

Erev Shabbos Kodesh Parshas Ki Teitzei 5772

D'ei Chochmah L'nafshechah

“Let your soul know wisdom”
Parshas Ki Teitzei



Explorations in sefer Tanya

A Synthesis of Lessons Taught during 5766 and 5769

From the discourses of Moreinu v'Rabeinu
the Gaon and Tzaddik Shlit"a

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*Shalosh Seudos*¹ of Parshas Ki Teitzei 5766

”כִּי-תִצֵּא לַמִּלְחָמָה עַל-אִיְבֹיֶיךָ וַיִּתְּנֶנּוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּיָדְךָ וְשָׁבִיתָ שְׂבִייוֹ.”

“When you wage war against your enemies, Hashem will give you victory over them, so that you will take captives.”²

The Voluntary War

On the words, “When you wage war against your enemies,” Rashi writes that taking captives clearly refers to a *milchemes reshus*, a voluntary war for worthy reasons. In the conquest of the land of Israel, a *milchemes mitzvah*, Hashem commanded us to kill every person descended from the seven Canaanite nations who did not evacuate [even after seeing all the impressive miracles and being warned that Hashem wished them leave on penalty of death³]. On the words, “So that you will take captives,” Rashi comments, “...This includes Canaanites, even though they are one of the seven nations.” [This must, therefore, be a voluntary war since otherwise it would have been forbidden to take captives.]

In deeper terms the word *reshus*, voluntary, alludes to the Name שקוצי"ת, which is itself an acronym comprising the first letter of each word of the last verse of the mystical *Ana B'koach* prayer. “שׁוּעֵתֵינוּ קִבֵּל וְשָׁמַע צַעֲקוֹתֵנוּ יוֹדֵעַ תַּעֲלוּמוֹת” —“Accept our supplications and hear our cries, Knower of all secrets.” [This forty-two word prayer was composed by the Mishanaic sage Rav Nechunia ben Hakanah, and each initial letter is part of what is known as the “forty-two letter Name.”] The numerical value of *reshus*, רשות [200 + 300 + 6 + 400 = 906] is equal to that of שקוצי"ת [300 + 100 + 6 + 300 + 90

¹ The lesson was delivered at the third meal of Shabbos.

² *Devarim* 21:10

³ *Medrash Hagadol*

+ 10 + 400 = 906].⁴ This relationship is meant to teach us that the “voluntary war” discussed in our verse refers to beseeching Hashem with heartfelt prayers and supplications with all of the force at one’s disposal.

In this context, Rashi’s comment seems out of place. Why doesn’t this refer to the conquest of Eretz Yisrael? Eretz Yisrael is the ultimate place of heartfelt prayer, since it is the land where Hashem’s Presence is most accessible. The *Shechinah* is an aspect of prayer. Presumably, then, our verse is referring to a facet of prayer that is not yet on the level of the holiness of Eretz Yisrael. But what sort of prayer is this, exactly?

The Beloved and the Hated Wives—Expressions of the *Shechinah*

The *parsha* continues, “כִּי תִהְיֶה לְאִישׁ שְׁתֵּי נָשִׁים הָאֶחָת אֲהוּבָה וְהָאֶחָת שְׂנוּאָה וַיִּלְדוּ לוֹ” —“If a man has two wives, one whom he loves and one whom he hates, and both the loved and unloved wives have sons, but the first-born is that of the unloved one...”⁵ The Arizal revealed that when Adam was first created, there was an aspect of Chavah in the realm of *klippah* called Lili-t to whom he cleaved at first. Subsequently, Hashem created the real Chavah from Adam’s rib/side. This second aspect of Chavah in holiness is linked to Rachel. The first, unrectified, aspect of Chavah is linked with Leah.⁶ Our sages teach us that Yaakov’s beauty was likened to Adam’s.⁷ This signifies that Yaakov rectified the blemish of Adam by joining with both Rachel and Leah in holiness. Rav Yitzchak Isaac of Ziditchov, zt”l, explains that this is the deeper meaning of our verse; this is the situation of the man who has two wives, one “loved” and the other “hated.” “Loved” is an aspect of Rachel, while “hated” alludes to Leah—but both of them were rectified by Yaakov.

⁴ *Kehilas Ya’akov*, III, beginning of *Erech Reish Shin*.

⁵ *Devarim* 21:15

⁶ It is very important to note here that when we speak of Rachel/Leah we are talking in transpersonal terms, in aspects that are more related to the revelation of the *Shechinah* itself than with the historical figures themselves.

⁷ *Bava Metzia* 84a

In the realm of *Kesser*, there is an aspect that can transform into *kareis*, spiritual destruction. [The two words comprise the same three letters: כרת / כתר. To receive the light of *Kesser*, one must first pass through the *dinim* or harsh judgments of Leah, expressed by כרת. To understand this more fully, we must go back and discuss the roots of creation itself.]

The Dual Purpose of Creation

The first verse of the Torah states, "בראשית" — "In the beginning, Hashem created the heavens and the earth." The first word of the Torah can also be read "ב-ראשית" [the numerical value of *beis* is two]. For *two purposes*, Hashem created the heavens and the earth: for *Kesser* / Crown, and *Chochmah* / Wisdom. *Kesser* is an aspect of Moshiach ben Dovid, while *Chochmah* is a characteristic of Moshiach ben Yosef. The light of Moshiach ben Yosef is like the light of the *nefesh* when compared with the much higher light of *Kesser* that Moshiach ben Dovid draws down. This light of *Kesser* encompasses the four higher illuminations of *ruach*, *neshamah*, *chayah* and *yechidah*.⁸ The composite souls of both Moshiach ben Dovid and Moshiach ben Yosef have a dual nature to them: *Chochmah* parallels the *nefesh* or *Malchus* aspect, while *Kesser* parallels the higher levels of the soul and the *sefiros*. This is the double "reishis"—the dual purpose and culmination of Hashem's plan for the world. But this dual soul of the two aspects of Moshiach has been obscured since the very beginning of time.

These two aspects are the deeper meaning of Yitzchak's request to Esav, to make "delicacies" for him. [Yitzchak literally asked Esav bring him venison, but he was alluding to these two hidden aspects, the two spiritual "delicacies" that Esav could have revealed if he had only searched for them while he hunted.] There are two basic paths to bringing pleasure to Hashem. The first has the quality of Moshiach ben Yosef, which is

⁸ These five levels of the soul are listed in ascending order, and they are translated respectively as: life-force, spirit, soul, Divine vitality, and the unique and unified aspect.

Chochmah. This quality is seen in a tzaddik who, like Shaul HaMelech, never sinned.⁹ Such a *tzaddik* gives Hashem pleasure by serving Him in holiness and purity, standing up to spiritual challenges and learning the revealed and hidden aspects of the holy Torah, its Wisdom. He guards his eyes against seeing what is indecent. Hashem created this world for just such a person, for the sake of those who are careful to always act in an absolutely holy manner. Such people are rooted in the soul of Moshiach ben Yosef, and they afford Hashem great pleasure.

The second type of “delicacy” that Hashem enjoys is the path of *teshuvah*, of sincere repentance. This is the way of Moshiach ben Dovid, and we see it from the teaching of the sages that Dovid only “fell” into the episode with Bas-Sheva to demonstrate that any individual can repent.¹⁰ On the contrary, his entire purpose in coming to the world was to teach *teshuvah*—the path that transcends the service of one who always serves Hashem in holiness and purity, without fault. We learn the greatness of *teshuvah* from statements in the Talmud such as, “*Teshuvah* reaches the Throne of Glory,”¹¹ and, “*Teshvuah* preceded the [creation of the] world.”¹² This is because the root of *teshuvah* is in the higher realm of *Kesser*.

Rachel and Yosef, Leah and Dovid

The great soul of Dovid, the aspect of reaching *Kesser* through the power of *teshuvah*, was shattered immediately after creation due to the *sheviras keilim*, the primordial “breaking of the vessels,” and the argument of the moon. [“Can it be that two kings (both sun and moon) will rule with ‘one crown’ (will be the same size and have the same influence)?”¹³ The power of *teshuvah* and the essence of Dovid HaMelech is symbolized by the moon—which has been in a state of diminishment since that time, and will be until the final redemption.] Since the soul of Dovid HaMelech initially

⁹ *Yoma* 86a

¹⁰ *Shabbos* 56a; *Avodah Zara* 4b

¹¹ *Yoma* 86a

¹² *Pesachim* 54a

¹³ *Chulin* 60b

lacked completion, it fell from the level of *Kesser* to *Binah* / Understanding. Although Leah is an expression of *Binah*, at the outset she too lacked completion since she fell into and manifested as a non-holy aspect [of Lili-t]. Adam connected with, and was blemished by, this fallen aspect of Leah. He remained so until Hashem created Chavah from his rib/side. She was an aspect of Rachel, who is aligned with [the power of] Moshiach ben Yosef [since she is the mother of Yosef, just as Leah is the maternal ancestor of Dovid].

Yaakov began to rectify the fallen aspect of Leah by inspiring her cry to Hashem until her eyes were weakened and she was removed from Esav's lot.¹⁴ [Although her fallen aspect made her originally suited for Esav, after her first rectification through longing to connect with holiness, she became suited for Yaakov.] In this way Yaakov began to elevate Dovid HaMelech's soul from the depths of the *klippos*, from its enmeshment in the forces of impurity.

But even after this first transformation of Leah, she remained the "hated wife" compared with Rachel, "the beloved wife" discussed in our *parshah*. This indicates that she [the Leah aspect of the *Shechinah*] is still not completely rectified since she is still expressing [the "back" or less revealed parts of] *Binah*, the source of all judgments, and has not yet returned to *Kesser*, her holy source. *Binah* cannot be tolerated today since its light is very hidden and obscured [because we don't see the good that lies within heavenly judgments and only find them painful], as the *Zohar Hakadosh* writes. This is unlike Rachel, which is an aspect of rectified *Chochmah* [without the admixture of judgments].

The verse in our *parshah* continues: "...Both the loved and unloved wives have sons, but the first-born is that of the unloved one." This indicates that Yaakov wished to marry Rachel, the "beloved" wife, first. But Hashem orchestrated that he marry Leah, the "hated" wife, first.¹⁵ Yaakov did not realize that it was his task to rectify Leah first.

¹⁴ *Bereishis* 29:17; See Rashi there.

¹⁵ We place these two terms in quotations to indicate that they are relative terms. Yaakov did not hate Leah—but compared with his love for Rachel, it is as though she was hated.

There is a very deep secret regarding this alluded to in the verse: "וייהי בוקר והנה לאה"—"And it was morning, and she was Leah."¹⁶ Rashi cites the *gemara* which explains that Yaakov, anticipating trickery from Lavan, transmitted *simanim* or signals to Rachel for the wedding night so that he would be able to tell if Lavan tried to switch the sisters. Rachel, however, had mercy on her sister and entrusted the signals to her.¹⁷ The Arizal explains that Rachel was "beneath the bed" when she transmitted the signals to her sister. [Note: This does not mean that she was literally beneath the bed. It means that since the signals involved a particular physical act, her transmission of them constituted involvement in "the bed." But, as we will see, the deeper meaning of being "beneath the bed" is on another plane entirely.] The Arizal explains that this alludes to the point when the *Shechinah* aspect of Rachel descends to the worlds of *Beriyah* / Creation. At such times, Leah takes Rachel's "place" in *Aztilus* / Emanation. Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Ziditchov explains that it is precisely at this point that Leah began her rectification. When Leah assumes Rachel's place, this is called the transmission of the "signals." The result is that some of the supernal light of *Chochmah* shines into Leah.

The War of Prayer

The "voluntary war" of unrectified prayer discussed at the beginning of this lesson is connected with the evening prayer of *Maariv*—the time when we rectify Leah. It is no coincidence that this began as a "*tefillas reshut*," a voluntary prayer that became obligatory through communal adoption. The holy unifications brought about during the evening prayer are the result of the voluntary war on the *yetzer*. As the sages taught, "*Tefillah* does half..."¹⁸ [Note: Although it is impossible to accomplish complete *yichudim* in the night, nevertheless partial *yichudim* are possible.] This alludes to the aspect of Leah. Praying in an aspect of Leah sweetens half the judgments of the sixty-six days of the year during which there are judgments, as discussed in the *Zohar*. When

¹⁶ *Bereishis* 29:25

¹⁷ *Megillah* 13b

¹⁸ *Devarim Rabbah* 8

we pray in an aspect of Leah alone [without the added dimension of Rachel], we cannot sweeten more than half.

The *partzuf*¹⁹ of Leah [is not yet rectified completely and] represents the fire of *Binah* without the “coolness” [or detachment] of *Chochmah*. It is only after we pray the morning service of *Shacharis*, which also draws down the light of Rachel / *Chochmah*, that we can effect the changes we wish to make. This is because we then have both elements of *Binah* and *Chochmah*. First, one must access the world of Leah—an aspect of overwhelming Divine mercy that begins the process of redemption. But this is not enough because Leah’s aspect was initially caught in the *klippos* until she underwent her first rectification through longing for attachment to Yaakov. Similarly, when one cries to Hashem from his heart [to connect with holiness], he is like Leah in the half-corrected state who cannot draw down a true redemption because she is still the “hated” wife. Leah, the “hated” wife, is not yet in a state of unity with the aspect of Rachel, the “beloved” spouse.

The deeper significance of this dynamic is that Yehudah, an aspect of prayer, and Yosef, an aspect of Torah, are still disconnected. In this diminished state, one can only arouse the fire of *Binah* [an aspect of fiery prayer from the heart] but not the cool aspect of *Chochmah* [the deep pleasure of truly connecting with Hashem through Torah study, which is mental]. Without the cooling influence of *Chochmah*, this *Binah*-type fire is liable to cause interpersonal strife since it also arouses the fire of arrogance [and intolerance] within. This fire manifests in the state known as *anah emloch*, “I will rule,” the desire for control. This state is a perversion of the purpose of the world, which is to declare and live under the Kingship of Hashem exclusively.

When a person prays in this fiery “way of Leah” [*Binah*], it is very easy to fall into the trap of being filled with arrogance since the intensity of heartfelt prayer can

¹⁹ The *partzufim* (“Faces”) are a personified representation of the *sefiros*: *Arich Anpin* (the “Long Face”) parallels *Kesser*; *Abba* (“Father”) parallels *Chochmah*; *Imma* (“Mother”) parallels *Binah*; *Ze’ir Anpin* (the “Small Face”) parallels the six *sefiros* from *Chessed* through *Yesod*; and *Nukvah* (“Feminine”) parallels *Malchus*. When we speak of the *partzufim*, the images of elements of family, so to speak, help us to grasp more of the inter-relational and active nature of the *sefiros*.

itself become a source of false pride. We can see the relationship between the two states of *Binah* prayer and pride from their numerical values: The *Binah*-form of the Divine Name has the *gematria* of 63 / ט"ג, which is an inversion of the word גס, or pride. [+ יד הי + ואו + הי = 20 + 15 + 13 + 15 = 63 = ט"ג] Such feelings of self-importance are extremely counterproductive; the Talmud teaches that one whose prayers feels grandiose [מגיס דעתו] about the fact that his prayers were answered inflicts Divine wrath upon the world.²⁰

When one petitions Hashem in this fiery aspect of Leah, he must always take care that not to fall into the negative emotional states described, since this prayer is an aspect of the lands outside of Israel where fire and water do not become one. [The lands of the diaspora are associated with a state of conflict and controversy—the state where “fire” and “water” cannot unite.²¹] It is only when prayer is mixed with *Chochmah* that it is an aspect of Eretz Yisrael, where water and fire “blend” [where differing opinions can exist harmoniously] as one. This is a fulfillment of the verse, עושה שלום “...במרומיו...”²² This is the peace of *shomayim*; literally the word means heaven, but its miracle is that it is a harmonious conjunction of the conflicting states of *esh* /fire, and *mayim* / water.

The “Beautiful Wife” of Moshe Rabbeinu

Our opening verse continues: וראית בשביה אשת יפת תאר וחשקת בה ולקחת לך לאשה והבאתה אל תוך ביתך וגלחה את ראשה ועשתה את צפרניה והסירה את שמלת שביה מעליה וישבה בביתך ובכתה את אביה ואת אמה ירח ימים ואחר כן תבוא אליה ובעלתה והיתה לך —“If you see a beautiful woman among the prisoners and desire her, you may take her as a wife. In such a case, when you bring her home, she must shave off her head and let her fingernails grow. She must take off her captive’s garb and remain in your

²⁰ *Taanis* 8a

²¹ *Sanhedrin* 24a

²² *Iyov* 25:2

house a full month, mourning for her father and mother. Only then may you be intimate with her and possess her, making her your wife.”²³

This teaches that when one prays intensely using the light of *Binah* alone, he begins to arouse Divine mercy through *Maariv*, when the aspect of Yaakov partially rectifies the aspect of Leah. But one must realize that this is only meant to be a preparation for learning Torah for the sake of Hashem's Name, with *dveikus*, deep emotional and spiritual attachment to Him. When one feels himself (or notices someone else) fall into the grandiosity of misdirected fire, it proves that he lacks the balancing aspect of Rachel. There is a simple test to determine this. One should ask himself if he is not in harmony with another Jew. If he is harboring ill will toward any Jew, it is a sure sign that his Torah is incomplete. Even if this man learns the outer aspects of Torah, he lacks its inner aspect. We know this because this person has not managed to sweeten the inner fire necessary for true prayer with the waters of true connection with Hashem.

Moshe's wife was also an aspect of Leah, as the Arizal explains. Moshe continued the work that Yaakov began, by transforming Leah in the form of Tziporah from “hated” to “beloved.”²⁴ This is reflected in the concept of *halachah l'Moshe mi'Sinai*—that Moshe Rabbeinu was the prime lawgiver and transmitter of Torah directly from Hashem. [We know that Moshe Rabbeinu's task was the transmission of Torah, but we are also told by the Arizal that, in fulfilling his mission (“*halachah l'Moshe mi'Sinai*”), he accomplished his *true* task: “*Tefillah L'Moshe, Ish HaElokim...*”—“A prayer of Moshe, the man of G-d...”²⁵ The initials of “Moshe, the man of G-d,” spell “Leah.”] This is why Miraim referred to Moshe's wife as a *kushis*—an Ethiopian, or black, woman. [Rashi explains that she was not black, but that she was exceedingly beautiful. The term “black” was meant to deflect the jealousy of others.] He took the as-yet incomplete Leah [who was in the state called “black”] and rectified her

²³ *Devarim* 21:11-13

²⁴ Again, we are speaking in transpersonal terms—although Tziporah was a historical figure, we are speaking about the *Shechinah* aspect that she represented.

²⁵

[made her beautiful and beloved]. He brought her to the next level by taking her of his own free will, not through subterfuge as Yaakov did. He didn't take Tziporah for a wife when she was in her lower state, but when she was in the higher state of the knot of the head *tefillin*. This parallels Rachel's descent during every weeknight [at the time of *chatzos* / true midnight, when *Tikkun Rachel* is recited] when Leah assumes her "signals," as discussed in the Arizal.

The deeper meaning of this is that Moshe rectified Leah, the revealed components of the Torah. By its very nature this portion of Torah is fiery [it must be learned with intensity and drive] but this can also bring a person to feel the grandiosity that inevitably leads to strife. One must fight this tendency by engaging the "signals" of Rachel, which were primarily revealed through Moshe. These signals point toward the deep secrets of every aspect of the revealed Torah. Many great *tzaddikim* did not understand that even if one learns the revealed aspects of Torah for the sake of heaven, he remains incomplete until he attains deep *dveikus*—and that can only come from sweetening Leah / revealed Torah by expanding her to the level of Rachel / inner Torah. Without this, it is all too easy to fan the fires of controversy through one's learning.

This is the deeper meaning of Miriam's slander to Aharon regarding their brother Moshe—that he had taken a "Kushite woman." The Arizal explains that they felt that he should not spend his time rectifying Leah. They did not realize that he was sweetening the judgments of Leah by giving her the signs of Rachel and, in doing so, cooling off all the [unholy] fire in the creation and revealing G-dliness.

When one sees that he is able to pray the evening prayers with more connection than the morning, this indicates that he can only accomplish the partial rectification of Leah but not the full rectification of Rachel. Although their prayers arouse Divine mercy, they cannot complete *yichudim*. This is the secret of the soul of Dovid HaMelech; even after Leah is rectified by Yaakov, she is still mostly composed of unsweetened judgments trapped within the *klippas* that cannot be completely released until the final rectification of the redemption itself. People naturally wish to avoid [the

work of] Leah, just as Yaakov desired only Rachel. One is drawn to [the feeling of completely to be found in] learning and praying with one's entire strength [like the true Rachel / Yosef-type *tzaddikim* who never err.] But Hashem arranged that Yaakov could not marry Rachel without attending to the aspect of Leah. This indicates that one cannot [maintain] genuine [holy connection during] his Torah study or prayers before realizing [that he is incomplete and] can't do anything without Hashem's help. First, one must pour forth fiery words of heartfelt prayer to succeed in doing Hashem's will. One must accept how far he is from praying in the morning as he really should and learning with true *dveikus*. His lack of completion demonstrates how far he is from the level of the true *tzaddikim*, the Yosef-type *tzaddikim*, who are able to draw down the light and make a true *yichud*.

The Ox and the Donkey

This is the deeper meaning of the verse: "וכי יפתח איש בור או כי יכרה איש בור ולא יכסנו ונפל שמה שור או חמור בעל הבור ישלם כסף ישיב לבעליו והמת יהיה לו" —"If a person digs a hole in the ground, or uncovers a hole, and does not cover it over. If an ox or donkey falls into it, the one responsible for the hole must make restitution, restoring the full value [of the animal] to its owner. The dead animal remains the property [of its owner]."²⁶ The *Zohar* explains that the ox signifies Moshiach ben Yosef while the donkey represents Moshiach ben Dovid. The "person responsible for the pit" is our faithful shepherd, Moshe Rabbeinu.²⁷ When the aspect of Rachel / Moshiach ben Yosef / *Chochmah* "dies" by descending [from *Atzilus*] to the lower worlds, Leah takes her place and is imbued with an aspect of *Chochmah* as explained at length above.

How is Moshe Rabbeinu responsible for the "pit" into which the "ox or donkey" falls? Hashem commanded Moshe, "ודברתם אל הסלע" —"You shall speak to the rock."²⁸

²⁶ *Shemos* 21:33-34

²⁷ *Zohar* V:279a

²⁸ *Bamidbar* 20:8

The rock represents the *Shechinah*.²⁹ The only way to receive the light of the *Shechinah* is through our teacher Moshe, who merited to achieve true connection to the *Shechinah* and elevate it. The *Shechinah* is the manifestation of the absolute oneness of Hashem within every aspect of creation. One who knows in his deepest self that there is nothing but Hashem reveals the true aspect of "אנא אמת" — "I rule." Instead of using the power of rulership to control others, he reveals the absolute Kingship of Hashem. He is truly connected with the *Shechinah*. "In the beginning Hashem created the heavens and earth (*aretz*)," but later, "there was a famine in the land (*aretz*)."³⁰ Hashem primarily wanted to reveal the aspect of heavens that animates the earth, the aspect of the *Shechinah* which is expressed in the *aretz* / earth.³¹

"Say before me *Malchuyos*, *Zichronos*, and *Shofros*...so as to declare My Kingship over you."³² This indicates that the foundation of the entire creation is: 1) *Malchus*, declaring Hashem's Kingship and connecting with Him at all times; 2) *Zichronos*, practically applying this by remembering that this is the purpose and cleaving to Hashem at all times; 3) *Shofros*; The root of *shofar* "שופר" means to rectify or לשפר. If one truly remembers Hashem's Kingship at all times, he will come to rectify his actions. In this way, he will be included in *Atik*, the highest level of *Kesser*, and all the seeming inscrutability of the physical world will be pierced and we will merit the fulfillment of our prayer in *Shemonah Esrei*, "תקע בשופר גדול" — "Sound the great *shofar*" that will usher in the redemption.³³

This *shofar* represents *Atik* / *Kesser*, which is revealed specifically from the "rock" of *Malchus*—by accepting Hashem's Kingship. We cannot draw down the aspect of the hidden Torah [and the rectifications of Rachel and Leah] by trying to pry the rock open with brute force. The most that will emerge will be scattered drops—and they are

²⁹ See *Tikunei Zohar Tikun 21*, o, 61a-62a

³⁰ *Bereishis 12:10*

³¹ *Eitz Chaim, Sha'ar Tziur Olamos*, Chapter 1, 128:3

³² *Rosh Hashanah 34b*

³³ *Yeshayah 27:13*

also in the merit of the true *tzaddikim* who appease the *Shechinah* by speaking to the “rock” and pleading with Hashem to reveal His splendor.

This was Moshe Rabbeinu’s function in the desert: to appease Hashem. But the Jews of his generation were not on a high enough level and this caused Moshe to hit the rock instead of speak to it. This was his “digging of the pit” into which the “ox” fell. This refers to the “death” of Moshiach ben Yosef as his aspect of Rachel descends to the lower worlds of *Beriyah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*. How did the “ox” fall into the “pit?” This was a direct result of the “donkey,” of the aspect of Moshiach ben Dovid / Leah having fallen. But since Moshe did rectify Leah, “ויהמת יהיה לוי”—the damage he caused partially repays itself. [In the *gemara*, we see that the person who caused the damage deducts the value of the corpse from the total damages that he owes the original owner of the animal that fell into the pit. Although the former owner of the animal actually keeps the corpse, the one who dug the pit has monetary use of it to defray his debt.³⁴] Moshe pays his debt by revealing that there is no such thing as a true descent in spirituality [since one can always just search for and find Hashem wherever one may be]. This is actually the purpose of creation, to reveal Hashem’s Kingship specifically from spiritual descent. This is the significance of the expression, “אין מלך בלא עם”—“There is no King without subjects.”³⁵ The word “עם” is also the root of the word for being in a lowly state—*עמימות*. The main declaration of Hashem’s Kingship is to remember Him even in a spiritual descent.

The Four-Fold Song of Renewal

This is the power of the song of the ultimate future—the “four-fold” song or permutation of the Divine Naem. [י ייה יהיי יהוייה] The way in which this permutation always returns to its origin even as it goes on teaches us to always make a new beginning because there is no room for despair in the world at all. This is the purpose of creation—to reveal Hashem even in distant places even after one falls. This is a

³⁴ *Bava Kama* 10b

³⁵ *Rabbeinu Bachayah* in *Kad Hakemach*, *Rosh Hashanah* 70a

manifestation of “saying *malchuyos* before Me,” since Hashem derives much pleasure from sincere *ba'alei teshuvah*.

One need not reserve the power of *teshuvah* for the aftermath of sin, G-d forbid, since sin has no place in the next world at all. The Ropshitzer actually said that just hearing the word “sin” is enough to make a person require immersion in the *mikveh* to remove its taint. What this means is that wherever a person is, he must exhibit genuine self-sacrifice to refrain from sinning. And if one falls against his will at a weak moment, he must certainly repent. In this way, the penitent reveals Hashem even in such distant places. He then fulfills the concept of “יהמת יהיה לך”—the damage he caused goes toward repaying his debt.

This is the deeper reason why Moshe caused the *Shechinah* to descend, why he “hit the rock”—so that we can reveal Hashem’s Kingship by believing that *teshuvah* helps for anything. And it does so in the merit of the true *tzaddikim* who reveal to us that Hashem’s mercy is always open and His kindness never ends. Through following the path of the *tzaddikim*, we sweeten the judgments and reveal Hashem’s mercy also.

Moshe was the “owner of the pit” because only he understood the purpose of “the pit” of creation. This is the secret of Moshe’s burial place outside of Israel. Although Hashem chose Israel, He desired the light of holiness to radiate throughout the entire world. Moshe is buried in a place that is not fitting for him, as the *Zohar* states.³⁶ Similarly, the secrets of Torah are in a place that cannot be accessed; they are an aspect of Rochel descended into the three lower worlds of *Beriyah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*.

When the month of Elul arrives, it is the time when, “ובכתה את אביה ואת אמה”³⁷—“She shall cry over her father and mother a month of days.”³⁷ We must work to repent and cry as Leah did to draw down all the rectifications described above and merit to merge Leah with Rachel. We do this by learning the revealed Torah with diligence and imbuing it with true *dveikus*. We must also work to learn the hidden aspect of Torah, so that we can reveal Hashem even in the aspect of the three lower

³⁶ *Zohar* V:280a

³⁷ *Tikunei Zohar* brought in *Pri Tzaddik*

worlds and uplift Leah and all souls that are an aspect of the “beautiful captive” that have been trapped. In this merit, Leah will attain an aspect of *Mussaf* of *Shabbos* which is the secret of *yud*, the ten types of song that will be revealed in the ultimate future when the true unification is revealed. At that point, Leah will be elevated from *Binah* to *Kesser*.

“Let Your Soul Know Wisdom”

This is the meaning of: “דעה חכמה לנפשך והיא כתר לראשך”—“Let your soul (*nefesh*) know (*d'ei*) wisdom (*Chochmah*) and it will be a crown (*Kesser*) for your head.”³⁸ *Chochmah* / Rachel descends to the lower level of *nefesh*—which parallels the three lower worlds. When the Torah says that the “*Ba'al habor yishalmenah*”—“the owner of the pit will pay its value”—it can also be read, “*yashlimenah*”—“he will complete her.” Moshe Rabbeinu takes the aspect Rachel and uses it to complete the aspect of Leah / Moshiach ben Dovid so that he can reveal Hashem in an aspect of *teshuvah*. In doing so, one merits “a crown to one’s head.” Then *Malchus*, which was an impoverished *dalet* [*dalut* is poverty] is imbued with the aspect of the ten types of song [a *yud* is added] and it is transformed into a *hei*. The completed *hei* becomes a “crown to your head”—just as when the bride is drawn after the groom, she becomes a crown for him. [When the lower feminine aspect of *Malchus* is completed, it rises to the place of *Kesser*. “A woman of valor is her husband’s crown.”³⁹]

Through this, one merits to “...guard Your holy *mitzvos*, preserve Your holy *Shabbos*.” Through persevering through difficult situations and revealing Hashem even when it’s difficult, one merits to fulfill the *mitzvos* in the proper way and draw down the light of *Shabbos*. One merits to know that Hashem’s Kingship is truly everywhere—despite the fact that bandits rule by force in Israel and derive their life force from the [fallen aspects] of holiness. But this situation will not last forever. Eventually, the

³⁸ From the *Shabbos zemer* “*D’ror Yikrah*,” based on *Mishlei* 24:14.

³⁹ *Mishlei* 12:4

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holiness will overcome and elevate all the lost sparks and bring our righteous Moshiach, speedily in our days. Amen.

Translated and Adapted by Rav Micha Golshevsky.

Sefer Tanya

Chapter VIII

“There is an additional aspect in the matter of forbidden foods. The reason they are called *issur* [forbidden, but literally ‘bound’] is that even in the case of one who has unwittingly eaten a forbidden food intending it to give him strength to serve G-d by the energy of it, and he has, moreover, actually carried out his intention, having both studied and prayed with the energy of that food, nevertheless the vitality contained within it does not ascend and become clothed in the words of the Torah or prayer, as is the case with permitted foods. This is because it is being held captive in the power of the *sitra achra* of the three unclean *klippos* [i.e. it is not within the realm of *nogah*]. This is so even when the prohibition is a rabbinic enactment, for ‘the words of the scribes are even more stringent than the words of the Torah,’ and so forth...” This does not only mean an actual rabbinic enactment, but even those matters that the rabbis forbade due to contemporary conditions.

“...Therefore, also the evil impulse (*yetzer hara*) and the force that strains after forbidden things is a ‘demon of non-Jewish demons,’ [i.e. a spirit of impurity well removed from a holy source] which is the evil impulse of the nations whose souls are derived from the three unclean *klippos*. On the other hand, the evil impulse and the craving force after permissible things to satisfy an appetite is a ‘demon of Jewish demons,’ [it has a root in *kedushah* even if its expression is negative] for it can be reverted to holiness, as explained above...”

The *Zohar* explains that there are spiritual forces called demons [ידין], and they are also spoken about in the Gemara as surrounding a person, and so on. One must bear in mind that most of the temptations that a person faces are rooted in his imagination; Rebbe Nachman emphasized the relationship by saying that we can make things simpler

by just calling the *yetzer hara* the “*medameh*”—the imagination. The *yetzer hara* mainly acts on us through the vehicle of our imaginations, by leading us to imagine one thing or the other. The truth is that our imaginings come from the same source as angels; they have a very lofty potential when applied for holiness. Unfortunately, most imaginings are more associated with demons than with angels, G-d forbid. “Hashem made one thing opposite the other”—there are four worlds of *Atzilus-Beriyah-Yetzirah-Asiyah* within the realm of holiness, and the same exist in the other side. What are demons? Those spiritual forces that serve the four worlds on the other side [the agents and messengers of negativity]. If a person fantasizes about something evil, his thoughts are rooted in the “non-Jewish demons,” and if the thoughts are of *klippas nogah*, then they are “Jewish demons,” because at least they can be repaired and uplifted to good if he does *teshuvah*.

Rav Chaim Vital explained further that just as Hashem created the worlds of *Adam Kadmon* and *ABY”A* as realms of G-dlienss, He also garbed them with parallel worlds of *A”K* and *ABY”A* that serves as “mines” from which all of the strata of souls are drawn. And there are also angels associated with each of these five levels, like layers upon layers, each one associated with its parallel on the same level. [This does not mean that a soul that derives from the world of *Atzilus* is actually *Elokus*, as we would say of the world of *Atzilus* itself. The primary world is at one with the ultimate Source, while the layers upon it of souls and angels are merely *associated* with that world.] These concepts also appear in the Baal HaTanya’s work, as well as in the writings of his students. Opposite all of this structure of holiness is a parallel structure in the realm of impurity, from which darkness and obscurity is “mined.” Its uppermost level is *klippas nogah*, and after it come the three completely impure *klippas*—the “great cloud,” the “stormwind,” and the “flashing fire.”

Rav Aharon of Strasheleh taught in the name of his own teacher, the Baal HaTanya, that in previous generations the gradation among souls and their origins in the upper world were fairly distinct and clear. The souls of simple and ignorant people were rooted in *Asiyah*; those who supported Torah study financially were rooted in *Yetzirah*;

Torah scholars themselves were rooted in *Beriyah*; and the great *tzaddikim* of the generation were rooted in *Atzilus*. Nowadays, however, every person is an amalgam of a variety of Divine sparks. One day, a person wakes up and he's a Torah scholar; the next day he wakes up like an *am ha'aretz* with *middos* to match. And even though everything is mixed up today, each person still comprises a kind of constellation of sparks that, while different, have something in common—they are generally associated with a particular level of development, if not of expression.

Each soul is therefore rooted in some particular level, and it is surrounded by an angel that is sourced in the “mine” of angels associated with that level. At a greater distance is the *klippas nogah*, and upon it is encloded a further three impure *klippas*. The *klippas* are called by that name because they are concentric layers of shells that surround holiness, one upon the other. Hashem chose that the source of the souls of the Jewish people be rooted in the “internality” of all of the worlds (closest to the source and vitality), while the souls of non-Jews are rooted in the “externality” of the worlds [which is the place of *klippah*]. This is the deeper sense of, “And I have hated Eisav...”—I have placed him at a distance, rooted him in *chitzoniyus*. The ultimate purpose of creation, however, is that the external should be nullified to the internal [meaning, that it, too, should be revealed to be an illusion of darkness and obscurity, exposed by the bright light of revealed *Elokus*]. The state of destruction and exile is all a result of the external overpowering the internal, but in the future world the non-Jewish nations will aid the Jewish people—the external will only serve to highlight the internal. Just as there are different realms in the sources of souls, so too are there different realms in the sources of angels [and “demons”], and they parallel the good and evil inclinations within man.

Because the souls of the Jewish people are rooted in *pnimiyus* [“internality”], every single mitzvah that a Jew performs generates an angel within the internal “mine” of angels, as does every word, and every holy thought. Such thoughts can uplift the wasted thoughts of *nogah*, and bring the “Jewish demons” back up to the realm of

holiness. The non-Jewish nations, however, are in the main rooted in the negative aspect of *nogah*, and these are the “non-Jewish demons.” The purpose of their existence is to serve the *pnimiyus*, they can serve a function at some point, but while a person is still immersed in such “non-Jewish musings,” they are an absolute *klippah* and completely evil, and receive their vitality from the “mine” of *klippos*. This is why using magic and trying to manipulate the forces of negativity and impurity are such serious sins; such actions bring them even more vitality. But we can console ourselves that the good is always more powerful than the evil, and when a person makes efforts to intensify the good within himself and love Hashem with “all his hearts”—both his inclinations—his holy aspect and his imagination, then he can uplift everything to holiness. He realizes that all that he sees—the table, the wall, people, and everything else—is vitalized by the Divine light, and everything else is just an illusion. This kind of contemplation uplifts all of creation to Hashem, and this is the main path in *avodah* that was taught by the Baal Shem Tov. In this way, the *chitzoniyus* is uplifted to *pnimiyus*.

“...Nevertheless, before it has reverted to holiness it is [stuck in] *sitra achra* and *klippah*, and even afterwards a trace of it remains attached to the body, since blood and flesh of his flesh is immediately formed from each item of food and drink [consumed]. That is why the body must undergo the *chibut* [purging suffering] of the grave in order to cleanse it and purify it of its uncleanness which it had received from the enjoyment of mundane things and pleasures that derive from the impurity of the *klippas nogah* and of the ‘Jewish demons.’ Only one who had derived no enjoyment from this world all his life, as was the case with our holy **Rebbi [Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi, who testified of himself that he had not taken earthly delight in any of the pleasures afforded by his vast wealth], is spared this...”**

The *maggid* of the Beis Yosef—whose words the Mahari Tzemach said bore as much weight as the teachings of the Arizal—related that during the Purim feast it is permitted for a Jew to take pleasure in his food. The Maharal adds that, on Purim, there is a value in eating for pleasure because the souls of the Jewish people ascend to such

heights at that time that everything they eat is considered holy and it is all *l'shem shomayim*. This is also true of eating on Pesach night—both of the matzah and the four cups. The Arizal explained that the matzah is the means of drawing down all of the *mochin*, more mature states of G-dly awareness. “You shall eat *matzos* in a holy place”—the word *kodesh* alludes to *Chochmah* [“the holy anointing oil”] and its state of total *bitul* to Hashem.

The sages taught that a child is obligated to eat matzah on Pesach night from the time that he can say “*Abba*,” which corresponds to the time from which he can eat wheat.¹ [*Abba* is *Chochmah*, and the eating of wheat means that the child is mature enough to receive the light of *Chochmah* to some degree.] The Baal HaTanya explained that this teaches us that every Jew is able to really feel that he has an *Abba*, a Father in heaven, through eating the matzah. The four cups of wine draw down the *mochin* of *Imma* [*Binah*], which is the awareness that comes from struggling in Divine service. Drinking those four cups provide a Jew with the power to expend effort in his *avodah* for the entire year. And even if one does not eat with actual *kavanah* that it be for the sake of heaven on Pesach night, nevertheless all his eating is transformed into holiness. We can understand how this is possible by considering the words of the Arizal, that on Pesach night something special happens that is unique to that one night—the *yichud* also takes place in the world of *Asiyah*. [When we learn that mitzvah acts accomplish *yichudim*, this is generally because the actor has uplifted himself to a sufficiently high place to make them. On Pesach night, the *yichudim* can also be made from where we are, which means that they are available to everyone.]

We have already explained that each person possesses two *nefesh*-aspects; they parallel *Ze'ir Anpin* and *Malchus d'Atzilus*. Torah thoughts, words and acts generate garments for the Divine soul, and mundane thoughts, words and acts generate garments for the animal soul. On Pesach night, a Jew becomes so bound up with Hashem until his

¹ *Berachos* 40a

every thought, word and act—and every bite of food—is transformed into *Elokus*. Then there is a revelation of G-dliness even in the world of *Asiyah*.

On that night, the main *avodah* is to contemplate that there is nothing but Hashem; this is especially true while drinking the four cups, because wine is associated with *Binah-hisbonenus* [the *gevurah* of the red wine is rooted in *Binah*]. This means looking deeply into the message contained within everything, how G-d is calling for us to recognize Him through everything. Every bite that he takes fills him with the understanding that the Creator exists everywhere, and he feels profound holiness. This is what allows a person to uplift all of his eating throughout the year, and what provides him with the holy force needed to sanctify his eating in the coming year. The Arizal taught a number of awe-inspiring *yichudim* to focus on while eating, and the author of the *Toras Chochom* says that one should keep them in mind with every single bite. Here, the Baal HaTanya wrote that if a person has in mind that the food he eats should energize him to serve Hashem, this is also considered *l'shem shomayim*. If, however, he eats only for his own pleasure then the act serves as a barrier that makes it harder for him to serve G-d. He can uplift those fallen sparks by overcoming the resulting entropy and forcing himself to learn in any case, but his body will still need to be purified of the impression left by the *klippah* through suffering through decomposition in the grave after his death. This is why it is so crucial for a person to take advantage of the special times that Hashem affords us to uplift the *klippas nogah* and repent over our misuse of the permitted pleasures of this world. *Erev Shabbos* is one such time, as the Baal Shem Tov explains, and this is also true of Pesach night.

“...As for innocent idle chatter, such as in the case of an ignoramus who cannot study...” Rabbi Akiva Eiger asks how it could have been possible for the uneducated Jews that lived during the sages' time to have fulfilled their obligation to recite *Shema* if they did not even understand the simple meaning of the words? Rabbi Akiva Eiger concludes from this fact that it is possible to fulfill the basic obligation of *Shema* even if one does not understand its meaning. It is enough to focus on one's

acceptance of the yoke of the kingdom of heaven, and even the ignorant know that much.

“...He must cleanse his *nefesh* from the impurity of this *klippah* by having it cycle through the *kaf ha'kela* [the ‘hollow of the sling,’ a form of limbo] as is stated in the *Zohar, Parshas Beshalach, 59a...*” The punishment known as *kaf ha'kela* is that of the soul being “thrown from one end of the world to the other,” like an object flung from the pocket of a slingshot. The Tzemach Tzedek and Rebbe Nachman of Breslov both explain that this means getting lost in the limbo of the imagination and illusion. One is left to wallow in all of the fantasies that he cultivated throughout his life—that he’ll be wealthy, and so on—until he finally reaches his *tikkun*. The Kabbalists taught that the six *sefiros* of *CHaGaT NH”Y* [*Chessed, Gevurah, Tiferes, Netzach, Hod, Yesod*] parallel our emotive attributes or *middos*, and *Malchus* parallels the feelings and imaginings within the *nefesh*—the realm of the animal soul, whose thoughts, words and acts are driven by the imagination. They have enormous power for good or ill; if one activates his imagination for holiness, they are uplifted. If not, he has to spend time in *kaf ha'kela*, to clarify and cleanse his imagination. We can see a little bit of what this punishment is like when we consider the life of a person who lives in his evil fantasies; it’s as though all of reality is his enemy. This is what it means to be “flung from one end of the earth to the other.”

“...But when it comes to forbidden speech, such as mocking and slander and the like, which stem from the three completely unclean *klippas*, *kaf ha'kela* (alone) does not suffice to cleanse and remove the uncleanness of the soul. Rather, it must descend into *Gehinnom*...”

Gehinnom is not just a punishment within the realm of the imagination; it is actual punishment. Just as, in this world, there is a difference between psychological suffering and actual physically suffering, G-d forbid.

“...So, too, if one is able to engage in the Torah but occupies himself instead with frivolous things, *kaf ha'kela* cannot itself effectively to cleanse and

refine his soul. Severe penalties are meted out for neglect of the Torah in particular, apart from the general retribution for the neglect of a positive commandment through indolence. [The place for this is] in the *Gehinnom* of snow, as explained elsewhere...”

The Baal HaTanya taught that the prayer, “Forgive us”—לנו סלח—was instituted to repair the sin of neglecting Torah study. This is why we recite it even right after Yom HaKippurim—because of the possibility of *bitul Torah*. Doing an honest *teshuvah* when saying לנו סלח can spare a person from these harsh punishments. The “*Gehinnom* of snow” also has its parallel in this world—living a cold and indifferent life, without feeling any warmth or enthusiasm for the Torah that one learns and the *mitzvos* one performs. Such numbness is excruciatingly painful for the soul.

“...Likewise, one who occupies himself with the sciences of the nations of the world [secular wisdom] is included among those who waste their time in profane matters when it comes to the sin of *bitul Torah*, as explained in *Hilchos Talmud Torah*...” This is an echo of the Talmudic teaching: “Keep your sons from [studying scientific] logic.”² Rav Moshe Isserles states that it is only permitted to pursue secular studies as a sideline and not as a major focus of time and attention.

“...Moreover, the impurity of the science of the nations is greater than that of wasted words [about mundane matters]. The latter informs and defiles only the *middos* which emanate from the element of the holy *ruach* within his Divine soul with the contamination of the *kelipat nogah* that is contained in profane speech. [Such speech] is derived from the element of the evil *ruach* of this *kelipah* in his animal soul, as mentioned above...” This is a novel idea; that even the Divine soul which parallels *Ze'ir Anpin d'Atzilus* [“*ruach*”] also is garbed in *klippah*. This concept reflects a teaching of the Arizal, that sin causes *Beriyah-Yetzirah-Asiyah* within *Atzilus* to fall.

² *Berachos* 28b

“...Yet he does not defile the [intellectual] faculties of *CHaBaD* in his soul, for they are but words of foolishness and ignorance; even fools and ignoramuses can speak that way. This is not so in the case of the nations’ science, through which one garbs and defiles the intellectual faculties of *CHaBaD* in his Divine soul. Those sciences are contaminated with *klippas nogah*, because the *klippas* have fallen into them after the ‘shattering of the vessels’ out of the so-called ‘back side’ of holy *Chochmah*, as is known to those familiar with the Kabbalistic tradition...”

The Arizal explains that at the time of the *shevirah*, there were two aspects: the breakage within the *middos*, when *CHaGaT-NH”Y* shattered and fell into *Beriyah-Yetzirah-Asiyah*, together with all of their elements; and the breakage within the *mochin*, when the “back sides” of *Chochmah* and *Binah* shattered, but not their “front sides.”

“...Unless he employs [these sciences] as a useful instrument, i.e. as a means of earning a more affluent livelihood to be able to serve G-d, or if he knows how to apply them in the service of G-d and His Torah. This is the reason why the Rambam and the Ramban, of blessed memory, and their adherents, engaged in them.”

This refers to using science to accomplish the intercalation of the leap years and other necessary calculations.

It is said of Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi that he did not enjoy anything of this world; this means that he was free of the illusions of this world and only sought the revelation of G-dliness. His interfacing with the material world had no connection with the *sitra achra*. Every single one of us must do *teshuvah* for all of the fantasies that we have about this material world. Within those flights of imagination are cloaked our intellectual faculties. The *Shechinah*—like Queen Esther—has seven handmaids, and they are the seven main branches of worldly wisdom. The *tzaddik*—also like Queen Esther—makes use of them and they clarify the Torah for him to an even greater degree, but if a person pursues them for worldly ends, he defiles his mental faculties and can fall into heresy, G-d forbid. This is the essence of the *klippah* of “enlightenment”

[*haskalah*], that Jewish youth who were not yet saturated with Torah knowledge sought to learn secular wisdom, and it defiled their *Chochmah-Binah-Da'as* faculties. They then abandoned Torah observance. (The Chasam Sofer said that the leader of the Jewish enlightenment movement was a reincarnation of *oso ha'ish* [the founder of Christianity], and that his soul will not receive its *tikkun* even when the souls of “that man” receives its *tikkun* for his original blemish.) At first, the damage to the soul is not apparent, but as time goes on more and more difficult challenges arise that make the simpler tests of physical temptation pale in comparison. One must therefore steer clear of secular studies, because they affect a person at a much more essential level than simple material desires. The great *tzaddikim*, however, do not fall from their study of non-Jewish science because they have already absorbed the full spectrum of Torah knowledge, and only made use of their “external wisdom” to increase holy and purity.

May Hashem save us from all of this, and make us worthy of attaching ourselves to true *tzaddikim* who will lead us to greet Moshiach, speedily and in our days.

Translated and Adapted by Rav Micha Golshevsky.