



LIKKUTEI TORAH • SHIR HASHIRIM • MAAMAR 7

ביאור ענין שחורה אני ונאווה

An Explanation of “I Am Black, yet Comely”



The Shechinah’s descent into the lower worlds makes her “black,” through the bitterness of distance and through being clothed in physical mitzvos, yet that very blackness makes her more “comely” than the souls that never left Atzilus. Through it she rises above the level of vessels to the lights, and to the essence of the Infinite One.

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 Shechinah's descent into the lower worlds makes her "black," through the bitterness of distance and through being clothed in physical mitzvos, yet that very blackness makes her more "comely" than the souls that never left Atzilus. Through it she rises above the level of vessels to the lights, and to the essence of the Infinite One.

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 reads Song of Songs 1:5 as the Shechinah, Malchus of Atzilus, speaking to "the daughters of Jerusalem," the souls as they exist in "gestation" within Atzilus before their "birth" into the lower worlds. Below Atzilus everything is limited, since the ray of the Infinite reaches only as far as Atzilus. The Shechinah is "black" in two ways: through bitterness at her distance from the higher unity, the "sun" that has withdrawn from her in exile, and through her clothing in physical mitzvos. Each blackness becomes beauty: subduing the sitra achra raises G-d's glory, and the 620 mitzvos reach Keser, the supernal will. So she is comelier than the souls of Atzilus, which remain vessels, and she rises to the lights and beyond. "The tents of Kedar" and "the curtains of Shlomo" are two kinds of encompassing light: one that sustains even the lowest realms and has a counterpart in kelipah, and a higher one with no counterpart, drawn down by Torah study for its own sake and revealed in the time to come. The verse "Before the hoary head you shall rise" alludes to the same structure in the mitzvos.

OUTLINE

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|--|---|------|
| 1 | The Shechinah and the daughters of Jerusalem | ¶1-2 |
| <hr/> | | |
| <p>The speaker is Malchus of Atzilus, descending into the lower worlds; the listeners are souls still in gestation in Atzilus, one with the Infinite Light, while everything below Atzilus is limited.</p> | | |
| 2 | Two kinds of blackness, two kinds of beauty | ¶3 |
| <hr/> | | |
| <p>The bitterness of distance from the higher unity and being clothed in physical mitzvos make the Shechinah black; subduing the sitra achra and the 620 mitzvos that reach Keser make her comely.</p> | | |
| 3 | Comelier than the souls of Atzilus | ¶4 |
| <hr/> | | |
| <p>The souls of Atzilus remain at the level of vessels, the letters of the Torah, while Malchus through her descent rises to the lights and to the essence of the Infinite One.</p> | | |

4 The tents of Kedar

¶5

Even the lowest realms live from an encompassing spark of holiness, like the frankincense among the spices; the Shechinah too has an encompassing light, and the mitzvos draw down higher ones.

5 The curtains of Shlomo

¶6-7

Higher encompassing lights, named for shalom, the joining of opposites, are drawn down by Torah study for its own sake; they have no counterpart in kelipah and will be revealed in the time to come.

6 The hoary head and the elder

¶8

Leviticus 19:32 alludes to the positive commandments (white hair), the prohibitions (black locks) and the rabbinic mitzvos (the fear of G-d), all one in Havayah.

KEY CONCEPTS

Gestation and birth (ibbur and leidah) עיבור ולידה

The souls' state within Malchus of Atzilus, still one with their source, and their emergence as separate, limited beings in the lower worlds.

The daughters of Jerusalem בנות ירושלים

The souls in gestation in Atzilus: "daughters" because they are held within Malchus, "Jerusalem" (yirah shalem) because they have complete awe and self-nullification.

The higher unity (yichuda ila'ah) יחודא עילאה

The level at which everything is nothing before G-d; the "sun" whose absence makes the Shechinah black.

Two kinds of blackness ב' בחינות שחרות

The bitterness of distance from the higher unity, and being clothed in the physical things with which the mitzvos are performed.

620 and Keser תר"ך בחינת כתר

The 613 mitzvos with the seven rabbinic ones equal the numerical value of Keser, the supernal will that stands between the Emanator and the emanated.

Encompassing light (makif) מקיף

Light that surrounds a level rather than entering it; the maamar distinguishes the makif that sustains even kelipah from higher makifim revealed only in the time to come.

Peace (shalom) שלום

The joining of two opposites: supernal lights that tend to rise, made to shine below, in the household above and the household below.

SECTION 1 • 11-2

The Shechinah and the daughters of Jerusalem

1 ביאור ענין¹ שחורה אני² ונאווה³. הוא מאמר כנסת ישראל לבנות ירושלים הן הנשמות הופשטות מן הגוף.

An explanation of the matter of “I am black, yet comely.” This is the statement of the Community of Israel (Knesses Yisrael) to “the daughters of Jerusalem,” who are the souls divested of the body.

The maamar sets out to explain the verse “I am black, yet comely, O daughters of Jerusalem” (Song of Songs 1:5). The speaker is the Community of Israel, and the listeners, “the daughters of Jerusalem,” are identified as souls not clothed in a body.

והענין כי השכינה היא מל' דאצי' המתלבשת בבי"ע ושכנתי בתוכם.⁴ השוכן אתם בתוך טומאותם.⁵ היא האומרת ששחורה אני ואעפ"כ נאווה.

The matter is this: the Shechinah is Malchus of Atzilus, which enclothes itself in [the worlds of] Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah, [as it is written,] “that I may dwell in their midst,” [and] “Who dwells with them in the midst of their impurity.” She is the one who says, “I am black, and nevertheless comely.”

The Community of Israel is the Shechinah, G-d's indwelling Presence, which in Kabbalistic terms is Malchus, the last Sefirah of the World of Atzilus. It descends into the lower worlds of Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah and dwells even among Israel in their impurity, as two verses attest; it is she who calls herself black yet comely.

וביאור בנות ירושלים הוא כי הנה הנשמות מתחלה היו כלולים בבחי' עיבור באצי' ואח"כ נמשכים בבחי' לידה בבי"ע (ועמ"ש מזה בד"ה הים ראה⁶ וינוס)⁷

And the explanation of “the daughters of Jerusalem” is this: at first the souls were included [in their source] in the state of gestation (ibbur) in Atzilus, and afterwards they are drawn down in the state of birth (leidah) into Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah (and see what is written on this in the discourse beginning “The sea saw and fled”).

Before the souls come into the lower worlds they exist within Atzilus like a child in the womb, held within their source; this is called “gestation.” Their coming forth into Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah, where each soul becomes a separate being, is called “birth.”

ואזי נעשו בעלי גבול כי אין בחי' א"ס אלא באצילות ששם מסתיים הארת הקו וחוט מאור א"ס כו' (ועמ"ש מזה בביאור ע"פ מי מנה עפר יעקב).⁸

And then they became limited beings, for the level of the Infinite (Ein Sof) exists only in Atzilus, where the illumination of the kav and the thread of the Infinite Light (Or Ein Sof) comes to an end, etc. (and see what is written on this in the explanation of the verse “Who has counted the dust of Yaakov”).

Once born into the lower worlds, the souls become finite. The reason is that the kav, the ray of the Infinite Light, reaches only as far as Atzilus and stops there; below it, all existence is bounded.

משא"כ בבי"ע לא מיבעיא מלאכים מיכאל באהבה וגבריאל ביראה ופחד ג"כ קדוש ביי"ב שעות כו' הכל הם בבחינת גבול כו' והמלאכים שקטרגו ואמרו מה אנוש⁹ הושיט אצבעו כו'¹⁰

This is not so in Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah. Needless to say the angels—Michael with love and Gavriel with awe and fear, and likewise [those who say] “Holy” in the twelve hours, etc.—all of them are in a state of limitation, etc.; and the angels who accused and said, “What is man?”—He stretched out His finger, etc.,

Everything in the lower worlds is limited, starting with the angels: Michael serves with love and Gavriel with awe, and the angels who sing “Holy” have fixed hours. Their limitation is shown by the Talmudic account that when angels objected to the creation of man, asking “What is man?”, G-d stretched out His finger and consumed them.

כי לא יוכלו לקבל יותר מבחי' גבול ומדה שבהם וז"ש להודיע לבני האדם גבורותיו¹¹ וכבוד הדר מלכותו שלא כל מדת מלכותו ית' מלובשת בהם

for they cannot receive more than the level of limit and measure that is in them. And this is what is written, “to make known to the sons of man His mighty deeds, and the glory of the splendor of His kingship”: that not the whole measure of His kingship, blessed be He, is en clothed in them,

The angels could not grasp more than their own measured capacity allowed, and so they could not see the worth of man. The verse from Psalms says G-d's kingship is only “made known” to created beings: they receive a glimpse of it, not its full measure.

אלא כבוד וזיו ואעפ"כ זיו זה המעט מזעיר הדר הוא להם כו' אלא אפי' נשמות

but only glory and radiance; and even so, this radiance, a tiny fraction of [His] splendor, is theirs, etc. And not only [angels], but even souls,

What the angels receive is only a “radiance,” a tiny glimmer of G-d's splendor, and even that is overwhelming for them. The text then turns to show that not only angels but even souls are limited once they are in the lower worlds.

כמו נשמות האבות אברהם יצחק ויעקב¹² יש בחי' אברהם יצחק ויעקב באצי' דאיהו וחיוהי חד. אבל אברהם יצחק ויעקב שבבריאה הם בבחי' בע"ג כו'.¹³

such as the souls of the Patriarchs, Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov: there is a level of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov in Atzilus, where “He and His life-forces are one”; but the Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov that are in Beriah are in the state of limited beings, etc.

Even the Patriarchs’ souls have two levels: one in Atzilus, where the soul is wholly one with G-d’s light (“He and His life-forces are one”), and one in Beriah, where it is a limited, separate being.

2 ובחינת גבול זה הוא בלידת הנשמות בבי"ע. משא"כ בבחי' עיבור באצי' שם איהו וחיוהי וגרמוהי חד.¹⁴

And this state of limitation comes with the birth of the souls into Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah. Not so in the state of gestation in Atzilus: there “He and His life-forces and His vessels are one.”

Limitation begins only with the souls’ “birth” into the lower worlds. While they are still in “gestation” in Atzilus they share the state described in the Tikkunei Zohar, where G-d, His life-forces and His vessels are all one.

כי שם מאיר אור א"ס ונשמות אלו שבבחי' עיבור נקראו בנות ירושלים שלפי שהן בבחי' עיבור במל' נקראו בנות ונקראו ע"ש ירושלים שמקבלות יראה שלם שלימות היראה בבחי' ביטול אמיתי דאיהו וחיוהי חד שבבחי' אצי'.

For there the Infinite Light shines. And these souls that are in the state of gestation are called “the daughters of Jerusalem”: because they are in the state of gestation within Malchus they are called “daughters,” and they are called by the name of Jerusalem (Yerushalayim) because they receive complete awe (yirah shalem), the perfection of awe, in a state of true self-nullification (bittul), [that of] “He and His life-forces are one,” which is at the level of Atzilus.

Because the Infinite Light shines in Atzilus, the souls there are called “daughters,” since they are held within Malchus as in a womb. They are called “of Jerusalem” (Yerushalayim) because they receive “complete awe” (yirah shalem): a true self-nullification in which they feel nothing but G-d.

SECTION 2 • 13

Two kinds of blackness, two kinds of beauty

3 והנה מאמר השכינה להם שחורה אני¹⁵ ואעפ"כ נאווה כי הנה שחורה אני בירידה בבע"ג כי נעשה שחרות מחמת מרירות על עוצם ריחוקה מיחוי"ע

Now the Shechinah's saying to them, "I am black, and nevertheless comely": "I am black" in [her] descent among limited beings, for blackness came about through bitterness over how very far she is from the higher unity (yichuda ila'ah).

The Shechinah calls herself "black" because she has descended among limited beings, far from the higher unity, the state in which everything is nullified before G-d. Her blackness is the darkening of bitterness at being so far away.

ועל זה נופל רחמנות גדולה כמאמר אלקי עולם ברחמיך הרבים כו' ואזי נקרא המלי' שחרחרות ב' בחי' שחרות.

And over this great compassion is aroused, as in the saying, "G-d of the world, in Your abundant mercy," etc. And then Malchus is called "swarthy" (shecharchores): two aspects of blackness.

Such distance calls for great compassion, the kind asked for in the prayer "G-d of the world, in Your abundant mercy, have mercy on us." The next verse calls her "swarthy" (shecharchores), a doubled word that the text reads as two kinds of blackness.

הא' ממרירות הנ"ל ומבשרי אחזה¹⁶ מרירות האדם בנפשו לעורר רחמים רבים על נפשו שמרירות זו משכנה בלב בחלל השמאלי המלא דם כו'

The first is from the bitterness mentioned above. And "from my flesh I behold" the bitterness a person [feels] in his soul, so as to arouse great compassion upon his soul, the seat of this bitterness being in the heart, in the left chamber, which is full of blood, etc.

The first blackness is the bitterness itself. As Job says, "from my flesh I behold": a person knows from his own experience how bitterness over the soul's state, felt in the heart's left chamber, arouses great compassion for that soul.

ועל בחי מרירות זו שבמלי כתיב ששזפתני השמש¹⁷ פי יחוי"ע שנקרא שמש ומגן¹⁸ שזפתני בזכרי על
 בחי יחוי"ע נעשה בחי שחרות ומרירות כנ"ל וכדפירש בפי תוריע (דמ"ה ע"ב)¹⁹ ששזפתני השמש
 דאסתלק מני שמשא מלאנהרא לי²⁰ כו

And of this level of bitterness in Malchus it is written, “for the sun has gazed upon me.” That is: the higher unity, which is called “a sun and a shield”—“has gazed upon me”: when I remember the level of the higher unity, a state of blackness and bitterness comes about, as mentioned above. And as he explains in Parshas Tazria (page 45b): “for the sun has gazed upon me”—that the sun has withdrawn from me, from shining for me, etc.

The verse “the sun has gazed upon me” describes this bitterness. The “sun” is the higher unity, called “a sun and a shield”; remembering it darkens her, and the Zohar reads the verse as “the sun has withdrawn from shining for me.”

ע"ש: (וזהו ענין מארז"ל מצות נר חנוכה משתשקע החמה.²¹ פי כי עיקר ירידת המלי לבי"ע היינו בזמן
 שאין בהמ"ק קיים ואז הוא בחי דאסתלק מני שמשא כו וזהו ענין משמשקע החמה.

See there. (And this is the meaning of the saying of our Sages, of blessed memory, that the mitzvah of the Chanukah lamp is “from when the sun sets.” That is: the main descent of Malchus into Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah is at the time when the Holy Temple is not standing, and then it is the state of “the sun has withdrawn from me,” etc.; and this is the meaning of “from when the sun sets.”

A parenthetical aside begins: the Sages say the Chanukah lamp is lit “from when the sun sets.” The text reads this as the time of exile, when the Temple does not stand and Malchus has descended into the lower worlds, so that “the sun has withdrawn” from her.

וכדי להאירה הוא ע"י נר חנוכה וכמ"ש מזה בביאור ע"פ רני ושמחי^{22, 23} בת ציון כו אור ושמן ופתילה
 כו הכל ממשיכים גם למטה כו ע"ש

And to give her light is through the Chanukah lamp, as is written on this in the explanation of the verse “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion,” etc.: light, oil and wick, etc., are all drawn down below as well, etc.; see there.

The Chanukah lamp is what gives her light in that state. Another discourse explains that its light, oil and wick all draw divine light down below.

והנה מצות נר חנוכה היא מדברי סופרים שהוא בחינת מקור האור כו' שע"י הוא המשכת בחינת ונאווה בבחינת שחורה אני כנ"ל) והשחרות הב' הוא הירידה עצמה להתלבש במצות מעשיות ולא מחמת ששזפתני השמש לכד

Now the mitzvah of the Chanukah lamp is of the words of the Scribes (divrei soferim), which is the level of the source of the light, etc., and through it the level of "and comely" is drawn into the level of "I am black," as mentioned above.) And the second blackness is the descent itself, to be enclothed in the practical mitzvos; and [this is] not only because "the sun has gazed upon me,"

The Chanukah lamp is a rabbinic mitzvah, and the words of the Scribes are called the source of light; through it "comely" is drawn into "black." After the aside, the text names the second blackness: the descent itself, into the practical mitzvos.

אלא מחמת גשמיות הירידה עצמה שמלובשת בענינים גשמיים שבהם נעשו המצות קרבנות מבעלי חיים ציצית מצמר תפילין מקלף כו'

but because of the physicality of the descent itself, being enclothed in physical things, with which the mitzvos are performed: offerings from animals, tzitzis from wool, tefillin from parchment, etc.

The second blackness is not about missing the "sun" but about physicality itself: the mitzvos are done with material things, such as animal offerings, woolen tzitzis and parchment tefillin.

(ועמ"ש בפ' במדבר סד"ה וידבר²⁴ כו' במדבר סיני מענין בחינת ומדרגת הרחמנות ד"ב שבטים לעורר רחמים על ניצוץ אלקות שירד ממקום כבודו כו')

(And see what is written in Parshas Bamidbar, at the end of the discourse beginning "And [G-d] spoke, etc., in the wilderness of Sinai," on the level and degree of the compassion of the twelve tribes, to arouse compassion upon the spark of G-dliness that descended from its place of glory, etc.,

A second aside refers to another discourse on two degrees of compassion. The first, linked with the twelve tribes, is compassion on the spark of G-dliness that fell from its place of glory.

והרחמנות דבחינת ע' נפש יוצאי ירך יעקב לעורר רחמים רבים מאד על נפשו ולא בשביל הירידה לבדה שירדה ממקום כבודה אלא גם זאת שנתלכשה בגוף החומרי ע"ש.

and the compassion of the level of the seventy souls who came forth from Yaakov's loins, to arouse exceedingly great compassion upon one's soul: not only on account of the descent, that it descended from its place of glory, but also that it became enclothed in the material body; see there.

The second, linked with the seventy souls who went down with Yaakov to Egypt, is a still greater compassion: not only because the soul came down from its place of glory, but because it is clothed in a coarse physical body.

וזהו ענין ב' בחינות שחרות הנ"ל הא' מה שירדה ממקום כבודה. הב' גם זאת שנתלבשה בגוף החומרי
(כ"י)

And this is the matter of the two aspects of blackness mentioned above: the first, that she descended from her place of glory; the second, that she also became en clothed in the material body, etc.)

These two degrees of compassion match the two kinds of blackness described here: the descent from on high, and being clothed in the physical.

והנה זאת נחמתה הגם כי שחורה אני אעפ"כ ונאווה שמזה השחרות דוקא נעשה בחינת ונאווה כי

Now this is her consolation: although "I am black," nevertheless "and comely," for from this very blackness the level of "and comely" comes about. For

Now comes the comfort: the Shechinah is comely precisely because of her blackness, not in spite of it. Each kind of blackness produces its own beauty.

הנה ע"י השחרות שבמרירות הריחוק הנה ע"ז נאמר ורב תבואות בכח שור²⁵ דכד אתכפיא סט"א
אסתלק²⁶ כ"י

through the blackness that lies in the bitterness of distance—of this it is said, "and much produce comes through the strength of the ox," for "when the sitra achra is subdued, [the glory of the Holy One, blessed be He,] rises," etc.

The bitterness of distance becomes the "strength of the ox" that brings "much produce" (Proverbs 14:4). The Zohar teaches that when the sitra achra, the side opposed to holiness, is subdued, G-d's glory rises in all the worlds; overcoming distance produces an elevation beyond what was there before.

וע"י השחרות בהתלבשות במצות מעשיות הנה המצות הן תרי"ג ארחין ועם ז' דרכנן תר"ך בחינת
כתר²⁷

And through the blackness of being en clothed in the practical mitzvos: the mitzvos are the 613 paths, and together with the seven rabbinic [mitzvos, they are] 620, the level of Keser,

The physical mitzvos are the 613 "paths," and with the seven rabbinic mitzvos they number 620, the numerical value of Keser (the Crown). So being clothed in physical mitzvos connects her with the level of Keser.

דהיינו רצון עליון כי יש רצון תחתון המתפשט מחו"ב למדות. אבל רצון העליון הוא הממוצע בין מאציל לנאצלים כנודע.

that is, the supernal will. For there is a lower will, which extends from Chochmah and Binah to the emotive attributes (middos); but the supernal will is the intermediary between the Emanator and the emanated, as is known.

Keser is the supernal will, higher than the "lower will" that arises from intellect and spreads into the emotions. The supernal will stands between G-d the Emanator and everything emanated, and so the mitzvos, which express it, reach above the orderly structure of the Sefiros.

SECTION 3 • 14

Comelier than the souls of Atzilus

4 וזהו ונאווה יותר מבנות ירושלים שהן הנשמות שבאצילות שעם היות שמדורם ומשכנם באצילות עצמו ואין להם ירידה בבי"ע

And this is "and comely"—more than "the daughters of Jerusalem," who are the souls in Atzilus. For although their abode and dwelling is in Atzilus itself and they have no descent into Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah,

This is why the Shechinah is more "comely" than the daughters of Jerusalem. Those souls live in Atzilus itself and never descend into the lower worlds.

הנה חיותם וקיומם הוא מבחינת אותיות כי ס"ר נשמות הן ס"ר אותיות התורה²⁸ והאותיות הן בחינת כלים אלא שהנשמות הן מבחינת פנימית הכלים ומ"מ בחינת כלים הם משא"כ ע"י ירידת המלי

their life-force (chayus) and existence are from the level of letters, for the 600,000 souls are the 600,000 letters of the Torah, and the letters are the level of vessels; only the souls are from the inner dimension of the vessels, but vessels they are nonetheless. Not so through the descent of Malchus:

Yet even their existence comes from the letters of the Torah, for each of the 600,000 souls corresponds to one of its 600,000 letters, and letters are vessels, forms that contain light. The souls come from the inner side of those vessels, but they are still vessels; Malchus, through her descent, gains something more.

הנה היא עולה בבחינת האורות (ועמ"ש מזה ע"פ ושמתי כדכד) ^{29,30} ולא עוד אלא שעולה מעלה מעלה עד רום המעלות עד עצמיות א"ס הפשוט כו': ³¹

she rises to the level of the lights (and see what is written on this on the verse "And I will make [your windows] of kadmah"), and not only that, but she rises ever higher, to the loftiest heights, to the very essence of the simple Infinite One (Ein Sof), etc.

By descending, Malchus rises to the level of the lights themselves, above the vessels. And beyond that she rises to the very essence of the simple Infinite One, higher than any level she could reach without descending.

SECTION 4 • 15

The tents of Kedar

5 כאהלי קדר. ^{32,33} אברהם שיצא ממנו ³⁴ כו', ^{35,36} בחינת קדר סיגים ופסולת ³⁷ אך מ"מ יש בו איזה חיות מועט דקדושה שאם לא כן היה כלה ונפסד

"As the tents of Kedar." Avraham, from whom there came forth, etc.: the level of Kedar, dross and refuse. Yet nevertheless there is in it some small life-force of holiness, for otherwise it would cease to be and perish;

The text now explains "as the tents of Kedar." Kedar was a son of Yishmael, and the Talmud's phrase "Avraham, from whom there came forth [Yishmael]" is used in Kabbalistic terms: what separated off from Avraham's holiness became "dross and refuse." Yet even such a level must hold a small spark of holy life-force, or it could not exist at all.

אלא שהחיות ההוא הוא בבחינת מקיף והוא ענין לבונה שבי"א סממני הקטורת ³⁸ כי עשרה סממנים הן מתלבשים בקליפות והי"א הוא בבחינת מקיף שהוא בעצם לבן כו'.

only that life-force is in the manner of an encompassing [light] (makif). And this is the matter of the frankincense among the eleven spices of the incense: for ten spices are encloded in the kelipos, and the eleventh is in the manner of an encompassing [light], for it is white in its essence, etc.

That spark of life does not enter it directly; it surrounds it from outside, as an encompassing light (makif). The text compares this to the incense: of its eleven spices, ten are said to be clothed in the kelipos, while frankincense (levonah), whose name means "white," stands above them as an encompassing light.

וזהו כאהלי קדר שיש להם אהל ומקיף. כך יש אצלי בחינת אוהל ומקיף מבחינת יחודא עילאה ששזפתני השמש כו' שמש ומגן כו'

And this is “as the tents of Kedar”: they have a tent and an encompassing [light]. So too I have a level of a tent and an encompassing [light], from the level of the higher unity (yichuda ila'ah)—“for the sun has gazed upon me,” etc., “a sun and a shield,” etc.

“Tents” are a picture of a surrounding light, a covering from above. So the Shechinah says: I too have a “tent,” an encompassing light that comes from the higher unity, the “sun” that has gazed upon me.

(ור"ל דאם יש בחינת מקיף המחיה אותם שהם משבירת הכלים כו' מכ"ש וכ"ו שנמשך מקיפים עליונים בקיום המצות מעשיות שהוא תיקון ובירור³⁹ ק"נ ולהיות ובערת הרע⁴⁰ כו')

(That is to say: if there is a level of encompassing [light] that gives life to them, who derive from the shattering of the vessels, etc., how much more so, many times over, are higher encompassing [lights] drawn down through fulfilling the practical mitzvos, which are the rectification and refinement of kelipas nogah, so as to bring about “and you shall eradicate the evil,” etc.

The parenthesis argues from the lesser to the greater. If an encompassing light sustains even the realms that come from the “shattering of the vessels” (the primordial breaking from which the kelipos derive), then far higher encompassing lights must be drawn down by the practical mitzvos, which refine kelipas nogah (the mixed realm of good and evil) and lead toward removing evil entirely.

ועמ"ש לקמן סד"ה לסוסתי ברכבי פרעה⁴¹ דמיתך⁴² ועיין בד"ה ויהי בשלח פרעה⁴³ בענין לעושי רצונו על אחת כמה וכמה):

And see what is written below, at the end of the discourse beginning “To a mare among Pharaoh’s chariots I have likened you,” and see the discourse beginning “And it came to pass when Pharaoh sent,” on the matter of “for those who do His will, how much more so.”)

The reader is referred to two other discourses for the same reasoning. It follows the Sages’ principle: if G-d gives so much even to those who do not do His will, how much more to those who do.

SECTION 5 • ¶6-7

The curtains of Shlomo

6 כיריעות שלמה.⁴⁴ מקיפים יותר עליונים כי יש⁴⁵ בחינות במקיפים האחד שמתגלים עתה. והבי שאין

באים לידי גילוי אלא לימות המשיח (ועמ"ש מזה בפי שמות בביאור על פסוק הבאים ישרש⁴⁶ כו)⁴⁷

“As the curtains of Shlomo”: more exalted encompassing [lights]. For there are [two] levels in the encompassing [lights]: the first, those that are revealed now; and the second, those that come to revelation only in the days of Mashiach (and see what is written on this in Parshas Shemos, in the explanation of the verse “[In days] to come Yaakov will take root,” etc.).

“The curtains of Shlomo” stand for still higher encompassing lights. There are two kinds: those that are revealed now, and those that will be revealed only in the days of Mashiach.

ואותן נק' יריעות שלמה ע"ש הפסוק או יחזיק במעוזי⁴⁸ יעשה שלום לי פי' ענין שלום הוא התחברות
בי הפכים

And these are called “the curtains of Shlomo” after the verse, “Or let him take hold of My strength, let him make peace (shalom) with Me.” Explanation: the matter of peace is the joining of two opposites,

The higher kind is named after Shlomo (Solomon), whose name comes from shalom, peace, as in Isaiah’s “let him make peace with Me.” Peace, in this sense, means bringing two opposites together.

דהיינו אורות עליונים שטבעם לעלות ולהסתלק למעלה יאירו למטה⁴⁹ וב"פ שלום⁵⁰ בפמליא של
מעלה ושל מטה פמליא של מטה התחברות

that is, that supernal lights, whose nature is to rise and withdraw upward, should shine below. And “peace” twice: [peace] in the household above and [in the household] below. The household below: the joining of

The opposites are supernal lights, whose nature is to rise away from the worlds, and the lower places where they are made to shine. The Sages speak of peace in two “households,” above and below, and the text now explains each.

מלי דאצילות להיות עתיק לבריא ופמליא של מעלה להיות המשכה והתחברות מבחינת א"ס דכולם בחכמה עשית⁵¹ שהחכמה נקרא עשייה גשמיות לפניו ית' להיות עתיק לאצילות

Malchus of Atzilus, to become Atik to Beriah; and the household above: that there be a drawing down and joining from the level of the Infinite (Ein Sof), [as it is written,] “You made them all with wisdom,” for Chochmah is called action, physicality, before Him, blessed be He, [so as] to become Atik to Atzilus

Peace below means that Malchus of Atzilus becomes “Atik,” the hidden inner source, for the World of Beriah. Peace above means that the Infinite One joins with Atzilus in the same way, so that even Chochmah, the highest wisdom, is as mere physical “action” before Him, as in “You made them all with wisdom.”

(ועמ"ש מזה בד"ה צאינה וראינה⁵² במלך שלמה)⁵³ וכל העוסק בתורה לשמה ע"י קריאה באותיות התורה ממשיך זאת.

(and see what is written on this in the discourse beginning “Go forth and behold... King Shlomo”). And whoever engages in Torah for its own sake, by reading the letters of the Torah, draws this down.

This joining of the Infinite with the worlds is brought about by Torah study for its own sake. Saying and reading the words of the Torah draws the higher light down.

וזהו אשר יקראוהו באמת.⁵⁴ באמת זו התורה כי חכמה נקרא אמת אורייתא מחכמה נפקת^{55,56} כו'

And this is “[all] who call upon Him in truth.” “In truth”—this is the Torah, for Chochmah is called truth, [and] “the Torah comes forth from Chochmah,” etc.

The verse “G-d is near to all who call upon Him in truth” is read as a reference to Torah, since Chochmah is called truth and the Torah comes from Chochmah.

ויקראוהו באמת פי' בתוך אמת יקראוהו וימשיכוהו כו' ונקרא יריעות שלמה בה' ה' עילאה ה' תתאה.

“And they call upon Him in truth” means: within truth they call Him and draw Him down, etc. And it is called “the curtains of Shlomo” with a hei: the higher hei and the lower hei.

“Call upon Him in truth” is read as “call Him into the truth,” that is, draw G-d into the Torah. The name Shlomo ends with a hei, which the text links to the two letters hei in the divine Name Havayah, the higher (Binah) and the lower (Malchus).

7 והנה ענין שלום ושלמה עצמן היינו בבחינת התלבשותו בעולמות ועושה שלום ביניהם. אבל כריעות שלמה היינו מקיפים עליונים ואין לעומתם בקליפות כלל

Now the matter of shalom and Shlomo themselves is at the level of His enclothing in the worlds, making peace between them. But “as the curtains of Shlomo” refers to higher encompassing [lights], and there is nothing corresponding to them in the kelipos at all.

Shalom and Shlomo in themselves refer to G-d as clothed within the worlds, making peace among them. “The curtains of Shlomo,” though, are the higher encompassing lights, and nothing in the kelipos corresponds to them.

כי אהלי קדר בחינת לבונה נגד בחינת מקיף דקדושה. אבל נגד יריעות שלמה אין לעומת זה כלל וזה יתגלה לע”לדוקא כו’.

For “the tents of Kedar,” the level of frankincense, stand opposite the level of the encompassing [light] of holiness; but opposite “the curtains of Shlomo” there is no counterpart at all, and this will be revealed specifically in the time to come, etc.

The “tents of Kedar,” the frankincense, have a holy counterpart, the encompassing light of holiness. The “curtains of Shlomo” have no counterpart at all, which is why they can be revealed only in the time to come.

SECTION 6 • 18

The hoary head and the elder

8 וזהו שחורה אני בבי מיני שחרות הנ”ל ואעפ”כ ונאווה כנ”ל והנה כל זה מרומז ג”כ בפסוק מפני שיבה תקום⁵⁷ כו’.

And this is “I am black” with the two kinds of blackness mentioned above, and nevertheless “and comely,” as mentioned above. Now all this is also alluded to in the verse, “Before the hoary head (seivah) you shall rise,” etc.

The text sums up: the two kinds of blackness, and the comeliness that comes from them. It finds all this hinted at in the verse “Before the hoary head you shall rise, and honor the face of the elder, and you shall fear your G-d; I am Havayah.”

פִּי שִׁיבָה הֵיִינוּ מִיֵּשׁ וְשַׁעַר רִישִׁי כַּעֲמַר נָקֵא⁵⁸ שֶׁהַשְּׁעָרוֹת הֵם בְּבַחֲיִנַת לְבִנוּנִית וְהֵן הַהֲלָכוֹת רַבּוֹת שֶׁבְּמִיָּע וְהַדְרַת פָּנֵי זָקֵן הֵיִינוּ מִיֵּשׁ קוֹצוֹתָיו תִּלְתָּלִים⁵⁹ שֶׁחֹרוֹת כַּעֲרֹב וְכַמְאֲרִז״ל דְּפִי זָקֵן הֵיִינוּ שֶׁקֵּנָה חֲכָמָה.⁶⁰

Explanation: “seivah” is what is written, “and the hair of His head like clean wool,” for the hairs are at the level of whiteness, and they are the many laws in the positive commandments. And “honor the face of the elder (zaken)” is what is written, “His locks are wavy, black as a raven,” as our Sages, of blessed memory, said, that “zaken” means one who has acquired wisdom.

“The hoary head” is white hair, which recalls Daniel’s vision of G-d with hair “like clean wool”; the white hairs are the many laws of the positive commandments. “The elder” recalls the beloved’s locks, “black as a raven,” in the Song of Songs; and the Sages read “elder” as one who has acquired wisdom.

וְהֵן הַהֲלָכוֹי שֶׁנִּמְשְׁכוּ וְנִתְפָּשְׁטוּ בַּמִּצְוֹת לִ”ת כּוֹי. וִירָאֵת מֵאֲלֶקֶךְ הֵיִינוּ דְּבָרֵי סוֹפְרִים וְזֵי מִצְוֹת דְּרַבָּנָן וְכַמְאֲרִז״ל חֲמוּרִים דְּבָרֵי סוֹפְרִים מִדְּבָרֵי תוֹרָה אֲנִי הוּי דְּכוּלָּא חַד׃⁶¹

And they are the laws that were drawn down and extended into the prohibitive commandments, etc. And “you shall fear your G-d”: this is the words of the Scribes and the seven rabbinic mitzvos, as our Sages, of blessed memory, said, “The words of the Scribes are more stringent than the words of Torah”; “I am Havayah,” for all is one.

The black locks are the laws that extend into the prohibitions, the “black” side of the mitzvos. “You shall fear your G-d” refers to the rabbinic mitzvos, which the Sages treat as even weightier than Torah law, and “I am Havayah” shows that all these levels are one.

IN ONE'S AVODAH

The maamar teaches that the bitterness a person feels over his soul's distance from G-d, and the work of doing mitzvos with physical things, are not merely a loss: from this very "blackness" comes a beauty higher than that of souls that never descended. Subduing the sitra achra raises G-d's glory, the practical mitzvos connect with the supernal will, and Torah study for its own sake draws the higher encompassing lights down.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why does the maamar say that the souls in Atzilus, though one with the Infinite Light, remain at the level of "vessels," while Malchus through her descent rises to the lights?
2. What are the two kinds of blackness, and how does each one become a source of the Shechinah's beauty?
3. How does the Chanukah lamp, lit "from when the sun sets," illustrate drawing "comely" into "black"?
4. What is the difference between the encompassing light of "the tents of Kedar" and that of "the curtains of Shlomo," and why does only the first have a counterpart in kelipah?
5. How does the maamar read Leviticus 19:32 as an allusion to the positive commandments, the prohibitions and the rabbinic mitzvos?

SOURCES AND REFERENCES

Notes

PARAGRAPH 1

1 **וביאור ענין בנות ירושלים**
The note says this explanation of “the daughters of Jerusalem” is quoted in Or HaTorah on Parshas Yisro.
KEHOT’S NOTE

מובא באוה”ת יתרו ע’ תתק.

2 **ביאור ענין שחורה אני**
The note points to a transcript of this discourse made by the Mittlerer Rebbe, printed among the Alter Rebbe’s written discourses.
KEHOT’S NOTE

הנחת כ”ק אדה”א במאמרי אדה”א כתובים ח”ב ע’ עג. ראה המשך בששה”ק תער”ב ח”א ע’ שסא.

3 “I am black, yet comely, O daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Shlomo.” The whole maamar is an explanation of this verse.

שיר השירים א’ ח”ה: 1:5 Song of Songs

שחורה אני ונאווה בנות ירושלים כְּאֹהֶל־קֶדָר כִּירִיעוֹת שְׁלֹמֹה:

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

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)

4 **ושכנתי בתוכם**
“Make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.” Cited to show that the Shechinah dwells within the lower worlds.

שמות כ”ה: ח”ה: 25:8 Exodus

וְעָשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם:

And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.

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5 **השוכן אתם בתוך טומאותם**
G-d’s Presence dwells with Israel “in the midst of their impurity.” It shows how far the Shechinah descends, which is the source of her “blackness.”

ויקרא ט”ז: ט”ז: 16:16 Leviticus

וְכִפֹּר עַל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִטְּמֵאת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמִפְשָׁעֵיהֶם לְכָל־טִמְאָתָם וְכֵן יַעֲשֶׂה לְאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד הַשֹּׁכֵן אִתָּם בְּתוֹךְ טִמְאָתָם:

And he shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleannesses of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, even all their sins; and so shall he do for the tent of meeting, that dwelleth with them in the midst of their uncleannesses.

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KEHOT’S NOTE

ויקרא טז, טז.

6 Kehot’s note points to Psalms 114:3 for these words.

תהילים קי”ד: 114:3 Psalms

הַיָּם רָאָה וַיָּנָס הַיַּרְדֵּן וָסָב לָאָחוֹר:

The sea saw it, and fled; The Jordan turned backward.

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7 **בד”ה הים ראה וינס**

That passage explains that the 600,000 souls of Israel, drawn from the 600,000 letters of the divine thought, are called “brothers” of the Holy One, since in Atzilus “He and His life-forces and His vessels are one.” It also refers back to this discourse’s teaching on the daughters of Jerusalem, and goes on to describe how the soul must come to be a separate created being.

KEHOT’S NOTE

לעיל צו טז, ג. ס”ר נשמות ישראל שנמשכים מס”ר אותיות התורה נק’ אחים להקב”ה.

8 **בביאור ע”פ מי מנה עפר יעקב**

As the note summarizes, that discourse teaches that the line and thread of the Infinite Light extend down to Malchus of Atzilus and stop there, and that between Atzilus and the lower worlds there is a screen.

KEHOT’S NOTE

לעיל בלק סח, ג. כי עד מלי דאצי נמשך הקו וחוט של אוא”ס ב”ה ומשם ואילך הוא נפסק. ובעמוד ד’ שם מה מלגאו בפנימי האצי הוא שם מ”ה שהוא הארת אוא”ס ב”ה שנמשך ממצחא דא”ק וגילוי זה באצי, משא”כ מאצי לבי”ע יש מסך.

9 **מה אנוש**

“What is man that You are mindful of him?” The words the angels used in their objection.

תהילים ח”ה: 8:5 Psalms

מַה־אָנוֹשׁ כִּי־תִזְכְּרֵנוּ וְכֵן־אָדָם כִּי תִפְקְדֵנוּ:

What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that Thou thinkest of him?

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10 **מה אנוש . . הושיט אצבעו כו’**

The Talmud relates that angels asked, “What is man that You are mindful of him?” when G-d proposed to create man, and He stretched out His finger among them and burned them. Here it illustrates that the angels’ grasp is limited.

תהילים ח”ב: 8:2 Psalms

ה’ אֲדַגִּינוּ מַה־אֲדִיר שְׁמֶךָ בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר תִּנָּה הוֹדָךְ עַל־הַשָּׁמַיִם:

O L-RD, our L-rd, How glorious is Thy name in all the earth! Whose majesty is rehearsed above the heavens.

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Sanhedrin 38b:5-6 ו"ה-ב:ח-ו

אמרו לפניו: רבוננו של עולם, "מה אנוש כי תזכרנו וכן אדם כי תפקדנו?" הושיט אצבעו קטנה ביניהן ושרפם. וכן כת שניה. כת שלישית אמרו לפניו: רבוננו של עולם, ראשונים שאמרו לפניו מה הועילו? כל העולם כולו שלף הוא. כל מה שאתה רוצה לעשות בעולמך - עשה. כיון שהגיע לאנשי דור המבול ואנשי דור הפלגה שמעשיהן מקולקליו, אמרו לפניו: רבוננו של עולם, לא יפה אמרו ראשונים לפניו? אמר להן: "ועד וקנה אני הוא ועד ..."

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים ח, ב. סנהדרין לח, ב. ראה לעיל פי' ברכה זו, ד ואילך ובמ"מ לשם.

להודיע לבני האדם גבורותיו

"To make known to the sons of man His mighty deeds, and the glory of the splendor of His kingship." Read here to mean that created beings receive only a glimpse of G-d's kingship.

Psalms 145:12 תהילים קמ"ה:י"ב

להודיע לבני האדם גבורותיו וכבוד הדר מלכותו:

To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, And the glory of the majesty of His kingdom.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים קמה, יב.

12 Kehot's note points to II Kings 13:23 for these words.

II Kings 13:23 מלכים ב י"ג:כ"ג

ויהי ה' אתם וירחמם ויפן אליהם למען בריתו את אברהם יצחק ויעקב ולא אבה השחיתם ולא השליכם מעל פניו עד עתה:

But the L-RD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither hath He cast them from His presence until now.

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13 ג"פ קדוש

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

ועליק (כט, ב). וש"נ. [כ].

PARAGRAPH 2

14 באצ"י שם איהו וחיהו וגרמוהו חד

The Tikkunei Zohar's introduction says of the Sefiros of Atzilus that "He, His life-forces and His vessels are one." Here it defines the state of the souls before their birth into the lower worlds.

Tikkunei Zohar 3b:9-10 תקוני זוהר ג' ב:ט-י

דעשר ספירות דאצילות מלכא בהון, איהו וגרמיה חד בהון, איהו וחייהו חד בהון, מה דלאו הכי בעשר ספירות דבריאה, דלאו אינון וחייהו חד, לאו אינון וגרמיהו חד. ועלת על כלל הוא נהיר (נ"א נחית) בעשר ספירות דאצילות, ובעשר ספירות דבריאה, ונהיר בעשר כחות דמלאכיא, ובעשר גלגלי דרקיעא, ולא אשתני בכל אתר.

Tikkunei Zohar - Vocalized (Public Domain)

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה ת"ז בהקדמה (ג, ב).

PARAGRAPH 3

15 Kehot's note points to Song of Songs 1:5 for these words.

Song of Songs 1:5 שיר השירים א:ה

שחורה אני ונאור בנות ירושלם כהלי קדר פיריעות שלמה:

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

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16 "From my flesh I behold G-d." Used here to say that a person knows from his own experience how bitterness over the soul arouses compassion.

איוב י"ט:כ"ו Job 19:26

ואחר עורי נקפוצאת ומבשרי אהזה אלוה:

And when after my skin this is destroyed, Then without my flesh shall I see G-d;

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17 ששופתני השמש

"Do not look upon me that I am swarthy, for the sun has gazed upon me." The doubled word is read as two kinds of blackness.

Song of Songs 1:6 שיר השירים א:ו

אל תראוני שאני שחורה ששופתני השמש בני אמי נחרו בי שמי נטרה את הכרמים כרמי שלי לא נטרתי:

Look not upon me, that I am swarthy, That the sun hath tanned me; My mother's sons were incensed against me, They made me keeper of the vineyards; But mine own vineyard have I not kept.'

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שה"ש א, ו.

18 שמש ומגן

"For Havayah Elokim is a sun and a shield." The "sun" here stands for the higher unity.

Psalms 84:12 תהילים פ"ד:י"ב

כי שמש ומגן ה' אלקים חן וכבוד יתן ה' לא ימנע טוב להלכים בתמים: For the L-RD G-d is a sun and a shield; the L-RD giveth grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.

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19 בפ' תזריע (דמ"ה ע"ב)

The note gives the Zohar's opening words there, "Why black?", and refers to a discussion in Parshas Shlach.

KEHOT'S NOTE

מאי שחורות. ראה לעיל פי' שלח מג, ב.

20 בפ' תזריע (דמ"ה ע"ב) שזפתני השמש דאסתלק מני שמשא מלאנהרא לי

The Zohar in Parshas Tazria, which begins "Why black?", reads "the sun has gazed upon me" as "the sun has withdrawn from shining for me." The Alter Rebbe uses it for the Shechinah's bitterness in exile.

ספר הזהר, תזריע י"ד:ס"ז-י"ז:ע"ז 14:60-17:70 Zohar, Tazria
Observe this. When the Holy One, blessed be He, is in the company of the Community of Israel, if she first makes approaches to him and draws him towards her in the strength of her love and desire, then she is replenished from the side of the right and multitudes from the side of the right are found in all worlds. But if the Holy One, blessed be He, is the first to make advances and she only rouses herself afterwards, then all is on the side of the female ...
The Zohar; London, Soncino Press, 1933 (Public Domain)

21 מצות נר חנוכה משתשקע החמה

The Talmud says the mitzvah of the Chanukah lamp is from sunset. Here sunset stands for the exile, when "the sun has withdrawn" from Malchus.

שבת כ"א ב:ג'-ד' 21b:3-4 Shabbat
וכבתה אין זקוק לה? ורמינהו: מצותה משתשקע החמה עד שתכלה רגל מן השוק. מאי לאו, דאי כבתה הדר מדליק לה! לא, דאי לא אדליק — מדליק. ואי נמי לשיעורה. עד שתכלה רגל מן השוק. ועד כמה? אמר רבה בר בר חנה אמר רבי יוחנן: עד דכליא ריגלא דתרמודאי.
William Davidson, Vocalized Aramaic (CC-BY-NC)
KEHOT'S NOTE
שבת כא, ב.

22 בביאור ע"פ רני ושמחי

The note locates the discourse the text cites on the Chanukah lamp.
KEHOT'S NOTE

23 "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold I come and I will dwell in your midst." It is the opening verse of the discourse cited here.

זכריה ב:י"ד 2:14 Zechariah
רני ושמחי בת ציון כי הנני בא ושכנתי בתוכך נאמרה
'Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the L-RD.
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24 בפ' במדבר סד"ה וידבר

The note shows that the discussion the text places in Parshas Bamidbar, on the compassion of the twelve tribes and of the seventy souls, is found at the Shlach page just cited.
KEHOT'S NOTE
לעיל שלח שם.

25 ורב תבואות בכח שור

"Much produce comes through the strength of the ox." Read here to mean that the struggle against the lower

forces yields the greatest gain.

משלי י"ד:ד' 14:4 Proverbs

באין אלפים אבוס בר ורב תבואות בכח שור:

Where no oxen are, the crib is clean; But much increase is by the strength of the ox.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

משלי יד, ד.

26 וכד אתכפיא סט"א אסתלק

The Zohar teaches that when the sitra achra is subdued, the glory of the Holy One rises in all the worlds. It explains how the bitterness of distance becomes a source of elevation.

זח"ב קכח, כב 128b Zohar II,

KEHOT'S NOTE

זח"ב קכח, ב.

27 תר"ך בחינת כתר

The note refers to a discussion in Parshas Bechukosai of the 620 mitzvos as the level of Keser, with further sources listed there.

KEHOT'S NOTE

עי בחקותי (מז, ב). וש"נ. [כ].

PARAGRAPH 4

28 ס"ר נשמות הן ס"ר אותיות התורה

The note says the sources for "600,000 souls are 600,000 letters" are given at an earlier discourse on this same verse.

KEHOT'S NOTE

נסמן לעיל ו, ג.

29 ע"פ ושמתי כדכד

That passage describes two "suns": one shining from above downward in Elul, and one from below upward in the ascents of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

KEHOT'S NOTE

לעיל פ' ראה כו, א.

30 ושמתי כדכד

"And I will make your windows of kadkod." It is the opening of the discourse cited here.

ישעיהו נ"ד:י"ב 54:12 Isaiah

ושמתי כדכד שמשתי ושערי לאבני אקדח וכל גבול לאבני חפץ:

And I will make thy pinnacles of rubies, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy border of precious stones.

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31 "I am black, yet comely, O daughters of Jerusalem." Read here as "comelier than the daughters of Jerusalem."

שיר השירים א:ה' 1:5 Song of Songs

שחורה אני ונאווה בנות ירושלם כאהלי קדר כיריעות שלמה:

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

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PARAGRAPH 5

32 כאהלי קדר

"I am black, yet comely... as the tents of Kedar." The paragraph explains this phrase.

Song of Songs 1:5 שיר השירים א:ה

שחורה אני ונאור בנות ירושלים כאהלי קדר כיריעות שלמה:

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

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33 קדר

Kedar is listed among the sons of Yishmael.

Genesis 25:13 בראשית כ"ה:י"ג

ואלה שמות בני ישמעאל בשמתם לתולדתם בכר ישמעאל נבית ומקר ואדבעל ומבשם:

And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the first-born of Ishmael, Nebaioth; and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam,

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34 אברהם שיצא ממנו

The Talmud speaks of "Avraham, from whom Yishmael came forth" as an example of a flaw that went out from a righteous person. Here it explains why Kedar, a descendant of Yishmael, represents what separated from holiness.

Pesachim 56a:7 פסחים נ"ו א:ז

דאמר רבי שמעון בן לקיש: "ויקרא יעקב אל בניו ויאמר האקספו ואגידה לכם". ביקש יעקב לגלות לבניו קץ הימיו, ונסתלקה ממנו שכינה. אמר: שמא חס ושלום יש במטתי פסול, כאברהם שיצא ממנו ישמעאל, ואבי יצחק שיצא ממנו עשו? אמרו לו בניו: "שמע ישראל, ה' אלקינו ה' אחד". אמרו: כשם שאין בלבך אלא אחד, כך אין בלבנו אלא אחד. באותה שעה פתח יעקב אבינו ואמר: "ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד".

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

פסחים נו, א. ספרי דברים ו, ד. לב, ט.

35 אברהם שיצא ממנו כו

In the manuscript copy on page 698a the phrase reads as in print, but the copy on page 699a adds the word "Yishmael," completing the Talmud's phrase "Avraham, from whom Yishmael came forth."

KEHOT'S NOTE

בבבך 1101 דף תרצח, א. ובדף תרצט, א נוסף: "ישמעאל".

36 אברהם שיצא ממנו כו

The Sifrei on the Shema contrasts Yaakov, all of whose children were worthy, with Avraham, from whom Yishmael

came forth.

Sifrei Devarim 31:1א:א

(דברים ו ד) שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד, למה נאמר? לפי שנאמר (שמות כה ב): "דבר אל בני ישראל", דבר אל בני אברהם, דבר אל בני יצחק - אין כתוב כאן; אלא "דבר אל בני ישראל", וזה אבינו יעקב שיאמר דבור לבניו! לפי שהיה אבינו יעקב מפחד כל ימיו ואומר: או לי שמא תצא ממני פסלת כדרך שיצאת מאבותי, אברהם - יצא ממנו ישמעאל שעבד עבודה זרה, שנאמר (בראשית כא ט): "ותרא שרה את בן הגר המצרית..." "שהיה עובד עבודה זרה, ...

(Devarim 6:4) "Hear, O Israel, the L-rd our G-d, the L-rd is One": Because it is written (Shemot 25:2) "Speak to the children of Israel — It is not written "Speak to the children of Abraham and Isaac," but "speak to the children of Israel (i.e., Jacob [viz. Bereshith 32:29]) — Jacob merited that this pronouncement be stated to his children. For Jacob feared all of his days — Woe unto me, lest "base matter" issue from me as it did from my fathers! From Abraham there came forth Yishmael. ...

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37 בחינת קדר סיגים ופסולת

The manuscript reads "from the level of dross," a slight variant of the printed wording "the level of Kedar, dross and refuse."

KEHOT'S NOTE

שם מבחי' סיגים. ראה גם לעיל פי' מטות פז, א.

38 והוא ענין לבינה שבי"א סממני הקטורת

The note says this teaching on the frankincense among the eleven spices is quoted in Or HaTorah on Devarim.

KEHOT'S NOTE

מוכב באוה"ת דברים ע' יח.

39 (ור"ל . . תיקון ובירור

This parenthesis appears in the manuscript on page 698c, where it ends "the rectification and refinement of these sparks, etc.)".

KEHOT'S NOTE

מוסגר זה נמצא בבבך 1102 שם בדף תרצח, ג ושם מסיים: "תיקון ובירור ניצוצות אלו כו)". אבל בדף תרצט, ב הוא כבדפוסים שלנו.

40 ובערת הרע

"And you shall eradicate the evil from your midst." Here it names the goal of refining the lower realms through the mitzvot.

Deuteronomy 13:6ד:ו

והנביא ההוא או חלם החלום ההוא יומת כי דבר-סרה עלי-ה' אלקיכם המוציא אתכם מארץ מצרים והפדה מבית עבדים להדיחה מן-הדרך אשר צוה ה' אלקיך ללכת בה ובערת הרע מקרבך:

And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken perversion against the L-RD your G-d, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of bondage, to draw thee aside out of the way which the L-RD thy G-d commanded thee to

walk in. So shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee.

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41 לקמן סדי"ה לסוסתי ברכבי פרעה

As the note summarizes, that passage explains that the G-dly life-force within those lower realms is not grasped by them; it sustains them only from outside, which is the encompassing light spoken of here.

KEHOT'S NOTE

יא, ד שהחיות אלקות שיש בהם אינו נתפס.

42 לסוסתי ברכבי פרעה דמיתך

"To a mare among Pharaoh's chariots I have likened you, my beloved." It is the opening of the later discourse cited here.

Song of Songs 1:9 ט"ז שיר השירים

לסוסתי ברכבי פרעה דמיתך רעיתי:

I have compared thee, O my love, To a steed in Pharaoh's chariots.

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43 ויהי בשלח פרעה

"And it came to pass when Pharaoh sent the people." It is the opening of the other discourse cited here.

Exodus 13:17 י"ג שמות

ויהי בשלח פרעה את העם ולא נחם אלקים דרך ארץ פלשתים כי קרוב הוא כי אמר אלקים פני נחם העם בראתם מלחמה ושבו מצרימה:

And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that G-d led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for G-d said: 'Lest the people regret when they see war, and they return to Egypt.'

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PARAGRAPH 6

44 כיריעות שלמה

"As the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Shlomo." The paragraph explains the second phrase.

Song of Songs 1:5 ה' שיר השירים

שחורה אני ונאור בנות ירושלם כאהלי קדר כיריעות שלמה:

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

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שה"ש א, ה.

45 כי יש ב' בחינות במקיפים

The note says this teaching on two kinds of encompassing lights is quoted in the series Mayim Rabbim of 5636.

KEHOT'S NOTE

מובא בהמשך מים רבים תרל"ו ח"א פרק פג.

46 הבאים ישרש

"In days to come Yaakov will take root." It is the opening of the Torah Ohr discourse cited here.

Isaiah 27:6 ו' ישיעיהו

הבאים ישרש יעקב ופרח ישראל ומלאו פני תבל תנובה:

In days to come shall Jacob take root, Israel shall blossom and bud; And the face of the world shall be filled with fruitage.

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47 בכיור על פסוק הבאים ישרש כו

That passage distinguishes two encompassing lights: one that relates to the inner being and shines into it, giving it life, and a general one that surrounds everything equally and does not shine within at all.

KEHOT'S NOTE

תו"א נד, ג. יש ב' בחי' מקיפים. בתרל"ו שם מוסיף: "בענין ב' בחי' מקיפים, והמקיפים שיתגלו לע"ל". נק' יריעות שלמה.

48 או יחזיק במעוזי

"Or let him take hold of My strength, let him make peace with Me; peace let him make with Me." The doubled "peace" is read as peace above and below.

Isaiah 27:5 ה' ישיעיהו

או יחזק במעוזי יעשה שלום לי שלום יעשה לי:

Or else let him take hold of My strength, That he may make peace with Me; yea, let him make peace with Me.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ישע"י כו, ה.

49 ולהסתלק למעלה יאירו למטה

Mayim Rabbim adds here: "this is the level of peace, the joining of two opposites together." It makes explicit that the light shining below is itself the "peace" being defined.

KEHOT'S NOTE

בתרל"ו שם נוסף: "זהו בחי' שלום והתחברות ב' הפכים יחד כו".

50 וב"פ שלום

The Talmud teaches that one who studies Torah for its own sake makes peace in the household above and the household below, based on this verse. The Alter Rebbe uses it for the joining of the Infinite with the worlds through Torah.

Sanhedrin 99b:10-11 א"י-י"א צ"ט ב' סנהדרין

אמר רבי אלכסנדר: כל העוסק בתורה לשמה משים שלום בפמליא של מעלה ובפמליא של מטה, שנאמר: "או יחזק במעוזי יעשה שלום לי שלום יעשה לי". רב אמר: כאילו בנה פלטרין של מעלה ושל מטה, שנאמר: "ואשים דברי בפיך ובצל ידי כסיתך לנטע שמים וליסד ארץ". רבי יוחנן אמר: אף מגין על כל העולם כולו, שנאמר: "ובצל ידי כסיתך". ולוי אמר: אף מקרב את הגאולה, שנאמר: "ולאמר לציון עמי אתה".

R' Alexandri said: All who engage in Torah for its own sake make peace in the household above and in the household below, as it says "If they would grasp My fortress, they would

make peace for Me, they would make peace for Me.” (Yeshayahu 27:5) Rav said: it is as if he built the palace above and below, as it says “And I placed My words into your mouth, and with the shadow of My hand I covered you, to plant the heavens and to found the earth...” (Yeshayahu ...

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה סנהדרין צט, ב. וראה גם תו"א סו, ב.

51 דכולם בחכמה עשית

“You made them all with wisdom.” Read here to mean that even Chochmah is only “action” before G-d.

Psalms 104:24 תהילים קי"ד כ"ד

מַה־רַבּוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ ה' כָּל־מַחְכְּמָה עָשִׂיתָ מְלָאָה הָאָרֶץ הַנִּינֶה:

How manifold are Thy works, O L-RD! In wisdom hast Thou made them all; The earth is full of Thy creatures.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים קד, כד.

52 בד"ה צאינה וראינה

That passage speaks of drawing the Infinite Light into the supernal attributes of Atzilus through speaking words of Torah, called “bread,” and from there down into the lower worlds.

KEHOT'S NOTE

לקמן כה, ג. וראה בתרל"ו שם.

53 צאינה וראינה במלך שלמה

“Go forth and behold, O daughters of Zion, King Shlomo.” It is the opening of the discourse cited here.

Song of Songs 3:11 שיר השירים ג' י"א

צֵאנָה וּרְאִינָה בְּנוֹת צִיּוֹן בְּמֶלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה בְּעֶטְרָה שְׁעֶטְרָה־לּוֹ אִמּוֹ בְּיוֹם חֲתֻנָּתוֹ וּבְיוֹם שְׂמֻחָתוֹ לְבֹ:

Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, And gaze upon king Solomon, Even upon the crown wherewith his mother hath crowned him in the day of his espousals, And in the day of the gladness of his heart.

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54 אשר יקראוהו באמת

“G-d is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.” “Truth” is read as the Torah.

Psalms 145:18 תהילים קמ"ה י"ח

קָרוֹב ה' לְכָל־קֹרְאָיו לְכָל־אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאֻהוּ בְּאֵמֶת:

The L-RD is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, To all that call upon Him in truth.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים קמה, יח.

55 אוריינתא מחכמה נפקת

The Zohar teaches that the Torah comes forth from

Chochmah. It links “truth,” Chochmah and the Torah.

Zohar II, 121a זח"ב קכא, א

KEHOT'S NOTE

זח"ב קכא, א. ראה שם פה, א.

56 אוריינתא מחכמה נפקת

Another place where the Zohar says the Torah issues from supernal Chochmah, cited in the Kehot note.

Zohar, Yitro 21:378-22:389 ספר זוהר, יתרו כ"א:שע"ח-כ"ב:שפ"ט

According to R. Judah, “father” represents Wisdom (Hokhmah) and “mother” Understanding (Binah). Said R. Judah: ‘Both interpretations mean one and the same thing, for we have been taught that the Torah emanated from the Supernal Wisdom.’ R. Jose said that the Torah emanated from Understanding, for it says: “to perceive the words of understanding” and “forsake not the Torah of thy mother”.

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

PARAGRAPH 8

57 מפני שיבה תקום

“Before the hoary head you shall rise, and honor the face of the elder, and you shall fear your G-d; I am Havayah.” The whole paragraph reads this verse.

Leviticus 19:32 ויקרא י"ט:ל"ב

מִפְּנֵי שִׁיבָה תִּקּוּם וְהִדַּרְתָּ פָנַי זָקֵן וַיִּרְאֶתָ מַאֲלָקִיהָ אֲנִי הָוָיָה

Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and thou shalt fear thy G-d: I am the L-RD.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ויקרא יט, לב. וראה לעיל בהערות וצינונים לד"ה והדרת פני זקן.

58 ושער רישי כעמר נקא

In Daniel's vision the Ancient of Days has hair “like clean wool.” Here the white hair stands for the laws of the positive commandments.

Daniel 7:9 דניאל ז' ט'

חָזָה הָיִיתָ עַד דַּי כְּרֹסֶן רַמְיוֹ וְעֵתִיק יוֹמִינוֹ יָתֵב לְבוּשָׁה כְּתֹלַג חֹר וְשַׁעַר רֹאשָׁה כְּעֶמֶר נִקָּא כְּרֹסְיָה שְׂבָבִין דִּי־נִגְוָר גְּלִגְלוּהִי נוֹר דְּלָק:

I beheld Till thrones were placed, And one that was ancient of days did sit: His raiment was as white snow, And the hair of his head like pure wool; His throne was fiery flames, and the wheels thereof burning fire.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

דניאל ז, ט.

59 קוצותיו תלתלים

“His locks are wavy, black as a raven.” Here the black locks stand for the laws that extend into the prohibitions.

Song of Songs 5:11 שיר השירים ה' י"א

רֹאשׁוֹ כְּתָם פָּז קוֹצוֹתָיו תִּלְתָּלִים שְׁחֹרֹת כְּעוֹרֵב:

His head is as the most fine gold, His locks are curled, And black as a raven.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שה"ש ה, יא.

60 זקן היינו שקנה חכמה

The words here quote Kiddushin 35b:4-5; the passage is shown below.

Kiddushin 35b:4-5 הי"ה ב:ד-ה' Kiddushin 35b:4-5

ומנלו דלא איתנהו בהשחתה? איבעית אימא סכרא: דהא לא אית להו זקן. ואיבעית אימא קרא: דאמר קרא: "לא תקפו פאת ראשכם ולא תשחית את פאת זקנה", מדשני קרא בדיבוריה, דאם כן ניתוב רחמנא: "פאת זקנכם". מאי "זקנה" – זקנה, ולא זקן אשתך.

William Davidson, Vocalized Aramaic (CC-BY-NC)
KEHOT'S NOTE

קידושין לה, ב.

61 חמורים ד"ס מדברי תורה

The Mishnah and Talmud there teach that the words of the Scribes are treated more stringently than words of Torah. Here it gives the rabbinic mitzvos their special weight, linked to "you shall fear your G-d."

Sanhedrin 88b:14-15 ט"ו-ט"ד Sanhedrin 88b:14-15

מתני' חומר בדברי סופרים מבדברי תורה. האומר: "אין תפילין", כדי לעבור על דברי תורה – פטור. "חמש טטפות", להוסיף על דברי סופרים – חייב. גמי אומר רבי אלקעזר אומר רבי אושעיא: אינו חייב אלא על דבר שעיקרו מדברי תורה ופירושו מדברי סופרים, ויש בו להוסיף, ואם הוסיף גורע. ואין לנו אלא תפילין, אליבא דרבי יהודה.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

סנהדרין פח, ב.



Likkutei Torah

THE CHASSIDISHE PARSHA

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

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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