Specifically, the first *sefirah*, *chochmah* (“wisdom”) is associated with the first letter of the Name, *yud*; the second *sefirah*, *binah* (“understanding”) with the second letter, the upper *hei*; the six *sefirot* of the emotions with the third letter, *vav*; and the tenth *sefirah*, *malchut* (“kingdom”) with the last letter, the lower *hei*. The tenth *sefirah*, *da’at* [“knowledge”] is not specifically associated with any letter of the Name *Havayah*, but is generally seen to come after *binah*, and therefore may be considered to be something of an extension of the first *hei*.

<i>yud</i>	<i>chochmah</i>	wisdom
<i>hei</i>	<i>binah</i> <i>da’at</i>	understanding knowledge
<i>vav</i>	<i>midot</i>	emotions
<i>hei</i>	<i>malchut</i>	kingdom

From this we see that the first aspect of femininity is *binah*, or “understanding.” It is in *binah* that the objective insight that is *chochmah* becomes subjectified and starts to become “real” to the person. The second aspect of femininity, the second *hei*, is *malchut*, or “kingdom.” *Malchut* is how a person becomes king over reality, by expressing his ideas and emotions and through them changing, rectifying, and elevating the world from its initial, purely physical state to a spiritualized state. *Binah* is thus the actualization of *chochmah*, and *malchut* is the actualization of the emotions. In both cases, the male principle is the abstract idea and the female principle is its concretization. *Malchut* may be considered a lower form of *binah* since expression is simply a way of making other people understand the emotions one feels.

The two Biblical archetypes for these two facets of femininity are the two wives of Jacob, Leah and Rachel. Leah is represented by the first *hei* of the Divine Name, and Rachel by the second *hei*. Since the four letters represent a sequential, descending process in the act of creation, this means that Leah (the “upper” *hei*) represents a higher level of spirituality than Rachel (the “lower” *hei*). Leah personified *binah*; Rachel personified *malchut*.

Each [*hei*] comprises ten [sub-*sefirot*], giving fifty “gates.” They each comprise ten since they take ten from the *yesod* of the masculine [principle]. This is the mystical meaning of the word “will be”: *yud-hei* above and *yud-hei* below.

The numerical value of the letter *hei* is five, which means that there is an innate “five-ness” in femininity; each of these aspects of femininity comprises five dimensions. The ten *sefirot* are reflected in each of the five dimensions of these two aspects of femininity. This gives us fifty (5 x 10) sub-aspects for Leah, the upper *hei*, and fifty for Rachel, the lower *hei*.

This clearly recalls two teaching of our sages recorded in the Talmud. The first is that there are fifty “gates” of understanding,<sup>1</sup> that is, fifty subjective levels through which one may conceptualize or relate to G-d. The second is that an additional measure of understanding was given to woman beyond that given to man.<sup>2</sup> Thus we see that understanding is an intrinsically feminine quality, which is associated with the feminine letter *hei* and which comprises fifty “gates,” corresponding to the ten *sefirot* manifest in each of the five dimensions of (both aspects of) femininity.

This is also the significance of the final *nun*, which signifies *Ima*.

<sup>1</sup> *Rosh Hashanah* 21b

<sup>2</sup> *Niddah* 45b

Since each of the two aspects of femininity, the upper and lower *hei*'s of G-d's Name, comprises fifty sub-aspects, they may each be represented by the letter of the Hebrew alphabet whose numerical value is indeed 50. This is the letter *nun*. And here we encounter an interesting phenomenon: the letter *nun* is of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet that has two forms, one used when the letter occurs at the end of a word and another in all other cases. In the usual form, the lower part is bent at a right angle to the "spine" of the letter. In the form used at the end of a word, this bent segment is bent down and is in effect a continuation of the "spine" extending below the normal line of the letters.

Since there is no risk of evil deriving sustenance [from the revelation of Divine beneficence] at this level, it therefore extends downward, as in the form of this letter [the extends below the line].

This is not true of Rachel, who returns her light back to herself in order to prevent the forces of evil from deriving sustenance from it. This is indicated in the form of the [regular,] bent *nun*. She shines her light upwards.

The idea of extending "below the line" in Kabbalah represents the idea of penetrating into the lower aspects of reality. As we said, the feminine aspect of creation is that which draws the Divine energy into the task of rectifying and elevating the created world. This entails a certain danger, since through prolonged contact with aspects of reality that are not conscious of holiness their perspective on life can "rub off," and it is possible to lose sight of the goal of the work being done. For this reason, whenever *malchut* descends into the lower realms, she must take adequate precautions not to let the negative forces latch on to her and drag her down to their level.

Thus, the final form of the *nun*, which extends below the line, represents *binah*, the upper *hei*, Leah. Since *binah* is on a higher level of spirituality than is *malchut*, its higher consciousness of spirituality enables it to descend into the realms of impurity without fear of attack. The regular form of the *nun*, in contrast, is bent upward, signifying the need for *malchut* to refrain from getting too involved with its task of refining reality. What this means is that on an intellectual level one can freely contemplate and discuss strategies of how to go about rectifying even the lowest realms, the aspects of creation that are inimical to Divine consciousness. But when it comes to actually engaging in the struggle with these elements, it is necessary to refrain from venturing into levels where one could be exposed to attack.

The *vav* between the two *nun*'s signifies *Z'eir Anpin*, which extends "from [one] world to the [other] world.

In between these two *nun*'s (or two *hei*'s) is the letter *vav*, which signifies the emotions, as we said. The emotions oscillate between *binah* and *malchut*, between renewing themselves in the intellectual ideas that gave rise to them and the means for their expression. The Biblical archetype for the emotions is thus Jacob, who was married to both Leah and Rachel. When the letter *nun* is spelled out as a word, it is spelled *nun-vav-nun*; the *vav* is wedged between the regular and the final *nun*.

The *vav* indicates the Name *Havayah* spelled out to equal 45.

The process of "spelling out" a letter is called "filling" it (*milui*) in Kabbalah. Now, when the letters of the Name *Havayah* are spelled out as words, this produces an "expanded" Name *Havayah*. There is only one way of spelling *yud*: *yud-vav-dalet*. There are three ways used to spell *hei* in Kabbalah: *hei-alef*, *hei-hei*, and *hei-yud*. Similarly, *vav* may be spelled *vav-alef-vav*, *vav-yud-vav*, or simply *vav-vav*. Thus, there are many ways that the original *yud-hei-vav-hei* of the Name *Havayah* may be expanded. Of all these, however, Kabbalah focuses primarily on only four major spellings. Since every letter possesses a numerical value, these four "fillings" add up to four aggregate numerical values. These four fillings and their values are:

the <i>yud</i> -filling	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	$10 + 6 + 4 = 20$	72
	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	$10 + 5 = 15$	
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav-yud-vav</i>	$6 + 10 + 6 = 22$	
	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	$5 + 10 = 15$	
the combined filling	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	$10 + 6 + 4 = 20$	63
	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	$5 + 10 = 15$	
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav-alef-vav</i>	$6 + 1 + 6 = 13$	
	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	$5 + 10 = 15$	
the <i>alef</i> -filling	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	$10 + 6 + 4 = 20$	45
	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-alef</i>	$5 + 1 = 6$	
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav-alef-vav</i>	$6 + 1 + 6 = 13$	
	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-alef</i>	$5 + 1 = 6$	
the <i>hei</i> -filling	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	$10 + 6 + 4 = 20$	52
	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-hei</i>	$5 + 5 = 10$	
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav-vav</i>	$6 + 6 = 12$	
	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-hei</i>	$5 + 5 = 10$	

These four fillings themselves are associated with the four original letters of the Name *Havayah*. Thus, the third spelling, whose numerical value is 45, is associated with the *vav* of the Name *Havayah*, or the emotions.

[The sages said,] “Read ‘a hundred’ instead of ‘what.’” This refers to the two *nun*’s, whose combined numerical value is 50.

The number 45 is represented in Hebrew by the letters *mem-hei*, which spell *mah*, the word for “what.” Based on the phonetic affinity between the word *mah* and the word formed by inserting an *alef* between the *mem* and the *hei*, *mei’ah*, which means “a hundred,” our sages made the following homiletical exposition:<sup>3</sup> It is written, “What [*mah*] does G-d require of you?”<sup>4</sup> If we read the word *mah* as if it were *mei’ah*, we have: “G-d requires of you a hundred.” This alludes to the obligation to recite one hundred blessings daily.

For our purposes, we see from this that the *vav* is associated with the filling of the Name *Havayah* whose numerical value is 45; 45 is the numerical value of *mah*, which is substituted in Rabbinic homiletics by 100; thus, the *vav* is associated with the number 100. This is reflected in the dynamic we have just described, in which the emotions are situated and oscillate between the two *hei*’s, which, as we explained, are the two *nun*’s, each of whose numerical value is 50, giving a total of 100.

The Divine blessing that comes to the world is always associated with the number 100, as in the verse, “And Isaac planted in that land, and the produce yielded a hundred-fold, for G-d blessed him.”<sup>5</sup>

A blessing is a means through which we draw Divine consciousness into the world. When a person eats, for example, he is performing a mundane, physical act, which at best serves to keep him alive, and in less than optimal situations simply serves as a means for him to indulge in gross sensuality. When he makes a blessing on the food, however, he acknowledges G-d as the source of both the sustaining power of the food and the enjoyment derived in eating it. He thus infuses a potentially animal act with awareness of G-d; this influences the way he eats (as well as what he eats and how much) and transforms the act of eating into a way to increase the world’s consciousness of G-d. The obligation to recite a hundred blessings each day means that every day we are instructed to actualize both the

<sup>3</sup> *Menachot* 43b.

<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 10:12.

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 26:12.

abstract insight of the higher perfection through the fifty gates of *binah* and the motivation to change reality through the expression of the fifty gates of the lower *binah*, *malchut*.

We therefore give donations, in order to return all the 100 [blessings] to their source, to prevent the forces of evil from deriving sustenance from them. This is why donations are called *terumah*, meaning “elevation.” And this is why *terumah* refers specifically to the feminine principle, for the masculine principle does not require this [elevation], for there is no risk of evil deriving sustenance from it. Only the feminine principle, where this risk exists, requires this elevation.

Keeping all the above in mind, we may return to our original discussion of the idea of donating. As we said, the propensity of the feminine force of creation is to get so involved and active with the challenge of infusing Divinity into reality that it runs the risk of exposing itself to the attacks of the unrectified elements. In its enthusiasm to bring Divine inspiration into all corners of the universe, it may focus too much on the task and cross the subtle line between influencing and being sucked in or sucked upon. By focusing too much on the exigencies of the job, it may lose track of its ultimate goal. The syndrome is unfortunately all too well known: An inspired young couple dedicates their lives to raising a Jewish family. But to provide a proper home and a proper education, the parents must go to work and expend great effort and concentration on succeeding in business and building the home. Before they know it, their focus has shifted and they have sunk into the pursuit of materialism and the quest for greater and better ways to provide the proper setting and home for the spiritual life they never seem to get around to living. This scenario plays itself out in a thousand ways in different settings all over the world.

Therefore, G-d calls upon us to donate some of the fruits of our labors to the Holy Temple. By donating, by freely giving up some of the precious goods we have labored so exhaustingly to acquire, we are re-orienting them back to the goal of our involvement with them: the ultimate reunification of reality with its Divine source. The word for “donation,” *terumah*, we said, literally means “elevation.” It is the feminine aspect of reality, the hundred blessings of life, that needs to be “donated,” or elevated, for its specifically our captivation with the romantic idea of infusing reality with Divinity that is in perpetual danger of leading us astray into the quicksand of materialism.

—adapted from *Likutei Torah*, beginning of *parashat Terumah*

## *Parashat Terumah* [second installment]

The portion of the Torah read this week discusses the Tabernacle. The inner chamber of the Tabernacle house the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the Tablets of the Covenant, on which we engraved the Ten Commandments.

There were actually three arks, one inside the other.<sup>1</sup> This reflects the fact that there are three Names *Elokim* in *Z'eir Anpin* of *Atzilut*, corresponding to [its] *binah*, *gevurah*, and *malchut*. The numerical value of these is 258, the numerical value of Haran. Betzael made three arks corresponding to these three Names.

*Elokim*: *alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem* = 1 + 30 + 5 + 10 + 40 = 86. 3 x 86 = 258.

*Haran*: *chet-reish-nun* = 8 + 200 + 50 = 258.

The Name *Elokim* signifies contraction, restriction (*tzimtzum*), judgement (*din*), and severity (*gevurah*). It can therefore be seen to signify any *sefirah* that exhibits these properties.

As we have explained previously, *binah* is the faculty of the intellect whose function it is to analyze and evaluate the insight of *chochmah*, thereby purifying it from any admixtures of subjectivism it might contain due to the imperfection of the individual's ability to perceive and recognize the truth behind his insight. It is thus functions with judgement and severity.

*Gevurah* is the *sefirah* whose task it is to limit the indiscriminate beneficence of *chesed*, in order that goodness be bestowed only on recipients who deserve it.

Finally, *malchut* is the funnel through which the consciousness of one world passes to the next, lower one, and thus becomes the ruling principle of that lower world. Since it functions in this context as the definer of the lower world, it is also clearly a principle of contraction and limitation.

Haran was the city in Mesopotamia where Abraham's family settled after leaving Ur of Chaldea. Abraham himself continued on to the land of Israel, leaving his extended family behind. Haran thus thematically represents the idea of opting out of answering the Divine call to perfect the world and the preference to remain behind in order to indulge in the world's ungodly enticements. The last sentence of *parashat Noach* (which as a whole describes G-d's displeasure with mankind's choice of the lawless life over Divine discipline),<sup>2</sup> which immediately precedes G-d's call "go forth" to Abraham at the beginning of *parashat Lech Lecha*, is "and Terah [Abraham's father] died in Haran." Significantly, as a word, *haran* means "anger," signifying G-d's frustration with mankind's rejection of Him prior to Abraham.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, these three Names *Elokim* constitute the full manifestation of G-d's attributes of severity. The three arks that made up the Ark of the Covenant were intended to counterbalance these Names *Elokim*.

Since the top of the supernal tree is *binah* and its bottom is *malchut*, the inner and outer arks were made of gold, whereas the middle ark, corresponding to *gevurah*, was made of wood.

Since *chochmah* in a way transcends human intellect and rationality, being a revelation of some insight from "beyond," it is in contexts like this one excluded from the full structure (or "tree") of consciousness. In such contexts, *binah* is the highest *sefirah* and *malchut* the lowest. It thus follows that this model of consciousness is

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<sup>1</sup> Rashi on Exodus 25:11.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 11:31.

<sup>3</sup> Rashi *ad loc*.

framed top and bottom by elements of *gevurah*. This is because this structure is limited by the parameters of human rationality and intellect. Gold, a reddish color, signifies *gevurah*.

Know also, that the *Shechinah* in *Atzilut* becomes vested in *keter* [of *Beriah*], and these are the three arks: Akatriel<sup>4</sup> in *Beriah*, Metatron in *Yetzirah*, and Sandalfon in *Asiyah*.

In a famous passage of the *Zohar*, it is stated that *binah* of *Atzilut* “nests” in *Beriah*, *Z’eir Anpin* “nests” in *Yetzirah*, and *Nukva* “nests” in *Asiyah*. This means that the levels of consciousness denoted by the three lower worlds derives from these *partzufim* in *Atzilut*. *Binah* is intellect; thus, the Divine consciousness that defines the world of *Beriah* is intellectual consciousness of G-d. *Z’eir Anpin* is the *partzuf* of the emotions; thus, the Divine consciousness that defines the world of *Yetzirah* is emotional relationship to G-d. *Nukva* is expression; thus, the Divine consciousness that defines the world of *Asiyah* is active, “practical” consciousness or relationship to G-d.

Thus, the three Names *Elokim* of *Atzilut* manifest themselves as the defining principles of the three lower worlds. This occurs first through the *Shechinah* (*malchut* of *Atzilut*, the expression of Divine consciousness in the lower worlds) being vested in the *keter* of *Beriah*, since *keter* is synonymous with will, specifically, the will to become manifest throughout the world.

Therefore, when the word for “ark” (*aron*) [...] produces the numerical value of Akatriel plus that of Metatron plus that of Sandalfon.

*Aron*: *alef-reish-vav-nun*. Taking *alef* as 1000, this gives  $1000 + 200 + 6 + 50 = 1256$ .

*Akatriel*: *alef-kaf-tav-reish-yud-alef-lamed* =  $1 + 20 + 400 + 200 + 10 + 1 + 30 = 662$ .

*Metatron*: *mem-tet-tet-reish-vav-nun* =  $40 + 9 + 9 + 200 + 6 + 50 = 314$

*Sandalfon*: *samech-nun-dalet-pei-vav-nun* =  $60 + 50 + 4 + 30 + 80 + 6 + 50 = 280$

$662 + 314 + 280 = 1256$

Now, even though we said that the ark embodies three Names *Elokim*, nonetheless, in times of Divine favor the Name *Havayah* and its spellings-out shine into these Names, transforming G-d’s attribute of justice into that of mercy.

As we have explained previously, there are four principle methods of spelling out the Name *Havayah*, the numerical values of which are 72, 63, 45, and 52. When these numbers are added to the numerical value of the Name *Havayah* as it is normally spelled, 26, we have  $72 + 63 + 45 + 52 + 26 = 258$ , the same numerical value of the three Names *Elokim* mentioned above. Thus, the 258 of *Elokim* is exchanged for the 258 of *Havayah*. This is how the ark counteracts, or “sweetens,” the three Names *Elokim*.

Know as well that the ark is the secret of *yesod* of *Abba*.

*Yesod* of *Abba* is the drive within the initial insight of *chochmah* toward self-actualization. It becomes the *mochin*, or Divine consciousness, of *Z’eir Anpin*, the emotional *partzuf* which is the principle *partzuf* of *Atzilut*. Housing the Tablets of the Covenant, which encapsulated the entire Torah, the ark can be seen as the vehicle through which G-d’s plan for creation is transmitted to the world. This, too, is how the ark transforms the world of *Elokim*, the ruthless and unrelenting laws of nature, into *Havayah*, the mercy and goodness of G-d’s presence.

As you know, *yesod* possesses three shells: the foreskin, the mucous membrane, and the blood. To counteract these, the *gulgulta* of *Nukva* issued as the ark, the word for “ark” (*aron*) having the same numerical value as a synonym for “crown” (*nezer*).

*Aron*: *alef-reish-vuv-nun* =  $1 + 200 + 6 + 50 = 257$ .

<sup>4</sup> These three names are names of angels. It is customary not to pronounce names of angels (unless these names are also used for people, e.g., Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, etc.).

*Nezer*:  $nun-zayin-reish = 50 + 7 + 200 = 257$ .

The *brit milah*, the commandment of circumcision, is designed to remove the shells surrounding the procreative organ (which is the bodily manifestation of the *sefirah* of *yesod*), since these shells obstruct the full exposure of this *sefirah* and thereby limit the Divine beneficence that can issue from it. “Shells” in Kabbalah are an appellation for “evil.” The act of ritual circumcision consists of three separate procedures: removing the outer foreskin (*milah*), peeling back the mucous membrane (*periah*), and sucking off the blood produced by the operation (*metzitzah*).

In order for the Divine message embodied in *yesod* of *Abba* to penetrate the world, *malchut* reveals its will, i.e., its will to manifest Divinity in the lower worlds. The skull (*gulgulta*) of any *partzuf* is the *keter* of that *partzuf*, and *keter* is synonymous with will, as we have explained.

[Betzalet] therefore made three arks, one within the other, for the brain also possesses three shells: the thick membrane, the thin membrane, and the skull, above which is the skin.

Just as *yesod* possesses three “shells,” so does *chochmah*, or the brain in general.

The skull is the ark-cover (*kaporet*), and the skin is the veil that separates between the holy and the mundane, i.e., the head from the body.

Here, the Holy of Holies is the “head” of creation, while the outer chamber of the Tabernacle is the “body.” The Holy of Holies measured three cubits long, while the outer chamber measured seven. This is a clear indication that the inner chamber (the Holy of Holies) is to be associated with the intellect (or “head”), comprising three *sefirot*, and the outer chamber with the emotions (or “body”), comprising seven *sefirot*.

The Torah [i.e., the Tablets of the Covenant] alludes to the brain within [the head], alluded to by the *yud* [of the Name *Havayah*]. For the [Tablets] were initially one tablet, as indicated by the fact that the word for “tablets” [*luchot*] is written such that it can be read “tablet” [*luchat*]. Because of the sin of the Golden Calf they were made into two.

“And He gave to Moses when He finished speaking with him on Mt. Sinai, the two Tablets of the Covenant, tablets of stone, written with the finger of G-d.”<sup>5</sup> In this verse, describing how G-d gave Moses the Tablets of the Covenant and Moses descended with them from Mt. Sinai (only to find the Jewish people engaged in the sin of the Golden Calf), the word for “tablets of...” (*luchot*) appears twice. Both times it is written without a *vav* before the final *tav*, the usual indication of feminine plural. Thus, the word can be vocalized also (as *luchat*) to mean “the tablet [sing.] of...”

Evidently, the original intention was for mankind to be aware and conscious of G-d’s unity much more directly than it is now. Since the sin of the Golden Calf, in which the Jewish people insisted on an intermediary between them and G-d (which they originally conceived of as Moses, but in his absence demanded a substitute), the human mind functions on the principle of duality and balance, contrast and juxtaposition represented by the twin Tablets of the Covenant.

This most likely ties in with the teaching of the sages that had the first Tablets not been shattered, there would have been no need for the oral Torah. This obviously is not referring to the part of the oral Torah that explicates the written Torah, for would had to have been in any case. Rather, it is referring to the dialectic process of Talmudic logic and exegesis through which the teachings of the Torah are derived from the written text. This is a painstaking process of logic and argumentation, through which the truth emerges gradually as all other possibilities are examined and contraverted by opposing logic. When the first tablet(s) were/was shattered, the direct perception of G-d’s will and wisdom was shattered with them; the Divine consciousness of Israel went down a notch. From that point on, Divine will would have to be perceived through the indirect veil of human logic and dialectic.

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<sup>5</sup> Exodus 31:18.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim* and *Likutei Torah*

## *Parashat Terumah* [third installment]

The portion of the Torah read this week discusses the architecture and vessels of the Tabernacle, including the Table and the Showbread.<sup>1</sup> The details of the Showbread are given in *parashat Emor*.<sup>2</sup>

[We will now discuss] the mystery of the Showbread, i.e., the twelve loaves that were always warm.

The loaves were baked on Friday, placed on the Table on the Sabbath, and eaten by the priests the following Sabbath. Miraculously, they stayed fresh for the whole week.<sup>3</sup>

You already know that above there are several types of couplings, which are [all] metaphorically referred to as “eating,” as in the mystical meaning of the verse, “Eat, beloved ones.”<sup>4</sup>

Eating is a euphemism for sexual relations. Thus, we find that when Potiphar made Joseph in charge of his household and business affairs, “he left all that he had in Joseph’s care, and with him in charge, he concerned himself with nothing except *the bread he ate*.”<sup>5</sup> Rashi comments: “This means his wife.” And indeed, Joseph says when Potiphar’s wife propositions him, “he has denied me nothing but you, being his wife.”<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, when Jethro heard that Moses had saved his daughters from a shepherd, he said to them, “Why did you leave the man [there]? Call him [here] and let him eat bread.”<sup>7</sup> Rashi comments: “Perhaps he will marry one of you,” as Moses indeed did, as we are told in the next verse: “he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses.”

The verse quoted above is from the Song of Songs, the love poem between G-d and Israel.

As to why eating should be a metaphor for sexual relations...

Now, the coupling of *Abba* and *Ima* is effected by the *mazal* of the beard of *Arich Anpin*. The numerical value of the word for “bread” (*lechem*, 78) is the same as that of the Aramaic word for *mazal* (*mazla*).

*Lechem*: lamed-chet-mem = 30 + 8 + 40 = 78.

*Mazla*: mem-lamed-zayin-alef = 40 + 30 + 7 + 1 = 78.

In order for a couple to unite in marital relations, there must be some inspiration that descends upon them from above. In the case of *Abba* and *Ima*, this inspiration is a spark of Divine consciousness that descends upon them from the preceding *parztuf*, *Arich Anpin*, the will. Specifically, it is channeled through the beard of *Arich Anpin*, which, as we have discussed previously, subdivides into 13 “tufts,” which in turn correspond to G-d’s 13 attributes of mercy. These attributes are called *mazalot* (pl. of *mazal*), meaning “channel of flow,” since the root of *mazal* is *nun-zayin-lamed*, which means “to flow.” Thus, the zodiacal signs are also called *mazalot*, since they channel the Divine beneficence into the natural world.

In other words, the to will live and enhance life is the motivation for *Abba* and *Ima* to couple. In prosaic terms, we might say that a couple can engage in marital relations either as an expression of love for each other or of

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 25:23-30.

<sup>2</sup> Leviticus 24:5-9.

<sup>3</sup> *Menachot* 96b.

<sup>4</sup> Song of Songs 5:1.

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 39:6.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 39:9.

<sup>7</sup> Exodus 2:20.

their desire to become parents together. When focusing on the latter intention, their coupling is like that of *Abba* and *Ima* (“father” and “mother”), and the inspiration they draw upon to unite in this way comes from their own precedent, or parents. (The former intention is represented by the coupling of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*.)

The names of the *partzufim* are in Aramaic, taken from the *Zohar*, as is this concept of *mazal*. That is why the numerical analysis uses the Aramaic term *mazla* rather than the Hebrew *mazal*.

(The text refers to *Arich Anpin* by the Zoharic term *Atika*, not to be confused with the *partzuf* of *Atik Yomin*.)

[This *mazal*] is the sixth [of the thirteen], and [the letter representing the number 6, *vav*] is spelled out by doubling itself with another *vav*. These [two 6’s] are manifest as the twelve loaves, arranged in two arrays of six each. They also manifest the two letters *hei* [of the Name *Havayah*], whose numerical value when spelled out also equals twelve.

One of the ways the letter *vav*, the third letter of the Name *Havayah*, can be spelled out is *vav-vav*. These two *vav*’s represent the two arrays of six loaves arranged on the Table.

The letter *hei* appears as the second and fourth letter of the Name *Havayah*. One of the ways it can be spelled out is *hei-alef*, the numerical value of this combination is  $5 + 1 = 6$ . So, the two *hei*’s again give us two sets of six.

These twelve [loaves] derive from the three Names *Havayah* present in the [said] *mazal*, which [together] comprise 12 letters.

The numerical value of these three Names *Havayah* is the same as the numerical values of the words for “bread” and *mazal*.

*Yud-hei-vav-hei*:  $10 + 5 + 6 + 5 = 26$ .  $3 \times 26 = 78$ .

Since *Abba* and *Ima* couple continuously, this bread, i.e., the *mazal* that motivates them to couple, must be continuously on the table, as it is written, “[and you shall place] showbread on the Table before Me *continuously*.”<sup>8</sup>

For this reason also it was always warm, as it is written, “to place warm bread on the day it is taken off.”<sup>9</sup> [It was always warm] to indicate that [the *mazal*, too,] is always warm, arousing the continuous supernal coupling [of *Abba* and *Ima*].

Warmth and heat, in the vernacular also, are metaphors for sexual arousal. Rabbi Wolf Ashkenazi notes here that some texts add: “We find that coupling is referred to as heat, as it is written, ‘whenever the flock are in heat.’”<sup>10</sup>

[Only] the priests [were allowed to] eat this bread. This is because the priests manifested *chochmah*, the beginning, the High Priest of all the ten *sefirot*.

The right axis of the sefirotic array alludes to the three types of priests: *chochmah* to the High priest, *chesed* to the regular priests, and *netzach* to the assistant [*segran*] priests. The left side of the sefirotic tree alludes to the Levites.<sup>11</sup> The priests, who officiated at the sacrificial rites in the Temple, channeled the Divine beneficence downward to the people, and thus manifested the attribute of *chesed*, G-d’s lovingkindness. The Levites, in contrast, accompanied the Temple service with music, arousing the emotions of the people and focusing their consciousness upward, on G-d. This ascent is an attribute of *gevurah*, G-d’s strict judgment, for any ascent implies a transcendence or rejection of the lower level one is ascending out of.

<sup>8</sup> Exodus 25:30.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Samuel 21:7.

<sup>10</sup> Genesis 30:41.

<sup>11</sup> See *Sha’ar Ma’amarei Rashbi* on the *Idra*, *Zohar* 3:131b.

Through this you may understand the meaning of the phrase: “The Levite Priests...”<sup>12</sup> We see, in fact, that the Torah sometimes calls the Levites priests, as it is written, “They will approach the priests, the children of Levi,”<sup>13</sup> and the like. The reason for this is that the archetypes for the priests and the Levites are *chochmah* and *binah*, respectively. Since, as we have said, [these two *sefirot*] never part, the Levite on this level is “sweetened,” i.e., [he exhibits] no strict judgment. He therefore is closely allied to the priests, and they all exist together, as one.

But below, [in their physical manifestation], the Levites manifest strict severity. They therefore cannot connect with the priests [as they do in their spiritual archetype]. This is why the showbread is eaten only by the priests, who manifest *chochmah*.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>12</sup> Joshua 3:3.

<sup>13</sup> Deuteronomy 21:5.

## *Parashat Terumah* [fourth installment]

In this Torah portion, G-d tells Moses to make an ark in which to house the Tablets of the Covenant. From the top cover of this ark is to protrude two cherubs.

Regarding the ark-cover and the cherubs, there are those of the opinion that the cherubs are [manifestations of] *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, and there are others of the opinion that they are [manifestations of] *netzach* and *hod* [of *Ima*], and there are still others of the opinion that they are [manifestations of] *Abba* and *Ima*.

According to the sages, the two cherubs represent the pairing of G-d and the Jewish people. When G-d is pleased with us, the cherubs faced each other; when not, they miraculously turned away from each other.

The Kabbalistic archetype for the “romantic” dynamic of union and estrangement is the relationship between the *partzufim* of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, whose union is intermittent, and depends upon the behavior of the Jewish people, whose souls are derived from *Nukva*. The more “mature” *partzufim* of *Abba* and *Ima* do not undergo such vicissitudes in their relationship, and their union is constant.

Inasmuch as all [opinions in the Torah] are true, know that [the cherubs] are in fact [manifestations of] *Abba* and *Ima*, which are like *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* [except that] they never, ever part.

They [also] manifest *netzach* and *hod* [of *Ima*], which enter into *Z'eir Anpin*. For this reason, they had [middle-aged] adult faces, to indicate that they entered into *Z'eir Anpin*. For if *Abba* and *Ima* were in their place, above, it would have been proper for them to have had elderly adult faces, rather than [middle-aged] mature faces. Rather, [you we must assume that] they were [manifestations of] *netzach* and *hod* that entered *Z'eir Anpin*.

The sages state that the cherubs on the ark-cover had the faces of a child.<sup>1</sup> The *Zohar* states that three times a day, during the daily prayers, the cherubs would miraculously spread their wings, and at that time, when the Jews experienced expanded, mature consciousness, their face would change from that of a child to that of an adult.

In Kabbalistic terms, mature consciousness is the presence of the mentality of *Ima* in *Z'eir Anpin*. The facet of *Ima* that can enter *Z'eir Anpin* is its *netzach* and *hod*, as we have explained previously.

About this, it is said, “And spread over us the shelter of Your peace,”<sup>2</sup> referring to the shelter of Solomon.

The word for “peace” (*shalom*) is closely related to the name Solomon (*Shelomo*).

This refers to the fact that when *netzach* and *hod* of *Ima* enter *Z'eir Anpin*, *Z'eir Anpin*'s intellect matures and this quiets the internal strife going on inside us. The mentality of *Ima* (i.e., *Ima* itself, that cannot enter *Z'eir Anpin*) “hovers” over us, acting as an inspiration, protecting us.

In any case, the union of the two cherubs signifies the union of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, who, when united, resemble the constant union of *Abba* and *Ima*.

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<sup>1</sup> *Chagigah* 13b; *Sukah* 5ab.

<sup>2</sup> Liturgy, second blessed after the recitation of the Shema in the evening service.

Apparently, when *netzach* and *yesod* of *Ima* enter *Z'eir Anpin*, this somehow completes *yesod* of *Ima*, as will be now stated, and this sets in motion the proper functioning of the cherubs/ark-cover, the revelation of G-d's will through the Torah.

When *yesod* of *Ima* is completed, *yesod* of *Abba*—which is the Torah—becomes manifest. And where is it manifest? in the Ark [of the Covenant], which [manifests] *malchut* of *Ima*.

When *yesod* of *Ima*, i.e., the womb of the mother, is ready, the *yesod* of *Abba*, the father's procreative organ, is aroused to fertilize it. Insight is drawn into the mind when the mind has created in itself a vacuum, a womb, an awareness that it needs to be filled. This is possible only if the individual feels a sense of *bitul*, selflessness, a willingness to relinquish his present, imperfect worldview in favor of a more perfect one.

*Malchut* of *Ima* is the interface between *Ima* and the lower *partzufim*, the ability of the intellect to create emotions and their expression.

Similarly, when we remove the Torah [scroll] from the ark [in the synagogue], we are [in effect] removing the Torah, i.e., *chochmah*, from the ark, i.e., *malchut* of *binah*. We then take it to the reader's platform, i.e., *malchut*.

Reading the Torah is revealing G-d's will into the world, i.e., manifesting the Divine insight of *chochmah* as developed into a new vision of reality in *binah* that is now ready to revitalize and re-inspire the world.

We will now how this dynamic is manifest in the array of angels in the higher worlds.

Similarly, we find reference to the *seraphim*—which are cherubs—being in *Beriah*, which is [associated with] *binah*, and to *chayot* being in *Yetzirah*, and *ofanim* in *Asiyah*.

There are two *seraphim*, even though innumerable camps of millions [of angels are derived and] issue from them. They correspond to *yud-kei*, i.e., *chochmah* inside *binah*, which together enter *Beriah*.

The *seraphim* are the more “intellectual” angels, who personify Divine consciousness based on intellectual comprehension of Divinity. The letters *yud-kei* signify *chochmah* and *binah*.

It is stated in the *Zohar* that the four worlds are dominated by the four levels of Divine consciousness indicated by the four letters of the the Name *Havayah*, respectively. Thus, the world of *Atzilut* is dominated by *chochmah/yud*, pure Divine awareness. *Beriah* is dominated by *binah/hei*, Divine intellect. *Yetzirah* is dominated by the *midot/vav*, Divine emotion. *Asiyah* is dominated by *malchut/hei*, Divine expression.

This is the Name *Kah* in the world of *Beriah*, as Rabbi Yishmael said, “I saw Akatriel<sup>3</sup> *Kah Havayah Tzevakot...*”<sup>4</sup>

Evidently, these four Names of G-d correspond to the four letters of the Name *Havayah*, the four worlds, the four *partzufim*, etc. The name *Akatriel* is obviously related to *keter*, the super-rational *sefirah* that serves as the source of insight given into *chochmah*, and is thus associated with the world of *Atzilut*. *Kah*, as just stated, refers to *chochmah* within *binah*, the experience of *Beriah*. *Havayah* is associated with *tiferet*, the central of the six *midot*. *Tzevakot* is associated with *netzach* and *hod*, which are manifest as G-d's actions in the world of *Asiyah*.

These are [the two archangels] Michael and Gabriel, who are termed *seraphim*, and are the strength of the states of *gevurah*.

<sup>3</sup> Recall that names of angels that are not also used as names of people should not be pronounced.

<sup>4</sup> *Berachot* 7a.

*Binah* is on the left side of the *sefirah*-tree, and therefore associated with *gevurah*; thus *seraphim*, the angels of *Beriah*, are also associated with *gevurah*. In particular, the word *seraph* means “fiery angel” or “burning angel,” referring to the burning up of self-awareness that accompanies deep intellectual comprehension of Divine reality. The relentless, consuming nature of fire is associated with *gevurah*.

This is indicated by the fact that the numerical value of *seraph* [580] is the same as that of the word for “strength” [*tokef*].

*Seraph*:  $\text{sin-reish-pei} = 300 + 200 + 80 = 580$ .

*Tokef*:  $\text{tav-kuf-pei} = 400 + 100 + 80 = 580$ .

They are each twice the numerical value of the final letters.

The letters *mem*, *nun*, *tzadik*, *pei*, and *chaf* possess final forms, indicating a stopping or restraint (*gevurah*) of the flow of Divine life-force represented by the letters of the alphabet.

$\text{mem-nun-tzadik-pei-chaf} = 40 + 50 + 90 + 80 + 20 = 280$ .

$2 \times 280 = 560$ .

Each one includes itself and its fellow with it.

This statement apparently completes the calculation from 560 to 580.

Below them are the *chayot*, in *Yetzirah*. There are four *chayot*, in this order: *netzach* is included within *chesed*, *hod* is included in *gevurah*, *yesod* is included in *tiferet*—this is three. The fourth is *malchut*, which issues from the back of *tiferet*; it is the fourth *chayah*. [The names of the *chayot* are] Michael, Gabriel, Nuriel, and Raphael. They are all aspects of Metatron, for he is the main *chayah*, while these [four] others are manifestations of him.

They are the six extremities, which are the six *vav*’s, whose combined numerical value is 36.

The *seraphim* are above them, as it is written, “*Seraphim* were standing above Him.”<sup>5</sup>

The word for “Him” in this verse is *lo* (*lamed-vav*), whose numerical value is  $(30 + 6 =) 36$ . Thus, the verse may be read, “The *seraphim* were standing above the 36.”

The *ofanim* are below [these], in *Asiyah*. In fact, there is only one *ofan*, as it is written, “And behold, there was one *ofan* on the earth,”<sup>6</sup> but innumerable camps [of derivative *ofanim*] issue from it.

All this is because in *Atzilut* it is impossible for there to be any duality whatsoever, but below *Atzilut*—even though the infinite light of G-d spreads throughout *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*—it shines through veils. It shines into *Beriah* through one veil, into *Yetzirah* through two veils, and into *Asiyah* through three. [Therefore,] the infinite light of G-d does not cling to them [i.e., these worlds], and they are therefore termed “worlds of separateness.”

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 6:2.

<sup>6</sup> Ezekiel 1:15.

We can therefore speak of two or four [entities in these worlds], as is required *à-propos* to the matter.

When we reach the world of *Asiyah*, the forces of evil are quite numerous there, and it is therefore termed “the world of death.” For this reason, the *ofanim*, which are [the angels] in *Asiyah*, possess no intrinsic life-force, being from “the world of death,” rather, their life-force comes from *Yetzirah*.

This is the meaning of the verse, “For the spirit of the *chayah* was in the *ofanim*.”<sup>7</sup> And, [as we know,] the *chayah* is in the world of *Yetzirah*. Thus, the spirituality and life-force of *Yetzirah* descends into the *ofanim* of *Asiyah*, and there is no [life-force] in the *ofanim* except whatever reaches them from *Yetzirah*.

This is why “when the *chayot*, the *ofanim* followed; when the former moved, the latter moved, and when the former stop, the latter stop.”<sup>8</sup> For the spirit of the *chayah* is present in the *ofanim*, and the latter’s life-force comes from the former.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 1:20.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

## *Parashat Terumah* [fifth installment]

In this Torah portion, G-d tells Moses to build the Tabernacle. Maimonides writes: “The Tabernacle that Moses built was a temporary structure, as it is written, ‘For you have not yet come to the repose and inheritance that G-d, your G-d, is giving you.’<sup>1</sup> When [the Jews] entered the Land [of Israel, in the year 2488], they set up the Tabernacle at Gilgal, and it stood there for 14 years [until 2502], while they conquered and divided [the land]. From there, they came to Shiloh and built there a stone structure and spread the tapestries of the Tabernacle over it; it did not have a fixed roof. The Tabernacle of Shiloh stood [thus] for 369 years [until 2871]. When Eli died, it was taken down. They went to Nov and built a sanctuary there; when Samuel died, it was taken down. They went to Givon and built a sanctuary there; after Givon they went to the permanent Temple. [The structures at] Nov and Givon [stood for a total of] 57 years, [until 2928, or 832 BCE, when the first Temple was built].”<sup>2</sup>

The significance of the Tabernacle [of the desert], the Tabernacle of Shiloh, and the Temple [is as follows].

Know that in the Tabernacle, *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* were back to back on weekdays. This is the significance of the fact that the numerical value of the word for “Tabernacle” [*mishkan*] is 410, alluding to the two regressive iterations of the Name *Elokim*. For the numerical value of the regressive iteration of the Name *Elokim* plus 5 units for the 5 letters of the Name itself is 205.

*Mishkan*: *mem-shin-kaf-nun* = 40 + 300 + 20 + 50 = 410.

The regressive iteration of the Name *Elokim* (*alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem*):

*alef alef-lamed alef-lamed-hei alef-lamed-hei-yud alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem* =

1 + (1 + 30) + (1 + 30 + 5) + (1 + 30 + 5 + 10) + (1 + 30 + 5 + 10 + 40) =

5(1) + 4(30) + 3(5) + 2(10) + 1(40) =

5 + 120 + 15 + 20 + 40 =

200

This is the mystical significance of the verse, “And he came to *the mountain of G-d* [*Elokim*], to Horeb”<sup>3</sup>: “Mountain” signifies the Name *Elokim*, and therefore it is *Horeb* [“destruction”], for it signifies strict judgment, not settlement.

The numerical value of the word for “mountain” is *har*: *Har*: *hei-reish* = 5 + 200 = 205. 205, as we just saw, refers to the regressive iteration of the Name *Elokim*. The word *Horeb* (*chorev*) means “destruction.” Thus, this verse can be read, “And he came to the mountain, which signifies the Name *Elokim* undergoing destruction,” i.e., withdrawal, or regression. The Name *Elokim*, we know, is anyways associated with *gevurah* (judgment, severity), and its withdrawal signifies an especially negative situation, in which the Divine beneficence is severely limited. The Divine consciousness implied by such a situation is not sufficient to “civilize” reality, and therefore leaves reality outside its own realm a “desert” or “wasteland,” devoid of Divine consciousness.

Two times the numerical value of “mountain” [205] equals the numerical value of “Tabernacle” [*mishkan*, 410].

<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 12:4.

<sup>2</sup> *Mishneh Torah, Beit HaBechirah* 1:1-2.

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 3:1.

Thus, the two “mountains” of the “Tabernacle” are the two *partzufim* of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* in their limited states of Divine consciousness.

In fact, the two backs of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*—signified by the two “mountains” just mentioned—were facing and clinging to each other [in the desert on weekdays]. This is why the Tabernacle existed in the desert, a desolate place. For it alluded to [*Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*’s] backs, since the numerical value of the word for “Tabernacle” is twice that of the word for “mountain,” as mentioned.

When they face back to back, everything is in a state of severe judgment, signified by the Name *Elokim*.

In the Tabernacle at Shiloh, [*Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*] turned around to face each other, but [*Nukva* was manifest] only as the *partzuf* of Rachel, [whose stature extends] only from the chest [of *Z’eir Anpin*] downward. Therefore, the structure [of the Tabernacle at Shiloh] had built [i.e., permanent] walls.

The state of face-to-face is a more permanent and deeper union between the two *partzufim*. This was indicated by the construction of the Tabernacle, the “home” of the Divine “couple,” being built with permanent walls. But since this face-to-face union was not complete, only “from the chest down,” the permanence of the structure was only in its lower half, not its ceiling/roof. Psychologically, this means that we are only able to express the lower half of the emotions, the aspect of the emotions directed toward expression. The higher aspect of the emotions, the emotions as they are informed by the intellect, the idea that produced them, is “truncated.”

It would appear to me [Rabbi Chaim Vital] that after prayers [every day], [*Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*] reverted to being back-to-back, and this is why it was still called a “Tabernacle.”

Since the numerical value of “Tabernacle,” as above, alludes to *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* being back-to-back.

This is also why the numerical value of *Shiloh* is the same as that of “Moses” [*Moshe*].

*Shiloh*: *shin-yud-lamed-hei* = 300 + 10 + 30 + 5 = 345.

*Moshe*: *mem-shin-hei* = 40 + 300 + 5 = 345.

For the numerical value of the *shin* [of *Moshe*, 300] is the same as that of the Name *Elokim* spelled out with the letter *yud*.

alef	alef	1
	lamed	30
	pei	80
lamed	lamed	30
	mem	40
	dalet	4
hei	hei	5
	yud	10
yud	yud	10
	vav	6
	dalet	4
mem	mem	40
	mem	40
total		300

This serves to indicate that the original state [of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*] was that of the “back” of the Name *Elokim* [seen in its regressive iteration], but now, [in Shiloh], they are face to face, as indicated by the supernal form of the Name *Elokim*, i.e., its spelling-out with the letter *yud*.

The letter *yud* signifies *chochmah*, the highest conscious *sefirah*, and whenever it is used to spell out a Divine Name (as opposed to the letters *alef* or *hei*), this indicates the presence of *chochmah* in the state signified by that Name.

The *mem* and *hei* [of *Moshe*] allude to the 45-Name, spelled with the letter *alef*.

The numerical values of *mem* and *hei* are 40 and 5, which together add up to 45, the numerical value of the Name *Havayah* when it is spelled out with *alef*'s, as follows:

yud	yud-vav-dalet	10	
hei	hei-alef	5	
vav	vav-alef-vav	6	
hei	hei-alef	5	

This indicates that now, [at Shiloh,] *Z'eir Anpin* is no longer manifesting the Name *Elokim*, but rather the Name *Havayah* as spelled out to equal 45, and also to indicate that it is facing [*Nukva*].

The Name *Havayah*, associated with the attribute of mercy, indicates a much higher level of Divine consciousness than does the Name *Elokim*.

But in the Temple, *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* were of equal stature, and *Nukva* extended up to include the measure of the sub-*partzuf* of Leah. Therefore, the

numerical value of the word for “Temple” [*mikdash*] is the same as that of the word for “measure” [*midat*], as I have explained in regard to the mystical meaning of the verse, “...and the measure of my days, what it is,”<sup>4</sup> for Leah is called “the measure.”

*Mikdash*: mem-kuf-dalet-shin = 40 + 100 + 4 + 300 = 444.

*Midat*: mem-dalet-tav = 40 + 4 + 400 = 444.

The *partzuf* of Leah is the expression of thought, as opposed to Rachel, which is the expression of speech and action. Leah (thought) is more suited to express ideas and intellect, while Rachel (speech and action) is more suited to express emotion. Thus, Leah’s position is opposite the upper half of *Z’eir Anpin*, the aspect of the emotions that are still connected to the intellect.

This is the mystical meaning of our sages’ statement that in the days of King Solomon, the moon was full.<sup>5</sup>

King Solomon built the First Temple. The Midrash, counting Abraham as the first Jewish “king,” counts 14 kings between him and King Solomon, and another 14 kings from King Solomon to the destruction of the First Temple. Thus, King Solomon is the 15<sup>th</sup> of 30 kings. These 30 kings correspond to the 30 days of a lunar month, and thus the institution of Jewish monarchy is seen as starting (as a “new moon”) with Abraham, waxing until its greatest point in the person of King Solomon, and then waning as Jewish civilization became more decadent after him, until the destruction.

[*Nukva*] grew to equal the full stature of *Z’eir Anpin*.

The moon is a correlate of *Nukva*, as can be seen (among other ways) in the correlation between the lunar month and the menstrual cycle. The full moon thus indicates the full maturation of the *partzuf* of *Nukva*, that occurred when King Solomon built the Temple.

Therefore, [when he dedicated the Temple], King Solomon made a fourteen-day feast, divided into two groups of seven, corresponding to Rachel and Leah.

“And Solomon celebrated the festival at that time, and all Israel with him, a great congregation, from Levo Chamat until the wadi of Egypt, before G-d, our G-d, *seven days and seven days*, fourteen days.”<sup>6</sup>

*Malchut* is the seventh *sefirah* of the *midot*, thus, the seven-day periods each correspond to the two aspects of *malchut*, the two sub-*partzufim* of Leah and Rachel.

—translated from *Sha’ar HaPesukim*

<sup>4</sup> Psalms 39:5. Installment on *parashot Bamidbar & Naso* (Arizal\_16.doc)

<sup>5</sup> *Shemot Rabbah* 15:26; *Zohar* 1:223b, 225b, 3:46a.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Kings 8:65

## Parashat Tetzaveh

This week's Torah portion discusses the special garments the priests (*kohanim*) had to wear while performing their service in the Tabernacle and later in the holy Temple. Every priest had to wear four basic garments: pants (*michnasayim*), a tunic (*kutonet*), a sash (*avnet*), and a turban-like headgear (*migba'at*). In addition, the high priest (*kohen gadol*) had to wear four additional garments: a robe (*me'il*), a half-skirt (*ephod*), a breastplate (*choshen*), and a head-band (*tzitz*). The headgear of the high priest is more elaborate than that of a regular priest (and is called *mitznefet* in place of *migba'at*).

The *Zohar*<sup>1</sup> describes the spiritual powers of the *ephod* and the *choshen* as follows: The *ephod* corresponds to [the ability to perceive spirituality through] a clouded glass, while the *choshen* corresponds to [the ability to perceive spirituality through] a clear glass. The former is the back; the latter is the front.”

The *ephod* is, as we said, a sort of half-skirt, tied around the waist, which covers the back part of the body from the waist down. Two suspender-like straps come out of the upper edge of the back part of the *ephod* and extend over the crest of the shoulders. Onto these straps are fastened two chains, from which the *choshen* hangs. The *choshen* is a folded piece of fabric which rests over the chest, onto which are fixed twelve precious stones.

Thus, although parts of it are visible from the front, the *ephod* mainly covers the back of the body, while the *choshen* is entirely on the front of the body. “Back” and “front” in the imagery of Kabbalah denote direct and indirect experience. Thus, the *ephod* symbolizes the ability to perceive spirituality through “a clouded glass,” which may mean either a translucent but not transparent pane of glass or a mirror. In either case, what is implied is an indirect experience. In contrast, the *choshen* symbolizes the ability to perceive spirituality through “a clear glass,” i.e., directly.

To explain: *Z'eir Anpin* and its *Nukva* are [initially] back to back. *Z'eir Anpin* corresponds to the *choshen*, and the *ephod* corresponds to its *Nukva*.

G-d emanated the *sefirot* initially as one-dimensional points. This means that each *sefirah* was a pure manifestation of one of G-d's attributes. Although in this form each *sefirah* was extremely intense, this scheme was incomplete, for in order for any two entities to interrelate and interact, each must possess something of the other. Their common ground for communication and cross-fertilization is the presence of each one in the other. For example, in order for two people to communicate, each has to have a “place” in his mind where he can, at least to some extent, picture what it is to be the other person. Through this mini-presence of the other person within himself, he can understand what the other person is saying and couch what he wants to say to him in terms that he will be able to understand. This was lacking in the original scheme of the *sefirot*. Since there was no interaction, this version of creation, or world, was called *Tohu* (“chaos”), and eventually collapsed.

The rectified world that was created in order to fix this problem was called *Tikun* (“rectification”). *Tohu* and *Tikun* are the immature and mature versions of the first of the four created worlds, *Atzilut* (“emanation”). Generally, when reference is made to the world of *Atzilut*, the mature version (*Tikun*) is meant.

In the world of *Atzilut*, the *sefirot* are no longer one-dimensional points, but have metamorphosed into arrays (*partzufim*, sing. *partzuf*) of ten sub-*sefirot*. This occurs according to the following pattern:

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<sup>1</sup> 2:230b.

<i>sefirah</i> in <i>Tohu</i>	<i>partzuf</i> in <i>Tikun</i>
<i>keter</i>	<i>Atik Yomin</i> (“the Ancient of Days”)
	<i>Arich Anpin</i> (“the Long Face”)
<i>chochmah</i>	<i>Abba</i> (“father”)
<i>binah</i>	<i>Ima</i> (“mother”)
<i>chesed, gevurah, tiferet, netzach, hod, yesod</i>	<i>Z’eir Anpin</i> (“the Small Face”)
<i>malchut</i>	<i>Nukva</i> (“the female”) of <i>Z’eir Anpin</i>

Note that *keter* splits into two *partzufim*, while the aggregate of the emotional attributes (from *chesed* to *yesod*) form one. Each *partzuf* comprises ten sub-*sefirot*, as we said, so we may speak of *chesed* of *Abba*, *chochmah* of *Z’eir Anpin*, and so on. Once each *sefirah* has become a *partzuf*, the *sefirot* may interact and interrelate to each other. This process of interaction is called “coupling” (*zivug*).

Now, when any two people communicate (or “couple,” either in the physical or abstract sense), there can be many levels of intensity in their interaction. One of the parties may be distracted or disinterested; this is obviously a less than ideal level of communication. The ignored party will feel as if the other person has “turned his back” to him, regardless of whether he is physically facing him or not.

Thus, in the imagery of Kabbalah, when two *partzufim* couple, they are said to be either “face to face,” “face to back,” “back to face,” or “back to back.” The initial state is that of being back to back, since the orientation of youth is self-centeredness; other people are perceived mainly as objects through which one reaches his own, selfish ends. Maturity is the broadening of perspective that encompasses the other’s perspective; this is the state of being face to face.

The numerical value of *ephod* is identical to that of the two Divine Names *Havayah Adni*. The coupling of these two Names is the coupling between *Z’eir Anpin* and the *Nukvah*.

Every Divine Name is associated with a *sefirah* (or *partzuf*), since a name of G-d is simply a term we use to refer to Him acting in a certain way. The Name *Havayah* is primarily associated with the *sefirah* of *tiferet*, which is the pivotal *sefirah* of the *partzuf* of *Z’eir Anpin*; the Name *Adni* (which means “L-rd”) is associated with the *sefirah* of *malchut* (“kingdom”) or its manifestation as a *partzuf*, the *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin*.

Thus, the *ephod* itself carries in it an allusion to its consummate state, that of unification with the *choshen*.

The *choshen* corresponds to *Z’eir Anpin* in its immature, judgmental state. This is why it is called “the *choshen* of judgment,”<sup>2</sup> for it is a manifestation of the totally judgmental state of immaturity.

The *choshen* is called “the *choshen* of judgment” because by means of the letters engraved on the precious stones affixed to it, answers were obtained to crucial questions facing the Jewish people. Allegorically, however, this term indicates that the *choshen* at this stage represents *Z’eir Anpin* in its immature, self-oriented state. An immature person sees everything from only one perspective—his, and is thus apt to be highly judgmental of those he comes in contact with. We see this clearly with children, who, since they lack the perspective of experience, interpret things only with an eye to how they impinge on themselves and what they perceive to be their best interests. Clearly, when *Z’eir Anpin* is in this state, it is not yet ready to couple with its *Nukvah* face to face.

The *choshen* [in] this [state] is equivalent to the snake that tears open the womb of the doe when it gives birth<sup>3</sup> (as we have explained in our discussion of the splitting of the sea), for this is also a manifestation of total judgment.

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 28:15.

<sup>3</sup> See *Etz Chaim* 34:2, *klal* 16.

The imagery here is that of a young female deer giving birth for the first time. Since this is her first impregnation, the opening of her womb is still “virginal,” i.e., narrow—too narrow, in fact, for the fawn to fit through. In her pain trying to give birth, the doe cries, and a snake, hearing the cry, bites the doe, tearing open her womb so the fawn can emerge. Although this benefits the doe, the snake is surely acting only out in its own interest.

The union of the *choshen* and the *ephod* at this immature stage is thus characterized by extreme self-interest, each party acting only on its own behalf and motivated to interact only by what it thinks it can get out of the other.

When the Jewish people went out of Egypt, they were spiritually immature, also. The seven-week period between the Exodus and the Revelation on Mt. Sinai was a maturation process (which we relive every year nowadays as the *mitzvah* of counting the *Omer*). Both the splitting of the sea, seven days after the Exodus, and the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai, seven *weeks* after the Exodus, were revelations of Divinity. But whereas the Jewish people were maturely prepared for the Revelation at Mt. Sinai, the splitting of the sea occurred at the beginning of their spiritual education, when they were still “young.” Any revelation may be likened to a birth, but this birth was a first birth, and is therefore similar to the first birth of the doe just described.

We are therefore taught that providing for mankind is as difficult for G-d as the splitting of the sea,<sup>4</sup> for both are subject to G-d’s judgment, as mentioned in the *Zohar*.<sup>5</sup>

Our sages state that making a living is compared to the splitting of the sea, as it is written, “Praise G-d...who split the sea apart...who gives bread to all flesh.”<sup>6</sup>

Now, it certainly is not difficult for G-d to do anything, including splitting the sea and providing for man’s needs. The “difficulty” in both cases arises from the fact that G-d’s attribute of judgment was (or is) arguing against it. We are taught that when the Jews were crossing the sea, the guardian angel of the Egyptians was complaining that the Jews were just as sinful as the Egyptians, and that there was no justification for allowing them to pass through while the Egyptians were to be drowned. It was only after special merit was found that the attribute of judgment was silenced. Similarly, G-d provides for all creation’s needs every day, but the fact that man is sinful and thus does not deserve His care makes it “difficult” for Him to provide it. It is only thanks to the fact that G-d’s benevolence prevails over His judgment that man is provided for.

From all this we see that immaturity—the state of being self-oriented and egocentric—arouses G-d’s attribute of judgment.

Numerically, this is expressed by the fact that the word for “snake” (*nachash*, 358) is equal to the numerical value of the Name *Shakai* (314) plus the diminishing value (*achoraim*) of the Name *Ekyeh* (44), which is also the numerical value of the word for “blood” (*dam*, 44). All of this indicates the state of immaturity.

The “diminishing value” of a word is derived by writing the word in full followed by the word with the last letter left off, followed by the word with the last two letters left off, and so on until only the first letter is left. All these letters are then added up. In our case, the Name *Ekyeh* is spelled *alef-hei-yud-hei*. If to this we add *alef-hei-yud*, *alef-hei*, and *alef* by itself, the total of the numerical values of these letters is  $1 + 5 + 10 + 5 + 1 + 5 + 10 + 1 + 5 + 1 = 44$ .

The significance of the “diminishing value” of a word is that it signifies the concept conveyed by the word but in an immature, undeveloped state. Thus, the Hebrew term for this version of the word is its *achoraim*, or “back.” As we mentioned above, in Kabbalah, “back” signifies the immature state.

The Name *Ekyeh* in Kabbalah usually signifies the *sefirah* of *binah*, the principle component of the intellect. The “diminished value” of *Ekyeh* therefore signifies immature intellect, or the constricted consciousness characteristic of a child or person who has not matured.

<sup>4</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 97:3, 20:22.

<sup>5</sup> 2:170a.

<sup>6</sup> Psalms 136:13, 25.

The Name *Shakai* is associated in Kabbalah with the *sefirah* of *yesod*, the *sefirah* through which coupling takes place. Thus, the above *gematria* (numerical equivalence) in which the Name *Shakai* is added to the “diminished value” of the Name *Ekyeh* refers to a coupling conducted in a mode of immature consciousness, i.e., each party motivated by and seeking their own interests. The total is equal to the snake, who opportunely takes advantage of the immaturity of the doe, causing her to bleed, as we noted above.

To explain further: Aaron personified *Z’eir Anpin*. *Z’eir Anpin* manifests on its heart the lights of *yesod* of *Ima*, which are revealed on [*Z’eir Anpin*’s] chest.

*Ima*, as we said, is the *partzuf* of *binah*, which is, as we also said, the principle component of the intellect. Every intellectual idea, if allowed to, will produce an emotional reaction; in other words, *Ima* (the “mother”) gives birth to *Z’eir Anpin* (the amalgam of the emotional attributes). Not only that, the growth, development and maturation of this emotional make-up is dependent on it being periodically refreshed and reconstituted by the original idea that gave rise to it. In other words, the development of *Z’eir Anpin* is dependent on the flow of energy it receives from *Ima*.

This is what is meant by the imagery of the “lights” (i.e., “input” or “energy”) of *Ima* issuing from its *yesod* (the *sefirah* of transmission between one *partzuf* and another) and landing on the chest/heart of *Z’eir Anpin*.

Due to the intensity of the light present there, on his heart, these lights pierce through [him], shining and projecting outward.

If the emotional response is sufficiently intense, it will not be satisfied in simply producing feelings in the person experiencing it, but will motivate him to spread the enthusiasm his enlightenment has granted him to the outside world as well.

Similarly, the headband signifies the [lights of] *yesod* of *Ima* that are revealed on the forehead [of *Z’eir Anpin*], this being the location of all facets of [*Z’eir Anpin*’s] intellect. These lights, too, shine outward.

The emotional response to the intellect of *Ima* is not simply pure intellect, for we have noted that every *partzuf* comprises the full array of all ten *sefirot*. Thus, *Z’eir Anpin* has its own intellect, that is, emotions possess their own intellectual underpinning, apart from the abstract intellectual idea that gave rise to them. This emotional intellect must also be “fed” and “renewed” by the original abstract intellect (*Ima*) in order to be properly energized. When this happens, they, too, desire to spread forth and illuminate the rest of the world with their inspiration.

Correspondingly, Aaron would wear the headband and the *choshen*, just as does the Supernal Man. These garments derive from the lights we have now described.

The “Supernal Man” is another appellation for *Z’eir Anpin*.

By wearing these garments, *Z’eir Anpin* “matures.” For maturation, it will be remembered, is the process of expanding one’s consciousness to the extent that it can encompass more perspectives than one’s own. This is possible only when one’s emotions have been properly “fed” by the wisdom and understanding of intellect. The *tzitz* and the *choshen* signify this influx of consciousness (“light”) from *Ima*—the intellect—into the emotions—*Z’eir Anpin*. As it matures, *Z’eir Anpin* develops concern not only for itself but for the outside world as well, and seeks to shine its revelations outward rather than just hoard them within itself.

The *ephod* begins opposite the loins on the back, and extends down to the feet. [As mentioned above,] the *ephod* thus signifies the *Nukva*, which is [initially] situated behind *Z’eir Anpin*.

The *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin* is the *partzuf* of *malchut*, or the power to express emotions. Generally, these powers are seen as the three “garments” of the soul: thought, speech, and action. Each of these is a descent from the intensity of emotional enthusiasm represented by *Z’eir Anpin*, but on the other hand, they are necessary in order for the urge for expression and spreading of the Divine consciousness into the world to occur. As was explained in the

comments on *parashat Mishpatim*, the feminine side of creation is the drive to conquer and rectify reality and make the world a dwelling place for G-d. This is done by expressing the inspiration of *Z'eir Anpin* through *Nukva*.

Thus, as *Z'eir Anpin* matures, it seeks to couple with *Nukva* in a mature way, that will enable “her” to descend into the lower realms and give birth to new levels of Divine consciousness there. However—

Scripture therefore teaches us: “let not the *choshen* slide off the *ephod*.”<sup>7</sup> For they must remain constantly joined above. Even when she [i.e., *Nukva*, the *ephod*] descends below afterwards, part of her remains above, as it is written, “Your word, O G-d, forever stands in heaven.”<sup>8</sup>

Here we are taught that even when one is involved in expressing and transmitting the Divine inspiration to the world, he must remain “anchored” above; part of him must always retain consciousness of the original, pristine inspiration. This way, he will maintain balance and not lose sight of his goals while involved in the exigencies of translating the inspiration to others. This, as we mentioned in the comments to *parashat Mishpatim*, is an all-too-common pitfall.

A common appellation for the *sefirah* of *malchut* is “the word of G-d,” since, as we said above, *malchut* is the force of expression of the inspiration of *Z'eir Anpin*. The verse, “Your word, O G-d, forever stands in heaven,” thus means mystically that some aspect of *malchut* remains always anchored above, even as it descends to earth to rectify and elevate it.

Therefore, the numerical value of *ephod* [*alef-pei-dalet*] is 85, the numerical value of the Name *Elokim* [plus 1], which signifies *Nukva*. When *ephod* is spelled fully [i.e., with the *vav*: *alef-pei-vav-dalet*], its numerical value is 91, that of the combined Names *Havayah* (26) and *Adni* (65), indicating that [it must be united with the *choshen*] just as these two Names must be united forever.

The Name *Elokim* is often considered the feminine complement to the Name *Havayah*. It is fairly common to complete a numerical equivalence by adding the number 1, signifying the totality of the letters of a given word considered as a whole entity (the word) and not just as the constituent elements (the letters).

The union of the two Names *Havayah* and *Adni* was mentioned above.

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<sup>7</sup> Exodus 28:28.

<sup>8</sup> Psalms 119:89.

## *Parashat Tetzaveh* [second installment]

In the first installment on *parashat Tetzaveh*, we read part of the Arizal's discussion of the *choshen* and the *ephod*. Inside the *choshen* was "the *urim* and the *tumim*," a parchment with Divine Names written on it that caused the letters on the stones of the *choshen* to protrude and light up when the High Priest wished to ascertain G-d's will regarding some crucial question for the nation. Although it was one item, this parchment's name was double, indicating that its message was "lucid" (*urim* meaning "lights") and "true" (*tumim* meaning "perfections").

Now, according to the *Zohar*,<sup>1</sup> the *urim* were [manifest in] the *choshen*, while the *tumim* were [manifest in] the *ephod*. This accords with what we have explained, since the *urim* are the "lights" that shine on the heart [of *Z'eir Anpin*] and the words [that these lights cause to appear on the *choshen*] shine forth.

As was explained previously, the lights of *yesod* of *Ima* shine onto the chest of *Z'eir Anpin* in order to develop and mature it. When a person's emotions are fully matured, they "shine outward"; he seeks to share the enthusiasm of his new insight with the rest of the world.

The *tumim* correspond to *Nukva* [of *Z'eir Anpin*]. This is alluded to by the verse "and together they will be matching [*tamim*] at the top."<sup>2</sup>

This verse speaks of the boards that formed the walls of the Tabernacle. They had to be of equal height, in order to be fastened together by a rings inserted into slots carved in their tops. The word for "matching" (*tamim*) is obviously related to the word *tumim*. The word *tumim* thus is taken to imply a matching pair of something. As we will see, this invokes the image of the two female *partzufim*.

And it is know that there are two female [*partzufim*], *Leah* and *Rachel*.

As we have explained previously, *Leah* refers to the power of expression, or "garment," of thought, while *Rachel* refers to the "garment" of speech.

The two shoulder straps of the *ephod* correspond to *Leah*, for *Leah* is the concealed world, and all that is revealed of her is only two of her axes.

Since a person's thoughts are hidden from others, thought is called "the hidden world" and speech "the revealed world." The *ephod* covered mostly the back of the priest. The skirt-part covered the buttocks and the back of the thighs and was only slightly wrapped around the front of the body; the shoulder straps rose out of the skirt-part in the back and extended up to the shoulders, only "peeking" over the shoulders to the front in order to be fastened by chains to the *choshen*. It thus is associated with the hidden *partzuf* of *Leah*.

Every *partzuf* comprises three axes, the right axis of its sub-sefirot *chochmah-chesed-netzach*, the left axis of its sub-sefirot *binah-gevurah-hod*, and its middle axis of *da'at-tiferet-yesod*. The two shoulder straps embodied the left and right axes of *Leah*.

Also, [the word *tamim* further alludes to the two feminine *partzufim*, as follows:] the numerical value of the [letters used to spell out the] four *alef*'s of [the four Names *Ekyeh* that become the intellects of] *Leah* and *Rachel* is each [440, the numerical value of the word for] "unblemished" [*tam*].

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<sup>1</sup> 2:170a.

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 26:24.

The Divine Name *Ekyeh* (“I shall be”) is associated in Kabbalah with *binah/Ima*, the principle *sefirah/partzuf* of the intellect. As we have mentioned previously,<sup>3</sup> Specifically, the *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima* are expressed by four iterations of the Name *Ekyeh*. The intellect of *Nukva* is derived from the *alefs* of these four Names.<sup>4</sup> When the letter *alef* is spelled out (*alef-pei-lamed*), its value becomes  $(1 + 80 + 30 = ) 111$ . The numerical value of the four *alefs* together is thus  $4 \times 111 = 444$ . If we consider just the letters used to spell out these *alefs*, and not the *alefs* themselves, we must subtract their numerical value ( $4 \times 1 = 4$ ) from this total, giving  $444 - 4 = 440$ .

Therefore, Jacob, who couples with them, is called “an unblemished [*tam*] man,”<sup>5</sup> [which can also be read] “the husband of the *tam*,” referring to either Leah or Rachel. Thus, the *tumim* corresponds to the feminine principle.

Now, the numerical value of *choshen* is the same as that of the Name *Shakai* plus the diminishing value (*achoraim*) of the Name *Ekyeh*.

As we have explained, the Name *Ekyeh* is associated with *binah*, and the Name *Shakai* is associated with *yesod*.

*Choshen*: *chet-shin-nun* =  $8 + 300 + 50 = 358$ .

*Shakai*: *shin-dalet-yud* =  $300 + 4 + 10 = 314$ .

The diminishing value of *Ekyeh* (*alef-hei-yud-hei*):

$$\begin{aligned} \text{alef-hei-yud-hei, alef-hei-yud, alef-hei, alef} &= (1 + 5 + 10 + 5) + (1 + 5 + 10) + (1 + 5) + (1) \\ &= 21 + 16 + 6 + 1 \\ &= 44. \end{aligned}$$

Together,  $314 + 44 = 358$ .

Previously, it was noted that the numerical value of *Shakai* plus the diminishing value of *Ekyeh* equals the numerical value of the word for “snake” (*nachash*), which is just a permutation of *choshen*. This equivalency indicated that the initial coupling of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* occurs in an immature, selfish manner. The fact that this numerical equivalency (358) is also the numerical value of *choshen* indicates that the *choshen* is the “site” of this immature coupling between itself (representing *Z’eir Anpin*) and the *ephod* (representing *Nukva*).

This is because the heart [of *Z’eir Anpin*] is where the crown of the *yesod* of *Ima* terminates; this is why it is expressed by the “diminishing value” of the Name *Ekyeh*.

The *choshen* rested over the heart of the priest. The *yesod* of *Ima* is the intellect’s drive for self-actualization, and this terminates (i.e., is realized) when the intellect produces emotion. The “crown” here refers to the tip or end of *yesod*.

There, at the level of the heart, is the initial manifestation of *yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin*, which is [sufficient] for him to couple with *Leah*. As is known, there are two aspects of the *yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin*: the first [is manifest] when *Z’eir Anpin* is just [composed of] the six extremities [i.e., *chesed* to *yesod*]. At this stage, its *yesod* ascends to the level of its upper third and metamorphoses into its *tiferet*. This *yesod* is what couples with *Leah*.

When the *partzuf* of *Z’eir Anpin* is first “born” out of *Ima*, it is “immature,” that is, it is just the six emotions from which it is originally constructed. The process of its maturation consists of it metamorphosing into a full *partzuf* of ten sub-sefirot, i.e., both intellect and emotions. Although it remains the *partzuf* of the emotions, the

<sup>3</sup> See our translation of the Arizal’s teachings on *parashot Bamidbar and Naso* (arizal\_16.doc) near footnotes 13-14.

<sup>4</sup> *Sha’ar HaPesukim* to Psalms 39:5; *Sha’ar HaKavanot, Kariat Shema* 6.

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 25:27.

emotions, so to speak, acquire their own intellect (as distinct from the intellect *per se*, i.e., the *partzufim* of *Abba* and *Ima*), and are thus mature, stable emotions.

This metamorphosis is accomplished by the six original sub-*sefirot* dividing, similar to biological cell-division, and these new incarnations repositioning themselves in order to assume the role of the new intellect and emotions of the reconstituted, full *partzuf*. Without going into the full description of this process, what concerns us here is that the original *yesod* becomes the new *tiferet*.

The original *yesod* is part of the original configuration of the emotional *partzuf*, and thus represents and immature, selfish sort of sexuality. This immature, undeveloped sexual *sefirah* suffices to let the immature emotions couple with *Leah*, the *partzuf* of thought. Since thought is inwardly directed, it is “self-oriented” or “selfish.” We might characterize a person who is exclusively a thinker as narcissistic. He is caught up in the world of his own thoughts; his sexuality is self-oriented and “sterile,” pursued for the pleasure it affords him. In contrast, the mature *yesod* couples with *Rachel*, the *partzuf* of speech. Speech is outwardly directed; its purpose is to share the insight and emotions the insight engenders with the outside world, for the benefit of others. This sexuality is potent and fruitful.

The second [aspect of *yesod* is manifest] after maturation; this *yesod* is found below, in its proper place, and is there in order to couple with *Rachel*.

In any case, we see from here that there is an aspect of *yesod* at the level of the heart. *Yesod* is always associated with the Name *Shakai*, and therefore at this location—the level of the heart—are the breasts.

The Name *Shakai* can be read *shaddai*, “my breasts.”

Thus, there is a radiance of the Name *Shakai* [= 314] issuing from the *yesod* [of *Z'eir Anpin*] at the level of its heart, together with a radiance of the diminishing value of the Name *Ekyeh*, whose numerical value is that of the word for “blood” [*dam*, 44]. Together they equal the numerical value of the words for “snake” [*nachash*] and *choshen*.

According to one opinion in the Talmud,<sup>6</sup> the reason a woman does not usually menstruate when nursing is because her blood is transformed into milk. Whatever this may mean physiologically, we see here a conceptual connection between blood and breastmilk.

What have gleaned from this passage is that the union of the *choshen* and the *ephod*, i.e., that of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, occurs at both an immature and mature stage. The former is the union between the emotions and thought, and the latter the union between emotions and speech.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim* and *Ta'amei HaMitzvot*

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<sup>6</sup> *Bechorot* 6b.

## *Parashat Tetzaveh* [third installment]

This *parashah* opens with the commandment to “take for you [Moses] pure olive oil, ground for [use in] the candelabrum, in order to kindle the eternal lamp.”<sup>1</sup>

The *menorah* manifests [the *partzuf* of] *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin*, which is [initially] postured back-to-back with it. [*Nukva*] is rectified and constructed chiefly through the two sub-*sefirot* of *chesed* within *netzach* and *hod* of *Z’eir Anpin*, which are revealed lights.

*Nukva* must be reconstituted out of its original back-to-back state in order to be able to face *Z’eir Anpin* face-to-face and couple with it. Although we have mentioned previously that *Nukva* is constructed from the sub-*sefirot* of *gevurah* of the preceding *sefirot*, here we are discussing a further rectification process.

We have explained the difference between the male and female principles previously in terms of the difference between the drives for abstraction and concretization. The male principle seeks re-inspiration from the spiritual levels higher than it, while the female principle seeks to manifest Divinity in the levels below it, this being G-d’s directive to make the lower worlds into His home.

In order for the female principle to exhibit this consciousness, the male abstraction-drive must be subdued, or hidden. Only then can the female principle assert itself and become an equal partner with the male principle.

This female drive or consciousness is derived from the *netzach* and *hod* of the male principle, inasmuch as *netzach* and *hod* are the two *sefirot* that on the one hand possess their own content and on the other hand are oriented and extend outward from the sefirotic body. (*Yesod*, in contrast, is oriented outward, but its content is essential the coalescence of the preceding *sefirot*.) Thus, they already exhibit something of the female consciousness (albeit not enough to enable *Z’eir Anpin*, the male principle, to act in a female way on its own, hence the need for a female *partzuf*).

As we have explained elsewhere,<sup>2</sup> these states of *chesed* descend quickly when they issue from the *yesod* of *Ima*, which is situated level with the chest [of *Z’eir Anpin*]. When they strike the *yesod* [of *Z’eir Anpin*], they reflect [off of it] and ascend. A glimmer of this reflected light shines outside [*Z’eir Anpin*], behind *netzach* and *hod*, and thus reaches *Nukva*.

This is the way this process is described in *Sha’ar HaMitzvot*. In the parallel passages in *Ta’amei HaMitzvot* and *Sefer HaLikutim*, it is stated that this glimmer of the reflected light shines outside *Z’eir Anpin* behind its chest (i.e., at the level of *tiferet*, not *netzach* and *hod*), and reaches *Nukva* from there.

As is known, *Nukva* is built only through reflected light, not through direct light. Thus, if [these lights would not descend] as described, *Nukva* could not be constructed at all.

The idea that *Nukva* is built only through reflected light expresses what we said earlier, that the male principle cannot directly create female principle, since their respective orientations are opposite.

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 27:20.

<sup>2</sup> *Etz Chaim* 25:2, etc.

These two sub-sefirot of *chesed* within *netzach* and *hod* [of *Z'eir Anpin*] are manifest as two olives, as it is written, “there were two olive [trees] above it.”<sup>3</sup>

This verse is part of Zechariah’s prophetic vision of the return of the Babylonian exile, in which he is shown a golden *menorah*. The two olive trees seem to be the source of the oil burning in the lamps of the *menorah*.

When these two [sub-sefirot] descend to *yesod* [of *Z'eir Anpin*], they are crushed there by the force of their impact and are thus ground [to produce oil]. As is mentioned in the *Zohar*,<sup>4</sup> the grinding [of the oil] occurs at the level of the *tzadik* [i.e., *yesod*].

By the force of their impact there, they become pulverized and made into fine particles, and are then ground up, producing pure olive oil, i.e., the light that is given to *Nukva*.

According to Kabbalah, the male seed originates spiritually in the male brain, and then becomes progressively more “physical” as it descends via the spinal cord to the reproductive organs. This is the “grinding” or “pulverizing” process referred to here. Nowadays, we might imagine this as the process of the nerve impulses in the brain stem stimulating the production of semen in the scrotum. In any case, one of the physiological analogs for *netzach* and *hod* is the two testicles, and we have had occasion to point out the semantic connection between the Hebrew word for “oil” (*shemen*) and the English word “semen,” based on the fact that the implication of the word *shemen* is the distilled essence of any entity. Thus, these two olives may be seen as the spiritual “testicles” that produce the male seed, or oil, that is then spiritually transferred to the *menorah*, or female principle. In the present context, the “seed” is the conceptual insight originating in *chochmah* that is processed by the sefirotic array, eventually being brought to fulfillment as it is applied to the real world. This seed must be pulverized, i.e., reduced to its constituent elements, in order to create female consciousness, as we said. This is similar to how physically, the male seed must be “reduced” and made physical (i.e., descend from its spiritual origins in the male mind) in order for it to be given to the female.

This is the mystical meaning of the phrase “ground for the *menorah*.” The verse then continues by explaining that the purpose of this grinding process is in order “to kindle the eternal lamp.” This means that this light will reach *malchut*—which is called “the lamp”—as it ascends as reflected light.

The word for “to kindle” (*leha'alot*) literally means “to cause to ascend,” thus alluding to the fact that the *menorah* is supplied with its oil via a process of ascending, i.e., reflected light.

If this light were not crushed, it would not reflect upward, and as we have explained, it is only possible to shine *reflected* light to *Nukva*.

Regarding the pure olive oil, I [i.e., Chaim Vital] once heard from my master that the seven Divine Names mentioned in the *Zohar*<sup>5</sup> in connection with the Sabbath, which are derived from the two Names *Ekyeh* and *Yud-hei-vav* and issue from them like seven pearls, are equivalent to the seven extremities of *Z'eir Anpin*.

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<sup>3</sup> Zachariah 4:3

<sup>4</sup> 3:247a.

<sup>5</sup> 2:92a.

We have already explained these seven Names in our explanations of the liturgy, regarding the seven blessings [that constitute] each of the [*Amidah*] prayers recited on the Sabbath.<sup>6</sup>

The Name *Yud-hei-vav* is simply the first three letters of the Name *Havayah* (*yud-hei-vav-hei*), the latter *hei* dropped since it is seen as just a projection of the first *hei*.

It is explained that seven Names are derived from combinations of the letters of the Names *Ekyeh* and the Name *Yud-hei-vav*. These seven Names form part of the meditations associated with the ascent of the worlds on the Sabbath night.

Following are the seven names, the letters of the Names *Ekyeh* and *Yud-hei-vav* they originate from, and their numerical values:

blessing of the <i>Amidah</i>	letter of <i>Ekyeh</i> or <i>Yud-hei-vav</i>	derived Name	spelling out of derived Name	numerical value
1. Shield of Abraham	<i>alef</i>	<i>Havayah</i>	<i>yud-hei-vav-hei</i>	26
2. Who resurrects the dead	<i>hei</i>	<i>Havayah</i>	<i>yud-hei-vav-hei</i>	26
3. The holy G-d	<i>vav</i>	<i>Havayah</i> ( <i>atbash</i> )	<i>mem-tzadik-pei-tzadik</i>	300
4. Who sanctifies the Sabbath	<i>hei</i>	<i>Kah Adni</i>	<i>yud-hei alef-dalet-nun-yud</i>	80
5. Who restores His <i>Shechinah</i> to Zion	<i>yud</i>	<i>Kel</i>	<i>alef-lamed</i>	31
6. Whose Name is good	<i>hei</i>	<i>Elokim</i>	<i>alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem</i>	86
7. Who blesses His people Israel with peace	<i>vav</i>	<i>Havayah</i> ( <i>atbash</i> )	<i>mem-tzadik-pei-tzadik</i>	300

It will be noted that the sum of the numerical values of the Names that derive from the four letters of the Name *Ekyeh* is  $26 + 26 + 300 + 80 = 432$ , and the sum of the numerical values of the Names that derive from the three letters of the Name *Yud-hei-vav* is  $31 + 86 + 300 = 417$ .

These [seven] Names are associated with the 7 lower [*sefirot*] of *Z'eir Anpin*. The numerical value of the 4 Names derived from the 4 letters of the Name *Ekyeh* is the same as that of the word for “the world” [*teivel*, 432]. When *malchut* receives their light, it is called “the world.”

*Teivel*: *tav-beit-lamed* =  $400 + 2 + 30 = 432$ . This word for world figures in Psalm 93, which, together with Psalm 92, is part of the Sabbath night liturgy.

The numerical value of the 3 Names derived from the 3 letters of the Name *Yud-hei-vav* is the same as that of the word for “olive” [*zayit*, 417].

*Zayit*: *zayin-yud-tav* =  $7 + 10 + 400 = 417$ .

Now, when this “olive” that comprises these 3 Names derived from the Name *Yud-hei-vav* is crushed, it produces pure oil, as is seen from the fact that the numerical value of the phrase “pure oil” [*shemen zach*] is also the same as that of the word for “olive” [*zayit*, 417].

*Shemen zach*: *shin-mem-nun zayin-chaf* =  $300 + 40 + 50 + 7 + 20 = 417$ .

<sup>6</sup> *Sha'ar HaKavanot* (Jerusalem, 5662) 65d.

It appears to me that this idea is related to what we just stated. This is because [the three letters of] the Name *Yud-kei-vav* are aligned with the three final [sub-*sefirot*] of *Z'eir Anpin* [i.e., its *netzach-hod-yesod*], as is known, and the three [initial] letters of the Name *Ekyeh* [i.e., *alef-hei-yud*] are aligned with [the sub-*sefirot* of] *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*. The final *hei* [of the Name *Ekyeh*] is aligned with *malchut*, which clings to the chest, i.e., *tiferet* [of *Z'eir Anpin*].

It follows that the “olive” corresponds to *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*, i.e., these sub-*sefirot* of *chesed* that are revealed and crushed and from which issue the pure oil that shines on the *menorah*, i.e., *malchut*.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “There is one who distributes yet adds more.”<sup>7</sup> Our sages explained this verse to refer to charity.<sup>8</sup> But it may be explained as referring to our context as well, because the [*sefirah*] that gives “charity” to *Nukva* is called “the righteous,” and this process makes her righteous, as well.

Transfer of light from *Z'eir Anpin* to *Nukva* may be considered a form of charity. The word for “charity” is *tzedakah*, which literally means “righteousness,” and the chief appellation for *yesod* is *tzadik*, meaning “the righteous one.” The feminine form of the adjective “righteous” [*tzedek*] is the same as the noun “righteousness” [*tzedakah*].

Now, the righteous one “distributes,” meaning that he divides and grinds the states of *chesed*, making them into small crumbs. They become pulverized by the force of their impact in order that they can be given to *Nukva*, and are thus “distributed” into *Nukva* much as a person distributes charity.

If someone has six dollars to give to charity during the coming week, it is taught that it is better to give a dollar a day than to give all six dollars at once, since the repeated act of giving purifies the body more than the one act of given them all at once, even though the amount given is the same in either case. Thus, there is something inherent in giving charity about splitting the specific amount given up into smaller amounts (provided, of course, that this does not mean that less is given than otherwise!).

One should not think that the fact the *chesed* within *Z'eir Anpin* is given to *Nukva* means that it is lessened. On the contrary, it is increased, because the force of the impact causes the [descending] *chesed* to increase, and their light is magnified immeasurably, causing *Z'eir Anpin* to grow, as we have explained elsewhere.<sup>9</sup> This is the mystical meaning of the phrase “yet adds more.”

It is possible that it is for this reason that *yesod* is called “Joseph.”

The Name “Joseph” (*yosef*) means “he will increase.” Joseph, known as “the righteous,” is always identified with the *sefirah* of *yesod*.

So will it be for anyone who gives charity: he will become rich, and wealth will increase beyond what it was before.

<sup>7</sup> Proverbs 21:24.

<sup>8</sup> *Midrash Mishlei* 11.

<sup>9</sup> *Etz Chaim* 28:3, 6, 34:1.

—translated from *Sha'ar HaMitzvot*, *Sefer HaLikutim*, and *Ta'amei HaMitzvot*

## *Parashat Tetzaveh* [fourth installment]

In this *parashah*, G-d commands Moses to make the eight priestly garments of the High Priest and the four of the ordinary priest. One of the eight garments of the High Priest is the headband (*tzitz*). “Make a pure gold headband and engrave on it [the words] ‘Holy to G-d [*Havayah*].’ Put it on a turquoise sash so that it rest on the turban; it shall oppose the front of the turban. It shall remain on Aaron’s forehead, and thus Aaron will bear the iniquity of [the community with regard to] the sacred things that the Israelites consecrate for all their sacred gifts. It shall be on his forehead to always elicit Divine favor.”<sup>1</sup>

When the mentality of *Abba* enters *Z’eir Anpin*, [residual] radiances [of this light] issue from its sides [and shine] outside the forehead of *Z’eir Anpin*.

*Z’eir Anpin* is the *partzuf* of the emotions; *Abba* is the *partzuf* of *chochmah*, i.e., of transcendent insight. Although something of the mentality of *Abba* does inform (or “shine into”) *Z’eir Anpin*, in order that the emotions follow the dictates and lead of the new, Divine insight, *Z’eir Anpin* cannot contain all the intensity of the mentality of *Abba* that enters it. The aspects of the *Abba*-mentality that it cannot contain overflow, so to speak, and diffuse out of its brain.

Thus, the mentality (or “light”) of *Abba* present in *Z’eir Anpin* subdivides into two aspects: the immanent light, that is absorbed into and directly influences the mentality of *Z’eir Anpin*, and transcendent light, that is not and does not.

[This light] acts as enveloping light surrounding the mentality [of *Z’eir Anpin*], and this enveloping light is manifest [physically] as the headband of the High Priest.

The transcendent light of *Abba* is not lost, however. It surrounds the mentality of *Z’eir Anpin*, acting as an inspiration and influencing it indirectly.

[The headband] is called the *tzitz*, a noun in the masculine form, because it embodies the mentality of *Abba*, which is also masculine.

The word *tzitz* bring immediately to mind the word *tzitzit*, (“tassle” or “fringe”), the wool tassle required to be affixed to four-cornered garments. The noun *tzitz*, lacking any feminine suffix, is in the masculine form. *Tzitzit* is the same word but with a final *tav*, which indicates the feminine form.

*Abba*, the source of insight that “impregnates” the *partzuf* of *Ima* (*binah*) to develop a new way of looking at reality, is considered male relative to *Ima*.

Therefore, the headband of the High Priest was placed on the forehead above the [head-]*tefilin*, for the *tefilin* embody the mentality of *Ima*, while the headband embodies the mentality of *Abba*.

The Torah calls the *tefilin* “a [means of] remembrance between your eyes.”<sup>2</sup> From this we see that the head-*tefilin* are meant to influence our mentality, to keep the Exodus from Egypt and all it signifies in our consciousness at all times. As we have seen previously, the significance of the Exodus from Egypt is the release (or “birth”) of holy emotions from the womb of the mind, allowing us to express our Divine mentality in our emotions rather than having non-holy emotions that are the product of constricted consciousness. The Exodus is thus a function of *Ima*, the mother of the emotions. The *tefilin*, whose purpose is to keep this process going, are thus also an expression of

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 28:36-38.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 13:9.

*Ima*. The *tefilin*-straps are the means by which the mentality of *Ima* descends into the heart and body, where the emotions are felt.

Therefore, the *tzitz* is placed higher than the *tefilin*, to indicate that it embodies the mentality of *Abba* while the *tefilin* embody the mentality of *Ima*.

(All that was said above with regard to *tefilin* applies in particular to Rashi-*tefilin*. Rabbeinu Tam-*tefilin*, in contrast, are said to embody the mentality of *Abba*, just like the headband.)

Therefore, the words “Holy to G-d” were inscribed on it, since the word “holy” refers always to the intellect, as is known, and particularly to the mentality of *Abba*, which is called “holy.” As is known, the word “holy” refers particularly to *chochmah*.

“Holy” (*kadosh*) means “set above,” “separate,” “removed,” “beyond.” Relative to the emotions, the intellect is considered “holy,” since the intellect is objective and takes a person beyond himself, whereas emotions are inherently subjective and self-oriented. Within the realm of the intellect itself, *chochmah* is considered “holy” relative to *binah*, for *chochmah* is the transcendent insight that carries the person beyond himself, while *binah* is the development of his own intellect *per se*.

To explain: Within *Abba* is manifest the Name *Havayah* spelled out with the letter *yud*.

This is the 72-Name, spelled *yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-yud-vav hei-yud*, as we have seen previously. The fact that the Name *Havayah* is spelled out in this case with the letter *yud* indicates that it is associated with *chochmah*, for in the Name *Havayah* itself, the *yud* embodies *chochmah*; the first *hei*, *binah*; the *vav*, the emotions, and the final *hei*, *malchut*.

This [spelling-out] contains four *yud*’s, each of which possesses [an expanded] numerical value of 100. Thus, the combined [expanded] numerical value of the four *yud*’s of the 72-Name is 400.

The normal numerical value of *yud* is 10. Each *yud* is thus taken to signify the array of ten *sefirot*, which subdivides via inter-inclusion into 100 sub-*sefirot*.

If we add 4 for the four *yud*’s themselves, we reach the numerical value of the word for “holy” [*kodesh*], as we have explained elsewhere.

$$400 + 4 = 404.$$

$$\text{Kodesh: kuf-dalet-shin} = 100 + 4 + 300 = 404.$$

The light of the four internal mentalities of *Abba* [that cannot be contained with *Z’eir Anpin*] pierces outward [at the level of] the forehead of *Z’eir Anpin*, specifically, from the two sides of the forehead adjacent to the ears. The [transcendent] radiance of *chochmah* of *Abba* and the states of *chesed* within *da’at* of *Abba* issues from the [right] side. The [transcendent] radiance of *binah* and the states of *gevurah* with *da’at* of *Abba* [issue] from the [left] side.

The head-*tefilin* contains four compartments, into which are inserted four strips of parchment onto which have been written the four passages from the Torah that mention *tefilin*.<sup>3</sup> This indicates that there are four aspects of the consciousness of the Exodus that we are to maintain. These four mentalities are identified in Kabbalah as the four aspects of the intellect: *chochmah*, *binah*, the source of *chesed* within *da’at*, and the source of *gevurah* within

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 13:1-10, 13:11-16, Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:13-21.

*da'at*. The sources of *chesed* and *gevurah* within *da'at* are referred to as “the states of *chesed* within *da'at*” and “the states of *gevurah* within *da'at*,” respectively.

Just as the intellect in general is divided into these three/four *sefirot*, the mentality of *Abba* is also subdivided into these four aspects. Two of them, *chochmah* of *Abba* and *chesed* of *da'at* of *Abba*, are masculine and therefore issue to the right; the other two, *binah* of *Abba* and *gevurah* of *da'at* of *Abba*, are feminine and therefore issue to the left.

They then all spread around the forehead [of *Z'eir Anpin*], forming the headband of the High Priest.

It seems to me [Rabbi Chaim Vital] that I also heard from my master [the Arizal], of blessed memory, that the Name *Havayah* was engraved on the headband as follows. The *yud* and the *vav* were engraved on the right side, one above the other, and the two *hei*'s on the left side, one above the other. But I do not remember this well.

This would fit in well with what was previously explained, that the masculine “lights” issued via the area around the right ear and the feminine light via the area around the left ear.

Now, the High Priest was modeled after the Supernal Man, and therefore would wear the garments of the Supernal Man.

The “Supernal Man” is *Z'eir Anpin*, the arrangement of the *sefirot* in the human form.

Anyone who would pass in front of the headband, if he was a righteous person, it would be evident on his [own] forehead, for his *binah* would be revealed on his forehead. Letters are at the level of *binah*, as we have stated previously, and that is why letters are revealed on the forehead, which is [the individual's] *binah*.

The holiness of the headband would “call forth” the holiness of the person's intellect, causing it to be manifest on that person's forehead. Thus, the headband would “read” the “letters” or “words” in the mind of the person passing in front of it.

While the experience of *chochmah* is essentially beyond articulation (i.e., beyond “letters”), the task of *binah* is to take this transcendent experience and translate it into language (“letters”).

If the person was wicked, his face would fall into the other side, and he would be embarrassed before the holiness [of the headband], and would repent.

“The other side” (*sitra achra*) refers to the realm of evil. The wickedness individual, when confronted with the holiness of the headband, would be manifest on his forehead, and this embarrassment would spur him to repent.

—translated from *Ta'amei HaMitzvo*

## *Parashat Tetzaveh* [fifth installment]

In this *parashah*, G-d commands Moses to make the eight priestly garments of the High Priest. Two of these were the apron (*ephod*)<sup>1</sup> and the breastplate (*choshen*).<sup>2</sup> The breastplate was a doubled-over piece of fabric that rested on the chest of the High Priest, hanging by chains from the shoulder straps of the *ephod* and fastened by a sash to the waist section of the *ephod*. Inside the doubled fabric was inserted a parchment inscribed with G-d's Name, called the *urim v'tumim* ("lights and perfections").<sup>3</sup> The *urim v'tumim* served as a Divine oracle that enabled the High Priest to respond to questions of national consequence.

The *urim v'tumim* were [a manifestation of] the 42-Name of G-d and the 72-Name of G-d.

The 42-Name is formed by taking the Name *Havayah*, spelling it out, spelling out the spelling-out, and summing the number of letters generated. The Name *Havayah* itself comprises 4 letters. Spelling it out uses 10 letters:

*Yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-yud-vav hei-yud.*

Spelling out this spelling out uses 28 letters:

<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>
		<i>vav</i>
		<i>dalet</i>
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav</i>
		<i>yud</i>
		<i>vav</i>
	<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet</i>
		<i>lamed</i>
		<i>tav</i>
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>
		<i>yud</i>
	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>
		<i>vav</i>
		<i>dalet</i>
<i>vav</i>	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav</i>
		<i>yud</i>
		<i>vav</i>
	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>
		<i>vav</i>
		<i>dalet</i>
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav</i>
		<i>yud</i>
		<i>vav</i>
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>
		<i>yud</i>
	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>
		<i>vav</i>
		<i>dalet</i>

$$4 + 10 + 28 = 42.$$

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 28:6-12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 28:15-30.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 28:30.

It is explained elsewhere in the writings of the Arizal<sup>4</sup> that in each *partzuf*, the Name *Havayah* itself is manifest in the *keter* of that *partzuf*; the Name *Havayah* spelled out (once) is manifest in the *chochmah* of that *partzuf*; and the Name *Havayah* spelled out as second time is manifest in the *binah* of that *partzuf*. In other words, the triad of *keter-chochmah-binah* represent the unfolding of the initial insight (*chochmah*) from its source (in *keter*) into its full intellectual manifestation (*binah*). Thus, the Name *Havayah* thus manipulated to give a numerical value of 42 is associated with the “head,” i.e., the intellect and pre-intellect.

The 72-Name is the Name *Havayah* spelled out using the letter *yud*.<sup>5</sup> The numerical value of the all these letters together is 72:

*Yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-yud-vav hei-yud*:  $(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 10) + (6 + 10 + 6) + (5 + 10) = 72$ .

In the same passage just referenced, it is explained that the emotions of each *partzuf* (the sub-*partzuf* of *Z'eir Anpin* of each *partzuf*) manifests the 72-Name. Thus, since the emotions are anatomically associated with the heart and the torso, the 72-Name is spoken of as being associated with the torso.

The *urim*, which manifested the 42-Name, were positioned in the head, while the *tumim*, which manifested the 72-Name, were in the torso. For the 42-Name is always associated with the head and the 72-Name with the torso.

Thus, the *urim* are associated with the intellect and pre-intellect, while the *tumim* are associated with the emotions.

The *ephod* is mentioned elsewhere [as serving as an oracle], as in the episode of Evyatar, “an *ephod* went down in his hand.”<sup>6</sup>

The full passage reads:

David was told: “The Philistines are fighting with Ke'ilah and plundering the threshing floors.” David consulted G-d [through the *urim v'tumim*], “Shall I go and attack these Philistines?” And G-d said to David, “Go; attack the Philistines and you will save Ke'ilah.” But David's men said to him, “Look, we are afraid here in Judah, how much more if we go against the formations of the Philistines in Ke'ilah!” So David consulted G-d again, and G-d answered him, “Arise, go down to Ke'ilah, for I am going to deliver the Philistines into your hands.” David and his men went to Ke'ilah and fought against the Philistines; he drove off their cattle and inflicted a severe defeat on them. Thus David saved the inhabitants of Ke'ilah.

When Evyatar son of Achimelech fled to David at Ke'ilah, he brought down an *ephod* with him.

Saul was told that David had come to Ke'ilah, and Saul thought, “G-d has delivered him into my hands, for he has shut himself in by entering a town with gates and bars.” Saul summoned all the people for war, to go down to Ke'ilah and besiege David and his men. When David learned that Saul was planning to harm him, he said to the priest Evyatar, “Bring the *ephod* forward.” And David said, “O G-d, G-d of Israel, Your servant has heard that Saul intends to come to Ke'ilah and destroy the town because of me. Will the citizens of Ke'ilah deliver me into his hands? Will Saul come down here, as Your servant has heard? O G-d, G-d of Israel, please tell Your servant!” And G-d said, “He will come down here.” David continued, “Will the citizens of Ke'ilah deliver me and my men into Saul's hands?” And G-d answered, “They will deliver you.” So David and his men, about six hundred

<sup>4</sup> Etz Chaim 14:5.

<sup>5</sup> According to Rabbi Shalom Sharabi, the 72-Name mentioned here is not the usual 72-Name formed by spelling out the Name *Havayah* using the letter *yud* and then taking the numerical value, for then we would expect it to be contrasted by another one of the spellings-out of the Name *Havayah*, i.e., the 63-Name, the 45-Name, or the 52-Name. But here, it is contrasted with the 42-Name. Therefore, he concludes that the 72-Name mentioned here is the Divine Name composed of the 72 three-letter Names formed by juxtaposing the three consecutive 72-letter verses of Exodus 14:19-21, which we have described previously.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Samuel 23:6.

in number, left Ke'ilah at once and went wherever they could. And when Saul was told that David had got away from Ke'ilah, he did not set out.<sup>7</sup>

So we see here that when it was not possible for the king to consult the *urim v'tumim* in the Temple, he consulted the *ephod*, which served as a portable oracle.

But [the *ephod*] was not really [an oracle on the same order] as the *urim v'tumim*, because the latter may be consulted only in the Temple or Tabernacle, whereas they used to take the *ephod* from place to place in order to consult with it.

It is therefore written, "you shall be whole [*tamim*] with G-d, your G-d."<sup>8</sup>

By revocalizing the word for "whole" (*tamim*), it may be read *tumim*. Thus, the verse can be read to mean "You shall [consult] the *tumim* only when you are with G-d, your G-d [i.e., in His sanctuary]."

This means that you should cling to the body of the King, as we have stated, for in the *tumim* was the 72-Name, which is associated with the torso.

Once we have the association between *tumim* and *tamim*, and that between the *tumim* and the body, we can translate this verse, "You shall be [with] the body of G-d, your G-d."

Similarly, it is written, "Jacob was a sincere [*tam*] man,"<sup>9</sup> implying that he clung to the body of the King.

Whereas Abraham personified G-d's "right hand," the side of *chesed*, and Isaac personified G-d's "left hand," the side of *gevurah*, Jacob personified G-d's "torso," the middle axis of *tiferet*, the pivot and fusion of all the emotions. Here, the mystical association of *tam* with *tumim* and *tumim* with G-d's "body" alludes to this, for the verse can be read "Jacob was a man of the *tumim*," which in turn means "Jacob was a man associated with [G-d's] 'body.'"

Thus, "to cling to the body of G-d" means to emulate His emotions. As our sages say, "What does it mean: 'You shall walk after G-d, your G-d'?<sup>10</sup> Is it possible for a human being to walk after the *Shechinah*? Is it not written, 'For G-d, your G-d, is a devouring fire'?<sup>11</sup> Rather, it means to emulate G-d's attributes. As He clothes the naked...so should you also clothe the naked. G-d visits the sick...so should you also visit the sick. G-d comforts mourners...so should you also comfort mourners. G-d buries the dead...so should you also bury the dead."<sup>12</sup>

It is therefore written in that context, "Bring [*havah*] a correct [*tamim*] answer."<sup>13</sup>

The full passage is:

Saul said [to his soldiers], "Let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder them until the light of morning; and let us not leave a single survivor among them." "Do whatever you think is good," they replied. But the priest said, "Let us approach God first." So Saul inquired of God [through the *urim v'tumim*], "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You deliver them into the hands of Israel?" But this time He did not respond to him. Then Saul, [realizing the *urim v'tumim* did not work because someone in his army had sinned,] said, "Come forward, all chief officers of the troops, and find out how this guilt was incurred today. For as G-d, who brings victory to Israel, lives: even if [this sin] was through my son Jonathan, [the sinner] shall be put to death!" Not one soldier answered him. And he said to all the Israelites, "You stand on one side, and my son Jonathan and I shall stand on the

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 23:1-13.

<sup>8</sup> Deuteronomy 18:13.

<sup>9</sup> Genesis 25:27.

<sup>10</sup> Deuteronomy 13:5.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 4:24.

<sup>12</sup> *Sotah* 14a.

<sup>13</sup> 1 Samuel 14:41.

other.” The troops said to Saul, “Do what you think is proper.” Saul then said to G-d, “G-d of Israel, Bring a correct *tamim* [answer].” Jonathan and Saul were indicated by lot, and the troops were cleared. And Saul said, “Cast the lots between my son and me”; and Jonathan was indicated. Saul said to Jonathan, “Tell me, what have you done?”<sup>14</sup>

In this passage, Saul casts lots as an oracle, since the *urim v'tumim* would not work for him. Before doing so, he prays to G-d that He show him the correct answer using this method. In this prayer, he uses the unusual expression, “bring [*havah*] something correct [*tamim*],” the latter term alluding to the *tumim*.

Why did he use this expression? It was because the intention was to allude to the fact that the numerical value of the word *havah* is 12, referring to the twelve tribes that clung to the body of the King.

The twelve tribes are associated in Kabbalah with the twelve lines required to draw a cube, which is the basic geometric form of three dimensions of physical space and spiritual “space.” They are thus associated with the 6 emotions (*midot*, literally “measures” of space) that anatomically make up the “body” of G-d, the *partzuf* of *Z'eir Anpin*.

Although the patriarchs are associated with the three primary *midot* (*chesed-gevurah-tiferet*), the sons of Jacob, the heads and progenitors of the tribes, are associated with the *midot* as a whole, particularly as they are projected onto the three lower worlds of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*.

For the tribes are [twelve] letter *vav*'s, and the numerical value of *vav* is 6, such that the numerical value of 12 *vav*'s is 72, for as we said, the 72-Name is associated with the torso.

In summary, the *urim v'tumim* together manifest the full sefirotic development, from the pre-intellect (*keter*) through the intellect (*chochmah* and *binah*) and the emotions (*midot*). They thus channel the Divine message down into the world, where it can be articulated through the High Priest wearing them within his breastplate.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim* and *Ta'amei HaMitzvot*

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* 14:36-43.

## Parashat Ki Tisa

Among the topics discussed in this week's Torah portion is the preparation of the special oil used in the Tabernacle (*mishkan*) and Temple for anointing the Temple vessels and the priests. The ingredients of this compound were "choice spices: 500 weights of pure myrrh, fragrant cinnamon—half of which is 250 weights, 250 parts of aromatic cane, 250 weights...of cassia and a *hin* of olive oil."<sup>1</sup> The amounts of myrrh and cinnamon used in the compound were the same, 500 weights, but the cinnamon had to be measured out a half at a time.

The mystical significance of the anointing oil is as follows: As you know, 500 weights of pure myrrh were used, and it was measured out all at once. Five hundred weights of fragrant cinnamon were also used, but it was weighed out a half at a time, as it says: "fragrant cinnamon—half of which is 250 weights." Only 250 weights of cassia were used, however.

The reason for this is: All these spices are manifestations of the Divine Name *Elokim*, and as you know, there are three [usages of] *Elokim*: sometimes it signifies the *sefirah* of *binah*, other times the *sefirah* of *gevurah*, and other times the *sefirah* of *malchut*.

There are many names used for G-d throughout the Bible. This is because each name refers to G-d as He manifests Himself through a specific attribute. These attributes are called *sefirot* in Kabbalah; every *sefirah* is associated with a specific Name of G-d. That said, we see from this passage that there is some fluidity in this, and in different circumstances the same Name can refer to different attributes or *sefirot*. In general, the Name *Elokim* is juxtaposed with the more "proper name" of G-d, *Havayah*, and is considered a sheath or vessel through which *Havayah* is expressed. Thus it is written: "For as the sun and its shield are *Havayah* [and] *Elokim*."<sup>2</sup> In each of the three cases listed here, the *sefirah* with which the Name *Elokim* is identified acts as a secondary, receiving complement to another *sefirah*. *Binah* ("understanding") is the second *sefirah* of the intellect, which develops and focuses the intense but ephemeral flash of insight which is *chochmah* ("wisdom"), the first *sefirah* of the intellect. Although it is an independent faculty of the soul, it acts upon the material provided to it by *chochmah*. Similarly, *gevurah* ("strength," "might") is the second *sefirah* of the emotions, which limits the intensity of the first *sefirah* of the emotions, *chesed* ("loving-kindness"). Here again, *gevurah* is an independent faculty, but its function is to react to the actions of *chesed*. Finally, *malchut* ("kingdom") is the vehicle through which the emotions together express themselves. Thus, though it, too, is an independent faculty of the soul, it serves to express the content it is provided with from the emotions. We see, then, that in each case, these *sefirot* act as vessels or filters for other, more "active" *sefirot*, and this commonality is the basis for their all being associated with the Name *Elokim*.

The term used in Scripture for "pure myrrh" is *mor deror*, which literally means "free myrrh." This spice is associated with the Name *Elokim* of *binah* and is therefore called "free" myrrh. This is the mystical meaning of the verse, "and you shall proclaim freedom [throughout the land and to all its inhabitants],"<sup>3</sup> which refers to *binah*.

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 30:23-24. A *hin* is a unit of measurement.

<sup>2</sup> Psalms 84:12.

<sup>3</sup>

One of the Torah's commandments is that the high court (*Sanhedrin*) proclaim every fiftieth year a "jubilee" year. This year had several legal significances; one of these was that in it all Jews who had become indentured servants were to be set free. The number 50 is thus associated with the concept of freedom.

Kabbalah identifies in the soul six principle emotions: *chesed* ("loving-kindness"), *gevurah* ("strength"), *tiferet* ("beauty"), *netzach* ("victory"), *hod* ("glory"), and *yesod* ("foundation" or "connection"). All the other emotions we are familiar with are derivatives, combinations, or inner dimensions of these. These six *sefirot* together with *malchut*, the means of their expression, form a unit of seven. As we have explained previously, every *sefirah* subdivides into sub-*sefirot*, so the full experience of the emotions together with their expression is  $7 \times 7$ , or 49. This number thus represents the consummate consciousness of emotion, a state of awareness in which one interprets everything and reacts to everything based on his emotional makeup.

Now, important as the emotions are in the full psychological functioning man, they cannot be relied upon themselves to provide him with the proper consciousness he needs to interpret and respond properly to the world. This is because the emotions are entirely subjective. In order for a person to rise above—be free—of the confines of his own subjectivity, he must use his intellect.

Thus, we are taught in the Talmud that there are fifty "gates" of *binah*, i.e., fifty levels of understanding Divinity. *Binah* is the principle *sefirah* of the intellect, in which the insight of *chochmah* is developed into a full mental construction and world-view.

When the mature understanding of *binah* permeates all ten *sefirot*, we have  $50 \times 10 = 500$ ; this is why there are five hundred weights of myrrh in the anointing oil.

Fragrant cinnamon is weighed out a half at a time because even though it is associated with [only one *sefirah*,] *gevurah*, there is also an aspect of the Name *Elokim* associated with the *sefirah* of *hod*. [This Name *Elokim*], however, [is not counted] because it is considered part of *Z'eir Anpin*.

Thus, we count only 3 Names *Elokim*: that of *binah*, that of *gevurah*, and that of *malchut*. It is true that there are two Names *Elokim* in *Z'eir Anpin* itself, but they are both together considered one.

The fact that the cinnamon is measured out in two parts indicates that the Name *Elokim* which it represents has two aspects.

The interrelations between the *sefirot* are usually graphically represented by arranging them along three axes. This depiction of the *sefirot* is known as the "tree" of the *sefirot*.

left axis	center axis	right axis
	1. <i>keter</i>	
3. <i>binah</i>		2. <i>chochmah</i>
5. <i>gevurah</i>		4. <i>chesed</i>
	6. <i>tiferet</i>	
8. <i>hod</i>		7. <i>netzach</i>
	9. <i>yesod</i>	
	10. <i>malchut</i>	

Here we see clearly the relationships between the three *sefirot* identified with the Name *Elokim* mentioned above and their "partners": *binah* is opposite *chochmah*, *gevurah* is opposite *chesed*, and *malchut* is directly below *yesod*, the sum of all the emotions. However, there is one pair that we would expect to have a similar relationship but that was left out: *netzach* and *hod*. The reason for this is that as we explained previously, the emotions act as an aggregate, forming the *partzuf* known as *Z'eir Anpin* ("the smaller face"). Thus, once we have considered the pair of *chesed* and *gevurah*, we have already reckoned with the emotions. We are in fact taught that the second triad of emotions (*netzach*, *hod*, and *yesod*) derive directly from the first, principle triad (*chesed*, *gevurah*, and *tiferet*).

Still, in order to allude to the fact that there is another *sefirah*—*hod*—that exhibits an *Elokim*-type relationship with its pair, the cinnamon is measured out on half at a time, as if to say that the Name *Elokim* that is associated with *gevurah* is only half the picture, and together with it there is the secondary Name *Elokim* associated with the *sefirah* of *hod*.

The third Name *Elokim*, which is manifest [in the anointing oil] as cassia, is identified with the *sefirah* of *malchut*.

The number 500 is arrived at by considering the following two aspects of the Name *Elokim*: When this Name is spelled out in full its value is 300. When it is spelled out in increasing value, its value is 200. Together we have 500.

“Spelling out in full” refers to the process called *milui*, in which each letter is treated as a word in itself, and the numerical values of these words are then added to together. Thus, the Name *Elokim* (*alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem*) becomes *alef-lamed-mem lamed-mem-dalet hei-yud yud-vav-dalet mem-mem* and sums to 300. The “increasing value” of a word refers to the sum of the first letter of the word plus the first two letters plus the first three letters, and so on. Thus, the “increasing value” of the Name *Elokim* is *alef* plus *alef-lamed* plus *alef-lamed-hei* plus *alef-lamed-hei-yud* plus *alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem*, which sums to 200.

Since the Name *Elokim* in general signifies *binah*, the myrrh [which represents *binah*] is taken in a quantity of 500, and weighed out all at once. Since cinnamon represents *Z’eir Anpin*, it is weighed out in two parts [for there are two Names *Elokim* in *Z’eir Anpin*] even though we count them as only one: 250 corresponding to *gevurah* and 250 corresponding to *hod*. *Malchut*, which embodies only one Name *Havayah*, is only weighed out once, and in a quantity of 250.

This is why all these spices are called in Scripture “choice” spices. The word for “choice” (*rosh*) is composed of three letters: *reish*, *alef*, *shin*. The numerical value of *reish* is 200, representing the increasing value of *Elokim*, as we said. The numerical value of the *shin* is 300, representing the full value (*milui*) of *Elokim*. The *alef* refers to the Name *Elokim* itself.

We see from the above discussion that all the spices that compose the anointing oil are in some way a manifestation of the Name *Elokim*. As we said, the basic characteristic of this Name is that it serves as a receptacle, “funnel,” or “filter” for other Divine forces. Since the purpose of the anointing oil is to render a physical object or person fit for service in the holy Temple, we may surmise that the point here is that it should be clear to everyone that in order to serve in such a capacity one must see himself as a mere receptacle or channel for the Divine blessing elicited by the Temple service. We are taught that the Temple and the service that was (and will be) performed in it embody the mechanism whereby every individual Jew makes himself and his life into a miniature Temple, or dwelling place for G-d. Thus, we see here in order for this to work, one must maintain consciousness of himself and all the accoutrements of his life as being simple vessels to elicit and contain the Divine blessing.

As even a cursory perusal of this part of the Bible will show, constructing the Temple (or its portable version, the Tabernacle) and its vessels took considerable expense and effort. Nonetheless, the simple existence of the Temple, its vessels, and its work force (the priests) was not enough; these all had to be anointed. Similarly, when a person is properly inspired to serve G-d in his life, he will take great pains to try to arrange things such that everything is in place for this purpose. He will stock the shelves of his kitchen with kosher food and those of his living room with Torah books; he will make sure he has a job that enables him to keep the Sabbath and holidays while still providing all the needs for his family, and so on, and so forth. Yet if he forgets to “anoint” it all, an essential element will be lacking. By taking pains to demonstrate that each ingredient of the anointing oil is a manifestation of the Name *Elokim*, the Arizal is showing us that this essential element is the awareness that all our efforts are at best and at most in order to make ourselves and our lives receptacles and channels for G-d’s blessing.

## *Parashat Ki Tisa* [second installment]

In the first installment on *parashat Ki Tisa*, we read part of the Arizal's discussion of the anointing oil. The Arizal demonstrated how each of the ingredients of this oil—myrrh, cinnamon, aromatic cane, and cassia—all reflected the Name *Elokim*, which is manifest in the *sefirot* of *binah*, *gevurah*, and *malchut*. We now continue the translation of this discussion.

Know as well that these three manifestations of the Name *Elokim*—in *binah*, in *gevurah*, and in *malchut*, as we said—are also manifestations of the three [spellings out of the] Name *Ekyeh*: one with *yud*'s, one with *alef*'s, and one with *hei*'s. The spelling out that uses *yud*'s is manifest in *binah*; that which uses *alef*'s is manifest in *Z'eir Anpin* [which includes *gevurah*]; and that which uses *hei*'s is manifest in *malchut*. The numerical value of the letters used to spell out these three [iterations of the Name *Ekyeh*], independent of the letter used to spell the actual Name itself, is 392, which is also the numerical value of the word for “spices” [*besamim*].

The three spellings-out of the Name *Ekyeh* are as follows:

*Ekyeh* spelled with the letter  
*yud* (*Ekyeh* of *binah*)

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef</i>	1
	<i>lamed</i>	30
	<i>pei</i>	80
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	5
	<i>yud</i>	10
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	10
	<i>vav</i>	6
	<i>dalet</i>	4
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	5
	<i>yud</i>	10
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*Ekyeh* spelled with the letter  
*alef* (*Ekyeh* of *gevurah*)

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef</i>	1
	<i>lamed</i>	30
	<i>pei</i>	80
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	5
	<i>alef</i>	1
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	10
	<i>vav</i>	6
	<i>dalet</i>	4
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	5
	<i>alef</i>	1
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*Ekyeh* spelled with the letter  
*hei* (*Ekyeh* of *malchut*)

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef</i>	1
	<i>lamed</i>	30
	<i>pei</i>	80
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	5
	<i>hei</i>	5
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	10
	<i>vav</i>	6
	<i>dalet</i>	4
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	5
	<i>hei</i>	5
		151

The combined numerical values of these three is  $161 + 143 + 151 = 455$

If we subtract the three Names themselves,  $3 \times (1 + 5 + 10 + 5) = 3 \times 21 = 63$

we are left with  $392$

This is the numerical value of *besamim*: *beit-shin-mem-yud-mem* ( $2 + 300 + 40 + 10 + 40$ ) = 392.

We have explained previously that the Name *Havayah* is spelled out in four principle ways, giving the numerical values of 72, 63, 45, and 52, and that these four spellings-out correspond respectively to the four *partzufim* *Abba*, *Ima*, *Z'eir Anpin*, and *Nukva*. What differentiates these four spellings-out is the letter used to spell out the two *hei*'s and the *vav*. To arrive at a numerical value of 72, three *yud*'s are used; to arrive at 63, two *yuds* and

an *alef* are used; to arrive at 45, three *alef*'s are used; to arrive at 52, just two *hei*'s are used. According to this, it is clear why the three spellings-out *Ekyeh*—with *yud*'s, *alef*'s, and *hei*'s—correspond respectively to *binah*, *Z'eir Anpin*, and *malchut*.<sup>1</sup>

spelling out of the Name <i>Havayah</i>	letter(s) used	corresponding partzuf/sefirah	spelling out of the Name <i>Ekyeh</i>	letter used
72	<i>yud</i>	<i>Abba/chochmah</i>		
63	2 <i>yud</i> 's and 1 <i>alef</i>	<i>Ima/binah</i>	161	<i>yud</i>
45	<i>alef</i>	<i>Z'eir Anpin/midot</i>	143	<i>alef</i>
52	<i>hei</i>	<i>Nukva/malchut</i>	151	<i>hei</i>

The [name of the] ingredient pure myrrh also alludes to [the connection between these spices and the Name *Elokim*]:

The numerical value of the word for “myrrh” [*mor*, *mem-reish*] is [240, which is] 2 x 120. This number [i.e., 120] is the number of permutations that exist for the Name *Elokim*.

The Name *Elokim* is composed of five letters. The number of possible permutations of a five-letter word is  $5! = 5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 = 120$ .

All these 120 permutations are manifest in the “back” of *binah* [of *Atzilut*].

The principle manifestation of the Name *Elokim* is in *binah*.

Corresponding to them, there are another 120 permutations manifest in [the back of] *malchut* [of *Atzilut*]; these descend into the lower worlds of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*, as we have explained elsewhere.

The fact that the Name *Elokim* is plural seems to indicate that it is a double-phenomenon; therefore the number of its permutations is doubled in a mirror-manifestation project downward out of *Atzilut*. As we know, the task of *malchut* is to descend out of *Atzilut* and become the consciousness of the lower worlds.

By means of this act [of compounding the anointing oil], all these 120 [lower] permutations of the Name *Elokim* would join [with the higher permutations] and be absorbed within them above, in *binah*, and would thus be “sweetened.” Thus, they would all add up to 240 [the numerical value of *mor*, “myrrh”].

“Sweetening” means raising the consciousness of a fallen entity to that of its origin. The anointing oil served to confer the consciousness of *Atzilut* to the entity it onto which it was poured.

The word used here for “pure” [*dror*] alludes to this, as well:

The back of *malchut* [of *Atzilut*], which encompasses these [lower] 120 permutations of the Name *Elokim*, manifests [the posterior way of spelling out] the Name *Elokim*, as mentioned previously. This numerical value obtained by spelling out *Elokim* in this way (*alef*, *alef-lamed*, *alef-lamed-hei*, *alef-lamed-hei-yud*, *alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem*) and adding the number 5 for the five letters of the Name itself is 205.

<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Avraham Sutton for pointing this out.

$$1 + (1 + 30) + (1 + 30 + 5) + (1 + 30 + 5 + 10) + (1 + 30 + 5 + 10 + 40) = 200.$$

The additional five is added in order not to lose sight of the Name itself, in its five original letters.

As we have mentioned previously, the “posterior” or “increasing” numerical value of a Name of G-d expresses the manifestation of that Name as it gradually permeates a lower reality. The lower reality is not generally capable of experiencing the full revelation of consciousness embodied in the Name itself, and therefore can only gradually accommodate this consciousness as it is introduced stepwise into its level. This describes precisely the way *malchut* manifests itself in the lower worlds. Above, in discussing the 120 primary permutations of the Name *Elokim*, we similarly identified them with “the back” of *binah*, there referring to how this Name is manifest within *Atzilut* itself.

The same is true with regard to the back of *binah*; we thus have 2 x 205 [for these two Names *Elokim*, giving 410], the numerical value of the word for “pure” [*dror*].

*Dror*: dalet-reish-vav-reish, 4 + 200 + 6 + 200 = 410.

This exercise enables us as well to understand why Aaron was buried on the mountain known as *Hor HaHar*.<sup>2</sup>

The word for “mountain” in Hebrew is *har*; *Hor HaHar* literally means “the mountain of the mountain.” It was called thus because it was shaped like a small mountain on top of a larger one.<sup>3</sup>

As we said, the numerical value of the “posterior” of the Name *Elokim* together with 5 for its own letters is 205; this is also the numerical value of the word *har*. Now, there are two “mountains,” one in *binah* and one *malchut*.

There are two manifestations of the “posterior” of the Name *Elokim*, one in *binah* and the other in *malchut*, as we have described.

One is “higher” than the other, and [the lower one] becomes absorbed within it.

The “higher mountain” is, of course, *binah*, and the lower one, *malchut*. The 120 permutations of *malchut* become “sweetened” by the 120 permutations of *binah*, as described.

This is all alluded to by *Hor HaHar*, a mountain on top of another mountain. Aaron was buried there, and the letters of his name also include the letters which spell *har*, in order to allude to this.

Aaron is spelled *alef-hei-reish-nun*. Interestingly, it was Aaron and his progeny, the priestly caste, who were anointed with the anointing oil.<sup>4</sup> In becoming priests, they manifested their complete submission to G-d, this being the dynamic of the Name *Elokim*, as we explained previously.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim* and *Ta'amei HaMitzvot*

<sup>2</sup> Numbers 20:22-29.

<sup>3</sup> Rashi *ad loc.*

<sup>4</sup> Exodus 30:30.

## *Parashat Ki Tisa* [third installment]

This *parashah* includes the commandment to build certain vessels of the Tabernacle. After these commandments, G-d tells the Jewish people that important and constructing the Tabernacle is, it must not supercede their observance of the Sabbath. “And G-d said to Moses, saying, ‘You shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: “But you will keep My Sabbaths, for it is a sign between Me and you for your generations, to know that I, G-d, sanctify you.””<sup>1</sup>

Regarding the meaning of these verses, we must explain why, when G-d addresses Moses, He usually does not phrase His command as it is phrased here.

The usual phrasing is “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them...” or “Say to the children of Israel....” Here, it says “You shall speak ...,” emphasizing the word *you*.

In order to explain this, we will first explain another discrepancy. The first time the Ten Commandments are recorded, [the commandment to keep the Sabbath] is phrased: “Remember...,” and the words “as [*G-d*, your G-d] commanded you” are not included.

The Ten Commandments are recorded twice in the Torah. The first time is in the historical context of when they were given at Mt. Sinai,<sup>2</sup> and the second time is in the context of Moses’ review of the exodus just before He passes away at the end of the forty-year trek in the desert.<sup>3</sup> These two versions of the Ten Commandments are largely the same, but there are some slight differences, which allude to various things.

The two versions of the first verse of the commandment to keep the Sabbath compare as follows:

first version	second version
<b>Remember</b> the Sabbath day to keep it holy.	<b>Guard</b> the Sabbath day to keep it holy, <b>as G-d, your G-d commanded you.</b>

Similarly, [the commandment] to honor parents does not include the words “in order that it be well with you, as [*G-d*, your G-d] commanded you.”

The next commandment after the commandment to keep the Sabbath is the commandment to honor parents. This two versions of this commandment compare as follows:

first version	second version
Honor your father and your mother, in order that your days be long on the land <i>G-d</i> , your G-d, is giving to you.	Honor your father and your mother, <b>as G-d, your G-d, commanded you</b> , in order that your days be long <b>and in order that it be well with you</b> on the land that <i>G-d</i> , your G-d, is giving you.

To explain: These two commandments, observing the Sabbath and honoring parents, are equivalent. The [latter] is honoring one’s bodily parents, while the [former] is honoring one’s spiritual parents, i.e., *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, who are

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 31:12-13.

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 20:2-14.

<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy 5:6-18.

referred to as the “two Sabbaths” in the sages’ statement that “if the Jewish people would keep two Sabbaths properly, [they would be redeemed immediately].”<sup>4</sup>

Inasmuch as every Jewish soul is produced by the union of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, these *partzufim* may be considered our spiritual “parents.”

The sages’ statement that we will be redeemed if we would keep two Sabbaths is usually understood to mean two Sabbaths in a row. Elsewhere, however, the Arizal says that the mystical meaning of this statement is that we must keep the two aspects of the Sabbath, the feminine and masculine aspects, which are the Sabbath night and the Sabbath day. Thus, the two Sabbaths are clearly *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, and by “honoring” them, that is, observing the Sabbath in accordance with its mystical dynamics, we fulfill the commandment to honor our “parents” spiritually, and will be redeemed.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse: “Everyone must fear his mother and his father, and keep My Sabbaths.”<sup>5</sup> [The fact that the Sabbath is here referred to in the plural alludes to] these two Sabbaths, which correspond to the father and the mother.

Now, there are two aspects of [observing the] Sabbath. The first is to observe the [laws of] the Sabbath in all their details, in order to fulfill the commandment (may He be blessed) that He commanded us, and not for any other motive. The second is to rest from work on the Sabbath because we enjoy the fact that we rest from our work.

You know the sages’ explanation<sup>6</sup> of [the liturgical passage,] “Let Moses rejoice in the portion he was given,” that Moses asked Pharaoh to grant the Jewish people one day off a week from making bricks in order that they have strength to produce more on the other six days. Pharaoh agreed, and gave them the Sabbath off.

This, then, is what the Torah intends [to imply] by saying “*You* shall speak to the children of Israel...”: [G-d tells Moses,] “You, [Moses,] who asked Pharaoh to give them a day of rest, i.e., the Sabbath, must now yourself go tell them that from now on they must not observe the Sabbath for their own benefit, but rather because these are *My* Sabbaths. I am the one obligating them to observe this commandment; therefore, they should observe it only for *My* sake, and not for their own.” This is why the word “But” is prefaced to this verse. It implies that they should observe [the Sabbath] only because they are “*My* Sabbaths, for it is a sign...to know that I, *G-d*, sanctify” them, and not for their own benefit or enjoyment.

There is, of course, nothing wrong with enjoying observing G-d’s commandments, but this motivation must always be held in its proper perspective. We must always observe all of G-d’s commandments unconditionally, as an expression of our unconditional love for Him. As Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi put it: “if G-d had commanded us to simply chop wood [for no apparent reason], we would chop wood with the utmost enthusiasm.” Once we have

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<sup>4</sup> *Shabbat* 118b.

<sup>5</sup> Leviticus 19:3.

<sup>6</sup> *Shemot Rabbah* 1:32; *Midrash Tehilim* 119.

committed ourselves to observing the commandments unconditionally, there is also room for appreciating their tangible benefits.

As I said, the plural “My Sabbaths” alludes to *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*. The first [version of the Ten] Commandments does not include the words “as [*G-d*, your *G-d*,] commanded you,” in order that it allude to the first reason [for observing the Sabbath], the one that includes the reason of [the Jewish people’s] benefit. This [aspect of] the commandment is the one that our human logic can relate to, and it [i.e., our logic] decrees that [we should observe the Sabbath] “in order that your ox and your donkey [rest]....”<sup>7</sup>

In the second [version of the Ten] Commandments, the Torah mentions the second reason, which is [solely] in order to fulfill the Creator’s command, this being the meaning of the phrase, “as *G-d*, your *G-d*, commanded you.”

This explains also why [in the second version of the Ten Commandments, the commandment to keep the Sabbath] begins “*Guard* the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” The second [version of the Ten] Commandments is from the female principle, which is alluded to by the word “guard,” as is known.<sup>8</sup>

The word for “remember” (*zachor*) is related to the word for “male” (*zachor*). “Remembering” is the active aspect of observing the Sabbath, and refers to the active declaration of the day’s holiness made at its beginning (in *kiddush*) and end (in *havdalah*). “Guarding” is the passive aspect of observing the Sabbath, and refers to the passive cessation from work, which opens us up to the heightened Divine consciousness informing reality on the Sabbath.

[The feminine principle] now [i.e., in the second version of the Ten Commandments,] tells the Jewish people: “Guard the Sabbath day, as *Z’eir Anpin*—alluded to by the words ‘*G-d*, your *G-d*’—has already commanded you previously, in the first [version of the Ten] Commandments.”

The Name for *G-d* in the phrase “*G-d*, your *G-d*” is the Name *Havayah*, which is associated with *Z’eir Anpin*, as we have noted previously.

Now, there are also two reasons for [observing the commandment of] honoring parents. The first is because it is a commandment dictated by human logic, namely, that a child must honor his father and mother because they created him, brought him into the world, and ceaselessly exerted themselves on his behalf. The second is in order to allude to His commandment to honor our spiritual father and mother, i.e., the Holy One, blessed be He, and the Community of Israel, that is, *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*.

The sages typically refer to *G-d* as “the Holy One, blessed be He.” In Kabbalah, this appellation is said to refer to *Z’eir Anpin*, which is “holy,” i.e., “removed” from the world, relative to *Nukva*, which descends into the lower realms, as we know. The sages often refer to the Divine presence, or the *Shechinah*, as “the Community of Israel” (*keneset Yisrael*), indicating that it is the collective origin of all Jewish souls, the womb from which they emerge as they descend from *Atzilut* into the lower worlds.

<sup>7</sup> Exodus 23:12.

<sup>8</sup> *Zohar* 3:224a.

In the first [version of the Ten] Commandments, the Torah mentions the first reason, by saying “in order that your days be long,” referring to the increase of the six extremities [of *Z’eir Anpin*], which are called the six days of creation.

The six “extremities” of *Z’eir Anpin* are the six *sefirot* that metamorphose into this *partzuf*: *chesed*, *gevurah*, *tiferet*, *netzach*, *hod*, and *yesod*. They are called “extremities” since they are associated with the six directions of the three dimensions of space. These six *sefirot* are associated as well with the six days of creation. The association with the dimensions of space and the days of creation (time) alludes to that aspect of *Z’eir Anpin* that forms the conceptual framework for the physical world. In other words, by keeping the commandment to honor one’s physical parents, we increase the life force reaching this world. This Divine beneficence is expressed in this world as long life.

But the second [version of the Ten Commandments] refers to the proper, spiritual reason for performing this commandment, which produces an abundance of Divine beneficence, and therefore two types of reward are mentioned. The first is “in order that your days be long,” referring to the increase of the six extremities, as mentioned. In addition, [there is the reward of] “in order that it be well with you,” which refers to the influx of higher mentality. Mentality is alluded to by the word for “good” or “well” [*tov*], as we have explained in our commentary on the phrase, “who does good deeds of loving-kindness [*chasadim tovim*]” in the first blessing of the *Amidah*. This indicates that doing this commandment for its spiritual motivation will cause one’s intellect to mature, as well. This is why [in the context of this reason] it is written, “as G-d, your G-d, commanded you.”

By observing this commandment on the spiritual level, honoring *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* by increasing Divine consciousness in the world, we are rewarded in kind: we achieve a higher level of Divine consciousness and spiritual maturity.

Another allusion to the above may be found in the fact that the word *et* alludes to an additional entity. The two words *et* in the verse “Honor your father and your mother” allude to your spiritual, supernal father and mother, i.e., *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*.

The Hebrew particle *et* is usually not translated into English and serves simply to indicate the direct object. However, the sages often interpret its presence in verse to indicate an allusion to something besides the explicit object of the verb. Here, the *et* before the word for “father” alludes to *Z’eir Anpin* and the *et* before the word for “mother” alludes to *Nukva*.

—translated from *Likutei Torah* and *Sha’ar HaPesukim*

## *Parashat Ki Tisa* [fourth installment]

This *parashah* recounts the incident of the Golden Calf.

[In order to understand] the incident of the Golden Calf, we must understand what was the intention of the mixed multitude in making this calf at this point.

As the sages point out, it was the “mixed multitude”<sup>1</sup> of non-Jews that accompanied the Jews in their exodus from Egypt who instigated the idolatry of the Golden Calf.

I have already informed you, [in my comments] on the verse “And there arose a new king over Egypt,”<sup>2</sup> about the idea of the mixed multitude, [in particular] how they were [derived] from the impurities and pollution of [the soul of] Moses, whose soul was [derived] from the *da’at* of *Z’eir Anpin* itself, [which is in turn derived] from the mentality of *Abba*.

Moses’ soul was derived from *da’at*, which means that he was an expression of the idea of taking the intellectual idea and translating it into personal relevance, producing emotional response and practical expression. The fact that *da’at* is informed by the mentality of *Abba* means that it is the new, revolutionary, initial Divine insight that seeks to be made relevant and change reality.

But any initial insight appears in consciousness together with an admixture of impurity, in the form of illusions and deceptions, which have to be clarified out of the raw material of the insight via the process of *binah*. Moses’ error was in not recognizing these aberrations in the insight granted him for what they were, thinking that they could be incorporated and elevated into the picture. In material reality, this was expressed as his inclusion of the mixed multitude in the exodus.

Elsewhere, the Arizal explains that the mixed multitude were indeed intended to be elevated eventually, but Moses tried to do this prematurely. This is evidently a classic example of the Ba’al Shem Tov’s teaching that every process of spiritual growth must proceed through the three stages of submission (of the ego, in order to gain new insight), separation (of good and evil, in order to refine & purify the insight), and sweetening (of the impure elements of the insight with the power generated by the pure, refined insight). Moses was trying to skip the middle stage of this process.

Nonetheless, they still contained an admixture of sparks of holiness, and this is why Moses exerted all his energy to gather the mixed multitude under the wings of the Divine presence, [that is, to convert them to Judaism].

We find a similar [phenomenon] with Balaam, about whom our sages said, “[When the Torah says,] ‘And there arose no prophet in Israel like Moses,’<sup>3</sup> [it implies that] no [such prophet] arose *in Israel*, but among the [other] nations of the world one did arise, namely Balaam.”<sup>4</sup>

Balaam was thus somehow a fallen version of Moses.

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 12:38.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 1:8.

<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy 34:10.

<sup>4</sup> *Bamidbar Rabbah* 14:19.

I have also informed you, [in my comments] on the verse “And Rachel stole her father’s *terafim*,”<sup>5</sup> that Laban the Aramean was reincarnated as Balaam son of Beor, for Beor was Laban’s son and Balaam’s father. This whole family was [derived] from the one common source we have mentioned; they were all impurities from the soul of Moses. This includes Laban, Beor, Balaam, and [Balaam’s] two sons Yunus and Yumbruce that are mentioned in the *Zohar*.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, they were all great magicians and sorcerers, without equal anywhere in the world.

If Moses embodied the power to take Divine insight and make it relevant, we may assume that magic is a perversion of this power. Magic is the combining of disparate forces in nature that appear at first unconnected and unrelated and harnessing them to produce results. This is possible only if the one attempting to manipulate these powers possesses some inkling of the fact that everything is indeed related somehow, and can therefore be connected. The idea that everything is connected is derived, in its source, from the Divine insight that G-d created everything and sustains everything, and thus everything in the world is an expression of His power and is meant to express His presence. So the perversion of magic simply takes the insight of connectedness and ignores the Divine essence of this connectedness.

Thus, these souls, who were derived from the admixture of impurity in Moses’ soul, possessed something of his insight into the unity of creation, but either ignored or could not “divine” the Divinity underlying this unity. They therefore possessed great magical powers.

Now, I have already informed you in *The Gate of Reincarnations*,<sup>7</sup> as well as in [my discussion of] the commandment of Grace after Meals,<sup>8</sup> how souls transmigrate progressively through the four kingdoms: mineral, vegetable, animal, and human. I told you there also that there is a fixed time for [their incarnation into] each of these levels, after which they ascend to the next level. Now, the time fixed for being incarnated into the vegetable kingdom is the first four months of the year, which are Nisan, Iyar, Sivan, and Tamuz. After this, the [reincarnated souls] ascend to be incarnated into animals.

Now, Beor, the father of Balaam, was reincarnated into the vegetable kingdom, but he was not able to proceed in his rectification by ascending into the animal kingdom because of he was so polluted by evil. He was undoubtedly the highest aspect of the impurities in this soul-root, so therefore his grandsons Yunus and Yumbruce, who were the leaders of the mixed multitude, as is known,<sup>9</sup> as well as the mixed multitude themselves, all wanted him to be rectified. For his elevation would mean an elevation for them.

So they examined and understood through their magic that the only way it would be possible for him to ascend from there would be if they made the Israelites

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<sup>5</sup> Genesis 31:19.

<sup>6</sup> 2:191a.

<sup>7</sup> Introduction 22.

<sup>8</sup> *Sha’ar HaMitzvot*.

<sup>9</sup> *Zohar*, loc. cit.

sin. Through this, the forces of evil would be strengthened, and they would be able to extricate the soul of their grandfather Beor from the vegetable kingdom.

To [the sin of the Israelites] would be added the fact that the sin would occur through Aaron, the High priest, the holy one of G-d.

The evil generated by a sin is greater the holier the sinner, for the holier the person, the more Divine power he embodies.

Added to this would also be the fact that they possessed the same golden plate inscribed with the words, “Ascend, O ox!”

In Moses farewell blessing to the Jewish people, he describes Joseph as an “ox”: “The most eminent, his [is the power of the] ox that is given to him...”<sup>10</sup> In Jacob’s blessing to Joseph, the same word for ox appears, although in a different meaning, that of “wall”: “A fruitful son is Joseph, a fruitful son above the [evil] eye; daughters tread over the wall [to gaze on him].”<sup>11</sup> The words for “over the wall” in Hebrew are *alei shur*, which if slightly revocalized can be read: “Ascend, O ox!” (*aleh, shor*). The sages tell us that when Joseph died, his coffin was placed in the Nile River, and when the Jews left Egypt many years later, Moses stood at the edge of the Nile and cast into it a golden plate inscribed with the words “Ascend, O ox!” and Joseph’s coffin rose to the surface. In this way, Moses was able to fulfill Joseph’s wish to have his bones removed from Egypt and buried in the Land of Israel.<sup>12</sup> Obviously, this golden plate possessed great power.

Thus they devised to make the Golden Calf, which is also called an “ox,” with the powerful magic tools in their mouths, which upset the order of the supernal realms. All the powers we mentioned combined together—that of the evil [generated by the Jews’ sin], that of the magic [powers they possessed], that of the holiness of Aaron’s, and that of the holy Name etched in the golden plate that was used to elevate Joseph from the Nile. This combination produced the Golden Calf, which was animated by the spiritual life-force of their grandfather Beor. [Beor] thus ascended from the vegetable to the animal kingdom, and [the mixed multitude] accepted him as their leader, who would inform them of the future and tell them whatever they would need to know. And all this was possible by the fact that they made the Israelites sin, as we mentioned.

The soul of the wicked Beor, which was present in this Calf, was who yelled out, saying “This is your G-d, O Israel!”<sup>13</sup> as our sages have stated.<sup>14</sup>

This is also the inner meaning of our sages’ statement<sup>15</sup> that they fed the Golden Calf grass, as it is written, “[They made a calf at Horeb, and bowed down to a molten image; they made their glory bitter] in the form of an ox eating grass.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Deuteronomy 33:17.

<sup>11</sup> Genesis 49:22.

<sup>12</sup> *Midrash Tanchuma*, Ki Tisa 19.

<sup>13</sup> Exodus 32:4.

<sup>14</sup> See *Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer* 25.

<sup>15</sup> *Pesikta Zutarti*, Shemot 32:4.

<sup>16</sup> Psalms 106:

To explain: since [Beor] was incarnated in the vegetable kingdom as grass, [the Golden Calf] ate [this grass] in order to extricate [Beor's] soul that was incarnated there. By eating [this grass], the limbs of the Calf became animated one by one, and [Beor's soul] thus ascended from the vegetable to the animal kingdom.

They accomplished all this through the power of their magic.

And this is why they made the Golden Calf in the month of Tamuz, for that is the last month of the time of reincarnation ascending from the vegetable kingdom into the level of animals.

—translated from *Sha'ar HaPesukim*

## *Parashat VaYakhel*

Last week's Torah portion, *Ki Tisa*, described the infamous incident of the golden calf. The Arizal sees the beginning of this week's Torah portion as referring back to that incident and describing the means by which the Jewish people could restore their spiritual status to what it was before the sin.

We are taught that although the majority of the Jewish people worshipped the golden calf, the instigators of this incident were not the Jews themselves, but the "mixed multitude" which accompanied them out of Egypt.<sup>1</sup> These were the first converts to the Jewish people.

When a non-Jew seeks to convert and be accepted as part of the Jewish people, the rabbi or rabbinical court overseeing this process has to make sure his motives are pure and that he is not seeking to convert out of any ulterior motives. It is for this reason no converts were accepted during the reign of King Solomon and none will be accepted once *Mashiach* has come: when the Jewish people are as materially prosperous as they were in King Solomon's reign and as they will be in the messianic era, it is impossible to ascertain if a would-be convert's motives are pure.

Similarly, the "mixed multitude" of non-Jews who joined up with the Jewish people when they left Egypt are the classic example of insincere or opportunistic converts. Since they witnessed the ten plagues (which took place over the space of a whole year), it is not hard to imagine that they sided with the Jewish people out of the common human weakness for power and success, rather than a sincere devotion to truth at any cost.

Thus, when the going started to get rough, the weakness of these people's commitment was exposed in great relief. Moses was not coming down from the mountain; the people were left without a leader, someone to intermediate between them and G-d. The answer was all too ready to this mixed multitude who only recently renounced their old, idolatrous religions in order to accompany the Jews: "And this people saw that Moses was late in coming down the mountain, so they congregated around Aaron and said to him: 'Get up, make us a god who will go before us, for this man Moses who took us out of Egypt—we know not what has become of him.'...So [Aaron] took [the gold] from them...and made it into a molten calf, and they said: 'These are your gods, O Israel, who took you out of Egypt.'"<sup>2</sup> Notice that the makers of the golden calf address Israel in the second person, meaning that they themselves were not the original Jewish people.

Since both Moses and the generation of the desert were on the [spiritual] level of *yesod Abba*, Moses had to congregate them and gather them to him in order that they return to their source and become part of him. In this way [he cured them] from the sin of "they congregated around Aaron," shined upon them the light of holiness, and removed the impurity of [serving] the [golden] calf from them.

As we have explained previously, *Abba* is the name of the *partzuf* (full array of *sefirot*) that develops out of the *sefirah* of *chochmah* ("wisdom"). *Chochmah* in general is the fundamental insight or wisdom of creation, i.e., the Torah, which G-d used as his "blueprint" for creating the world. Every new insight an individual receives regarding some or another aspect of reality is—in its truest, purest form—an insight into the Torah. Moses, who was the human channel through which G-d gave the Torah to the world, thus personified and embodied this spiritual level.

In particular, the Arizal says, Moses personified the sub-*sefirah* of *yesod* of *Abba*. *Yesod* is the *sefirah* of connection and transmission; all the preceding *sefirot* coalesce in it and are channeled through it. In the correspondence that exists between the *sefirot* and the body, *yesod* corresponds to the organs of procreation.

Since the generation of the Exodus were the pupils of Moses and the original recipients of the Torah, they were also elevated to this profound level of consciousness. Thus, in the Talmud, this generation is referred to as "the generation of knowledge."

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<sup>1</sup> See Exodus 12:38.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* 32:1-4.

In Judaism, sin is defined as something that in some way degrades or perverts a person's awareness or consciousness of G-d. There are of course many levels of this, ranging from the subtle, "innocuous" sins of indulging in some permitted pleasure (glatt kosher chocolate cake...) to the out-and-out overt sins which incur serious punishments. Their common denominator, however, is that to a greater or lesser extent they all involve being overpowered by the "temporary insanity" or heresy that G-d doesn't care, or doesn't notice, or doesn't exist. The law of inertia dictates that "innocuous" trespasses can very easily degenerate into bona-fide sins.

Such was the case with the sin of the golden calf. Despite their intense awareness of G-d's reality in their lives, and in fact because of it, this generation knew that there had to be some leader, some Moses, who could serve to channel G-d's messages to them. When he did not return from the mountain at the appointed time, the thought of continuing without such a medium was intolerable. Instead of relying on G-d's providence, they relied on their own understanding (they had in fact miscalculated the day of Moses' return). The subtle lack of reliance degenerated into the full-blown sin of idolatry, since both are just different degrees of denying G-d's presence in one's life.

Thus, by committing the sin of the golden calf, the Jewish people fell from their former state of consciousness, *yesod Abba*. Instead of using their power of *yesod* to channel and coalesce the wisdom of the Torah—the awareness of G-d—into the world, they used it to "gather around Aaron" and force him to produce an idol, a proclamation that G-d has relinquished His involvement in the world to subordinate forces. In their minds, the Divine message was no longer focused and channeled through Moses, but dissipated throughout the forces of nature, which it now became necessary to honor and cajole ("serve") in order to sense the spirituality behind the curtain.

This dissipation of focus is the root of sexual sin, in which a person spreads his creative power in many directions instead of focusing it into one, consecrated channel. Instead of using his creativity to build and strengthen a family, a setting through which the consciousness of Divinity can be increased on earth, he diffuses it into nature, following the deception of fulfillment offered by the temporary thrill. We are thus taught that the worship of the golden calf involved not only idolatry but an orgy as well.

The cure, of course, is to re-gather the spiritual focus back to where it belongs, to Moses, the legitimate channel of Divine energy and wisdom into creation.

Thus it is written, "And Moses gathered together all the congregation." The word for "congregation" (*adat*) may be permuted to spell the word for "knowledge" (*da'at*).

By focusing on Moses and seeking spiritual enlightenment from the Torah, the Jewish people restored their knowledge of G-d to its proper form. This is alluded to by the fact that the words for "congregation" and "knowledge" contain the exact same letters, just in different order.

Now, the words for "mixed multitude" (*erev rav*) also have the same numerical value as the word for "knowledge" (*da'at*). This is because they also possessed this [sublime] aspect of Divine knowledge, albeit just the dregs of it.

Because they, too, committed the sin of the golden calf by congregating against Aaron, as it is written: "and the people congregated around Aaron," they needed another, [holy] congregating to rectify them, as it is written: "And Moses gathered together...."

On the one hand, the mixed multitude experienced the Divine miracles in Egypt and the Divine providence that had so far accompanied the Jewish people during the ensuing three months.<sup>3</sup> The result of this was that they had achieved something of the awareness that was being imparted to the people. On the other hand, since their motives were not pure, they could not assimilate as purely as the Jewish people themselves could.

Furthermore, since they sinned by using the word "these"—as they said: "These are your gods, O Israel"—the opposite [and holy usage of this word] was

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<sup>3</sup> The Exodus occurred on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nissan; the sin of the golden calf occurred on the 16<sup>th</sup> of Tamuz.

used to rectify them, as [Moses] said [in the present context]: “These are the things...”

We would have expected the mixed multitude to say to the Jewish people, “*this* is your god, O Israel,” since, after all, there was only one calf. The fact that they chose to phrase their call to idolatry in the plural means, as we are taught, that the intensity of the degeneration was so great that “they desired a multitude of gods to serve.”<sup>4</sup> In order to rectify this dissipation, the same term had to be used to focus them back on the proper source of spiritual enlightenment.

Since someone who serves idols is considered as if he had denied the entire Torah, [Moses] commanded them concerning two things that are also considered equivalent to the entire Torah. [The first was] the Sabbath, for a person who observes the Sabbath is considered as if he observed the entire Torah.

As we said, idolatry is the declaration that G-d either does not exist or has delegated His power to subordinates and has no direct involvement in the world. Thus, idolatry is a clear denial of the message of the Torah, which is exactly the opposite: that G-d does exist and that He cares very intimately about what goes on in the world.

By observing the Sabbath, the Jew declares that G-d created the world. First of all, by resting from work he re-enacts the first Sabbath of creation, when G-d ceased the work of creation. Secondly, by resting from work he declares his faith that G-d runs the world and can provide for his needs even though he does not work the full week. As is known, the ancient Romans considered the Jews lazy for taking a day off from work once a week. Although it is nowadays common to work formally even less than this, people still use their off time from work to take care of things they cannot take care of while at work, so the message of Shabbat is still pertinent.

### [The second was] the construction of the Tabernacle.

The Tabernacle, the portable Temple that the Jewish people constructed and carried with them in the desert, was the instrument through which G-d’s presence returned and remained in their consciousness. As the Torah puts it: “Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell amongst them.”<sup>5</sup> Since the Tabernacle accomplished the goal of the Torah in general, the establishment of a dwelling place for G-d on earth and within man, its construction was also considered equivalent to the fulfillment of the entire Torah. What the Sabbath accomplishes in time, the Temple accomplished in space; Shabbat is a sanctuary in time, while the Temple is a physical Shabbat.

Obviously, in both these cases, when we say that they are equivalent to the observance of the entire Torah, we do not mean that they can be substituted for observance of the Torah. Man needs the particular as well as the general, and the particular details of how G-d is brought into our lives through the observance of all the Torah’s commandments is just as important as the overall accomplishment of this goal through these general *mitzvot*.

[Moses] began with the commandment to construct the Tabernacle, and said: “Six days shall work be done....” This refers [not to work in general, but specifically] to building the Tabernacle, which is why it is phrased in the imperative.

Our sages in the Talmud derive the categories of work forbidden on the Sabbath from the types of work that were necessary to construct the Tabernacle. Here we can see why this is so: they are juxtaposed as being essentially equivalent to one another; when you are doing one, you do not need to do the other, and *vice versa*. A Jew is meant to be constantly involved in promoting Divine consciousness in the world. During the week, he does this by “building the Tabernacle,” i.e., making the physical world a fitting setting for Divine revelation. On Shabbat, he does this by ceasing from actively improving the world, instead simply opening himself to the Divine presence for which he has prepared the setting during the week. Thus, the Tabernacle and the Sabbath are simply two sides of the same coin: the preparation and fulfillment.

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<sup>4</sup> Rashi on Exodus 32:1.

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 25:8.

[Moses used the passive voice] and said “shall work be done” instead of [the active voice,] “you shall work” to indicate that the work will be done by itself. Similarly, it is said: “[...no hammer or ax or any iron tool was heard in] the House in its being built.”<sup>6</sup>

Nonetheless, even while engaged in actively purifying and elevating the world, we should not delude ourselves into thinking that we are doing so on our own power. It is only by virtue of the talents and capacities G-d has placed within us that we can make the world into a holy place. Therefore, it is at all times as if G-d Himself is doing all the work. Hence the use of the passive in Moses’ description of how we should go about building the Tabernacle.

In this way, “on the seventh day it will be holy for you.” Since you sanctify yourselves on the weekdays, while building the Tabernacle, it will assuredly be holy for you on the Sabbath. You will experience an additional measure of holiness, and possess an additional [level of] soul.

If we fulfill both conditions, that is, engage in the physical world throughout the week in order to elevate it to holiness, and maintain awareness throughout this process that we are doing so simply as G-d’s agents in the process, we will, by Shabbat, have fully sensitized ourselves to the holiness we have brought into the world, and will be fully able to experience it throughout the holy day. The celebration of Shabbat will not be a simple cessation from work, but a palpable experience of holiness in prayer, feasting, Torah study and social and family life. Even the mundane aspects of life will take on G-dly dimensions and become encounters with the wondrous reality of G-d Himself. This is described in the Talmud as the familiar metaphor of possessing an “extra soul” on Shabbat.

Together, then, Shabbat and the Temple constitute the consummate rectification for the sin of the golden calf, the denial or pollution of the idea of G-d’s unified presence throughout all reality—time and space.

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<sup>6</sup> 1 Kings 6:7.

## *Parashat VaYakhel* [second installment]

The following passage from the writings of the Arizal continues and amplifies the passage we cited and explained from *parashat Terumah* (2<sup>nd</sup> installment; it would be advisable to review this installment before proceeding). This passage is based on the verse from this portion of the Torah: “And Betzalel made the ark of accacia wood: it was two and a half cubits long, one and a half cubits wide, and one and a half cubits tall.”<sup>1</sup>

The Name *Elokim* is manifest in three places in *Atzilut*: in *binah*, in *gevurah*, and in *malchut*. The numerical values of these three Names *Elokim* [together] is [258,] the same as the numerical value of the word Haran. Betzalel made three arks corresponding to these three Names, in order to conceal within them the Torah, which is [a manifestation of] the Name *Havayah*.

As we have explained previously, the relationship between the Names *Havayah* and *Elokim* is that of “light” and “vessel,” or “message” and “medium.” *Elokim* (*alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem*,  $1 + 30 + 5 + 10 + 40 = 86$ ) shares the same numerical value with the word for “nature” (*ha-teva*, *hei-tet-beit-ayin*,  $5 + 9 + 2 + 70 = 86$ ), reflecting the fact that nature or the natural order that pervades creation conceals the Divine energy behind and within it. The gateway to Divine consciousness in this world, which contravenes the façade of nature, is the Torah. Thus, just as the physical ark(s) of the Tabernacle housed the Tablets of the Covenant, which encapsulated the entire written and oral Torah, the spiritual ark(s), the three Names *Elokim* of *Atzilut*, conceal within them and thereby channel into the world the Divine consciousness of the Name *Havayah*.

Since the root of the [sefirotic] tree from above is *binah* and from below is *malchut*, the inner and outer arks were made of gold, while the inner ark was made of wood. This is because gold expresses the full intensity of holy *gevurah*.

The *sefirot* function both as channels through which Divine beneficence is transmitted to the world and as levels of consciousness through which man may ascend. When the sefirotic tree is viewed as beginning above and extending down below, the “root” is *binah*, the source of its “branches,” the attributes of the heart. When it is viewed as beginning below and ascending, the “root” is *malchut*. These two *sefirot* thus define the borders of the matrix of Divine energy/consciousness within which Divine energy is funneled earthward. They are thus the inner and outer “arks” (*Elokim*) in which the Divine energy itself (*Havayah*) is sheathed.

Red is usually the color associated with *gevurah*. Gold is a reddish color but also possesses a brilliance and shine. It therefore is seen as the idealized, or holy, red.

Now, the numerical value of the word for ark (*aron*) plus the *kolel* equals the numerical value of the word *Haran*.

*Aron*: *alef-reish-vav-nun* =  $1 + 200 + 6 + 50 = 257$ .

Furthermore, if we take the *alef* of *aron* to equal 1000, the numerical value of *aron* is the same as the combined numerical values of Akatriel,<sup>2</sup> Metatron, and Sandalfon.

*Aron*: *alef* = 1000, *reish* = 200, *vav* = 6, *nun* = 50;  $1000 + 200 + 6 + 50 = 1256$ .

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 37:1.

<sup>2</sup> These three names are names of angels. It is customary not to pronounce names of angels (unless these names are also used for people, e.g., Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, etc.).

Akatriel = 662, Metatron = 314, Sandalfon = 280;  $662 + 314 + 280 = 1256$ .

As mentioned previously, these three angels are the personifications of the consciousnesses of the worlds of *Atzilut*, *Beriah*, and *Yetzirah*, respectively.

The Tablets inside the three arks were [a manifestation of] the Name *Havayah* of the world of *Atzilut*—

I.e., the open Divine consciousness manifest throughout the entire world of *Atzilut*.

—which becomes en clothed in the worlds of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*.

[This is alluded to by the fact that] the numerical value of these three Names *Elokim* together with the square-value of the Name *Adni*, plus the *kolel*, equal the numerical value of the word *Shechinah*.

The Name *Adni* is associated with the *sefirah* of *malchut* (in general, and of *Atzilut* in particular), and represents the way the contracted Divine energy of one world descends to the next lower world and “rules” it, i.e., becomes its dominant consciousness. In the present context, we are talking about how the consciousness of the world of *Atzilut* is constricted and contracted in order to function as the lower consciousness of the three lower worlds. Although the three lower worlds differ from each other with regard to their relative intensity of Divine consciousness, they have in common the fact that Divine consciousness is sufficiently screened and dimmed to allow self-consciousness as well. In this respect, they may be grouped together in order to contrast with the world of *Atzilut*, in which Divine consciousness is so prevailing that there is simply no “room” for self-awareness at all.

The numerical value of the three Names *Elokim* ( $3 \times 86$ ) is 258, as we have said.

The square-value (*ribu'a*) is the same as the “posterior” (*achorayim*) or “diminishing” value. For the Name *Adni*, this is *alef*, *alef-dalet*, *alef-dalet-nun*, *alef-dalet-nun-yud* =  $(1) + (1 + 4) + (1 + 4 + 50) + (1 + 4 + 50 + 10) = 126$ .

$258 + 126 + 1 = 385$ .

The Divine presence, or indwelling, is called the *Shechinah* (from the root *shin-chaf-nun*, “to dwell”). The numerical value of this word is *shin-chaf-yud-nun-hei* =  $300 + 20 + 10 + 50 + 5 = 385$ .

Thus, the three processes (Names *Elokim*) through which the Name *Havayah* of the world of *Atzilut* is occulted in order to be manifest in nature, and is then manifest in the lower worlds through G-d’s attribute of rulership, plus 1 to indicate that the whole process is one totality, is numerically equivalent to the result of this process, i.e., the Divine presence as it is manifest throughout the lower three worlds.



The Name *Elokim* comprises 5 letters; it is spelled out using 13 letters; and the process of spelling-out its spelling-out uses an additional 34 letters. The total number of letters used thusly is 52.

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-dalet</i>
	<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed-mem-dalet</i>
	<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet-lamed-tav</i>
<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed-mem-dalet</i>
	<i>mem</i>	<i>mem-final mem</i>
	<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet-lamed-tav</i>
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>
	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav-vav</i>
	<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet-lamed-tav</i>
<i>mem</i>	<i>mem</i>	<i>mem-final mem</i>
	<i>final mem</i>	<i>mem-final mem</i>

3 x 52 is the numerical value of the word for “and a tunic” (*umei’il*, 156).

$3 \times 52 = 156$ ;  $umei’il = vav-mem-ayin-yud-lamed = 6 + 40 + 70 + 10 + 30 = 156$ .

When we add 3 to this number, for the three iterations of the Name *Elokim* [simple, spelled-out once, and spelled-out again], we have [159,] the numerical value of the word for “small” (*katan*).

$Katan = kuf-tet-nun = 100 + 9 + 50 = 159$ .

This is an allusion to the verse, “and his mother made him a small robe,”<sup>3</sup> referring to Samuel.

Samuel’s mother, Hannah, was childless for many years. She prayed to G-d to bless her with a son, promising to consecrate him to the service of G-d. When Samuel was weaned, she took him to Shiloh (where the Tabernacle was located) and entrusted him into the care of the High Priest, Eli. “His mother would make him a small tunic and bring it up to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to slaughter the annual offering.”

The numerical value of *Samuel* [plus the *kolel*] is the same as that of *chashmal*, indicating how *Z’eir Anpin* comprises the eight *sefirot* from *chochmah* to *yesod*, and is crowned with the 370 lights of *Arich Anpin*.

$Samuel (Shemu’el) = shin-mem-vav-alef-lamed = 300 + 40 + 6 + 1 + 30 = 377$ .

$Chashmal = chet-shin-mem-lamed = 8 + 300 + 40 + 70 = 378$ .

Samuel, personifying *Z’eir Anpin*, is robed in a “small tunic,” i.e., a protective garment. This protective garment around *Z’eir Anpin* is known as *chashmal*, the “glow,” known to us from the vision of Ezekiel.<sup>4</sup> (In modern Hebrew, *chashmal* means “electricity.”) The *chashmal* is a “force-field” that protects *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* from the forces of evil. The fact that the “small tunic” of *chashmal* is numerically “equivalent” to the three iterations of the Name *Elokim* indicates that this garment is derived from them.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Samuel 2:19.

<sup>4</sup> Ezekiel 1:4-28.

Although the full *partzuf* of *Z'eir Anpin* possesses ten sub-*sefirot*, as does any *partzuf*, the *keter* and *malchut* of *Z'eir Anpin* can be considered external to the “body” of the *partzuf* proper. The *keter* is, after all, a crown placed on top of the head, and *malchut* of any *partzuf* is the expression of the *partzuf*.

*Arich Anpin* is the *partzuf* of the super-rational will, the desire that motivates the bringing into being of a particular world. The 370 lights of *Arich Anpin*, the will to create the world of *Atzilut*, are the presence of the motivating good will in the emotions. When the 370 lights of *Arich Anpin* shine on the *partzuf* of *Z'eir Anpin*, it means that G-d's motivating will in creating the world is present within the creation itself; i.e., that G-d is happy with His world—or at least focusing on the aspect of its origin that transcends its behavior. (Thus, *arich anpin* in Hebrew is *erech apaim*, the idiom for “patience”).

His mother is Hannah; the numerical value of her name (*Chanah*) is 63, referring to the eighth *sefirah* [*binah*], which possesses 50 gates included in [its] 5 emotional attributes.

*Chanah*: *chet-nun-hei* =  $8 + 50 + 5 = 63$ .

*Z'eir Anpin* derives from *Ima*, the *partzuf* of *binah*. Of the four spellings-out of the Name *Havayah* (giving numerical values of 72, 63, 45, and 52), that whose numerical value is 63 is associated with *binah*, as we know. Hannah here thus personifies *Ima*, the origin of *Z'eir Anpin*, personified by her son, Samuel.

According to the sages, there are fifty “gates” of understanding, i.e., fifty levels of understanding how Divinity is manifest in created reality. The simplest way of understanding this is as a reference to the fact that *binah/Ima* produces the seven emotions, each of which is inter-inclusive of the other, giving 49; *binah* itself would then be the fiftieth “gate.”

Here, however, the fifty “gates” are seen as  $5 \times 10$  rather than  $(7 \times 7) + 1$ . The five principle emotions are *chesed* to *hod*; the latter two, *yesod* and *malchut*, are just the drive for expression and power of expressing the “content” of the preceding five. These five principle emotions, as they exist within their source, the intellect, are in an “expanded” state, indicated by their self-inter-inclusion of all ten sub-*sefirot*. This contrasts with how these emotions exist outside their source, on their own; in this “contracted” state they are not inter-inclusive of all ten, but only of each other,  $7 \times 7$ .

This [idea is] further [alluded to by the fact that] when the Name *Elokim* is spelled out with *yud*'s and again with *alef*'s, this requires 104 letters. Spelling out [this Name] with *hei*'s requires 51 letters.

As we have mentioned previously, the three manifestations of the Name *Elokim* in *Atzilut*, specifically, in *binah*, *gevurah*, and *malchut* of *Atzilut*, correspond to the three methods of spelling out this Name. When *Elokim* is spelled out with *yud*'s, it corresponds to *binah*; with *alef*'s, to *gevurah*; with *hei*'s, to *malchut*.

*Elokim spelled with the letter yud (Elokim of binah)*

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-dalet</i>
	<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed-mem-dalet</i>
	<i>pei</i>	<i>pei-yud</i>
<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed-mem-dalet</i>
	<i>mem</i>	<i>mem-mem</i>
	<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet-lamed-tav</i>
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>
	<b><i>yud</i></b>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav-yud-vav</i>
	<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet-lamed-tav</i>
<i>mem</i>	<i>mem</i>	<i>mem-mem</i>
	<i>mem</i>	<i>mem-mem</i>

*Elokim spelled with the letter alef (Elokim of gevurah)*

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-dalet</i>
	<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed-mem-dalet</i>
	<i>pei</i>	<i>pei-yud</i>
<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed-mem-dalet</i>
	<i>mem</i>	<i>mem-mem</i>
	<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet-lamed-tav</i>
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-alef</i>
	<b><i>alef</i></b>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav-yud-vav</i>
	<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet-lamed-tav</i>
<i>mem</i>	<i>mem</i>	<i>mem-mem</i>
	<i>mem</i>	<i>mem-mem</i>

*Elokim spelled with the letter hei (Elokim of malchut)*

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-dalet</i>
	<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed-mem-dalet</i>
	<i>pei</i>	<i>pei-yud</i>
<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed-mem-dalet</i>
	<i>mem</i>	<i>mem-mem</i>
	<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet-lamed-tav</i>
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>
	<b><i>hei</i></b>	<i>hei-yud</i>
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav-yud-vav</i>
	<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet-lamed-tav</i>
<i>mem</i>	<i>mem</i>	<i>mem-mem</i>
	<i>mem</i>	<i>mem-mem</i>

These numbers, when added together with 3 for the three Names and the *kolel*, equal the numerical value of the word for “small,” referring back to the “small tunic” mentioned above.

$$104 + 51 + 3 + 1 = 158.$$

Strive to understand all this.

I.e., understand that the Name *Elokim* of *Ima* diminishes the power of the Name *Havayah* of *Abba* so that *Z'eir Anpin* may receive its intelligence (*mochin*) in stages. In the same way, the three Names *Elokim* (of *binah*, *gevurah*, and *malchut*) serve to diminish the power of the Name *Havayah* of *chochmah*. The three worlds (*Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*) serve to diminish the power of *Atzilut*. Finally, the three arks that Betzalel made all serve to diminish the power of the written Torah (a manifestation of *Z'eir Anpin*) so that Israel can participate in its revelation via the oral Torah (a manifestation of the *Shechinah*, *Malchut*). All of this is alluded to in the concept of the “small tunic” (*mei'il katan*) that Samuel received from his mother Hannah.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> with editorial thanks to R. Avraham Sutton

## *Parashat Pekudei*

In this week's Torah-reading, the accounts are given of the donations the Jewish people made to the construction of the Tabernacle and what was done with the donations. We are told that "the silver [collected] from those of the community who were recorded totaled 100 talents and 1,775 shekels by the sanctuary weight.... The 100 talents of silver [were used] for casting the sockets of the sanctuary and the sockets of the entry-curtain: 100 talents for 100 sockets, a talent a socket."<sup>1</sup>

The word for "socket" in Hebrew is *aden*, and the plural construct ("the sockets of"), the form used in this passage, is *adnei*. This is spelled exactly the same as the Divine Name *Adni* (pronounced *adonai*). Thus, the Arizal states—

Know that the one hundred sockets of the Tabernacle are manifestations of the *sefirah* of *malchut*, which is synonymous with the Divine Name *Adni*.

The sockets were the base of the Tabernacle; the boards which formed the walls were inserted into these sockets. The Tabernacle was, as we have noted previously, the means through which G-d's presence was manifest in the world (and in the consciousness of every Jew); it therefore was a microcosm of the entire creation. The final, lowest *sefirah* of the ten *sefirot* is *malchut*; therefore, the sockets, the lowest element of the Tabernacle, manifest this *sefirah*. As opposed to the preceding nine *sefirot*, *malchut* has no "content" or "personality" of its own. It is not an attribute of G-d *per se* but rather the power of expression of all the other, preceding attributes. Thus, it is stated in the *Zohar* that *malchut* "has nothing of its own." The word "*malchut*" means "kingdom," i.e., the manifestation of the preceding attributes of G-d throughout creation, creating, informing and organizing reality into a unified, harmonious whole—a kingdom run by a King, namely G-d. The Divine Name which expresses this lordship over reality is, of course, *Adni*, which literally means "My L-rd." Every *sefirah*, being a manifestation of G-d in the context of creation, is in effect another "name" of His, since the purpose of a name or title is to identify an individual in the context of the role he is playing *vis-à-vis* the world around him.

This Name possesses the numerical value of 100, as follows:

The simple *gematria* of the word *Adni* (*alef-dalet-nun-yud*) is 65, but through analyzing its *milui* (the full spelling-out of each letter), its numerical value is increased to 100. As mentioned previously, the full spelling out of a letter indicates in Kabbalah the full manifestation of all the Divine power latent in that letter. The full spelling of the Name *Adni* therefore indicates the full manifestation of G-d's power to unite creation under His rule. This, again, is the fullest expression of the idea of the Tabernacle in general: the dissemination of the awareness and consciousness of G-d throughout creation. In order to reach the value of 100, the Name *Adni* must be doubly spelled out, that is each of its constituent letter must be spelled out fully, as we will demonstrate presently. This indicates an even greater, consummate revelation of *malchut* throughout creation. The number 100, as well, being the perfect square of 10, the number of completion, conveys as well this same idea of super-perfection.

The filling of the filling of the Name *Adni* may be done in two ways. This is indicated as well in the verse "And therefore, I pray, let the power of *Adni* be great, as You have declared...."<sup>2</sup> The *yud* in the word "be great" [*yigdal*] is written large.

A certain number of letters in the Torah are written larger than the rest. This indicates a magnification of some kind. Here, as will be presently demonstrated, it indicates that the power of *Adni* is to be made great by the addition of the letter *yud* to its double spelling out.

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 38:25-27.

<sup>2</sup> Numbers 14:17.

This alludes to the following: The filling of the filling of this Name [*Adni*] is *alef-lamed-pei lamed-mem-dalet pei-alef, dalet-lamed-tav lamed-mem-dalet tav-vav, nun-vav-nun vav-alef-vav nun-vav-nun, yud-vav-dalet vav-alef-vav dalet-lamed-tav*.

To simplify this construction, let us picture it graphically:

simple spelling	first filling	filling of filling
<i>alef</i>	<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>
	<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed-mem-dalet</i>
	<i>pei</i>	<i>pei-alef</i>
<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet-lamed-tav</i>
	<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed-mem-dalet</i>
	<i>tav</i>	<i>tav-vav</i>
<i>nun</i>	<i>nun</i>	<i>nun-vav-nun</i>
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav-alef-vav</i>
	<i>nun</i>	<i>nun-vav-nun</i>
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav-alef-vav</i>
	<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet-lamed-tav</i>

If we imagine the original four letters *alef-dalet-nun-yud* as defining a straight line, the first *milui* would add a dimension, giving a square, and the *milui* of the *milui* would add a third dimension, giving a cube. **[I can't do this graphically on a word processor, but I'm sure some graphic artist in LA can make a nice picture out of this.]**

This [filling of filling] consists of 34 letters, this number being the same as the numerical value of the word for “poor” (*dal*). This is why the Name *Adni*, which is synonymous with the *sefirah* of *malchut*, the poor and destitute one, this being the concept of the reflective or translucent lens.

As we mentioned above in the name of the *Zohar*, *malchut* “possesses nothing of its own,” but merely reflects and transmits that which it receives from the preceding *sefirot*.

Prophecy is envisioned as seeing Divine truth through a lens. Moses’s prophetic vision is said to have been as if “through a transparent lens,” while that of all the other prophets is said to have been as if “through a non-transparent lens,” i.e. either a cloudy pane or a mirror. This simply indicates that the inferior prophecy of the other prophets was transmitted through the *sefirah* of *malchut*; they experienced Divinity as it has been funneled into creation (specifically, the three worlds of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*). Moses, in contrast, experienced Divinity directly (i.e., as it is manifest in the world of *Atzilut* before being channeled through *malchut*).

The Arizal now explains how “the filling of the filling of the Name *Adni* may be done in two ways”:

This is, however, only if the letter *yud* is omitted from the spelling of the letter *tav* (like this: *tav-vav*). If, however, the letter *yud* is included (like this: *tav-yud-vav*), [the filling of the filling] is then great and complete, this being the concept of the full moon.

At issue here is the sixth line of the chart above, where the *tav* of the *dalet* of *Adni* is spelled out. *Tav* may be spelled either with or without a *yud*. By adding the *yud*, the number of letters in the spelling out of the spelling out

changes from 34 to 35. 34 signified poverty, as was just mentioned; the significance of 35 will be explained presently.

One of the earthly manifestations of the *sefirah* of *malchut* is the moon. Just as *malchut* has nothing of its own, the moon merely reflects the light of the sun. Just as *malchut*'s emptiness or fullness is dependent upon the extent to which it is funneling the content of the preceding *sefirot* into creation, the moon waxes and wanes in accordance with how much it receives of the sun's light. The full moon thus signifies *malchut* in its fullness, when the additional *yud* has transformed it from "poor and destitute" to "great and complete."

The letter *yud* is the first letter of the Divine Name *Havayah*, and in this context generally indicates the *sefirah* of *chochmah* ("wisdom") or sometimes intellect in general. As the Arizal explains elsewhere, this *yud* which completes the spelling out of the Name *Adni* is synonymous with the extra measure of Divine intellect that radiates throughout the world (and specifically in the Jewish soul) on the Sabbath, festivals, and *Rosh Chodesh*.

The Arizal also explains elsewhere that the significance of the number 35 is that it is the numerical value of the full spelling of the first two letters of the Name *Havayah*, *yud* and *hei* ( $yud + vav + dalet + hei + yud = 10 + 6 + 4 + 5 + 10 = 35$ ). These two letters signify the first two *sefirot* of the intellect, *chochmah* and *binah*.

The completion and fulfillment of the Name *Adni*, thus, is the introduction and the presence of the intellect into its consciousness or experience. This is a pervasive theme in Kabbalah, replayed many time in various contexts, that the rectification of any situation or state of consciousness is accomplished by re-rooting it in the initial idea and intellectual development from which it issued in the first place. In our case, this means that in order for the dissemination of Divine consciousness throughout the world to be truly effective, it must be permeated by the inspiration afforded to it by the first, radical awareness of the idea of G-d. We have encountered this theme before: the feminine, active principle in creation is at risk of losing its inspiration in the ongoing task of elevating the world. It therefore needs to be constantly, or at least periodically, refreshed by reliving the initial insight of G-dliness as divorced from any particular worldly application.

This is the mystical meaning of the word "be great" [*yig-dal*]. We may understand it to mean: "let the filling which possesses *dal* [34] letters—and is thus defective—become great [by possessing] 35 letters by means of the addition of the *yud* to the spelling of the *tav*." Therefore the *yud* of *yigdal* is large, to indicate this.

The word *yigdal* in this verse thus does triple duty: (1) it means "become great," which here means become transformed from a 34-letter filling of filling to a 35-letter one; (2) it alludes to the number 34 (*dal*) in its second syllable; (3) the extra-large *yud* it begins with indicates that this transformation is to take place by inserting the *yud* where it is initially missing. Such multiple *entendres* are frequent in the rich texture of the Kabbalistic understanding of the holy text of the Bible.

The Arizal will now demonstrate how the word *yigdal* alludes to both levels of filling in, the first filling and the filling of the filling.

The word *yigdal* may be seen to be composed of two numbers, 13 (*yud-gimel*) and 34 (*dalet-lamed*). The Name *Adni* in this verse refers to the simple Name itself; "the power of *Adni*" refers to the filling and the filling of the filling [of the Name]. Both of these [fillings] "become great" when the additional *yud* is introduced into the *tav*[, as explained previously]. The first filling is 12 letters and the filling of the filling is 35 letters. Together they comprise 47 letters; this number is the numerical value of *yigdal*.

Although he has just shown how the numerical value of *yigdal* (47) alludes to the first filling (12) plus the second (35), the Arizal is not through yet. Since the word *yigdal* naturally divides into the numbers 13 and 34, not 12 and 35, he will now adjust the calculation to reflect this inner structure of the word.

However, since the filling of the filling is usually 34 letters and only occasionally is augmented by the addition of the *yud* into the *tav*, its principle numerical value remains 34.

The numerical value of the filling of the filling is augmented to 35 only on the Sabbath, festivals, and *Rosh Chodesh*, as we said.

The additional *yud* thus remains separate. This is how we arrive at 13, namely, the 12 letters of the first filling plus the extra *yud*. This, again, is why the *yud* is written large, to indicate that it is added later. And then “the power of *Adni* is great,” as is known.

The filling of the filling is called “power” since the filling of the filling of the Name *Havayah* consists of 28 letters, this number being the numerical value of the word for “power” [*koach*=*kaf*+*chet*=28]. For this reason, the filling of the filling of the Name *Adni* is called its “power.”

The Name *Havayah* is the most essential of G-d’s Names. The filling of the filling of this Name is as follows:

simple spelling	first filling	filling of filling
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav-yud-vav</i>
	<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet-lamed-tav</i>
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>
	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>
<i>vav</i>	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav-yud-vav</i>
	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav-yud-vav</i>
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>
	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>

As may be seen, the filling of the filling comprises 28 letters. Since the filling of the filling of this most essential Name comprises 28 letters, and 28 is the numerical value of the word for “power” (*koach*), we generalize this to all other Names and say that the filling of the filling of any Name is the expression of its full “power.”

When, however, we add all three together, the simple Name [4 letters] plus the first filling [12 letters] and the filling of the filling [35 letters], the total is 51 letters, this being the value of the word for “I pray” (*na*) in this verse.

This, then, is the mystical meaning of the verse, “And therefore, I pray, let the power of *Adni* be great, as You have declared....” When the power of this Name will be augmented as we have described [by adding the *yud*], it will add up to 51 [= “I pray”]. Otherwise, it adds up to only 50 letters.

The Arizal will now return to the subject of the sockets of the Tabernacle.

To return to the subject at hand: the numerical value of the Name *Adni* [by itself] is 65, but when the number 35, the number of letters of the [augmented] filling of its filling is added to it, the total is 100, the number of sockets in the Tabernacle. In this way, we may understand how the word for sockets [*adanim*] is related to the Name *Adni*.

Know, then, that all hundred sockets of the Tabernacle were manifestations of the Name *Adni*, which is the *sefirah* of *malchut*.

—translated and adapted from *Sefer HaLikutim*

## *Parashat Vayikra*

As we have mentioned previously, the word “Kabbalah” means in Hebrew “parallel” or “correspondence.” By paralleling the different structures and elements that inhere within creation, Kabbalah demonstrates the its underlying unity, and how all creation reflects and expresses the same Divine powers that create it. In the following exposition, we will encounter in quick succession the main conceptual structures that correspond to the four letters of the Divine Name *Havayah*, which expresses the basic pattern of Divine creative energy that sustains and informs all levels of reality.

### Concerning the commandment of the sacrifices:

After the Torah discusses the construction of the Tabernacle in the *parashot Terumah, Teztaveh, Ki Tisa, Vayakhel* and *Pekudei*, it begins to discuss the ritual of the sacrifices that are offered in the Tabernacle. This is the subject of *parashat Vayikra*.

As is known, the Divine Name *Havayah* [alludes to the five principle *partzufim* of the world of *Atzilut*, as follows]: The [upper] thorn of the *yud* corresponds to *Arich Anpin*, the *yud* to *Abba*, the *hei* to *Ima*, the *vav* to *Z’eir Anpin*, and the [final] *hei* to the *Nukva* [of *Z’eir Anpin*].

For the sake of clarity, we will reproduce the chart from our discussion of *parashat Tetzaveh* that summarized the correspondences between the *sefirot* and the *partzufim* that develop out of them, adding the correspondence between the *partzufim* and the letters of G-d’s Name *Havayah*.

<i>sefirah</i> in <i>Tohu</i>	<i>partzuf</i> in <i>Tikun</i>	the Name <i>Havayah</i>
<i>keter</i>	<i>Atik Yomin</i> (“the Ancient of Days”)	upper thorn of <i>yud</i>
	<i>Arich Anpin</i> (“the Long Face”)	
<i>chochmah</i>	<i>Abba</i> (“father”)	<i>yud</i>
<i>binah</i>	<i>Ima</i> (“mother”)	<i>hei</i>
<i>chesed, gevurah, tiferet, netzach, hod, yesod</i>	<i>Z’eir Anpin</i> (“the Small Face”)	<i>vav</i>
<i>malchut</i>	<i>Nukva</i> (“the female”) of <i>Z’eir Anpin</i>	<i>hei</i>

*Atik Yomin* is not alluded to explicitly in the Name *Havayah*, since it is considered the inner dimension of the outer *partzuf* of *keter*, *Arich Anpin*.

Now, corresponding to these, the Holy One, blessed be He, created [five “kingdoms” in this physical world]: the silent [i.e., inanimate or mineral], the vegetable, the animal, the articulate [i.e., man], and the soul.

Creation unfolds through successive levels of consciousness of G-d; each of these levels is called a “world.” Every world is thus simply a projection of the preceding one onto a lower spiritual level. Thus, even our physical world reflects the spiritual structure of the highest spiritual realm, the world of *Atzilut*. The fact that the elements of this world may be organized into different “kingdoms” in accordance with the level of life they exhibit means that this hierarchy exists as well in the spiritual realms. The Arizal here tells us that the five “kingdoms” correspond to the five *partzufim* of the world of *Atzilut* from which they descend.

There are many ways in which these correspondences are evident. *Malchut* is described as “possessing nothing of its own,” i.e., whatever content it possesses it receives from the other *sefirot*. In this sense, it may be considered to be “silent” or “inanimate.” The emotions (*chesed* to *yesod*) are the context in which a person’s maturity develops. Although there is also a difference between a mature intellect and an immature one, the most visible indication of a person’s growth and development on the ladder of humanity is his emotional behavior. The emotions are thus the “vegetative” aspect of the personality, that which exhibits growth and development. The intellect, the chief *sefirah* of which is *binah*, is the source of vitality and animation in a person. Only when a person understands the importance and significance of something does he get animated about it and pursue it. Thus, the *sefirah* of *binah* is manifest in the world as the animal kingdom. The insight (*chochmah*) which recognizes the Divine element of reality is what differentiates man from animal; thus, the manifestation of *chochmah* in this world is the human being. Finally, the spiritual intent and purpose of creation embodied in the *sefirah* of *keter* manifests itself in the spiritual consciousness of man itself, his Divine soul.

<i>sefirah</i> in <i>Tohu</i>	<i>partzuf</i> in <i>Tikun</i>	the Name <i>Havayah</i>	Kingdom
<i>keter</i>	<i>Atik Yomin</i> (“the Ancient of Days”)	upper thorn of <i>yud</i>	soul
	<i>Arich Anpin</i> (“the Long Face”)		
<i>chochmah</i>	<i>Abba</i> (“father”)	<i>yud</i>	man
<i>binah</i>	<i>Ima</i> (“mother”)	<i>hei</i>	animal
<i>chesed, gevurah, tiferet, netzach, hod, yesod</i>	<i>Z’eir Anpin</i> (“the Small Face”)	<i>vav</i>	vegetable
<i>malchut</i>	<i>Nukva</i> (“the female”) of <i>Z’eir Anpin</i>	<i>hei</i>	mineral

Now, from each of the four lower levels there are elements that need to be elevated and refined. All of these elements were rectified by the sacrifice.

All the worlds that were created subsequent to the world of *Atzilut* were constructed out of the fallen remains of the shattered world of *Tohu*, the immature version of *Atzilut*. These Divine sparks from the world of *Tohu* are embedded within all aspects and facets of reality in all the lower worlds, including, of course, the lowest one, our physical world. By using any particular element of reality for a Divine purpose, the spark enlivening it is released from its existential entrapment in anti-spirituality and ascends back to its source, spiritualizing reality in the process. When all the sparks will have been liberated in this way, the world will have attained its maximal spiritual potential and *Mashiach* will come.

The prototypical example of this process is the sacrificial service in the Holy Temple. The Temple is the microcosm of creation, and the rites performed within it are both symbolic of and actualizations of the wider Divine service that mankind performs in the world at large.

To wit: Salt is a mineral, and through it the mineral kingdom was rectified. The wine and the oil [offered with the sacrifices] rectified the vegetable kingdom. The animals rectified the animal kingdom. The confession the animal’s owner recited over the animal corresponds to the articulate kingdom [i.e., man]. The intention of the priest [*kohen*] while he was offering the sacrifice corresponds to the soul within [man]. Through these five aspects of the sacrifice, the four “kingdoms” are elevated.

All animal sacrifices were salted when they were offered on the altar.<sup>1</sup> Wine and oil were also offered along with most animal sacrifices.<sup>2</sup> Immediately before the animal is slaughtered, the owner of the sacrifice must confess his sins (in the case of a sin offering or burnt offering) or express his thanksgiving and joy (in the case of other

<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 2:13.

<sup>2</sup> See, *inter alia*, Exodus 29:38-41.

offerings) to G-d.<sup>3</sup> The intention of the priest while offering the sacrifice is an essential aspect of the rite; if something is amiss in his intentions it could render the sacrifice invalid.

These [five aspects of the sacrifice] are the *nefesh*, *ruach*, *neshamah*, *chayah*, and *yechidah*.

In addition to manifesting themselves in the material reality of this world (and the “proto-material” reality of the spiritual worlds), the five *partzufim* correspond to the five aspects of the spiritual reality of creation, i.e., the Divine soul. They thus correspond as well to the five aspects of the sacrifice:

<i>sefirah</i> in <i>Tohu</i>	<i>partzuf</i> in <i>Tikun</i>	the Name <i>Havayah</i>	aspect of sacrifice	level of the soul
<i>keter</i>	<i>Atik Yomin</i> (“the Ancient of Days”)	upper thorn of <i>yud</i>	the intention of the priest ( <i>kohen</i> )	<i>yechidah</i>
	<i>Arich Anpin</i> (“the Long Face”)			
<i>chochmah</i>	<i>Abba</i> (“father”)	<i>yud</i>	the confession	<i>chayah</i>
<i>binah</i>	<i>Ima</i> (“mother”)	<i>hei</i>	the animal	<i>neshamah</i>
<i>chesed</i> , <i>gevurah</i> , <i>tiferet</i> , <i>netzach</i> , <i>hod</i> , <i>yesod</i>	<i>Z’eir Anpin</i> (“the Small Face”)	<i>vav</i>	the oil and wine	<i>ruach</i>
<i>malchut</i>	<i>Nukva</i> (“the female”) of <i>Z’eir Anpin</i>	<i>hei</i>	the salt	<i>nefesh</i>

The *nefesh* (“life force”) is the behavioral aspect of the soul, and thus corresponds to the *sefirah* of *malchut*, the expression of the higher *sefirot*. The *ruach* (“spirit”) is the emotional aspect of the soul, and thus corresponds to the emotional *sefirot* (the *midot*, from *chesed* to *yesod*). The *neshamah* (“breath” of life) is the intellectual aspect of the soul. The *chayah* (“living one”) is the soul’s innate wisdom, and the *yechidah* (“single one”) is the soul’s identity within G-d’s essence.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse [describing the sacrifices]: “a fire offering, an aroma that is pleasing to G-d,”<sup>4</sup> [as we will now explain]:

The word “a fire offering” [*isheh*] corresponds to *nefesh*; since it is the feminine this word can be also read to mean “woman” [*ishah*]. Also, fire is a symbol for *malchut*, as in the phrase “a consuming fire.”<sup>5</sup>

The word *nefesh* literally means “blowing”; this may be one conceptual link to fire, which one blows on to increase. In addition, fire reduces the offering to its mineral constituents. *Malchut*, the *sefirah* that corresponds to the soul-level of *nefesh*, is the feminine principle in creation (as we have elaborated upon previously). The phrase “a consuming fire” describes G-d when revealed to creation, which unless properly prepared cannot bear the intensity of the revelation and is consumed by it. The indwelling of G-d in creation is the feminine aspect of G-d, the *Shechinah*, or Divine Presence.

The word for “aroma” [*reiach*] corresponds to the *ruach*, which in turn corresponds to the world of *Yetzirah* and the *partzuf* of *Z’eir Anpin*.

As opposed to the bland, inanimate characterization of *nefesh*, *ruach* is characterized as colorful and fragrant, due to it’s being the location of the emotions. The words *reiach* and *ruach* are also obviously cognate to each other.

<sup>3</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, *Ma’aseh HaKorbanot* 3:14-15.

<sup>4</sup> Leviticus 1:9, 13, 17, 2:2, 9, 3:5, 23:18; Numbers 15:10, 13, 14, 28:8, 24, 29:36.

<sup>5</sup> Deuteronomy 4:24, 9:3.

The four/five letters of the Name *Havayah*, the five *partzufim*, the four/five kingdoms, the five aspects of the sacrifice, and the five levels of the soul, all correspond as well to the four/five worlds. We may thus expand the above charts as follows:

<i>sefirah</i> in <i>Tohu</i>	<i>partzuf</i> in <i>Tikun</i>	the Name <i>Havayah</i>	aspect of sacrifice	level of the soul	world
<i>keter</i>	<i>Atik Yomin</i> (“the Ancient of Days”)	upper thorn of <i>yud</i>	the intention of the priest ( <i>kohen</i> )	<i>yechidah</i>	<i>Adam Kadmon</i> (“Primordial Man”)
	<i>Arich Anpin</i> (“the Long Face”)				
<i>chochmah</i>	<i>Abba</i> (“father”)	<i>yud</i>	the confession	<i>chayah</i>	<i>Atzilut</i> (“Emanation”)
<i>binah</i>	<i>Ima</i> (“mother”)	<i>hei</i>	the animal	<i>neshamah</i>	<i>Beriah</i> (“creation”)
<i>chesed, gevurah, tiferet, netzach, hod, yesod</i>	<i>Z’eir Anpin</i> (“the Small Face”)	<i>vav</i>	the oil and wine	<i>ruach</i>	<i>Yetzirah</i> (“formation”)
<i>malchut</i>	<i>Nukva</i> (“the female”) of <i>Z’eir Anpin</i>	<i>hei</i>	the salt	<i>nefesh</i>	<i>Asiyah</i> (“action”)

“...that is pleasing” corresponds to the *partzuf* of *Ima*, the *neshamah* of *Beriah*. “...to G-d” corresponds to the inner soul of this *neshamah*, i.e., *Abba*. With it, we have constructed the full four-letter Name *Havayah*. This is the secret of the phrase “a sacrifice to G-d [*Havayah*].”<sup>6</sup> [In offering a sacrifice,] the person sublimates the four powers [alluded to] in the Name *Havayah* [and manifest in the four “kingdoms” of creation], as we have mentioned.

—translated and adapted from *Ta’amei HaMitzvot*

<sup>6</sup> Leviticus 1:2.

# Parashat Vayikra

## [second installment]

In the previous installment of the Arizal's teachings on this portion of the Torah, we established correspondences between the four letters of the Name *Havayah*, the five principle *partzufim*, the five worlds, the five "kingdoms" or levels of life in this world, the five levels of the soul, and the five aspects of the sacrifices. These correspondences are summarized in the following chart:

the Name <i>Havayah</i>	<i>sefirah</i> (in <i>Tohu</i> )	<i>partzuf</i> (in <i>Tikun</i> )	world	kingdom	level of the soul	aspect of sacrifice
upper thorn of <i>yud</i>	<i>keter</i>	<i>Atik Yomin</i> ("the Ancient of Days")	<i>Adam Kadmon</i> ("Primordial Man")	soul	<i>yechidah</i>	the intention of the priest ( <i>kohen</i> )
		<i>Arich Anpin</i> ("the Long Face")				
<i>yud</i>	<i>chochmah</i>	<i>Abba</i> ("father")	<i>Atzilut</i> ("Emanation")	articulate (man)	<i>chayah</i>	the confession
<i>hei</i>	<i>binah</i>	<i>Ima</i> ("mother")	<i>Beriah</i> ("creation")	animal	<i>neshamah</i>	the animal
<i>vav</i>	<i>chesed, gevurah, tiferet, netzach, hod, yesod</i>	<i>Z'eir Anpin</i> ("the Small Face")	<i>Yetzirah</i> ("formation")	vegetable	<i>ruach</i>	the oil and wine
<i>hei</i>	<i>malchut</i>	<i>Nukva</i> ("the female") of <i>Z'eir Anpin</i>	<i>Asiyah</i> ("action")	inarticulate (mineral)	<i>nefesh</i>	the salt

Know, that all the animals, beasts, and fowl have a soul [*nefesh*], which [originates in,] descends from, and is influenced by the Holy Beasts. If the creature is ritually pure [*tahor*] [it descends, etc.] from the holy Chariot, and if it is ritually impure [*tamei*] it derives from the impure chariot.

The "Divine chariot," a vision of a person riding a chariot, is described most vividly in the first chapter of the book of Ezekiel, but appears elsewhere in the Bible as well. It is generally understood to be a depiction of the hierarchy of Divine powers through which G-d channels His life force into the world. Each detail of the vision embodies a different aspect of this organization of life powers, and all the details eventually find their way into various manifestations in this world.

The "Holy beasts" here are the four celestial creatures that bear the Divine chariot. "This was their appearance: they were human figures, but each one had four faces, and each one had four wings.... Their faces and their wings were alike on the four of them.... As for the likeness of their faces: each one had a human face [in the

front]; each of the four had a lion's face to the right; each of the four had an ox's face to the left; and each of the four had an eagle's face [in the back]."<sup>1</sup>

Corresponding to this "Divine chariot" is an "impure chariot," or the array of powers through which G-d channels life force into the realm of evil, in order to create and sustain it until such time as its purpose has been served and it can be dispensed with.

The soul[s] of the domesticated animal descend from the face of the ox of the chariot. [Those of] the wild animals descend from the face of the lion in the chariot. [Those of] the fowl descend from the face of the eagle of the chariot.

The permitted (*kosher*) domesticated animals of this world are derived from the face of the ox in the chariot; the permitted wild animals are derived from the face of the lion (even though lions themselves are not kosher); the permitted birds are derived from the face of the eagle. Forbidden animals and fowl are derived from the corresponding faces of the beasts of the unholy chariot.

The animal soul of man descends from the human face of the chariot, whether the holy or the impure one, as detailed at length in the *Zohar*.<sup>2</sup>

When a person sins, the *Zohar* explains, "he draws down upon himself a spirit from the side of impurity, which then has complete sway over him. But if he makes an effort to purify himself, he is assisted [from on high] to do so. When the Temple stood and he brought his offering, his atonement was [nonetheless] suspended until he repented and broke the pride of that spirit and humbled it." Thus, the individual has the power to determine to which chariot's influence he submits himself, the holy one or the impure one.

All this, nonetheless, applies only to the superficial, [i.e., animal soul], for the inner, [Divine soul] is always entirely holy.

The Divine soul remains pure, undefiled by the influence of the unholy chariot on the animal soul, even if the person elects to sin.

It is from there [i.e., from the Divine soul] that the inner *nefesh-ruach-neshamah* are derived.

Although both the Divine soul and the animal possess all five aspects (from *yechidah* to *nefesh*), when we speak of the three aspects of the *nefesh-ruach-neshamah*, we are (usually) referring to these aspects the Divine soul; when we speak of the animal soul we (usually) only consider the *nefesh*.

Now it sometimes happens that when the soul of an evil man is descending [into the world to be born], and at the same time the soul of a domesticated or wild animal is being emanated [downward into a physical animal being born], the human soul is grafted onto [the soul of the animal] in order to punish it, in accordance with the decisions of the heavenly court.

This is a description of transmigration of souls (*gilgul*), wherein someone who dies without repented (i.e., having done *teshuvah*) for his sins is sent down again into an animal body. This experience is extremely painful and frustrating for the Divine soul, in that it cannot express its Divine nature as it can in a human body (by learning Torah and doing *mitzvot*, etc.). This experience is meant to "demonstrate" to this soul what it has wrought by its sins in its previous lifetime(s), and thereby scour it of its enmeshment with the material side of life. Once cleansed of this, the soul can proceed with its ascent in the spiritual realms.

As we have also explained previously, the purpose of Divine punishment is not to exact retribution or vengeance, but to effect the restitution of the soul to its former, proper, spiritual status.

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<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel 1:5-10.

<sup>2</sup> 3:240-242.

With this we can understand the mystery of the sacrifices, which bring close those who are far.

The Hebrew for “sacrifice” (*korban*) is from the verb “close” (*karov*); the sacrifice is designed and intended to bring the offerer close to G-d.

It can also happen sometimes that [the sinner descends and] is found in the animal’s food. [In either case, whether he is reincarnated into the animal or its food, the animal] is thereafter offered on the altar. And when the proper rites are performed on it, [the human soul within it] is brought close again to its source and rectified.

Even if the sacrificial animal does not contain any reincarnated human soul within it, it nonetheless contains within it something of the 288 sparks [from the vessels world of *Tohu*] that fell and shattered; these are now rectified.

All animals (and, indeed, all physical reality) contain sparks from the fallen world of *Tohu*, as we have explained previously. When the animal is sacrificed, it elevates these sparks—as well as sparks from the animal kingdom generally.

This also explains why there is unfit [*treif*] and fit [*kosher*] food. If animal [after being slaughtered] is [found to be] fit, and is then eaten by a “fit” individual, it indicates that there is a spark of holiness in it, and fortunate is the one who elevates it. But if it is found to be unfit, this indicates that the time has not yet come to for it to be liberated from the clutches of evil. [Inasmuch as these forces of evil are allegorically] called “the dog,” we are therefore commanded “you shall cast it to the dogs.”<sup>3</sup> This is until its punishment has been completed, and it is reincarnated again into a fit animal, and a fit individual eats it; it then will be elevated.

Not all animals belonging to *kosher* species are permitted to be eaten by Jewish law. Such animals have to be properly slaughtered according to Jewish law. Assuming nothing went awry with the slaughtering, the animal is then inspected to see if there are any signs of fatal lesions on the lungs or other conditions that would indicate that it was on its way to die anyway, before it was slaughtered. If this is the case, it is considered “unfit” (*treif*, literally “torn,” since such internal injuries usually result from the animal having been “torn” by some animal of prey). The Torah prescribes that such carrion be given to the dogs, since, although it may not be eaten, benefit may still be derived from it.

The “fit” individual referred to here is one who eats in order to serve G-d; if he does, the energy (and mass) he derives from eating the food is elevated into holiness. If he does not, then the animal vitality either remains at the level of the animal, or worse, in the case of someone who intentionally commits a sin, is caused to descend into the realms of explicit evil.

If the slaughtered animal is found to be unfit to be eaten or sacrificed, it means that the soul or Divine spark it was hosting is not yet ready to be elevated by human consumption, and must return again to repeat the process until it is sufficiently “scrubbed” of its existential crust to ascend into holiness.

From the above passage we see clearly how at least one aspect of the sacrificial rite is considered synonymous with eating, and that the same dynamic of rectifying the primordial shattering of the vessels of *Tohu* (which was later acted out in the primordial sin of the Tree of Knowledge) applies to both. From here come all the sayings of our sages that a man’s table is like an altar and effects atonement for him, the custom to salt the bread

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<sup>3</sup> Exodus 22:30.

(just as the sacrifices were salted), and so forth. The cosmic responsibility each of us bears when he lifts his fork to his mouth is evident from this passage, as well.

—translated and adapted from *Ta'amei HaMitzvot*

## *Parashat Vayikra*

### [third installment]

In this *parashah*, we are told that “do not make any flour-offering that you bring to G-d *chametz*, for you must not offer any leavening or honey in fire to G-d.”<sup>4</sup>

The reason we must not offer these two [i.e., *chametz* and honey] is that they are identified with all the states of severe judgment of the immature and mature stages of development [of the *partzufim*, respectively].

In its discussion of the laws of animal sacrifices, the Torah uses exclusively the Name *Havayah*, which indicates G-d’s mercy, and never the Name *Elokim*, which indicates G-d’s judgment. Thus, it is clear that the institution of animal sacrifice must be seen as an expression of G-d’s mercy, and not as some primitive way of placating a vengeful G-d, G-d forbid.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, whatever is associated with severe judgment must not be burned on the altar, in order not to arouse these Divine attributes. As we will see, *chametz* is associated with immature judgment, while honey is associated with mature judgment.

*Chametz* manifests the three mentalities of the immature state of the Name *Elokim*.

The Name *Elokim*, as we said, is associated with G-d’s attribute of judgment.

[This may be seen by the fact that]

1. the numerical value of the letter *shin* [300] is the same as that of the Name *Elokim* when spelled out with the letter *yud*, and that
2. the numerical value of the letter *reish* [200] is the same as that of the Name *Elokim* in its progressive iteration, and that
3. the numerical value of the letter *alef* [1] is the inclusive representation of the third Name *Elokim*.

The word for “leaven”—any agent that makes flour into *chametz*—in Hebrew is *se’or*, which is spelled *shin-alef-reish*.

When the Name *Elokim* is spelled out (spelling out the letter *hei* with a *yud*), the numerical value generated is 300:

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<sup>4</sup> Leviticus 2:11.

<sup>5</sup> See commentary of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch to the beginning of the book of Leviticus.

alef	alef	1
	lamed	30
	pei	80
lamed	lamed	30
	mem	40
	dalet	4
hei	hei	5
	yud	10
yud	yud	10
	vav	6
	dalet	4
mem	mem	40
	mem	40
total		300

The progressive iteration of the Name *Elokim* yields a numerical value of 200, as follows:

*Alef alef-lamed alef-lamed-hei alef-lamed-hei-yud alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem* =

$1 + (1 + 30) + (1 + 30 + 5) + (1 + 30 + 5 + 10) + (1 + 30 + 5 + 10 + 40) =$

$5(1) + 4(30) + 3(5) + 2(10) + 1(40) =$

$5 + 120 + 15 + 20 + 40 =$

200.

It is explained elsewhere in the Ari's writings<sup>6</sup> that the Name *Elokim* spelled out with the letter *yud* is associated with *chochmah* of *Ima*, the progressive iteration of the Name *Elokim* is associated with *binah* of *Ima*, and the Name *Elokim* spelled out with the letter *alef* (i.e., in which the letter *hei* is spelled *hei-alef*) is associated with *da'at* of *Ima*. This explains how the letter *alef* of *se'or* indicates the "third Name *Elokim*," i.e., the Name *Elokim* spelled with this letter.

Honey, in contrast, manifests the states of severe judgment of the mature stages.

The numerical value of the word for "honey" (*devash*) is 306:

*Devash*: *dalet-beit-shin* =  $4 + 2 + 300 = 306$ .

There are 320 states of [mature] severe judgment. [This number is 306—the numerical value of the word for "honey"—] plus 14, as we have explained in our explanation of the *shofar* of Rosh Hashanah. [The numerical value of the first two letters of the word *shofar*,] *shin-vav* [306], is the same as that of the word for "honey" [*devash*]. To this is added 14 for the [14] joints of the hand that grasp the *shofar*.

The numerical value of the word for "hand" (*yad*, *yud-dalet*) is 14, and the hand possesses 14 joints (3 in the 4 fingers and 2 in the thumb).

<sup>6</sup> *Sha'ar HaKavanot*, Pesach 4 (81c).

Together they add up to 320. As for the [other letters of the word *shofar*,] *pei-reish*, they manifest other states of severe judgment, as is known.

For the allusions in the word *shofar*, see our translation of the passage that discusses this.<sup>7</sup>

Since *chametz* and honey both manifest severe judgment, it is forbidden to burn them [on the altar].

In Rabbi Menachem Menchin (?)’s glosses to *Sha’ar HaKavanot*, he notes that the numerical value of the word for “honey” (*devash*, 306) is the same as that as the word for “in fire” (*isheh*, *alef-shin-hei*: 1 + 300 + 5 = 306) in this verse. The latter word can also be seen to allude to the three manifestations of the Name *Elokim* we saw above. The *alef* refers to the Name *Elokim* spelled out with the letter *alef*; the *shin* refers to the Name *Elokim* spelled out with the letter *yud*; and the *hei* (= 5) refers to the five letters of the Name *Elokim* not spelled out at all, but merely iterated progressively. Thus, honey also alludes (in a more indirect way) to these same Names.



Further in the *parashah*, we are told, “Salt all your flour offerings with salt; offer salt with all your sacrifices.”

When the clouded part of the animal soul in man ascends to the soul of *Asiyah* in order to derive sustenance from it, it causes him to sin.

Sacrifices atone for unintentional sins. What causes a person to sin unintentionally? When a person sins intentionally, we can ascribe this to “temporary insanity,” i.e., the fact that he becomes duped—either by himself or by someone else—into thinking that sinning will cause no harm or in fact be a boon to his Divine consciousness. But when the mind is not consciously involved, why should a person sin? And moreover, if his sin was unintentional, why should he have to seek atonement for it?

Here the Arizal explains that an unintentional sin results when the animal nature within the person prevails over his Divine nature. The “cloudiness” of the animal perspective—the tendency to relate to the world in terms of “nature” rather than in terms of its Divine origin—desensitizes the individual to Divinity.

The part of the soul that is man’s consciousness is always connected to the parts of the soul that transcend consciousness, i.e., the roots of the soul in the higher worlds. When a person cultivates (wittingly or unwittingly) an animal consciousness, this perspective affects the lower levels of his soul-root in the upper worlds; this blemish in his soul-root then backwashes down into his unconscious mind, and he inadvertently sins.

But what is the cause of the cloudiness [of animal-orientation] in the first place? It is the animal soul of the man, which is external [to his Divine soul].

By over-indulging his animal nature and needs, the individual desensitizes himself to Divine concerns, as we said. It is for this reason that inadvertent sins require atonement: they are a barometer of the individual’s level of Divine consciousness. If a person commits an unintentional sin, it means that somewhere in his psyche his animal nature is getting the upper hand.

Therefore, when a man sins, [his restitution is] to offer the sacrifice of an animal soul of an animal, for they caused him to sin. Then fire descends from on high and burns those sins. The source of the animal soul in man is then cleaned and purified and the man is atoned for, for all these are hewn from the same source. Understand deeply the secret of the sacrifices.

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<sup>7</sup> (Arizal\_29.doc).

The purification of the animal soul is through G-d's consumption of a real personification of the animal soul, an animal. An animal, for all its intelligence, is focused almost exclusively on satisfying and caring for its animal needs and instincts. By representing himself to G-d in the form of an animal, the person offering the sacrifice is acknowledging that—to some degree, at least—he has “become” an animal.

Inasmuch as the soul of the inanimate and vegetable [levels of life] are even more clouded, they also impel and assist the animal soul to sin, by virtue of the evil inclination within them. They are therefore [offered] as libations and flour offerings, which are brought from the mineral and vegetable [kingdoms]. In this way, all of the four [kingdoms]—man, animal, vegetable, and mineral—are rectified.



As you know, when Adam sinned, evil became intermixed with good, and the forces of evil gained power. In other words, he caused a blemish in all worlds, which now need to be purified anew.

Therefore, G-d commanded [man] concerning the sacrifices, that he bring together with himself all four fundamental elements, so that they can all be rectified.

The mineral kingdom [ascends by means of] salt and water; it derives from the [world of] *Asiyah*. The vegetable kingdom [ascends by means of] flour, oil, and wine; it derives from the [world of] *Yetzirah*. The animal kingdom [ascends by means of] the animals—the flock [i.e., sheep and goats] and the herd [i.e., cows]—and the birds—turtledoves and pigeons; it is derived from the [world of] *Beriah*. Those who exert the effort [to offer all these]—the priests in their service, the Levites on the dais [where they sing], the laymen on watch, and the people who offer themselves [through the sacrifice]—[elevate the human kingdom, which] is derived from the [world of] *Atzilut*.

world	kingdom	elevated by
<i>Atzilut</i>	human	priests, Levites, laymen, owners
<i>Beriah</i>	animal	flock, herd, birds
<i>Yetzirah</i>	vegetable	flour, oil, wine
<i>Asiyah</i>	mineral	salt and water

Furthermore: the consumption [of the sacrifice] by fire [elevates the world of] *Asiyah*. The fragrance [the sacrifice produces elevates the world of] *Yetzirah*. The satisfaction [this fragrance produces elevates the world of] *Beriah*. The Divine revelation [the satisfaction causes expresses the world of] *Atzilut*.

This is based on the phrase “a fire offering that produces a satisfying fragrance for G-d.”<sup>8</sup> The simple meaning of this fragrance that, so to speak, pleases G-d, is given by our sages’ expression of G-d’s reaction to the sacrifices: “It gratifies Me that My will has been performed.”<sup>9</sup> Here, the mystical explanation of this phrase is given, in which we see how the sacrifice travels upward through the four worlds.

world	consciousness	aspect of sacrifice
<i>Atzilut</i>	Divinity	Divine revelation
<i>Beriah</i>	intellect	Divine satisfaction
<i>Yetzirah</i>	emotion	fragrance
<i>Asiyah</i>	action	consumption by fire

All these aspects are necessary. Know, that when sparks of light [from the world of *Tohu*] fell into the realm of evil, some fell into the inanimate kingdom, some into the vegetable kingdom, some into the inarticulate animal kingdom, and some into the articulate animal kingdom. Thus, our sages state that “there is no blade of grass [below] that does not have its spiritual angel above it, which activates its growth.”<sup>10</sup> This refers to the sparks that fell; they are the agents that cause everything to grow until a human being comes along and elevates them by separating the good from the evil.

Here again we see that the Kabbalistic definition of evil (which simply articulates the *Jewish* definition of evil in the context of mystic cosmology) carries none of the stigma of perniciousness the word connotes in Western culture. Evil is simply that which does not promote Divine consciousness, or is antagonistic to it. Yes, evil is bad and harmful, but only because it obstructs Divine consciousness, not because there is such a thing as intrinsic bad. Thus, the image used to denote evil in Kabbalah is *kelipah*, the “shell” that obstructs access to the kernel or fruit within it.

Thus, in this passage, we see that the morally neutral physical world is termed “evil”; this is because it serves to hide Divinity from our consciousness. Acknowledging the Divinity present in creation breaks the shell open. But, like the shell or peel of a nut or fruit, evil also serves a constructive purpose; it protects and nurtures the fruit within until it is ripe. So, too, when a child, for example, is developing, he must establish first his sense of self, his ego. Only later can he re-define himself in terms of a broader consciousness of society and, ultimately, Divinity.

Therefore, when the Temple stood, the sacrifice caused the sparks to ascend. Nowadays, our prayers take the place of the sacrifices. Therefore, the prayers are divided into two parts: action and speech, as is explained in *Sefer HaKavanot*, *Sha’ar HaTefilah*.

The liturgy parallels the ascent of the soul through the four worlds, just as does the sacrifice. The morning blessings and prayers until *Baruch She’amar* (“Blessed be He who spoke...”) describe the Temple service and thus parallel the world of *Asiyah*. The “Verses of Praise” (*Pesukei D’Zimra*, from *Baruch She’amar* until *Yishtabach*) address the emotions and therefore parallel the world of *Yetzirah*. The recital of the *Shema* and the blessings before and after it address the intellect and therefore parallel the world of *Beriah*. The *Amidah* expression union with G-d and thus parallels the world of *Atzilut*.

Prayer is obviously chiefly a matter of speech, of articulating the words. But at the beginning of each ascent into a higher world, there is an accompanying action. When entering the world of *Asiyah*, the individual washes his hands before reciting the first blessing, “...who commanded us concerning the uplifting of the hands.” When

<sup>8</sup> E.g., Leviticus 1:9, 1:13, 1:17, 2:9, etc.

<sup>9</sup> Rashi on 1:9.

<sup>10</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 10:6.

entering the world of *Yetzirah*, the individual is to take hold of his two front *tzitzit* and hold them while he recites *Baruch She'amar*. When entering the world of *Beriah*, the individual is to touch his *tefilin* as he recites the blessing "...who forms light and creates darkness..."<sup>11</sup>

The articulation of the words of prayer expresses our emotions (*Yetzirah*), our intellectual meditation on the ideas in the liturgy (*Beriah*), and our transcendent union with G-d (*Atzilut*). By incorporating action (*Asiyah*) into the prayers, this level can ascend as well.

—translated and adapted from *Sha'ar HaMitzvot* and *Ta'amei HaMitzvot*

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<sup>11</sup> *Pri Eitz Chaim*, *Keriat Shema* 1, based on *Zohar* 3:120b.

## *Parashat Vayikra* [fourth installment]

In this *parashah*, we are told about the four genres of sacrifices: the ascent-offering (*olah*), the peace-offering (*shelamim*), the sin-offering (*chatat*), and the guilt-offering (*asham*). An individual is required to offer and guilt-offering in a number of circumstances, among which is if he swore to do or not do something and then forgot about his oath and transgressed it.

“...if someone takes an oath by articulating with his mouth to do evil or to do good [to himself]—whatever a person may utter as an oath—and he forgets about it [and transgresses it], but he knew about it and [thus] incurred guilt...and confesses his sin, he must offer his guilt-offering to G-d...”<sup>1</sup>

In the course of explaining [the mystical significance of] the oath of articulation, we will explain the following passage from the *Mishnah*, in tractate *Shevuot* (“Oaths”):

“There are two types of oaths, which are [really] four.”<sup>2</sup>

The *Mishnah* further on delineates what these types of oaths are specifically, using the example of eating:<sup>3</sup>

1. an oath not to eat.
2. an oath to eat.
3. an oath that he did not eat.
4. an oath that he ate.

The first two are mentioned explicitly in the verse quoted above: “to do evil or to do good [to himself].” These are called the two “principle” forms of articulation-oaths, or, in the mishnaic idiom, the two “fathers.” The second two are not mentioned in the verse, and are called the two “derivative” or “secondary” forms, or the two “offspring.” In all four cases, if the person infringed the oath intentionally (by eating or not eating or knowing that he did eat or didn’t eat), he is punished with lashes. If he infringed the oath inadvertently (by forgetting he took it and eating or not eating, or forgetting that he had eaten or not eaten and swearing), he must bring the guilt-offering prescribed in the Torah.

[On the mystical level,] this passage discusses the Name *Havayah* as it is spelled out. There are two sets of seven letters in [this spelling-out], as is mentioned in the *Zohar*<sup>4</sup> with reference to the seven letters that can take a *dagesh kal*.

The dot that sometimes appears in Hebrew letters is called a *dagesh* (“emphasis [point]”). There are two types of *dagesh*: the *dagesh chazak* (“strong *dagesh*”) and the *dagesh kal* (“light *dagesh*”).

The *dagesh chazak* appears in letters that according to grammatical theory should be doubled. When pronounced, letters vocalized with a *dagesh chazak* should be lengthened somewhat. The *dagesh chazak* can appear in any letter except a guttural letter, since these letters cannot be lengthened when pronounced.

The *dagesh kal* appears only in seven specific letters, when these letters appear at the beginning of a syllable (or word). These seven letters are *beit*, *gimel*, *dalet*, *kaf*, *pei*, *reish*, and *tav*. In pronunciation, the *dagesh kal* changes these letters from their spirant to aspirate form. In modern, Sefardic pronunciation, the spirant pronunciation has

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 5:4-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Shavuot* 1:1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 3:1.

<sup>4</sup> *Tikunei Zohar* 70.

been retained only in the letters *beit*, *kaf*, and *pei*. In Ashkenazic pronunciation, it has also been retained in the letter *tav*, and in Yemenite pronunciation, it has also been retained in the letters *gimel* and *dalet*.

letter	spirant pronunciation	aspirate pronunciation
<i>beit</i>	v	b
<i>gimel</i>	(j)	g
<i>dalet</i>	(th)	d
<i>kaf</i>	ch	k
<i>pei</i>	f	p
<i>reish</i>	r	r
<i>tav</i>	(s)	t

The word for “oath” is *shavua*, which grammatically is the passive form of the word for “seven” (*sheva*). Thus, a person taking an oath can be considered to have “seventhed” himself. This leads to the mystical interpretation of an oath as a manipulation of the Name *Havayah* using seven letters.

The Name *Havayah*, as we know, can be spelled out in four principle ways, leading to the numerical values of 72, 63, 45, or 52. Using the 45-Name as an example, the spelling out of the Name *Havayah* is:

*yud-vav-dalet hei-alef vav-alef-vav hei-alef.*

The Name *Havayah* is often analyzed as two sub-groups, i.e., *yud-hei* and *vav-hei*, the first sub-group signifying the intellect and the second signifying the emotions and their expression. If we consider each sub-group together with its respective spelling out, we have two sets of seven letters:

These are: *yud-hei*, *yud-vav-dalet hei-alef* and *vav-hei*, *vav-alef-vav hei-alef*.

These form two sets of seven letters. These [two sets of seven] are called the “parents,” because they comprise the simple spelling and the first spelling-out.

There are also four other sets of seven letters, these being in the second spelling-out.

The second spelling-out of the 45-Name is as follows:

the Name	first spelling-out	second spelling-out
yud	yud	yud
		vav
		dalet
	vav	vav
		alef
		vav
	dalet	dalet
		lamed
		tav
hei	hei	hei
		alef
	alef	alef
		lamed
		pei
vav	vav	vav
		alef
		vav
	alef	alef
		lamed
		pei
	vav	vav
		alef
		vav
hei	hei	hei
		alef
	alef	alef
		lamed
		pei

As can be seen, there are 28 letters used in the second spelling-out, or  $4 \times 7$ . Here, the 4 sets of 7 do not divide into groupings similar to the 2 primary sevens, although the two sets of 14 are split at the division between the *yud-hei* and the *vav-hei*.

This, then is the mystical meaning of this passage:

“There are two types of oaths...”—referring to the first two sets of seven,

“...that are [really] four”—referring to the second spelling-out.

Explaining this passage [of the *Mishnah*] this way answers several questions:

The first: Why does the *Mishnah* refer to “oaths” rather than “cases of forgetfulness [regarding oaths taken]”? After all, it is required that the person forget that he swore in order for him to be obligated to bring a sacrifice. This is similar to the question of the *Tosafot* regarding the knowledge of impurity: “Let the author say, ‘cases of forgetfulness [regarding defilement]!’”<sup>5</sup>

The passage from the *Mishnah* quoted above continues: “There are two types of knowledge of impurity that are [really] four.” Since what is being referred to are cases when a person *forgot* that he had been ritually defiled and nonetheless entered the Temple, it would seem that the *Mishnah* should have been phrased, “There are two types of *forgetting* impurity that are [really] four.”

<sup>5</sup> *Shavuot* 2a, s.v. *Yediot Hatumah*.

Yet, the *Tosafot* does not ask this question about the “two types of oaths that are four,” even though this is mentioned before the “two types of knowledge of impurity that are four.” This is apparently so because the question does not really apply, due the mystical meaning of this passage of the *Mishnah*, as we have seen.

But [we can now see why] he chose the idiom of “oaths,” that is, in order to allude to the meaning mentioned above.

Since, as we said, the word for “oaths” can be interpreted to mean “sevens.”

The second: Why does [the author of the *Mishnah*] say “two that are [really] four,” instead of just “four”?

Two principles types of oaths and two derivative types could be expressed simply as four types of oaths.

The answer is that he wishes to allude to the fact that there are two “parents,” i.e., principle forms [of the Name *Havayah*], and four more “offspring,” or secondary types, i.e., the second spelling-out.

The third: According to the simple sense [of the law], we have to give this *Mishnah* a forced explanation, i.e., that there are two principle types of oaths that, together with the [two] secondary types, make four. But when we explain it according to its mystical meaning, the idiom makes sense: there are two principle types, which produce four secondary types.

In the mystical sense, “two that are four” means that there are in fact, six forms.

If we wish, we can fit our explanation into the simple way [of reading the idiom of “two that are (really) four”], because the two forms [of the Name *Havayah*] in the first spelling-out are included within the four forms of the second spelling-out. Thus, in fact, there are really only four forms [just as in the simple reading of the *Mishnah*].

The mystical meaning of “to do evil or to do good” is that the two final letters of the Name *Havayah* tend “toward doing evil” and the first two letters tend “toward doing good.”

This will be explained presently.

It follows that this verse is in ascending order.

“...to do evil or to do good...” refers to the final two letters and the first two letters of the Name *Havayah*.

This affords us an explanation of the Talmud’s statement: “[He takes] an oath [saying,] ‘I shall eat’ or [an oath saying,] ‘I shall not eat.’”

Why does the Talmud use eating as the example of the principle forms of an oath that when transgressed inadvertently requires a guilt offering?

To explain:

As is known, the seven “kings” that died are [the prototype of] *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, which are indicated by the two final letters of the Name *Havayah*, *vav-hei*.

As we have seen previously, the seven “kings” are the seven lower *sefirot* of the world of *Tohu*. These *sefirot* were not designed to interact with each other, and therefore, when the light of one passed into the other, their vessels shattered and “fell” into (what would become) the lower worlds, embedding these worlds with sparks of holiness concealed in evil husks. We also know that in the rectified world (*Tikun*) that was constructed on the ruins of *Tohu*, the *sefirot* metamorphosed into *partzufim*, and specifically, the lower seven *sefirot* formed the *partzufim* of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*. Thus, we may speak of the six *sefirot* of *chesed* to *yesod* of *Tohu* as being the *Z’eir Anpin* of *Tohu*, and the *malchut* of *Tohu* as being the *Nukva* of *Tohu*, even though these *sefirot* became *partzufim* only in the world of *Tikun*.

For the letter *vav* indicates *Z’eir Anpin*, in that [*Z’eir Anpin*] comprises six “extremities” [and six is the numerical value of the letter *vav*]. The letter *hei* indicates *malchut*. Because of their overabundance of impurities, which is the “evil” in them, they “died” and were shattered. Therefore, “evil” is in them.

Emotions imply at least some measure of self-awareness and ego. This egocentric subjectivity of perception is what is meant by the “impurities” mentioned here. The emotions of *Tohu* were particularly egocentric, in that each one was a thing unto itself and was incapable of interacting with any of its sister emotions or subordinating itself to them. “Evil” is the state of discord and blockage that does not allow the flow of Divine beneficence to reach its proper destination, so the latter two letters of the Name *Havayah*, indicating the emotions, can be seen as tending toward the formation of evil.

In contrast, the two first letters [of the Name *Havayah*], *yud-hei*, signify *Abba* and *Ima*, and they “tend toward doing good” for they are entirely good [themselves] and they possessed no evil impurities. Therefore they did not die, as is known.

The first two letters and the *partzufim* they represent signify the intellect. The intellect is essentially objective and impartial, since a person involved and absorbed in some intellectual pursuit generally is looking for truth and has temporarily suspended his ego.

Now, the idiom “to do good” implies “[doing good] to others.”

It is a transitive verb.

To explain: when the seven “kings” of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* [of *Tohu*] died, which is to say, when they descended into the world of *Beriah*, they assuredly retained some aspect of the 288 [original] sparks, in order to sustain them at least minimally.

In the world of *Tohu*, the seven lower *sefirot* contained 288 general “sparks” or elements of holiness. The fact that these “died” in the Shattering of the Vessels is alluded to in the verse, “...and the spirit of G-d was hovering over the surface of the water.”<sup>6</sup> The word for “was hovering” is *merachefet*, spelled *mem-reish-chet-pei-tav*, which can be rearranged to read *reish-pei-chet mem-tav*, or “288 [sparks] died.”

This [minimal consumption of energy] is not termed “nourishment” or “eating,” only [an absorption of] the minimal necessary life-force necessary [to persist and] be reinvigorated in the Resurrection, this being the final rectification of the loss of the kings, as is known.

It follows that in the world of *Beriah*, this minimal necessary energy was extended to them from the two latter letters of the Name *Havayah*, *vav-hei*. The

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<sup>6</sup> Genesis 1:2.

combined numerical value of these letters is 11, alluding to the 11 component spices of the incense<sup>7</sup> that sustain and nourish evil with the minimal life-force necessary.

“Whoever adds, detracts.”<sup>8</sup> Ten is the number of holiness, the number of *sefirot*. Eleven signifies an overflow of holiness spilling into undesired places, and as we have seen, this characterizes evil. Thus, the fact that the incense used in the Temple was made out of eleven spices indicates that, in addition to its other qualities, it provided evil with the minimal life-force necessary for it to exist and fulfill its function in the scheme of G-d’s plan.

But actual “eating” and satiety did not reach them from this level. Therefore, the two letters *vav-hei* are referred to by the words “toward evil,” meaning “I will not eat,” that is, it does not provide [the sparks of] the “kings” trapped inside evil with real eating.

After these “kings” ascended back into *Atzilut* and were rectified, [the first two letters of the Name *Havayah* come into play, which] tend toward “doing good,” this being the oath/seven that “I will eat.” For then eating and nourishment is given to them to satiety—much more than the minimal life-force required to merely keep them existing—from the first two letters of the Name *Havayah*, *yud-hei*, which signify *Abba* and *Ima*.

We see now why the Talmud uses the example of eating to illustrate taking oaths and breaching them inadvertently. An “oath” is a “seven,” an upper or lower two-letters of the Name *Havayah* with their first spelling-out or part of its second spelling-out. These parts of the Name *Havayah* provide sustenance for the seven “kings,” either in the form of the minimal energy required to sustain them when they are trapped in the context of evil, or in the form of full feeding to satiety when they have been redeemed and are in their resuscitated state of holy rectification. These provisions are alluded to by the two archetypal oaths, “not eating” and “eating,” respectively.

This is because these “kings” become rectified only by being re-impregnated within *Abba* and *Ima*, and there they are provided with true eating to satiety.

The fallen, broken, disillusioned emotions find their rectification by being absorbed and re-processed by the rectified intellect.

This is the mystical significance of the word “eating” [*achilah*], which can be permuted to spell “eating [from] *yud-hei*,” indicating that [real] eating originates in *yud-hei*, which signify *Abba* and *Ima*.

*Achilah*: *alef-kaf-yud-lamed-hei*.

“Eating [from] *yud-hei*”: *alef-kaf-lamed yud-hei*.

As is known, eating is only completed by chewing with the teeth. And it is further known that the mouth is above [i.e., in the head], at the level of *chochmah* and *binah*, which are *Abba* and *Ima*, while the minimal essential life-force comes from the heart, which is in the torso, indicated by the *vav* of the Name *Havayah*. This is why someone who is fasting and does not eat, living [instead] on minimal energy that he receives then from the life-force of his heart and which extends to

<sup>7</sup> Exodus 30:34-35.

<sup>8</sup> *Sanhedrin* 29a.

the rest of the body's limbs throughout the three or four consecutive days of his fast. For were it not so, how could the person survive without food for all those days?

—translated and adapted from *Sha'ar HaMitzvot* and *Ta'amei HaMitzvot*

## Parashat Tzav

*And G-d spoke to Moses, saying: "Command Aaron and his sons, saying: This is the law of the burnt offering. The burnt offering itself shall remain where it is burned upon the altar all night until morning, while the fire on the altar is kept going on it. The priest shall put on his linen garment, and shall put his linen breeches on his flesh, and he collect the ashes to which the fire has reduced the burnt offering on the altar, and place them beside the altar. He shall then take off his garments and put on other garments, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place."<sup>1</sup>*

In this passage, which opens this week's Torah-reading, the Torah describes the commandment known as "lifting up the ashes."<sup>2</sup> This was one of the first things done in the daily Temple service, after the fire on the altar had been burning the sacrifices all night. In this ritual, the priest (*kohen*) would collect a certain amount of the ashes on the top of the altar and place them on the ground next to the altar; these ashes would be absorbed into the ground on the spot. This was done every morning. In addition, whenever the ashes on the altar accumulated such that there was no more room on the wood, the priest would collect these ashes and take them outside the camp (or, when the Temple was built in Jerusalem, outside the city walls) and deposit them there.

When he did this, the priest had to wear his regular linen garment. The Arizal discusses the significance of this.

### The priest personifies the attributes of silver, the whiteness of *chesed*.

The Temple service was divided between two classes of the tribe of Levi, the priests (*kohanim*), which were those members of the tribe of Levi who descended directly from Aaron, and the Levites, which were all other members of the tribe. The priests officiated at the offering of the sacrifices while the Levites fulfilled other functions pertinent to the maintenance of the Temple. The Levites also formed a choir and an orchestra that accompanied the offering of certain sacrifices.

Spiritually, a sacrifice consists of both an "upward" and "downward" spiritual movement. The animal ascended in flames on the altar, signifying and effecting the elevation of man's animal nature into holiness. This elicited a downward flow of Divine beneficence in response. The priests represented the downward response of the offering, since as a result of the rituals they performed (slaughtering and burning the animal) Divine fire descended from heaven onto the altar to consume the sacrifice. The Levites, in contrast, represented the upward soaring of man's heart—as expressed in the consumption of the sacrifice in the flames—in their music and song.

These two movements reflect the natures of the first and principle two *sefirot* of the emotions: *chesed* ("loving-kindness") and *gevurah* ("strength," "power"). The downward flow of G-d's beneficence into the world expresses His *chesed*, while the ecstatic, upward soaring of the soul expresses the ardent power (*gevurah*) of human love and yearning for G-d expressed in the song accompanying the sacrifice. In terms of color-imagery, the sweet, downward flow of *chesed* is reflected in the pure transparency of water or the purity of the colors white or silver, while the fiery flames of *gevurah* are reflected in the brilliance of red or gold. Accordingly, the two metals silver and gold are associated with the *sefirot* of *chesed* and *gevurah*, respectively.

### Shining forth from him is the whiteness of the head of *Arich Anpin*.

Although the emotions are *inspired* by the intellect, they do not originate in the intellect. The intellect is a detached, cold, objective faculty, and therefore cannot produce an emotion, which is an excited, subjective response. All the intellect provides the emotions is their inspiration, that is, the subject material to which the emotion responds. In fact, the greater the intellectual understanding of a given concept, the greater and more intense the

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 6:1-4.

<sup>2</sup> Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Tamidim uMusafim* 2:10-15.

emotional response to it. But although the intellect can stimulate, fire, and feed the emotions, it cannot *produce* them, since they are not intellectual by nature.

Therefore, the emotions must have their own independent source in the soul apart from the intellect. This source is in the *partzuf* of *Arich Anpin*, which is higher (and precedes) both the *partzufim* of the intellect (*Abba* and *Ima*) and that of the emotions (*Z'eir Anpin*). And here we see an interesting thing: while in the conscious part of the soul, the intellect is higher and precedes the emotions, in the super-conscious will (*Arich Anpin*), the situation is reversed; the source of the emotions is higher and precedes that of the intellect. In other words, up there in the super-conscious parts of the soul, the emotions are superior to and more “real” than the intellect. It is only in our conscious lives that the intellect is superior to the emotions, because in the process of becoming conscious the emotions suffer a fall in that they become tainted by the ego. But “up there,” in our purer selves, our emotions are more the “real thing” than our intellect.

This is reflected in our conscious lives as well, in the fact that the emotions are the true test of a person’s personality. It is easy to spout allegiances and philosophies of life on an intellectual level, but the extent to which these have been truly integrated into a person’s life becomes evident only when we see how he reacts emotionally to things.

In any case, the root of *chesed* in the super-conscious is the whiteness of *Arich Anpin*.

The *sefirah* of *chochmah* as well is a referent for the high priest.

The high priest was distinguished in a number of ways from the rest of the priests, most markedly by the four extra garments he wore (the breastplate, the *ephod*, the headband, and the robe) and the fact that only he was allowed inside the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctum of the Temple, and only once a year, on Yom Kippur. His relationship to the rest of the priests was analogous to that between the priests and the laity, in that he wore special garments and had both special privileges and special duties. He was thus the most special of the special, a sort of super-priest, who embodied all the aspects of the priesthood but in a much more absolute way.

Therefore, if a priest in general may be said to be a manifestation of the *sefirah* of *chesed*, the high priest would be the manifestation of the *sefirah* directly above *chesed* on the *sefirah*-tree, and this is *chochmah*.

This is why [the high priest] had to wear linen clothes [on Yom Kippur], as it is written, “he shall wear a holy linen robe...”<sup>3</sup> This is because sackcloth [which is linen] manifests the 400 worlds.

[The text of the Arizal’s teaching now refers to his explanation of these “400 worlds” in another text, which we will now quote.]

The dominant symbolic imagery in this passage is that of hair. Hair is considered to be alive, since it is constantly growing, but the life force it possesses is very limited, since it can be cut without causing any pain to the person. It therefore signifies the transference of a highly limited and diluted level of life force from the area of the body from which it issues.

On the head of *Arich Anpin* there are 13 strands of hair and 13 white [i.e., bald] areas.... Four of the white areas together with four strands of hair extend behind and below the head of *Arich Anpin* and reach down to the head of *Z'eir Anpin*. These hairs thus cover *Abba* and *Ima*.

Thus, *Arich Anpin*—the will—produces hairs, through which its intense spiritual energy is transmitted in a highly diluted form to the lower levels of creation. They bypass the intellect (*Abba* and *Ima*) altogether; the intellect plays no role in the creation of the emotions (*Z'eir Anpin*).

These four hairs and four white areas are manifestations of the four *yuds* in the *milui* of the Name *Havayah* whose numerical value is 72.

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<sup>3</sup> Leviticus 16:4. This chapter describes the rites the high priest performs on Yom Kippur.

The Name *Havayah* can be spelled out four different ways, as we mentioned previously (in our discussion of *parashat Terumah*). When spelled out such that its numerical value is 72, four *yuds* are used. This spelling out of the Name is associated with the *sefirah* of *chochmah*.

[The numerical value of] each of these [four] *yud*'s [is 10, and they] each inter-include another 10. This yields 400, which is the numerical value of the word for "sackcloth" (*sak*).

As we mentioned on a previous occasion, inter-inclusion is the hallmark of holiness.

Now, the strands [i.e., the threads of the sackcloth] manifest the hairs themselves of the above-mentioned four strands [of the hair of *Arich Anpin*], while the holes in between the threads of the sackcloth manifest the four white spaces. The latter look like white paper on which is written black letters, i.e., the [dark] hairs. And in fact, on the head of *Arich Anpin* they are as white as white snow.

Corresponding to these, in the realm of evil opposite the world of *Atzilut*, there are 400 red [hairs]. These are called the "garment of hair"<sup>4</sup> of the red-haired Esau.

Almost all aspects of the created order have corresponding entities in the realm of evil, as it is written, "You have made one opposite the other."<sup>5</sup> This is in order to afford man the possibility of free choice. Nonetheless, the choice is weighted in favor of good and holiness, as the ensuing discussion will demonstrate.

Whereas Abraham personified the Divine attribute of *chesed*, Isaac personified *gevurah*. Esau, the son of Isaac, personified the fallen, evil aspect of *gevurah*. He is therefore associated with the color red.

This accords with what I have taught you, that in the evil realm opposite the world of *Atzilut*, the only evil that has been rectified is that opposite *Z'eir Anpin* and its *Nukva*, which are [the archetypes of] the wicked Esau and his wife. But the evil that is opposite *Abba* and *Ima* of the world of *Atzilut* did not undergo the rectification process of becoming a *partzuf*, but rather remained simple points, similar to how the primordial kings [i.e., the *sefirot* of *Tohu*] were before they were rectified.

Herein lies the essential superiority of intellect over emotion. Whereas the evil emotions (evil love, hatred, etc.) can function harmoniously (i.e., behave as a *partzuf*), the evil intellect cannot. On the side of evil, then, intellect is always subservient to emotions, that is, it serves simply as a way to justify and rationalize the emotions (and devise plans to satisfy them) rather than as a way to direct or influence them. In contrast, since the holy intellect can behave as *partzufim*, it has the power of its combined elements working together and can therefore influence the emotions.

Now, you already know that in the holy [side of creation] there must be hairs in order to achieve proper rectification, that is, in order to diminish the light such that it can be channeled through the tubes of the hairs in a highly filtered way. This is necessary in order that the lower realms be able to bear the light without being nullified and dying, as happened originally.

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<sup>4</sup> Genesis 25:25.

<sup>5</sup> Ecclesiastes 7:14.

The concept of these hairs, which form part of the rectification process, are not to be found in the evil that is opposite *Abba* and *Ima* of the world of *Atzilut*, only in the evil opposite *Z'eir Anpin* and its *Nukva*, which are [the archetypes] of Esau and his wife.

Hair, as an element of rectification, appears only in the context of a *partzuf*.

The phenomenon of hair which occurs in the realm of holiness at the level of *Abba* and *Ima* occurs in the realm of evil at the level opposite *Z'eir Anpin* and its *Nukva*. This is why Esau was born entirely covered with red hair, while Jacob—who was [the archetype] of *Z'eir Anpin* of holiness—was not hairy.<sup>6</sup> This is because the entirety of *Atzilut* is completely rectified, and therefore hair is necessary only at the level of *Abba* and *Ima*, leaving Jacob [i.e., *Z'eir Anpin*] without hair.

The intensity of light at the level of *Z'eir Anpin*—the emotions—is dim enough that there is no “danger” of it producing hair. The evil life force that will be channeled into the world as a result of this hair (i.e., that of Esau, the evil *Z'eir Anpin*) will be enough to sustain the realm of evil, but not enough to empower it to perpetrate its designs on creation. As we said above, the existence of a minimal amount of evil in the world is necessary in order to afford man free choice.

This is the mystical meaning of the 400 men who accompanied Esau.<sup>7</sup> They correspond to the 400 [levels] mentioned above, which in turn are referred to as the 400 silver shekels [with which Abraham paid for the Machpelah cave].<sup>8</sup>

Now, the forces of evil seek to overcome this situation and undergo the rectification process [of becoming a *partzuf*] as well all the way up to the levels that are opposite *Arich Anpin*, *Abba*, and *Ima* of *Atzilut*, and thus be able to channel their light through hairs the same way as is done in the side of holiness. Referring to this, Scripture states: “If you will ascend like an eagle, and put your nest amongst the stars, I will pull you down from there, says the L-rd.”<sup>9</sup> For if—G-d forbid—evil would be allowed to undergo this rectification process at the levels of *Arich Anpin*, *Abba* and *Ima*, the world would be destroyed!

That is, a contraction of the life force of holiness through the channel of hair to the realm of evil would be disastrous at these levels, since the intensity of their light is much greater than that of *Z'eir Anpin*. Transmission of life force this way from them to the realm of evil would grant evil much too much power.

Now, when a person puts sackcloth on his loins, he weakens the power of those 400 hairs whose numerical value is that of the word for “sackcloth.” [This is so also because] these hairs are similar to sackcloth, which is made out of strands of hair-like material. He causes these supernal hairs to be whitened like white snow, and then the 400 white areas between them, called the 400 silver shekels,

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<sup>6</sup> Genesis 27:11.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 32:7.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 23:16.

<sup>9</sup> Obadiah 1:4.

together with the [energy in the] empty holes between the strands of the sackcloth will shine forth through the holes in the sackcloth.

The sackcloth will then become white like silver, and become like the holy linen tunic [worn by the High Priest on Yom Kippur]. For the word for “linen” [*bad*] transforms into the word for “sackcloth” [*sak*] in the system of *atbash*.

[Thus ends our citation from elsewhere in the writings of the Arizal. We now return to the original text we began with.]

Now, when an [ordinary] priest performed the duty of “lifting up the ashes” of the altar, he also had to wear a linen garment.

The truth is that the priestly garments (other than those of the high priest) were all of linen, and all the priests wore these linen garments whenever they performed any of the rites in the Temple. However, it is interesting to note that the fact that they were made of linen is not specifically mentioned when the commandment to prepare these garments is given (Exodus 28), but it *is* mentioned here, with regard to the commandment of “lifting up the ashes.” This would seem to indicate that the fact that the priestly garments were made of linen is somehow intrinsically connected to this *mitzvah*.

The ashes are produced by the residual holiness of the altar and its inassimilable elements, such that what is left is only ash, similar to dust.

The fact that in the process of burning the sacrifice there is a part of the animal that cannot ascend on high, i.e., the ash, indicates that this element of the animal cannot be assimilated into holiness.

When he removed this element, the priest had to wear linen garments in order to accomplish that which was described above in reference to the sackcloth.

In other words, removing the residue of the sacrifice that could not be assimilated into Divinity is analogous to neutralizing the 400 evil hairs of Esau, which provide sustenance for the forces of evil.

In Chassidut, the Kabbalistic dynamic just described is translated into psychological terms reflected and relevant to daily life, as follows: The sacrificial service is paralleled by the process of prayer. In both cases, the animal elements of man are elevated and refined by the fiery passion of the heart aroused by singing G-d's praises and contemplating His infinity. However, also in both cases, there is an element of residual animal life force that cannot be elevated. In man, this is “ash” is the depression he feels over his own animal nature after having experienced the transcendence of Divine reality in prayer. Feeling the closeness of G-d and the ecstasy of ascent *should* grant a person enough frustration with his material nature to inspire him to work on it, but not throw him into depression over it. Depression, though not an explicit sin, is the gateway to all other sins, since it engenders despair and hopelessness. How tragic it would be for the holy experience of prayer and Divine closeness to leave a person with the dejected feeling of his own worthlessness that would in turn make him give up!

Thus, before he even begins to pray, he should separate himself from this negativity, this leftover ash that will result from his ardent, fiery service of G-d. Therefore we read this passage of the Bible before morning prayers, in order that it be as if we performed this rite in the Temple. We are thus protected, with G-d's help, from any negative side effects of ecstatic meditation and prayer.

—translated and adapted from *Sha'ar HaMitzvot* and *Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh*

## *Parashat Shemini*

The latter half of this week's Torah portion contains the basic laws of *kashrut*, detailing which animals may and may not be eaten. *Kosher* animals include domesticated animals (cattle, sheep, and goats), seven species of wild beasts, four types of locusts, plus various species of fowl and fish.

Man derives in general from *Z'eir Anpin*, while the beasts and cattle derive from *Nukva* [of *Z'eir Anpin*] and fish, locusts, and fowl derive from *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*. For this reason, the numerical value of the word for “fish” [*dag*] is 7, for *yesod* is the seventh *sefirah*. Furthermore, *yesod* “gives to the poor” [*gomel dalim*], and the initials of this phrase in Hebrew are the same letters used to spell the word for “fish.”

*Yesod* is actually the sixth *sefirah* of the *midot*, but since *yesod* couples with *malchut*, the seventh *sefirah*, it may be considered in this context the seventh *sefirah* as well. *Malchut* is considered “the poor” since it possesses no intrinsic content of its own, as we have explained previously. Since the content of the preceding *sefirot* is funneled through *yesod* to *malchut*, *yesod* may be spoken of as “giving to the poor.”

Specifically, [fish] derive from the states of *chesed* given to *yesod* for its own purposes; this is why they live in the water.

Certain aspects of *chesed* are merely channeled through *yesod*, while others become part of *yesod* itself (since *yesod* is principally a *sefirah* of transmission, it reflects the giving aspect of *chesed*). In the imagery of Kabbalah, water is a metaphor for *chesed* (and therefore a manifestation of *chesed*), since water always flows downward and is the source of life.

Locusts derive from the states of *gevurah* [within *yesod*] as they return upward. This is the mystical meaning of the verse: “Extend your hand over...the locusts and they will ascend...,”<sup>1</sup> for they manifest the principle of ascent.

In order to transmit properly, *yesod* must evince *gevurah* as well as *chesed*, since unmitigated and unrestricted giving is never effective. This element of withdrawal or restraint within *yesod* is embodied in the locusts.

The numerical value of the Hebrew word for “fowl” [*oaf*] is equal to that of the word “Joseph” [*yosef*]. Joseph personified the *sefirah* of *yesod*. Therefore, birds fly, for they, too, manifest the principle of ascent, as the states of *gevurah* return and fly upward.

The seven shepherds of Israel (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph, and David, in this order) correspond to and personify the seven emotional *sefirot* from *chesed* to *malchut*. Joseph personifies *yesod* chiefly because he (1) sustained and provided for the entire kingdom (*malchut*) of Egypt during the years of famine, and (2) preserved his sexual integrity (sexuality being associated with *yesod*, the *sefirah* of coupling) even while immersed in the depraved culture of Egypt.

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 10:12.

Since fish and locusts derive from the *sefirah* of *yesod*, which is referred to as being “alive,” they do not require ritual slaughter [as do beasts and cattle], but rather only “gathering up.”

Man, being created in “the image of G-d,” reflects both in his body and soul the structure the *sefirot* assume when they form a *partzuf*. The correspondence between the limbs of the body and the *sefirot* is as follows:

<i>keter</i>	skull
<i>chochmah</i>	right lobe of brain
<i>binah</i>	left lobe of brain
<i>da'at</i>	rear (occipital) lobe of brain
<i>chesed</i>	right arm
<i>gevurah</i>	left arm
<i>tiferet</i>	torso
<i>netzach</i>	right leg, right kidney, right testicle/ovary
<i>hod</i>	left leg, left kidney, left testicle/ovary
<i>yesod</i>	reproductive organs
<i>malchut</i>	mouth

*Yesod* thus corresponds to the reproductive organ, and *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin* specifically to the male reproductive organ. Again, this is because *yesod* is the *sefirah* of transference between one *partzuf* and the next.

In order for *yesod* to transfer the content of the preceding *sefirot*, it must properly focused on its goal. We see this in day to day life: a person cannot communicate effectively with another person if he is distracted and his mind is elsewhere. Physically, the male reproductive organ cannot transfer the semen within it, nor can the female reproductive organ receive the semen from the male, unless they are properly focused on each other. This focus is termed in Kabbalah “being alive,” just as in *halachah*, the erect male reproductive organ is called “alive” (and in its flaccid form, it is called “dead”). Similarly, effective communication is characterized by animation and excitement, as opposed to a “deadpan” style that does not excite the listener. *Yesod*, then, at least when acting effectively, is called the “live” *sefirah*.

Thus, the animals (fish and locusts) that derive from this *sefirah* are considered to possess intrinsic life-force, and therefore do not have to undergo any ritual process to prepare them for Jewish consumption.

(Note that the Arizal does not yet explain why fowl, even though deriving from the same *sefirah*, do require ritual slaughter.)

This is not the case with beasts and cattle; they derive from the *Nukva* [of *Z'eir Anpin*] and therefore require ritual slaughter.

Beasts and cattle are considered a lower level of life than fowl and locusts. In order for their life force to be properly assimilated, it must undergo the additional rectification process of ritual slaughter. Through this process the life force inherent in the animal flesh is rendered capable of being absorbed into spirituality through being eaten by the Jew.

The Arizal now turns the discussion to the subject of the birds.

Now, it is the angels that issue from the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin* of *Atzilut*. These [angels] are the [spiritual] birds that derive from this level. As it is said of [the

angel] Gabriel, “and the bird will fly in heaven.”<sup>2</sup> In contrast, physical birds derive from *yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin* of [the three lower worlds,] *Beirah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*.

Whereas the physical fish and locusts derive from *yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin* of *Atzilut*, the fowl derive only from the projection of this level onto the lower spiritual worlds. The difference between *Atzilut* and the three subsequent worlds is that the pervading consciousness in the world of *Atzilut* is that of total submersion in the Divine presence. “Denizens” of this world do not conceive of themselves as independent beings, but rather as aspects of Divinity. In the lower worlds, the pervading consciousness is that of selfhood; the “denizens” of these worlds are aware of themselves as independent entities, albeit subject to Divine rule. This is indicated by the fact that fish must remain in the water to live, that is, their existence is dependent on being almost always submerged within the ocean, just as the “denizens” of the world of *Atzilut* live totally immersed in Divine consciousness.

This is the mystical meaning of [our sages’ statement that the fowl] were created from the mire [i.e., a mixture of water and earth].<sup>3</sup> *Z’eir Anpin* of *Beriah*, which is male, exists in the female world, for all the lower worlds are the legions of the *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin* [of *Atzilut*].

Every world is created out of the *Nukva* [female partner] of *Z’eir Anpin* of the world preceding it, just a physical child is born of its parents. And just as the parents (and particularly the mother) must rear and educate the new child, *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin* of any particular world is entrusted with the task of disseminating the light, or consciousness, of its world into the worlds below it. Inasmuch as all three lower worlds (*Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*) share the common denominator of being worlds of independent consciousness, they may be grouped together and be considered to have emerged as a group from the “womb” of *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin* of *Atzilut*. Since the three lower worlds then assume the role of the recipient *vis-à-vis* *Atzilut*—in that they are intended to absorb as much as possible of the consciousness pertaining in the world of *Atzilut*—they are considered feminine and it masculine relative to each other.

While *water* is a mystical referent to the *sefirah* of *chesed*, *earth* refers to the *sefirah* of *malchut*, the lowest of the ten *sefirot* and the allegorical “floor” of the world it belongs to.

It thus follows that [the lower worlds] are the extracted states of *chesed* after they have been “processed” by *Nukva* of [*Z’eir Anpin* of] *Atzilut*. This is the mystical meaning of the verse: “And the birds will multiply on earth,”<sup>4</sup> implying that they are created from the earth. [But since it is also stated: “Let the water swarm with...birds,”<sup>5</sup> it means that the birds were created as well] from the water on the earth, i.e., the states of *chesed* within *yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin*. Therefore they have scales on their feet like fish, on the one hand, yet they fly like locusts, on the other.

The fowl were thus created from both the *chesed* and *gevurah* elements and therefore possess fishlike and locust-like characteristics. Since they derive not directly from the world of *Atzilut* but rather from *Atzilut* as it has been “processed,” diminished and diluted into the lower worlds, they require ritual slaughtering in order to be eaten.

Now, man is a mammal [i.e., he produces and suckles milk]. This is because *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* [of *Atzilut*] suckle from *Ima*.

Man derives directly from *Z’eir Anpin* of *Atzilut* and its female partner, *Nukva*. These two *partzufim*, which together comprise the emotions of the world of *Atzilut* and its capacity for self-expression, emerge from the “womb”

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 1:20.

<sup>3</sup> *Chulin* 27b.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 1:22.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 1:20.

of *Ima*, the *partzuf* of *binah*, just as an emotion or means of expression is derived from an intellectual idea that gives rise to it. Here again, once *Ima* has produced the emotional reaction (*Z'eir Anpin*) and its expression (*Nukva*), it “nurtures” them, ensuring that they indeed properly emotionalize and express the idea and concept they derive from. The physical manifestation of this principle in man is the nourishment the infant derives from its mother’s milk.

Beasts and cattle are also mammals, for they, too, derive from *Nukva*. In contrast, fish, locusts, and birds produce no milk and they do not suckle, for they derive from the *yesod* of *Ima*, and *Ima* therefore does not suckle them, for [as is said in the *Zohar*,] *Ima* extends only so far as *hod*.

Although beasts and cattle are not created “in the image” of G-d, and therefore do not reflect completely the phenomenology of *Atzilut*, the fact that they originate in *Nukva* and *Nukva* suckles from *Ima* is enough to make them milk-producing and milk-suckling animals, i.e., mammals. Fish, locusts, and birds, in contrast, are not “processed” by *Nukva* the same way beasts and cattle are, as we explained. Therefore, they do not possess this quality. They are derived directly from the *sefirah* of *yesod*, whether it be *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*, as stated above, or *yesod* of *Ima*, as stated here.

The intellect (*binah*) “extends only as far as *hod*.” This means that even after a person has progressed from the intellectual development of an idea into the emotional response-phase (*chesed*, *gevurah*, *tiferet*), he can still “recharge the batteries” of this emotional response from the residual memory of the original idea. The same is true once he has passed from the emotional response-phase into the initial stage of the active transmission phase (*netzach*, *hod*) and is involved in overcoming obstacles to the transmission of his new idea (*netzach*) and making it relevant to its target audience (*hod*). Once he has passed from this phase, however, into the stage of transmission in which he must focus entirely on the goal, that is, become totally resonant with the target audience (*yesod*), he must give up any memory he still has of the original inspiration that accompanied his experience of the original idea. Were he to retain this memory, it would derail and distract his attention from its now crucial object, the recipient. As we said, before, this focus is necessary in order for *yesod* to be “alive.” Therefore, *binah* is said to extend only as far as *hod*, but not as far as *yesod*.

In this sense, *yesod* may be considered an “orphan,” since it does not suckle from the milk of *Ima*. This is alluded to in the fact that in the verse describing Joseph, he is said to be “of good appearance and good form” [*yefeh toar vifeh mareh*].<sup>6</sup> The initials of this phrase spell the Hebrew word for “orphan” [*yatom*].

Joseph is the personification of the *sefirah* of *yesod*, as mentioned above.

Therefore fowl requires ritual slaughter, since it has an element of earth in it, as our sages said, that it was created from the mire.

—translated and adapted from *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 39:6.

## *Parashat Shemini* [second installment]

The latter half of this week's Torah portion contains the basic laws of *kashrut*, detailing which animals may and may not be eaten. *Kosher* animals include domesticated animals (cattle, sheep, and goats), seven species of wild beasts, four types of locusts, plus various species of fowl and fish.

Know that all domesticated animals, wild beasts, fowl, fish, and locusts derive from *malchut*, which is *Nukva* [of *Z'eir Anpin*].

In fact, the crown of the five states of *gevurah* is given to the *Nukva*, and the origin of all these species comes from this.

But you already know that there are two crowns: one of the [five] states of *chesed* and the other of the [five] states of *gevurah*. These are manifest as the two Divine Names, the 45-Name and the 52-Name.

The five states of *chesed* are manifest as the 45-Name and the five states of *gevurah* as the 52-Name.

The numerical value of the word for “domesticated animal” [*beheimah*] is 52, indicating that these derive from the crown of [the five states of] *gevurah*, present in *malchut*.

This covers the origin of domesticated animals (*beheimah*). What about the wild animals (*chayah*)?

Regarding wild beasts, our sages stated that “wild beasts are included in term *beheimah* [when it is used in a general sense].”<sup>1</sup>

The mystical significance of this is as follows: The numerical value of the above-mentioned [spelling-out of G-d's] Name, produced by [spelling out the Name *Havayah* with] the letter *hei*, as we said, is 52, the same as that of the word *beheimah*. If we spell out this spelling-out, i.e., spell out the letters a second time, we use 23 letters, as follows:

*Yud-vav-dalet vav-alef-vav dalet-lamed-tav, hei-hei hei-hei, vav-alef-vav vav-alef-vav, hei-hei hei-hei.*

Or, viewed schematically:<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Chulin* 70b.

<sup>2</sup> As Rabbi Shmuel Vital (Rabbi Chaim Vital's son) points out, the second spelling-out here does not follow the paradigm of the first spelling-out, as we would expect, in that the *vav*'s are spelled out the first time with just another *vav*, while the second time they are spelled out with an *alef* and a *vav*. Rabb Wolf Ashkenazi points out that Rabbi Chaim Vital himself explains elsewhere why this is so (*Sha'ar HaKavanot*, discourse on *Tzitzit* 4, in note, section 7; *Pri Eitz Chaim, Zemiroth* 2; *Sha'ar HaHakdamot* 44c).

Name	first spelling-out	second spelling-out
yud	yud	yud
		vav
		dalet
	vav	vav
		alef
		vav
	dalet	dalet
		lamed
		tav
hei	hei	hei
		hei
	hei	hei
		hei
vav	vav	vav
		alef
		vav
	vav	vav
		alef
		vav
hei	hei	hei
		hei
	hei	hei
		hei

[23 is] the numerical value of the word for “wild beast” [*chayah*].

*Chayah*: *chet-yud-hei* = 8 + 10 + 5 = 23.

Thus, *chayah* alludes to the spelling-out of the spelling-out of the 52-Name, and thus *chayah* is “included” within *beheimah*.

We will now explain this in greater detail.

I have already explained that after the states of *chesed* descend from the *yesod* of *Ima* [into *Z’eir Anpin*], only three of them [continue and] fall into the *yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin*. These three are the states of *chesed* of *netzach*, *hod*, and *tiferet*, which are exposed, as is known. These are the ones that descend into *yesod* [of *Z’eir Anpin*].

The five states of *chesed* and the five states of *gevurah* are the two sides of the origins of the five *sefirot* from *chesed* to *hod* as they exist within *da’at*, or higher, within *binah*. Therefore, we may speak of the five states of *chesed* as the *chesed-gevurah-tiferet-netzach-hod* states of *chesed*, and the five states of *gevurah* as the *chesed-gevurah-tiferet-netzach-hod* states of *gevurah*.

The upper, basic states of *chesed*, the *chesed* and *gevurah* states, remain covered by *yesod* of *Ima*, as we have explained previously. Only the derivative states of *tiferet-netzach-hod* are “dim” enough to descend further, into *yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin*, where they can be prepared to be transmitted further.

After this, the states of *gevurah* also descend as far as *yesod* [of *Z’eir Anpin*], and as they descend there they are sweetened. The higher three states of *gevurah* of the five are sweetened by the three exposed states of *chesed*. This is what happens as [the states of *chesed* and *gevurah*] descend.

This leaves the lower two states of *gevurah* unsweetened. (See my exposition on the descent of the states of *chesed* and the states of *gevurah*, where this is explained fully.)

It follows that the [upper] three states of *gevurah* have combined with the three [exposed] states of *chesed*. And, as you know, every state of *gevurah* or state of *chesed* is manifest as a Name *Havayah*. Thus, when the states of *gevurah* combine with their sweetening agent, this being a state of *chesed*, the two corresponding Names *Havayah* also join together.

The numerical value of each of these Names *Havayah* is 52. Thus, [the combination of] the three sweetened states of *gevurah* with the three states of *chesed* [that sweeten them] yields three times 52.

We would have expected this to yield six times 52. The reason this is not so is that the three states of *chesed* leave the three states of *gevurah* and ascend out of *yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin*. Thus, the three states of *gevurah* are left by themselves. However—

<sup>3</sup>Even though these states of *chesed* return and ascend out of *yesod* [of *Z’eir Anpin*] as reflected light, nonetheless, it is also known that a holy entity leaves an impression or residue wherever it goes.

[In our case,] since the states of *gevurah* have been sweetened by the states of *chesed*, the residue of the states of *chesed* remains inside the states of *gevurah*, even though afterwards the states of *chesed* ascended back up.

And therefore, their residue keeps the states of *gevurah* in a sweetened state. However, since they themselves are no longer there, they are not counted as Names *Havayah*, and only the three states of *gevurah* (manifest as Names *Havayah*) are counted, making for 3 x 52.

It follows that the three sweetened states of *gevurah* are termed the three “sons.”

Each is a 52-Name, and the abbreviation for 52 (*beit-nun*) spells “son.”

[As we said,] this process leaves the two lower states of *gevurah*, which originate from *netzach* and *hod*, unsweetened. These two also combine together, since they are both in the same state, that is, unsweetened. This is especially probable since they originate in *netzach* and *hod*, which are termed “the children.”

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<sup>3</sup> We are translating the passage as it appears in *Sefer HaLikutim*. The following paragraph is worded somewhat clearer in the parallel passage in *Sha’ar HaPesukim*, so we are using it here.

*Netzach* and *hod* are so close that sometimes they are considered two halves of the same *sefirah*. Also, whereas *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* are identified with the three patriarchs, or “fathers,” *netzach-hod* are identified as their “offspring” or “sons.”

In any case, they combine and form a fourth 52-Name, for these two states of *gevurah* are manifest as two 52-Names.

Thus, we have four sons, and corresponding to them we say in the Passover *Hagadah*: “The Torah speaks of four sons....”

Now, when the states of *chesed* return and ascend, they sweeten the two states of *gevurah* that had remained unsweetened. They sweeten them now as they ascend.

Thus, the first three states of *gevurah*, originating in *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*, become sweetened first, when [the states of *chesed* and *gevurah*] descend, while the lower two states of *gevurah*, originating in *netzach-hod*, are only sweetened as [the states of *chesed*] ascend.

We will now explain these details, with G-d’s help. We note that animals are heavier in their movements than all other creatures. This is because they derive from those two [lower] states of *gevurah* that were not sweetened [at first]. [As we said,] the numerical value [of these two states of *gevurah*] is 52, which is also the numerical value of *beheimah*. For they comprise two Names *Havayah* together, the lowest of all of them, and therefore they are heavy and do not fly.

Domesticated animals (*beheimah*) derive from the first spelling-out of the 52-Name, and wild animals (*chayah*) derive from the second spelling-out of the 52-Name, as explained above.

The fact that these animals are derived from the lower, least spiritual of the five states of *gevurah* is reflected in the fact that in their physical incarnation they are also the lowest, heaviest, most corporeal of creatures.

<sup>4</sup>But the domesticated animals are heavier and slower than wild animals, for the wild animals derive only from the spelling-out of the spelling-out [of the 52-Name], as mentioned.

Now, there are pure and impure [i.e., kosher and non-kosher] species of both domesticated and wild animals.

Their purification is effected by their sweetening [that occurs] on the ascent, as mentioned. For unsweetened states of *gevurah* are in a state of absolute severe judgment, and the forces of evil are able to attach themselves to them. This is why [animals derived from these unsweetened states of *gevurah*] are forbidden. But if such [animals] possess signs of purity, it indicates that they are already rectified and derive from the two lower states of *gevurah* that have been sweetened.

[The signs of purity] are chewing the cud and having split hooves. The numerical value of the word for “cud” [*geirah*] is four times 52, referring to the

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<sup>4</sup> As in note 3, above.

five states of *gevurah*, as stated, which are manifest as the four sons, alluded to in the numerical value of the word for “cud.”

*Geirah*: *gimel-reish-hei* =  $3 + 200 + 5 = 208$ .

$4 \times 52 = 208$ .

Chewing [“elevating”] the cud indicates that this fourth 52-Name ascended, that is, [it alludes to how] the two lower states of *gevurah* were sweetened on the ascent [of the states of *chesed*], and can then combine with the three other “sons,” for they are now sweetened just like they are. When they all combine, they produce the numerical value of “cud.”

[A kosher animal] must also have split hooves. The letters that spell the word for “hoof” [*parsah*] can be divided into two: the numerical value of the first two letters [*pei-reish*] is 280, and that of the second two letters [*samech-hei*] is 65.

The significance of this is that the numerical value of the five states of *chesed* is 280, the five final letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and the numerical value of the Name *Adni* is 65.

The five states of *gevurah* are also signified by the five letters of the Hebrew alphabet that have final forms: *mem-nun-tzadik-pei-kaf*. The combined numerical value of these letters is  $40 + 50 + 90 + 80 + 20 = 280$ .

*Adni*: *alef-dalet-nun-yud* =  $1 + 4 + 50 + 10 = 65$ .

The word for *parsah* thus indicates how all five states of *gevurah* combine together [in their sweetened state] and are given from the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin* to his *Nukva*, and that they are untouched by the forces of evil, remaining unscathed, and are given to *malchut* together, with no defect.

The Name *Adni* signifies *malchut*, or *Nukva*, and therefore the word *parsah* indicates how the 5 states of *gevurah* (indicated by the numerical value 280 of *pei-reish*) are transmitted to *Nukva* (indicated by the numerical value 65 of *samech-hei*).

In other words, in order for an animal to be kosher, it must embody (1) the five sweetened states of *gevurah*—indicated by chewing the cud, and (2) the successful and safe transference of these five states into *Nukva*, the feminine consciousness of expression—indicated by splitting the hoof.

Lack of either sign indicates that at some point, Divine beneficence has been siphoned off by the forces of evil, judgment, anger, self-orientation, etc.

The following paragraph is the same idea as it appears in the parallel passage in *Sha'ar HaPesukim*:

When [the five states of *gevurah*] have all been sweetened in the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*, they issue forth from behind this *yesod*, and are transmitted to the *da'at* of *Nukva*, which is positioned right there. When they combine together after they have become sweetened, and they issue forth [from *Z'eir Anpin*] and are transmitted to the *da'at* of *Nukva*, the forces of evil can gain no control over them. Rather, they are all transferred there together as one complete unit. In this way, they all remain kosher and pure. Were this not to happen, they would not be pure, even though they had been sweetened, because the forces of evil would gain

control over them. Therefore, in order to indicate this, [the Torah] requires a second sign of purity [i.e., *kashrut*], which is possessing split hooves.

It follows that even if [animals] chew their cud, they are not kosher unless it be known that nothing [of them] escaped to the forces of evil. This [latter state] is indicated by their having split hooves.

We have thus explained the two signs of *kashrut* of animals.

The following paragraph concludes this section in *Sha'ar HaPesukim*:

Regarding wild animals, they are also derived from the lower two states of *gevurah* as mentioned, and therefore they also require the two signs [of *kashrut*]. But they only derive from the spelling-out of the spelling-out, and therefore there are other, additional signs that differentiate between them and domesticated animals, as mentioned in the Talmud.<sup>5</sup> I did not receive the mystical interpretation of their explanation [from my master].

—translated and adapted from *Sefer HaLikutim* and *Sha'ar HaPesukim*

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<sup>5</sup> *Chulin* 59ab.

## *Parashat Tazria*

**Background:** This week's *parashah* begins with three seemingly unrelated topics: the ritual impurity acquired by a woman through giving birth, the commandment to circumcise infant boys on the eighth day of their life, and the ritual impurity imparted by the condition known as *tzara'at*. (The latter term is usually incorrectly translated as "leprosy," but in fact refers to a unique disease that existed only when the Temple stood and bears only the slightest resemblance to what we know today as leprosy.) Since the order of topics in the Torah is significant, the juxtaposition of these three topics begs for explanation.

It might be worth mentioning that both these types of impurity, as well as menstrual impurity, which will also come under discussion, are purely spiritual conditions, and must not be confused with medical or hygienic conditions. Although spiritual impurity (*tumah*) may be brought about by physical conditions and has physical repercussions, it is more a psychological malaise than a physical one. The ritually impure person typically suffers from some kind of mental association with death, depression, ego, or other condition that is antithetical to the joyful optimism characteristic of healthy spirituality. In order to resume a life of active spirituality, he must be "purified" from this mentality. This will be evident in the course of the Arizal's discussion.

In the passage before us, the Arizal will explain why these three seemingly unrelated topics are discussed in succession. As is typical in classic homiletic style, he begins by presenting a list of questions, proceeds to discourse on theological doctrine, and ties everything together, resolving the original difficulties, at the end.

[The *parashah* opens:] "And G-d spoke to Moses, saying: 'Speak to the children of Israel, saying: "If a woman conceives, and gives birth to a son, she shall be impure for seven days; she shall be impure as she is in the days of her menstrual period. And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised."'"<sup>1</sup>

It is worth examining why the Torah states "saying" twice in this passage, when once would have sufficed. [We must also address] why the commandment of circumcision is mentioned in the context of menstrual impurity and the impurity incurred through *tzara'at*; what do they have in common? Furthermore, the Torah continues:

"When a man has in the skin of his flesh a swelling, a scab, or bright spot, and it be in the skin of his flesh the plague of *tzara'at*..."<sup>2</sup>

The words in this verse appear to be out of order; it should have said: "When a man has in the flesh of his skin the plague of *tzara'at*, as a swelling, a scab, or a bright spot..."

All the above will be understood based on our sages' statement that in consequence of disobeying G-d's command, Eve was made to undergo the blood of menstruation and the blood of virginal marital relations.<sup>3</sup> [They inferred this

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 12:1-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 13:2.

<sup>3</sup> *Eiruvin* 100b.

double bleeding] from the double expression, “I will increase greatly [your suffering...].”<sup>4</sup>

As originally created, the physiology of woman was such that she did not have a menstrual cycle, and the process of conceiving and giving birth did not involve any bleeding. Nor did she bleed when she first engaged in marital relations. These (as well as other) facets of life were introduced into reality as the result of the primordial sin. In other words, in order to rectify the faulty way of thinking or looking at life that led Adam and Eve to partake of the forbidden fruit, certain physical changes occurred in reality, among them the menstrual cycle and virginal bleeding. By experiencing and properly dealing with these phenomena, mankind should ideally undergo a spiritual maturation process that will eventually lead to the final Redemption. At that time, these conditions of fallen reality will no longer be necessary, and life (including woman’s physiology) will revert to its Edenic state.

This, then, is the explanation of the opening verse:

*“And G-d spoke to Moses, saying”*—that is, “concerning what I am about to say to you about menstrual and virginal bleeding. If the Jewish people ask you why they have to be defiled by menstrual bleeding, seeing that they are a holy people, then: *Speak to the children of Israel, saying.*” That is, “Tell them that it is because Eve transgressed what I told her to do, she was made to suffer the impurity of menstruation. For this reason, *if a woman conceives, and gives birth to a son, she shall be impure for seven days; she shall be impure as she is in the days of her menstrual period.*”

So far, the Arizal has answered his first question, namely, why the repetition of the word “saying” in the opening verse. The first refers to G-d addressing Moses with the commandments concerning childbirth, and the second is the answer to the Jewish people’s potential question as to the reason for these commandments. They are the consequence of another “saying,” G-d’s commandment to Adam and Eve.

The commandment of circumcision is mentioned in connection with the impurity of menstruation, since by being circumcised, a person will be kept from being defiled with the impurity of menstruation. This is why G-d commanded us to circumcise baby boys when they are eight days old, for through this we weaken the power of impurity and eliminate evil lust.

The foreskin of the male reproductive organ effects his experience of marital relations in two ways: it increases his gross sensual pleasure and decreases his sensitivity to his wife by insulating him from her to a certain extent. By removing the foreskin, the experience of marital relations becomes for the man less of a narcissistic indulgence and more of a true spiritual coupling between him and his wife. Once the spiritual dimension of marital relations is allowed into the picture, it enhances the physical dimension as well. The sages of the Talmud therefore state that ideally, at least, it is the Jewish couple that experiences the truest enjoyment in marital relations.

During the wife’s menstrual period, she is too self-aware and self-conscious to engage in marital relations with the proper spiritual orientation. The Torah thus forbids marital relations during this period. When a man has been circumcised of his gross sensual approach to marital relations, he retains more control over his sexual passion, and is thus less likely to succumb to them. His circumcision thus helps him not engage in forbidden marital relations, including relations with his wife during her period.

Furthermore, circumcision indicates that man is the servant of G-d, stamped with His seal. As such, he will certainly not transgress his Master’s command.

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<sup>4</sup> Genesis 3:16.

The Torah refers to circumcision as the “sign” of the covenant between G-d and the Jewish people. The Jewish is thus “branded” as G-d’s servant, and this awareness serves to remind him that he is responsible to a higher authority.

Therefore the commandment of circumcision was placed between the commandments concerning menstrual impurity and the impurity induced by *tzara’at*, for circumcision protects him from both. He will not engage in sexual relations with a menstruating woman, and will also remain humble and of lowly spirit, like a servant stamped with the seal of his master, thus shunning haughtiness.

As the Arizal will explain presently, haughtiness is the root of the impurity of *tzara’at*. He has now answered the question as to why the commandment of circumcision is placed between the commandments of menstrual impurity and *tzara’at*.

There are three types of haughtiness: One type of person is haughty in his heart and appears to be humble to everyone else. About this type of person, the Torah says, “When a man has in the skin of his flesh a swelling.” That is, his haughtiness [“swelling”] is concealed deep within the skin of his flesh and is not apparent to everyone. It is a private sort of egocentricity.

A second type of haughtiness is that in which a person feels superior to those like him, but not to those who exceed him in wisdom or stature. This type of haughtiness is called “a scab.” [The Hebrew word for “scab,” *sapachat*, means a connected addition,] as in the verse, “Assign me [*sapcheini*], please, to one of the priestly duties,”<sup>5</sup> in the sense of “joining” and “connection.” [It thus refers to someone who feels superior only to those of his own caliber.]

The third type of haughtiness is more serious [and therefore requires a lengthier process of purification]. This is the “bright spot,” meaning that the person feels and acts superior even to those who exceed him in wisdom, stature, or wealth. He acts impudently to all. This type of haughtiness is therefore alluded to by the strong, bright spot.

G-d detests all three of these, and all three are made to suffer the impurity of *tzara’at*, even the first, which is the most innocuous of the three in that he is only haughty inwardly. This is why the Torah repeats the phrase “in the skin of his flesh,” to intimate that he is considered plagued with this impurity even if it is hidden from public sight, and that he will be duly punished. Even more so, of course, is this the case with the other two types of haughtiness, which are more heinous.

The Arizal has now answered his third question, regarding the order of the words in the verse about *tzara’at*. He now briefly discusses the problem of haughtiness in general.

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<sup>5</sup> 1 Samuel 2:36.

As mentioned, haughtiness is such a severe blot on a person's personality that even G-d Himself hates it. Thus, it is written, "G-d reigns, He is robed in haughtiness."<sup>6</sup> That is, haughtiness is spoken of here as a mere article of clothing that G-d dons in ruling the world in order to instill fear in His creatures and then immediately takes off. Thus our sages state, "Whenever you find mention [in the Bible] of G-d's greatness, you find immediate mention of His humility."<sup>7</sup>

With the above explanation, we may now understand the verses quoted properly.

—translated and adapted from *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>6</sup> Psalms 93:1.

<sup>7</sup> *Megilah* 31a.

## *Parashat Tazria* [second installment]

This portion of the Torah begins, “And G-d spoke to Moses, saying: ‘Speak to the children of Israel, saying: “If a woman conceives, and gives birth to a son, she shall be impure for seven days; she shall be impure as she is in the days of her menstrual period. And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.”’”<sup>1</sup> The comments regarding “impurity” and “defilement” at the beginning of the first installment of the Arizal’s teachings on this portion of the Torah should be reviewed here.

Know that this [i.e., a woman’s defilement for seven days when giving birth to a son] was caused by the injection of the [snake’s] poison into Eve.

Although the text of the Bible only says that the snake spoke to Eve, it is explained in the oral tradition that the snake actually had intercourse with her.<sup>2</sup> The snake personified “evil,” i.e., selfishness and self-centered ego, the antithesis of G-d-consciousness.

Of course, every individual has a unique Divine soul, which is meant to express itself as his/her unique “Divine personality,” which means: the unique contribution or angle this person is meant to give to the world’s understanding of G-d’s presence in reality. This may express itself in many ways, from innovative understandings of the Torah, to artistic creativity, to acts of kindness and goodness, to inspiring others to lead holy lives, and so on. This is the person’s unique, Divine “ego.” Thus, ego *per se* is not necessarily a bad thing.

The problem is that this Divine ego is too often hidden by the alter-ego of the animal soul, which begins as the consciousness-of-self that a person must have in order to ensure that he will look out for his own physical needs, but quickly assumes complete control of the person’s thoughts, making him selfish and self-oriented. In other words, if a child is not given proper spiritual education (a.k.a. Torah-*chinuch*), which trains him to give precedence to his Divine soul, his animal soul will take over by default. This is so because the animal ego is given first control of the mind—for an infant needs first of all to learn how to take care of itself—and because society has a vested interest in training people to be good consumers, etc.

This inflated consciousness of self (i.e., inflated beyond the basic consciousness of self required for us to function physically) is defined as “evil,” inasmuch as it usurps the role intended for the Divine soul—that of determining the course the individual’s life should take and how he should utilize the resources G-d has granted him to accomplish his purpose on earth. It seeks to divert the individual’s attention from Divine matters—sometimes with material indulgence, sometimes with substitute forms of spirituality—in order to aggrandize his concern with and focus on himself. This subterfuge can express itself very refined ways, also, such as abstract intellectual or artistic pursuits, utopian pursuits, or even the pursuit of good deeds—if done as an escape from religious obligation or for non-altruistic motivation.

In most people, their conscious mind is a blend of mostly animal ego and some deep desires of the Divine soul seeking to surface. The result of this is that most secular human artistic (and even scientific) creation and innovation is largely an expression the basest human/animal drives, although, as we said, the element of the Divine soul seeking to penetrate this thick and heavy animal context is also present. The more one spiritualizes his life and—through learning Torah and doing *mitzvot*—gives his Divine self means for expression, the more his creativity will express true Divinity, and the more he will be sensitive to Divinity in general and thus be able to identify and focus on the Divine element in other people’s creative output.

This animal/subjective/selfish perspective on life was introduced to humanity by the snake, its primordial personification. By sexually injecting its psychological poison into Eve, the snake robbed Adam and Eve of their ability to selflessly see reality through G-d’s eyes, and made man the subjective, self-referencing creature he is today.

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 12:1-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Shabbat* 146a; Rashi (1<sup>st</sup> printing [1474]), on Genesis 3:14.

This [also] explains why Adam was created from the dirt of the place of his atonement, and why [this dirt] was not taken from the Garden of Eden. For G-d knew that he would sin, and had he been created from the dirt of the Garden, there could never be any atonement for him. G-d therefore [created Adam outside the garden] and brought him into it [afterwards].

According to tradition, Adam was created on what would later be known as the Temple Mount, or Mount Moriah, specifically from the spot where the outer altar of Temple would later stand.<sup>3</sup> This fact signifies that man was created with the potential for repentance, i.e., the ability to restore his consciousness to its intended Divine orientation such that his true, individual, Divine ego can be revealed.

G-d took Adam out [of the garden] when the sin [he and Eve committed brought out] the injection of the [snake's] poison. This was the intermingling of the seventy gentile nations with Israel in Eve's womb.

Had the primordial sin not occurred, mankind would not have been divided into Jew and gentile; Adam and his progeny would all have had the status now held only by the Jewish people. Once pure Divine consciousness—the original consciousness of Adam and Eve—had become diluted with self-consciousness, it became necessary to separate between the two. This, indeed, has been the task of mankind ever since its primordial fall, and this process will eventually end in the restoration of reality to its original spiritual state. As an essential facet of this process, G-d isolated the original kernel of Divine consciousness and passed it on, latently, through the line of Adam's seed that remained more-or-less true to its ideals. This continued until Abraham, who by his actions, faith, and—perhaps most importantly—his dedication to perpetuating his vision in his progeny—internalized this consciousness and made it such an essential part of his being that G-d chose him and his offspring to be its conscious bearers for the rest of humanity.

The gentile world is divided into seventy archetypal nations<sup>4</sup>; all present, future, and extinct nationalities, cultures, civilizations, etc., are derived from these seventy.

This is why Eve menstruated at that moment, giving birth to Cain—who shed blood, and Abel—whose blood was shed. This is the origin of woman's menstrual blood, as it is written, “When a woman gives seed and gives birth to a boy, she shall be impure seven days; [*as in the days of her menstrual period* shall she be impure].”<sup>5</sup>

The fact that the Torah compares impurity contracted by birth with impurity contracted by menstruation indicates that the two are thematically connected.

Menstruation causes the woman to focus on herself and her physical and emotional feelings. (This is why marital relations are forbidden during menstruation; the woman is too focused on herself to focus on her husband and/or their common soul.) The fact that this is so indicates that menstruation is spiritually the result of the introduction of self-awareness into humanity, which we have seen originated in the snake's injection of his physical/metaphysical “seed” into Eve. The laws of Family Purity are the Divinely directed way the menstrual experience can be transformed into what is meant to be: an educative process out of self-orientation.<sup>6</sup>

Bleeding at birth also began with the primordial sin; had Adam and Eve not sinned, childbirth would occur without bleeding (and this will be the case in the future).

[This is also] the reason she becomes impure for seven days when she gives birth to a boy, for when she contributes her redness first, the offspring is male.

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<sup>3</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 14:8.

<sup>4</sup> Listed in Genesis 10.

<sup>5</sup> Leviticus 12:2.

<sup>6</sup> As detailed, of course, in *The Mystery of Marriage*.

According to the Talmud,<sup>7</sup> “there are three participants in [the creation of] man: the Holy One, blessed be He, his father, and his mother. His father supplies the white substance, out of which are formed the child’s bones, sinews, nails, the brain in his head, and the white in his eye; his mother supplies the red substance, out of which is formed his skin, flesh, hair, blood, and the black of his eye; and the Holy One, blessed be He, gives him the spirit, the soul, facial features, eyesight, hearing, speech, the ability to walk, understanding, and discernment.”

Furthermore, we are taught that “when the wife gives her seed first, she will give birth to a male; when the husband gives his seed first, she will give birth to a female.”<sup>8</sup>

We will not attempt here to align these two Talmudic statements *vis-à-vis* with our present-day understanding of physiology; this has been done elsewhere. For our purposes, these two statements taken together indicate that the birth of a boy indicates that the mother “gave seed” first, and that this “seed” was the “red substance,” which produces the blood. In general, it seems that the mother’s contribution is the more “female” aspects of human nature, which, as we have explained at length previously, is the drive to manifest Divinity in the world. The fact that the woman gave birth to a boy means that when the child was conceived her femininity took the leading role; her desire to express Divinity in the world produced a male, since males are obligated to fulfill more active *mitzvot* than are women.

With this we will also understand why, of the four “foreskins” of man, only that of his procreative organ is circumcised. The reason is because [these four “foreskins”] allude to the four [years that] a tree’s fruit is considered “foreskin.” The foreskin of the procreative organ is where Adam sinned, so it recalls the injection of the [snake’s] poison and sexual sin [*keri*], known as “evil”; [this organ is thus] compounded of good and evil.

The Torah uses the expression “uncircumcised” of four human organs: the male procreative organ, the ears, the heart, and the mouth.<sup>9</sup> These organs are referred to as “uncircumcised” or as possessing a “foreskin” when the individual does not use them to be sensitive to others or to G-d.

When a tree is planted, we are forbidden to eat the fruit it produces during its first three years. This prohibition is called *orlah*, which is the word for “foreskin.”<sup>10</sup> Rashi explains that this is so because we are to treat the fruit as if it were blocked off from us by some type of foreskin.

The fruit the tree produces during the fourth year is to be taken to Jerusalem and eaten that year within the precincts of the holy city.<sup>11</sup>

In Kabbalah, it is explained that the tree’s fruit during its first three years “belongs” to the three realms of absolute evil (“shells,” *kelipot*) that cannot be elevated by human consumption; this why eating it is prohibited. The fruit of the fourth year comes from the realm of the “bright” or “translucent shell” (*kelipat nogah*), which is the realm of reality that includes all things that are neither intrinsically good nor intrinsically evil but rather assume the status of good or evil depending on how they are used. Whatever comes from this realm is neither forbidden by the Torah (for then it would be “evil”) nor expressly legislated (for then it would be a *mitzvah*), but simply permitted. This realm includes, for example, all *kosher* food and activities permitted by the Torah but not specifically required to be done. If we eat this food or do these acts for holy purposes, their status rises into the realm of holiness; if we eat it or do them for selfish or unholy purposes, their status descends into the realm of evil. The tree’s fourth-year fruit is not prohibited from consumption but must be eaten in the holy city; it must be elevated to holiness. It therefore expresses the moral dynamic of the fourth “shell.”

The heart, ears, and mouth, must be guarded scrupulously from any contact with evil; any “foreskin” on these organs—experience of insensitivity, selfhood and unrectified ego—is bad and must be rejected. With the sexual organ, however, the picture is not so black and white. A certain amount of self-awareness and self-orientation is necessary if marital relations are to occur. True, we are bidden to sanctify our sexuality as much as we can, but—in

<sup>7</sup> *Nidah* 31a.

<sup>8</sup> *Berachot* 60a.

<sup>9</sup> See *Bereishit Rabbah* 46:5.

<sup>10</sup> *Leviticus* 19:23.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid* 19:24; see Rashi *ad loc.*

contrast to the other three organs—the sanctification process consists not of eliminating the animal awareness but refining it such that it serves as a window to our Divine soul. This is the paradox of marital relations: each partner is to focus on giving pleasure to the other, but in order for each partner to do this successfully, the other partner must oblige by experiencing his/her own pleasure. Thus, each partner experiences his/her own pleasure as a way of helping the other partner fulfill her/his objective of pleasing. Moreover, the greater my pleasure, the greater is my partner's success, and the greater his/her pleasure in having pleased me. It is thus ironically crucial to the selflessness of the act that each partner experience the greatest pleasure possible, although absolutely not for the sake of experiencing their own pleasure. Actively, I pursue my partner's pleasure; passively, I "pursue" my own. Marital relations are thus simultaneously consummately selfless and consummately self-fulfilling.

Obviously, sliding from experiencing pleasure for the partner into experiencing pleasure for oneself can happen very easily. Therefore, since some degree of self-awareness must remain in marital relations, the danger of falling into evil here is much greater. Sexuality, in this context, is thus the fourth "shell" that can go either way. Since its potential for evil is so much greater than that of the other three organs, only it requires actual physical circumcision. With the others, spiritual "circumcision," i.e., proper attitudes engendered by holy training, suffice.

Regarding the congealing of semen when it is mixed with the choice parts of the blood of the woman's redness, and the leftovers of this process that becomes the embryo's nourishment, all this is alluded to in the verse: "Behold, I was formed in transgression, and my mother conceived me in sin."<sup>12</sup> "Transgression" refers to the whiteness from the father, and "sin" refers to the redness of the mother. Similarly, the verse "Have You not poured me out like milk, and congealed me like cheese?"<sup>13</sup> refers to the same.

"My mother conceived me in sin" does not mean that marital relations are sinful (G-d forbid), but simply that a certain element of self-awareness is necessary for them to be carried out as G-d desires, as mentioned above.

Having established that it is specifically the sexual organ that requires physical circumcision, we return now to why this must occur on the eighth day.

We shall now return to the subject of the injection of the [snake's] poison, and how the intermixing of good and evil is the mixing of the seventy nations [with Israel in Eve's womb]. Sam-el<sup>14</sup> is the [celestial] king of the seventy [celestial] princes, while Michael is the over the seventy [sages of the] Sanhedrin [corresponding to] the seventy souls of Jacob.<sup>15</sup>

The angelic personification of self-orientation is the "demon" (i.e., negative angel) Sam-el. Michael is the angelic personification of *chesed*.

The reason there are seventy nations and seventy corresponding descendents of Jacob and members of the Sanhedrin is because these are personifications of the seven emotional attributes from *chesed* to *malchut*, each compounded of ten sub-*sefirot*. The seventy nations express the seventy facets of self-oriented emotion (the emotions of the animal soul), while the seventy members of Jacob's household express the seventy facets of Divine-oriented emotion (the emotions of the Divine soul).

From this you will understand why a boy must be circumcised after seven days and one night [have passed from his birth], this being the mystical meaning of the verse, "The days of our years in them are seventy years, or with strength, eighty

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<sup>12</sup> Psalms 51:7.

<sup>13</sup> Job 10:10.

<sup>14</sup> The hyphen in this name is there to indicate that, just like other names of angels that are not used for people's names as well, it is not pronounced.

<sup>15</sup> See Genesis 46:8-27.

years,”<sup>16</sup> and in what merit [the heavenly court] annuls a decree of seventy years [of suffering].

The seven days before the *brit* correspond to the seventy years of this verse, the eighth day to the eighty years, as will be explained presently.

There are number of reasons a person could bring upon himself a heavenly decree of seventy years of suffering; among these are articulating for what purpose a bride is brought into her bridal chamber.<sup>17</sup> There are also a number of ways a person can merit to have such a degree annulled; among these are performing a *mitzvah* the way G-d intended<sup>18</sup> and answering *kaddish* with great concentration.<sup>19</sup> The seventy years of suffering are to rectify the blemished seven emotions.

And know that for every year there is different [celestial] prince, and that no [prince] has permission to pass into the area of another's jurisdiction. This is why we do not take tithes from one year's produce for the previous year's, but rather take tithes each year from its own produce. This is also why we must repent every year for [the sins of] that year, for the repentance of one year does not help for another year.

Time in Judaism is not a monolithic entity. Every moment in time has its own unique nature and “personality,” a result of the changing hues of Divine energy constantly recreating the world. As part of this, every year has its own personality, and therefore *mitzvot* designated to be performed in a specific year must be done so. Above, this is depicted as the “prince” or angelic personality of a specific year not being able to trespass into another year's “space.”

This is why [the heavenly court] annuls a decree of seventy years [of suffering], for the individual falls under the power [of the forces of evil] for only seventy years. G-d therefore has mercy on him and annuls this power. But when a person becomes eighty years old, [the forces of evil] no longer have power over him, this being the mystical meaning of “or with strength, eighty years,” meaning that he has overpowered them for ten years.

Evidently, 70 is the maximum number of years of suffering for which a person can be decreed. This is so because, as we said, 70 is the full expression of the seven emotional attributes. By sinning, a person blemishes these attributes, and since there are only seven, 70 is the maximal period of rectification he needs, a year per sub-*sefirah*. When a person turns 80, he has “outlived” his emotions by 10 years, meaning that he has rectified them through the ten *sefirot* of his Divine soul.

The number 7 is therefore thematically associated with the emotions, the realm of the person's psyche or personality that can under the influence of evil. Of course, there is evil intellect also, but the major battle between the animal and Divine souls (or their personifications as the evil and good inclinations) is fought over the individual's emotions—what he will love, fear, empathize with, etc. In contrast, the number 8 signifies overcoming this struggle.

Therefore Scripture decrees that “on the eighth day he shall be circumcised,” for he has then escaped the power of the sevens, and entered the realm of eight.

Circumcision on the *eighth* day means that the newborn Jew has transcended the power of 7, of nature, of the animal within him, and entered the realm of the transcendent, supernatural power of holiness.

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<sup>16</sup> Psalms 90:10.

<sup>17</sup> *Shabbat* 33a; *Ketubot* 8b.

<sup>18</sup> *Shabbat* 63a.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* 119b.

—translated and adapted from *Sefer HaLikutim*

## *Parashat Tazria*

### [third installment]

In this *parashah*, we are given the laws of the various skin diseases (types of *tzara'at*, usually and incorrectly translated as “leprosy”) that can render a person spiritually impure. These specific diseases do not render an individual impure because of their physical contagiousness, but rather because their presence reflects some spiritual fault or contamination, as we shall see.

The first verses of these laws is: “And G-d spoke to Moses, saying, ‘A man on whose skin there is a raised-disease or an excess-disease or a bright-disease, and it turns into the plague of *tzara'at* on his flesh, he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons, the priests.’”<sup>1</sup>

Regarding the appearances of the plagues, [we are taught that] they are two that subdivide into four.<sup>2</sup>

The principle appearances are the bright-spot and the raised-spot; the “excess-spot” mentioned in the verse is interpreted to mean that there are two ancillary colors of spots for each of these, giving four colors (actually “shades” or degrees of white) that signal the onset of *tzara'at*.

[Also regarding them, it is written:] “[The Chaldean nation] is awesome and terrible; its judgment and its raised-disease come out of it.”<sup>3</sup>

From this verse we see that the occurrence of the raised-sign is caused by a manifestation of Divine judgment.

Let us [first] note that the word for “my raised-disease” [*se'eiti*] may be permuted to spell the word for “my wife” [*ishti*]. [This indicates that] if a person merits, [his wife is good to him; if not, she is like a plague to him].

*Se'eiti: sin-alef-tav-yud; ishti: alef-shin-tav-yud.*

On the verse, “It is not good for man to be alone; I will make him a helpmate opposite him,”<sup>4</sup> the sages comment, “if he merits, she is his helpmate; if not, she becomes his opponent.” In *Chassidut* this statement is interpreted to mean, “if he is *refined*, she [reflects this and] acts as his helpmate; if he is not, she [reflects this, too, and] becomes his opponent.” A person’s spouse mirrors his own level of refinement, particularly his sexual refinement.

Know that the four appearances [of the plagues] are [manifestations of the two wives of] Samael<sup>5</sup> and his two maidservants, Sagrirah and Tzariah, who attach themselves [parasitically] to Eve. He introduced pollution into Eve.

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 13:1-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Negaim* 1:1.

<sup>3</sup> Habakkuk 1:7.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 2:18; Rashi *ad loc*.

<sup>5</sup> It is customary not pronounce the names of demons (or their wives, etc.), so as not to lend strength to the evils they personify.

Samael is the name of the demon (i.e., angel whose task is to promote evil) who is the general personification of evil. He appears in history first as the primordial snake, who raped Eve and thereby introduced the seminal evil of self-consciousness and self-orientation into humanity.

Elsewhere,<sup>6</sup> the two principle wives of Samael are given as Na'amah and Lilith, and his secondary wives are their maidservants Garirah and Tzariah. These four represent the perversions of sexuality that lurk around a person's spouse, tempting him to defile his holy marital intercourse by making a means for selfish gratification, mere base, sensual fulfillment, egotistic manipulation, etc., instead of selfless, Divine love.

These four [she-demons] are opposite the four mothers that Jacob married, thereby imitating Adam. They are alluded to in the verse [describing King Og of Bashan], "Behold, his bed is a bed of iron,"<sup>7</sup> for Og alludes to Samael.

Jacob married two principle wives, Rachel and Leah, and their maidservants, Bilhah and Zilpah. The initials of their four names spell the word for "iron" (*barzel*).

Og was the king who attempted to prevent the Jewish people from entering the land of Israel. Entering the land of Israel is another analog of sexual intercourse, the Jewish people being the husband and the land the wife that they enter and fertilize both physically and spiritually, in order to produce physical and spiritual yield. Og, in seeking to prevent this holy entering, assumes the role of Samael, who, together with his wives, seeks to derail the holy intercourse between husband and wife.

(It is apparent from this also that anyone who is not a member of the Jewish nation and lives in and thereby "husbands" the land of Israel is committing spiritual adultery. The Torah therefore forbids non-Jews to live in the land of Israel.<sup>8</sup>)

Jacob rectified the sin of Adam; he is therefore considered himself to be a rectified version of Adam, the consummate human being.

This relates to the 130 years during which Adam consorted with liliths and spirits derived from Samael, the numerical value of whose name is also 130 [plus the *kolel*].

As we have mentioned previously, Adam separated from Eve after the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, and did not return to her until 130 years later, when they together had their third son, Seth. During this hiatus, he did not succeed in remaining celibate, but rather his sexual force was spent on succumbing to the fantasies offered him by Samael's wives, and he thus sired legions of demons who propagated the energy of selfish sensual fulfillment ("evil") throughout reality.

*Samael: samech-mem-alef-lamed: 60 + 40 + 1 + 30 + 131.*

The reason the Torah uses the word *adam* for "man" in the phrase "a man on whose skin..." instead of [the more usual] word *ish* is because the sin [that causes *tzara'at* to appear on the skin is committed] because the individual is [in a sense reliving the life] Adam.

I.e., he is succumbing to sexual temptation, as we have seen that Adam did.

The only name used to describe someone in the fullest state [of Divine consciousness] is "Israel." Before [Jacob was given this name], Samael was attached to his thigh, and he was limping because [he was struck with regard to]

<sup>6</sup> *Likutei Torah, Tazria.*

<sup>7</sup> Deuteronomy 3:11.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 7:2; Rashi *ad loc.*

the other rib that Adam had previously [lost], as it is written, “And He took one of his ribs.”<sup>9</sup> This [rib] was [made into] Eve, and not the other wife, Lilith.

As mentioned above, Jacob rectified the sin of Adam and in so doing became the perfected version of Adam (who had blemished himself spiritually by committing the primordial sin).

The purpose of Jacob’s stay with Laban was to work on rectifying Adam’s sin. As he later told Esau, Jacob “dwelt with Laban,” the word “dwelt” alluding numerically to the 613 commandments he kept in order to perfect reality.<sup>10</sup> Having done this, Jacob prepared to return to the land of Israel. Inasmuch as the land of Israel is an analog to the Garden of Eden, his return there was to be the spiritual equivalent of Adam’s return to the Garden, the restitution of reality to its pristine Divine state.

But when Jacob returned to the land of Israel (which, as we have seen, is a metaphor for marital relations) after his stay with Laban, he had to first prepare to confront Esau (another personification of Samael). The night before their encounter, he wrestled with Esau’s angel (i.e., Samael), and although he overcame him, he was left limping because “he struck his hip-socket, so Jacob’s hip-socket was dislocated.”<sup>11</sup>

Now, at the conclusion of this encounter, Esau’s angel blessed Jacob and informed him that his name would become Israel, but G-d did not actually give Jacob this second name until later (after the Jacob actually met Esau, the incident with Dinah occurred, and Jacob built an altar at Bethel).<sup>12</sup> In other words, there was some lapse of time between Jacob’s struggle with Esau’s angel and his completion of the rectification of Adam’s sin, signaled by his being renamed “Israel.”<sup>13</sup>

In other words, as Jacob was about to enter the land of Israel (an analog for marital relations) and complete the rectification of Adam’s sin, Samael came and attempted to derail him from achieving his goal. He did this by tempting him with sexual perversion, just as he had done at the dawn of history with Adam and he does whenever holy, loving marital relations are about to occur. In other words, he “struck” him with regards to his relationship with his spouse. Since Eve had been constructed out of Adam’s rib, this is tantamount to saying that Samael struck Jacob’s rib, trying to subvert the true marriage, Adam-to-Eve, with a spurious one, Adam-to-Lilith.

When Jacob was healed of this limp, it indicated that he had overcome this temptation and had earned the name “Israel.”

This is the meaning of the verse, “Therefore *she* shall be called ‘woman’ [*ishah*] for *this one* was taken from man [*ish*].”<sup>14</sup>

The emphasized words indicate that Eve is here being contrasted with someone else, namely, Lilith.

The Divine Name *Kah* is [the difference] between them, and without it, they are both fire [*esh*].

The words for “man” (*ish*: *alef-yud-shin*) and “woman” (*ishah*: *alef-shin-hei*) are very similar. Each is composed of three letters, two of which are the same as in the other word. The two common letters (*alef-shin*) spell the word for “fire,” and the two different letters (*yud* in *ish* and *hei* in *ishah*) spell the Divine Name *Kah* (*yud-hei*).

As the sages of the Talmud point out,<sup>15</sup> this means that the union of husband and wife should include the Divine presence, and the when it does not, they are not really a true man and woman but just two fires, two opposing passions.

This is why demons fly about in the air, for they are composed of the elements of fire and air.

<sup>9</sup> Genesis 2:21.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 32:5, Rashi *ad loc.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 32:26. See also v. 32.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 35:10.

<sup>13</sup> See Rashi on 33:18, that Jacob was healed of his limp before he arrived in Shechem.

<sup>14</sup> Genesis 2:23.

<sup>15</sup> *Sotah* 17a.

As we know, demons are produced by sexuality devoid of the presence of G-d, i.e., the simple fire of sensual passion expressing selfish pleasure-seeking, etc.

After this digression regarding the essence of sexual perversion, the Arizal now explains why sexual perversion causes *tzara'at*.

As to why [the skin disease] is called *tzara'at*, it is because [it comes from] Lilith, who was jealous [*tzarat ayin*].

The word for “jealous” (*tzarat ayin*, literally, “troubled of eye”) is spelled *tzadik-reish-tav ayin-yud-nun*. The latter three letter can be considered simply the spelling out of the name of the letter *ayin*, so that the whole locution becomes *tzadik-reish-tav-ayin*. These are the same letters used to spell *tzara'at*: *tzadik-reish-ayin-tav*.

She therefore kills the children of Eve, as it is written, “her rival provoked her repeatedly....”<sup>16</sup>

The word for a rival wife is *tzarah*, literally, a “troublemaker,” since in a polygamous setting it is assumed each wife will consider the other a troublemaker. Lilith considered Eve such a troublemaker, usurping her perceived husband. In her angry jealousy of Eve, she seeks to destroy Eve’s children through infant mortality, crib death, etc. (G-d forbid).

But she cannot rule over someone who sanctifies himself during marital relations, for such a person elicits a flow of seed from a supernal source, i.e., the river of the Garden of Eden. This becomes for [the married couple] a delight [*oneg*], rather than a plague [*nega*]. This is alluded to in the verse, “Happy are you who sow upon all the waters”<sup>17</sup>—[the waters] of life, referring to someone who sanctifies himself [during marital intercourse].

If marital relations are conducted in a spirit of selflessness, love, and holiness, the children produced are immune to Lilith’s machinations. The couple’s delight in each other does not degenerate into a plague.

The words for “plague” [*nega*] and “delight” [*oneg*] are composed of the same letters:

*Nega*: nun-gimel-ayin.

*Oneg*: ayin-nun-gimel.

Proper intentions during marital intercourse ensure that these letters will be ordered properly.

In contrast, for someone who does not sanctify himself [during marital relations], [his experience] becomes that of the plague. He elicits a flow of seed from the place of murky waters, the “waters of bitterness that bring curses,” as alluded to in the laws of the suspected adulteress [*sotah*].<sup>18</sup> This is why [the punishment of the suspected adulteress, when found guilty, is that] her belly swells and her leg falls off,<sup>19</sup> because she was disloyal to her husband [by accepting] the impurity of the snake.

By committing adultery, a person elicits unholy seed. This flow of seed becomes manifest as the water given to the suspected adulteress to drink; if she is guilty, it destroys her sexual organs and kills her.

<sup>16</sup> 1 Samuel 1:6.

<sup>17</sup> Isaiah 32:20.

<sup>18</sup> par. Numbers 5:22-23.

<sup>19</sup> Numbers 5:21, 27.

And therefore also, if she is proven innocent, she “sows seed” from the supernal source.<sup>20</sup>

If she was innocent, the water given to her to drink is rooted in the same source as that of seed elicited during holy intercourse. According to the sages, if the woman was infertile, the water makes her fertile; if she hitherto produced ugly children, she will henceforth produce beautiful children, and so on.<sup>21</sup>

For Eve, [the impurity of the primordial snake] turned into the blood of menstruation, which causes *tzara'at*, and her delight [*oneg*] turned into plague [*nega*]. [The process of] Eden-river-garden [became the plague].

One cause of *tzara'at* is intercourse with a menstruating woman.<sup>22</sup> During menstruation, a woman is acutely conscious of herself and her physical feelings, and therefore not capable of focusing on marital relations in a selfless, loving way. Marital relations are therefore forbidden during this time, and someone who engages in them will be affected by the woman's self-orientation, leading to *tzara'at*.

“And a river came forth from Eden to water the garden.”<sup>23</sup> The same letters that spell both “delight” [*oneg*] and “plague” [*nega*] are the initials of the three words for “Eden” [*eiden*], “river” [*nahar*], and “garden” [*gan*].

The *hei* of the name Abraham diminished itself.

G-d changed Abram's name to Abraham by adding the letter *hei*. In this context, He said, “Your name shall no longer be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you a father of a multitude of nations.”<sup>24</sup> This would be ample cause for haughtiness, but Abraham remained humble. This is alluded to by the following. In the verse, “These are the generations of heaven and earth when they were created,”<sup>25</sup> the word for “when they were created” (*behibaram*) can be permuted to spell “Abraham” (*Avraham*), indicating that the whole world was created in the merit of Abraham.<sup>26</sup> But in this very word, the *hei*—the letter that made Abram into Abraham, the person on whose merit the whole world rests—is written small.

And therefore, these four appearances of *tzara'at* come upon the haughty, the sexually perverse, and the boastful.<sup>27</sup> This is alluded to in the verse, “because the daughters of Zion have been haughty...”<sup>28</sup> The disease is called a “raised-disease” because [it comes from] haughtiness, and an “excess disease” because [it comes from] sexual perverseness, and a “bright-disease” because [it comes from having relations with a woman before she has purified herself from] the blood of menstruation. Therefore *tzara'at* comes from these [three sins].

“Excess” alludes to how a person seeks sexual fulfillment in ways other than with his spouse. “Bright” is the opposite of the darkness of blood.

This is also why it is written, “he shall be brought to the priest” in order that he quarantine him, for during his isolation he will repent, inasmuch as when he is quarantined he cannot do evil or any of the things that cause *tzara'at*. If he did not repent, the priest would declare him [impure] and he would have to “dwell outside

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* 5:28.

<sup>21</sup> Rashi on this verse.

<sup>22</sup> *Zohar* 3:33b; *Sha'ar HaGilgulim*, introduction 38; *Sha'ar HaPesukim*, *Iyov*.

<sup>23</sup> Genesis 2:10.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* 17:5.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* 2:4.

<sup>26</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 12:9.

<sup>27</sup> See *Arachin* 16a.

<sup>28</sup> Isaiah 3:16.

the camp, and announce [as he walked], ‘impure, impure!’”<sup>29</sup> [so that others would know to stay away from him].

Similarly, the souls above are quarantined by the angel Michael, the supernal priest, or by some other lesser angel, this being the meaning of the phrase, “or to one of his sons, the priests.”

But if [such a soul] is declared to suffer from *tzara’at*, woe to him, for “he must dwell alone outside the camp.” The numerical value of the word for “alone” [*badad*] is 10, meaning outside the realm of the ten *sefirot*, in the realm of evil.

*Badad*: *beit-dalet-dalet* = 2 + 4 + 4 = 10.

“And he will call, ‘impure, impure,’” meaning that he is given over to those who “wreck havoc in the field,”<sup>30</sup> each of whom is called “a man of the field,” for they are happy to be of the portion of “the man who knows how to hunt, the man of the field,”<sup>31</sup> this being the domain of Esau, may G-d preserve us.

—translated and adapted from *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>29</sup>Leviticus 13:45.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Song of Songs 2:15.

<sup>31</sup> Genesis 25:27.

## *Parashat Tazria* [fourth installment]

In this *parashah*, we are given the laws of the various skin diseases (types of *tzara'at*, usually and incorrectly translated as “leprosy”) that can render a person spiritually impure.

The first verses of these laws is: “And G-d spoke to Moses, saying, ‘A man on whose skin there is a raised-disease or an excess-disease or a bright-disease, and it turns into the plague of *tzara'at* on his flesh, he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons, the priests.’”<sup>1</sup>

Know that the word “man” refers to *Z'eir Anpin*, since [this *partzuf*] manifests the 45-Name, [the allusion to this being that 45] is the numerical value of the word for “man” [*adam*].

The four spellings-out of the Name *Havayah* manifest the four principle *partzufim*: *Abba*, *Ima*, *Z'eir Anpin*, and *Nukva*.

*Adam*: *alef-mem-dalet* = 1 + 40 + 4 = 45.

From the rear of [*Z'eir Anpin*] issue [his] two wives, *Rachel* and *Leah*. Indeed, there are three *alef*'s in the 45-Name, which produce *Leah* and *Rachel* from behind him: *Leah* from the [first,] highest *alef*, and *Rachel* from the two [other] *alef*'s, because *Rachel* begins from the chest of *Z'eir Anpin*, [as follows].

What distinguishes the 45-Name from the other spellings-out of the Name *Havayah* is the three *alef*'s used to spell out the last three letters. These three *alef*'s are seen as the source of the two feminine *partzufim* that issue from *Z'eir Anpin*, just as these *alef*'s are implicit in the Name *Havayah* and the means of expression issue from the emotions.

As we have seen previously, *Leah* and *Rachel*, the two manifestations of *Nukva*, signify the three means of expression: *Leah* is thought, while *Rachel* is speech and action. *Leah* is positioned parallel to the intellect and upper parts of the emotions of *Z'eir Anpin*, since thought is primarily used to express intellect and abstract emotion, while *Rachel* is positioned parallel to the lower emotions of *Z'eir Anpin*, which are expressed primarily through speech and action.

The upper emotions are considered to be *chesed* and *gevurah* (manifest in the body as the right and left arms) and the upper third of *tiferet* (the heart).

The [45-]Name is manifest [in *Z'eir Anpin*] as follows: The [three letters that spell] *yud* are manifest in *chochmah* of *Z'eir Anpin*; the [first *hei* used to spell the letter] *hei* is manifest in *binah*; the *alef* used to spell out the [first] *hei* is manifest in *da'at*; the [three letters used to spell] *vav* are manifest in the three thirds of *tiferet*; and the [three letters used to spell the final] *hei* are manifest in *netzach-hod-yesod*.

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 13:1-2.

simple spelling	filling	sub-sefirah of Z'eir Anpin
yud	yud	chochmah
	vav	
	dalet	
hei	hei	binah
	alef	da'at
vav	vav	tiferet
	alef	
	vav	
hei	hei	netzach-hod-yesod
	alef	

It follows that the three *alef*'s are situated on the middle axis, in *da'at-tiferet-yesod*. [Thus,] *Leah* is derived only from the [*alef* manifest in] *da'at*, while *Rachel* is derived from the other two *alef*'s. This is because [the three letters in] the spelling-out of the *vav*, *vav-alef-vav*, manifest the three thirds of *tiferet*, the second third corresponding to the *alef* of *vav-alef-vav*, and it is from this point that [the position of] *Rachel* begins.

Evidently, the *hei* used to spell out the final *hei* is seen to be manifest as *netzach* and *hod* of *Z'eir Anpin*, while the *alef* of this letter manifests *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*.

As we have seen previously, *Leah* is positioned opposite the upper half of *Z'eir Anpin*, extending down to the bottom of the upper two thirds of its *tiferet*. *Rachel* is positioned opposite the lower half of *Z'eir Anpin*, beginning at the top of the bottom third of its *tiferet*. This is because, as we have also seen, *yesod* of *Leah* covers (i.e., its consciousness contextualizes) *Z'eir Anpin* as far “down” as the upper two thirds of the latter’s *tiferet*, inclusive, inasmuch as the intellect that produces the emotions remains in the background of the *midot* only that far. Beyond that point, the *midot* become too practical, too oriented toward expression, to exist within the consciousness of the intellect. They must leave the context of *Ima* and be revealed on their own.

Thus, *Rachel* takes two *alef*'s, each of which is an aspect of [Divine] light. It follows that *Rachel* possesses two types of light. Twice the numerical value of the word for “light” [*or*] is [almost] the numerical value of the word for “house” [*bayit*] and also the numerical value of the word for “laughter” [*sechok*].

*Or*: *alef-vav-reish* = 1 + 6 + 200 = 207.

2 x 207 = 414.

*Bayit*: *beit-yud-tav*: 2 + 10 + 400 = 412.

*Sechok*: *sin-chet-vav-kuf* = 300 + 8 + 6 + 100 = 414.

[In order to arrive at the exact numerical value of] the word for “house,” we disregard the two first [letters of the two words *or*, that is, the two] *alef*'s, leaving the two sets of the remaining two letters *vav-reish*; [twice *this* is] the numerical value of the word for “house.”

*Vav-reish* = 6 + 200 = 206; 206 x 2 = 412.

This is the mystical meaning of [our sages' statement that] “since the destruction of the Holy Temple”—which is a manifestation of *Rachel*, who possesses two types of light—“it is forbidden to [fill one's mouth with] laugh[ter].”<sup>2</sup> For there is [true] laughter only when the Temple is standing, inasmuch as the numerical values of the words for “laughter” and “house” are the same [when related via twice the word for “light”].

The idiom for “Temple” is *beit ha-mikdash*, literally, “the house of the sanctuary.”

Although the numerical value of *bayit* is 412 and that of *sechok* is 414, *sechok* is two times *or* (207) and two times the last two letters of *or* (206) is *bayit* (412).

*Rachel's* diminished stature, extending only as high as *Z'eir Anpin's* chest, reflects the state of reality during the exile, when the Temple is in ruins. Since reality in this state is imperfect, it is not fitting for us to be totally happy at any time. (Hence the Jewish custom of remembering the destruction of the Temple even at happy occasions, by breaking a glass at a wedding, leaving part of a house unpainted, etc.)

Mystically, this state is indicated by the fact that the letter *alef* must be removed from the word for “light” in order for the two lights of *Rachel* (speech and action) to reach the numerical value of *bayit*. Removing the *alef* from *Rachel's* lights signifies the destruction of the Temple, since the Temple, the “house of prayer,”<sup>3</sup> the yearning of the feminine principle of creation for content given to it by the masculine principle, is a manifestation of *Rachel*. When the light of *Rachel* is lacking (because the Temple is destroyed), the “house” produced by this is less than the full value of “laughter.”

But *Z'eir Anpin* possesses all three *alef's*, signifying three complete types of light, and three times the numerical value of the word for light [*or*, 207] is the numerical value of the word *keter* [620, plus the *kolel*].

*Keter*: *kaf-tav-reish* = 20 + 400 + 200 = 620.

207 x 3 = 621.

This indicates that the *keter* of *Z'eir Anpin* is complete, while the *keter* of *Rachel* comprises only two types of light.

Every type of light is a type of *chesed*, as is known. The lights [of *Z'eir Anpin*, signified by the *alef's*,] are states of *chesed* of *binah* [i.e., *Ima*] vested in *Z'eir Anpin*. There are three aspects [to their investiture in *Z'eir Anpin*]: they are first manifest in its *da'at*; next in the second third of its *tiferet*, which is where they begin to be revealed—while above [in *da'at*], they were concealed [within *yesod* of *Ima*—this gives two aspects; and below in the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*, where they are gathered together—this gives three aspects of [the manifestation of] the states of *chesed* [of *Ima* in *Z'eir Anpin*].

These are signified by the three *alef's* in the 45-Name.

The five [times] the word “light” [is mentioned] in [the account of] the first day [of creation<sup>4</sup>] manifest the fives states of *chesed*, while the five [times] the

<sup>2</sup> See *Berachot* 31a.

<sup>3</sup> *Isaiah* 56:7.

<sup>4</sup> *Genesis* 1:1-5.

word “water” [is mentioned in the account of the second day of creation<sup>5</sup>] manifest the five states of *gevurah*, as reflected in the idiom, “the powers of [providing] rain.”<sup>6</sup>

The first day of creation manifests the first of G-d’s *midot*, *chesed*; the second day, the second of these *midot*, *gevurah*.

The second blessing of the *Amidah* is called *Gevurot*, “powers,” for it describes G-d’s powers. During the winter, the phrase “He makes the wind blow and causes the rain to fall” is added, praising G-d for providing rain. This phrase is called in the Talmud “the powers of [providing] rain,” for in order for rain to be beneficial, it must come down gently, meaning that the flow of water has to be restrained; this is an act of *gevurah*. Hence, the five times the word “water” is mentioned in account of the second day of creation signify five states of *gevurah*, even though in general, water signifies *chesed*.

Here we have additional proof that the lights are types of *chesed*, as stated above.

*Leah* possesses only a third of a *keter*, i.e., one light, so therefore, the states of severe judgment in *Leah* are more numerous—double, in fact—than they are in *Rachel*. This is especially true since [the one *alef* manifest in *Leah*] is a concealed light, while in *Rachel* the two lights are revealed.

*Leah*, as we saw, is derived from the letter *alef* used to spell out the first *hei* of the Name *Havayah* when it has the numerical value of 45. Since this light—the light of the five states of *chesed* of *Ima* as they are manifest (first) in *da’at* of *Z’eir Anpin*—is derived from the intellect, whose job it is to be judgmental in its process of analysis, the *partzuf* it produces, *Leah*, is more judgmental than *Rachel*.

Now, these lights [of *Z’eir Anpin*, originating in *Ima*,] do not issue outward in order to produce *Rachel* and *Leah* until the mentality of *Abba* enters them also. For the mentality of *Abba* repels the forces of evil, preventing them from entering and latching onto *binah*’s [i.e., *Ima*’s] states of *chesed*.

The mentality of *Abba* is the pristine, intense experience of the initial insight. By reliving the purity of this experience after the development of *binah*, the development process is inoculated against infection from the forces of evil that seek to corrupt the intellect-emotion process and steer it in the wrong direction.

These [states of *chesed*] constitute the main aspect of the Tree of Knowledge [of good and evil], from which the forces of evil derive sustenance, as we have explained elsewhere.

The five states of *chesed* and the five states of *gevurah* within *da’at* are the propensities toward acceptance and rejection that are implied in any emotional connection to the abstract idea emerging from *chochmah* and *binah*. They are thus the initial source of good and evil.

When the light of *Abba* is not revealed, having been hidden, then, in the place of the three *alef*’s that produce *Leah* and *Rachel*, three types of *tzara’at* issue: the raised-disease, the excess-disease, and the bright-disease. This is the source of all [the forces of evil’s] sustenance, and their presence prevents the issue of the *partzufim* of *Leah* and *Rachel*.

The raised-disease is the counter-principle of the first *alef*. Thus, it is called the *raised-disease*, for it is the highest.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 1:6-8.

<sup>6</sup> *Berachot* 26b, etc.

Corresponding, as it does, to the highest of the three *alef* s.

The excess-disease and the bright-disease are the counter-principles of the two lights of *Rachel*.

This allows us to understand what is written in the *Zohar*<sup>7</sup> the Aramaic translation of “the plague of *tzara’at*” is “a closing plague.” It means that this “disease” is in fact holy, and expels the impurity that has infected the house or the person. It is a manifestation of the holy power of judgment. This is the implication of the word “the plague of.” What causes this [manifestation of holy judgment and power of repulsion]? “*tzara’at*,” meaning: “the closing off of the supernal light, so that it not be revealed” [in the words of the *Zohar*]<sup>8</sup>—this is what is called *tzara’at*. Therefore the person must be brought to Aaron the priest, in order to elicit and reveal [again] that supernal light that had been closed off.

These are the words of the *Zohar*. The explanation is as follows:

The “supernal light” that has been closed off is the mentality of *Abba* that is not revealed in *Z’eir Anpin*. This is what causes *tzara’at*, i.e., the latching on of the powers of evil.

This is why the sages state that “one who suffers from *tzara’at* is likened to a dead person.”<sup>8</sup> As we have already explained in our discussion of the rites of mourning, death causes the mentality of *Abba* to depart, as it is written, “they die, and they are [left] without *chochmah*,”<sup>9</sup> for “*chochmah* gives life to those who possess it.”<sup>10</sup> When it is removed, there is death; when “they die,” it is because of the lack of *chochmah*.

[To be continued...]

—translated and adapted from *Sefer HaLikutim* and *Sha’ar HaMitzvot*

<sup>7</sup> 3:47a.

<sup>8</sup> *Nedarim* 64a.

<sup>9</sup> Job 4:21.

<sup>10</sup> Ecclesiastes 7:12.

## *Parashat Metzora*

The portion of the Torah for this week begins with a discussion of the purification rites a person afflicted with *tzara'at* must undergo when he is cured. One of the features of this rite is that “the priest shall take two live, ritually pure birds.... The priest shall order one of the birds slaughtered over fresh water in an earthen vessel. He shall take the live bird...and dip...the live bird in the blood of the bird that has been slaughtered.... He shall then set the live bird free in the open country.”<sup>1</sup>

As we explained previously, the affliction of *tzara'at* is not simply a medical condition, but reflects a spiritual-mental affliction, a faulty attitude in life. This attitude results from the intrusion of some form of unG-dly ideas or perspective into a person's way of thinking, that eventually renders him depressed, negative, anti-social or afflicted by some other negative emotion. The purification process, then, must reflect how the individual disassociates himself with these negative ways of thinking.

This negativity or egocentricity is unabashedly called “evil” in Kabbalah. The imagery used for it is that of a “shell,” a coarse, inedible husk that surrounds the fruit or meat of the nut. The image is significant on two counts: Firstly, the fact that the shell cannot be eaten, obstructs the fruit, and has to be removed indicates that egocentricity has no place in the Jew's life. Secondly, the fact that the shell does serve to protect the fruit while it is ripening indicates that, in the context of self-preservation, the ego does serve a purpose. In any case, central to understanding the purification process from egocentric negativity is the Kabbalah's “topology” of evil. It is this subject which will form the bulk of the passage from the Arizal's writings cited here.

We will now discuss the subject of the shells [i.e., forms of evil] associated with the four worlds, *Atzilut*, *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*. We will base this exposition on the following passage from the holy *Zohar*:<sup>2</sup> “We have been taught that there is a certain world above; when the herald goes forth, that world trembles and shakes, and there emerge from it two birds. Their abode is under the tree wherein is the appearance of life and death. One bird flies northward, and the other southward; one at dawn and the other at dusk.”

In order to understand this passage, we have to understand a number of other things first.

First of all, just as there are four worlds—*Atzilut*, *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*—in the realm of holiness, so are there four impure worlds.

The *Atzilut* of impurity is also known as *kelipat nogah*, the “shiny shell,” which although not holy, is not entirely evil either. It is neutral, and whatever is part of it can be assimilated into holiness if utilized properly. The lower three worlds of impurity are the three entirely impure shells, which cannot be assimilated into holiness.

In the world of *Atzilut*, there are shells only opposite the backs of *Z'eir Anpin* and its *Nukva*. There is thus evil at the level of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, but not at the level of *Abba* and *Ima*.

In the idealized world of *Atzilut*, evil cannot attack the intellect (*Abba* and *Ima*). This is because the objectivity of intellect precludes any possibility of evil “convincing” it to succumb to its enticements. Ideally, then, a

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 14:4-7.

<sup>2</sup> 1:217b.

healthy intellect should be a person's first defence against evil. As long as he is thinking clearly, there is no way a person can fall into sin.

Even at the level of emotions and emotional expression (*Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*), evil can attack only from the "back." Only when the emotions are oriented improperly (i.e., towards things other than Divinity) and a person begins to love, fear, etc. things other than G-d, does he become susceptible to evil's machinations.

In the lower worlds, however, where the consciousness of G-d is not as pervasive as it is in the world of *Atzilut*, we find that the shells exist on successively higher levels.

In the world of *Beriah*, there are shells opposite the back of *Ima* besides those opposite the backs of *Z'eir Anpin* and its *Nukva*.

In the world of *Yetzirah*, there are shells opposite the backs of *Abba*, *Ima*, *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*.

In the world of *Asiyah*, there are shells opposite all five *partzufim*: *Arich Anpin*, *Abba*, *Ima*, *Z'eir Anpin*, and *Nukva*.

Thus, in the world of *Asiyah*, all facets of the personality are susceptible to the inroads of evil.

As we have explained elsewhere, there are five *partzufim* in each of the four worlds of the realm of holiness. Every *partzuf* has associated with it seven palaces, in which exist the ten *sefirot* of that *partzuf*.

A "palace" is, in this context, simply a setting in which the *sefirot* may operate.

Furthermore, we have also explained that these palaces are in fact twice seven: seven male palaces and seven female palaces. Just as the female's full stature extends only as high as the male's chest, so are the [male and female] palaces like this: the female palaces begin at the level of the male's chest and extend downward to the level of his feet. This applies to all the four worlds.

As we have explained previously, the dichotomization of reality into male and female was necessary in order to give full play to two necessary but divergent focuses in achieving the purpose of creation. The male is the abstract awareness of creation's source (G-d); the female is the drive to manifest that source in the reality. The male "needs" the female in order to actualize its abstract inspiration; the female "needs" the male to inspire and sustain the direction of its drive toward actualization.

The implication of this is that each facet, male and female, is given a personality (or in Kabbalistic terms: a sefirotic makeup) tailored to its focus. The female is therefore depicted as having its head on the level of the male's heart; in other words, the female intellect is *a priori* oriented toward thinking of ways to actualize what the male has already emotionally reacted to. Were the female's head to be on the same level as the male's (i.e., that of abstract inspiration), it could not focus on its intended goal.

This also explains why women are generally shorter than men.

The palaces of the shells of the four worlds are similarly structured, there being two sets of 7 palaces [for each *partzuf*]. We might therefore assume that the seven palaces of the *Z'eir Anpin* of the shells would be opposite the seven palaces of *Z'eir Anpin* of holiness, but this is not the case. The reason is that the shells do not touch the three first *sefirot* of any *partzuf*. Therefore, it follows that the full stature of all seven impure palaces of the evil *Z'eir Anpin* reaches only as high as that of the six lower palaces of the holy *Z'eir Anpin*. There is no shell opposite the seventh, highest palace of the holy *Z'eir Anpin*, i.e., [the palace associated with] its

first triad of *sefirot*. The same is true of all the evil palaces in each of the four worlds.

The *partzufim* of evil are also shorter than the *partzufim* of holiness, although for an entirely different reason. Here, the shorter stature (for both male and female evil *partzufim*) indicates that evil is, as we said, unable to attack intellect. Although the evil *partzufim* of course possess their own intellect (since by definition a *partzuf* is a full array of *sefirot*), their intellect is not abstract. It is *a priori* biased towards evil, that is, towards denial or at least de-emphasizing Divinity and/or its significance. Were evil to possess abstract intellect, it would not be evil, since abstract, unbiased intellect cannot but acknowledge the existence and omni-relevance of G-d.

The first triad of *sefirot*, *chochmah-binah-da'at* is that of the intellect.

Still, it should be kept in mind that even though the shells of the world of *Beriah* cannot ascend to the level of the first sefirotic triad of *Beriah*, the evil palaces of the world of *Atzilut* can prevail and be manifest from their exalted height [down into the world of *Beriah*]. The same is true of the other worlds.

Just as all the holy *partzufim* possess intellect, so do all the impure *partzufim*, both male and female. The difference, however, is this: the male and female evil *partzufim* possess only two “brains” [i.e., *chochmah* and *binah*], while the male holy *partzufim* possess three: *chochmah*, *binah*, and *da'at*. The holy female *partzufim* also only possess two “brains” [i.e., *chochmah* and *binah*], for, as we are taught, “women’s *da'at* is light.”<sup>3</sup>

*Chochmah* is the flash of insight that pierces through the veil of the sub- or super-conscious into the conscious mind. It is an ephemeral experience, since by its very nature an insight is foreign to the mental structure into which it is introduced. Being a foreign entity, if it is not in some way integrated into the mind, it will simply disappear and be forgotten.

Therefore, the task of *binah* is to integrate this new insight into the mental structures and thought patterns the individual already possesses. This is a process of translation and evaluation: translating the insight into familiar terms and evaluating the existing mental structures and ideas in terms of the new insight. Does this new insight confirm or contradict what I already know and believe, and if so, to what extent? And so on. *Binah* thus *distinguishes* (Hebrew: *bein*) between reality as reflected in the insight and as conceived of prior to the insight, and *reconstructs* (Hebrew: *boneh*) the person’s mentality in the wake of the insight.

Still, all this is abstract mental activity. It is the function of the third component of the intellect, *da'at*, to make this new picture of reality relevant and meaningful in the person’s day-to-day life. Now that I understand reality in a new, higher way, what does that say about how I have been living my life and how I should be living it from now on?

We now begin to see the essential difference between good and evil, or more precisely, holiness and mundaneness. The drive of holy intellect is always to seek the relevance of insight, understanding, and knowledge. The intellect of evil has no such drive. It is entirely content to focus on the experience of the insight, the “wow” or “high” without “polluting” it with moral concerns or relevance. For it, then, life is a succession of sterile experiences, titillating in and of themselves, but which produce no lasting fruit or change in the individual’s or society’s life.

Women are also not granted *a priori* this third component of intellect, since as we said, their innate intellect is already fully “subjectified” and oriented towards translating abstractness into relevance. Women acquire *da'at* fully when they marry, and can then combine their own intellects with and fully benefit from their husbands’ more abstract intellects.

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<sup>3</sup> *Shabbat* 33b.

This concept is alluded to in the *Zohar*:<sup>4</sup> “the ‘other god’ [i.e., evil] is emasculated, and has no desire to procreate; it does not multiply or bear fruit, for were it to bear fruit, it would turn the whole world into chaos.” The explanation of this is in accordance with the verse, “Ephraim shall say: ‘What more have I to do with idols? When I respond and look to Him, I become like a leafy cypress.’ Your fruit is provided by Me.”<sup>5</sup>

Forsaking idolatry, the evil orientation, is thus associated with fecundity.

In other words, the supernal coupling of the holy *Z’eir Anpin* and its *Nukva* produces fruits, i.e., the souls of Israel. The *nefesh* [“innate life force”] issues from the *Nukva* directly. The levels of *neshamah* [“breath of life”] and *ruach* [“spirit”], however, originate in the male [*Z’eir Anpin*], which couples with the *Nukva*. The seminal drop transferred through intercourse comes from the brain of *da’at*, for it is this brain that reconciles and bridges the males’ other two brains, *chochmah* and *binah*. No coupling is possible without *da’at*. This is why the Bible refers to intercourse as “knowledge,” as in the verses: “And Elkanah knew his wife Chanah,”<sup>6</sup> “no man had known her,”<sup>7</sup> and many such others. The reason is because without *da’at* there can be no intercourse at all.

As we said, *da’at* is the subjectification of the intellect. This is the element of the female within the male, i.e., the aspect of his intellect that propels him toward making his abstractness relevant and concrete. It is therefore the point in his mind that allows him to “get out of himself” and be sensitive to his other half, or spouse, and particularly to develop an appreciation for her innate drive towards actualization and concretization of Divinity in the real world.

In the realm of evil, however, there is no *da’at*, even in the male. They possess the other two brains [*chochmah* and *binah*], but they lack the third brain, *da’at*. There is therefore no concept of coupling, and they are, as it were, emasculated, unable to procreate.

It is known that the term “other god” refers to the male aspect of evil, as is clear from the usage of the *Zohar* in many passages, particularly on the verse “You shall possess no foreign god.”<sup>8</sup> That is why it calls evil “the ‘other god’ emasculated, having no desire to procreate.” The female shell obviously cannot be called “emasculated,” but only “frigid,” as our sages said with regard to the great serpents.<sup>9</sup>

It is said that G-d castrated the male primordial sea-creature, the Leviathan and killed the female in order to prevent them from procreating and their species overrunning the world. In contrast, when faced with the same problem regarding the primordial beast, the Behemoth, He castrated the male but only made the female frigid. The reason why he had to kill the female Leviathan and not simply make it frigid, the Talmud states, is because fish mate even when they are cool.

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<sup>4</sup> 2:103a

<sup>5</sup> Hosea 14:9.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Samuel 1:19.

<sup>7</sup> Genesis 24:16.

<sup>8</sup> Psalms 81:10; *Zohar* 2:243a.

<sup>9</sup> *Bava Batra* 74b; *Zohar* 2:273.

In any case, it follows from this that the Jewish people derive their souls from the realm of holiness. Their *nefesh* originates from *malchut* directly; their *ruach* and *neshamah* from the male, which possesses *da'at*. Non-Jews, however, possess only the level of *nefesh*, and theirs originates in the *Nukva* of the shells. They possess no *ruach* or *neshamah* from the male side, for the male shell is emasculated, i.e., possesses no *da'at*-brain through which it could couple with the female and produce a *ruach* or *neshamah*. This is the meaning of “the ‘other god’ is emasculated, and produces no fruit,” i.e., no *ruach* or *neshamah* originating in the male.

The fundamental difference between Jews and non-Jews is that non-Jew is charged with keeping the world running smoothly, civilizing it, populating it, and cultivating it, while the Jew is intended to provide the proper Divine direction and inspiration for humanity. Therefore, the non-Jew's intellect is inherently this-world oriented. For this reason as well, non-Jewish culture is inherently “sterile,” i.e., oriented towards diversion and stimulation rather than moral advancement or holiness.

The [non-Jewish] *nefesh*, in contrast issues directly from the evil *Nukva*. This is the mystical meaning of the verse: “Also the absence of *da'at* makes a *nefesh* that is not good.”<sup>10</sup> The souls of the gentiles, which originate in the shells, which are called “evil” or “not good,” are produced without the aid of *da'at*, which is why they also do not possess a *ruach* or *neshamah*.

This is also the inner meaning of our sages' statement: “It is forbidden to pity someone who possesses no *da'at*.”<sup>11</sup> Someone who possesses no *da'at* is rooted in the shells (which possess no *da'at*). If someone pities such a person, he causes G-d's attribute of mercy to extend over evil (which possesses no *da'at*).

Now, all these different brains in the realm of evil are identified by name in the book *Adam Yashar*. The two brains of the evil *Z'eir Anpin* of *Atzilut* are termed the “two spies,”<sup>12</sup> as mentioned in the *Zohar*.<sup>13</sup> The two brains of the evil *Nukva* of *Atzilut* are called “the two birds.” We see that the Hebrew word for bird [*tzipor*] is considered feminine in many places in the Bible....<sup>14</sup>

As the Arizal goes on to discuss, the purification rites of the individual afflicted with *tzara'at* involves the ritual of the two birds because these two birds signify the mentality of female evil. This egocentric self-serving mentality, that of orientation away from G-dliness and making relevance into the end-all and be-all of life, living life only for the high, the experience, is the root of *tzara'at*. Our sages tell us that *tzara'at* afflicts a person because he has indulged in slander, a vicious indication that his egocentricity has so overtaken him that he is ready to make another person into a mere subject of conversation, without regard for his feelings or reputation. He must therefore be ostracized, sent out of the camp, until his condition passes. As part of his purification he must take two birds, the chirping personifications of pointless and self-serving indulgence in relevance and experience, and kill one and set the other free. In this way he utterly dissociates himself from this evil, and is ready to begin his life anew in the image of holiness.

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<sup>10</sup> Proverbs 19:2.

<sup>11</sup> *Berachot* 33a.

<sup>12</sup> Joshua 2.

<sup>13</sup> 2:178b, 3:60b.

<sup>14</sup> E.g., Deuteronomy 14:11, Leviticus 14:7.

—translated and adapted from *Eitz Chaim*

## *Parashat Acharei Mot*

The portion of the Torah read this week opens with the description of the rituals of Yom Kippur practiced in the Holy Temple. Usually, G-d's commandments are prefaced by the introduction. "And G-d spoke to Moses, saying..." In this instance, however, a time frame is given for this communication: "And G-d spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they approached G-d and died. And G-d said to Moses..."<sup>1</sup> This refers to the incident described in *parashat Shemini*<sup>2</sup> in which Nadav and Avihu, the two elder sons of Aaron, were killed by a flame of fire that burst forth from the Holy of Holies and entered their nostrils when they offered incense that G-d had not commanded them to. In the following passage, the Arizal discusses why the two sons of Aaron died.

Regarding Nadav and Avihu, let us note that the letters that spell the name Nadav [*nun-dalet-veit*] may be rearranged to spell "four sons" [*ben dalet*; the letter *dalet* also signifies the number four]. Thus, his name alludes to the "four sons of which the Torah spoke": Adam and his three sons [Cain, Abel, and Seth].

In the course of its discussion of the commandment to retell the story of the exodus, the Passover Haggadah points out that this commandment is phrased in the Torah four different ways. The four ways are seen as responses to four different types of Jewish children; the story must be retold to each child in accordance with his level of understanding and approach to Judaism.

Here, the Arizal uses the phrase from the Haggadah "The Torah spoke of four sons" to refer to the four male members of Adam's immediate family mentioned in the Torah. (We are told that Adam had more sons besides these three, but they are not mentioned by name and are therefore not considered spiritual archetypes.)

All four were included in Nadav and Avihu, for the two of them were considered one person inasmuch as they were not married.

Since Adam and his sons sinned, their souls needed to be reincarnated so their sins could be rectified in their next lifetime. Nadav and Avihu were the collective embodiment of these four primordial souls. The sages of the Talmud say that an unmarried individual is only half a person, so since these two were not married, they together were counted as one individual.

The name Avihu also alludes to Adam, since it may be split into the two words "he is my father" [*avi hu*; i.e., my first progenitor].

These two committed the same sin that Adam committed. This blemish was that of "strange fire," i.e., a foreign woman. This refers to the first Eve, Lilith, who copulated with Adam before [the real] Eve. This is why Adam said [about Eve]: "this one shall be called 'woman'"<sup>3</sup>—"this one," and not the other one.

Instead of rectifying the sin of Adam and his sons, Nadav and Avihu repeated it. A sin causes a "blemish" or imperfection in the spiritual worlds. This imperfection has repercussions throughout all creation and must therefore be rectified.

The Torah refers to the incense that Nadav and Avihu offered as a "strange fire." The linguistic and thematic connected between "fire" and "woman" will be explained presently.

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 16:1-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 10:1-2.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 2:23.

Lilith<sup>4</sup> is a female demon. Just as an angel is the personification of some holy emotion, a demon is the personification of some evil emotion. In this case, Lilith (whose name is related to the Hebrew word for “night,” *lailah*) is the personification of man’s sexual lust as divorced from any context of true love or desire to increase G-dliness in this world. In other words: raw, self-indulgent, self-serving sensual pleasure. Man is intended to indulge in sexual pleasure as a spiritual pursuit that gives pleasure to his wife, makes him into a more holy person, and increases the Divine image on earth (ideally by resulting in children). When instead, he engages in sexual release simply for the “high” he enjoys from it, he is said to be copulating with Lilith. Although he does not intend to procreate by this union, he does so anyway, for every act of man has its repercussions on some level. The semen he expels “impregnates” Lilith, and she “bears” for him “demon-children,” i.e., negative, abusive, and evil energy, which spreads evil throughout the world.

According to the Midrash,<sup>5</sup> Lilith was Adam’s first wife, created out of the earth just as he was. She insisted on lying on top of Adam during intercourse, and when he refused, insisting that it was more proper for him to lay on her, she left him and was transmuted into a demon.

We mentioned previously that the dichotimization of mankind into male and female was G-d’s way of assuring proper balance between the male drive to retreat into abstract unity with the Divine and female drive to manifest G-dliness in this world. The glue which holds these two opposite drives together, enabling them to rectify reality properly, is the attraction or passion they have for each other, each one sensing that the other one is its true complement and completion. Allegorically, then, Lilith’s insistence on lying on top of Adam would be the tendency for this attraction to seek to become an end in itself. Sexuality and sexual passion can promote and actualize a man’s or woman’s innate Divine potential as nothing else can, but the fascination with its very power can divert a person’s focus from its true purpose and cause him to focus instead on the ecstatic experience itself.

Although Lilith is not mentioned explicitly in the Bible, she is alluded to by the way Adam reacts to Eve when he first sees her. Calling Eve “this one” implies that there had been another one who had not been worthy of being called “woman.”

Our sages alluded to this when they said that Adam stretched his membrane in order to cover his reproductive organ.<sup>6</sup> This is a euphemism meaning that he copulated with his first “Eve” [i.e., Lilith], and sired many evil spirits and demons through her.

As we have explained previously, the purpose of circumcision is to reduce the raw, sensual titillation of intercourse and increase the sensitivity to the organ to that of the person’s partner. In this way, copulation becomes less of an exercise in self-indulgence and more an expression of true love and bonding (which, of course, serves ultimately to enhance the sensual side of intercourse far beyond what is possible when it is treated as a selfish, epicurean thrill). Stretching the membrane over the glans, then, indicates the individual’s rejection of this higher vision of sexual relations in favor of the base, selfish, sensual high it can provide. Again, this is the sort of sexuality symbolized by Lilith.

This was Adam’s “strange fire.” For both man and woman are essentially fire when they lack the Divine Name *Kah* [yud-hei].

“Fire” here means desire or passion. The Hebrew words for “man” [*alef-yud-shin*] and “woman” [*alef-shin-hei*] are grammatically based on the word for “fire” [*alef-shin*]; the word for “man” includes an added *yud* and the word for “woman” an added *hei*. The two added letters, *yud* and *hei*, together spell the Divine Name *Kah* [yud-hei, pronounced “yah,” as in “hallelujah”].

In other words, man and woman are fully man and woman only when together they manifest the Divine Presence. Without this, they remain nothing but two separate cauldrons of unbridled passion.

When, however, the Divine Name *Kah* is amongst them, this is their true union and true fire.

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 34:14; *Eiruv* 100b; *Shabbat* 151b; *Bava Batra* 73b; *Nidah* 24b.

<sup>5</sup> *Alfa Beita d’Ben Sira*.

<sup>6</sup> *Sanhedrin* 38b.

When the G-d is present in the couple's sexual relations, their union is not superficial, ephemeral, and merely physical, but a true spiritual bond that forges them into one, complete person. As we said, the fire of passion in this proper union between husband and wife enhances their physical passion for each other far beyond what is possible in the lack of this spiritual dimension.

However, when the Divine Name *Kah* is removed, all that remains is the “strange fire.”<sup>7</sup> This is what Adam [originally] preferred.

Nadav and Avihu committed this same error, [and it was very grave] since there were none in their generation that could compare to them.

Witnessing the profound revelations of G-d that accompanied the instillation rites of the Tabernacle, Nadav and Avihu, like the rest of the Jewish people, were overcome with emotions of holy ecstasy. As it is written: “And Moses and Aaron went into the Tent of Meeting, and came out and blessed the people. And the glory of G-d appeared to all the people. And a fire went forth from before G-d and devoured the burnt offering and fat parts that had been placed on the altar, and all the people saw it, and they sang in ecstasy, and fell on their faces.”<sup>8</sup>

Inspiration, upliftment, and ecstasy are, of course, essential ingredients in a person's spiritual life. They are, however, only half of the story. Their true fulfillment comes when the person uses his inspiration to make the world a better, holier place. Instead of viewing this ecstasy as only one side of the coin of Divine service, however, Nadav and Avihu sought to remain in it. To use the idiom of Ezekiel 1:14, they wanted to “run” but not “return.” The sacrifice they chose to express this, incense, is the most “spiritual” of all the sacrifices.

On a somewhat more refined level, this is essentially the same mistake (or “sin”) that Adam made when he opted originally for Lilith. Self-indulgent sexuality has its own ecstasy, and it could even be called a “spiritual” ecstasy. But because it is ecstasy for its own sake, it is ultimately egocentric and “evil.” Therefore, Nadav and Avihu were punished just as Adam was punished. Their punishment, like all Divine punishments, was not a mere chastisement or vengeance but a direct result and outcome of their misdeed: They sought the ecstasy of the soul and shunned the experience of life in the body, so their souls left their bodies to rejoin their Divine origin, leaving their bodies lifeless corpses.

They also sinned by [offering sacrifices] while drunk.

Immediately after their death, G-d commanded Aaron not to enter the sanctuary precincts while drunk.<sup>9</sup> This, our sages state, alludes to the fact that his two sons died because they were performing the sanctuary service while drunk.

Adam sinned this way, also, for, as our sages say, Eve squeezed grapes and gave him [the juice] to drink together with its dregs.<sup>10</sup> [The juice and its dregs] were [the fruit of] the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

The primordial sin—partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil—is seen in the eyes of our sages not as one, specific act, but a conglomerate of several. The common denominator of these is the aggrandizement of the ego, the transformation of man from a pure channel of Divinity into the world into a self-oriented agent with his own egocentric agenda.

There are four opinions as to what the tree of knowledge of good and evil was (interestingly, there is no opinion that it was an apple, although the Garden of Eden is spoken of as being an apple orchard). According to one opinion, it was a vine, and Eve squeezed wine out of the grapes to give to Adam.

The dregs of the wine are the elements of ego within the experience of ecstasy, which poison the experience and make it self-serving. The tree of knowledge of good and evil is the admixture of pure experience with that of ego. In everything he does, man may choose either to seek his own self-gratification or selfless dedication to

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<sup>7</sup> *Sotah* 17a.

<sup>8</sup> *Leviticus* 9:23-24.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 10:8-11.

<sup>10</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 19:5.

elevating the world. By choosing self-gratification, man increases the opaqueness of the world to G-dliness; by choosing pure experience, he renders reality more transparent, revealing more of its innate Divinity.

He chose not to drink the good wine, which has no dregs, and “gladdens G-d and man.”<sup>11</sup> This wine is spoken of as “gladdening G-d,” for the Name here used for G-d [*Elokim*] signifies severe judgement, and [drinking good wine] transforms it into gladness. The other, [impure] wine, is called “a cup...of wine fully mixed...the wicked ones of the world will drink and suck its dregs.”<sup>12</sup>

Choosing to relate to reality not through the clouded lens of ego renders the world more fit to receive Divine blessing. It thus figuratively transforms G-d’s attribute of judgment and limitation to that of benevolence and happiness.

Adam sinned additionally in wanting to draw all the nations under the wings of the Divine Presence. This caused all the suffering that befell him and has befallen us throughout our exile. Moses also erred this way, and therefore had to die in the desert. King Solomon also erred by encouraging conversion.

As we have explained previously, the psychology and innate orientation of the non-Jew is that of sustaining perfecting the functioning of the world. This is their role in the big picture of making the world into a home for G-d. The problem is that they, too, suffered a fall in the wake of the primordial sin, and this altruistic drive is manifest in most people as the drive for a more material and comfortable standard of living.

Adam, Moses, and King Solomon all erred in thinking that if the non-Jews were converted to Judaism, the Jewish drive for spirituality would combine with the non-Jewish drive for physical perfection. This would, they thought, have the double effect of objectifying the Jewish spiritual drive, keeping it from degenerating into egocentric ecstasy, and spiritualizing the non-Jewish physical drive, keeping it from degenerating into egocentric materialism. However, they each erred in their own way, not realizing that for this to work the non-Jew must initiate the process by himself.

Let us return now to our original discussion. As we said, Adam sinned with his “strange fire” and by drinking the wine with the dregs. These dregs were [personified] by the [fallen] non-Jews who sought to cling to him.

As we said, the non-Jewish psyche suffered a fall with the primordial sin as well, becoming overtly egocentric. In this state, they are symbolized by the dregs of egocentricity that spoil the wine of pure experience as well as by Lilith, the demon of egocentric sexual thrill.

Nadav and Avihu were also drunk. These two sins [“strange fire” and inebriation] are alluded to in the first verse of this Torah-reading. The initials of the words for “after the death of the two” [*acharei mot shenei*, *alef-mem-shin*] may be rearranged to spell “from fire” [*mei-eish*, *mem-alef-shin*]. The final letters of the three words, “the two sons of Aaron” [*shenei benei Aharon*, *yud-yud-nun*] spell “wine” [*yayin*]. If the two words “death of the two” [*mot shenei*] are read backwards [*yud-nun-shin-tav-vav-mem*], they contain the word for “they drank” [*shatu*, *shin-tav-vav*]. This verse thus alludes to both sins.

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<sup>11</sup> An elision of Judges 9:13 and Proverbs 3:4.

<sup>12</sup> Psalms 75:9.

It follows that they attempted to rectify the sin of Adam, but they instead made the same mistake as he, and therefore died. They were each half of Adam's body, so to speak, and they effectively died two deaths: their own and his [again].

[This, too, is alluded to in this verse.] "...after the death of the two sons of Aaron"—this refers to their death in their present incarnation. "...when they approached G-d"—i.e., aforesaid, "...and they died"—in the time of Adam.

This is also why Moses comforted Aaron by saying that Nadav and Avihu were greater than either of them. For they were incarnations of the father [Adam], while Moses and Aaron were incarnations of Abel [Adam's son].

—translated and adapted from *Sefer HaLikutim*

## *Parashat Acharei Mot*

### [second installment]

In this week's *parashah*, we are told that as part of the Yom Kippur sacrificial ritual in the Tabernacle/Temple, the high priest must take two goats "and place them before G-d at the entrance of the tent of meeting. Aaron will place lots on the two goats, one lot for G-d and one lot for Azazel. Aaron will take the goat on whom the lot fell for G-d and make it a sin-offering. The goat on whom fell the lot for Azazel will be positioned live before G-d to make atonement on it [and] to send it to Azazel into the desert."<sup>1</sup> The plain meaning of Azazel is a cliff; the goat sent to Azazel was thrown off a desert cliff to its death.<sup>2</sup>

The mystical significance of Azazel is Samael<sup>3</sup> and the *Nukva* of the luminous [shell], to whom the goat is given. They [Samael and the evil *Nukva*], the male and female [principles of evil] are also called "the depths of the sea"—what remains after the dross of the kings [of Edom] are purified—and "the shadow of death."

As we have seen previously, Samael is the name given to the evil *partzuf* of *Z'vir Anpin*. Just as the *partzufim* exist in each of the four holy worlds, so do they exist in each of the four realms of evil. The four realms of evil are called "shells," contrasting with the fruit or meat of the nut within the shell that signifies the holy realms. The significance of this imagery is that just as the shell obscures the fruit within it, is inedible and must be discarded, so does evil obscure the power of holiness in the world; we must break through it and reject it in order to reveal goodness. On the other hand, just as the shell protects the fruit within it until it is ripe, so does evil (i.e., egocentricity) serve the purpose of protecting the good within it until it is ripe.

Three of the four realms of evil are totally unable to be assimilated. The fourth realm is neutral, meaning that although it is *a priori* evil, it is evil only inasmuch as it is not oriented by nature toward G-d. If it is used for holy purposes, however, it can be absorbed and elevated into holiness. Conversely, if it is used for evil purposes, it descends into and becomes part of the three unholy realms. This neutral realm of evil is called the "luminous shell."

These four realms of evil are all alluded to in the vision of Ezekiel: "I saw, and behold, there was [1] a *stormy wind* coming from the north, [2] a *great cloud*, and [3] a *flashing fire*, and [4] a *luminescence* surrounding it..."<sup>4</sup>

The "depths of the sea" refers to the verse, "He will return, He will have mercy on us; He will conquer our iniquities and cast all their sins into the *depths of the sea*."<sup>5</sup> The phrase "the shadow of depth" refers (among others) to the verse, "Even though I walk through the valley of the *shadow of death*, I will fear no evil; Your rod and Your staff comfort me."<sup>6</sup> As we will see, the Hebrew for these two phrases consists of the same letters.

The "kings of Edom" refers, as we have seen previously, to the *sefirot* of the world of *Tohu*, which collapsed. The portions of these *sefirot* that were refined enough to be assimilated into holiness in the subsequently constructed world of *Tikun* became the *sefirot* of that world, while those elements that were too crass to be so assimilated became the realms of evil.

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 16:7-10.

<sup>2</sup> Rashi on 16:8, 10.

<sup>3</sup> It is customary not to pronounce the names of the powers of evil.

<sup>4</sup> Ezekiel 1:4.

<sup>5</sup> Micah 7:19.

<sup>6</sup> Psalms 23:4.

[This evil] is transformed into the defending counsel [for the Jews on *Yom Kippur*] by virtue of the good present within it, as explained in the *Zohar*.<sup>7</sup>

This process will be explained here shortly.

Now, these two goats are [mystically] the equivalent of the two spies, *chochmah* and *binah* of the evil *Z'eir Anpin* of *Atzilut*, as mentioned there.<sup>8</sup>

We have stated previously that the two spies Joshua sent to spy out the land of Israel correspond to *chochmah* and *binah* of the evil *Z'eir Anpin* (i.e., Samael).<sup>9</sup>

The [goat/spy] of *chochmah* is [*a priori*] more sweetened; this is why one lot is for G-d. In contrast, the second [goat/spy], which is sent to die, manifests *binah* of [the evil] *Z'eir Anpin*.

Since the experience of *chochmah* is selflessness, there is some good in it even in a non-holy context. For example, if a person is laboring over some mathematical problem and is totally absorbed in thought over it, he is not focused on G-d, but neither is he focused on himself. The very fact that he is at that moment not focused on himself makes the experience one that can be transformed into holiness, if, say, the individual remembers or realizes that mathematics is, after all, our way of describing G-d's wisdom as it has been imprinted in nature.

*Binah*, in contrast, is the experience of self. The insight of *chochmah* is evaluated and analyzed in the context of the individual's personal world-view he has developed during his life. If this is done in an evil context, there is no redeeming element that could make the experience holy.

Azazel signifies Samael and the *Nukva* of the luminous [shell], which are positioned opposite *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* of the worlds of *Beirah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*. Since [they receive the *binah*-goat,] they are happy.

Samael and *Nukva* of the three lower worlds receive the evil *binah* of the level of *Atzilut*.

Since [*chochmah* and *binah* of the evil *Z'eir Anpin* of *Atzilut*] are called “goats”—as mentioned in the *Zohar*<sup>10</sup>—*Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* of the luminous [shells] of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*, their children, are called Aza and Azel.

The word for goat is *eiz* (*ayin-zayin*). The “children” of the goats of *Atzilut* are called Aza (*ayin-zayin-alef*), a derivative, Aramaic form of “goat” and Azel (*ayin-zayin-alef-lamed*), meaning “goat-god.”

Together, [these two goat-offspring] are called Azazel, just like the words for “the shadow of death” and “the depths” comprise both of them, “shadow” referring to the male and “death” to the female.

Azazel can thus be seen as a contraction of Aza and Azel.

The word for “the shadow of death” is *tzalmavet*, itself a contraction of the words for “shadow” (*tzeil*) and “death” (*mavet*). The letters that form this word (*tzadik-lamed-mem-vav-tav*) can be permuted to spell “depths” (*metzulot*: *mem-tzadik-lamet-vav-tav*).

The “shadow” or lack of light is the active side of evil, the obstruction of holy light, and “death” is the result or expression of this evil, i.e., being cut off from holiness, the source of life. Thus it is written, “The feet [of a forbidden woman] descend unto death.”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> 3:101.

<sup>8</sup> See also *Zohar* 2:178b, 3:60b.

<sup>9</sup> On *parashat Metzora*, 1<sup>st</sup> installment.

<sup>10</sup> 2:108b.

Thus, when the goat is sent to Azazel, “[G-d] casts all their sins into the depths of the sea,”<sup>12</sup> as is stated in the *Zohar*.<sup>13</sup>

This is so since Azael and the “depths of the sea” are mystically synonymous, as stated.

Since these goats derive from the holy *Nukva* and her leftovers, they manifest strong judgment, as stated in the *Zohar*.<sup>14</sup>

We have explained previously that *Nukva* must evince strict judgment in order to differentiate between holiness and evil. When this judgment is exercised in an entirely evil context, however, it becomes prejudicial judgment.

Now, you know that the luminous shell is half good and half evil, and separates the holy realm from the evil realm. When a person transgresses a prohibition, [this neutral realm] serves to complete the three evil shells of his evil inclination, and becomes completely evil itself. This is his punishment for transgressing a prohibition.

When an element of the luminous shell is given over to the three completely evil shells, it “completes” them into a unit of four, mirroring the four worlds of holiness. This reinforcement of his inner evil, making it a power more difficult to reckon with, is the truest punishment for evil behavior. As the sages say, “One *mitzvah* leads to another *mitzvah*, and one sin leads to another sin.”<sup>15</sup>

Now, on *Yom Kippur*, G-d commanded us and permitted us through His good will to send Samael one goat, which comprises good and bad [elements], as stated above. [Samael] then rejoices over the [additional power granted to the] three wholly evil shells, for [by receiving the goat] he has received the Divine beneficence and life-force present in the goodness of that goat. As is known, the reason [the forces of evil] pursue holiness is so that they can enliven themselves; without [the life-force siphoned off holiness] they would die. Hence the great joy Samael derives from this goat sent to Azazel, especially in light of the fact that [G-d] gives it to him knowingly and [Samael] does not have to toil or exert himself [for it].

[After casting the lots over the goats,] the high priest would then confess [the sins of the Jewish people] over the goat’s head. The power of this repentance would refine the portion of [the goat] associated with the world of *Yetzirah*, separating the good [in it] from the evil. This is necessary for it is impossible for good and evil to be intermixed as they were before the sin, for through sin the power of evil increased, and the good would just be subdued before it.

As was stated above, good and evil are mixed together equally in the luminous shell. Once a person sins, however, the evil is strengthened and the balance is upset. Repentance cannot be merely an attempt to return to the state of affairs that existed before the sin; it is too late. The initial innocence has been lost, and the only avenue open

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<sup>11</sup> Proverbs 5:5.

<sup>12</sup> Micah 7:19.

<sup>13</sup> 3:63.

<sup>14</sup> 3:41.

<sup>15</sup> *Avot* 4:2.

is to align the potential good with actual good, i.e., holiness, and let the evil that has been actualized assume its position with true evil.

For example, a kosher chocolate cake is in the realm of the luminous shell. It is neither holy nor evil; what it will become depends on how it is used. If someone eats it for holy purposes, e.g., to add to the enjoyment of the Sabbath, or to give himself a needed, temporary lift, or in order to experience the goodness of G-d in having made delicious food, then the cake existentially enters the realm of holiness. If it is eaten for coarse purposes, e.g., to indulge in sensual pleasure, it descends into the realm of evil. The person who eats it will most likely be able to measure the purity of his intentions by the way he feels after eating the cake. To the extent that he feels uplifted or holier after eating, he succeeded in keeping his intentions pure. To the extent he feels coarser, he didn't.

As long as he eats chocolate cake for the right reasons, the person retains a certain innocence about it. The potentials for good and evil in the cake are both there, but the evil is not so threatening. He can go on happily eating the cake whenever he needs to, always stopping before his sensual lust gets the upper hand. Once he sins, however, he can never look at chocolate cake again the same way. If he's serious about his spiritual life, chocolate cake will forevermore represent for him an existential challenge, a spiritual minefield he must negotiate with extreme care. He has no choice but to consciously differentiate between and identify the good and the evil potentials in the cake, choose the good and reject the evil.

The positive outcome of this process is that through his conscious determination, the evil in the cake will be sundered from the good in a much more profound way than would have been possible before the sin. There was a certain advantage in innocence—namely, that the person had not experienced the evil depths the cake was capable of bringing him to—but there was a disadvantage, too—namely, that this innocence exposed him to the danger of sin. Once he has lost his innocence, he fortifies his commitment to and consciousness of good, and although no longer innocent, he is now immune to the egomaniacal machinations of sensual cake-lust. He is older, but wiser.

This is the meaning of repentance. [Evil and good] are separated through this. Although they existed originally together in the luminous shell, the evil has now been identified; it clings to the goat and disappears into the [realms of] complete evil. The good, meanwhile, returns to [the realm of] supernal holiness, no longer part of the luminous shell.

This is why Samael rejoices. He sees that he has now been fortified [by this additional measure of energy from the luminous shell], and he accepts it with full consciousness. But he is a fool and makes a [fatal] mistake, for on the contrary, “he will be heaping coals on his own head,”<sup>16</sup> meaning that evil was initially intermixed with good in the luminous shell and he had a strong foothold. Supernal holiness was forced to grant beneficence to the good with which this evil shared [the luminous shell]. This is the mystical significance of Israel's exiles amongst the idolaters.

When evil shares the luminous shell with good, it can more easily seduce man into sin, since it does not have to entice him into an explicit prohibition, only into using a neutral aspect of reality for egotistic purposes.

But now that evil has been separated from the good, Samael has lost that portion [of Divine beneficence] that was granted [to it] via the good [of the luminous shell]. It follows that Samael has been tricked and has suffered a great loss. On the contrary, a situation that was originally complete [for him] is now the opposite. For, [as the verse paraphrased above continues:] “[G-d] will surely

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<sup>16</sup> Par. Proverbs 25:22.

reward you,” meaning that the goodness [of the luminous shell] attaches to and completes the holy soul of the person, while Samael loses this good altogether.

This illustrates the tremendous power of repentance.

—translated and adapted from *Sefer HaLikutim*

## *Parashat Kedoshim*

The portion of the Torah read this week opens: “Every man should fear his mother and his father, and keep My Sabbaths, I am G-d, your G-d.”<sup>1</sup> Rabbi Chaim Vital will begin his exposition of the Arizal’s teachings by explaining why the word “Sabbaths” is in the plural when we would have expected the more usual singular form.

Now, [by understanding] the eighth king [as will be explained presently,] you will understand the two Sabbaths the Torah refers to. For whenever mention is made of the Sabbath, it is mentioned twice. For example: [this verse,] “keep My Sabbaths,” and “the children of Israel will keep the Sabbath to make the Sabbath,”<sup>2</sup> etc. From this [explanation, which will be given presently,] you will also understand how those who say that our present sabbatical [cycle] is the second actually erred.

According to the sages of the Talmud, our world is destined to exist for no more than seven thousand years: six millennia of normal existence, followed by a millennium of rest.<sup>3</sup> This seven-millennium time period is envisioned as one, gigantic “week,” the six millennia of normal existence corresponding to the six workdays and the millennium of rest and reward corresponding to the Sabbath. In Kabbalah, this imagery is expanded to the sabbatical cycle of six years of field labor followed by a year when the land is to lay fallow. The six years of agricultural work correspond to the six workdays and six millennia of normal existence, and the seventh, sabbatical year to the Sabbath and the seventh millennium.

Furthermore, just as the agricultural cycle consists of seven sabbatical cycles totaling 49 years followed by an additional year of rest—the jubilee—so is the entire seven-millennium period of the world’s existence only one of seven such periods, which will be followed by a fiftieth, jubilee millenium.

Now, according to some opinions, our present seven-millennium period is the second such period since the creation of the world. This is why the Torah begins with the letter *beit*, the numerical value of which is 2. The Arizal, however, contends that this opinion is incorrect.

To explain: When G-d the emanated the ten *sefirot*, He first emanated the first three. After this was the [first,] supernal Sabbath.

The Arizal now begins to describe the creation of the primordial world of *Tohu* (“Chaos”). It is important to bear in mind that this imperfect version of creation was not a “mistake” or a miscalculation on G-d’s part, but rather a necessary stage in the unfolding of creation.

G-d did not create time, of course, until He created our physical world, but before time there was a sequential progression of spiritual steps leading to our universe. This sequence may be referred to as “proto-time”: although all these steps “occurred” simultaneously in the “instant” before the creation of the physical world, they followed a certain developmental order, which we as finite humans would experience eventually as real time.

In this context, we may speak of the process the creation of the spiritual worlds preceding ours as if it happened in the context of what we call time (since we have no other way of describing a sequential progression). We must bear in mind, however, that time, as we know it, did not yet exist.

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 19:3.

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 31:16.

<sup>3</sup> *Sanhedrin* 97a.

In any case, after G-d emanated the first three *sefirot* (*keter*, *chochmah*, and *binah*), the intellect, He emanated the next seven *sefirot*, the emotions. Whereas the emanation of the first three *sefirot* is described as occurring on the same “day,” the emanation of each of the seven latter *sefirot* is described as occurring on a different day. The last *sefirah*, *malchut*, was emanated on the seventh day. This was the first “Sabbath.”

When He emanated these [first] three, He did not do so in a wholly rectified manner, and they were not fully and properly rectified. Therefore, this day is not counted.

The exact nature of this not-fully-rectified emanation will be explained later.

Afterwards He emanated a different group [of *sefirot*], in seven other “days.” These are the mystical correlates of the kings who ruled in the land of Edom. On the Sabbath, [the seventh day of this primordial “week,”] the eighth king, Hadar, was [also] emanated.

The emanation of the next seven *sefirot* is spoken of as occurring in seven “days,” one day for each *sefirah*. But since, as we said, this all is occurring before the creation of time, what this essentially means is that each *sefirah* is a separate entity. These seven *sefirot* will, when time is created, manifest themselves as the seven days of the week, each *sefirah* dominating a particular day.

It is told in the Torah that there were eight kings who ruled the land of Edom before there was a king in the land of Israel.<sup>4</sup> Of the first seven of these kings, the Torah states that they ruled and they died, while of the eighth, Hadar, it only records that he ruled, not mentioning his death.<sup>5</sup> Since Edom symbolizes the unrectified existence of evil, the first seven kings are understood to refer to the primordial, unrectified version of creation described here, the world of *Tohu*.

Since the first three *sefirot* were not yet fully rectified, all these kings died. Since they were not rectified above, these kings could not bear the supernal light of the Emanator. Thus, since all these kings evinced strict judgement, they all died and were nullified.

The perfection of the emotions is dependent upon the rectification of the intellect, since emotional responses are primarily the result of some idea that is understood.

The rectification these *sefirot* lacked was their ability to contain or absorb the “light,” i.e., creative energy, of G-d. In their fragility, they shattered as soon as the higher light attempted to shine through them. The reason why these *sefirot* were so fragile was because they were immature and undeveloped. In this iteration, the *sefirot* were simple, one-dimensional manifestations of G-d’s attributes and did not inter-include any aspect of their sister-*sefirot*. They were therefore incapable of accepting any content other than their own intrinsic one. This rejection of anything not consonant with one’s own world-view is the mentality of strict judgement (*din*).

I have already explained [elsewhere<sup>6</sup>] regarding the supernal rectification [process], that it consists of separating screens that enable the lower [entities] to receive light greater [than their intrinsic level] without being blinded. This is similar to how someone [is blinded] by looking at the light of the sun. Thus, the dimming of the light is [not a bad thing, but] on the contrary, the rectification.

By screening the Divine light, G-d created a new, more stable world that could withstand and transmit the light it received. The intensity of each *sefirah* would be less, but this lack of intensity would enable each *sefirah* to

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 36:31-39; 1 Chronicles 1:43-51.

<sup>5</sup> His death is mentioned in Chronicles, but not in Genesis.

<sup>6</sup> *Etz Chaim* 9:7-8.

accommodate the “personality” of its sister-*sefirot*. The combined strengths of each *sefirah* present in the others would enable the world comprising them to endure the Divine light shining into it.

Still, when the eighth king, Hadar, was emanated, he emerged more rectified than the others did. He manifested the *sefirah* of *yesod*; this was on the [first] Sabbath.

As we have said, the principal reason why the world of *Tohu* shattered was because the *sefirot* in it were too “egocentric” to interrelate. The reason this was so was because the predominant aspect of these *sefirot* was their *malchut*; each *sefirah* of *Tohu* was in effect nothing more than the *malchut* of that *sefirah* in general. *Malchut* is the *sefirah* of the ego, inasmuch as it expresses the drive to rule, to impose oneself on reality. The *malchuts* of the *sefirot* clashed, and therefore the entire structure collapsed.

The eighth “king” or emanation, in contrast, was constructed out of the *yesods* of the various *sefirot*. *Yesod* is the *sefirah* of inter-connection *par excellance*, since it expresses the drive and ability to relate and connect with another entity.

After this, the first three *sefirot* were rectified, as described in the *Zohar*. Then, the second week emerged, i.e., the seven lower *sefirot*, which we call nowadays *chesed*, *gevurah*, *tiferet*, *netzach*, *yesod*, and *malchut*. *Malchut* issued on the [seventh day, the] Sabbath.

Out of this emanation emerged a second set of seven *midot* (from *chesed* to *malchut*) which were more fully rectified than the first set of seven “kings.” This second set of seven constituted a second week, or Sabbath-cycle.

Thus we have two Sabbaths: the first being the first Sabbath, when Hadar was emanated, and the second Sabbath, when *malchut* was emanated the second time. This is the mystical meaning of the two Sabbaths that are mentioned in many places, [as we said above].

You will now understand the mystical reason why we call the seven millennia [we are presently living in] the “second” sabbatical-period. It is because they are the second [order of creation] after the “kings of the land of Edom.”

Thus, our present sabbatical-period (of seven thousand years) is not the second because it was preceded by another period of seven thousand *physical* years, but because it follows the *spiritual* “period” of *Tohu*, the emanation of the seven “kings” that preceded the present order, that of *Tikun*.

In this respect they [i.e., the earlier authorities] erred [as well]: They said that if this is the second sabbatical-period, then there must certainly be [in the end] a total of seven such periods.

Just as the agricultural jubilee-cycle consists of seven sabbatical-cycles, the macrocosmic jubilee-cycle should logically consist of seven sabbatical-cycles of seven thousand years each. In other words, after the seventh millenium of our time period, there will be (according to these opinions) another five sabbatical-periods (of seven thousand years each). The Arizal will now explain why this is not the case.

Understand, however, that Hadar, the eighth king, is entirely [composed of] *yesod*, even though he precedes the *chesed* that we nowadays call *chesed*.

When we refer to *chesed* we mean (unless we specify otherwise) the rectified *sefirah* of *chesed* in the world of *Tikun*. In the normal order of *sefirot*, *yesod* is the sixth emotion and *chesed* is the first, so *chesed* precedes *yesod*. When we consider the initial emanation of the *sefirot* of *Tikun*, however, and note that they all emerged from Hadar, who was constructed wholly out of the *yesods* of the primordial *sefirot*, *yesod* precedes *chesed* (and all the other *sefirot* as well).

After the [second set] of seven *sefirot* were emanated, those other “kings” came back to be rectified, and they were all absorbed into the [second set of] seven *sefirot*.

When the first set of seven *sefirot*, those of *Tohu*, collapsed, they didn’t just disappear. These *sefirot* were much more intense and powerful than those of the subsequent world of *Tikun*, as we have mentioned. Their shattered fragments were therefore “particles” of great energy and potential. The challenge of the world of *Tikun* is to assimilate and integrate these supercharged energy particles as far as possible. In fact, this is the whole reason why G-d created the world of *Tohu* in the first place and did not just create the world of *Tikun* from the beginning. Despite its name, *Tikun* is not the ultimate fulfillment and highest vision of creation. The goal is to integrate these two worlds and produce from them a third order of existence much greater than either of them in and of themselves.

After the element of strict judgement had been removed from them and they had been purified of it, like waste matter, the remaining [elements of these *sefirot*] were absorbed and sweetened in the [second set of] seven *sefirot*, each one in accordance with its nature.

The shattering of the vessels effectively neutralized the egocentricity of the *sefirot* of *Tohu*. Thus rid of their negative, judgmental aspects, they were able to be absorbed into the *sefirot* of the world of *Tikun*. This process is called “sweetening,” inasmuch as it evokes the imagery of some sour, poisonous substance being distilled and purified of its odious elements.

[This was possible] because those “kings” were themselves these [second] seven *sefirot*.

The *sefirot* of *Tohu* and *Tikun*, though radically different in their orientation, possessed the same “identities.” *Chesed* of *Tohu* was *chesed*, just as *chesed* of *Tikun*; the difference lay only in the way *chesed* was expressed. In this sense, the *sefirot* of *Tohu* may be considered simply immature, undeveloped versions of the *sefirot* of *Tikun*.

It follows that the statement in the *Zohar*<sup>7</sup> that “some of them rectified and some of them were not” does not mean that only some of the “kings” were rectified and others not, for all eight of the “kings” were rectified. Rather, it means that in each of them, part of it was not rectified and part of it was.

As has been explained in our discussion of the 288 sparks, sparks of each [*sefirah*] fell [from *Tohu* into the subsequent, lower worlds of *Tikun*]. The lights remained in *Atzilut*, and then what fell from *Beriah* was rectified in *Yetzirah*, as is known.

The death of the seven “kings” of *Tohu* is alluded to in the Torah’s account of creation in the verse: “and the spirit of G-d was hovering over the water.”<sup>8</sup> The word for “was hovering” (*merachefet*) may be split into two sets of letters: *mem-taf* and *reish-pei-chet*. The first set (*mem-taf*) spells the word for “died” (*meit*), and the numerical value of the second set is 288. This word may thus be read: “the 288 died.” This alludes, according to Kabbalah, to the 288 sparks of the world of *Tohu* that fell after the collapse of that world and the shattering of its *sefirot*.

Every *sefirah*, as we have mentioned previously, is composed of its “light” and its “vessel.” The “light” is the Divine creative energy that determines the nature and identity of the *sefirah*, while the “vessel” is the means through which this energy is expressed, the interface between the light and the rest of reality. When the *sefirot* of *Tohu* shattered, it was the vessels that broke.

The first world of *Tikun* created after the shattering of the vessels was the world of *Atzilut*. The consciousness of this world is one of total immersion in the awareness of G-d, and thus the lights were able to remain in this world.

<sup>7</sup> 3:135b.

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 1:2.

With regard to the broken vessels, however, only the more sublime aspects were able to remain and be assimilated into this world; the lower, more self-aware aspects were rejected and fell further, into the world of *Beriah*. There, the same process was repeated: the more sublime aspects were assimilated and the grosser aspects were rejected. This process continued in the worlds of *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*, and finally, the coarsest aspects of *Tohu* became absorbed and embedded in our physical world.

This process set the stage for the process of “elevating the sparks,” or liberating the raw, great power of *Tohu* from the physical context into which it has become entrenched. The conclusion of this process is what will precipitate the cosmic Redemption of all reality and the coming of *Mashiach*.

Thus, after the redemption there will be no additional, physical sabbatical-periods akin to our present world, since physicality will already have been rectified. What will occur after the coming of *Mashiach* will be infinite ascents of the new physical-spiritual order of creation into higher and higher levels of Divinity and consciousness of G-d.

—translated and adapted from *Sefer HaLikutim*

## *Parashat Kedoshim*

### [second installment]

The following are the Arizal's teachings on some of the numerous commandments in the portion of the Torah read this week.

“Do not turn to idols, and do not make for yourselves molten gods; I am G-d.”<sup>1</sup>

Know, that when someone looks and gazes at someone else, it has an effect [on the person looking], for the soul itself goes out via the faculty of sight to look.

Although we are accustomed to think of sight as the eye's reaction to light waves that enter it, we are here bidden to conceive of sight as an outward projection of the soul, through the individual's eyes, to “grasp” the image of the object being looked at.

If the object being looked at is good, [its goodness] will cling [to the soul] and it will have a good effect on the looker. If, on the other hand, it is evil, [the looker] will also take [some of its evil] and this will adversely affect his soul. This is the [mystical] meaning of this verse: “do not turn to idols”—lest “you make yourselves” into “molten gods”; if you look at impure things, you will be adversely affected and become like what you look at.

Similarly, it is [praiseworthy] to look at good things, as it is written: “And they gazed after Moses.”<sup>2</sup> [The people looked after him] because they could not gaze at his face, since he had spoken with G-d face to face. They were, however, able to look at him from behind and benefit from so doing. This is similar to what we are told about Rabbi Yehudah *HaNasi*, who said that all that he learned from his teacher, Rabbi Meir, was because he looked at him from behind, and that he would have learned even more had he looked at him face to face.<sup>3</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah *HaNasi* (“the Prince”) was the spiritual leader of the Jewish people in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century who performed the monumental task of recording the Oral Torah in writing (as the Mishnah). When he was studying under his teacher, Rabbi Meir, he sat in the rows of pupils behind him, rather than the rows facing him.

—from *Sefer HaLikutim* and *Ta'amei HaMitzvot*



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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 19:4.

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 3:8.

<sup>3</sup> *Eiruv* 13b.

“Do not steal....”<sup>4</sup> “...Do not rob....”<sup>5</sup>

Know, that our sages said that “he who steals the slightest amount from his friend is as if he stole his soul.”<sup>6</sup> The mystical significance of stealing and robbing is as follows:

Stealing [causes a blemish] in the upper third of *tiferet* of *Z’eir Anpin*, for it is there that the states of *chesed* become revealed, as is known.

As we have explained previously, the *yesod* of *Ima* envelops *Z’eir Anpin* as far down as the upper third of its *tiferet*. From that point downward, the states of *chesed* that make of *Z’eir Anpin* become revealed. Stealing is done clandestinely, so it causes a blemish in the upper, concealed third of *tiferet*, while robbing, which is done out in the open, causes a blemish in the lower, revealed two thirds of *tiferet*.

*Chesed* is the raw-material out of which all the emotions are built; it is thus the basic ingredient of all of *Z’eir Anpin*.

The inner dimension of *tiferet* is “mercy” or “empathy” (*rachamim*)—the ability of the soul to feel for another person. Stealing (or robbing) is obviously the direct antithesis of this: in order to steal, an individual must forget about the other person’s feelings. Stealing and robbing thus blemish, i.e., weaken, the power of *tiferet* above.

This is the mystical significance of the double restitution, for the thief causes a blemish above, in the concealed levels, while the robber causes a blemish in the revealed levels.

Unless he admits his crime on his own, someone who steals from his fellow must restore twice the amount he stole; in this way he suffers the loss he intended to inflict on his victim.<sup>7</sup>

When one steals “down below” [in this world], he causes the forces of evil to steal “up above” [in the spiritual worlds] the souls emerging from the supernal female, *malchut* [i.e., the *partzuf* of *Nukva d’Zeir Anpin*]. She acquired these souls by virtue of her coupling [with *Z’eir Anpin*].

The union of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* of a specific world produces souls possessing the state of consciousness of that world. This coupling is part of the process the soul undergoes as it descends from its Divine origin into a physical body. On the way, it must first descend through the various worlds to be “processed” and thus acquire the successively dimmer states of consciousness of those worlds. This process continues until it has descended in consciousness to the level of this physical world.

This supernal “kidnapping” or “crib-robbing” means that the forces of evil are empowered by the theft below to claim a certain amount of the souls being born into this world as their own. These souls will be born with less empathy or mercy than they would have otherwise. This means that the task of infusing the world with Divine consciousness and goodness will be slowed down or even suffer a setback.

As is known, coupling is known as [carnal] “knowledge,” as it is written, “And Adam *knew* his wife, Eve.”<sup>8</sup> We are also taught that feminine knowledge is “light.” Therefore, the [thief must make] double restitution, for the numerical value

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<sup>4</sup> Leviticus 19:11.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 19:13.

<sup>6</sup> *Bava Kama* 119a. The original for “the slightest amount” is “the value of a *perutah*,” a *perutah* being the smallest coin; less than this amount is not considered money for legal purposes.

<sup>7</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, *Geneivah* 1:4.

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 4:1.

of the word for “double” [*kefel*] is the same as that of the word for “light” [*kal*, 130].

“Women have ‘light’ knowledge.”<sup>9</sup> This generally means that although women possess *da’at*, their *da’at* is initially less objective than is men’s. This relative subjectivity is necessary for women to fulfill their task of manifesting Divinity in the world; men’s relative objectivity renders them unfit for this task.

In any case, by robbing *Nukva* of her offspring, the forces of evil are attacking her use of her “lightness” of knowledge.

*Kefel*: *kaf-pei-lamed* = 20 + 80 + 30 = 180; *Kal*: *kuf-lamed* = 100 + 30 = 130.

We will now see another reason for the double restitution.

Furthermore, when someone steals “down below,” he also causes the forces of evil to steal “up above” the souls ascending as “feminine water” to *malchut*; this further causes the descent of the [seminal] drop of “male water” from the male [*partzuf*, i.e., *Z’eir Anpin*].

“Male water” and “feminine water” (the imagery of rain and evaporation—or perhaps even that of geysers) are the Zoharic terms for “arousal from above” and “arousal from below,” respectively. When a soul completes its task (or a task) on earth, it (or the positive energy created by this good deed) ascends back through the spiritual realms into its source in *malchut*. This upward surge from below elicits a corresponding downward response from above, and causes a further revelation of Divine beneficence and goodness in the world.

When a person steals, however, the forces of evil are empowered to steal this upward surge for themselves, preventing the concomitant, downward “male” response from occurring.

[He thus causes] a double blemish, for which he must therefore make double restitution.

Now, as we said, when someone steals “down below,” he causes a blemish “up above” by causing the forces of evil to steal souls in the way we have described. This is the mystical meaning of our sages’ statement that “[he who steals the slightest amount from his friend] is as if he stole his *soul*.” They made a point of saying “he stole his soul” rather than some other expression [in order to include the mystical interpretation just cited]. May G-d preserve us [from this sin].

—from *Sefer HaLikutim*



“The wages of a hired worker shall not abide with you [through the night] until morning.”<sup>10</sup>

In another verse [that details this commandment] it is written, “You shall give [him] his wages on the day he [earns them].”<sup>11</sup> The initials of these words [*beyomo titein secharo*] spell *Shabbat*. This is because whenever a person performs any

<sup>9</sup> *Kidushin* 80b.

<sup>10</sup> *Leviticus* 19:13.

<sup>11</sup> *Deuteronomy* 24:15.

commandment or learns a lot of Torah on a weekday, he accrues an additional level of Sabbath holiness—even on the weekday. This applies to the [full] extent individuals are capable of accruing additional measures of Sabbath holiness.

Learning Torah and performing *mitzvot* increases the individual's Divine consciousness. Since Shabbat is the day of higher Divine consciousness, we may conceive of the additional measure of Divine consciousness attained by learning Torah and doing *mitzvot* as a “piece of Shabbat” that is added to the individual. This happens, of course, even in the case of Divine service performed on weekdays.

This accords with what Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai taught, namely, that Torah scholars possess on weekdays the [level of] soul that ignoramuses possess on the Sabbath.

Thus, the reward that G-d grants Torah scholars for their studies, or to those who observe the commandments, is likened to that of a worker who expects his wages. For such people earn their [spiritual] **deserts** daily—even on weekdays, when they accrue additional measures of Sabbath holiness. Therefore, the initials of these words allude to the Sabbath.

Furthermore, the wages mentioned in this verse can be understood as well to refer to the reward one earns each day [for his study and/or observance of the Torah]. These combine with the other [reward], the additional measure of Sabbath holiness that comes automatically with the Sabbath, as is known.

On Shabbat, every Jew's consciousness ascends a spiritual notch, no matter what.

Thus, these two additional measures [of Divine consciousness] are given to the person on Shabbat. In this sense, [both types of] “wages” paid to this type of “worker” are paid on the Sabbath. The Sabbath is therefore alluded to in this verse, and this is the mystical meaning of “he who toils on the day[s] before the Sabbath will eat on the Sabbath.”<sup>12</sup>

The physical sense of this statement is simply that if one prepares his meals and other needs before Shabbat, he will be able to enjoy them on Shabbat, but if not, he will have nothing to enjoy because the preparations he should have done beforehand are forbidden to do on Shabbat. The spiritual sense of the statement is that the extent of one's spiritual experience or level of consciousness on Shabbat is proportional to the amount of spiritual preparation for Shabbat one engages in during the preceding week. In more prosaic terms: one cannot expect to live (think, eat) like an animal during the week and suddenly turn into an angel on Shabbos; if a person doesn't want to be left out of the action on Shabbos, he'd better put some time into refining himself while he still can—during the week. True, as we said above, every Jew's spiritual consciousness ascends automatically on Shabbat, but without the prior weekday preparation, he cannot “cash in on” or “tune in to” this consciousness, since he has done nothing to prepare a vessel to receive it.

In any case, the point here is that in addition to whatever heightened spiritual consciousness an individual attains by learning Torah and doing *mitzvot* during the week, these acts also heighten his spiritual consciousness on Shabbat.

Additionally, [this verse implies] that specifically someone who fulfills the commandment of paying a worker [on time] acquires the ability to attain an additional level of soul the following Sabbath. This reward is given to him measure

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<sup>12</sup> Avodah Zarah 3a.

for measure, for with regard to paying a worker [on time] it is said, “for...he lifts up his soul to you.”<sup>13</sup> Therefore, in recompense [for granting him his soul, so to speak], the employer is likewise given an extra level of soul with which to sustain his [weekday] soul [on the Sabbath]. And therefore, the Sabbath is alluded to in the initials of this verse.

The idiomatic meaning of “he lifts up his soul” is “he looks expectantly” or “he directs his desire.”

Rabbi Chaim Vital now gives us an anecdotal illustration of the extent to which the Arizal took his own teachings seriously.

My teacher [the Arizal] was extremely careful regarding the commandment of paying a worker [on time]. He sometimes put off praying *Minchah* until he had paid [his worker]. This sometimes meant waiting to pray until sunset, if he did not have the cash to pay the wages and had to send people all over to ask others for money until he had enough to pay the wages. Only then would he pray *Minchah*, saying, “How can I pray to G-d when such a great *mitzvah* comes my way? Can I put it off and still face G-d in prayer?”

—from *Ta'amei HaMitzvot*

—translated

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<sup>13</sup> Deuteronomy 24:15.



psychological transformation that occurs within the woman when she first experiences marital relations, which will be partially elucidated in this passage, in which this “spirit” is identified as *da’at*.

*Tiferet* here refers to *Z’eir Anpin* in general, and *malchut* to *Nukva*.

Specifically, it is the 52-Name, and it is in her *yesod*. That is why it is called a “tree.”

As has been mentioned previously, the inner energy of *Nukva* is the 52-Name of G-d (i.e., the Name *Havayah* spelled out such that its numerical value is 52).

Now Cain elevated the letters used to spell out this 52-Name present in *malchut* up to *tiferet*, as “feminine water.” The sin was that this Name must remain always in *malchut* in order to raise “feminine water” so that [*malchut*] can receive the supernal light as “male water,” both of them remaining within her.

“Male water” and “feminine water” are the Kabbalistic idiom for “arousal from above” and “arousal from below,” respectively. As we have seen previously, the female principle innately yearns for union with the male principle, in order to combine the female drive for concretization of Divine consciousness in the world with the male drive for ever more abstract and sublime levels of Divine consciousness in oneself. Without rejuvenation from the male, the female loses inspiration and succumbs to the “gravitational” pull of the very material reality she initially seeks to conquer.

But Cain did not [simply] intend to *raise* “feminine water,” but rather to *remove* it from [*Nukva*] entirely, returning it all the way to its source in *Z’eir Anpin* itself.

Cain sought to make the female into a male, so to speak, forsaking its Divine mission and destiny as the drive to concretize Divine consciousness in the world and remaining in the abstract realm of *Z’eir Anpin*, the emotions *per se*.

This is the mystical analogue of flaxseed that depletes the power of the earth for seven years. The “power of the earth” is this 52-Name, which is the inner [Divine] power of *malchut*. [Flaxseed] depletes the power of all the seven lower *sefirot* within her, alluded to here as seven years.

This is the [mystical] meaning of the verse, “And Cain brought from the fruits of the earth,” meaning [“from the produce] that is termed ‘*the* fruit of the earth’ because it saps all the power of the earth,” removing it from it and depleting it. Indeed, this is how our sages concluded that [Cain’s offering] was flaxseed.

[Cain] offered this plant as an offering to G-d, i.e., to *Z’eir Anpin*, returning it to its source and leaving *malchut* bereft of the 52-Name. This was Cain’s sin.

The word for “G-d” in this verse is the Name *Havayah*, which generally refers to *Z’eir Anpin*. Thus, Cain sought to elevate the flaxseed, the inner vitality of *malchut*, to *Z’eir Anpin*, instead of keeping it in *malchut* so it could inspire *Z’eir Anpin* to couple with it on its own level.

Abel [then] attempted to rectify Cain’s error, and brought an offering of wool. The [mystical] explanation of this is as follows:

The source of the *da’at* that *Z’eir Anpin* imparts down to *Nukva* is in the supernal *da’at* of the “beloved” *mazal*, as is known.

As we have seen previously, the word *mazal* refers in Kabbalah to a specific flow of Divine energy, particular to thirteen such flows that constitute the “beard” of *Arich Anpin*. These are known generally as the Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy. The eighth and thirteenth are the super-rational source of *Abba* and *Ima*, the *partzufim* of *chochmah* and *binah*.

[This *mazal* is called “beloved”] for through [this level of *da’at*], *Abba* and *Ima* unite, and from this [union] additional power is supplied to *Z’eir Anpin*, enabling it to couple with *Nukva* and impart some of this spirit to her, as is explained in our exposition of the liturgy of the *Shema* recited before going to sleep, whose purpose is to kill off destructive forces.

The flow of Divine consciousness from the super-rational will (*Arich Anpin*) into the intellect (*Abba* and *Ima*), enables them to couple and produce emotions (*Z’eir Anpin*). In common experience, this means that when a person experiences a true will to do or understand or acquire something, this will produces ideas in his mind about how to do, understand, or acquire this thing. The will drives his mind to gain new insight (by motivating the person to exhibit the selflessness that predicates new insight, as we have explained previously) and capture that insight in his conscious mind, reconstructing his worldview in its wake and thereby producing an emotional response to it. The now super-charged emotions are potent, and can produce “seed,” i.e., inspiration, to *Nukva*, the power of expression, in order to actualize the imperative originating in the will.

This purity of purpose neutralizes the power of the forces of evil, who seek to derail the new Divine energy for their own purposes, as we have seen previously. This is the theme of the nightly recital of the *Shema* before going to sleep, and in particular those sections added when it is anticipated that the couple will engage in marital relations.

It follows that [Abel] offered wool in order to restore the influx of supernal *da’at*, so that it also reach *Z’eir Anpin*, enabling it in turn to restore this strength that Cain removed from [*Nukva*], i.e., the spirit referred to above.

Therefore Abel offered some of the choicest of his flock. This is because, as we have explained, Cain’s sin [caused a blemish] in *malchut* of *Yetzirah*. So Abel had to elicit [Divine energy] from the supernal *da’at* of *Arich Anpin* of *Yetzirah*. And it is known that all the power [of this level of *da’at*] is present within *yesod* of *Yetzirah*, for *yesod* is called “alive.” Thus, the inner essence of *da’at* is *yesod*.

As we have explained previously, *yesod* is called “alive” because the male sexual organ (to which *yesod* corresponds anatomically) exhibits growth and quasi-independent movement. This, in turn, is so because the mind, emotion, and body’s power is concentrated here as it is prepare to be transferred to the feminine principle.

In order for the spirit of *malchut* to be replenished, *malchut* must receive from *yesod*. As we saw, the inner life force of *malchut* of *Yetzirah* is, allegorically, the power of the earth to produce vegetation. In order for this to be replenished, it must receive from the next higher form of life up, i.e., from the animal kingdom. Therefore, Abel had to bring an animal offering. *Yesod* is called “alive,” which is also the word for “animal” (both being translations of the word *chai*).

This is the mystical essence of sheep, because the word for “sheep” [*keves*] permutes to spell the word for “lie down” [*shachav*], indicating that it alludes to the supernal lying down. This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “...fill the world and subdue it [*kivshuah*],”<sup>6</sup> and the allusion of the conquered one “who lies with her.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 1:28.

<sup>7</sup> Deuteronomy 22:29.

*Keves: kaf-beit-sin.*

*Shachav: shin-kaf-beit.*

The “lying down” here is a euphemism for marital relations, as seen from the quote at the end of the paragraph.

The root “to subdue” [*kavash*] is related to the word for “sheep” [*keves*] because sheep are easily subdued and led. Here, however, the relation is seen in the opposite way: the sheep (*yesod*) is the male who “conquers” the female and “lies down” with her. Inasmuch as the word for “world” [*ertez*] alludes to *malchut*, the phrase, “fill the world and subdue it” evokes the interpretation, “fill the feminine principle [with male vital seed] in marital relations with her.”

Know as well that just as there is a higher [facial] beard, there is a lower [pubic] “beard” around the *sefirah* of *yesod*, and understand these great mysteries, because just as there are 13 tufts of the higher beard, so are there thirteen tufts of the lower beard around *yesod*. This is the mystical meaning of [the sages’ statement that] “Great is circumcision, for thirteen covenants were made concerning it.”<sup>8</sup>

In the Biblical passage<sup>9</sup> in which G-d commands Abraham to circumcise himself and all his present and future male offspring, the word for “covenant” [*brit*] occurs thirteen times. Clearly, this redundancy is not necessary for the prose of the story, and exists only to allude to the fact expressed in the sages’ statement.

The inner meaning of the 13 “covenants” made concerning circumcision is that this rite evokes the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, and brings the Jewish male child into this super-rational relationship with G-d. (Jewish females are considered innately, automatically circumcised,<sup>10</sup> and therefore no rite is necessary to initiate them into this covenant.) Thus, there is an innate connection between the upper beard, the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, and the lower “beard,” which surrounds the organ through which the individual is allowed to access the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy.

I have already told you [elsewhere] that *Z’eir Anpin* is formed out of the *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Arich Anpin*, and that the [facial] beard of *Z’eir Anpin* is formed out of the lower beard of [*yesod* of] *Arich Anpin*. This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “From the *strait* I called out to G-d,”<sup>11</sup> for the *Zohar*<sup>12</sup> refers this verse to the beard of *Z’eir Anpin*, which issued from the mystical correlate of the wool of the sheep, i.e., the supernal *yesod* of *Arich Anpin*. Thus, the word for “wool” [*tzemer*] permutes to spell the word for “strait” [*meitzar*], this being the mystical significance of “From the *strait* I called out....”

*Tzemer: tzadik-mem-reish; meitzar: mem-tzadik-reish.*

From this you can also understand what I have told you, namely, that the *yesod* of *Arich Anpin* couples with itself, and out of [this coupling] issues *Z’eir Anpin*, and for that reason it is called “from the strait.” Understand this.<sup>13</sup>

There is no explicit female counterpart to the *partzuf* of *Arich Anpin*, as there is for the *partzufim* of *Abba* and *Z’eir Anpin*. Instead, the feminine aspect is implicit. Thus, the *yesod* of *Arich Anpin* contains both male and female

<sup>8</sup> *Nedarim* 31b.

<sup>9</sup> Genesis 17.

<sup>10</sup> *Avodah Zarah* 27a.

<sup>11</sup> Psalms 118:5.

<sup>12</sup> 3:295a, in the *Idra*.

<sup>13</sup> See *Sha’ar Mamarei Rashbi*, in the exposition of the *Idra Zuta* of *parashat Ha’azinu*.

elements, and therefore the “coupling” at this level is intrinsic. Since the male-female aspects of *Arich Anpin* is not fully articulated, it is called a “strait,” a constricted version of this duality.

This is also the mystical significance of the *shofar*, which alludes to the verse “From the strait I called out to G-d; [He answered me in the broad places of G-d],” for, as is known, it is narrow on one side and wide on the other.

To explain: The coupling that produces *Z’eir Anpin* is in the *yesod* of *Arich Anpin*, but [when it first issues, *Z’eir Anpin*] only manifests a small *vav*, which comprises only three [*sefirot*], for [the other] three are folded within the [manifest] three. This is the mystical significance of the sound that issues from the *shofar*, which comprises only three [elements]—fire, air, and water.

*Z’eir Anpin* corresponds to the *vav* of the Name *Havayah*, as we have explained previously, and the numerical value of the *vav* is 6, alluding to the six *sefirot* from *chesed* to *yesod* that metamorphose into the *partzuf* of *Z’eir Anpin*. But a small *vav* alludes to the initial iteration of the emotions, i.e., the first three, principle emotions, in which the ancillary three emotions exist only implicitly.

Similarly, the simple, undifferentiated sound of the *shofar* alludes to the basic, primary emotions (as the world is renewed on *Rosh HaShanah*), in which the further development of the emotions exists only implicitly. The fourth “element,” earth, is missing, indicating that this stage of development is not yet at that of concretization; only the three relatively abstract “elements” are present.

To return to our topic: just as “the hair on the head”—of *Arich Anpin*—“is like white wool,”<sup>14</sup> so is the hair surrounding his *yesod* also white. This is alluded to by the white wool of sheep, for all the hair of the holy Ancient One [*Arich Anpin*] is white. It was this wool that Abel offered as a sacrifice, as our sages said.

The “Holy Ancient One” is the term used in the Book of Daniel to refer to the vision identified in Kabbalah as that of *Arich Anpin*.

In contrast, the “wool” of *Z’eir Anpin* is black as a raven.<sup>15</sup> It is only the upper [i.e., facial] beard and head hair that turns white when he grows old. He then emulates the supernal grandfather. But in his youth, his hair is black; his hair turns white only in his old age, as he approaches *Arich Anpin*, whose *yesod* produces [*Z’eir Anpin*]’s intellect.

As *Z’eir Anpin* matures, he ascends in spiritual level and approaches *Arich Anpin*. *Arich Anpin* is called the “grandfather” of *Z’eir Anpin*, whose father and mother are, of course, *Abba* and *Ima*.

But the lower [i.e., pubic] beard of *Z’eir Anpin* always remains black, even in his old age, for [even then] it remains distant from the whiteness of the holy Ancient One [*Arich Anpin*]. “And from my flesh shall I behold G-d.”<sup>16</sup>

This verse is used here (and throughout Kabbalistic literature) to mean that since the phenomena of our material world are derived from their spiritual antecedents, we can deduce things about the spiritual worlds by observing the material world (within given limits and parameters, of course). Here, the physiological behavior of our body hair as we age alludes to spiritual truths in the supernal worlds.

<sup>14</sup> Daniel 7:9.

<sup>15</sup> See Song of Songs 5:11.

<sup>16</sup> Job 19:26.

It follows that Abel's offering aroused the supernal *da'at*, and this increased the power of *da'at* of *Z'eir Anpin*, and allowed the spirit of the 52-Name to return to *malchut*, i.e., to her *yesod*.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse, "And G-d *turned* to Abel and his offering, but to Cain and his offering He did not *turn*."<sup>17</sup> To explain: This "wool" descended from the supernal *da'at* to *Z'eir Anpin*, which is [permeated by] the 45-Name. The combined numerical values of 45 and the word for "wool" [*tzemer*] is 375, the same as that of the word for "turned" [*sha'ah*]. Thus, "...to Cain and his offering He did not *turn*." But He did turn to Abel, for he brought it down into *malchut*.

As we have seen previously, *Z'eir Anpin* is associated with the 45-Name of G-d, i.e., the Name *Havayah* spelled out such that its numerical value is 45.

*Tzemer*: *tzadik-mem-reish* = 90 + 40 + 200 = 330.

330 + 45 = 375.

*Sha'ah*: *shin-ayin-hei* = 300 + 70 + 5 = 375.

This indicates that G-d's *turning* to (i.e., taking notice of and accepting) the offering was because it drew the "wool" (330, the *yesod* of *Arich Anpin*) into *Z'eir Anpin* (45). G-d did not turn to Cain's offering because he withdrew the wool from *Z'eir Anpin*, i.e., he subverted the process by which Divine consciousness and energy is transmitted into *malchut*.

Thus, it is written, "If you mend your ways, it will be forgiven."<sup>18</sup> Meaning, "So far, you elevated the 52-Name of *malchut*, which is its "feminine water," and you uprooted them from their proper place. But if you mend your ways, it will be forgiven. That is, you can 'carry' and elevate "feminine waters" as is proper."

The word for "it will be forgiven" is *se'eit*, which literally means "it will be carried, born, lifted." The imagery is that of G-d carrying the weight of the sin and atoning for it, or of Him bearing the consequence of the sin, rather than it being born by the sinner. Here, the literal imagery of the word is "it will be lifted up," i.e., G-d tells Cain that he can, indeed, reconstitute the Divine order by repenting of his misconceived plans, submitting to G-d's vision of how male and female should function together, and thus allow the female to raise and elevate her yearning, her "feminine water," to the male, initiating the process of their coupling and ensuring the proper continuation of their continued existence and fulfillment of their Divine mission together.

From all this we can understand the prohibition against *shatnez*, and why it is permitted in performing the commandment of *tzitzit*.<sup>19</sup>

—translated from *Sha'ar HaMitzvot* and *Ta'amei HaMitzvot*

<sup>17</sup> Genesis 4:4-5.

<sup>18</sup> Genesis 4:7.

<sup>19</sup> See *Peri Etz Chaim*, *Sha'ar HaTzitzit*.

## *Parashat Emor*

Toward the end of the portion of the Torah read this week is the commandment to prepare “shewbread” for the Tabernacle/Temple.<sup>1</sup> There were twelve loaves of this special bread, which were placed on a special table in the sanctuary before Shabbat and replaced with newly-baked loaves a week later.

[We will now explain why] there were twelve loaves of shewbread, and why they were [miraculously] warm even when they were replaced.

Our sages state that the shewbread remained warm the whole week they were in the Temple.<sup>2</sup> This fact is derived from the verse: “to replace it with warm bread on the day it was taken away,”<sup>3</sup> which refers to the shewbread. Although this verse does not directly imply that the shewbread stayed warm the whole week, the homiletic interpretation is based on the fact that the phrase “warm bread” may be taken to refer to the bread of the previous week: “warm bread on the day it was taken away.”

To explain: It has been explained that a number of different couplings [between the various *partzufim*] above [in the spiritual realms] are termed “eating.”

The purpose of the transformation or metamorphosis of the *sefirot* into *partzufim* was that they be able to interact and cross-fertilize each other. These unions produce “fruit” or “offspring” in the form of Divine energy (or “light” or consciousness) that shines into the lower *partzufim* or the lower worlds. The reason some of these couplings are termed “eating” will be explained below.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse: “eat, O beloved companions.”<sup>4</sup> [This verse] refers to the coupling of *Abba* and *Ima*, which is occasioned by the [flow of energy from the] holy *mazal* of the beard of *Arich Anpin*.

In order for *Abba* and *Ima* to couple, they must receive a dose of higher consciousness from the *partzuf* above them, that of *Arich Anpin*.

In a parallel passage in the Arizal’s writings, the phrase “the *mazal* of the beard of the *Atika Kadisha*” is used instead of “the holy *mazal* of the beard of *Arich Anpin*.” Although the term *Atik Yomin* refers specifically to the higher of the two *partzufim* of *keter*, the term *Atika Kadisha* (“the Holy Ancient One”) is a general term for *keter*.

The beard is seen in Kabbalah as the seat of mercy or empathy (*rachamim*). Kabbalistic works identify thirteen components of the beard (either tufts or parts of the face that are devoid of hair and thus outline the beard), corresponding to G-d’s thirteen attributes of mercy (Exodus 34:6-7). Indeed, *Arich Anpin* literally means “patience” or “the patient one,” a concept closely allied to that of mercy. The thirteen components of the beard of *Arich Anpin* are called *mazalot* (sing. *mazal*), which means literally a “source of flow” or influence.

As is known, [the beard of *Arich Anpin*] is composed of three iterations of the Divine Name *Havayah*, which together give 12 letters, corresponding to the 12 other parts of the beard [besides the 13<sup>th</sup> *mazal*]. The numerical value of these three Names [3 x 26] is the same as that of the word [in Aramaic for *mazal*,] *mazla* [78]...

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 24:5-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Chagigah* 26b.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Samuel 21:7.

<sup>4</sup> Song of Songs 5:1.

These thirteen *mazalot* are divided into two groups. Twelve correspond to the four-letter Divine Name *Havayah* repeated three times (giving twelve letters). The thirteenth *mazal* stands by itself and summarizes or encapsulates the other twelve. This is alluded to by the fact that numerical value of three times the Divine Name *Havayah*,  $3 \times 26$ , equals the numerical value of the Aramaic word [the *Zohar* is written in Aramaic] for *mazal*, *mazla* (78). It is this thirteenth *mazal* that must shine upon *Abba* and *Ima* in order for them to couple.

It is explained in Kabbalah and *Chassidut* that it is the thirteenth *mazal* that makes the entire set of *mazalot* into attributes of mercy. This is because numerically, twelve is a closed, rigid, perfect system, reflected in the physical world by the twelve lunar months and the twelve signs of the zodiac, in the Jewish people by the twelve tribes, in the spiritual realm by the twelve permutations of the letters of the Divine Name *Havayah*, and so on. In each of these sets, however, there is a (sometimes hidden) thirteenth element that adds the flexibility and adaptivity that makes the set alive, pliable and viable. This is perhaps most graphically seen with regard to the twelve lunar months. In the Jewish calendar, a thirteenth month is added in 7 out of every 19 years in order to align the lunar cycle with the solar cycle. Here, the thirteenth lunar month makes the twelve original ones into an empathic system that can coexist with its solar “mate.” Similarly, the thirteenth tribe, Levi, officiates at the Temple, reconciling the twelve tribes of the Jewish people with their “mate,” G-d.

This passage therefore means that in order for *Abba* and *Ima* to couple, they must receive a flow of mercy- or compassion-consciousness. This is, of course, a lesson pertinent to human marital relationships as well, and indeed to all types of interpersonal communication: the underlying consciousness and attitude toward the other partner must be one of compassion, empathy, and mercy.

... and of the word for “bread” [*lechem*, 78].

This indicates the dependence of coupling (“eating bread”) on the flow of consciousness from the *mazal*.

Corresponding to these twelve letters are the twelve loaves [of shewbread]. This is because the [holy, thirteenth] *mazal* expresses the concept of the double-*vav*, which equals 12 [since the numerical value of the letter *vav* is 6].

[This is why the shewbreads were arranged in two stacks,] six on one side and six on the other.

They also express the two letters *hei* of the Divine Name *Havayah*, whose combined numerical value [when spelled out] is also 12.

When the letter *hei* is spelled out *hei-alef*, the numerical value of the two *heis* (*hei-alef hei-alef*,  $5+1+5+1$ ) is 12.

In any case, this exposition indicates that the shewbread is the physical manifestation of this thirteenth *mazal*, which, as we said, encapsulates and includes all the other twelve.

Now, since the coupling of *Abba* and *Ima* is termed “eating,” it never ceases.

The two main pairs of *partzufim* are *Abba* and *Ima* and *Z'eir Anpin* and its *Nukva*. Whereas the coupling of the former pair is constant, the coupling of the latter pair is occasional. The constant, steady-state relation between *Abba* and *Ima* is therefore termed “eating,” for it is much less “charged” and ardent than the love-relationship between the “younger” pair, *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* (the offspring of *Abba* and *Ima*). This is to be expected, since *Abba* and *Ima* are the *partzufim* of the intellect while *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* constitute the emotions and their expression.

(We may perhaps find an allusion here to the romantic aspect of a couple intimately dining together. As a shared experience, eating together is a relaxed, sedate form of coupling. Interestingly, Jewish law allows a wife to delegate all her duties to her husband to servants except for three, since they are considered to arousing. These are: making his bed, washing his face, and serving him meals.)

The union of the intellect must be constant in order for the world to continue to exist. The union of emotion and expression, however, need not be constant, although the *quality* of life increases the more frequently this union occurs. It is this union that results from our observance of the Torah and performance of the *mitzvot*.

Therefore, this bread—which is synonymous with the supernal *mazal* and arouses them [i.e., *Abba* and *Ima*] to the [constant] coupling termed “eating”—had to remain on the table [in the sanctuary] at all times. And so it is written: “And you shall set shewbread on the table before Me at all times.”<sup>5</sup>

The fact that the shewbread had to be on the table at all times indicates that the union of *Abba* and *Ima* is constant, since this union is dependant upon the thirteenth *mazal*, which is, as stated above, the spiritual correlate of the shewbread.

This is also why they remained warm constantly, as it is written: “to replace it with warm bread on the day it was taken away.”<sup>6</sup> This alludes to the constant arousal of the heat of the said coupling.

The Arizal now discusses why it is that the *kohanim* (the priests who officiate in the Temple) eat the shewbread.

Now, the priests would eat this bread. This is because the priests in the upper world express the *sefirah* of *chochmah*. It is at this level that the high priests of all ten *sefirot* begin.

This is the mystical way to understand the verse “the priests, the Levites.”<sup>7</sup> As you have noticed, the priests are called Levites in many verses, such as: “and the priests, the sons of Levi, approached...”<sup>8</sup> and so on.

Although the priests, being descended from Aaron, are of course members of the tribe of Levi, they are not usually referred to as “Levites.” That term is reserved for the rest of the members of the tribe (i.e., non-priests), who have an entirely different set of duties to perform in the Temple.

The reason is because the supernal priests and Levites are the *sefirot* of *chochmah* and *binah*, respectively. Since the union of these two *sefirot* is constant, the Levite at this level is completely “sweetened,” without any severe judgement. He is therefore strongly bound to the priest, and they are considered one.

*Chochmah* is the initial flash of insight; *binah* is the development of that insight into a full intellectual structure of thought. In the process of analyzing and developing the insight, the mind can sometimes lose track of the original idea, going off on tangents and trains of thought that were never implied in it. The end result is a perversion of the original truth. In order to prevent this, *binah* must stay connected to *chochmah*, that is, the development of the idea must be constantly checked and evaluated against the experience of the initial insight. Then the pristine brilliance of the inspiration can keep the intellectual process on track.

So, in the upper worlds, where *chochmah* and *binah* are in a state of constant union, as we have said, *binah*, or the Levite, is constantly being purified by *chochmah*, the priest. Down here below, however, where *chochmah* and *binah* are not always connected, matters are different:

Below, however, where the Levite personifies severity, they do not unite.

Since in this world *binah* can, if left alone, stray far from the pristine insight of *chochmah*, it can even serve as a potential source for evil, which elicits G-d’s severe judgement.

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<sup>5</sup> Exodus 25:30.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Samuel 21:7.

<sup>7</sup> Deuteronomy 17:9.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 21:5.

Therefore, the shewbread was eaten [only] by the priests, who personify *chochmah*.

—translated and adapted from *Sha'ar HaMitzvot* and *Ta'amei HaMitzvot*

# Parashat Emor

## [second installment]

The portion of the Torah read this week includes the commandment of raising the four plants on Sukkot. We are taught “And you will take for yourselves on the first day [of Sukkot] the fruit of the goodly tree [i.e., an etrog], palm branches [i.e., a lulav], a branch of the myrtle and willows....”<sup>1</sup> We will now see how the process of resurrection is alluded to in this verse.

The mystery of resurrection [is as follows]:

[Resurrection] will occur by means of holy [spiritual] droplets that manifest the Name of G-d whose numerical value is that of the word for “dew” [*tal*, 39]. [This Name is formed by spelling out the first three letters of the Name *Havayah*,] *yud-hei-vav*.

<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	10 + 6 + 4	20
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-alef</i>	5 + 1	6
<i>vav</i>	<i>vav-alef-vav</i>	6 + 1 + 6	13
			39

According to the sages, God will in the future resurrect the dead with dew. “Whence do we know that the dead will come to life only by means of dew? It is written: ‘Your dead will come to life, my corpses will arise; awake and shout for joy, O you who rest in the dirt. For Your dew is the dew the brings vegetation to life....’<sup>2 3</sup> When the Jewish people expired in ecstasy from hearing the first commandment at Mt. Sinai, “G-d revived them using the dew with which He will in the future resurrect the dead.”<sup>4</sup> Here it is explained that this “dew” is in fact a physical manifestation of the Name of G-d whose numerical value when spelled out is the same as that of the word for “dew.”

We see here that this “Name” is actually the Name *Havayah* without the final *hei*. As we will see presently, the final *hei* is manifest as the dead that these three letters are meant to revive. The resurrection of the dead is thus the (re-)joining of the first three letters of the Name *Havayah* with its last letter.

These [droplets] descend from the brain of *Z’eir Anpin* to its *yesod*, and from there to “the land of the living” and *malchut*. The Jewish souls there receive [these droplets] and come to life.

Although generally we say that the four letters of the Name *Havayah* are manifest in the four *partzufim* of *Abba*, *Ima*, *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, respectively, if we narrow our focus onto *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, these four letters are manifest in them also, as a unit. The first three letters are the intellect and emotions, i.e., the bulk of *Z’eir Anpin*, while the final *hei* continues to signify *Nukva* (*malchut*).

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 23:40.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 26:19.

<sup>3</sup> *Y. Berachot* 5 (9b).

<sup>4</sup> *Shabbat* 88b.

Thus, the resurrection of the dead, the (re-)union of the first three letters with the *hei*, is synonymous with the coupling of *Z'eir Anpin* with *Nukva*.

This accords nicely with what we have said previously about the divergent psychologies of man (manifesting *Z'eir Anpin*) and woman (manifesting *Nukva*): the male is *a priori* oriented upward, seeking to abstract himself from reality and reunite with his source, while the female is driven to manifest Divinity in reality below. Nonetheless, their mutual success is dependent upon their “cross-fertilization” of orientation. If the female detaches herself from the male in order to pursue her ideal of concretizing the Divine reality down below, she will eventually run dry of inspiration, i.e., wither and die, while if the male detaches himself from the female in order to pursue his ideal of abstraction and return to source, he will eventually become frustrated over his lack of ability to manifest his inspiration.

The earth is a common metaphor or appellation for *malchut*. (*Yesod* is the “foundation” of the “building” of the *sefirot*, and thus *malchut*, which is below *yesod*, is the earth below and supporting the foundation.) When *malchut* receives influx from *yesod* (i.e., the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*) it is called “the land of life” or “the living land.”

Specifically, what is transferred to *Nukva* when it couples with *Z'eir Anpin* is its inspiration, or a “drop” of its consciousness, which resides in its brain. We see here, again, that true coupling of male and female is a “cross-fertilization” of attitudes and orientations of consciousness. The procreative organ receives its true ability to be “fruitful” and couple when it manifests and is in tune with the spiritual dimension of individual’s mind.

This is the meaning of what is written in the *Zohar*,<sup>5</sup> that “dew that is shaken off its head....” This “head” is the “head” discussed there, i.e., the head of the procreative organ, its “crown.”

What has been said so far is by way of introduction.

Now, I [i.e., Rabbi Chaim Vital] made efforts to find [a Scriptural allusion to] this, since everything is alluded to in the [Biblical] text.

It is known that the etrog is the manifestation of the “crown” of [the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*]. I therefore concluded that the future resurrection—that is, the dew referred to above, which [yesod of *Z'eir Anpin*] receives from its [i.e., *Z'eir Anpin*’s] brain, and transfers to *malchut*—should certainly be alluded to in it.

And indeed, I found that the numerical value of the words for “fruit of the goodly tree” [*peri etz hadar*] is 659. This turns out to be exactly the numerical value of the phrase “it [i.e., *Z'eir Anpin*] contains the dew of resurrection, [which flows] from its brain to her [i.e., *malchut*]” [plus the *kolel*]. This idea is that expounded on in the above “introduction.”

In Hebrew, this phrase reads *bo tal d'techiah min ha-mo'ach lah*:

<i>bo</i> : <i>beit-vav</i>	= 2 + 6	= 8
<i>tal</i> : <i>tet-lamed</i>	= 9 + 30	= 39
<i>d'techiah</i> : <i>dalet-tav-chet-yud-hei</i>	= 4 + 400 + 8 + 10 + 5	= 427
<i>min</i> : <i>mem-nun</i>	= 40 + 50	= 90
<i>ha-mo'ach</i> : <i>hei-mem-vav-chet</i>	= 5 + 40 + 6 + 8	= 59
<i>lah</i> : <i>lamed-hei</i>	= 30 + 5	= 35

$$8 + 39 + 427 + 90 + 59 + 35 = 658.$$

The meaning is that the “crown” of [yesod of] *Z'eir Anpin*, which is “the fruit of the goodly tree,” receives the dew of resurrection from the brain of *Z'eir Anpin*,

<sup>5</sup> In the section of the *Zohar* titled *Idra Rabba*, 3:128a.

and then gives it to *malchut*. Those who dwell in it, that is, in the land of Israel, receive it and thus live forever.

Thus, we see that all the mysteries of the Torah are alluded to and concealed deep within Scripture.

Furthermore, it is explained in the *Zohar*<sup>6</sup> that the origin of this dew is in *Atika* [i.e., in *Arich Anpin*].

*Arich Anpin* is the *partzuf* of super-rational will. The ultimate origin of *Z'eir Anpin*'s mentality and consciousness is its super-rational will. This will drives *Z'eir Anpin* toward self-expression and motivates it to couple with *Nukva*. If this will is not manifest, there will be no coupling; *Z'eir Anpin* will be "cold," "sterile," or "impotent."

I discovered that this is alluded to [as well] in the words [of Scripture] themselves. The numerical value of the words "fruit of the goodly tree" is 659 [as above]. This is also the numerical value of the phrase "dew from *Atika*" with the *kolel*.

In Hebrew, "dew from *Atika*" is *tal mei-Atika*.

<i>tal: tet-lamed</i>	= 9 + 30	= 39
<i>mei-Atika: mem-ayin-tav-yud-kuf-alef</i>	= 40 + 70 + 400 + 10 + 100 + 1	= 621

39 + 621 = 660 = 659 + 1.

We thus see how the origin [of the dew] is alluded to [in the words of Scripture as well].

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>6</sup> I.e., in the *Idra Rabba*.

# *Parashat Emor*

## [third installment]

In this week's *parashah*, we are told that "The son of an Israelite woman and an Egyptian man went outside amongst the children of Israel. And that son of an Israelite woman contended with an Israelite man in the camp. So the son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name [of G-d] and cursed, and they brought him to Moses. His mother's name was Shelomit, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan. They put him in jail until [Moses] could tell them what G-d said to do [with him]. And G-d spoke to Moses, saying, 'Bring the curser outside the camp and all those who heard [him curse] should place their hands upon his head, and then all the congregation should stone him.'"<sup>1</sup>

We are told in the oral tradition that this curser was the son of an Egyptian taskmaster. Shelomit was an overly outgoing, talkative woman, as alluded to by the fact that the Torah mentions that she was "the daughter of Dibri," for these words may be read as "the talkative daughter." Because of her immodesty, this Egyptian taskmaster took note of her and desired her. He woke her husband up in the middle of the night and summoned him to his work. While the husband was out, the Egyptian taskmaster slipped into the house and had relations with Shelomit, who thought that this man was her husband. When the husband came home, he understood what had happened. When the taskmaster saw that the husband understood what had happened, he afflicted him relentlessly. Moses, who at this point was still an Egyptian noble, had gone out to see how his compatriots were doing, and when he witnessed how this taskmaster was afflicting Shelomit's husband, he slew the taskmaster by pronouncing G-d's Name.<sup>2</sup>

Years later, the son born of this illicit union tried to encamp in the camp of the tribe of Dan, but an Israelite man quoted him the verse, "The children of Israel shall encamp such that each man be near the flag of the insignia of their *father's* houses."<sup>3</sup> This man could therefore not claim the right to encamp with his *mother's* tribe. The two of them went into Moses' tent to be judged, and the verdict was against the son of the Egyptian, who then went outside Moses' tent and blasphemed. God told Moses that after the witnesses place their hands on his head, the court should stone him.

[In order to understand this,] you must [first] know what it says in the *Zohar*,<sup>4</sup> namely, that the word for "blaspheme" [*vayikov*] is to be understood [as it is in the phrase] "and he bored [*vayikov*] a hole in its door."<sup>5</sup>

The word for "and he blasphemed" (*vayikov*) literally means "and he bored"; the Mishnaic word for "hole" (*nekev*) is derived from this word. The verse regarding the son of the Egyptian may thus be read, "...he bored a hole in the Name [of G-d]..." and in general, blaspheming G-d's Name may be mystically seen as "puncturing" it.

**He bored this hole because he wanted to defend his mother.**

We will see presently how the son of the Egyptian sought to defend his mother, Shelomit, by boring this hole in G-d's Name.

According to the *Zohar*, the Israelite man who was arguing with the son of the Egyptian was in fact his step-brother. When Shelomit's husband understood that she had had illicit relations with the taskmaster, and that this was brought about by her immodest behavior, he separated from her and took another wife. This Israelite man was the son of Shelomit's husband and his second wife. This second son knew the story surrounding the first son's birth, and

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 24:10-14.

<sup>2</sup> See Rashi on v. 10 and on Exodus 2:11.

<sup>3</sup> Numbers 2:2.

<sup>4</sup> 3:106a.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Kings 12:10.

in the course of explaining to him why he was not allowed to encamp together with the tribe of Dan, told him the circumstances of his birth. The first son then blasphemed G-d's Name in order to defend his mother Shelomit's honor, as we shall see.

Now, you must know that when Abel was killed [by Cain] over the extra twin [sister born with him], the evil of Cain was transferred into the Egyptian [taskmaster] that Moses killed, since [Moses] was a reincarnation of Abel, who was killed by Cain.

As we have mentioned previously, a twin sister was born with both Cain and Abel, but with Abel were born two twin sisters. The brothers were meant to marry their twin sisters and thus populate the world. Cain was jealous of Abel's extra sister-wife, and this is one of the reasons he killed him.

Now, the blasphemer was the son of the Egyptian, and he was entirely evil, devoid of any good [aspects].

In the semi-parallel passage in *Sha'ar HePesukim*, the Arizal points out that the son of the Egyptian inherited the evil of Cain from his father. This is why the Torah specifically calls him "the son of an Egyptian man." Because Moses killed his father using the Divine Name, he blasphemed that same Divine Name.

His mother, Shelomit the daughter of Dibri, was a spark of that second twin of Abel's, over which Cain killed him. Therefore, this Egyptian was killed over this Shelomit.

Since Cain killed Abel over Abel's sister-wife, the reincarnation of Cain—the Egyptian taskmaster—was killed over the reincarnation of the sister-wife—Shelomit.

In the semi-parallel passage in *Sha'ar HaPesukim*, the Arizal states that just as Cain desired Abel's sister-wife, his reincarnation—the Egyptian taskmaster—desired her reincarnation—Shelomit. Moses, the reincarnation of Abel, killed this Egyptian, thereby avenging the death of Abel at the hands of Cain.

Now, you know that there is a screen separating *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah* that acts as a veil [shielding *Asiyah* from the light of *Yetzirah*]. This [veil] is the *malchut* of that world [i.e., *Yetzirah*]. That *malchut* is called the *dalet*, and is the significance of the *dalet* of the word for "one" [*echad*].

The *malchut* of any world is the interface between that world and the world below it on the chain of spiritual development, where the "light" (i.e., consciousness) of the higher world is translated into or projected onto terms meaningful in the lower world, which is in fact defined by this lower level of Divine consciousness.

According to Jewish law, when we recite the *Shema*, "Hear, O Israel, G-d is our G-d; G-d is one," we are to meditate on certain allusions in the spelling of the word for "one," *echad*. This word is spelled *alef-chet-dalet*; the word *alef* means "chief" (*aluf*); the numerical values of *chet* and *dalet* are 8, and 4, respectively. We are to consider how the "chief of the world," i.e., G-d, is master of the 8, i.e., the seven heavens and earth, and the 4, i.e., the four directions. Thus, the *chet* signifies G-d's mastery over the "vertical" dimension (including the spiritual realms "above" the physical universe) and the *dalet* signifies G-d's mastery over the horizontal dimension of space.

The *dalet* thus represents the spatial expanse at the bottom of the spiritual/physical hierarchy of the world. As such, it correlates to *malchut*, the lowest level of any world.

It is further known that *chesed* and *gevurah* correspond to the Name *Akvah*.

The Divine Name *Akvah* (*alef-hei-vav-hei*)<sup>6</sup> does not appear explicitly in the Bible, but is "encoded" as the initials of many phrases. In most contexts, it is associated with the *sefirah* of *da'at*, which contains the sources of

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<sup>6</sup> See *The Mystery of Marriage*, p. 423.

*chesed* and *gevurah* (which is why there are four compartments in the *tefilin* instead of the three we would expect, being that the intellect comprises three *sefirot*, *chochmah*, *binah*, and *da'at*).

Now, this son of the Egyptian [taskmaster] was [meant to rectify the sin of] Cain and Abel, who personified *chesed* and *gevurah*. With the power of this Name, from which he was sustained—as is alluded to in the initials of the words for “And the son of the *Israelite* woman blasphemed *the Name and they brought him...*” as well as in the initials of the words for “the soothsayers and the wizards”<sup>7</sup>—he sought to puncture this veil, and thereby draw down [Divine] beneficence on his mother, who was in *Asiyah*.

Since the son of the taskmaster was intended to rectify the sin of Cain and Abel, he derived spiritually from their spiritual source, *chesed* and *gevurah*. He therefore was able to manipulate the Name of G-d associated with these two *sefirot*, the Name *Akvah*.

The most basic initials that form the name *Akvah* are those of the words from the first verse of the Torah, “...the heavens and the earth”<sup>8</sup> (*et ha-shamayim v’et ha-aretz*). This Name thus represents the power to join heaven and earth, to unite, which is why it is associated with the *sefirah* of *da'at*, the power to unite *chochmah* and *binah* and produce “offspring” from them, the *midot*. This is also why the word *da'at* is used to describe marital union, as in “And Adam *knew* his wife, Eve.”<sup>9</sup>

The son of the taskmaster thus wanted to misuse this Divine Name in order to unite that which is not meant to be normally united. He wanted to draw down Divine beneficence from the world of *Yetzirah* into the world of *Asiyah*, i.e., a level of holiness onto a realm that cannot (normally) lay claim to such a level. In this way, he thought that he could “purify” his mother and rid her of the scourge of her immodesty.

The italicized words in the phrase “And the son of the *Israelite* woman blasphemed *the Name and they brought him...*” are consecutive: *va-yikov ben ha-ishah ha-yisra'eilit et ha-shem va-yavi'u oto...*

“The soothsayers and the wizards”: *et ha-ovot ve-et ha-yidanim*.

Shelomit was considered to be in the world of *Asiyah*, in this world the power of evil is greater than the power of holiness. In *Yetzirah*, the powers of evil and holiness are on equal footing, and in the world of *Beriah*, the power of holiness is greater than the power of evil.

This is the meaning of “he blasphemed the Name,” [taking the word for “blasphemed” to be] cognate to the word “*and he bored a hole in its door,*” alluding to *malchut* of *Yetzirah*, which is called the “door.”

Thus, the proof-text from the Book of Kings does not only provide us with the literal meaning of the word for “blasphemy” but also with the imagery associated with blasphemy: making a hole in a door. The name of the letter *dalet*—which, we said above, signifies *malchut*—literally means, “door.” This is appropriate, since *malchut* is the door from the lower world to its own world and vice versa.

The reason “all the congregation”—i.e., the Sanhedrin and the Torah scholars—were the ones who had to stone him is because only they can receive the additional ray of Shabbat [consciousness] during the week as well, as is known.

It is, of course, impossible for the whole people of Israel to stone anybody, so this verse is interpreted to mean that the *representatives* of the people, i.e., the Sanhedrin, or high court of justice, were to do the stoning.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Kings 23:24.

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 1:1.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 4:1.

The Torah scholar, by virtue of his consciousness being fully imbued with the Torah he studies, is able to sustain something of the Divine consciousness we normally attain only on Shabbat throughout the week. For this reason, the *Zohar* states that a Torah scholar is likened to Shabbat.<sup>10</sup>

Rabbi Shalom Sharabi points out that on Shabbat, the world of *Atzilut* shines into the world of *Beriah*, meaning that the intellect is imbued with Divine consciousness that transcends intellect. One senses G-d's presence in his Torah study.

By invoking the Name *Akvah* and thereby improperly opening the world of *Asiyah* to the world of *Yetzirah*, the blasphemer was also causing the consciousness of the higher worlds, *Beriah* and *Atzilut*, to unnaturally descend. This had to be rectified by those who personify those worlds, the Torah scholars and the Sanhedrin.

This explanation dovetails with another reason given why the blasphemer blasphemed. According to the sages, when he heard the law of the showbread (which immediately precedes the account of his blasphemy), he scoffed at the fact that the Torah requires the showbread to remain in the Temple for nine days and only then eaten by the priests.<sup>11</sup> "A king should be served fresh bread every day, not stale, nine-day-old bread!" (In fact, the showbread miraculously remained fresh for nine days).

According to this, his scoffing at the Sabbath made him blaspheme. It was therefore proper that the Sanhedrin and the scholars, who are likened to the Sabbath, be the ones to stone him.

From all this we see the importance of being fit to receive Divine consciousness, and the seriousness of the error of trying to "reform" evil by shining Divine consciousness on it before it has been made ready for it. The Ba'al Shem Tov taught that all processes of spiritual growth must pass through the three stages of ego-submission, separation between good and evil, and finally sweetening of evil through good. We see here, it seems, an instance of trying to skip the second stage, of trying to sweeten evil without first "separating" it out, i.e., destroying its evil context. Sweetening evil is possible only because of the inner core of good that is present within it, and this can be revealed only if we crush the outer shell or context of evil within which the inner good is trapped. The mistake of all would-be but misguided spiritualists, says the Ba'al Shem Tov, is being reluctant to slay the evil context before trying to sweeten the good, inner core. Instead, they try to sweeten the outer reality, but this outer reality is not ready to be sweetened; in fact, it exists only to be resisted, rejected, and destroyed by being identified for what it is. Only when this is done can we proceed to sweeten reality by revealing the inner good that truly lies within everything.

—translated and adapted from *Ta'amei HaMitzvot* and *Sha'ar HaPesukim*

<sup>10</sup> *Zohar* 3:29a; see *Shabbat* 119a.

<sup>11</sup> *Menachot* 100b.

## *Parashat Emor* [fourth installment]

In this week's *parashah*, G-d gives the commandments of the holidays, including the holiday of *Sukot*, on which we are commanded to hold the four plants together.

“And you shall take for yourselves on the first day [of *Sukot*] the fruit of the beautiful tree, date palms, a branch of the thick-bough tree, and willows of the brook.”<sup>1</sup> [The sages explain:] “The fruit of the beautiful tree” is the *etrog*; “date palms” refers to the palm stem [*lulav*]; “a branch of the thick-bough tree” is the myrtle [*hadas*]; and “willows” of the brook” is the willow branch [*aravah*].<sup>2</sup>

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai explained<sup>3</sup> that these plants allude to the seven *sefirot* that build [the world, and the four letters of the name *Havayah*].

The seven *midot* are referred to as the seven *sefirot* of building [the world], for they manifest in the material world as the seven days of creation.

To explain: The *hadas* manifests *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*, which in turn are alluded to by the letter *yud* spelled out.

According to Jewish law, we must hold a minimum of three *hadas* branches in order to fulfill this commandment. The three *hadas* branches therefore allude to the primary triplet of the seven *midot*, *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*.

The letter *yud* is spelled out with three letters: *yud-vav-dalet*.

[Inasmuch as the leaves of the *hadas*] must be triplets, this indicates that we should consider the *yud* spelled-out twice [i.e., expanded into its third iteration], like this: *yud-vav-dalet vav-alef-vav dalet-lamed-tav*.

In order for the *hadas* to be valid, its leaves must issue in triplets from the same point on the branch at least for a length of three handbreadths. Thus, the triplet of *hadas* branches becomes nine *hadas* leaves, alluding to an additional iteration of the letter *yud*.

The two willow branches manifest *netzach* and *hod*, and are alluded to by the spelling out of the letter *hei*: *hei-hei*.

We must hold two willow branches in performing this commandment. *Netzach* and *hod* are always considered a pair.

The *lulav* manifests *yesod*, and alludes to the spelling out of the *vav*: *vav-vav*.

The *lulav* must be straight, alluding to the straight line of the *vav*. It is valid if the two halves of its central leaf are connected for the majority of its length; these two halves allude to the two *vav*'s used to spell out the *vav*.

The *etrog* manifests *malchut*, alluding to the final *hei* spelled out as *hei-hei*.

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 23:40.

<sup>2</sup> *Sukah* 32b, 35a.

<sup>3</sup> *Zohar* 3:24a.

Thus, the four plants are actually seven.

Now, according to this [explanation], the Torah lists them neither in ascending nor descending order. Logically, it should have begun with the *hadas*, which alludes to *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*, and continued with the willow, which alludes to *netzach-hod*, etc. Or, it should have begun with the *etrog*, proceeded to the *lulav*, and continued with the *aravah* before the *hadas*.

Furthermore, the *lulav* alludes to the 18 vertebrae of the spinal column, and *yesod* is not part of the spinal column, for *tiferet* is manifest in the spinal column, and all 18 vertebrae are part of it, not *yesod*. *Yesod* is below the 18 vertebrae of the spinal column, as we see physically.

Another question: If the *etrog* is one of the four plants, why don't we tie it together with the others, making one bundle.

The other three plants—the *lulav*, *hadas*, and *aravah* are bound together, while the *etrog* is held separately and just touched to the group of the other three.

Another question: When we move the four plants, we do so in all four directions, up and down. These [correspond to the *sefirot* as follows:] south manifests *chesed*, north manifests *gevurah*, east manifests *tiferet*, up manifests *netzach*, down manifests *hod*, west manifests *yesod*—in which all the other lights coalesce, as is known—and for *malchut*, which is manifest in the *etrog*, we do not make any movement at all.

The word for “west” (*ma'arav*) comes from the word for “to mix” (*l'arev*), for it is in the west that day blends gradually into evening.

In contrast, in the circuits [*hakafot*, made with the Torah on *Simchat Torah*] there is a seventh circuit. Moreover, the *lulav* [and the other three plants] are [held and] moved on the seventh day [of *Sukot*], so why with regard to the days [of moving] there is a day [for *malchut*], while with regard to the movements in particular there is not?

Another question: [Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai] said that the *etrog* corresponds to the heart, while *malchut* is the lowest *sefirah*.

The heart is generally associated with *tiferet*, not *malchut*.

And when we explain, as we will later, please G-d, that [the *etrog*] manifests the crown [of *yesod*], this will give rise to the question of what connection is there between the crown [of *yesod*] with the heart? The latter is one of the internal organs, while the former is one of the external organs.

Finally: The *hadasim* correspond to the eyes, so why are there three of them? There are only two eyes, not three.

To answer all this, you have first to understand the following. As you know, the *sefirot* are composed of their essence and their vessel, which [are like] a soul and a body.

These “essence” or “content” of the *sefirah* is also known as its “light.”

We are not speaking now of the vessels; [we are speaking] only of the inner entity [of the *sefirot*], which divides into an inner, middle, and outer aspect, [known as] the *nefesh*, *ruach*, and *neshamah* [of the *sefirah*, in reverse order].

*Nefesh* (“animating soul”), *ruach* (“spirit”), and *neshamah* (“breath”) are three synonyms for “soul,” and generally are used to indicate the instinctive, emotional, and intellectual aspects of the soul. Here, they are used to describe the three aspects of the Divine light within each *sefirah*.

The *nefesh* [of the *sefirah*] is the aspect [manifest as] the Name *Elokim*; the *ruach* is the aspect [manifest as] the Name *Havayah*; and the *neshamah* is the aspect [manifest as] the spelling-out of the Name *Havayah*.

They also possess a simple Name *Havayah*, which is a *neshamah* to it; and a [further] *neshamah* to [both of] them, a Name *Havayah* spelled-out; and a [further yet] *neshamah* to them all, a simple *yud*. All this will be explained in its context, please G-d.

In any case, what always strengthens the body and makes it grow is the states of *chesed*, which produce the drop of semen that initiates the birth process. The source and position [of these states of *chesed*] is *da'at*.

The “body” here is the *sefirot* that correspond anatomically to the torso and its limbs, i.e., the *sefirot* from *chesed* to *malchut*.

We have explained previously that the states of *chesed* and *gevurah* within *da'at* are the subjective aspects of the intellect, the propensities of attraction and repulsion toward and against the implications of an idea based on what it means for the individual.

Of *da'at*, it is written, “And with *da'at* the rooms are filled,”<sup>4</sup> meaning that [the states of *chesed* within *da'at*] spread out to “water” the body and make it grow. This is the mystical meaning of the [sages’] statement that “there is no erection without *da'at*,”<sup>5</sup> meaning that the root of the whole body is alluded to and rooted in *da'at*. For this reason, it is forbidden to show mercy to someone who has no *da'at*.<sup>6</sup> It is also said that “Without *da'at*, a soul is not good,”<sup>7</sup> for the soul needs to live.

Thus, the source of all seven [*sefirot*] and their vitality is stored within *da'at*. From there, the life-force spreads out and causes all seven [*sefirot*] to develop. But the origin and root always remains [within *da'at*], and it only spreads forth [in response] to the deeds of [those in] the lower worlds and their arousal [of it]

<sup>4</sup> Proverbs 24:4.

<sup>5</sup> *Yevamot* 53b.

<sup>6</sup> *Berachot* 33a.

<sup>7</sup> Proverbs 19:2.

through acts [here] below. [Their acts] cause the upper levels to be aroused and give additional light of *da'at* [in to the seven lower *sefirot*], and from the plentitude of light that enters the “body,” it bestows and adds greatly throughout the seven *sefirot*.

This *da'at* comprises states of *chesed* and states of *gevurah*. All couplings are effected through via these [states of *chesed* acting] as male waters and these [states of *gevurah* acting] as female waters. These [ten] are ten simple Names *Havayah*. The masculine ones [extend] to the male [*partzuf*, *Z'eir Anpin*, particular to its] *chesed-gevurah-tiferet-netzach-hod*. In contrast, [its] *yesod* and *malchut*—that is, the crown [of *yesod*]*—do not each possess a state of chesed, as is the case with the first [five of the seven midot], for there are only five states of chesed.*

The same applies to the states of *gevurah* [that extend] into *malchut*, [the female *partzuf*, *Nukva d'Z'eir Anpin*]. They spread out into here *chesed-gevurah-tiferet-netzach-hod*, as do the states of *chesed* throughout the male [*partzuf*].

As for *yesod* and *malchut* [of *Z'eir Anpin*], the general radiance of the five [states of *chesed*] descends to them from *da'at*. This general [radiance extends] to *yesod* and to the crown [of *yesod*], too, in order to prepare them to receive the [five] states of *chesed* themselves.

The same applies to *yesod* and *malchut* of *Nukva*: they also receive the general [radiance] of the states of *gevurah*, in order to [prepare them to] later receive the [five] states of *gevurah* themselves.

This general light that spreads through *yesod* comes to them [i.e., *yesod* and *malchut* of *Z'eir Anpin*] from *da'at*, preparing it to receive afterwards the drop of semen from the totality [of the preceding five *sefirot*], for were they not to receive this general radiance, they would not afterwards be able to receive the states of *chesed* themselves as a drop of semen, as mentioned.

Similarly, the same applies to [the *partzuf* of] *malchut* with regard to the states of *gevurah*.

Thus, there are five states of *chesed*, their general radiance for *yesod* [of *Z'eir Anpin*] and their general radiance for *malchut* [of *Z'eir Anpin*]. These add up to seven. And likewise for [the *partzuf* of] *malchut*, it is veritably constructed from the [five] states of *gevurah*, which cause it to develop just as the states of *chesed* do for the male [*partzuf*], as is known.

[Now that we have explained all this], it is time for me to tell you another principle. We should ask: why are there only five states of *chesed*, which shine into *chesed-gevurah-tiferet-netach-hod*, while for *yesod* and *malchut* there is only a general radiance, as we have explained? G-d could have made it so there were

seven states of *chesed*, each [of the seven *midot*] receiving [the light] of one state of *chesed*. The same question may be asked about the states of *gevurah*.

The answer is as follows. All the limbs of the body—the hands, the feet, and the torso—perform functions: walking with the legs, artistry and deeds with the hands, and similarly the torso, which is the “stem” of the legs and hands; they are always active. [The limb of] *yesod*, on the other hand, has only a spiritual, not physical, function, and then only from time to time. It remains flaccid except for during marital relations. This is why it is said [in the *Zohar*<sup>8</sup>] that “Joseph was born.” It means that when [Z’*eir Anpin*] wants to couple [with *Nukva*], and all the lights [of the higher *sefirot*] spread through it, it comes to life.

To be continued...

—translated and adapted from *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>8</sup> 1:1b.

## *Parashat Behar*

The portion of the Torah read this week begins with the commandment of letting the land lay fallow every seventh year. To quote the verse:

“When you come into the land which I am giving to you, the land shall rest, a Sabbath for G-d.”<sup>1</sup> The meaning of the sabbatical year and the jubilee will be understood [after the following discussion].

We see that there is a weekly Sabbath and a sabbatical year, which is also called a Sabbath. As it is written: “...a Sabbath for G-d,”<sup>2</sup> and “And the Sabbath of the land...”<sup>3</sup> Let us examine why the sabbatical year is also called a Sabbath, and what difference there is between the [weekly] Sabbath and the sabbatical year.

We have already explained that the essence of the Sabbath is that it is a spiritual ascent of all worlds, each one rising to a higher level than it is on during the rest of the week.

To wit: The *netzach-hod-yesod-malchut* of *Asiyah* [collectively] ascend to the level [normally “occupied” by] *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*; *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* ascend to the level of *chochmah-binah-da’at*; *chochmah-binah-da’at* of *Asiyah* ascend to the level of *netzach-hod-yesod-malchut* of *Yetzirah*, and so on, up to the original origin of emanation itself. For even *Arich Anpin* ascends [on Shabbat], and its place is taken by *Abba* and *Ima*, as is known.

It is clear from this that the *sefirot* behave collectively relative to their “energy levels.” Although each *sefirah* has its own unique identity, the *sefirot* of the intellect, of the emotions, and of behavior and expression function together as units. For this reason, the ascent they undergo on Shabbat occurs relative to these energy levels.

A “world” in Kabbalah is a level of consciousness, a “realm” in which whatever is there shares a common awareness of G-d. A lower world sustains less Divine consciousness; a higher world, more. The ascent of the worlds on Shabbat one notch in the hierarchy of consciousness thus means that each level temporarily is able to sustain a level of G-d-awareness that is normally too high for it. Normally, if someone or something on the level of *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* of *Asiyah* would acquire the consciousness of *chochmah-binah-da’at* of *Asiyah*, that would mean that he has ascended *from* the previous level up *to* the higher one. On Shabbat, however, the lower level ascends to the higher level while still retaining its identity as the lower level. This temporary “bending” of reality occurs only on Shabbat, and reality reverts to its normal, stable state as soon as Shabbat is over.

It follows that on Shabbat all worlds experience an ascent.

The sabbatical year is called a Sabbath since it is similar in this respect to Shabbat. All worlds ascend to a level higher than their normal one, just as they do on the [weekly] Sabbath.

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 25:2

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 25:2, 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 25:6.

The difference is that on Shabbat *all* creation experiences an ascent, while in the sabbatical year only the three [lower] worlds—*Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*—ascend.

This works as follows: *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Asiyah* ascend to the level of *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* of *Asiyah*, and so on, [just as on Shabbat]. Thus, *chochmah-binah-da'at* of *Beriah* ascend to the level of *malchut* of *Atzilut*. But from *malchut* of *Atzilut* on up there is no ascent whatsoever, and we [mortals] have no power to cause any such ascent. These levels ascend only on Shabbat.

Notice that in the description of what happens on Shabbat, *netzach-hod-yesod* and *malchut* all function as one unit, whereas here, the Arizal mentions only *netzach-hod-yesod* functioning as a unit, and *malchut* seems to be functioning separately (as seen in the fact that *chochmah-binah-da'at* of *Beriah* are described as ascending to *malchut* of *Atzilut* and not to *netzach-hod-yesod-malchut* of *Atzilut*). This discrepancy will be explained presently.

There is a second difference, which will shed additional light on the difference just described. On Shabbat, all four lower *sefirot* of each world ascend to the level of the three middle *sefirot*. In the sabbatical year, this is not the case, but rather, only *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Asiyah* ascend to the level of *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* of *Asiyah*, while *malchut* of *Asiyah* ascends to the level of *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Asiyah*. Thus, *malchut* behaves independently of *netzach-hod-yesod*, and does not ascend with them to the level of *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*, but only up to the level of *netzach-hod-yesod*, and remains there by itself.

Similarly, the three higher *sefirot* of *Asiyah* ascend to the level of *malchut* of *Yetzirah*, *malchut* of *Yetzirah* to the level of *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Yetzirah*, *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Yetzirah* to the level of *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* of *Yetzirah*, *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* of *Yetzirah* to the level of *keter-chochmah-binah* of *Yetzirah*, *keter-chochmah-binah* of *Yetzirah* to the level of *malchut* of *Beriah*, and *malchut* [of *Beriah*] to the level of *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Beriah*. Following this pattern, *keter-chochmah-binah* of *Beriah* ascend to the level of *malchut* of *Atzilut*. From this point upward, all the *sefirot* remain at their usual level, and do not ascend, as we pointed out above.

We will now explain how it is possible on Shabbat for all four lower *sefirot*—*netzach*, *hod*, *yesod*, and *malchut*—to ascend together.

*Netzach*, *hod*, and *yesod* exist on the three axes of right, left, and center respectively.

It will be recalled that the *sefirot* are organized into a trilinear array that depicts the various relationships between them. This structure is as follows:

left axis	center axis	right axis
	<i>keter</i>	
<i>binah</i>		<i>chochmah</i>
	<i>(da'at)</i>	
<i>gevurah</i>		<i>chesed</i>
	<i>tiferet</i>	
<i>hod</i>		<i>netzach</i>
	<i>yesod</i>	
	<i>malchut</i>	

The “energy level” of the *sefirot* is reflected in their position in this structure. For example, the energy level of *netzach* and *hod* is lower than that of *chesed* and *gevurah*.

The fourth [of the four lower *sefirot*], *malchut*, is not situated below them [as the chart might seem to indicate], such that we might assume that it occupies a level of its own. If this were the case, we would have to explain how it is possible that three [*sefirot*] can occupy the place normally occupied by four, or four [*sefirot*] the place normally occupied by three.

As was detailed above, on Shabbat the *netzach-hod-yesod-malchut* of each world collectively ascend to the level of *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* of that world. Likewise, the *chochmah-binah-da'at* of each world ascend to the level of *netzach-hod-yesod-malchut* of the next world up.

This is not the case, however, since *malchut* is not underneath *netzach-hod-yesod* but behind them, as is known. *Malchut* stands behind the *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*. It follows that the “feet” of *malchut* extends down only as far as [does the lower extremity of] *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*. This being the case, *malchut* does not occupy any “vertical” space by itself at all.

This is true on weekdays, when *malchut* is back-to-back with *Z'eir Anpin*. It is also true on Shabbat, when they turn to face each other.

During the week, *Z'eir Anpin* and its *Nukva* (referred to here simply as *malchut*) are “back-to-back.” What this means is that the emotions are somewhat divorced or disconnected from their means of expression. During the week, as we have explained previously, we are intended to focus on the task of rectifying and elevating the physical world. This entails a temporary disconnection from our higher selves as we sally forth into the jungle or desert of unredeemed reality to slay the dragons and spread the light. In order to engage reality on its own level, we have to turn our backs, so to speak, on the pure experience of inspiration so we can get on with the work at hand.

On Shabbat, however, we are bidden to rest from this challenge in order to reconnect with our higher selves. In Kabbalistic terminology, this means that our *Nukva* and *Z'eir Anpin* face each other anew in order to couple; our means of expression get recharged from their renewed contact with the emotions that power them.

This is in fact exactly what *malchut* demanded, i.e., that she stand face to face with *netzach-hod-yesod*.

This refers to the demand of the moon, recorded in the Midrash, that it be placed on equal footing with the sun. The moon symbolizes *malchut*, while the sun symbolizes *netzach-hod-yesod*.

In any case, it never occupies any level by itself below them. Thus, if these four *sefirot* ascend to a level occupied by three *sefirot*, or three others ascend to the level occupied by these four, this is no problem, since the “vertical” space occupied by these four is the same as that occupied by three.

We have thus explained how the ascent [of the *sefirot*] occurs on Shabbat.

However, we must now explain [something else]. For by this same token, we must ask how in the sabbatical year the first three [*sefirot* of any particular world] can ascent to [the level normally occupied by] *malchut* [of the world immediately above it], which is [a level normally occupied by] one *sefirah*. Or how *malchut*, which is only one *sefirah*, can ascent and occupy the level of *netzach-hod-yesod*, which are three *sefirot*.

The truth is that this, too, is self-understood. For *malchut*, after all, is not just one *sefirah*, but rather an entire *partzuf* [i.e., *Nukva*]. It is just that the length [i.e., height] of this *partzuf* is the same as that of *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin*. Thus, when it ascends, *malchut* can fill the level usually occupied by *netzach-hod-yesod*, and *keter-chochmah-binah* [of the lower world] can ascend to [and fill] the place occupied by *malchut* alone. This explains everything.

There are other differences, which will also be self-understood based on what we will explain presently, please G-d.

Bear in mind that the word Shabbat [*shin-beit-tav*], as explained in the *Zohar*,<sup>4</sup> may be read as “daughter of the [letter] *shin*” [*shin-bat*]. This is because *malchut*, which is called the “daughter,” ascends to the level of *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*, which are alluded to by the [three branches of the] letter *shin*, [which alludes as well to] the three axes [of the *sefirot*] and the three patriarchs, as is known.

*Nukva* is called the “daughter” of *Abba* (the “father”) and *Ima* (the “mother”), while *Z’eir Anpin* is called the “son.” This simply means that the emotions and their means of expression are revealed by the intellect.

The three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, personified the three axes of the *sefirot*, right, left, and center, respectively.

When *netzach-hod-yesod* ascend, *malchut* ascends with them to the level normally occupied by *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*; this is Shabbat. This is the advantage of Shabbat over the sabbatical year, for in the sabbatical year *malchut* ascends only as far as *netzach-hod-yesod*.

As detailed above, during the sabbatical year *malchut* only ascends to occupy the level of *netzach-hod-yesod*. On Shabbat, in contrast, *malchut* ascends with *netzach-hod-yesod* to occupy the level of *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*. Since the soul is “born” out of *malchut*, the consciousness of the Jew therefore follows the same paradigm. This is why on Shabbat more worldly pursuits are forbidden than are during the sabbatical year: the soul is experience a higher level of spirituality, which would be contravened by engaging in material work.

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<sup>4</sup> 1:23b, 2:204a, 3:243b, 281a, etc.

This, then, is the mystical meaning of the verses [which refer to the sabbatical year as a Sabbath]: “And the Sabbath of the land...,” “and the land will rest...” etc. The “land” refers to *malchut*. It rests by itself, and is not included with *netzach-hod-yesod* [as they ascend to the level of *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*], but rather ascends only as far as the level of *netzach-hod-yesod*.

The phrase “and the land will rest” alludes to the first distinction we detailed [between Shabbat and the sabbatical year]. For Shabbat is the day of rest and ascent for all ten *sefirot* of *Atzilut*, whereas in the sabbatical year only *malchut* rests and ascends, while the other *sefirot* of *Atzilut* remain at their usual levels and do not ascend at all.

Note here that the concept of “ascent” is considered equivalent to that of “rest,” while we might assume that rest means staying at one’s native level and not ascending. This indicates that resting, and particular Sabbath resting, is conceived in Judaism as a return to one’s higher spiritual self—which in fact can often be quite taxing—rather than simple relaxation.

This, then, is the meaning of “a Sabbath of the land” and “the land shall rest, a Sabbath for G-d”: the land [—*malchut*] will ascend to G-d, meaning to [the higher consciousness of G-d informing] *Z’eir Anpin*. It does not, however, ascend to the level of *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* as it does on Shabbat. If this were so, it would not be a Sabbath of rest only for “the land,” but for *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin* as well. Rather, the sabbatical year is a time of rest only for “the land,” for it alone ascends.

Even though in the three [lower] worlds—*Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*—all ten *sefirot* ascend, these three worlds are relatively all *Nukva*, being the hosts of *malchut* of *Atzilut*.

All three lower worlds are “born” from the “womb” of *malchut* of *Atzilut*, and are therefore subject to the vicissitudes of her spiritual dynamics. In this case, it is the issue of whether or not *malchut* of *Atzilut* ascends all the way up to the level of *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* or only as far as *netzach-hod-yesod* that determines whether it will be Shabbat or the sabbatical year in these lower worlds.

Thus, all the rest [of the sabbatical year] is only as far [“up”] as *malchut* of *Atzilut*, as it is written, “the land will rest.”

## *Parashat Behar*

### [second installment]

The reader is advised to review our first installment of the Arizal's teachings on *parashat Behar*. The following is a direct continuation of that excerpt.

[The above] is [the basis of] the explanation of the statement of the *Zohar*<sup>1</sup> that the sabbatical year “occurs” in the lower *hei* [of the Name *Havayah*], whereas the jubilee year “occurs” in the upper *hei*. We have explained how the sabbatical year occurs in the lower *hei*, namely, that [in this year] the worlds do not ascend collectively any higher than the lower *hei*, i.e., *malchut* of *Atzilut*, but from there upwards nothing ascends.

As explained in the previous installment, even though in the sabbatical year the three lower worlds of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah* do ascend, they collectively can be considered “female” (i.e., *malchut*) relative to the world of *Atzilut*. Thus, whatever ascent occurs during the sabbatical year may be considered an ascent of *malchut*, nothing more.

The mystical meaning of the jubilee year, signified by the upper *hei* [of the Name *Havayah*] is as follows:

[This year] undergoes everything that occurs in the sabbatical year, plus an additional [ascent]: there is an ascent within *Atzilut* itself. *Z'eir Anpin* ascends to the level of *binah*, which is signified by the upper *hei* [of the Name *Havayah*]. Higher than this, however, there is no ascent whatsoever.

There are thus three degrees of ascent:

1. the sabbatical year, in which ascent occurs only as far up as *malchut* [of *Atzilut*],
2. the jubilee year, in which ascent occurs up to the level of *binah* [of *Atzilut*], and
3. the Sabbath, in which all levels ascend.

You will therefore observe that all the laws that apply during the sabbatical year apply as well during the jubilee year, with some few additional restrictions, due to the additional ascent in the jubilee over and above that of the sabbatical year.

The addition [in the jubilee year] is that bondsmen are released from slavery. This is analogous to the exodus from Egypt, when the Jewish people as a whole

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<sup>1</sup> 3:108a.

also went “out of the house of bondage.”<sup>2</sup> [Freedom] can only occur by means of *Imma*, i.e., by her opening up her fifty gates [of understanding], as we have explained with regard to *Pesach* and *Shavuot*.

*Shavuot* occurs fifty days after *Pesach*; these fifty days correspond to the fifty gates of understanding (*binah*). “Freedom” is thus the release of consciousness from its constricted state, wherein it lacks the fifty levels of Divine understanding.

It is for the same reason that the jubilee occurs after fifty years, corresponding to the fifty gates of understanding, in contrast to the sabbatical year, which occurs after seven years. [The sabbatical year] corresponds [therefore] to the lower *hei*, which is the “daughter” of the seven [*sefirot* of the emotions].

*Malchut* receives its light from the six *sefirot* above it. This is reflected in the fact that the sabbatical year, in which the lower worlds ascend to *malchut* of *Atzilut*, occurs after six years, corresponding to the input of the six higher *sefirot* into *malchut*.

Now, we see that on the Sabbath all types of work are forbidden, while on the festivals, preparation of food is allowed, and in the sabbatical year all types of work are permitted except those pertaining to working the land. In order to understand this difference, we will first explain the significance of the prohibition of work in general.

Bear in mind that we have already explained that the origin of all this is what happened to the kings who died in the land of Edom.

The account of the deaths of the kings of Edom is the allegorical correlate of the shattering of the vessels of the world of *Tohu*.

Because they died, we have to elevate and revive them.

This refers to our task of “elevating the sparks” of *Tohu* that became embedded in our material world.

For we cause *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* to couple, and through our prayers and good deeds we cause [the sparks of] these fallen kings to ascend, as “feminine waters,” to *malchut*.

Our task is to harness the material aspects of this world (including the mental and emotional energies, etc., allied with the material world) for Divine purposes, i.e., to infuse Divine consciousness into this world. This we accomplish primarily through prayer, the ascent of consciousness into Divine consciousness, and “good deeds,” whether the performance of actual, formal *mitzvot*, or of general deeds that serve to increase Divine consciousness in the world. The effect of these activities is, as we said, that the sparks, or potentials, of holiness inherent but trapped within material reality are “liberated” and enabled to “ascend” to the level of *malchut* of *Atzilut*. *Malchut* of *Atzilut* is the source of consciousness for the lower worlds. This released spiritual energy serves to develop or empower *malchut*, rendering it fit to couple with *Z’eir Anpin*. The ascent of these released sparks is our act of initiative that catalyzes this coupling. In Lurianic terms, this is called “arousal from below”; in Zoharic terms, it is called “the ascent of feminine waters.”

The coupling of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* is the unification of emotion and expression. This, as we have explained previously, is necessary in order that the female drive for expressing Divinity in the world be properly inspired by Divine emotion and not sidetracked into the enhancement of the existential reality it is intended to elevate. The accomplishments of our feminine consciousness, i.e., our prayers and good deeds, “inspire” our male

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<sup>2</sup> Exodus 20:2.

consciousness, i.e., our abstract orientation towards Divinity, to “couple” with our feminine consciousness, as we have also explained previously.

This causes the [fallen kings] to be renewed and revived. This process will continue until, with G-d’s help, our righteous Messiah arrives. When all [the sparks of] these kings will be able to be elevated, and the good and holiness within them will be rectified and purified [from the dross attached to them], the “shells” will be left by itself, as dross. At that time, it is written, “death will be swallowed up forever.”<sup>3</sup>

Presently, the negative (“evil”) energies and contexts in which the sparks of *Tohu* are embedded derive their energy to exist from the sparks they host. Once these sparks are all liberated and re-ascend, however, the encasing shell of evil has no life-force, and therefore disintegrates. Our task in life may therefore be seen as “decontextualizing” the energies of this world from evil and reorienting them toward holiness.

Thus, all our prayers and good deeds in this world are only in order to purify and elevate [the sparks of] these seven [fallen] kings.

Now, on weekdays, we are allowed to work, for work implies that things need to be worked on by our efforts. [This would not be the case] had G-d created the world the way it will be in the [messianic] future. [Of that time] it is written, “let there be an abundance of grain on the earth,”<sup>4</sup> and we are taught that the earth will produce [fully baked] cakes, etc.<sup>5</sup> We would not have perform numerous forms of work in order to eat. Nowadays, however, we do indeed have to perform numerous forms of work in order to eat, to plow, to plant, to remove the hay, straw, and bran—which are the “shells,” and then to prepare it through fire, i.e., to bake the bread—this being the culmination of the process, giving us a finished product. The same is true of other forms of work [other than preparing bread].

This recalls Rabbi Akiva’s response to Tinneius Rufus regarding beans, which must be [cooked in order to be] sweetened, and wheat, which must be ground, etc.<sup>6</sup>

The Roman general Tinneius Rufus asked Rabbi Akiva: “Whose deeds are nicer, those of the Holy One, blessed be He, or of man?” He answered, “Those of man!” Tinneius Rufus asked further, “Look at heaven and earth! Can man make anything like this?” Rabbi Akiva responded, “Don’t talk to me about things that are beyond mankind’s ability, but about things which are in his purview.” He said, “Why do you circumcise yourselves?” He said back, “I knew you were planning to ask me about this. That’s why I said that the deeds of man are nicer than those of the Holy One, blessed be He.” Rabbi Akiva then brought him ears of grain and baked cakes, and said to him, “This was done by the Holy One, blessed be He, and this was done by man. Is not this [cake] nicer than these ears of grain?” Tinneius Rufus then asked him, “If He wants us circumcised, why doesn’t He bring the child out of his mother’s womb already circumcised?” Rabbi Akiva answered him, “Why does his umbilical cord come out with him, attached to his stomach, and his mother cuts it? As to why he does not emerge already circumcised, it is because the Holy One, blessed be He, gave the commandments to Israel only for their own purification. Thus, King David said, “The word of God is pure.”<sup>7</sup>

From this passage from the Midrash, we see that the purpose of work is to refine and elevate reality.

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<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 25:8.

<sup>4</sup> Psalms 72:16.

<sup>5</sup> *Ketubot* 111b.

<sup>6</sup> *Midrash Tanchuma, Tazria* 5.

<sup>7</sup> Psalms 18:31.

As we have explained, everything that makes up all the worlds derives from these seven kings; there is nothing that is not derived from them. Now, had these kings not died and become nullified, and had not the “shells” been formed from their remains, it would not be necessary for us to purify them; they would be intrinsically purified and would require no rectification whatsoever. But now that they have died and require rectification, we need our prayers, good deeds, and *mitzvot* in order to rectify them and elevate them as “feminine waters.”

Now, just as it is with regard to the four worlds—*Atzilut*, *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*—namely, that they need to be rectified, so it is with regard to the souls, for they derive from these [worlds], i.e., from that which remains after the purification process required by the [four] worlds.

The Divine soul, of course, originates in G-d Himself. Nonetheless, as we say in the morning blessings every day, “the soul which You have placed in me is pure; You created it, You formed it, You breathed it into me....” The soul *is pure* Divinity when it descends into the world of *Atzilut*; *You created it*—refers to the soul as it descends further, into the world of *Beriah* (“creation”); *You formed it*—this refers to the soul as it descends into the world of *Yetzirah*; *You breathed it into me*—this refers to the soul as it descends into the world of *Asiyah*. In other words, as the soul descends on its way into the body, it undergoes a process of consciousness-constriction paralleling the levels of consciousness defined as the four worlds. As part of this process, the soul picks up the perspective of the “sparks” of the world of *Tohu* that could not be assimilated into these worlds. A “world” is an objective state of consciousness; the soul is a subjective creature—at least it becomes one as it descends the rungs of consciousness. The sparks of *Tohu* too coarse to be absorbed into the worlds, i.e., the subjective elements, get taken up and integrated into the consciousness of the soul.

Furthermore, even all the lowest aspects of this world are [derived from the holy sparks of *Tohu*, that is,] from the coarsest refuse left from those seven kings. [Since the material aspects of this world are derived from the coarsest aspects of *Tohu*,] they can therefore be refined only after numerous processes of rectification and types of work.

For this reason, every type work done in this world is employed for some active *mitzvah*. For example, if one goes to plow the ground, he can perform the *mitzvah* of “you shall not plow with an ox and a donkey [harnessed] together.”<sup>8</sup> If one goes to plant, he can perform the *mitzvah* of “you shall not plant your vineyard with mixed species.”<sup>9</sup> The same applies to all other types of work. This is the mystical meaning of the verse “Know Him in all your ways.”<sup>10</sup>

All this is in order that we may elevate those kings by means of our work and the power of the active *mitzvot* that they entail. Through this [holy use of our power to work in these ways] these types of work are elevated.

Then, when the bread has been finished and a person eats it, the [spark of Divine life force in the bread] returns [upward,] being elevated, and becomes an

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<sup>8</sup> Deuteronomy 22:10.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 22:9.

<sup>10</sup> Proverbs 3:6.

integral part of the limbs of this person. And so it is with all things, in the secret of “Know Him in all your ways,” as we have said. This principle can be applied in all details [of life], if someone seeks to understand these details fully.

If someone examines his life deeply enough, he will see how the above principle—that holy use of the material world increases the power of holiness in the world—holds true in all circumstances.

We shall therefore now repeat that even the lowly forms of physical labor performed in this world exist in order that we elevate the seven kings with them. And all types of work exist in the context of this world, the [physical correlate of the] world of *Asiyah*.

Therefore, the numerical value of the word for “work” [*melachah*, 96] is the same as that of the two Names *Kel Adni* together.

*Melachah*: mem-lamed-alef-chaf-hei = 40 + 30 + 1 + 20 + 5 = 96.

*Kel*: alef-lamed = 1 + 30 = 31. *Adni*: alef-dalet-nun-yud = 1 + 4 + 50 + 10 = 65. 31 + 65 = 96.

The Divine Name *Adni* (“My lord”) is associated with the *sefirah* of *malchut* and the world of *Asiyah*.

As we have said, on weekdays all types of work are permitted, as long as in doing them one does not commit any sin. For if he does, they will not be elevated; on the contrary, this will increase the power of evil. [The sparks within them are elevated] only when they are performed in an completely permitted manner—fulfilling the verse, “Know Him in all your ways,” as we said—and with the intention of elevating thereby the seven kings.

This applies both to [what we do in order to elevate the sparks of] this world and [to what we do] in order to elevate the supernal worlds and to elevate the souls. We accomplish all this ourselves, with the power of the work of our hands, i.e., our prayers and [*mitzvot*, such as] *tzitzit*, *tefilin*, and *lulav*, etc. For it is possible to elevate [the sparks of holiness present in] the workday [aspect of creation] only via our own efforts. This is why work is permitted and why we have been commanded to perform the various commandments, and especially the inner dimension of our prayers.

To be continued...

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim* and *Ta’amei HaMitzvot*

## *Parashat Behar*

### [third installment]

The reader is advised to review our first two installments of the Arizal's teachings on *parashat Behar*. The following is a direct continuation of that excerpt.

Now, man certainly requires assistance of the upper worlds to accomplish the aforementioned things, and the upper worlds require the assistance of the lower worlds [i.e., man, in turn]. This is the mystical meaning of the verse, "Give power to G-d."<sup>1</sup>

In Jewish thought, once G-d created the world and placed man in, He made certain aspects of the world's functioning dependent upon man's actions. In this sense, we may conceive of G-d's ability (or "strength") to bestow His beneficence on the world to be determined by us—again, simply because this is way G-d wants it to be and set it up.

For this reason the [upper] worlds descend on weekdays and become vested in levels below their own in order to assist man in the process of elevating the seven fallen kings.

Weekday consciousness is therefore one of being out of one's element, being an emissary sent on a mission. Feeling "at home" and "in one's element" is Shabbos-consciousness.

This is why the seven lower *sefirot* of *Atzilut* descend and become vested in the seven workdays—in order to elevate it all.

The Arizal now explains why he refers to seven workdays when there are in reality only six.

However, only *Z'eir Anpin*, the male figure, has the power [to do this], so there are therefore only six workdays. The six extremities of *Z'eir Anpin* elevate all the days of the week themselves. But with regard to the seventh day, the Sabbath, [the day of] *malchut*, *malchut* is incapable of elevating it. On the contrary, it is only by virtue of what was elevated [by *Z'eir Anpin*] during the week that *malchut* ascends on the Sabbath.

The "six extremities" of *Z'eir Anpin* are simply the six *sefirot* out of which it is constructed.

This will explain for you why the Sabbath, the holiest day, is associated with *malchut*, the lowest *sefirah*, while the other days of the week [which are associated with *Z'eir Anpin*, which is 'higher' than *Nukva*] are entirely profane. The reason is that the higher one is the less he is afraid to descend to a level lower than his. This is not the case with *malchut*, as should be evident.

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<sup>1</sup> Psalms 68:35. The usual, literal translation is "Ascribe strength unto G-d."

The energy and nature of *malchut* are such that it is simply not “equipped” to elevate the lower realms on its own, as is *Z’eir Anpin*. Feminine energy is too focused on the Divine imperative to spread Divine consciousness to contend with the dichotomy of Divine consciousness and the material world.

But on the Sabbath the [consciousness of] *malchut* [is ascendant], and *malchut* is incapable of elevating the seven fallen kings. Therefore, on this day the six higher extremities [i.e., *Z’eir Anpin*] that were vested [in the lower worlds] during the six workdays return and ascend to their original status. When they are below, they elevate what there is to elevate below, but when they are above, in their proper places, there is nothing there to elevate. All they do there is couple with one another and produce new souls. This is the secret of the holiness of the Sabbath and the reason why marital relations are prescribed for Torah scholars on the Sabbath—for on that day [the results of these relations] are new, “Sabbath” souls, originating in an [already] elevated source, and not in the realm [that requires] elevation.

As long as the pervading atmosphere in the lower worlds is determined by one of the six aspects of *Z’eir Anpin*, i.e., is “male,” elevation can occur. As soon as the conduct of the world passes into the hands of *malchut*, however, elevation is not possible.

A married couple elicit a soul for their offspring relative to their state of consciousness during relations. The ideal time for relations is thus on the Sabbath night, since then consciousness is naturally more attuned to higher, Divine levels. Even when the couple engage in relations during the week, they should attempt to put themselves into “Shabbos consciousness.”

Still, the ascent of the worlds on the Sabbath is not a true ascent. As we have explained, when [the *sefirot*] are in their proper place it is enough for them to elicit new souls [through their coupling]. But when they go to elevate [the sparks of *Tohu*] they descend to levels lower than their own and become vested [in these levels]. This occurs on weekdays. It thus follows that it is only to their native, original positions that they return on the Sabbath. During the week they are not in their true place, but below it, and they only descended there in order to elevate the seven kings.

Thus, what happens on the Sabbath is not an “ascent” to a level higher than the native level, but just a return to normality after the exceptional, unusual situation on the weekdays.

You can understand all this [better] based on what we explained in our exposition on Adam, that is, how he was originally on a higher level than Metatron<sup>2</sup> is now. Based on this, you will understand that when creation first occurred the worlds were [naturally] on the level that they reach nowadays only on the Sabbath.

Metatron is the highest angel.

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<sup>2</sup> As we have mentioned previously, it is customary not to pronounce fully names of angels that are not also names used for people. Thus, Metatron is usually abbreviated in speech to “Metat.”

It follows that on weekdays [the *sefirot*] descend in order to elevate [the sparks] and on the Sabbath we restore them to their proper places, in order that they draw down new souls [through their coupling].

This is the reason behind the prohibition of work on the Sabbath, even those types of work necessary for the preparation of food [—which are permitted on festivals]. For there is no elevation [to be performed] on the Sabbath; everything is new.

Since everything is new, not the fallen remains of a primordial world, there is no need to elevate anything.

This is the mystical significance of the *new* song sung on the Sabbath, as it written: “Sing to G-d a new song,”<sup>3</sup> which we recite on the Sabbath.

Even separating is forbidden on the Sabbath.

Separating (*birur*) is one of the thirty-nine archetypal forms of work forbidden on the Sabbath. The type of separating forbidden is separating out unwanted elements from a mixture of wanted and unwanted things (the technical term is separating “food” from “refuse”). For example, if there is bowl of good and rotten fruit, it is forbidden to separate out the rotten fruit in order to be left with a bowl of good fruit. Separating the good fruit from such a mixture (by hand, in order to eat it immediately) is permitted, since this is considered the way of eating rather than separating as an end in itself. However, it *is* forbidden to separate the good from the bad if one is doing so to eat later rather than right away, since in this case the fact that one does not eat the separated elements right away dissociates the act of separating from eating and it becomes an end in itself.<sup>4</sup> It is evidently to this type of separating “the wanted from the unwanted” that the Arizal refers to now.

The mystical reason why we do not separate out the wanted from the unwanted on the Sabbath is that on the Sabbath there is no such thing as separating something from refuse—i.e., from the seven kings—for everything is in the category of the “wanted”: new souls devoid of any refuse.

The spiritual correlate of “separating” is “elevating,” i.e., decontextualizing the fallen sparks of *Tohu* from their material orientation in this world—i.e., separating the “wanted” from the “unwanted” or “refuse”—in order that it be free to ascend.

When a person *does* do some manner of work on the Sabbath, such as separating, he causes the supernal energies to descend below, just as they do during the workweek. The forces of evil can then attach themselves to these [energies].

When these energies are dragged down below and there is nothing for them to elevate, they can be easily diverted by the forces of evil for their own purposes.

The forces of evil are called “the realm of death”; it is therefore written [of the Sabbath]: “those who desecrate it shall surely die.”

The Torah gives the death penalty to someone who has on his own already cut himself off from the source of life. Here, by working on the Sabbath, the individual has divorced himself from the Divine energy informing the world and, even worse, misdirected Divine energy to become available to the forces of evil. Evil, as we have defined it previously, is the ascendancy in man’s consciousness of self-awareness or ego. Attempting to “work,” to accomplish and rectify reality when it is not in need of this is an affront to G-d’s plan and purpose—as if he is

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<sup>3</sup> Psalms 96:1.

<sup>4</sup> See *Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Orach Chaim* 319:1-2.

saying that he knows better than G-d what the world needs. This attitude, rather than fostering Divine consciousness, fosters human ego, which will in the end only oppose Divinity.

You will be able to understand this [better] through understanding what we have explained regarding the mystical significance of the Sabbath boundary.

On the Sabbath, it is forbidden to walk further than two thousand cubits (roughly a kilometer) outside the city limits. This idea will now be explained in its mystical dimension.

On weekdays, [the realm of] holiness borders closely to [that of] evil, but on the Sabbath, there is a distance of two thousand “cubits,” the Sabbath boundary, between them. Thus, the forces of evil do not cling to holiness.

In this imagery, the settled, civilized city is the metaphor for holiness, and the wild, untamed wilderness (desert, field, forest) surrounding it is the realm of evil.<sup>5</sup>

On weekdays, the lines between good and evil are somewhat blurred; it is very easy to slip from doing good into doing the opposite, so one must be constantly on guard. On the Sabbath, however, evil “retreats” into the wilderness to a distance of 2000 “cubits” from the perimeter of holiness. Since evil is held at a distance, we can be more relaxed and “natural” on Shabbos, and need not be as concerned about falling into the trap of materialism and egocentricity.

Thus, one who works on the Sabbath causes holiness to descend into the realm of evil, and is liable to the death penalty.

This is also why it is forbidden to walk beyond the Sabbath boundary, for the mystical meaning of the boundary is that it extends for 2000 cubits, i.e., [the area originally occupied by] *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Asiyah*, which ascend [on the Sabbath] to the position of *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* of *Asiyah*. Thus, the [original] position of *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Asiyah* is left vacant. The forces of evil, whose position is [immediately] below *Asiyah*, cannot ascend to fill this void; this realm is thus left vacant. We are allowed to walk in this [safe] area, but if we go beyond it we cause the supernal “man” to go outside the boundary as well, and he descends into [the realm of] evil.

As the Arizal explained previously, on the Sabbath, *malchut* ascends with *netzach-hod-yesod* to the level of *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*.

The “supernal man” is simply the spiritual array of Divine attributes (usually *Z’eir Anpin*) that are organized into the form of a “man,” i.e., a *partzuf*.

The feet of a man who walks outside the Sabbath boundary—which is [the physical manifestation of the area normally occupied by] *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Asiyah*—descend below *Asiyah* into the realm of evil. This is the mystical significance of the Sabbath boundary.

—to be continued.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim* and *Ta’amei HaMitzvot*

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<sup>5</sup> In other contexts, the “desert” carries positive connotations, and this paradox is resolved elsewhere in Kabbalah and *Chassidut*.

# *Parashat Behar*

## [fourth installment]

The reader is advised to review our first three installments of the Arizal's teachings on *parashat Behar*. The following is a direct continuation of that excerpt.

Now, on the festivals, the worlds do not ascend to the extent that they do on the Sabbath. Therefore, types of work associated with the preparation of food are permitted, and on the intermediate days of the festivals [*chol ha-mo'eid*] any type of work that would result in loss if not done [*davar ha-aveid*] is also permitted, as we will explain.

In the sabbatical year, however, the ascent is least of all, and for this reason it is entirely mundane, and only those forms of work that involve working the earth are prohibited, i.e., planting, tilling, etc. This can be explained on the basis of what we have said, i.e., that during the sabbatical year there is no ascent whatsoever from *malchut* of *Asiyah* upwards. Thus, the only level that experiences rest and reprieve during the sabbatical year is *malchut*, which is called “the earth.” Therefore, only working the earth is prohibited, while the other types of work—which are relevant to the *sefirot* above *malchut*—are permitted.

In Kabbalistic imagery, *malchut* is often conceptualized as the “earth” and *Z'eir Anpin* as “heaven.” The basis of this imagery is both that of the spiritual/material dichotomy, in which *Z'eir Anpin* is the “spiritual,” abstract domain of the emotions and *malchut* the “physical,” concrete domain of expression, and that of the male/female dichotomy, in which *Z'eir Anpin* is the male who “rains” his “drops” of fertilizing seed on the “earth” of *malchut*.

There are thirty-nine categories of work forbidden on the Sabbath:

The primary forms of work are forty less one: [1] sowing, [2] ploughing, [3] reaping, [4] binding sheaves, [5] threshing, [6] winnowing, [7] selecting, [8] grinding, [9] sifting, [10] kneading, [11] baking, [12] shearing wool, [13] bleaching, [14] hackling, [15] dyeing, [16] spinning, [17] stretching the threads, [18] making two meshes, [19] weaving two threads, [20] dividing two threads, [21] tying and [22] untying, [23] sewing two stitches, [24] tearing in order to sew two stitches, [25] capturing a deer, [26] slaughtering, [27] flaying, or [28] salting it, [29] curing its hide, [30] scraping it [of its hair], [31] cutting it up, [32] writing two letters, [33] erasing in order to write two letters [over the erasure], [34] building, [35] pulling down, [36] extinguishing, [37] kindling, [38] striking with a hammer, [and] [39] carrying out from one domain to another: these are the forty primary forms of work less one.<sup>1</sup>

Of these, the first three are considered “agricultural” forms of work forbidden in the sabbatical year. #4-11 complete the “order of making bread” (as it is called in the Talmud), but are not performed directly on the earth.

We will now explain the types of work associated with the earth, i.e., planting, harvesting, and the like. All these types of earth-work are ways of raising

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<sup>1</sup> Mishnah, *Shabbat* 7:2 (73a)

“feminine waters,” while the other forms of work, associated with the male paradigm [i.e., *Z’eir Anpin*] are ways of causing “male waters” to descend.

As we have explained, “male” and “female waters” are the Zoharic terms for “arousal from above” and “arousal from below,” the relative forms of initiative in the process of spiritual coupling of the higher, giving player and the lower, receiving player, respectively.

We have explained that all forms of work elevate the seven fallen kings and “sweeten” them. In other words, man [through his service of G-d here on earth] works the supernal “earth” [as well]. But during the sabbatical year, there is no need for man’s efforts, as we have explained and will explain further, please G-d.

The mystical meaning of “sowing” is as follows: There are souls of the order of “feminine waters” that are hidden within the earth, that ascend and become revealed on the face of the earth. This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “Light is sown for the righteous,”<sup>2</sup> which implies that [the light] has already been sown and now simply ascends and takes root, as explained in the *Zohar*.<sup>3</sup>

The Arizal explains elsewhere<sup>4</sup> that every day, through our Torah study and prayers, we elevate holy sparks out of the realm of evil. These ascend into the *yesod* of *Nukva* and serve to “arouse,” i.e., catalyze the coupling of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* through their respective sub-*sefirot* of *yesod*. (This is the dynamic of “feminine waters” arousing “masculine waters,” as mentioned.) This coupling produces new souls. However, when these holy sparks are first liberated from evil, they are not immediately ready to form new souls; they must first remain in the *yesod* of *Nukva* (the female “womb”) until the next day’s coupling.

Thus, these potential souls are “hidden,” i.e., being stored, within the “earth,” i.e., *malchut* (specifically, *yesod* of *Nukva*). They have already been “sown” in the earth as they have “ascended” from our material world into the spiritual realm of *Nukva*. The following day, they “become revealed on the face of the earth,” i.e., they become active in *yesod* of *Nukva* and serve to arouse the *yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin* to couple. This produces the new “souls,” which are either actual souls that later descend into human bodies, heightened levels of Divine consciousness that impregnates already living people, or simply Divine beneficence that descends to improve the world.

The mystical meaning of “harvesting” is along similar lines: it refers to the supernal process of giving birth. The souls *in utero* inside *Nukva* are “harvested” from it and transferred into physical bodies in this world.

In order to understand all this, let us explain this concept as it is found in the *Zohar*. It is written in the *Zohar*: “And these secrets are only given to those reapers of the workers.”

The “reapers of the field” (*chatzdei chakla*) is the Zoharic term for the students of Kabbalah.

To explain, based on what I have told you in our exposition on Pesach regarding the splitting of the sea:

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<sup>2</sup> Psalms 96:11.

<sup>3</sup> 2:166b.

<sup>4</sup> *Etz Chaim* 39:2.

*Malchut* desires to give birth to the souls impregnated within it. Now, [it is written,] “sin crouches at the door.”<sup>5</sup> This refers to the supernal snake who bites the reproductive organ [of *malchut*, opening her womb and] causing her to give birth.

We have explained this imagery previously, on *parashat Tetzaveh*, as follows: The imagery here is that of a young female deer giving birth for the first time. Since this is her first impregnation, the opening of her womb is still “virginal,” i.e., narrow—too narrow, in fact, for the fawn to fit through. In her pain trying to give birth, the doe cries, and a snake, hearing the cry, bites the doe, tearing open her womb so the fawn can emerge. Although this benefits the doe, the snake is surely acting only out in its own interest.

When the Jewish people went out of Egypt, they were spiritually immature.... The seven-week period between the Exodus and the Revelation on Mt. Sinai was a maturation process (which we relive every year nowadays as the *mitzvah* of counting the *Omer*). Both the splitting of the sea, seven days after the Exodus, and the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai, seven *weeks* after the Exodus, were revelations of Divinity. But whereas the Jewish people were maturely prepared for the Revelation at Mt. Sinai, the splitting of the sea occurred at the beginning of their spiritual education, when they were still “young.” Any revelation may be likened to a birth, but this birth was a first birth, and is therefore similar to the first birth of the doe just described.

This induced birthing of *malchut* thus applies when *malchut* is “immature,” i.e., characterized by egocentricity. The snake is the power of evil—i.e., sin—that crouches at the “door” to *malchut*, i.e., her womb. *Malchut* is considered “immature” because of her sense of accomplishment in having rescued the sparks (the previous day) from the clutches of evil.

This is the secret of the Divine Name “Tear Satan,” for the numerical value of the word *satan* [plus the *kolel*] is the same as that as the word for “snake” [*nachash*, 358]. [This alludes to the fact that] the snake is the one who tears open the womb of the doe. This “tearing” is accomplished by means of this Divine Name.

One of G-d’s Names is the “42-letter” Name, known to us as the initials of the prayer of Rabbi Nechunia ben HaKaneh.<sup>6</sup> This Name is composed of seven sub-Names of six letters each. The initials of the words of the second stanza of this prayer (i.e., the second Name) spell the words “tear Satan.”

*Satan* in Hebrew means “accuser,” and refers to the angel whose job is to act as the prosecutor in the heavenly court. Based on the Talmudic saying<sup>7</sup> that “he is the accuser, he is the evil inclination; he is the angel of death”—i.e., the same force of evil induces a person to sin, prosecutes against him in the heavenly court, and then carries out the sentence—the term “Satan” is often used to refer to evil in general. The primordial snake also is personification of evil.

*Satan*: *sin-tet-nun* = 300 + 9 + 50 = 359.

*Nachash*: *nun-chet-shin* = 9 + 300 + 8 = 358.

The “doe” is an allegory for *malchut*. Although the simple meaning of “tear Satan” would appear to be “destroy the accuser,” it is here interpreted to mean “tear [open the womb of *malchut*] by means of the power of evil.”

However, in order that the forces of evil not latch on to these new souls, they require the prayers of the righteous. Through their prayers, the supernal *Nukva* can give birth without recourse to the snake crouching at the “door.”

Prayer is the mean by which we increase our Divine consciousness. The effect of this is that the Divine consciousness of our “root,” *malchut*, is increased concomitantly. Informed by this increased Divine consciousness,

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 4:7.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, *Siddur Tehillat HaShem* (Kehot, 1978), p. 22, etc.

<sup>7</sup> *Bava Batra* 16a.

the womb of *malchut* is more receptive to Divine input and does not need to be bitten by the snake of egocentricity and self-interest—i.e., be convinced of how it will benefit—to open up.

This is the mystical meaning of why our sages instituted in our prayers the recital of Psalm 20: “May G-d answer you on the day of your distress.” As is known, it consists of 70 words corresponding to the seventy cries of the woman in labor.<sup>8</sup>

It follows that the prayers of the righteous are required first to sew these souls [in the womb of *Nukva*] and again thereafter to enable [*Nukva*] to give birth to them, [the latter] being the mystical “reaping” of the supernal “field.”

As mentioned above, the elevation of the sparks into the womb of *Nukva* is accomplished by our prayers, etc., in this world. Our prayers also obviate the need for *Nukva*’s womb to be torn open forcibly, allowing for “regular” childbirth of the new souls into reality. Prayer is the means by which the sparks released by our other efforts in the world (encapsulated in the general categories of learning Torah and doing *mitzvot*) ascend.

All this happens by virtue of the deeds and prayers [of the righteous]. Therefore, the sages who understand the mystery of prayer are called “reapers of the field,” i.e., those who reap the supernal field and gather its fruits.

Thus, those who accomplish this are called “reapers of the field,” the supernal “field”—where the “fruit” (new souls) is produced—being *malchut*.

But in the sabbatical year, all this [effort] is not necessary, as we have explained. [This being the case,] we will now explain why we need to pray or do *mitzvot* in these periods of time, e.g., the Sabbath or the sabbatical year, inasmuch as everything is accomplished on its own. It would also be proper to know the difference between the Sabbath and the sabbatical year.

The explanation is as follows: On weekdays, we are required to accomplish two things by means of our prayers. The first [thing we have to do] is to rectify *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* until they reach the state of complete *partzufim*—each comprising ten sub-*sefirot*—facing each other back to back. Initially, *Z’eir Anpin* comprises only the six “extremities” and *Nukva* is only a single point. By means of our deeds, however, they become reconstituted as complete *partzufim* and postured back to back. The second rectification is to turn them around face to face. They can then couple in order to produce [new] souls.

The initial, pre-*Tikun* state of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* is as the six *sefirot* from *chesed* to *yesod* (the six “extremities” of a cube) and the single *sefirah* of *malchut*. This is a situation of *Tohu*, characterized by lack of ability to interact fruitfully. Maturation, conferred by expanded Divine consciousness, is the process whereby these one-dimensional *sefirot* are transformed into *partzufim*, full arrays of inter-included powers that can interact and couple, as we have explained on numerous previous occasions.

The first, *a priori* state of these *partzufim* is “back to back,” i.e., each concerned with its own internal self-development. The second stage is getting them to interact with each other, so the “content” of *Z’eir Anpin* can be fully expressed in reality through *Nukva*.

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Tikunei Zohar* 67b: “The seventy words of Psalm 20 correspond to the seventy supernal princes and earthly nations that vex and attack the supernal and lower *Shechinah*.”

Now, during the sabbatical year, all we need to do is the second rectification, i.e., to turn them around face to face, because of themselves, without our prayers, they are already [full *partzufim*, but] facing back to back. Then, by virtue of our prayers, they turn around face to face. The Sabbath, however, is [an] even greater [level of sanctity] than this, for on it they even turn around face to face by themselves. When the Sabbath night begins, *malchut* turns to face *Z'eir Anpin*.

Our prayers [on the Sabbath] are necessary only to elevate [these two *partzufim*] to a level higher than their natural state, i.e., up to the level of *Abba* and *Ima*, as is known.

On the Sabbath, the emotions and means of expression become renewed and reinvigorated in the experience of new intellectual insight.

Thus, what is accomplished on weekdays by means of our prayers, i.e., turning them in their place to face each other face to face, is accomplished of itself on the Sabbath. Our contribution [on the Sabbath] is to elevate them and to ensure that on this higher level they also remain face to face.

On festivals, *Rosh Chodesh*, and the intermediate days of the festivals, [these *partzufim*] also experience various ascents through our prayers, but in these cases they both ascend simultaneously, as is known.

It follows that were we to do work on these days, each on according to its level, it would appear (G-d forbid) as if we were implying that there is something missing above, i.e., that the supernal realms require some rectification on our part. This has the effect of actually causing a defect above (G-d forbid).

We see here a well-known psychological principle in action, namely, that implicating a deficiency in another actualizes that deficiency in them (as a so-called “self-fulfilling prophecy”).

Inasmuch as in the sabbatical year, the “masculine waters” are elicited by themselves, as we have mentioned, all agricultural work is forbidden. Plants that grow on their own [*sefichin*], however, may be gathered, because they grow by themselves. But whatever man grows through his own efforts is forbidden.

—to be continued.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim* and *Ta'amei HaMitzvot*

## *Parashat Behar*

### [fifth installment]

The reader is advised to review our first four installments of the Arizal's teachings on *parashat Behar*. The following is a direct continuation (and conclusion) of this excerpt.

We will now explain [the mystical reason why] a person [is permitted] to go outside the [Sabbath] boundary [on weekdays] during the Sabbatical year.

The question is: if the whole year is called the *Sabbatical* year, why doesn't the prohibition of venturing beyond the Sabbath boundary apply during such a year on weekdays as well as on the Sabbath?

Doing so would appear to be included in [the prohibition of] working the earth, since the person is treading upon it. But in light of what we have explained above regarding the mystical meaning of the prohibition of [walking beyond] the [Sabbath] boundaries, it will be fully explained.

As we explained above, *netzach* and *hod* are the supernal legs that walk on the [supernal] ground, which is *malchut*. When we walk outside the [Sabbath] boundary, we cause these supernal legs to go out into [the domain of] evil. This is the mystical meaning of the prohibition of [traversing] the Sabbath boundary.

Now, we know that the prohibition of Sabbath boundaries does not apply to a ship sailing in the sea, [and it is permitted to be a passenger on a wind-powered boat] on the Sabbath even if a person will thereby travel many miles. The reason for this given in the Talmud<sup>1</sup> is that the prohibition against [traveling beyond] the Sabbath boundary does not apply above a height of ten handbreadths, and the sea-surface is higher than ten handbreadths [above the seabed].

The mystical explanation of this is as follows. The *sefirah* closest to [the realm of] evil is *malchut*. As long as the supernal legs, i.e., *netzach* and *hod*, are not touching the [supernal] ground, i.e., *malchut*, [no matter where they walk] it is not considered going beyond the [Sabbath] boundary. [This is so] even if they travel many miles, as long as they remain [more than] ten handbreadths in the air above the ground. There is no way they can enter [the realm of] evil unless they are on the ground. Only then, if they traverse the [Sabbath] boundary they contact evil.

Now, *malchut* is ten handbreadths tall.

Like all *sefirot*, *malchut* comprises ten sub-*sefirot*, each of which is manifest in one handbreadth of height above the ground.

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<sup>1</sup> *Eiruvin* 43a.

This, then, is why there is no injunction against [traversing the Sabbath] boundary above a height of ten handbreadths, and even if a person walks [this way for] many miles, he is still within [the realm of] holiness, and within this [airspace] is just walking around within [the realm of] holiness.

Based on what we have now explained regarding [the prohibition of venturing beyond specific boundaries on] the Sabbath, we can understand how it is permitted to travel beyond the [Sabbath] boundary [on weekdays] during the Sabbatical year. During the Sabbatical year, all walking is considered to be above a height of ten handbreadths, which, [as we explained,] is permitted even on the Sabbath.

This is because [on the Sabbath], as we explained, *netzach-hod-yesod* ascend together with *malchut* to the level of *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*. Thus, the [supernal] feet, [*netzach* and *hod*,] are treading on the [supernal] ground, [*malchut*]. The prohibition of [traversing] the boundary therefore applies.

But in the Sabbatical year, *malchut* does not ascend together with them, for they ascend to the level of *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* while she remains below in their [former] level. Thus, the supernal legs are not treading on her. This is exactly similar to the case of the ship described above, in which travel [beyond the boundary] is permitted, since the prohibition does not apply above ten handbreadths.

This, then, is the mystical meaning of the verse describing the Sabbatical year, “and the ground will rest, a Sabbath for G-d [*Havayah*].” “The ground” signifies *malchut*. It rests by itself, [a rest] similar to [that of] the Sabbath, and by itself causes feminine water to ascend to *Z’eir Anpin*, referred to in this verse as *Havayah*.

The central *sefirah* of *Z’eir Anpin* is *tiferet*, which is associated with the Name *Havayah*, G-d’s “proper” Name.

Since *malchut* rests/ascends by itself on the Sabbath and on the Sabbatical year, it is not necessary for us to actively engage in the process of elevating the sparks of holiness as we do during the workweek. All we need to do is to desist from the prohibited acts of work in order not to interfere with the Divine consciousness operative during these periods of time.

The meaning of “a Sabbath for G-d” is thus that this type of rest does not require us [to do anything to actualize it]. This is also the meaning of the phrases “And the Sabbath of the earth” and “and the earth will rest,” for the Sabbatical year applies only to the earth, which manifests *malchut*, and not to [any of the *sefirot*] above it.

## *Parashat Bechukotai*

The portion of the Torah read this week begins: “If you will follow My laws and faithfully observe My commandments, I will grant your rains in their season, so that the earth shall yield its produce and the trees of the field their fruit.”<sup>1</sup>

It is fitting that we understand these words, which read as if G-d is trying to convince and entice the Jewish people, telling them that if they do such and such they will receive such and such reward.

The tenor of these verses at face value is not that they describe a simple cause and effect relationship, but that G-d is trying to coax us into observing His commandments with the promise of reward.

Furthermore, the reward seems to be blessings of material beneficence.

And our sages have told us that the true reward for keeping G-d’s commandments awaits us in the afterlife.

The explanation is that [this passage] alludes to the concept of transmigration of souls.

As you know, the soul is [initially] reincarnated in the mineral or vegetable kingdoms, and afterwards ascends into the animal kingdom, i.e., cattle. If it merits further, it ascends to the kingdom of man.

Transmigration is the means by which the soul atone for the sins it committed in its first, human lifetime. In the words of the Arizal:

There is almost no person on earth that is spared such transmigration. The wicked, after their death, enter Purgatory [*gehinom*] and receive their punishment and atonement there. Their judgement there lasts twelve months.

Although the Arizal uses the term “punishment,” it is important to remember that the suffering the soul endures in *gehinom* (and in being reincarnated) is meant to “scour” or purify it from the spiritual filth that it accrued during its lifetime by transgressing the commandments of the Torah. This purification process enables it to progress afterwards to higher levels of afterlife. Thus, the “punishment” is an expression of G-d’s mercy, an opportunity for the soul to rid itself of the existential “encrustation” of sin that prevents it from experiencing the higher levels of spirituality that await it in reward for the good it performed during its lifetime.

The suffering of the soul in *gehinom* can be alleviated by someone saying *kaddish* for it. This is why the custom is to say *kaddish* for only eleven months after the person’s death: saying *kaddish* the full twelve months would imply that the individual was a completely wicked and requires the full term of purification in *gehinom*.

To certain wicked people, however, is applied the verse, “He will fling away the lives of your enemies in the hollow of the sling.”<sup>2</sup> They do not merit entering Purgatory [immediately] after their death in order to be cleansed of their sin. Rather, their soul descends from level to level through various incarnations, until

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 26:3-4.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Samuel 25:29.

their sins have been scoured away sufficiently so that they may enter then Purgatory for twelve months and attain full atonement.

The punishment of “the hollow of the sling” (*kaf ha-kela*) is here defined as reincarnation. It is taught that the way a person can avoid this experience is by, during his lifetime, spending as much of the day as possible in reciting passages from the Mishneh, the *Tanya*, and Psalms by heart.<sup>3</sup>

There is no set time for these cases, for sometimes a soul can progress through its incarnations in twenty years, or a hundred, or a thousand—all depending upon the seriousness of the sins that it committed in this world.

In contrast, the fire of Purgatory does not singe the souls of the righteous and Torah scholars.... Therefore, they must be reincarnated into this world in order to scour them from whatever sins they may have done, for there is no one that has not committed some sin.

Thus, for the righteous, reincarnation is the lighter purification process, after which they enter paradise directly. For the wicked, however, reincarnation entails more suffering, and only after finishing the reincarnation process can he proceed to *gehinom*.

When a righteous person dies, he is thus ready to ascend the ladder of sublime levels of paradise, but this does not happen all at once. Rather, immediately after his death he is subjected to suffering in order to cleanse him of his more serious sins. Only after this is he brought into his first level of paradise. When his turn comes to ascend to a higher, more sublime level, he is again subjected to suffering in order to cleanse him of his more subtle sins. He can then enter his second, higher level of paradise. After this, he is again subjected to suffering [in order to cleanse him of the sin of transgressing] the minor details of *mitzvah*-performance.... Then he is ushered into his true, fitting place [in paradise]....

Rabbi Chaim Vital, who is writing these teachings of his master, the Arizal, now relates the following incident:

It happened a few times that I was walking in the field with my teacher, may his memory be for a blessing, and he said to me: Behold, there was a certain person, named so-and-so, who was a *tzadik* and a Torah scholar, but because he committed such-and-such a sin during his lifetime, he is now incarnated into this stone, or this plant, etc. My teacher, of blessed memory, never knew these people, and we [his students] would investigate the history of these departed souls, and we invariably found the facts to be in accordance with his words. I am not going to go into this at length, because I could never recount all the times this happened.

Other times he would gaze at a grave five hundred cubits away, amongst twenty-thousand other graves, and he would see the soul of the person buried there standing on the grave. He would tell us that so-and-so is buried in that grave, and he is undergoing such-and-such a punishment for having committed such-and-such

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<sup>3</sup> *HaYom Yom*, 7 Tevet

a sin. We would inquire after this person, and always find it to be as my teacher said. We were witness to many amazing things like this.

To return to our discussion: After an individual dies, he is repaid for his sins in various forms of reincarnation before he enters Purgatory. That is, he can be reincarnated in an inanimate object, a plant, an animal, or in a person. Almost no one can avoid being reincarnated, since a soul cannot experience the suffering [required to cleanse him of the effects of his sin] unless he has become re-materialized in a soul-body [combination]. Only then, having been reincarnated, can he suffer and feel the pain and thus achieve atonement.

The degree and extent of the reincarnation—i.e., into which “kingdom” he is reincarnated—is a function of the seriousness of his sins. This is why there are even some *tzadikim* and Torah scholars that undergo reincarnation, as we have said, on account of some sin that they stumbled over during their lifetimes....

We have explained elsewhere that all the worlds were created from the ruins of the seven primordial kings that ruled in the land of Edom and then died [i.e., the world of *Tohu* that collapsed]. The purest remains of this world were absorbed into the world of *Atzilut*; what was too coarse [to be absorbed into *Atzilut*] was absorbed into the world of *Beriah*, then *Yetzirah*, and finally *Asiyah*. The purest elements [that descended to *Asiyah*] were absorbed into the human kingdom, followed by the animal kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, and finally the mineral kingdom. A righteous person, through his deeds and the *mitzvot* he performs through eating and such, has the power to elevate [the sparks of holiness in] the mineral kingdom to the level of the vegetable kingdom, and then to the level of the animal kingdom, and finally to the level of the human kingdom.

The wicked person, in contrast, through his deeds, causes the exact opposite to happen—he causes [the sparks of holiness] to descend. Some sins cause the [sparks of holiness in] man to descend to the level of the inanimate kingdom; others, to the level of the vegetable kingdom or animal kingdom. Therefore, in correspondence to their sin, some wicked people after their death are reincarnated into a stone, while others are reincarnated into vegetables or animals.

When a person commits a sin, he is betraying the Divine image within him; he is not acting like a human being, who is meant to rule over creation and elevate it to Divinity. He is rather stooping to the level of the object he is committing the sin with, and—at least for the duration of the sin—subjecting himself to its rule over him. This dynamic applies both to *bona fide* sins and subtler forms of submission to the evil inclination, as well.

For example, let’s say a person has a sensual urge to eat chocolate cake. It is not Shabbat or any other occasion in whose honor he can justify eating the cake, and he has already eaten his meal, so he cannot justify the indulgence with claims of real hunger. No, the sole motivation for this piece of cake is pure, unadulterated sensual indulgence. Furthermore, this is *glatt* kosher cake, and eating it entails no transgression of waiting between meat and dairy foods, so the indulgence is not a sin *per se*, but just an indulgence. If the person succumbs to his urge and eats the cake, he is demonstrating that—at that moment, at least—he is subservient to the power the cake has over him. He has taken his Divine spark animating him at that moment and brought it down to the level of the cake. He

becomes, in effect, not a human-person but a cake-person. Moreover, he has to a certain extent brought the whole level of creation down to this level.

So long as this cakeness and cake-identity remains with him, this individual cannot expect to be admitted to the chambers of paradise, where the delights of this world are insignificant and the soul basks in the glow of the Divine presence. He has, on the contrary, demonstrated that he is “into” much coarser delights. He must therefore be cleansed of this cake-mentality. This is accomplished by being reincarnated into the vegetable kingdom, where he can experience the pain of his soul—which is used to the freedom of expression and movement of a human being—being trapped in vegetable-identity. In other words, he must experience the same descent he put his soul (and the world) through when he ate the cake.

Those who undergo these reincarnations remain there for a fixed amount of time, until the sin that caused them to be incarnated into the vegetable kingdom is expunged. When this time is over, they ascend into the animal kingdom; when this time is over they ascend into the human kingdom....

To return to the verse from Torah with which we began the discussion:

Thus, the Torah says: “If you will follow My laws and faithfully observe My commandments, I will grant your rains in their season, so that the earth shall yield its produce and the trees of the field their fruit.” You will eat and be satisfied, and the souls that are present within the food will ascend to your level.

The ascent of the souls incarnated in the food a person eats is subject to him following G-d’s laws and faithfully observing His commandments. That is, he must preserve his Divine level while engaged in eating. Otherwise, as we said, he does not elevate the Divine sparks or souls within the food, but falls to its level.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse: “And you shall eat your bread to satiation, and dwell securely in your land.”<sup>4</sup>

Now, the souls reincarnated [in lower forms of life] do not ascend at all times. Rather, there is a proper time for each ascent to occur.

Specifically, someone who has been reincarnated into the mineral kingdom only ascends into the vegetable kingdom during the four months of Av, Elul, Tishrei, and Cheshvan. Someone who has been reincarnated into the vegetable kingdom only ascends into the animal kingdom during the four months of Nisan, Iyar, Sivan, and Tamuz.

—anthologized and translated from *Sefer HaLikutim* and *Sha’ar HaGilgulim*

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<sup>4</sup> Leviticus 26:5.

## *Parashat Bamidbar and Naso*

In the portion of the Torah read this week, G-d commands Moses to take a census of the Jewish people. For all the tribes other than the tribe of Levi, he was instructed to count all every male “twenty years old or more.”<sup>1</sup> Following this, the tribes are assigned their positions in the desert encampment and traveling formation.

The Levites were then counted separately, “every male, one-month old or more,”<sup>2</sup> according to the three Levite clans descended from the three sons of Levi: Gershon, Kehat, and Merari. They were then assigned their respective positions in the encampment and traveling formation.

Finally, at the end of the portion,<sup>3</sup> begins the detailed instructions for each Levite clan in the process of dismantling and carrying the Tabernacle whenever the Jewish people were commanded to continue their trek in the desert. The instructions for the sons of Kehat close the portion, and the instructions for the sons of Gershon and Merari continue at the beginning of the following portion of the Torah, *Naso*.<sup>4</sup> Together with these instructions is the command to count the members of each clan eligible for service, that is, “from thirty years old until fifty years old.”<sup>5</sup>

The Torah calls counting each tribe or Levite clan “lifting up its head.” Thus we read:

“And G-d spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: ‘Lift up the head of the sons of Kehat from amongst the sons of Levi, according to their families and their fathers’ houses....’”<sup>6</sup> and—

“And G-d spoke to Moses, saying: ‘Lift up the head of the sons of Gershon as well, according to their fathers’ houses and their families....’”<sup>7</sup>

However, with regard to the clan of Merari, the Torah simply says: “‘The sons of Merari, number them according to their families and their fathers’ houses.’”<sup>8</sup> The expression “lift up the head of...” is not used.

Also, we note that in the cases of the Kehat and Merari clans, the order of the census is “according to their families and their fathers’ houses,” while in the case of the clan of Gershon, this is reversed: “according to their fathers’ houses and their families.”

The Arizal explains these differences according to Kabbalah.

The overall tribe of Levi is the source of the five states of *gevurah*, known as the “crown of *gevurah*,” the feminine portion.

It is explained in Kabbalah and *Chassidut* that love and fear of G-d are the two “wings” with which a person’s service of G-d takes flight. That is, a person can perfunctorily perform all the Torah’s commandments, but unless he does so out of love and fear of G-d, his service will not connect him consciously to G-d. He will be doing G-d’s will, and will both affect the world and receive his due reward for this, but he is doing so only partially, for G-d desires that we serve Him enthusiastically as well.

Thus, love and fear should characterize the service of G-d. The *sefirot* that correspond to love and fear are *chesed* and *gevurah*. In the microcosm of Divine service, the holy Temple, the *kohanim* (priests) personified the *sefirah* of *chesed* and the Levites the *sefirah* of *gevurah*. The priests performed their duties quietly and calmly,

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers 1:3, 47-49.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 3:15.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 4:10-20

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 4:21-28 and 29-34, respectively.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 4:3, 23, 30.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 4:1-2.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 4:21-22.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 4:29.

evoking the image of still water, while the Levites were the choir and orchestra, arousing the emotions of the Jewish people looking on, and evoking the image of passion and fire.

Contrary to Victorian stereotypes, in Kabbalah, *chesed* and love are considered the male side of reality, while *gevurah* and fear/awe are considered the female side. (There are of course many cross-manifestations of this dualism, but these are the exceptions or sub-categories rather than the rule.) In a general way, this accords with what we have said previously about male-female approaches to life the world, i.e., that the male is the more abstract emphasis, while the female is the more concrete. In order to concretize the reality of Divinity in this world, the female must evince great strength and power (so as not to be overcome by the distracting forces of evil). She derives this power, of course, from the inspiration she takes from the male, so in that context the male is the giver and she is the recipient. What the Arizal will be describing in the coming paragraphs is a bit of how the main female *partzuf*, the *Nukva* of *Z'eir Anpin*, is constructed out of the *gevurah*-aspects of the preceding *sefirot*.

In any case, we see from this that the priest-Levite combination is the source and archetype for the duality of male-female.

This is why it is written in *parashat Bamidbar*: “Do not count them together with the children of Israel.”<sup>9</sup> They are the states of *gevurah* set aside for the female. Still, [the Levites manifest these states of *gevurah* as] they exist inside *Z'eir Anpin*, before they are given to *Nukva*. They themselves are therefore male. After [these states of *gevurah*] are given to *Nukva* they become female states of *gevurah*, i.e., women and not men.

As we said, the female receives her power from the inspiration she derives from the male. Thus, her states of *gevurah* are derived from the *gevurah* in the male.

Now, these states of *gevurah* are divided into several categories. There are two general categories, each of which subdivides into three sub-categories.

The first category has three sub-categories: (1) The crown of *gevurah*, which comprises the five states of *gevurah*, and is situated at the level of the brain of *da'at* of *Nukva*. This is the source of the five states of *gevurah* [that will be described as the next sub-category]. (2) The five states of *gevurah* as they spread further through her body, i.e., from her *chesed* to her *hod*. (3) The aggregate composed of the preceding states. These are called the five states of *gevurah* of “the feminine waters,” in her *yesod*.

In this first category, then, we have the five states of *gevurah* at the levels of (1) *da'at*, (2) *chesed* to *hod*, and (3) *yesod*.

Just, as we said above, the main aspect of any world is its emotions (*midot*, *Z'eir Anpin*), so too, the main aspect of any *partzuf* is its *midot*. Here, then, the chief manifestation of the five states of *gevurah* is in the second sub-category, that is, the “body” of the *partzuf* of *Nukva*. The first sub-category is the intellectual origin of these states, while the third sub-category is their drive for expression.

*Da'at* is distinguished from *chochmah* and *binah* by its subjective character. Whereas the focus in *chochmah* and *binah* is on the idea *per se*—its force and power or development and ramifications—in *da'at* the idea is analyzed *vis-à-vis* its implications for the person. This is the origin within the intellect of emotional response. Since *chesed* and *gevurah* are the primary emotions, this means that there is a proto-*chesed* and a proto-*gevurah* within *da'at*.

*Yesod*, we said, is where all the previous emotions coalesce; it is therefore not an emotion of content but of drive. The five emotions of content are *chesed*, *gevurah*, *tiferet*, *netzach*, and *hod*. Since these are five in number,

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 1:49.

there are in *da'at* five aspects or states of proto-*chesed* and five of proto-*gevurah*. The five states of *gevurah* within *da'at* act thus as a sort of *keter* to the subsequent, *bona fide* states, so they are collectively called the “crown of *gevurah*.”

When the higher *sefirot* pour into *yesod*, their respective aspects of *gevurah* coalesce as well into an aggregate *gevurah*. This *gevurah* powers the “feminine waters” of *yesod*, which is a term for the power of the female *yesod* to arouse the male *yesod* and inspire him to couple with her. Thus, even though *yesod* is in essence oriented “down,” i.e., toward the lower level, *malchut*, acting as the drive for expression which is the quintessence of the female, this aggregate *gevurah* in *yesod* is oriented upward, back toward *Z'eir Anpin*, to arouse it to re-charge, re-inspire, and re-inseminate its *Nukva* in order that she be able to continue her task of spreading Divinity in the world with the requisite inspiration.

The second category has three sub-categories of its own: (1) The five states of *gevurah* given to her when her *partzuf* is first formed and completed. These are given to her for the construction of her body and skeleton. (2) Her first set of five states of *gevurah* given to her after her body has been completed. *Z'eir Anpin* transfers [these states of *gevurah*] to her via her *yesod* in their first sexual intercourse, which [is what] turns her into a vessel. (3) An additional, new set of five states of *gevurah* that he transfers to her via her *yesod* in their subsequent intercourse. Whenever they couple [after the first time], he gives her a new set of five states of *gevurah*.

This second category of *gevurah*-states relates to the intrinsic construction of the *partzuf* itself and its insemination by *Z'eir Anpin*. The first category could be seen as being aspects of all three sub-categories of the second category. That is, when *Nukva* is first constructed, she is given *gevurah*-aspects in her *da'at*, her *midot*, and her *yesod*, and the same is true whenever she couples with *Z'eir Anpin*.

The three clans of the Levites—Gershon, Kehat, and Merari—manifest the three sub-categories, but I<sup>10</sup> do not remember whether they manifest the sub-categories of the first category or the second.

The numerical value of *Gershon* [559] is the same [with the *kollel*] as that of the word for “flask” [*keset*] in the phrase “the flask of the scribe.”<sup>11</sup> His clan manifests the five states of *gevurah* indicated by the five final letters: *mem*, *nun*, *tzadik*, *pei*, *chaf*, whose combined numerical value is 280. Since these letters have two forms, their numerical value may be doubled, giving 560, which again, is the numerical value of the word for “flask.”

A main manifestation of the five states of *gevurah* is the five organs of speech in the mouth: the throat, the palate, the teeth, the lips, and the tongue. These are seen as five “dams” that stop or give form to the amorphous breath rising from the lungs. Since they limit, restrain, form, and give definition to the breath, they are seen as five states or aspects of *gevurah*. In the alphabet, this phenomenon is reflected in the five letters that have final forms, i.e., special forms when these letters appear at the end of a word. They are thus, allegorically, like the flask that holds and contains the ink.

[The clan of] Gershon is, as we said, one of the three sub-categories. It comprises the five states of *gevurah* that spread through the body of *Nukva*. As is known, these five states of *gevurah* descend rapidly to the *yesod* of *Nukva* and

<sup>10</sup> I.e., Rabbi Chaim Vital, who recorded the teachings of the Arizal.

<sup>11</sup> Ezekiel 9:2-3, 11.

rebound upward from that level as reflected light. [In this process, this light] reaches her *keter*, thus [spreading] through her entire *partzuf*. This is similar to how the states of *chesed* descend into the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin* and rebound upward as reflected light.

Although above Rabbi Chaim Vital said he was not sure if the three clans of Levites correspond to the sub-categories of the first or second category, here he seems to take it for granted that they correspond to those of the first category.

The reflected light here is the “feminine waters” described above. In the process of being reflected, the light that ricochets off *yesod* gains the power of *yesod*; together with the residual power of its own descent, this enables it to re-ascend to a point higher than its point of origin. Reaching *keter* means that the overall will of her entire being is overtaken and permeated with the will to be united with *Z'eir Anpin*.

As we have also explained, the first three states of *gevurah* of *Nukva* are hidden; only the latter two states—her *netzach* and *hod*—are revealed. These latter states are the only ones that ascend [in this process] and thus become revealed.

It will be recalled that the five states of *gevurah* correspond to and are manifest in the five *sefirot* from *chesed* to *hod*. The Arizal explains elsewhere<sup>12</sup> that when the five states of *gevurah* become manifest in these *sefirot* of *Nukva*, they do not do so in a uniform manner. Rather the first three (*chesed*, *gevurah*, and *tiferet*) remained clothed within a sheath, which derives from the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*. Only the latter two, *netzach* and *hod*, enter *yesod* “exposed.”

Psychologically, we could say that this means that the light at the level of the first three states of *gevurah*, i.e., those of the three primary emotions, retain a certain measure of the consciousness of their source in *Z'eir Anpin*. This precludes them from truly becoming vested in the *yesod* of *Nukva*, since a primary emotion is too much matter of feeling to be diverted to the path leading toward practical action. Only *netzach* and *hod*, which are already much more action-oriented than the first three states, can be said to truly enter and be actively present within *yesod*. The other three are there, but they are cloaked by their memory of their origin.

Thus, only *netzach* and *hod* are touched directly by the identity and power of *yesod*, the drive for fulfillment, and thus experience the rebounding energy sending them back up to the *keter* of *Nukva*, as above.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse: “Lift up the head of the sons of Gershon.” Counting them is referred to as “lifting up their head,” alluding to their ascent in order shine, as we have explained. It is for this reason as well that only those that had attained the age of thirty were counted, for only such individuals derive from the upper three, covered states of *gevurah*, each of which comprises ten [sub-states], giving thirty [aspects, or] years. These are the only ones that need light shone upon them, therefore only those [Levites] thirty years old and older are counted.

G-d commanded Moses to count all the Levites between the ages of thirty and fifty (for the purpose of service in the Temple). The wording of the command in the Hebrew, however, is split into two clauses. The first (“from age thirty and higher”) implies only that those who had attained at least thirty year were counted. The fact that only those over-thirty-year-olds who were under fifty were in fact counted is not made clear until the second clause (“until age fifty”) is stated. Thus, the verse seems to imply that the main factor is being over thirty; being under fifty is only an afterthought.

By counting the thirty-year old Levites, we are forcing them to participate in this rebounding ascent, as well. In this way, the *gevurah*-states of *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* can also experience the illumination naturally experienced by the *netzach-hod* states.

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<sup>12</sup> *Mevo She'arim* 6:1:5 (132b).

However, since there are in total five states of *gevurah*, [the Levites] are counted up to age fifty, for they all form one unit.

The meaning of the phrase “according to their families and their fathers’ houses” is as follows: There are two female *partzufim* constructed out of the five states of *gevurah*, i.e., Leah and Rachel. As is known, the female *partzufim* are constructed wholly out of states of *gevurah*.

As we said above, the female is the essence of expression, and the two principal forms of expression are thought and speech, which respectively are the two female *partzufim* of Leah and Rachel, the two wives of Jacob, who personifies *Z’eir Anpin*.

The first to be built is Leah, who is called “their fathers’ house.” This is because [our sages] call woman the “home.” Leah is the higher [of the two houses] since she absorbs [443] lights, this number being the numerical value of the word for “their fathers” when written without the *vav*.

The word for “fathers” (*avot*) is generally written *alef-beit-vav-tav*, but it may be written without the *vav* as well, since the *vav* in this case plays the role of a vowel (the *cholam*) that can be also written as a diacritical mark, like the other vowels. This is, in fact, how the word is written throughout the portion of the Torah we are discussing.

Since “fathers” come conceptually before “families,” “their fathers’ house” is the higher of the two levels. The number 443 here will be contrasted with a smaller number, 370, associated with Rachel.

These lights are the same as those of the four *alefs* in the four Divine Names *Ekyeh* [*alef-hei-yud-hei*], whose numerical value is 444, the same as that of the word for “their fathers” with the *kolel*.

When the letter *alef* is spelled out (*alef-pei-lamed*), its value becomes  $(1 + 80 + 30 = ) 111$ .  $4 \times 111 = 444$ . The Divine Name *Ekyeh* (“I shall be”) is associated in Kabbalah with the *sefirot* of *keter* and *binah*. Specifically, the *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima* (the *partzuf* of *binah*) are expressed by four iterations of the Name *Ekyeh*. The intellect of *Nukva* is derived from the *alefs* of these four Names.<sup>13</sup>

As I have explained elsewhere, this is alluded to in the verse: “Make known to me, O G-d, my end, and what is the measure of my days.”<sup>14</sup> The word for “my end” refers to [the *partzuf* of] Rachel, while the word for “the measure of” [*midat: mem-dalet-tav*, whose numerical value is 444] refers to Leah.

The word for the phrase “according to their families” [*le-mishpachotam*] refers to Rachel. The reason for this is as follows: We may divide this word in two, *lamed-mem-shin* and *pei-chet-vav-tav-mem*. [The *partzuf* of] Rachel comprises ten [sub-]*sefirot*, and each *sefirah* possesses one Divine Name *Havayah*, spelled out in such a way that its numerical value is 52.

When the Divine Name *Havayah* is spelled out *yud-vav-dalet hei-hei vav-vav hei-hei*, its numerical value is 52. This is one of the four basic ways the Name *Havayah* may be spelled out, as we have explained previously. Each of these four spellings of the Name *Havayah* is associated with one of the four basic *sefirah*-groups (72 with *chochmah*, 63 with *binah*, 45 with the *midot*, and 52 with *malchut*).

<sup>13</sup> *Sha’ar HaPesukim* to Psalms 39:5; *Sha’ar HaKavanot*, *Keriat Shema* 6.

<sup>14</sup> Psalms 39:5.

This is alluded to in the verse: “I am not better to you than ten sons?”<sup>15</sup>

The numerical value of the word for “son” (*ben, beit-nun*) is 52. The ten sons in this verse allude to the ten spellings-out of the Name *Havayah* in the ten sub-*sefirot* of the *partzuf* Rachel.

[The numerical value of all these Names together,]  $10 \times 52 = 520$ . If we add the *kolel* of each of the ten Names *Havayah*, this gives an additional 10, giving us a total of 530. If we add to this the number 5, signifying the five states of *chesed* together with the five states of *gevurah*, this gives 535. Alternatively, we can add to 530 the female [*partzuf*], represented by the final letter *hei* of the Name *Havayah* [and whose numerical value is 5]; this also gives us a total of 535.

This number is the numerical value of [the second set of letters into which we divided the word for “according to their families,”] *pei-chet-vav-tav-mem*, together with the *kolel*. Thus, this number represents [the *partzuf*] of Rachel.

The number of lights that she absorbs is 370, which is the numerical value of [the first set of letters into which we divided the word for “according to their families,”] *lamed-mem-shin*.

With regards to these 370 lights, it is known that there are 370 lights that shine from the upper face of *Z’eir Anpin*, as is explained elsewhere. It is explained there that they spread out in a straight, descending line until they reach the *yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin*. This phenomenon is called “peace” [*shalom*].

The 370 lights originate in the *partzuf* of *Arich Anpin*.<sup>16</sup> The number 370 is derived in various ways, the simplest being based on the general process of inter-inclusion of the *sefirot*. The three intellect-*sefirot* of *Arich Anpin* undergo a tenfold iteration twice, thus giving a total of one hundred for each *sefirah* and a total of 300 for the intellect as a whole. The seven emotion-*sefirot*, in contrast, undergo only one tenfold iteration; this gives  $7 \times 10$ , or 70. The sum of the iteration of all ten *sefirot* is thus 370.

These 370 lights are said to shine out of the face of *Arich Anpin*, and in so doing manifest tremendous good will and mercy. Even in everyday parlance, when someone is in an especially happy mood we speak of his face “lighting up.” *Arich Anpin* is the *partzuf* of the super-rational will, so when “light” or positive energy emanates from its “face,” G-d’s good will is manifest in creation.

When these 370 lights reach *Z’eir Anpin*, they shine in it as well, and thus the emotions are “lit up” by the will. As we have explained previously, *Z’eir Anpin* is the main *partzuf* of any particular world, which simply means that the measure of man is his emotions. This is why the emotions are called in Hebrew *midot* (literally, “measures”). Man’s intellect is, of course, his distinguishing human factor, but abstract intellect that does not produce an emotional response is not worth much. Similarly, he may possess all kinds of good intentions and wills, but these become actualized only beginning with emotions (which in turn serve as the motivation for action).

The emotions (*chesed, gevurah, tiferet, netzach, and hod*) all coalesce in *yesod*, the *sefirah* of sexuality. Sexuality is the drive to connect with the world and affect it; to reproduce one’s image and imprint on reality. The most profound and physical manifestation of this drive is, of course, the drive to have children and perpetuate oneself and his ideals for posterity. But in essence, any interaction between the person and the world outside him (including interactions with any other creature) are “sexual” in that in the interaction he seeks to leave his imprint on reality in some way.

If everything is working right, and the 370 lights of *Arich Anpin* are shining into *Z’eir Anpin*, and they affect all the emotions including *yesod*, it means that the person’s sexuality is holy and in consonance with the positive

<sup>15</sup> 1 Samuel 1:8.

<sup>16</sup> *Etz Chaim* 13:13-14; *Zohar* 1:4b.

energy and “good will” informing his whole being. This phenomenon is called “peace”: the individual is not torn between what he knows his higher ideals should be and the negative egocentricity his unrectified sexuality pulls him toward, but his sexuality is a pure expression of the highest, positive, wholesome, creative energy possible.

This is because the *sefirah* of *yesod* is represented by a small *vav* [whose numerical value is 6], and when the 370 lights descend to it, they add up to 376, the numerical value of *shalom* [*shin-lamed-vav-mem*].

*Yesod* is represented by the *vav* since it is the final of the six emotions. Also, the straight-line form of the *vav* evokes the image of the 370 lights shining in *Z’eir Anpin* descending along a straight path into *yesod*.

The concept of “peace” is associated with the *sefirah* of *yesod*—besides for the reasons cited above—because the word *shalom* is related to the word for “perfection” (*sheleimut*). A person whose sexuality is warped is considered “blemished,” while one whose sexuality it on track is considered complete. This idea is closely allied, obviously, with the relationship between *yesod* and “peace” mentioned previously.

As you know, all these [370] lights are states of *chesed*, and that is why they descend to *yesod*.

In the process the 370 lights shining from the face of *Arich Anpin* into *Z’eir Anpin*, it is described that they shine from the two “cheeks” of the face, the shining skin where there is no beard-hair. One way the number 370 is derived is that the two beams of light from the cheeks are each a manifestation of the Divine Name *Kel* (*alef-lamed*), as this Name is “filled in”:

letter	filling	value
<i>alef</i>	<i>alef</i>	1
	<i>lamed</i>	30
	<i>pei</i>	80
<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed</i>	30
	<i>mem</i>	40
	<i>dalet</i>	4
total		185

$185 \times 2 = 370$ . The inner dimension of *chesed* is love, and the real manifestation of love, of course, is in the person’s sexuality, or *yesod*.

This is also why “Joseph was of beautiful form and beautiful appearance,”<sup>17</sup> from the glow of these 370 lights.

Joseph personified the attribute and *sefirah* of *yesod*. He thus reflected the light that shines into this *sefirah* from the face of *Z’eir Anpin*.

This is also the mystical reason why our sages say, “the glory of the face is the beard,”<sup>18</sup> for someone who possesses the attribute of *yesod*, the attribute of Joseph, has a beard and the glory of the face, which is, as we said, these 370 lights.

On the verse, “And Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him,”<sup>19</sup> Rashi explains that this was because when they had seen each other last, the brothers already had beards, but Joseph had not grown his yet; but by this time he had grown his beard. Thus, the beard plays a key role in the drama surrounding Joseph.

<sup>17</sup> Genesis 39:6.

<sup>18</sup> *Shabbat* 152a.

<sup>19</sup> Genesis 42:8.

A eunuch, in contrast, who lacks the attribute of *yesod*, lacks the glory of the face, i.e., the beard.

The biological reason why a person without a procreative organ will be lacking a beard is, of course, because without sexual hormones his “secondary sexual characteristics” (e.g., a beard), will not appear. The mystical reason for this, however, is that without a vehicle for expressing his sexuality, which, as we said, is his drive to impress his unique expression of Divinity on creation, the person will lack the “glory of his face”—there will be no reason for the 370 lights to emanate from him.

Once these [370] lights reach Joseph—i.e., *yesod* [of *Z'eir Anpin*]<sup>20</sup>—they pass through his back to [the *partzuf*] Rachel, which is situated there. This is the mystical meaning of the verse: “Rachel was of beautiful form and beautiful appearance,”<sup>20</sup> [i.e., she received the attributes of Joseph], whereas Leah, the higher *partzuf* is not referred to as being beautiful.

It is explained in *Chassidut* that Leah and Rachel signify the two principle vehicles of expression (i.e., of *malchut*): thought and speech, respectively. The difference between these is that thought is chiefly inwardly directed (i.e., it is a means of expressing one’s ideas to oneself) while speech is outwardly directed (one talks to others). This is the mystical reason why Jacob preferred Rachel to Leah: he sensed that she personified speech, which is a more effective way of making one’s imprint on reality than is thought, and therefore was driven to channel his sexual/creative energy specifically through her. This also why—despite the fact that thought (Leah) is a higher revelatory experience to the thinker than speech is to the speaker—only Rachel is described as being beautiful: the glow of beauty is the reflection of the glow of the 370 lights of good will, optimism, and purity, and these are fully manifest only when they flow into full expression.

It appears to me that this is the mystical significance of the verse: “And then Joseph and Rachel approached and bowed down.”<sup>21</sup> Rachel was behind Joseph.

When Jacob introduced his family to his brother Esau, the Torah says that first the handmaids and their children approached Esau and bowed down to him, then Leah and her children, and finally Joseph and Rachel. Since in the case of the handmaids and Leah the mothers are mentioned first and then the children, this indicates that the mothers were in front of their children when they bowed down. In the case of Rachel and Joseph, however, Joseph moved in front of Rachel, in order to hide his mother’s beauty from the wicked Esau.

Thus, we see that Rachel is positioned behind Joseph. This would explain why in this sense Rachel “receives” her beauty from Joseph, even though in the plain sense, obviously, the order was the other way around: Joseph inherited his beauty from his mother.

The sons of Merari also manifest the five states of *gevurah*, but they manifest the five states of *gevurah* of the “feminine waters” that exist in the *yesod* of *Nukva*. This is why they are called *Merari*, meaning “bitter,” referring to the states of severe judgement they comprise. For they are the lowest states of *gevurah* in [*Nukva*].

Thus, the numerical value of *Merari* [*mem-reish-reish-yud*] is 450, which is 5 x 90, the numerical value of the word for “water” [*mayim*, *mem-yud-mem*], referring to the five states of *gevurah*, each one of which is a type of “feminine water.”

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* 29:17.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* 33:7.

It is for this reason that when G-d commands Moses to count them, He does not use the idiom “lifting up their head,” but simply says: “The sons of Merari, number them....” They manifest the hardest and most bitter states of *gevurah* in the *yesod* of [Nukva] that do not ascend. For were they to ascend, they would make the higher states of *gevurah* bitter.

As we said above, only the descending states of *gevurah* (corresponding to the clan of Gershon) rebound when they hit *yesod* of Nukva. The third, lowest set of states of *gevurah* do not rebound.

In reference to the sons of Gershon, however, who [manifest the states of *gevurah*] which spread throughout her body, the idiom “lifting up their head” is used.

I do not recall the mystical significance of the sons of Kehat, but it seems to me, Chaim [Vital], that they manifest the five states of *gevurah* in the *da'at* of Nukva. This would explain why the sons of Kehat are on a higher level than the sons of Gershon.

This is a logical assumption, for of the three sub-categories of the first category mentioned at the beginning of this passage, two have already been assigned, and only the highest sub-category remains for the clan of Kehat.

The job of the Kehat clan is explained first (at the end of *parashat Bamidbar*), before those of the clans of Gershon and Merari (at the beginning of *parashat Naso*). Furthermore, the Kehat clan's job is to pack and unpack the actual vessels of the Tabernacle (the ark, the menorah, the two altars, and the table), referred to as “the holiest of holy,” while the other clans are to pack and unpack the boards and curtains that comprise the Tabernacle structure and the curtains surrounding the Tabernacle compound.

Now, in the directive to count the sons of Gershon, the expression “according to their fathers’ houses and their families” is used, while in the directive to count the sons of Kehat and Merari, this expression is reversed. This is because the sons of Gershon manifest the states of *gevurah* that descend and re-ascend, as we have explained. Their light is not noticeable until they have ascended; their light thus may be considered to shine only after they have ascended. Therefore, their light reaches first [the *partzuf*] Leah, who is called “their fathers’ house,” and only afterwards reaches [the *partzuf*] Rachel, who is called “their families.” This is not the case with the sons of Kehat and Merari, [and therefore the order for them is reversed].

sons of Kehat	the five states of <i>gevurah</i> in <i>da'at</i> of Nukva	“according to their families and their fathers’ houses”
sons of Gershon	the five states of <i>gevurah</i> that spread through the body of Nukva	“according to their fathers’ houses and their families”
sons of Merari	the five states of <i>gevurah</i> in <i>yesod</i> of Nukva, the “feminine waters”	“according to their families and their fathers’ houses”

## *Parashat Bamidbar*

### [second installment]

This *parashah* opens with G-d's command to Moses and Aaron to take the census of the Jewish people. The results of the census are given for each tribe in the form:<sup>1</sup> "For the sons of X, their offspring, according to their families, according to their fathers' houses, the number of names from twenty years old up, all those subject to conscription, those counted of the tribe of X: Y," where X is the name of the tribe and Y the number of persons counted.

It is appropriate to note that with regard to all the tribes, the expression "*for* the sons of..." is used, while in the case of the last tribe, Naftali, it says only "the sons of..." and not "for."

The reason for this is as follows: When they wanted to count the Jews, the heads of the tribes and their scribes circulated throughout the whole camp of Israel, standing at the entry of every tent, writing in their tablet the names [of those who lived in each tent], in the form: "So-and-so the son of So-and-so of the tribe of so-and-so," and so forth. They did this until they finished counting all the households of Israel.

Then, they took this tablet, [in which the names of] thousands of individuals we randomly written, and had to divide it up into lists of the members of each tribe on a separate sheet.

In order to do this, they began with the first, [random] list, removing first all the names belonging to the tribe of Reuben, the firstborn, by [reading off these names,] saying, "Record So-and-so the son of So-and-so on the list of the tribe of such-and-such." [The scribes] would then write these names individually [on the first of the separate lists].

They then returned [to the beginning of the] random list and proceeded to remove all the names belonging to the tribe of Simeon from it, writing them in the second of the separate lists, saying, "this is *for* the sons of Simeon."

They did this for each of the first eleven tribes.

It seems as though they either erased or checked off the names from the first list as they read them off.

When they finished the first eleven tribes, only one tribe was left, i.e., Naftali. In his case, they did not need to return [to the beginning of the random list] and remove [the names belonging to this tribe] in order to write them on another list,

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers 1:20 ff.

for by this time there were no longer any [names belonging to] other tribes mixed in with this tribe; only it was left.

They therefore counted [the tribe of Naftali] from the existing list, and they said simply, “such-and-such is the number of the sons of Naftali that are left [on this list].

Whereas in the case of the other [tribes], that had to be tallied on separate lists, it is written “*for* the tribe of So-and-so,” meaning, “This person written here [on the random list] must be joined with the tribe of Simeon, or Levi, etc.”

The remaining, unerased (or checked-off) names on the first list were by default of the tribe of Naftali.

—translated from *Sha’ar HaPesukim* and *Likutei Torah*

## Parashat Naso

In this Torah portion, G-d gives the laws of the Suspected Adulteress (*sotah*). The passage begins:

“G-d spoke to Moses, saying: “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘[This is what should be done] should any man’s wife stray and be unfaithful to him, and a man lie with her carnally unbeknownst to her husband, and she was secluded and defiled but there was no witness against her, and she was not seized. If a spirit of jealousy had come upon [the husband] and he had warned his wife, and she was defiled, or a spirit of jealousy had come upon him and he had warned his wife, and she was not defiled. Then the man shall bring his wife to the priest and bring her offering for her, one tenth of an *ephah* of barley flour. He shall neither pour oil over it nor put frankincense on it, for it is a grain-offering of jealousies, a grain-offering of remembrance, recalling iniquity. The priest shall bring her forth and present her before G-d. The priest shall put holy water in an earthen vessel, and the priest shall take some earth from the Tabernacle floor and put it into the water....”<sup>1</sup>

The word translated above as “jealousy” [*kinah*] and the one translated as “had warned” [*kinei*] are from the same root. Thus, a more literal translation of the phrase in which these words occur would be: “If a spirit of jealousy had come upon him and he had expressed his jealousy to his wife [by warning her not to be secluded with the other man]....”

Our sages said that “A man only warns his wife if a spirit of purity enters into him [from heaven].”<sup>2</sup>

This is based on the idiom, “a *spirit* of jealously had come upon him.”

It is considered commendable for a man to warn his wife not be secluded with another man if he senses that she is becoming overly frivolous or flirtatious. We have seen previously how the feminine principle of reality can “lose track” of its purpose and misdirect its energies in the course of going about the business of expressing Divinity in the world, and that it is the male principle’s role to re-inspire her with the purity of intention his abstract orientation provides. The sages disapprove of a husband who is uninterested in the moral purity of his family, beginning with his wife.

To be sure, a husband can delude himself into thinking an overbearing manner or unreasonable suspicion is a “spirit of purity.” There is therefore an opinion in the Talmud that the spirit that enters into the husband, causing him to warn his wife, is in fact a spirit of *impurity*. The<sup>3</sup> sages therefore advise husbands to assume their wives are innocent of any wrongdoing unless they have clear justification to suspect otherwise.<sup>4</sup> Even if the husband is convinced that there is cause for concern, he must first appeal to his wife privately to improve her behavior.<sup>5</sup> If this does not work, he may proceed with the ritual *if* he is sure that his motivations are pure—he may not invoke the rite in jest, in anger, or in order to frighten her.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the rite only works if the husband himself is not guilty of adultery.<sup>7</sup>

The Arizal now discusses what this “spirit of jealousy” is in mystical terms.

Know that Joseph manifested *yesod*, and that his numerical value is the same as that of “Zion” [*Tzion*, 156], which signifies the *yesod* of *malchut*, while Joseph manifest the *yesod* of the male principle, which enters this “Zion.”

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers 5:11-17.

<sup>2</sup> *Sotah* 3a.

<sup>3</sup> The following few sentences are taken from *The Rebbe’s Chumash* (in preparation).

<sup>4</sup> *Y. Kidushin* 4:4.

<sup>5</sup> *Mishneh Torah, Sotah* 4:19.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 4:18.

<sup>7</sup> *Sotah* 47b.

Joseph is associated with *yesod* because he exhibited sexual purity in the incident with Potiphar's wife,<sup>8</sup> and *yesod* is associated anatomically with the male sexual organ.

Joseph (*Yosef*):  $yud-vav-samech-pei = 10 + 6 + 60 + 80 = 156$ .

Zion (*Tzion*):  $tzadik-yud-vav-nun = 90 + 10 + 6 + 50 = 156$ .

The word for "Zion" (*tzion*) means "point," "sign," "designation." It is also an appellation for the Holy Land, the Holy Land is the location designated for the revelation of G-d's presence. Specifically, "Zion refers to the inner sanctum (the "Holy of Holies") of the Holy Temple. We have seen previously how the Holy of Holies is considered the "bridal chamber" where the marital union of G-d and the Jewish people takes place. "Zion" therefore specifically refers to the female sexual organ, or the "womb" of the world, where reality is impregnated with Divine consciousness and from which new Divine consciousness is born and spreads throughout the world.

[156] is also three times the numerical value of the 52-Name [referring to the three Names *Havayah* spelled out to equal this number] that are given from the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin* to the *yesod* of *Nukva*. This is why the numerical value of both Joseph and Zion is three times 52, as is mentioned in connection with [our exposition of Psalm 25,<sup>9</sup> which begins,] "Unto You, O G-d, I lift up my soul." As is explained there, [these three 52-Names] are manifestations of *nefesh*, *ruach*, and *neshamah*.

Psalm 25 is recited in the daily liturgy as part of *Tachanun*, the penitential prayers recited after the climax of the prayers, the *Amidah*. After achieving total self-effacement and union with G-d in the *Amidah*, we become acutely aware of our shortcomings, and for these we ask forgiveness in *Tachanun*. Psalm 25 expresses remorse for sin and rededication to G-d. We rededicate ourselves, mystically, by elevating our consciousness out of the world of *Asiyah* and up through the three worlds into the world of *Atzilut*. By doing this, we arouse G-d to forgive us. Thus, the elevation of consciousness through these three worlds creates three forms of arousal, signified by the three 52-Names mentioned here. The three worlds of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah* correlate to the three aspects of the soul, *nefesh*, *ruach*, and *neshamah*, which manifest the three "garments" of the soul—intellect, emotion, and action—respectively.

Significantly, the sin mentioned explicitly in Psalm 25 is in the verse, "Recall not the sins and transgressions of my youth..." referring to sexual sins. Thus, the Psalm we recite in order to arouse G-d to restore our sexual purity is connected with the theme of sexual purity alluded to in the names of Joseph and Zion.

The fact that the numerical value of Joseph is 156 alludes also the [following] mystical principle I have taught you:

There are five states of *chesed* and five states of *gevurah* [that descend from *Ima* into *Z'eir Anpin*], which are manifest as ten Names *Havayah*. The five states of *gevurah* [descend] into *malchut* [of *Z'eir Anpin*], while the five states of *chesed* [descend] into [the five sub-*sefirot*] from *chesed* to *hod*. All these five issue [to *Nukva*] via *yesod* [of *Z'eir Anpin*]. [*Yesod*, however,] has its own Name *Havayah*. Thus, there are [in *yesod*] five Name *Havayah*'s [manifesting the five states of *chesed* that enter *Z'eir Anpin*] and one of its own, giving six. Their combined numerical value is thus 156.

The numerical value of the Name *Havayah* is 26;  $6 \times 26 = 156$ .

[156] is also the numerical value of the word for "jealousy" [*kinah*].

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 39:7-20.

<sup>9</sup> *Sha'ar HaKavanot*, *Inyan Nefilat Apaim*, 3<sup>rd</sup> discourse.

*Kinah*:  $kuf-nun-alef-hei = 100 + 50 + 1 + 5 = 156$ .

Hence, we have a direct connection between the *sefirah* of *yesod*, i.e., sexuality, and the idea of righteous jealousy.

This explains what is written in the *Zohar* [about *yesod*]: “Then, a righteous one dons jealousy....”<sup>10</sup>

This passage of the *Zohar* describe what happens when righteous people pass away. Their souls ascend and enter *malchut*, which adorns itself with the sparks of holiness these souls have elevated in their lifetime and brought with them. *Yesod*, seeing how beautiful *malchut* has become by adorning itself with these good deeds, is aroused to couple with it.

The term the *Zohar* uses for *yesod* in this context is “a righteous one” (*tzadik*). “Righteousness” is particularly associated with *yesod* because the main test of righteousness is in sexual behavior. Thus, Joseph, the archetype of sexual purity, is traditionally called *Yosef HaTzadik*, “Joseph, the righteous.”

The term the *Zohar* uses to describe *yesod*’s arousal to couple with *malchut* is “donning jealousy.” Jealousy is typically experienced physiologically by increased adrenalin flow and body heat, similar to sexual arousal.

Until now, we have seen that the “jealousy” of *yesod* is its insistence on purity in sexual behavior. Beyond this, there is a deeper connection alluded to here between jealousy and sexuality.

Let us note first that in English, “jealousy” implies “zealousness,”<sup>11</sup> and in fact, “zealous” could be a better translation of the root *kinah* than “jealous.”

We have defined the experience of *yesod*, as the drive for self-actualization and for the promulgation of the insight of Divine consciousness to which one has been privy. In this light, holy sexuality is an expression of a person’s passion for transmitting his personal vision of Divine reality to the world (either in the form of children that will be imbued with his values, or metaphysical Divine energy that will have a positive influence on reality, which, we are taught, is one result of marital relations conducted with love and proper intentions).

Thus, holy (as opposed to mere bestial) sexual passion is an expression of zeal and dedication. This perhaps explains why the *Zohar* here says that, in order to couple with *malchut*, *yesod* “dons jealousy/zeal.”

This, then, is the mystical meaning of the saying, “A man only warns his wife if a spirit of purity enters into him,” for this [spirit] originates from the [holy] side, that of the supernal [*sefirah* of *yesod*, identified with] Joseph.

Thus, the “spirit of jealousy” is the ideal of pure sexuality, associated with Joseph and *yesod*. This spirit of Joseph is manifest as its numerical correlate, *kinah*, the “jealousy” that inspires a husband to warn his flirtatious wife not seclude herself with her suspected paramour.

Interestingly, the seminal episode of jealousy in the Torah is that of Pinchas, who was incensed over the sexual sins of Zimri and Kozbi. Here, too, we find a link between “jealousy/zeal” and sexuality.

—translated from *Likutei Torah* and *Sefer HaLikutim*

<sup>10</sup> *Zohar* 2:211a.

<sup>11</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition* (copyright © 1992 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Electronic version licensed from INSO Corporation. All rights reserved) gives the following etymology for “jealous”: “Middle English *jelous*, from Old French *gelos*, jealous, zealous, from Vulgar Latin *zelosus*, from Late Latin *zelus*, zeal.”

## *Parashat Beha'alotecha*

The portion of the Torah read this week begins with G-d's command to Moses:

“Speak to Aaron and say to him: “When you kindle the lamps, the seven lamps are to shine toward the front of the candelabrum.”” And Aaron did thus; he kindled the lamps toward the front of the candelabrum...”<sup>1</sup>

The lamps of the candelabrum (the seven-branched *menorah* of the holy Temple) were all in a straight line; the “front” of the *menorah* is thus interpreted to mean the lamp situated on top of its middle shaft. The word used for “kindle” literally means “cause to ascend.” The Arizal will explain why two separate terms are used for the burning of the lamps: “kindling” and “shining.” Note as well that in G-d's command, Aaron is only required to make sure the seven lamps *shine* toward the middle lamp of the candelabrum, whereas in describing how he fulfilled the command, we are told that he also *kindled* them facing toward the front of the candelabrum. This, too, will be explained. In the course of this discussion, many points touched upon in the previous installment will be developed and elucidated.

The *menorah* is [the physical manifestation of the *partzuf*] Rachel, the *Nukva* of *Z'eir Anpin*, which are postured back to back.

As we have explained previously, *Nukva* of *Z'eir Anpin* appears as two *partzufim*, Leah and Rachel, just as Jacob (the personification of *Z'eir Anpin*) had two wives with these names. And just as the main wife of Jacob was Rachel, the main iteration of the *partzuf* of *Nukva* is that of Rachel.

When the *partzuf* of Rachel is initially emanated (or “built”), it is positioned back to back with *Z'eir Anpin*. This corresponds to the Midrashic account of the creation of Adam and Eve, in which they were created as a sort of Siamese twin, joined back to back, and had to be “sawed” apart in order to later turn toward each other and mate. Similarly, the *partzuf* of Rachel, once emanated, must be further developed in order to mate with *Z'eir Anpin*. This is the process of kindling the lamps of the *menorah*, as will be explained now.

Its seven lamps are [the physical manifestation of] the seven lower *sefirot* [of the *partzuf* of Rachel], from its *chesed* to its *malchut*. These [together] are called its “body,” and they are depicted like the three branches of the *menorah*: left, right, and center.

The *menorah*, of course, had seven branches, but what is meant here is the general subdivision of three branches to the right, three to the left, and the central shaft.

As is known, the five states of *gevurah* in [*Nukva*'s] *da'at* spread throughout its seven lower *sefirot*, similar to the way the five states of *chesed* spread throughout the body of *Z'eir Anpin*.

Whereas *Nukva* is constructed mainly out of different states of *gevurah*, as we have explained, *Z'eir Anpin* is constructed out of different states of *chesed*.

[In *Z'eir Anpin*,] the five states of *chesed* [within its *da'at*] spread forth from *chesed* to *hod*, and the aggregate of their shining forth pools into *yesod*, and then the aggregate that shines in *yesod* pools into its *malchut*. This is the mystical

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers 8:2-3.

meaning of “the seal within the seal,” as we have explained in reference to *Hosha'ana Rabbah*.<sup>2</sup>

The “seal within a seal” is a halachic concept: wine, etc., which has been touched by idolaters is considered defiled unless it is sealed with a double seal.<sup>3</sup> The mystical correlate of this concept is the seal given by G-d on the promise of His beneficence given at the beginning of each year. This seal is seen as G-d's assurance that He will bestow His beneficence on the Jewish people (and via them to all worthy recipients among the other nations and creatures of the world), and not to the forces of evil. (I.e., the “wine” will not be “contaminated” by association with false gods and ideologies.)

The first seal occurs during the *Ne'ilah* (“closing”) prayer of *Yom Kippur*, when the judgement which began on *Rosh HaShanah* is “signed and sealed.” But this judgement is subject to further certification by the holiday of *Sukkot* (which is also a time of judgement, albeit in a more positive vein). Thus, on each day of this holiday, special prayers are recited called *hosha'anut* (prayers for salvation). The last day of *Sukkot* is the final, closing day of this second judgement period, and is called *Hosha'ana Rabbah* (the great Hosanna) after the extra long *hosha'anut* recited on it.

In the terminology of Kabbalah, the Divine effulgence which flows through the *midot* becomes “solidified” and ready to be transmitted to the world when it reaches the *sefirah* of *yesod*, the *sefirah* of drive-for-transmission, but it is only fully assured of uncontaminated transmission when it reaches the *sefirah* of *malchut*, that of full expression.

The five states of *chesed* [that spread through] *Z'eir Anpin* are alluded to by the five time the word “light” is mentioned in the account of the first day of creation,<sup>4</sup> and are called lights of day. The five states of *gevurah* [that spread through] *Nukva* and shine in it are called the lights of night. These shine via the lamps [of the *menorah*]. Thus, the seven lamps—which are the vessels [that hold the burning oil and wicks]—manifest the seven lower *sefirot* of *Nukva*, while the seven lights which burn in them, shining from the fire and flame of the burning wicks inside the lamps, are the lights that shine via the vessels.

Every *sefirah* is composed of a “light” and a “vessel.” In most contexts, the light is simply the Divine energy or creative force, which is a uniform, simple entity that does not change from one *sefirah* to another. What gives the *sefirah* its unique identity is its vessel, which is the context in which the light shines. The standard analogy for this is clear water that is poured into different colored glasses. Although water is colorless, it will appear to assume the color of the glass it is poured into. Similarly, G-d is a simple, unified essence, but He acts through the various attributes of the *sefirot*, which may be diametrically opposed to one another (e.g., *chesed* and *gevurah*). The dichotomy of light and vessel allows the one G-d to assume a multitude of attributes without compromising His unity.

(We said “in most contexts” since a more detailed analysis of this issue leads to the conclusion that the lights, also, have some *a priori* identity even before they enter their respective vessels, but this discussion and its ramifications are beyond the scope of the present exposition.)

As we have explained elsewhere, the states of *chesed* [that spread throughout] *Z'eir Anpin* are divided into two categories. As far down as its “chest,” they are covered within the sheath of the *yesod* of *Ima*, which reaches this far. From its “chest” downward, however, they are exposed lights. Thus, the exposed lights are the lower two-thirds of *tiferet* [of *Z'eir Anpin*]<sup>5</sup>—this is what is meant by “from the

<sup>2</sup> *Sha'ar HaKavanot*, Sukot 6 (106b).

<sup>3</sup> *Avodah Zarah* 31a; *Mishneh Torah*, *Ma'achalot Asurot* 13; *Shulchan Aruch*, *Yoreh Deah* 118.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 1:1-5: “And G-d said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. And G-d saw the light that it was good, and G-d divided the light from the darkness. And G-d called the light day....”

chest downward”—plus the two full lights of *netzach* and *hod* [of *Z'eir Anpin*]. They are thus two and two-thirds [exposed] light.

The five states of *chesed* of *Z'eir Anpin* originate in *Ima* (the *partzuf* of *binah*), as will be explained further on. They are transmitted from *Ima* to *Z'eir Anpin* via the *yesod* of *Ima*. In psychological terms, this simply means that the love or enthusiasm that expresses itself throughout the entire emotionally array originates in the intellect, specifically in *binah*, where the insight of *chochmah* is developed into a full conceptual structure that can elicit an emotional response. But since intellect itself is self-referencing and self-oriented, it is only the *yesod* of *binah*, the drive of the intellect to actualize itself, which is interested in changing reality by eliciting an emotional response.

This drive, the *yesod* of *Ima*, thus envelopes and is the context within which the five states of *chesed* are manifest in *Z'eir Anpin*, at least as far as its “chest,” i.e., as far as the first, upper third of *tiferet* of *Z'eir Anpin*, inclusive. To that point, that is, as they manifest through *chesed* and *gevurah* and the beginning of *tiferet*, they are enveloped by the consciousness of their source in the intellect. From this point onward, however, this awareness of where the emotional response is coming from is lost, and the emotional response (i.e., the spreading forth of the five states of *chesed* through *Z'eir Anpin*) assumes a life of its own. This is what is meant by calling these states of *gevurah* “revealed” or “exposed” or “unsheathed” from that point on.

The inner experience of *chesed* is love; that of *gevurah* is fear; that of *tiferet* is mercy. Love and fear are still abstract enough to retain awareness of their source in the intellect; their thrust is simply the transmission or withholding of the idea, without too much reference to the recipient. Mercy, in contrast, is much more subjective and oriented toward the needs and condition of the intended recipient of the new reality; therefore, only its first third, or intellectual, abstract aspect (recall that every *sefirah* itself subdivides into ten sub-*sefirot*, grouped into “thirds” of intellect, emotion, and drive) can retain the consciousness of where it’s coming from. The rest of it is focused on where it’s going to.

Since these two and two-thirds lights are divested of any envelope restraining them, they descend rapidly down to *yesod* [of *Z'eir Anpin*].

In contrast to the deliberate nature of intellect, emotion is characterized as being impetuous and forceful.

They then rebound, ascending as reflected light, and spread through the three axes of *Z'eir Anpin* until they reach its *keter*. In this way they cause *Z'eir Anpin* to grow and mature.

By receiving and transmitting the inspiration of *chochmah* and *binah* (*Abba* and *Ima*), *Z'eir Anpin* matures. The flow of positive energy, well-rooted in insight into holiness and its intellectual development, serves to make the emotionality of *Z'eir Anpin* more and more holy and mature in its orientation. The three “axes” here mentioned are the right, left, and middle lines of the sub-*sefirot* of *Z'eir Anpin* (right: *chochmah*, *chesed*, *netzach*; left: *binah*, *gevurah*, *hod*; center: *keter*, *da'at*, *tiferet*, *yesod*, *malchut*). When the light of the five states of *chesed* (that originated from *Ima*) reach the *keter* of *Z'eir Anpin*, they influence its will, which in turn sets the tone for the overall focus of the *partzuf*.

The rebound occurs at the level of *yesod*, the outward drive for actualization of the emotions. By actualizing itself outwards, the *partzuf* itself gains and matures internally. This is because self-actualization and propagation promotes self-validation and the remaking of the self in the image one is projecting outwards. One “rises to the occasion,” so to speak.

This is akin to the common experience that by helping someone else or teaching someone else, the helper or teacher gains and grows immensely. As our sages have said, “more than the householder helps the pauper, the pauper helps the householder,”<sup>5</sup> and, “I have learned much from my colleagues, more from my teachers, but most of all from my students.”<sup>6</sup>

A similar process occurs in *Nukva*. For when these states of *gevurah* issue from the back of *Z'eir Anpin* [in order to develop *Nukva*], they cannot issue simply

<sup>5</sup> *Vayikra Rabbah* 34:10.

<sup>6</sup> *Ta'anit* 7a.

as lights of *gevurah*; rather, there issue with them some of the vessels and “walls” of *Z'eir Anpin* itself, which enclothe and envelop them.

As will be explained later, these vessels and “walls” are the sheath of *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*, which is the context in which these lights of *gevurah* issue, just as the states of *chesed* issued from *Ima* in the sheath of its *yesod*.

It thus follows that just as in *Z'eir Anpin* [the states of *chesed*] are partly covered and partly exposed, so is it with regard to *Nukva*: [the states of *gevurah*] are partly covered and partly exposed, for the vessels of *Z'eir Anpin* [partly] cover them.

Now, with regard to *Z'eir Anpin*, the sheath [covering the five states of *chesed*] is the *yesod* of *Ima*. Since it [*yesod* of *Ima*] is short, it ends at it's [*Z'eir Anpin*'s] chest. In contrast, however, the sheath covering the states of *gevurah* [spreading through] *Nukva* originates in the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*, which is long, reaching until the bottom of *tiferet* of *Nukva*.

The passage from *Ima* to *Z'eir Anpin* is a change of essence, from intellect to emotion. Therefore, as we said, the intellectual actualization-drive (*yesod*) can extend only so far as the intellectual aspect (the upper third) of *tiferet* of *Z'eir Anpin*. In contrast, the passage from *Z'eir Anpin* to *Nukva* is just a change of focus, from emotion *per se* to the expression of emotion. Therefore, the actualization-drive of *Z'eir Anpin* can extend all the way down to the end of *tiferet* of *Nukva*. In other words, the consciousness of the emotions themselves can remain in the expression-consciousness of *Nukva* as far its *tiferet* (or mercy, empathy). From that point on, the transmission consciousness (*netzach* and *hod*) takes over.

It thus follows that in *Z'eir Anpin*, two and two-thirds of its states of *chesed* are exposed, while in *Nukva* only the two states of *gevurah* manifest in its *netzach* and *hod* are exposed. This is one difference between the states of *gevurah* [of *Nukva* and the states of *chesed* of *Z'eir Anpin*]: the extent to which they are exposed or concealed.

A further difference is regarding the “height” [of the point where they become exposed]. That is, in *Z'eir Anpin*, where they are exposed from the “chest” down, the descent which the states of *chesed* traverse is relatively tall.

The states of *chesed*, once they become exposed, traverse the remaining two thirds of *tiferet* before they reach *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*. (The *sefirot* of *netzach* and *hod* do not add any length to the descent of the states of *chesed*, for *yesod* is positioned directly under *tiferet*, just as the reproductive organ is the lower extremity of the torso in the human body, the legs—which correspond to *netzach* and *hod*—being off to the side.)

But in the case of *Nukva*, there is almost no descent for its states of *gevurah* to traverse whatsoever, for as soon as they emerge from the bottom of its *tiferet* they immediately enter its *yesod*.

Now, it is known that chief way the states of *chesed* cause *Z'eir Anpin* to mature is by the force of their descent and headlong rush into its *yesod*.

Even in English, we see that the word “emotion” is related to “motion.” The chief “usefulness” and effect of emotions is their force, which provides their impact. The impact of the states of *chesed* on *Z'eir Anpin* is proportional to the force and intensity with which they “assault” its *yesod*.

This is clearly demonstrable: if a stone falls from a height of ten cubits, it will rebound upward one or two cubits. But if it falls from a height of twenty cubits, it will rebound upward double the distance.

Therefore, in the case of *Z'eir Anpin*, when their descent was from a great height, the states of *chesed* were able to rebound as reflected light all the way up its stature, and to spread through all three of its axes, as well, reaching its *keter*. But in the case of *Nukva*, there are two drawbacks: firstly, in the number of exposed states of *gevurah*, of which there are only two in contrast to the exposed states of *chesed* in *Z'eir Anpin*, of which there are two and two-thirds. Secondly, in the height of their descent and fall, which is practically naught, as we have explained.

Thus, [*Nukva*'s] exposed states of *gevurah* that descend to its *yesod* are not capable of rebounding up to its *keter* and at the same time spreading upward through all three of its axes, as do the rebounding states of *chesed* in *Z'eir Anpin*. In order that they be able to reach *Nukva*'s *keter*, they do not spread upward through its three axes; rather, they ascend to its *keter* only through the middle axis. In this way, the intensity of their light is not diminished by being spread through the other two axes.

We are only concerned that *Nukva*'s central axis be illuminated [by the light of these states of *gevurah*, and not that the other two axes be illuminated by them]. This is because [at the top] of these two axes are *Nukva*'s two brain-lobes, those of *chochmah* and *binah*, which shine downward through the left and right axes. But it's *keter* [initially] possesses no such brain, and it is improper for its *keter* to be inferior to its *chochmah* and *binah*. It is therefore crucial that the states of *gevurah* ascend to *keter* in order to shine in it as the brain of *keter* itself. We have explained a similar process elsewhere with regard to why the states of *chesed* of *Z'eir Anpin* must ascend to its *keter*.

You might ask, these two states of [exposed] *gevurah* ascend back through the middle axis and pass through *tiferet*, whose light, as we said, is entirely sheathed. If so, how can they act to enlarge and mature them, since they become hidden again, as they were to begin with?

It would seem that on the rebound, the exposed states of *gevurah* would re-enter the consciousness of the upper triad of emotions, which, as we said, in *Nukva* is still permeated with the consciousness of *Z'eir Anpin*, the emotions in and of themselves. Thus, it would seem, these lights would lose their inertia and revert to their previous, subdued state.

The answer to this is that once they have been exposed, their light—which was initially confined and constricted within the sheath [of the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*—expanded and spread outward. Therefore, even when they return upward [to the level of *tiferet*] and become hidden [within the sheath], they cannot become confined and constricted as they were originally. On the contrary, they cause the sheath to expand. Thus, the vessel of their sheath [into which they enter] together

with those states of *gevurah* that remained covered [within it] now become greatly energized by their impact and expand concomitantly, to the extent that the place [i.e., the level of *tiferet*] can no longer contain them. This is similar to the process we explained elsewhere regarding how the states of *chesed* affect *Z'eir Anpin*.

Thus, both the vessel of *tiferet* and the lights of those states of *gevurah* that remained hidden within it gain immeasurably by the impact of the returning, reflected light.

We may now begin to explain the mystical significance of kindling the lamps of the *menorah* [in the holy Temple]. The descent of the states of *gevurah* [within *Nukva*] down to its *yesod* is called “kindling” the lamps and “making them shine.” This is the process referred to in the verse [quoted above] by the words, “the seven lamps are to shine....” The idiom of “causing to ascend” is not used here, as it is earlier in the same verse.

In contrast, the ascent and rebound [of these states of *gevurah*] from *yesod* of *Nukva* to its *keter* is a different aspect [of kindling the lamps] and is referred to using the idiom of “causing to ascend.”

It is to this that our sages referred when they said that the meaning of “causing the lamps to ascend” is that Aaron should kindle [the wicks] “until the flame ascends by itself.”<sup>7</sup>

I.e., rebounds on its own power. The mystical meaning of the verse is thus: “In order to make the lights ascend, they must first shine/descend through the seven *midot* of *Nukva*.”

Aaron, however, did more than he was commanded to. For he was only commanded to make sure that the wicks faced the middle shaft of the *menorah*, which embodies the middle axis [of *Nukva*], when the [five states of *gevurah*] were descending [through *Nukva*]. As it is written, “the seven lamps are to shine toward the front of the candelabrum.”<sup>8</sup> He, however, waited in order to ensure that even when they re-ascended they would do so only through the middle axis, as we explained. This is the mystical meaning of the following verse: “And Aaron did thus; he kindled the lamps toward the front of the candelabrum....” In this verse, the idiom of “shining” is not used, as it is in G-d’s commandment to him.

The reason why Aaron did this is as follows: when the two exposed states of *gevurah* descended down to *yesod*, they separated from each other, since there was no sheath forcing them together. This is only to be expected, inasmuch as they were *netzach* and *hod*, which are two opposite forces, the first belonging to the right side and the second to the left. Therefore, when they ascended on their rebound, they were also separated, each one tending toward its native axis. But had they been allowed to pursue this path, this would have dissipated their light such that they would not have been able to reach [*Nukva*’s] *keter*, as we explained

<sup>7</sup> *Shabbat* 21a.

<sup>8</sup> The word for “front” (*penei*) also means “the inner part of,” or in this context, the central shaft.

above. He therefore tarried [in the process of kindling them] until “the flame ascended by itself,” that is, such that the light ascended solely into the middle axis, which is called “the front of the *menorah*.” Once it has entered this channel it can no longer diffuse to the right or left because [this channel] is bounded by walls preventing this. Rather, the light must perforce ascend directly up the middle line, until it reaches *keter*.

Aaron’s characteristic trait was that of love, as we are taught: “Be of the students of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving the creatures and drawing them near to the Torah.”<sup>9</sup> By kindling the *menorah*, he thus aptly represents the way the flow of *Z’eir Anpin* (the emotions, the principle one of which is love) inspires and causes *Nukva* to mature and develop.

—anthologized and translated from *Sha’ar HaMitzvot* and *Ta’amei HaMitzvot*

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<sup>9</sup> *Avot* 1:12.

## *Parashat Beha'alotecha*

### [second installment]

In this *parashah*, Moses complains to G-d that he cannot lead the people by himself. “I cannot carry all this nation by myself, for it is too heavy for me.”<sup>1</sup> In response, G-d told Moses, “Gather for Me seventy men of the elders of Israel...and take them to the tent of meeting, and they will present themselves there with you. I shall descend and speak with you, and I will set aside some of the [Divine] spirit that is upon you and place it upon them.”<sup>2</sup> To select the seventy, Moses took six from each tribe, i.e., 72 elders, and placed 72 pieces of paper in a box. On 70 of them were written the word “elder” and two were blank. Each of the 72 elders took a paper from the box; the 70 who selected a paper with the word “elder” became the 70 selected to become Moses’ assistants; the other 2 did not. “And G-d descended in the cloud and spoke to [Moses], and He set aside some of the spirit that was upon him and placed it upon the seventy elderly men. As the spirit descended upon them, they prophesied unceasingly. Now, there were two men [of the seventy chosen] in the camp who remained [because they felt unworthy of the gift of prophecy]. The name of the first was Eldad and the name of the second was Meidad. They were amongst those who chose ballots [with the word ‘elder’ on them]. But they did not return to the Tent [of Meeting] but instead prophesied in the camp [because G-d gave them the gift of prophecy anyway]. So the youth ran to tell Moses, saying, ‘Eldad and Meidad are prophesying in the camp!’ Joshua ben Nun, the servant of Moses, responded from amongst his youths, and said, ‘My master, Moses, stop them!’ But Moses said to him, ‘Are you jealous on my behalf? Would that all of G-d’s people were prophets because G-d placed His spirit upon them!’”<sup>3</sup>

You know that our sages said,<sup>4</sup> regarding the verse: “Where were you when I established the earth?”<sup>5</sup> that all the righteous [of all generations] originate in one or another of the limbs of Adam. Eldad and Meidad originated in his two breasts, [the organs] which [in the female] provide milk for the baby.

Therefore, the word for “breast” [*dad*] is alluded to in both their names. The difference is that one [i.e., Eldad] originated in the right breast, indicated by the letters *alef-lamed*, and the other [i.e., Meidad] originated from the left breast, indicated by the letters *mem-yud*.

The names *Eldad* and *Meidad* both end with the letters *dalet-dalet*, which spell *dad*, the word for “breast.” They differ in their first two letters.

To explain: In general, the female is indicated by the Name *Elokim*.

G-d’s “proper” Name is the Name *Havayah*, which comes from the verb meaning “to bring into being,” and therefore signifies G-d as Creator, i.e., as the active force that brings reality into being. But, as we know, G-d’s creative force must be constricted in order to allow for creatures conscious of themselves as independent beings, and this constrictive Divine force is indicated by the Divine Name *Elokim*. The Name *Elokim* is thus the channel through which the Name *Havayah* is expressed. Content and expression, as we have explained previously, are the fundamental properties of male and female, respectively.

In [the female’s] three middle [*sefirot*], the Name *Elokim* is manifest as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers 11:14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 16-17.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 25-29. The interpolated comments are taken from Rashi.

<sup>4</sup> *Shemot Rabbah* 40:3.

<sup>5</sup> Job 38:4.

The female archetype is, of course, a *partzuf* comprising ten *sefirot*. The middle triad of *sefirot* consists of *chesed*, *gevurah*, and *tiferet*.

The [first] two letters of *Elokim*, *alef-lamed*, are manifest on the right side, this being the mystical meaning of the verse, “The *chesed* of G-d [*Kel*] is the whole day.”<sup>6</sup> This [manifestation of the Name *Elokim* on the right side] produces [the right breast,] Eldad.

The two letters *alef-lamed* spell the Divine Name *Kel*, which, as we see from this verse, is associated with the attribute of *chesed*, which in turn is situated on the right axis of the sefirotic tree.

The [final] two letters of *Elokim* [in reverse order], *mem-yud*, are manifest on the left side; this produces [the left breast], Meidad. [This manifestation] is related to *binah*, which is on the left side and is called “who” [*mi*], indicating the 50 gates of understanding.

*Binah* is the source of *gevurah*, which is situated opposite *chesed*, on the left side. According to the sages,<sup>7</sup> there are fifty “gates of understanding” Divinity. These are alluded to in the verse “Her husband is known in the gates,”<sup>8</sup> which is interpreted in the *Zohar* to mean that G-d (the Jewish people’s “husband”) is known “by each person according to the estimation of his heart,” since the word for “estimation” (*hasha’arah*) is related to the word for “gate” (*sha’ar*).

The numerical value of the last two letters of the Name *Elokim*, *mem-yud*, is 40 + 10, or 50. Thus, these two letters allude to the 50 gates of understanding. In addition, these two letters spell the word for “who” (*mi*), which is also seen to allude to *binah* in the verse “Lift up your eyes on high, and see who [*mi*] created all this.”<sup>9</sup> The numerical value of the word for “all this” (*eileh*: *alef-lamed-hei* = 1 + 30 + 5) is 36, alluding to the 6 *sefirot* from *chesed* to *yesod* inter-included within each other (6 x 6 = 36). The verse thus reads: “...and see that *binah* is the origin of the six *midot*.”

Also, the Egyptian exile is the constriction of *binah*, preventing it from giving birth to its natural offspring, the *midot*. The word for *Egypt* (*mitzrayim*) may be permuted to spell the words for “the constriction of *mi*” (*metizar mi*), i.e., of *binah*.

Although we normally associate *binah* with the left lobe of the brain, let us recall that according to the *Zohar*, *binah* is also associated with the heart, the seat of understanding, and the heart tends to the left side of the body. Nonetheless, we would have expected the allusion to be based on *gevurah* rather than *binah*. Perhaps the preference for *binah* is an allusion to the sages’ saying that G-d put the mother’s breasts “in the place of *binah*,”<sup>10</sup> i.e., next to the heart.

This leaves the letter *hei* in the middle, between the *alef-lamed* and *mem-yud* of *Elokim*.

Thus, we see that the Name *Elokim* divides symmetrically, the two letters on the right becoming manifest as the right breast, the two letters on the left being manifest as the left breast, and the middle letter (*hei*) signifying the middle axis of the *sefirot*.

It is manifest as the milk channel, situated in the middle between the two breasts spreading out in either direction. It produces two types of milk, one type going to the right breast, and one type going to the left breast.

<sup>6</sup> Psalms 52:3.

<sup>7</sup> *Rosh HaShanah* 21b.

<sup>8</sup> Proverbs 31:23.

<sup>9</sup> Isaiah 40:26.

<sup>10</sup> *Berachot* 10a.

By and large, women do not menstruate as long as they are nursing. According to the sages, this is because the woman's menstrual blood is converted to mother's milk during the lactation period.<sup>11</sup> Since blood comes from the heart, in between the two breasts, the "channel" of milk from the heart to the breasts may be conceived of as being in the middle as well.

We will now explain how the letter *hei* of the Name *Elokim* becomes milk, as we have stated.

Now, it is known that the milk that issues from the right breast is sweeter than the milk that issues from the left breast, since the former originates in [the side of] *chesed*. Thus, there are two types of milk, and these must be derived from the letter *hei*, as we have said.

The explanation is this: there are two aspects of the letter *hei*; one is its spelling-out and the other is its shape.

Regarding its spelling out, there are three ways to spell out the letter *hei*: either with a *yud*, a *hei*, or an *alef*, i.e., *hei* may be spelled either *hei-yud*, *hei-hei*, or *hei-alef*. The mnemonic for these three letters is the [Aramaic] word for "let there be" [*yehei*].

*Yehei*: *yud-hei-alef*.

The combined numerical value of these spellings-out is [31,] the same as the numerical value of the Name *Kel*.

*hei-yud*:  $5 + 10 = 15$ ; *hei-hei*:  $5 + 5 = 10$ ; *hei-alef*:  $5 + 1 = 6$ ;  $15 + 10 + 6 = 31$ .

*Kel*: *alef-lamed* =  $1 + 30 = 31$ .

If we then add 3 for the three ways of spelling, we have 34. If we then add 5 for the simple numerical value of the letter *hei*, we have 39. If we add 1 for the *kolel* of all these aspects together, we have 40, the numerical value of the word for "milk" [*chalav*].

*Chalav*: *chet-lamed-beit* =  $8 + 30 + 2 = 40$ . Thus we have seen how the spelling out of the letter *hei* "produces" milk.

Regarding its form, note that you can picture the letter *hei* in two ways: as a *dalet* and a *yud* or as a *dalet* and a *vav*, for the "leg" of the *hei* can be small, like a *yud*.

The two connected strokes of the *hei* form the letter *dalet*. The left, disconnected "leg" of the *hei* can be visualized either as a *yud* or as a *vav*.

The combined numerical value of these two forms is 24.

*dalet-yud* =  $4 + 10 = 14$ ; *dalet-vav* =  $4 + 6 = 10$ ;  $14 + 10 = 24$ .

If we add to this number the numerical value of the three letters that can be used to spell the letter out, i.e., *yud-hei-alef*, we have [40,] the numerical value of the word for "milk."

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<sup>11</sup> *Bechorot* 6b; *Nidah* 9a.

$24 + yud\text{-}hei\text{-}alef = 24 + 10 + 5 + 1 = 40$ . We thus see how the form of the letter *hei* produces milk.

These are the two aspects of milk that originate from the letter *hei* of the Name *Elokim*, which is situated between the two breasts, alluded to by the letter-pairs *alef-lamed* and *mem-yud*, and that extend [from it] in either direction.

Elsewhere,<sup>12</sup> the Arizal states explicitly that “the two prophets, Eldad and Meidad...suckled from the two breasts of the lower feminine archetype, *Nukva* of *Z'eir Anpin*.” The most obvious connection, then, is that the “milk” Eldad and Meidad sucked from the world of *Atzilut* was Divine consciousness, which manifested itself in them as the inspiration of prophecy.

In addition to this, it is explained in *Chassidut*<sup>13</sup> that the spiritual/psychological analog to a suckling infant is an individual's newborn Divine consciousness he attains after contemplating G-d's Divinity. After contemplating the reality of G-d, he will feel how this Divine awareness fills his being with vitality, energy, and inspiration. But if he is honest, he will also realize that he carries a lot of negative spiritual baggage that frustrates and undermines his ability to derive the full benefit and life power he could from Divine consciousness. This will lead him to become angry and upset over his spiritually crippled state, but this anger, once he steps back for a minute and views things a bit more objectively, will give way to a feeling of pity on his Divine soul. This pity, in turn, will give way to joy, when he realizes that G-d is on his side and is fully capable of drawing him into His presence despite his shortcomings, provided he seriously and earnestly desires this.

This joy that follows the shock of the rude awakening is similar to the sweet milk the infant enjoys after the shock of birth. The milk we live off of—in our initial stage of spiritual development, which the Arizal calls “the mentality of nursing (*mochin d'yenikah*)—is our joy in the knowledge that G-d loves us and cares for us, like a nursing mother cares for her child.

This is why G-d as He relates to the forefathers (i.e., the stage in our development when we are still children) is called *Kel Shadai*. These two Names are usually translated “G-d Almighty,” but the second Name more literally means “my breasts.”

In any case, nursing is identified here with joy, and joy is one of the prerequisite conditions for prophecy.

In the Midrash, it is stated that since Eldad and Meidad humbly withdrew from the honor of prophecy, considering themselves unworthy, G-d declared that “since you diminished yourselves, I will make you greater than all the others.”<sup>14</sup> They exceeded the others in five ways: the others only prophesied about the following day, while they prophesied about what would happen in another forty years; the others did not enter the land of Israel, but they did; the others are not mentioned in the Torah by name, but they are; the others eventually ceased prophesying, for their prophecy was derived from Moses', but they did not stop prophesying, for their prophecy came from G-d Himself.<sup>15</sup>

—translated from *Sha'ar HaPesukim* and *Likutei Torah*

<sup>12</sup> *Mevo She'arim* 5:2:3.

<sup>13</sup> *Torah Or* 55d-56a.

<sup>14</sup> *Sifrei, Beha'alotecha* 95.

<sup>15</sup> *Bamidbar Rabbah* 15:19; *Sanhedrin* 17a.

## *Parashat Beha'alotecha* [third installment]

Toward the end of this *parashah*, we are told how God bestowed the gift of prophecy on the seventy elders. At that time, Miriam was standing next to Moses' wife, Zipporah, when Gershom ran to Moses, saying "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." When Zipporah heard this, she said, "Woe to their wives if they have become prophets, for they will now separate from them, just as Moses has separated from me." Miriam overheard this, and assumed that Moses had done this because he felt it was inappropriate for a prophet to become defiled by marital relations,<sup>1</sup> just as God had bidden the whole people to refrain from marital relations in preparation for the revelation at the Giving of the Torah.<sup>2</sup> However, she also knew that she and her brother Aaron had received prophetic revelations and had not been required to separate from their spouses, so she assumed that it was Moses' own idea to separate, and thought that this was unfair to Zipporah. Miriam later told Aaron about this, and Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses regarding how he was treating Zipporah. The Torah describes this as follows: "Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses regarding the Cushite woman he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman. They said, 'Has G-d spoken only to Moses? Has He not spoken to us, too?'"<sup>3</sup>

Zipporah is here referred to as "the Cushite woman" because her physical beauty was as incontestable as the darkness of the skin of a Cushite woman, and in addition, her deeds were also as faultless as a Cushite woman is black. The absoluteness of her character contrasts with the way he was mistreating her, at least in Miriam's and Aaron's eyes.

However, the Torah refers to Moses' wife as "the Cushite woman" for another reason, as well.

My master [the Arizal], of blessed memory, told me that he heard from a great sage in our generation by the name of Rabbi Klonymus, of blessed memory, an explanation of this passage of the Torah, as follows:

We have seen how the patriarch Jacob's body and skeleton were both buried in the Land of Israel.<sup>4</sup>

"Body" here refers to the flesh.

Joseph's bones were buried [in the Land of Israel], but not his body.

He was buried in Egypt;<sup>5</sup> his body had decomposed by the time his bones were taken out of Egypt;<sup>6</sup> they were buried in Shechem.<sup>7</sup>

Neither Moses' body or bones [were buried in the Land of Israel].<sup>8</sup>

The reason for this that the Land of Israel is the earthly manifestation of the "woman of valor" who "fears G-d."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Leviticus 15:18.

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 19:15.

<sup>3</sup> Numbers 12:1-2.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 49:4-13.

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 50:26.

<sup>6</sup> Exodus 13:19.

<sup>7</sup> Joshua 24:32.

<sup>8</sup> Deuteronomy 34:5-6.

<sup>9</sup> Proverbs 31:10, 30.

The phrase “fears G-d” can also be read “the fear/awe of G-d.” Thus, mystically, the “woman of valor,” *Nukva of Z'eir Anpin*, is also the (lower level of the) fear of G-d, the aspect of our relationship with G-d associated with the *sefirah* of *malchut*.

Because Jacob did not marry Timna, the sister of Lotan, as our sages relate,<sup>10</sup> he merited to have both his body and skeleton buried in the Land of Israel.

In giving the genealogy of Esau and the history of his progeny, the Torah also describes the people who originally inhabited the land he eventually possessed, the Chorites. “These are the sons of Seir the Chorite, the [original] inhabitants of the land: Lotan, Shoval, Tzivon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These were the tribal chiefs of the Chorites among the sons of Seir in the land of Edom. The sons of Lotan were Chori and Hemam, and Lotan’s sister was Timna.”<sup>11</sup> The reason the Torah tells us who Lotan’s sister was is because she wanted to convert to Judaism, but neither Abraham, Isaac, nor Jacob would accept her. She even offered to be Jacob’s concubine, but Jacob refused here. She then declared, “I would rather be a concubine to anyone from this nation [i.e., a descendant of Abraham] than a princess in another nation” and indeed, became Esau’s son’s concubine: “Timna was a concubine of Esau’s son Eliphaz, and she bore Amalek to Eliphaz.”<sup>12</sup>

Regarding Joseph: he did sin in thought, and drops of his semen issued from between his fingernails, but he did not complete the evil act by injecting [his seed] into that foreign woman. Therefore, his skeleton was buried [in the Land of Israel] but not his body.

Joseph sold as a slave to Potiphar, the priest of On, in Egypt. Potiphar’s wife tried to seduce Joseph, and although he initially demurred, he eventually agreed. As he was about to complete the illicit act of relations, the image of his father suddenly became fixed in his mind, and he relented. He dug his fingernails into the ground in order to control himself, and miraculously, the flow of semen issued from his fingers into the ground instead of issuing into Potiphar’s wife.<sup>13</sup>

Regarding Moses: he went to the Land of Cush and lived there for forty years, and actually married the wife of the [slain] Ethiopian king, and lived with her [outwardly] as man and wife, as is recounted in the accounts of Moses’ life. Even though he did not approach her physically, he was still not buried in the Land of Israel at all, neither his body nor his bones.

The Written Torah does not tell us what happened to Moses between the time when he fled Pharaoh’s henchmen, at about the age of 18, and when he became Jethro’s shepherd and son-in-law, at about the age of 77. There are a few versions in the Midrashim of what happened, but according to the most detailed one, Moses slew the Egyptian in the year 2386, when he was 18 years old. He fled to Ethiopia, where he joined the army and 9 years later was coronated king. This is when he “married” the widow of the previous king of Ethiopia, or Cush. He remained king of Ethiopia for 40 years, from 2395 to 2435. In that year, at the age of 67, he left Ethiopia and went to Midian. After the incident with the shepherds at the well, Jethro imprisoned Moses for ten years. Zipporah fed Moses secretly during these ten years, and finally convinced her father to release him. In 2445, at the age of 77, Moses and Zipporah were married, and shortly after had their first son, Gershon. The incident of the burning bush occurred in the year 2447, when Moses was 79 years old.<sup>14</sup>

Thus far are the words of the said sage [Rabbi Klonymus], of blessed memory.

<sup>10</sup> *Sanhedrin* 99b; *Yalkut Shimoni*, *Bereishit* 129.

<sup>11</sup> *Genesis* 36:20-22.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 12.

<sup>13</sup> *Genesis* 39:7-12; *Rashi* on *Genesis* 49:26; *s.v. Nezir echav*.

<sup>14</sup> See *Seder HaDorot*, *s.v.* 2386, 2387, 2392, 2435, 2444.

To this, my master added an explanation of this passage [regarding Miriam's accusation of Moses], as follows:

It is stated prior [to this passage] that "Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp."<sup>15</sup> Our sages teach us that they were prophesying that "Moses will die [in the desert] and Joshua will bring Israel into the Land of Canaan."<sup>16</sup> Following this, "Miriam and Aaron spoke"<sup>17</sup> about this matter, and were discussing why Moses should die in the desert before being able to enter the land. It could not yet have been clear to them that the reason for this was [Moses'] sin with regard to [bringing forth water from] the rock, for this incident did not occur until [37 years later], after Miriam's death, as recounted in *parashat Chukat*.<sup>18</sup> They therefore concluded that the reason must be that [Moses] fully and legally married a Cushite woman, and therefore he was barred from entering the land, similar to what the above-quoted sage said.

[Having said this,] they then proceeded to rule out another explanation [for why Moses would not enter the Land of Israel]. Namely, as it is written in the *Zohar*, the Land of Canaan is associated with the moon. Therefore, Joshua, about whom our sages said, "Joshua's face was like the face of the moon [relative to Moses' face, which was like the face of the sun],"<sup>19</sup> entered it. Moses, in contrast, whose "face was like the face of the sun," which expresses a higher level [of spirituality] than the moon [does], did not enter it.

The sun and moon are associated with *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, respectively. *Z'eir Anpin* shines with the radiance of the emotional *sefirot*, which are reflected in *Nukva*, their means of expression. This is similar to the way the moon reflects the light of the sun. Similarly, Joshua's spirituality—evidenced as the glow of his face—was a reflection of his teacher Moses'.

The Land of Israel, the quintessential "land," is also associated with *malchut*, inasmuch as heaven and earth are also respectively associated with *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*.

It thus would appear that Moses did not enter the Land of Israel because he was of a higher spiritual order than it; only his disciple, who was of a lower spiritual order, was "low" enough to enter it.

It would follow that [Moses'] denial of entry [into the land] was to his credit, rather than the result of some lack on his part. [Aaron and Miriam] ruled out this explanation by saying, "Has G-d spoken only to Moses? Has He not spoken to us, too?" Meaning: "We are on the same level of prophecy as he is; if so, why are we going to enter the land and he not? Rather, it must not be because of his preeminence but because of some lacking of his that he is not entering the land, namely, because 'he married a Cushite woman,'" etc., as we have explained. They did not know [at this point] that they, too, would not be entering the Land of Israel.

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<sup>15</sup> Numbers 11:27.

<sup>16</sup> *Sanhedrin* 17a.

<sup>17</sup> Numbers 12:1.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 20:1-13.

<sup>19</sup> *Bava Batra* 75a.

G-d then told them that the reason [Moses would not be entering the land] was indeed because of his preeminence, in accordance with the explanation given in the *Zohar*. As for their argument that “has He not spoken to us, too,” G-d told them that it is faulty. For, “If there be a prophet among you, [I, G-d, will make Myself known to him in a vision; I will speak to him in a dream.] This is not so with My servant Moses; [he is faithful throughout My household. With him I speak mouth to mouth; unambiguously, without riddles, so he beholds the image of G-d. So why were you not afraid to speak against My servant, against Moses?]

<sup>20</sup> [In other words,] he alone is “the face of the sun,” and therefore will not enter the land, which is referred to mystically as the “holy moon.”

Although Aaron and Miriam were correct that their level of prophecy was higher than Joshua's, it was still not on the level of Moses'.

This is similar to the mystical explanation given in the *Zohar* [of Moses' words] in the verse, “Is there a tree there, or not...”<sup>21</sup>

When Moses sent spies to report on the land, he told them to see “what [kind of] land it is. And the people who inhabit it: are they strong or weak? Are there few or many? And what of the land they inhabit? Is it good or bad? And what of the cities they live in: are they in open cities or in fortresses? What is the soil like: is it rich or poor? Are there any trees in it or not?”<sup>22</sup> The latter phrase literally reads: “is there a tree in it or not?”

Meaning: If the Tree of Life, which is *tiferet*, known as the “sun,” is there, I shall enter it; if not, I will not.

The Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge are respectively associated with *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*.

It follows from the above that the Arizal, based on the *Zohar*, holds that it was not because Moses formally married the widow of the Cushite king that he was denied entrance into the Land of Israel, but because he was essentially above its level. He puts Rabbi Klonymus' interpretation into the mouths of Miriam and Aaron as their supposition that G-d then refuted.

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Rabbi Shmuel Vital (Rabbi Chaim Vital's son) notes that after Timna became Eliphaz's concubine, she bore him Amalek, the ancestor of the nation that became Israel's archenemy, and that the sages state that this was because Jacob, in fact, *should have* married her. He could have elevated the good in her (evinced by her desire to convert) and thereby nullified the bad in her (that became manifest later as Amalek). Thus, from our sages words, it appears that Jacob erred by not accepting Timna, while in Rabbi Klonymus' exposition, it appears that he was rewarded for repelling her.

He resolves this dichotomy by proposing that it would have indeed been preferable for Jacob to marry Timna, even if by doing so he would have forfeited his ability to be buried in the Land of Israel. By preventing the emergence of Amalek, he would have saved his descendants from much suffering and removed an obstacle in the way of the Redemption. (One of the conditions that must be met before the Redemption can occur is that Amalek's descendants must be wiped out.) Not being buried in the Land of Israel would be a small price to pay for this, especially since Moses himself was also not buried in the Land of Israel, and our sage say that this was in order that he be able to bring the generation that died in the desert to the final Redemption with him.

If this is true, its psychological implications are far-reaching. For we are taught that Amalek signifies the coldness in our relationship with G-d that comes from doubts that the “inner skeptic” plants in our mind. The above exposition implies that this inner Amalek derives from our reluctance to answer the challenge of absorbing and

<sup>20</sup> Numbers 12:6-8.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* 13:20.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* 13:18-20.

elevating the good elements of materiality and foreign culture out of fear of the contamination it will entail. These unredeemed elements of non-Jewish culture later come back to haunt us in the form of doubts and the cultured sophistication that cools off our enthusiasm for Divinity.

So, what is better: to insist on ascetic purity of mind, soul, and body, as Jacob did, or to sacrifice purity in order to elevate the non-Jewish world and thereby avoid the doubts and indifference of Amalek? We could propose that *Chassidut* would answer that Jacob could not have allowed himself the risk of elevating alien culture because the Torah, with its solid anchoring in Divine lifestyle and consciousness, had not yet been given. Moses, on the other hand, who represented the giving of the Torah, could allow himself this risk. The lesson for us would then be that only to the extent that we are solidly grounded and immersed in the holiness of the Torah and its lifestyle can we allow ourselves the broadmindedness to absorb, include, and elevate the elements of worldly culture that can, and indeed, beg to be assimilated. If we do not trust the power of the fire of the Torah to burn off the dross of this unrefined raw material, these elements will eventually plague us as seeds of doubt and as a coldhearted attitude in all things holy.

—from *Sha'ar HaPesukim* and *Likutei Torah*

## *Parashat Shelach*

The portion of the Torah read this week opens with the story of the spies who were sent to spy out the land of Israel before the Jewish people entered it. These spies were the princes of each tribe.

Our sages said, commenting on the verse, “And Joseph said to them, ‘You are spies...,’”<sup>1</sup> that Joseph was hinting to his brothers that they would [be reincarnated and] spy out the land of Israel, but that Joshua—the prince of the tribe of Ephraim, the son of Joseph, would not be a [reincarnated] spy.

The patriarch Jacob had twelve sons, each of which became the progenitor of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. When Joseph told his brothers, “you are spies,” he was in effect telling them that all eleven of them (including his brother Levi) would be reincarnated as the spies who spied out the land. The Arizal will explain how this worked, seeing that no spy was sent from the tribe of Levi.

Based on this, we will be able to understand this passage very well. Let us note first of all that when the Torah refers to the princes of Israel in an earlier passage,<sup>2</sup> they are called “the heads of the thousands of Israel,” whereas in this passage [about the spies], they are called “the heads of the children of Israel.”<sup>3</sup>

The reason for this discrepancy is as follows: When G-d foresaw that these princes would sin and that Moses wished to send them, He devised a way to fortify them, minimize the evil they would do, and rectify it somewhat. He therefore decreed that the souls of the actual sons of Jacob, the brothers of Joseph, who were literally “the children of Israel,” would be impregnated into the [souls] of these spies, so that [their holiness would] help them not to sin completely. Nevertheless, this did not help them.

Jacob was also known as “Israel,” so the phrase “the children of Israel,” while usually denoting the Jewish people as a whole, may also be literally understood to mean “the sons of Jacob.”

“Impregnation” (Hebrew: *ibur*) is a specific type of reincarnation, in which the soul being reincarnated does not become the full and only soul of the body into which it is incarnated, but is rather “grafted” onto the soul already present in this body. The result is that the soul of the individual retains its intrinsic consciousness and identity, but these are augmented by the impregnated soul it “hosts.”

This is the mystical meaning of the verse: “They were all men, the heads of the children of Israel were they,”<sup>4</sup> i.e., they themselves were the [progenitors of the] tribes, who were in fact the “heads” of the Jewish people.

The word “head” also may mean “beginning.”

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 42:9.

<sup>2</sup> Numbers 1:16.

<sup>3</sup> Numbers 13:3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 13:3.

This is also the mystical meaning of the verse: “[Send for yourself men who will spy out the land of Canaan] that I am giving to the children of Israel.” The verb “am giving” is in the present tense, meaning: “these men whom you are now sending to spy out the land that I am giving now to the children of Israel are themselves the [progenitors of the] tribes, who are called ‘the sons of Israel.’ I will give it to them in the merit of this expedition, if they deserve it.”

Now, the eleven [progenitors of the] tribes [besides Joseph] were impregnated in the eleven spies. Since the tribe of Levi did not have any portion in the land, they did not need to send a spy.

The tribe of Levi was not meant to make their living by farming or pasturing the land; their “job” was to serve as priests and Levites in the Temple and teach the Torah to the rest of the people. They lived off their sacrificial dues in the Temple, and the various tithes and so forth the other tribes were required to give them of their produce. They lived in special cities that were set aside for them, which were surrounded by parks, but they possessed no agricultural territory. Thus, since they were not “interested” in the land *per se*, no representative of their tribe was sent to spy out the land.

In its place, the tribe of Joseph was divided in two: Menasheh and Ephraim.

Menasheh and Ephraim were the two sons of Joseph. Before his death, Jacob made these two sons progenitors of tribes in order to keep the number of tribes twelve in the cases when the tribe of Levi would not be counted.

The soul of Joseph was impregnated into the spy of the tribe of Menasheh, it is therefore written: “Of the tribe of Joseph, of the tribe of Menasheh...”<sup>5</sup>

In listing the princes of the tribes who were sent as spies, the idiom used in each case is “Of the tribe of X, so and so.” Here, the name of the tribe (Menasheh) is preceded by the phrase “of the tribe of Joseph.” The tribe of Ephraim is mentioned *earlier*, so the phrase “of the tribe of Joseph” cannot be considered an introductory phrase that covers both tribes of Ephraim and Menasheh. This phenomenon, the Arizal tells us, therefore alludes to the fact that the soul of Joseph was impregnated specifically into the prince of Menasheh.

Even though in all cases Ephraim takes precedent over Menasheh, Joseph was nonetheless associated with Menasheh, in order to indicate what we have said.

When Jacob split Joseph into two tribes, he made a point of giving Ephraim precedent of Menasheh, even though Menasheh was the firstborn.

Thus, Joshua was left as the spy of the tribe of Ephraim, without the impregnation of [a progenitor of] any tribe. Moses was therefore afraid to send him, lest he sin. Therefore, Moses “called Hoshea bin Nun, Joshua.”

Joshua’s given name was Hoshea, but Moses changed it to Joshua at this time. In Hebrew the sole difference between the consonantal spelling of these two names is the addition of the letter *yud* to Hoshea, giving *Yehoshua*.

[He did this,] as our sages say, praying for him: “May G-d spare you from the scheme of the spies.”<sup>6</sup>

The name Hoshea means “salvation.” The addition of the letter *yud* to the name Hoshea makes the word begin with the two-letter Name of G-d, *Kah* (*yud-hei*). The name Joshua may thus be interpreted to mean “May G-d save.”

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 13:11.

<sup>6</sup> *Sotah* 34b.

The mystical meaning of calling him this new name is that [Moses thereby] drew into [Joshua] the soul of Levi, the son of Jacob, whose soul had not been impregnated into the prince of his tribe, as we mentioned. It was specifically Moses who was able to do this, for he, [as the head of the tribe of Levi,] should have gone on this mission and been the spy for the tribe of Levi. Instead, he sent Joshua, his student in his place, for [one's student] is considered the same as his son, as is known. Thus, the soul of Levi, which should have been impregnated into Moses, became impregnated into Joshua.

We can now better understand a difference in expression that occurs in this passage: First, G-d says: "Send for yourself," addressing Moses in the singular. Later [in the same verse], He says: "send one man from each of their ancestral tribes," addressing him in the plural.

In English there is no difference between the singular and plural imperative or single and plural second-person future. (In archaic English, there is "send you" and "send ye," and "you will send" and "ye will send," but there is no such distinction in modern English). But in Hebrew, the first "send" in this verse is in the singular (*shelach*), while the second "send" (*tishlachu*) is in the plural.

Furthermore, the expression "for yourself" seems to be superfluous.

In truth, however, these inconsistencies allude to what we have said. G-d at first was referring to the greatest of all the emissaries, that of the tribe of Levi, i.e., Moses. He said to him: "Send for yourself," i.e., since you yourself are not going, send someone else in your place. In reference to the rest of the tribes, however, G-d addressed Moses in the plural.

In sending out the other spies, Moses was acting on behalf and as the representative of the whole Jewish people. He is therefore referred to in the plural.

Moses then sent Joshua [in his place] and drew into him the soul of Levi, as we said.

Now, when [the spies] scouted out the land, they plotted an evil scheme, that is, to denigrate the land. Therefore, the souls of the [progenitors of the] tribes that had been impregnated into them departed from them. As is known, a soul that attaches itself to a person via reincarnation [*gilgul*] does not depart from him until he dies,<sup>7</sup> but one that enters into a person via impregnation withdraws from him when he sins. It says: "withdraw now from above the tents of these wicked people!"<sup>8</sup> As a matter of fact, even an individual's own soul withdraws from him when he sins. This is the mystical meaning of our sages' statement that "the wicked even in their lifetime are called 'dead.'"<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *Sha'ar HaGilgulim*, beginning of introduction 5.

<sup>8</sup> Numbers 16:26.

<sup>9</sup> *Berachot* 18b.

This is alluded to in the verse: “And they went and they came to Moses and Aaron.”<sup>10</sup> [The words “and they went” seem to refer to the spies’ expedition into the land of Israel.] But we have already been told [in the preceding verse] that “they returned from scouting out the land,” so why does the narrative mention again their going, now that they have already come back? The verse should have simply stated: “And they came to Moses.”

The answer is that the phrase “and they went” refers to the departure of those [impregnated] souls, and the next phrase “and they came” refers again to the spies themselves. When they came to Moses, the impregnated souls had already departed from them.

[These spies were then punished and died,] but, we are told, “Joshua and Caleb lived from these men.”<sup>11</sup> Now, the word “remained alive” does not seem to be appropriate here.

“Lived” would imply that they “lived off” the other people or something like that, but the simple meaning of the verse is simply that they survived them.

The reason why it is nonetheless used is to indicate that in the case of these two, their impregnated souls did not depart from them. These were the souls of Judah in Caleb and Levi in Joshua.

Since Joshua and Caleb did not participate in the sin of the spies (i.e., did not denigrate the land of Israel and discourage the people from entering it, there was no reason for their impregnated souls to depart from them.

They therefore possessed an extra measure of life force. Thus, the expression “lived” is used in reference to them, rather than “survived.”

The other spies, however, “died” as soon as they came to Moses, inasmuch as their impregnated souls departed from them, for “the wicked even in their lifetime are considered dead,” as above. This is why [the narrative contrasts Joshua and Caleb with them, saying] “from these men,” which appears superfluous.

This is also alluded to in the verse: “And My servant Caleb, since there was a different spirit with him.”<sup>12</sup> This refers to the fact that in the other spies there was a different spirit of the impregnated souls of the [progenitors of the] tribes in them. They did not “remain loyal to Me,” and therefore departed [from their respective descendents].

The phrase “remained loyal to Me” is from the verse just quoted describing Caleb, and literally means “fulfilled after Me.” The Arizal is thus saying that the impregnated souls of the sons of Jacob did not complete the task for which they were impregnated. This was not their fault, of course, so no blame is intended to be imputed to them.

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<sup>10</sup> Numbers 13:26.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 14:38.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 14:24.

With regard to Caleb, however, there was from the outset a different spirit of the impregnated soul of Judah with him, and he therefore did not sin. He therefore “remained loyal to Me” and stayed as loyal at the end as he was at the beginning.

The reason these two [—Joshua and Caleb—had a “different spirit” with them] was because in the case of Joshua, Moses’ prayer was effective, as was his permanent name-change. Caleb’s own prayer was effective, for we are taught that he prostrated himself [in prayer] on the graves of the forefathers in Hebron. He therefore did not sin with regard to the [other spies’] evil scheme.

We have elsewhere<sup>13</sup> explained that Caleb was a reincarnation of Eliezer, the servant of Abraham.

This would add significance to the fact that he went to pray at the graves of the forefathers.

[Although Eliezer hailed from accursed seed, when Laban said to him,] “Come in, O blessed one of G-d,”<sup>14</sup> he went out of the category of the cursed and entered the category of the blessed.

Eliezer was a Canaanite, that is, a descendant of Canaan, whose seed Noah cursed to be a servant caste.<sup>15</sup>

It appears to me, Chaim [Vital], that this is alluded to in the verse “And My servant Caleb,” meaning that he was originally a Canaanite servant, i.e., cursed, but was now “My servant,” i.e., blessed.

—anthologized and translated from *Sha’ar HaPesukim* and *Likutei Torah*

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<sup>13</sup> *Sha’ar HaGilgulim*, introduction 36.

<sup>14</sup> Genesis 24:31.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* 10:25-26.

## *Parashat Shelach*

### [second installment]

(Note: part of this excerpt may be considered a continuation of the first installment.)

Of the twelve spies sent to spy out the land, as described in the beginning of this *parashah*, only Caleb and Joshua remained faithful to G-d's mission. The rest fell prey to their fear of the land and its inhabitants.

Regarding the mystical significance of Caleb, the son of Yefuneh, I first found it written that the numerical value of Calav, the son of [King] David<sup>1</sup> is [53,] the same as the numerical value of [one of the spellings-out of] the Name *Havayah* [plus the *kolel*].

*Calav ben David: kaf-lamed-alef-beit* = 20 + 30 + 1 + 2 = 53.

The Name *Havayah*, as we have seen previously, is spelled out in 4 basic ways, such that it yields the numerical values of 72, 63, 45, and 52. The latter is as follows:

*yud-vav-dalet hei-hei vav-vav hei-hei* = (10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 5) + (6 + 6) + (5 + 5) = 52.

I then found it written that this is [also] the mystical significance of Caleb, the son of Yefuneh. It could well be that they are both incarnations of the same soul.

The numerical value of Caleb is exactly 52: *kaf-lamed-beit* = 20 + 30 + 2 = 52.

Know that the soul of Caleb originated in that of Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, for Eliezer left the curse of “cursed be Canaan”<sup>2</sup> when Laban said to him “Come, O blessed of G-d.” Had this not been decreed in heaven, it would not have been recorded in the Torah. At this point, [Eliezer] became blessed.

Eliezer was a descendant of Canaan, the fourth son of Noah's son Ham. Noah cursed Canaan after Ham castrated Noah. In the same episode, Noah blessed his son Shem: “Blessed be G-d, the G-d of Shem.”

Abraham sent Eliezer to his nephew, Bethuel, to find a match for his son, Isaac. We are told that Eliezer in fact wanted his daughter to marry Isaac, but Abraham told him, “You are cursed [because you are a descendent of Canaan] and I am blessed [because I am a descendent of Shem]. He who is cursed cannot cling to he who is blessed.”<sup>3</sup>

Bethuel's son was Laban, Rebecca's brother. Although Laban was wicked, and therefore his words could not affect reality the way a righteous person's can, the Arizal says that the fact that the Torah takes the trouble to record Laban's greeting means that it in this case, the reverse was true: because on the spiritual level, Eliezer had already been gone from being cursed to being blessed, Laban was able to intuit this and unknowingly articulated it, thereby causing it to take effect on the physical plane, as well.

Eliezer's transference from cursed to blessed allowed him to be reincarnated as Caleb.

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Samuel 3:3.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 9:25.

<sup>3</sup> See Rashi on Genesis 24:39.

Therefore, because of this ascent that he [accomplished in Eliezer] when he said “Come, O blessed of G-d,” [Laban] was reincarnated as Naval the Carmelite. [This is indicated by the fact that] the letters that spell their names are the same.

*Laban: lamed-beit-nun; Naval: nun-beit-lamed.*

Naval the Carmelite was Abigail’s first husband, before she married King David.<sup>4</sup> Her son through King David was Calav, mentioned above.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore our sages stated on the verse, “For the choirmaster, upon the death of Laban,”<sup>6</sup> that Laban [in this verse] is actually Naval.<sup>7</sup>

This is also alluded to by the fact that Caleb is called “the son of Yefuneh,” i.e., the “son” of [Laban,] the one who said, “I have emptied [*paniti*] the house.”

When Laban invited Eliezer into his home, he said, “Come, O blessed of G-d. Why do you stand outside? I have emptied the house and there is place for the camels.”<sup>8</sup> Rashi on this verse says that the words “I have emptied the house” mean “I have removed all the idols, so you can now enter it.”

The root of the word for “I have emptied” (*paniti*) is *pane*, which is also the root of the name *Yefuneh*. By calling Caleb “the son of Yefuneh,” the Torah thus alludes mystically to the fact that Caleb was a reincarnation (“son”) of the one who emptied his house, Laban.

The sages further stated that [the name *Yefuneh* alludes to the fact that Caleb] “turned away from the scheme of the spies.”<sup>9</sup>

The root *pane* also means “to turn away.”

Through Laban’s blessing, Eliezer was reincarnated into Caleb, and is therefore considered Laban’s “son.”

The mystical significance of Caleb is that the numerical value of his name is the same as that of the Name *Havayah* when spelled out to equal 52 [as stated above].

The mystical significance of this Name is that it is “the spirit that enters the female” [in order to enable it] to arouse [the male with] feminine waters. As we explained [in reference to the *Zohar*’s statement that] “there is no arousal of feminine waters until a spirit from the male enters her.”

As we have seen previously, the four spellings-out of the Name *Havayah* correspond to the four *partzufim* *Abba*, *Ima*, *Z’eir Anpin*, and *Nukva*. Thus, the Name *Havayah* whose numerical value is 52 corresponds to the feminine principle, *Nukva*.

“Feminine waters” is the Zoharic term for “arousal from below,” the recipient’s arousal of the giver to give.

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<sup>4</sup> 1 Samuel 25.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Samuel 3:3.

<sup>6</sup> Psalms 9:1.

<sup>7</sup> *Midrash Tehilim* 9:17.

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 24:31.

<sup>9</sup> *Sotah* 11b.

This is the mystical correlate to the first marital intercourse [between a couple], for our sages have noted that “a woman cannot become pregnant from her first marital union.”<sup>10</sup>

“To become pregnant” here is mystically understood to mean “to be able to produce a spiritual arousal” of the male. In the first, virginal intercourse, the male seed does not impregnate the female, i.e., “his spirit does not enter her” and she cannot produce.

This Name alludes to *malchut* as she is postured back to back [with *Z’eir Anpin*], for then “she separates his and her arms and legs [from each other].” Therefore, this Name [takes the form of] four opposite four, i.e., four letters on the masculine side and four on the feminine side, to indicate his and her arms and legs.

Presumably in this depiction, the *vav-dalet* of the spelling out of the *yud* is considered one letter. We thus have:

masculine	<i>yud</i>	<i>hei</i>	<i>vav</i>	<i>hei</i>
feminine	<i>vav-dalet</i>	<i>hei</i>	<i>vav</i>	<i>hei</i>

Based on the mystical meaning of this Name, Benjamin was called “the son of the right.” Of him, it is written, “When [Rachel’s] soul departed [in childbirth], for she died, she named him *Ben-oni* [‘the son of my affliction’], but [Jacob,] his father, called him *Benjamin*.”<sup>11</sup>

Benjamin was the last son born to Jacob, and the only one born in the land of Israel, which lies south of Padan-Aram (modern-day Syria), where all his other sons were born. Therefore, in order to change his son’s name to one that had positive connotations yet still preserved some alliteration to the name Rachel gave him, he called him “the son of the right” (*ben-yamin*), for the in the Torah’s orientation (that of a person standing in the holy of holies and looking outward toward the world), the south is on the left.

Now, the numerical value of the word for “son” (*ben*) is 52 (*ben*: *beit-nun* = 2 + 50 = 52). Thus, the names given by Rachel and Jacob to Benjamin in this verse can be understood to mean “The spelling-out of the Name *Havayah* that equals 52 is my affliction” and “The spelling-out of the Name *Havayah* that equals 52 is on the right,” respectively.

For this Name arouses feminine waters [as we have said], and is therefore called “her soul.”

As we have seen previously, Rachel personified *Nukva*, the feminine archetype. The phrase “When her soul departed” can thus mean, “when the 52-Name departs the female.”

Since, however, this name indicates the posture of back-to-back, it is easy for the powers of evil to gain a foothold through it.

When *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* are back-to-back, their attention and energies are not focused on each other. It is thus a prime opportunity for the powers of evil to try to divert some of their energies to themselves.

Interestingly, we are taught that Rachel had hidden her father Laban’s idols in her saddle in the vain hope that this would force him to give up idolatry. She had not told Jacob about this plan, however, and therefore, when Laban accused him of stealing his idols, Jacob said, “the one with whom you find your idols will die,” and from that curse, Rachel died later in childbirth. Rachel’s failure to include her husband in her scheme recalls Adam’s failure to

<sup>10</sup> *Yevamot* 34a.

<sup>11</sup> Genesis 35:18.

communicate with Eve and indicated a lack of communication—a back-to-back stature—between them. This lack of communication was the proverbial recipe for disaster, the opportunity for the forces of evil to cause tragic damage.

His mother therefore called him “the son of my affliction.”

This was because this Name indicates the back-to-back posture.

But his father called him Benjamin, in order to connect him to the right side, i.e., reflecting the fact that the numerical value of the word for “please” [*ana*] is also 52.

Jacob was thus associated Benjamin with a positive aspect of the value 52, instead of the less favorable association of 52 with the spelling-out of the Name that is prone to invasion by evil. The word for “please” used here is the word used in prayers for G-d’s mercy and kindness, thus focusing on the right side of the sefirotic tree, the side of *chesed*.

*Ana*: *alef-nun-alef* =  $1 + 50 + 1 = 52$ .

[This supplication] is the self-sacrifice we espouse in *Tachanun*.

*Tachanun* [“supplications”] is the part of the liturgy that follows the *Amidah*, consisting of various appeals for G-d’s mercy on us as individuals and as a nation. In the verses and prayers that compose this liturgy, we make repeated mention of the fact that we have throughout history many times given up our lives for G-d, and in this merit we ask G-d to show us mercy today.

Thus, the combined numerical value of the initials of [the highlighted words in] the phrase, “Unto You, O G-d, I lift up **my** soul; **my** G-d...”<sup>12</sup> is 52.

The highlighted words are: *nafshi esa Elokai*, the initials of which are *nun-alef-alef* =  $50 + 1 + 1 = 52$ .

In this connection, we will now explain the mystical significance of *Tachanun*, in which the suppliant falls to the world of *Asiyah* from the world of *Atzilut*, where he was during the *Amidah*.

Let us first note with regard to the following three spellings-out of the Name *Havayah*:

*Yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-alef-vav hei-yud* indicates the supernal [*partzuf* of] *Ima*, which rests in the “throne,” [i.e., the world of *Beriah*],

The numerical value of this spelling out is  $(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 10) + (6 + 1 + 6) + (5 + 10) = 63$ .

*Yud-vav-dalet hei-alef vav-alef-vav hei-alef* indicates *Z’eir Anpin*, which rests in [the world of] *Yetzirah*, and

The numerical value of this spelling out is  $(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 1) + (6 + 1 + 6) + (5 + 1) = 45$ .

*Yud-vav-dalet hei-hei vav-vav hei-hei* indicates *malchut*, which rests in the [the world of] *Asiyah*.

The numerical value of this spelling out is  $(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 5) + (6 + 6) + (5 + 5) = 52$ .

Now, when [the Psalmist] says, “Unto You, O G-d, I lift up my soul,” he connects *Asiyah* with *Yetzirah* and *Yetzirah* with *Beriah*, via these three Names.

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<sup>12</sup> Psalms 25:1-2.

“My soul,” we said, was the soul of *Nukva*, the 52-Name. This is “lifted up” through prayer to the 45-Name and the 63-Name, which are associated with *Yetzirah* and *Beriah*, respectively.

Then, [the soul enters] *malchut* of *Atzilut*, i.e., the 52-Name within [*Atzilut*].

Just as the four spellings out correspond to the four worlds, they also correspond to the four levels of each world. The 52-Name thus corresponds to the world of *Asiyah* in general and also to the sub-world of *Asiyah* within the general world of *Atzilut*, i.e., with *malchut* of *Atzilut*. Thus, through *Tachanun*, the soul re-ascends into the world of *Atzilut* from which it fell after finishing the *Amidah*.

It then becomes “feminine waters.”

Once it assumes the identity of the feminine archetype of *Atzilut*, it can arouse the male archetype, *Z'eir Anpin*, to channel Divine beneficence to it.

The soul “falls” after the *Amidah* because the intense awareness of G-d it achieves therein, i.e., the consciousness of the world of *Atzilut*, makes it keenly aware of its shortcomings in the “real world,” i.e., its day-to-day affairs in life. This awareness is brought into full relief only when compared with the ideal Divine consciousness achieved in the *Amidah*.

Now, by understanding the mystical meaning of Benjamin that I have explained, we can understand why Rachel was not buried in the [Machpelah] cave.

Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob and Leah were all buried in the Machpelah cave in Hebron. Rachel, in contrast, was buried to the north, at the outskirts of Bethlehem.

To explain: the whole mystical meaning of burial is that an entity disappears into another entity lower than it.

When Jacob was buried, he disappeared into *Yetzirah*; when Rachel was buried, she disappeared into *Asiyah*; when Leah was buried, she disappeared into *Beriah*.

All three began in *Atzilut*, but they each “fell” to differing degrees. Inasmuch as Jacob personified *Z'eir Anpin*, the *midot* of *Atzilut*, he fell into the world of the *midot*, *Yetzirah*. Leah personified *Ima*, the intellect, so she fell into the world of intellect, *Beriah*. Rachel personified *Nukva*, expression, so she fell into the world of expression, *Asiyah*.

Now, had not Jacob’s descent been preceded by Benjamin’s birth and Rachel’s [untimely] death, in which “her soul departed, for she died,” it would have been possible for *Asiyah* to disappear [back] into *Yetzirah* and *Yetzirah* [back] into *Beriah*. All of their souls would have then been able to converse with each other.

The circumstances surrounding Rachel’s death meant that she had lost her connection to Jacob. Had she merely fallen to *Asiyah* but still retained her connection to Jacob, she would have been able to use that connection to ascend back to *Yetzirah* (where he fell to) and then with him back up to *Beriah* (where Leah was).

But Rachel’s spirit had already departed, and the spirit he had given her did not remain so that he might communicate with her.

In a sense, she had reverted to her virginal status, her connection to her husband not being able to produce any arousal in him, as we described above.

Therefore she was buried on the road, and Jacob disappeared [when he died] [back] into *Beriah* with Leah, and the two of them converse together [in the cave].

—translated from *Likutei Torah*

## *Parashat Shelach* [third installment]

In this *parashah*, we are taught that someone who intentionally serves idols will be “cut off” from the Jewish people. Literally, the phrase describing this process reads: “And the soul that does [this] with an uplifted hand...blasphemes G-d, and that soul will be cut off from the midst of its people. For it has disgraced the word of G-d and abrogated His commandment; that soul will be cut off, yes, cut off, [as long as] its transgression is within it [i.e., if it does not repent].”<sup>1</sup>

The word for “its transgression” in this verse [*avonah*] can also be read as “time-period” [*onah*], as in the phrase, “he will not diminish her conjugal rights.”<sup>2</sup>

The word *onah* means “time period” or “season,” and is used also to mean “conjugal rights” or “frequency of marital relations.”

This means that if the soul in question had remained holy and not sinned, it would have joined together with its mate in Paradise and thereby produced the soul of converts, as is mentioned in the *Zohar*.<sup>3</sup>

The marital union of soul-mates is always fertile; if it does not produce physical offspring, it produces good metaphysical “energy” that spreads throughout the world. Sometimes this “offspring” takes the form of souls that eventually convert to Judaism. In the spiritual afterlife, also, soul-mates unite in marital union after midnight; this produces souls of converts.

Souls of converts are also produced by Torah study.<sup>4</sup>

And Torah study is a central occupation of the soul in Paradise.

But this soul, which performed such a serious sin that it becomes liable to the punishment of excision, is cut off from its mate. Thus, what should have been *onah*—the conjugal act, becomes transgression [*avon*] and sin, and it is cut off from its mate.

The sense of the verse quoted above thus becomes: “that soul will be cut off [from its mate]; its transgression prevents its coupling [with its mate] from taking place.”

This is one type of excision. This type of excision is sometimes given to a person who has not tried to have children, as mentioned in the *Zohar*.<sup>5</sup>

When the Torah uses the expression, “he shall be cut off,” the punishment referred to is called “excision” (*karet*). This may take a number of forms.

Although not marrying and trying to have children is not one of the sins the Torah applies the punishment of excision to, it is stated in the *Zohar* that someone who did not try to have children in this world is sometimes punished by not being allowed to couple with his soul-mate in the afterlife, either.

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers 15:30-31.

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 21:10.

<sup>3</sup> 3:167b, 168a.

<sup>4</sup> *Sha'ar HaGilgulim*, introduction 34.

<sup>5</sup> 2:106a.

—translated from *Likutei Torah* and *Sefer HaLikutim*

## *Parashat Korach*

In this *parashah*, the Torah chronicles the rebellion of Korach. The opening words of Korach's speech against Moses were "It is too much for you": "They assembled against Moses and Aaron and said to them, '*It is too much for you*, for the whole congregation is holy, and G-d is in their midst. So why do you exalt yourselves over G-d's assembly?'"<sup>1</sup>

Significantly, Moses closed his reply with the same words: "He spoke to Korach and all his assembly, saying, 'In the morning let G-d make known who is His.... *It is too much for you*, O you Levites!'"<sup>2</sup>

The souls of the Jews [of that generation] were derived from the Name of G-d whose numerical value is 135, i.e., from [the combination of] the [two] Names [*Havayah* whose numerical values are] 72 and 63.

As we have noted previously, the Name *Havayah* can be spelled out in four basic ways, giving the numerical values of 72, 63, 45, and 52. The sum of the first two of these iterations is  $72 + 63 = 135$ .

The four spellings-out of the Name *Havayah* correspond to the four *partzufim* of *Abba*, *Ima*, *Z'eir Anpin*, and *Nukva*. Thus, combining the 72 and 63 spellings-out signifies the union of *chochmah* and *binah*, i.e., the masculine consciousness of *chochmah* applied or made relevant to the feminine consciousness of *binah*.

The two of them together thus express the idea [embodied in the sages' statement] that "women have light [or 'agile'] *da'at*."<sup>3</sup>

The numerical value of the word "light" in this expression (*kalah*, the feminine form of the adjective) is 135:

*Kalah*: *kuf-lamed-hei* =  $100 + 30 + 5 = 135$ .

Thus, the *da'at*, or Divine consciousness of this generation, the second generation of the exodus, was "female" relative to the "male" *da'at* of the first generation of the exodus. As we know, this was in fact necessary in order for them to enter the land of Israel and concretize the abstract consciousness of the first generation.

Korach's rebellion occurred shortly after the incident with the spies, i.e., during the first year after the exodus. However, after the incident with the spies, G-d declared that that generation would perish in the desert and only the next generation would enter the land of Israel. So, in a sense, the first generation was "over," and the history and mentality of the second generation had taken over by the time Korach mounted his revolt.

This is why they said, "why do you exalt yourselves over G-d's assembly [*kahal*]?"

The word for "assembly" (*kahal*) is spelled *kuf-hei-lamed*, and so therefore its numerical value is also 135.

Moses[']s soul,] however, was derived only from the first [of these two spellings-out of the Name *Havayah*], i.e., from [the one whose value is] 72. This [numerical value can also be derived from the Name *Havayah*] in square form.

The "square form" of a Name is the progressive spelling of the name. For the Name *Havayah*, this is:

*yud yud-hei yud-hei-vav yud-hei-vav-hei* =  $10 + (10 + 5) + (10 + 5 + 6) + (10 + 5 + 6 + 5) = 72$ .

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers 16:3

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 16:7.

<sup>3</sup> *Kidushin* 80b. See the explanation of this given in the third installment of *parashat Vayishlach*.

Moses' soul-consciousness was pure *chochmah*, i.e., entirely masculine, or abstract. He was thus not suited to enter the land of Israel.

When this square form is considered together with how it is spelled out with the letter *alef*, we have the words “a light cloud,” whose numerical value is 202, that of “it is too much.”

If we then spell out each of the stages of the iteration of the “square form” in full, using the letter *alef* to spell out the letters *hei* and *vav*, we have:

<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	$10 + 6 + 4$	20
<i>yud-hei</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet hei-alef</i>	$(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 1)$	26
<i>yud-hei-vav</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet hei-alef vav-alef-vav</i>	$(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 1) + (6 + 1 + 6)$	39
<i>yud-hei-vav-hei</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet hei-alef vav-alef-vav hei-alef</i>	$(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 1) + (6 + 1 + 6) + (5 + 1)$	45
			130

130 is the numerical value of the word for the masculine form of the adjective “light” (*kal*, *kuf-lamed* =  $100 + 30$ ). 72 is the numerical value of the word for “cloud” (*av*, *ayin-beit* =  $70 + 2 = 72$ ). The phrase “a light cloud” appears in Isaiah 19:1: “A prophecy about Egypt: Behold, G-d is riding on a light cloud and coming to Egypt. The gods of Egypt will squirm before Him and Egypt's heart will melt within it.”

$130 + 72 = 202$ , the numerical value of the word for “it is too much” (*rav*, *reish-beit* =  $200 + 2 = 202$ ).

This is the mystical meaning of the phrase “it is too much.” In other words, [Korach said to Moses,] “you personify [the spiritual consciousness indicated by the number] 202, while Israel personifies [the spiritual consciousness indicated by the number] 135, i.e., the numerical value of] ‘the congregation of G-d.’ Why, then, do you exalt yourselves over them?”

Korach said, “It is too much for you,” which can be read, “You have 202,” i.e., “your soul is that of *chochmah*, while that of the congregation is that of *chochmah* informing *binah*. You therefore cannot relate, cannot understand this congregation. You are irrelevant.”

[To explain:] You already know what I have written on *parashat Beha'alotcha*, on [Moses'] statement, “[Six hundred thousand marchers are] the people in whose midst I am,”<sup>4</sup> namely, that the entire generation of the desert, six hundred thousand souls, were all soul-sparks who were derived from the source of Moses' soul, which was the source of all of them.

The generation of the exodus achieved the highest levels of Divine consciousness, and were able to do so because they shared a common soul-root with Moses, who personified this consciousness.

But now, Korach said to him, “All that generation have already died out, through all the various ways in which they died. So now *G-d* is in their midst, not you, as you said previously, ‘the people in whose midst I am.’”

Korach argued that Moses was not the proper leader of the new generation; his mentality fit that of the previous generation. The younger generation, whose Divine consciousness was relatively “feminine,” was not able to relate to the “masculine” leadership of Moses.

<sup>4</sup> Numbers 11:21.

Moses replied that the exact opposite was the case. “It is too much for you, O Levites,” i.e., “you Levites personify [the spiritual consciousness expressed by the number] 202, not I.”

“It is too much for you” (*rav lachem*) can be read, “202 is yours.”

As we saw above, 202 is the numerical value of the 72-spelling-out of the Name *Havayah* plus the value of the word for “light” (*kal*). In other words, the masculine *chochmah* (as manifest in the 72-spelling-out) does have an implicit feminine “lightness” in it, as well. This was Korach’s error: he thought that *chochmah* was pure *chochmah* and could therefore not relate to or lead *binah*. Moses knew, however, that even though the new generation was the generation of *binah*, *binah* still needs to be connected to *chochmah*, as we have explained previously.

To explain:

The following explanation is based on the fact that the numerical value of Korach (*Korach*: *kuf-reish-chet* =  $100 + 200 + 8 = 308$ ) plus that of Abel (*Hevel*: *hei-beit-lamed* =  $5 + 2 + 30 = 37$ ) equals that of Moses (*Mosheh*: *mem-shin-hei* =  $40 + 300 + 5 = 345$ ). Elsewhere, the Arizal states that the evil side of Abel was expressed by the number 308, and that this evil was rectified in Abel’s reincarnation, Moses. This is indicated by the fact that Moses’ numerical value (345) equaled that of the good in Abel (37) plus that of the evil in him (308). Korach (= 308) was thus the evil in Abel that had been rectified in the soul of Moses. Thus, he was a part of Moses’ soul, dependent upon him. But when he began his rebellion, he was rerooted in the soul of Cain.

Since Korach sensed that a reincarnated spark of the soul of Cain had ignited in his soul, he said to Moses, “I am no longer subservient to you.” This is alluded to in [Moses’ and Aaron’s prayer], “O G-d! G-d of the *spirits of all flesh*...,” the initials of which spell *Abel*.

G-d’s first response to Korach’s rebellion was to tell Moses that He intended to wipe out the whole people. “God spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ‘Separate yourselves from this congregation, and I will wipe them out instantly.’ But they fell on their faces, and said, ‘O G-d! G-d of the spirits of all flesh! Shall one man sin and You be angry at the whole congregation?’”<sup>5</sup>

The initials of the phrase “spirits of all flesh” (*ha-ruchot le-kol basar*) are *hei-lamed-beit*.

Abel (*Hevel*): *hei-beit-lamed*.

Meaning: In fact, the souls of the [second] generation were [also] soul-sparks of Moses, the reincarnation of Abel. Thus, G-d, who is “the G-d of the spirits of all flesh,” knew that they are derived from Abel’s soul. Since only Korach sinned, [Moses therefore asked G-d,] “Shall one man sin...?” [The rest of the generation] knows this [i.e., that they are no different from the previous generation] and believe in Moses, for they are all included in his soul.

Moses argued that despite the difference in the generations, they were still “his,” i.e., they were still derived from Abel’s soul. Thus, the 202 that defined his soul defined theirs, as well.<sup>6</sup>

This explains [Moses’ statement]: “Through this you will know...that it is not from my heart [that I do this].”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Numbers 16:20-22.

<sup>6</sup> As Rabbi Shalom Sharabi notes, this still does not explain Moses’ statement that the number 202 informed the Levites and not him. Perhaps, though, the meaning is that the full 202, i.e., the “lightness within 72,” is not part of the essential Moses but rather relevant to that part of Moses that relates to the second generation. In other words: the part of *chochmah* that relates to *binah*. The pure Moses, pure *chochmah*, is just 72, without the 130. Moses is therefore fully justified in saying *rav lachem*, “the 202 is for you,” “I am 202 only for your sake.”

In Moses' speech before the trial of the incense that would demonstrate Korach's folly and cause the death of the rebels, he said, "Through this you will know that G-d sent me to do all these deeds, that I did not make it up." The latter phrase literally reads, "that it is not of my own heart," which can also be interpreted to mean, "that it is not of my heart, of my own free will."

For he was forced to do it by G-d, against his will. [He said,] "For you are all part of me, and if evil befalls you it hurts me; this blemish affects me as well. But I am forced to do this against my will, because of your wickedness."

—translated from *Likutei Torah* and *Sha'ar HaPesukim*

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<sup>7</sup> Numbers 16:28.

## *Parashat Korach* [second installment]

In this *parashah*, the Torah chronicles the rebellion of Korach.

You can understand Korach's quarrel with Moses based on what is written in the *Zohar*<sup>1</sup> on the verse, "And G-d said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters.'"<sup>2</sup> In the middle of that passage [in the *Zohar*] it says, "Similar to this is the quarrel of Korach with Aaron."

The division of the water into two (atmospheric and ocean water) presaged the division of Korach.

The seven days of the Creation week manifested the seven *sefirot* of the emotions. Sunday, when light was created, manifested *chesed*, pure giving. Monday, when the primordial water was divided into atmospheric moisture (the upper water) and the oceans (the lower water), manifested *gevurah*, restraint. Water is naturally heavier than air, so in order for it to be suspended in air, it had to be restrained from precipitating, and this aspect of the hydrological system/cycle is referred to as the "firmament."

In particular, however, the upper and lower waters manifest *chesed* and *gevurah*, and the firmament manifests *tiferet*, which harmonizes *chesed* and *gevurah*. This is why the work of creation involving water was not finished until the third day (when the oceans were "gathered" in order for the dry land to appear), for the third day manifested *tiferet*.

Know that Korach was a Levite, and thus embodied *gevurah*, and [moreover] was the head of the Levites, and thus embodied the highest aspect of all states of *gevurah*, while Aaron [embodied the highest aspect of all] states of *chesed*. Thus, their quarrel was that of the left side with the right side.

*Chesed* is the central *sefirah* on the right axis of the *sefirot*, while *gevurah* is the central *sefirah* on the left axis. Their natures are fundamentally opposed, *chesed* being the nature to give and *gevurah* being the nature to withhold. The tension between them is thus the fundamental tension of duality in all reality.

Moses observed [this], and said: "It is proper for me to try to harmonize them." This befitted Moses, for he [embodied the principle that] sweetens all states of *gevurah* above [i.e., in the spiritual realm], the middle axis.

The middle axis of the *sefirot* harmonizes the right and left axes, combining the positive qualities in each and neutralizing their extremeness.

Furthermore, Moses embodied the *yesod* of *Abba*, which is revealed at the level of *tiferet* of *Z'eir Anpin*, as is known, because it emerges [from its investiture in *yesod* of *Ima*] and extend further down than *yesod* of *Ima*.

*Yesod* of *Abba* (the drive of insight for self-actualization) becomes clothed in the *yesod* of *Ima* (the drive of the intellect proper for self-actualization) and thereafter, together with it, in *Z'eir Anpin* (the emotions produced by the intellect). Thus, the emotions are "driven" by these two drives, one invested within and driving the other. The *yesod* of *Ima*, however, is invested in *Z'eir Anpin* only as far down as its *tiferet*, while *yesod* of *Abba* continues

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<sup>1</sup> 1:17a.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 1:7.

down until the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*. Thus, *yesod* of *Abba* is revealed (i.e., openly manifest) when the emotions reach their central point of development, *tiferet*, the element of “mercy” in the emotional array. The essence of any new insight is a new, higher, better way of looking at reality. This new insight, if properly transmitted, will enable everyone to live life better, and therefore transmitting it is an act of mercy on creation. Therefore, *yesod* of *Abba* becomes manifest in *tiferet* of *Z'eir Anpin*.

This manifest light of *Abba* also serves to sweeten the states of *gevurah* at that point.

It is the exposed light of *yesod* of *Abba* that enables *tiferet* to harmonize the two preceding sub-*sefirot* of *Z'eir Anpin*, *chesed* and *gevurah*.

This is [the mystical meaning of] what is said of Moses, “And she saw him [*oto*]”—i.e., his “sign [*ot*] of the holy covenant,” which was *yesod* of *Abba*—“that he was good”<sup>3</sup>—that it manifest only states of *chesed*, and could serve to sweeten states of *gevurah*.

In the phrase, “And she saw him, that he was good,” the word for “him” (*oto*) can also mean “his sign,” and thus the phrase can read, “And she saw that his sign was good.” The male reproductive organ is known as “the sign of the holy covenant [of circumcision]”<sup>4</sup>

But Korach did not want to be reconciled [with Aaron], and therefore persisted [in his quarrel].

Moses said: “Surely *gehinom* resulted from the intensity of this tension above [in the spiritual realm], it is therefore necessary to combine [Korach, the personification of the left side] with the right side. If he does not want this, he will surely descend into *gehinom*, just as when the world was created, the intensity that issued from the tension [between the higher and lower waters] descended into *gehinom*.”

Initially, *chesed* argued that kindness should be shown even to the wicked, while *gevurah* argued that punishment should be meted out even to the righteous (for their miniscule faults). *Tiferet* harmonized these, so that *chesed* agreed that the wicked should be punished and *gevurah* agreed that the righteous should not. This argument thus produced *gehinom*, the fire of Purgatory, wherein the wicked receive their punishment/purification for their sins. Allegorically, the heat of the argument is envisioned as producing the fire of *gehinom*.

Korach did not want to agree [to be mollified] because [his quarrel] was not “for the sake of heaven.”

The sages state that “Any quarrel that is for the sake of heaven will endure, while [any quarrel] that is not for the sake of heaven will not endure. What is [an example of] a quarrel for the sake of heaven? The quarrel between Hillel and Shammai. And [what is an example of] a quarrel that is not for the sake of heaven? The quarrel of Korach and his congregation.”<sup>5</sup> “For the sake of heaven” means “for the purpose of arriving at the truth, in order to further G-d’s purposes on earth” rather than “for the purpose of self-aggrandizement.”

The word for “for the sake of” (*lesheim*) literally means, “for the name of.”

Here, the Arizal interprets this phrase mystically, defining “heaven” and “name” as appellations for specific mystical realms.

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 2:2.

<sup>4</sup> *Tikunei Zohar*, introduction (17a).

<sup>5</sup> Avot 5:17.

“Heaven” refers to *Z’eir Anpin* and “name” refers to *Nukva* [of *Z’eir Anpin*], which is its “name.”

A “name” is something that manifests the entity called by that name. The feminine principle, *malchut*, expresses the emotions, which are *Z’eir Anpin*.

Thus:

“Any quarrel”—i.e., any manifestation of *gevurah*,

“that is for the sake of heaven”—i.e., for the *Nukva* of [*Z’eir Anpin*], “heaven,”

“will endure”—i.e., it will remain above, with *Z’eir Anpin*, and will not descend into *gehinom*, while

“[any quarrel] that is not for the sake of heaven” but is rather for the “other side” [the side of evil],

“will not endure” there above, but will descend to *gehinom*.

Whatever aspects of *gevurah* assent to be sweetened by *chesed* can remain together with it, functioning as male and female in the orderly development of the creative process. Those coarser aspects of *gevurah* that are too egocentric to be sweetened, *ipso facto* become the forces of pure punishment for sin, i.e. for egocentricity.

Korach was not concerned with G-d’s glory, but sought to confound the work of creation, [as follows]. The [original] *gevurah* of which we speak is holy, and when it is properly sweetened, it indeed remains above [in the realm of *Z’eir Anpin*]. This increases the glory of holiness.

When, however, aspects of *gevurah* are made to leave [the realm of holiness] and not be sweetened, it causes holiness to descend, weakening holiness and strengthening evil, for [the realm of evil] is thus increased by the force of holiness [transferred to it]. This is what Korach did.

This is how he “confounded the work of creation.” His egocentricity added power to evil.

When Moses saw how he deranged the upper realms, diminishing holiness, he himself was being affronted, for [Korach] was fitting to be sweetened and rectified by him.

Korach’s refusal to be reconciled with Aaron was thus both a derangement of the workings of creation and a personal affront to Moses, who, as *yesod* of *Abba*, should have rectified him.

When Korach refused him and did not want [to be sweetened], “Moses became very angry”<sup>6</sup> over the rectification that was meant for him [to orchestrate], but that he could not conclude. For Korach diminished the power of holiness and increased the power of impurity.

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<sup>6</sup> Numbers 16:15.

[Moses] is therefore described as being “very” [angry], because it was not only that he did not merit to rectify [what he should have], which affected only him personally. [Korach’s rebellion] also blemished the spiritual realms.

Because Korach caused all this, he descended to *gehinom* as befitted him.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, we see how Korach reflected the very first quarrel, in which the [coarser aspects of] *gevurah* asserted themselves stridently.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 16:31-33.

## *Parashat Chukat*

This *parashah* opens with the commandment of the red heifer. The ashes of the red heifer are used to purify a person from the impurity of death. “Death,” we have noted before, is spiritually a falling from one state of Divine consciousness to a lower one (or lack of one). Thus, the commandment of the red heifer contains within it the mystical explanation of evil and the purification from defilement of evil/death, i.e., loss of Divine consciousness.

“G-d spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ‘This is the statute of the Torah, which G-d spoke, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel, that they for you a pure, unblemished red heifer, which has never worn a yoke, and give it to Elazar the priest. He will take it outside the camp, and someone will slaughter it before him. Elazar the priest will take some of its blood on his finger and sprinkle it toward the opening of the tent of meeting seven times. Someone will burn the heifer in front of him; he will burn its hide, its flesh, its blood, and its innards...”’<sup>1</sup>

Know that the five final forms of the letters signify the five states of *gevurah*. Their combined numerical value is 280, and when we add 5 for the five letters themselves, we have [285, the numerical value of] “heifer.”

Five letters of the Hebrew alphabet have different forms that they assume at the end of a word. Since these final forms signal a pause in the flow of reading, they signify the five states of severity (*gevurah*), or restraint. The letters with their numerical values are: *mem* (40), *nun* (50), *tzadik* (90), *pei* (80), *chaf* (20).  $40 + 50 + 90 + 80 + 20 = 280$ .

“Heifer”: *parah*: *pei-reish-hei* =  $80 + 200 + 5 = 285$ .

Alternatively, [the extra *hei*, whose numerical value is the 5 needed to equal the numerical value of “heifer,” signifies that the five states of *gevurah*] descend to *binah*, which is referred to by the [first] letter *hei* [of the Name *Havayah*] or descend to *malchut*, which is referred to by the [second] letter *hei* [of the Name *Havayah*]. Therefore the heifer is called the *parah*, i.e., the cow [*par*] of the *hei*.

The first two letters of the word for “heifer” (*parah*) are simply the male or generic word for cow, *par*.

The heifer must be red, because [the five states of *gevurah* it signifies] it is drawn from *binah*, which is red.

Red is the color of blood, usually associated with *gevurah*, or the source of *gevurah*, *binah*.

Therefore the word for “red” is written without the [expected] *vav*, so that its numerical value be 50, referring to the “fifty gates of *binah*,”<sup>2</sup> “from which severe judgments enter.”<sup>3</sup>

“Red”: *adumah*: *alef-dalet-mem-hei* =  $1 + 4 + 40 + 5 = 50$ .

True, when [the spiritual flow signified by the red heifer] is still within [the realm of holiness] it is “pure, possessing no blemish.” But when it proceeds

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers 19:1-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Rosh HaShanah* 21b.

<sup>3</sup> *Zohar* 2:175b.

further, into the realm of evil, the root of the impurity of its inherent states of judgment is revealed.

As we have explained previously, judgment is a necessary component of the process of transmission of Divine beneficence. But when it is exercised outside of its proper context, judgment adds strength to the powers of evil.

What causes these [evil] states of judgment is the fact that they [*Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*] were not facing each other, and therefore occurred the [breaking of the vessels,] signified by the kings of the land of Edom [who died, producing] the powers of severe judgment.

In the world of *Tohu*, the precursors of the *partzufim* of *Tikun* are not facing each other, and therefore the inherent severity of the female principles cannot be mitigated by the male principles. Therefore, the *sefirot* cannot “tolerate” each other; each one insists on expressing its own content and identity without any admixture of any other *sefirah*. This judgmentality causes the vessels of *Tohu* to break, and the shattered remains of this world become the consciousness of evil in the subsequent worlds of *Tikun*.

This is the mystical meaning of the words “which has never worn a yoke,” as is taught in the *Zohar*,<sup>4</sup> referring to *yesod*, which receives the 100 blessings, this being the numerical value of the word for “yoke” [*ol*]; alternatively, this refers to *tiferet* as it enters *malchut*.

The numerical value of the word for “yoke” (*ol*: *ayin-lamed* = 70 + 30) is 100. The same word appears in the verse, “The words of David, the son of Jesse, the words of the man who was established on high.”<sup>5</sup> The word for “on high” (*al*) is spelled the same way as the word for “yoke,” and therefore its numerical value is also 100. The sages teach us that this alludes the fact that David instituted the custom of reciting 100 blessings each day.<sup>6</sup> These 100 blessings correspond to the 10 x 10 sub-*sefirot* of *Z'eir Anpin* that rectify *Nukva*. These blessings, i.e., channels of Divine beneficence and consciousness, flow through *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin* into *Nukva* to complete and rectify it.

The alternative meaning of *tiferet* entering *malchut* also refers to the union of *Z'eir Anpin* (whose central *sefirah* is *tiferet*) and *Nukva*.

The literal meaning of the phrase “which has never worn a yoke” is “upon whom a yoke has never ascended,” alluding to the sexual union of *Z'eir Anpin* (signified by the word “yoke”) and *Nukva*. Thus, the red heifer, which is meant to signify the *sefirah* of *malchut* acting as the source for the power of evil, must not have worn a yoke, for it must reflect *Nukva* as it is still “virgin,” i.e., not having coupled with *Z'eir Anpin* and therefore not having had its states of *gevurah* sweetened by the *chesed* which dominates *Z'eir Anpin*.

The idea here is that the male and female principles have not yet joined together, and that is why these states of severe judgment issued [from *malchut*]. Therefore, [Elazar] “will take it outside the camp,” i.e., when these [originally holy] states of judgment extend outside the camp of the Divine presence, then, outside, they exhibit [their potential] impurity.

Therefore, “and he will slaughter it.”

I.e., these forces of severe judgment must be subdued.

In order to purify this impurity through holy fire, “he will burn the heifer in front of him.”

<sup>4</sup> 3:180b.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Samuel 23:1.

<sup>6</sup> *Menachot* 43b; *Bamidbar Rabbah* 18:21.

*Gevurah* is associated with fire. Severe judgment is the fire or evil enthusiasm of righteous indignation. This fire must be subsumed within holy fire, i.e., enthusiasm for holiness.

After it has been burnt, its holy [source] is left, i.e., one-fifth, namely *malchut*, which is referred to by the letter *hei*, alluding to the fifth of the [five states of] severity.

*Malchut* is the source of these states of severity, as we have said. The fact that *malchut* is represented by the *hei*, whose numerical value is 5, indicates that *malchut* is one-fifth of these fallen five states of severity, i.e., their root in holiness.

The heifer is then called “ashes.” For these 280 [*par*] states of *gevurah* become all included in just 1. Therefore, what was before the “heifer” [*parah*], spelled with a *hei*, becomes now “ashes” [*eifer*], spelled with an *alef*.

The word for “ashes” (*eifer*) is spelled *alef-pei-reish*. Thus, it is the same as the word for “heifer” (*parah*, *pei-reish-hei*), except that the *hei* of has been replaced by an *alef*. But we noted above that the main part of the word for “heifer” is the two letters *pei-reish*, whose numerical value is 280 and which therefore signify the five states of *gevurah* signified by the 5 final letters, whose combined numerical value is 280. Thus, the transformation from “heifer” to “ashes” may simply be seen as the replacement of the *hei* by an *alef*. The 280 states of *gevurah*, instead of flowing downward into *malchut* (the *hei*) and beyond it (since the male and female principles were not face to face) into evil, now are anchored in the oneness of G-d, and therefore do not slip out *malchut* of the realm of holiness.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

## *Parashat Chukat* [second installment]

This *parashah* opens with the commandment of the red heifer. The ashes of the red heifer are used to purify a person from the impurity of death. “Death,” we have noted before, is spiritually a falling from one state of Divine consciousness to a lower one (or lack of one). Thus, the commandment of the red heifer contains within it the mystical explanation of evil and the purification from defilement of evil/death, i.e., loss of Divine consciousness.

“G-d spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ‘This is the statute of the Torah, which G-d spoke, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel, that they for you a pure, unblemished red heifer, which has never worn a yoke, and give it to Elazar the priest. He will take it outside the camp, and someone will slaughter it before him. Elazar the priest will take some of its blood on his finger and sprinkle it toward the opening of the tent of meeting seven times. Someone will burn the heifer in front of him; he will burn its hide, its flesh, its blood, and its innards...”’<sup>1</sup>

This excerpt from the teachings of the Arizal follows the previous installment.

Regarding the essence of the [rite of the] red heifer, King Solomon, of blessed memory, said, “I said, ‘I will become wise,’ but it was far from me,”<sup>2</sup> as our sages explained.<sup>3</sup>

King Solomon was the wisest of all men, but even he could not understand how, as happens in the rite of the red heifer, the individual administering the purification rite himself becomes defiled by doing so.

Know that [this is because] the basis of the [rite of the] red heifer is [that it expresses] how *malchut* receives from the back of the Holy Names, and not from their front.

Since the rite of the red heifer exemplifies a state of reality in which the Divine Name is not showing its “face,” but rather its “back,” we sense ourselves in this context as being removed, or “far” from G-d’s presence. This is why King Solomon described his inability to fathom the workings of the red heifer rite as feeling “far” from wisdom.

Therefore the heifer must be red, to signify the state of severe judgment [to which *malchut* is subject].

Red is the color of *gevurah*, severity. Someone who has been defiled by means of contact with death is in a state of extreme, severely limited Divine consciousness. The stark confrontation with the reality of death carries with it the seeds of abject depression born of a nihilistic, fatalistic, pagan, or absurd attitude toward life. The individual must therefore “purify” himself from this defilement.

The retrogressive spelling of the 72-Name, i.e., *tet-hei-gimel dalet-tet hei-tet-hei dalet-tet*, which is similar to *tet-dalet-hei-dalet* [being produced out of] *yud-hei-vav-hei*, the numerical value [of this spelling] is 62.

The loss of optimistic, forward-looking Divine consciousness is reflected by the Name *Havayah* “recoiling” backward in the alphabet.

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers 19:1-5.

<sup>2</sup> Ecclesiastes 7:23.

<sup>3</sup> *Bamidbar Rabbah* 19:3.

When we consider the four letters of the Name *Havayah* and substitute each letter with the letter preceding it in the alphabet, this is called the “retrogressive” spelling of the Name. Thus, *yud-hei-vav-hei* becomes *tet-dalet-hei-dalet*. There is also a “progressive” spelling of the Name *Havayah*, in which each letter is replaced by the letter following it in the alphabet. In this way, *yud-hei-vav-hei* becomes *kaf-vav-zayin-vav*.

The spellings-out of the Name *Havayah* can also be spelled retrogressively. Here, though, we must point out that since there is no letter before the letter *alef*, the *alef* remains an *alef* even when “retrogressed.”

Following is the derivation of the usual and retrogressive spellings-out of the Name *Havayah*:

regular spelling			retrogressive spelling				
The 72-Name (the yud-filling)							
yud	yud-vav-dalet	10 + 6 + 4 = 20	72	tet	tet-hei-gimel	9 + 5 + 3 = 17	62
hei	hei-yud	5 + 10 = 15		dalet	dalet-tet	4 + 9 =	
vav	vav-yud-vav	6 + 10 + 6 = 22		hei	hei-tet-hei	5 + 9 + 5 = 19	
hei	hei-yud	5 + 10 = 15		dalet	dalet-tet	4 + 9 =	
The 63-Name (the combined filling)							
yud	yud-vav-dalet	10 + 6 + 4 = 20	63	tet	tet-hei-gimel	9 + 5 + 3 = 17	54
hei	hei-yud	5 + 10 = 15		dalet	dalet-tet	4 + 9 =	
vav	vav-alef-vav	6 + 1 + 6 = 13		hei	hei-alef-hei	5 + 1 + 5 = 11	
hei	hei-yud	5 + 10 = 15		dalet	dalet-tet	4 + 9 =	
The 45-Name (the alef-filling)							
yud	yud-vav-dalet	10 + 6 + 4 = 20	45	tet	tet-hei-gimel	9 + 5 + 3 = 17	38
hei	hei-alef	5 + 1 = 6		dalet	dalet-alef	4 + 1 =	
vav	vav-alef-vav	6 + 1 + 6 = 13		hei	hei-alef-hei	5 + 1 + 5 = 11	
hei	hei-alef	5 + 1 = 6		dalet	dalet-alef	4 + 1 =	
The 52-Name (the hei-filling)							
yud	yud-vav-dalet	10 + 6 + 4 = 20	52	tet	tet-hei-gimel	9 + 5 + 3 = 17	43
hei	hei-hei	5 + 5 = 10		dalet	dalet-dalet	4 + 4 =	
vav	vav-vav	6 + 6 = 12		hei	hei-hei	5 + 5 =	
hei	hei-hei	5 + 5 = 10		dalet	dalet-dalet	4 + 4 =	

Similarly, the numerical value of the retrogressive spelling of the 63-Name is 54, that of the retrogressive spelling of the 45-Name is 38, and that of the retrogressive spelling of the 52-Name is 43.

The combined numerical value of the four retrogressed root-letters, *tet-dalet-hei-dalet*, is 88.

$$Tet-dalet-hei-dalet = 9 + 4 + 5 + 4 = 22. 4 \times 22 = 88.$$

[This plus] the combined numerical value of the all retrogressed Names [285] is the same as that of the word for “heifer” [*parah*].

$$62 + 54 + 38 + 43 + 88 = 285.$$

$$Parah: pei-reish-hei = 80 + 200 + 5 = 285.$$

Thus, the heifer embodies the retrogression of normal Divine consciousness that results from contact with death.

Just as [the numerical value of the word for “heifer”] is produced from five instances of retrogressive spelling, so does it comprise five states of *gevurah*, [as follows]:

It is termed “heifer” because of *malchut*, “red” because of *hod*, “pure” because of *yesod*, “unblemished” because of *gevurah*, and “which has never worn a yoke” because of *binah*.

The *sefirot* in the above list are those on the left axis of the *sefirot* (*binah*, *gevurah*, and *hod*) and the two final *sefirot* of the middle axis (*yesod* and *malchut*), which act as funnels for the preceding *sefirot* (including the three left ones).

Know also that the red heifer purifies the defiled by means of the Divine attribute of mercy, as well. Specifically, [this is] by means of the regressive iterations of the four Divine Names *Havayah*, [as follows].

The numerical values of the regressive iterations of these four names are 184, 166, 130, and 144, as follows:

step					
The 72-Name (the yud-filling)					
1	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10		
2	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10		
	hei:	hei-yud	5		
3	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10		
	hei:	hei-yud	5		
	vav:	vav-yud-vav	6		
4	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10		
	hei:	hei-yud	5		
	vav:	vav-yud-vav	6		
	hei:	hei-yud	5		

The 63-Name (the combined filling)					
1	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10		
2	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10		
	hei:	hei-yud	5		
3	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10		
	hei:	hei-yud	5		
	vav:	vav-alef-vav	6		
4	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10		
	hei:	hei-yud	5		
	vav:	vav-alef-vav	6		
	hei:	hei-yud	5		

The 45-Name (the alef-filling)					
1	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10		
2	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10		
	hei:	hei-alef	5		
3	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10		
	hei:	hei-alef	5		
	vav:	vav-alef-vav	6		
4	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10		
	hei:	hei-alef	5		
	vav:	vav-alef-vav	6		
	hei:	hei-alef	5		

The 52-Name (the hei-filling)					
1	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10		
2	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10		
	hei:	hei-hei	5		
3	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10		
	hei:	hei-hei	5		
	vav:	vav-vav	6		
4	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10		
	hei:	hei-hei	5		
	vav:	vav-vav	6		
	hei:	hei-hei	5		

The<sup>4</sup> total of these four numerical values is 624.

$$184 + 166 + 130 + 144 = 624.$$

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<sup>4</sup> The remainder of this calculation is taken from the corrections to the text proper.

When we subtract from this the four iterated Names themselves, each of which has the value of 72, we are left with 336.

The regressive iteration of the Name *Havayah* itself, not being spelled out, is:

$$yud\ yud-hei\ yud-hei-vav\ yud-hei-vav-hei = 10 + (10 + 5) + (10 + 5 + 6) + (10 + 5 + 6 + 5) = 72.$$

$$4 \times 72 = 288.$$

$$624 - 288 = 336.$$

This is the numerical value of the words for “red heifer” [*parah adumah*], plus the *kolel*.

$$Parah\ adumah: pei-reish-hei\ alef-dalet-mem-hei = (80 + 200 + 5) + (1 + 4 + 40 + 5) = 335.$$

$$335 + 1 = 336.$$

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim* and *Likutei Torah*

## *Parashat Balak*

This *parashah* focuses on two principle characters, Balak and Balaam.

I see fit to explain here the characters of Balak and Balaam, who were unrivaled magicians and sages. As our sages have said, in one respect Balak was inferior to Balaam, and in another Balaam was inferior to Balak.

The *Zohar*<sup>1</sup> also speaks at length about Balak and Balaam, noting that [the former] is called “Balak the son of Tzipor” because of his wisdom; he performed magic using a certain bird.

*Tzipor* in Hebrew means “bird”; thus, “Balak the son of Tzipor” means “Balak, who owed his magical powers to a bird.”

We note also their unbounded and unfounded hatred of the Jewish people. No other people [exhibited such hatred] save Amalek, who also hated the Jewish people greatly.

I therefore wish to base the explanation of this matter on the statement of the *Zohar*<sup>2</sup> that “King David said, ‘For behold, the wicked draw the bow; they aim their arrow....’ Even though this verse.... They said, *Amalek* means ‘The people [*am*] that lick [*lak*],’ i.e., the people that lick [their sustenance] from us.... *Balak* means ‘Come [*ba*] to lick [*lak*]’.... *Balaam* means ‘the non- [*bal*] people [*am*].’ What letters remain? Those that spell ‘depth’ [*omek*]. He confused their deep thoughts so that they could not rule, and they did not remain in the world....”

*Balaam* is spelled *beit-lamed-ayin-mem*.

*Balak* is spelled *beit-lamed-kuf*.

*Amalek* is spelled *ayin-mem-lamed-kuf*.

The *Zohar* here notes that the names *Balaam*, *Balak*, and *Amalek* are phonetically inter-related. The first two letters of *Balaam* and *Balak* are the same; the last two letters of *Balak* and *Amalek* are the same; and the first two letters of *Amalek* are the same as the last two letters of *Balaam*. Furthermore, the letters of the names *Balak* and *Balaam* that are not common to both spell *Amalek*. These phenomena will be used later.

Know that all these things are based on the transmigration of the souls [of these nations] and [the significance of] their origins. Amalek is the waste product of evil that was separated out of [the soul of] Cain, the son of Adam.

As we will see, there was a good and an evil aspect to Cain’s soul. The evil was separated from the good and became the source of Amalek.

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<sup>1</sup> 3:184b.

<sup>2</sup> 3:199b.

This is one of the five types of [spirituality embodied in] the mixed multitude that became intermixed with the Jews. These [five types] were the Amalekites, the Rephaim, [etc.,] as mentioned in the *Zohar*<sup>3</sup> that in the mixed multitude there was an admixture of the evil of [the souls of] both Cain and Abel.

Therefore, Amalek hated Israel greatly, as it is stated further on in Scripture, that the Kenites follow the Amalekites.

As far as I can tell, this refers to the fact that in Balaam's prophecies concerning what will happen in the messianic future,<sup>4</sup> his prophecy concerning the Kenites<sup>5</sup> follows his prophecy concerning the Amalekites.<sup>6</sup> The Kenites (*Keini: kuf-yud-nun-yud*) are evidently etymologically related to Cain (*Kayin: kuf-yud-nun*).<sup>7</sup>

For the good in Cain was separated out into Jethro, who is called "Chever the Kenite," i.e., who was separated out of Cain, that is, from the evil of Cain, which [then became] Amalek.

Spiritually, thus, Jethro derives from the good part of Cain while Amalek derives from the evil part of Cain. The fact that Jethro is called "Chever the Kenite" alludes to his spiritual descent from Cain, just as the juxtaposition of Amalek and the Kenites in Balaam's prophecies alludes to the spiritual descent of Amalek from Cain.

Balak and Balaam both comprised both evils: the evil of Cain and the evil of Abel. Therefore both their names contain the letters *beit-lamed* from Abel.

As was explained previously, on the verse "And he saw the angel of G-d in the heart of [*belabat*] the fire within the bush,"<sup>8</sup> the only part of Abel that was rectified was the [first] letter [of his name, the] *hei*, this being the last letter [of the Name *Havayah*]. It signifies the good of Abel, and it was given to Moses.

We have seen previously that Moses was a reincarnation of Abel. We see here that it was specifically the *hei* of Abel's name (*Hevel*) that became reincarnated in Moses.

The remaining two letters, *beit-lamed*, were not rectified, and they embodied the evil of Abel. They were given to Balak and Balaam, as the first two letters of their respective names.

The evil of Cain that was mixed into them is also alluded to in their names, for we already stated that the evil of Cain is Amalek, and the first three letters of *Amalek* (*ayin-mem-lamed*) were given to Balaam and the last letter (*kuf*) remained for Balak.

Balaam: *beit-lamed-ayin-mem*; *beit-lamed* from Abel and *lamed-ayin-mem* from Amalek.

Balak: *beit-lamed-kuf*; *beit-lamed* from Abel and *kuf* from Amalek.

The *lamed* of Balaam here does double-duty: it signifies part of the *beit-lamed* of Abel and the *ayin-mem-lamed* of Amalek.

<sup>3</sup> 1:25a; *Tikunei Zohar* 50 (86a).

<sup>4</sup> Numbers 24:14-24.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 24:21-22.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 24:20.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 24:22.

<sup>8</sup> Exodus 2:.

Nonetheless, even though both Balaam and Balak embodied the evils of Cain and Abel, Balak mainly expressed the evil of Cain and Balaam mainly expressed the evil of Abel.

The Arizal now explains how this is so.

The character of Balak is alluded to in the verse “And Balak, the son of Tzipor, saw....” [Balak] was a descendant of Jethro, of whom it is said, “The bird [*tzipor*] has also found its home...”<sup>9</sup> Jethro was the father of Tziporah, the wife of Moses, as mentioned in the *Zohar*.<sup>10</sup> Jethro took the good [of Cain for himself] and thus became a permitted bird. He transmitted the evil [of Cain] to his offspring, i.e., Balak, who was descended from Jethro, as mentioned there [in the *Zohar*]. We have already explained<sup>11</sup> that that the soul [*neshamah*] of Cain was reincarnated in Jethro and the spirit [*ruach*] of Cain in the prophet Samuel.

Jethro’s connection to Balak is alluded to by the fact that named his daughter Tziporah, i.e., “the bird of the [holiness of G-d’s Name, represented by the letter] *hei* [of His Name].” By so doing, he indicated that he had rectified part of Cain’s soul and had identified with the good in it. The evil, indicated by the word *tzipor* without the *hei*, the plain bird, was passed on to Balak, the son of Tzipor.

We have explained on several occasions that Balaam is derived chiefly from Abel, this being the mystical meaning of [our sages’ statement on] the verse, “And there arose in Israel no other prophet like Moses,” meaning that in Israel there arose no [such prophet], but amongst the nations there did arise [a comparable prophet], i.e., Balaam.<sup>12</sup>

We also explained, [in our comments] on the verse “Behold, Milkah gave birth to children, she as well, from your brother Nachor,”<sup>13</sup> that the initial letters of the words for “she, children from your brother” [*hi banim leNachor*] spell the name Abel. This indicates that Laban, the son of Bethuel the Aramite, was an incarnation of Abel. All his family was also from [the same soul-root], as we have explained in our comments to the story of the golden calf.

One of the children of Nachor (Abraham’s brother) and Milkah enumerated in this verse is Bethuel, the father of Laban.

This is especially so in light of what you have already learned, namely, that Laban himself was reincarnated in Balaam.

Thus, Balaam embodied the evil of Abel.

You must know [also] what type of admixture there is between Balak and Balaam.

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<sup>9</sup> Psalms 84:.

<sup>10</sup> 3:196b.

<sup>11</sup> *Sha’ar HaGilgulim*, introduction 32 (34a).

<sup>12</sup> *Bamidbar Rabbah* 14:34.

<sup>13</sup> Genesis.

We have explained [in our comments] on the verse “And Rachel stole her father’s *terafim*,”<sup>14</sup> that the middle third of *tiferet* of *Z’eir Anpin*, which is located at its chest, is where the lights of *yesod* of *Ima* begin to be revealed. At that level, behind [*Z’eir Anpin*], is where the *keter* of Rachel begins, and within [the *keter* of Rachel] are vested the two heels of the feet of Leah. This is the location of the *terafim*.

The *terafim* were idols; Rachel intended to stop her father from serving idols by stealing them from him when she left his home.

*Yesod* of *Ima* is the drive of the intellect to express itself in the emotions. Although this drive is what gives birth to *Z’eir Anpin*, the *partzuf* of the emotions, it is subdued throughout the initial, higher stages of its development, i.e., its own intellect and the primary emotions of *chesed* and *gevurah*. Only at the level of *tiferet*—and at that, the middle level of *tiferet*, not the higher part of *tiferet* that is basically the interface between it and the primary emotions—does the intellect’s drive to express itself as emotion begin to be revealed. For it is at this level that true awareness of the other occurs. *Chesed* and *gevurah*, although they are the impetuses to give or withhold from another, are primarily concerned with their own needs to give or withhold. *Tiferet* is where true awareness of the *needs* of the recipient comes into play, i.e., empathy.

As we have explained previously, there are two principle iterations of *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin*, two “mates” or means of expression the emotions flow through. The higher one is Leah, or thought, and the lower one is Rachel, or speech. Since speech is an expression of the emotions that have been processed through thought, the lower level (the “heel”) of Leah becomes the highest level (*keter*) of Rachel.

The evil of Balak and Balaam, which we are seeing derived here, can come to be only when Rachel is back to back with *Z’eir Anpin*. This, we know, is the initial state when these *partzufim* are created. As we have seen previously, whenever the male and female are not in full spiritual union there is an opening for evil to draw sustenance.

[For the full explanation of this,] see there at length. But the idea in short is this:

We already know—from our discussion of walking four cubits in the land of Israel—that the radiance of *chesed* and *gevurah* [of *Abba*] present in the *yesod* of *Abba* eventually reaches Leah. In addition, we know that Leah originates from the *malchut* of *Ima*, which is vested in *Z’eir Anpin*. Thus, there are lights of both *Abba* and *Ima* in Leah.

*Abba* is insight, or abstract intellect, while *Ima* is applied intellect. Thought derives from applied intellect, since thought is the most natural means for intellect to express itself. *Malchut* of *Ima* is the expression of intellect. Nonetheless, something of the inspiration of *Abba* also is present in thought, for as we have explained previous, the initial purity of insight of *chochmah* must be present together with *binah* to keep the flow of thought from going astray.

Now, Leah’s head is situated behind the *da’at* of *Z’eir Anpin*, in which is vested the *yesod* of *Abba*, in which [in turn] is vested the lights of *chesed* and *gevurah* [of *Abba*, as we have just stated]. The *yesod* [of *Abba*] itself is vested in the *yesod* of *Ima*, in which is vested as well other lights of *chesed* and *gevurah*. The *yesod* of *Ima* is vested in the middle cavity of the skull of *Z’eir Anpin*, which is the seat of its *da’at*.

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<sup>14</sup> Genesis 25.

Leah, being thought, is situated opposite the upper half of *Z'eir Anpin*. As we have seen, the lights (mentalities, energies, consciousness) of *Abba* and *Ima* are concealed as they descend through the upper half of *Z'eir Anpin*, becoming revealed only from *Z'eir Anpin*'s *tiferet* on down.

Thus, when the lights of *Ima* shine into Leah, they have to break through two barriers: the vessel of *yesod* of *Ima* and the vessel [i.e., the skull] of the head of *Z'eir Anpin*. Only then can they issue outward and enter the head of Leah, then spreading through her entire length, reaching her heels, and becoming vested in the *keter* of Rachel, as we have described.

Now, it is explained in our comments on the passage regarding the *terafim* that here [i.e., the *keter* of Rachel] is the position of the heels of Leah, which herself is complete judgment—since she derives from diminished lights that issue from the location of the concealed lights, which issue only by breaking through [the barriers,] as we said. [Her nature of complete judgment] is particularly apparent in her heels, which express harsh judgment.

Leah is principally judgment, since she derives from the lights of *Abba* and *Ima* that are hidden within the upper half of *Z'eir Anpin* (as opposed to how they become revealed when they descend to the lower half of *Z'eir Anpin*, as we said). Since these lights are concealed, Leah does not benefit from the broad perspective of uncontextualized intellect. Thought is a process of weeding out invasive thoughts and focusing on the idea on which the individual wishes to think about. Thought is thus a phenomenon of judgment, of rejecting competing thoughts.

The heels express harsh judgment because they are hard skin, designed to be impervious to attacks from thorns and rough ground.

For this reason, the forces of evil can derive sustenance from this level, and a radiance of the said lights of *Ima* that spread down to Leah's heels, which break through into the *keter* of Rachel's head and enter into it, as we said, issue outside, and the forces of evil latch on to it.

As we have seen previously, even though the purpose of judgmentality is to preserve the integrity of holiness, its downside is that when it gets wrapped up in its own momentum it begins to focus on the negative aspects of *all* parts of reality, turning on the good it intended originally to protect. This is the perfect opportunity for evil to gain a foothold. As we all unfortunately know, well-intended but unchecked anger and judgmentality is the ruin of many otherwise salvageable situations.

The part of the lights of *Ima* that reaches Leah's two heels and breaks through and enters Rachel's head and shines outward to the force of evil, is called Balak. This is so for two reasons: first, the meaning of the word *Balak* [is "to break through"]<sup>15</sup> and thus refers to how] these heels break through Rachel's head and enter it. Since they shine outward through breaking through, they are called *Balak*.

Second, Jethro was the ancestor of Balak, as we said, and he embodied the *yesod* of *Ima*, which was also embodied in Cain, as we have explained—[in our comments] on the commandment [that the king should] not have many wives. *Yesod* of *Ima* is indicated by the Name *Ekyeh*, specifically the four known spellings out of *Ekyeh*, i.e., two using the letter *yud*, one using the letter *alef*, and one using

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<sup>15</sup> See Isaiah 24.

the letter *hei*. The combined numerical value of all of them is the same as that of Jethro [plus the three *kolels* for the three spellings-out].

The numerical value of the two Names *Ekyeh* spelled with the letter *yud* is 322; that of the Name *Ekyeh* spelled with the letter *hei* is 151; that of the Name *Ekyeh* spelled with the letter *alef* is 146.  $322 + 151 + 146 = 619$ .

Jethro: *Yitro*: *yud-tav-reish-vav* =  $10 + 400 + 200 + 6 = 616$ .

Balak is [Jethro's] descendant, who is derived from him, as we said, and he is derived from *Ima*, from whose *malchut* Leah is constructed, all the way to her heels.

The lights that issue from the lights of *Ima* (that are present in *Z'eir Anpin*) into Leah are the four mentalities [expressed through the four spellings out of the Name *Havayah*] whose numerical values are 72, 63, 45, and 52. Their roots [i.e., the four letters of the Name *Havayah* itself] remain in *Z'eir Anpin*, while the letters used to spell them out shine outward to Leah. As is known, the feminine is alluded to in the letters used to spell out the Name. The numerical value of the four sets of letters used to spell out the Name these four ways, together with the four *kollels* is the same as that of *Balak*.

The numerical value of the letters used to spell out the 72-Name is 46; that of the letters used to spell out the 63-Name is 37; that of the letters used to spell out the 45-Name is 19; that of the letters used to spell out the 52-Name is 26.  $46 + 37 + 19 + 26 = 128$ .

*Balak*: *beit-lamed-kuf* =  $2 + 30 + 100 = 132$ .

[This indicates that] Balak was rooted in these four spellings-out, i.e., in the two heels of Leah that break through Rachel's head. We explain this idea more in our discussion of the verse "...who envisions the vision of the Almighty" further on.

As for Balaam, he derives principally from the lights of *da'at* of *Abba*, as we said. The explanation of this is as follows.

When the lights of *Abba* shine outside, to Leah, they have to break through three barriers: *yesod* of *Abba*, *yesod* of *Ima*, and *Z'eir Anpin*'s head. Only then can they be revealed [outside] and enter Leah's head. They subsequently spread throughout her entire stature, all the way to her heels. [These heels] then break through and enter Rachel's *keter*.

Now, Rachel's *keter* is [in this context] called the place where [these lights] are absorbed, for it clothes Leah's two heels and absorbs [their light] within it.

Rachel's entire stature is constructed out of revealed lights, i.e., those [lights that shine] from [*Z'eir Anpin*'s] chest downward. [Rachel] therefore exhibits more mercy than does Leah. But in this location [i.e., her *keter*], her light is dimmed because [it must shine through] a number of barriers, i.e., vessels. For the light that issues from *yesod* of *Ima*—which terminates at the chest [of *Z'eir Anpin*], is revealed there, breaks though the back of the vessel of *tiferet* of *Z'eir Anpin*, and

shines outward toward Rachel—must first traverse the barrier of the back of the vessel of Rachel’s head, which right next to the body of *Z’eir Anpin*, as is known. It must then traverse two more barriers, i.e., that of each of Leah’s heels, which are there inside Rachel’s head, as we said. Each heel has two barriers: its back and front. It must then traverse the front of the vessel of Rachel’s head. Only then do these lights reach Rachel’s *keter*, which is situated in her front. It is obvious, thus, that these lights must be considerably weakened [by the time they reach Rachel’s *keter*], and therefore the powers of evil can latch on to them.

This is especially true when we consider another reason—that we have explained in our discussion of the tree of knowledge—i.e., that wherever the lights of *Ima* are revealed outside their sheath the powers of evil can latch on.

Therefore, from the radiance that reaches Rachel’s *keter*—in which are absorbed the Leah’s two heels—a further radiance shined outward to the powers of evil. This is the location of Balaam, who is so named because Rachel’s *keter* absorbs (*boleia*) Leah’s heels.

Nonetheless, Balaam’s chief origin is the lights of *Abba* that enter Leah and extend to Rachel’s *keter*, as we said.

We thus see that Balak is from the lights of *Ima* in Leah’s heels, while Balaam is from the lights of *Abba* in Rachel’s *keter*.

It appears to me, Chaim [Vital], that this is how we understand that Balak and Balaam comprise elements of both Cain and Abel. For there is light from *Abba* and *Ima* in both of Leah’s heels and in Rachel’s head. It is just that Leah’s heels derive mainly from the lights of *Ima* while Rachel’s *keter* derives mainly from the lights of *Abba*. So it appears to me.

You can now understand why Balak was a magician while Balaam was a sorcerer, as is stated in the *Zohar*. This is because a sorcerer’s power is just in his mouth, and so Balaam was mainly from Abel, as we said, and he was the evil breath that issues from the mouth.

Abel (*Hevel*) in Hebrew means “breath.”

But Balak was mainly from Cain, who was derived from *Ima*, which is expressed through action, as you know from [our discussion of] the 32 times the Name *Elokim* is mentioned in the account of creation. There we explained that *Abba* speaks and *Ima* acts.

The Name *Elokim* is associated with *binah*, and it is the only Name of G-d used in the account of creation, which chronicles G-d’s *action* as the Creator of the universe. In this account, G-d is described as both creating through speech (“G-d *said* ‘Let there be...’ and there was...”) and action (“And G-d *made*...”).

Magic is performed with the hand, as it is written, “...with magic [tokens] in their hand...” for Balak was more expert at these than was Balaam.

Balak's emissaries came to Balaam with magic instruments, so that he not be able to refuse on account of not having the right tools.

It appears to me, Chaim [Vital], that I head from my master, of blessed memory, that the numerical value of Balaam is 142, which is the numerical value of the Names *Havayah* and *Ekyeh* and the Names *Havayah* and *Adni*, together with their four *kolels*. The significance of this is that [Balaam] takes the radiance from *Z'eir Anpin*—which is referred to by the Name *Havayah*—that shines to Leah—which is referred to by the Name *Ekyeh*—and the said radiances from *Z'eir Anpin*—which are indicated by two Names *Havayah*—that shine to Rachel, who is referred to by the Name *Adni*.

[This is the end of Rabbi Chaim Vital's comment.] Based on this exposition, the Arizal explains the sequence of the events of the story.

—translated from *Sha'ar HaPesukim*

## *Parashat Balak* [second installment]

This passage from the Arizal's writings is a continuation of the previous installment on this *parashah*.

“And Moab became terrified of the people, for they were numerous, and Moab became disgusted [because of the Israelites].”<sup>1</sup>

The [mystical] explanation of this is as follows:

There were two types of [people that made up] Israel [in that generation]. The first was the Jews themselves who lived in that generation, the source of whose souls were sparks of Moses' [soul], who in turn derived from Abel. (This is explained in our exposition on the generation of the desert, on the verse, “And a new king arose over Egypt.”)

The second type [of people] was the mixed multitude, who are referred to in Scripture simply as “the people,” without any qualifier.<sup>2</sup> They derived from the evil aspect of Cain, as explained above.

It is with reference to *them* that it is written, “And Moab became terrified of *the people*, for they were *numerous*.” This refers to the mixed multitude, who are described as “numerous.”

The literal meaning of the words translated as “mixed multitude” (*erev rav*) is “a numerous mixture.” The phrase “the people, for they were numerous,” therefore quite clearly refers to the mixed multitude.

The narrative then goes on to say that “Moab became disgusted because of *the Israelites*,” referring to the Jews themselves, who were derived from Abel.

The literal meaning of the words translated as “the Israelites” (*benei Yisrael*) is “the children [or ‘descendants’] of Israel,” i.e., of Jacob; this refers only to the direct descendants of Jacob as opposed to Moses' converts.

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“[And Moab said to the elders of Midian, ‘Now this assembly will eat up everything around us,] as the ox eats up the greens of the field.’”<sup>3</sup>

An ox that has been established legally as a goring ox derives from the evil of Esau, who is the “black ox” mentioned in the sages' teachings.<sup>4</sup>

Once an ox gores other animals three times unprovoked, it is legally classified as a “goring ox” (*shor mu'ad*) and its owner becomes liable for full damages it causes instead of just half.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers 22:3.

<sup>2</sup> See Rashi on Exodus 32:7; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 16, pp. 408 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Numbers 22:4.

<sup>4</sup> *Berachot* 33a.

In discussing under what dangerous circumstances a person may interrupt his prayers in order to flee for safety, the sages said that “If an ox’s head is in a [fodder] basket, go up to a roof and kick the ladder away from underneath you,” i.e., get as far away as possible, for the ox will not take kindly to anyone it perceives as interrupting it from its meal. “Samuel said: ‘This applies only to a black ox in the month of Nisan, because then the Satan is dancing between his horns.’” Rashi says on this: “Because the days of autumn have passed, when the land is dry, and the ox now sees it full of greenery, it gets high-spirited and the evil inclination enters it.” No longer having to worry about food, the ox becomes mischievous, so it is better to stay away from it.

In any case, we see here that the image of a “black ox” is a particularly threatening type of evil, associated with the evil inclination, which in turn is often personified as Esau.

It “eats up the greens of the field.” This refers to the souls that issue from the supernal coupling, i.e., from the “field that G-d blessed.”<sup>6</sup> This is why they said “*the* field,” with the definite article.

When Jacob appeared before Isaac disguised as Esau, in order to receive his blessings, Isaac said, “Behold, my son’s fragrance is like that of the field that G-d blessed.” Rashi says this means that Isaac recognized on Jacob’s garments the fragrance of the Garden of Eden (which he remembered from when he was temporarily there when he was almost slaughtered). Thus, “the field that G-d blessed” is the Garden of Eden, or in Kabbalistic terms, the *sefirah* of *malchut*. In this imagery, holy souls are the “grass” that grows in the “holy field.” The union of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, which is often allegorized as the fertilization of the earth by the rain of heaven, produces the grass of the earth, the souls that issue from this union.

This is also alluded to by the fact that the numerical value of the word for “the field” [*hasadeh*, 314] is the same as that of the Name *Shakai*, alluding to the supernal righteous one, who is also called “the soul of all life,” from which all souls take flight.

*Hasadeh*: *hei-sin-dalet-hei* = 5 + 300 + 4 + 5 = 314.

*Shakai*: *shin-dalet-yud* = 300 + 4 + 10 = 314.

The Name *Shakai* is associated with the *sefirah* of *yesod*, which in turn is associated with sexuality, the area of life that serves as the basic test of righteousness.

Thus, the Moabites complained to the Midianites that the Jews threatened to wipe them out, just as evil threatens to annihilate the holy souls produced by the holy union of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*. They saw themselves as the good ones and the Jews as the embodiment of evil.

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“[Balak] sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor, to Petor, which is by the river of the land of his people, to call for him, saying, ‘...please come and curse this people for me.’”<sup>7</sup>

Balaam’s power was sorcery, for he derived from the enveloping breath, and [therefore] his power was solely in his mouth.

As explained previously, Balaam derived from Abel, whose Hebrew name (*Hevel*) means “breath.”

But Balak derived from Cain, who personified action.

As explained previously, Cain is derived from *Ima*, which is expressed in action, as opposed to *Abba*, which is expressed in thought.

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<sup>5</sup> Exodus 21:35-36.

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 27:27.

<sup>7</sup> Numbers 22:5.

He was therefore a magician, for he derived from the states of *gevurah* [in the] arms, the hands, and the fingers, and that is why it is written “with magic [tokens] in their hands.”<sup>8</sup>

As mentioned previously, Balak’s emissaries came to Balaam with magic instruments, so that he not be able to refuse on account of not having the right tools. The implication of the verse’s phraseology is that magic is something done with the hands, as opposed to sorcery, which is more a matter of incantations and charms, uttered with the mouth.

Inasmuch as he derived ultimately from *Ima*, Balak was associated with the axis of *gevurah*. Both *chesed* and *gevurah* are associated anatomically with the arms, hands, and fingers—*chesed* with the right and *gevurah* with the left.

Balak wanted Balaam—who personified breath, which is the encompassing light, signified by the Name *Ekyeh*—to curse them from his source in which he was rooted. Therefore the Name *Ekyeh* is alluded to twice [in this passage]: the first as the initials of the words for “the ox the greens of the field,” and the second as the final letters of the words for “please come and curse for me.”<sup>9</sup> Both of these letter-sequences are permutations of the Name *Ekyeh*, which has twelve permutations, as is known.

“The ox the greens of the field”: *hashor et yerek hasadeh*; the initial letters of these words are *hei-alef-yud-hei*. “Please come and curse for me”: *lechah na arah li*; the final letters of these words are *hei-alef-hei-yud*.

Although the Name *Ekyeh* is composed of four letters, and should therefore have 24 permutations ( $4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 = 24$ ), two of its letters are the same (the two *hei*’s), and there are therefore only 12 unique permutations.

Balaam, on the other hand, wanted to curse them from [the spiritual source of] Balak, who was rooted in the inner light, signified by the Name *Havayah*. Therefore three permutations of the Name *Havayah* are alluded to in the words of Balaam, all in reverse order:

The first is the final letters of the words for “Lodge here for the night, and I will give you an answer...”<sup>10</sup>

The Hebrew for these words is *linu poh halailah vehashivoti*, the final letters of which are *vav-hei-hei-yud*.

The second is the final letters of the words for “Come and curse them for me.”<sup>11</sup>

The Hebrew for these words is *lechah kavah li oto*, the final letters of which are *hei-hei-yud-vav*.

The third is the final letters of the words for “[to do] either good or evil on my own.”<sup>12</sup>

The Hebrew for these words is *tovah o ra’ah milibi*, the final letters of which are *hei-vav-hei-yud*.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 22:7.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 22:6.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 22:8.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 22:11.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 24:13.

The explanation of this accords with what I have told you in connection with how the *sefirot* are called in the world of *Beriah*. There, [the *sefirot*] are known by the permutations of the Names *Ekyeh* and *Havayah*. And since it is from the world of *Beriah* on down that the powers of evil begin to have dominion, [Balaam] therefore wanted to curse them from there.

As explained in the previous installment, Balak derives from the lights of *Ima* in Leah's heels, while Balaam derives from the lights of *Abba* in Rachel's *keter*. Thus, Balak is an inner light and Balaam is an encompassing light. The encompassing light is higher and more powerful, but the inner light permeates more thoroughly. Each party therefore wanted to curse the Jews with the other's qualities.

—from *Sha'ar HaPesukim*, *Likutei Torah*, and *Sefer HaLikutim*

## *Parashat Pinchas*

The portion of the Torah read this week begins with the story of Pinchas: “G-d spoke to Moses, saying: Pinchas the son of Elazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, turned back My anger against the children of Israel by avenging My vengeance against them. I therefore did not destroy the children of Israel in My vengeance.”<sup>1</sup>

The idiom “vengeance” is mentioned three times in this verse. [The numerical value of the root of this word, *kuf-nun-alef*, is 151, and is derived in three ways:] The numerical value of the Divine Name *Ekyeh*, when spelled out using the letter *hei* is 151.

As we have explained previously, the Divine Names may be spelled out in various ways, depending on how the letters *hei* and *vav* are spelled. In the case of the Name *Ekyeh* (*alef-hei-yud-hei*), if the two letters *hei* are spelled out *hei-hei*, we have:

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef</i>	1
	<i>lamed</i>	30
	<i>pei</i>	80
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	5
	<i>hei</i>	5
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	10
	<i>vav</i>	6
	<i>dalet</i>	4
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	5
	<i>hei</i>	5
		151

Spelling out (*milui* in Hebrew) signifies the fulfillment of latent potential, similar to the birth of a fetus hidden within the womb. Thus, in a certain sense, anger is the psychological fulfillment of the Name *Ekyeh*, and rectifying it involves tracing it back to its source in this Divine Name. This will be explained further on.

Furthermore, the numerical of the Name *Ekyeh* squared is also 151.

If we take the sum of the squares of each of the four letters that compose this Name, we have  $1^2 + 5^2 + 10^2 + 5^2 = 1 + 25 + 100 + 25 = 151$ . This technique is called *ribua perati* (“individual squaring”), i.e., summing the squares of each letter that make up the word.

Squaring signifies maturation and development, similar to the way a child matures (hopefully) as he grows into an adult. This is because squaring a number makes that number inter-include all its constituent units. For example, the number five may be envisioned as a set of five points, named A through E. If five is squared, we have 25 points, or five A’s, five B’s, and so on:

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers 25:10-11.

A of A	B of A	C of A	D of A	E of A
A of B	B of B	C of B	D of B	E of B
A of C	B of C	C of C	D of C	E of C
A of D	B of D	C of D	D of D	E of D
A of E	B of E	C of E	D of E	E of E

Inter-inclusion is the characteristic of maturity, since maturity means being able to see all sides of an issue and grant validity to other people. In Kabbalah, the maturation of the *sefirot* from individual points into *partzufim* is the process which marks the transition from the chaotic, unstable world of *Tohu* to the rectified world of *Tikun*.

Here again, anger is seen paradoxically seen to be the result of the maturation of the Name *Ekyeh*, and its rectification involves tracing it back to its source in this Divine Name.

Finally, the combined numerical values of the Names *Elokim* and *Adni* are 151.

*Elokim*: alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem (1+30+5+10+40 = 86); *Adni*: alef-nun-dalet-yud (1+50+4+10 = 65). 65+86 = 151. The Name *Elokim* signifies G-d's attribute of judgement and severity, while the Name *Adni* signifies His attribute of authority and dominion (*adon* means master or ruler). When these two Divine attributes are combined, this also can produce anger, and thus the rectification of anger involves as well tracing it back to these two attributes in the soul, as will be explained further on.

These three aspects of vengeance are alluded to in the verse: "I descended to the garden of nuts."<sup>2</sup> The numerical value of the word for "garden of" [*ginat*, *gimel-nun-tav*] is 453, which is 3 times 151.

The nut symbolizes in Kabbalah the phenomenon of evil surrounding holiness, just as the shells of the nut surround the inner meat. Here, too, anger is a shell which must be discarded, and in so doing one reveals the inner goodness of the soul.

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This is the end of this passage in *Sha'ar HaPesukim* and its parallel passage in *Likutei Torah*. In *Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh*, which contains (amongst other things) numerous remedies (*tikunim*) for various sins, these numerical equivalencies are discussed at greater length. Therefore, to help us understand this passage, we will quote from two passages from *Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh*. The first is Remedy #13 (p. 18a in the standard editions, p. 50 in the Brandwein edition):

The following is a remedy for someone who gets angry.

Even though there is no explicit prohibition against anger in the Torah, it is nonetheless considered a most heinous sin, and the sages have even compared it to idolatry.<sup>3</sup> This is because anger betrays at least a temporary lapse in the individual's belief that G-d runs the world and is responsible for every occurrence in life. For if G-d is responsible for everything, and everything G-d does is good, how is it possible to get angry? It is only possible if the person feels, at least for that moment, that *he* knows better than G-d what should be happening, and this is a subtle form of idolatry: he is considering his own understanding of how the world should be running superior to G-d's.

My master, of blessed memory, before he departed for the life of the world to come, wanted to teach all the members [of his following] a remedy for anger, but we did not merit to do it, since, because of our numerous sins, I forgot the full explanation. The gist of the matter, however, is this:

<sup>2</sup> Song of Songs 6:11.

<sup>3</sup> *Zohar* 1:27b, 2:182b, 3:179a, 234b; *Zohar Chadash* 21a; *Tikunei Zohar* 56; *Mishneh Torah*, *Deiot* 2:3; see *Shabbat* 105b, *Nedarim* 22b, *Igeret HaKodesh* 25.

One should perform 151 fasts, corresponding to the numerical value of the word for “anger” [*ka’as, kuf-ayin-samech*] plus 1 for the value of the word itself [the *kolel*].

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi explains in the *Tanya*<sup>4</sup> that all the fasts prescribed in the works of Kabbalah for rectifying various sins do not constitute the substance of repentance—which is sincere regret for past deeds and resolve not to repeat them. Rather, they are intended—once the individual has already repented and been forgiven for his sin—to purify the soul from the damage the sin caused and to reinstate the individual in G-d’s favor. Furthermore, these fasts are essentially not practicable today since our constitutions are much weaker than those of previous generations. Instead, we are to redeem these fasts by giving charity.

There are three types of vengeance alluded to in the story of Pinchas: “by avenging,” “My vengeance,” and “I did not destroy the children of Israel in My vengeance.” During the morning prayers, one should meditate on the Divine Name *Ekyeh* as it is spelled out with the letter *hei*, the numerical value of which is 151. During the afternoon prayers, one should meditate on the Name *Ekyeh* squared, which also equals 151. During the evening prayers, one should meditate on the Divine Names *Adni Elokim*, the combined numerical values of which equal 151.

(I am not sure if he told us to do it this way or oppositely, that is, to meditate on what is said above regarding the evening prayers during the afternoon prayers and *vice versa*.)

The way this is done is as follows. We shall explain with regard to how one meditates during the morning prayers of the 151 fast days, and from this you will understand how to meditate during the other prayers. On the first fast day, you should meditate [during the morning prayers] on the letter *alef*. During the next thirty fast days, you should meditate [during the morning prayers] on the letter *lamed* [whose numerical value is 30], this being the second letter of the spelling-out of the letter *alef* [i.e., the first letter of the Name *Ekyeh*]. During the next eighty fast days, you should meditate [during the morning prayers] on the letter *pei* [whose numerical value is 80], this being the third letter of the spelling-out of the letter *alef*. In this way you should meditate [on the remaining letters of the spelling-out of the Name *Ekyeh*] for the duration of the 151 fast days.

Schematically, this would look like this:

morning prayer	alef 1	lamed 30	pei 80						hei 5	hei 5	yud 10	vav 6	dalet 4	hei 5	hei 5
afternoon prayer	alef 1 <sup>2</sup>	hei 25	yud 100								hei 25				
evening prayer	alef 1	dalet 4	nun 50	yud 10	alef 1	lamed 30	hei 5	yud 10	mem 40						

I do not remember which vowels to use when meditating on these Names.

<sup>4</sup> *Igeret HaTeshuvah* 1-3. Rabbi Shneur Zalman does allow a person to complete a limited number of fasts, but the Rebbe has said that even these fasts are no longer applicable.

Although every Name of G-d has its natural vocalization, these Names may be visualized as being vocalized with other vowels (since, after all, one does not pronounce these Names while meditating on them, but merely visualizes and contemplates them). In Kabbalah, the vowels signify the light that fills the vessels (signified by the letters). By changing the vowels, then, one is filling the vessel with various types of light.

I also do not remember at which exact point in the prayers one is to perform these meditations. All I remember is that they are to be done during the prayers, as I said. If, however, one wishes to meditate on these ideas throughout the whole day, so much the better.

In order to assuage anger, it is also effective to meditate—when one becomes angry—on the Name *Ekyeh* spelled out with the letter *hei*. As mentioned above, the numerical value of this Name is the same as that of the word for “anger” [with the *kolel*].

From this remedy we see that prayer is an integral part of the process of rectifying anger. Furthermore, all three aspects of anger must be addressed: the fulfillment of the Name *Ekyeh*, the maturation of the Name *Ekyeh*, and the combination of the Names *Elokim* and *Adni*.

We now turn to Remedy #15 (p. 18b in the standard editions, p. 50-52 in the Brandwein edition).

Here is another way to remove anger when it overtakes a person, beside the remedy mentioned previously. If a person meditates on what follows, the [aspect of the] evil inclination which causes anger will be nullified. It will therefore be effective [in eliminating anger]—unless, of course, the person willfully chooses to become angry.

Let us first explain what anger is. As we explained above, there are three types [and derivations] of vengeance [whose numerical value is 151]: the Name *Ekyeh* when spelled out with the letter *hei*, giving a numerical value of 151; the combined numerical values of the Names *Adni* and *Elokim*, which equal 151; and the square of the Name *Ekyeh*, which equals 151. All these equal the numerical value of the word for “anger” [*ka’as*] plus 1 for the word as a whole.

We see from this that anger derives from the two Names *Adni* and *Elokim*, which signify the two types of courts: lenient and strict. When these two Names are combined, anger issues from them.

In other words, being judgmental (i.e., acting like a court) is the source of anger. The connection between anger and the Name *Ekyeh* will be discussed presently. The Name *Elokim* signifies strict judgement, and the Name *Adni* lenient judgement. In Kabbalah, the Name *Elokim* is associated chiefly with the *sefirah* of *gevurah* and the Name *Adni* with the *sefirah* of *malchut*. Judgement is obviously an essential aspect of both of these attributes. When allowed to get out of hand, however, it degenerates into anger.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse: “for I, *G-d* your G-d, am a jealous G-d.”<sup>5</sup>

The italicized “*G-d*” is the translation of the Name *Havayah*, which is read nowadays as the Name *Adni*. The non-italicized “G-d” immediately following is the translation of the Name *Elokim*. Thus, the combination of these two Names makes G-d “a jealous G-d,” exacting vengeance.

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<sup>5</sup> Exodus 20:5; Deuteronomy 5:9.

For anger derives from these two Names, *Adni* and *Elokim*, whose combined numerical value is 151.

This is also alluded to in the verse: “For anger rests in the bosom of fools.”<sup>6</sup> The numerical value of the word for “in the bosom of” [*becheik, beit-chet-yud-kuf*] is 120, which is the number of permutations of the Name *Elokim*, from whence anger derives.

The Name *Elokim* comprises five letters (*alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem*), and five letters produce 120 permutations:  $5! = 5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 = 120$ . The different permutations of this Name indicate all the various types of judgement.

Now, the word *becheik* comprises the letters of the word Yabok [*yud-beit-kuf*] together with the letter *chet* inserted in the middle.

The Yabok is a tributary of the Jordan river and was the scene of Jacob’s night-time encounter with the angel of Esau (Genesis 32:23-33). As such, it signifies the context of the struggle between good and evil.

The significance of this is that when the Name *Havayah* is joined to the Name *Elokim* the negativity of the Name *Elokim* is sweetened by the mercy of the Name *Havayah*. The combined numerical value of these Names is that of Yabok, 112.

Just as the Name *Elokim* is associated with G-d’s attribute of judgement, the Name *Havayah* is associated with His attribute of mercy. Judgement is not intrinsically negative, of course, since proper discernment is necessary in order to recognize good and evil and separate them. Only when judgement is allowed to overtake a person’s consciousness does it become a negative force, resulting eventually in anger. Therefore, care must always be taken to moderate and mitigate judgement with mercy.

This interplay between judgement and mercy may be seen as the struggle between Jacob and Esau’s angel (not Esau himself—for he is the personification of fallen judgement, i.e., anger and violence—but his “angel” or spiritual origin). They are both legitimate, but Jacob (mercy) must always retain the upper hand. This is why this struggle took place at the Yabok river, for as we said, the numerical value of Yabok is 112, the sum of the numerical values of the Name *Havayah* (26) and *Elokim* (86).

However, through anger, the individual introduces the letter *chet* into this word. The numerical value of *chet* is 8, alluding to the eight kings of who ruled the land of Edom. [By inserting them into the picture,] the individual causes the world to revert to chaos.

Edom is the kingdom of Esau, and thus signifies unmitigated judgement. As such, this kingdom and the eight kings who ruled it (Genesis 36:31-39) express the energy of the world of *Tohu* (“chaos”), the order of creation that preceded the rectified order of *Tikun* or *Atzilut*. In this world, the *sefirot* could not interact because they did not allow each other to enter each other’s vessels. In other words, they exhibited excessive severity, judgement, and self-centeredness. By exhibiting anger, the individual causes the world to regress to this level.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “And the querulous man alienates his friend.”<sup>7</sup>

The word used for “friend” in this verse (*aluf*) is the same as that for “chieftain,” possibly alluding to the chieftains of Edom (Genesis 36:15-19). The meaning would then be that an angry person separates between people, regressing the world to the state of *Tohu*.

<sup>6</sup> Ecclesiastes 7:9.

<sup>7</sup> Proverbs 16:29.

When the Name *Havayah* is thus separated from the Name *Elokim*, this produces the state of severe judgement, which in turn leads to anger. The root of this anger is in the 120 permutations of the Name *Elokim*, which is the numerical value of the word “in the bosom of,” as we have noted.

This is also the meaning of what [the people] said to Aaron [when they asked him to make the golden calf]: “Arise, make us gods that will go before us.”<sup>8</sup> That is, they asked him to make the Name *Elokim*—which in the context of holiness is only one Name—expand into many gods, i.e., its 120 permutations. This is why the verb “that will go” in this verse is in the plural. “That will go” also means “that will extend,” implying that the Name *Elokim* expands into its 120 permutations.

The Arizal will presently explain that the 120 permutations themselves are entirely within the realm of holiness, but they serve as the origin of the “other gods” that constitute idolatry and denial of the one G-d.

It is to this that the elder in the *Zohar*<sup>9</sup> alludes when he explains the verse, “G-d [*Elokim*] ruled over the nations”:<sup>10</sup> “the Name *Elokim* expands until other gods issue from it.” This means that the Name *Elokim* expands into its 120 permutations, all of which are still in the realm of holiness, but [whatever expands] further than this becomes other gods, which are rooted in the said 120 permutations.

When the judgement of the Name *Elokim* is allowed to extend beyond its natural borders, i.e., when a person becomes overly judgmental, this becomes a recipe for idolatry. The person comes to deny the oneness of G-d in the world, i.e., the fact that everything in the world is caused and directed directly by G-d. This subtle idolatry leads, as we said, to anger.

This is alluded to as well in the continuation of the story of the golden calf, when it is said: “they made for themselves a god of gold,”<sup>11</sup> the word “a god” being in the plural.

The word for “a god of” in this verse literally reads “gods of” [*elohei*].

Similarly, G-d told Moses, “they made themselves a molten calf.”<sup>12</sup> The numerical value of the word for “molten” [*maseichah*, *mem-samech-chaf-hei*] is 125, alluding to the 120 permutations of the 5 letters of the Name *Elokim*. Thus the word *maseichah* divides into two parts, *mem-samech-chaf*, the numerical value of which is 120, and *hei*, the numerical value of which is 5. This is also why the calf was made of 120 talents of gold, corresponding to the 120 permutations [or, according to another opinion, 125 talents of gold, correspond to] the numerical value of the word *maseichah*, as our sages have said.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Exodus 32:1.

<sup>9</sup> 2:96a.

<sup>10</sup> Psalms 47:9.

<sup>11</sup> Exodus 32:31.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 32:8.

<sup>13</sup> *Shemot Rabbah* 42:8; *Zohar* 2:198b, 3:79a.

This is also the mystical meaning of the commandment, “Do not make for yourselves molten gods.”<sup>14</sup> Do not allow the Name *Elokim* to expand to its 120 permutations—120 being the numerical value of the word for “molten”—so that these can serve as a source for the forces of evil, known as “other gods.”

Now that we have explained the damage [caused by anger], we can explain the remedy. Since anger causes the Name *Havayah* to be dissociated from the Name *Elokim*, the remedy is to join them together again.

This is done as follows: During the morning, afternoon, and evening prayers, when reciting the first three blessings of the *Amidah*, one should meditate on the following: When saying “Blessed are You, O G-d” during the first blessing (*Avot*), one should, when saying the Name *Havayah*, meditate on the spelling of this Name whose numerical value is 72, i.e., as it is spelled out using the letter *yud*. He should also intend [in his mind] to unite this Name with the Name *Ekyeh* as it is spelled out using the letter *yud*.

As we explained previously, there are four chief ways to spell out the Name *Havayah*; the numerical values of these spellings are 72, 63, 45, and 52. The first blessing of the *Amidah* is called *Avot* (“fathers”) since it mentions the forefathers of the Jewish people. The spelling whose numerical equivalent is 72 is associated with the *sefirah* of *chochmah*. The Name *Ekyeh* is associated with the *sefirot* of *keter* and (secondarily) *binah*. This means that when the *keter-binah* experience is allowed to fulfill itself, develop and mature (as signified by the spelling out and squaring of this Name) without the presence of *chochmah* in the process, anger is likely to ensue. If, however, *chochmah* is present, this serves to sweeten the fulfillment and maturity of *keter* and *binah*, ensuring that the process will not lead to anger.

We may explain this as follows: *Keter*, in its most immediate manifestation, is the will that drives the person to pursue his vision or idealism and make its imprint in the world. This will gives rise to an intellectual insight regarding how this vision can be expressed in a particular context, usually as a solution to a problem or challenge. This insight is called *chochmah* (“wisdom”). It is then necessary to integrate this insight into the individuals pre-existing world-view and mode of thinking, in order for him to be able to hold on to the ephemeral and elusive insight he has just been graced with. This is the role of *binah* (“understanding” the insight).

In the process of processing the insight, however, *binah* must perforce give due consideration to the individual’s way of looking at the world, which he has developed throughout his lifetime. This carries with it the danger of reinforcing and bolstering his ego, as details of the insight validate his preconceptions. Man, being an egocentric creature, will naturally tend to emphasize those aspects of his new insight that validate his preconceptions and existing notions of the nature of reality, and tend to ignore those aspects of the insight that require him to re-evaluate or re-formulate his world-view.

It is therefore necessary for someone who has received an insight to try to re-experience the pristine vision of the insight at various points during the process of integrating it into his existing mental structures, particularly after the process has been completed. In this way, he can measure the extent to which his mental processing has remained true to the original vision of the insight. This process is called joining or unifying *chochmah* and *binah*.

If a person neglects to do this, his insightful experience will only serve to aggrandize his ego, as we said, and this of course will lead him to anger, since anger is just a manifestation of the ego. (This is alluded to by the fact that the numerical value of the word for “anger” [*ka’as*, 150] is ten times that of the word for “haughtiness” [*ga’avah*, 15].)

Similarly, the will that engendered the insight in the first place is a self-oriented experience: “I want to solve this problem; I am bothered by this challenge.” In contrast, receiving insight is a humbling experience, since one is

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<sup>14</sup> Exodus 34:17.

privileged to experience a transcendent revelation that is obviously from a place of infinity beyond him. If, however, this transcendental experience is allowed to fade into distant memory, the egocentricity of the will goes unchecked.

Rooting out anger at its source, then, involves uniting the Name *Havayah* (specifically, the Name *Havayah* associated with *chochmah*) with the Name *Ekyeh*.

When saying “Blessed are You, O G-d” during the second blessing (*Gevurot*), one should, when saying the Name *Havayah*, meditate on the spelling of this Name whose numerical value is 63. He should in addition intend to unite this Name with the Name *Elokim*. This he does by visualizing the Name *Havayah* vocalized with the vowels of the Name *Elokim*.

The Name *Elokim* has three vowels (*chataf-segol*, *cholan*, *chirik*). These should be envisioned as appearing together with the first three letters of the Name *Havayah*. The second blessing of the *Amidah* is called *Gevurot* (“powers”) since it discusses G-d’s power and strength. The Name *Havayah* whose numerical value is 63 is associated with the *sefirah* of *binah*. Inasmuch as *binah* is the source of *gevurah*, joining these two names in effect grants *gevurah* an experience of its source, or returns *gevurah* to its source in *binah*.

As we said above, *binah* is the analysis through which the insight of *chochmah* is processed. This process entails evaluating one’s preconceived notions and way of thinking in light of the new insight, a process of judgement and severity, since old ideas that do not jibe with the new insight will have to be rejected. Thus, *binah* is the source of *gevurah*. However, it is always necessary to keep *gevurah* connected to its source in *binah*, so that it retains the “personality” of an objective arbitrator rather than degenerating into an arbitrary despot.

When saying “Blessed are You, O G-d” during the third blessing (*Kedushat HaShem*), one should, when saying the Name *Havayah*, meditate on the spelling of this Name whose numerical value is 45, i.e., as it is spelled out using the letter *alef*. He should in addition intend to unite this Name with the Name *Adni*.

The Name *Havayah* whose numerical value is 45 is associated with the concept of humility. The numerical value of the word for “what” (*mah*) is 45, and the question “what?” implies a humble admission that one does not know everything. Moses, the humblest man on earth,<sup>15</sup> said of himself and his brother Aaron, “What are we?”<sup>16</sup> i.e., “we are, or personify, the attribute of ‘what.’”

This attribute is the essential compliment and inner dimension of the attribute of *malchut*, sovereignty. This was exemplified by King David, the quintessential monarch, who declared of himself, “I shall be lowly in my own estimation.”<sup>17</sup>

Thus, in the second and third blessings of the *Amidah*, he has connected the Name *Havayah* with the Names *Elokim* and *Adni*, which are the two powers of judgement from which anger is numerically derived, as we have said. In this way, he has sweetened them by associating them with the Name *Havayah*.

The way to prevent anger is thus to ensure that one’s power of judgement is always mitigated by mercy. The third blessing of the *Amidah* is called *Kedushat HaShem* (“the holiness of G-d’s Name), for this is its subject.

In the first blessing of the *Amidah*, he has also through his meditation sweetened the source of these two powers of judgement, that is, the Name *Ekyeh*, from which anger also is derived when it is spelled out with the letter *hei*, as we have mentioned. This Name is sweetened by the Name *Havayah* spelled out to

<sup>15</sup> Numbers 12:3.

<sup>16</sup> Exodus 16:7,8.

<sup>17</sup> 2 Samuel 6:22.

equal 72. Thus, all three aspects of anger have been rectified: the root and its two branches.

To summarize:

<i>Amidah</i>	Name to be rectified	Name <i>Havayah</i> used to rectify it
first blessing ( <i>Avot</i> )	<i>Ekyeh</i> (will & understanding)	<i>Havayah</i> = 72 (wisdom in mercy)
second blessing ( <i>Gevurot</i> )	<i>Elokim</i> (severity)	<i>Havayah</i> = 63 (understanding in mercy)
third blessing ( <i>Kedushat HaShem</i> )	<i>Adni</i> (sovereignty)	<i>Havayah</i> = 45 (humility in mercy)

In summary, then, we see that by tracing the root of vengeance (*kuf-nun-alef*) back to its origin in the Divine Names, we see how the perversions of Divine power that give rise to anger can be rectified and sweetened in their source. Evidently Pinchas succeeded in doing this, for the result of his expressing rectified anger (i.e., anger devoid of any ego) was being granted membership in the priesthood. On the one hand, we see that the tribe of Levi was characterized by extreme zealousness for G-d. Levi and his brother Shimon took vengeance on the people of Shechem when they raped their sister, Dinah.<sup>18</sup> When Moses came down from Mt. Sinai and saw the people worshipping the golden calf, he said, “Who is for G-d, come to me,” and the entire tribe of Levi came to him and slew the idolaters.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, one of the chief functions of the priest, besides officiating at the Temple sacrificial rites, was to bless the people each day with peace. The passage describing this function of the priesthood<sup>20</sup> contains 150 letters, signifying how by rectifying their innate attribute of zealous anger, they serve as conduits for peace and brotherhood for the whole people. Thus, G-d says of Pinchas, “Therefore, say that I hereby grant him My covenant of peace.”<sup>21</sup>

The Arizal makes another recommendation for insulating oneself from anger:

In addition, one should immerse in the *mikveh* twice a week, on Tuesdays and Fridays.... When he immerses, he should meditate on the fact that the numerical value of the word *mikveh* [*mem-kuf-vav-heh*, 151] is the same as that of the word for “anger” [*ka’as*, 150 plus the *kolel*] and that of the Name *Ekyeh* spelled out with the letter *hei* [151]. He should intend through these immersions that the anger that overcomes him be nullified, provided that he persists in immersing this way.

—anthologized and translated

<sup>18</sup> Genesis 34.

<sup>19</sup> Exodus 32:26-28.

<sup>20</sup> Numbers 6:22-27.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* 25:12.

## *Parashat Pinchas* [second installment]

In this *parashah*, God commands us to offer daily (*tamid*) offerings and additional (*musaf*) offerings on the Sabbath and the holidays. The daily and additional offerings are “ascending-offerings” (*olah*). In its listing of the additional offerings, the Torah refers to each being required in addition to the daily morning offering.

“On the Sabbath [you shall offer]...**beyond** the daily ascending offering....”<sup>1</sup>

“On the first days of your months [*Rosh Chodesh*], you shall offer...**beyond** the daily sacrifice **it shall be done**....”<sup>2</sup>

“On the fourteenth day of the first month...*Pesach*...you shall offer...beside the morning daily sacrifice **you shall do** them...**beyond** the daily sacrifice **it shall be done**....”<sup>3</sup>

“On the day of the first fruits...on your weeks [*Shavuot*]...you shall offer...beside the daily sacrifice **you shall do** them....”<sup>4</sup>

“On the first day of the seventh month...a day of blowing [the *shofar*, *Rosh Hashanah*]...**you shall do**...beside the...daily sacrifice....”<sup>5</sup>

“On the tenth day of the seventh month...you shall afflict yourselves [by fasting, *Yom Kippur*]...you shall offer...beside...the daily sacrifice....”<sup>6</sup>

“On the fifteenth day of the seventh month...you shall celebrate the festival [of *Sukkot*]...and you shall offer...beside the daily sacrifice....”<sup>7</sup>

The Torah refers to the [additional] sacrifices of the Sabbath, the first day of the month, and the festival of *matzot* [*Pesach*] as being “beyond [lit., “above”] the daily ascending-offering,” implying that [these sacrifices reach] “the highest of the highest [levels of spirituality],” as mentioned in the *Zohar*.<sup>8</sup>

The daily offering is already called an “ascending” offering, so something “above” an “ascending” offering is “above the above.”

But with regard to *Shavuot*, [the Torah] refers [to the additional offerings as being] simply “*beside* the daily ascending-offering.”

It would seem that, contrary to this, it would be appropriate to refer to the day the Torah was given as being “*above* the daily [offering],” since this day is surely “the highest of the highest,” more so than the first day of the month and the festival of *matzot*.

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers 28:9-10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 11,15.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 17, 23, 24.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 26, 27, 31.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 29:1, 2, 6.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 7, 8, 11.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 12, 13, 16. The same pattern and expression is used for the offerings of the rest of *Sukkot* (v. 19, 22, 25, 28, 31, 34) and for *Shemini Atzeret* (v. 38).

<sup>8</sup> 3:79b.

Let us also note the difference between the [active] phraseology of “you shall do” and [the passive] “shall be done.”

In its description of the additional offerings of *Rosh Chodesh*, the Torah uses the passive, in its description of those of *Pesach*, both the active and the passive, in its description of those of *Shavuot* (and *Rosh Hashanah*, but the Arizal is not focusing on this here), only the active. In its description of those of the Sabbath, the Torah uses neither expression.

Through this we will be able to understand the [mystical] difference between the Sabbath, *Rosh Chodesh*, and the festivals.

On the Sabbath, there occur two types of couplings [between the *partzufim*]. The first involves the angels, and through them this coupling occurs. This coupling is thus called “the coupling of the angels,” meaning that they act as “male waters” in order that they receive Divine beneficence from above them.

As we have explained previously, “male waters” is the idiom used for “arousal from below,” an act performed in order to elicit Divine beneficence from above. The coupling of the *sefirot* initiated by the angels is seen as an internal system function in the workings of the channeling of Divine beneficence earthward. The angels themselves are part of this “machinery” and elicit Divine beneficence as part of the Divine plan.

This coupling occurs on the Sabbath night. We are therefore permitted to engage in marital relations on the Sabbath night.

Marital relations on Friday night imitate the coupling of the *partzufim* (aroused by the angels) that occurs this night.

The second type is initiated by [human] souls [and occurs on the Sabbath day]. We are therefore forbidden to engage in marital relations on the Sabbath day, for we then have to raise “male waters” in order to effect the supernal coupling, which elicits a flow of souls [into the world].

Presumably, our marital relations can imitate a supernal coupling that is already occurring but not initiate one. Since the sefirotic coupling occurs anyway (thanks to the angels) on Friday night, we can imitate it and thus channel it. But on Shabbat day, it is up to us to initiate the supernal coupling, so we must focus on activities (prayer, Torah study, etc.) that effect this union, rather than channel it. We cannot simply channel the flow produced by the supernal union (by engaging in marital union below) because without our actions, there is no union to channel.

These two couplings occur through Jacob and Joseph, as is mentioned in the *Zohar*.<sup>9</sup> Since these two couplings occur on the Sabbath, one through us and one without us, a higher and lower coupling, it is therefore said that “...on its Sabbath, *above* the daily ascending-offering and its libation.” For this coupling occurs above: *Z’eir Anpin* is absorbed within *Abba* and *Nukva* within *Ima*.

The Sabbath is the return of everything to its source. The emotions and their means of expression are renewed within the intellect that gave rise to them, in this case, G-d’s idea of the world.

This is why it is written, “You shall guard the Sabbath for it is holy unto you,”<sup>10</sup> implying that it is intrinsically holy, for *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* ascend to

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<sup>9</sup> 2:259a.

<sup>10</sup> Exodus 31:14.

the level of *Abba* and *Ima*, who are termed “holy,” as it is written, “It is a jubilee, it will be holy unto you.”<sup>11</sup>

As we have explained previously, the jubilee year manifests *Ima*. In general, the intellect is above and removed (holy, objective) from the subjective reality of the emotions.

In contrast, the festivals are called “a calling of holiness,”<sup>12</sup> but not holiness itself. This is why with regard to the Sabbath it is written “*above* the daily sacrifice.”

However, since there are two types of coupling [that occur on the Sabbath], one through us and one without us, the Torah says neither “it shall be done,” in the passive, nor “you shall do,” in the active.

On *Pesach* and *Rosh Chodesh*, a supernal coupling [also] occurs, but it occurs by itself, without our initiative. This is the meaning of the *Zohar*’s statement<sup>13</sup> that “the coupling that occurs on *Pesach* is not from our side.” Therefore, in the context of *Rosh Chodesh* and *Pesach*, the Torah says, “*above* the daily sacrifice *it shall be done*,” implying that (1) there is a supernal coupling and (2) it occurs by itself.

By the way, this also explains the difference between the Sabbath and *Rosh Chodesh* in the following way. On the Sabbath, the male principle predominates due to the influence of *Abba*, but on *Rosh Chodesh*, the female principle predominates due to the influence of *Ima*.

The Sabbath is a solar phenomenon, occurring every seventh day, while *Rosh Chodesh* is a lunar phenomenon, occurring when the moon begins its cycle anew.

This alluded to in the verse, “[The gate of the inner courtyard (of the Temple) will be closed during the six days of the workweek,] but on the Sabbath day it shall be opened and on the day of the [new] month it shall be opened.”<sup>14</sup> We see first in this verse the Name *Havayah* written in order in the context of the Sabbath, in the initials of the words “days of the workweek, but on the Sabbath day.”

These words read: *yemei hama’aseh u’veiyom haShabbat*. The initials of these words, in order, are *yud-hei-vav-hei*, the Name *Havayah*.

In the Name *Havayah* [written normally], the “male” letters *yud* and *vav* overpower the “female” letters *hei* and *hei*.

The four letters of the Name *Havayah* are associated with the four *partzufim* *Abba*, *Ima*, *Z’eir Anpin*, and *Nukva*, respectively. Thus, the *yud* and *vav* are “male” letters while the two *hei*’s are “female” letters. In the two couples, *yud-hei* and *vav-hei*, the male principle precedes and therefore dominates the female principle.

But in the context of *Rosh Chodesh*, it is written, “the Sabbath it shall be opened and on the day of the [new] month.” The initials of these words [also] spell

<sup>11</sup> Leviticus 25:12.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 23:2, 4, 37.

<sup>13</sup> 3:95b.

<sup>14</sup> Ezekiel 46:1.

the Name *Havayah*, but with the first *hei*, which is *Ima*, ruling over the *yud*, which is *Abba*.

These words read: *haShabbat yipatei'ach u'veyom ha-chodesh*. The initials of these words are *hei-yud-vav-hei*. This is the Name *Havayah* with the first two letters reversed, indicating the ascendancy of the female (*Ima*) over the male (*Abba*).

Returning to the main train of thought:

On *Shavuot*, marital relations are forbidden both by day and by night, as Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai states in the *Zohar*,<sup>15</sup> that we must stay up the whole night of *Shavuot* learning the Torah. This is because on the night of *Shavuot* we are preparing ornaments for the matron.

The Torah was given in the early morning. G-d had to wake us up to give us the Torah, and this is seen as a sign of disrespect for the Divine gift. In order to rectify this error, it is customary to stay of the night of *Shavuot* learning Torah in anticipation of the annually repeated revelation that occurs in the early morning.

A more mystical reason for this custom is the one mentioned here; we must prepare the “ornaments” for the matron, or bride. The giving of the Torah is the marriage between G-d (the groom) and the Jewish people (the bride); the flow of the Torah’s Divine insight and wisdom from G-d to us being analogous to the flow of vital seed from the groom to the bride on the wedding night.

It is stated in the *Zohar*<sup>16</sup> that G-d prepared Eve for her wedding with Adam by adorning her with 24 ornaments. (The numerical value of the word “and He brought her [*vayevi'eha*] to Adam”<sup>17</sup> is 24.) The primordial snake contaminated her with 24 types of venom. (The word “and I shall place *enmity* between you and her”<sup>18</sup> in G-d’s curse of the snake is spelled with the same letters as the word for “and He brought her,” and its numerical value is therefore also 24). When we received the Torah at Mt. Sinai, we were purified from the defilement of the snake—the fallen consciousness of self-orientation—and the 24 ornaments were restored to us, the new Eve. (The same word appears as initials of key phrases in the passages describing how these 24 ornaments were restored.)<sup>19</sup>

The 24 ornaments are listed in Isaiah 3:18-24.<sup>20</sup>

These 24 ornaments are manifest as the 24 books of the Bible (the 5 books of Moses, the 7 books of the prophets,<sup>21</sup> and the 9 books of the Writings<sup>22</sup>).<sup>23</sup> It is therefore customary to spend the night of *Shavuot* reading selections of these books (chiefly the beginning and end of each *parashah* of the Torah and book of the Prophets and Writings) plus selections from the Oral Law as well. (This is called *tikun*, “rectification” or restoration of the 24 ornaments of the bride.)

The “matron” is the female principle, the *Shechinah*, which is the collective soul of the Jewish people. The “bride” we are adorning by learning Torah on *Shavuot* night is thus essentially our individual selves and the Jewish people collectively.

Since we are busy with the workings of the supernal coupling on *Shavuot* night, marital relations are forbidden to us.

<sup>15</sup> 1:9a.

<sup>16</sup> 3:79a, 1:48b.

<sup>17</sup> Genesis 2:22.

<sup>18</sup> Genesis 3:15.

<sup>19</sup> See *Megaleh Amukot* 206.

<sup>20</sup> *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Ki Tisa* 16; Rashi on Exodus 31:18.

<sup>21</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel are considered one book in the Jewish tradition, as are 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings. The 12 minor prophets are considered one book.

<sup>22</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles are considered one book, and Ezra-Nehemiah are considered one book.

<sup>23</sup> *Midrash Tanchuma* and Rashi, *loc. cit.*

But [on *Shavuot*], *Z'eir Anpin* is not rectified by us but rather by *Ima*, as it is written, "...with the crown his mother [*Ima*] crowned him with on the day of his wedding."<sup>24</sup>

As above, *Shavuot* is the wedding day between G-d and Israel. During the Sabbath day, marital relations are forbidden because during the day we must effect the coupling by actively performing *mitzvot*. On *Shavuot*, this is not the case since the rectification of *Z'eir Anpin* occurs without us. G-d (through the *partzuf* of *Ima*) bestows upon *Z'eir Anpin* his crown, i.e., is delight and will vis-à-vis Torah study and observance of the commandments.

Therefore, marital relations are forbidden [on *Shavuot*] just as they are on *Yom Kippur*. This is the mystical meaning of the verse, "[she is my sister, my father's daughter,] but she is not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife."<sup>25</sup> The whole night there is no supernal coupling, for *Nukva* of *Z'eir Anpin* must immerse herself the following morning, as is explained in the *Zohar* there.<sup>26</sup>

The verse quoted was Abraham's answer to Abimelech as to why he referred to his wife, Sarah, as his sister. Sarah was Abraham's niece, i.e., his father's granddaughter, but through a different mother. Since granddaughters often call their grandfathers "father," Sarah could loosely be called Abraham's sister.

This alludes to the relationship between *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*. They are both "offspring" of *Abba* and *Ima*, and are therefore brother and sister in addition to groom and bride.

It is explained in the *Zohar*<sup>27</sup> that *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* may couple only when *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* are receiving consciousness ("light") from *Abba*. For only the extremely intense light of *Abba*, i.e., the pure light of the original insight, can expel the forces of evil that always seek to intervene and siphon off the flow from *Z'eir Anpin* to *Nukva*. Therefore, marital relations are chiefly encouraged on the Sabbath night, when *Abba* is shining into *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*. At such times, they are considered more the offspring of *Abba* than of *Ima* ("...not the daughter of my mother, and [therefore] she became my wife").

On Festival nights, however, when *Z'eir Anpin* is receiving consciousness chiefly from *Ima*, marital relations are not as encouraged. Specifically, on *Shavuot* day they are forbidden, for on *Shavuot* *Z'eir Anpin* is receiving chiefly from *Ima* as the Torah, G-d's intellect, is being given over to Israel.

The *Zohar* explains that the *mikveh* in which *Nukva* immerses is the fiftieth gate of understanding (*binah*, *Ima*), the level of Divine consciousness granted to us on *Shavuot* by virtue of the 49 gates of understanding we achieved on our own by counting the 49 days of the Omer.

The second tablets were given on *Yom Kippur*, so there is therefore an affinity between *Yom Kippur* and *Shavuot*. *Shavuot* is the culmination of the "new year" that began with *Pesach*, the renewal of the spring, while *Yom Kippur* is the completion of the new year of *Rosh Hashanah* (*Sukkot* and *Shemini Atzeret* are seen as just the revelation of the consciousness that was already elicited from on high during the ten days from *Rosh Hashanah* to *Yom Kippur*). Both *Yom Kippur* and *Shavuot* are therefore days of the giving of the Torah. (This could also be why the Arizal does not address in this passage what happens on *Sukkot* and *Shemini Atzeret*; they are just projections of *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* onto lower, conscious reality.)

But on the day of *Shavuot*, *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* couple solely through the influence of *Ima*.

*Ima* escorts *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* to the bridal chamber, so to speak. The powerful flow of intellect into our consciousness that occurs when the Torah is given on *Shavuot* serves as sufficient inspiration for the union of the emotions and their means of expression. The excitement over the new insights and understanding inspires us both to get emotionally involved with the Torah and seek to disseminate its message to outside reality.

<sup>24</sup> Song of Songs 3:11.

<sup>25</sup> Genesis 20:12, Rashi *ad loc.*

<sup>26</sup> *Zohar* 3:98b.

<sup>27</sup> 3:100b.

This explains the textual differences [we pointed out above] with regard to *Shavuot*. For since the coupling [of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*] occurs because of *Ima* and not *Abba*, it is not written, “above the daily offering.”

On *Shavuot*, *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* do not ascend to the level of *Abba*, only to the level of *Ima*. They are thus “above” their normal level (and therefore the *musaf* offerings are “ascending [*olah*]-offerings”) but not “above the above” (*al olat*).

And because we prepare the matron by night, it is written, “you shall do” [in the active sense], for we effect the rectification.

For this same reason, in the case of all the other festivals, the word “unblemished” is written before [mention of the daily offering], as it is written, “and seven one-year-old sheep, *unblemished*...[above/beside the daily offering].” But in the case of *Shavuot*, the word “unblemished” is not written until the end: “...beside the daily sacrifice and its meal offering you shall do them—they will be *unblemished* for you—with their libations.”<sup>28</sup> This is because they are not unblemished and completed until after we rectify the matron and she immerses in the morning. Only after this are they perfected and fully rectified. It is therefore written first “you shall do” and only after that “unblemished.”

In contradistinction to all the other festivals, the supernal union of *Shavuot* is especially dependent on our active participation (by “preparing the bride’s adornments” when we stay up the whole night).

—translated from *Sha’ar HaPesukim*

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<sup>28</sup> Numbers 28:31.

## *Parashat Pinchas* [third installment]

In this *parashah*, G-d gives the commandments regarding the division of the Land of Israel among the tribes, clans, and families of the Jewish people. After hearing these commandments, the five daughters of a man named Tzelofechad, who had not had any sons, argued that they, too, deserved a portion of the land.<sup>1</sup>

Know that Tzelofechad [personified] the source of the [fives] states of *gevurah*. This is alluded to by the fact that the letters of his name spell the words for “the shadow of fear” [*tzel pachad*].

Fear is the emotion associated with the attribute of *gevurah*.

His five daughters personified the five states of *gevurah*.

As we have seen previously, there are five states of *gevurah* in *binah* and *da'at*, which then become the *gevurah*-components of the five principal *sefirot* of the emotions, *chesed* to *hod*.

Specifically, they personify the five states of *gevurah* that remain within the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*, and do not enter *malchut*. Instead, other states of *gevurah* take their place and enter *malchut*, as is known.

The first set of states of *gevurah* that descend from *Ima* to *Z'eir Anpin* remain within it until they are “sweetened” by the states of *chesed* within *Z'eir Anpin*. They are then transferred to *Nukva*.

Therefore, Moses was unsure whether or not they deserved a portion in the land, i.e., in *malchut*.

The earth, and specifically the Land of Israel, personifies *malchut*. These five daughters personified the five states of *gevurah*, but there are iterations of the five states of *gevurah* that do not reach *malchut*, so Moses was not sure whether they personified the iterations that reach *malchut* or not.

G-d told him that since they do shine into *malchut*, they deserve a portion of the land.

Even the iterations of the five states of *gevurah* that do not themselves enter *malchut* shine some of their light into *malchut*, and therefore, no matter what iteration of the five states of *gevurah* the five daughters of Tzelofechad personified, they deserved a portion in the land.

Of these five states of *gevurah*, three of them are sweetened by the states of *chesed* [within *Z'eir Anpin*] and two are not, as is known.

The three that are sweetened were personified by the daughters Choglah, Milkah, and Tirtzah.

This is because Choglah means “she has a holiday” [*chag lah*]. She celebrates because she is sweetened.

Milkah's name indicates her essence.

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers 27:1-11.

*Milkah* can be vocalized *malkah*, “queen,” clearly associated with *malchut*, “sovereignty.”

Tirtzah means “will” and “lovingkindness.”

*Tirzah* means “she will want,” indicating goodwill and desirability, which is possible only if the *gevurah* has been sweetened by *chesed*.

The two that were not sweetened were Machlah and Noah.

*Machlah* can be interpreted to mean “she will be wiped out,” similar to “And he wiped out [*vayimach*] all life....”<sup>2</sup>

*Noah* is similar to [the words meaning “swaying”] in the verse, “The earth is swaying like a drunkard; [it is rocking to and fro like a hut. Its iniquity shall weigh it down, and it shall fall, to rise no more].”<sup>3</sup>

These two names are thus associated with states of *gevurah* that have not been sweetened with *chesed*.

—from *Sha’ar HaPesukim* and *Likutei Torah*

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<sup>2</sup> Genesis 7:23.

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 24:20.

## *Parashat Matot*

In the portion of the Torah read this week, G-d tells the Jewish people to battle the Midianites in vengeance for their assault chronicled at the end of *parashat Balak*. The Jews slew all the males in battle, and Moses instructed them further to slay all the male children and the females who had reached sexual maturity. G-d then told Moses:

“...count the booty that was captured, man and beast, and divide the booty equally between those who took the war upon them and went out to do battle and the rest of the community. You shall then take a levy for G-d: from the half-share of the soldiers who engaged in the campaign you shall take one item in five hundred—of persons, oxen, donkeys, and sheep—and give them to Eleazar the priest as a contribution to G-d. [In addition,] from the half-share of the other Israelites you shall take one portion of every fifty persons, cattle, donkeys, and sheep—all the animals—and give them to the Levites, who attend to the duties of G-d’s Tabernacle.”<sup>1</sup>

We must answer the following questions on this passage:

1. Since G-d said “divide the booty equally,” why did He then say “from *the half-share* of the soldiers...you shall take...and give them to Eleazar” when it would have been clear enough just to say “from the warriors...you shall take...and give them to Eleazar” without mentioning again that their portion was a half-share?
2. In the first case [i.e., that of the half-share of the soldiers] it is written: “one item in five-hundred,” while in the second [i.e., that of the civilians] it is written “one portion of every fifty.” Why the difference in expression?
3. Why, in fact, did G-d give Eleazar one in five hundred [i.e., two tenths of a percent], and the Levites one in fifty [i.e., two percent]?
4. Why, in describing the half-share of the civilians, is the expression “all the animals” added?
5. Why is the expression “levy” [*meches*] used<sup>2</sup> only in describing the half-share of the soldiers?

The exoteric answer to these questions is those who counted the half-share of the soldiers were not required to do so precisely.

As we will see, the expression “precisely” here does not mean that an exact count was not taken of the soldiers’ portion; it simply means that their contribution was taken from the overall total of their half-share rather than separated out as the counting was being done.

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers 31:25-30.

<sup>2</sup> As the Arizal points out, this expression used both here (in the commandment) and later (in the report of the fulfillment of the commandment, Numbers 31:39) only in the case of the portion of the soldiers.

They simply rounded off how many thousands of cattle there were [after the counting had been done] and calculated the levy accordingly. This is why the expression “levy” is used only with regard to the soldiers’ half.

The term “levy” (*meches*) is appropriate for a portion taken from an overall sum. This was done, as we will see, only with the soldiers’ half-share, and not with the civilians’.

This is also why it is written “from the half-share of the soldiers...”: this expression implies that the levy is to be taken from the general sum of the half-share, rounded off.

In the case of the civilians’ half-share, however, they had to count every item in detail, i.e., one by one. As they counted, every fiftieth item became the contribution to the Levites. [In other words,] this was done similar to the way tithes in general were required to be given the Levites, as it is written, “As to the tithe of the herd or the flock: of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth will be holy unto G-d.”<sup>3</sup> This is why the expression “one portion of every fifty” is used.

The Hebrew word for “portion” (*achuz*) literally means “that which is grabbed,” evoking the image of the one counting physically setting aside every fiftieth animal as they were passed in front of him to be counted.

Thus, the contributions were taken from the respective half-shares of the soldiers and the civilians in totally different ways: the half-share of the soldiers was counted, the sum was rounded off to the nearest thousand, and then the proper number of girls or animals was separated accordingly. In contrast, every fiftieth girl or animal was separated from the half-share of the civilians as it was being counted.

This difference accounts for the difference of expressions used in the commandments regarding the two half-shares. Still, we have only answered questions 1, 2, and 5 of the five above questions.

The esoteric explanation of the above, however, is the same as the mystical explanation of our sages’ statement that “[walking with] wide steps diminishes a man’s eyesight by one five-hundredth.”<sup>4</sup> This statement of our sages can be understood based on what is written in the *Zohar*<sup>5</sup> regarding how [*malchut*] extends her step outward. As we have explained on this passage,<sup>6</sup> this refers to when *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Z’eir Anpin* were together in the womb of their mother.

Both *Z’eir Anpin* and its *Nukva* are “children” of *Abba* and *Ima*, and here it is evident that they are in a sense “twins” in that *Ima* was pregnant with both of them at the same time. This phase in their development is alluded to in the first *hei* of the Name *Havayah*, which as we know corresponds to the *sefirah* of *binah* or its *partzuf*, *Ima*. The *hei* may be viewed as composed of a *dalet* (the top and right “leg”) and a small *vav* (the left, detached “leg”). Since the numerical value of the letter *vav* is 6, this small *vav* may be taken as an allusion to the six *sefirot* from *chesed* to *yesod*—i.e. *Z’eir Anpin*—as they exist *in utero* within *Ima*. However, the *Zohar* tells us, at a certain point this *vav* “grows” a projection at its lower extremity that extends outward. (The *hei* thus takes on the appearance somewhat of the letter *tav*, except that the left leg is of course still detached from the top and right leg.) This projection outward is the source of *malchut*—i.e. *Nukva*—within the womb of *Ima*. This projection at the “foot” of the *vav* is considered an outward “step.”

<sup>3</sup> Leviticus 27:32.

<sup>4</sup> *Berachot* 43b; *Shabbat* 113b.

<sup>5</sup> *Zohar* 3:203b.

<sup>6</sup> *Sha’ar Ma’amarei Rashbi*, *ad loc.*

There are, however, two instances of this phenomenon. The first is when [Nukva] is born and emerges out of [the womb of *Ima*, i.e.] the first *hei* [of the Name *Havayah*]. The second is when [Nukva] goes out [of the world of *Atzilut*], i.e., at the lower extremity of the [small] *vav* within the second *hei* [of the Name *Havayah*].

The Name *Havayah* depicts, as we have explained previously, the entire array of *partzufim* in the world of *Atzilut*. But, as we know, *malchut* (or its *partzuf*, *Nukva*) descends out of the world of *Atzilut* in order to create and then rectify the lower worlds. This aspect of *malchut* is represented graphically as the projection out of the left leg (the small *vav*) of the second *hei*.

These two letters *hei* form one *yud*, inasmuch as they both originate from *Abba*, the *yud* [of the Name *Havayah*].

The numerical value of *hei* is 5, so the *hei* of *binah* plus the *hei* of *malchut* equals 10, the numerical value of the letter *yud*. The two letters *hei* of the Name *Havayah* may thus be seen as lower manifestations of the *yud*. *Binah* can be considered to be a by-product of *chochmah* in that the subject matter of understanding is the initial insight of *chochmah*. *Malchut* is considered a product of *chochmah* in that expression is implicit in the insight. In contrast, the *midot* (out of which are formed the *partzuf* of *Z'eir Anpin*, represented by the *vav* in the Name *Havayah*) are more directly a result of *binah* rather than a manifestation of *chochmah*; the emotional response is elicited only when the full intellectual development of the idea in *binah* has occurred.

Since they are both [expressions of] judgment and severity, they are called “the booty that is captured.”

As we have explained previously, *binah* is primarily a process of evaluating, judging, accepting and rejecting. The person's previous way of thinking has to be evaluated in light of the new insight, and those aspects of his previous way of thinking that do not fit in with his new, higher perception of the truth have to be rejected, often painfully and ruthlessly.

Similarly, *malchut* is—as we have discussed previously—constructed out of the *gevurah*-aspects of the *sefirot* that precede it. This is because in order to express an idea through thought, speech, or action, there must be first a large amount of censoring and selecting. This is true in both directions: the infinite idea and its infinite implications, applications, and ramifications cannot all be expressed since expression is finite. In addition, in order to express the idea properly, the proper words or actions (e.g., colors on a canvas or notes in a composition) must be carefully selected. The improper choice of words, etc., could vastly distort the meaning. Therefore, the person must be very selective at this point.

Thus, in the context both of *binah* and *malchut*, the mental structures and thought-, speech-, and action-patterns chosen are called the “booty” of the war in which all unworthy pretenders to the role of vehicles of intellection or expression are eliminated.

And since they are divided into two letters *hei*, they were commanded to divide the booty in two: half for the upper [i.e. first] *hei* and half for the lower [i.e. second] *hei*.

Now, it is known that the kings of Edom emerged from the upper *hei*, *Ima*, which is termed “the land of Edom,” as is known. These kings, who are called the “soldiers,” died because of the extreme amount of *gevurah* and war in them, as is known.

The Arizal is here referring to the world of *Tohu*. As we have explained previously, this world collapsed because the *sefirot* that composed it were immature and could not properly interact; they were effectively at “war” with each other. This realm of creation is called Edom and its *sefirot* are called the kings of Edom since Edom is kingdom of Esau, the perpetually immature, wild twin of the mature and holy Jacob.

Although we usually conceive of the four letters of the Name *Havayah* as signifying the total array of *partzufim* of the world of *Atzilut*, in other contexts these letters are conceived of as depicting a much broader span of creation. As we have mentioned on an earlier occasion, the four ways the Name *Havayah* can be spelled out—yielding the four numerical values of 72, 63, 45 and 52—may themselves be aligned with the four letters of this Name:

letter	associated <i>sefirah</i>	associated value of spelling of the Name <i>Havayah</i>
<i>yud</i>	<i>chochmah</i>	72
<i>hei</i>	<i>binah</i>	63
<i>vav</i>	the <i>midot</i>	45
<i>hei</i>	<i>malchut</i>	52

In this scheme, each spelling of the Name *Havayah* produces a corresponding stage of creation. The spelling whose numerical value is 72 produces the level that precedes the world of *Tohu*; that whose numerical value is 63 produces the world of *Tohu*; that whose numerical value is 45 produces the masculine aspect of the world of *Tikun* or *Atzilut*; and that whose numerical value is 52 produces the feminine aspect of the world of *Tikun* or *Atzilut*. It is to this scheme that the Arizal refers when he says here that the kings of Edom issued from the upper *hei*.

In contrast, the other aspects of judgment and severity, which issue from the lower *hei*, are called “the community.” They inform the lower court, and they are more fragranced and sweetened. It is known that the lower court is called “the community,” as it is written, “G-d stands in the community of G-d.”<sup>7</sup>

The *gevurah* of *binah* is much more severe than that of *malchut*. In simple terms, this is because it is much more crucial to be selective and critical at the conceptual stage of the creative process than it is at the expressive stage. An error at the conceptual stage will have severe repercussions all down the chain of development. In contrast, if the conceptual stage was passed properly, a lot more latitude can be given to the final means of expression. Since the conceptual integrity of the process has been so zealously guarded, the strength and intensity of the concept will be able to shine through a much wider range of expression.

Thus, the upper judicial “court” of *binah* must be much stricter than the lower “court” of *malchut*.

The verse quoted from Psalms refers to the rabbinical court; we are taught that G-d’s presence is found, guiding the judgment and giving His approval to the decisions of the judges. The Name used for the first “G-d” in this verse is *Elokim*, the attribute of Divine justice. The “community of G-d” refers to the court.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse “You shall divide the booty equally between those who took the war upon them and went out to do battle and the rest of the community.”

The two letters *hei* of the Name *Havayah* split between them the “booty” they snatch from the *yud*. The first *hei* is indicated in this verse by the soldiers and the second by the civilians.

Now, there are always only five states of *gevurah*, i.e., from *chesed* to *hod*, as is known. These five states of *gevurah* pour into *yesod*, which is therefore termed “all” [*kol*]. Their numerical value is 50, since when they are there below [in *yesod*] each sub-divides into ten [sub-sub-*sefirot*].

The sub-*sefirot* of *gevurah* of the five *sefirot* of *chesed*, *gevurah*, *tiferet*, *netzach*, and *hod* descend into *yesod* and from there are passed to *malchut*, this being how the *partzuf* of *Nukva* is constructed. In the verses “To You, O G-d, is the greatness, and the power [*gevurah*], and the beauty [*tiferet*], and the eternity [*netzach*], and the glory

<sup>7</sup> Psalms 82:1.

[*hod*]. For all [*kol*] that is in heaven and on earth [is Yours]. Yours, O G-d, is the kingship [*mamlachah*, from *malchut*]...,”<sup>8</sup> the word “all” [*kol*] signifies *yesod*. This is because, as we said, *yesod* coalesces the flow of the preceding five *sefirot*, in our case the sub-*sefirot* of *gevurah* within them. The numerical value of this word [*kuf-lamed*] is 50. This alludes to the sub-division of these 5 states of *gevurah* each into a full array of 10 *sefirot*.

In contrast, when [these states of *gevurah*] are above, in *Ima*, the upper *hei*, each sub-divides into one hundred [sub-sub-sub-*sefirot*], giving 500.

Although while *in utero* within *Ima* the *partzufim* of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* are not fully developed, their consciousness is nonetheless far more expansive than it will be when they are “born” and emerge from the womb. This is because *Ima* is abstract intellect, while *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* are merely the emotional reactions and expression of this intellect. Thus, the sub-*sefirot* of the *sefirot* which will form *Z’eir Anpin* (*chesed* to *yesod*) exist in the womb of *Ima* in a higher level of differentiation and complexity, indicating their superior intensity of intellect there. Each sub-*sefirah* divides into ten sub-sub-*sefirot*, and then these ten further sub-divided into a hundred sub-sub-sub-*sefirot*.

This is why the portion taken from the soldiers is one five-hundredth and that taken from the civilians is one-fiftieth.

The soldiers personify the states of *gevurah* within the womb of *binah*, while the civilians personify the states of *gevurah* within *yesod*, on their way to *malchut*. We have now answered question #3 above.

Now, *malchut* is referred to “the wide step,” as we mentioned.

*Malchut* is the projection at the lower end of the small *vav* (which indicates *Z’eir Anpin*) of the *hei*. Since this projection extends outward, it is called the “wide step” outward from the *hei*.

This wide step “diminishes man’s eyesight by one five-hundredth.” “Man” refers to *Z’eir Anpin*. He is considered the husband of *malchut*, for she receives her light and beneficence from the above-mentioned soldiers from him and through him. This occurs when they are both above, within [the womb of] *Ima*.

As we said, the five states of *gevurah* in the *sefirot* of *Z’eir Anpin* as it exists *in utero* within *Ima* each undergo two tenfold iterations, giving  $5 \times 10 \times 10 = 500$  sub-states. Thus, *Z’eir Anpin* at this stage may be said to possess 500 parts of life-force, or “eyesight.” *Malchut* at this stage receives one portion of these 500, and may thus be said to reduce *Z’eir Anpin*’s life-force or eyesight by one five-hundredth.

At this stage, *malchut* is called *nefesh*, based on what we have explained elsewhere, that while she is there she possesses only the Name *Havayah* spelled out with the letter *hei*, which is called *nefesh*.

The numerical value of the Name *Havayah* spelled out with the letter *hei* is 52 (*yud-vav-dalet hei-hei vav-vav hei-hei*,  $10+6+4 + 5+5 + 6+6 + 5+5 = 52$ ). As we saw above, this spelling-out corresponds to the *sefirah* of *malchut*.

Now, the four letters of G-d’s Name *Havayah* also correspond to the five levels of the soul:

letter	associated sefirah	associated value of spelling of the Name <i>Havayah</i>	level of the soul
upper tip of the <i>yud</i>	<i>keter</i>		<i>yechidah</i>
<i>yud</i>	<i>chochmah</i>	72	<i>chayah</i>
<i>hei</i>	<i>binah</i>	63	<i>neshamah</i>
<i>vav</i>	the <i>midot</i>	45	<i>ruach</i>
<i>hei</i>	<i>malchut</i>	52	<i>nefesh</i>

<sup>8</sup> 1 Chronicles 29:10-12.

Thus, the Name *Havayah* whose numerical value is 52 is associated with the soul-level of *nefesh*.

This is why it is written [with regard to the portion taken from the soldiers], “one item in five hundred.”

The word used for “item” in this verse is *nefesh*. We have thus answered now question #2 above.

This is also why this portion is given to Eleazar the priest, as it is written, “give them to Eleazar the priest as a contribution to G-d.” The priest is the personification of *chesed*, which serves to develop this portion into a full-fledged “contribution to G-d” in the sense of something separated.<sup>9</sup>

We have explained previously that the priests (*kohanim*) express the Divine attribute of loving-kindness (*chesed*) while the Levites express the attribute of severity (*gevurah*). By giving this embryonic version of *malchut* to *chesed*, the love *Z’eir Anpin* showers on it causes it to grow and develop until, at birth, it emerges as an independent *partzuf* and not just an appendage sticking out of the lower extremity of *Z’eir Anpin*. (This process is obviously re-enacted in the way Eve is created out of Adam in the garden of Eden.)

The word used in this verse for “contribution” is *terumah*, which literally means “a portion lifted up and out of the mass from which it is taken.” Thus, giving the one-five-hundredth to Eleazar signifies the making of *malchut* into an independent entity of *Z’eir Anpin*.

In contrast, [at the later stage of her development,] when [*malchut*] is depicted as the “wide step” protruding from the lower *hei*, she does not take anything from the soldiers [i.e., the states of *gevurah* within the womb of *Ima*]. She takes only from her husband, *Z’eir Anpin*, who is called “Israel,” as in the mystical meaning of the verse: “before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.”<sup>10</sup>

Once *malchut* has emerged and is developing as *partzuf* in her own right, her development does not depend on any influx from her *in utero* origins within *Ima*. Both she and *Z’eir Anpin* have severed themselves from the world of intellect and are now developing their own personalities as emotions and expression, respectively. At this stage, *malchut* (in the process of becoming the fully-developed *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin*) is developed out of *Z’eir Anpin*, the emotions.

The verse quoted here refers to the account of the primordial kings of Edom/*Tohu*. This world existed prior to the maturation stage of *partzufim*. The *partzuf* of *Z’eir Anpin* is called “Israel.”

She therefore takes only one fiftieth, since she receives her influx from *yesod* [of *Z’eir Anpin*], which is alluded to by the word “all” [*kol*], whose numerical value is 50.

It is therefore written here “one portion,” for she clings to and depends upon at this point the lower extremity of the letter *vav*, i.e., *yesod* [of *Z’eir Anpin*]. This is in contrast to the stage [*in utero*] described above, when *malchut* is receiving her life-force from the soldiers.

This is the continuation of the mystical answer to question #2. As above, the word for “portion” here [*achuz*] literally means “that which is grabbed,” evoking the image of *malchut* hanging on to the *yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin* in order to receive all the influx necessary for her growth and development.

<sup>9</sup> See *Zohar* 3:77b.

<sup>10</sup> Genesis 36:31.

This is why the portion [taken from the civilians] is given to the Levites. They are the legions of *malchut*, the supernal choristers, as is known.

While the priests performed their duties in the Temple silently, the Levites composed the orchestra and choir. They thus expressed the emotions that accompanied the sacrificial service. As such, they were obviously instruments of *malchut*, the *sefirah* of expression.

Let us now complete the explanation of the statement of our sages regarding how walking with wide steps diminishes a person's eyesight by one five-hundredth. They go on to say that this lacking is restored when he makes *kiddush* on the Sabbath evening. The mystical explanation of this is as follows: On Friday, *Z'eir Anpin* was producing demons, spirits and succubae, as is known, but when the day was sanctified and it became the Sabbath evening, he ceased producing forces of evil and coupled with *malchut*. It was then that his eyesight returned to him.

We are taught that the forces of evil—the “demons,” etc.—were created in the last moments on Friday just before Shabbat. In other words, they were created from the final, lowest and weakest energies of creation, after G-d's creative power had been “spent,” so to speak, in creating the holiness of the world. It is for this reason we are instructed to begin Shabbat every week early, for in this way we cut off the source of the power of evil before it has a chance to propagate.

Adam and Eve were created on Friday. The usual explanation of the primordial sin is that Adam and Eve engaged in sexual relations before they were intended to, that is, they copulated on Friday afternoon instead of waiting for the holy day of Shabbat. By engaging in marital relations outside of the context of holiness, they “profaned” them, i.e., approached them from the perspective of personal gratification, and thus actualized the world's latent potential of egocentricity and evil.

However, in certain sources, it is said that Adam did not copulate on Friday with Eve at all, but with Lilith, a precursor of his true wife. She was the personification of egocentricity, as exemplified by the fact that she insisted on being on top of Adam during their copulation. She thus introduced the element of self-awareness into the sublime experience of marital relations, and the offspring of their union was the various forces of evil that spread throughout creation. On Shabbat, Adam engaged in marital relations with his true wife, Eve.

Adam is the earthly personification of *Z'eir Anpin* and Eve the personification of the *Nukva* of *Z'eir Anpin*, so this whole episode reflects the spiritual process of creation. As we said, on Friday *Z'eir Anpin* will produce forces of evil unless we begin Shabbat earlier than the moment it technically begins in order to cut off these forces. Shabbat itself, especially the holy union of husband and wife (reflecting the union of G-d and Israel, *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*) also serves to cut off the source of life-force of the forces of evil. By coupling with his mate, *Nukva*, *Z'eir Anpin* is in a sense reuniting with the one-five-hundredth of his life-force she took from him in order to emerge as an independent *partzuf* from the womb of *Ima*. Thus, by sanctifying Shabbat, his “eyesight” is restored.

It could also be that the Arizal is here alluding to the statement of our sages that improper issue of semen (i.e., other than to one's wife, and then only when she is permitted to him) diminishes a person's eyesight. Focusing on women other than one's wife is a misuse of the power of sight, and misusing one's G-d-given powers weakens them. By focusing one's love and sexuality intensely on one's spouse, which, as we said, is the essence of the Sabbath—the reunion of the Divine and earthly couple—one rectifies his power of eyesight, and its power is restored.

—translated from *Sha'ar HaPesukim* and *Likutei Torah*

## *Parashat Matot* [second installment]

In the portion of the Torah read this week, we read that the tribes of Reuven and Gad asked Moses to remain on the east bank of the Jordan river rather than cross the Jordan to inherit the promised land. Moses, after making certain stipulations, agreed to their request, and thus these two tribes—together with half the tribe of Menasheh—received as their territory areas outside the technical boundary of the holy land.

We must know what distinguished these tribes, the sons of Gad, the sons of Reuven, and half of the tribe of Menasheh, that they took their inheritance in Transjordan. In the course of this explanation, we will explain the difference between the land of Israel and Transjordan.

The land of Israel is [the physical manifestation of] *Nukva* of *Z'eir Anpin*. She comprises ten sub-*sefirot*, as is known. Her height is the same as that of *Z'eir Anpin*.

As is known, the top of *Z'eir Anpin*'s head is level with the midpoint of *tiferet* of *Ima*. Therefore, when *Nukva* is the same height as her “husband,” the top of her head is likewise level with the same point, half the height of *Ima*.

*Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* are the same height on the Sabbath, on Festivals, and on the New Moon.

When we consider only the conscious *sefirot*, i.e., those from *chochmah* on down, the midpoint of *tiferet* a *partzuf* is automatically the midpoint of the entire *partzuf*.

<i>chochmah</i>
<i>binah</i>
<i>chesed</i>
<i>gevurah</i>
<i><b>tiferet</b></i>
<i>netzach</i>
<i>hod</i>
<i>yesod</i>
<i>malchut</i>

Thus, left [exposed,] above [*Z'eir Anpin*,] we have *keter*, *chochmah*, and half of *binah*.

I.e., the *partzuf* of *Arich Anpin*, the *partzuf* of *Abba*, and half the *partzuf* of *Ima*.



yesod-malchut

Thus, the full stature of the land of Israel, i.e., of the ten sub-*sefirot* of *Nukva* of *Z'eir Anpin* of *Atzilut*, extends from the midpoint of *tiferet* of *Z'eir Anpin* of *Atzilut* until the midpoint of *netzach* of the world of *Beriah*.

Remaining [below *Nukva*] are thus three and a half *sefirot*.

As we have explained, *malchut* of *Beriah* is always vested in the chamber of the holy of holies of *Yetzirah*.

The “holy of holies” of any world is the *keter* of that world.

Similarly, the *malchut* of *Yetzirah* is [always vested] in the chamber of the holy of holies of *Asiyah*. And similarly [above], *malchut* of *Atzilut* is [vested] in the holy of holies of *Beriah*.

It therefore follows that there are in fact only two and a half [“exposed”] *sefirot* remaining in *Beriah* outside the border of the land of Israel, i.e., of [the *partzuf* of] *malchut* of *Atzilut*.

This is so since the *malchut* of *Beriah* is vested inside the *keter* of *Yetzirah*. The only “exposed” *sefirot* in *Beriah* are thus the lower half of *netzach*, *hod*, and *yesod*.

Corresponding to this [phenomenon,] two and a half tribes remained outside the land of Israel.

Still, we must understand why [specifically] Gad, Reuven, and half the tribe of Menasheh were those who remained outside the land of Israel. The reason is as follows:

First the Arizal discusses the case of the tribe of Reuven.

It is stated in the *Zohar*<sup>2</sup> that when Jacob was conceiving Reuven, he thought he was conceiving Joseph, because Laban had substituted Leah for Rachel.

Jacob intended to marry Rachel, but Laban tricked him into marrying Leah first. Jacob had intended that his first child would be the result of his union with Rachel; i.e., he wanted his firstborn to be a blend of his and Rachel’s qualities. Therefore, on his wedding night, Jacob tried to draw down the soul that would be elicited by his union with Rachel—that of Joseph. But in fact, of course, he was not copulating with Rachel, so this did not work.

Therefore, the drop of semen [bearing the spiritual consciousness] of his firstborn did not issue from him [at that time], as it is written: “Unstable as water, you shall not excel.”<sup>3</sup>

This is part of Jacob’s rebuke of Reuven on his deathbed.

<sup>2</sup> 1:155a, in *Sitrei Torah*.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 49:3.

The mystical meaning of this verse is as follows: There are two orifices in *yesod*. Through one passes the semen, and through the other passes the clouded water, i.e., the urine. When the seminal drop of Reuven issued from Jacob, it issued through the water-orifice, and became somewhat dissolved there. Thus, [Jacob] said: “You became diluted like water, therefore you shall not excel,” because the drop [from which you developed] was diluted when it issued via the water-orifice.

Mystically, Jacob is telling Reuven that since his soul was diluted by passing through the water-orifice, he cannot be rightfully considered the firstborn in the complete sense. And in fact we find that (1) the priestly service, originally the birthright of the firstborn of the family, passed to the tribe of Levi; (2) with regards to inheritance, the double portion that is the birthright of the firstborn passed to Joseph (who split into two tribes, Ephraim and Menasheh, and thus received a double portion of the land of Israel); and (3) the political leadership was given to the tribe of Judah. Only with regard to being first in the tribal listings did Reuben remain first.

Thus, although Reuven was indeed the firstborn, issuing from *yesod* [of *Z’eir Anpin*, physically manifest as Jacob], he acquired something of the nature of the water-orifice [from which he issued], which, as you know, expels the leftover impurities, in order to give sustenance to the external forces [i.e., evil].

Evil subsists on very low-grade spiritual energy (otherwise it would lose its identity as evil). This low-grade spirituality is the leftover impurities rejected from the realm of holiness.

This is why Reuven inherited his place outside the [holy] land [of Israel], in Transjordan. This idea is alluded to in the *Zohar*.<sup>4</sup>

We will now see that this concept of issuing from the “wrong” orifice actually occurred in Reuven’s case *not* just at the level of *yesod* but at the level of *da’at*. Since *da’at* coalesces the *sefirot* of *chochmah* and *binah* so that they can together produce the subsequent *sefirot*, just as *yesod* coalesces the *sefirot* from *chesed* to *hod* so that they can together produce the subsequent world, *da’at* may be considered a sort of “higher” *yesod*.

Now, Reuven originates in the supernal *da’at*, i.e., the *da’at* situated between *chochmah* and *binah* of *Z’eir Anpin*.

*Da’at* is situated between (and slightly below) *chochmah* and *binah*, indicating that it facilitates the union between these two *sefirot*.

[*Da’at*] also possesses two orifices, similar to what we have described regarding *yesod*. Reuven originated from the second, [lesser] orifice. This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “My brothers betrayed me like a stream [that occasionally dries up].”<sup>5</sup> The supernal “stream” is *binah*, which is embodied in the letter *alef*. This is the *alef* that is missing in the phrase “luck has come.”

*Alef* as a word means “teaching” and thus may be considered to allude to the intellect, the chief *sefirah* of which is *binah*. More specifically, however, *alef* is usually taken to refer to *chochmah*. So, perhaps the *alef* here is referring specifically to the *chochmah*, the source of the intellect, the seminal drop of insight that was not fully present in Jacob’s union with Leah.

When Leah’s maidservant Zilpah gave birth to Gad, Leah exclaimed, “luck has come.”<sup>6</sup> The normal way of spelling such a phrase is as two words: “has come”-“luck” (since the verb usually precedes the subject in Biblical Hebrew). These two words would then be spelled: *beit-alef gimel-dalet*, pronounced “*ba gad*,” this being the source

<sup>4</sup> 1:244b.

<sup>5</sup> Job 6:15.

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 30:11.

for the name Gad. However, in the Biblical text, the two words elide into one, compound word, spelled *beit-gimel-dalet*. (Linguistically, although a rare occurrence, this can be justified since the *alef* is a “vowel-letter” and does occasionally drop out in certain grammatical forms.) Significantly, however, this three-letter word is in fact another word, the past tense of the verb “to betray.” Thus, Leah’s exclamation can be read: “He betrayed!” It is as if the Torah deliberately combined the two words in order to allude to this additional layer of meaning.

Thus, the absence of the expected *alef* from this two-word-become-one-word phrase indicates that there was a betrayal.

[Leah was thus saying that] this stream was betrayed because it did not receive the seminal drop from the seminal orifice of *da’at* but from the water-orifice. Reuven thus resulted from this betrayal of the supernal stream, i.e., *binah*.

Similarly, in the lower [*sefirah* of] *yesod*, from which Gad issued, this same betrayal occurred, in that he issued from the water-orifice of the lower *yesod*. When Rachel gave her maidservant Bilhah to Jacob, she asked him first, as it is written, “Now, then, please consort with my maidservant.”<sup>7</sup> However, when Leah gave her maidservant Zilpah to Jacob, it was without his permission, as it is written, “And she took Zilpah, her maidservant, and gave her to Jacob as a wife.”<sup>8</sup> Jacob thought he was copulating that night with Leah; thus Gad was conceived under deception. The second time Jacob copulated with Zilpah, he knew about it and consented, so his second son by her, Asher, corrected this mistake. This is alluded to by the fact that the letter that compose his name [*alef-shin-reish*] permute to spell the word for “head” [*rosh, reish-alef-shin*], indicating that the relations that led to his birth were conducted with proper mental intention.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “My brothers betrayed me like an [intermittent] stream.” [The brothers alluded to in this verse are] the tribe of Gad, who issued from the *yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin* to its *Nukva*. They betrayed [her] similar to the betrayal that occurred above—with Reuven—to the supernal stream of *binah*. Thus, there were two betrayals, one above and one below, which resulted in the births of Reuven and Gad.

The verse may thus be read: “My brothers [i.e., the tribe of Gad] betrayed me [i.e., *Nukva*, the lower stream] just like [Reuven betrayed *Ima*,] the [higher] stream.”

Now, it is known that Gad originates in Jacob’s right ankle, this being the mystical meaning of the verse: “Gad: troops will march forth from him, and he will march back, [turning] on the heel,”<sup>9</sup> as is mentioned in the *Zohar*. The heel expresses the attributes of *gevurah* and judgment, as is known.

The heel is a relatively insensitive part of the body. The heel has therefore always been considered a vulnerable part of the body, susceptible to attack and conquest by the enemy, as was the case when the angel of Esau wrestled Jacob and sprained his thigh.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 16:2. This is actually a quote from Sarah’s request to Abraham to consort with her maidservant, Hagar. However, it is clear from Rashi on Genesis 30:3 that Rachel sought to imitate Sarah in this respect.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 30:9.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 49:19.

This is why Gad issued from the orifice otherwise reserved for [apportioning Divine energy to] the external forces. This is also why “Jacobs’ thigh was sprained,”<sup>10</sup> for Gad is situated on the right thigh.

We have explained elsewhere the statement in the *Zohar*<sup>11</sup> that “Jacob’s thigh was sprained” refers to Nadav and Avihu, [the two sons of Aaron]. Therefore, when they died, [their souls were] impregnated into Elijah the prophet, who was from the tribe of Gad, because Gad caused this catastrophe.

The Arizal now turns to discuss why half the tribe of Menasheh also inherited in Transjordan.

Menasheh is also associated with Jacob’s sprained thigh, as seen by the fact that the word for “sprained” [*nasheh*] is related to his name, *Menasheh*, as it is written, ““because God caused me to forget all my hardship and all my father’s household.””<sup>12</sup>

The word *nasheh* means “moved” or “dislocated.” When Joseph named his firstborn son Menasheh, he said that is was “because God caused me to forget all my hardship and all my father’s household.” To forget is to have prior knowledge removed or dislocated from the sphere of one’s memory or consciousness.

Therefore, he, too, settled outside the holy land. True, Menasheh issued from seminal orifice of *yesod*, but he, [like Reuven] was half water. Therefore, only half of the tribe of Menasheh settled outside the holy land.

This is because Menasheh was the son of Osnat, who in turn was the daughter of Dinah and Shechem.

Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, was raped by Shechem, the son of Chamor the Hivite.<sup>13</sup> Their union produced a daughter, Osnat, whom we find later as the adopted daughter of Potiphar in Egypt.<sup>14</sup> Osnat married Joseph;<sup>15</sup> Joseph thus married his niece. Through Osnat, Joseph had Menasheh and Ephraim.

Half of Osnat, [i.e., the part of her personality she inherited] from Shechem was rooted in evil, while the half of her from Dinah was rooted in holiness. Now, Joseph was entirely holiness, so when he copulated with Osnat and Menasheh was born, Menasheh inherited from his mother her half evil side and from his father half of his holiness. When Joseph and Osnat later conceived Ephraim, Ephraim inherited from his mother her half holy side and from his father his the other half of his holiness; he was thus entirely holy.

Thus, Menasheh was genetically half holy and half evil, while Ephraim was genetically wholly holy.

Therefore, when Joseph brought Menasheh and Ephraim to Jacob to be blessed, “he took...Ephraim on his right, to Israel’s [i.e., Jacob’s] left, and Menasheh on his left, to Israel’s right.... But Israel extended his right hand and put

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 32:26.

<sup>11</sup> 1:148b.

<sup>12</sup> Genesis 41:51.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 34:2.

<sup>14</sup> *Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer* 38; *Midrash Agadah, Bereishit* 41, 45.

<sup>15</sup> Genesis 41:45.

it on Ephraim's head, although he was the younger, and his left hand on Menasheh's head."<sup>16</sup>

Since Menasheh was the firstborn, Joseph presented him to Jacob so that he would be at Jacob's right, and thus receive the stronger blessing than would Ephraim. Jacob, however, crossed his hands.

Jacob said to him, "I know, my son, I know: [Menasheh] will also...become great, but his younger brother will become greater than he."<sup>17</sup>

Because Menasheh inherited the defilement of Shechem via his mother Osnat, he was not fit for the primogeniture.

Therefore, [i.e., because he was only half holy,] only half of his descendants, the tribe of Menasheh, entered the holy land.

The allusion to this may be found in the verse, "for he had provided recesses around the outside of the wall of the Temple."<sup>18</sup> The word for "recesses" begins with the initials of the three tribes Menasheh, Gad, and Reuven.

These "recesses" in the wall of the Temple were indentations in the wall's thickness, providing a support for crossbeams. The word thus denotes a lacking.

The Hebrew for "recesses" is *migra'ot* (*mem-gimel-reish-ayin-vav-tav*). The first three of these six letters are the initials of the three tribes that did penetrate (or penetrate fully) into the holy land of Israel.

All the above is a very graphic illustration of the importance of focusing on one's spouse during relations. The fact that Jacob thought he was having relations with someone else when he conceived Reuven and Gad resulted in their being spiritually unfit to inherit the land of Israel.

—translated from *Sha'ar HaPesukim*, *Sefer HaLikutim*, and *Ta'amei HaMitzvot*

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* 48:13-14.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* 48:19.

<sup>18</sup> 1 Kings 6:6.

## *Parashat Matot* [third installment]

This portion of the Torah opens with a description of the methods by which certain types of oaths (*shavuah*) and vows (*neder*) may be annulled.

Know that even though it is stated in the *Zohar*<sup>1</sup> that oaths occur in *Nukva* of *Z'eir Anpin* and vows in the supernal *Ima*, i.e., *binah*, in principle both occur in *Nukva* of *Z'eir Anpin*. This is alluded to by the verse, "...her husband will confirm it and her husband will annul it"<sup>2</sup>—whether "it" be a vow or an oath.

Her "husband" refers to *Z'eir Anpin*, so the subject must be *Nukva* of *Z'eir Anpin*.

As we have mentioned previously, the feminine aspect of the psyche is the drive within us to actualize G-d's purpose in creation, making reality into His home. However, as we have also mentioned, this drive must be coupled with an equal drive to *escape* the mundane reality of this world in favor of the abstract reality of spirituality; this is the male drive within us. The coupling is necessary because left to itself, the drive to make separate reality into G-d's home would have us penetrate further and further into the darkness of materiality, endangering us to becoming sucked into it as the memory of Divine experience fades.

Therefore, as the sages say, "vows ensure asceticism,"<sup>3</sup> meaning that it behooves us all to set boundaries for ourselves as we prepare to venture into the world of materiality in order to conquer it for G-d's purposes.

Thus, the Arizal explains this constructive force of vows and oaths with reference to their salutary effect on *Nukva*, the feminine archetype.

(The technical difference between a vow and an oath is that a vow is a promise a person makes with regard to a specific object, while an oath is a promise he makes with regard to his own behavior.)

The mystical explanation [of vows and oaths] is as follows:

Vapor issues from the mouth of *Z'eir Anpin* and becomes light that encompasses the seven lower sub-*sefirot* of his *Nukva*. These are the seven "vanities" mentioned in the [opening of the] book of Ecclesiastes.

The word for "vapor" (*hevel*) also means "vanity," i.e., "something of no substance." The Book of Ecclesiastes opens: "Vanity of vanities, says Kohelet, vanity of vanities, all is vanity." The word "vanity" occurs in the singular three times in this verse, and twice in the plural (as the word "vanities"). If we take each plural to mean 2, the minimum plural, then we have seven vanities.

Here, though, the word is taken in its primary meaning of "vapor."

They issue from the mouth of *Z'eir Anpin*. This is the mystical significance of a true oath. It is a positive commandment to make a true oath in the Name of G-d [when the Torah requires it], as it is written, "...and you will swear by His Name."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 2:91b.

<sup>2</sup> Numbers 30:14.

<sup>3</sup> *Avot* 3:13.

<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 10:20.

The word for “oath” (*shavuah*) is related to the word for “seven” (*sheva*), and can be interpreted as the passive form of that word, i.e., as if it meant “seventhed,” and “to take an oath” means “to seventh oneself.” Mystically, this refers to enveloping the seven lower *sefirot* of *Nukva* with the vapor from the mouth of *Z’eir Anpin*.

The seven vapors of her enveloping light issue from the mouth of *Z’eir Anpin*, which is referred to as “truth.” Thus, someone who makes a true oath elicits light-vapor from the mouth of *Z’eir Anpin*, which manifests as seven vapors that envelop the seven lower sub-*sefirot* of *Nukva*, as a light that envelops her body. Her stature is from the chest of *Z’eir Anpin* downward, as is known.

And therefore the light that issues from his mouth can envelop her completely as it descends.

In her immature stage, *Nukva* is only as “tall” as the *midot* of *Z’eir Anpin*. She expresses only what he feels.

Thus, “oaths” occur in *Nukva* [of *Z’eir Anpin*], but issue to her from her husband, *Z’eir Anpin*. Therefore Scripture states, “her husband will confirm it and her husband will annul it.”

[Such an oath] is also termed “a true oath” because it is an enveloping light, and, as is known, all enveloping lights are derived from the Name *Ekyeh*, and the numerical value of the name *Ekyeh* squared is the numerical value of the word for “truth” [*emet*], as is known.

*Ekyeh*: alef-hei-yud-hei = 1 + 5 + 10 + 5 = 21.

$21^2 = 441$ .

*Emet*: alef-mem-tav = 1 + 40 + 400 = 441.

What is written in the *Zohar*<sup>5</sup> about the verse “And now, let the power of my L-rd be magnified,”<sup>6</sup> is also known, namely, that *malchut* is referred to as “the power of my L-rd” [i.e., the power of the Name *Adni*, which means “my L-rd”]. This is because [*malchut*] is also known as Bath Sheba [“the daughter of seven”], and in each of her seven lower sub-*sefirot* is manifest a Name *Havayah*. Seven Names *Havayah* comprise 28 letters. Thus, [all seven collectively] are termed “the power of *Havayah*,” and that is why she is called Bath Sheba. Understand this.

*Malchut/Nukva* is associated with the Name *Adni*, for “kingship” and “sovereignty” (the translation of *malchut*) is allied in meaning with “lordship.” The numerical value of the word for “power” (*koach*: kaf-chet = 20 + 8) is 28. The 28 letters in the 7 Names *Havayah* (each possessing 4 letters) thus allude to the “power” of this Name. True, the verse refers to “the power of *Adni*,” not “the power of *Havayah*,” but since the Name *Havayah* is pronounced (everywhere outside the Holy Temple) as if it were the Name *Adni*, this substitution is legitimate.

*Bath Sheba* literally means “the daughter of seven,” but the Hebrew “son of”/“daughter of” can idiomatically also mean “one who is relevant to” or “master of,” as in *bar/bat mitzvah* meaning “one who is required to do *mitzvot*.” In this context, *malchut* is called *bat-sheva* since it is the seventh of the *midot* and its seven sub-*sefirot* express “the power of *Havayah*.”

Thus, mystically, an oath gives the seven *midot* of *Nukva* the enveloping power of the Name *Ekyeh* and the inner power of the Name *Havayah*. Her emotions can thus remain pure and impervious to pollution by the material world.

<sup>5</sup> *Tikunei Zohar* 74b

<sup>6</sup> Numbers 14:17.

[...]

Now, the [mystical] meaning of a vow is different. Know that there are three different types of light that issue from *Arich Anpin* and reach the intellect of *Z'eir Anpin*.

*Arich Anpin* is the *partzuf* of the will. It is instrumental in the construction of the subsequent *partzufim* for the will is the foundation of all intellectual and emotional development. Without will, the intellect and emotions dry up and wither.

The first is the radiance that issues from the supernal *chesed* of *Atik* and extends until the 13<sup>th</sup> rectification of the beard of *Arich Anpin*, which is called the *mazal*, and from there a radiance is drawn down until the *da'at* situated between *Abba* and *Ima* and serves to unite and couple them together.

Then with the power [of this radiance], *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima* become the intellect in the brain of *Z'eir Anpin* when it matures, as is known.

The second [light that issues from *Arich Anpin*] is the radiance that issues from the inner dimension of *mocha setima'ah* of *Arich Anpin* via the hairs of its head and of its beard. These extend until the head of *Z'eir Anpin*, as is known, and shine into the intellect of *Z'eir Anpin*.

*Mocha setima'ah* means “the hidden brain,” and refers to *chochmah* of *Arich Anpin*.

The third [light] is the radiance that issues from the inner light in the forehead of *Arich Anpin*, i.e., that originates in the brain of *Arich Anpin* and pierces its forehead and issues from it. It extends until the forehead of *Z'eir Anpin*, and shines into the intellect of *Z'eir Anpin* itself—that exists within its forehead. It destroys all aspects of severe judgment present on [*Z'eir Anpin's*] forehead, as is known.

The forehead of *Arich Anpin* is seen as one of the places from which the good will of *Arich* shines downward into the lower *partzufim*. In contrast, the forehead of *Z'eir Anpin* is seen as the expression of his power to make resolutions, for good or for bad. Brazenness, for example, is resoluteness in doing bad, and the prophets chastise Israel for their “brazen foreheads.”<sup>7</sup> The resoluteness of the forehead of *Z'eir Anpin* therefore needs to be “sweetened” of all its negative potentials. This is accomplished by having the forehead of *Arich Anpin*—which is pure good will—onto the forehead of *Z'eir Anpin*.

Now we will explain the idea of a vow. Just as *Arich Anpin* looks out and shines forth from its forehead of goodwill toward the forehead of *Z'eir Anpin* and its intellect, so does *Z'eir Anpin* look out toward the forehead of its *Nukva* in order to shine his three intelligences to her.

To explain: after the “oath of truth,” her body is completed, that is, her seven lower sub-*sefirot*. Then, after this, her three upper sub-*sefirot* are completed [by the “vow”]. She is then equal [in stature] to *Z'eir Anpin* and stands face to face with him.

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<sup>7</sup> Isaiah 48:4.

Then, a radiance issues from within his brain—which is situated behind his forehead—and issues forth from his forehead. From there, it “looks at” the forehead of *Nukva*, and this light then enters through her forehead, and shines into her three [levels of] intellect.

So we see here that true, legitimate vows and oaths are positive acts, which contribute to the maturation of the soul.

—translated from *Sha’ar Ruach HaKodesh*

## *Parashat Devarim*

In the book of Genesis, G-d promises to Abraham the land of Canaan, which comprises the territory of ten nations: the Kenites, the Kenizites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizites, the Refaim,<sup>1</sup> the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.<sup>2</sup> The first three were synonymous with the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites.

In the time of Moses, however, whenever G-d lists the peoples of Canaan whose land He will give to the Jewish people, only the last seven of these ten are mentioned. Thus, our sages note, G-d only gave the latter seven nations to the Jews in the time of Moses, and we will inherit the land of the other three nations in the future, when *Mashiach* comes.<sup>3</sup> The Jewish people are commanded to entirely wipe out these seven nations: “Of the cities of these peoples whom G-d is giving you to inherit, you shall leave no soul alive. Rather, you must wipe them out: the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, as G-d has commanded you.”<sup>4</sup>

In the portion of the Torah read this week, Moses reviews the journeys on which he led the Jewish people on their way to the threshold of the land of Israel. They were told by G-d not to wage war against the descendents of Esau, who inhabited Mt. Seir,<sup>5</sup> nor to wage war against Moab<sup>6</sup> or Ammon.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, they *were* commanded to fight and conquer the two Amorite kings, Sichon<sup>8</sup> and Og.<sup>9</sup>

We must understand why, with regard to the seven [Canaanite] nations, G-d commanded us “you shall leave no soul alive,” whereas with regard to Seir, Moab, and Ammon, He commanded us not to attack them.

The explanation is that the seven nations are [the earthly manifestations of] the seven evils, i.e., the vessels which broke. Thus, all the holiness [that was originally in them] has left them.

In the world of *Tohu*, which collapsed, the full breakage of the vessels occurred only in the seven lower *sefirot*, from *chesed* to *malchut*. When the vessels of these *sefirot* broke, they could contain nothing of the holy “lights” that had been in them. These lights therefore left the vessels, and the broken vessels fell into the lower worlds, becoming the source of all the egocentricity and evil of these worlds.

[Some of] the holiness remained, however, in first three [*sefirot*]. The [earthly manifestations of these *sefirot*] were the Kenites, the Kenizites, and the Kadmonites.

In the first three *sefirot* of *Tohu*, the vessels were more spiritual than they were in the lower seven *sefirot*. This is simply because emotions—the lower seven *sefirot*—are much more subjective than intellect or super-intellect (the first three *sefirot*). Therefore, even though there was no inter-inclusion amongst the *sefirot* in the world of *Tohu* (this being the reason why the vessels broke, as we have explained previously), this was not so crucial in the case of the first three *sefirot*. Their essential natures were not as self-assertive and exclusive of other natures as were those of the seven lower *sefirot*.

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<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere in the Torah, this people is called Hivites.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 15:19-21.

<sup>3</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 44:23.

<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 20:16-17. The Girgashite people is considered included in this list as well (see *Rashi ad loc.*).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 2:2-8.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 2:9.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 2:17-19.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 2:24-25, 31.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 3:2.

Since the shattered fragments of the emotions (*midot*) of *Tohu* are embedded in our world, we can refine them and elevate them. This we do whenever we refine our animal natures, and the completion of this process will usher in the messianic era. Since, however, the intellect and super-intellect of *Tohu* did not break and did not become embedded in the existential fabric of our order of existence, we cannot refine it.

In the [messianic] future, the holiness will completely depart [these *sefirot* as well], and thus we will then be commanded to “leave no soul alive” of them, as well.

The elevation and refinement of the intellect and super-intellect of *Tohu* will occur only in the messianic future, when we will be able to eliminate the negative aspects of these *sefirot* as well.

These [three nations] are synonymous with Seir, Ammon, and Moab. Seir alludes to the first [*sefirah*, *keter*], as it is written, “and the he-goat [*se’ir*] is the king...”<sup>10</sup>

*Keter* literally means “crown” and is thus the sign of kingship. Seir, the southernmost of the three kingdoms on the far side of the Jordan, thus signifies *keter*, or the super-intellect, of *Tohu*.

Moab means “from the father” [*mei-av*], and thus alludes to *chochmah*.

Lot’s daughter conceived her son by her own father. When she named him, she expressed this in the name she gave him, since Moab means “from the father.” The people of Moab descended from this incestuous union. *Abba* (“father”) is the *partzuf* of *chochmah*, and thus this nation alludes to the *chochmah* of *Tohu*. Moab was situated immediately north of the kingdom of Se’ir, and the Jewish people, traveling northward from the Sinai desert, encountered them immediately after their encounter with the Edomites in Se’ir

[The name] Ammon [permutes to spell] *no’am* [which means “pleasantness”], alluding to *binah*.

The insight of *chochmah*, since it is abstracted from any contextual relationship to the individual’s way of thinking, is not accompanied by any sense of conscious pleasure or joy. (There is a sublime, only semi-conscious sense of pleasure, but it is as abstract and ephemeral as the insight itself.) This occurs only when the insight is integrated into the existing mental structure, which is the function of *binah*. The new, higher perception of reality that is produced engenders a sensation of pleasure and happiness. In a similar fashion, we are taught that the liquid that corresponds to *chochmah* is water, while that which corresponds to *binah* is wine.

Ammon was situated immediately north of Moab, and the Jewish people passed by their land immediately after they passed by the kingdom of Moab.

Now, Seir is Edom.<sup>11</sup> The seven kings who ruled there were not from that land, they just ruled over it. This is indicated by the fact that each one is mentioned together with the country he came from, since they themselves were not from Edom.

We just identified Seir with *keter* of *Tohu*, which did not break. Yet the “seven kings of Edom” are always identified with the seven lower *sefirot* of *Tohu*, which did break. The Arizal solves this by saying that the “seven kings of Edom” ruled in that country but were not actually from it. Thus, Edom itself does indeed signify *keter* of *Tohu*. The fact that foreign kings occupied the territory of Edom before its kingdom was properly established would indicate the strong connection between the super-intellect (or subconscious) and the emotions. As we are taught in *Chassidut*, although the emotions are revealed and guided by the intellect, they possess their own roots and origins within the pre-conscious mind (i.e., *keter*).

<sup>10</sup> Daniel 8:21. The phrase quoted in the Arizal’s writings is not exactly this one, but this is the closest verse I could find to it.

<sup>11</sup> See Genesis 32:4, 36:9; Deuteronomy 2:5.

Now, when the Torah describes how the Jewish people were not to wage war against Ammon and Moab, it points out that these lands were formerly occupied by the Refaim. Thus, it might be assumed that their territory was indeed part of that of the seven nations the Jews were meant to conquer in Moses' time, since, as we pointed out above, the Refaim were one of these seven. The Torah, however, points out that this is not the case, and that G-d gave these territories of the Refaim to other parts of Abraham's family, i.e., the nations descended from the sons of Lot (Ammon and Moab).

In the course of this discussion, the Torah makes mention of the fact that the Refaim who formerly occupied the land of Moab were also called Eimites,<sup>12</sup> and those who formerly occupied the land of Ammon were also called Zamzumites.<sup>13</sup>

The Zamzumites personified the evil portion of *chochmah* [of *Tohu*] that was removed, as it is written, "as he schemed" [*zamam*].<sup>14</sup> The mixed multitude is [spiritually] derived from them, as well as anyone who has evil thoughts or fancies.

The name "Zamzumites" is etymologically related to the word for "scheme" [*zamam*]. They thus personified the fallen, corrupt version or use of insight, i.e., scheming and plotting evil.

We said above that Ammon signified the *binah* of *Tohu*. So, either the Arizal here means to include the Eimites together with his mention of the Zamzumites as former inhabitants of the lands associated with the intellect of *Tohu*, or he is referring to the process of how *chochmah* enters and informs *binah*, i.e., that the Zamzumites actually hail from *chochmah* but they settled the land of *binah*.

In any case, this perversion of intellect is the source of all evil thoughts and fancies, as well as of the distorted way of thinking associated with the "mixed multitude." The "mixed multitude" were the Egyptian converts that accompanied the Jewish people on their exodus from Egypt. Since their motives for conversion were not pure (they were impressed by the victory of the Jews over the Egyptians rather than the merits of monotheism over idolatry), they were the cause of much of the suffering the Jews underwent in their desert trek. The first and most heinous of these instances was that of the golden calf, which was in essence a warped vision of the role of Moses as the intermediate between G-d and Israel.

The fact that these nations (Edom, Moab, and Ammon) were not to be engaged in conflict indicates, as we said, that until *Mashiach* comes we do not possess the power to rectify the wild, unrectified intellect and super-intellect of *Tohu*. We are thus taught in *Chassidut* that when untoward thoughts enter our minds, we must not attempt to elevate them or refine them, but simply push them away and bypass them, just as we passed by the lands of these nations without engaging in any conflict. We *are* bidden to rectify our emotions, however (as signified by the seven Canaanite nations), by utilizing our intellects to meditate and contemplate life in such a way that engenders proper emotions and emotional responses.

The Arizal now turns to discuss the two nations that Moses and the Jewish people *were* allowed and even bidden to conquer. These were actually two branches of one kingdom, that of the Amorites, which, as we saw above, were one of the seven nations.

[The name] Sichon is etymologically related to the word for "young donkey" [*sayach*].<sup>15</sup> [He personified] the type of evil identified with the donkey, which is also identified with the foreskin over the [organ of] circumcision.

The Hebrew word for "donkey" (*chamor*) is related to the word for "material" (*chomer*) and "materialism" (*chumriut*). Sichon is thus the personification of gross materialism, or the desire for sensual gratification.

The *mitzvah* of circumcision is intended to sever the Jew from his egocentric, material orientation and thereby prepare him and make his suitable for the pursuit of spirituality and Divinity. As is explained in *Chassidut*, the presence of the foreskin renders sexual relations more immediately personally gratifying, but desensitizes the individual to the experience of his wife. Sexual relations thus remain an essentially narcissistic experience. The

<sup>12</sup> Deuteronomy 2:10-11.

<sup>13</sup> Deuteronomy 2:20.

<sup>14</sup> Deuteronomy 19:19.

<sup>15</sup> See *Rosh HaShanah* 3a: "He was called Sichon because he was as like a young donkey in the desert."

removal of the foreskin puts the individual more directly in contact with his wife, and thus he shares her experience as well. This, of course, serves to spiritualize and therefore augment the sensual experience in ways not possible in the narrow, egocentric context.

The removal of the foreskin, i.e., the propensity toward gross, self-oriented materialism, thus sensitizes the individual to the presence of an other person, and ultimately, readies him for encounter with the ultimate Other, G-d.

Og, in contrast, [personified the type of evil] identified with the mucous membrane which covers the [organ of] circumcision. As it is written, “he drew a circle” [*ag uguh*].<sup>16</sup> This is a particularly difficult form of evil [to deal with] inasmuch as it is very close to holiness.

The name “Og” [*ayin-gimel*] is etymologically related to the root *ayin-vav-gimel* or *ayin-gimel-gimel*, which means, “to form a circle.” Thus, it refers to the mucous membrane which encircles the glans of the penis underneath the foreskin, and which must also be peeled back as part of the rite of circumcision. The removal of the foreskin is called *milah* (“cutting”) and the removal of the mucous membrane is called *periah* (“peeling” back).

This membrane is obviously much more subtle and delicate than the coarse foreskin. It therefore embodies a much more abstract, delicate form of evil that is therefore much more difficult to root out than the usual, coarse evil. In *Chassidut* it is explained that the foreskin signifies the evil that exists in the outer dimension of the heart, while the mucous membrane signifies the evil that exists in the inner dimension of the heart. The evil of the outer dimension of the heart is the individual’s gross lust for material and sensual forms of pleasure and gratification.

These two kings were the kings of the Amorites. This kingdom personified the *sefirah* of *yesod*, as it is written, “two and three berries on the head of the uppermost bough.”<sup>17</sup>

The preceding phrase reads: “Only gleanings shall be left of it, as when one beats an olive tree: two or three berries on the topmost branch...” The olive tree signifies the *sefirah* of *yesod*. The condensed essence of any thing is considered the “oil” of that thing, and *yesod* is the condensed essence of the preceding five *sefirot*, as we have explained previously. *Yesod* is associated in human anatomy with the male organ of procreation, and man’s vital seed is considered his condensed essence, capable of reproducing him. (The Hebrew word for “oil,” *shemen*, is probably the origin of the English word “semen.”)

Thus, the two Amorite kings, Sichon and Og, personify the two layers covering the *sefirah* of *yesod* that must be eliminated in order for the Jewish people (and the individual Jew) to reveal their innate sensitivity to each other as well as to G-d, and thus be prepared to enter the holy land of Israel.

—translated from *Sha’ar HaPesukim* and *Likutei Torah*

<sup>16</sup> *Ta’anit* 23a.

<sup>17</sup> Isaiah 17:6; *Sanhedrin* 95b.

## *Parashat Devarim* [second installment]

In the beginning of *parashat Devarim*, Moses begins his farewell address to the Jewish people before his death. As part of this address, he rebukes them for having sinned. Although when they first left Egypt, G-d was rushing them through the desert in order to enter the land of Israel as quickly as possible, their sins caused Him to prolong their stay in the desert for forty years. A sign of how fast they were originally traveling is the fact that “it takes eleven days [to travel] from Horeb via Mt. Seir to Kadesh Barnea,”<sup>1</sup> but they miraculously traversed this distance in three days.

The mystical interpretation of this verse is as follows:

[These eleven days] correspond to the seven primordial kings that died and the four backs of *Abba* and *Ima*.

As we know, the seven kings of Edom are the physical correlate to the seven lower *sefirot* of *Tohu* whose vessels shattered. This was the origin of evil, i.e., “separate”-consciousness as opposed to Divine consciousness. The lower worlds (*Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*) were constructed out of the fragments of these vessels, and thus are realms of increasingly non-Divine-oriented consciousness.

In the collapse of the world of *Tohu*, not only did the seven lower, emotional *sefirot* shatter. The *sefirot* of the intellect suffered a less drastic fall as well. As we have explained previously, the reason they did not shatter completely is because of the difference between intellect and emotion. Intellect, being more abstract, is not an experience of self-assertion as much as emotion is. The *sefirot* of the intellect therefore did not clash with each other to the extent that the *sefirot* of the emotions did. However, since the overall tone of the world of *Tohu* is one of self-assertion and self-orientation, the external, or “back” of the intellectual *sefirot* of *chochmah* and *binah* did clash somewhat and in the process lose some of their intensity, or “fall.” The reason why there are four “backs” of these two *sefirot* is because they exist both in their totally abstract forms (which evolve in the next world, *Atzilut*, into the *partzufim* of *Abba* and *Ima*) and their more “applied” forms (which in *Atzilut* into the *partzufim* of *Yisrael Saba* and *Tevunah*).

Thus, we have a total of eleven fallen elements: the four partial collapses of the intellect and the seven total collapses of the emotions.

These [eleven fallen elements] are the source of these eleven days.

The number eleven is especially significant because it is one more than ten. Ten signifies holiness, the complete functioning unit of the ten *sefirot*. The array of ten *sefirot* is perfectly balanced and when operating as intended is the channel for the transmission and distribution of holiness (God-consciousness) throughout reality.

Eleven, however, indicates and excess, a spillage, an over-doing or wasting of Divine energy. To explain this we will digress briefly from this text and quote another passage from the Arizal’s teachings:<sup>2</sup>

The significance of the eleven ingredients of the incense, the eleven goat-skin overhangings [of the Tabernacle], and the eleven curses in *parashat Ki Tavo* [is as follows]:

There are ten “shells” of *nogah*.

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 1:2; see Rashi *ad loc*.

<sup>2</sup> *Etz Chaim* 11:10.

“Shells” are layers of evil. *Nogah* is the realm of evil that is “neutral,” i.e., consciousness that is simply non-Divine as opposed to *anti*-Divine.

They possess holy life-force, which enlivens them.

In order for *anything* to exist, even evil, it must have some G-dly life-force in it, i.e., some will from G-d to keep it existing. The difference, then, between evil and holiness is as follows:

As regards the ten holy *sefirot*, the [Divine] life-force [that enlivens them] is absorbed within them, and thus they are counted only as ten.

Since holiness is G-d-consciousness, the holy *sefirot* are not an existential contradiction to G-d’s will, so G-d’s enlivening energy can become part of them.

But with regard to the “shells,” the [Divine] life-force [enlivening them] cannot be absorbed within them, because the holy does not mix with the profane. Rather, it hovers over their heads, and shines onto them from there. Together they are thus regarded as eleven [entities].

Since evil is by definition antithetical to G-d-consciousness, it cannot “host” Divine life-force.

This is the [mystical] meaning of [the statement of our sages]: “whoever adds, detracts.”<sup>3</sup>

We return now to our original text.

[These eleven days] are “via Mt. Seir,” this being the mystery of the kings of Edom.

The eleven fallen levels produce, as we have noted, the existence of evil in the lower worlds (“lower” meaning “below *Atzilut*”). Mt. Seir is the abode of Esau, the wicked brother of Jacob, the progenitor of the kingdom of Edom. *Edom* in Hebrew means “red,” and is thus associated with bloodshed and bloodlust, just as Esau chose to be a hunter rather than a farmer. Edom eventually produced the nation of Rome, which destroyed the holy Temple, decimated the Jewish people, and exiled them from their land.

These [eleven fallen levels also] give rise to the eleven overhangings of goat-skin.

The word *Seir* in Hebrew means “goat.” Although goats are kosher animals and are offered as sacrifices in the Temple, the Torah also makes reference to “goat-devils,”<sup>4</sup> associating the goat with evil. Thus, the eleven goat-skin overhangings in the Tabernacle signify the “shell” nature of evil. The shell is the inedible part of the nut or fruit, and must be discarded. On the other hand, the shell performs a vital function in that it protects the nut or fruit while it is growing, just as ego and selfishness help a child develop a necessary sense of self before he graduates to a mature consciousness of selflessness. Thus, the goat, again, has its place in the Temple, both as an offering and as a protective covering.

Now, in order that the “day” shine out of the night—i.e., that the [sparks of holiness inherent in evil be liberated through the] process of separation accomplished [by our proper use of physicality]—the destruction had to take place.

The purpose of the creation of evil is so that these high-energy sparks of *Tohu* can be released from their non-holy context and made part of the holy order. Thus, holiness acquires an added energy and impetus that it does not possess otherwise. This is known as bringing “the lights of *Tohu* into the vessels of *Tikun*.”

<sup>3</sup> *Sanhedrin* 29a.

<sup>4</sup> *Leviticus* 17:7; *Isaiah* 13:21.

Thus, any descent in level is ultimately for the purpose of a subsequent ascent, in order to capitalize on the latent energy implicit in the lower level and harness it for goodness and holiness.

This is mystical meaning of this verse: There are eleven “days” from “Horeb,” i.e., that issued from the dregs of the destruction. As our sages said, G-d was building and destroying worlds [before He created our world].

The word “Horeb” (*Chorev* in Hebrew) means “destruction.” The beginning of the verse thus means that the revelation (“days”) of Divinity we are striving to cause is made possible by the eleven fallen levels of the destroyed world of *Tohu*.

In the Midrash, we are told that the fact that the Torah records that G-d pronounced this world “good” when He created it implies that He had been creating and destroying other “versions” of it before finally settling on this one, which He considered “good” relative to them. According to Kabbalah, this does not mean (G-d forbid) that G-d had to go through various “tries” until He got it right; rather, these previous versions of the world were the preparatory stages of creation (*Akudim*, *Nekudim*, *Tohu*, etc.) that were imperfect but necessary precursors to this world. They were created and then destroyed so that the ruins of their destruction would linger as the existential constituents of our present reality, giving it its potential for elevation to levels higher than its own origin.

The verse alludes to the fact that our redemption is dependent upon [the process of effecting] these “days” [i.e., revelations caused by the elevation of the sparks], as is known. For [the redemption will not occur] until all the “souls” are released from the “body” of evil, and ascend every day into holiness.

Our sages state that “the son of David [i.e., the Messiah] will not come until all the souls have been emptied out of the Body,”<sup>5</sup> referring to the celestial storehouse of souls. (This is one reason why religious Jews seek to have as many children as possible.) Here, this phrase is being used allegorically, the “souls” meaning the sparks of holiness hidden within the coarse “body” of evil.

This is alluded to by the words “until Kadesh,” meaning, until they ascend and become sanctified to come afterwards into this world as “weekday souls,” as is known.

*Kadesh* means “holiness.” [This sentence *may* mean that the sparks of holiness liberated by our involvement with the physical world become somehow embodied in the souls of the children conceived by marital relations conducted on weekdays (as opposed to on the Sabbath). But I have to verify this. —myw]

The verse ends with the word “Barnea,” indicating that these sparks wander back and forth all throughout the exile until their final elevation and redemption, may it be speedily, in our days.

The word *Barnea* is here allegorically interpreted to mean “one who wanders” (*bar-na* [*v’nad*]).

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*, and *Likutei Torah*

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<sup>5</sup> *Yevamot* 62a.

## *Parashat Devarim* [third installment]

Before his death, Moses blessed the Jewish people: “May G-d, the G-d of your forefathers increase you a thousand fold.”<sup>1</sup> To this, the Jewish people replied, “Moses! You are setting a limit to our blessing [by limiting it to a thousand fold increase]! The Holy One, blessed be He, has already promised Abraham: “I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, meaning, if a person can count the dust of the earth, so will he be able to count your offspring.”<sup>2</sup> Moses replied, “What I said is my own blessing [i.e., the maximum extent to which I can bless you]. But as for G-d, He will indeed ‘bless you as He spoke of you.’”<sup>3</sup>

To understand this, let us note that the numerical value of *Moses* [*Moshe*, 345] is the same as that of the Divine Names *Kel Shakai*.

*Moshe*: mem-shin-hei = 40 + 300 + 5 = 345.

*Kel Shakai*: Alef-lamed Shin-dalet-yud = (1 + 30) + (300 + 4 + 10) = 345.

When these Names are spelled out and the *kolel* is added, their numerical value is 1000.

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>	1 + 30 + 80	111
<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed-mem-dalet</i>	30 + 40 + 4	74
<i>shin</i>	<i>shin-yud-nun</i>	300 + 10 + 50	360
<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet-lamed-tav</i>	4 + 30 + 400	434
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	10 + 6 + 4	20
			999

This 1000 [*elef*] is the 1000 of *binah*, for these Divine Names are located there; this is the mystical meaning of the statement: “*Alef-beit, alef-binah.*”

In the Talmud,<sup>4</sup> the meanings of the names of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet are interpreted as a sequence. “The Rabbis told Rabbi Joshua ben Levi: ‘Children have come to the House of Study and said things the like of which was not said even in the days of Joshua the son of Nun: “*Alef beit* [means] ‘learn understanding’ [*alef binah*]. *Gimmel dalet*, [means] ‘show kindness to the poor’ [*gemol dalim*],”” and so on.

The phrase *alef-beit* is interpreted as “learn understanding” since the word *alef* also means “to learn,” and the word for “understanding,” *binah*, begins with the letter *beit*.

The word *alef* is spelled the same way as the word for “one thousand,” *elef*. Thus, the phrase “*alef-binah*” may also be read “the thousand of *binah*,” giving the relationship between the number 1000, the numerical value of the spelling out of the Names *Kel Shakai*.

In the parallel passage in *Likutei Torah*, Moses and the Names *Kel Shakai* are described as being in the world of *Beriah* rather than in the *partzuf* of *Ima* (of *Atzilut*). This accords with the fact that the *partzuf* of *Ima* “nests” in the world of *Beriah*, i.e., that *binah* is the dominant consciousness of the world of *Beriah* (while *chochmah* is the

<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 1:11.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 13:16.

<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy, *ibid.*; Rashi *ad loc.*

<sup>4</sup> *Shabbat* 104a.

dominant consciousness of *Atzilut*, the emotions are the dominant consciousness of *Yetzirah*, and *malchut* is the dominant consciousness of *Asiyah*.

This is also the significance of the “one million shield-bearers of the first world,” mentioned [in the *Zohar*].

In the *Zohar*,<sup>5</sup> one of the appellations of the world of *Beriah* is “the one million shield-bearers.” One million is a thousand thousands, i.e., 1000 entities inter-included amongst themselves. This world is called “shield-bearers” since it is the first world in which the energy of holiness must be protected from the forces of evil, just as *binah* must be protected from the sensation of ego that accompanies understanding and integrating an insight of *chochmah*.

Now, Moses’ power [to bless] reached [only] as far [up] as *Ima*; this is why he blessed them to increase [only] a thousand fold.

This is perhaps related to the idea that “a thousand lights” were detracted from Moses’ understanding of the Torah because of the sin of the golden calf are returned to his soul every Sabbath.<sup>6</sup>

Evidently, since Moses’ task as to teach the Torah to the Jewish people, to make them understand it, he could only impart to them the spiritual potentials associated with *Ima*, the *partzuf* of *binah*, understanding.

But as for G-d Himself, “He will bless you [as He spoke concerning you,” i.e., infinitely,] from the supernal *partzuf* of *Abba*.

G-d’s blessing transcends the limits of understanding, and is infinite, this being the experience of insight, or *chochmah*. Hence we see that intellectual understanding is a limited form of connection to G-d, and that our connection to Him must be predicated on assumptions and involvement that transcends intellect. In this way we can “access” His infinity as well, and produce an infinite “progeny” of shades of heightened Divine consciousness with which to “populate” reality.

—translated from *Sha’ar HaPesukim* and *Likutei Torah*

<sup>5</sup> 3:132a; see *Chasdei David* #118.

<sup>6</sup> See our excerpt on *parashat VaEtchanan*, first installment.

## *Parashat VaEtchanan*

In the beginning of this portion of the Torah, Moses tells the Jewish people that G-d got angry at him for praying so much to be allowed into the land of Israel. “And G-d became angry with me because of you, and did not listen to me.”<sup>1</sup> The word used here for “became angry” (*yitaber*) is unusual, and is etymologically derived from the word for “pregnancy” (*ibur*). This is the basis for the Arizal’s mystical interpretation of this verse.

As you know, *Z’eir Anpin* develops through three states of consciousness: fetal [*ibur*], suckling [*yenikah*], and mature [*gadlut*]. Similarly, every soul develops through these states of consciousness.

Physically, a person develops through three stages of deriving nourishment: When he exists as an embryo inside his mother’s womb, he is nourished directly through her. When he is a suckling infant, he still receives his nourishment from his mother but does so through his own active involvement. After he is weaned, he eats on his own. Similarly, the mentality of the soul undergoes the same three-stage development process. This process initially occurs in tandem with the physical development, that is, in the embryonic stage, the soul functions at the level of fetal consciousness; in the nursing stage, the soul functions at the level of suckling consciousness; and after weaning, the soul achieves mature consciousness. But relatively, an individual can experience and pass through these three stages on different levels during the course of his life.

Both the physical phenomenon of these three stages and the mental/spiritual phenomenon experienced by the soul derive from the parallel process that occurs in the development of the *partzuf* of *Z’eir Anpin*. Let us remember that *Z’eir Anpin* is the *partzuf* of the *midot*, the emotions. Thus, the mental development of the individual is measured by the nature of the relationship between his intellect and his emotions.

In other words, when an idea is first conceived in the mind (as an insight of *chochmah*) and then developed (in *binah*), the emotional reaction that will result from this idea is not yet evident; it is only there *in potentia* within the idea. We may therefore consider the idea to be “pregnant” with the emotion it will give rise to. The fetal position of the child in the womb is such that the lower limbs are crouched under the rest of the body, indicating that his potential, full stature cannot yet manifest itself. “Fetal consciousness” is thus purely intellectual—emotions exist only in potential.

Once an idea is fully developed, it can give birth to its inherent emotional reaction. When a child is still young, his understanding of life is immature and the emotions produced by his intellect are directly tied to their source. As long as he is aware that something is desirable, he wants it, and nothing can mitigate the intensity of his desire. As long as he is aware that something else is harmful, he is afraid of it, and nothing can mitigate his fear or loathing of that thing. “Suckling consciousness” is thus a more mature stage than “fetal consciousness” in that the intellect is expressing itself through the emotions, but this occurs still in a relatively immature way.

As he matures, the child’s intellect expands and he can view the desirability or undesirability of a thing in a much broader context, e.g., long-term consequences, immediate effects on those around him, and so on. Thus, at this stage, his emotional response reflects a much deeper and broader understanding of the issues at hand. This is full, “mature consciousness.”

Now, G-d blesses the leader of every generation with wisdom concomitant with the collective refinement of the generation.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, when Israel sinned in the incident of the golden calf, they caused their leader, Moses, to regress to fetal consciousness and lose whatever “lights” he had achieved until then. He was thus

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 3:26.

<sup>2</sup> *Arachin* 17a.

bereft of his suckling and mature consciousness, and was left only with fetal consciousness.

When Israel sinned, they revealed a deep-seated fault in the way they conceived of reality. Their consciousness had to therefore regress back to its “prenatal” stage in order to be refreshed from the source. In their wake, Moses also suffered a similar regression.

The Torah alludes to this when G-d tells Moses after the sin of the golden calf, “Go down, for your people, who you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted [themselves].”<sup>3</sup> Our sages say this means: “Descend from your greatness, for I have given you greatness only on their account.”<sup>4</sup> “At that moment, Moses was expelled from the heavenly court.”<sup>5</sup>

At this point in the version of the text as it appears in *Sha’ar HaPesukim*, the following sentence appears: “He [i.e., Moses] then forgot all those laws that he had previously known, as is known.” On this, Rabbi Wolf Ashkenazi<sup>6</sup> notes that there is no tradition of our sages that has reached us to the effect that Moses forgot any laws as a result of the sin of the golden calf. (There are a few incidents recorded in the Torah in which Moses forgot certain laws, but, as Rashi points out, this always was a result of his becoming angry, not because of the sin of the golden calf.) However, it is recorded in the *Zohar*<sup>7</sup> that as a result of this sin G-d denuded Moses of a thousand “lights.” The Arizal himself makes reference to this passage in other places.<sup>8</sup>

Now, *Z’eir Anpin* spends its fetal period in the womb of *Ima*, which is also known as the “jubilee.” Therefore, the initials of [the four Hebrew words that make up] the verse, “And G-d became angry with me because of you” [—*va-yitaber y-k-v-k bi lema’anchem*—may be permuted to] spell the word for “jubilee” [*yovel*, *y-v-b-l*].

*Ima* is, of course, the *partzuf* of *binah*, and we are taught that there are fifty “gates” of *binah* (“understanding”). These fifty gates are seen to comprise the seven emotions inter-included of each other (7x7=49) plus one additional, transcendent level. This division into 49+1 is reflected in the fifty-year agricultural cycle, which is composed of seven 7-year sabbatical cycles (7x7=49) followed by a fiftieth super-sabbatical, the jubilee year. Thus, just as the fiftieth level of understanding, that of pure *binah* is above and transcends the other 49, so is the jubilee year—the transcendent year that stands apart from the seven sabbatical cycles—an appellate for the level of pure *binah*.

As we said, the verse “And G-d became angry with me because of you” may be understood to mean “and G-d made me regress into the fetal state because of you.” If onto this meaning we superimpose the allusion hidden in the initials of the four words that compose this verse, we have: “And G-d made me regress into the fetal state, i.e., return into the womb of *Ima*, which is called ‘jubilee,’ because of you.”

Thus, Moses regressed and re-entered, i.e., re-impregnated, *Ima*, which is termed “jubilee.” The Name *Havayah* in this verse signifies the *partzuf* of *Ima*. This is the mystical meaning of the phrase, “And G-d became angry with me.”

This phrase may thus be read, “The *partzuf* of *Ima*—signified by the Name *Havayah*, G-d—became pregnant [again] with me.”

This happened “because of you,” for, as we said, just as the sins of the generation cause the *partzuf* of *Z’eir Anpin* to return to the womb of *Ima*, so do they cause this to happen to the leaders of the generation.

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 32:7.

<sup>4</sup> *Berachot* 32a.

<sup>5</sup> *Midrash Tanchuma*, *ad loc.* This and the previous comment are quoted by Rashi *ad loc.*

<sup>6</sup> *Haga’ot veChidushim ad loc.*

<sup>7</sup> 2:58a

<sup>8</sup> *Sha’ar HaPesukim* on Leviticus 1:1 and Exodus 34:33



We may also explain [this passage] based how we have explained the verse “My beloved went down to his garden, to the bed of spices, to browse in the gardens and pick lilies.”<sup>9</sup> The initials of the words for “to browse in the gardens and pick lilies” [*lir’ot baganim velilkot shoshanim, lamed-beit-vav-shin*] spell the word for “garment” [*levush*]. When G-d becomes angry with Israel and takes the righteous from this world, the latter are transformed into a garment for Him, and He becomes, so to speak, impregnated within them and enclothed within them.

When the righteous pass away, they serve as channels of Divine influence and beneficence to the followers they had when they were alive. In the case of a leader of the generation, his afterlife influence extends to the whole generation. In this sense, G-d acts through (i.e., is garbed in) these righteous individuals, and His Divine beneficence is channeled through their souls. This allows the Divinity to flow into the world in a matter tailored to the needs of the generation.

The mystical meaning of the verse “And G-d became angry with me because of you” is [now, in this context]: “And G-d became impregnated within me on your account—for on account of your sins I was gathered up from this world before my time.”

Rabbi Shalom Sharabi notes: Even though Moses was still alive when he said this, he was referring to what would happen when he would die. (The whole book of Deuteronomy is Moses’ farewell address to the Jewish people, and was said during the 37 days before he passed away.) Alternatively, it may refer to the expanded consciousness (the “thousand lights” mentioned above) that he lost on account of the sin of the golden calf. This loss of consciousness was a sort of “death.”

Now, there are twelve months in a year; this number is the numerical value of the letter *vav* when it is spelled out with another *vav*. In a leap year, there are thirteen months, this number being the numerical value of the letter *vav* when it is spelled out *vav-alef-vav*.

The *vav* is spelled *vav-vav* in the spelling of the Name *Havayah* whose numerical values is 52, while it is spelled *vav-alef-vav* in the spelling of the Name *Havayah* whose numerical value is 45. As we have mentioned previously, the 52-value Name is associated with the *sefirah* of *malchut* (or the *partzuf* of *Nukva*), while the 45-value Name is associated with the *midot* (or the *partzuf* of *Z’eir Anpin*).

Moses is associated with the letter *vav* spelled *vav-alef-vav*, which indicates the *sefirah* of *tiferet*.

Moses, as we saw above, is in the present context the earthly personification of *Z’eir Anpin*, the pivot *sefirah* of which is *tiferet*.

The month added in a leap year is always *Adar*. This explains why Moses passed away in the month of *Adar*: his death alluded to this phenomenon.

Moses passed away specifically in the month associated with the leap year, to indicate that he is associated with the spelling of the letter *vav* whose numerical value is 13, the number of months in such years. Furthermore, the Hebrew term for “leap year” (*shanah me’uberet*) literally means “impregnated year,” i.e., the year is “impregnated” with an additional month. Thus, Moses’ passing away in the “impregnated” month alludes to the fact that when the

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<sup>9</sup> Song of Songs 6:2.

righteous die, G-d becomes “impregnated” within them in order to channel His Divinity into the world most effectively, as we said.

It is perhaps significant that the Arizal himself passed away on the 5<sup>th</sup> of the Hebrew month Av, during the week when this portion of the Torah is read.

—translated from *Sha’ar HaPesukim* and *Likutei Torah*

## *Parashat VaEtchanan* [second installment]

*Parashat VaEtchanan* begins with Moses' description of how he pleaded with G-d to let him enter the land of Israel: "And I supplicated to G-d at that time, saying...."<sup>1</sup>

Know, that there is an angel appointed over prayers, who elevates them from earth to heaven, this being a journey of five hundred years.

"From earth to heaven is a journey of five hundred years; from one heaven to the next is a journey of five hundred years; and the width of each heaven is a journey of five hundred years." "The height of the hooves of the heavenly beasts is also a journey of five hundred years."<sup>2</sup> The significance of the five hundred years is understood to be the five principle *sefirot* of the *midot* (*chesed*, *gevurah*, *tiferet*, *netzach*, and *hod*) as they each inter-include ten sub-*sefirot* and each of these ten sub-*sefirot* inter-include ten sub-sub-*sefirot* ( $5 \times 10 \times 10 = 500$ ).

He elevates them with the power of the Divine Name *Kah*, which G-d used to form the worlds.

Isaiah 26:4 is usually translated: "Trust in G-d forever, for in *Kah*, [who is] G-d, is the everlasting rock." However, the prefix translated here as "in" can also mean "through" or "by," the Divine Name *Kah* is spelled *yud-hei*, the word for "rock" (*tzur*) can also be taken as a verb meaning "to form," and the word for "everlasting" (*olamim*) can be taken to mean "worlds." Thus, the verse can be mystically translated as: "Trust in G-d forever, for with the letters *yud* and *hei* G-d formed the worlds." Based on this (and other verses), the sages say that G-d created this world with the letter *hei* and the world to come with the letter *yud*.<sup>3</sup> Thus, it follows that G-d "used" the Divine Name *Kah*, i.e., the two letters *yud-hei*, to create the two worlds: this world and the next.

Concerning these angels that elevate prayers, it is written, "their legs are a straight leg."<sup>4</sup>

Angels in general are depicted as having one, straight leg. Since angels are personified Divine attributes or facets of consciousness, they are static; they do not grow, develop, or progress in any way. (If they would, they would cease to be what they are and turn into a different angel.) So, they therefore have no need for any means of walking, and their "leg" serves only as a pedestal to stand on. Thus, one leg is enough, and they have no knee to bend it since they do not need to move it.

The numerical value of the word for "straight" [*yesharah*, 515] is equal to 500 plus the numerical value of the Name *Kah* [15], corresponding to the 500-year journey [from earth to heaven] and the Name *Kah* [used to take the prayers on this journey].

*Yesharah*: *yud-shin-reish-hei* =  $10 + 300 + 200 + 5 = 515$ .

*Kah*: *yud-hei* =  $10 + 5 = 15$ .

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 3:23.

<sup>2</sup> *Chagigah* 13a; *Pesachim* 94b; *Y. Berachot* 9:

<sup>3</sup> *Menachot* 29b.

<sup>4</sup> *Ezekiel* 1:7.

This is why [Moses] chose to describe his prayers with the word [*va-etchanan*, meaning] “and I supplicated,” for its numerical value is the same as that of the word “straight.”

*VaEtchanan*: *vav-alef-tav-chet-nun-nun* =  $6 + 1 + 400 + 8 + 50 + 50 = 515$ .

Elsewhere, Moses describes his prayers using the usual verb for prayer, *l'hitpalel*. The exceptional use of the verb “to supplicate” (*l'hitchanen*) thus invites homiletical interpretation.

Meaning to say, “I entreated the angels to elevate my prayer [through the process alluded to by the number 515,] the value of the word *va-etchanan*.” The numerical value of the word for “prayer” [*tefilah*] is also 515.

*Tefilah*: *tav-pei-lamed-hei* =  $400 + 80 + 30 + 5 = 515$ .

The next words in the verse, “at that time,” thus refer to the time when the angels elevate the prayers via the Name *Kah*.



In response to Moses' plea, “G-d became angry with me on your account and did not listen to me. G-d said to me: “Enough! Speak to Me no more about this.”<sup>5</sup>

[As we have explained elsewhere,] the mixed multitude derive from the evil [aspect] of Moses. They issued prematurely and were not properly rectified [first], so they sinned.

When the Jews, led by Moses, left Egypt, Moses acceded to take along a “mixed multitude” of non-Jews with them. Although his intentions were good, these people had not been fully educated about the ways of Judaism and the path of the Torah, and so they made numerous errors in judgment throughout Israel's trek in the desert, often drawing the Jewish people into their errors as well.

We have defined evil as consciousness not sufficiently oriented toward and focused on G-d, or worse, oriented away from or against G-d. Just as with people, who must undergo a selfish period of childhood in order to develop their sense of self before emerging into the mature, adult world, so must any revelation of Divinity, or any soul, undergo a maturation process before it can descend into the world. Although the soul will mature again during its lifetime as it goes through childhood, etc., this is a second stage of development. Thus, to a certain extent, the character of the individual is already developed during its fetal life.

The mixed multitude thus reflected this idea of premature introduction into holiness. Insecure in their sense of self, they were not ready to abandon it in favor of the truth to which they were being elevated.

Moses, as a leader, should have known that this was the case. But his acceptance of the mixed multitude reflected a weakness on his part, an unwarranted tolerance and acceptance of that which is imperfect and unripe, erroneously allowing it to take part in mature, adult life before its time.

(Perhaps this over-fascination with the raw, the untamed, and the immature echoes Isaac's fascination with and preference of Esau over Jacob, as well as modern society's worship and indulgence of youth at the expense of its reverence and appreciation of the wisdom of age.)

G-d did not want to accept these unfit converts. [Had they not joined the Jewish people], there would have been no death or exile, as it is written, “[The

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<sup>5</sup> Deuteronomy 3:26.

tablets were the work of G-d, and the writing was the writing of G-d,] chiseled on the tablets.”<sup>6</sup>

When the Torah was first given, the spiritual impurity caused by the sin of the tree of knowledge was removed from the world. Thus, the word for “chiseled” (*charut*) can be interpreted to mean “freedom” (*cheirut*); the tablets freed the world from the sentence of death and its spiritual analog, exile.<sup>7</sup> The mixed multitude, however, perpetrated the sin of the golden calf, which reintroduced this impurity or self-orientation into the world.

But Moses accepted them, thinking that it would be good to absorb them into holiness.

This way, Moses reasoned, their unrefined power could be harnessed for holy purposes. Their desire to join the Jewish people seemed to indicate their readiness for this.

[He] especially [wanted to accept them] because they were somewhat important to him, as it is written “the people in whose midst I am,”<sup>8</sup> and “the people at your feet.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, he sought to rectify them. But on the contrary, they ruined Israel, as it written, “Go, descend, for your people who you brought up out of Egypt have corrupted...”<sup>10</sup> It does not say “have been corrupted” but “have corrupted,” meaning, “have corrupted others,” i.e., Israel.

In this verse, the verb “corrupt” is transitive. Furthermore, G-d tells Moses about *his* people, that *he*, not G-d, brought up out of Egypt, referring to the mixed multitude.

Moses therefore had to die, in order to ascend on high and receive G-d’s beneficence. There is therefore no generation without [a leader like] Moses.

In order to right the wrong he caused, Moses’ trans-generational job is to rectify the ongoing impurity of the mixed multitude, until it is fully matured. He therefore belongs spiritually to the pre-redemptive generation of the desert and could not pass over the Jordan river to lead the next generation in the conquest of the land of Israel. Aspects of his soul return as the leader of each generation in order to rectify the spiritual heirs of the mixed multitude. In order to do this, his soul, each time, has to accrue extra spiritual power, and this it does by staying in the womb of *Ima* for a longer than usual period, as the Arizal now explains:

When he emerges the union of *Abba* and *Ima*, he remains impregnated in the womb of *Ima* for twelve months. This is alluded to by (1) in the phrase “And G-d became angry *at me* on your account,” the word “became angry” can be read “made me [re-]enter the state of pregnancy,” (2) that the fact that the numerical value of the word for “at me” in this phrase is 12, and (3) that the initials of this phrase spell the word for “jubilee,” which is an appellation of *binah*, as is known.

“At me”: *bi*: *beit-yud* = 2 + 10 = 12.

“And G-d became angry at me on your account”: *Vayitaber YKVK bi le-ma’anchem*: *vav-yud-beit-lamed*.

“Jubilee” [*yovel*]: *yud-vav-beit-lamed*.

The jubilee is the fiftieth year, and there are fifty “gates” of *binah*.

<sup>6</sup> Exodus 32:16.

<sup>7</sup> *Avot* 6:2; *Eiruv* 54a; *Shemot Rabbah* 32:1.

<sup>8</sup> Numbers 11:21.

<sup>9</sup> Exodus 11:8.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.* 32:7.

When Moses was born the first time, however, he required [a pregnancy of] only seven months, because [his soul] did not require so much maturation.

When Moses was born, his mother Yocheved hid him for three months, after which she put him in a basket in the river. If she hid him from the Egyptian authorities successfully for three months, why did she not continue to hide him? Our sages answer that Moses was born in the seventh month, and the Egyptian authorities came to inspect her home only nine months after her remarriage to Amram, Moses' father.<sup>11</sup>

The fact that he was born early means, according to our above discussion, that Moses' soul did not require the full gestation period of nine months in order to reach the level of maturity necessary for birth into this world, since it was *a priori* a superior soul.

Understand this, for *binah* includes the twelve signs of the zodiac. These are alluded to in the word *binah* itself, the first two letters of which [*beit-yud*] have the numerical value of 12. The numerical value of [the third letter of *binah*,] *nun*, is fifty, alluding to the fifty gates of *binah*, and the [last letter of *binah*,] *hei*, alludes to the five states of *chesed* or *gevurah* that exist within *binah*.

*Binah*, the central *sefirah* of the intellect, is the “mother” of the emotions, which emerge from its “womb.” The six emotions from *chesed* to *yesod* define a three-dimensional space (two directions for each dimension), since emotion implies relationship with an other, and this requires a “space” in which to occur. The three-dimensional cube is formed with 12 lines. These twelve lines are seen as the spiritual source of the twelve months of the year and their associated zodiacal signs.

The five states of *chesed* or *gevurah* within *binah* are the precursors of the five principle *sefirot* of the emotions, *chesed*, *gevurah*, *tiferet*, *netzach*, and *hod*. They are the latent propensities of intellectual analysis to produce emotional response to the subject being studied.

This the meaning of the words “[G-d became angry with me] on your account.” Moses was speaking to the mixed multitude [present at the assembly].

The verse thus reads mystically: “G-d made me return to the fetal state because I decided to accept you.”

Alternatively, we can say that he was speaking to the Jewish people, and the words “on your account” mean “in order to rectify you.”

In this case, the verse reads: G-d made me return to the fetal state and be reborn in order to rectify you.”

—translated and anthologized from *Sefer HaLikutim* and *Likutei Torah*

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<sup>11</sup> See Rashi on Exodus 2:3.

## *Parashat VaEtchanan* [third installment]

*Parashat VaEtchanan* begins with Moses' description of how he pleaded with G-d to let him enter the land of Israel. G-d denied Moses' request: "And G-d grew angry with me because of you, and did not listen to me. G-d said to me, 'It is enough for you; do not continue to speak to Me anymore about this.'"<sup>1</sup>

The Arizal discusses the meaning of the words, "it is enough for you" (*rav lach*), which can also mean "you have a teacher."

This means that Moses was originally the teacher of all other prophets.

Moses, being the first prophet to communicate G-d's words to the people, was the prototype for all following prophets and leaders of the Jewish people. They would all learn from him and aspire to his level.

But when he pleaded to enter the promised land with the rest of the Jewish people in order to continue to shepherd them, G-d, in a way, did answer his prayer, by assuring him that his soul would return and be vested in the soul of each generation's leader. In these cases, however, he would not initially be the teacher, but the student:

But afterwards, [i.e., when Moses' soul would return] in every generation, he [in the form that generation's next leader] would need a teacher to teach him. [In particular,] the prophet Elijah would come and teach him, and the generation will then begin to shine within him.

Moses' soul, impregnated in each new generation's up-and-coming leader, must begin from scratch and learn the Torah from others. One of the missions of the prophet Elijah, who ascended alive into heaven and became a type of angel, is to teach the secrets of the Torah to those scholars in every generation who are worthy of this. Once an individual begins to learn the inner dimension of the Torah, he begins to identify with the unique psychosocial context of his generation and thus develops his innate leadership qualities.

At first, he will be "dumb, not knowing how to open his mouth."<sup>2</sup>

He will not have learned the art of articulation and inspiring speech.

In fact, we see that even then [i.e., in Moses' own lifetime] something of this promise was fulfilled. Our sages state<sup>3</sup> in reference to the verse, "I can no longer go and come," that it refers to Torah study, meaning that the fountains of wisdom had closed up for him, and he need to learn [Torah] from Joshua.

On the day of his death, Moses told the people, "I am 120 years old today; I can no longer go and come. G-d told me, 'You shall not cross this Jordan river.' [Instead,] G-d will go before you [i.e., the Jewish people]; He will annihilate these nations before you and drive them out. Joshua will lead you, as G-d has said."<sup>4</sup>

This is an additional meaning of the words "You have a teacher," i.e., that you already have a teacher, namely, Joshua.

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 3:26.

<sup>2</sup> Psalms 38:14.

<sup>3</sup> *Sotah* 13b; Rashi on Deuteronomy 31:2.

<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 31:2-3.

Thus, these words, spoken on the first of Shevat in the last years of Moses' life, look ahead 37 days to the 7<sup>th</sup> of Adar, the last day of his life, when the Divine inspiration necessary to teach the Torah to the Jewish people would be transferred from him to Joshua. This, of course, in addition to their promise that Moses' soul would return to lead the Jewish people in each generation and in so doing would need to be taught first by another teacher.

This is alluded to in the verse, "I will raise a prophet like you for them from amongst their brethren."<sup>5</sup> The initials of the words for "I will raise for them from amongst" spell the word for "dumb."

"I will raise for them from amongst": *akim lahem mikerev*. The three initial letters are *alef-lamed-mem*, which spell *ileim*, the word for "dumb."

The passage from which this verse is taken states that the Jewish people will never have to guess what G-d's will is for them; unlike other nations that need to resort to divination and soothsayers, there will always be prophetic leaders—who are mystically understood to be impregnated with Moses' soul—who will convey G-d's will to the Jewish people. The full verse quoted here reads: "I will raise a prophet like you for them from amongst their brethren, and I will place My words in his mouth, and he will tell them all that I command him."

After [the new leader has passed through the learning stage,] "I will place My words in *his* mouth," meaning that G-d's words will flow from within him. After this, he will ascend to the next, higher level: ["and he will tell them all that I command him," meaning that] G-d will speak to him openly.

The Arizal now finds allusion to this process in the verse, "I became dumb, silent; I was quiet of good; and my hurt intensified."<sup>6</sup>

This is the mystical meaning of the verse "I became dumb, silent..." The word for "silent" [*domiah*] can be read as if to mean "silenced by G-d" [*dom Kah*], meaning, "He decreed that I should be dumb."

*Domiah*: *dalet-vav-mem-yud-hei*, can be split into two words, "silent" (*dom*, *dalet-vav-mem*) and the Divine Name *Kah* (*yud-hei*).

"I was quiet of good" [means "I did not teach Torah," for] "there is no 'good' but Torah."<sup>7</sup>

The sages state that the word "good," wherever it appears in the Bible, refers to the Torah, the ultimate good.

"My hurt intensified" refers to the suffering that he will endure.

To explain this, the Arizal turns to the sages' explanation of the verse, "Behold, My servant will prosper; he will ascend, be lifted up, and be very high. Just as many were astonished over you, [saying,] 'He looks too disfigured to be human...so will the many nations exclaim about him...'"<sup>8</sup> This implies that the redeemer's (or Israel's, or Moses' as we will see) exalted state after the Redemption will be commensurate with their dejection during the exile.

As it is stated in the Talmud,<sup>9</sup> Moses will first be "desolate."

The name *Moses* (*Mosheh*, *mem-shin-hei*) may be permuted to spell the word for "desolate" (*shamah*, *shin-mem-hei*). In Hebrew, the words for "desolation" and "astonishment" are related, since desolation astonishes the beholder and astonishment puts the person undergoing it in a state of temporary "desolation," i.e., incapacitation.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 18:18.

<sup>6</sup> Psalms 39:3.

<sup>7</sup> *Avodah Zarah* 19b.

<sup>8</sup> Isaiah 52:13-15.

<sup>9</sup> *Berachot* 5a.

Thus, the phrase “Just as many *were astonished* [*shamemu*] over you” in the verse quoted above describes Moses’ initial, pre-grandeur state.

Only afterwards, “My servant will prosper.” This refers to Moses.

Since G-d elsewhere calls Moses “My servant.”<sup>10</sup>

This [prophecy] also refers to the Messiah. [This is not a contradiction, since] the numerical value of *Shilo* is the same as that as Moses’ name [*Mosheh*].

*Shilo*: *shin-yud-lamed-hei* = 300 + 10 + 30 + 5 = 345.

*Mosheh*: *mem-shin-hei* = 40 + 300 + 5 = 345.

Shilo was the town where Joshua put the Tabernacle, i.e., its first location in the promised land. (Later, in the days of Samuel, it moved to Nov and later Givon, and remained there until King Solomon built the first Temple.) Being the first resting place of the house of G-d when the Jews entered the promised land, it represents the idea of the return of the people to their land with the messianic Redemption.

Furthermore, our sages stated that whatever pertains to the first redeemer [i.e., Moses] pertains to the final redeemer [i.e., the Messiah]<sup>11</sup> and that the generation that passes [away] is [the same] as the generation that is to come [i.e., be resurrected].<sup>12</sup>

The second statement means that “If a person dies lame, he will be resurrected lame; if he dies blind, he will be resurrected blind. This is so people won’t say that those that G-d let die are different from those He resurrected.... ‘I will raise them with their defects...and then I will heal them.’”<sup>13</sup>

These two statements of our sages indicate that the verse quoted (“Behold, My servant will prosper...”) can apply equally to Moses and to the final redeemer.

This is also the meaning of the verse, “As in the days when you went out of Egypt, I will show him wonders.”<sup>14</sup> We would have expected this verse to read, “...I will show *you* wonders” and “As in the days when *he* went out of Egypt....”

In this case, the verse would read, “As in the days when *he* [i.e., Moses, or the generation of the exodus] went out of Egypt, I will show *you* [the Messiah, or the generation of the final redemption] wonders.”

[The verse is instead written the way it is] to indicate that *you* [i.e., the final generation] yourself went out of Egypt, and that you yourself are that generation [which G-d will now show new wonders].

Thus, the verse “Behold, My servant will prosper...” can again apply equally to Moses and to the final redeemer.

The verse “Behold, My servant will prosper...” describes the ascent [the redeemer] will undergo. At first, “he will prosper.” Then, “he will ascend.” Then, “he will be lifted up.” Then, “he will be high.” Then, “very much so.”

The two words for “and be very high” (*vegavah me’od*) are taken to refer to two separate stages.

<sup>10</sup> Numbers 12:7; Joshua 1:2, 1:7; 2 Kings 21:8; Malachi 3:22.

<sup>11</sup> *Bamidbar Rabbah* 11:3; *Kohelet Rabbah* 1:9.

<sup>12</sup> *Kohelet Rabbah* 1:4.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Micah 7:15.

The word for “very much so” [*me’od*] is a permutation of the name *Adam*, indicating that [the Messiah] will be on the spiritual level that Adam was before the primordial sin.

*Me’od: mem-alef-dalet; Adam: alef-dalet-mem.*

He will then rectify everything [that was flawed by the primordial sin], and thus “the final action [will restore reality to the way it was] first intended.”

This phrase comes from the *Lecha Dodi* poem and describes the Sabbath, the last day created but the first thought of, since it embodies the perfection of reality the preceding days lead up to. On the cosmic scale, the phrase means that the final action, the redemption, will bring the world to its originally intended state.

This is the highest level; [the following verses] inform us what will happen in the intervening generations, in order that [we realize that] it is worth ascending all those levels.

It therefore states [in the following verse,] “Just as many were astonished over you, [saying,] ‘His appearance is too disfigured to be that of a man.’” The words “a man” refer to Moses.

For Moses is on occasion referred to as “this man, Moses” or “the man, Moses,”<sup>15</sup> which is an unusual idiom in the Bible.

“His appearance” refers to Moses’ [unique] appearance, namely, the fact that his face shone.<sup>16</sup>

But in subsequent generations, when Moses reappears [initially] as a regular person, [his condition is] described by the following verses.

Following is the complete passage. We have marked in bold the verses the Arizal addresses specifically.

**Behold, My servant shall prosper, ascend and be lifted and be very high.**  
*Just as the many were appalled at him—so marred was his appearance, unlike that of man, his form, beyond human semblance—just so he shall startle many nations.*  
*Kings shall be silenced because of him, for they shall see what has not been told them, Shall behold what they never have heard.*  
**Who would believe what we have heard? Upon whom has the arm of G-d been revealed?**  
*For he has grown, by His favor, like a tree crown, like a tree trunk out of arid ground.*  
*He had no form or beauty, that we should look at him: No charm, that we should find him pleasing.*  
*He was despised, shunned by men, a man of suffering, familiar with disease.*  
*As one who hid his face from us, he was despised, we held him of no account.*  
*Yet it was our sickness that he was bearing, our suffering that he endured.*  
*We accounted him plagued, smitten and afflicted by G-d.*  
*But he was wounded because of our sins, crushed because of our iniquities.*  
*He bore the chastisement that made us whole, and by his bruises we were healed.*  
*We all went astray like sheep, each going his own way, and G-d visited upon him the guilt of us all.*  
*He was maltreated, yet he was submissive, he did not open his mouth.*  
*Like a sheep being led to slaughter, like an ewe, dumb before those who shear her, he did not open his mouth.*  
*By oppressive judgment he was taken away. Who could describe his abode?*  
*For he was cut off from the land of the living through the sin of my people, who deserved the punishment.*  
**And his grave was set among the wicked, and with the rich, in his death—**

<sup>15</sup> Exodus 11:3, 32:1,23; Numbers 12:3.

<sup>16</sup> Exodus 34:29.

*Though he had done no injustice and had spoken no falsehood.  
 But G-d chose to crush him by disease, so that, if he made himself an offering for guilt,  
 he might see offspring and have long life, and that through him G-d's purpose might prosper.  
 Out of his anguish he shall see it; he shall enjoy it to the full through his devotion.  
 My righteous servant makes the many righteous; it is their punishment that he bears.  
 Assuredly, I will give him the many as his portion; he shall receive the multitude as his spoil.  
 For he exposed himself to death and was numbered among the sinners,  
 Whereas he bore the guilt of the many and made intercession for sinners.*<sup>17</sup>

Thus:

“Who would believe what we have heard? Upon whom has the arm of G-d been revealed?” This evidently refers to the revelation of G-d’s arm upon Moses, as it is written, “...and for all the strong arm [and awesome power that Moses demonstrated before all Israel.]”<sup>18</sup>

“And his grave was set among the wicked.” Allegorically, this means that [Moses’] soul descended to be impregnated into the bodies [of individuals] in these [later] generations, who, [no matter how righteous,] are considered wicked relative to him. Therefore—

“I will give him the many as his portion,” meaning that he will receive the reward for [leading] all these [generations], since he brought all these generations to merit. We know that Moses[’ merits] “weigh” as much as [those of the rest of] Israel,<sup>19</sup> and as our sages said, “Moses attained merit and brought all Israel to merit; therefore the merits of the many are accounted as his.”<sup>20</sup>

“He shall receive the multitude as his spoil” means that he received his portion directly from G-d, while the other righteous people will receive theirs [indirectly,] through him. This is “because he exposed himself to death” in each generation.

This is the mystical meaning of why, [in the repetition of his name,] it is written “Moses Moses,”<sup>21</sup> without a dividing punctuation mark, indicated that in each generation, he himself appears.

When G-d called to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, He also repeated his name,<sup>22</sup> but there is a cantillation mark telling the reader to pause between the two times his name is mentioned. The same is true when G-d called Jacob before he went to Egypt.<sup>23</sup> The fact that Moses’ name is repeated without any intervening punctuation indicates that the two appearances of Moses (as himself and impregnated into the leader of each generation) are the same.

<sup>17</sup> Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Translation adapted from *Tanakh, The Holy Scriptures* (Philadelphia, Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society) 1985.

<sup>18</sup> Deuteronomy 34:12.

<sup>19</sup> *Midrash Tanchuma, Beshalach* 10.

<sup>20</sup> *Avot* 5:18.

<sup>21</sup> Exodus 3:4. See *Zohar* 3:138a.

<sup>22</sup> Genesis 22:11.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* 46:2.

“And he was numbered among the sinners and he bore the guilt of the many” means that through [his final reappearance, as the Messiah,] he will achieve complete forgiveness for the sins of the generations, including the sin of Adam and Eve, who were “many” and great.

—translated and anthologized from *Sefer HaLikutim* and *Likutei Torah*

## *Parashat VaEtchanan* [fourth installment]

*Parashat VaEtchanan* includes—in the first paragraph of the *Shema*, the commandment to study the Torah.

It is written, “And these words, which I command you this day, will be upon your heart. You shall teach them to your children, and discuss them....”<sup>1</sup>

I am going to write first about the concept of forgetfulness that people suffer from, because they use it to justify the laziness and sleepiness that prevents them from studying the Torah, saying that (G-d forbid) it’s all just wasted effort since they forget everything anyway. We will therefore discuss forgetfulness and what it is all about [mystically].

It is known that it says in the *Zohar*<sup>2</sup> that a person is first given a *nefesh*, and “if he merits more, he is given a *ruach*, etc.”

The soul comprises five levels, but only one is actively conscious in the person from birth: the *nefesh*, which governs the vital life processes and provides the person with the will to live and the urge to fulfill physical needs. Psychologically, *nefesh* is the actualization of the self, or the need and ability of self-expression. It therefore originates in the feminine principle, *Nukva*, which is synonymous with self-awareness and ego, as we have discussed previously. As a person matures, higher levels of the soul become active in his or her consciousness.

The *nefesh* comes from the feminine principle, and forgetfulness occurs in it. As long as a person has not achieved [the revelation of] the level of *ruach*, which comes from the masculine principle and embodies the principle of memory, he keeps forgetting [things].

*Ruach* is the emotional aspect of the soul, and thus originates in the *midot*, or *Z’eir Anpin*, the male principle. The word for “male” (*zachar*) is related to the verb “to remember” (*zachor*).

Forgetfulness (at least with regard to Torah study) is thus attributable to unchecked ego—the person being more interested in himself than in G-d and His wisdom, and the antidote is a selfless, emotional attachment/commitment to what one is learning.

Now, a person is working on a rectifying his *nefesh* through the efforts he expends in learning the Torah. And even if he forgets what he learns, it is not wasted effort (G-d forbid), for in the World to Come and the messianic future, he will be reminded of all [the Torah learning] that he forgot, as the sages state.<sup>3</sup>

The “World to Come” is synonymous with “the Garden of Eden” or “Paradise,” the above of the soul after death. “The messianic future” is the rectified, physical world that will exist after the Messiah comes and (at some point after that) the dead are resurrected.

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 6:6-7.

<sup>2</sup> 2:94b.

<sup>3</sup> *Zohar* 1:185.

If now, during his lifetime, he forgets [things], it is because G-d makes him [forget, due to his lack of *ruach*]. But [in the meantime] he is rectifying his *nefesh*, known as the feminine principle, and it is not (G-d forbid) wasted effort. He is obligated to first rectify his *nefesh*, and only after that is he given the *ruach*.

Rabbi Shalom Sharabi points out that it is also necessary to avoid things that the sages say impede memory,<sup>4</sup> and that if a person tries to learn something but fails to understand it, it will be explained to him in the World to Come.<sup>5</sup>

This is the first principle [you must know].

The second principle is understanding what forgetfulness is.

Know that forgetfulness originates in the back of *Abba* and *Ima*, for it is known that their fronts are [manifest respectively] as the Names *Havayah* and *Ekyeh* spelled out with the letter *yud*. The numerical value of both of them is the same as that of the word for [the imperative] “remember” [*zechor*, 233].

*Havayah* spelled with the letter *yud*: *yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-yud-vav hei-yud* =  $(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 10) + (6 + 10 + 6) + (5 + 10) = 72$ .

*Ekyeh* spelled with the letter *yud*: *alef-lamed-pei hei-yud yud-vav-dalet hei-yud* =  $(1 + 30 + 80) + (5 + 10) + (10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 10) = 161$ .

$72 + 161 = 233$ .

*Zachor*: *zayin-kaf-vav-reish* =  $7 + 20 + 6 + 200 = 233$ .

This is because remembering comes from them, as indicated by the fact that the word for “remembering” [*zechirah*] can be seen as compounded of the words “remember” [*zecher*] and the Name *Kah*. For remembering is from the front of *Abba* and *Ima*—who are called *Kah*—whose numerical values are 72 and 161.

*Zechirah*: *zayin-kaf-yud-reish-hei*

*Zecher Kah*: *zayin-kaf-reish yud-hei*.

The Divine Name *Kah* is also the first half of the Name *Havayah*, and thus its two letters signify *chochmah* and *binah*.

Remembering is thus rooted in taking a “frontal” attitude to *chochmah* and *binah*, i.e., by paying attention to what is being learned.

In contrast, the back of these [*partzufim*] are manifest as the regressive iterations of these two Names—*Havayah* and *Ekyeh*—the numerical value of the spelling out of which, using the letter *yud*, is the same as that of the word for “you will forget” [*tishkach*].

The regressive iteration of the Name *Havayah* is *yud yud-hei yud-hei-vav yud-hei-vav-hei*.

The spelling out of this iteration, using the letter *yud*, is:

<sup>4</sup> See *Horiot* 13b.

<sup>5</sup> *Sha’ar Ma’amarei Razal*, on chapter 6 of *Avot* (p. 22d).

step				
1	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10	
2	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10	
	hei:	hei-yud	5	
3	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10	
	hei:	hei-yud	5	
	vav:	vav-yud-vav	6	
4	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10	
	hei:	hei-yud	5	
	vav:	vav-yud-vav	6	
	hei:	hei-yud	5	
total				

The regressive iteration of the Name *Ekyeh* is *alef alef-hei alef-hei-yud alef-hei-yud-hei*.

The spelling out of this iteration, using the letter *yud*, is:

step				
1	alef	alef-lamed-pei	$1 + 30 + 80 =$	111
2	alef	alef-lamed-pei	$1 + 30 + 80 =$	111
	hei	hei-yud	$5 + 10 =$	15
3	alef	alef-lamed-pei	$1 + 30 + 80 =$	111
	hei	hei-yud	$5 + 10 =$	15
	yud	yud-vav-dalet	$10 + 6 + 4 =$	20
4	alef	alef-lamed-pei	$1 + 30 + 80 =$	111
	hei	hei-yud	$5 + 10 =$	15
	yud	yud-vav-dalet	$10 + 6 + 4 =$	20
	hei	hei-yud	$5 + 10 =$	15
				544

$$184 + 544 = 728.$$

$$Tishkach: \text{tav-shin-kaf-chet} = 400 + 300 + 20 + 8 = 728.$$

Forgetfulness originates in these two backs, because the forces of evil can only latch on to the back [of a *partzuf*], and forgetfulness comes only when evil latches on.

Regarding these two [principles], it is written in the Torah: “Remember, do not forget.”<sup>6</sup>

The word for “you shall forget” [*tishkach*] serves also as the imperative when phrased in the negative.

<sup>6</sup> Deuteronomy 9:7.

I have already told you that *Ima* comprises two aspects, known as *binah* and *tevunah*. They are indicated by the two letters *samech* and *mem*, as we have explained elsewhere.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the angel of forgetfulness is called *Mas*, the reason being that he is derived from the two backs of *binah* and *tevunah*, indicated by the letters *samech* and *mem*, as stated. Therefore, the evil opposite them is called *Mas*.

*Binah* is abstract understanding, while *tevunah* is applied understanding.

*Mas* is spelled *mem-samech*, indicating the back, or reverse, of *binah* and *tevunah*.

Since the numerical value of [the spelling out of the regressive iterations of *Abba* and *Ima*, indicating their] backs equals that of the word for “you will forget,” as mentioned, this evil [angel] is given charge over forgetfulness.

This is alluded to by our sages’ words, “Someone who reviews his lessons [only] a hundred times cannot be compared to someone who reviews his lessons a hundred and one times.”<sup>8</sup> This saying is not an exaggeration, but is meant to be taken literally, since the numerical value of the name of this angel *Mas* is 100. Thus, [the angel *Mas*] has the power to make someone who reviews his lesson up to 100 times forget it, while if he reviews it more than this, [this angel] cannot make him forget it.

*Mas*: *mem-samech* = 40 + 60 = 100.

Also, our sages state that there are foods that promote forgetfulness when eaten, such as olives, etc.<sup>9</sup> But know that this is true only if someone eats them without proper [mystical] intentions, like an ignoramus. In contrast, whoever eats [olives] with the [mystical] intentions we will explain in our comments to *parashat Eikev*, on the verse “you shall eat and be satisfied,”<sup>10</sup> improves his memory, since he is eating them with proper [mystical] intentions that help him purify and rectify them, as will be explained.

Regarding our sages’ statement<sup>11</sup> that someone who reads what is written on a tombstone forgets his learning, this applies only to writing that protrudes from the stone, not to writing that is etched into the stone.

There is also another [mystical] meditation that rectifies forgetfulness that is elucidated in our explanations of the final blessing of the morning *Amidah*.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Etz Chaim* 14:6.

<sup>8</sup> *Chagigah* 9b.

<sup>9</sup> See *Horiot* 13b.

<sup>10</sup> Deuteronomy 8:10.

<sup>11</sup> *Horiot*, loc. cit.

<sup>12</sup> *Sha’ar HaKavanot*, *Amidah* 6.

Examine this. I also wrote another meditation in *Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh* that helps memory.<sup>13</sup>

It has also been explained, regarding the House of Study, that there is a meditation a person should perform when entering a synagogue, as we have explained, and it concerns [the *sefirah* of] *malchut*.<sup>14</sup> But the holiness of a House of Study exceeds that of a synagogue, and the meditation [performed when entering it] is that the numerical value of the back of the Name *Ekyeh*, indicated by its regressive iteration spelled out with the letter *yud* is the same as the numerical value of “Study.”

The idiom for “House of Study” is *beit midrash*.

*Midrash* = *mem-dalet-reish-shin* = 40 + 4 + 200 + 300 = 544.

We have seen above that the numerical value of the regressive iteration of the Name *Ekyeh* spelled out with the letter *yud* is also 544.

To be continued...

—translated from *Sha'ar HaMitzvot*

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<sup>13</sup> *Pri Etz Chaim, Hanhagot HaLimud*. This involves rolling in the snow and meditating on certain numerical equivalents.

<sup>14</sup> See *Sha'ar HaKavanot* 3d.

## *Parashat Ekev*

In the portion of the Torah read this week, Moses gives the Jewish people the commandment to recite Grace after meals: “When you have eaten and are full, you shall bless *G-d* your G-d for the good land He has given you.”<sup>1</sup> There are many laws surrounding the proper performance of this commandment, and the Arizal discusses the mystical dimension of them in great detail.

One of these laws is that of *mayim acharonim* (“water after [the meal]”). Before reciting grace, the individual is required to rinse his fingertips.

Know that the “other side” hovers over the table, as is described in the *Zohar*,<sup>2</sup> and can gain control over an individual then more than it can at other times.

As described in the *Zohar*, eating and drinking by their nature bolster a person’s material orientation, thereby desensitizing him to spirituality and Divinity. He is thus, after having eaten his full, particularly susceptible to the power of evil (the “other side” of reality).

This is particularly true if he has eaten by himself, and there are not three to recite Grace together. For the Invitation to Recite Grace drives away “other side” from there, as is mentioned in the *Zohar*<sup>3</sup> regarding the incident of the young child.

According to Jewish law, if three or more men or three or more women have eaten bread together, they must recite Grace together. One of the party acts as the leader and formally invites the others to join him in reciting Grace.

In the *Zohar*, it is recounted that the young, orphaned son of Rabbi Hamnuna the Elder possessed great spiritual perception and mystical knowledge of the Torah. One of the teachings he shared with his guests, two student of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, was that when the Invitation to Recite Grace is recited, it weakens the power of evil present at the table.

The collective power of the three individual’s Divine souls and the positive energy generated by their camaraderie overcomes the negative power of evil. This occurs, however, only when they consciously join their individual energies together to recite Grace, that is, to focus on the spiritual dimension of the meal rather than simply the sensual pleasure of eating. Hence the power and importance of the Invitation to Recite Grace.

A person must therefore be very careful to have the proper intentions when rinsing his fingertips after the meal, in order that [the “other side”] not prosecute against him.

Whenever a person succumbs to the temptations of evil, the sin he performs acts as a “prosecutor” against him at the heavenly court.

For by giving it this gift, as is known, the “other side” departs, leaving [the person alone]. In the beginning [of the meal] it is just a guest, but if the individual does not recite Grace with the proper intention and concentration, it becomes the host and prosecutes against him. As we said, this is particularly true if one dines by himself, without the [protection offered by the] Invitation to Recite Grace.

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 8:10.

<sup>2</sup> 2:154ab.

<sup>3</sup> 3:186b.

Rinsing the remains of the meal off the fingertips is seen as “throwing the dog a bone.” Evil possesses no intrinsic power; it derives its power solely by virtue of man’s misdeeds. However, in the present order, it must be present to at least some minimal extent in order for there to be free choice. If evil receives this minimal sustenance, it is satisfied, and, realizing that it has nothing more to expect from this meal, departs.

This is what you should meditate on [when rinsing the fingertips]:

The initials of the words for “after-water” [*mayim acharonim*] are *mem-alef*, as are the initial and final letters of the word for “after” [*acharonim*] itself. [The numerical value of *mem-alef* is forty-one.] Align the first *mem-alef* with the forty-one letters in the Name *Ekyeh* spelled out with the letter *yud*, and the second *mem-alef* with the forty-one letters in this Name spelled out with the letter *alef*.

The Name *Ekyeh* [*alef-hei-yud-hei*] can be spelled out either with *yuds* or with *alefs*. Two iterations of the spelling-out process yield a total of 41 letters in each case (4 for the Name itself, 10 for the first spelling out, and 27 for the spelling out of the spelling out):

alef	alef	alef
		lamed
		pei
	lamed	lamed
		mem
		dalet
	pei	pei
hei	hei	alef
		hei
		yud
	yud	yud
		vav
		dalet
yud	yud	yud
		vav
		dalet
	vav	vav
		yud
		vav
	dalet	dalet
		lamed
		tav
hei	hei	hei
		yud
		yud
	yud	vav
		vav
		dalet

alef	alef	alef
		lamed
		pei
	lamed	lamed
		mem
		dalet
	pei	pei
hei	hei	alef
		hei
		yud
	alef	alef
		lamed
		pei
yud	yud	yud
		vav
		dalet
	vav	vav
		alef
		vav
	dalet	dalet
		lamed
		tav
hei	hei	hei
		yud
		alef
	alef	alef
		lamed
		pei

Intend to remove and banish the “other side” from the table by means of these two sets of 41, so that it not take any more than its rightful portion.

Meditate on this idea in the context of the form of your own hand, as follows: Consider the four fingers of your right hand together and the thumb by itself. There are ten letters associated with each finger, and one associated with the thumb. This gives a total of 41, for the forty-one letters of the Name *Ekyeh* spelled out with the

letter *yud*. Follow the same pattern with the five fingers of your left hand for the forty-one letters of the Name *Ekyeh* spelled out with the letter *alef*.

Meditate thus as your fingers are pointed downward. As is known, when rinsing the fingertips after the meal one should point the fingers downward.

I found in my notes another, slightly different meditation. According to this, you should associate your right thumb with the four letters of the simple spelling of the Name [*Ekyeh*]. Since the thumb is the chief and best finger, the letters of the Name proper are associated with it. Then associate your other four fingers with the letters of the spelling out and the spelling out of the spelling out using the letter *yud*. Associate as well the four letters of the Name *Ekyeh* and the ten letters of the [first] spelling out—a total of fourteen letters—with the fourteen joints of the five fingers of your hand.

Each of the four fingers has three joints and the thumb has two:  $(4 \times 3) + 2 = 14$ .

According to the prayerbook with the commentary of Rabbi Shabsi of Rashkov:

	right hand	left hand
<b>thumb</b>	<i>alef-hei-yud-hei</i>	<i>alef-hei-yud-hei</i>
<b>first finger</b>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i> and the second iteration of each letter	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i> and the second iteration of each letter
<b>second finger</b>	<i>hei-yud</i> and the second iteration of each letter	<i>hei-alef</i> and the second iteration of each letter
<b>third finger</b>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i> and the second iteration of each letter	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i> and the second iteration of each letter
<b>fourth finger</b>	<i>hei-yud</i> and the second iteration of each letter	<i>hei-alef</i> and the second iteration of each letter

In a similar fashion, associate the [letters of the] Name *Ekyeh* spelled out with the letter *alef* with the fingers of your left hand.

Based on this you can understand the statement of our sages that washing the fingertips after the meal is an obligation, for the numerical value of the word for “obligation” [*chovah*,] is the same as that of the Name *Ekyeh*.

*Chovah*: *chet-vav-beit-hei*,  $8 + 6 + 2 + 5 = 21$ ; *Ekyeh*: *alef-hei-yud-hei*,  $1 + 5 + 10 + 5 = 21$ .

The mystical meaning of this statement is thus that when washing the fingertips after the meal one must meditate on the Name *Ekyeh* [as we have said].

Now, one should not make any interruption between rinsing the fingertips and reciting Grace after meals. I [Chaim Vital] was once with my master [the Arizal] and someone came to me and said that he had been suffering from severe shoulder pains for two days. My master looked at him and said that this pain came from his having interrupted between rinsing the fingertips and reciting Grace after meals by studying a chapter of the Mishnah. He thus transgressed the instruction of our

sages to proceed *directly* from the rinsing to the blessing.<sup>4</sup> In so doing, he transmuted the word for “directly” [*teikef, tav-kaf-pei*] into the word for “shoulder” [*kateif, kuf-tav-pei*], and he felt the pain there. From this we see that one must not make any interruption between the rinsing and the recital of Grace, even with words from the Torah. If one wishes to converse [at his table] in the Torah, as our sages have said one should, he should do so before the rinsing of the fingertips.

By not allowing any interruption between rinsing the fingertips and the recitation of Grace, the individual demonstrates that they form one conceptual unit, that is, the spiritual meaning of the former is also that of the latter.

Nonetheless, one *should* recite the following verses after rinsing the fingertips, before beginning the Grace after meals: the entire Psalm 67, and then the verse, “I will bless G-d at all times; His praise is always in my mouth.”<sup>5</sup> This is because the “other side” hovers over the table, as we have said, and it is called “at all times,” as in the verse, “He must not come into the sanctuary at all times.”<sup>6</sup>

The Torah commands that the high priest not enter the Holy of Holies whenever he wants (“at all times”), but rather only on the day of *Yom Kippur*. In this context, the phrase “at all times” is seen as something that prevents one from entering the realm of holiness, i.e., evil. Reciting the verse “I will bless G-d at all times” is thus seen as a formula that neutralizes the power of evil present at the table.

It is interesting to note that *Yom Kippur*, the one day when the Torah allows the high priest to enter the inner sanctum of the Temple, is a total fast day. On this day, of course, the evil that can potentially become empowered through the process of eating is not operative.

In order to remove [the evil] from there [i.e., the table], one must recite [the Invitation to Recite Grace, i.e.] “Bring us [the goblet] and we will bless,” as is stated in the story of the young child in the *Zohar*. We therefore recite the verse “I will bless G-d at all times...” in case a person is eating by himself and cannot say “Bring us and we will bless.”

One should then say: “Ultimately, all is known: fear G-d and observe His commandments, for this is the whole purpose of man.”<sup>7</sup>

Then, one should say: “My mouth will utter the praise of G-d, and let all flesh praise His holy Name forever,”<sup>8</sup> “And we will bless G-d from now to all eternity. Praise G-d,”<sup>9</sup> and “And he said to me, this is the table that is before G-d.”<sup>10</sup> Only then should he commence Grace after meals.

The common denominator of all these verses is that the person saying them is declaring his wish to orient his consciousness toward the Divine dimension of eating rather than its worldly, material aspects. As such, these verses do not constitute a thematic interruption between the rinsing of the fingertips and the recitation of Grace.

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<sup>4</sup> *Berachot* 42a.

<sup>5</sup> Psalms 34:2.

<sup>6</sup> *Leviticus* 15:2.

<sup>7</sup> *Ecclesiastes* 12:13.

<sup>8</sup> Psalms 145:21. This verse is not included in the Arizal’s version of the liturgy as formulated by Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 115:18.

<sup>10</sup> *Ezekiel* 41:22. In Rabbi Shneur Zalman’s formulation of the liturgy, all the above save this verse is recited *before* rinsing the fingertips.

—translated from *Sha'ar HaMitzvot*

## *Parashat Eikev* [second installment]

In this *parashah*, Moses tells the Jewish people that “G-d is bringing you into...a land of wheat, barley, grape-vines, figs, and pomegranates; a land of oil-olives and honey.”<sup>1</sup>

These are the seven species for which the land of Israel is praised. [In other words,] *Nukva*, which is termed “the land of Israel,” needs to be praised, i.e., blessed from [Z’*eir Anpin*’s] seven [lower *sefirot*].

The phrase “the land of Israel” means “the land that belongs to Israel”: “the land” is an appellation of *Nukva d’Z’eir Anpin*, the mate of *Z’eir Anpin*, one of whose appellations is “Israel.”

These are the six [*sefirot*] that remained above plus her *malchut*, equaling seven. It thus becomes a male-principle relative to her, as we have explained.

This may be proven by the fact that all types of fruit issue from the earth and are thus not from the male domain but from this feminine domain.

Wheat is from the right axis, that of *chochmah*. As our sages have said, “the unripe version of the supernal *chochmah* is the Torah [we know in this world],”<sup>2</sup> and the Torah is made up of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, this being the numerical value of the word for “wheat” [*chitah*].

*Chitah*: chet-tet-hei = 8 + 9 + 5 = 22.

Of the realm of evil, it is said, “instead of wheat, may nettles grow there.”<sup>3</sup> The numerical value of the word for “nettles” [*choch*] is also 22, “G-d created the one thing opposite the other.”<sup>4</sup>

*Choch*: chet-vav-chet = 8 + 6 + 8 = 22.

In general, every entity that exists in the realm of holiness has a corresponding entity in evil. This provides the opportunity for man to have free choice.

Barley is from the left axis. You will find that the numerical value of the word for “barley” [*se’orah*] is twice that of the combined numerical values of the five final letters plus the unit value [1] for each of the ten letters [of the two sets of final letters] plus five unit-values for each of the five states of *gevurah*.

*Se’orah*: sin-ayin-reish-hei: 300 + 70 + 200 + 5 = 575.

*Hei*, the second letter of the Name *Havayah*, signifies the *sefirah* of *binah*, the top of the left axis of the *sefirot*. Directly under *binah* is *gevurah*, signifying restraint or withholding. Similarly, the final forms of the letters indicate a stopping of the flow of speech. The five letters with final forms are *kaf*, *mem*, *nun*, *tzadik*, and *pei*.

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 8:7-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 17:7.

<sup>3</sup> Job 31:40.

<sup>4</sup> Ecclesiastes 7:14.

*Kaf-mem-nun-tzadik-pei*:  $20 + 40 + 50 + 90 + 80 = 280$ ;  $280 \times 2 = 560$ ;  $560 + 10 + 5 = 575$ .

For this reason, the suspected adulteress brings a barley-offering, for barley embodies the power of *gevurah*.

The suspected adulteress (*sotah*) is brought to the Temple to submit to a rite of judgment.

The archangel Gabriel also derives from this aspect of spirituality; therefore he has “the inkwell of the scribe at his waist.”<sup>5</sup> The numerical value of the word for “inkwell” [*keset*] is also twice that of the combined numerical values of the final letters. The ink of judgment originates in this inkwell, which [G-d] uses to mark all [the righteous of] humanity, as it is written, “and you shall draw a line [on the foreheads of the men...].”<sup>6</sup>

These verses are taken from a vision in which the prophet Ezekiel is shown how G-d plans to destroy Jerusalem. Delivering the consequence of sin is certainly an act of *gevurah*, and is therefore executed by the archangel Gabriel. However, G-d also tells Gabriel to use the ink to “mark a sign on the foreheads of the men who sigh and moan for all the abominations done within [the city]” and not to “approach any man upon whom is the sign.” Thus, the ink-sign is also evinces *gevurah*, here in the sense of “restraint” of the execution of G-d’s wrath.

*Keset*: *kuf-samech-tav* =  $100 + 60 + 400 = 560$ .

Also, of the time when evil is ascendant it is written: “instead of barley, may stinkweed grow.”<sup>3</sup> This is the principle of the Name *Elokim* spelled out with the letter *yud* plus unit-value for the eight letters of the spelling-out.

The Name *Elokim* signifies G-d’s attribute of judgment. When the Name *Elokim* is spelled out using a *yud* to spell out the *hei*, we have:

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef</i>	1
	<b><i>lamed</i></b>	30
	<b><i>pei</i></b>	80
<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed</i>	30
	<b><i>mem</i></b>	40
	<b><i>dalet</i></b>	4
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	5
	<b><i>yud</i></b>	10
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	10
	<b><i>vav</i></b>	6
	<b><i>dalet</i></b>	4
<i>mem</i>	<i>mem</i>	40
	<b><i>mem</i></b>	40
total		300

There are eight letters used to spell out the Name itself; these are indicated in bold in the above chart.

<sup>5</sup> Ezekiel 9:2, 3.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.* 9:4.

The numerical value of the word for “stinkweed” [*bashah*] is *beit-alef-shin-hei*:  $2 + 1 + 300 + 5 = 308$ .

“Stinkweed” is thus the opposite for barley in the realm of evil, signifying *gevurah* of evil.

The grape vine [originates] in the middle axis, between the right and the left. The word for “vine” [*gefen*] alludes to the numerical values of the spellings-out of the four ways of spelling out the Name *Havayah*, 128, plus the 4 letters of the Name itself and the *kolel*.

*Gefen*: *gimel-pei-nun* =  $3 + 80 + 50 = 133$ .

As we have seen previously, there are four standard ways of spelling out the Name *Havayah*, giving numerical values of 72, 63, 45, and 52. The total of these four values is 232. To consider only the numerical value of the letters used in the spelling-out process, we simply subtract 4 times the value of the name itself,  $26 \times 4 = 104$ ;  $232 - 104 = 128$ . When we add 4 unit values ( $4 \times 1$ ) for the four letters of the Name plus the *kolel*, we have  $128 + 4 + 1 = 133$ , the numerical value of *gefen*. This demonstrates the association between the grape and the Name *Havayah*, which is the channel for *tiferet*, the central *sefirah* on the middle axis.

[These three] are the mental states that enter *Z'eir Anpin* from *chochmah-binah-da'at*, and *Z'eir Anpin* imparts some of their energy to *malchut*.

Wheat and barley were associated above explicitly with *chochmah* and *binah*. While the grape was not explicitly associated with *da'at*, it was demonstrated that it relates to the central axis, on which *da'at* is situated, directly above *tiferet*.

However, there are differing levels of how he imparts them to her. When she is situated [entirely] below him, he gives them to her in one way; when she is level with his *netzach-hod-yesod*, he gives them to her in a superior way; when she is level with his *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*, he gives them to her in a yet more subtle way; and when she becomes the crown of his head, she receives them on a par with him.

We have described the union of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* to be necessary in order to preserve the balance of consciousness between abstract inspiration and active inspiration, between the desire to leave the world and become absorbed in Divine consciousness and the desire to make the world into a fitting setting for Divine consciousness to flourish. These are the male and female aspects of consciousness (of both men and women), respectively. The male must couple with the female in order to be properly oriented toward the purpose of life, while the female must couple with the male in order to preserve her perspective and not fall prey to the forces of non-Divine-consciousness (“evil”). These couplings can occur on various levels, depending on the mental state of *Nukva*.

The sages said that in the [messianic] future, “the righteous will sit with their crowns on their heads.”<sup>7</sup> Know that on the Sabbath, when *Z'eir Anpin* ascends to the level of *Abba* and *Ima*, only its inner dimension ascends, whereas its outer garment remains below [at its normal level of consciousness]. [*Nukva*] then ascends to be level with his inner dimension, becoming a crown over the head of his garment, which remained below in its [usual] place. It is then that she receives all these spellings-out [of the Name *Havayah*] on par with him.

The ideal state, of course, is for *Nukva* to be fully matured, postured as the crown of *Z'eir Anpin*, receiving insight and inspiration on par with him. This state will be fully realized only in the messianic future, when the task of elevating and refining the world into a home for G-d will have been accomplished and it will no longer be

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<sup>7</sup> *Berachot* 17a.

necessary for *Nukva* to descend into contracted states of consciousness in order to elevate the lower realms of reality on/from their level.

The Sabbath is a taste of the world to come, and therefore this state is semi-realized on the Sabbath.

The fig takes [its consciousness] from *netzach*. This is the principle of the three spellings out of the Name *Ekyeh*, giving numerical values of 161, 151, and 143.

*Ekyeh* spelled with the letter *yud*

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef</i>	1
	<i>lamed</i>	30
	<i>pei</i>	80
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	5
	<b><i>yud</i></b>	10
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	10
	<i>vav</i>	6
	<i>dalet</i>	4
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	5
	<b><i>yud</i></b>	10
		161

*Ekyeh* spelled with the letter *hei*

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef</i>	1
	<i>lamed</i>	30
	<i>pei</i>	80
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	5
	<b><i>hei</i></b>	5
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	10
	<i>vav</i>	6
	<i>dalet</i>	4
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	5
	<b><i>hei</i></b>	5
		151

*Ekyeh* spelled with the letter *alef*

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef</i>	1
	<i>lamed</i>	30
	<i>pei</i>	80
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	5
	<b><i>alef</i></b>	1
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	10
	<i>vav</i>	6
	<i>dalet</i>	4
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	5
	<b><i>alef</i></b>	1
		143

The sum of these three values plus the *kolel* gives 456, the numerical value of the word for “fig” [*te’ainah*].

$$161 + 151 + 143 + 1 = 456.$$

$$Te'ainah: taf-alef-nun-hei = 400 + 1 + 50 + 5 = 456.$$

These [iterations of the Name *Ekyeh*] are the mental states of *Ima* that enter *Z'eir Anpin*, included in which are the mental states of *Abba*, which are [three] Names *Havayah*. It is thus written, “he who guards the fig will eat its fruit.”<sup>8</sup> “He who guards the fig” refers to the mentality of *Ima*; “will eat its fruit” refers to the mentality of *Abba*.

The Arizal now shows how the phrase “will eat its fruit” refers to the mentality of *Abba*.

[The mental states of *Abba*] are, numerically, three times 72, which equals 216.

As we have noted previously, of the four ways of spelling out the Name *Havayah*, that whose numerical value is 72 is associated with *chochmah*, the *partzuf* of *Abba*, and the *yud* of the Name *Havayah* itself. Three such Names *Havayah* give  $3 \times 72 = 216$ .

<sup>8</sup> Proverbs 27:18.

The combined numerical values of the original Names *Havayah* themselves are 78. When to these is added the *kolel*, the sum is 295, the numerical value of the word for “its fruit” [*piryah*].

$$3 \times 26 = 78.$$

$$216 + 72 + 1 = 295.$$

$$\text{Piryah: } \text{pei-reish-yud-hei} = 80 + 200 + 10 + 5 = 295.$$

The reason why all this is associated with *netzach* is because anatomically, *netzach* and *hod* are associated with the two male testicles in which the male seed develops, the male-male seed in the right [testicle] and the female-male seed in the left [testicle].

We see that the sperm that develop in the right and left testicles are, relative to each other, “male” and “female.”

This is the meaning of the statement in the *Zohar*: “he is in *netzach* and she is in *hod*.”<sup>9</sup> [...]

The pomegranate originates in *hod*, and thus numerical value of the word for pomegranate [*rimon*, plus the *kolel*] is the same as that of the angel Nuriel.<sup>10</sup>

$$\text{Rimon: } \text{reish-mem-vav-nun} = 200 + 40 + 6 + 50 = 296; 296 + 1 = 297.$$

$$\text{Nuriel: } \text{nun-vav-reish-yud-alef-lamed} = 50 + 6 + 200 + 10 + 1 + 30 = 297.$$

This word [*rimon*] is also the same as the name of the angel Metatron when we remove the two letters *tet* in its middle—these being the numerical value of “alive” [*chai*], referring to the inner life-force of the pomegranate—leaving a *mem* to the right and *reish-vav-nun* to the left.

*Metatron* is spelled *mem-tet-tet-reish-vav-nun*. Thus, it can be seen that removing the two *tet*’s in the middle leaves the letters that are used to spell *rimon*. The *mem* is to the right, etc., since Hebrew is read right to left.

$$\text{tet-tet} = 9 + 9 = 18; \text{chai: } \text{chet-yud} = 8 + 10 = 18.$$

These [remaining letters that spell *rimon*] are the outer shell that we call the pomegranate, while the inner [life-force] is the *sefirah* of *tiferet*. This is alluded to in the verse, “lest he eat it and live forever.”<sup>11</sup> And so it is said of Rabbi Meir: “he ate its core and discarded its shell.”<sup>12</sup> The forces of evil cannot suckle from the inner life force, but they can suckle from the garment, i.e., the pomegranate.

In this way we may also understand the mystical meaning of the verse “And the [angelic] beasts were running and returning.”<sup>13</sup> The numerical value of the word for “running” [*ratzo*, plus the *kolel*] is the same as that of the word *rimon*.

$$\text{Ratzo: } \text{reish-tzadik-vav-alef} = 200 + 90 + 6 + 1 = 297.$$

<sup>9</sup> *Sha’ar Erkei HaKinuyim*, Chanukah 1; *Mevo She’arim* 3:1:2, 5:1:1.

<sup>10</sup> As mentioned previously, it is proper not to pronounce names of angels that are not also used as names for people.

<sup>11</sup> Genesis 3:23, referring to the fruit of the tree of life.

<sup>12</sup> *Chagigah* 15b, explaining how Rabbi Meir could learn from the heretic Acher.

<sup>13</sup> Ezekiel 1:14.

The word for “running” [*ratzo*] may also be permuted to spell the word for “neck” [*tzavar*].

*Tzavar*: tzadik-vav-alef-reish.

This refers to the neck of *Ima*, i.e., her throat; *Ima* extends as far as *hod*.

The inner life force, [in contrast,] refers to the words “and returning,” inasmuch as the numerical value of the Name *Shakai* [314] is the same as that of this phrase “and returning.” [...]

In Hebrew, the phrase “and returning” is one word: *veshov*, *vav-shin-vav-beit* = 6 + 300 + 6 + 2 = 314.

*Shakai*: *shin-dalet-yud* = 300 + 4 + 10 = 314.

In any case, “running” is associated with the pomegranate, the shell, while “returning” is associated with the inner life force.

Oil-olives originate in *yesod*. [Since *yesod* is a relatively “male” *sefirah*,] we may ponder why the verse does not read simply “a land of honey?”

As we know, “land” is feminine, an appellation for *malchut*. And honey, as we shall see presently, is also associated with *malchut*. It thus seems inappropriate that the word for “land” should be repeated just before a masculine-associated modifier.

Know then, that *yesod* never separates from her [i.e., *malchut*], and is embodied in the upper tip of the *dalet*. Of it, it is written: “Better a close neighbor than a far brother.”<sup>14</sup> “A close neighbor” refers to *yesod*, which receives the 370 lights corresponding to the numerical value of “neighbor” [*shachen*]. It remains close to her and does not part from her.

*Shachen*: *shin-kaf-nun* = 300 + 20 + 50 = 370.

The “far brother” refers to *tiferet*, which is occasionally distant [from *malchut*], as opposed to the neighbor, [*yesod*,] who is always close.

He [i.e., *Z'eir Anpin*] therefore possesses the facial beauty accompanying the beard, for all facial beauty depends on [the purity] of this limb [i.e., that of *yesod*, the reproductive organ], because it is the receptor of the 370 lights that shine on the face.

This is alluded to in the verse, “And Joseph had beautiful features and a beautiful face.”<sup>15</sup>

Joseph is associated with the *sefirah* of *yesod*, and successfully resisted sexual temptation.

The reason why the Torah says “...of oil-olives and honey” instead simply “...of oil and honey” is because, according to the *Zohar*,<sup>16</sup> the Divine Names that issue from the letters *yud-hei-vav* are *Elokim*, *Kel*, and *mem-tzadik-pei-tzadik*. The

<sup>14</sup> Proverbs 26:10.

<sup>15</sup> Genesis 39:6.

<sup>16</sup> 2:92a.

combined numerical value of these Names is the same as that of the word for “olive” [*zayit*].

*Mem-tzadik-pei-tzadik* is the Name *Havayah* permuted through the system known as *atbash*, in which the first letter of the alphabet (*alef*) is replaced with the last letter (*tav*), the second letter (*beit*) with the second-to-last letter (*shin*), and so on.

*Elokim*: *alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem* =  $1 + 30 + 5 + 10 + 40 = 86$ .

*Kel*: *alef-lamed* =  $1 + 30 = 31$ .

*Mem-tzadik-pei-tzadik* =  $40 + 90 + 80 + 90 = 300$ .

$86 + 31 + 300 = 417$ .

*Zayit*: *zayin-yud-tav* =  $7 + 10 + 400 = 417$ .

The word for “oil” [*shemen*], when permuted in *atbash*, becomes *beit-yud-tet*, the same numerical value as the letters *yud-hei-vav*. The Name *yud-hei-vav* is associated with the *sefirah* of *yesod*. [...]

*Beit-yud-tet* =  $2 + 10 + 9 = 21$ .

*Yud-hei-vav* =  $10 + 5 + 6 = 21$ .

[Date-]honey [*devash*] derives from *malchut*, and is the *shin-vav* of *shofar*, its *malchut*.

*Devash*: *dalet-beit-shin* =  $4 + 2 + 300 = 306$ .

*Shofar* is spelled *shin-vav-pei-reish*. *Shin-vav*:  $300 + 6 = 306$ .

Thus, *malchut*, which must descend into the world of *Beriah*, is blessed from these seven [fruits].

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim* and *Likutei Torah*

## *Parashat Eikev* [third installment]

In *parashat Eikev*, Moses tells the Jewish people, “Burn the idols of their gods in fire...do not bring an abomination into your house, lest you become an abhorrence like it. Treat it as disgusting and abominable, for it is an abhorrence. Take care to do all the commandment that I command you today, in order that you live and multiply and come and inherit the land that G-d swore to your fathers. Remember the journey on which G-d guided you these forty years in the desert, in order to afflict you and test you to know what is in your heart, if you will keep His commandments or not. He afflicted you and made you hungry and fed you the manna, which you did not know and your fathers did not know, in order to teach you that man does not leave by bread alone but rather by every word that issues from G-d’s mouth shall man live....”<sup>1</sup>

As we have noted previously, in Hebrew, the second person singular and plural have different forms. (This is not true in modern English, where the word “you” can mean one person or a whole crowd. In old English, the difference exists in the forms “thou” vs. “ye.”) If we note the usage of the singular and plural forms in the above passage, we have:

“Burn [implied *you*, sing.] the idols of their gods in fire...do not [implied *you*, sing.] bring an abomination into your [sing.] house, lest you [sing.] become an abhorrence like it. Treat it [implied *you*, sing.] as disgusting and abominable, for it is an abhorrence. All the commandment that I command you [sing.] today, take care [pl.] to do, in order that you [pl.] live and you [pl.] multiply, and you [pl.] come and you [pl.] inherit the land that G-d swore to your [pl.] fathers. Remember [implied *you*, sing.] the journey on which G-d guided you [sing.] these forty years in the desert...how He afflicted you [sing.] and made you [sing.] hungry and fed you [sing.] the manna....”

Thus, the entire passage is in the singular except for one clause. The Arizal will address this as well as other aspects of this passage.

The expression “all the commandment” does not make sense. [Moses] should have said “all the commandments,” in the plural. Based on this irregularity, the sages<sup>2</sup> learned that a person should finish any commandment that he begins, and that its performance is ascribed only to the one who finishes it. The verse thus reads, “Take care to do *the whole* commandment....,” and not just part of it.

Alternatively, the verse may be understood to be a continuation of the preceding verse, which enjoins us to distance ourselves from idolatry: “Burn the idols of their gods in fire...do not bring [an abomination into your house, lest you become an abhorrence like it. Treat it as disgusting and abominable, for it is an abhorrence].”<sup>3</sup> Our sages taught that “whoever repudiates idolatry is as if he accepts the entire Torah.”<sup>4</sup> It therefore says that if you “treat is as disgusting and abominable,” “you will do all the commandment,” i.e., G-d will consider it as if you kept the whole Torah.

Rabbi Shalom Sharabi points out that this second explanation does not resolve the grammatical irregularity.

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 7:28-8:3.

<sup>2</sup> *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Eikev* 8.

<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy 7:25-26.

<sup>4</sup> *Kidushin* 40a.

A [third] possibility is that the Torah is here discussing [the specific commandment of] Torah study. We note that [Moses] began this passage addressing us in the singular, [and continues in the next verse] saying, “Remember the journey [on which G-d guided you these forty years in the desert]...how He afflicted you [and made you hungry and fed you the manna]....”<sup>5</sup> It therefore appears to me that this passage is talking about Torah study, for it, too, is called “the commandment.” The word “all” then comes to include the oral Torah, which is also called “the commandment.”

“Do all the commandment that I command you” thus means “do the commandment of Torah study completely, learning both the written and oral Torah.”

Proof of this may be seen in the words “Take care to do.” Our sages taught<sup>6</sup> that in the verse “You shall be careful and do them,”<sup>7</sup> “you shall be careful” refers to learning [how to do the commandments] and “and do them” refers to performing [them,] as it sounds. Here, too, “Take care” means be sure not to forget what you have learned, so that you can do it, as indicated by “to do....”

This explains what I learned about the [following] passage of the Mishnah: “Moses received the Torah from Sinai [and transmitted it to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets transmitted it to the Men of the Great Assembly].”<sup>8</sup> It was pointed out that with regard to Moses, the expression “received” is used, whereas with regard Joshua, the expression “transmitted to” is used. It would seem that it would have been more consistent either to speak of both of them as having “received” or as having been “transmitted to.” Furthermore, the next two stages, the elders and the prophets, are not spoken of as having received or having been transmitted to. Finally, the prophets are said to have “transmitted” it to the Men of the Great Assembly. Why not follow the precedent and simply say, “and the prophets to the Men of the Great Assembly?”

It was answered that “transmitted to” implies being acted upon forcefully. As it is written, “and [the conscripts] were handed over from amongst the thousands of Israel”<sup>9</sup> in connection with [the conscription for] the war against Midian.

The word for “were handed over” (*yimasru*) is the same verb used in the Mishnah quoted for “transmitted” (*masrah, masru*).

The Jews had to be conscripted by force [to fight the war against Midian], since they knew that Moses would die thereafter.<sup>10</sup> As it is written, “Avenge the

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<sup>5</sup> Deuteronomy 8:2-3.

<sup>6</sup> *Sifrei, Re'eh* 58, 59.

<sup>7</sup> Deuteronomy 7:12.

<sup>8</sup> *Avot* 1:1.

<sup>9</sup> Numbers 31:5.

<sup>10</sup> Rashi *ad loc.*

vengeance [of the Israelites against Midian,] and then be gathered [unto your people].”<sup>11</sup>

Thus, the verb in question denotes involuntary transmission.

Therefore, inasmuch as our holy Torah “is longer than the earth [and wider than the sea],”<sup>12</sup> Moses had to transmit it to Joshua against forcefully, for Joshua was unable to receive it all on his own. Only Moses had the power to receive it easily. But Joshua received it only on Moses’ power, beyond his ability.

As for “and Joshua to the elders”: Since he was transmitting it to many people, his own power was not required, for amongst many people, one will remember most of what he learned, another most of what he learned, [and thus they will all, together, cover the subject]. It is therefore not as difficult as it is with an individual who has to remember the whole Torah by himself.

The same pertains for “and the elders to the prophets,” a transmission from the many to the many.

But as the generations wore on, human intellect diminished, until even transmission from the many to the many required power. It is therefore stated that “the prophets *transmitted it* to the Men of the Great Assembly.”

Thus, it never happened that one individual [was responsible for] knowing the whole Torah other than in the cases of Moses and Joshua.

Therefore, [here,] Moses says “the whole commandment”—meaning the whole Torah—“that I command you”—in the singular, as if to say “*I am teaching it* to each of you individually, just as to Joshua. But I know that you will not all be able to remember it all; therefore I tell you”—in the plural—“to at least *take care* of it amongst all of you, so that each one remember at least part of it.” He then reverted again to the singular, saying, “Remember the journey....”

In other words, the whole passage is addressed to each individual Jew, in the singular, except for the clause “Take care [implied *you*, pl.] to do, in order that you [pl.] live and you [pl.] multiply, and you [pl.] come and you [pl.] inherit the land that G-d swore to your [pl.] fathers.” The next verse continues, “Remember [implied *you*, sing.] the journey on which G-d guided you [sing.]...” and the rest of the passage is in the singular. The plural clause is addressed to the people as a whole who are collectively responsible for remembering amongst all of them the whole Torah.

Similarly, [we can better understand this passage with the help of] something written by the pious Rabbi Yonah [of Gerondi]<sup>13</sup> regarding the sequence of verses [in another Biblical passage]. King Solomon said, “Honor G-d with your wealth...and He will fill your storehouses [with satiation].... Do not despise, my

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<sup>11</sup> Numbers 31:2.

<sup>12</sup> Job 11:9.

<sup>13</sup> *Sha'arei Teshuvah* 3:30.

child, G-d's discipline...[for G-d chastises whom He loves]."<sup>14</sup> He wrote that [this implies that] even if G-d does not "fill your storehouses," do not say that it is pointless to serve Him, "for G-d chastises whom He loves."

So, too, did [Moses] say here. "Even though I told you 'you shall take care to do...in order that you live [and multiply],' if it doesn't happen, don't rebel, for it might be a test: 'for G-d is testing you to know'<sup>15</sup> 'if you will keep His commandments or not.' So, too, [do not rebel even] if pain or suffering befall you, [for He is testing you] like the way He tested you by making you wander for forty years in the desert, to see if you would rebel and say that 'look, we are keeping His commandments and learning His Torah, and He has been tiring us out on this journey for forty years, and has not brought us into the land of Israel.'"

[Moses] began [this section of this passage] in the plural but then switched to the singular. This is because generally whoever keeps the commandments will prosper and live. Thus, he said: "take care [pl.] to do, in order that you [pl.] live...," for this is the general rule. If there is an exception or two, that is, "a righteous person who suffers,"<sup>16</sup> it is only a test. He therefore continued, "Remember [implied *you*, sing.] the journey on which G-d guided you [sing.]...how He afflicted you [sing.] and made you [sing.] hungry...." Meaning, "from this you should understand that if you are a righteous person who suffers, this might be an affliction that He, may He be blessed, is inflicting on you in order to cleanse [you] of [the existential filth you have accrued from] some sin. For G-d chastises whom He loves."

The Arizal now explains why the manna is mentioned in this context. We have explained the passage to be describing how G-d sometimes inflicts suffering on the righteous. Wasn't the manna a good thing?

Even though the manna was a spiritual and important form of nourishment, they still suffered and were hungry, as it is written, "and our souls are fed up with this light bread,"<sup>17</sup> and "our eyes see nothing but manna."<sup>18</sup>

These verses indicate that the Jews did not appreciate the manna, as the Arizal will now explain.

Scripture here repeats this complaint on their behalf and justifies it, as it is written: "[and fed you the manna,] which you did not know and your fathers did not know." It is normal for people to prefer food they are used to, and if they are brought a better type of food, they do not appreciate it, since they are not used to it. The same is true here, especially since [the manna] was a spiritual food, and physical beings desire only physical food.

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<sup>14</sup> Proverbs 3:10-12.

<sup>15</sup> par. Deuteronomy 13:4.

<sup>16</sup> *Berachot* 7a.

<sup>17</sup> Numbers 21:5.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 11:6.

G-d's intention [in nonetheless feeding them manna] was to teach them that not everything that seems good is really good. For suffering serves to cleanse sin, and it is therefore better [than apparent good]. This is why we are taught to bless G-d [even] for misfortune, just as we bless Him for good fortune.<sup>19</sup> And so did Nachum of Gamzu say, "This [misfortune], too, is for the good,"<sup>20</sup> even though it appears evil to everyone.

This is the meaning of the phrase, "in order to teach you that man does not leave by bread alone"—which you consider good—"but rather by every word that issues from G-d's mouth"—i.e., everything G-d decrees, whether [it appear] good or bad, on this—"shall man live" better. Therefore, "Do not despise, my child, G-d's discipline."

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim* and *Likutei Torah*

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<sup>19</sup> *Berachot* 54a.

<sup>20</sup> *Ta'anit* 21a.

## *Parashat Eikev* [fourth installment]

This passage is the continuation of the previous installment. To review:

In *parashat Eikev*, Moses tells the Jewish people, “Burn the idols of their gods in fire...do not bring an abomination into your house, lest you become an abhorrence like it. Treat it as disgusting and abominable, for it is an abhorrence. Take care to do all the commandment that I command you today, in order that you live and multiply and come and inherit the land that G-d swore to your fathers. Remember the journey on which G-d guided you these forty years in the desert, in order to afflict you and test you to know what is in your heart, if you will keep His commandments or not. He afflicted you and made you hungry and fed you the manna, which you did not know and your fathers did not know, in order to teach you that man does not live by bread alone but rather by every word that issues from G-d’s mouth shall man live...”<sup>1</sup>

The Arizal notes that Scripture says “Take care to do all the commandment” —in the singular, instead of “all the commandments,” as we would expect.

We can also explain [this discrepancy] as follows:

Everything in the world possesses life-force, and just as man was created with both a body and soul, so does everything [possess both a body and “soul,” its life-force].

[In this vein,] the Torah also possesses a body and a soul. The body [i.e., the legal aspect of the Torah] acts as its garment, and in fact is referred by our sages as “the ‘bodies’ [i.e., laws] of the Torah.”

There is also the inner dimension of the Torah, which is its soul.

This is why the angels said, “Place Your glory over the heavens,”<sup>2</sup> for [as Moses argued,] what do they need the body of the Torah for? They have no jealousy or hatred, and the laws “you shall not kill” and the like do not apply to them. Therefore, they only asked [of G-d] the inner dimension, which is never garbed in this body and these laws. For since it is higher [than the body of the Torah], it has no need to be garbed in it at all.

This refers to the Midrashic account of how, when Moses ascended to heaven to receive the Torah from G-d, the angels protested, saying, “What is man, that You are mindful of him, or the son of man [i.e., Moses] that You consider him?”<sup>3</sup> Meaning, the Torah is so sublime and spiritual; why are you giving it to mortal man? Rather, “Keep Your glory [the Torah] in heaven.” G-d turned to Moses, telling him to answer the angels. He noted that the Torah is full of commandments and moral instructions that cannot apply to angels.

Here, the Arizal says that the angels, so to speak, were fully aware of this, and all they requested was that the inner dimension of the Torah, the Kabbalah, remain in heaven, since it describes the workings of heaven and cannot be understood on a physical level. Let the laws that apply to man, they said, be given to man, but let the soul of the Torah remain with us.

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 7:28-8:3.

<sup>2</sup> Psalms 8:2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 5.

The fact that Moses bested their argument indicates that humanity needs the inner dimension of the Torah as well, in order to overcome his material nature.

Just as the soul of man, which needs to be clothed in a material body [only] in order to descend into this world, so it is with the Torah.

The inner, spiritual dimension of the Torah assumes the garb of the laws in order to be applicable to this world.

Similarly, the commandments possess a body, which is their physical performance, and a soul, which is the intentions [*kavanot*] a person meditates on in order to perform them properly. If [the commandment] is performed without the requisite intention, it is like a body without a soul.

[Scripture] therefore says, “All the commandment [sing.] that I command you today, take care to do,” meaning: “do *all* the commandment,” including its inner intention and life-force. [The verse continues:] “in order that you live.” This is [an instance of G-d’s method of reward, i.e.] reciprocal payment: just as you performed a commandment with its life-force and vitality, so will you be provided for in this world in the merit of its body [i.e., physical performance] and in the World to Come in the merit of its life-force [i.e., inner intentions]. You will thus be rewarded with life from it both in this world and the World to Come. Therefore it is written, “in order that you live,” referring to complete life, in this world and in the World to Come.

The food a person eats also possesses an inner life-force, which is the words that issued from G-d’s mouth when the world was created, when He said, “Let the earth produce such-and-such.” That “breath” is a real thing, just as when a person speaks, he produces vapor from his mouth, and that vapor is part of his life-force. The proof of this is that after the soul departs from the body [at death], there remains neither vapor nor speech. Thus, that vapor that issues from his mouth when he speaks is part of his *soul*.

If the vapor were only physical, there is no reason why it should not continue to exist in the corpse after death.

This is why we are commanded not to speak idle words, for through this a person wastes part of his soul. And so did I hear from the sage, Rabbi Shimon Turno, of sainted memory, in his homily on the verse, “He shall not profane [*yacheil*] his word; he shall act in accordance with all that issues from his mouth”<sup>4</sup>: A person should not make his speech commonplace [*chulin*], for according to whatever issues from his mouth, so shall he become—for better or for worse. In addition, he creates defending or prosecuting angels [through his speech].

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<sup>4</sup> Numbers 30:3.

The word for “profane,” in the sense of “violate,” is related to the word for “commonplace.” Both share the idea of “robbing of intrinsic sanctity.” For the purposes of the homily, the word for “he shall act” [*ya’aseh*] is read as the passive “he shall become” [*yei-aseh*].

If this is true of the vapor of man’s speech, all the more so is it true of the vapor that issues from the mouth of G-d. In this connection, it is written, “And all the people were seeing the voices”<sup>5</sup>—they saw that which is normally heard.<sup>6</sup> They saw G-d’s speech, as it came and kissed them on their mouths and said, “Accept me upon yourself.” Thus, they saw G-d’s speech in the apparition of an angel of sorts.

So was it with regard to G-d’s speech when the world was created: every utterance entered the entity [it created] in order to serve as its inner life-force and to make it grow.

Thus, within the food a person eats, there is both the material component that nourishes the body and the inner life-force that becomes part of the person’s soul.

All this allows us to answer the following question:

How is it possible that material bread can nourish a person’s soul, which is spiritual? If a person refrains from eating bread or any other food for several days, he will die of hunger and his soul will depart from him, but if he eats bread he will live. How can the bread retain the spiritual soul [in the body]?

Because of this question, the philosophers insisted that the soul does not live on [after death], and that when the body dies the soul dies also. [They argued:] since it is nourished from a physical thing, it must also be physical.

The truth is not like this, G-d forbid, for they did not know what we said [above], namely, that there is life-force within the food, which is its spiritual dimension, and this spiritual aspect [of the food] enlivens the spiritual aspect of man’s life-force.

This is meaning of the verse: “and He fed you the manna...”—spiritual food—“...in order to teach you...” that the only thing that nourishes [the soul of] a person is the spiritual aspect [of the food]. As the verse continues: “...that man does not live by bread alone but rather by every word that issues from G-d’s mouth shall man live.” Meaning: the words which issued from G-d’s mouth when the world was created to bring forth everything from the earth entered into each form of nourishment, and that is what nourishes and enlivens the person [i.e., his soul].

The manna is considered spiritual food even though it assumed physical form because it descended from heaven every day. The blessing the Jewish people recited before eating it was “...who brings forth bread from heaven.”

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<sup>5</sup> Exodus 20:15.

<sup>6</sup> *Mechilta*, *Bachodesh* 9.

This is why we must recite blessings before eating food, for by reciting the blessing we activate the [spiritual] life-force [inherent in the food].

The same applies to [performing] the commandments: the blessing we recite before performing a commandment serves to [active] the life-force in it.

It follows that in every commandment there is thought, speech, and action. The intention is the thought; the blessing is the speech, and the action [is the action]. Therefore Scripture refers to “*all* the commandment,” meaning the entire commandment, including its intention, as stated above.

In order that a person should not think that someone who does not know the inner intention associated with a commandment will not have a portion in the World to Come, Scripture therefore says, “Remember... [He fed you the manna].” Remember the eating of the manna, for His intention was to teach you the refutation of this supposition: just as the manna was spiritual [food] but it nonetheless could nourish the body, which is material, so should you know that physical [food] can nourish the soul, because this principle works both ways.

It is therefore written, “in order to teach you that man does not live by bread alone”—that is, his physical side, which is called “man” [*adam*] for it is made from the physical matter of the earth [*adamah*—“but rather by every word that issues from G-d’s mouth”—i.e., the manna, which is absolutely spiritual, for it issued from His mouth. By it “shall man live”—meaning, his material side, as said above.

The opposite is also true: when a person eats without reciting a blessing first, and thus without activating the [spiritual] life-force within [the food], and similarly, when the wicked eat—for their eating is without blessing—this will also nourish the soul, but not as well as it would have had the person recited the blessing.

The same is true of [performing] the commandments. Even if it is performed without the proper intentions, it will aid the person in the World to Come, although not as much as it does for a person who performs it with its proper intentions.

## *Parashat Re'eh*

In the portion of the Torah read this week, Moses gives the Jewish people the commandment to slaughter animals according to specific rules before eating their meat: “You must slaughter any of your herd or flock, which G-d has given you, as I have commanded you. Only then may you eat [of them] in your gates as much as you desire.”<sup>1</sup>

In contrast to an everyday butcher, the ritual slaughterer (*shochet*) in Judaism is a position of great honor. In order to be a *shochet*, a person should ideally be of exemplary character, a Torah scholar, pious, and G-d-fearing—besides being well-versed in the laws of ritual slaughter and expert in their performance. This is because, as we will see, the act of ritual slaughter—the first stage towards the eventual consumption of the flesh by the Jew—is an intensely spiritual act, and the spiritualization of the physical flesh depends a great deal on the purity of thought and intentions of the *shochet*.

The following are the meditations my master [the Arizal] of sainted memory taught to [the *shochet*] Rabbi Yitzchak Cohen, of blessed memory.

As you know, regarding the mystical intentions one should have while eating, all creatures of this world need to be rectified and refined. This is in order that they reach the spiritual level of the primal matter of which they were made when the world was created.

The primordial sin, that of eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, caused a spiritual fall in the ability of material creation to sustain spiritual consciousness. Our task in life is to refine the physical world so that it can once again be receptive to this level of Divine awareness.

This [level of refinement] is similar to [that exemplified by] the donkey of Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair.

Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair was a Talmudic sage. His donkey refused to eat untithed barley.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, it happens many times that human souls are reincarnated into animals. If the animal is slaughtered with the proper intentions, its helps extricate the reincarnated soul from the punishment it is undergoing. It can then re-enter a human body the next time it enters this world, as it was meant to originally.

There are thus two basic objectives of ritual slaughter: to elevate the spiritual nature of the material animal flesh, and to help the reincarnated soul finish its process of rectification.

The mystical purpose of ritual slaughter, then, is to sweeten all the judgements.

Both the descent (i.e., de-spiritualization) of material reality and the rectification process of the reincarnated soul are manifestations of G-d's attribute of judgement (which, of course, was invoked in the first place by the sin or wrongdoing of man). Counteracting this attribute by spiritualizing reality is called “sweetening” the judgement.

The first step of ritual slaughtering is preparing the knife. The knife must be perfectly smooth and free of any nicks. The *shochet* must check the knife by running it gently over his thumbnail before proceeding with the ritual slaughtering.

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 12:21.

<sup>2</sup> *Chulin* 7a.

When you inspect the knife and sharpen it on the stone, your intention should be to remove all its defects [i.e., nicks]. The numerical value of the word for “defect” [*pagam, pei-gimel-mem*] is [123,] equivalent to three times the number of letters in the Divine Name *Ekyeh* when it is spelled in its simple form and two iterations of its spelling-out. When it is spelled out thusly, using the letter *yud*, there are 41 letters. When it is spelled out in the same way using the letter *alef*, there are again 41 letters. When it is spelled out in the same way using the letter *hei*, there are again 41 letters. This gives a total of 123 letters, the numerical value of the word for “defect.”

Ekyeh spelled with the letter yud		
alef	alef	alef
		lamed
		pei
	lamed	lamed
		mem
		dalet
hei	pei	pei
		alef
		alef
	hei	hei
		yud
		yud
yud	yud	yud
		vav
		dalet
	vav	vav
		yud
		vav
	dalet	dalet
		lamed
		tav
	hei	hei
		yud
		dalet
hei	yud	yud
		vav
		dalet
	vav	vav
		yud
		vav

Ekyeh spelled with the letter alef		
alef	alef	alef
		lamed
		pei
	lamed	lamed
		mem
		dalet
hei	pei	pei
		alef
		alef
	hei	hei
		alef
		alef
yud	alef	alef
		lamed
		pei
	yud	yud
		vav
		dalet
	vav	vav
		alef
		vav
	dalet	dalet
		lamed
		tav
hei	alef	alef
		lamed
		pei
	hei	hei
		alef
		alef

Ekyeh spelled with the letter hei		
alef	alef	alef
		lamed
		pei
	lamed	lamed
		mem
		dalet
hei	pei	pei
		alef
		alef
	hei	hei
		hei
		hei
yud	yud	yud
		vav
		dalet
	vav	vav
		alef
		vav
	dalet	dalet
		lamed
		tav
	hei	hei
		hei
		hei
hei	hei	hei
		hei
		hei
	alef	alef
		lamed
		pei

The problem here is, as is readily seen, that when the Name *Ekyeh* is spelled out with the letter *hei*, only 39 letters are used. The Arizal himself states this explicitly elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> (I have yet to find an explanation for this. — myw)

These [iterations of the Name *Ekyeh*] are thus all manifestations of the attribute of judgement; you should intend to sweeten them.

The Divine Name *Ekyeh* is associated with the *sefirah* of *binah*. Whereas *chochmah* is the pristine experience of transcendent insight, *binah* is the analysis of the insight and its integration into the pre-existing mental structures of the mind. The mental process of *chochmah* is an experience of wonder and openness, while that of *binah* is an experience of evaluation and judgement. Thus, the Name *Ekyeh* is associated with judgement.

<sup>3</sup> *Etz Chaim* 14:8.

It is instructive to note that the only time this Name is used in the Bible is in the exchange between G-d and Moses at the burning bush. Moses asks G-d what he should tell the Jewish people G-d's Name is. G-d answers: "I shall be who I shall be." Rashi explains that G-d was telling Moses to reassure the Jewish people that G-d will be with them in future exiles, just as He was with them in the Egyptian exile. Thus, even the basic meaning of the Name *Ekyeh* is associated with exile, a manifestation of the Divine attribute of judgement.

The way this is done is by raising the number 41 to the number 42. Forty-two is the number of letters in the Divine Name *Havayah* when it is spelled in its simple form and two iterations of its spelling-out.

The Divine Name *Havayah* is associated with G-d's attribute of mercy. As we have explained previously, there are four standard ways in which this Name is spelled-out:

<b><i>Havayah</i> spelled with the letter <i>yud</i></b> numerical value: 72		
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>
		<i>vav</i>
		<i>dalet</i>
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav</i>
		<b><i>yud</i></b>
		<i>vav</i>
	<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet</i>
		<i>lamed</i>
		<i>tav</i>
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>
		<i>yud</i>
	<b><i>yud</i></b>	<i>yud</i>
		<i>vav</i>
		<i>dalet</i>
<i>vav</i>	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav</i>
		<b><i>yud</i></b>
		<i>vav</i>
	<b><i>yud</i></b>	<i>yud</i>
		<i>vav</i>
		<i>dalet</i>
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav</i>
		<b><i>yud</i></b>
		<i>vav</i>
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>
		<b><i>yud</i></b>
	<b><i>yud</i></b>	<i>yud</i>
		<i>vav</i>
		<i>dalet</i>

<b>the mixed spelling of <i>Havayah</i></b> numerical value: 63		
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>
		<i>vav</i>
		<i>dalet</i>
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav</i>
		<i>yud</i>
		<i>vav</i>
	<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet</i>
		<i>lamed</i>
		<i>tav</i>
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>
		<b><i>yud</i></b>
	<b><i>yud</i></b>	<i>yud</i>
		<i>vav</i>
		<i>dalet</i>
<i>vav</i>	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav</i>
		<i>yud</i>
		<i>vav</i>
	<b><i>alef</i></b>	<i>alef</i>
		<i>lamed</i>
		<i>pei</i>
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav</i>
		<i>yud</i>
		<i>vav</i>
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei</i>
		<i>yud</i>
	<b><i>yud</i></b>	<i>yud</i>
		<i>vav</i>
		<i>dalet</i>

<b><i>Havayah</i> spelled with the letter <i>alef</i></b> numerical value: 45		
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>
		<i>vav</i>
		<i>dalet</i>
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav</i>
		<i>yud</i>
		<i>vav</i>
	<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet</i>
		<i>lamed</i>

<b><i>Havayah</i> spelled with the letter <i>hei</i></b> numerical value: 52		
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud</i>
		<i>vav</i>
		<i>dalet</i>
	<i>vav</i>	<i>vav</i>
		<i>yud</i>
		<i>vav</i>
	<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet</i>
		<i>lamed</i>

		tav				tav
hei	hei	hei		hei	hei	hei
		yud			yud	yud
	alef	alef			hei	hei
		lamed			hei	hei
		pei				
vav	vav	vav		vav	vav	vav
		yud			yud	yud
		vav			vav	vav
	alef	alef				
		lamed				
		pei				
	vav	vav			vav	vav
		yud			yud	yud
		vav			vav	vav
hei	hei	hei		hei	hei	hei
		yud			yud	yud
	alef	alef			hei	hei
		lamed			hei	hei
		pei				

If we consider the first three ways of spelling the Name, we note that the number of letters in the simple spelling and two iterations of spelling-out together is 42.

[You should count only the number of letters in the spellings-out of] the Name *Havayah* whose numerical value are 72, 63, and 45. Three times 42 [= 126, which] is the numerical value of the word for “defect” [*pagam*, 123] plus one for each of the three letters that compose the word itself [*pei*, *gimel*, and *mem*].

These Names *Havayah* indicate Divine mercy, which you have now substituted for the attribute of judgement indicated by the 41 letters of the Name *Ekyeh*, as we said.

The fourth spelling-out of the Name *Havayah*, whose numerical value is 52 and is spelled out using the letter *hei*, does not possess 42 letters [in its simple spelling and two iterations of spelling-out].

Therefore, it cannot “counteract” the 41 letters of the spelling out of the Name *Ekyeh* and does not figure in this meditation.

Now, when you slaughter the animal, have in mind that the numerical value of the word for “the slaughtering” [*ha-shechitah*, *hei-shin-chet-yud-tet-hei*] is 337, which is three times the numerical value of the word “Yabok” [*yud-beit-kuf*, 112].

$3 \times 112 = 336$ ; adding 1 for the value of the word Yabok as a whole gives 337. Yabok is the name of the river next to which Jacob wrestled with the angel of Esau. Slaughtering is thus a specific case of the cosmic struggle between good and evil, Divine consciousness and gross material consciousness. Will the animal be slaughtered in order for man to satisfy his craving for meat, to aggrandize his animal nature? Or will it be slaughtered in order to heighten the awareness of G-d’s magnificence in creating the taste and satiation that accompany eating, and by utilizing the energy gained from eating to augment the world’s consciousness of G-d through Torah study and observance of the commandments?

[112] is also the combined numerical value of the Names *Havayah* [26] and *Elokim* [86]. These two Names are situated in the throat, which is where the animal is slaughtered.

This will be explained presently. Whereas during the sharpening of the knife, the negativity of the Name *Ekyeh* was sweetened by the Name *Havayah*, during the slaughtering itself, the negativity of the Name *Elokim* will be sweetened by the Name *Havayah*.

Have in mind that the numerical value of the word for “throat” [*garon, gimel-reish-vav-nun*, 259] is three times that of the Name *Elokim*.

$86 \times 3 = 258$ ; adding 1 for the value of the Name *Elokim* as a whole gives 259.

These [three Names *Elokim*] are the three immature “brains” which descend there [i.e., to the throat], as part of the development process of *Z'eir Anpin*, as is known.

As we have explained previously, *Z'eir Anpin* passes through three stage of consciousness in the course of its development as a *partzuf*. These are fetal consciousness, suckling consciousness, and mature consciousness. Mature consciousness is characterized by the mature influence of the intellect over the emotions. In other words, the consciousness of the intellect must, so to speak, descend into the realm of the emotions.

Now, the conscious powers of the soul are all associated with corresponding locations of the body. Intellect, of course, is “in” the head, while the emotions are “in” the heart or torso. Between the head and the torso is the neck, which is of much smaller diameter than either the head or the torso. Thus, we may envision the ideas and consciousness of the intellect having to contract in order to pass through the neck on the way to the heart, where they can expand again to inform and permeate the emotions. This contraction is of course necessary, since intellect and emotion are two different worlds, and were the consciousness of the intellect to attempt to influence the emotions without any quantum leap of level (*tzimtzum*), the emotions would not be able to “relate to” or internalize any of the intellect’s level of awareness. This neck-stage is thus crucial for *Z'eir Anpin*’s (and by extension, every human being’s, who is a projection and manifestation of *Z'eir Anpin*) emotional maturation.

So, first, the three brains (*chochmah, binah, and da'at*) descend into the neck region on their way to the heart. But, as we said, these are mentalities of constricted consciousness, created by the power of contraction of the Name *Elokim*. This Name indicates G-d’s power and strength of restraint. In order for these levels of consciousness to be able to influence the heart properly, they must be influenced here, before descending any further, by the Name *Havayah*, G-d’s mercy.

At this point, these Names are manifestations solely of G-d’s judgement. Therefore have in mind to elicit three Names *Havayah*, indicating mature consciousness. [Combining the Names *Havayah* and *Elokim* thus] will give three times *Havayah-Elokim*, which as we said, is the numerical value of the word for “the slaughtering.”

By removing the blood [which embodies] the attribute of judgement, you allow the three Names *Havayah* that embody mature consciousness to shine into the soul incarnated into the animal. This rectifies him.

Blood is red, the color of severity and judgement (*gevurah*).

After this, meditate on the fact that there are two channels in the throat [i.e., the trachea and the esophagus]. The numerical value of the word used here for “channel” [*siman, samech-yud-men-nun*, 160] is the same as that of the Name *Ekyeh* when spelled-out with the letter *yud*.

The numerical value of the first iteration of the spelling out of the Name *Ekyeh* using the letter *yud* is 161. So this equivalence requires adding 1 for the value of the word for “channel” as a whole.

The numerical value of the word for “trachea” [*kaneh, kuf-nun-hei*, 155] is the same that of the Name *Ekyeh* when spelled out with the letter *hei*, plus 4 for sweetening each of the four base-letters of this Name.

The numerical value of the first iteration of the spelling out of the Name *Ekyeh* using the letter *hei* is 151.

The numerical value of the word for “esophagus” [*veshet, vav-shin-tet*, 315] is seven times the numerical value of the word for “man” [*adam, alef-dalet-mem*, 45]. This number [315] is also related to the 320 states of severity associated with the blood of the throat, which is also a manifestation of severity.

We are to picture the mentality of the brain figuratively descending through the two channels of the throat into the torso. The act of ritual slaughtering, which empties these vessels of their blood, neutralizes the negative forces that threaten to thwart the safe passage of Divine consciousness from head to heart.

Seven is the number of emotions that compose *Z'eir Anpin*, who is the archetypal man-figure, as we have noted. It is these seven emotions whose rectification depends upon the successful transference of mind-consciousness through ritual slaughter. Thus, the seven man-emotions are rectified via the esophagus.

The number 320 is derived from the 288 sparks of Divine light that fell from the world of *Tohu* and became embedded as self-oriented consciousness and egocentricity in the fabric of the lower worlds, including ours. To this number is added the number 32, the number of times the Name *Elokim*—the Name signifying Divine judgement and severity—appears in the story of creation. The “320 states of severity” thus signify the negativity and egocentricity inherent in creation since the fall accompanying the primordial sin, which our task is to counteract by eliciting Divine mercy and love.

The equivalence of 315 and 320 is arrived at probably by adding the definite article (“the,” indicated by the Hebrew letter *hei*, whose numerical value is 5) to the word for “esophagus” (*ha-veshet*).

Now, through ritual slaughter, the dross in these states of severity is sweetened and refined.

One Thursday, we were sitting before my master, and a goat came up to us and placed its two front paws on the table. My master began to converse with it in its language.<sup>4</sup> He then told me to go buy this goat, and have it slaughtered for the Sabbath. He then told Rabbi Moshe Sofino to slaughter it according to the [above detailed] meditations. [...] When I later asked my teacher what this soul did that it had to be punished by being reincarnated into this goat, he said that this soul was a great scholar from Talmudic times that had engaged in marital relations with his wife by candlelight. May G-d preserve us, Amen.

Marital relations are supposed to be conducted in the dark, for reasons of modesty and intimacy. The Hebrew word for “goat” (*eiz*) also means “brash” (*az*).

—translated from *Sha'ar HaMitzvot* and *Ta'amei HaMitzvot*

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<sup>4</sup> Certain Talmudic sages are also known to have known various animal languages.

## *Parashat Re'eh* [second installment]

In this *parashah*, we are commanded to give charity (*tzedakah*): “When there will be a poor person amongst you...do not tighten your heart and do not close up your hand in front of your poor brother. Rather, open your hand to him...”<sup>1</sup>

Rabbi Chaim Vital, who recorded the teachings of the Arizal, tells us:

As for philanthropy and generosity, I observed that my master was not particular that his own clothes be terribly fancy, that he only ate a very little, and—with regards to his wife’s expenses—that he would dispense [funds] according to her wish. [In contrast,] my master would give charity with great joy and good-heartedness, open-handedly, and sometimes he would not even look to see if there would be any money left for himself or not.

My master said that every commandment is associated with one of the twenty-two letters [of the Hebrew alphabet], and that when someone performs a commandment, the letter associated with that commandment shines on his forehead, replacing the letter shining on his forehead from the previous commandment he performed. [The letter remains on his forehead] only as long as he is performing the commandment [with which it is associated]; afterwards it is absorbed within [him]. But if he performs the commandment of charity, the letter associated with it does not disappear as fast as the letters associated with other commandments, but rather continues to shine on his forehead the whole week. This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “His righteousness [*tzedakah*] endures forever.”<sup>2</sup>

Regarding buying things that are used for performing the Torah’s commandments, such as a *lulav* and *etrog*, I saw that my master would give the merchants all they asked for the first time [they named a price], and did not try to bargain with them. Sometimes he placed his wallet before them and told them to take what they want. He told me that one should not bargain over the prices one pays to do *mitzvot*. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai says the same thing in the *Zohar*.

We will now explain the mystical meaning of the verse, “There is one who gives generously yet ends with more,”<sup>3</sup> which our sages applied to the *mitzvah* of charity.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, we will also relate [this verse] to the same subject, for *yesod* is

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 15:7-8.

<sup>2</sup> Psalms 111:3, 112:3, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Proverbs 11:24.

<sup>4</sup> *Yalkut Shimoni ad loc.*

called the “righteous one” [*tzadik*], inasmuch as it gives “charity” [*tzedakah*] to *Nukva*, who is *a priori* termed “righteousness” [*tzedek*], but thereby becomes “charity” [*tzedakah*].

The word for “charity,” *tzedakah*, is composed of the word for “righteousness” (*tzedek*, *tzadik-dalet-kuf*) plus an additional *hei*. Since the *hei* at the end of a word is a sign of the feminine gender, *tzedakah* may be considered the feminine form of *tzedek*. Thus, *yesod* transforms *Nukva* into a female.

Now, [the verse speaks of] the *tzadik* [i.e., *yesod*] as “giving generously.” The literal meaning of this word [*mefazeir*] is “spreading,” implying that it crumbles the supernal states of *chesed* into small crumbs, which scatter from the pulverizing blows. This is in order to give [these crumbs] to *Nukva*, and the crumbs spread throughout *Nukva* similar to [how the coins of] *tzedakah* [a person distributes spread salvation throughout the world].

You should not think that these states of *chesed* are diminished by [passing through] *Z'eir Anpin* nor that they lack anything by being given to *tzedek* [i.e., *Nukva*]. On the contrary, [the result of this process] is not a lack but “ends with more.” For these [pulverizing] blows magnify all the states of *chesed*, and their light increases infinitely. *Z'eir Anpin* grows through this process, as we have explained elsewhere. This is the meaning of the phrase, “yet ends with more.”

*Z'eir Anpin* must process its abstract experience of *chesed*, “breaking it down” or concretizing it into terms and contexts that are meaningful to the objective-oriented *partzuf* of *Nukva* in order for the latter to assimilate it. Lest one think that *Z'eir Anpin* suffers from its “marriage” to *Nukva* (for which it must “trouble itself” to contextualize its inherent abstractness, which would seem to be a regrettable descent), we are told here that it in fact matures and develops from the process. The descent into reality rebounds as a greater ability to achieve abstraction.

It could be that this is why *yesod* is called “Joseph.”

As we have explained numerous times, Joseph is associated with *yesod* by virtue of his sexual purity. Here, we note that the word “Joseph” (*yoseif*) means “he will add,” alluding to the increase Joseph—i.e., holy coupling with *Nukva*—causes in *Z'eir Anpin*.

So will it be with someone who gives charity. [He will not suffer financially from this, but] on the contrary, he will become wealthier, and possess more than he did beforehand.



The mystical meaning of *tzedakah* and prayer is that since [because of mankind’s sins] the *yud-hei* has been separated from the *vav-hei*, we must give *tzedakah* or pray in order to unify G-d’s Name with His *Shechinah*, with fear and love, in the name of all Israel.

Misdeeds are possible only because the intellect is divorced from the emotions (and their expression). Intellectually, a person can understand that it is not right for him to do evil. But as long as this understanding is not given the opportunity (usually through contemplation and meditation) to affect the way he feels about things, it remains abstract and sterile.

The *yud-hei* of G-d's Name *Havayah* signify, as we have explained previously, the *sefirot* of *chochmah* and *binah*, respectively, the two principal components of the intellect. The *vav-hei* signify the emotions (considered collectively) and their means of expression (thought, speech, and action).

By renewing our connection to G-d in prayer or performing acts of loving-kindness, we show that our intellect is indeed affecting our emotions and actions, thus healing the breach between the two halves of G-d's Name.

As we know, the first two letters of the Name *Havayah* are a Name of G-d in their own right, the Name *Kah*. The final *hei* of the Name *Havayah*, which descends to express the intellect and emotions of the first three letters into the lower worlds, is termed the *Shechinah*, the "Divine presence."



The mystical meaning of charity is as follows:

When you give a coin, consider the word for "coin" [*perutah*] to be made up of two letter-groups: *pei-reish-tet* and *vav-hei*. The origin of strict judgment is from the 288 sparks [of *Tohu* that fell]; when to this number the *kolel* is added, we have the numerical value of *pei-reish-tet*.

$$\text{Pei-reish-tet} = 80 + 200 + 9 = 289.$$

Evil, suffering, and all varieties of occultation of the Divine presence result cosmologically from the collapse of the world of *Tohu*, in which the sparks of holiness of this world became embedded in the gross materiality (relative or actual) of the subsequently created worlds. The general number of these sparks is 288, as we have explained previously.

These [sparks] are existentially ensconced within the final *hei* [of the Name *Havayah*].

The final *hei*, *malchut*, is the *sefirah* of any world that descends into the next lower world in order to bring it into being and sustain it. It thus embodies the principle of descent.

When we join the [final] *hei* with the *vav*, the individual aspects of the judgments are sweetened; this occurs through giving charity.

The letter-group *pei-reish-tet* spells the word for "individual aspect" (*perat*).

The numerical value of the word *tzedakah* [plus the *kolel*] is the same as the combined numerical values of the Names *Elokim*, *Adni*, the number 45, and 4 [for the four] letters of the Name [*Havayah*].

$$\text{Tzedakah: tzadik-dalet-kuf-hei} = 90 + 4 + 100 + 5 = 199.$$

$$\text{Elokim: alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem} = 1 + 30 + 5 + 10 + 40 = 86.$$

$$\text{Adni: alef-dalet-nun-yud} = 1 + 4 + 50 + 10 = 65.$$

$$86 + 65 + 45 + 4 = 200.$$

The meaning of this is that the Names *Elokim* and *Adni* [which both signify strict judgment] are sweetened by *tzedakah* performed with the 45-Name.

Generally, the 45-Name (i.e., the Name *Havayah* spelled out such that its numerical value is 45) signifies selflessness (*bitul*). Thus, we see here the importance of giving *tzedakah* selflessly.

We will now explain the mystical meaning of the phrase: “You shall surely open your hand to your brother, your poor, and your destitute of your land.”<sup>5</sup>

*You shall surely open your hand to your brother...* this refers to *yesod*;

*...in your land:* this refers to *Nukva*, i.e., [the union of] both [*Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*] together, for through *tzedakah*, *tzedek* [*yesod*] and *tzedakah* [*malchut*] unite, as is known.

As we know, “the land” is an appellation for *malchut*, the lowest *sefirah*.

—translated from *Ta'amei HaMitzvot*

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<sup>5</sup> Deuteronomy 15:11.

## *Parashat Re'eh* [third installment]

In this *parashah*, we are told: “When there will be a poor man from among your brothers in one of the gates of your land, which G-d, your G-d, is giving you, do not constrict your heart or close your hand before your poor brother. Rather, open, open your hand to him or loan him as much as he needs of what he is lacking.”<sup>1</sup>

The mystical significance of charity [*tzedakah*] [is as follows]:

The word for “charity” (*tzedakah*) is spelled *tzadik-dalet-kuf-hei*.

The *yud* in the letter *tzadik* is faced in the opposite direction that the [*yud*] of the *nun* [of the *tzadik*], and this indicates that *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* are back-to-back.

In the scribal script used for writing Torah scrolls, *tefilin*, and *mezuzot*, the letters of the alphabet have precise forms as dictated by Jewish law. The Arizal's system is basically the same as that of Rabbi Yosef Karo,<sup>2</sup> with seven exceptions. One of these is the form of the letter *tzadik*, which is formed by writing a slightly bent-over *nun* and then attaching a *yud* on the right. According to Rabbi Karo, this *yud* is to be written “facing” the *nun*, that is, in its normal orientation. (Most letters in the Hebrew alphabet appear to be “facing” left.) According to the Arizal, however, the *yud* is to be written “facing” right. This is also the way the Sefardim write the *tzadik*.

As we know, the *partzufim* being “back to back” is the least favorable position, in which the flow of Divine beneficence is severely limited. One of the ramifications of this situation is material poverty in the physical world.

The *dalet* [the second letter of the word *tzedakah*] indicates that *Nukva* is impoverished, inasmuch as the word *dalet* means “poor.”

The adjective *dal* means “poor,” so *dalet* can be seen as a feminine form of this word.

Since *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* are back-to-back, *Nukva* does not receive the full flow of Divine beneficence it needs.

Even though the [third letter,] *kuf*, does indicate a certain low-grade coupling, its “leg” is long, indicating that [the Divine beneficence it channels unfortunately] extends to the realm of evil.

The *kuf* is formed of a slightly truncated *kaf* and a lowered *zayin*. These two letters are facing the normal way, indicating that altogether the *kuf* does indicate a measure of “coupling,” but the lowered *zayin*, the “leg” of the *kuf*, extends below the line, indicating a flow into the lower realms of reality, i.e., evil.

In order to freshen [lit., “perfume,” i.e., rectify] this situation, we must give charity, which fills in [the missing elements of the first three letters] as the letter *hei*, which depicts the true coupling, this being the mystical significance of the letter *hei*, as explained in the *Zohar*.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 15:7-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 36.

<sup>3</sup> 2:104a.

The *hei* is seen as a perfectly balanced letter, in which the leg does not extend below the line as it does in the *kuf*, and there is a coupling between its two parts, unlike the *dalet*, which lacks a second “half” to couple with. As we will see, the *hei* is the rectified form of the *kuf* and the *dalet*.

Now, the *kuf* signifies Cain, i.e., the spreading of the impurity [of evil], while the *hei* signifies Abel.

The name Cain (*Kayin*) begins with a *kuf*, while the name Abel (*Hevel*) begins with a *hei*.

The one giving the charity should also intend to unite the [letters of the] Name *Havayah* in the following way:

By giving charity, we facilitate the union of the *partzufim*; this then allows the Divine beneficence to flow unrestrictedly.

The coin he gives to the poor person manifests the *yud* of the Name *Havayah*.

The coin is the concentrated point of Divine beneficence, similar to the *yud*, the smallest of the letters, which signifies the seminal drop of insight (*chochmah*).

The five fingers of the hand of the giver manifest the [first] *hei* of the Name *Havayah*.

The numerical value of the *hei* is 5.

His extended arm manifests the *vav* of the Name *Havayah*.

Since its straight line of the arm is visually similar to the form of the *vav*, essentially a straight line.

The five fingers of the hand of the recipient manifest the final *hei* of the Name *Havayah*.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “and the act of charity will be peace.”<sup>4</sup>

Giving charity makes peace between the estranged letters of the Name *Havayah*.



The purpose of giving charity [before] prayer is to unify the [first two letters of the Name *Havayah*], *yud-hei*, that are separated from the [final two letters,] *vav-hei*.

The first two letters of the Name *Havayah* indicate *chochmah* and *binah*, i.e., the intellect. The second two letters indicate the emotions and their expression. Before prayer, the intellect is divorced from emotion and expression, and through prayer, we join our Divine consciousness with our emotions and means of expression, so that they, too, should be G-d-oriented.

The surest way to ensure that this is successful is by performing an act of charity or other good deed before prayer. This indicates that our intentions are good, and that we are giving concrete expression to our desire that *all* our emotions and deeds follow these good intentions.

Before performing the good deed or giving the charity, however, it is necessary to say, “[I am doing this] in order to unify the Holy One, blessed be He,

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<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 32:17.

and His *Shechinah*, in love and fear [of G-d], in the name of all Israel.” [In this way,] he will connect the *yud-hei* with the *vav-hei*.

“The Holy One, blessed be He,” is usually an appellation for *Z’eir Anpin*, indicated by the *vav* of the Name *Havayah*, while the *Shechinah* (“Divine Presence” or “Indwelling”) is an appellation for *Nukva*, indicated by the final *hei* of the Name *Havayah*.

In this context, however, it appears that “The Holy One, blessed be He” denotes the *yud-hei* and the *Shechinah* denotes the *vav-hei*. Or, perhaps, the union of the *vav* and final *hei* leads to the larger, more general union of the *yud-hei* and the *vav-hei*.



Another mystical meaning of *tzedakah*: When you give the coin, intend that word [for “coin,” *perutah*], means “289 *vav-hei*.”

The word we are translating here as “coin” is *perutah*, which is actually a coin of a specific value, i.e., the minimal value that is considered money in Jewish law. If one gives less than this amount, it is not considered as if he gave anything, he has not fulfilled the commandment to give charity, and he has not accomplished any of the mystical unions described here. The value of the *perutah* is that of 25 mg of pure silver; the value of this in present-day money fluctuates according to the value of the currency.

The word *perutah* is spelled *pei-reish-vav-tet-hei*. This may be split into *pei-reish-tet* and *vav-hei*; the numerical value of *pei-reish-tet* is  $80 + 200 + 9 = 289$ .

The origin of the states of severity [reflected in poverty] is the 288 sparks [of *Tohu* that fell into the lower worlds when the vessels of *Tohu* shattered]. Together with the *kolel*, this becomes 289. The states of severity are [manifest through] *malchut* [i.e., *Nukva*], the final *hei* of the Name *Havayah*.

When you join the *vav* with the *hei*, the 289 [states] of severity are sweetened [i.e., rectified]; this is accomplished through *tzedakah*.

Joining the *vav* and the *hei* ensures that the *hei*, the means of G-d’s (and our) expression, is driven by the *vav*, the rectified emotions, rather than being a vehicle for the forces of evil.



Another aspect of *tzedakah*: The letter *kuf* alludes to Cain [as above], “the nest of impurity,” the spreading of the [venom of the primordial] snake.

Specifically, this refers to the “leg” of the *kuf* [as above].

When you give charity, intend that thereby the *kuf* will become a *hei*, as the extension of the leg of the *kuf* is withdrawn upward, producing the form of the *hei*. [When this occurs,] it prevents the forces of evil from latching on [and deriving sustenance this way].

I heard [this latter idea] from Rabbi Eliyahu Falcon, in my teacher’s [the Arizal’s] name.

## *Parashat Re'eh* [fourth installment]

In this *parashah*, we are told: “Offer the Passover sacrifice to G-d, your G-d...in order that you remember the day you went out of the Land of Egypt all the days of your life.”<sup>1</sup>

The reason we are enjoined to remember the Exodus from Egypt, as opposed to all the other exiles—Babylonia, Media, and Greece—is as follows.

There is a fourth exile, Rome, but we are still considered to be in its exile, so there is no supposition that we should remember our redemption from it yet.

It is known that Egypt is more defiled than any other country outside the Land of Israel, and is [therefore] known as “the nakedness of the world.”

The term “nakedness” (*ervah*) in the Torah is used to refer to the sexual organs, and “uncovering the nakedness” of someone is a euphemism for engaging in sexual relations with that person.

The idiom “nakedness of the land” as used in the Torah<sup>2</sup> means “the exposed, vulnerable part of a land” through which it can be conquered, i.e., entered and “defiled” by an invading army. Despite its general sense, the term is tellingly used only with reference to Egypt.

In Rabbinic literature, this idiom is associated specifically with Egypt, which is seen as the most degenerate and debased civilization in the world with regard to sexual licentiousness and lechery.<sup>3</sup>

The Divine presence went into exile with the Jews when they went to Egypt, as it written, “I will descend with you into Egypt.”<sup>4</sup> It is known what is written in the *Zohar*,<sup>5</sup> namely, that the Egyptians made use of various types of spells and magic, which they accessed by manipulating the powers of impurity, in order to enslave [the Jews so severely] that even a single slave could not escape from there.

It is also known what we have explained concerning the meaning of the exile of the Divine presence, namely, that the ultimate reason for this [Divine exile] is because Adam’s primordial sin mixed good and evil together and caused all the souls from the realm of holiness to fall into the realm of evil. They remain powerless to extricate themselves from it, except with the help of G-d’s mercy. He feels their pain, inasmuch as His presence goes with the Jewish people into [its] exile in the realm of evil. When it enters [with them] into their place, it gathers these souls from there.

The Divine presence (the *Shechinah*) follows the Jewish people into exile in order to extricate it from there.

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 16:1-3.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 42:9, 12.

<sup>3</sup> See Isaiah 20:4; *Kohelet Rabbah* 1:4 (end); Leviticus 18:3; *Sifra*, *Acharei* 18; *Vayikra Rabbah* 23:7; *Tana d’vei Eliahu Rabbah* 7; *Sha’ar HaYichud VehoEmunah*, introduction.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 46:4.

<sup>5</sup> 2:37b.

There are seventy aspects of evil, corresponding to the seventy gentile nations, and the Jews must be exiled through all of them in order to gather all the souls from their number that fell into each particular form of evil. When they will finish gathering all the souls from amongst the seventy nations, it will be the time when “feet touch feet,” mentioned in the *Zohar*,<sup>6</sup> and then the verse, “Death will be swallowed up forever”<sup>7</sup> will be fulfilled.

Each nation, or civilization/culture, represents a different perversion of the truth of the Torah, either partial or complete. The Jews, the bearers of the Divine message, must traverse all these perversions in order to rectify them in the light of the truth they possess (in the form of the Torah). This rectification process may occur directly, as the Jews are honored as the bearers of Divine light to a culture that willingly looks to them for guidance, or, as has usually been the case, indirectly, as ideas and concepts from the Torah “leak” into the host culture via its contact with the Jews.

As will be explained further on, the “feet” are the lowest part of the “body” of the “man of evil” and the “man of holiness.” That is, the lowest, most depraved (and therefore most powerful) forms of evil, and the lowest and weakest manifestations of holiness. The exile of the Jewish people will continue until the lowest meets the lowest, that is, until the weakest elements of holiness overcome the strongest elements of evil.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “For as the four directions of heaven I have spread you out, says G-d.”<sup>8</sup> The Jewish people had to go into exile, in all four directions and through all seventy nations. But it is not necessary for all of them to be exiled together to each and every nation. Rather, as long as one single Jew is exiled to a specific nation, it is considered as if all Jews participated in that exile.

Adam caused a blemish in all the worlds [through his sin], and therefore, when the souls he comprised fell into the realm of evil, they were spread through the world in all four directions—since the dirt from which he was made was gathered from all four directions, as is known.

When G-d created Adam, He gathered the earth He used to form him from all parts of the earth, so that wherever one of his descendants would die, the earth would accept the corpse and decompose it.<sup>9</sup> Since Adam was formed out of dirt from all over the world, when he fell, all aspects of him fell, and his soul fragmented into “pieces” (sub-souls) that scattered into all aspects of reality. All Jewish souls are derived from Adam’s soul.

Each of the seventy [angelic] Princes of the seventy nations of the world—who collectively constitute the realm of evil in its entirety—absorbed its respective aspect [of Adam’s fragmented soul].

Each of the seventy archetypal nations (listed in Genesis 10), from which all the other nations of the world derive, is “presided over” in heaven by its “Prince,” which is the spiritual essence of that nation/culture/civilization.

The souls [present in each aspect of exile] are not capable of extricating themselves. Only commandments performed by the Jewish people and the prayers they recite possess the power to separate them from the realm of evil and remove

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<sup>6</sup> 2:258a.

<sup>7</sup> Isaiah 25:8.

<sup>8</sup> Zechariah 2:10.

<sup>9</sup> *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Pekudei* 3; Rashi on Genesis 2:7.

them from there, elevating them in the form of “feminine waters,” as is known. All this occurs through the Jewish people’s prayers.

A similar thing is accomplished when righteous people die. For every single righteous person must enter Purgatory [*gehinom*], which is the abode of evil, as is known. He does not enter it in order to be punished, G-d forbid, for on the contrary, when he enters Purgatory it is cooled off for his sake, so that it doesn’t affect him. Rather, the reason he must enter Purgatory is in order to gather souls held captive by the forces of evil present there and elevate them together with him. They enter [the higher realms] as “feminine waters” and are rectified by the “masculine waters,” and then they can enter this world in corporeal bodies, like the rest of the Jewish souls.

“Feminine” and “masculine waters” are the Kabbalistic terms for initiative taken by created beings and the Divine response to it, respectively.

Thus, the righteous, both in life and in death, extricate souls that have gone into exile amongst the nations.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse, “There is a time in which man rules man to his detriment,”<sup>10</sup> i.e., that the “man of evil” rules the “man of holiness,” that is, the souls.

All the souls of holiness constitute a complete “body” of holiness, termed “the man of holiness.” The same applies to the forces of evil.

This is to the detriment of the “man of evil” for the rule of evil over the Jewish people during their exile is to [evil’s] detriment, inasmuch as through this the holy souls are redeemed from within it. Thus, their rule over them eventually harms them.

If you ask, “what do they care,” know that evil is a dead thing, and possesses no life force of its own whatsoever. This is why the feminine aspect of evil is called “death” and the male aspect “the shadow of death,” as taught in the *Zohar*.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, “the wicked are considered dead even while alive,”<sup>12</sup> for their holy soul derived from the living G-d had departed from them due to their sins.

It is known that the soul descends [into the body] via the [*sefirah* of] *yesod*, which is called “the living G-d” [*Kel chai*], but when [they sin] a soul of evil—called “death” or “the shadow of death”—enters them, and that is why they are called “dead” even while alive.

Therefore, the only desire of evil and the evil inclination is to pursue man and entice him to sin, for their benefit, for they grab hold of the holy soul, called “life,”

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<sup>10</sup> Ecclesiastes 8:9.

<sup>11</sup> 1:160b.

<sup>12</sup> *Berachot* 18b.

and derive sustenance from it, and through it they live. The souls held captive by evil function exactly like a soul inside a body, enlivening it. Therefore all the forces of evil pursue [holiness] and cling to anything that possesses any holiness. For it is known that whatever clings to holiness clings to life, and whatever separates itself from holiness separates itself from life.

It is now not surprising to you that the forces of evil pursue people so much in order to entice them to sin and anger their Creator. They must do so for their own benefit, in order to survive and live.

With this you can understand why a wicked person is punished when he sins, and how much he deserves to be punished, in that he defiles holiness and profanes it, enlivens evil and “kills” the forces of holiness by causing it to enter “death.”

With this you can also understand how Adam, through his sin, caused all the exiles [the Jewish people will have suffered] until the Messiah comes.

Now we must address the question: why do we speak of only four [major] exiles—Babylonia, Media, Greece, and Rome—while in fact the Jewish people were exiled amongst all seventy nations, as is known?

We must also explain why the entire Jewish people were subjected [only] to these four exiles, while not all of them were exiled to the other countries, but rather, as long as even one of them was exiled there, it was considered as if they had all been exiled there, as we said.

The explanation is that in the realm of holiness, there are four letters in the Name *Havayah*, which are the source from which the 72 Names *Havayah* are manifest, as well as the 72 [other] Divine Names, which are branches from these roots. These [four letters] are the four rivers of the Garden [of Eden], as is known.

Similarly, in the realm of evil, there are four rivers—[known by the same names:] the Pishon, the Gichon, [the Tigris, and the Euphrates]<sup>13</sup>—which are the roots, which divide into seventy nations. As our sages say: “‘The name of the first was Pishon’—this refers to the Babylonian empire; ‘The name of the second was Gichon’—this refers to the Medean empire,” etc.<sup>14</sup>

Since all seventy nations are included within these four “rivers,” therefore the entire Jewish people were exiled to each of these four [archetypal] nations—Babylonia, Medea, [Greece, and Rome]. But the other seventy nations are just particulars and branches [of these], and each of these [lesser] nations took only one type of soul, and therefore the entire Jewish people does not need to be exiled to

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<sup>13</sup> Genesis 2:10-14.

<sup>14</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 16:4.

these nations. Only those individuals the sparks of whose souls fell into that nation need to be exiled there, in order to extricate their sparks that fell there.

With all this, you can understand [the significance of] the Egyptian exile, which preceded all others inasmuch as it is alluded to by the first river, the highest of them.

We are told that “a river issued from Eden to water the garden; from there it split and became four head[river]s. The name of the first was Pishon....”<sup>15</sup> Thus, there was a general river of which the four primordial rivers were branches. The four rivers signify the four archetypal exiles, and the preceding general river signifies the super-archetypal exile of Egypt.

The Divine presence first descends and is clothed inside the form of evil known as the “head,” and then descends and enters level after level, until the lowest level, the “feet.” When it reaches the “feet,” the verse “And His feet will stand on that day [on the Mount of Olives...]”<sup>16</sup> will be fulfilled, as is explained in the *Zohar*.<sup>17</sup>

This verse describes the future, messianic redemption.

Therefore the entire Jewish people were exiled into Egypt and Babylonia, for Egypt was the “head” [relative to the other exiles], and Babylonia is also called a “head,” as it is written, “You are the head of gold.”<sup>18</sup>

The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar had a dream vision of a strange statue. Daniel interpreted the various parts of the statue as referring to the various empires that would rule the world.

But the ten [northern] tribes did not go into the exiles of Greece and Rome, for Sennacherib, [the king of Assyria] had already exiled them, as is known, and [Greece and Rome] are not included in the head, which includes all Jewish souls. Rather, the sparks from the remaining two-and-a-half tribes were scattered and mingled [into these nations] when they were exiled to them. All the more does this apply to the other nations that are only branches and derivatives [of the main four]. Whoever needs to is exiled there by himself. This explains everything.

In fact, the Assyrians deported the ten tribes of the northern kingdom, Israel, *before* the Babylonians ascended to power and conquered (and exiled) the southern kingdom, Judah. So it would appear that the entire Jewish people participated only in the Egyptian exile, while only the Judean remnant were subject to the subsequent exiles—including the Babylonian exile.

True, as Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulai points out,<sup>19</sup> the prophet Jeremiah brought some members of the ten exiled tribes back to Judah. These refugees intermingled with the southern tribes, and therefore there are members of all the tribes among us to this day. It may therefore be said that at least representatives of the whole Jewish nation did undergo all the exiles. But then, this applies to all four exiles, not just the Babylonian. He therefore proposes that the Arizal only stated that the entire Jewish people underwent the Egyptian exile, and that the four subsequent, archetypal exiles were experienced by only the southern tribes (with representatives from the other

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<sup>15</sup> Genesis 2:10.

<sup>16</sup> Zechariah 14:4.

<sup>17</sup> 2:258.

<sup>18</sup> Daniel 2:38.

<sup>19</sup> *Midbar Kedemot* 7.

ten). Relative to each other, the Babylonian exile was the “head” of these four, but it was not a “head” in the same overarching sense that the Egyptian exile was a “head.”

We can now explain the Egyptian exile, and why it is mentioned more than the others. This is because all the sparks of the collective “head” of the Jewish people were present in Egypt, and the people were not redeemed from Egypt until they had extricated all these sparks from within it. This is the meaning of the verse, “and they emptied out Egypt.”<sup>20</sup> [As the sages put it,] “they left it like a net with no fish”<sup>21</sup>—meaning Jews, who are likened to fish, as in the verse, “and they will multiply like fish.”<sup>22</sup> Or, [as the sages said, they left it] “like a silo with no grain”—also meaning Jews, who are likened to grain, as it is written, “Israel is holy to G-d, the first of His produce,”<sup>23</sup> and “Those who devour My people like those who eat bread.”<sup>24</sup>

In contrast, in the subsequent three redemptions—from the Babylonian, Medean, and Greek exiles—they were not entirely redeemed from them, and some aspects of the Jews’ souls remained in them, not having been extricated entirely. Accordingly, some of the Jews remained under the rule of Babylonia and Medea and did not return [to the Land of Israel] to build the second Temple, as is known, in order to redeem the [sparks] that remained there.

Nonetheless, the Jewish people as a whole did return from these exiles, and therefore [these returns] are termed “redemptions.” But they were not as complete as was the redemption from Egypt.

This is also the reason why the prohibition of “you shall not see them again”<sup>25</sup> is so strong.

It is forbidden for Jews to live in Egypt, based on this verse (and others).<sup>26</sup>

For since all the souls have already been extricated from this evil [i.e., Egypt], whoever returns there and thereby submits himself to that evil profanes holiness and the Divine presence for no reason, and subjugates it to the power of evil.

And now we can understand the importance of mentioning the Exodus from Egypt, as opposed to all other exiles, for it was the only true and complete exile.

But the future redemption will be even greater than the redemption from Egypt. The reason is that in the case of the redemption from Egypt, even though no spark of holiness remained in it, for everything was extricated, as we said,

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<sup>20</sup> Exodus 12:36.

<sup>21</sup> *Berachot* 9b.

<sup>22</sup> Genesis 48:16.

<sup>23</sup> Jeremiah 2:3.

<sup>24</sup> Psalms 14:4, 53:5.

<sup>25</sup> Exodus 14:13.

<sup>26</sup> *Mishneh Torah, Melachim* 5:7.

nonetheless, in all countries other than Egypt, the portion [of holiness] that was embedded in them from the time of Adam's sin was not redeemed.

This also explains why after the redemption from Egypt there was a disruption [in the redeemed state] and the Jewish people could be exiled again amongst the nations. [This was] in order to extricate the other souls in these other lands.

But in the case of the future redemption, there will not be after it any disruption in the form of another exile, for the Messiah will not come until all the souls will be redeemed from all the other nations. This is the meaning of the verse, "And He will return and gather you from all the nations to which He scattered you."<sup>27</sup> And therefore, "a time is coming, declares G-d, when it shall no more be said, 'As G-d lives who brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt,' but rather, 'As G-d lives who brought the Israelites out of the northland, and out of all the lands to which He had banished them.'"<sup>28</sup> This redemption will include [redemption from] all the seventy Princes of evil.

This also explains why it is said, "And [the future] will be a time of trouble for Jacob..."<sup>29</sup> and "[From the west, they shall fear the Name of G-d, and from the east, His presence. For He shall come like a narrow stream that the wind of G-d drives on. A redeemer shall come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn back from sin."<sup>30</sup> It is known through the words of our sages how intense will be the great suffering the Jewish people will endure as the "birth pangs" of the Messiah's coming. The reason for this [suffering] is that it will accompany the end of the process of extricating holiness from the "feet" of the "man of evil," and it is there [in evil's "feet"] that evil is most powerful and holiness weakest. When the "feet" will be completely purged [of holiness], it is written, "death will be swallowed up forever,"<sup>31</sup> as is explained elsewhere.

This also explains why, in all the other redemptions that have occurred, the oppressing nation was not annihilated [by having the holiness removed from it, as will occur in the future redemption]. For while they were subject to it, "like a tail ruling,"<sup>32</sup> they embodied the evil that was then ruling over holiness, and all the Divine beneficence [that was extended to the world] flowed through it, and from it was extended to the other nations, each taking its appropriate portion.

The *Zohar*'s image of the "tail ruling" is that if the nations of the world are likened to a snake, then the Jewish people are the head of the snake, and the other nations its tail. When the head is on the ground, the tail rises

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<sup>27</sup> Deuteronomy 30:3.

<sup>28</sup> Jeremiah 16:14-15.

<sup>29</sup> Jeremiah 30:7.

<sup>30</sup> Isaiah 59:19-20.

<sup>31</sup> Isaiah 25:8.

<sup>32</sup> *Zohar* 3:119b.

up and swats everyone in its way. The tail can rise only because the head is down, but even so, the head leads the tail and watches over it. Similarly, when the Jews are in exile, the gentile nations are in ascendancy, but even so, the world is nourished in the merit of the Jews and the Jews still function as the ones who are to lead the other nations in the proper direction.

This is the meaning of our sages' statement that "whoever distresses Israel becomes a head."<sup>33</sup> See, Egypt was "a house of slaves," yet when the Jews were in exile in Egypt, Egypt ruled the world. But after the Jews left Egypt, the Egyptians' life force was taken from them, and they fell from greatness. As it is written, "[Egypt] shall be the lowliest of all the kingdoms, and shall not rule over the nations again. I will reduce the Egyptians, so that they shall have no dominion over the nations."<sup>34</sup> Still, that nation did not cease to be entirely, for the root of the evil expressed in the seventy nations existed, together with the souls held captive with them, and they give Egypt its portion of [the Divine] beneficence, Egypt remaining subject to them.

The same is true of Babylonia, Medea, and Greece. It is written, "Behold the land of Chaldea: This is the people that has ceased to be."<sup>35</sup>

Chaldea is a synonym for Babylonia.

When the Jewish people were captive amongst them, they ruled the world, but when the Jews left them, they returned to their former low state, although they did not cease to be altogether, [for the reasons we have given].

The same applies to all nations: when they rule over the Jews [they rule the world], but after this they fall from power.

But in the future, when all holiness will be fully extricated from all the seventy Princes, all their life force will depart from them, and they will have no sustenance whatsoever, and the forces of evil, termed "death," will cease to be, as it is written, "death will be swallowed up forever." And there will be no other exile after [this redemption], ever.

—translated from *Sha'ar HaMitzvot*

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<sup>33</sup> *Sanhedrin* 104b.

<sup>34</sup> *Ezekiel* 29:15.

<sup>35</sup> *Isaiah* 23:13.

## *Parashat Shoftim*

The portion of the Torah read this week begins with the commandment: “Appoint judges and policemen in all your gates which *G-d* your G-d gives you, according to your tribes, that they may judge the people equitably.”<sup>1</sup> Although it is not evident in English,<sup>2</sup> the imperative “appoint” as well as the pronouns “your” and “you” are in the singular.

Why is this commandment phrased in the singular, rather than in the plural?

We heard in the name of the esteemed Rabbi Chaim Vital, of righteous memory, that this is so in order to indicate that every individual Jew has several “gates.” These are: the gates of sight, the eyes; the gates of hearing, the ears; the gate of speech, the mouth; the gate of smell, the nose; the gate of touch, the hands and feet.

Just the gate of a domain is a passageway through which one enters and exits, the “gates” of the person are his sense organs, through which stimuli enter his mind and he reacts to the outside world. The skin—here represented by the hands and feet, its principle loci of action, is in fact considered an “organ” in many biological contexts, no less than the other organs mentioned here.

Thus, a person must position “judges” and “policemen” at each of these “gates,” in order to protect himself from looking at women forbidden to him, listening to untoward matters, speaking in a foul or malicious manner, smelling the perfume of a woman forbidden to him, touching such a woman or walking to commit a sexual sin, or walking to theatres or circuses. This is why “your gates” is phrased in the singular, in order to indicate the above.

When a person guards his “gates” from sin, it is said of him, “Open up, O gates, that a righteous nation may enter,”<sup>3</sup> measure for measure.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the 310 worlds destined for every righteous person will open their gates for him, for every world has its entrance gate.

The final section of the Mishnah begins:<sup>5</sup> “Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: The Holy One, blessed be He, will in the future bequeath every righteous individual three hundred and ten worlds, as it is written: ‘To bequeath substance to My beloved, and I will fill their storehouses.’”<sup>6</sup> The numerical value of the word for “substance” (*yesh*, *yud-shin*) is 310.

Know as well, that [on the path] from here to heaven there are all sorts of accusing angels and angels of destruction, and there are a number of gates to each of the seven heavens, each of which is guarded. When the soul ascends it is

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 16:18.

<sup>2</sup> At least in Modern English. Archaic English would use “ye” to distinguish the plural “you” from the singular “you.”

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 26:2.

<sup>4</sup> Meaning: the reward is of the same nature as the commandment fulfilled.

<sup>5</sup> *Uktzin* 3:12.

<sup>6</sup> Proverbs 8:21.

inspected. If it is worthy, the gates are opened for it and it is permitted to enter. If it is not, it is pushed outside, the gates are closed before it and it is not allowed to enter. For this reason, every intelligent person should take [this teaching] to heart while he is still alive and control and guard his “gates,” as we said above. He will then merit to have the gates of righteousness opened before him, as we have said.

The “accusing angels” and “angels of destruction” are the corresponding elements to “judges and policemen” on the side of evil. The accusing angels tally off the individuals sins, which were brought about by not properly guarding his “gates,” and the “angels of destruction” cause the ascending soul to suffer accordingly.

The seven heavens are listed in the Talmud:<sup>7</sup>

7	<i>Aravot</i>	“darkness”
6	<i>Machon</i>	“residence”
5	<i>Ma'on</i>	“habitation”
4	<i>Zevul</i>	“habitation”
3	<i>Shechakim</i>	“dust”
2	<i>Rakia</i>	“firmament”
1	<i>Vilon</i>	“curtain”

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Further on, the Torah commands:

“If something be too complicated for you to judge, whether it be between two types of blood, or two different cases, or types of plague, or an argument in your gates, go up to the place that G-d your G-d will chose.”<sup>8</sup>

The “place that G-d will chose” refers to the site of the Temple in Jerusalem, where the high court, the *Sanhedrin*, met. They are the final judicial authority of the Torah.

According to our sages, this verse alludes to an exchange between the Ministering Angels and the Holy One, blessed be He, when the Temple was being destroyed.

The following exchange is based on the idea that “He declares His words to Jacob, His judgements to Israel,” i.e., that the commandments of the Torah are a description of the ways, customs, or behavior of G-d. In some abstract or spiritual way, He Himself performs all the commandments in the Torah, and commands us to do the same simply in order that we emulate Him. When the Temple was destroyed, according to the accusations of the angels in this exchange, G-d transgressed a number of His own commandments, so to speak.

[The Angels began:]<sup>9</sup> “Master of the World, You wrote in Your Torah:

...when you shed its blood you must cover [the blood] with dirt.”<sup>10</sup>

In this case, however, it is written:

<sup>7</sup> *Chagigah* 12b.

<sup>8</sup> Deuteronomy 17:8.

<sup>9</sup> Similar (although not identical) passages to this occur in *Eichah Rabbah* 1; *Midrash Tehilim* 119:32.

<sup>10</sup> Leviticus 17:13. After any animal is slaughtered in the ritual manner, its blood must be covered with dirt.

*[O G-d, nations have come into Your inheritance,  
They have defiled Your holy Temple,  
They have laid Jerusalem in heaps.  
They have given the dead bodies of Your servants  
to be food to the birds of the sky,  
The flesh of Your pious ones to the beasts of the earth.]  
They have shed their blood like water around Jerusalem,  
And there was no one to bury them.<sup>11</sup>*

*For the blood she shed is still in her;  
She set it upon a bare rock;  
She did not pour it out on the ground to cover it with earth.<sup>12</sup>*

You wrote in Your Torah:

*You shall not slaughter [any animal] and its young on the same day.<sup>13</sup>*

In this case, however, it is written:

*Mothers and babes were dashed to death together.<sup>14</sup>*

You wrote in Your Torah:

*And the priest shall command that they empty out the house...<sup>15</sup>*

In this case, however, it is written:

*They burned the House of G-d  
and tore down the wall of Jerusalem,  
burned down all its mansions,  
and consigned all its precious objects to destruction.”<sup>16</sup>*

G-d answered them: “Is there any peace in the world, then? Since there is no peace, there is nothing.”

It is stated in the Mishnah that peace is the vessel for all blessing, meaning that without peace, there is no point in G-d bestowing His blessing on the world, for inasmuch as there is no vessel to contain it, it will just dissipate. We are taught specifically that it was the *second* Temple that was destroyed on account of the causeless hatred amongst the Jewish people (whereas the first Temple was destroyed on account of other sins), yet the verses quoted all refer to the destruction of the first Temple (which occurred during Biblical times, while that of second Temple was post-Biblical). However, that the same sorts of suffering occurred in the second destruction, and there is

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<sup>11</sup> Psalms 79:3

<sup>12</sup> Ezekiel 24:7, referring to the population of Jerusalem as an errant woman.

<sup>13</sup> Leviticus 22:28.

<sup>14</sup> Hosea 10:14. [The source text here quotes a passage I could not identify with any specific Biblical verse: “the children are slaughtered....” The verse quoted here is the one used in the Midrashic passages on which this citation is based.]

<sup>15</sup> Leviticus 14:36. When a house is about to be declared defiled by reason of a plague having attacked its walls, the officiating priest is required to direct those present to first empty the house of all its movable items. This is in order that they not fall under the same declaration of impurity as the house he is about to sentence, for if they were, it would be necessary to purify them or destroy them (if they could not be purified, as is the case with earthenware vessels). We see from this law that G-d is concerned with not causing unnecessary monetary loss to any Jew.

<sup>16</sup> 2 Chronicles 36:19.

also no reason to assume that the verses referring to the first destruction do not refer prophetically to the second destruction as well.

All this alluded in this verse quoted above, as follows:

*“If something be too complicated for you to judge, whether it be between two types of blood”*—this refers to the angel’s query regarding why G-d did not follow His own law regarding shedding blood [and did cover the blood with dirt].

*“...or two different cases...”*—this refers to the angel’s query regarding why G-d did not follow His own law regarding not slaughtering an animal and its young on the same day.

*“...or types of plague...”*—this refers to the angel’s query regarding why G-d did not follow His own law regarding saving property and possessions.

The answer to the angels is alluded to in the next phrase:

*“...an argument in your gates...”*—arguments and lack of peace brings all this about.

The verse then concludes:

*“...go up to the place that G-d your G-d will chose”*—for Jerusalem is “the city that is altogether united”<sup>17</sup>; in it all become friends.

Jerusalem existed before the Temples were destroyed, of course, so what is meant here is obviously more than a physical ascent to the physical city of Jerusalem. Rather, what is meant is an ascent to the ideals embodied in the idealized vision of Jerusalem as the center of the Torah and Divine revelation on earth. This is embodied in the name Jerusalem, which means “total awe” (*Yerushalayim* -> *yirah shalem*), or absolute awareness of being in the presence of G-d.

Also, the study of the Torah unites and makes peace amongst people.

—translated from *Sha’ar HaMitzvot* and *Ta’amei HaMitzvot*

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<sup>17</sup> Psalms 122:3.

## *Parashat Shoftim* [second installment]

In this *parashah*, the commandment to appoint a king is given. Among the laws concerning kings, is the prohibition that “he should not have many wives.”<sup>1</sup>

As is known, our sages state that [this means that] a king is permitted to have [up to] eighteen wives.<sup>2</sup>

This is based on the fact that when King David had six wives, and God told him, “I would add to these similarly and similarly again.”<sup>3</sup>

I would like to explain this number.

Know that the [facet of its] intellect that *Z’eir Anpin* receives from *Abba* is vested first in *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Abba*.

In order to be transmitted to *Z’eir Anpin*, the intellect or mentality of *Abba* must first be vested in *Abba*’s own *netzach-hod-yesod*, or triad of actualization.

[Similarly,] the intellect it receives from *Ima* is first vested in *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima*.

Then, the *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Abba* are vested in the *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima*. After this, the *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima*—together with all the aspects [of Divine light] that we have said are vested in them—enter *Z’eir Anpin*.

These [mentalities derived from *Abba* and *Ima*] are called the Image [*tzelem*] of *Abba* and the Image of *Ima*, respectively.

The two [sub-*sefirot* of] *malchut* within *Abba* and *Ima* must perforce enter [*Z’eir Anpin*] with them, since they are lower than *netzach-hod-yesod*.

Thus, they are “forced” into *Z’eir Anpin* by the descending triads of *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Abba* and *Ima*. Thematically, this means that expression (*malchut*) is intrinsically tied to the drive toward self-actualization (*netzach-hod-yesod*).

These two [sub-*sefirot* of] *malchut* are actually the two “crowns” of the two [sub-*sefirot*] of *yesod* of *Abba* and *Ima*, as is known.

Now, the [sub-*sefirot* of] *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Abba* or *Ima* are masculine *sefirot*. They are present in *Z’eir Anpin* for its own purposes, in order to act as vessels for his three aspects of mentality, as we said.

The *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Abba* or *Ima* clothe the intellect of these *partzufim*, acting as vessels that transmit these intellects to *Z’eir Anpin*.

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 17:17.

<sup>2</sup> *Sanhedrin* 21.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Samuel 12:8.

But the two [sub-sefirot of] *malchut* [of *Abba* and *Ima*] are feminine, and are not present in *Z'eir Anpin* for its own purposes. Rather, they cause [the *partzuf* of] Leah to egress [from *Z'eir Anpin*], which is situated behind the *da'at* of *Z'eir Anpin*. Since *malchut* is connected to *yesod*, Leah is therefore connected [to *Z'eir Anpin* at the point] behind its *da'at*.

Leah is the higher *partzuf* of *malchut*. The *Netzach-hod-yesod*-triads of the higher *partzufim* are vested in the *chochmah-binah-da'at* of *Z'eir Anpin* in a one-to-one correspondence. Thus, *yesod* (of *Abba* and *Ima*) is vested in *da'at* (of *Z'eir Anpin*). This is why Leah is situated behind the *da'at* of *Z'eir Anpin*.

Generally, Leah is identified with thought and Rachel with speech. Thought is the highest of the three forms of expression (thought, speech, action) and is most closely connected with intellect.

We have already explained...that four aspects of Leah issue from these two *malchuts*, as follows: The first Leah is connected to *yesod* of *Abba*. The second and third are connected to *yesod* of *Ima*, which clothes *yesod* of *Abba*. The fourth is situated behind *Z'eir Anpin*.

Now, the first and third are radiances of *Abba*; the second and fourth are radiances of *Ima*. Thus, their order is *Abba, Ima, Abba, Ima*, for of the two that are connected to *yesod* of *Ima*, the first is a radiance of *Ima* and the second is a radiance of *Abba* that simply emerges at that point.

Now, there are four aspects of intellect in *Abba*: *chochmah*, *binah*, and [the sources of] *chesed* and *gevurah* [within *da'at*].

Even though we normally speak of three aspects of intellect, *da'at* includes within in the sources of *chesed* and *gevurah*, meaning the propensity to accept or reject (since the purpose of *da'at* is distinguishing and choosing). This is why the head *tefilin* have four compartments.

All of these four radiances emerge as the first Leah; the latter three emerge as the second Leah; the latter two as the third Leah; and final one by itself—i.e., the [states of] *gevurah* [within *da'at*] of *Abba*—emerges as the fourth Leah, which is the most external of all of them.

First, all four aspects of *Abba*'s intellect shine together, then only the lower three, then only the lower two, and finally only the lowest one by itself.

Furthermore, *malchut* of *Abba* becomes the *partzuf* we have called here the first Leah. *Malchut* of *Ima* becomes the *partzuf* of the second Leah. Then, the first Leah, of *Abba*, shines outward, breaking through to the position of the second Leah, i.e., *malchut* of *Ima*, emerging there and becoming the third Leah. Similarly, the second Leah, [*malchut*] of *Ima*, shines outward, breaking through the *da'at* of *Z'eir Anpin*, emerging behind *Z'eir Anpin*'s neck and becoming the fourth Leah. This is known as the knot of the head-*tefilin*, as is known.

Now know, that since this [fourth,] most external Leah is situated outside *Z'eir Anpin*, it couples only with Israel—which is *Z'eir Anpin* itself—or with Jacob, which, as we know, emerges also from the radiance of *yesod* of *Abba* that shines outside of *Z'eir Anpin*, exactly analogous to this fourth Leah. (The

difference [between Jacob and the fourth Leah] is that the former is male, originating in the *yesod* of *Abba* and the latter is female, originating in *malchut* of *Ima*.) This is why they can couple.

The first and third Leah, which are *malchut* of *Abba* and the radiance emanating from it, couple with the *yesod*—the male—of *Abba*. The second Leah—which is *malchut* of *Ima*, couples with the *yesod* of *Ima*.

Now, *yesod* of *Abba* was embodied in Abel, the son of Adam. He was therefore born together with two twin sisters, who embodied the first and third [*partzufim* of Leah]. *Yesod* of *Ima* was embodied in Cain, who was born with only one twin sister, who embodied the *malchut* of *Ima* [i.e., the second Leah].

[What would have been his] second twin sister—i.e., the radiance [of *malchut* of *Ima*] that shines forth outside of *Z'eir Anpin*, [becoming] the fourth Leah—is not situated inside [*Z'eir Anpin*], close to *yesod* of *Ima*, but rather on the outside. It therefore does not couple at all with *yesod* of *Ima*, i.e., Cain.

Cain and Abel married their twin sisters.

Keep in mind that all these four [*partzufim*] are called Leah, even though they also have individual names, as we will explain.

We must also tell you that these four aspects of Leah derive from the inner mentalities of *Z'eir Anpin*, which is known as the *tzadik* of the *tzelem*, which has been explained elsewhere [and will be explained presently].

Let us return to this matter, in brief. Know that there are three aspects of the mentalities of *Z'eir Anpin*, alluded to in the three letters of the word *tzelem* (“image”).

*Tzelem*: *tzadik-lamed-mem*.

The *tzadik* indicates the inner mentalities while the *lamed-mem* indicates the aspects that surround them.

The “inner mentalities” refers to the nine sub-*sefirot* from *keter* to *yesod*, each compounded of ten sub-sub-*sefirot*, giving  $9 \times 10 = 90$ , the numerical value of *tzadik*. The numerical values of *lamed* and *mem* are 30 and 40, respectively, referring to the triad of *keter-chochmah-binah* and the four sub-*sefirot* of *keter-chochmah-binah-da'at* considered collectively and compounded of ten sub-sub-*sefirot* each, giving  $3 \times 10 = 30$  and  $4 \times 10 = 40$ . These two ways of considering the intellect and super-intellect are relatively “surrounding” (*makif*), since they do not consider how the intellect is manifest in the emotions. In contrast, the full array represented by the *tzadik* does consider the intellect manifest in the emotions, and is therefore considered “inner” (*penimi*), referring to how the intellect has entered “into” the emotions.

This is true of the *tzelem* of the mentalities of *Z'eir Anpin* derived from *Ima*, and the same is true of the mentalities of *Z'eir Anpin* derived from *Abba*. Thus, there is *tzelem* derived from *Abba* and a *tzelem* derived from *Ima*.

Nonetheless, know that the term *tzelem* refers mainly to garments of the mentalities, i.e., *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima*. This is seen in the fact that the

numerical value of *tzelem* [plus the *kolel*] is the same as that of the Name *Ekyeh* spelled out with the letter *yud*, which signifies *Ima*.

*Ekyeh*: *alef-hei-yud-hei*.

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>	$1 + 30 + 80$	111
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	$5 + 10$	15
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	$10 + 6 + 4$	20
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	$5 + 10$	15
			161

*Tzelem*: *tzadik-lamed-mem* =  $90 + 30 + 40 = 160$ .

Thus, *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima* are termed the *tzelem*, but the mentalities themselves, i.e., the lights, are not termed *tzelem*.

Relative to each other, the *chochmah-binah-da'at* of the *partzuf* are “lights” while the *netzach-hod-yesod* are the “vessels,” as stated above.

*Netzach-hod-yesod* of *Abba*, which also serve as vessels for other mentalities, are also termed *tzelem*, for when *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Abba* enter *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima* and are vested in them—as we mentioned in the beginning of this exposition—and their radiance shines forth outside, it must pass through *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima*. It is therefore also termed *tzelem*. There is thus a *tzelem* of *Abba* and a *tzelem* of *Ima*, both of which are vessels, i.e., *netzach-hod-yesod*. But their respective mentalities are not termed *tzelem*.

To return to our subject: the *tzadik* of *tzelem* refers to *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima* or *Abba*; the *lamed* of *tzelem* refers to *chesed-gevurah-tiferet*; and the *mem* of *tzelem* refers to *chochmah-binah-da'at*. For the three letters of *tzelem* comprise all ten [sub-]sefirot of *Ima*, alluded to in the Name *Ekyeh* spelled out with the letter *yud*, this having the numerical value of *tzelem* [as above].

It is also known that the *mem* of *tzelem* signifies the higher surrounding mentalities, these being the mentalities that are not vested in garments or vessels of *Ima*. But the *lamed* of *tzelem* signifies the secondary surrounding mentalities, these being the mentalities that are vested in the vessels of *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* of *Ima*. Similarly, the *tzadik* of *tzelem* signifies the inner mentalities, these being the mentalities vested in the vessels of *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima*.

<i>tzadik</i>	inner mentalities	vested in <i>netzach-hod-yesod</i> of <i>Ima</i>
<i>lamed</i>	secondary surrounding mentalities	vested in <i>chesed-gevurah-tiferet</i> of <i>Ima</i>
<i>mem</i>	higher surrounding mentalities	not vested

According to this, it follows that just as four aspects of Leah issue from the inner mentalities alluded to by the *tzadik* of *tzelem*, so do four other aspects [of Leah] issue from the secondary surrounding mentalities, alluded to by the *lamed* of *tzelem*. For they also possess vessels of *Ima*. But no aspect of Leah issues from the higher surrounding mentalities alluded to by the *mem* of *tzelem*. This is because [the *partzuf* of] Leah is not produced from [unvested] mentalities, but rather from the *malchut*'s of the vessels of *Ima* or *Abba*, as stated above. These higher surrounding mentalities possess no vessels at all, as we said, and therefore they produce no aspect of Leah whatsoever.

Nonetheless, know that the four aspects of Leah produced from the secondary surrounding mentalities alluded to by the *lamed* of *tzelem* are termed “tent,” rather than Leah.

*Leah* is spelled *lamed-alef-hei*, and the word for “tent” (*ohel*) is spelled *alef-hei-lamed*. These two words are thus permutations of each other.

This is appropriate, for a tent surrounds and encompasses a person. Similarly, the Leahs produced by the [secondary] surrounding mentalities are like a tent that surrounds the Leahs produced by the inner mentalities. It is to these surrounding Leahs that the Torah alludes when it says, “and he went...into the tent of Leah.”<sup>4</sup>

These are also termed “the heavenly Jerusalem,” meaning: it is known that Rachel is termed Zion, which is the merciful [aspect of Jerusalem], while Leah is termed Jerusalem, which is the severe [aspect of Jerusalem]. The higher Leahs, produced by the surrounding mentalities, are called “the heavenly Jerusalem.”

To be continued...

—translated from *Sha'ar HaMitzvot*

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<sup>4</sup> Genesis 31:33.

## *Parashat Shoftim* [third installment]

The following is the continuation of the previous installment on this *parashah*, the discussion of the maximum number of wives, 18, that a king may have.

It follows that there is a difference between the three letters of the word *tzelem*:

The *tzadik* of *tzelem*, which indicates the inner mentalities, possesses aspects of Leah and Rachel. For the *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima* become invested in the *chochmah-binah-da'at* of *Z'eir Anpin*. Thus, *malchut* of *Ima* gives forth its radiance opposite the back of *da'at* [of *Z'eir Anpin*] and becomes Leah.

*Yesod* of *Ima* [which includes the lights of *netzach* and *hod* of *Ima*] reaches until the chest [of *Z'eir Anpin*], where it concludes, and its lights are revealed there and shine from there downward. Then, opposite the chest [of *Z'eir Anpin*] and downward, where revealed light shines, Rachel issues from the back of *Z'eir Anpin*.

Now, Rachel is the tenth *sefirah* of the world of *Atzilut* in general, and is termed *malchut* of the world of *Atzilut* overall. In contrast, Leah is only the *malchut* of *Ima* of *Atzilut*.

From the *lamed* of *tzelem*, which indicates the secondary enveloping [mentalities], issues Leah, for it includes also *malchut* of *Ima*, as mentioned, from which [Leah] is made. But Rachel does not issue from there, for the reasons mentioned [which we will review now].

Firstly, because Rachel does not issue from *malchut* of *Ima*; rather, it is a *sefirah* on its own, the tenth of *Atzilut*, and issues only below, in its own place, opposite the back of the chest of *Z'eir Anpin*.

Secondly, the *tzadik* of *tzelem* is vested within *Z'eir Anpin*, and part of its light is covered until the chest [of *Z'eir Anpin*], from where Leah issues. [The other part is] the revealed light [that exists] from the chest [of *Z'eir Anpin*] downward, from where Rachel issues. But the *lamed* of *tzelem* is not vested within *Z'eir Anpin*, and is not manifest as covered and exposed light.

From the *mem* of *tzelem*, which indicates the higher enveloping [mentalities], which in turn are mental lights without vessels, neither Leah nor Rachel issue, for the above reasons.

We have thus explained the overall [phenomenon of the] *tzelem* of *Abba* and *Ima*.

We will now explain something else: It is known that there exist [in *Z'eir Anpin*] immature mentalities and [their] *tzelem*, which are operative when *Z'eir Anpin* nurses from *Abba* and *Ima*, and there exist mentalities and [their] *tzelem* when *Z'eir Anpin* [receives] mature intellect from *Abba* and *Ima*.

These two states<sup>1</sup> are divided into three:

The first is the immature mentality of nursing. These [mentalities] are indicated by Names *Elokim*. The second is when the six extremities [i.e., emotional sub-*sefirot*] of mature mentality enter [*Z'eir Anpin*]. The third is when the three upper [sub-*sefirot*, those of the mentality of *Abba* and *Ima*] of mature mentality also enter [*Z'eir Anpin*].

Mature mentality divides into two stages is because, as is known, when the three upper [sub-*sefirot*] of mature mentality enter, they push out the immature mentality. [The latter] descend first to the throat of *Z'eir Anpin*, and then further down, to the *yesod* [of *Z'eir Anpin*], as is explained in its context, and will be explained further on. But when the six extremities of mature mentality enter by themselves, the immature mentality is not expelled below; rather, it remains with them.

It follows that there are two states because when the six extremities of mature mentality are conjoined with the immature mentality, their coexistence and the collision of their mutual lights produces new states that are different both than what exists when the immature mentality functions by itself and what exists when mature mentality functions by itself.

According to what we have said, it follows that when immature mentality functions on its own, only four radiances issue, all termed “Leah.” Similarly when mature mentality functions on its own, four other radiances issue, also termed “Leah.” But during the intermediary stage, when the immature mentality functions together with the six extremities of mature mentality, there are ten lights termed “Leah.” These are:

1. The four radiances of immature mentality, explained above:
  - a. *malchut* of *Abba*, remaining in its place, clinging to *yesod* of *Abba*,
  - b. *malchut* of *Ima*, in its place, with the *yesod* of *Abba* present within it,
  - c. the radiance of *malchut* of *Abba*, which issued from the place of *malchut* of *Ima* and remains nearby, and

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<sup>1</sup> Emended according gloss of Rabbi Shalom Sharabi.

- d. the radiance of *malchut* of *Ima*, which issued outward behind the *da'at* of *Z'eir Anpin*—this being known as the neck-knot of the head *tefilin*.
2. Now that there are additional lights—the immature mentalities together with the six extremities of mature mentality—additional power is lent to *malchut* of *Abba*, enabling it to emanate a third radiance out of *Z'eir Anpin*, next to the external Leah of *Ima*.

Thus, there are five varieties of Leah on the level of immature mentality—three from *malchut* of *Abba* and two from *malchut* of *Ima*.

Similarly, there are five additional varieties of Leah derived from the six extremities of mature mentality [that coexist at this stage with the immature mentality], exactly along the lines of the five detailed above [with regard to the immature mentality].

The reason why *malchut* of *Abba* emanates three radiances and *malchut* of *Ima* only two is because [the latter] does not possess a third place where its radiance could collide and produce a third radiance. For other than *Z'eir Anpin*, there is no other place [where this could occur]. In contrast, *malchut* of *Abba* had three places where its radiance can spread. It therefore produces three radiances.

*Malchut* of *Abba* can “collide” both with its own level, with *Ima*, and with *Z'eir Anpin*. *Malchut* of *Ima* can “collide” only with its own level and with *Z'eir Anpin*.

We have already explained why we count again all four radiances from the immature mentality and all four from the mature mentality, while it would appear that we should count only the two radiances added at this point—one from the mature mentality and one from the immature mentality. The reason is that now that there are several mixed in it, the radiances that issue now are certainly not similar to the radiances that issue during pure immaturity or pure maturity. The four radiances of the period of admixture are brighter and of a higher order than the four radiances that issued during pure immaturity and inferior to the four radiances that issue during pure maturity.

We have thus expounded [the existence of] 18 types of Leah, which issue above during the three periods [of mental maturity of *Z'eir Anpin*] mentioned. And all of them issue from the *sefirot* of *malchut* of *Abba* and *Ima*.

We can now understand why the king is allowed to have [up to] 18 wives: for their analog exists above [in the spiritual realm]. But he is forbidden to have more than 18, for there is no spiritual precedent for this.

If you ask: if this is so, why is he only *allowed* to have 18 wives, rather than *required* to have this many? This answer is: these 18 [Leah's] do not exist together at any one time, but they rather exist in three [separate] times. Furthermore, each of

the 18 types [of Leah] is separate from the others, and they do not exist in the same realm. [The king] is therefore not required to have [wives corresponding to] all of them [at once].

We can also now understand why specifically the king is obligated to observe this commandment, and not everyone else. The reason is because all these types [of Leah] are aspects of *malchut*, as we have pointed out, any they are thus suited only for the king, and not for ordinary people at all.

The mental state between immaturity and maturity apparently alludes to adolescence, which is a confused mixture of immaturity and nascent maturity.

In our task of spiritualizing the world, of making the world a home for G-d, we must in certain contexts assume the leadership (“king”) role, directing the affairs of our private “kingdom” so that whatever happens to be in our domain is orchestrated so as to serve this purpose. It would seem from the above discussion that in order to be a proper “king,” we must be able to be marry 18 “wives,” i.e., we must be able to relate to the 18 archetypal types of feminine mentality. As we have said repeatedly, feminine mentality is the drive to actualize Divinity in the real world. These 18 types of feminine mentality cover the full span of this drive, from immature, through adolescent, to mature. Each type of mentality has its context wherein it is relevant, and the optimal king must know when to “wed,” i.e., when to manifest his kingship, through each.

To be continued...

—translated from *Sha’ar HaMitzvot*

## *Parashat Ki Teitzei*

The portion of the Torah read this week begins: “When you go out to war against your enemies, and G-d your G-d delivers him into your hand, and you capture its captives, and you see amongst the captives a beautiful woman, and you desire her, you make take her for a wife. You shall take her into your house, and she will shave her head and grow her nails long. She shall take off her [beautiful] dress of captivity and dwell in your house, mourning over her father and mother for a month. Only after this may you [again] engage in intercourse with her, and she will become your wife. But if [after the mourning period] you do not desire her, you may send her away, but you may not sell her for money....”<sup>1</sup>

Know, that the hair of *Z’eir Anpin* is black, due to the influence of the states of *gevurah* [which produce this hair]. [His hair] is black as a raven, due to [the influence of] the attribute of judgment.

As we have explained previously, the male (*Z’eir Anpin*) is the archetype of *chesed* while the female (*Nukva*) is the archetype of *gevurah*. This is because the female personifies G-d’s drive to be revealed in creation, and this requires both strength and severity (to resist the enticements of evil), while the male personifies the abstract Divine idea itself, outside the context of creation.

One aspect of the flow of Divine energy between the *partzufim* is reflected in the hair. Hair is seen as a hollow channel filled with Divine “light.” However, since it is possible to cut the hair without experiencing any pain (which is of course not the case with any other part of the body), the life-force present within hair is seen to be extremely attenuated. The force flowing through hair is thus highly contracted, a manifestation of the power of *gevurah* and judgment. (Judgment in the sense of being strictly rationed and apportioned).

The black hair of *Z’eir Anpin* is contrasted with the white (or grey) hair of *Arich Anpin*. *Arich Anpin* is such a high, intense level of Divine consciousness that even the contraction represented by hair does not produce truly contracted (dark) light, but rather a lower state of *chesed*.

The hair of the *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin* is red, since *Nukva* is itself constructed out of *gevurah*, as we have explained previously.

As our sages said, “black [blood] is really red [blood] that has deteriorated,”<sup>2</sup> this being [the influence of] the attribute of judgement.

The color red is associated with *gevurah*. The fact that black (in this case) is a form of red provides the association between black and *gevurah*.

The Mishnah lists five colors of blood that are considered a sign of menstrual *tumah* (impurity), but the sages of the Talmud find only four scriptural allusions to different colors of menstrual blood. This is solved by pointing out that black blood is simply red blood that has changed its color. As the Talmud continues, “Black blood is not black originally. It assumes the black color only after it is discharged, like the blood of a wound which becomes black after it had been discharged from it.”

These powers of judgement are the ten Names *Elokim* that enter *Z’eir Anpin* from *Ima*, and then return upward as reflecting light, which is judgement.

The Name *Elokim* is associated with the *sefirah* of *binah*, and specifically, with its power of contraction and limitation. *Binah* in general is a process of limiting, defining, honing down and contracting the infinite insight of *chochmah*. But beyond this, the process of intellect becoming emotion—the creation of *Z’eir Anpin* out of *Ima*—is a

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 21:10-14.

<sup>2</sup> *Nidah* 19a.

further contraction, a quantum leap lessening the intensity of revelation characteristic of intellect into that characterizing emotion. The ten Names *Elokim* are the ten sub-*sefirot* of *binah* that enter into *Z'eir Anpin*.

If so, [the light] which itself is judgement is surely severe judgement, enough so that the red is changed into black. As it is written, “His locks are curly, black as a raven.”<sup>3</sup>

The Song of Songs is considered, Kabbalistically, to be the song of love between *Z'eir Anpin* (the groom) and *Nukva d'Z'eir Anpin* (the bride).

These are the hairs whose numerical value is ten times that of *Elokim*, being equal to the word for “lock.”

The numerical value of *Elokim* (*alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem*, 1 + 30 + 5 + 10 + 40) is 86. Ten times 86 is 860. The word for “locks” (*taltalim*) may be split into the singular for “lock” (*taltal*) and the plural suffix (*-im*). The numerical value of *taltal* (*taf-lamed-taf-lamed*, 400 + 30 + 400 + 30) is 860.

The plural suffix (*-im*) of the word for “locks” signifies the 50 letters comprised by the ten Names *Elokim*. This is why the verse concludes, “dark as a raven.”

Each Name *Elokim* comprises five letters,  $10 \times 5 = 50$ . The word *taltalim* thus signifies the numerical value of ten Names *Elokim* and the letters that form these Names.

When the Jewish people used to go out to make war, the five Names *Elokim* of the right side would be joined with the five Names *Elokim* of the left side, in order to exact vengeance from their enemies. All that would thus be evident of these ten Names *Elokim* would be the five of the right side. For would the five of the left side be visible, the forces of evil would latch onto them.

Although one would think that wartime is when one should evince *gevurah*, the power of the left side, we learn here that this is not the case. True, power and might (*gevurah*) must be present within the army (or individual) waging war, but its/his outward conduct must be that of *chesed*. The fact that the enemy has chosen to oppose the forces of holiness means that he must be fought, conquered—and if necessary annihilated—for his own good. (It should be remembered that the Torah enjoins the nation to exhaust peaceful overtures before resorting to war.)

Thus, fighting the enemy is an act of *chesed* for him and for reality as a whole. There is thus no place for any outward demonstrations of vindictiveness or the like. On the contrary, should the people evince any of the outward trappings of *gevurah* unnecessarily, they weaken themselves by allowing the essence of their enemy to intrude into their being. This of course lessens their merit to win. As we are taught, when the Jews were crossing the sea on dry land and the Egyptians were being drowned in it, the angels complained to G-d that both parties were guilty of idol worship; why, then, was He showing favor to one over the other? And anger, according to sages, is equivalent to idol worship. Also, the Song at the Sea, which the Jewish people sang to G-d after being delivered from the Egyptians, mentions G-d's right arm twice, but not His left arm.

This is why the straps [of the *tefilin*] are black, for they are to reflect these [black] hairs [of *Z'eir Anpin*]. Furthermore, the right strap is to be longer than the left one.

The *tefilin* manifest the flow of consciousness from the intellect of *Z'eir Anpin* (the man wearing them) downward. The head *tefilin* comprises four compartments, signifying *chochmah*, *binah*, and the two aspects of *da'at* (the five states of *chesed* and the five states of *gevurah*). The two sides of the straps emerging from the head *tefilin* and encompassing the head signify *chesed* and *gevurah* themselves. The knot at the rear of the head signifies *tiferet*. The two straps descending from the knot signify *netzach* and *hod*.

<sup>3</sup> Song of Songs 5:11.

The straps are to black in order to reflect the hair of *Z'eir Anpin*, i.e., the protracted flow of Divine light into *Nukva* and the world in general. This is reflected in the fact that the *partzuf* of Leah is said to be situated behind the head of *Z'eir Anpin*, at the level of the knot of the head *tefilin*, while the *partzuf* of Rachel is the hand *tefilin* itself. As we said, the female (both in woman in general as well as in the female aspect of man) is the warrior whose task it is to battle the materialism of this world. Thus, in the flow of Divine energy reaching her through *Z'eir Anpin*, the right side must predominate. Then the war will be able to be fought properly, as described above.

This is alluded to in the verse [which opens this passage of the Torah]. The numerical value of the word for “when” [*ki*] together with the first letter of the word for “you go out” [*teitzei, tav*] is that of the five Names *Elokim* of the right side.

The numerical value of *ki* (*kaf-yud*, 20 + 10) is 30; that of *tav* is 400; 400 + 30 = 430. The numerical value of *Elokim*, as above, is 86. 5 x 86 = 430.

These [aspects of the Name *Elokim*] appear [in this verse] with G-d's proper Name [the Name *Havayah*].

The verse continues: “...to war against your enemies, and G-d [*Havayah*] your G-d [*Elokim*] delivers him into your hand...”

[G-d's proper Name is spelled] *Havayah* [and read as] *Adni*; the numerical value of these together is 91, the numerical value of *amen*.

*Havayah* (*yud-hei-vav-hei*, 10 + 5 + 6 + 5) = 26; *Adni* (*alef-dalet-nun-yud*, 1 + 4 + 50 + 10) = 65. 26 + 65 = 91. *Amen* (*alef-men-nun*, 1 + 40 + 50) = 91.

This is also the numerical value of the remaining letters of the word for “you go out” [*teitzei*].

*Teitzei* is spelled *tav-tzadik-alef*. The numerical value of the final two letters (*tzadik-alef*, 90 + 1) = 91.

This, then is the implication of this verse: “When you go out” [alludes to the five Names *Elokim* of the right side, together with G-d's proper Name *Havayah*,] as we have said. “...to war against your enemies” [in this way], then it is a sure thing that “G-d your G-d,” i.e., [G-d as manifest in] these two Names *Havayah* and *Elokim* “will deliver him into your hand.” “Your hand” alludes to the five Names *Elokim* of the right side, reflected in the five fingers of the right hand. Then, “you will capture its captives.”

Thus, success in the war against evil is predicated on holy conduct, as opposed to fighting evil with evil conduct.

\* \* \*

We must now inquire as to the statements of our sages that [the soldier] is permitted to engage in sexual intercourse with the beautiful woman once during the war, and that the Torah in this passage acquiesces to the evil inclination.

According to our sages, the Torah permits the beautiful woman to the soldier within the parameters described in this passage (that he must marry her, etc.) because otherwise he would not be able to resist her.

Because the soldier cannot conquer his urge must the Torah then permit her to him? If this is so, then let the Torah do the same will all other prohibitions!

Secondly, it is stated further in the Torah that [one of the punishments for national wrongdoing is that] “G-d will return you to Egypt in ships...and you will be sold there to your enemies as slaves and handmaidens, and no one will buy.”<sup>4</sup> Why is causing us to return to Egypt a punishment? The Torah does indeed tell us that “you will see them [the Egyptians] no more,”<sup>5</sup> but is going against the Torah’s command a punishment?

Thirdly, why did G-d say this about Egypt, but not about other exiles? Why is He against our returning to Egypt, but permits us to travel to Babylonia or Media?

Fourthly, why do our sages normally speak of only four exiles—Babylonia, Media, Greece, and Edom—as in the verse “And behold, a dark fear...,”<sup>6</sup> but the exile of Egypt, which was more severe than any of these, is not mentioned together with them?

Finally, why is the exodus of Egypt mentioned in the Torah so many times?

[To answer all this:] The four exiles correspond to the four letters of the Name *Havayah*, and the exile of Egypt to the upper tip of the *yud*, which outweighs them all and is greater than they.

The four letters of the Name *Havayah* correspond to *chochmah*, *binah*, the *midot*, and *malchut*, respectively, while the upper tip of the *yud* corresponds to *keter*, the source of them all. The super-conscious is more powerful and its rectification therefore more crucial than all the other powers of the soul.

Therefore it is mentioned repeatedly [in the Torah] and is not mentioned together with the other [exiles], for it is in a class by itself.

Now, the purpose of exile is to elevate the fallen sparks of holiness that [were scattered all over the earth and] were mixed in with evil due to the sin of Adam. This is the meaning of the verse, “There is a time when a man overcomes another man to his detriment,”<sup>7</sup> meaning that the “evil man” overcomes the “holy man” to his own detriment, for the fact that he oppresses Israel and rules them allows Israel to totally extract from him all the sparks of holiness within him.

“Evil man” and “holy man” here mean the forces of evil and good. Just as in the vision of Ezekiel the array of Divine attributes flowing into creation had the form of a man, and the anatomy of terrestrial man reflects this organization of forces, so are the forces of evil arranged in the human form.

And wherever they go, the *Shechinah* [Divine presence] goes with them, in order to elevate her component parts.

The Divine presence accompanies the Jewish people in their exile, in order to reconstruct herself out of the fallen sparks of her shattered self.

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<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 28:68.

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 14:13.

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 15:12, discussing Abraham’s vision of the future of his descendants: “And behold, a great, dark fear fell upon him.” “‘Fear’ refers to Babylonia.... ‘dark’ refers to Media.... ‘great’ refers to Greece.... ‘fell upon him’ refers to Edom” (*Bereishit Rabbah* 44:17).

<sup>7</sup> Ecclesiastes 8:9.

That is why we are commanded not to return to Egypt, but are not so prohibited with regard to other nations [that have oppressed us], for we have not yet elevated all [the Divine sparks] within them.

“And they emptied out Egypt,” meaning that during the Egyptian exile the Jewish people elevated all the Divine sparks that inhered in that culture and country.

This is why the punishment for wrongdoing is that G-d “will return you to Egypt in ships.” Since Egypt corresponds to the upper tip of the *yud*, and there remain Divine sparks to elevate in the other lands, which are in comparison to Egypt like the body is to the head, Israel must return to Egypt.

By returning to Egypt, the general exile, Israel can then proceed to elevate whatever sparks remain in the derivative exiles of the other nations.

But as to Egypt itself, “no one will buy.” When there were sparks of holiness embedded within them they desired to rule over Israel. But since Egypt has already been totally refined, they no longer have any desire to enslave Israel. Therefore, they will not want to buy them as slaves.

Babylonia corresponds to the head, as it is written: “You are the head of gold.”<sup>8</sup> Media and Persia correspond to the two arms, Greece corresponds to the body, and Edom and Ishmael correspond to the two legs. This is why the latter two exiles are long.

The present exile is seen as an extension of the Roman exile (Edom is Rome), since culturally and legally, Western civilization shares the values and worldview of ancient Rome. A subset of this exile is that of Ishmael, the Arabs, who are seen as an antithesis of Roman civilization and values, and who will rule over the Jewish people for a time concurrently with the exile of Rome.

This is also why our sages refer to the final stages of the exile as “the heels of the Messiah,”<sup>9</sup> for in that time it will be necessary to elevate [the Divine sparks] that have become enmeshed in the lowest elements [of these exiles], the feet.

Regarding this body, our sages said: “The son of David shall not come until all the souls have been emptied out of the Body,”<sup>10</sup> referring to the holiness that has been mixed in with the evil of the “evil man” mentioned above.

The usual meaning of this saying is that all the souls waiting in their spiritual storehouse (known as the “Body”) must be born into this physical world at least once in order for *Mashiach* to come. Here, it means that all the Divine sparks (“souls”) must be elevated and thus emptied out of the body representing the exiles of Israel.

Now, as we said, Egypt outweighs all the other exiles for it corresponds to the tip of the *yud* and transcends the rest of this “body.” Therefore, when the messiah comes and the process of elevation and refinement [of the sparks] will be completed, “death will be swallowed up forever”<sup>11</sup> and the sparks will be totally

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<sup>8</sup> Daniel 2:38. Daniel is speaking to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylonia.

<sup>9</sup> *Sotah* 49a.

<sup>10</sup> *Yevamot* 62a.

<sup>11</sup> Isaiah 25:8.

elevated as they were in Egypt. About this time it is written, “as in the days when you went out of Egypt I will show him wonders.”<sup>12</sup>

All this enables us to understand the subject of the beautiful woman. As is known, all those who engaged in this type of war—an optional war—were absolutely righteous, and had not even [committed the sin] of talking during prayer.

The Torah commands the Jewish people to wipe out the seven pagan nations that occupied Canaan, in order to possess the land of Israel and fill it with holiness. In this obligatory war, we are commanded, “you shall let no soul live.” The war we are discussing here, however, is not of this type, but a voluntary war we are allowed to wage in order to expand the borders of Israel.

Before going out to fight this war, all those who were afraid to fight because they felt that their sins would disqualify them from G-d’s protection were allowed to leave the front. Thus, the ones who remained were only those totally confident in their sinless state.

It is impossible for the evil inclination to persuade such a righteous person to defile himself with a non-Jewish woman. Therefore the Torah informs us that if he does indeed feel attracted to her, it is because there is a holy spark enmeshed in this nation and something of it is found in this non-Jewish woman. This spark is connected to the soul of this man, and he therefore is attracted to her.

We are taught that the soul descends into this world not only for the general purpose of elevating the fallen sparks of holiness, but that there are in fact specific sparks that each soul is uniquely suited to elevate.

Therefore the Torah permits her to him. With the power of the spirit that he introduces into her through intercourse, it is possible that the good in her will be able to overpower the evil and expel it. The woman will then be fit to enter the realm of holiness and convert to Judaism.

Sexual intercourse is meant of course to be a union not only of body of soul as well; through intercourse, the righteous man will impart something of his Divine consciousness to this woman.

Nonetheless, their offspring will still be rebellious, for it is impossible that some residual evil will not remain in her [that will manifest itself in their child].

The passage of the Torah describing the laws of the beautiful woman is followed by the laws of what is to be done to an exceptionally rebellious son. According to the oral tradition, the juxtaposition of these two passages is meant to convey that the offspring of the soldier and the beautiful woman will be rebellious.

“But if you do not desire her”—this indicates that whatever good there was within her was the minority and became nullified, for the evil overcame it and expelled it. It joined together with the spirit he introduced into her, which then returned to him and was elevated. She was thus left totally evil.

In this case, the spirit introduced into her through intercourse was not able to expel the evil since she herself did not possess enough good to combine forces with his good and overcome the evil. The indication that this indeed happened is if after the mourning period he is no longer attracted to her.

—translated from *Likutei Torah* and *Sefer HaLikutim*

## *Parashat Ki Teitzei* [second installment]

One of the *mitzvot* given in this *parashah* is that of “send away the nest”: “If on the way you happen upon a bird’s nest, in any tree or on the ground, with chicks or eggs, the mother sitting on the chicks or the eggs, do not take the mother together with the children. Send away the mother, and [only then] take the children, so that it be well with you and you live long.”<sup>1</sup>

[Before discussing this *mitzvah*,] we must first inform you concerning one prefatory concept regarding the supernal coupling of *Abba* and *Ima*.

Know that the union of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* occurs sporadically and there are times when it is interrupted. In contrast, *Abba* and *Ima* couple continuously and never part from each other, as mentioned in the *Zohar*.<sup>2</sup>

Now, this seems to contradict the statement of our sages that “The Holy One, blessed be He, swore that He would not enter the celestial Jerusalem until He enters the terrestrial Jerusalem.”<sup>3</sup> This means that there would be no supernal coupling of *Abba* and *Ima*—referred to as “the celestial Jerusalem”—until the lower coupling, between *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*—referred to as “the terrestrial Jerusalem”—would occur.

The solution to this is that there are two types of coupling of *Abba* and *Ima*. The first is in order to emanate new souls into earthly bodies. The second is for two purposes: either to elicit the life-force necessary to sustain the continued existence of the worlds or to draw down old souls—i.e., souls that were emanated when the worlds were created—in order that they now enter the physical world, as we will explain presently.

Now, when *Abba* and *Ima* couple for the first purpose, i.e., to emanate new souls, they do so as various states of the Name *Havayah*, names vocalized with vowels.

In the Bible, the Name *Havayah* is usually vocalized with the vowels of the Name *Adnut*, but is occasionally vocalized using the vowels of the Name *Elokim* (see, for example, Deuteronomy 3:24). In Kabbalah, the Name *Havayah* is vocalized in many ways, each way indicating a different type of Divine flow.

It is known that the vowels express the *chochmah* of whatever context in which they are found. It follows that this type of coupling is that of *chochmah* of *Abba* with *Ima*.

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 22:6-7.

<sup>2</sup> 3:290b.

<sup>3</sup> *Ta’anit* 5a.

However, when they couple for the second purpose, i.e., only to sustain the worlds, they do so via the Names *Havayah* themselves, i.e., just the letters without the vowels. This is the couple of *binah* of *Abba* with *Ima*, for the letters express the *binah* of the context in which they are found.

The consonants, the skeletal “shell” of the sound, are considered external relative to the vowels, the inner “meat” of the sound. Similarly, *binah* is external to *chochmah*, clothing it.

The first type of coupling is referred to in the *Zohar* as the “complete coupling.” This is because this coupling produces crowns and brains for *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* of *Atzilut*, the offspring of *Abba* and *Ima*. This then allows *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva* to couple, too, in order to propagate new souls in the world.

The second type of coupling is referred to as the “incomplete coupling,” for its purpose is only to elicit the life-force necessary to sustain creation or to elicit souls that have already been created and are included in that of Adam, as is known, and as will be presently explained.

The second type of coupling is inferior to the first because it does not produce anything new. It simply sustains the steady-state existence of the world, keeping it from reverting to the nothingness-state that preceded creation.

Now, these two types of coupling are both divided into two manners [of coupling]. Sometimes *Abba* and *Ima* couple while they are situated in their normal location, above, in which case they are of equal height and face each other. In this posture, they couple, as we said, in two ways: the “complete coupling” and the “incomplete coupling.”

The second manner [of coupling] occurs when *Ima* descends and “sits on the chicks.” This means that her *netzach-hod-yesod* descend and become enclothed as the intellect of *Z’eir Anpin*, as is known. In this case, *Ima* is postured face to face with *Abba* but only from the midpoint of the *tiferet* of *Abba* on down.

In order for *Ima*, the quintessence of the intellect, to impart intellect to *Z’eir Anpin*, the personification of the emotions, it has to descend somewhat to the level of the emotions and “become” emotional intellect. This requires her to cease relating to *Abba*’s intellect (*chochmah-binah-da’at*), because the intellectual intensity of the intellect of *Abba* would not allow *Ima* to diminish itself (*tzimtzum*) enough to enter into the reality of the emotions. She can thus, for the duration of this transference, only couple with *Abba*’s emotions.

Now, it is also known that these two postures exist also with regard to *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*. Sometimes *Nukva*’s top is level with his chest, in which case she couples with his lower half, face to face. At other times, she is level with him, in which case they couple face to face sharing the same stature. So it is here with *Abba* and *Ima*: two statures, at each of which can occur the said two types of coupling, “complete” and “incomplete.”

Know that the second posture can also occur in two fashions. The first is when *Ima* crouches over *Z’eir Anpin* and becomes clothed within him in order to provide him with intellect, as we have mentioned. The second is when she hovers

only over *Nukva* and becomes vested within her in order to provide her with intellect.

We have thus described six types of coupling between *Abba* and *Ima*. To summarize:

1. in their native location, face to face and of equal stature:
  - a. the “complete coupling” in this context
  - b. the “incomplete coupling” in this context
2. when *Ima* descends, “sitting on the chicks.” In this context, *Abba* must bend over and lower his head in order to couple with *Ima*.
  - a. the “complete coupling” in this context
  - b. the “incomplete coupling” in this context
  - c. while vested in *Z’eir Anpin*
  - d. while vested in *Nukva*.

We will now explain these six types of coupling.

Know that the “complete coupling” is in order to elicit new souls that are not included in Adam’s comprehensive soul. This coupling is not continuous. When the holy Temple stood, this “complete coupling” occurred and new souls came [into the world]. But after the destruction, this coupling stopped, as is explained in the *Zohar*<sup>4</sup> with reference to the “chamber of love”: “for new souls did not go there after the Temple was destroyed.” The sages alluded to this coupling when they said that God swore that He would not enter the celestial Jerusalem until, etc.

I.e., He would not reinstate the constant “complete coupling” of *Abba* and *Ima*, which produced new souls, until the terrestrial Temple would be rebuilt.

This is explained in the seventh [of the eight] gate[s], *Sha’ar Ruach HaKodesh* [“the gate of Divine Inspiration”],<sup>5</sup> regarding meditative unifications, that one should not meditate on the vowels of the various Names *Havayah*, only on the letters themselves.

The “incomplete coupling,” however, which occurs in order to sustain reality, is never interrupted, for were it (G-d forbid) to stop, the existence of all the worlds would be annulled. As we said, it was in reference to this coupling that it was said in the *Zohar* that it never stops.

This principle applies to both types of coupling, i.e., whether *Abba* and *Ima* are both at their native level facing each other or *Ima* descends to “sit on the chicks.” The “complete coupling” is subject to being interrupted, while the “incomplete coupling” goes on continuously.

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<sup>4</sup> 2:223a.

<sup>5</sup> One version of the Arizal’s teachings is that arranged by Rabbi Shmuel Vital, the son of Rabbi Chaim Vital, which is called “the eight gates.”

We will now explain the said two types [of coupling].

Know that when they are both at their native level, this is their main coupling. In contrast, their coupling when *Ima* descends to “sit on the chicks” is an occasional occurrence, i.e., when there are sins in the lower worlds. For then, [mankind] does not have the power to receive the supernal beneficence that issues from the supernal coupling [of *Abba* and *Ima*] occurring when they are both at their native level. *Ima* therefore descends, “crouching” as we have described, and from that vantage point couples with *Abba*. The energy [“light”] of the beneficence produced by this [inferior] coupling is less intense than that produced when they are both at their native level, and therefore mankind can receive it.

Sin decreases the capacity of the individual in particular and reality in general to sustain Divine consciousness. Specifically, it causes a gap between the intellect and the emotions, disallowing the emotions to experience the full intensity of the intellect. In their fallen state, the only way the emotions can receive the intellect that produces and drives them is in a highly contracted fashion, described here as *Ima* partially disengaging from *Abba* and in this state becoming vested in *Z’eir Anpin*. The emotions in this fallen state are less purely aligned with the intellect, and reflect (at least partially) the selfish interests of the individual rather the pure, abstract truth of the intellect.

A second reason: when the children, i.e., *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, are mature, they do not require their mother. When they are young and weak, they need their mother to crouch over them and protect them from the forces of evil, just as a bird spreads her wings over her young and crouches over them to protect them from birds of prey. It follows that the coupling [of *Abba* and *Ima*] performed when she is “crouching” is weaker and occurs only occasionally, i.e., when there is some blemish below (G-d forbid) [on account of sin].

When the emotions and their expression are not fully developed (i.e., do not possess their own developed intellect), they need to be sheltered from the forces of evil (i.e., the temptations of the world that threaten to subvert and derail the emotions from their proper, holy orientation).

There is another difference between these two types of coupling. When they are above, at their [native] level, *Abba* and *Ima* exhibit what is called [in the *Zohar*] “manifestation of their faces” to 3,700,000 worlds, similar to what it says [about *Arich Anpin*]: “The face of the holy ancient one”—i.e., *Arich Anpin*—“shines to 3,700,000 worlds.”<sup>6</sup> This phenomenon exists with regard to both types of coupling, the “complete” and the “incomplete.”

The number 3,700,000 is 10,000 times 370. The significance of 370 has been discussed previously, and signifies the shining expression of good will. 10,000 is the ultimate inter-inclusion (the largest number for which Hebrew possesses a distinct name—*ribo*), signifying each *sefirah* sub-divided into (10) sub-*sefirot*, (100) sub-sub-*sefirot*, (1,000) sub-sub-sub *sefirot*, and (10,000) sub-sub-sub-sub-*sefirot*.

But with regard to the second type of coupling, i.e., the crouching of the mother below, over her chicks, neither in the “complete” coupling nor in the “incomplete” couple does *Ima*’s face [shine]. All she does is manifest into

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<sup>6</sup> *Zohar* 3:128b.

1,500,000 worlds, similar to the way *Z'eir Anpin*'s face does not shine, but only manifests into 1,500,000 worlds, as explained in the *Zohar*.<sup>7</sup>

1,500,000 is 150 time 10,000. 150 is the numerical value of the word for "nest," *ken*: *kuf-nun* = 100 + 50 = 150.

In contrast, [the face of] *Abba* [shines into] 3,700,000 worlds, as does *Arich Anpin*.

Since *Abba*, even when coupling with *Ima* at the lower level, does not leave its native level, it does not lose any of the intensity of its intellect. Its intellect thus reflects the full 370 lights of good will shining to it from *Arich Anpin*.

—translated from *Ta'amei HaMitzvot*

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<sup>7</sup> 3:135b.

## *Parashat Ki Teitzei* [third installment]

In this *parashah*, the laws of divorce begin with the phrase, “When a man takes a wife and engages in marital relations with her....”<sup>1</sup> The laws of betrothal and marriage are derived from this passage. In Jewish law, “betrothal” (*kidushin*) is not simple engagement, but rather a legally binding relationship that establishes a quasi-marital bond between the betrothed couple. The marital bond is not fully actualized until “marriage” (*nesu'in*), which occurs when the couple first engages in marital relations.

Know that when a man betroths a woman, a certain spirit from the spirit of the husband is drawn down upon her. [This spirit] is an encompassing light.

There are two types of “lights,” or spiritual energies. Encompassing light does not enter into the operative consciousness of the entity it encompasses. Rather, it serves as a source of inspiration or protection. In contrast, “inner” light informs the consciousness of the entity it enters and remakes its possessor’s world-view, changing the way the possessor lives his or her life.

Once the encompassing light has been drawn down upon her from his spirit, he can then engage in full marital relations with her. This imparts to her an additional level of spirit from him, an inner light.

“Full” marital relations involve the union of the souls of the couple, not just their bodies. By the same token, full union is not possible without bodily union, either. But the ideal is that these two types of union enhance each other. Therefore, no matter how close the couple become by being betrothed, their full spiritual union is not possible until their marriage is consummated.

Betrothal must therefore precede [marriage], for the inner spirit cannot enter her until the encompassing spirit of this same [inner] spirit enters her first.

Note the use of the verb “to enter” for the encompassing spirit as well as for the inner spirit. This is because the “encompassing” spirit does not physically surround the entity to which it has been given, but metaphorically. It is a present within the entity as is the inner spirit, but since it does not inform its consciousness, it is always “at a distance.”



As you know, [the *partzuf* of] Leah is formed from *malchut* of *binah* [i.e., of *Ima*], and [that of] Rachel from *malchut* of *tevunah*. Since they all shine from the same place, they all join together during marital relations.

Leah, the *partzuf* of the thought, develops from the intellect proper. Rachel, the *partzuf* of speech, develops from the “applied intellect,” *tevunah*.

Now, Leah is manifest in the *dalet* of the knot of the [head-]*tefilin*, and Rachel is also manifest as a *dalet*. When they join together, they form the closed *mem* of the word “to increase [*lemarbeh*] the reign.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 24:1.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 9:6.

The final *mem* can be envisioned as two *dalet*'s, one written normally and the other upside down and backwards, forming the angular mirror-image of the first one.

The final *mem* occurs in the middle of a word only once in the Bible, in the verse, "To increase the reign and for peace without end over the throne of David and his kingdom..." The word for "to increase" [*le-marbeh*] is spelled *lamed*-[final] *mem*-*reish*-*beit*-*hei*.

[The final *mem*] is formed of two hinges and two doors. The two hinges are the two *yud*'s, i.e., the thorns in the backs of the *dalet*'s, this being what distinguishes the letter *dalet* from the letter *reish*.

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The word *dalet* actually means "door." Thus, each *dalet* that makes up the closed *mem* can be envisioned as a door swinging on a hinge, i.e., the point where the two lines of the *dalet* meet. Since the upper stroke of the *dalet* extends beyond the vertical stroke, the excess may be seen as a *yud*, act as the hinge around with the two strokes of the *dalet* swing.

These [two *yud*'s may also be conceived of as] the two "handles" [to the doors], the 28 "times" of Ecclesiastes.

The word for "handle" is *yad*, which is also the word for "hand" and the basic meaning of the name of the letter *yud*. This word is spelled *yud*-*dalet*, and its numerical value (10 + 4) is 14. The two *yud*-handles have thus a combined numerical value of 28.

In the beginning of Ecclesiastes, King Solomon lists 28 "times," in the form of "a time to...and a time to..."<sup>3</sup>

The door swings on its hinge, whose [influence] extends in either direction only by virtue of the power of the *yud*, for the *yud* represents the soul while the *dalet* represents the body.

The soul animates the body. In general, the letter *yud* signifies *chochmah*, the first conscious *sefirah*, the first manifestation of the soul in the body. The letter *dalet* is often understood to refer to *malchut*, the last *sefirah* that "possesses nothing of its own," but rather serves as the means the other *sefirot* use to find expression in the world. As such, it is a fitting representation of the body, which serves as the means for the soul to express itself in the world.

Of these two *yud*'s it is written, "those who desecrate it shall surely die."<sup>4</sup> The word for "those who desecrate it" can be understood to mean "its emptiness." The numerical value of the word for "emptiness" [*chalal*] is the same as that of the word for "life" [*chaim*].

The verse "those who desecrate it shall surely die" refers to those who desecrate the Sabbath. The root of the verb "to desecrate" (*le-chaleil*) is the word for "emptiness" or "vacuum" (*chalal*).

*Chalal*: *chet*-*lamed*-*lamed* = 8 + 30 + 30 = 68.

*Chaim*: *chet*-*yud*-*yud*-*mem* = 8 + 10 + 10 + 40 = 68.

The phrase "those who desecrate it shall surely die" can thus be read, "its emptiness is surely death." The "emptiness" is the hollow of the doorway, the space through which the door swings. The door is the body, and the body by itself, without the soul, is a lifeless corpse.

<sup>3</sup> Ecclesiastes 3:2-8.

<sup>4</sup> Exodus 31:14.

This is the mystical significance of the phrase [in the preceding verse,] “You shall keep My Sabbaths.” The arms [of the Sabbath figuratively] spread out to add from the mundane [weekdays] to the holy. The *yud* indicates the Sabbath itself. All this will be [more fully] explained, please G-d, when we explain the significance of the two Sabbaths [implied in the plural “My Sabbaths”].

The Sabbath is to the week as the soul is to the body, and thus as the hinge is to the door. The workweek gives us a chance to express and actualize the inspiration we draw from the Sabbath, but without the Sabbath the workweek is a lifeless corpse. In order for this relationship to be clear, the Sabbath must “take over” some of the weekday; this is why we add some time to the Sabbath before it begins (at sundown on Friday) and after it ends (at nightfall on Saturday).

Now, the *dalet* spreads forth as the *mem* of *malchut*. The *yud* alludes to the point of Zion of *malchut*, this being the mystical significance of the Holy of Holies.

The *yud* is often conceived of as a geometric point, since it is the smallest of the Hebrew letters and the graphic origin of the others—all other letters can be drawn by first drawing a *yud* and then extending it in one way or another.

The word for Zion (*tziyon*) also means “point” or “dot.” When *malchut* is first emanated, its initial form is that of a single point that must then be “fleshed-out” or “constructed” by transferring the *malchut*’s of the preceding *sefirot* to it—through coupling with *Z’eir Anpin*. Zion is a synonym for Jerusalem, the seat of the Kingdom of David (who also personifies *malchut*). The Holy of Holies, the inner sanctum of the Temple, is the point of union between G-d and the Jewish people, and is thus allegorically referred to as the “bridal chamber.”

Specifically, “Zion” indicates the *yesod* of *malchut*, the womb.<sup>5</sup>

For what we said [above, that *malchut*] takes the form of the *yud*, you can understand the mystical dimension of betrothal, which requires the groom’s money.

It was not stated explicitly before that *malchut* takes the form of the *yud*, but it was stated that the *yud* signifies the soul and the Sabbath, both of which are manifestations of the *sefirah* of *malchut*. *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin* is the origin of the soul, and the Sabbath is the seventh day, corresponding to the seventh of the seven *midot*, *malchut*.

Although a man may betroth a woman “in three ways, with money, with a document, or with intercourse,”<sup>6</sup> the prevalent way is with money (i.e., an object of value, such as a ring), which he gives to her in the presence of two witnesses, saying, “Be betrothed to me with this ring according to the laws of Moses and Israel.”

This [money] embodies the mentality he gives her, which is embodied in the *yud*, which has three tips.

We have seen elsewhere that the point of the *yud* represents a coin. The *yud* has three tips: two to the left and one below.

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These three tips represent the three *sefirot* of the intellect, *chochmah*, *binah*, and *da’at*.

This *yud* comprises *chesed* and *gevurah*.

The origins of *chesed* and *gevurah* are present in *da’at*, as we have explained previously.

<sup>5</sup> *Etz Chaim* 35:3.

<sup>6</sup> *Kidushin* 1:1.

When [the bride] receives this radiance [of encompassing light] from him, she assumes the form of the *vav* within the six extremities, her back to him. The *dalet* thus represents [this phase of] coupling.

As we have explained previously, the *dalet* appears to be postured with its back to the preceding letter, the *gimel* (from *gomel*, “bestower”).

The large *dalet* alludes to how [the *partzuf* of] Leah is opposite [that of] Rachel. [Z’*eir Anpin*] gives her her *dalet* for the purpose of coupling. This is the mystical meaning of the four times the word “truth” occurs in the blessing “True and certain,” as has been explained elsewhere.

In order to couple, the feminine *partzuf* has to be “developed” to the point where it is of equal stature with the male *partzuf*. This, as we have seen previously, is accomplished by the male *partzuf* transmitting his intellect to the female *partzuf*, so they can be “of one mind” and couple completely. (This is perhaps reflected in the teaching that before marital relations, the husband must “gladden” his wife with words, helping her focus on the *mitzvah* they are about to perform.) The *dalet* given to Leah is the four parts of the intellect (the numerical value of the *dalet* is 4): *chochmah*, *binah*, and *da’at*, which divides into two (the sources of *chesed* and *gevurah* within *da’at*).

The blessing recited after the morning recitation of the *Shema*, linking the *Shema* to the *Amidah*, begins “True and certain it is....” The word “true” (or the adverb “truly,” which is the same word [*emet*] in Hebrew) appears eight times in this blessing:

1. “True and certain, established and enduring....”
2. “Truly, the G-d of the universe is our King...”
3. “His words are living and eternal...[Your] word is good and eternal, in truth and trustworthiness...”
4. “Truly, You are G-d, our G-d and the G-d of our fathers...”
5. “Truly, happy is the man who heeds Your commandments...”
6. “Truly, You are the master of Your people...”
7. “Truly, You are the first and You are the last...”
8. “Truly, You redeemed us from Egypt...”

The first four instances of “truth” in this blessing refer to the four aspects intellect given to Leah for the purpose of coupling. The second four refer to the aspects of intellect given to Rachel.

The mystical significance of the *yud* is also that the *yud* [is used to spell out] the Name *Ekyeh*, which receives the embryo.

The Name *Ekyeh*, as we know, is associated with the *sefirah* of *binah*. *Binah*, as the *partzuf Ima*, is the mother that receives the seminal insight from *Abba* and develops it in her “womb” into a full-grown intellectual structure.

They [these *yud*’s] also allude to the fact in them are finished the ten Names *Havayah* that act as feminine waters.

These ten Names *Havayah* are the Names used to make Z’*eir Anpin* into a complete *partzuf* of ten *sefirot*.

In any case, from this *dalet* positioned with its back [to Z’*eir Anpin*], when it faces him and receives the seminal drop, it becomes the Name *Havayah* spelled out to equal 45, and is called the closed *mem*, just as *binah* encloses the *yud* of *chochmah* within it.

Now, when it is positioned with its back [to *Z'eir Anpin*], it possesses only one hinge and one door, as we have explained elsewhere<sup>7</sup> regarding the five states of *gevurah*.

The feminine *partzuf* initially possesses only the five states of *gevurah*; it receives the five states of *chesed* from the male *partzuf*. The hinge (1) and the door (*dalet*, 4) add up to 5.

But when she faces [*Z'eir Anpin*], she receives the second hinge in the form of the five states of *chesed*. A door then issues from her, serving to contain the light, and thus there is then a hinge for each door.

She is then ready for intercourse, since she is a closed vessel and will not lose (“miscarry”) the seminal drop of light that will be deposited in her.

Corresponding to all this the groom has to do to her finger, for the *yesod* is only for her benefit.

The male *yesod*, the male consciousness’ drive for self-actualization that propels it to seek expression, is fulfilled only when the consciousness that has developed to this point (beginning with *Abba*, through *Ima*, and into *Z'eir Anpin*) is deposited in a vehicle for expression that will express it properly and not “spill” it into undesirable contexts (corresponding to the “death” inherent in the doorway, as above). Thus, the female *partzuf* has to have a closed womb that, as above, will contain the seed. The groom therefore places the ring on the bride’s finger, signifying the seal with which he closes her reproductive powers and dedicates them to his particular soul-slant on the Divine imperative to make the world into a home for G-d. By courting her (before marriage) and “gladdening” her (throughout marriage), he brings their common soul-root to the forefront of her consciousness and makes her his partner in promulgating the Divine image and consciousness.

The proof of this is that it is possible to betroth as well through intercourse.

As we saw above, there are three ways a man can betroth a woman, one of which is through intercourse. Although this is never done nowadays (and probably only rarely done in olden days), it was technically possible in more innocent times for a man to take two qualified witnesses and have them watch him say to his bride-to-be, “Be betrothed to me through this act of intercourse according to the laws of Moses and Israel” and then be secluded with her. They would then be betrothed and would have to separate until she had time to prepare her dowry and make arrangements for the actual wedding (back in those times, twelve months later). The intercourse they would conduct after the wedding, their second, would then formalize the marriage completely.

The point of this is that betrothal is in order to focus the female onto one, specific male and thereby “close her mind,” so to speak, to all the other, various possible ways of spreading Divine consciousness (i.e., “men”). The fact that this can be accomplished by an act of intercourse indicates that betrothal is for this purpose.

The ring signifies her *yesod*, which encompasses and contains the light within her.

Her *yesod* is her womb.

When the *yud* of the hinge is added to her via *yesod*, she is called the closed *mem*. We thus have *yud-mem*, and she is called “the sea.”

The closed *mem* is the image of the safe, closed womb that develops and nurtures the embryo. The numerical value of *mem* is 40, and it takes 40 days for the embryo to form.<sup>8</sup> When the embryo reaches full term, the closed *mem* changes into the regular, open *mem*, and birth occurs.

<sup>7</sup> *Etz Chaim* 35:3.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

The word for “sea” (*yam*) is spelled *yud-mem*. The sea is an appellation for *malchut*, since, just as “all rivers run into the sea,”<sup>9</sup> *malchut* is the final repository for all the lights of the preceding nine *sefirot*, that flow into it in order to be transformed and transmitted to a lower level of reality, the outside world.

The formula “Be betrothed to me...” contains 32 letters, corresponding to the 32 pathways of wisdom.

Behold	<i>harei</i>	<i>hei-reish-yud</i>	3
you	<i>at</i>	<i>alef-tav</i>	2
are betrothed	<i>mekudeshet</i>	<i>mem-kuf-vav-dalet-shin-tav</i>	6
to me	<i>li</i>	<i>lamed-yud</i>	2
with...ring	<i>b'taba'at</i>	<i>beit-tet-beit-ayin-tav</i>	5
this	<i>zo</i>	<i>zayin-vav</i>	2
according to the laws of	<i>kedat</i>	<i>kaf-dalet-tav</i>	3
Moses	<i>Moshe</i>	<i>mem-shin-hei</i>	3
and Israel	<i>veYisrael</i>	<i>vav-yud-sin-reish-alef-lamed</i>	6
			32

The thirty-two pathways of wisdom are mentioned in *Sefer Yetzirah*, and are generally understood as the 22 letters and the ten *sefirot*.

—translated from *Ta'amei HaMitzvot* and *Sha'ar HaMitzvot* by Rabbi Moshe Wisniefsky

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<sup>9</sup> Ecclesiastes 1:7.

## *Parashat Ki Teitzei* [fourth installment]

This passage is a continuation of installment #1. The Arizal offers a number of explanations why the verse in the beginning of this *parashah* switches suddenly between singular and plural.

Scripture says, “When you go out to war against your enemies...”—the word “enemies” being in the plural [even though a country generally fights one enemy at a time]—and continues, “...and *G-d*, your *G-d*, delivers *it* to you...,” the word “it” being in the singular. The reason for this is that one spark of holiness, which is only one soul, becomes mixed amongst a number of bodies [when it enters the world]. Thus, the word “your enemies” is in the plural, for the spark is somewhere amidst all of them. “...And *G-d*, your *G-d*, delivers *it* to you...” refers to the [one] spark that you will extricate from there.

Alternatively, according to the basic [non-mystical] meaning of the text, Scripture said that “When you go out” as one man with one heart, then *G-d* will reward you in kind, and will make your numerous enemies like one single one. That is why “...and *G-d*, your *G-d*, delivers *it* to you...” is in the singular.

“When *you* go out” is in the singular, referring to the Jewish army as a unit. This indicates that they are of one mind and spirit, as opposed to a host of individuals with their own personal agendas. *G-d* responds in kind, “changing” the enemy hoards into a group as easy to conquer as a single man.

Alternatively, [this may be explained] similar to [how we understand the verse,] “In that day, *G-d* will punish the host of heaven in heaven and the kings of the earth on earth.”<sup>1</sup> “...And *G-d*, your *G-d*, delivers *it* to you...” refers to delivering the [heavenly] Prince [of the enemy nation], just as the verse “And Israel saw Egypt [dead on the seashore]”<sup>2</sup> refers to the [heavenly] Prince [of Egypt].

The “host of heaven” refers to the patron angels (“Princes”) appointed over their respective nations.

After the Egyptians were drowned in the sea, Scripture says “Israel saw Egypt”—in the singular, rather than “the Egyptians”—“dead on the seashore.” Although the simple meaning of this verse refers to the *nation* of Egypt, it implies as well the heavenly angelic patron of the nation that was robbed of its power over them.

Here, too, *G-d* promises to deliver the heavenly power source of the enemy nation to the Jewish people.

Afterwards, “you will take its captive” refers to the [earthly soldiers] under its influence.

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 24:21.

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 14:30.

Alternatively, it is known that “the [real] enemies of a person are the men of his house.”<sup>3</sup> [Mystically,] this refers to the drops of seminal emission that issued from him and from which the “bodies” of the forces of evil were made, as it is written, “and I have created destructive forces to cause damage.”<sup>4</sup>

Although, as this verse states, G-d creates the forces of evil, the “material” He uses to construct their “bodies” is the vital seed that a person emits improperly.

Thus, there are two types of enemies: seminal emissions, known as “the plagues [caused by] mortal men,”<sup>5</sup> and the forces of evil themselves. Therefore “When you go out to war against your enemies...” is in the plural. “...and *G-d*, your G-d, delivers *it* to you...” refers to the forces of evil, the first type of enemy, and “...you will take its captive” refers to the drops of seminal emission, the holy soul that the first enemy captured, the forces of evil. You will retrieve from his hand the very captive he took from you originally, and return it to the realm of holiness, as it is written, “...and take her into your house.”

The first enemy, the forces of evil in general, has captured the vital force in the seminal emissions. These drops were the vehicles through which G-d intended to bring a holy soul into the world. Instead, this holy soul became captive to the forces of evil and animated the destructive forces created through it. When a person repents for this sin, he recaptures these holy souls from the forces of evil, and turns them into forces of holiness.

Alternatively, since “sin crouches at the door,”<sup>6</sup> while the good inclination does not [fully] enter the person until he is 13 years old, his limbs are used to [following] the evil inclination from the day he is born.

The “evil inclination,” the drive each of is born with toward fulfilling our material needs and focusing mentally on ourselves, is present from birth. In contrast, the altruistic “good inclination” enters consciousness slowly, beginning with proper religious education and blooming fully at age 13 for boys and 12 for girls. Thus, the evil inclination is at a distinct advantage, having accustomed the individual’s body to taking its orders for 12-13 years.

When a person desires to repent, he “goes out to war against his enemies,” i.e., the evil inclination and the limbs of his body. “...and *G-d*, your G-d, delivers *it* to you...” refers to the evil inclination, and then “...you will take its captive,” referring to the limbs of the body.

[Continuing along these lines,] “And you see amongst the captives a beautiful woman...” refers to the soul.

The Divine soul is held captive by the body that has become accustomed to following the evil inclination.

“...and she shall shave her head...” means that [the soul] will remove any evil beliefs [it held].

When held captive by the force of the evil inclination, the soul becomes “indoctrinated” with distorted or evil philosophies and beliefs, such as Deism, pantheism, atheism, cynicism, etc.

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<sup>3</sup> Micah 7:6.

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 54:16.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Samuel 7:14

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 4:7.

“...and make her nails...” means cutting away and renouncing unnecessary indulgences.

Nails symbolize extraneous life-force, since they grow but can be cut without pain.

“...and remove her captivity dress...” refers to the “garment” produced by sinful acts, similar to the idiom, “remove the filthy garments [off him].”<sup>7</sup>

A “garment” of the soul is a means of expression. Repeated sinful acts weave a crude and vulgar “garment” that the soul gets used to wearing; its desensitization to spirituality makes it insensitive to the crudeness of vulgarity and gives it the impression that expressing itself in crude ways is sophisticated or chique. So it gets used to thinking, talking, and acting in these crude ways.

“...and she shall weep for her father...” this refers to [her heavenly Father,] the Holy One, blessed be He.

“...and her mother...” refers to the collective soul of Israel, similar to what is written, “After my return, I comforted...”<sup>8</sup>

The penitent must, as part of his repentance, realize that his past acts have “harmed” G-d, i.e., prevented Him from advancing His purpose in creation. Similarly, he has “harmed” the Divine presence, or *Shechinah*, which is the collective soul of Israel (*keneset Yisrael*), by preventing it from actualizing Divine consciousness in reality. Remorse for this helps the penitent reorient his energies toward goodness.

The verb “I comforted” in the verse from Jeremiah is transitive, as if to mean, “I comforted [G-d].”

“...and she shall weep...for a month of days” refers to the month of Elul, which are days and not years, and are the [most propitious] time for repentance.

The idiom “days and not years” is taken from the Talmud<sup>9</sup> and means “only a short time.”

The passage concludes: “...and then she shall be brought to you and you shall become her husband, and she shall be your wife.”

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[Note from Rabbi Shmuel Vital: I have seen fit to append here (some of my father’s words regarding) the care to be taken regarding immersion, especially for someone who has had an (improper) seminal emission.]

Regarding immersion [in a *mikveh*] as prescribed in the Talmud<sup>10</sup> for someone who has had an [improper] seminal emission or who has had marital relations, I saw that my master [the Arizal] insisted with all his might on performing it as prescribed. Even when he was very sick and suffered from an inguinal hernia, which is aggravated by immersion, he did not refrain from immersing at all.

Once, his mother forbade him from immersing the whole winter, so perforce he did not immerse, but nonetheless, he did not lose his understanding [of mystical matters] during this time. One of his other students testified before me that he heard my master say that nothing aids a person in understanding Kabbalah as much

<sup>7</sup> Zechariah 3:4.

<sup>8</sup> Jeremiah 31:18.

<sup>9</sup> *Shabbat* 105b.

<sup>10</sup> *Berachot* 22.

as being scrupulous about always being spiritual pure from the defilement of seminal emission, proper or improper, through immersion.

I did not receive [from him] the mystical meditations accompanying this type of immersion, only the meditations accompanying the immersion of the day before the Sabbath and of the Sabbath morning, as I have explained. But what I did receive from him in general regarding immersion is that immersion is an experience of the *sefirah* of *chesed* of *Ima*, indicated by the final *mem*, which holds the water.

The final *mem* is a square, closed on all sides. The numerical value of *mem* is 40, the minimum number of measures of water (*se'ah*) that a *mikveh* must contain to be fit.

—translated from *Likutei Torah*, *Sefer HaLikutim*, and *Sha'ar HaMitzvot*

## *Parashat Ki Teitzei* [fifth installment]

This passage is a continuation of installment #4. The Arizal offers a number of explanations why the verse in the beginning of this *parashah* switches suddenly between singular and plural.

Another explanation:

You know the [Zohar's] explanation of the verse "...who walked in darkness"<sup>1</sup>: that the forces of evil "dwell together but end in division."<sup>2</sup> Someone who goes out to do battle against [his] evil inclination must do so in an ascending matter, battling [the forces of evil] first when they are in division. This is why Scripture says, "...over your *enemies*," in the plural. He then [battles them as they dwell] together; therefore Scripture says, "...and He will deliver *him*," in the singular.

Evil, as we have seen previously, is synonymous with the egocentricity that prevents the individual from seeing himself as part of G-d, insisting instead on seeing himself as an independent entity, free to choose how much of Divine law to accept or not to accept it altogether. This independence prevents the various forces of evil from ever functioning completely harmoniously, since each individual force will always keep its own agenda paramount and remain unwilling to submit to the others for the greater, common "good" (or rather, evil).

This independence becomes more and more characteristic of evil the lower we go on the spiritual chain of development, inasmuch as "lower" in spiritual terms always means "further removed from complete Divine consciousness." The less Divine consciousness, the more evil, and the more division into independent, clashing pockets of self-consciousness.

When we set out to eradicate the evil within, we must usually deal first with the "small," behavioral things and then gradually ascend to the "bigger" issues. Our first encounters with evil are therefore with numerous day-to-day challenges, a multiplicity of smaller enemies. Only later do we face the more ultimate issues.

But in order to understand the rest of this idea, we must [first] understand how our sages said [in reference to these laws] that "the Torah spoke only against the evil inclination."<sup>3</sup> [This is usually understood to mean that the Torah here gave in to the soldier's evil inclination.] Because the evil inclination overcame this man, should we permit him to commit such a great transgression?

It is usually understood that the Torah permits the soldier to engage in sexual intercourse with the captive woman once and then marry her because otherwise he would not be able to overcome his urges and would simply take her unlawfully. By legislating a permitted way for the soldier to channel his urges, the Torah enables him to hold them at least somewhat in check. This partial submission to the evil inclination is therefore seen as sort of victory, since the evil inclination has been prevented from making the soldier commit a complete transgression of the Torah.

Ultimately, however, this cannot be the only rationale for this leniency.

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 50:10.

<sup>2</sup> Zohar 3:196a.

<sup>3</sup> Kidushin 21b.

Rather, the mystical understanding of this matter is as follows:

There are a number of great and holy souls that have been “captured [while] in the scale,” and [have descended into this world as] non-Jews.

In the imagery of the *Zohar*,<sup>4</sup> the world operates (presently) under the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, meaning that evil and good are intermixed in our reality. This tree is depicted as a balance-scale with two pans, one tending toward good and the other toward evil. There are evidently certain souls that at certain points of their life are in these pans, and if the world at large is sinful, the scale tips in the direction of evil and these souls become ensnared by the forces of evil.

Also, the Jewish men who participated in this war were all righteous, as it says, “Who is the man who is afraid of his sins? [He must return from the front.]”<sup>5</sup>

In the passage preceding this one, the Torah tells us that before going out to war, the army is addressed by a priest and the army officers who say that anyone who is afraid should return home then and there. The basic meaning of this is that someone who is cowardly should not go out to war, for his cowardice could infect the other soldiers. The somewhat deeper meaning is that someone who knows that he has committed sins for which he has not yet done proper penitence, and is therefore afraid that he does not possess the spiritual merit of G-d’s protection, should not go out to war.

Thus, anyone who possessed any demerits whatsoever had already left the ranks before the army went out to battle. The soldiers that remained were all totally righteous individuals.

[Under these circumstances,] if “you see amongst the captives a beautiful woman, and desire her...,” this indicates that this woman is certainly from the [spiritual] root of Israel, and that the forces of evil “took” and captured her. Therefore, you may take her as your wife.

Thus, it is written, “...and you capture its captive,” for this [soul] is in fact held captive by them in this “scale,” and therefore it is proper for you to take her from them.

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Another explanation: When a person sins, the forces of evil envelop him and clothe him in impurity. This is the meaning of [the image of] “filthy garments” [found in the Prophets].<sup>6</sup> Scripture now says, “When you go out to war against” the evil inclination, and calls it “your *enemies*,” in the plural, referring to Samael,<sup>7</sup> his wife—the greater Lilith, Agrat the daughter of Machalat, the lesser Lilith, Naamah, and so forth, and all their hordes. They pursue people, trying to make them sin. But when a person repents, G-d does not trouble him to attack all these [demons], but rather, “...and He will give *him*...” in the singular, referring to the head and greatest of them all, the evil inclination. G-d will give him “...into your hand,” just as the Men of the Great Assembly did.

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<sup>4</sup> 2:95b.

<sup>5</sup> Deuteronomy 20:5-8, and Rashi *ad loc*.

<sup>6</sup> Zechariah 3:4.

<sup>7</sup> These are all names of demons, and should not be pronounced.

The “Men of the Great Assembly” was the Sanhedrin during the period roughly from the rebuilding of the first Temple (353 BCE) to the beginning of the period of Alexander the Great (313 BCE). It is recorded in the Talmud<sup>8</sup> that they once petitioned G-d to given them control of the evil inclination, and He did.

The words “...and you capture a captive” refer to the following: The commandments that a sinner performs and the Torah he learns elicit Divine beneficence and enlightenment from on high. But the forces of evil capture it, for they say, “This man who performed these commandments is our servant and our ally, and whatever a servant acquires is automatically acquired by his master.” Thus, the beneficence elicited by the sinner is snatched by the forces of evil, and this is obviously against G-d’s will.

This is why it is written, “And to the wicked, G-d says, ‘Why do you discuss My statutes?’”<sup>9</sup> Does [this imply that] G-d wants to prevent [a wicked person] from studying the Torah?! [Certainly not!] Rather, it means that as long as he continues sinning, the forces of evil enjoy [the beneficence elicited by] all the Torah he learns and the commandments he fulfills.

But when he repents properly, he extracts from mouth of the forces of evil that which they swallowed, this being the mystical meaning of the verse, “He swallowed a legion and vomited it out.”<sup>10</sup>

This is the meaning of repentance [*teshuvah*, lit. “return”]: [the penitent] returns the Torah and commandments to their original abode [in the realm of holiness].

This is the meaning of “...you capture a *captive*.” That which [the forces of evil] captured from your evil aspect, when you now go out to do battle against it and repent, you take back.

“...and you see amongst the captives a beautiful woman” alludes to the soul of the sinner that was ensnared [by the forces of evil], for it is beautiful—a princess “as beautiful as the moon, bright as the sun”<sup>11</sup> that was sullied by the impurity of the sickness of the house of sin. [G-d says,] “I command you to desire her!” This is why it is written, “...and you *will* desire her,” as if it were a commandment.

“...and you take her as a wife,” meaning that she should not be cut off [from you], reincarnated amongst the bodies of the wicked, or as a dog or some other impure being. Rather, she should be your wife, and no one else’s.

If the person does not repent and reclaim his soul, it will have to be purified by other means, among which is reincarnation.

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<sup>8</sup> Sanhedrin 64a.

<sup>9</sup> Psalms 50:16.

<sup>10</sup> Job 20:15.

<sup>11</sup> Song of Songs 6:10.

“...and you shall take her into your house,” meaning that you should look deeply into yourself, secluding yourself to cry over your sins. As our sages say, “If [the evil inclination], that disgusting thing, harms you, drag him into the House of Study.”<sup>12</sup> They used the term “harm” to allude to the fact that he harmed you with his sharp sword. In this context, “into your house” means “into the House of Study.”

Studying Torah fortifies the soul and sensitizes it to the gravity of the sins it performed in the past. This ensures that the person will repent fully.

“...and she shall shave her head,” meaning that you should divest yourself of all the foreign beliefs, heresies, or planned sins that you harbored.

Alternatively, these words refer to whatever haughtiness or obstinacy you possess. You should “shave” these off yourself, i.e., uproot them and condemn yourself as dust.

“...and trim her nails,” meaning that if you have anything you robbed or extorted that you [literally or figuratively] snatched with your fingernails, like an eagle snatches [animals] with its fingernails and devours them, then the correction for this for you to return what you stole or extorted. In this way—

“...she shall remove the skirt of her captivity from her,” meaning those “filthy garments” that were created out of your misdeeds, through which the soul was captured and robed in foreign clothes.

“...and she shall sit in your house,” meaning that then your soul will dwell again in your body, and will not leave you and be cut off from this world, wandering [in the spiritual worlds], leaving you without a soul. For that is the way of a sinner: his soul flies away from him, and he walks about without her.

Although he continues to live, the sinner forfeits the revelation of his Divine soul within him, and subsists on the power of his animal soul.

But when you repent, “...she will sit in your house and bemoan her father and her mother.” This alludes to the fact that the sinner causes a blemish in *Abba* and *Ima*, i.e., the Holy One, blessed be He, and His *Shechinah*.

This includes also the lower manifestation of male and female, *Z’eir Anpin*, and *Nukva*.

This is alluded to by the addition of the article [twice, before the words “her father” and “her mother”].

The article (*et*), which has no translation but signifies that the following word is the direct object of the verb, is often understood to mean that something addition is implied besides the explicit direct object. Here, the penitent is intended to mourn adjuncts to his “mother and father,” as will be indicated presently.

[Specifically, sexual sins are referred to in the Torah as “uncovering nakedness.”]

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<sup>12</sup> *Sotah* 52a.

In listing forbidden sexual relationships, the Torah uses the idiom “you shall not uncover the nakedness of....”

The two spellings of “nakedness” in the Torah indicate that by sinning, a person causes a blemish in both the *yud-hei* and the *vav-hei*, which together make up the Name *Havayah*, which indicates *tiferet*, “her father.”

The two words used for “nakedness” in the Torah are *ervah* and *eryah*,<sup>13</sup> spelled:

*Ervah*: ayin-reish-vav-hei;

*Eryah*: ayin-reish-yud-hei.

*Tiferet* is the central *sefirah* of *Z'eir Anpin*.

The words “and her mother,” including the article, indicate that [because of the sin] the forces of evil have spread upward until “her mother,” [*Nukva*], blemishing her such that she became “...a month of days,” i.e., that she was diminished from “a month” to “days.”

Your rectification is to bewail this separation and diminishing. That is why the Torah says “...and she will cry,” for it has been established that the [heavenly] gates of tears are never closed.<sup>14</sup> This is because tears cause the sources of pure water from the supernal Lebanon to open, and a flow of water issues from there to purify the stopped up channels [of Divine mercy].

The supernal “Lebanon” refers to *Abba* and *Ima*: *Lebanon* is spelled *lamed-beit-nun-vav-nun*. The numerical value of *lamed-beit* is 32, the number of “pathways of wisdom.” *Nun-vav-nun* spells the letter *nun*, whose numerical value is 50, the number of “gates of understanding.” It is also explained in *Chassidut* that tears result from an excess of emotion in the mind that cannot be contained within the normal vessels of the intellect and must therefore “spill over” in order to be released.

Crying thus indicates that the penitent had taken his penitence so seriously that he is overwhelmed by the gravity of what he has done. The tears so produced indicate that this awareness has flushed the rest of his spiritual infrastructure and purified it.

Geographically, the mountains of Lebanon are the source of the Jordan River, the main source of drinking water for the Land of Israel.

“...After this, she will come to you,” referring to the how the soul of a righteous person departs [his body], which is like pulling a hair out of milk.<sup>15</sup>

This is how the Talmud describes “death by the kiss [of G-d],” reserved for the righteous.

Just like the righteous person made the physical into the spiritual, that is, he [built] his [portion in] the World to Come out of [his Divine service in] this world, so does his soul pull his body after it, like “pulling a hair.” For when a person pulls a hair out of milk, some of the milk clings to it. This indicates how part of the body is transformed into the soul, as it is written, “Pull *me*, and *we* will run after you.”<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The latter is the less common, and is found in Ezekiel 16:7, 22, 39, 23:29, Micah 1:11 and Habakkuk 3:9.

<sup>14</sup> *Berachot* 32b.

<sup>15</sup> *Berachot* 8a.

<sup>16</sup> Song of Songs 1:4.

This is the meaning of “after this, she will come to you,” i.e., that the physical body will be drawn after the soul.

The phrase “she will come to you” thus indicates how the soul will pull some element of the body with it to the afterlife. In *Chassidut*, this is described as the energy inherent in the animal soul that the righteous person has harnessed in the service of good and holiness.

The verse quoted from the Song of Songs indicates how G-d pulls the soul after Him, and then the soul is joined by the body; hence the change from singular to plural.

“...and you will marry her” means [in this context] that you will give her a husband, [which in this case means] G-d. For until now [the verse] “G-d is far from the wicked”<sup>17</sup> [applied to the soul], but now he becomes her husband and master, and she his servant, and he shall say to her, “you are My servant.”<sup>18</sup>

When the dead shall be resurrected, “...she will be your wife,” meaning that the body will no longer be opaque, disintegrating in the ground with no hope of rising, for there will be dust under the feet of the righteous. Rather, “it will be your wife.”

The body will join wholly with the soul and together live in the rectified world.

“...and if you do not desire her,” means that I [i.e., the Torah] advise you to desire her and gain all that has been described above, but if you do not desire her, she will have to undergo reincarnation, and will be sent away from you. This is the meaning of what follows, “...you will send her on her way.” This is a loss.

You will also lose what you could have gained by taking her; this is the meaning of [the following words]: “you shall not sell her for money,” meaning that you will not deliver her into the World to Come with desire, but rather, she will have to roll about [through reality] like a pebble in a box.

“...you will not abuse her” any more, meaning that you will no longer be able to use her, but rather she will (G-d forbid) be cut off from you, and you will deteriorate like dirt, with no resuscitation. All of this is “...because you made her suffer” through your deeds.

May G-d, in His mercy, bring us back to Him in full penitence. Amen.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>17</sup> Proverbs 15:29.

<sup>18</sup> par. Isaiah 41:9, 49:3.

## *Parashat Ki Tavo*

In the beginning of *parashat Re'eh*, the Jewish people were commanded to “place the blessing on Mt. Gerizim and the curse on Mt. Eval”<sup>1</sup> when they cross the Jordan river and enter the land of Israel. The discussion of how to do this does not take place in that passage but is rather postponed until the portion of the Torah read this week. In it, the Jewish people are told: “When you cross the Jordan, the following [tribes] will stand on Mt. Gerizim to [face the Levites when they] bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin. The following [tribes] will stand on Mt. Eval [to face the Levites when they pronounce] the curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.”<sup>2</sup> There follow a list of the eleven curses the Levites are to pronounce. The blessings are not mentioned explicitly but according to the sages they were simply the inverse of the curses.

I have already taught you about the eleven ingredients of the incense, the eleven goat wool coverings [of the Tabernacle], and the eleven curses of *parashat Ki Tavo*.

What is conspicuous here is the number eleven. Since the Divine energy that creates and sustains the world is organized into a structure of ten *sefirot* (and the *Sefer Yetzirah* is particular about this number: “ten and not eleven; ten and not nine”), it follows that ten as number signifies the complete, balanced, and holy order of powers. The number eleven, in contrast, is seen to indicate destructive excess, an egotistic tendency to one-up the Divine system. In the words of the sages: “whoever adds detracts.”<sup>3</sup> It therefore signifies evil and curse.

The Tabernacle was covered with three curtains: one made of ten curtains fastened together, each woven of a mixture of various materials; one made of eleven goat skins fastened together, and one of *tachash* skins (the *tachash* was an multi-colored animal does not exist nowadays).

Their significance is that just as there are ten holy *sefirot*, there are ten *sefirot* of evil.

Since evil is a perversion of holiness, it follows that for every shade of holiness (expressed in the ten *sefirot*), there is a corresponding shade of evil.

In addition, there is within [the ten holy *sefirot*] a spark of holiness that sustains them. This is the mystical meaning of the verse: “and His kingship rules over all.”<sup>4</sup>

The common denominator of all ten *sefirot* is that they are expressions of G-d's sovereignty over creation. This is the basis for their mutual inter-inclusion and harmonious co-functioning.

[The same is true for the ten evil *sefirot*,] with the following difference: The ten holy *sefirot* are composed of “essences” and “vessels.”

The essence of a *sefirah* is the Divine energy that powers it; the vessel of a *sefirah* is its identity, or the particular Divine power it manifests. The more familiar terminology for “essence” in this context is “light.” Here the light is called the “essence” since it is of course the Divine power that makes the *sefirah* into an instrument or a “useful” tool in the hand of G-d; the vessel or particular identity of the power being manifest is relatively incidental.

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 11:29.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 27:12-13.

<sup>3</sup> *Sanhedrin* 29a.

<sup>4</sup> Psalms 103:19.

Now, [in the case of the ten holy *sefirot*,] the essence—which is the life force that sustains the *sefirot*—is absorbed and hidden with them. Thus it is written in the *Zohar*: “He and that which He enlivens [i.e., the ‘lights’] are one; He and that which He causes [i.e., the ‘vessels’] are one.”<sup>5</sup> This why their number is only ten; they are the ten overhanging curtains of the Tabernacle.

Holiness is characterized by submission to G-d’s will, and submission to G-d’s will enables an entity to coexist with its opposite, if it is G-d’s will that this occur. Here, although essence and expression are opposite in nature, the lights and vessels can coexist together so long as they both submit to the Divine scheme. This submission to Divine will is expressed by there being only ten *sefirot*, the number of balance and containment. The ten curtains that form the inner covering of the Tabernacle, closest to the holiness of the ark and the other vessels, express this submission.

But in the case of the ten evil *sefirot*, the holy life force cannot be absorbed inside them, for the holy does not mix with the profane. Rather, it hovers above them and enlivens them from afar. Therefore their number is eleven.

Since the evil *sefirot* express rebellion against the Divine will, there can be no reconciliation between essence and expression. Furthermore, the essence cannot enter the vessel since the essence is obeying G-d’s will (since it is only by virtue of G-d’s will that evil can exist or have any power) while the vessel is not (—as we said, the vessel is an expression of rebellion against G-d’s will).

Therefore, the life force (the “essence” or “light”), rather than being counted as the an aspect of the ten *sefirot*, is counted as an entity on its own.

As is explained in the *Zohar* regarding the eleven [goat-wool] coverings, this is because “whoever adds detracts.” We have explained this idea in that context as well. This is the mystical significance of all three elevens mentioned above.

We will now explain these eleven curses [individually]. The first, “Cursed be he who makes a graven or molten image,”<sup>6</sup> corresponds to the evil known as *Arich Anpin* of *kelipah*. Therefore it is said about [this image that the one who makes it that] “he puts it hiding.” This refers mystically to the hidden realms of creation, for *Arich Anpin* hides and is clothed within the world of *Atzilut*, as is known.

*Kelipah* (“shell”) is a synonym for evil, and in the present context a particularly apt one, since evil is here described as the phenomenon of Divine energy surrounding its powers rather than entering them to fuse with them.

Idolatry is obviously the general, overall statement of rebellion against G-d, and is therefore considered the *keter* of evil. *Keter*, and specifically the *partzuf* of *Arich Anpin*, corresponds to the psychological power of will; idolatry is the expression of the will within the soul to break off “the yoke of the kingdom of heaven” in the false hope of independence. This is because idolatry is not a religion in the sense that it is the submission of the individual or community to the will of the deity; it is rather an attempt to harness and manipulate the spiritual power inherent within creation for one’s own purposes.

*Atzilut* in this context signifies the array of conscious powers of the soul (intellect, emotion, and expression). The will permeates, informs, and runs these powers in a “hidden” (subconscious) fashion, behind the scenes, as it were. Hence the importance of aligning the will with holiness rather than delusions of selfhood.

<sup>5</sup> *Tikunei Zohar*, introduction (3b).

<sup>6</sup> Deuteronomy 27:15.

For this reason there are thirteen words in this verse until and including the word “in hiding”; these correspond to the thirteen rectifications of the beard of the “holy ancient One” [*Arich Anpin*].

The actual curse in this verse is exactly thirteen words. The number thirteen signifies the thirteen attributes of Divine mercy, the expression of G-d’s good will and willingness to forgive sin. The bodily correlate of this mercy is the beard, which is seen as a way the head can be channeled down into the lower parts of the body directly.

As we have explained previously, the normal flow of Divine beneficence into reality is patterned after the flow of a new idea or insight from the super-conscious mind (*keter*) into the conscious mind (*chochmah*, *binah*, and *da’at*) and from there, through the neck into the torso (signifying the emotions) and on out into expression (mouth, hands, feet, and sexual organs). When a person sins, however, this normal flow has been sabotaged such that there is blockage along the way, most typically in that the power of insight cannot properly affect the emotions—leaving the person frustrated and unable to grow, develop, or express himself spiritually. It is therefore necessary for the normal flow to be bypassed or overridden, and this is the dynamic of forgiveness. In such a case, a small but highly concentrated flow of inspiration emerges from the mind—not through the standard channel of orderly processing, signified by the neck, but through the hairs of the beard. As we have also explained previously, hair signifies a very diminished form of life force: it is constantly growing, but can be cut without causing pain. The beard thus signifies G-d’s attribute of mercy. Elsewhere, the Arizal describes the thirteen “rectifications” or “tufts” of the beard, and how each one corresponds to one of the thirteen attributes of mercy.

The second curse, “Cursed be he who insults his father or his mother,”<sup>7</sup> corresponds to [the two *partzufim* of] *Abba* and *Ima*.

The next five curses correspond to the first five *sefirot* of *Z’eir Anpin*: *keter*, *chochmah*, *binah*, *chesed*, and *gevurah*.

The Arizal does not explain the correspondences between these curses and *sefirot*.

The next, “Cursed be he who has relations with his sister,” corresponds to *tiferet* of *Z’eir Anpin*, for the head of *Nukva* begins at this level, opposite the chest [of *Z’eir Anpin*], as is known. She [in addition to being his bride] is *Z’eir Anpin*’s sister, but this is so only when she is situated at this level, not when she is otherwise. For it is only in this case that they can cling together consummately.

As we have explained previously, both *Z’eir Anpin* and his feminine counterpart, *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin*, originate in *Ima*, and they are therefore considered “brother and sister.” However, they are also intended to mate, and in this context are called “bride and groom” or “prince and princess.” As we have also explained, their proper coupling occurs when the intellect (head) of *Nukva* (expression and actualization) is at the level of the chest (emotions) of *Z’eir Anpin* (inspiration and Divine idea). If *Nukva* were to be the same height as *Z’eir Anpin*, this would mean that her intellect receives directly from his intellect, and this would be counter-productive, for she personifies a totally different thrust in the Divine plan, that of disseminating the Divine idea without and throughout creation. It is thus crucial that her intellect receive from the emotions of *Z’eir Anpin*, the level at which his intellect has been over-staged by the emotion response, the desire to relate the idea of the intellect to the outside world.

To summarize:

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 16.

curse	partzuf/sefirah
Cursed be he who makes a graven or molten image, abhorred by G-d, a craftsman's handiwork, and puts it in hiding.	<i>Arich Anpin</i>
Cursed be he who insults his father or mother.	<i>Abba and Ima</i>
Cursed be he who moves his neighbor's landmark [a form of stealing].	<i>keter of Z'eir Anpin</i>
Cursed be he who misdirects a blind person on his way.	<i>chochmah of Z'eir Anpin</i>
Cursed be he who perverts the judgement of a stranger, orphan, or widow.	<i>binah of Z'eir Anpin</i>
Cursed be he who has relations with his father's wife.	<i>chesed of Z'eir Anpin</i>
Cursed be he who has relations with any beast.	<i>gevurah of Z'eir Anpin</i>
Cursed be he who has relations with his sister, whether the daughter of his father or of his mother.	<i>tiferet of Z'eir Anpin</i>
Cursed be he who has relations with his mother-in-law.	<i>netzach of Z'eir Anpin</i>
Cursed be he who strikes his neighbor in secret.	<i>hod of Z'eir Anpin</i>
Cursed be he who accepts a bride in the case of the murder of an innocent person.	<i>yesod of Z'eir Anpin</i>

\* \* \*

Further on in this portion of the Torah, Moses describes the results of the people abandoning their covenant with G-d. This passage, known as the “the reproof” (*tochachah*)<sup>8</sup> consists of exactly 98 curses.

[These curses] are all a punishment for the blemish caused in [the *sefirah* of] *yesod*. This is the mystical meaning of the phrase “a sword avenging the vengeance of the covenant.”<sup>9</sup>

This whole passage is referred to by the Torah itself as a “covenant” (*brit*).<sup>10</sup> Simply stated, a covenant or pact is an agreement between two parties sealed by the clause that if the pact is abrogated there will be consequences. The existence of consequences cements the relationship and makes it serious (or “real”) for the parties involved.

As we have explained previously, the *sefirah* of *yesod* is where all the powers of the preceding *sefirot* coalesce into a concentrated essence (the seed or semen), which is then meant to be transmitted, via *malchut/Nukva* to outer reality as the “birth” of a new reality or way of living. All these powers, from the initial insight on, are a gift of G-d that He gives us in order for us to use for positive, wholesome, and holy purposes. It is therefore crucial that this seminal message or energy be channeled through the proper medium, that of *malchut*. For *malchut*, being the personification of G-d's will “to have a home in the lower realms,” is totally directed and dedicated toward using the energy of *yesod* for the holy purpose of increasing the awareness of G-d's presence in the world. If a person chooses not to direct his energy into *malchut*, but instead to divert it into non-holy channels, he is betraying his covenant with G-d. He is taking his G-d-given gifts (whether his vital seed or any other gifts, resources, or talents he possesses) and using them for self-indulgent or egocentric ends.

This explains why the commandment of circumcision specifically is called *brit*, covenant. (After all, the whole Torah is G-d's covenant with the Jewish people.) This also explains why the Arizal here says that the consequences detailed by the Torah for abrogating its observance can all be seen as the result of betraying the

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 28:15-68.

<sup>9</sup> Leviticus 26:28.

<sup>10</sup> Deuteronomy 28:69.

covenant of *yesod*. In other words, all sins are ultimately sins of misdirected sexuality, and the specific sin of misdirected sexuality in a sense contains within it all other sins.

The verse about the sword avenging the vengeance of the covenant is taken from the parallel rebuke-passages in the book of Leviticus (26:14-45).

Now, the [organ of procreation, the physical manifestation of] *yesod*, is likened to a bow that shoots arrows [of semen]. We see this with regard to [halachic discussions regarding whether or not a particular discharge of semen can be considered potent.<sup>11</sup> The] seed [is not considered potent if when discharged it does not] shoot like an arrow.

The simile of ejaculation and shooting an arrow is found in Biblical verses as well.<sup>12</sup>

The target [of the “arrows” of *Z’eir Anpin*] is [the *partzuf*] Rachel.

As we said, the only legitimate “target” for *yesod* is *malchut*, personified in the narrow sense by one’s wife or in the broader sense by the holiness of the vessel as evinced in its being a vehicle for the dissemination of the G-d-idea throughout reality.

Therefore, when the Jewish people sinned and thereby caused the holy arrows to be disassociated [from their rightful “target”], the consequence was that [“G-d shot them at them;] a sudden arrow was their wounds.”<sup>13</sup>

This verse applies normally to those who “have sharpened their tongue like the sword, and aimed their arrow—a bitter word—to shoot the innocent in secret.”<sup>14</sup> Here, since the community abuses their arrows, the power of *yesod*, they bring upon themselves retribution in kind.

These are the 98 curses of this passage.

The numerical value of the word for arrow (*cheitz*, *chet-tzadik*) is 98.

—translated from *Sha’ar HePesukim*, *Likutei Torah*, and *Sefer HaLikutim*

<sup>11</sup> i.e., cause pregnancy. *Chagigah* 15a; *Nidah* 43a; Rashi on Deuteronomy 23:2.

<sup>12</sup> See Rashi on Genesis 21:16, 49:24, 49:25.

<sup>13</sup> Psalms 64:8.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, 4-5.

## *Parashat Ki Tavo* [second installment]

In the section of this portion of the Torah known as “the admonition” (*tochachah*), it is written: “G-d will cause the pestilence to cling to you until it finishes you off of the land you are entering in order to possess.”<sup>1</sup>

The mystical concept of pestilence is as follows:

Know that everything [that occurs] is a function of the elevation process [of the sparks that fell from the world of *Tohu*]. For do not all souls derive [their spiritual sustenance] from the [fallen] kings [of *Tohu*] and the their refinement, as we have explained regarding the statement of our sages that “all Israel are princes”<sup>2</sup>?

Now, when there remains an element of waste in the refined sparks, which was not separated out, it acts as a poison, killing the person during an outbreak of pestilence.

Refining reality, as we have explained previously, entails removing the element of ego or self-orientation from whatever aspect of reality we are working with. When this is done incompletely, i.e., the individual’s motives are not pure and he therefore allows an element of self-interest to remain in the use he makes of the physical world, this admixture of impurity acts to misdirect the Divine flow that results from releasing the sparks of holiness inherent in the physical world. If not arrested or checked in some way, this misdirection of Divine energy results in disease.

Pestilence also occurs when the four Names *Havayah* do not [fully] shine, that is, the Names themselves are withdrawn, and all that remains is the four spellings-out. The numerical values of these four spellings-out are 46, 37, 19, and 26. Their total is 128; when to this are added the four *kolels* [for the four Names] and the *kolel* [for the sum itself] the sum total is [133,] the numerical value of the word for “plague” [*negef*]. This is the source of the plague.

To review the four spellings-out of the Name *Havayah* (72, 63, 45, 52):

letter	1 <sup>st</sup> spelling out (72)			2 <sup>nd</sup> spelling out (63)			3 <sup>rd</sup> spelling out (45)			4 <sup>th</sup> spelling out (52)		
<i>yud</i>	<i>vav-dalet</i>	6 + 4	10	<i>vav-dalet</i>	6 + 4	10	<i>vav-dalet</i>	6 + 4	10	<i>vav-dalet</i>	6 + 4	10
<i>hei</i>	<i>yud</i>	10	10	<i>yud</i>	10	10	<i>alef</i>	1	1	<i>hei</i>	5	5
<i>vav</i>	<i>yud-vav</i>	10 + 6	16	<i>alef-vav</i>	1 + 6	7	<i>alef-vav</i>	1 + 6	7	<i>vav</i>	6	6
<i>hei</i>	<i>yud</i>	10	10	<i>yud</i>	10	10	<i>alef</i>	1	1	<i>hei</i>	5	5
			46			37			19			26

It will be seen that subtracting 26, the value of the Name *Havayah* itself, from the four spelled-out values (72, 63, 45, 52) gives the four remainders above.

<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 28:21.

<sup>2</sup> *Shabbat* 14:4.

*Negef*:  $nun-gimel-pei = 50 + 3 + 80 = 133$ .

Clearly, the withdrawal of the Name itself from its full spelling-out—leaving only the letters used to spell out the main letters—indicates a highly abnormal, defective revelation of Divinity. This defective life-force comes into the world as disease: life, but a harmful form of life.

It is therefore good to always meditate in times of pestilence on this name, i.e., the word *negef*, this being [in this context] a holy Name [of G-d]. Vocalize it as follows: a *shuruk* [under the *nun*], a *chirik* [under the *gimel*], and a *tzeirei* [under the *fei*], as if it were pronounced *nugifei*.

Since this word *negef* was derived from an iteration of the Name *Havayah*, it may be considered a derivative Name itself.

The Arizal does not here explain why to meditate on this word as if it were vocalized with these letters.

It is also advisable to meditate on the formula for the incense, both in the morning [before the morning prayers] and before the afternoon prayers, when you recite the verses “And G-d said to Moses, ‘take for yourself spices: stacte, onycha....’”<sup>3</sup>

The incense possessed the power to ward off pestilence, as can be seen from the aftermath of the Korach rebellion, when Aaron used the incense to stop the spread of the plague.<sup>4</sup>

Specifically, meditate on the first instance of the word “spices” [*samim*] in this verse, permuting it according to the system of *ayik-becher*. This will produce a specific Name of G-d, i.e., *mem-tav-kuf-vav*. I [i.e., Rabbi Chaim Vital] do not remember how [the Arizal said] it is to be vocalized.

*Ayik Becher* is the “triple linear transformation” system of permutation. In it, the *alef-beit*—including the final forms of the letters—is split into three groups of nine letters, which are then aligned in order. Any letter of any triplet (in the chart: of any column) may then be interchanged with either of the other two.

<i>alef</i>	<i>beit</i>	<i>gimel</i>	<i>dalet</i>	<i>hei</i>	<i>vav</i>	<i>zayin</i>	<i>chet</i>	<i>tet</i>
<i>yud</i>	<i>kaf</i>	<i>lamed</i>	<i>mem</i>	<i>nun</i>	<i>samech</i>	<i>ayin</i>	<i>pei</i>	<i>tzadik</i>
<i>kuf</i>	<i>reish</i>	<i>shin</i>	<i>tav</i>	<i>final kaf</i>	<i>final mem</i>	<i>final nun</i>	<i>final pei</i>	<i>final tzadik</i>

The system takes its name from the first two letter triplets formed this way.

Now, whenever we produce a Divine Name through permutation using the *ayik-becher* system, we always take the letter in question and transform it into the closest letter following in the sequence. For example, an *alef* becomes a *yud*, a *yud* becomes a *kuf*, and a *kuf* becomes an *alef*. The same applies to the other letters of the alphabet.

Each of the nine triplets should thus be seen as a wheel.

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 30:34.

<sup>4</sup> Numbers 17:9-14.

Thus, the word for “spices” [*samim*, *samech-mem-yud-final mem*] transforms using the [6<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 1<sup>st</sup> of the] three triplets: *vav-samech-final mem*, *dalet-mem-tav*, and *alef-yud-kuf*.

How so?

- The *samech* of *samim* permutes to the final *mem* of [the 6<sup>th</sup> triplet,] *vav-samech-final mem*;
- the *mem* of *samim* permutes to the *tav* of [the 4<sup>th</sup> triplet,] *dalet-mem-tav*;
- the *yud* of *samim* permutes to the *kuf* of [the 1<sup>st</sup> triplet,] *alef-yud-kuf*;
- the final *mem* of *samim* permutes to the *vav* of [the 6<sup>th</sup> triplet,] *vav-samech-final mem*, for as we have said, if the letter in question is the third of the triplet, we substitute for it the first letter of the triplet.

Thus, the word *samim* permutes to the letter-combination *mem-tav-kuf-vav*.

- *samech* → *mem*
- *mem* → *tav*
- *yud* → *kuf*
- final *mem* → *vav*.

Also, meditate on the fact that the numerical value of this Divine Name *mem-tav-kuf-vav* [546] is equivalent to the numerical value of the letters used to spell out the Name *Havayah* such that its total is 72 [i.e., 46] plus the numerical value of the posterior of the Name *Ekyeh* when it is spelled out, i.e., 544.

$$\text{Mem-tav-kuf-vav} = 40 + 400 + 100 + 6 = 546.$$

We saw above that the numerical value of the letters used to spell out the 1<sup>st</sup> spelling-out of the Name *Havayah* is 46. (72 - 26 = 46.)

The posterior (*achorayim*) of the Name *Ekyeh* (*alef-hei-yud-hei*), as we have explained previously, is given by spelling the word progressively, beginning with the first letter, then the first two letters, etc., i.e., *alef*, *alef-hei*, *alef-hei-yud*, *alef-hei-yud-hei*.

The spelling-out of the posterior of the Name *Ekyeh*, then, is as follows:

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>	$1 + 30 + 80$	111
<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>	$1 + 30 + 80$	111
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	$5 + 10$	15
<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>	$1 + 30 + 80$	111
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	$5 + 10$	15
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	$10 + 6 + 4$	20
<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>	$1 + 30 + 80$	111
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	$5 + 10$	15
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	$10 + 6 + 4$	20
<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	$5 + 10$	15
			544

When these values are added together, we have:

$46 + 544 = 590$ . This is obviously more than the numerical value of the Name *mem-tav-kuf-vav*, which is 546. The Arizal now explains this difference of  $590 - 546 = 44$ .

The [extra] 44 is the numerical value of the squaring of the four letters of the original Name *Ekyeh*, which is 44, as follows: *alef*, *alef-hei*, *alef-hei-yud*, *alef-hei-yud-hei*.

$$= 1 + (1 + 5) + (1 + 5 + 10) + (1 + 5 + 10 + 5) = 1 + 6 + 16 + 21 = 44.$$

It will be seen that the terms “squaring” and “posterior” refer to the same process, i.e., that of spelling out a word progressively.

It will also be noticed that the value of the letters used to spell out the posterior of the Name *Ekyeh* considered separately from the letters used to iterate the posterior itself is given by subtracting 44 from 544, i.e., is 500.

Thus, the numerical value of the letters used to spell out the 72-Name *Havayah* is 46, and the numerical value of the letters used to spell out the squaring of the Name *Ekyeh* is 500.

Their combined numerical value is thus 546, the numerical value of the Name *mem-tav-kuf-vav*.

Thus, we see again that the Name associated with pestilence and plague is derived by divorcing the main letters of Divine Names from the letters used to spell them out, which, again, indicates a highly defective form of Divine revelation.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

## *Parashat Ki Tavo* [third installment]

In this portion of the Torah we are given the commandment to bring the first fruits (*bikurim*) to the Temple.<sup>1</sup> The fruits are to be brought in a wicker basket, and the fruits with the basket are presented to one of the priests of the Temple. “And the priest will take the basket from your hand, and place it before the altar of G-d, your G-d.”<sup>2</sup> The word for “basket” in this passage is *tene*.

The [mystical meaning of the] commandment of the first fruits is the return of the lights of the *Nukva* [of *Z'eir Anpin*] to *chesed*, which is embodied by the priest, in order that evil not be able to derive sustenance [from the Divine beneficence elicited by our performance of the commandments].

As we have discussed previously, whenever there is a revelation of Divine beneficence, there is the risk that the forces of evil will benefit from the overflow, i.e., whatever is not directed to proper vessels. One way of minimizing this risk is ensuring that the vessels are capacious enough to hold whatever Divine beneficence reaches them. We accomplish this by building orderly and well-functioning mental, emotional, and physical structures and contexts in our lives through which we can easily channel whatever new insights, emotions, and material wealth and well-being come our way.

The other way we minimize this risk is by taking steps to ensure that whatever would overflow if it was given is instead withheld. Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi explains<sup>3</sup> that in order for Divine beneficence to reach this world in any form, it has to be greatly contracted. This contraction process is likened to piercing small holes in a veil that shields a bright, intense light, allowing only small rays of light to penetrate it and be visible from the outside. Once this light has reached its destination, the holes must then be closed in order to prevent the light from shining elsewhere. If we allegorically consider the *sefirot* the “garment” of the Divine form or body, the veil hiding their light from the lower worlds may be conceived of as a coat of armor, which has many holes in it (for the light to issue through). These holes are covered by scales to prevent arrows entering it, or, in our analogy, prevent light from issuing where it is not wanted and thus granting power to evil.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman explains that this preventative power is part of the effect of acts of charity and kindness in this world.

Presumably, it is in this light that we are to understand the effect of giving the first fruits to the Temple. Giving the first fruits is a form of charity, since the priests are the ones who actually eat these fruits, and the commandment educates us to give the first and best fruits of our efforts to holy purposes. This, in effect, indicates that *all* the fruits of our efforts are going to be directed for holy purposes, since we dedicate even our mundane lives to promulgating Divine consciousness in this world.

By ensuring that our mundane lives are dedicated and oriented to Divine purposes, we close the holes in the Divine veil, preventing G-d's beneficence from being sidetracked into evil channels through our misuse of it.

As we have also seen previously, the involvement in the material world is the feminine side of our personalities. It is thus the light of the feminine principle that must directed upward, to the source of Divine beneficence (G-d's *chesed*). If left to its own devices, the feminine principle within us will focus obsessively on the material world, at first with the object of making the world a home for G-d, but eventually losing sight of this goal and seeing our involvement in the material world as an end in itself.

The feminine principle is alluded to by the word for “basket.”

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 26:1-11.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* 26:4.

<sup>3</sup> *Igeret HaKodesh* 3 (*Tanya*, p. 104a ff).

This is the mystical meaning of [the phrase,] “the priest will take the basket from your hand,” for the numerical value of the word for “the basket” (*ha-tene*) is the same as that of the Name *Adni*.

*Ha-tene*: *hei-tet-nun-alef* = 5 + 9 + 50 + 1 = 65.

*Adni*: *alef-dalet-nun-yud* = 1 + 4 + 50 + 5 = 65.

The Divine Name *Adni* signifies the *sefirah* of *malchut*, the feminine principle.

Rabbi Bachya ben Asher ( ) adds the following ideas: The first fruits symbolize the first three letters of the Name *Havayah*, *yud-hei-vav*, and the basket symbolizes the fourth letter, the final *hei*, which, as we know, also signifies the *sefirah* of *malchut*. *Malchut* is the recipient of the flow of Divine insight and beneficence of the *sefirot* signified by the first three letters of the Name *Havayah*. It is therefore symbolized by the basket that holds the fruits.

The priest represents G-d in this ceremony, and he takes the fruit and the basket, symbolizing the Divine Name, and waves them in the four directions, indicating that it is G-d who runs and animates the world. The holes in the wicker basket evoke the image of G-d observing the world from His unobserved vantage point and directing the affairs of life through His Divine providence.

—translated from *Ta'amei HaMitzvot* and *Sha'ar HaPesukim*

## *Parashat Nitzavim*

In the portion of the Torah read this week, Moses addresses the Jewish people, exhorting them to follow G-d's commandments. The following ten verses of this address are a section by themselves, and in them, the Name *Havayah* (here indicated by the word "*G-d*" in italics) occurs fourteen times. The text of these verses seems to be redundant in places, but the Arizal will demonstrate that this is not so.

"And it will be, when all these things come upon you—the blessing and the curse which I have placed before you—and you return in your heart while amongst the peoples to whom *G-d* your G-d has exiled you, and you return to *G-d* your G-d and hearken to His voice in accordance with all that I have commanded you today—you and your children—with all your heart and soul, then *G-d* your G-d will return your exiles and have mercy upon you, and He will turn to gather you from amongst all these peoples whence *G-d* your G-d has scattered you. [Even] if the scattered among you be at the ends of the heavens, *G-d* your G-d will gather you and take you from there. And *G-d* your G-d will bring you to the land that your fathers inherited, and you will inherit it, and He will do better to you and multiply you more than your fathers. And *G-d* your G-d will circumcise your heart and the heart of your children, so that you may love *G-d* your G-d with all your heart and soul, for the sake of your life. And *G-d* your G-d will visit all these curses upon your enemies and those who hate you, who pursued you. But you will return and listen to the voice of *G-d*, and do all His commandments, which I have commanded you today. And *G-d* your G-d will multiply the work of your hands, the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your animals, and the fruit of your land, for *G-d* will again rejoice in you as He rejoiced in your fathers. If you will listen to the voice of *G-d* your G-d, to keep all His commandments and statutes written in this *sefer Torah*; if you return to *G-d* your G-d with all your heart and soul."<sup>1</sup>

This section consists of ten verses, each of which contains the Name *Havayah*. Some verses contain this name twice, such that this Name occurs 14 times in all. The numerical value of this Name is 26; thus, the numerical value of all 14 Names is 364. We are thus lacking the number 6 if we wish to reach the sum 370.

370 is the number of "lights" that shine from the face of *Arich Anpin*, as discussed previously (on *parashot Bamidbar-Naso*). These verses discuss G-d's forgiveness, which originates in the *partzuf* of *Arich Anpin* (G-d's will to create and sustain creation in general and the Jewish people in particular), so it is to be expected that the number 370 be "encoded" in them.

The missing six are derived as follows:

In the phrase, "And *G-d* your G-d will multiply the work of your hands, the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your animals, and the fruit of your land," the expression "the fruit of" occurs three times. There are three *yuds* in these expressions.

The word for "the fruit of" (*peri*) is spelled *pei-reish-yud*. The letter *yud* is the sign of the construct form. The threefold expression of G-d's blessing is taken as an emphatic statement of the forgiveness these verses describe.

These three *yuds* form one of the 72 Names [of G-d].

In the story of the exodus from Egypt, three consecutive verses describe G-d's power as manifest just before He split the Sea of Reeds, which the Jewish people passed through on dry land while the Egyptians were drowned:

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 30:1-10.

“And the angel of G-d who had been going ahead of the camp of Israel now moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud went from in front of them and stood behind them. Thus [the pillar of cloud] came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel, making it cloud and darkness [to the Egyptians], but it gave light by night [to the Jews], so that the one came not near the other all the night. Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and G-d drove the sea back with a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land; thus the waters were divided.”<sup>2</sup>

In Hebrew, these three verses each contain 72 letters. In the *Zohar*<sup>3</sup> it is stated that these three verses refer in sequence to the Divine attributes of loving-kindness (*chesed*), severity (*gevurah*), and mercy (*tiferet*). The harmonious blending of these three principle emotive attributes forms the basic paradigm of how G-d relates to the world. Thus, they together form a composite “Name” of G-d, since a “name” is a means by which one is made known to others, i.e., manifests his attributes.

The fact that each verse contains 72 letters means that they can be aligned in parallel, forming 72 triplets of letters. In this configuration, the *Zohar* states, the first verse is to be written in its proper order, since it represents G-d’s loving-kindness, or a direct revelation of G-d’s goodness. The second verse is to be written in reverse order, from the last letter to the first, since it represents G-d’s severity, which is an indirect revelation of His goodness. Although *tiferet* is a blend of both *chesed* and *gevurah*, the third verse is not to be written half in the proper order and half in reverse order, as one might expect. There are two reasons for this: (1) in *tiferet*, *chesed* dominates over *gevurah*, and (2) as the ideal blend of *chesed* and *gevurah*, *tiferet* is a direct revelation of G-d’s goodness and glory rather than an indirect one.<sup>4</sup>

When the three 72-letter verses are aligned in the described manner, the 22<sup>nd</sup> triplet, or “Name,” is *yud-yud-yud*, three *yuds* in a row.

The verse also alludes to the “Name” *yud-lamed-yud*, inasmuch as these letters are the initials of the words for “G-d will again rejoice” [*yashuv y-k-v-k lasus*].

This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> of the 72 triplets in this array.

These two “names” together possess six letters, bringing the total number associated with the Names of G-d in this passage to 370, the number of lights a penitent individual merits to elicit upon himself from above.

These lights are the 370 lights that shine from the face of *Arich Anpin*, in accordance with the mystical meaning of “He will again have mercy on us,”<sup>5</sup> the two cheeks, as is stated in the *Zohar*.

The Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy appear in two forms in the Bible: the more prevalent form is that given fully in Exodus 34:6-7: “Mighty, merciful, and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in kindness and truth, storing kindness to thousands, bearing iniquity, transgression, and sin, acquitting.” This form is repeated in abbreviation several other times. The second form is that given in Micah 7:18-20: “Who is a G-d like You, who pardons iniquity, and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He does not maintain His anger forever, because He delights in kindness. He will again have mercy upon us; He will suppress our iniquities. You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea; You will show truth to Jacob, kindness to Abraham, as You have sworn to our fathers from days of old.”

As we explained previously, the Divine attribute of forgiveness and mercy is indicated in Kabbalah by the beard. These thirteen attributes of mercy, then, correspond to the thirteen parts of the beard. The correspondence between both versions and the beard is as follows:

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 14:19-21.

<sup>3</sup> 2:51b.

<sup>4</sup> This array may be seen, *inter alia*, in the standard editions of the *Zohar*, volume 2, p. 270a.

<sup>5</sup> Micah 7:19.

	Exodus 34	Micah 7	beard
1	mighty	Who is a G-d like You	sideburns
2	merciful	who pardons iniquity	mustache
3	and gracious	and forgives the transgression	the lack of hair in the middle of the mustache
4	long-	of the remnant of his heritage	the hair under the lower lip
5	suffering	He does not maintain His anger forever	the lack of hair in the middle of the hair under the lower lip
6	abundant in kindness	because He delights in kindness	the hair of the jaw bone
7	and truth	He will again have mercy upon us	the lack of hair on the cheeks
8	storing kindness	He will suppress our iniquities	the upper layer of the beard
9	to thousands	You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea	the short hairs between the upper and lower layers of the beard
10	bearing iniquity	You will show truth to Jacob	the small hairs near the throat
11	and transgression	kindness to Abraham	the fact that these small hairs are all of equal size
12	and sin	as You have sworn to our fathers	the lack of hair in the mouth
13	and acquits	from days of old	the lower layer of the beard

What concerns us here is the seventh attribute/part of the beard. At least in the Micah-version, this is the specific attribute of mercy. It is associated with the “part of the beard” that is actually not part of the beard, i.e., the lack of beard-hair on the cheeks.

As we have explained, the overall meaning of hair is a highly concentrated but contracted form of life-force, as evinced by the dual fact that hair is constantly growing but can be cut without causing pain. The beard overall, thus, is a contraction of life-force flowing from the head or mind into the body bypassing the usual channel of the throat, etc. It thus signifies G-d’s great mercy in bypassing the usual “rules” He has set up for creation and granting us mercy and forgiving us.

Within the general context of the beard, which basically covers the entire face, there are the two cheeks. If we consider them part of the beard as well, they signify the revelation within the occultation, so to speak. The “light” or glow or expression shining from the face is obstructed by the beard, except for this part of the visage that is free of hair. In the cheeks, then, all the emotion expressed in the face but covered by the beard can be seen. As we said, the “light” shining from the face is the good will of forgiveness. This must be largely transmuted into the contracted form of hair in order to be able to reach the sinner in a form he can assimilate, but the exception is the cheek, the one part of the face that remains uncovered in order to express most fully G-d’s unmitigated good will.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

## *Parashat Nitzavim* [second installment]

In the course of exhorting the Jewish people to perform G-d's commandments, Moses tells them, "For this commandment that I command you this day is not too wondrous for you, or too far away."<sup>1</sup> The Arizal discusses the mystical dynamics of performing the commandments.

There are two types of [spiritual] coupling that we effect by performing G-d's commandments. These are the coupling of *Abba* and *Ima* and the coupling of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*.

There are also two [corresponding] types of commandment: active commandments and passive commandments.

These are generally known as positive commandments ("do's") and negative commandments ("don'ts").

As you know, our sages point<sup>2</sup> out that the numerical value of "My Name" plus that of the letters *yud-hei* equals 365, while the numerical value of "My Remembrance" plus that of the two letters *vav-hei* equals 248.

There are 613 commandments in the Torah, 365 of which are passive and 248 of which are active.

When Moses was experiencing his first revelation of G-d in the burning bush, G-d told him, "Thus shall you say to the Israelites: 'G-d [*Havayah*], the G-d of your fathers, the G-d of Abraham, the G-d of Isaac, and the G-d of Jacob sent me to you.' This is My Name forever, and this is My Remembrance for all generations."<sup>3</sup> G-d thus refers to the Name *Havayah* as "My Name" and "My Remembrance."

The word for "My Name" is *shemi*, and the word for "My Remembrance" is *zichri*:

*Shemi*: *shin-mem-yud* = 300 + 40 + 10 = 350.

*Zichri*: *zayin-chaf-reish-yud* = 7 + 20 + 200 + 10 = 237.

The numerical value of the first two letters of the Name *Havayah* (*yud-hei*: 10 + 5) is 15; when this is added to the numerical value of the word for "My Name" (350), the sum is 365, the number of passive commandments.

The letters *yud-hei*, in addition to being the first two letters of the Name *Havayah*, are themselves a Name of G-d (*Kah*), so the word "My Name" plus *yud-hei* can be read as the phrase "My Name *Kah*."

The numerical value of the second two letters of the Name *Havayah* (*vav-hei*: 6 + 5) is 11; when this is added to the numerical value of the word for "My Remembrance" (237), the sum is 248, the number of active commandments.

The letters *vav-hei* are not a Name of G-d, just a "remembrance" of the Name *Havayah*. The word for "My Remembrance" plus the letters *vav-hei* can thus be seen as the phrase "My Remembrance, *vav-hei*."

Thus, the active commandments are associated with the second half of the Name *Havayah* and the passive commandments with the first half.

By this they meant that the passive commandments are dependent upon the two letters *yud-hei*, which indicate *Abba* and *Ima*, and the active commandments

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 30:11.

<sup>2</sup> *Zohar* 3:275b; *Tikunei Zohar*, introduction (4b) and 2 (18a).

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 3:15.

[are dependent] upon the two letters *vav-hei*, which indicate *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*.

Thus, when a person performs a commandment, he effects both types of coupling. This is because the first two letters of the word for “commandment” [*mitzvah*, *mem-tzadik*] transform via *atbash* to *yud-hei*, which signifies the coupling of *Abba* and *Ima*.

*Atbash* is the most common of the various methods used in Kabbalah (and elsewhere in the Torah, as well) to relate concepts by substituting the letters of a word with other letters according to a specific algorithm. In *atbash*, the first letter of the alphabet (*alef*) is replaced by the last letter (*tav*), the second letter (*beit*) by the penultimate letter (*shin*), and so on. (These two, first pairs of substitutions form the word *at-bash*). *Mem* pairs with *yud*, and *tzadik* pairs with *hei*.

In general, transforming a word (or set of letters) to another via a substitution algorithm indicates that in the resulting word (or set of letters), the idea represented by the first word is hidden or less intense; hence, to reach it, the letters have to be “decoded.” In this case, the idea of *yud-hei* (the union of *Abba* and *Ima*) is hidden in the first two letters of the word *mitzvah*. The second two letters of both the Name *Havayah* and the word *mitzvah* are the same (*vav-hei*).

This coupling is accomplished by observing the passive commandments, as alluded to by the fact that the numerical value of the word for “My Name” plus that of the two letters *yud-hei* equals 365, as stated.

To explain this:

The numerical value of the word for “My Name” is [also] that of the progressive iteration of the spelling-out of Name *Havayah* when spelled out to equal 72—which corresponds to *Abba* and the letter *yud* [of the Name *Havayah*]—plus the progressive iteration of the spelling-out of the Name *Havayah* when spelled to equal 63—which corresponds to *Ima* and the letter *hei* [of the Name *Havayah*].

As we have explained previous, the Name *Havayah* is spelled out in Kabbalah in four basic ways, such that it equals 72, 63, 45, and 52. These four numerical equivalents themselves correspond to the four letters of the Name *Havayah*, and thus to the four basic *partzufim*, the *sefirot*, etc. In the following chart, the letters that are varied in order to produce the different values are indicated in bold:

				total	letter	partzuf
the yud-filling	yud	yud-vav-dalet	$10 + 6 + 4 = 20$	72	yud	Abba
	hei	hei-yud	$5 + 10 = 15$			
	vav	vav-yud-vav	$6 + 10 + 6 = 22$			
	hei	hei-yud	$5 + 10 = 15$			
the combined filling	yud	yud-vav-dalet	$10 + 6 + 4 = 20$	63	hei	Ima
	hei	hei-yud	$5 + 10 = 15$			
	vav	vav-alef-vav	$6 + 1 + 6 = 13$			
	hei	hei-yud	$5 + 10 = 15$			
the alef-filling	yud	yud-vav-dalet	$10 + 6 + 4 = 20$	45	vav	Z'eir Anpin
	hei	hei-alef	$5 + 1 = 6$			
	vav	vav-alef-vav	$6 + 1 + 6 = 13$			
	hei	hei-alef	$5 + 1 = 6$			
the hei-filling	yud	yud-vav-dalet	$10 + 6 + 4 = 20$	52	hei	Nukva
	hei	hei-hei	$5 + 5 = 10$			
	vav	vav-vav	$6 + 6 = 12$			
	hei	hei-hei	$5 + 5 = 10$			

As we have also explained previously, the progressive iteration of a Name is produced by considering first the first letter of the Name, then the first two letters, then the first three letters, and so on until the whole Name is spelled out. For the 72-Name, this iteration yields:

step				
1	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10	
2	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10	
	hei:	hei-yud	5	
3	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10	
	hei:	hei-yud	5	
	vav:	vav-yud-vav	6	
4	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10	
	hei:	hei-yud	5	
	vav:	vav-yud-vav	6	
	hei:	hei-yud	5	
total				

For the 63-Name, this iteration yields:

step				
1	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10	
2	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10	
	hei:	hei-yud	5	
3	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10	
	hei:	hei-yud	5	
	vav:	vav-alef-vav	6	
4	yud:	yud-vav-dalet	10	
	hei:	hei-yud	5	
	vav:	vav-alef-vav	6	
	hei:	hei-yud	5	
total				

$184 + 166 = 350$ , the numerical value of “My Name” (*shemi*).

When we combine this value with that of the letters *yud-hei*, which is the source of these two Names [i.e., iterations], the total is 365, the number of passive commandments.

The technical term for “progressive iteration” is *achorayim*, which means “backs.” This is because this operation on a Name indicates how the Divine effulgence represented by this Name is progressively withdrawn from reality. We are to visualize how first the first letter retreats, then the first two letters, then the first three letters, etc., as if we are watching the Name disappear into its source head-first, leaving us with progressively less and less of its “end” or “back.”

In contrast, the basic letters of a Name indicate its direct revelation into reality.

This leads to the following idea:

This indicates that by observing the passive commandments, the individual causes “My Name,” which is equivalent to the backs of *Abba* and *Ima*, to join with their fronts, which are indicated by the letters *yud-hei*. The total [of this union] is then 365.

Thus, by observing passive commandments, we ensure that whatever withholding of Divine blessing is necessary for the world to operate properly is accomplished together with, permeated by, and for the sake of direct revelation.

It appears to me, Chaim [Vital], that [the above phenomenon] occurs because the coupling of *Abba* and *Ima* is the higher and more hidden [of the two types of coupling]. Therefore, since passive commandments are [an expression of] judgment, they cause [the letters indicating the coupling they effect] to be transformed [via an algorithm]. Thus, [the *yud-hei*] are transformed and hidden in the two letters *mem-tzadik* of *mitzvah* through *atbash*.

In general, the love between *Abba* and *Ima* is relatively mature, settled, consistent, and modest, like that between a mature couple, as opposed to that between *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, which is relatively impetuous, volatile, arduous, and uninhibited, like that between a young couple. Despite the fireworks of young love, the settled passion of maturity is more consistent and enduring, despite it being more subdued.

Similarly, the love for G-d we express by refraining from what He opposes (i.e., observing passive commandments) is less outwardly expressive and colorful than fulfilling His directives (by performing active commandments), but reflects a deeper, more mature level of relationship. The ability to exercise self-control and restraint strikes deeper than the ability to demonstrate love actively. Both are necessary, but passivity causes the greater union.

As a practical example, as a husband and wife mature, they (hopefully) realize that they can enhance their marriage more by refraining from negative acts than by doing positive ones. Refraining from negative acts would include avoiding anger, criticism, name-calling (*à la* blasphemy), and arguments, as well as avoiding negative habits that make one a less-attractive or less-functional partner (overeating, under-sleeping, surrendering to animal drives, etc.). Positive acts would include active demonstrations of consideration and love, such as giving complements or gifts, helping each out, etc. Both are necessary, but it is harder—and therefore calls for more devotion—to resist a second helping of chocolate cake or a chance for a cutting criticism than it is to give a complement.

When a person performs an active commandment, he causes the coupling of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, which are indicated by the *vav-hei* of the Name *Havayah* and of the word *mitzvah*. For the letters of the Name *Havayah* are the same as the word *mitzvah*, except that the first two letters [of each] are transformed [into each other] via *atbash*, as stated. Then, the numerical value of the *vav-hei* is added to that of the word for “My Remembrance” to give the 248 active commandments.

Thus, in performing active commandments, there is no need to transform the letters that indicate these commandments (*vav-hei*) in producing the word *mitzvah*, since the union they effect (that of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*) is not hidden as is that effected by observing passive commandments (i.e., that of *Abba* and *Ima*).

Earlier in this *parashah*, Moses says, “The hidden things are to G-d, our God, but the revealed things are to us and our children forever, to do everything in this Torah.”<sup>4</sup> It is explained that “the hidden things” refers to the first two letters of the Name *Havayah*, *yud-hei*, which indicate *Abba* and *Ima*, here alluded to by the words “G-d, our G-d.” The word for “but the revealed things” (*ve-ha-niglot*) begins with the letters *vav-hei*, and can thus be read, “*Vav-hei* [are] revealed,” alluding to the union of *vav-hei*, *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, the “children” of *Abba* and *Ima*.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim*

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<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 29:28.

## *Parashat VaYeilech*

*Parashat VaYeilech* describes G-d's final admonitions to Moses before his death. Amongst these is the following:

“And G-d said to Moses: ‘Behold, you [now go to] lie with your ancestors, and this people will rise up and go astray after the strange gods of the land into which it is entering, and they will forsake Me and abrogate My covenant that I made with them. Then My anger will flare up against them, and I will abandon them and hide My face from them. They shall be ready prey; and many evils and troubles shall befall them. And they shall say on that day, “Surely it is because our G-d is not in our midst that these evils have befallen us.” Yet I will keep My face hidden on that day, because of all the evil they have done in turning to other gods.’”<sup>1</sup>

You already know what our sages said concerning the verse “and there did not arise in Israel another prophet like Moses”<sup>2</sup>—that in *Israel* no such prophet arose, [but there did arise a comparable prophet amongst the gentiles, i.e., Balaam].<sup>3</sup>

According to the sages, G-d granted Balaam the gift of prophecy in order to test the gentile nations. Had they not had a prophet similar to Moses, they could argue that they did not accept G-d's sovereignty the way the Jews did because they had no leader of the stature the Jews did. G-d therefore gave them a prophet of similar stature to Moses, but the gentile nations still did not take advantage of this, and chose instead to remain distant from G-d.

Both Moses and Balaam personified *da'at*, the former in holiness, and the latter in evil.

As we know, *da'at* is the *sefirah* of consciousness. *Chochmah* and *binah* refer to abstract intellect, while *da'at* is the faculty of intellect that interprets *chochmah* and *binah vis-à-vis* their relevance to the individual. Moses, the transmitter of the Torah, our glimpse into G-d's mind, is the spiritual force that grants us Divine consciousness, and thus personifies holy *da'at*.

Evil *da'at* is simply all types of consciousness that are not G-d-oriented, from the simply self-centered to the overtly antagonistic.

At first, the good [*da'at*] and the evil [*da'at*] were intermixed because of the sins of Adam and Abel, but afterwards this was rectified and Moses was born embodying the good and holy [*da'at*] alone. This is the mystical meaning of the verse [describing Moses' birth:] “And she [Moses' mother] saw him, that he was good.”<sup>4</sup>

[As a result of this,] Balaam was separated from him, counterbalancing him as [the embodiment of] evil *da'at*. This is the mystical meaning of the phrase [Balaam uses to describe himself:] “knowing the supernal knowledge.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 31:16-18.

<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy 34:10.

<sup>3</sup> *Bamidbar Rabbah* 14:20.

<sup>4</sup> Exodus 2:2.

<sup>5</sup> Numbers 24:16.

Indeed, Moses' generation is called "the generation of knowledge," for their consciousness was defined by their knowledge of G-d. Counterbalancing them was the mixed multitude, whose consciousness was defined by evil knowledge.

As we know, a "mixed multitude" of gentiles left Egypt together with the Jews. Moses converted these converts to Judaism on his own, without consulting G-d on this. Oral tradition tells us that this multitude was in fact not ready for this spiritual leap, and caused much trouble during the forty-year trek in the desert. Specifically, we see here that they did not make the change from worldly/self-oriented consciousness to Divine consciousness.

To explain: [the mixed multitude embodied] the sparks of [holiness present in] the seminal emissions that issued from Adam during the 130 years [he abstained from marital relations with Eve], as explained elsewhere, and were not yet rectified.

Wasted seminal emission is the archetypal form of self-indulgence and self-orientation. Although Adam separated from his wife because he did not wish to bring children into the world that would suffer the fate of death that his sin had introduced, his misplaced altruism was in fact selfish in motivation. *He* did not want to experience the suffering brought about by *his* sin; his actions were not motivated by concern for what G-d wanted in the world: a world of human beings that—it is true—were not on the same level as mankind had been intended to be at, but who would rise to the challenge of rectifying the world nonetheless.

The result of Adam's selfish self-imposed estrangement from his wife was the proliferation of selfish, non-G-d-directed energy in the world.

Moses desired to take them out [of the realm of evil] before their time and rectify them then [i.e., in his time]. The Egyptian exile was for both of them [i.e., the Jews and the mixed multitude], for it was spiritually [the exile of] supernal *da'at*, as we have explained previously regarding the mystical meaning of the verse "descend there,"<sup>6</sup> and Israel and the mixed multitude were both manifestations of *da'at*. Thus, the numerical value of the words for "mixed multitude" is the same for that of *da'at*.

"Mixed multitude": *erev rav*, *ayin-reish-beit reish-beit* = 70 + 200 + 2 + 200 + 2 = 474.

*Da'at*: *dalet-ayin-tav* = 4 + 70 + 400 = 474.

With this, you will understand the meaning of the verse, "Behold, you [now go to] lie with your ancestors, and the people will rise up...." This is one of those verses open to alternative interpretations, for the verb "and will rise up" can apply to what comes before it [i.e., Moses] or what follows it [i.e., the people]. Both interpretations are true. Moses will arise again, meaning that he will be reincarnated in the last generation, and so will the mixed multitude. With this meaning, the verse reads: "and the people will rise up....," referring to the mixed multitude.

This is alluded to in the phrase "into which they are entering [there]," the word for "there" being a permutation of the name "Moses," indicating that Moses will be reincarnated amongst them, inasmuch as they all a manifestation of *da'at*, [as is Moses].

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<sup>6</sup> Genesis 42:2.

“There”: *shamah, shin-men-hei.*

“Moses”: *Moshe, mem-shin-hei.*

Indeed, this reincarnation is a very mysterious thing. The explanation is that there is no generation without some manifestation of Moses, [who returns] in order to complete the generation of the desert, for the generation of the desert will also return and be reincarnated in our, last generation.

This is why in most cases the women of this generation dominate the men—especially the wives of Torah scholars. The reason is that [the men of our generation lived previously and] were present at the incident of the golden calf and did not resist the mixed multitude. Since their wives did not want to contribute their gold jewelry [toward the making of the calf], the women therefore dominate them.

The women, not tainted by the sin of the golden calf, are thus on a superior spiritual level than the men.

In any case, we see that our generation is a reincarnation of the generation of the desert, and that the mixed multitude has also been reincarnated, and Moses is together with both of them.

The continuation of this passage can be similarly interpreted:

In the following passages, the standard translation takes the object of G-d’s scorn in the plural, referring to the people. In the Hebrew, however, the people are sometimes referred to in the plural and at other times collectively, in the singular (as “the people” is a singular noun). This allows for the interpretations we are about to see.

*Then My anger will flare up against them, and I will abandon them and hide My face from them:* This refers to the mixed multitude, since it is couched in the plural.

*They shall be ready prey; and many evils and troubles shall befall them:* This is [in the original Hebrew] couched in the singular, and thus refers to Moses. [His suffering as depicted here] is similar to [that of Israel’s redeemer, as described in the verse:] “For he has suffered our sickness and G-d has visited upon him the sins of us all.”<sup>7</sup>

*...because of all the evil they have done...:* This [being in the singular] again refers to Moses, [the evil he did being] that he accepted the mixed multitude. As it is said, “for your people have corrupted...”<sup>8</sup>

When speaking to Moses of the incident of the golden calf, G-d refers to the mix multitude, who instigated the sin, as “*your* people, who corrupted” the Jews.

*And they shall say on that day, “Surely it is because our G-d is not in our midst...”:* [This, too is in the singular, and thus refers to Moses. G-d “not being in

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<sup>7</sup> Isaiah 53:4-6.

<sup>8</sup> Exodus 32:7.

his midst”] means that his return is not a result of his soul being impregnated with another soul [*ibur*] but is a result of reincarnation. When a person is reincarnated, the soul that enters the new body originates in his own soul-root. In the case of impregnation, in contrast, a soul from a different, soul-root is grafted onto the original soul. This happens with righteous individuals; since they possess a great amount of holiness, and are aware of their various incarnations, they cling to [this other soul] in their thought, aligning their animating soul [*nefesh*] with his soul, their spirit [*ruach*] with his spirit, and their intellectual soul [*neshamah*] with his, [drawing his into theirs].

This grafting of soul to soul does not occur with the ongoing reincarnation of Moses’ soul; his own soul is all that is reincarnated as the leader of every generation. He continues to suffer from generation to generation as he progressively accomplishes the task of rectifying the world’s consciousness, reorienting the minds of both the Jewish people the mixed multitude from self-centeredness to G-d-centeredness.

—translated from *Sefer HaLikutim* and *Likutei Torah*

## *Parashat VaYeilech* [second installment]

In this *parashah*, Moses says to the Jews: “And now, write for yourselves this song and teach it to the Israelites—put it in their mouths—in order that this song remain a witness for the Israelites”<sup>1</sup>

According to the basic meaning of this verse, the “song” it refers to is the poem “Give ear, O heavens” that constitutes the greater part of the following *parashah*. However, the sages also understand it as referring to the Torah as a whole, and from this verse is derived the commandment incumbent upon each individual to write a Torah scroll.

Know that it is necessary to have in mind that the five Books of Moses correspond to the five *partzufim*:

The Book of Genesis corresponds to the [upper] thorn of the *yud* [of the Name *Havayah* and the *partzuf*] *Arich Anpin*].

The Book of Exodus corresponds to the *yud* [itself] and *Abba*.

The Book of Leviticus corresponds to the first *hei* and *Ima*. The sacrifices [whose laws are detailed in this book come] to rectify and sweeten the states of Divine judgment that originate in [this *partzuf*].

The Book of Numbers corresponds to the *vav*, the number of Israelites above.

Presumably this refers to the fact that the numerical value of the letter *vav* is 6 and there are 600,000 archetypal souls of Israel. The Book of Numbers contains a number of censuses of the peoples as whole, the army, the Levites, etc.

The Book of Deuteronomy, known as the “repetition of the Torah,” recapitulates and includes everything that was in the preceding books, and corresponds to the final *hei* and *Nukva*.

To summarize:

book	letter of the Name <i>Havayah</i>	<i>partzuf</i>
Genesis	upper thorn of <i>yud</i>	<i>Arich Anpin</i>
Exodus	<i>yud</i>	<i>Abba</i>
Leviticus	<i>hei</i>	<i>Ima</i>
Numbers	<i>vav</i>	<i>Z'eir Anpin</i>
Deuteronomy	<i>hei</i>	<i>Nukva</i>

Following is an alternate system of correspondences, encompassing the entire Bible as “distributed” over the two *partzufim* of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*. It should be kept in mind that in the traditional reckoning, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel are considered one book, as are 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles, and the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Nonetheless, in one instance, as we shall see, the Arizal does consider 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings separately.

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 31:19.

*Tiferet* [i.e., *Z'eir Anpin*] includes the five Books of Moses, and its two arms comprise its five states of *chesed* and the five states of *gevurah*, as follows:

Joshua, Judges, and Samuel [correspond to] *chesed*, *gevurah*, and *tiferet*. First and Second Kings correspond to *netzach* and *hod*. Thus we have the five states of *chesed*.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel [correspond to] *chesed*, *gevurah*, and *tiferet*. The twelve [Minor Prophets correspond to] *netzach* and *hod*, this being the mystical meaning of the verse, "His legs are pillars of marble [*sheish*]." <sup>2</sup> Thus we have the five states of *gevurah*.

The Hebrew for "marble" (*sheish*) also means "six." The legs correspond to *netzach* and *hod*. Each one being six, the two together are twelve, corresponding to the twelve Minor Prophets.

The books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings manifest *chesed* because they describe the Jewish people more-or-less in their heyday, focusing on their development as a people and the conquests of their kings. The prophetic books, on the other hand, focus on the spiritual lapses and descent of the people, which resulted eventually in the destruction of the Temple and the exile.

*Malchut* [i.e., *Nukva*] includes the five Scrolls, and its two arms comprise the five states of *chesed* and the five states of *gevurah*, as follows:

The five Scrolls are Esther, Song of Songs, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Ruth.

The five states of *chesed* are the five books of Psalms, and the five states of *gevurah* are Proverbs, Job, Daniel, corresponding [respectively] to *chesed*, *gevurah*, and *tiferet*, Ezra [and Nehemiah corresponding to] *netzach* and Chronicles to *hod*.

The Book of Psalms is traditionally subdivided into five sub-books.

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Regarding the forms of the letters, and to what extent there is a difference between the ways the Ashkenazim and Sefardim write them, my master [the Arizal] used to say that they all allude to [spiritual configurations] above, for the forms of the letters change to various representations [of these spiritual configurations].

This is particularly true regarding the form of the letter *alef*. The upper *yud* of the *alef* is written [according to the Sefardim] like a *zayin*.

The *alef* is conceived of as being formed of a long, diagonal *vav* with a *yud* above and below it. If the stroke of the *yud* is extended to the right, beyond the stem connecting it to the *vav*, it appears like a *zayin*.

He said that all of this is alluded to in *Tikunei Zohar*.

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Some people are reluctant to fulfill this commandment [to personally write a Torah scroll], for two reasons:

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<sup>2</sup> Song of Songs 5:15.

The first is that they don't know how to write [like a scribe], and they think that the commandment is to write with their own hand.

Learning how to write Torah scrolls according to Jewish law is complicated, and requires knowledge of the laws, the conventions and traditions to be followed, and artistic skill. However, the commandment may be fulfilled by proxy, and is usually fulfilled nowadays by either commissioning a scribe to write a Torah scroll (for those who can afford this) or participating in the cost of writing one. Also, owning printed copies of the Torah and its commentaries for personal study is considered part of fulfilling this commandment.

The second is that there are no longer in our times people who are well-versed in which words are to be spelled fully and which defectively or which paragraphs are to be left "open" or "closed," as mentioned [already] in the Talmud.<sup>3</sup>

Many words in Hebrew can be spelled either "fully," using all the letters required by the rules of grammar and precedent, or "defectively," leaving some or all of the "vowel-letters" out. ("Vowel-letters" are letters used to indicate vowels, such as *vav* or *yud*, and these vowels can instead be indicated by vowel-points.)

There are differing traditions regarding which paragraphs in the Torah are followed by a space extending to the end of the line the paragraph ends on (this is called an "open" paragraph) and which are followed by a space only equal to the width of nine letters (this is called a "closed" paragraph).

But my master told [the scribe] Rabbi M. Romi to write a Torah scroll similar to the other Torah scrolls in our country, following the instructions of Maimonides regarding which paragraphs are to be opened or closed, and he did not concern himself with the [other traditions regarding which are to be] closed and opened followed by others who are stringent about this and change things.

He also instructed him to leave blank all the places where the Name *Havayah* occurs, for he wanted to write them himself, with his own hand, after fasting and immersing and while having certain meditations in mind (that will be explained in our discussion of the *tefilin*).

Certain letters in Torah scrolls, *tefilin*, and *mezuzahs* are adorned with "crowns," small lines in the form of the letter *zayin* attached to the top of the letters. These crowns are obligatory on the letters *shin-ayin-tet-nun-zayin-gimel-tzadik*,<sup>4</sup> and according to some opinions their absence invalidates a Torah scroll from use.<sup>5</sup> It is customary to make smaller crowns on the letters *beit-dalet-kuf-chet-yud-hei*.

Regarding the form of the crowns over the letters *shin-ayin-tet-nun-zayin-gimel-tzadik* and *beit-dalet-kuf-chet-yud-hei*, he was extremely stringent.

These crowns, as mentioned, must have the form of the letter *zayin*, and they must be centered on the top of the letter, not to the right or left.

The mystical significance of why there are crowns on specifically these letters is explained in the "Gate of Cantillation marks, Vowels, Crowns, and Letters" and in "the Gate of the Vowels."

This is the end of this passage; following is an excerpt from "the Gate of the Vowels," i.e., *Etz Chaim* 8:6.

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<sup>3</sup> *Kidushin* 30.

<sup>4</sup> *Menachot* 29b.

<sup>5</sup> *Magen Avraham* on *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chaim* 36:3.

...the 22 letters of the [Hebrew alphabet used in the] Torah, seven of them indicate the vessels of the seven kings [of Edom] and 15 of them indicate the vessels of *Abba* and *Ima*.

Although we are at this point talking about the Breaking of the Vessels, which occurred in the world of *Tohu*, before the development of the *partzufim* of the world of *Atzilut*, the names of these *partzufim* are nonetheless used to refer to the aspects of the *Tohu* from which they will develop.

This is because *Abba* and *Ima* are greater than all of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*.

Therefore, the former's vessels are alluded to by 15 letters while the latter's are alluded to by only 7.

The indication that *Abba* and *Ima* take 15 letters is the fact that they are alluded to by the letters *yud-hei* of the Name *Havayah*, whose numerical value is 15.

The letters indicating the vessels of *Z'eir Anpin* are *shin-ayin-tet-nun-zayin-gimel-tzadik*. Of the fifteen remaining letters [of the alphabet] that indicate the vessels of *Abba* and *Ima*, six of the indicate the back of these vessels, and they are *beit-dalet-kuf-chet-yud-hei*, as is mentioned in the *Zohar*. The remaining letters, *alef-vav-kaf-lamed-mem-samech-pei-reish-tav*, indicate the front or inner dimension of these vessels.

This is the reason why the letters *shin-ayin-tet-nun-zayin-gimel-tzadik* require three crowns each, while the letters *beit-dalet-kuf-chet-yud-hei* require one crown each, and also why these letters are different from the other letters, that require no crown at all.

The letters *shin-ayin-tet-nun-zayin-gimel-tzadik* allude to the seven kings [of Edom] that died, and from [these kings] the forces of evil were created and issued, as is known. These letters can be combined to form the words *satan az geitz*, meaning, "The strength and mighty power of the insolent [*az*] states of judgment, which descended and became *Satan*, i.e., the forces of evil." And it is known that the *Zohar* states that these seven kings were like sparks that were scattered, "like a blacksmith who hits iron and sparks fly in all directions." This is the allusion in the word *geitz* ["spark"], as in the words of the Talmud, "a spark [*geitz*] that flies out from under the hammer."<sup>6</sup>

We have explained previously that these seven kings took their light from the body of *Adam Kadmon*, under the tuft of the beard, but not higher [than this].

*Adam Kadmon* ("Primordial Man") is the first Divine emanation after the initial *tzimtzum*. The *sefirot* issue from his various "body" parts.

It follows that they lack the three highest lights, i.e., those of [*Adam Kadmon's*] ears, nose, and mouth. This is why both their frontal and back aspects broke. These [missing lights] are indicated by the three crowns affixed atop these

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<sup>6</sup> *Shabbat* 21b.

letters. For [the crowns] allude to the withdrawal of the light and life-force from the vessels, which are alluded to by the letters themselves. The light remained above them instead of within them, as depicted by the placement of the crowns above the letters.

In contrast, the letters *beit-dalet-kuf-chet-yud-hei* allude to the backs of *Abba* and *Ima*, which descended [rather than broke].

Here, the point is that the vessels of the seven lower *sefirot* of *Tohu* broke because they lacked the stabilizing influence of the intellect, while the three upper *sefirot* of *Tohu*, its intellect, did not break (since intellect is inherently more stable than the volatile emotions); instead, only (1) their backs, or external aspects, (2) “fell.”

We have explained previously that *Abba* and *Ima* are formed from the two lights of the nose and mouth [of *Adam Kadmon*], and thus lack only the light of the ear. Therefore, [when the vessels of *Tohu* broke,] only their backs fell. To allude to the one light they lack [i.e., that of the ear of *Adam Kadmon*] we affix a single crown on each of these letters.

—translated from *Sha’ar HaMitzvot*, *Ta’amei HaMitzvot*, and *Etz Chaim*

## *Parashat Haazinu*

The Song of Moses, which constitutes the greater part of the portion of the Torah read this week, begins<sup>1</sup>:

<sup>1</sup>*Give ear, O heavens, and I shall speak,  
Let the earth hear the talk of my mouth.*

<sup>2</sup>*Let my teaching drip like rain,  
let my talk flow like dew,  
like droplets on new growth,  
like showers on grass.*

<sup>3</sup>*When I proclaim the Name of G-d,  
give greatness to our G-d.*

<sup>4</sup>*The Rock, perfect are His deeds,  
for all His ways are just.  
[He is] a steadfast G-d, [with] no corruption,  
equitable and upright is He.*

Let us understand the following differences [in expression] in this passage:

1. What is the difference between “to hear” and “to give ear?”
2. Why in the first clause does Moses use the imperative [“Give ear...”], while in the second he uses the future [“Let..hear...”]?

We would have expected the imperative in the second clause as well: “Hear, O earth.”

3. Why in the first clause does he say “I shall speak,” while in the second he does not say “I shall talk?”

We would have expected the second clause to read: “Hear, O earth, and I shall talk.”

4. Why in the second clause does he say “the talk of my mouth” rather than “my talk?”
5. Why, when referring to the dew, does he use the verb “to flow,” and when referring to the rain, the expression “to drip?”
6. What is the difference between “my teaching” and “my talk,” especially since both refer to the Torah?
7. Why did he say “give greatness” to G-d rather than “utter the greatness” of G-d? How does “giving” apply here?
8. Why did he say “The rock, His action is perfect...” instead of “G-d’s way is perfect...,” as did King David?<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 32:1-4.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Samuel 22:31; Psalms 18:31.

9. It would seem more appropriate to mention the fact that there is no corruption in G-d's ways before saying that He is "a steadfast G-d," since the former is the negation of evil while the latter is the affirmation of perfection. Why, then, are these ideas mentioned in the opposite order?

The answer to all this is as follows:

The Torah possesses both an exoteric and esoteric dimension; these are called *peshat* ["simple meaning"] and *sod* ["secret"], respectively. The esoteric dimension is not appropriate for all people, but only for those who are like angels. The exoteric dimension, in contrast, is appropriate for all people.

From the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai on, the esoteric meaning of the Torah was always reserved for the select elite that were spiritually refined enough to appreciate it and not to interpret it mistakenly. It is only in recent history that its teachings have become increasingly available to the general public.

Referring to this esoteric dimension of the Torah, the angels said, when the Holy One, blessed be He, wanted to give the Torah to Israel: "How much might there is in Your Name!" "Your Name" is the Torah, which is all Names of the Holy One, blessed be He.<sup>3</sup> [The angels felt that the Torah, which they perceived as being] only the esoteric dimension, [should not] be given on earth [i.e., to mankind]. This is the meaning of the verse: "G-d our Lord, how mighty is your Name in all the earth, for You have given Your glory over the heavens."<sup>4</sup> They did not know that since the exoteric dimension of the Torah is not relevant to them—since they are immortal—it was given to mankind.

The phrase "for You have given Your glory over the heavens" may be read: "Give Your glory over the heavens." The angels were thus saying to G-d, "since Your Name—i.e., the Torah—is so mighty—i.e., so sublime and unfit for mortal man, don't give it to them, rather, give Your glory—i.e., the Torah—to us in heaven."<sup>5</sup> G-d told Moses to respond to this argument, which he did by pointing out how the simple meaning of the Torah refers to all sorts of situations that are irrelevant to angels.

This, then, is the mystical meaning of "Give ear, O heavens." The "heavens" are the holy and righteous people, who although they live on earth are similar to the angels who dwell in heaven. To them it is said, "give ear" to the esoteric dimension of the Torah, since this aspect of the Torah, as it were, is not said out loud [so that all may hear] but rather whispered into the hearer's ear. This is why the expression "give ear" is used; the esoteric dimension of the Torah was communicated only to the righteous, since it is difficult to grasp.

This is also why [—in reference to the esoteric dimension of the Torah—] the verb "to speak" is used. The verb "to speak" refers to difficult language, as in the

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<sup>3</sup> Ramban, introduction to commentary on the Torah; *Yonat Elim* 29; *Shnei Luchot HaBrit*, Yitro.

<sup>4</sup> Psalms 8:2.

<sup>5</sup> *Shabbat* 88b.

verse, “the man *spoke* to us *harshly*.”<sup>6</sup> In contrast, the verb “to talk” or “to say” [refers to softer speech, used, for example,] when one speaks to women. In our case, it is used [even] for the common men who, like women, [did not learn the esoteric aspect of the Torah].

This distinction between the verb “to speak” (root: *dalet-beit-reish*) and the verb “to say” or “to talk” (root: *alef-mem-reish*) is common in the Talmud and Midrash. It is based in part on the verse preceding the account of the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai: “Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob, and declare to the house of Israel.”<sup>7</sup> Tradition understands the “house of Jacob” refer to the women and the “house of Israel” to refer to the men.<sup>8</sup> This is because the name “Israel” is primarily associated with the Jewish people in their role as the bearer of the Divine message on earth, while the name “Jacob” refers more to how they battle the material aspect of the world in the course of fulfilling this goal. These are the male and female aspects of our personalities, respectively, as we have explained previously. The verb “declare” used in this verse (*tageid*) is phonetically similar to the word for “tendon” (*gid*), prompting the comment of our sages: to the men Moses was bidden to communicate the harsher aspects of the Torah.

The Arizal now reinterprets this understanding of this verse to refer to the exoteric and esoteric dimensions of the Torah.

This is the esoteric meaning of the verse:

“*Thus shall you say*”—this refers to the exoteric dimension of the Torah, which is easy to understand—

“*to the house of Jacob*”—referring to the common people;

“*and declare*”—this refers to the esoteric dimension of the Torah, which is ‘hard as tendons’ to understand for ‘not every mind can bear it’<sup>9</sup> and ‘not all who wish to take upon himself the mantle may do so’<sup>10</sup>—

“*to the house of Israel*”—referring to the holy [elite].

(The reason why our sages said<sup>11</sup> that the verb “declare” in this verse implies communicating something ‘as hard as tendons’ is because there is an extra *yud* in it, unlike its usual spelling, as, for instance, in the verse: “Declare to My people their transgression.”<sup>12</sup>)

The spelling of the verb “declare” in this verse is somewhat enigmatic. The imperative of “declare” is *hageid* (*hei-gimel-dalet*), while the 2<sup>nd</sup> person future is *tagid* (*taf-gimel-yud-dalet*). Here, however, we have what appears to be a hybrid cross between these two, *tageid*, in which the consonants are the same as the 2<sup>nd</sup> person future but the vowels are that of the imperative (the *tzeirei* under the *gimel* instead of a *chirik*). This draws attention to the fact that the combination *gimel-yud-dalet* (*gid*) is the word for “tendon.” The implication is thus “declare—” (the imperative, following the vowels) “—in a way as harsh as a tendon” (following the consonants).

This explains why Moses addressed [in the first clause of this verse] the heavens directly [i.e., in the imperative: “Give ear...”]. [It was as if to say:] “to

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 42:30.

<sup>7</sup> Exodus 19:3.

<sup>8</sup> Rashi *ad loc*.

<sup>9</sup> Introduction to *Shnei Luchot HaBerit*.

<sup>10</sup> *Berachot* 16b.

<sup>11</sup> *Mechilta, Yitro*.

<sup>12</sup> Isaiah 58:1.

you”—i.e., the heavens, or the holy elite—“it is fitting that I speak [i.e., communicate the difficult, esoteric aspects of the Torah].” And this is also why he spoke in the first person [“I shall speak”]: since he was talking about the esoteric dimension of the Torah, he referred to it as his own, and he was speaking from the depths of his own heart.

Moses was obviously the most qualified to study the esoteric aspect of the Torah, and thus he considered this aspect of the Torah to be “his,” so to speak. “Listen, O holy ones, and I will teach you the difficult, esoteric aspect of the Torah, which is the aspect most dear to my heart.”

But the exoteric dimension is suited [even] for the common folk, so [when referring to it] he spoke indirectly: “Let the earth hear the talk of my mouth.” Meaning: the common people, referred to as the “earth,” should hear my “talk,” i.e., the exoteric aspect of the Torah, which is easy to grasp. He referred to this aspect of the Torah as “the talk of my *mouth*,” since he considered it superficial relative to the esoteric dimension. It issued only from his lips, not from his innermost heart.

The idiom in Hebrew for an ignoramus or common person is *am ha-aretz*, “one of the people of the earth.” Here the Arizal uses the term to refer to anyone—even a Torah scholar—who does not learn the inner dimension of the Torah, for with regard to this aspect, such a person is indeed an ignoramus, and his perspective is entirely material rather than spiritual.

Concerning the esoteric dimension, Moses said: “Let my teaching drip like rain.” The verb used here for “to drip” [*ayin-reish-pei*] also means “to kill,” as in the verse “and they shall kill [*v’arfu*] the calf there.”<sup>13</sup> The implication here is [that the esoteric dimension of the Torah is] a very powerful revelation, just like rain is not always good for everyone; for example, travelers are vexed by it. So it is with the esoteric dimension of the Torah: it can kill someone who is not fit for it.

The rain falls on the roads the same as it falls on the fields; in the former context it gives life, while in the latter it is an inconvenience or even a detriment to mankind. Similarly, the secrets of the Torah can be a spiritual boon to someone who appreciates them as they are meant to be taken, but can cause spiritual harm to someone unready to absorb them on their own terms.

As the rain is a vexation for travelers, so is the esoteric dimension a negative influence on those who have departed from the path of the Torah.

The idiom in Hebrew for “travelers” is “walkers on the paths” (*holchei derachim*), subtly implying those who walk on paths other than the highway or main road, that of the Torah.

This is similar to the saying of our sages [regarding the Torah in general]: “if one merits it becomes for him an elixir of life; if not, it becomes poison.”<sup>14</sup>

For the righteous, in contrast, the esoteric aspect of the Torah will “drip like the rain,” it will flow abundantly and give them life, like an ever-increasing wellspring. This is why Moses used here the idiom “my teaching.” The word for

<sup>13</sup> Deuteronomy 21:4.

<sup>14</sup> Yoma 72b.

“teaching” (*lekach*) is related to the word for “taking”; he referred to the esoteric portion of the Torah as the part he took for himself.

When referring to the simple meaning, he said “let my talk flow like dew,” since dew is good for everyone, just like the exoteric dimension of the Torah harms no one.

Moses said “like droplets on new growth, [like showers on grass]” in order answer the question: if the esoteric dimension is the main and preferred aspect of the Torah, why do we need the exoteric dimension? The answer to this is that raindrops are very small, and are like “droplets on new growth.” (The word used for vegetation in this verse—*desha*—refers to when the grass begins to grow and is just barely seen above ground.) If large drops of water would fall on the new growth, it would destroy them. Once the growth has become a mature grass, the rain falls on it in the form of a “shower,” i.e., with larger drops, which the grass can now endure.

So it is with regard to the exoteric dimension of the Torah. When a person is young and his intellect is not fully developed, he learns the simple meaning of the Torah, for his mind cannot yet appreciate or bear the intensity of the Torah’s mysteries. After he has learned the exoteric dimension—which is “like droplets on new growth”—and “he has filled his belly with meat and good wine,” i.e., the exoteric dimension of the Torah, he may approach the study of the esoteric dimension—which is “like showers on mature grass.”

“Filling the belly with meat and wine” is an idiom commonly used in rabbinic literature to refer to the study of the exoteric dimension of the Torah. (Nowadays we might say “meat and potatoes” instead of “meat and wine.”) The imagery is that one should eat his full of the basic staples of life before indulging in delicacies or fancy desserts; in this way he will be assured of good health and be saved the ill-effects of overindulgence in rich foods. Similarly, a person should make his main Torah-diet from the exoteric basics (Torah, Talmud, etc.) and only when he is firmly anchored and grounded in these allow himself to delve into the Torah’s mysteries.

Alternatively, we can explain this verse according to Rashi’s explanation. He translates the word we have taken to mean “showers” as “storms.” Storm winds aid the growth of vegetation when it is very young and closely bound to the mud at ground level. The storm wind dries up the mud and crumbles it; this frees the grass from being stuck to the mud. Afterwards comes the rain, which makes it grow further.

Similarly, the exoteric dimension of the Torah serves to separate the individual from his gross materialism. Once he has been somewhat detached from materiality and the matters of this world he can go on to learn the esoteric dimension. It will then develop him further, “like showers on mature grass.” For mature grass is already detached from the mud and clay and can bear the heavier showers that promote its growth to maturity.

Studying the Torah's exoteric dimension trains the individual in the fundamentals of Jewish faith; this knowledge prevents him from misunderstanding or misinterpreting the imagery or allusions found in the esoteric tradition. Learning and following the Torah's laws sanctifies the individual, giving him at least the basis of a higher perspective on life in which the spiritual is ascendant over the material.

Moses then said: "When I proclaim the Name of G-d, give greatness to our G-d." This, too was to answer the question of why both exoteric and esoteric dimensions of the Torah are necessary. The answer given here is that the Torah is similar to the Name *Havayah*, which also possesses both a hidden and revealed dimension. The hidden dimension is the Name itself, as it is written; the revealed dimension is the way it is pronounced, as the Name *Adni*.

This is similar to our sages' explanation of the verse: "This is My Name forever, and this is My remembrance for all generations."<sup>15</sup> The word for "forever" [*l'olam*] can be phonetically interpreted to mean "to conceal" [*l'aleim*].<sup>16</sup> The word for "My remembrance" [*zichri*] can also mean "the way I am mentioned," referring to the way the Name *Havayah* is to be pronounced throughout all generations, i.e., as the Name *Adni*.

The Name *Havayah* was allowed to be pronounced as it was written only when the Temple stood—and even then, only in the Temple itself.

So it is with the Torah, for G-d and His Name and the Torah are all one, for [as mentioned above], the Torah is all Names of the Holy One, blessed be He.

Just as G-d's Name possesses both a hidden and revealed dimension, so does the Torah, since the Torah is, after all, G-d's Name.

This is why Moses said: "When I proclaim the Name of G-d, give greatness to our G-d," meaning, "When I recite a blessing and say 'Blessed are You,' you should respond 'Blessed be He,' referring to our G-d Himself, referred to by the Name *Havayah*. When I then [continue and] say '*Adni*,' you should respond, 'and blessed is His Name,' referring to the Name *Adni*."

The Name *Havayah* is considered G-d's proper Name, and in many contexts is taken to refer to His essence (as opposed to any of His attributes). The Name *Adni*, in contrast, is just one of the various Names of G-d that refer to Him as He manifests Himself in one of His attributes—in this case, the attribute of kingship, since the word *Adni* literally means "my lord" or "my master." The essential idea here is that—except in the Holy Temple, where the revelation of G-d is most intense—the average person is not able to bear a direct revelation of G-d's essence and still retain his own independent existence. Rather, we refer to G-d, even when reciting a blessing in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person ("Blessed are *You*...") as the lord and master of the universe. That is, we relate to G-d as He is manifest in this world. This is, of course, a much lower aspect of Divinity than G-d's essence itself.

Thus, Moses is here telling the Jewish people: whenever I refer to G-d in a blessing as "You," i.e., I address G-d's essence, you should respond "Blessed is *He*," referring to G-d Himself, abstracted from any particular attribute. When I then pronounce G-d's Name (as *Adni*), you should respond "Blessed be His Name."

This is the mystical explanation of why after the first words of blessings ("Blessed are You, O G-d"), those hearing the blessing respond *baruch Hu uvaruch shemo*—"Blessed be He and blessed be His Name."

<sup>15</sup> Exodus 3:15.

<sup>16</sup> In modern Hebrew: *l'ha'alim*. *Pesachim* 50a.

Thus we see that G-d's Name possesses both a hidden and revealed dimension.

If you then ask, but why does G-d's Name itself need to have a hidden and revealed dimension? Would not the hidden dimension [i.e., the Name *Havayah*] be enough, seeing that it is the main and essential Name of G-d?

To answer this question, Moses continues: "The Rock, perfect are His deeds, for all His ways are just." "The Rock" refers to the Name *Adni*, which in turn refers to G-d's attribute of stern justice. As is known, the Name *Havayah* refers to the Divine attribute of mercy, while the Name *Adni*, when spelled backwards, spells "judgement" [*dina*]. The attribute of justice is necessary in order to reward the righteous and punish the wicked. For G-d wanted to create man with two inclinations—the good inclination and the evil inclination. This is why He is called "perfect," for both inclinations contribute to the service of G-d, yes, even the evil inclination. As our sages explained the verse "And you shall love *G-d*, your G-d, with all your heart..."—with both your inclinations: the good inclination and the evil inclination.<sup>17</sup>

The "evil inclination" motivates man to engage in activities that emphasize and aggrandize his material side, at the expense of his spiritual side. If the individual can harness this inclination and use it to see to the needs of those physical aspects of his life necessary for his continued and increasingly enhanced service of G-d, he is loving G-d with both his inclinations.

This is how the sage answered the heretic [who mocked the commandment of circumcision, saying that if G-d wanted man circumcised he would have created him thus. The sage answered: just as] beans need to be cooked [in order to be eaten, so does man need additional perfection even after he has been born the way G-d created him].<sup>18</sup> Similarly, G-d desired that man should rectify the evil within him by his own efforts, and in this way be perfected [by his own efforts].

—translated from *Likutei Torah*

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<sup>17</sup> *Berachot* 54a.

<sup>18</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 11:6.

## *Parashat Haazinu* [second installment]

This installment continues the passage presented in the first installment.

The Song of Moses, which constitutes the greater part of the portion of the Torah read this week, begins<sup>1</sup>:

<sup>1</sup>*Give ear, O heavens, and I shall speak,  
Let the earth hear the talk of my mouth.*

<sup>2</sup>*Let my teaching drip like rain,  
let my talk flow like dew,  
like droplets on new growth,  
like showers on grass.*

<sup>3</sup>*When I proclaim the Name of G-d,  
give greatness to our G-d.*

<sup>4</sup>*The Rock, perfect are His deeds,  
for all His ways are just.  
[He is] a steadfast G-d, [with] no corruption,  
righteous and upright is He.*

<sup>5</sup>*[If someone] corrupted, he did not corrupt Him,  
Their blemish is His children's,  
A stubborn and twisted generation.*

<sup>6</sup>*Shall you do this to G-d?  
You degenerate and unwise people?  
Is he not your Father, your creator?  
He made you and established you.*

At the end of the previous installment, we saw how the Arizal explained the verse “The Rock, perfect are His deeds” to mean that G-d created man imperfect in order to allow him to perfect himself through his own deeds.

This, then, is the mystical meaning of “The Rock, perfect are His deeds.” “His deed” refers to Adam, whom G-d formed with His own hands.<sup>2</sup>

The phrase “perfect are His deeds” is actually written in the singular: “perfect is His deed,” and thus can be understood to refer to G-d’s most perfect creation, Adam. The Arizal now relates this to the following verse from the Book of Habakkuk:

*G-d, I heard what I heard from you, and I was afraid.  
G-d, sustain Your deed in these years,  
In the midst of these years, make it known  
That in anger, You remember to be merciful.<sup>3</sup>*

Thus, [the prophet] Habakkuk, who was a reincarnation of Adam, said, “G-d...sustain Your *deed* in these years [of their exile].”

Habakkuk heard that G-d was going to exile the Jewish people, and was afraid. Since he was a reincarnation of Adam, the “deed” of G-d, he similarly refers to Israel as G-d’s “deed.” But the mystical meaning of this passage is as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 32:1-6.

<sup>2</sup> Agadat Bereishit 11, 19.

<sup>3</sup> Habakkuk 3:2.

When [G-d] called [Adam] in the Garden of Eden [after he sinned], He said, “Where are you?” [Referring to this, Habakkuk said, “G-d,] I heard what I heard from you, and I was afraid. G-d, sustain Your deed”—i.e., Adam—“in these years.” I.e., even though he will not live a thousand years, at least let him live “In the midst of these years,” i.e., most of them.

Adam was intended to live a thousand years. When he sinned, his life was shortened to 930 years.

From this, we see that the word “Your deed” refers to Adam.

Similarly, King David, who was [also] a reincarnation of Adam, said “A psalm, a song for the Sabbath day.”<sup>4</sup> It is known that Adam composed this psalm. King David said about Adam, “For I rejoiced, O G-d, in Your *deed*,”<sup>5</sup> referring to Adam, for [Adam] gave [King David] seventy of the years of his life. Were it not for this, [David] would have had no life at all.

When Adam sinned, G-d banished him from the Garden of Eden. This was on Friday afternoon, but Adam was allowed to stay in the Garden of Eden through Shabbat. He therefore composed the Psalm “A song for the Sabbath day.” When King David re-composed this Psalms thousands of years later, he did so as the reincarnation of Adam.

King David was destined to be a miscarriage, but when Adam prophetically saw this, he asked G-d to grant David 70 years of his own life, and indeed, King David lived for 70 years. This is another reason Adam’s life was shortened from 1000 to 930 years.<sup>6</sup>

David could not be born until [his grandfather] Oveid came and rectified Adam’s [sin of abrogating G-d’s] command “to *work* and to guard” [the Garden of Eden.] This is why he was called Oveid.

*Oveid* means “the one who works.” Only after someone had rectified Adam’s sin could his prayer be fulfilled.

And parallel to [G-d’s] curse to Adam, “you shall eat *bread* by the sweat of your brow,”<sup>7</sup> [King David’s father] Jesse was called “the Bethelomite” [literally, “of the house of My *bread*”].

In any case, this is another indication that the word “Your *deed*” refers to Adam.

We now return to the original subject of this exposition: why G-d created man “imperfect.”

And for this reason, G-d desired to create Adam with an evil inclination, so that he eat [the fruit] of his own efforts, achieved through his own toil, i.e., subdue the evil inclination.

“For all His ways are just,” and He does not want man to indulge and enjoy life in the Garden of Eden for free, the way the soul originally “ate off its father’s

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<sup>4</sup> Psalms 92:1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 92:5.

<sup>6</sup> *Zohar* 1:91b.

<sup>7</sup> Genesis 3:19.

table,” receiving charity and unearned gifts, before it came into this world. Rather, G-d desired that it come to this world and gather [the rewards of fulfilling the] commandments and [doing] good deeds. Only “then will it rejoice over G-d”<sup>8</sup> as a reward for its deeds, and not an unearned fashion.

Thus, since “all His ways are just,” Adam had to possess two inclinations, a good inclination and an evil inclination.

And [as well, G-d’s] Name had to possess both judgment and mercy, i.e., the revealed and the hidden, so that if Adam would sin, he could be punished for his wickedness. [For the same reason] the Torah also had to possess both an exoteric and esoteric dimension.

If you ask, how can it be said that “all His ways are just” when we see that there are wicked people who prosper [and righteous people who suffer]? For this reason, [Moses continued in his song,] replying first about the righteous [who suffer]: “[He is] a steadfast G-d,” and may be relied upon to give him his reward, i.e., [his just portion in] the World to Come. This is the same meaning as that of the verse, “...who guards the covenant and the loving-kindness [to repay those who love Him and keep His commandments] for a thousand generations,”<sup>9</sup> referring to the World to Come, which is the world that is all truth.

Unlike this world, wherein the righteous can suffer.

It is a thousand generations long. [G-d therefore] prefers not to repay [the righteous] in this world, in which life is short.

Concerning the wicked [who prosper, Moses] continued: “...[with] no corruption.”

Meaning: be assured that He is not miscalculating.

The fact that He bestows goodness upon him is because “He is righteous,” and is performing a kindness and charitable act with the wicked person.

Also, “He is upright,” and must therefore reward the righteous in the World to Come, in which there is enough time for Him to bestow on him all the honor due him.

If you then ask: since all the fearsomeness was created only to punish the wicked, it would appear that someone who causes a blemish [through sin] blemishes (G-d forbid) [the One] above. To this, [Moses] replied that it is not so. Rather, “[If] a person corrupts, he does not corrupt Him,” i.e., he does not corrupt [the One] above at all, only “His children [suffer] their blemish,” i.e., the blemish accrues to them, the children, alone.

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<sup>8</sup> Isaiah 58:14, interpreting the second person form of the verb as the third person.

<sup>9</sup> Deuteronomy 7:9.

[The result of sin] is called a blemish since man possesses 248 members and 365 sinews.

Since man's body is composed this way, it follows that the soul, in whose image the body is created, and which "fits" the body perfectly, also possesses 248 spiritual members, or aspects, and 365 spiritual sinews, or connecting channels.

Someone who neglects to perform an active commandment causes the [spiritual] member [of his soul] that corresponds to that commandment to be lacking altogether. But when he transgresses a passive commandment, it is similar to sticking a finger in an eye: he injures what he already possesses.

A "blemish" on the soul is thus caused by transgressing a passive commandment, by doing something one should not do.

This is the meaning of the phrase, "His children [suffer] *their* blemish."

G-d, however, may He be blessed, "makes plans so that no one pushed away will be pushed away [forever]."<sup>10</sup> He reincarnates the person two and three times, [in order to give him the opportunity to rectify his wrongdoings in subsequent incarnations]. This is the meaning of the phrase, "A stubborn and twisted generation." He brings the person into the world the first time, and he sins. He then has to be reincarnated a second time in order to rectify [his wrongdoings], but instead he makes things worse. Thus, he is called "stubborn." [G-d] then reincarnates him a third time, but the individual returns to his folly. This is the meaning of "twisted."

Therefore, he continues, "Shall you do this to G-d?" He acts for your good, but you anger Him.



The Arizal now returns to verse 3, "When I proclaim the Name of G-d, give greatness to our G-d."

An alternative explanation [of this verse]:

Moses said, "When I call upon the Name of G-d." He prayed about the exile in the psalm that begins "A prayer of Moses,"<sup>11</sup> as it is written [there], "Sate us in the morning with Your loving-kindness,"<sup>12</sup> referring to the "morning" of the redemption.

Exile is allegorically referred to as "night" and redemption as the "morning" that follows it.

Moses said: "When I pray about the exile"—this being the meaning of "When I call upon the Name of G-d"—"then you should 'give greatness to our G-d.'"

<sup>10</sup> 2 Samuel 14:14.

<sup>11</sup> Psalms 90.

<sup>12</sup> v. 14.

This is similar to the idea that “When Israel gazed upward and submitted their hearts to their Father in heaven, they prevailed.”<sup>13</sup>

When the Jews came out of Egypt, they were attacked by the Amalekites. G-d told Moses to send his disciple, Joshua to lead the Jews in battle against them. In the meantime, Moses ascended to a vantage point where he could observe the battle, and lifted his hands in prayer to G-d for victory. “And it was that when Moses would raise his hand that Israel prevailed, but when he rested his hand, Amalek prevailed.”<sup>14</sup> The sages teach us that it was not Moses’ hands that magically enabled the Jews to prevail or kept them from prevailing, but rather, when they saw his hands raised they raised their eyes heavenward and submitted their hearts to G-d, and G-d gave them the strength to prevail.

Although the plain meaning of this is that we should realize that our ability to succeed in life is dependent upon our submission to G-d’s will, the flip-side of this idea is that by the same token, G-d has set things up such that He cannot win His battles unless we “enable” Him to do so—by submitting to His will. Submitting to G-d’s will, on the one hand, is indeed an act of self-abnegation, but on the other hand, it puts us squarely in the driver’s seat, since only by doing this can G-d, so to speak, grant us the power to accomplish His purposes in the world.

Thus, Moses does his part as the leader by praying to G-d to alleviate the suffering of exile. But at the same time, he asks us to “give greatness to our G-d,” i.e., to grant G-d the power, so to speak, to grant us victory in fighting His battles.

Therefore he said, “*Give* [greatness to our G-d],” which is similar to the thought [implicit in the verse,] “*Give* strength to G-d.”<sup>15</sup> He, may He be blessed, only manifests His greatness and power when the Jewish people perform His will. This is also the meaning of [the continuation of] this verse, “...His greatness is [dependent] upon Israel.” Even though, [as the verse continues,] “His strength is in the heavens,” he nonetheless only manifests His greatness and power when the Jewish people do His will.

Even though strength is His to apportion as He sees fit, and He can do whatever He wants, He still refrains from exercising His power until the Jewish people submit to His will, so they can be fit to exercise this power.

From this we learn, as well, that G-d will only bestow true success and power upon those who have actualized their Divine potential enough to be able to properly use them. If a person is not sufficiently refined and subservient to G-d’s will, he will misuse the power.<sup>16</sup>

—translated from *Likutei Torah* and *Sefer HaLikutim*

<sup>13</sup> *Rosh Hashanah* 3:8.

<sup>14</sup> Exodus 17:11.

<sup>15</sup> Psalms 68:35. See third installment to *parashat Behar*, on this verse.

<sup>16</sup> “Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Lord Acton [John Emerich Edward Dalberg, 1st Baron Acton (1834–1902), British historian. Letter, April 3, 1887, to Bishop Mandell Creighton. *The Life and Letters of Mandell Creighton*, vol. 1, ch. 13, ed. Louise Creighton (1904).]

## *Parashat Haazinu* [third installment]

The Song of Moses, which constitutes the greater part of the portion of the Torah read this week, begins<sup>1</sup>:

<sup>1</sup>*Give ear, O heavens, and I shall speak,  
Let the earth hear the talk of my mouth.*

<sup>2</sup>*Let my teaching drip like rain,  
let my talk flow like dew,  
like droplets on new growth,  
like showers on grass.*

<sup>3</sup>*When I proclaim the Name of G-d,  
give greatness to our G-d.*

<sup>4</sup>*The Rock, His work is perfect,  
for all His ways are just.  
[He is] a trustworthy G-d, [with] no corruption,  
righteous and upright is He.*

<sup>5</sup>*[If someone] corrupted, he did not corrupt Him,  
Their blemish is His children's,  
A stubborn and twisted generation.*

<sup>6</sup>*Shall you do this to G-d?  
You degenerate and unwise people?  
Is he not your Father, your creator?  
He made you and established you.*

<sup>7</sup>*Remember the days of old,  
Consider the years of ages past;  
Ask your father, he will inform you,  
Your elders, they will tell you:*

<sup>8</sup>*When the Most High gave nations their homes  
And set the divisions of man,  
He fixed the boundaries of [the] peoples  
In relation to Israel's numbers.*

<sup>9</sup>*For G-d's portion is His people,  
Jacob is the rope of His inheritance.*

<sup>10</sup>*He found him in a desert region,  
In an empty, howling waste.  
He engirded him, watched over him,  
Guarded him as the pupil of His eye.*

<sup>11</sup>*Like an eagle, who rouses his nestlings,  
Gliding down to his young,  
So did He spread His wings and take him,  
Bear him along on His pinions;*

<sup>12</sup>*G-d alone did guide him,  
No alien god at His side.*

<sup>13</sup>*He set him atop the highlands,  
To feast on the yield of the earth;  
He fed him honey from the rock,  
And oil from the flint rock,*

<sup>14</sup>*Curd of cows and milk of flocks;  
With the best of lambs,*

*And rams of Bashan, and he-goats;  
With the very finest wheat—  
And foaming grape-blood was your drink.  
<sup>15</sup>So Yeshurun grew fat and kicked—  
You grew fat and gross and coarse—  
He weakened the G-d who made him  
And forgot the Rock of his support.*

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 32:1-6.

This installment continues the passage presented in the second installment, in which the Arizal, discussing verse 3 in the above passage (“give greatness to our G-d”), noted how G-d created the world such that when we submit to G-d’s will, we “enable” Him to accomplish His purpose in this world. In this sense, we “strengthen” G-d, so to speak.

How is it possible for mortal man to “give strength to his King”<sup>1</sup>?

We will answer this by first discussing the heretics’ question:<sup>2</sup> why does the Torah quote G-d as saying “Let *us* make man,”<sup>3</sup> in the plural, instead of “*I* shall make man,” inasmuch as He alone, may He be blessed, is the Creator. As it is written [in this *parashah*], “See, now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me.”<sup>4</sup>

As recounted in the Midrash, when Moses was writing this passage, he asked G-d why He phrased it in such a way as to allow a heretic to “prove” plurality in the G-dhead, G-d forbid. G-d replied, “Write, and whoever wishes to err may err,” for G-d wanted to teach us a lesson by “consulting” with the other forces of creation, namely, that a great person should consider the opinion of his inferiors when he is about to do something. Here, the Arizal gives the mystical reason for this phraseology.

The answer is that He, may He be blessed, created all four worlds—*Atzilut*, *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*—and in order to connect them all together, he created man, for he consists of elements of all the worlds. It was to all the worlds that G-d said “Let *us* make man,” so that the world of *Beriah* could contribute [man’s] *neshamah*, and *Yetzirah* the *ruach*.

The Arizal here discusses four aspects of the soul: the *nefesh*, or vital soul; the *ruach*, or emotions; the *neshamah*, or intellect, and the life-soul (or “breath of life”). These four correspond in ascending order to the four worlds.

[The *ruach*] is the part of [man’s makeup] derived from the angels, for there is no Jew who does not possess part of a heavenly angel. Therefore, in Egypt, it is written, “These are the names of the children of Israel...”—referring to the angels, “...who came to Egypt with Jacob,”<sup>5</sup> down below.

Jacob and Israel are both names of the patriarch Jacob, so the fact that both are used in the same verse begs explanation. The *Zohar*<sup>6</sup> explains that “Israel” refers to the angelic dimension of the Jewish people, which descended into the Egyptian exile together with “Jacob,” their earthly dimension.

This is [the mystical meaning of] the verse, “And the Israelites traveled from Ramses, *about* six hundred thousand foot[-soldiers].”<sup>7</sup> [At first blush], it sounds as if Scripture was just estimating how many there were, but G-d forbid [that we should think this], since everything is revealed before G-d—certainly something as

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Samuel 2:10.

<sup>2</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 8:8.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 1:26.

<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 32:19.

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 1:1.

<sup>6</sup> 2:4b.

<sup>7</sup> Exodus 12:37.

simple as this! Rather, *the Israelites* said about the angels that went of Egypt [with them]: just like six hundred thousand of them went out below, so went out the same number of angels above.

The world of *Asiyah* contributed the *nefesh* [to man].

After this, G-d contributed His portion [to man], as it is written, “And He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.”<sup>8</sup> Note that here it does not say, “And *they* breathed” in the plural.

So here we have the answer to Moses’ question: “Let *us* make man” refers to G-d and the three lower worlds. “And *He* breathed” refers to G-d Himself, introducing the purely Divine aspect of the soul into the person. This is considered here as the “contribution” of the world of *Atzilut*, the world of Divine unity and absolute Divine consciousness.

When a person sins, his Divine element departs [from his body] first so that it not be blemished [by the sin]. The person thus only blemishes the parts of his soul contributed by the various worlds.

It is therefore understood why the Torah says “Let *us* make man,” even though G-d alone is the creator.

This is analogous to a king who gave a *maneh* to a number of people, but to one person he did not give anything, but rather told all the others to each give him a *sela* from what he had given them.

The *maneh* and the *sela* are coins that were used in Talmudic times; there are 25 *selas* in a *maneh*. In the analogy, since the king gave the other people what they in turn gave the one person, all that the one person received may be considered to be from the king. So, too, even though man received his subordinate aspects from the three lower worlds, since these receive everything they possess from G-d, man in effect is created only by G-d.

Therefore, “a righteous person rules by the fear of G-d,”<sup>9</sup> for the [Divine] portion of his life-soul is within him, which is part of the King, “a portion of G-d above.”<sup>10</sup> He is like the viceroy to whom the king has given his signet ring. As long as he possesses the king’s seal, he is [accorded] the honor of the king [himself], and even the king himself will not contravene his decrees.

It is axiomatic in Judaism that G-d fulfills the decrees of the righteous, as it is written, “He does the will of those who fear Him.”<sup>11</sup>

It follows that when a person is good and goes in the ways of G-d, he connects all the worlds together and “gives power to his King.” Thus, it is written [in this *parashah*], “...give greatness to our G-d.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Genesis 2:7.

<sup>9</sup> 2 Samuel 23:3.

<sup>10</sup> Job 31:2.

<sup>11</sup> Psalms 145:19.

<sup>12</sup> Deuteronomy 32:3.

The Torah then explains how a person gives power to Him, saying, it is because G-d is “the Rock, His work is perfect.” That is, man is His “work” and He created him perfect, giving him a portion of all the worlds.

Why did He do this? Because “all His ways are just.” This means that when a person performs a commandment, the angel [within him] is also considered to have performed it, and it benefits from his good deed. Every person possesses an angelic component, and G-d desires that all creatures be sustained on the merit of their deeds and not live off [His] charity. But an angel does not possess free choice, so he could never be sustained on his own merit; [he can be sustained] only through [the merits of] the person of whom he is a part. The good deed of the person is considered for the angel as if *he* did it. This is the inner meaning of the phrase, “for all His ways are just.”

It is better to be sustained by the merit of one’s good deeds, for otherwise one is living off of G-d’s “charity” and he eats “the bread of shame.” Since an angel has no evil inclination, he does not possess free choice (for he has nothing to choose between). Therefore, he cannot be sustained by his own merits, for he has no way of overcoming obstacles and thereby accruing merit. By connecting man with the angels, G-d enables the angels to partake of man’s merits and be sustained through them.

This consideration for the “feelings” of the angels is called His “justice.”

Continuing with this verse, “[He is] a trustworthy G-d...”:

G-d nourishes and provides for the portion of the person’s soul of life that He breathed into his nostrils. When the person in this world is not occupied with learning the Torah and performing the commandments—which is the soul’s nourishment—when he sleeps, [the soul] ascends on high and is sustained by the radiance of G-d’s glory.

But G-d is “a trustworthy G-d,” and returns the soul into the body, even against its will. [The soul] would have been perfectly happy to remain there [in heaven], for it is the King’s daughter, and would He refuse to feed it? Nonetheless, G-d is trustworthy with [the soul,] the deposit [he received from the person, and returns it to him].

This is the [allegorical] meaning of the verse, “[It is good]...to declare Your loving-kindness in the morning and your trustworthiness at night.”<sup>13</sup> It is fitting to recount Your loving-kindness in the morning by referring to the trustworthiness that You demonstrate by night, [for in the morning, when people wake up,] You “return [their] souls back into [their nearly] lifeless bodies.”<sup>14</sup>

This is the [allegorical] meaning of the verse, “Renewed every morning, [great is Your trustworthiness].”<sup>15</sup> [G-d] not only acts with loving-kindness toward

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<sup>13</sup> Psalms 92:3.

<sup>14</sup> Liturgy, Morning Blessings.

<sup>15</sup> Lamentations 3:23.

man by returning [his soul] to him; He also renews it and strengthens it before He returns it.

People generally wake up refreshed, not only with renewed physical capacities but with renewed optimism and patience as well.

[The quoted verse] thus means, “From the fact that You renew it every morning can be seen how great is Your trustworthiness, for You return to the person more than he entrusted to Your care.”

This is also the meaning of the phrase, “Into Your hand I entrust my spirit [*ruach*].”<sup>16</sup> The *nefesh* remains in the body while the person sleeps, for this is the difference between sleep and death. In death, the *nefesh* leaves as well. But in sleep, the *nefesh* remains, but the *ruach* [together with the levels of the soul above it] ascends above.

This verse is the last sentence in the liturgy surrounding the recital of *Shema* upon going to sleep at night, before the final blessing.

Thus it is written, “Into Your hand I entrust my *ruach*; [redeem me, G-d of truth.]” Meaning: “Even though I owe You, and [You] would be justified in not returning it, You nonetheless redeem me and return it to me, because You are a faithful G-d.”

During the course of the day we generally abuse the soul G-d gives us and cause all kinds of spiritual damage, for which we “owe” G-d reparation, and therefore, He should by right hold on to the soul that we entrust to His keeping during the night. Nonetheless, He trusts that we will fulfill our daily promises to better ourselves and returns the deposit for our use the following morning.

The faithfulness/trustworthiness of G-d is indicated in the next verse in the *parashah*, “He is a *trustworthy* G-d, with no corruption.”

Moreover, [this verse indicates that] He does no wrongdoing to the soul, [as it states, “with no corruption.”] He even returns it, against its will, to this world, for on the contrary, this is for its greater good, as it written before [in the continuation of this verse], “Righteous and upright is He,” and He wants it to be sustained on its own merit.

The next verse reads, “[If someone] corrupted, he did not corrupt Him; their blemish is His children’s.”

If the person sins and causes corruption, he does not corrupt *Him*, G-d forbid, for a person never causes a blemish in his [Divine] life-soul, for it departs as he is about to sin. Rather, “their blemish is His children’s,” i.e., in the aspects of the person he receives from the other worlds, which are the angels [from these worlds], who are “His children.” The blemish occurs in them.

And [the recalcitrant sinner] undergoes reincarnation for his own good, as the verse continues, “A stubborn and twisted generation.”

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<sup>16</sup> Psalms 31:6.

If the person is stubborn and does not repent of his sins, he must be reincarnated (“twisted”) into another generation.

The song continues, “Shall you do this to G-d?” Meaning: is it fitting for you to be so ungrateful to G-d, who bestows such loving-kindness upon you?

The following phrase, “You degenerate and unwise people” seems not to be logically parallel. It should have either said, “You degenerate and miserly people” or “You stupid and unwise people.”

In Hebrew, the two adjectives are couched as opposites: “x and not y.” Thus, logically, they should be the inverse of each other, either “degenerate and not-generous” or “stupid and not-wise.” Instead, two unrelated concepts seem to be juxtaposed.

[The explanation is that] “degenerate” here means “ungrateful.” And [the sense of the continuation is that] even if you were ungrateful and did not walk in G-d’s ways, if you were at least wise, or understanding, or intelligent, you would deserve some [Divine] beneficence because of your wisdom. But you lack wisdom, let alone good deeds.

[The verse continues:] “Is he not your Father, your creator?” Meaning, He placed a part of Himself in you, the life-soul He breathed into you.

Betraying this act of goodness is ingratitude of the first order.

He also did the following for you: “When the Most High gave nations their homes....”

This phrase reads literally: “When [He] caused to inherit—the supernal [One]—the nations [their homes],” and may thus also be read, “When [He] caused the supernal [ones] to inherit the nations.” Thus—

[“The supernal ones”] refers to the seventy angelic princes, under whose dominion G-d placed the seventy [archetypal] earthly nations.

And how does each person recognize his [national] identity and people? [The answer is given in the continuation of the verse,] “He set the divisions of man” when He confounded their languages [at the Tower of Babel],<sup>17</sup> and each [angelic prince] was given a different language. The angelic prince corresponding to each language took the nation that G-d gave that language to as his own.

The different language-groups are not simply arbitrarily different ways of saying the same thing, but reflect the deep cultural differences and ways of thinking that define the various races and cultures.

[G-d] gave each [nation its distinctive language and culture] only for the sake of Israel. That is why there are seventy [of them],<sup>18</sup> corresponding to the seventy [archetypal] souls of Jacob’s children who descended to Egypt.<sup>19</sup>

As the verse continues, “He fixed the boundaries of [the] peoples in relation to Israel’s numbers.”

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<sup>17</sup> Genesis 11:1-9.

<sup>18</sup> Genesis 10.

<sup>19</sup> Genesis 46:27; Exodus 1:5.

These seventy were the roots of all the souls of all Israel. G-d gave whatever He gave to the angelic princes [of the nations] only so that He could extract from them His portion, His people, as the song continues, “For G-d’s portion is His people.”

Even though this process began with Abraham, Ishmael issued from him. [The process] continued with Isaac, but Esau issued from him. [Therefore,] Jacob was the main [forefather], for he was the third, possessing a triple-merit, like “a rope that is twisted from three strands that will not quickly be snapped.”<sup>20</sup> This is indicated in the continuation of this verse: “[Jacob] is the rope of His inheritance,” for there was no imperfection found in his offspring, [unlike Abraham and Isaac].

Abraham and Isaac personified *chesed* and *gevurah* respectively. Both of these emotions can lead to excess if not properly balanced. The proper balance was achieved in Jacob, who personified *tiferet*, the harmonious blend of *chesed* and *gevurah*. Therefore, Jacob did not have any wayward offspring, and he is considered the exclusive patriarch of the Jewish people.

After continuing to recount G-d’s deeds of loving-kindness to His people, Moses’ song continues: “[The people] weakened the G-d who made him, and spurned the Rock of his support.”

“He weakened the G-d who made him,” for by requiring to be reincarnated time after time, the person gives the impression that G-d is weak (G-d forbid), in that He is powerless to better him the first time. This analogous to an unskilled potter who cannot produce a well-formed vessel the first try, and has to keep trying an number of times.

“And forgot the Rock of his support.” It does not say “He did not know...” but “he forgot.” For if, in the second or third incarnation, the person would remember what he suffered the first time for sinning, and how he was expelled from Paradise, he would not repeat [the same sins] during these incarnations. But he forgets and repeats them, “as a dog returns to his vomit.”<sup>21</sup>

In this context, the Arizal now explains the following verse: “And then I saw the wicked being buried and coming, and they went from a holy place, and they were forgotten in the city, what they did. And this was another waste.”<sup>22</sup> He interprets “they were forgotten” as if it said “they forgot.”

This is alluded to in the following verse: “And then I saw the wicked being buried,” but after they were buried the first time, they return to this world. Therefore it is written, “and coming,” because they were rejected from Paradise. This is referred to by the words, “and they went from a holy place,” i.e., Paradise. Had they then remembered their original sins, for which they were now suffering, they would not repeat them. But they forget all they did during their first incarnation, as it says, “and they forgot in the city,” i.e., in this world, “what they did” the first time they were here, and they “return to their vomit.” Thus, the

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<sup>20</sup> Ecclesiastes 4:12.

<sup>21</sup> Proverbs 26:11.

<sup>22</sup> Ecclesiastes 8:10.

second or third time they were reincarnated was a waste, for they did not rectify anything, but, on the contrary, made things worse. Thus it says, “this was another waste.”

Generally, it is not people’s fault that they do not remember what they did in their previous incarnations; this knowledge is usually denied us. Nonetheless, the very fact that most of us are reincarnations of people who lived previously should give us enough pause to evaluate our lives and realize that we are probably being tested in this life specifically in those areas that “we” failed in the previous lifetime(s).

—translated from *Likutei Torah* and *Sefer HaLikutim*

## *Parashat VeZot HaBerachah*

Moses' farewell blessing to the Jewish people begins:

*"G-d came from Sinai, and shone forth from Se'ir to them,  
He appeared from Mt. Paran, and came from amongst the holy ten-thousands,  
He gave them a fiery law from His right hand."*<sup>1</sup>

The second word "came" in this verse [*atah*] is in Aramaic.

The first "came" is in the usual Hebrew (*ba*).

It is explained in the *Zohar*<sup>2</sup> on the verse "After these things, the word of G-d came to Abram in a vision..."<sup>3</sup> that the word used for "vision" here [*machazeh*] is in Aramaic since Abraham was still uncircumcised at this point. G-d therefore revealed Himself to him in Aramaic, so the ministering angels would not be jealous.

Aramaic is considered an intermediary language, not possessing the absolute holiness of Hebrew but holier than the other languages of the world. Its occasional use in the Bible testifies to its secondary holiness. The angels, who are absolute pure beings, know only Hebrew, and so when G-d does not want them to "eavesdrop" on what He is saying, He uses Aramaic.<sup>4</sup> Once Abraham was circumcised, he was holy enough that the angels would not be jealous when G-d revealed Himself to him in Hebrew.

The same idea applies here. The verse is informing us that when the Holy One, blessed be He, came to give the Torah to Israel, His coming was camouflaged in Aramaic. The word "came" is therefore in Aramaic.

The reason He had to do this was, as the verse continues, "the holy ten-thousands," i.e., the angels, that they not make accusations against them and prevent the giving of the Torah.

We are taught that when Moses ascended to heaven to receive the Torah from G-d and bring it to Israel, the angels argued that mortal man was not holy enough to receive the holy Torah. Moses therefore had to plead the case of humanity in order that the angels "allow" G-d to give the Torah to the Jewish people. The argument Moses used was that the Torah speaks of refining the animal nature of man, etc., and therefore rightfully belongs to beings that possess an animal nature and evil inclination, i.e., humans, and not angels.

Of course, angels, being created by G-d, cannot "prevent" G-d from doing anything He wishes. This account simply means that indeed, from one perspective, the holiness of the Torah and the mundane nature of man are incompatible. This perspective was personified as the angels that argued against the giving of the Torah to man. Although correct, this perspective is overridden by Moses' argument that it is precisely the mundane nature of man that renders him most in need of the sanctifying influence of the Torah.

Since the Torah was in fact given to the Jewish people in Hebrew—not in Aramaic—it is evidently to this idea that the Arizal is referring to in this passage. The Torah as we read, know, and experience it is merely a "translation" of the pristine, holy, spiritual Torah known in heaven. "Up there," the Torah discusses the dynamics

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 33:2.

<sup>2</sup> *Zohar* 1:88b.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 15:1.

<sup>4</sup> *Shabbat* 12b; *Sotah* 33a.

and topology of holiness and the holy realms, and speaks nothing of sin, non-kosher animals, murder, and the like. It is only when the Torah descends earthward that the Torah speaks of these things.

More precisely: the Torah is the same both “up there” and “down here,” but “up there,” the words we identify as referring to all these mundane concepts are naturally read and interpreted to refer to sublime, spiritual concepts. Only in the context of this world do the words of the Torah take on their familiar, mundane meanings.

In this fashion we can also understand the verse: “[One calls to me out of Se’ir: ‘Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?’ The watchman said: ‘The morning comes, and also the night.’] If you will inquire, inquire, return, *come*.”<sup>5</sup> The word “*come*” is in Aramaic.

In fact, a number of words in this verse are in Aramaic.

The reason for this is that “a tunnel is carved out under the throne of glory for the penitent,” in order that the ministering angels not voice accusations against him.

This was done specifically in the case of Menasheh, the evil king.<sup>6</sup> The ministering angels protested, saying “How can you accept the penitence of someone who served idols and set up a graven image in the Temple?” G-d replied, “if I do not accept his penitence, I am closing the door to all penitents.” He then carved out the tunnel, etc. In any case, we have here the same idea of G-d using tricks to bypass the angelic order. This is because the angels are the “cogs” and “gears” in the orderly functioning of creation, each angel signifying a different aspect of the created order G-d set up as the way the world should run. *Teshuvah*, or repentance, is in essence an overriding of this order, since in the natural order, crime results in punishment. As the saying goes, “nature is unforgiving.” In order for G-d to forgive, He must act “supernaturally,” i.e., circumvent His own created order.

Therefore, the prophet said “*come*” [*eitayu*] in Aramaic.

“Come” here means “come back to Me.” Since *teshuvah* overrides the created order, the word referring to it is here said in Aramaic, using the same root as the word *atah*, above.

The fact that the giving of the Torah, as mentioned above, was also couched in Aramaic, therefore indicates as well that although the Torah appears to be a strict compendium of laws and punishments, its inner dimension is the mechanism of *teshuvah*, which overrides the strict laws of nature and enables man to return to G-d despite everything.

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Two verses later, Moses says that the Jewish people are worthy of being blessed because they say:

*The Torah that Moses commanded us is an inheritance for the community of Jacob.*<sup>7</sup>

Our sages have said that “the imperfect version of the supernal wisdom is the Torah.”<sup>8</sup>

The full quote reads: “Rabbi Chaninah bar Yitzchak said: There are three unripe fruits: the unripe fruit of death is sleep; the unripe fruit of prophecy is the dream; the unripe fruit of the world to come is the Sabbath. Rabbi Avin added two more: the unripe fruit of the supernal light is the orb of the sun; the unripe fruit of the supernal

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<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 21:11-12.

<sup>6</sup> *Y. Sanhedrin* 10:2

<sup>7</sup> Deuteronomy 33:4.

<sup>8</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 17:5.

wisdom is the Torah.” The idiom of “unripe fruits” obviously means “imperfect versions,” not “something that will develop into its full version.”

Know that the Torah is the *yesod* of *Abba* present inside *Z’eir Anpin*, and is derived from it’s [i.e., *yesod* of *Abba*’s] power.

*Abba*, the *partzuf* of *chochmah*, is the “supernal wisdom” referred to in the above statement of our sages. It is the seminal insight of creation, the distilled essence of G-d’s creation and its purpose. *Yesod* of *Abba* is the drive within *Abba* for self-actualization, i.e., the drive the point of creation possesses to actualize itself, to make itself known and manifest in creation itself. Obviously, this is the essence and purpose of the Torah, which is both the blueprint and user’s manual for creation. *Z’eir Anpin* is the spiritual precursor of man, and as we saw above, the Torah can be truly fulfilled only when given to mankind.

From that which falls out of it [i.e., of *Abba*] and goes outside of it, to *Z’eir Anpin*, issues [the *partzuf* of] Jacob, who is synonymous with the Torah.

The *partzuf* of *Yaakov* (“Jacob”) is one of the ten secondary *partzufim* that develop out of the primary array of six *partzufim*.<sup>9</sup>

We are taught that “the world stands on three things: on the Torah, on the [sacrificial or prayer] service, and on deeds of loving-kindness.”<sup>10</sup> The three pillars of the world are personified by the three patriarchs: Abraham was famous for his deeds of loving-kindness, as evidenced by his hospitality and pleas to save the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Isaac was known for his fervent prayer. Jacob was characterized as “a sincere man, sitting in tents,”<sup>11</sup> which, we are taught, refers to the tents of Torah study.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse: “The Torah the Moses commanded us,” for Moses is an appellate for *yesod* of *Abba*.

Moses was the individual through whom the Torah was given to the Jewish people, and as we saw above, is even described as being the one who successfully rebutted the arguments of the angels against it being given to mankind altogether. He thus personifies the drive within *Abba* for actualization, or *yesod* of *Abba*.

It is he who brought forth the Torah, which is “the community of Jacob,” i.e., the lights collected in [the *partzuf* of] Jacob.

\* \* \*

In the course of his blessing, Moses blesses each tribe individually. Part of his blessing to his own tribe, that of Levi, reads:

*They will teach Your judgements to Jacob,  
and Your Torah to Israel.  
They will place incense in Your nostril,  
and the burnt offering on Your altar.  
Bless, O G-d, his legions....*<sup>12</sup>

The initials of the words for “They will place incense in Your nostril” [*yasimu ketorah b’apecha*] spell *Yabok*.

<sup>9</sup> See, *inter alia*, *The Mystery of Marriage*, p. 436.

<sup>10</sup> *Avot* 1:2.

<sup>11</sup> *Genesis* 25:27.

<sup>12</sup> *Deuteronomy* 33:10-11.

As we have mentioned previously, the *Yabok* (or “Jabbok”) river was where Jacob wrested with the angel of Esau, and thus represents the struggle between good and evil.

Also, the sum of the numerical values of the initials of the words for “On Your altar; bless...” [*al mizbechecha bareich*] is the same as the numerical value of *Yabok*.

The numerical value of *Yabok* (*yud-beit-kuf*,  $10+2+100$ ) is 112; the numerical value of these initials (*ayin-mem-beit*,  $70+40+2$ ) is also 112.

Furthermore, the numerical value of the word for incense [*ketorah*] with the *kolel* is the same as that of the Name *Ekyeh* plus that of the word for “in mercy.”

*Ketorah* (*kuf-tet-vav-reish-hei*,  $100+9+6+200+5$ ) = 320, adding one for the word as a whole (the *kolel*) gives 321. The numerical value of the Name *Ekyeh* (*alef-hei-yud-hei*,  $1+5+10+5$ ) is 21; that of “in mercy” (*berachamim*, *beit-reish-chet-mem-yud-mem*,  $2+200+8+40+10+40$ ) is 300; together,  $21 + 300 = 321$ .

To explain: The Name *Havayah* signifies G-d’s attribute of mercy. This Name in *atbash* is *mem-tzadik-pei-tzadik*, the numerical value of which is 300, which is the numerical value of the word for “in mercy.” The Name *Ekyeh* signifies G-d’s attribute of strict judgement, since it is associated with the *partzuf* of *Ima*, the source of judgement.

The Name *Havayah*, being G-d’s “proper” Name, is in many cases devoid of any association with any of G-d’s attributes. When it is associated with G-d’s attributes, it signifies the attribute of mercy, the inner dimension of the *sefirah* of *tiferet*.

*Atbash* is the letter-substitution system in which the first letter of the alphabet is substituted for the last, the second for the second-to-last, and so on. (*Alef* thus is replaced by *tav* and *beit* by *shin*, hence the abbreviation *atbash*.) Thus, the fact that the *atbash* of the Name *Havayah* is numerically equivalent to the words for “in mercy” indicates that this Name signifies complete mercy, “inside and out.”

We have explained previously that the Name *Ekyeh* is associated with *binah*. In its role as the analyzer of the insight of *chochmah*, *binah* must make use of the attribute of judgement in order to weigh the validity of the various associations between the new insight and the existing mental structure that suggest themselves.

Burning the incense caused the Name *Havayah* to combine with the attribute of judgement. This is alluded to in the word for “incense,” as mentioned.

The word for “incense” used in this verse (*ketorah*) is numerically the sum of the Name *Ekyeh* (21) plus “in mercy” (300), i.e., the union of the Names *Ekyeh* and *Havayah* (the latter being numerically included in this equation by virtue of its numerical value in *atbash*).

At any nexus point in the struggle between good and evil (signified by the confrontation between Jacob and the angel of Esau at the Jabbok river), the goal is to “sweeten” the severe judgements, in order that evil (or negativity) be subdued and subsumed within holiness.

The above exposition explains, as Rabbi Shmuel Vital (son of Rabbi Chaim Vital) notes, why the word *ketorah* is used in this verse rather than the more usual *ketoret*. Obviously, the numerical equivalencies would not work if the usual form of the word were used.

[Burning the incense] also caused the Name *Havayah*, which signifies G-d’s attribute of mercy, to combine with another [Name that indicates G-d’s] attribute of judgement, *Elokim*, in order to mitigate its power. This combination is alluded to in the word *Yabok*, whose numerical value [112] is the same as the combined numerical values of the Names *Havayah* [26] and *Elokim* [86].

Thus, we have here another indication of the power of the incense to sweeten the attribute of judgment. We are told that, in at least one instance, when G-d got angry at the Jewish people, the incense stayed His wrath (Numbers 17:6-15).

This is the mystical meaning of the word “in Your nostril,” for as we have noted, the incense sweetened the power of strict judgement.

The Hebrew word for “nostril” (*af*) also means “anger.”

—translated from *Likutei Torah*, *Sha’ar HaPesukim*, and *Sefer HaLikutim*

## *Parashat VeZot HaBerachah* [second installment]

In Moses' blessing to the tribe of Joseph, he says that Joseph's portion of the Land of Israel is blessed "with choice fruits that are produce of [the light of] the sun, and with choice fruits brought forth by the [light of the] moon."<sup>1</sup> There are two synonyms for "moon" in Hebrew, *levanah* (literally, "white") and *yareiach*. Here, the latter synonym is used, and it is in the plural, so the literal translation of the second half of the verse would be, "...and with choice fruits brought forth by the moons."

The difference between [the terms] *yareiach* and *levanah* is that *yareiach* signifies the moon in its blemished state, while *levanah* signifies the full moon. This is why term *yareiach* appears in the plural, while the term *levanah* never does.

Since there are many forms of the "incomplete" moon but only one form of the full moon, *yareiach* can appear in the plural form, whereas it would be inappropriate for *levanah* to take the plural. The meaning of the verse now can be understood to be: "...and with choice fruits that are brought forth by the various phases and appearances of the moon."

This is also the meaning of the verse: "A righteous person will blossom in his days, and abundant peace until there be no *yareiach*."<sup>2</sup> This verse is cast in the future, when the moon will no longer be called *yareiach*, but only *levanah*.

As we have seen, the moon is a manifestation of the *sefirah* of *malchut*, the source of the souls of the Jewish people. As such, the waxing and waning of the moon is understood to reflect the spiritual rise and fall of the fortunes of the Jews. Moreover, the moon was originally intended to be equal to the sun (which is a manifestation of *Z'vir Anpin*), but in order to precipitate history and the odyssey of exile and redemption, the moon was diminished, i.e., sent to retrieve the sparks of holiness from the exile. The messianic redemption, the return of the Jewish people to their homeland, and the fulfillment of history, are thus conceived of as the return of the moon to its original full-time full state, and even its eventual restoration to the brightness of the sun. The verse quoted, speaking of the messianic era, thus refers to the future as the time when the term *yareiach*—referring to the unending waxing and waning of the moon—will no longer be relevant.

\* \* \*

Moses' blessing to the tribe of Gad was: "Blessed be He who expands Gad; He dwells like a young lion, and rips off the arm [of his prey] together with the skull."<sup>3</sup> In discussing this verse, the Arizal will refer also to Jacob's blessing to his son Gad: "Troops will sally forth from Gad, and they will come back on their own heels."<sup>4</sup>

What is stated in the *Zohar* is well-known, namely, that [the name *Gad*] alludes to "the white *coriander* seed."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 33:14.

<sup>2</sup> Psalms 72:7.

<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy 33:20.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 49:19.

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 16:31.

The name *Gad* is also the word in Hebrew for “coriander.” In the verse quoted, the manna is described as being similar in appearance to this seed.

[Concerning this,] it is stated in the *Zohar*,<sup>6</sup> “do not read [only] ‘coriander’ but [also] ‘[male reproductive] organ.’”

By adding a *yud* to the word *gad* (which is spelled *gimel-dalet*), the word for “nerve,” “sinew,” “male reproductive organ” (*gid*, spelled *gimel-yud-dalet*) is produced. Since the *yud* in *gid* serves no consonantal purpose, it can be viewed as a vowel-letter. In this way, a simple vowel change transforms *gad* into *gid*. Thus, the word *gad* can justifiably be considered to phonetically allude to the word *gid*.

What we gain from this is that the verse describing the manna can now be read: “...it was like the white seed of the male reproductive organ” and Moses’ blessing to Gad as: “Blessed be He who expands the male reproductive organ.” The Arizal will now go on to explain the mystical significance of this.

This provides the mystical meaning of the verse: “And G-d said to the fish, and it vomited out Jonah onto the dry land.”<sup>7</sup> [This refers to] the emission of the drop [of male seed] into the place referred to as “the dry land,” as it is written, “and the dry land appeared.”<sup>8</sup>

The “dry land” is an appellation of *malchut*, the feminine archetype. In this imagery, *malchut* is the dry land waiting to be fertilized by the introduction of potent, fruit-producing seed, and/or by the drop of rain that promote growth. Similarly, *malchut*, the avenue of expression for Divine consciousness, possesses no intrinsic content but rather awaits the “rain” of the *sefirot* above it (channeled through *yesod*, the male archetype, or specifically, the male reproductive organ) to “fertilize” it with Divine content it will then express in the world.

In the *Zohar*, Jonah is taken as a representation of this Divine seed of consciousness because his name alludes to the process of its transmission through the *sefirot*. Jonah (*Yonah*) is spelled *yud-vav-nun-hei*. The *yud* signifies the initial flash of Divine insight, *chochmah*, as we have seen many times before. The *vav* signifies the descent of this “seed” down the spinal column (alluded to by the straight form of the *vav*) as it is processed through the subsequent *sefirot*, all the while gaining more and more substantiation, until it reaches *netzach* and *hod*, indicated in Jonah’s name by their initials, *nun* and *hei*. This pair completes the processing of the Divine insight, transforming it into a communicable idea, and passes it on to *yesod* either as a spiritual seed of consciousness and/or the impulse to produce physical reproductive seed. In this context, the “fish” is the male reproductive organ, which “vomits out” the seed into the world, just as Jonah, once he accepted his prophetic mission, could no longer remain in the fish, but had to emerge in order to transmit his Divine insight to reality. The “dry land,” again, is *malchut*, the female, the means of expression, the only way the whole process can come to fruition and the Divine insight can be brought productively into reality. As we have seen previously, without proper mating with the female, the spiritual or physical seed is “wasted,” i.e., produces negative (“evil”) energy, detracting from the collective Divine consciousness of reality rather than enhancing it.

All this will be better understood by prefacing it with understanding the verse: “Gad, troops will sally forth from him, and he will return on his heel.”

This verse is actually a play on words. The name *Gad* produces the word for “troop” (*gedud*) by repeating its second letter and adding the vowel-letter *vav* in between them: *Gad* (*gimel-dalet*) becomes *gedud* (*gimel-dalet-vav-dalet*). The word for “will sally forth from him” is this same word from “troop” made into a verb, as if to say, “troops will troop out of him.” Finally, the word for “will return” (*yagud*) is another form of the word *gad/gedud*.

Here is alluded that which we said above concerning how “coriander” [*gad*] becomes “male reproductive organ” [*gid*].

<sup>6</sup> *Tikunei Zohar* 21 (54a).

<sup>7</sup> Jonah 2:11.

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 1:9.

That is, the word for “troop” [*gedud*] can be seen as a combination of the word *gad* plus the letters *vav-dalet*. [Inasmuch as the numerical value of the two letters *vav-dalet* is 10,] this refers to the *yud* [whose numerical value is 10] inserted into *gad* [to form the word *gid*].

*Vav* = 6; *dalet* = 4; 6 + 4 = 10.

And this is [also alluded to in the word for] “will sally forth from him” [*yegudenu*], and in fact even more so, for here we have the letter *yud* and its spelling-out [inserted] into the word *gad*.

The word *yegudenu* is spelled *yud-gimel-vav-dalet-nun-vav*. The main consonantal letters are the *gimel* and *dalet*, giving its derivation from *gad*. In addition, we have the *yud* at the beginning of the word, and the *vav* in the middle together with the *dalet* (doing double duty) are the spelling-out of the *yud*, as we have seen.

This for the purpose of *Nukva* [of *Z’eir Anpin*, so that there can be a coupling of] male and female.

The purpose of the seminal insight of *chochmah* traversing and being processed by the ensuing *sefirot* is for its ultimate expression via the feminine principle.

Possibly, the Arizal is here indicating that the last two letters of *yegudenu*, the *nun-vav*, allude to *Nukva*, the first two letters of which are *nun-vav*.

We can now understand why [reciting] this verse [before going to sleep at night] is beneficial, in that its recital possesses the property of helping a person not to experience a wasteful emission of semen in bed.

This verse is part of the prayers recited together with the *Shema* before going to sleep at night.

For [in this verse,] the *yud* is joined with the heel, which is the place where the forces of evil can suck [their sustenance].

The heel, being a relatively bony, insensitive part of the foot, is seen as the body’s weak point. (Allied to this imagery is the imagery of Jacob being injured in his hip or sciatic nerve area, which is also seen as a weak point.) It is a place where, for example, a leech could suck blood without being “noticed” as much as it would be were it to attach itself to a more sensitive part of the body. True, because it is so insensitive, the life-force present in the heel is low-grade, but this is enough to satisfy the “nutritional” needs of evil. Psychologically, all of this means that insensitivity (being a “heel”) promotes the growth of evil.

In this verse, as we have seen, the *yud* inserted into *gad* to form *gid* is alluded to twice. The final word of the verse is the word for “heel.”

[When they join], it produces the word “Jacob,” rendering him complete.

The word for “heel” is *akeiv*: *ayin-kuf-beit*.

Jacob (*Yaakov*) is spelled *yud-ayin-kuf-beit*.

The imagery of Jacob being “complete” is taken from the verse, “And Jacob came *complete* to the city of Shechem...,”<sup>9</sup> which follows the story of his hip being injured by the angel with whom he wrestled.<sup>10</sup> Rashi states that the word *complete* here indicates that he recovered from this injury. The idea is that Jacob overcame the power of evil that tried to incapacitate him by sucking the life-force out of him at his heel/hip.

<sup>9</sup> Genesis 33:18.

<sup>10</sup> Genesis 32:24-31.

This was done, in the context of our present discussion, by binding the force of the *yud* to the heel. The *yud*, again, is *chochmah*, the initial flash of insight. This flash, this pristine moment of enlightenment and expansion of the horizon of Divine consciousness, often gets obscured as it is processed by the subsequent *sefirot*. Although this processing is necessary in order to bring the implications of the insight into practical reality, the dimming of its intensity in the process can leave the person or the process open to the attack of evil. In other words, the person can lose sight of the original thrust of the insight and allow the intellectual or emotional development it spawns to be sidetracked into selfish or worldly directions.

It is therefore necessary to periodically renew the freshness of the insight by recalling the initial moment of insight, the epiphany. Doing this helps to keep the development of the insight on track. The intellectual and emotional development is infused with the original, transcendent holiness of the experience; we remember that, yes, G-d was at the center of this insight, and this renders us immune to the machinations of evil.

Jacob's blessing to Gad can thus be read as "Gad [*yesod*] will be infused with the *yud* [*chochmah*, rendering it *gedud*] once and again [rendering it *yegudenu*], for the purpose of coupling with *Nukva*, and thus it will overcome the power of evil [that can enter via the heel]."

And thus the power of evil is left with no entry into the realm of holiness, G-d forbid.

This verse thus describes how evil is not allowed entry into holiness, preventing evil thoughts from intruding on a person's holiness while he sleeps. Interestingly, part of the blessing recited before going to sleep is the phrase, "and may my bed be complete before You." The Rabbinic imagery of "the bed being complete" refers to how Jacob's progeny (the result of his marital relations, euphemistically referred to in Rabbinic literature as *tashmish hamitah*, "the use of the bed") were completely holy. Unlike Abraham who fathered Ishmael and Isaac who fathered Esau, all of Jacob's offspring remained true to his Jewish ideals. Here is another example of the concept of evil not being allowed entry into the realm of holiness being associated with Jacob.

We can now understand why Jacob gave this blessing to Gad, for Gad [personified *yesod*, which] is situated in the area of the legs, which include the heel.

Since the heel is the point of vulnerability to evil, Gad, who personified *yesod*, needed the blessing of "military strength"—here described as the ability to bind the *yud* to the heel—to resist evil's power.

Moses had the same intention in *his* blessing [to Gad], when he said, "Blessed be He who expands Gad," for the word for "He who expands" can be read as "He who joins the *yud*," [and the phrase can thus be read, "Blessed be He who joins the *yud*] to Gad, rendering it *gid*, capable of transmitting [the male seed] into *Nukva*."

The word for "He who expands" is *marchiv*, spelled *mem-reish-chet-yud-beit*. The word for "He who joins" is *mechaber*, spelled *mem-chet-beit-reish*. Thus *marchiv* can be reread as *mechaber yud*, "He who joins the *yud*."

For the word for "He who expands" can also be read as "*yud* in the womb," referring to the drop [of male seed].

The word for "womb" is *rechem*, spelled *reish-chet-mem*; "in the womb" is *be-rechem* (*beit-reish-chet-mem*). *Marchiv* can thus be read as *yud be-rechem*, "*yud* in the womb."

Using these two readings of *marchiv*, the phrase thus reads: "Blessed be He who joins the *yud* to Gad [rendering it *gid*—*yesod* fortified by the insight of *chochmah*—capable of safely positing] the *yud* [the initial insight of *chochmah*] into the womb [of the female]."

This expansion [of *yesod*] occurs also via the womb—

The word "into the womb" (*be-rechem*) can also be read as "by means of the womb."

—this being the mystical significance of the fact that the numerical value of the name *Abraham* is the same as that of the word for “womb,” indicating that the drop [of male seed] is produced by *chesed*, personified by Abraham.

*Abraham* (Avraham): *alef-beit-reish-hei-mem* =  $1 + 2 + 200 + 5 + 40 = 248$ .

“Womb” (*rechem*): *reish-cheit-mem* =  $200 + 8 + 40 = 248$ .

Abraham personified *chesed*, loving-kindness, or love in general. This equivalence thus reflects the fact that the husband’s love for his wife (i.e., her feminine capacity to express what he, being male, cannot—this being the essence of her womb) is what renders his reproductive organ capable of transmitting his seed into her womb. We have seen previously how the attraction between male and female is in essence the sense of mutual completion each grant each other in the their intrinsic desire to make this world a home for G-d. The husband is attracted to the wife’s drive to bring this idea to fruition; the wife is attracted to the husband’s drive to renew the inspiration.

The full understanding of the phrase “Blessed be He who expands Gad” is now: “Blessed be He who joins the *yud* to Gad [rendering it *gid*—*yesod* fortified by the insight of *chochmah*—capable of safely positing] the *yud* [the initial insight of *chochmah*] into the womb [of the female], all this by means of the love and attraction the male [the insight and its development] feels for the female [the power expression and concretization concentrated in the womb].

—translated from *Likutei Torah*

## *Parashat VeZot HaBerachah* [third installment]

Moses' blessing to the tribe of Gad was: "Blessed be He who expands Gad; He dwells like a young lion, and rips off the arm [of his prey] together with the skull. And he saw the beginning for himself, for there the portion of the lawgiver is hidden; he went out as the heads of the people; he performed the charity of G-d, and His judgments with Israel."<sup>1</sup>

In the previous installment, we saw how the Arizal explained the phrase "Blessed be He who expands Gad" as follows: "Blessed be He who joins the *yud* to Gad [rendering it *gid*—*yesod* fortified by the insight of *chochmah*—capable of safely positing] the *yud* [the initial insight of *chochmah*] into the womb [of the female], all this by means of the love and attraction the male [the insight and its development] feels for the female [the power expression and concretization concentrated in the womb]."

The verse continues: "...He dwells as a young lion..." The word for "as a young lion" [*kelavi*] can be read as if to spell the words for "all in the eleven" [*kol be-yud-alef*].

*Kelavi*: *kaf-lamed-beit-yud-alef*

*Kol* ("all"): *kaf-lamed*

The letter *beit* as a prefix means "in" and the numerical value of the letters *yud-alef* (10 + 1) is 11.

Meaning to say, that "all," which is the righteous one, *yesod*, combines that which equals 11, namely, the *vav-hei* [of the Name *Havayah*], which indicates *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*.

The verse "For unto You, O G-d, is the greatness, and the might, and the beauty, and the victory, and the majesty, for all that is in heaven and earth; unto You, O G-d, is the kingdom..."<sup>2</sup> is the Biblical source for the seven lower *sefirot*:

"For unto You, O G-d, is the greatness [*chesed*], and the might [*gevurah*], and the beauty [*tiferet*], and the victory [*netzach*], and the majesty [*hod*], for all that is in heaven and earth [*yesod*]; unto You, O G-d, is the kingdom [*malchut*]..."

As is evident, the *sefirah* of *yesod* is not mentioned by its conventional name, but is rather alluded to as being the principle that joins heaven and earth (which are in turn appellations for *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, as we have seen previously). The main word that indicates *yesod* in this context is *kol*, "all."

The phrase "the righteous one, *yesod*," is a fragment of the phrase, "and the righteous one [*tzadik*] is the foundation [*yesod*] of the earth,"<sup>3</sup> the Biblical verse that establishes the thematic connection between *yesod* and "righteousness," or sexual fidelity and purity.

The word "like a young lion" is thus interpreted to mean, "*yesod* combines *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*" and the phrase "He dwells like a young lion" is interpreted to mean "*yesod* dwells with and combines *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*."

This is the epitome of coupling, for thus "all" [*yesod*] dwells with *vav-hei* [*Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*]. Understand this, for coupling is actualized through "all," i.e., the "white coriander seed."

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 33:20.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Chronicles 29:11.

<sup>3</sup> Proverbs 10:25.