



LIKKUTEI TORAH • PARSHAS MATOS • MAAMAR 4

ושמע אביה את נדרה

“And her father hears her vow”



The fences and stringencies of the Sages are an expression of G-d's great love, and a person who is exacting with himself beyond the law draws that love down from beyond all the worlds.

“Her father,” who annuls the vow, is this great love, supernal Chochmah: a vow, like all restraint, only subdues evil, while the father's love releases the soul's bonds and turns darkness itself into light.

DEDICATED IN HONOR OF

מוקדש לכבוד הגאון המקובל רבי לוי יצחק שניאורסאהן זצ"ל

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



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THE BIG IDEA

The fences and stringencies of the Sages are an expression of G-d's great love, and a person who is exacting with himself beyond the law draws that love down from beyond all the worlds. "Her father," who annuls the vow, is this great love, supernal Chochmah: a vow, like all restraint, only subdues evil, while the father's love releases the soul's bonds and turns darkness itself into light.

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

THE MAAMAR IN BRIEF

The maamar opens with the law that a father may annul his daughter's vow, and first asks why the Talmud is so full of stringencies the Sages added to the Written Torah, and why the Congregation of Israel finds "the words of the Scribes" sweeter than the Torah's secrets. All these fences flow from G-d's great love, as a loving father is most exacting with his son and a precious pearl is most carefully guarded. While the Holy Temple stood, Biblical law sufficed, for love of G-d was settled in every heart; as hearts weakened and bodily desires prevailed, love can be awakened only through the fine points of the Scribes, in turning from evil and in the good eye, good heart and good companionship of Avos. Being exacting with oneself draws "May Havayah lift up His countenance," a love above the chain of worlds that elevates even the animal soul. "Her father" is that great love, supernal Chochmah, which nullifies the soul's bonds. Binah, like the vow itself, can only subdue the sitra achra; the transformation of darkness into light comes from Chochmah, once restraint has come first.

OUTLINE

- 1 Why the Sages' fences are sweeter than the Torah's secrets** ¶1
The fine points of the Scribes flow from G-d's great love, like a father's strictness with his son and the care given a precious pearl; since the Temple they are needed to awaken love, in turning from evil and in doing good.
- 2 "May Havayah lift up His countenance"** ¶1
Being exacting with oneself beyond the Written Torah draws a great love from above the chain of worlds, revealed in man and elevating even the animal soul; the Raaya Mehemna places this "lifting" above the 248 commandments.
- 3 The father who annuls** ¶1
"Her father" is great love, which nullifies the bonds that hold the soul; Binah, like the vow, only subdues the sitra achra, while supernal Chochmah transforms darkness into light.

4 First restraint, then transformation

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The vow's subduing comes first, and then "her father" is revealed; "the heads of the tribes" and "This is the thing" are the heart's great love and the level of Moshe through which vows are released.

KEY CONCEPTS

The fine points of the Scribes (dikdukei soferim) דקדוקי סופרים

The Sages' stringencies, fences and safeguards around the Written Torah; the maamar explains them as an expression of G-d's great love and as the way love is awakened in later generations.

Great love (ahavah rabbah) אהבה רבה

A love beyond measure and above the chain of worlds; in the maamar it is "her father," supernal Chochmah, from which the Sages' fences are drawn and which annuls the soul's bonds.

"May Havayah lift up His countenance" ישא ה' פניו

G-d's response to Israel's being exacting with themselves beyond the law: a love from above the chain of worlds, drawn "to you," into the person himself.

Subduing (iskafya) אתכפיה

Holding the sitra achra in check without changing it; it comes from Binah and Daas, and vows, "a fence for abstinence," are of this kind.

Transformation (is'hapcha) אתהפכא חשוכא לנהורא

Turning darkness itself into light; it cannot come from Binah, from which judgments are aroused, but only from supernal Chochmah and the bittul above comprehension.

The heart's desire (re'usa d'liba) רעותא דליבא

The heart's deep longing for G-d, identified at the end of the maamar with great love and with "the heads of the tribes."

SECTION 1 • ¶1

Why the Sages' fences are sweeter than the Torah's secrets

SECTION 2 • ¶1

“May Havayah lift up His countenance”

SECTION 3 • ¶1

The father who annuls

¹ ושמע אביה¹ את נדרה.² להבין ענין דקדוקי סופרים שאנו רואים כמעט שכל התלמוד מלא מהלכות וחומרי' [וחומרות] שהחמירו חז"ל [חכמינו זכרונם לברכה] והוסיפו כמה גדרים וסייגים לתורה שבכתב.

“And her father hears her vow.” To understand the matter of the fine points of the Scribes (dikdukei soferim), as we see that almost the entire Talmud is full of laws and stringencies in which our Sages, of blessed memory, were stringent and added many fences and safeguards to the Written Torah.

The maamar opens with Numbers 30:5, from the laws of vows: when a young woman in her father's house makes a vow, her father may annul it on the day he hears it. Before turning to the verse, the Alter Rebbe asks about the Rabbinic enactments: why the Talmud is so full of stringencies, fences and safeguards that the Sages added to the Written Torah.

והענין מובן כמ"ש רז"ל [רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] ע"פ כי טובים דודיך מיינ³ אמרה כנס"י [כנסת ישראל] ערבים עלי דברי סופרים⁴ יותר מיינה של תורה.^{5,6}

The matter is understood from what our Sages, of blessed memory, said on the verse “For Your love is better than wine”: the Congregation of Israel said, “The words of the Scribes are sweeter to me than the wine of the Torah.”

He answers with the Sages' reading of Song of Songs 1:2, “For Your love is better than wine”: the Congregation of Israel says that the words of the Scribes, the teachings and enactments of the Sages, are sweeter to her than the “wine” of the Torah.

פִּי יֵינָה שֶׁל תּוֹרָה הוּא פְּנִימִית הַתּוֹרָה וּסְדוּתִיהָ כְּמִשְׁאַרְזִ"ל [כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמְרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ זְכוֹרֵנוּם לְבִרְכָּה] נִכְנָס יֵין יֵצֵא
סוּד⁷ דִּ"ס עֲרֵבִים עַל כִּנְסִי [כִּנְסַת יִשְׂרָאֵל] יוֹתֵר מִסְדּוּת הַתּוֹרָה

That is, “the wine of the Torah” is the inner dimension (pnimiyus) of the Torah and its secrets, as our Sages, of blessed memory, said, “Wine enters, the secret comes out.” The words of the Scribes are sweeter to the Congregation of Israel than the secrets of the Torah,

“The wine of the Torah” is its inner dimension, its secrets, for the Talmud says “when wine enters, the secret comes out” (in Hebrew, “wine” and “secret” both have the numerical value seventy). This sharpens the question: the Rabbinic fences, which seem the outermost part of the Torah, are dearer to the Congregation of Israel than its secrets.

כִּי כָל הַגְּדֵרִים וְהַחֲמוּמֵרוֹת שֶׁבְּדִבְרֵי רִזִּ"ל [רַבּוֹתֵינוּ זְכוֹרֵנוּם לְבִרְכָּה] וְדַרְכֵי מוֹסֵר שֶׁבְּאַגְדוֹת וּפְרָקֵי אֲבוֹת כּוֹלֵם
נִמְשָׁכִים מִכַּחֲסֵינָה אֶהְבָּה רַבָּה כְּמִיֵּשׁ אֶהְבֵּתִי אַתְּכֶם אָמַר⁸ ה' (וְעַמִּישׁ עִיפֵי כִי אֶהְבֵּךְ⁹ ה' אֶלְקֶיךָ בְּדִ"ה לֹא
אֶבָּה),¹⁰

because all the fences and stringencies in the words of our Sages, of blessed memory, and the ways of moral instruction in the Aggados and Pirkei Avos, all of them are drawn from the level of great love (ahavah rabbah), as it is written, “I have loved you, says Havayah” (and see what is written on the verse “For Havayah your G-d loved you” in the discourse beginning “[But Havayah your G-d] would not”),

The reason is that every Rabbinic fence and stringency, and all the ethical guidance of the Aggadah and of Pirkei Avos, flows from “great love” (ahavah rabbah), the love G-d declares in “I have loved you” (Malachi 1:2). The parenthesis refers to the discourse on “But Havayah your G-d would not listen to Bilam” in Likkutei Torah, Ki Seitzei, on the love expressed in “for Havayah your G-d loved you.”

כְּמוֹ לְמִשְׁלֵי אָדָם מַחֲמֵת אֶהְבֵּתוֹ עַל בְּנוֹ מְדַקְדֵּק עִמּוֹ יוֹתֵר לְהוֹסִיף עָלָיו שְׁמִירָה מְעוֹלָה בְּסִיגִים וּגְדֵרִים
בְּכָל הָאֲפָשְׁרֵי בַעֲ"כ [בְּעַל כִּרְחָךְ] שִׁיְהִיָּה מְנוּקָה מִכָּל וְכָל

as, for example, a person who, because of his love for his son, is more exacting with him, to add superior guarding over him, with safeguards and fences in every way possible, against his will, so that he will be wholly clean,

A parable: a father who loves his son is more exacting with him than with others, surrounding him with extra fences, even against the son’s will, so that he stays entirely free of wrong. The strictness itself is the expression of his love.

וכן חפץ מאד שימצא חן ושכל¹¹ ביתר שאת. וכמו למשל מרגליות מה שהיא יקרה ביותר שומרה ביותר שמירה מעולה כלי בתוך כלי.

and likewise he greatly desires that [his son] find favor and understanding in surpassing measure. And as, for example, with pearls: the more precious one is, the more one guards it, with a superior guarding, a vessel within a vessel.

The same love makes the father want his son to excel all the more in grace and understanding, in the language of Proverbs 3:4. A second illustration makes the same point: the more precious a pearl, the more carefully it is guarded, in a case within a case.

כך מחמת גודל אהבתו ית' אלינו מחמיר ומדקדק עלינו בדקדוקי סופרים שהן המה דברי תורתו הנמשכות

So too, because of the greatness of His love, may He be blessed, toward us, He is stringent and exacting with us through the fine points of the Scribes, which are themselves the words of His Torah that are drawn

Applying the parables: it is because of His great love for Israel that G-d is exacting with us through the fine points of the Scribes. These are not additions from outside the Torah; they are themselves words of His Torah.

מאהר"ר [מאהבה רבה] בסייגים וגדרים לזכותינו לטוב לנו שנהיה נקיים לפניו ית' (עמ"ש מזה ע"פ שחורה אני¹² ונאווה¹³ ועיין ברבות ר"פ שמות גבי ואוהבו שחרו מוסר).^{14, 15}

from great love, with safeguards and fences, to give us merit, for our good, so that we will be clean before Him, may He be blessed (see what is written about this on the verse "I am black but comely," and see in the Midrash Rabbah at the beginning of Parshas Shemos, on "but he who loves him disciplines him early").

They are drawn from great love, and their fences are for our merit and our good, to keep us clean before Him. The parenthesis points to the discourse on "I am black but comely" (Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim) and to the opening of Shemos Rabbah, which cites Proverbs 13:24, "he who loves him disciplines him early," to teach that withholding discipline from a son leads him astray.

והנה בזמן שבהמ"ק [שבית המקדש]¹⁶ היה קיים היה סגי בדאורייתא כי היתה נאמנה את ה' רוחנו ולא משכנו

Now, at the time when the Holy Temple stood, Biblical law sufficed, for our spirit was faithful to G-d, and we were not drawn

The Alter Rebbe now explains why the fine points of the Scribes are needed so much more today. While the Holy Temple stood, the Torah's own laws were enough, because Israel's spirit was faithful to G-d and their capacity for love was not pulled toward physical desires.

חבלי עבותות אהבתנו לתאוות גשמיות והיה בנקל להיות אהבת ה' קבועה בלב כל איש להיות בהתלהבות לעבודת ה' ותורתו גם מבלי שנתעורר מזה אהבה רבה

by the cords and ropes of our love toward physical desires; and it was easy for the love of G-d to be fixed in the heart of every man, to be aflame for the service of G-d and His Torah, even without our arousing great love from this.

In that time love of G-d was easily settled in every heart, and people were aflame for His service and His Torah without needing the additional great love that the Rabbinic fine points awaken.

אך דור אחר דור כי נתמעטו הלבבות השלימות בעבודת ה' באהבה עזה ברשפי אש¹⁷ ונכוינו באש זרה באהבות ותאוות גופניות וכ"כ [וכן כתב] גברו עלינו עד אשר

But generation after generation, as the hearts that are whole in the service of G-d, with fierce love, with flashes of fire, have dwindled, and we have been scorched by a strange fire, by bodily loves and desires, and they have overpowered us so greatly that

Over the generations, hearts whole with fiery love for G-d (the “flashes of fire” of Song of Songs 8:6) became rare. Instead people were scorched by a “strange fire,” love and desire for bodily things, until these overpowered them.

לא נוכל לעבוד ה' באהבה בלתי שנתעורר מזה אהבה רבה ע"י דקדוקי סופרים וחומריהם בכל פרטיהם הן בבחינת סור מרע בכל החומרות שבגמרא ופוסקים והן

we cannot serve G-d with love unless we arouse great love from this, through the fine points of the Scribes and their stringencies in all their details: both in the category of “turn from evil,” in all the stringencies in the Gemara and the halachic authorities, and

Now a person can serve G-d with love only if great love is first aroused, and this comes through the fine points of the Scribes in all their details. They work in two directions, following “turn from evil and do good”: the stringencies of the Gemara and the halachic authorities belong to “turning from evil.”

בבחינת ועשה טוב בדברי מוסר שבאגדות ומילי דאבות עין טובה^{18,19} שיראה את חבירו בטוב עין ורעת רעהו אל יחשוב בלבו²⁰ וכן לב טוב וחבר טוב כו'.

in the category of “and do good,” in the words of moral instruction in the Aggados and the sayings of Avos: “a good eye,” that one should look upon his fellow with a good eye, and “let him not devise in his heart evil against his fellow,” and likewise “a good heart” and “a good companion,” etc.

The ethical teachings of the Aggadah and of Avos belong to “doing good.” Avos 2:9 lists “a good eye,” “a good companion” and “a good heart” as the straight way a person should cling to, and Zechariah 8:17 warns against devising evil against one’s fellow in one’s heart.

(ועמ"ש בד"ה כה תברכו²¹ את בניי [בני ישראל]²² בפ"י איך לא אשא פנים לישראל כו' והם מדקדקים על עצמן עד כזית²³ כו'.

(And see what is written in the discourse beginning “Thus shall you bless the children of Israel,” on the explanation of “How shall I not lift My countenance to Israel..., and they are exacting with themselves to [the size of] an olive...”.

A long parenthetical note begins here, referring to the discourse “Thus shall you bless the children of Israel” (Likkutei Torah, Nasso). It discusses the Talmud’s account (Berachos 20b) that the angels asked how G-d can show favor to Israel, and He answered that they are exacting with themselves to say Grace even after an olive’s bulk, though the Torah requires it after a satisfying meal.

נמצא שע"י שכנס"י [שכנסת ישראל] מדקדקים על עצמן להחמיר ע"ע ביותר ממ"ש בתשב"כ [בתורה שבכתב] מזה נמשך בחי' ישא ה' פניו שהוא כחינת אהבה רבה שלמעלה מההשתלשלות כו'

It follows that through the Congregation of Israel being exacting with themselves, being stringent upon themselves beyond what is written in the Written Torah, from this is drawn the level of “May Havayah lift up His countenance,” which is the level of great love that is above the chain of descending worlds (hishtalshelus), etc.,

The conclusion: because Israel are stricter with themselves than the Written Torah requires, G-d responds with “May Havayah lift up His countenance” (Numbers 6:26), a great love from above the whole ordered chain of worlds. Going beyond the measure of the law draws a love beyond measure.

ונמשך בחי' זו אליך ממש להיות גילוי אה"ר [אהבה רבה] זו גם באדם וכמ"ש ג"כ בד"ה שחורה אני ונאווה הנ"ל שע"י תתעלה הנפש הבהמית ג"כ כו' ע"ש. ועמ"ש בפ' מקץ סד"ה כי אתה נרי גבי

and this level is drawn “to you” in actuality, so that there is a revelation of this great love in man as well. And as is also explained in the discourse beginning “I am black but comely,” mentioned above, that through this the animal soul too will be elevated, etc.; see there. And see what is written in Parshas Mikeitz, at the end of the discourse beginning “For You are my lamp,” regarding

The word “to you” teaches that this transcendent love actually reaches the person and is revealed in him. The discourse on “I am black but comely” adds that this elevates even the animal soul, and the Alter Rebbe also refers to the end of the discourse “For You are my lamp” in Torah Ohr, Parshas Mikeitz.

והנה בדורות הראשונים כו' אבל דורות האחרונים כו'. וזהו והוי' יגיה חשכי^{24, 25} כו' וע"ש שהוא מלמעלה מסדר ההשתלשלות וזהו ענין ישא ה' פניו אליך²⁶ והיינו ע"י שמדקדקים על עצמן וכמ"ש ברע"מ [ברע"א מהימנא] בפ' פינחס)

"Now, in the earlier generations..., but the later generations...". And this is [the meaning of] "And Havayah illumines my darkness..."; and see there, that it is from above the order of the chain of descending worlds. And this is the matter of "May Havayah lift up His countenance to you," and that is through their being exacting with themselves; and as is written in the Raaya Mehemna on Parshas Pinchas)

That passage contrasts the earlier generations with the later ones (only its opening words are quoted here) and connects this with "And Havayah illumines my darkness" (II Samuel 22:29), a light from above the order of the chain of worlds. This is the "lifting of the countenance" that being exacting with oneself draws down, and the Raaya Mehemna on Pinchas is cited for it.

(דרל"ח ע"ב)²⁷ שהוא בחי' ישאהו על אברתו^{28, 29} שהוא למעלה ממה שנמשך ע"י רמ"ח פקודין דאינון רמ"ח אברין דמלכא^{30, 31} וע"י [ועיין] בגמ' [בגמרא] במגילה (דף כ"ז ע"ב ודכ"ח ע"א) גבי ובמה הארכת ימים³² כו' יעו"ש [יעויין שם].

(folio 238b), that it is the level of "He bears him on His pinions," which is above what is drawn through the 248 commandments, which are the 248 limbs of the King. And see in the Gemara, in Megillah (folio 27b and folio 28a), regarding "And by what have you prolonged your days..."; see there.

The Raaya Mehemna on Pinchas reads "He bears him on His pinions" (Deuteronomy 32:11) like "May Havayah lift up His countenance," and here this lifting is placed above what the 248 positive commandments draw down, the commandments that the Tikkunei Zohar calls the limbs of the King. The Gemara in Megillah tells of Sages who were asked how they merited long life and answered with practices they had taken upon themselves.

ועמ"ש במ"א בפ"י כל המאריך באחד מאריכין לו ימיו³³ כו'. וזהו שכתוב ושמע אביה את נדרה כו' הניא אביה אותה³⁴ שהאב מפר את הנדר

And see what is written elsewhere on the explanation of "Whoever prolongs [the word] Echad, his days are prolonged...". And this is [the meaning of] what is written, "And her father hears her vow...", "her father has disallowed her": that the father annuls the vow,

Similarly, the Talmud's teaching "whoever prolongs Echad [in the Shema], his days are prolonged" (Bera-chos 13b) is explained elsewhere. Now the Alter Rebbe returns to the verse: "her father has disallowed her" (Numbers 30:6) shows that it is the father who annuls the vow.

כי מבחי' אהבה רבה הוא מפר כתרגומו מבטל כל האיסורים והקישורים אשר כנס"י [כנסת ישראל] היא אסורה וקשורה ואין חבוש מתיר עצמו³⁵ כ"א ע"י מדת אהבה רבה בחי' אביה.

for it is from the level of great love that he annuls, as the Targum renders it, “nullifies,” all the bonds and knots with which the Congregation of Israel is bound and tied; and “a prisoner cannot free himself,” except through the attribute of great love, the level of “her father.”

The father stands for great love. The Targum renders “annul” as “nullify,” and great love nullifies all the bonds that tie the Congregation of Israel; as the Talmud says (Berachos 5b), “a prisoner cannot free himself from prison,” so release must come from “her father,” the attribute of great love.

(וענין האיסורים שהיא אסורה וקשורה בהן י"ל [יש לומר] דהיינו חלישת כח הנפש שאין בכחה לצאת מנרתקה ומאסרה כו')

(And the matter of the bonds with which she is bound and tied can be explained as the weakness of the soul's power, which does not have the strength to go out of its sheath and its prison, etc.,

A parenthetical gloss defines these bonds: they are the soul's own weakness, which leaves it unable to break out of the “sheath” and “prison” that confine it.

חומריות הגוף ונה"ב [ונפש הבהמית] וכמ"ש במ"א בד"ה בחדש השלישי בפ' יתרו ושם נת' [נתבאר] שע"י התורה נמשך כח ועוז לנפש לבטל קישורים אלו כו' ובמ"א נתבאר דקישורים אלו נקרא סירכות ברע"מ [ברע"א מהימנא] שהנפש מסתבכת בהם ועי"ז אינה יכולה לעלות כו'

the materiality of the body and the animal soul, as is explained elsewhere, in the discourse beginning “In the third month” in Parshas Yisro; and there it was explained that through the Torah strength and might are drawn to the soul to nullify these knots, etc. And elsewhere it was explained that these knots are called “adhesions” (sirchos) in the Raaya Mehemna, in which the soul becomes entangled, and through this it cannot rise, etc.,

That prison is the materiality of the body and the animal soul. The discourse “In the third month” (Torah Ohr, Yisro) explains that the Torah gives the soul strength to undo these knots; elsewhere they are called “adhesions” (sirchos, the term for adhesions on a lung in Jewish law), in which the soul becomes entangled so that it cannot rise.

בדי"ה פ"י הפסוק מי אל כמוך,³⁶ וי"ל [ויש לומר] שהפרת נדרים ביוהכ"פ [ביום הכפורים] היינו שע"י התשובה נמשך בחי' הפרת וביטול הקישורים וגילוי האה"ר [האהבה רבה] בנפש כו'. ועוד י"ל [יש לומר] בענין שהאב מפר והוא ע"ד מ"ש בזהר פ' אמור)

in the discourse beginning "The explanation of the verse 'Who is a G-d like You.'" And it can be said that the annulment of vows on Yom Kippur means that through teshuvah there is drawn the level of annulling and nullifying the knots, and the revelation of the great love in the soul, etc. And further, it can be said regarding the father's annulling that it is along the lines of what is said in the Zohar, Parshas Emor)

That last point is explained in the discourse on the verse "Who is a G-d like You" (Micah 7:18), which speaks of G-d's pardoning of sin. The gloss then suggests that the annulment of vows on Yom Kippur alludes to this: teshuvah draws down the undoing of these knots and reveals great love in the soul; and a further explanation of why the father annuls is drawn from the Zohar on Parshas Emor.

(ד"ק ע"ב) גבי בזמנא דנטלא מבי אבא ולא בזמנא דנטלי מבי אימא,³⁷ כי מבחי' הבינה והדעת נמשך להיות אתכפ"א סט"א [סטרא אחרא].

(folio 100b), regarding "at the time that she takes from the house of Abba, and not at the time that she takes from the house of Imma"; for from the level of Binah and Daas comes the subduing of the sitra achra (iskafya).

The Zohar there (III, 100b) says that the union of the Congregation of Israel with the King takes place when she receives from the house of Abba, the supernal Father, Chochmah, and not when she receives from the house of Imma, the Mother, Binah. Binah and Daas, the faculties of understanding, can bring about only iskafya: the sitra achra is held in check but not changed.

וזהו ענין הנדרים סייג לפרישות,³⁸ אבל להיות אתהפכא חשוכא ממש לנהורא א"א להיות מבחי' בינה שמינה דינין מתערין,^{39, 40}

And this is the matter of "vows are a fence for abstinence." But for actual darkness to be transformed into light (is'hapcha), it is impossible for this to come from the level of Binah, from which judgments are aroused,

This subduing is what a vow achieves: "vows are a fence for abstinence" (Avos 3:13), holding a person back from what is otherwise permitted. But turning darkness itself into light (is'hapcha) cannot come from Binah, for, as the Zohar says, judgments are aroused from it.

אלא מבחי' חכמה עילאה והחכמה תחיה⁴¹ והוא הביטול שלמעלה מהשגה ודעת כו' כמבואר בד"ה ראה אנכי נותן.⁴²

but rather from the level of supernal Chochmah, “and wisdom gives life”; and this is the self-nullification (bittul) that is above comprehension and knowledge, etc., as is explained in the discourse beginning “See, I set [before you].”

Transformation comes only from supernal Chochmah, to which the Alter Rebbe applies “wisdom gives life” (Ecclesiastes 7:12): the self-nullification that is above comprehension. That is why the father, Chochmah, is the one who annuls the vow; the subject is explained in the discourse “See, I set before you” (Likkutei Torah, Re’eh).

SECTION 4 • ¶2

First restraint, then transformation

2 וזהו שהאב מפר ומהפך חשוכא לנהורא ומבחי' זו נמשך ג"כ בחי' ואם היו תהיי [תהיה] לאיש⁴³ הנזכר למעלה וע' בזהר שם.

And this is [why] the father annuls and transforms darkness into light. And from this level there is also drawn the level of “And if she is to be [married] to a man,” mentioned above; and see in the Zohar there.

The conclusion: the father, the great love of supernal Chochmah, not only annuls the vow but turns darkness itself into light. From the same level comes “And if she is to be [married] to a man” (Numbers 30:7), the union of the Congregation of Israel with the King, which the Zohar on Emor, cited above, places at the time she receives from the house of Abba.

אך פי' ושמע אביה את נדרה⁴⁴ היינו שע"י אתכפייא בתחלה שזהו ענין הנדרים מזה נמשך אח"כ גילוי בחי' אביה להיות אתהפכא חשוכא לנהורא.

However, the meaning of “And her father hears her vow” is that through the subduing (iskafya) at first, which is the matter of vows, there is drawn from this, afterwards, the revelation of the level of “her father,” so that darkness is transformed into light (is'hapcha).

Yet the verse speaks of the father hearing the vow, so the vow comes first. The vow is iskafya, the person's own restraint at the outset; only after this subduing is “her father” revealed, transforming darkness into light.

ועיין עוד מענין בחינת אביה⁴⁵ בפרדס שער חמישי פ"ג [פרק ג']. וז"ש [וזהו שכתוב] ג"כ וידבר משה אל ראשי המטות כו' לאמר זה הדבר⁴⁶ כו'

And see further on the matter of the level of “her father” in the Pardes, Gate Five, chapter 3. And this is also [the meaning of] what is written, “And Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes..., saying: This is the thing...”:

For more on “her father” the Alter Rebbe refers to Rabbi Moshe Cordovero’s Pardes Rimonim, which quotes a tradition that Malchus issues from Keser, the highest Sefirah, so that it can be said of her, “she is the daughter of my father but not the daughter of my mother.” He then reads the opening verse of the passage of vows, “And Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes... This is the thing,” in the same light.

שע"י לאמר זה הדבר שמבחינת משה על ידי זה יוכל להתיר הנדר כו' גם ראשי המטות הוא בחי' רעותא דליבא אה"ר [אהבה רבה] וכמבואר למעלה:

that through “saying: This is the thing,” which is from the level of Moshe, through this one is able to release the vow, etc. Also, “the heads of the tribes” is the level of the heart’s desire (re’usa d’liba), great love, as is explained above.

“This is the thing” belongs to the level of Moshe, and through it a vow can be released (here the word is “release,” as distinct from the father’s “annulment”). “The heads of the tribes” are re’usa d’liba, the heart’s deep desire for G-d, which is great love, as explained above.

IN ONE’S AVODAH

Since the Temple’s destruction, love of G-d no longer settles in the heart by itself; it is awakened by taking on the Sages’ fine points and stringencies, both in turning from evil and in doing good: a good eye toward others, a good heart, being a good companion. Whoever is exacting with himself beyond the letter of the law draws G-d’s great love into himself, so that even the animal soul is raised. And restraint comes first: holding back, as vows are a fence for abstinence, prepares the way for the great love that turns darkness into light.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why should the Sages’ fences, which seem the outermost layer of the Torah, be sweeter to the Congregation of Israel than the Torah’s secrets?
2. What changed after the Holy Temple, according to the maamar, so that Biblical law alone no longer suffices to awaken love of G-d?
3. How does being exacting with oneself beyond the law draw down “May Havayah lift up His countenance,” a love above the chain of worlds?
4. Why can Binah, and the vow itself, only subdue the sitra achra, while the transformation of darkness into light must come from supernal Chochmah, “her father”?
5. Why must restraint come first, before the revelation of “her father” that transforms darkness into light?

SOURCES AND REFERENCES

Notes

PARAGRAPH 1

1 ושמע אבי

The note refers to a discourse beginning “Es korbani” among the Alter Rebbe’s short discourses, and to the note printed with it; it does not say what is found there.

KEHOT’S NOTE

ראה מאמרי אדה”ו הקצרים עי צג ד”ה את קרבני, ובהערה שם. קטע מהמאמר עד דף פה, א שו”ה פניו — שלמעלה מההשתלשלות מובא בסה”מ תרל”ד עי קמב בלי ההגהות מהצ”צ. ובסה”מ תרל”ה כרך א עי פה. לכללות המאמר ראה סה”מ תרע”ח עי עז.

2 ושמע אבי את נדרה

“And her father hears her vow and her bond with which she has bound herself, and her father is silent to her; then all her vows shall stand.” The maamar opens with this verse and reads “her father” as G-d’s great love.

Numbers 30:5: למדבר לה

ושמע אביה את נדרה ואשרה אשר על נפשה והחריש לה אביה וקמו כל נדריה וכל אשר אשרה על נפשה יקום:

and her father heareth her vow, or her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father holdeth his peace at her, then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand.

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KEHOT’S NOTE

במדבר ל, ה.

3 כי טובים דודיך מיין

“Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for your love is better than wine.” The Sages read the verse as the Congregation of Israel’s preference for the words of the Scribes over the “wine” of the Torah.

Song of Songs 1:2: שיר השירים א

ישקני משקיות פיהו כי טובים דידך מיין:

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth— For thy love is better than wine.

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KEHOT’S NOTE

שה”ש א, ב.

4 ערבים עלי דברי סופרים

That passage explains that the words of the Scribes, made as a fence for the Torah, are rooted like the prohibitive commandments in the level of “sofer” (scribe), Chochmah, above the Written Torah (“sefer”), and so could only be oral, not written.

Song of Songs 7:1: שיר השירים ז

שובי שובי השולמית שובי שובי ונחמה בך מה תהוו בשולמית כמחלת המנחמים:

Return, return, O Shulammit; Return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulammit? As it were a dance of two companies.

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KEHOT’S NOTE

עי עיז (לה, א) שם לי “דברי סופרים”. ועי ירושלמי פ”ב דע”ז ה”ז. ובשהש”ר (פ”א). ובירושלמי ברכות (פ”א, ה”ב). ושם בפאה (פ”ב, ה”ד). ושם חגיגה (פ”א, ה”ח). ושם מגילה (פ”ד, ה”א). ושם סנהדרין (פ”א, ה”ד). [כ]. נתבאר בתו”א נב, ד בדיוק לשון “עלי”. וראה לקמן סוכות פ, ב. ושה”ש ז, א.

5 ערבים עלי דברי סופרים יותר מיינה של תורה

The Gemara: the Congregation of Israel said before the Holy One, blessed be He, “Master of the world, the words of your beloved ones are sweeter to me than the wine of the Torah.” The Gemara’s wording is “the words of your beloved ones”; the Alter Rebbe cites the saying as “the words of the Scribes.”

עבודה זרה ל”ה א:ר”א: Avodah Zarah 35a:6

השיאו לדבר אחר וכו’. מאי “כי טובים דידך מיין”? כי אתא רב דימי אמר: אמרה כנסת ישראל לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא: רבוננו של עולם, עריבים עלי דברי דודיך יותר מיינה של תורה.

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6 ערבים עלי דברי סופרים יותר מיינה של תורה

In the name of Rabbi Yochanan: “The words of the Scribes are more beloved than the words of the Torah, as it says, ‘For your love is better than wine.’” This is the teaching with “the words of the Scribes,” as the Alter Rebbe has it.

שיר השירים רבה א:ח-ט-9: Shir HaShirim Rabbah 1:8-9

... לססתי ברכבי פרעה, דרש רבי פפוס (איוב כג, יג): והוא באחד ומי ישיבנו, דן יחידי לכל באי עולם ואין להשיב על דברי מי שאמר והיה העולם. אמר לו רבי עקיבא דנה פפוס שלא להשיב על דברי מי שאמר והיה העולם, לפי שהכל באמת והכל בדיו, שכן כתוב (ישעיה ו, א): ואראה את ה' יושב על כסא רם ונשא. אמר רבי סימון כסא ששפריש בין מיתה לחיים, (מלכים א כב, יט): וכל צבא השמים עומדים עליו מימינו ומשמאלו, וכי יש שמאל למעלה, והלא ...

“If you do not know, fairest among women, go out in the footsteps of the flock, and herd your kids by the tents of the shepherds” (Song of Songs 1:8). “Go out in the footsteps of [be’ikvei] the flock.” Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Akiva, and the Rabbis, Rabbi Eliezer says: From the coal-baked loaf that the Israelites took in their hands from Egypt, from which they ate for thirty-one days, as Rabbi Shila said: You know that there were sixty-two meals for the Israelites from this coal-baked loaf, [you know] what ...

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7

נכנס יין יצא סוד

Rabbi Chiya: “wine” has the numerical value seventy and “secret” has the numerical value seventy; when wine enters, the secret comes out. The Alter Rebbe uses it to identify “the wine of the Torah” with its secrets.

Eruvin 65a:19-20 ט"ז-כ"ט

אמר רבי חייא: כל המתנישב ביינו — יש בו דעת שבועים וזמנים. ויין נותן בשבועים אותיות, ויין סוד נותן בשבועים אותיות. נכנס יין — יצא סוד. אמר רבי חנין: לא נברא יין אלא לנחם אכלים ולשלים שְׂכָר לרשעים, שנאמר: “תנו שכר לאובד וגו’”.

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KEHOT’S NOTE

עירובין סה, א.

8

אהבתי אתכם אמר ה'

“I have loved you, says Havayah.” The verse expresses the great love from which, the Alter Rebbe says, all the Rabbinic fences and stringencies are drawn.

Malachi 1:2 ב'ב"א

אהבתי אתכם אמר ה' ואמרתם במה אהבתנו הלא אה עשו לעיניך נאם ה' ואהב את יעקב:

I have loved you, saith the L-RD. Yet ye say: ‘Wherein hast Thou loved us?’ Was not Esau Jacob’s brother? Saith the L-RD; Yet I loved Jacob;

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KEHOT’S NOTE

מלאכי א, ב.

9

כי אהבך ה' אלקיך

“But Havayah your G-d would not listen to Bilam, and Havayah your G-d turned the curse into a blessing for you, because Havayah your G-d loved you.” The verse is the subject of the discourse cited in the parenthesis.

Deuteronomy 23:6 ג"ג

ולא אבה ה' אלקיך לשמע אל־בלעם ויהפך ה' אלקיך לך את־הקללה לברכה כי אהבה ה' אלקיך:

Nevertheless the L-RD thy G-d would not hearken unto Balaam; but the L-RD thy G-d turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the L-RD thy G-d loved thee.

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10

בד"ה לא אבה

The explanation of “But Havayah your G-d would not” there speaks of the hidden love in the heart of every Jew, alluded to by the tip of the yud and rooted in Keser, so lofty that it is present even in one who cannot grasp much with his intellect.

KEHOT’S NOTE

לקמן תצא לט, א.

11

הן ושכל

“And you will find favor and good understanding in the eyes of G-d and man.” The parable uses the verse’s words:

a loving father wants his son to find favor and understanding.

Proverbs 3:4 ג"ד

ומצאתון ושל־טוב בעיני אלקים ואדם:

So shalt thou find grace and good favour In the sight of G-d and man.

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12

ע"פ שחורה אני

There “I am black” is the halachos and fine points of the Scribes in the prohibitive commandments, “black as a raven”; most of the Scribes’ fences are in the prohibitive commandments, which reach a level of G-dliness that the soul can hold only by way of negation.

Song of Songs 7:1 א"א

שובי שובי השולמית שובי שובי ונתנה־כך מה־תחזו בשולמית כמחלת המִתְנָהִים:

Return, return, O Shulammit; Return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulammit? As it were a dance of two companies.

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KEHOT’S NOTE

לקמן שה"ש ז, א.

13

“I am black but comely, O daughters of Jerusalem.” The verse heads a discourse in Likkutei Torah to which the Alter Rebbe refers twice in this paragraph.

Song of Songs 1:5 א"ה

שחורה אני ונאנה בנות ירושלם כְּאֶהְיֶה קֶדֶר כִּירְעוֹת שְׁלֹמֹה:

I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, As the tents of Kedar, As the curtains of Solomon.

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14

ואוהבו שחרו מוסר

Shemos Rabbah opens with Proverbs 13:24 and teaches that whoever withholds discipline from his son leads him to a bad end. The Alter Rebbe cites it for the idea that strictness is an expression of love.

Shemos Rabbah 1:1 א"א

ואלה שמות בני ישראל הבאים מצרימה את יעקב איש וביתו באו - הדא הוא דכתיב (משלי יג, כד): חושך שבטו שונא בנו ואוהבו שחרו מוסר. בנוהג שבעולם, אדם שאומר לו חברו: פלוני הכה לבנך, יורד עמו עד לחייו. ומה תלמוד לומר: חושך שבטו שונא בנו?! ללמדך, שכל המונע בנו מן המרדות, סוף בא לתרבות רעה ושונאהו. שכן מצינו בישמעאל, שהיו לו געגועים על אברהם אביו ולא רדהו ויצא לתרבות רעה ושונאהו, והוציאו מביתו ריקם. מה עשה ישמעאל כשהיה בן חמש עשרה שנה? התחיל להביא צלם מן השוק והיה מצחק בו ...

“These are the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob; each came with his household” (Exodus 1:1). That is what is written: “He who spares his rod hates his son, and he who loves him seeks for him admonition” (Proverbs 13:24). The way of the world is that a person whom another tells him: ‘So-and-so struck your son,’ he would harass him. What is the meaning when the verse states: “He

who spares his rod hates his son"? It is to teach you that anyone ...

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15 ואוהבו שחרו מוסר

"He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him early." Discipline is a sign of love, like G-d's exactness with Israel through the fine points of the Scribes.

Proverbs 13:24: משלי י"ג:כ"ד

חושך שבוטו שונא בנו ואוהבו שחרו מוסר:

He that spareth his rod hateth his son; But he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

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16 בזמן שבהמ"ק הי קיים הי סגי בדאורייתא

The note says this statement, that while the Holy Temple stood Biblical law sufficed, is explained there; it does not say how.

KEHOT'S NOTE

נתבאר בלקו"ש כח ע' 283 ובהערה 48.

17 באהבה עזה ברשפי אש

"For love is fierce as death...; its flashes are flashes of fire." The Alter Rebbe uses the verse's language for the fiery love of G-d that the earlier generations had.

Song of Songs 8:6: שיר השירים ח:ו

שימני כחותם על־לִבְךָ כחותם על־זרועך כי־עֵזָה כמות אהבה קשה כשאל קנאה רשפיה רשפי אש שלהבתיה:

Set me as a seal upon thy heart, As a seal upon thine arm; For love is strong as death, Jealousy is cruel as the grave; The flashes thereof are flashes of fire, A very flame of the L-RD.

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18 ומילי דאבות עין טובה

Kehot's marei makom for these words (its note is below).

KEHOT'S NOTE

פ"ב מ"י.

19 Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai asked his disciples which is the straight way a person should cling to: Rabbi Eliezer said "a good eye," Rabbi Yehoshua "a good companion," Rabbi Elazar "a good heart." The Alter Rebbe brings these as the "do good" side of the Sages' teachings.

Pirkei Avot 2:9: משנה אבות ב:ט"ז

אמר להם, צאו וראו איזוהי דרך ישרה שידבק בה האדם. רבי אליעזר אומר, עין טובה. רבי יהושע אומר, חבר טוב. רבי יוסי אומר, שכן טוב. רבי שמעון אומר, הרוצה את הנולד. רבי אלעזר אומר, לב טוב. אמר להם, רוצה אני את דברי אלעזר בן עזר מדבריהם, שבכלל דבריו דבריהם. אמר להם צאו וראו איזוהי דרך רעה שיתרחק ממנה האדם. רבי אליעזר אומר, עין רעה. רבי יהושע אומר, חבר רע. רבי יוסי אומר, שכן רע. רבי שמעון אומר, הלזה ...

He [Rabban Yohanan] said unto them: go forth and observe which is the right way to which a man should cleave? Rabbi Eliezer said, a good eye; Rabbi Joshua said, a good companion; Rabbi Yose said, a good neighbor; Rabbi Shimon said, foresight. Rabbi Elazar said, a good heart. He [Rabban Yohanan] said to them: I prefer the words of Elazar ben Arach, for in his words your words are included. He [Rabban Yohanan] said unto them: go forth and observe which is the evil way which a man should ...

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20 רעת רעהו אל יחשוב בלבו

"And let none of you devise in your hearts evil against his fellow." It is cited among the moral teachings that belong to "do good."

Zechariah 8:17: זכריה ח:י"ז

ואיש את־רעת רעהו אל־תחשוב בלִבְכֶם ושבַּעַת שקר אל־תאָהבו כי את־כָּל־אֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר שָׁנְאֵתִי נֶאֱמַרְהוּ

and let none of you devise evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath; for all these are things that I hate, saith the L-RD.'

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KEHOT'S NOTE

זכרי' ח, יז.

21 כה תברכו את תבריך

There, after explaining that the exact measures of the commandments (the length of the tzitzis, the square tefillin) come from Gevurah and tzimtzum, the Alter Rebbe takes up "How shall I not lift My countenance" through the verse "you shall eat and be satisfied and bless" and the sparks of good hidden in food.

KEHOT'S NOTE

לעיל פ' נשא כו, ג.

22 כה תברכו את בניי

"Thus shall you bless the children of Israel." The opening of the Priestly Blessing, on which the discourse in Likkutei Torah, Nasso, cited here, is built.

Numbers 6:23: במדבר ו:כ"ג

דבר אלי־אהרן ואֶל־בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר כֹּה תְבָרְכוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲמֹר לָהֶם:

'Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying: On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel; ye shall say unto them:

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23 מדקדקים על עצמן עד כזית

The ministering angels asked how G-d can show favor to Israel when His Torah says He shows no favor; He answered: "Shall I not show favor to Israel? I wrote for them, 'You shall eat and be satisfied and bless,' and they are exacting with themselves to an olive's bulk or an egg's bulk."

Israel's going beyond the law is answered by G-d's favor beyond it.

ברכות כ"ב:ט"ו Berakhot 20b:15

דרש רב עזרא, זמנין אמר לה משמיה דרבי אמר לה משמיה דרבי אסי: אמרו מלאכי השרת לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא: רבנו של עולם, כתוב בתורתך "אשר לא ישא פנים ולא יקח שחד", והלא אתה נושא פנים לישראל, דכתיב: "ישא ה' פניו אליך"? אמר להם: וכי לא אשא פנים לישראל, שכתבתי להם בתורה "ואכלת ושבעת וברכת את ה' אלקיך", והם מדקדקים [על] עצמם עד כזית ועד כביצה.

Rab 'Awira expounded (sometimes he said it in the name of R. Ammi and sometimes in the name of R. Assi) : The ministering angels spake before the Holy One, blessed be He, "L-rd of the universe ! It is written of Thee in Thy Torah, 'Who regardeth not persons nor taketh reward' (Deut. x. 17); but dost Thou not regard the person of Israel, for it is written, 'The L-rd lift up His countenance upon thee' (Num. vi. 26)?" He replied to them, "And should I not regard the ...

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ברכות כ, ב.

24

והי יגיי חשכי

"For You are my lamp, O Havayah, and Havayah illumines my darkness." The verse heads the Torah Ohr discourse referred to here, which speaks of a light from above the order of the chain of worlds.

II Samuel 22:29 כ"ב:כ"ט

כ"א אתה נירי ה' והי יגיה חשכי:

For Thou art my lamp, O L-RD; And the L-RD doth lighten my darkness.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ש"ב כב, כט.

25

Kehot's note points to Psalms 18:29 for these words.

תהילים י"ח:כ"ט Psalms 18:29

כ"א אתה תאיר נירי ה' אלקי יגיה חשכי:

For Thou dost light my lamp; the L-RD my G-d doth lighten my darkness.

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26

ישא ה' פניו אליך

"May Havayah lift up His countenance to you and grant you peace." The Alter Rebbe calls it a great love above the chain of worlds, drawn down by Israel's exactness with themselves.

במדבר ו:כ"ו Numbers 6:26

ישא ה' פניו אליך וישם לך שלום:

The L-RD lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

במדבר ו, כו.

27

כפי פינחס דרל"ח ע"ב

There "His pinions" are the commandments, the 248 commandments that are the limbs of the King, through which G-d lifts Israel up, with the same reference to the Raaya Mehemna on Pinchas, 238b; another explanation applies "He bears him" to teshuvah.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה לעיל פי' שלח לט, ב.

28

ישאחו על אברתו

The Raaya Mehemna on Pinchas expounds "He takes him, He bears him on His pinions," explaining "His pinions" as the limb of a person through which a commandment is done, and "He bears him" as in "May Havayah lift up His countenance to you". The Alter Rebbe cites it for the lifting that is above the 248 commandments.

ספר הזוהר, פינחס ע"ח:תפ"א-78:481-79:489 Zohar, Pinchas

ע"ט:תפ"ט

29

ישאחו על אברתו

"As an eagle stirs up its nest, hovering over its young, He spreads His wings, takes him, bears him on His pinions." The verse describes G-d carrying Israel; the Raaya Mehemna expounds it.

דברים ל"ב:י"א Deuteronomy 32:11

כנשר יעיר קנו על-גוזליו ירחף יפרש כנפיו יקחהו ישאחו על-אברתו:

As an eagle that stirreth up her nest, Hovereth over her young, Spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, Beareth them on her pinions—

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30

רמ"ח פקודין דאינון רמ"ח אברין דמלכא

Kehot's marei makom for these words (its note is below).

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה ת"ז ת"ל.

31

רמ"ח פקודין דאינון רמ"ח אברין דמלכא

Tikkun 30 speaks of the 248 commandments as the commandment of Havayah in each and every limb of the King. The Alter Rebbe uses the image to say that "He bears him on His pinions" reaches higher than what these commandments draw down.

תקוני זוהר ע"ד א"ח:8:74a Tikkunei Zohar

ועוד מצוה דא עמודא דאמצעיתא, דאיהו מצוה מסטרא דאבא דאיהו רא"ש, ומסטרא דאימא דאיהי אש"ר, והכי צדיק מצוה ועושה מתרין, ובגין דא אתמר על תרין דאיהו אשר קדשנו, אמא קדשנו ואבא צונו, על מאן על שכינתא תתא, דאיהי פטר כל רחם, פתיחו דרחם, דאיהו רמ"ח פקודין, איהי מצות יהויה בכל אבר ואבר דמלכא, איהי מצוה, ועוד אשר קדשנו מסטרא דאבא

Tikkunei Zohar - Vocalized (Public Domain)

32

The disciples of several Sages asked them, "By what have you prolonged your days?", and each answered with practices of his own; Rabbi Zakkai, for example, never neglect-

ed the Kiddush of the day. The Alter Rebbe cites it as an example of being exacting with oneself.

Megillah 27b:19 ט"ז ב:י"ט מגילה

שאלו תלמידיו את רבי זכאי: במה הארכת ימים? אמר להם: מימי לא השתנתי מים בתוך ארבע אמות של תפלה, ולא כניתי שם לחבירי, ולא ביטלתי קידוש היום. אמא זקינה היתה לי, פעם אחת מכרה כפה שבראשה והביאה לי קידוש היום.

Zakai was asked by his disciples: How have you lived so long? He said to them: I never urinated within four cubits of a place where prayers have been said, and I never called a friend by his nickname, nor have I omitted performing Kiddush [the sanctification of the day.] I had a grandmother who once sold her head covering so as to bring me [wine for] Kiddush.

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33 כל המאריך באחד מאריכין לו ימיו

Sumchos says: whoever prolongs the word Echad in the Shema has his days and years prolonged. The Alter Rebbe refers to an explanation of it given elsewhere.

Berakhot 13b:14-15 י"ג ב:י"ד-ט"ו ברכות

תנא סומכוס אומר: כל המאריך ב"אחד", מאריכין לו ימיו ושנותיו. אמר רב אחא בר יעקב: ובדלית. אמר רב אשי: ובלבד שלא יחטוף בחית. רבי ירמיה הוה יתיב קמיה דרבי (חייא בר אבא), תזייה דהוה מאריך טובא, אמר לקה: כיון דאמליכתייה למעלה ולמטה ולארבע רוחות השמים — תו לא צריכת.

There is a teaching : Symmachus says : Whoever prolongs the pronunciation of the word ehad "one," his days and years are prolonged for him. Rab Aha b. Jacob said : Especially the letter D. Rab Ashe said: Only he must not slur over the letter H. R. Jeremiah was sitting in the presence of R. Hiyya b. Abba, and noticed that he prolonged [the word ehad] exceedingly. He said to him : So long as thou hast proclaimed His Kingship above and below and the four winds of heaven, ...

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34 הניא אביה אותה

"But if her father disallowed her on the day he heard, none of her vows or her bonds shall stand..., because her father disallowed her." From here the Alter Rebbe shows that it is the father who annuls the vow.

Numbers 30:6 ל:ו' במדבר

ואם הניא אביה אתה ביום שמעו כל נדריה ואשריה אשר אסרה על-נפשה לא יקום וה' יסלח לה כיהניא אביה אתה:

But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth, none of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand; and the L-RD will forgive her, because her father disallowed her.

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35 ואין חבוש מתיר עצמו

When Rabbi Yochanan was ill, Rabbi Chanina raised him up, and the Gemara explains why he could not heal him-

self: "a prisoner cannot free himself from prison." So too, the Alter Rebbe says, the soul's bonds are released only by great love.

Berakhot 5b:13-14 י"ג ב:י"ג-י"ד ברכות

אמרי: אין חבוש מתיר עצמו מבית האסורים. רבי אלעזר חלש. על לגביה רבי יוחנן. הוה דהוה קא גני בבית אפל. גלייה לדרעיה ונפל נהורא. תזייה דהוה קא ככי רבי אלעזר. אמר לקה: אמאי קא בכית? אי משום תורה דלא אפשר — שנינו: אחד המרבה ואחד הממעיט, ובלבד שיכוין לבו לשמים. ואי משום מזוני — לא כל אדם זוכה לשתי שלחנות. ואי משום בני — דין גרמא דעשינא ביר.

They answer : A prisoner does not release himself from the dungeon. R. Eleazar was ill and R. Johanan went in to visit him. He saw that he was lying in a dark room, so he bared his arm and a brightness was radiated therefrom. He then noticed that R. Eleazar was weeping. He said to him, "Why weepest thou? Is it because thou hast not applied thyself sufficiently to the study of Torah ? We have learnt that it matters not whether one does much or little, so long ...

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ברכות ה, ב. וש"נ.

36 מי אל כמוך

"Who is a G-d like You, who pardons iniquity and passes over transgression..." The verse heads the discourse in which these knots are called "adhesions."

Micah 7:18 ח"ז:י"ח מיכה

מי־אל כמוד נשא עון ועבר על־פשע לשארית נחלתו לא־החזיק לעד אפו כ־י־חפץ חסד הוא:

Who is a G-d like unto Thee, that pardoneth the iniquity, And passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, Because He delighteth in mercy. .

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37 בזמנא דנטלא מבי אבא ולא בזמנא דנטלי מבי אימא

Rabbi Shimon taught that the union of the Congregation of Israel with the Holy King is "at the time that she takes from the house of Abba, and not at the time that she takes from the house of Imma," and that Yom Kippur proves it. The Alter Rebbe uses it to explain why it is the father, Chochmah, who annuls the vow.

Zohar, Emor 38:202-40:226 י"ח ב:י"ח-י"ח ב:י"ח ספר הזהר

This is the purpose which these blasts should serve, being accompanied by repentance before G-d. Thus when Israel produce the blasts of the shofar with proper devotion, the supernal Shofar returns and crowns Jacob so that all is properly arranged. Another throne is set up and joy is universally diffused and G-d has mercy on the world. Happy are Israel who know how to divert their Master from justice to mercy and to be the instruments for establishing all worlds. Corresponding to the three series of blasts three books are ...

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38 נדרים סייג לפרישות

Rabbi Akiva: “Vows are a fence for abstinence.” The Alter Rebbe identifies the vow with iskafya, the subduing that comes from Binah.

משנה אבות ג:יג: Pirkei Avot 3:13

רבי עקיבא אומר, שחוק וקלות ראש, מרגילין לערוה. מסרת, סג לתורה. מעשרות, סג לעשר. נדרים, סג לפרישות. סג לחכמה, שתיקה:

Rabbi Akiva said: Merriment and frivolity accustom one to sexual licentiousness; Tradition is a fence to the Torah; Tithes a fence to wealth, Vows a fence to abstinence; A fence to wisdom is silence.

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39 דינין — מתעריין

Kehot's marei makom for these words (its note is below).

KEHOT'S NOTE

ז"ח"ג (י, ב, יא, א). [כ].

40 דינין מתעריין

The Zohar describes Binah as a “river” of mercy from which judgments are nevertheless aroused, so that it is written with the letters of the Name Havayah but vocalized as Elokim. The Alter Rebbe cites it to show that the transformation of darkness cannot come from Binah.

ספר הזהר, ויקרא כ"ג:קמ"ו-כ"ד:קנ"ט Zohar, Vayikra 23:146-24:159

41 והחכמה תחיה

“...and the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to those who have it.” The Alter Rebbe applies it to supernal Chochmah, the source of the transformation of darkness into light.

Ecclesiastes 7:12ב"ז: קהלת ז'

כי בצל החכמה בצל הכסף ויתרון דעת החכמה תחיה בעליה:

For wisdom is a defence, even as money is a defence; but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom preserveth the life of him that hath it.

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42 ראה אנכי נותן

“See, I set before you today a blessing and a curse.” The verse heads the discourse in Likkutei Torah, Re'eh, to which the Alter Rebbe refers for the bittul above comprehension.

דברים י"א:כ"ו Deuteronomy 11:26

ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם היום ברכה וקללה:

Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse:

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PARAGRAPH 2

43 ואם היו תהי לאיש

“And if she is to be [married] to a man, and her vows are upon her...” The next case in the laws of vows; the Alter

Rebbe says this level too is drawn from “her father.”

במדבר ל"ז: Numbers 30:7

ואם-היו תהיה לאיש ונדריה עליה או מבטא שפתייה אשר אסרה על-נפשה:

And if she be married to a husband, while her vows are upon her, or the clear utterance of her lips, wherewith she hath bound her soul;

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44 ושמע אביה את נדרה

“And her father hears her vow...” The Alter Rebbe reads the order of the verse, the vow first and then the father, as subduing followed by transformation.

במדבר ל"ה: Numbers 30:5

ושמע אביה את-נדרה ואסרה אשר על-נפשה והחריש לה אביה וקמו כל-נדריה וכל-אסר אשר-אסרה על-נפשה יקום:

and her father heareth her vow, or her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father holdeth his peace at her, then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand.

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45 בחינת אביה

Rabbi Moshe Cordovero quotes a tradition of his teacher Rabbi Yosef Karo that Keser, Chochmah and Binah issued as one light, and that Malchus issued from Keser as Avraham (Chesed) did from Chochmah, as if both came from one place; so Avraham could say of her, “She is the daughter of my father but not the daughter of my mother.” He also writes that judgments are aroused from Binah. The Alter Rebbe refers here for more on “her father.”

Pardes Rimmonim 5:3ג: פרדס רמונים ה'

46 וידבר משה אל ראשי המטות כו' לאמר זה הדבר

“And Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes of the children of Israel, saying: This is the thing that Havayah has commanded.” The opening of the passage of vows, which the Alter Rebbe reads as the release of vows from the level of Moshe and great love.

במדבר ל"ב: Numbers 30:2

וידבר משה אל-ראשי המטות לבני ישראל לאמר זה הדבר אשר צוה ה'

And Moses spoke unto the heads of the tribes of the children of Israel, saying: This is the thing which the L-RD hath commanded.

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THE CHASSIDISHE PARSHA

About this edition

This edition contains the Hebrew text, the English translation, our explanations, and the notes.

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The Rebbe asked that the maamarim of the week's parsha, the "Chassidishe Parsha," be learned during that week, spread over its seven days (Sichah of Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel 5725 · Toras Menachem vol. 42, pp. 306-309). Why learn it, and the Rebbe's brachos: likuteitorah.com/about/the-chassidishe-parsha/

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DEDICATED IN HONOR OF

מוקדש לכבוד הגאון המקובל רבי לוי יצחק שניאורסאהן זצ"ל

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