



TORAH OHR • MEGILLAS ESTHER • MAAMAR 6

ויושט המלך לאסתר את שרביט הזהב ותקם אסתר...

“And the king extended to
Esther the golden scepter”



Every ascent of the soul toward G-d, however lofty, only “touches the top of the scepter”; the whole scepter, G-d’s full revelation, is given below, where darkness itself is transformed into light. That is why Purim and the halachos, which bring about this transformation in the physical world, will endure in the Time to Come.

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

Every ascent of the soul toward G-d, however lofty, only “touches the top of the scepter”; the whole scepter, G-d’s full revelation, is given below, where darkness itself is transformed into light. That is why Purim and the halachos, which bring about this transformation in the physical world, will endure in the Time to Come.

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 asks why Esther first only touched the top of the king’s golden scepter but later received the whole scepter. In exile the Jewish people, and the love of G-d hidden in each soul, are “Esther,” concealed “on that day.” On Shabbos and festivals the souls rise, burning away what opposes holiness like smoke rising from a desert, and passing through bitterness to joy, like the maidens’ myrrh and spices. Yet every such ascent, even love born of contemplating G-d’s essence, receives only a glimmer at the scepter’s tip. In the Time to Come that essence will be revealed below, when darkness is transformed into light rather than merely subdued. The Purim miracle, in which Achashverosh’s own heart was turned to good, was of this kind, so Purim alone of the festivals will endure; so will the halachos, in which G-d clothed His inner will in physical matters; and a mitzvah performed with a physical thing likewise turns darkness into light. The way there is a broken heart that opens the wall of arrogance, as Esther wept in the king’s house and received the whole scepter.

OUTLINE

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|----------|---|------|
| 1 | The question and the hidden Esther | ¶1-2 |
| | Why did Esther first touch only the top of the scepter and later receive all of it? Knesses Yisrael, and the love of G-d in each soul, are “Esther”: hidden in exile, “on that day,” but in the future revealed as “this is our G-d.” | |
| 2 | The ascent of Shabbos and festivals | ¶3-6 |
| | Only Purim and the halachos will endure. Festivals lift the souls by burning away what opposes holiness (smoke and fine smoke), then bring bitterness over evil (myrrh) and joy in G-d (frankincense and spices). | |
| 3 | Only the top of the scepter | ¶7-9 |
| | All such ascents, even love born of contemplating G-d’s essence, receive only a glimmer at the scepter’s tip. “Greatness” is G-d’s humility toward the worlds; His essence, beyond worlds, will be revealed in the future. | |

4 Transformation below: the future and Purim

¶10–12

The future revelation will be below, where darkness is transformed into light rather than subdued; Knesses Yisrael will need no ascent. The Purim miracle, Achashverosh's heart turned to good, was of this kind.

5 The halachos and the mitzvos

¶13–17

Like a gazelle turning its head back, G-d clothed His inner will and wisdom in physical matters; halachah sorts good from evil, and a mitzvah done with a physical thing turns darkness into light, so the halachos will endure.

6 The wall and the opening

¶18–19

G-d's will is revealed in the Torah but stands behind the wall of sin and arrogance; a broken heart opens a window in that wall.

7 Esther's two approaches

¶20–22

In the court Esther only touched the scepter's tip; weeping in the house for the spark held by Haman's arrogance, she received the whole scepter, rose and stood before the king as "the crown of her husband."

KEY CONCEPTS

The golden scepter שרביט הזהב

The flow of the Infinite Light that gives life to all the worlds. The soul's ascents receive only a glimmer at its tip; the whole scepter is G-d's full revelation below.

Esther: concealment אסתר — הסתר אסתיר פני

Knesses Yisrael in exile, when G-d's face is hidden "on that day," and the love of G-d hidden in every Jew, which rests on him only as something encompassing from above.

"That" and "this" ההוא / זה

"That day" is G-d hidden and distant; in the future He will be "this," revealed and seen even by the physical mind.

Subduing the sitra achra (iskafya) לאכפייא לסטיא

Overcoming and burning away what opposes holiness, as in the festivals' ascent and the plague of the firstborn; the evil is broken but not changed.

Transforming darkness into light (is'hapcha) אתהפכא חשוכא לנהורא

Darkness itself becomes light: the Purim miracle, the halachos, mitzvos done with physical things, and the Time to Come.

Coarseness of spirit גסי הרוח

The arrogance that makes a person a separate "something" and prefers his own desires to Heaven's; it is the wall between him and his Father in Heaven, and Haman is its source.

SECTION 1 • ¶1-2

The question and the hidden Esther

1 ויושט המלך לאסתר^{1,2} את שרביט הזהב ותקם אסתר ותעמוד לפני המלך וגו'. להבין ענין השינויים שבין פרשה זו לפרשה שלמעלה דשם נאמר ויושט המלך את שרביט הזהב³ אשר בידו.

“And the king extended to Esther the golden scepter, and Esther arose and stood before the king,” etc. [We need] to understand the differences between this passage and the passage above, for there it says, “And the king extended the golden scepter that was in his hand.”

The maamar opens with the verse from Esther’s second appearance before King Achashverosh, after Haman’s fall, when she came to plead for the annulment of his decree (Esther 8:4). The Alter Rebbe asks why it differs from the earlier passage (Esther 5:2), where the king extended to her “the golden scepter that was in his hand.”

וגם שם נאמר ותגע בראש השרביט. וכאן משמע שנתן לה כל השרביט. וגם להבין ענין זה בכל זמן מהו.

Also, there it says, “and she touched the top of the scepter,” while here the implication is that he gave her the whole scepter. And [we need] also to understand what this matter is at all times.

In the first passage Esther only “touched the top of the scepter”; here the wording suggests that the king gave her the entire scepter. The Alter Rebbe also asks what this means at all times, not only as an event of the past.

הנה כנס”י [כנסת ישראל] נקראת בשם אסתר על שם ואנכי הסתר אסתיר פני⁴ ביום ההוא.

Now, the Congregation of Israel (Knesses Yisrael) is called by the name Esther after [the verse] “And I will surely hide (haster astir) My face on that day.”

Knesses Yisrael, the Jewish people as a whole, is called Esther after the verse “And I will surely hide (haster astir) My face on that day”: Esther sounds like astir, “I will hide.” The Gemara (Chullin 139b) likewise finds Esther alluded to in this verse.

כי פני ה' שהוא גילוי שכינתו כמ"ש יאר ה' פניו אליך⁵ הוא עכשיו בזמן הגלות מסותרת בבחי' ביום ההוא (כי יום ההוא מורה על יום שאינו נראה ונגלה משא"כ יום הזה).

For the face of G-d, which is the revelation of His Shechinah (Divine Presence), as it is written, "May Havayah make His face shine upon you," is now, in the time of exile, hidden, at the level of "on that day" (for "that day" indicates a day that is not seen and revealed, which is not so with "this day").

G-d's "face" is the revelation of His Shechinah, His indwelling presence, as the Priestly Blessing shows: "May Havayah make His face shine upon you." The text of this maamar in Or HaTorah adds that Targum Onkelos renders it "May Havayah make His Shechinah shine upon you." In exile that revelation is hidden "on that day": "that" points to something distant and unseen, while "this" points to what is present and visible.

ודרך פרט בכל נפש מישראל הנה כאשר בחי' נצוץ נפשו האלהית הוא מכוסה ומלובש בלבושי מחשבה דבור מעשה הגשמיים ואין אור ה' שורה ומתגלה בו להיות נתפס ונקבע במוחו ולבו האהבה לה' לדבקה בו בהתגלות הלב כי אם בבחי' מקיף עליו מלמעלה

And in particular, in every soul of Israel: when the aspect of the spark of his G-dly soul is covered and clothed in the physical garments of thought, speech and action, and the light of G-d does not rest and become revealed in him, so that the love for G-d, to cleave to Him, would be grasped and fixed in his mind and heart, revealed in the heart, but [it rests] only in the aspect of something encompassing (makif) over him from above,

The same holds for each individual. When a person's G-dly soul is wrapped in the garments of physical thought, speech and action, G-d's light does not rest in him openly, and his love for G-d is not felt and fixed in his mind and heart; the light rests on him only as a makif, something that encompasses him from above without entering his awareness.

נקרא בחינת אהבה זו בשם אסתר. שהיא מסותרת בבחי' ביום ההוא שאינה בהתגלות.

this level of love is called by the name Esther, for it is hidden, at the level of "on that day," in that it is not in revelation.

This love, present but not revealed, is what is called "Esther": it is hidden "on that day."

2 והיא בחי' נקודה בהיכלא בפנימיות נקודת לבו ודאי מסותרת היא האהבה בכל נפש מישראל ואין לך אדם שאין לו בחי' פנימיות זו אלא שלהוציא מהעלם אל הגילוי אינה שוה בכל אדם.

It is the level of “a point within the chamber” (nekudah beheichala), in the inner dimension (pnimiyus) of the point of his heart. Assuredly the love is hidden in every soul of Israel, and there is no person who lacks this inner dimension; only, bringing it out from concealment into revelation is not the same in every person.

This hidden love is “a point within the chamber,” the innermost point of the heart. Every Jew has it; people differ only in how far they bring it out from concealment into open feeling.

ולכן לימות המשיח שאז יזדכך האדם אזי יהיה בבחי' ונגלה כבוד⁶ ה' וראו כל בשר וגו'. ואמר ביום ההוא⁷ הנה אלהינו זה קוינו לו וגו'.

Therefore, in the days of Mashiach, when man will be refined, then it will be at the level of “And the glory of Havayah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see,” etc. And “It shall be said on that day, ‘Behold, this is our G-d; we hoped for Him,’” etc.

In the days of Mashiach, when people are refined, Isaiah’s prophecy “The glory of Havayah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see” will be fulfilled. Isaiah also says that “on that day” people will point to G-d and say, “Behold, this is our G-d.”

פי' שיאיר אור ה' בהתגלות עד שיהא נתפס ונקבע אפי' [אפילו] במוחו ושכל אנושי וראו כל בשר בראיה גשמית חושיית כי אלהינו הוא בחי' זה אשר לזה קוינו לו ולא בבחי' ההוא:

That is, the light of G-d will shine in revelation until it is grasped and fixed even in his mind and human intellect, and “all flesh shall see,” with physical, sensory sight, that “our G-d” is at the level of “this,” for which “we hoped,” and not at the level of “that.”

The revelation will be so complete that it is grasped even by the human mind and seen with physical eyes. G-d will then be “this,” present and visible, the One “we hoped for,” and no longer the distant “that.”

SECTION 2 • 113-6

The ascent of Shabbos and festivals

3 והנה ארז"ל [אמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] כל המועדים⁸ יהיו בטלים לע"ל [לעתיד לבוא] חוץ מפורים שנאמר וימי הפורים⁹ וגוי וזכרם לא יסוף מזרעם. וגם ארז"ל [אמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] הלכות אינן בטלים¹⁰ לעתיד לבא.¹¹

Now, our Sages, of blessed memory, said: "All the festivals will be abolished in the Time to Come, except Purim, as it is said, 'And the days of Purim,' etc., 'and their remembrance shall not cease from their seed.'" Our Sages, of blessed memory, also said: "The halachos will not be abolished in the Time to Come."

The Sages taught that in the Time to Come all the festivals will lapse except Purim, for the Megillah says that the remembrance of the days of Purim "shall not cease from their seed." They also taught, in the Jerusalem Talmud (Megillah 1:5), that the halachos, the laws of the Torah, will not be abolished; the maamar sets out to explain both teachings.

והענין הוא כי הנה ענין שבתות וימים טובים הוא שבהם הוא בחי' עליית העולמות^{12,13} והנצוצות שכל נצוץ נשמת ישראל מתעלה במדרגה מפני אור ה' המתגלה בעתים ההם

The explanation is this: the significance of Shabbosos and festivals is that on them there is the aspect of the ascent of the worlds and of the sparks, for every spark of a soul of Israel rises a level because of the light of G-d that is revealed at those times.

Shabbos and the festivals are times when the worlds and the sparks of souls ascend, as the Arizal teaches in Etz Chaim (the Gate of the Inner and Outer Dimensions) of the worlds rising above their places at the reception of Shabbos. Every spark of a Jewish soul rises a level, because G-d's light is revealed at those times.

ונתוסף בהם אורה ושמחה וחדות ה' להלהיט הנשמות לדבקה בו ית' ביתר שאת ובפרטות בפסח מתגלה אור האהבה חסד עליון בפנימיות הנשמות.

On them there is added light, joy and the gladness of G-d, to set the souls aflame to cleave to Him, may He be blessed, with surpassing intensity. In particular, on Pesach the light of love, the supernal Chesed (kindness), is revealed in the inner dimension of the souls.

On those days added light, joy and gladness in G-d set the souls aflame to cleave to Him more strongly. Each festival has its own revelation: on Pesach, the supernal Chesed, love and kindness from above, is revealed in the souls' innermost core.

4 ועיי זה מתעלים כל נצוצי נשמות ישראל לעורר את האהבה רבה לה' ולדחות כל המונעים המבטלים

Through this all the sparks of the souls of Israel are elevated, to arouse the great love for G-d and to push away all that hinders and obstructs [it],

This revelation of the supernal love, above all on Pesach, lifts the sparks of the souls and awakens in them a great love for G-d. That love must push away everything that hinders and blocks it.

דהיינו הדברים שהם הפך ונגד אהבת ה' שהם תאוות גשמיים לאכפייא לסט"א [לסטרא אחרא].

that is, the things that are the opposite of, and against, the love of G-d, namely physical desires, so as to subdue the sitra achra (the other side).

The hindrances are the physical desires that oppose the love of G-d. Pushing them away is iskafya, the Zohar's term for subduing the sitra achra, the forces opposed to holiness: the opposing force is overpowered, not changed.

וכמ"ש למכה מצרים¹⁴ בכוריהם כל"ח [כי לעולם חסדו]. פי' שבכדי שיאיר לעולם אור החסד עליון¹⁵ הכה בכורי מצרים שהם הם ההפכים מזה.

As it is written, "To Him Who struck Egypt through their firstborn, for His kindness is forever." That is: in order that the light of the supernal Chesed should shine to the world, He struck the first-born of Egypt, who are the very opposite of this.

The Alter Rebbe brings the verse from Psalm 136, "To Him Who struck Egypt through their firstborn, for His kindness is forever," and reads it as an act and its purpose: so that the supernal Chesed could shine to the world, G-d struck Egypt's firstborn, who embodied its opposite.

כמ"ש מי זאת עולה מן המדבר¹⁶ כתמרת עשן מקוטרת מור ולבונה מכל אבקת רוכל.¹⁷ פי' כנס"י [כנסת ישראל] נקי זאת¹⁸ היא עולה מן המדבר שהם דברים הגשמיים אשר לא לה' המה שהם דומים למקום מדבר ושממה

As it is written, "Who is this coming up from the desert like columns of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, from all the powders of the merchant?" That is: the Congregation of Israel is called "this" (zos). She is "coming up from the desert," that is, [from] the physical things that are not for G-d, which resemble a place of desert and desolation;

The same pattern appears in the Song of Songs: "Who is this coming up from the desert like columns of smoke...?" "This" (zos) is a name for Knesses Yisrael. She "comes up from the desert," and the desert stands for physical matters that are not for G-d, as barren and desolate as a wilderness.

וגם מדבר מלשון דבור דהיינו דברים בטלים והיא עולה מהם בשבתות ומועדים ואז הוא כתמרות עשן
and also, midbar (desert) is related to dibur (speech), that is, idle words. She rises from them on
Shabbosos and festivals, and then it is “like columns of smoke.”

The Hebrew for desert, midbar, also suggests dibur, speech, here meaning idle talk. On Shabbos and festivals the soul rises out of these, and then it is “like columns of smoke.”

כי כמו שעשן גשמי¹⁹ התהוותו הוא מחמת שהאש שורף דבר שהוא הפך טבעו דהיינו לחלוחית שיש
בעצים או בפתילה שנאחז בהם האש שהרי רבוי העשן הוא לפי רבוי הלחלוחית שיש בדבר ההוא.

For just as physical smoke comes into being because the fire burns something that is the opposite
of its nature, namely the moisture in the wood or in the wick on which the fire takes hold, for the
amount of smoke is according to the amount of moisture in that thing;

Smoke comes into being when fire burns something opposed to its own nature, the moisture in the wood or
in the wick. The proof is that the more moisture there is, the more smoke: smoke is the sign of fire working
on what resists it.

כך כביכול כשאור ה' מתגלה בשבתות ויו"ט [ויום טוב] שורף ומכלה דבר ההפוך²⁰ הגלוי לאכפייא
לסט"א [לסטרא אחרא].²¹

so too, as it were, when the light of G-d is revealed on Shabbosos and festivals, it burns and con-
sumes the manifest opposing thing, so as to subdue the sitra achra.

So too, when G-d's light is revealed on Shabbos and festivals, it burns away the open opposition in a person
and subdues the sitra achra; the “smoke” is the sign of that struggle. In Or HaTorah the Tzemach Tzedek
adds that consuming what is truly opposite is like the blue light of a flame, which comes from its consuming
the wick: so the light consumes the animal soul's sense of self (yesh).

וגם היא מקוטרת קיטור נקרא עשן דק כמו עשן המגמר והקטורת ולרוב דקותו לא נקרא בתורה בשם
עשן כי אם בשם ענן כמ"ש וכסה ענן הקטורת.²²

She is also “perfumed” (mekuterer): kitur is the name for a fine smoke, like the smoke of burning
spices (mugmar) and of the incense; and because it is so fine, the Torah does not call it “smoke”
but “cloud,” as it is written, “And the cloud of the incense shall cover.”

The verse continues “perfumed (mekuterer) with myrrh and frankincense.” Plainly mekuterer means scent-
ed, as with burning spices; the Alter Rebbe hears in it kitur, a fine smoke, from the same root, like the smoke
of burning spices (mugmar) or of the incense (ketores), so fine that the Torah calls the smoke of the incense
a “cloud.”

והיינו מפני שאינו שורף ומכלה דבר ההפוך ממש לפי שאין בדבר הנאחז בהם האור מדבר ההפך כ"א מעט מזעיר

This is because it does not burn and consume a thing that is truly opposite, since in the thing on which the fire takes hold there is nothing of what is opposite except a very little.

Fine smoke comes when the fire does not burn something truly opposed to it, because the material holds only a trace of what is contrary.

ואעפ"כ [ואף על פי כן] צריכה להיות בבחי' זו בבחי' מקושרת לשרוף ולכלות כל אחד לפי מדרגתו ולפי מעלת נשמתו בעילוי אחר עילוי

Nevertheless, she must be at this level, the level of "perfumed," to burn and consume, each according to his level and according to the stature of his soul, ascent after ascent.

Even so, this finer stage is needed too. Each person, according to his level and the stature of his soul, must keep burning away even slight traces of what opposes holiness, rising from one level to the next.

ואח"כ יהיה בבחי' מור²³ הוא האמור במגילה בהגיע תור נערה ונערה²⁴ לבא אל המלך שכל נצוץ ישראל הם בבחי' נוקבא לגבי הקב"ה לעלות ולראות באור ה' כל אחד לפי מדרגתו

Afterwards there will be the level of myrrh. This is what is said in the Megillah, "When the turn of each maiden came to go in to the king": for all the sparks of Israel are at the level of Nukva (the feminine) in relation to the Holy One, blessed be He, to rise and to behold the light of G-d, each according to his level.

Then comes the stage of myrrh, described in the Megillah's account of the maidens who each came in turn to the king. Every Jewish soul is like a bride, in the receiving, feminine position (Nukva) toward the Holy One, blessed be He, and longs to rise and behold G-d's light, each according to its level.

ששה חדשים בשמן המור²⁵ שמן הוא בחינת חכמה להיות בבחי' מור בבחי' מרירות שמאחר שעולה מן המדבר ומפרר ומפריד הרע להיות כלה ונשרף בעשן וקטור אזי ישכיל היטב ענין המרירות מן ההפך איך ומה הוא

“Six months with oil of myrrh”: oil is the level of Chochmah (wisdom), to be at the level of myrrh (mor), the level of bitterness (merirus). For once one rises from the desert and crumbles and separates the evil, so that it is consumed and burned in the smoke and the fine smoke, then one will understand well the bitterness over the opposite, how and what it is.

The maidens spent “six months with oil of myrrh.” Oil stands for Chochmah, insight, and myrrh (mor) for bitterness (merirus): once the soul has broken up the evil and burned it away, its insight shows it how bitter that evil is, and what it is. Earlier in Torah Ohr, in the explanation of “Let them bring royal apparel” (Megillas Esther, maamar 2), the Alter Rebbe likewise reads Mordechai as mor deror, “pure myrrh,” which below is the bitterness of the Torah as it is clothed in this world in exile.

ואח"כ יבא לבחי' לבונה היא בחי' השמחה בחדות ה' ישמח ישראל בעושי²⁶:

Afterwards one will come to the level of frankincense (levonah), which is the level of joy in the gladness of G-d: “Let Israel rejoice in its Maker.”

After the bitterness comes the stage of frankincense (levonah): joy in G-d, as in the verse “Let Israel rejoice in its Maker.”

6 וזהו ענין ששה חדשים²⁷ בבשמים כי כמו שהריח נקלט ונכנס לתוך גופו ומענג בדשן נפשו²⁸ הגם שהוא דבר שאין בו ממש ואין נראה ונתגלה לעין רק נקלט הריח לתוך גופו.

This is [the meaning of] “six months with spices”: for just as a scent is absorbed and enters into one's body and delights one's soul with richness, although it is something that has no substance and is not seen or revealed to the eye; the scent is only absorbed into the body.

The other six months were “with spices.” A fragrance enters the body and delights the soul, yet it has no substance and cannot be seen; it is only taken in.

כך ענין השמחה בה' הוא מעלמא דאתכסיא רק שמשמחת את הלב ומלהיטו להתלהט ולהתלהב באור ה'

So too, joy in G-d is from the hidden world (alma de'iskasya); only, it gladdens the heart and kindles it to glow and blaze with the light of G-d.

Joy in G-d is like that: it comes from “the hidden world” (alma de'iskasya), a level that is not revealed. Yet it gladdens the heart and sets it glowing and blazing with G-d's light.

מכל אבקת רוכל²⁹ הם כל מיני התלהבות אשר בכל נפש מישראל כל חד לפש"ד [לפום שיעורא דיליה].
והוא ענין בתמרוקי הנשים שבכל אלו הנערה באה אל המלך:³⁰

"From all the powders of the merchant" are all the kinds of fervor that are in every soul of Israel, each one according to his own measure. And this is [the meaning of] "with the women's cosmetics," for with all these "the maiden comes to the king."

"All the powders of the merchant" are the many kinds of fervor in every Jewish soul, each according to its own measure. These are "the women's cosmetics" with which "the maiden comes to the king": every kind of fervent service brings the soul before G-d.

SECTION 3 • 17-9

Only the top of the scepter

7 והנה כל מיני עליות והתקרבות כנס"י [כנסת ישראל] להקב"ה בשבת ויו"ט [ויום טוב] וכל מה שמתעלות בעילוי אחר עילוי עד רום המעלות נק' בשם נגיעה בראש השרביט³¹

Now, all the kinds of ascent and drawing near of the Congregation of Israel to the Holy One, blessed be He, on Shabbos and festivals, and however much they rise, ascent after ascent, to the loftiest heights, are called "touching the top of the scepter."

Every way in which Knesses Yisrael rises and draws close to G-d on Shabbos and festivals, however high it reaches, is called "touching the top of the scepter." This begins the answer to the opening question.

כי שרביט הזהב הוא המשכת אור א"ס ב"ה והוא הוא חיות כל העולמות עליונים ותחתונים כמ"ש את שרביט הזהב וחיה³² ואינה יכולה לעלות ולראות ולקבל חיותה מכל השרביט. רק השרביט נשאר בידו ורק הארה מגיע אליה בראש השרביט

For the golden scepter is the drawing down of the Infinite Light (Or Ein Sof), blessed be He, and it is itself the life-force of all the worlds, higher and lower, as it is written, "...the golden scepter, and he shall live." And she cannot rise and see and receive her life-force from the whole scepter; rather, the scepter remains in his hand, and only a glimmer reaches her, at the top of the scepter.

The golden scepter is the flow of the Infinite Light into the worlds, their life-force; plainly the verse says that the one to whom the king extends it "shall live," and here the scepter itself is that life (in Yahel Or the Tzemach Tzedek suggests it is the kav, the line of light drawn from the Infinite Light). But the soul cannot receive its life from the whole scepter: it stays in the king's hand, and only a glimmer reaches her at its tip.

והארה זו היא בחי' אהבה עזה כרשפי אש ושללהבת³³ העולה למעלה זהב העליון זהב התנופה³⁴

This glimmer is the level of a fierce love like flashes of fire and a flame that rises upward: the higher gold, “the gold of the wave offering.”

That glimmer is a fierce love like flashes of fire and a flame that rises upward. The text calls it “the higher gold” and “the gold of the wave offering,” the gold given for the Sanctuary: a name that suits a love that rises, since *tenufah* is an offering lifted up.

וקצהו התחתון הוא כשאהבה עזה זו בוערה ומתלהבת מהתבוננותו בגדולת א"ס ב"ה ממלא כל עלמין וסובב כל עלמין וקצהו העליון הוא כשמתלהבת ומתלהט מהתבוננותו במהותו ועצמותו ית' ולית מחשבה תפיסא ביה כלל³⁵

Its lower end is when this fierce love burns and blazes from his contemplation of the greatness of the Infinite One (Ein Sof), blessed be He, [as] the light that fills all worlds (*memalei kol almin*) and the light that encompasses all worlds (*sovev kol almin*). Its upper end is when it blazes and glows from his contemplation of His very being and essence, may He be blessed, and “no thought can grasp Him at all”;

The scepter's tip has a lower and an upper end. The lower end is love kindled by contemplating G-d's greatness as He fills and encompasses all worlds; the upper end is love kindled by contemplating His very essence, which no thought can grasp at all.

ולא שייך ביה לשון גדולה ממכ"ע [ממלא כל עלמין] וסוכ"ע^{36, 37} רק על הארה³⁸ והמשכת החיות ממנו ית' שייך לומר³⁹ ממלא וסובב

and the term “greatness,” [as in] *memalei kol almin* and *sovev kol almin*, does not apply to Him. Only of the glimmer and the drawing down of life-force from Him, may He be blessed, can one say “filling” and “encompassing.”

“Greatness” in terms of filling and encompassing worlds does not apply to G-d's essence; it describes only the glimmer and life-force that flow from Him.

אבל לגדולתו דוקא אין חקר.⁴⁰ פ"י דלא שייך כלל⁴¹ לחקור ולהתבונן בגדולתו איך הוא גדול מאד ומהולל אלא בשם הוי" ב"ה המורה על המשכת החיות לעולמות.

But “His greatness,” specifically, “is unsearchable.” That is, it is not at all applicable to search out and contemplate His greatness, how He is “very great and praised,” except in [relation to] the Name Havayah, blessed be He, which denotes the drawing down of life-force to the worlds.

The psalm says, “Great is Havayah and highly praised, and His greatness is unsearchable.” The Alter Rebbe reads it precisely: one can contemplate how G-d is “very great and praised” only in relation to the Name Havayah, which denotes the flow of life-force to the worlds, while of “His greatness” itself, His essence, searching does not apply at all.

אבל קמיה ממש כלא ממש חשיבו וכאלו אין שם עולמות כלל כמ"ש אני ה' לא שנית⁴² ואתה הוא קודם שנברא ואתה הוא אחר שנברא העולם הכל בשוה

But truly before Him they are considered as truly nothing, and as if there were no worlds there at all, as it is written, "I, Havayah, have not changed"; and "You are He before [the world] was created, and You are He after the world was created," all equally;

Before Him the worlds are truly as nothing, as if they did not exist. "I, Havayah, have not changed": He is the same before and after creation, as in the words of the prayer, "You are He before the world was created, and You are He after the world was created."

ולא שייך לפניו ית' בחי' עלמין לא בבחי' ממלא ולא בבחי' סובב כי אינו בגדר עלמין כלל.⁴³

and before Him, may He be blessed, the aspect of worlds does not apply, neither at the level of "filling" nor at the level of "encompassing," for He is not within the bounds of worlds at all.

The very category of worlds, whether filling them or encompassing them, does not apply before Him, since He is beyond the bounds of worlds altogether. Yet even love born of this highest contemplation is only the upper end of the scepter's tip.

8 וכדכתיב גדול ה' ומהולל מאד⁴⁴ בעיר אלקינו הר קדשו. וארז"ל [ואמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] אימתי נקי גדול⁴⁵ כשהוא בעיר אלקינו וכו'.

As it is written, "Great is Havayah and highly praised, in the city of our G-d, His holy mountain." And our Sages, of blessed memory, said, "When is He called great? When He is in the city of our G-d," etc.

The psalm says, "Great is Havayah and highly praised, in the city of our G-d," and the Sages ask: when is He called great? When He is "in the city of our G-d." His greatness is spoken of only in connection with a realm to which He relates; the Zohar explains that He is called great when Knesses Yisrael is with Him.

כי לפניו ית' לא שייך לשון גדולה מאחר שכל עולמות עליונים ותחתונים כולא כלא חשיב קמיה אלא מדת גדולתו הוא ענותנותו שמתלבש בבחי' גדולה כדי להיות מלכותו מלכות כל עולמים.^{46, 47}

For before Him, may He be blessed, the term "greatness" does not apply, since all the worlds, higher and lower, are all considered as nothing before Him. Rather, the attribute of His greatness is His humility: that He clothes Himself in the level of greatness so that His kingship may be "a kingship of all worlds."

Before G-d Himself all worlds are as nothing, so "greatness" has no meaning there. His "greatness" is really His humility: He lowers Himself to take on the attribute of greatness so that He can be King over all worlds. Earlier in Torah Ohr (Va'eira, 56b) the Alter Rebbe makes the same point: greatness can be said of Him only of the radiance of His kingship, which is to Him as sunlight is to the sun.

9 וכמ"ש וישב ה' מלך לעולם.⁴⁸ וזהו ואתה קדוש⁴⁹ יושב תהלות ישראל. פ"י שלהיותך תהלות ישראל הוא בחי' ישיבה שהוא השפלה וענוה אצלך שבאמת אתה קדוש ומובדל מגדר זה.

As it is written, "Havayah sits as King forever." And this is [the meaning of] "And You are holy, sitting [upon] the praises of Israel." That is: Your being "the praises of Israel" is the level of "sitting," which is a lowering and a humility for You, for in truth You are holy and set apart from this bound.

One psalm says "Havayah sits as King forever," and another, "You are holy, sitting upon the praises of Israel." Plainly both speak of G-d enthroned; the Alter Rebbe hears in "sitting" a lowering: for G-d to be the subject of Israel's praises is humility on His part, since in truth He is holy, set apart from that whole category.

אבל לעתיד יתגלה אור ה' בגילוי רב ועצום דהיינו המשכת אלקותו ית' ועצמותו ומהותו מבחי' אני ה' לא שנית⁵⁰ היה הוה ויהיה ברגע אחד וראו כל בשר⁵¹ בעיני השכל גשמי כי אלהינו יהיה בכחינת זה כנ"ל.

But in the Time to Come the light of G-d will be revealed in a great and mighty revelation, that is, the drawing down of His G-dliness, may He be blessed, and His essence and being, from the level of "I, Havayah, have not changed": was, is and will be in one instant; and "all flesh shall see," with the eyes of the physical intellect, that "our G-d" will be at the level of "this," as mentioned above.

In the Time to Come His very essence will be revealed, the level of "I, Havayah, have not changed," in which past, present and future are one instant. Then "all flesh shall see," even with the physical mind, that our G-d is "this," present and revealed, as explained above.

SECTION 4 • ¶10-12

Transformation below: the future and Purim

10 והתגלות זה יהיה בתחתונים דוקא למטה.

This revelation will be in the lower realms specifically, below.

This revelation will take place specifically in the lower realms, in this world.

וכמו שארז"ל [שאמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] ע"פ כעת יאמר ליעקב⁵² ולישראל מה פעל אל. שמלאכי השרת ישאלו זאת לצדיקים ובמקום שהיו מלאכי השרת אומרים איה מקום כבודו יאמרו מלא כל הארץ כבודו.⁵³

As our Sages, of blessed memory, said on the verse "At the time it shall be said to Yaakov and to Israel, 'What has G-d wrought'": that the ministering angels will ask this of the tzaddikim; and in place of what the ministering angels used to say, "Where is the place of His glory?", they will say, "The whole earth is full of His glory."

The Sages expound Bilam's words, "At the time it shall be said to Yaakov and to Israel, 'What has G-d wrought?': in the future the angels will ask the tzaddikim what G-d has wrought, for the revelation will be with those below. Instead of asking, as they do now, "Where is the place of His glory?", the angels will declare, "The whole earth is full of His glory."

11 וזהו אשת חיל עטרת בעלה⁵⁴ שאור ה' המתגלה בה עכשיו נקרא בעלה. אבל לעתיד יהיה במדרגה גבוה יותר.

This is [the meaning of] "A woman of valor is the crown of her husband": the light of G-d that is revealed in her now is called "her husband," but in the Time to Come [she] will be at a higher level.

"A woman of valor is the crown of her husband": the woman is Knesses Yisrael, and "her husband" is the light of G-d revealed to her now. In the future she will stand higher than that light, as a crown is above the one who wears it.

לכן כתיב נפלה לא תוסיף קום בתולת ישראל.⁵⁵ פ"י שלא יהיה שייך לה בחי קימה ועלייה כי יהיה אור ה' בגילוי רב למטה דוקא.

Therefore it is written, "She has fallen; she will no more rise, the maiden of Israel." That is: the aspect of rising and ascent will not apply to her, for the light of G-d will be in great revelation below specifically.

In Amos the words "She has fallen; she will no more rise, the maiden of Israel" are a lament over Israel's downfall; here they are read as a promise: she will no longer need to rise and ascend, because G-d's light will be revealed abundantly below, where she is.

והיינו משום שאתהפכא חשוכא לנהורא

This is because darkness is transformed into light,

This is because in the future darkness itself will be transformed into light. The Zohar's phrase for it, is'hapcha chashocha linehora, names the highest way of overcoming evil: the darkness is not broken but becomes light.

ולא לאכפייא לסט"א [לסטרא אחרא] בלבד לבטלם ולהכניעם כמו בשאר גלות דכתיב למכה מצרים בבכוריהם^{56,57} וגוי. ויהרג מלכים אדירים⁵⁸ וגוי. רק כי גם אז אהפך אל עמים שפה ברורה⁵⁹ וגוי והלכו עמים רבים⁶⁰ וגוי.

and not only the subduing of the sitra achra, to nullify them and humble them, as in the other exiles, of which it is written, "To Him Who struck Egypt through their firstborn," etc., "And He slew mighty kings," etc. Rather, [it is] that then, too, "I will turn (ehpoch) to the peoples a clear language," etc., and "many peoples shall go," etc.

In the earlier exiles evil was only subdued (iskafya), broken and humbled, as when G-d struck Egypt's firstborn (the verse as [4.3] read it) and "slew mighty kings." In the future the nations themselves will be transformed: G-d will "turn" (ehpoch, from the same root as is'hapcha) to them "a clear language" so that they call on His name, and "many peoples" will go up to learn His ways.

12 והנה מעין זה היה הנס של פורים שנתהפך לב אחשורוש לטוב.⁶¹

Now, the miracle of Purim was a foretaste of this: the heart of Achashverosh was turned to good.

The miracle of Purim was a foretaste of the future transformation: Achashverosh's own heart was turned to good, and the king who had handed the Jewish people over to Haman became the one who authorized their rescue. In Likkutei Torah (Ki Seitzei, 40a) the Alter Rebbe explains such a reversal in "Havayah your G-d turned the curse into a blessing," and refers there to this maamar.

אותו הפה עצמו⁶² שאמר והעם לעשות בו כטוב בעיניך⁶³ הוא עצמו אמר ואתם כתבו על היהודים⁶⁴ כטוב בעיניכם. שהוא ענין אתהפכא חשוכא לנהורא⁶⁵ ונגלה כבוד⁶⁶ ה' למטה במקום החשך דוקא:

That very same mouth that said, "and the people, to do with it as seems good in your eyes," is the very one that said, "And you, write concerning the Jews as seems good in your eyes." This is the transformation of darkness into light, and "the glory of Havayah is revealed" below, in the place of darkness specifically.

The same mouth that told Haman, "the people, to do with it as seems good in your eyes," later told Mordechai and Esther, "Write concerning the Jews as seems good in your eyes." That is darkness turned into light, and "the glory of Havayah revealed" below, in the very place of darkness.

SECTION 5 • ¶13-17

The halachos and the mitzvos

13 ולכן אמרו רז"ל [רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] **שגם הלכות אינן בטלות. וביאור הענין כי הנה ארז"ל** [אמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] **על פסוק ברח דודי⁶⁷ ודמה לך לצבי וגו' מה צבי מחזיר ראשו לאחוריו.**

Therefore our Sages, of blessed memory, said that the halachos too will not be abolished. The explanation of the matter: our Sages, of blessed memory, said on the verse "Flee, my beloved, and be like a gazelle," etc.: "Just as a gazelle turns its head backward..."

For the same reason the halachos too will not be abolished. The Sages expound "Flee, my beloved, and be like a gazelle": as a gazelle runs, it turns its head back toward the place it left.

דהיינו עד"מ כמו שבאדם בעצם ראשו הנה מונח בתוכו מוח ושכלו ובינתו וכשמחזיר עצם ראשו לאחוריו הנה גם המוח אשר בתוכו ורוח שכלו ובינתו נמשכין אחריו

That is, by way of analogy: just as in a person, within the bone of his head are placed his brain, his intellect and his understanding, and when he turns the bone of his head backward, the brain within it, and the spirit of his intellect and understanding, are also drawn after it;

The analogy is a person's skull, the bone of the head that houses his brain, intellect and understanding. When he turns it backward, the brain and the mind within it turn with it.

כך כביכול המשיך הקב"ה והלביש רצונו וחכמתו במקום אחוריו שהם בחינת חיצוניות דהיינו בענינים גשמיים כמו בבהמות בסדר קדשים.⁶⁸

so too, as it were, the Holy One, blessed be He, drew down and clothed His will and His wisdom in the place of His "back," which is the level of the outer dimension (chitzoniyus), namely in physical matters, as with animals in the Order of Kodashim

So too, as it were, G-d "turned His head back": He drew down His will and wisdom and clothed them in His "back," the outer dimension, in physical matters. One example is the laws of animals in the Order of Kodashim, the laws of the offerings.

14 ובמעוֹת בסדר נזיקין. דפנימית רצונו וחכמתו ית' מלובשים בהם וגם מדותיו ית' הם נמשכים אחריהם מאליהם וממילא כמ"ש השיב אחר ימינו⁶⁹ וגוי.

and with money in the Order of Nezikin. For the inner dimension (pnimiyus) of His will and His wisdom, may He be blessed, is clothed in them, and His emotive attributes (middos), may He be blessed, are also drawn after them of themselves, as a matter of course, as it is written, "He has turned His right hand backward," etc.

G-d's inner will and wisdom are clothed even in money matters, in the Order of Nezikin (damages). His emotive attributes follow of themselves: in Lamentations "He has turned His right hand backward" means that G-d withdrew His help before the enemy, but here it says that His right hand, kindness, goes with Him into His "back."

ובחכמה אתברירו⁷⁰ פ"י כי אין לשון ברור נופל אלא בדבר שמתערב כגון מין במינו ואינו ניכר. כך עד"מ סרסור המחליף פרה בחמור⁷¹ לגבי השונה משנה והלכה זו.⁷²

And "through Chochmah (wisdom) they are sorted out." That is: the term "sorting out" applies only to something that is mixed in, such as a kind within its own kind, and is not recognizable. So, by way of analogy, a broker who exchanges "a cow for a donkey," as compared with one who studies this mishnah and halachah.

"Through Chochmah they are sorted out": sorting (birur) applies only where things are mixed so that they cannot be told apart, such as one kind mixed into the same kind. The broker trading "a cow for a donkey" and the scholar studying that very mishnah deal with the same cow and donkey; it is G-d's wisdom, studied in the halachah, that sorts the holy out of the physical. Earlier in Torah Ohr (Bereishis, 5d) the Alter Rebbe explains that the whole time of exile is such a time of sorting, separating evil from good through Chochmah.

15 וכן קצב המתעסק בנתוח אברי הבהמה לנתחים ובבני מעים וכ"י הוא קצב. אך המתעסק לידע כל פרטי הלכות התלויין באברי הבהמה להבדיל בין טרפה לכשרה

Likewise, a butcher who busies himself with cutting the limbs of the animal into pieces, and with the entrails, etc., is a butcher. But one who busies himself with knowing all the details of the laws that depend on the limbs of the animal, to distinguish between treifah and kosher,

A butcher who cuts up an animal and handles its innards is simply doing a butcher's work. One who studies the laws that depend on the animal's organs, to distinguish a kosher animal from a treifah (one with a fatal defect), is engaged in something else entirely.

וכן במחליף פרה לידע ולהבדיל ולברר בין חייב לזכאי וכן בסדר טהרות בין טמא לטהור כו'.

and likewise with one who exchanges a cow, to know, distinguish and sort out between the liable and the exempt, and likewise in the Order of Taharos, between impure and pure, etc.;

The same is true of the laws of exchanging a cow, which decide who is liable and who is exempt, and of the Order of Taharos, which distinguishes impure from pure. In each case the study is an act of distinguishing and sorting.

16 וכן בכל ש"ס [ששה סדרים] משנה וגמרא וכל הפוסקים ראשונים ואחרונים מתגלה ומתברר רצון העליון

וחכמתו ית' ועל ידי זה מתברר ונפרד הרע מהטוב

and likewise in all of Shas, Mishnah and Gemara, and all the halachic authorities, early and later, the supernal will and His wisdom, may He be blessed, are revealed and made clear, and through this the evil is sorted out and separated from the good,

Throughout the Talmud, Mishnah and Gemara, and all the halachic authorities, early and later, G-d's supernal will and wisdom are revealed and made clear. Through that clarity evil is sorted out and separated from good.

דהיינו הפסול מהכשר וחייבמזכאי וכן במצות מעשיות התלויין במדות כגון שומר אבידה שפטור ליתן

פרוטה לעני. שעוסק במצוה פטור ממצוה.⁷³

that is, the invalid from the valid, and the liable from the exempt. And likewise with practical mitzvos that depend on the emotive attributes (middos), such as one who guards a lost object, who is exempt from giving a perutah to a poor man, for one who is engaged in a mitzvah is exempt from [another] mitzvah.

Halachah separates the invalid from the valid and the liable from the exempt. The same applies to practical mitzvos that involve the emotive attributes: one who is guarding a lost object is exempt from giving a perutah, a small coin, to a poor person, because one who is engaged in a mitzvah is exempt from another mitzvah.

17 והיינו אם עוסק בה לצרכה לשטחה ולנערה⁷⁴ ואין חילוק בין היא אבדת עשיר או עני.

That is, if he is occupied with it for its own needs, to spread it out and to shake it out; and there is no difference whether it is the lost object of a rich man or of a poor man.

Guarding a lost object counts as a mitzvah when one tends it for its own sake, spreading out a garment and shaking it out so that it is not damaged. It makes no difference whether the owner is rich or poor.

משא"כ אם שומר כסות שלו אפי' [אפילו] אינו עשיר כמו בעל אבדה הרי אין בו מצוה.

Whereas if he guards his own garment, even if he is not as rich as the owner of the lost object, there is no mitzvah in it.

Guarding one's own garment is no mitzvah, even if the one guarding it is poorer than the owner of the lost object, so that the garment matters more to him. The act is the same; only its purpose differs.

וכן הענין בצדקה וגמילות חסדים מה שעושה חסד עם הבריות הרי זה מצוה. ואם עושה לצרכו אין בו מצוה.

The same applies to charity and acts of kindness: when one does kindness to people, this is a mitzvah; but if he does it for his own need, there is no mitzvah in it.

Charity and kindness work the same way: kindness done for others is a mitzvah, but done for one's own benefit it is not.

וא"כ כשעושה מצוה בדבר גשמי הרי הוא ענין ההתהפכות חשוכא לנהורא שאור ה' הוא גילוי רצונו ית' ואור במקום החשך הגשמי דוקא:

If so, when one does a mitzvah with a physical thing, this is the transformation of darkness into light; for the light of G-d is the revelation of His will, may He be blessed, and [it is] light in the place of physical darkness specifically.

So when one performs a mitzvah with a physical object, darkness is transformed into light. G-d's light is the revelation of His will, and here it becomes light in the very place of physical darkness.

SECTION 6 • ¶18-19

The wall and the opening

18 וזהו הנה זה עומד אחר כתלנו.⁷⁵ פירוש בחי' חכמתו ורצונו ית' הוא בחי' התגלות בבחי' זה בעניני התורה

And this is [the meaning of] "Behold, this one stands behind our wall." That is: the level of His wisdom and will, may He be blessed, is the level of revelation, at the level of "this," in the matters of the Torah;

The verse "Behold, this one stands behind our wall" describes the situation. G-d's wisdom and will are revealed in the matters of the Torah, at the level of "this," something present that can be pointed to.

אלא שעומד אחר כתלנו שאין אור ה' שורה ומתגלה בו מפני שעונותיכם מבדילין⁷⁶ ועומד לנגדו בכותל.

only, it “stands behind our wall,” for the light of G-d does not rest and become revealed in him, because “your iniquities separate,” and it stands facing him with a wall [between].

Yet it “stands behind our wall”: G-d’s light does not rest openly in a person, because “your iniquities separate” between him and G-d; the divine wisdom stands facing him, but a wall stands between them.

19 והעצה היעוצה לזה משגיח מן החלונות מציץ מן החרכים.⁷⁷ כי חלון הוא חלל שנעשה בכותל.

The counsel offered for this: “He gazes through the windows, He peers through the lattices.” For a window is an opening made in a wall.

The verse itself gives the remedy: “He gazes through the windows, He peers through the lattices.” A window is an opening made in a wall.

וכן ענין החרכים אלא שחרכים הם סדקים קטנים וחלון הוא חלל גדול יותר. כך ע”ד משל הנה ארז”ל [אמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] פתחי לי⁷⁸ כחודה של מחט^{79, 80} כו’.

So too the lattices, except that lattices are small cracks, while a window is a larger opening. So, by way of analogy, our Sages, of blessed memory, said, “Open for Me [an opening] like the point of a needle,” etc.

Lattices are small cracks, and a window a larger opening. The Sages put it this way: G-d says, “Open for Me an opening like the point of a needle,” and the saying continues that He will then open a far wider one. In Likkutei Torah (Korach) the Alter Rebbe explains that any arousal from below is only a needle’s point next to the encompassing Infinite Light, for through it only the kav can be drawn, like a thread through a needle.

דהיינו שישבור לבו לב האבן להיות לו רוח נשברה לב נשבר⁸¹ כי כל המסכים והכותל והמחיצה המפסקת בינו לאביו שבשמים הוא בחי' גסי הרוח אשר על כן מחשב עצמו ליש. וחפצי יקרים בעיניו מחפצי שמים:

That is, that he break his heart, the heart of stone, so as to have “a broken spirit, a broken heart.” For all the screens, the wall and the partition that divide between him and his Father in Heaven are the level of coarseness of spirit, because of which he considers himself something (yesh), and his own desires are dearer in his eyes than the desires of Heaven.

Making such an opening means breaking the heart of stone, so as to have “a broken spirit, a broken heart.” What separates a person from his Father in Heaven is coarseness of spirit, arrogance, which makes him regard himself as a separate “something” (yesh) and value his own desires above Heaven’s.

SECTION 7 • ¶20-22

Esther's two approaches

20 ועם כל הנ"ל יובן ויבואר היטב ענין אסתר שמתחלה בראותו את המלכה עומדת בחצר⁸² היה בחי' זאת עולה מן המדבר⁸³ הנ"ל.

With all the above, the matter of Esther will be well understood and explained: at first, "when he saw the queen standing in the court," it was the level of "this one coming up from the desert," mentioned above.

With all this the story of Esther becomes clear. At first, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she was at the level of "this one coming up from the desert," the ascent described above.

כי גם בחי' חצר הפנימית למדבר יחשב נגד בית המלך ממש לפי שאין המלך דר בקביעות בחצר כמו בבית אזי מתגלה הארת והמשכת אור ה'.

For even the level of the inner court is considered a desert compared with the king's house itself, since the king does not dwell permanently in the court as in the house; then there is revealed a glimmer and drawing down of the light of G-d.

Even the inner court counts as a "desert" compared with the king's house itself, because the king does not live in the court permanently as he does in his house. In the court only a glimmer of G-d's light is drawn down and revealed.

21 ואז ותקרב אסתר שמתעלה ומתקרבת אל המלך בתשוקה לדודה. אבל כל העליות והתקרבות אינו אלא ותגע בראש השרביט.⁸⁴

And then, "Esther drew near": she rises and draws near to the king, in longing for her Beloved. But all the ascents and drawing near are no more than "and she touched the top of the scepter."

"Esther drew near" is her ascent, coming close to the King out of longing for her Beloved. But all such ascents amount only to "she touched the top of the scepter."

אבל אחרי כן כתיב ותוסף אסתר וגו' דהיינו בהיותה אתו בבית ותבך ותתחנן לו להעביר את רעת המן האגגי אשר חשב על היהודים.⁸⁵

But afterwards it is written, "And Esther continued," etc., that is, when she was with him in the house, "and she wept and pleaded with him to avert the evil of Haman the Agagite, which he had devised against the Jews."

Later the Megillah says that Esther spoke again, when she was with the king in the house, and "wept and pleaded with him to avert the evil of Haman the Agagite, which he had devised against the Jews."

שהבכיה היא לעורר רחמים רבים על נצוץ אלהות אשר נתלבש בלבושים גסי הרוח מבחי' המן אשר הוא חשב על היהודים. כי ממנו באים ליהודים מחשבות כאלו.

For the weeping is to arouse great compassion upon the spark of G-dliness that has been clothed in garments of coarseness of spirit, from the level of Haman, who “devised against the Jews”; for from him such thoughts come to the Jews.

Her weeping arouses great compassion for the spark of G-dliness clothed in garments of coarseness of spirit, which come from the level of Haman. The Alter Rebbe reads “which he devised against the Jews” as the thoughts of arrogance that Haman, the spiritual source of such coarseness, brings into the minds of Jews.

22 ואז יתהפכו חשוכא לנהורא. ולכן ויושט המלך לאסתר את כל השרביט הזהב⁸⁶ שיאיר אור ה' בגילוי למטה דוקא.

And then darkness will be transformed into light. Therefore, “the king extended to Esther” the whole of “the golden scepter,” that the light of G-d should shine in revelation below specifically.

Then darkness is transformed into light. That is why “the king extended to Esther” the whole golden scepter: G-d’s light is revealed openly, specifically below.

ואז ותקם אסתר פ"י שקמה על עמדה ועל מצבה שלא תצטרך עוד לבחי' עולה מן המדבר.

And then, “Esther arose”: that is, she rose up in her place and her station, so that she would no longer need the level of “coming up from the desert.”

In the Megillah, “Esther arose” from where she had fallen at the king’s feet. Here it means that she came to stand firmly in her own place and no longer needed to rise “from the desert”: she no longer has to climb, for the light comes to her.

וזהו ותעמוד לפני המלך שתהא במדרגה גדולה לפניו כמ"ש א"ח [אשת חיל] עט"ב [עטרת בעלה]⁸⁷ (וע' מענין ויושט המלך כו' במ"ש פ' ראה ע"פ כי תשמע בקול⁸⁸ כו'. ובמק"מ [ובמקדש מלך] ח"א [חלק א'] פ' ויחי) (רכ"ח ע"ב).⁸⁹

And this is [the meaning of] “and she stood before the king”: that she will be at a great level before him, as it is written, “A woman of valor is the crown of her husband.” (And see, on the matter of “And the king extended,” etc., what is written in Parshas Re’eh on the verse “When you hearken to the voice,” etc.; and in the Mikdash Melech, Part I, Parshas Vayechi) (228b).

“She stood before the king” means she reached a great level before Him, like “a woman of valor, the crown of her husband.” The parenthetical cross-reference points to the maamar on “When you hearken to the voice” in Parshas Re’eh, and to the Mikdash Melech, a commentary on the Zohar, on Vayechi (Part I, 228b).

גם שם בד"ה כי תשמע הנ"ל נתי [נתבאר] ענין חצר הפנימית וענין בית. ועי' עוד מענין בית לעיל פי' בראשית בד"ה השמים כסאי⁹⁰ כו' אי זה בית כו'

Also there, in the discourse beginning "When you hearken," mentioned above, the matter of the inner court and the matter of the house were explained. And see further on the matter of the house above, Parshas Bereishis, in the discourse beginning "The heavens are My throne," etc., "Where is the house," etc.

The cross-references continue: the discourse "When you hearken" also explains the inner court and the house. There the inner court is the Shema and its blessings, and the king's house, where he sits on his throne, is the Shemoneh Esreh, in which one stands in bittul; from the house "the king extended the golden scepter," its fiery love, into the Shema. For why the Shemoneh Esreh is called a house, that discourse itself points to the maamar "The heavens are My throne ... Where is the house" in Parshas Bereishis, as this cross-reference does.

ועי' עוד לעיל פי' וישב בהפטרה דחנוכה ע"פ תשמור את חצרי^{91,92} בע"א [באופן אחר]:

And see further above, Parshas Vayeshev, in the Haftarah of Chanukah, on the verse "You shall guard My courts," [explained] in another way.

The last cross-reference points to the maamar on "You shall guard My courts," on the Haftarah of Shabbos Chanukah (Parshas Vayeshev), which explains the matter in another way: there a house, which has a roof, is an encompassing light from sovev kol almin, while a court is unroofed and needs guarding, and "My courts" are the animal soul.

IN ONE'S AVODAH

The maamar draws its lesson in [19] and [21]: the wall between a person and his Father in Heaven is coarseness of spirit, regarding oneself as a "something" and holding one's own desires dearer than Heaven's. The counsel is to break the heart of stone, "a broken spirit, a broken heart," which opens even a needle-point of an opening for G-d's light, as Esther wept to arouse compassion for the spark held in Haman's coarseness. And by studying halachah and doing mitzvos with physical things for their own sake, a person turns darkness into light here below ([13]-[17]).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why does the Alter Rebbe count even love born of contemplating G-d's essence as only "touching the top of the scepter"?
2. What is the difference between subduing the sitra achra and transforming darkness into light, and how does the Purim story show the second?
3. How do the broker and the scholar of "one who exchanges a cow for a donkey" explain why the halachos will not be abolished?
4. In what sense is G-d's "greatness" really His humility?
5. Why do weeping and a broken heart, rather than further ascent, bring the "whole scepter"?

SOURCES AND REFERENCES

Notes

PARAGRAPH 1

1 ויושט המלך לאסתר

The note sends the reader to the Rebbe's source notes on this maamar and records that it was said in the year 5560 (1800).

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה לעיל בציונים לכ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע. נאמר בשנת תק"ס. ראה ברשימת המאמרים שבסו"ס מאמרי אדה"י הקצרים הערה 160. ראה מאמרי אדה"א נ"ך ע' שעח שמיוסד על מאמר זה. באוה"ת מג"א ע' קיא המאמר עם הגהות. ע' קיו וע' קיה עוד הגהות.

2 ויושט המלך לאסתר

Esther had fallen at the king's feet, weeping and pleading that Haman's decree be undone (8:3); the king extended the golden scepter to her, a sign that she might rise and speak, and she rose and stood before him (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh). This verse is the subject of the maamar, which reads her rising and standing as a lasting station ([22.2]-[22.3]).

אסתר ח':ד"ד Esther 8:4

וַיֹּשֶׁט הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאַסְתֵּר אֶת שֵׁרְבִיט הַזָּהָב וַתִּקַּם אֶסְתֵּר וַתַּעֲמֵד לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ:

Then the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre. So Esther arose, and stood before the king.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

אסתר ה, ד.

3 ויושט המלך את שרביט הזהב

When Esther first entered the inner court unbidden, the king saw her and extended to her "the golden scepter that was in his hand," granting her leave to approach; she came near and touched its top (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh). The Alter Rebbe compares the two passages.

אסתר ה':ב"ב Esther 5:2

וַיְהִי כִּרְאוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־אַסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה עֹמֶדֶת בְּחֹצֵר נִשְׁאַף הֵן בְּעֵינָיו וַיֹּשֶׁט הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאַסְתֵּר אֶת־שֵׁרְבִיט הַזָּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ וַתִּקְרַב אֶסְתֵּר וַתִּגַּע בְּרֹאשׁ הַשֵּׁרְבִיט:

And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight; and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

אסתר ה, ב.

4 ואנכי הסתר אסתיר פני

G-d tells Moshe that when the people turn to other gods, He will surely hide His face from them "on that day," an unspecified time to come (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh). The Gemara (Chullin 139b) finds the name Esther in "haster

astir"; the Alter Rebbe applies the verse to the concealment of the Shechinah in exile.

דברים ל"א:י"ח Deuteronomy 31:18

וְאֶנְכִי הִסְתֵּר אֶסְתִּיר פָּנַי בְּיוֹם הַהוּא עַל כָּל־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה כִּי פָנָה אֶל־אֱלֹקִים אֲחֵרִים:

And I will surely hide My face in that day for all the evil which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

דברים לא, יח. באוה"ת מג"א ע' קיו יש הג"ה לכאן.

5 יאר ה' פניו אליך

From the Priestly Blessing that G-d commands Aharon and his sons to give Israel: "May Havayah make His face shine upon you," that is, may He show you His favor (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh). The Alter Rebbe cites it to show that G-d's "face" is the revelation of His presence; Targum Onkelos renders it "May Havayah make His Shechinah shine upon you."

במדבר ו:כ"ה Numbers 6:25

יָאֵר ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנֹךְ:

The L-RD make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee;

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KEHOT'S NOTE

במדבר ו, כה. באוה"ת מג"א ע' טו נוסף "ות"א ינהר ה' שכינתו לותך", ע"ש.

PARAGRAPH 2

6 ונגלה כבוד ה'

In Isaiah's prophecy of consolation a voice calls to clear a road in the wilderness for G-d's return to Zion: "The glory of Havayah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see together that the mouth of Havayah has spoken," that is, all the nations will see His glory when He redeems His people (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh). The Alter Rebbe reads "all flesh shall see" literally: in the days of Mashiach G-d will be perceived even by the physical senses.

ישעיהו מ"ה:5 Isaiah 40:5

וַנְּגַלֶּה כְּבוֹד ה' וְרָאוּ כָל־בָּשָׂר יַחְדָּו כִּי פִי ה' דִּבֶּר:

And the glory of the L-RD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the L-RD hath spoken it.'

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ישע"י מ, ה.

7

ואמר ביום ההוא

In Isaiah's vision of the future, when G-d swallows up death forever and wipes away the tears from every face, Israel will say "on that day": "Behold, this is our G-d; we hoped for Him, and He will save us; this is Havayah, we hoped for Him," the joy of a people that waited long and now sees its G-d revealed (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh). The maamar stresses "this" (zeh): G-d revealed and pointed to, as opposed to the hidden "that."

ישעיהו כ"ה:ט"ז

ואמר ביום ההוא הנה אלקינו זה קוינו לו ויושיענו זה ה' קוינו לו
נגילה ונשמחה בישועתו:

And it shall be said in that day: 'Lo, this is our G-d, For whom we waited, that He might save us; This is the L-RD, for whom we waited, We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.'

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ישעיי כה, ט.

PARAGRAPH 3

8

כל המועדים יהיו בטלים

The note refers there in connection with the saying that all the festivals will be abolished in the Time to Come.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ירושלמי תענית פ"ב ה"ב. ראה אודות ואתחנן ע' עב.

9

וימי הפורים

The Megillah records how the Jews took Purim upon themselves for all time: "These days of Purim shall not pass from among the Jews, and their remembrance shall not cease from their seed." The verse is the basis for the permanence of Purim.

אסתר ט:28 ט"ז

והימים האלה נזכרים ונעשים בכל ידור ודור משפחה ומשפחה מדינה ומדינה ועיר ועיר וימי הפורים האלה לא יעברו מתוך היהודים וזכרם לא יסוף מזרעם:

and that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

אסתר ט, כח.

10

הלכות אינן בטלים

The Jerusalem Talmud records that the Prophets and Writings will be abolished in the future but the Five Books of the Torah will not; Reish Lakish adds that Megillas Esther and the halachos will not be abolished either: the Megillah because "their remembrance shall not cease

from their seed," and the halachos because "eternal ways (halichos olam) are His."

תלמוד ירושלמי מגילה א' ח"א: 1:8 Jerusalem Talmud Megillah

משנה: אין בין זב הרואה שתי ראיות לרואה שלש אלא קרבן. אין בין מצורע מוסגר למצורע מוחלט אלא פריעה ופריעה תגלחת וצפרים: הלכה: אומר רבי יודה בר פזי. דרבי לעזר היא. דרבי לעזר אומר. [אף] בשלישית בודקין אותו מפני הקרבן. ברם קרבנו. השנייה מאונס טהור. והשלישית מאונס טמא. אומר רבי יוסה. אין לית היא דרבנו ולא אוף דרבי לעזר לית היא. דתני. אומר רבי לעזר. לא לסותרו אמרתי אלא שלא נביא קרבן. לא אמרתי שאינו ...

MISHNAH: The only difference between a sufferer from flux who experienced two episodes and one who experienced three is the sacrifice. 15:1-30 and Tractate Zavim. After one emission of fluid the sufferer becomes impure; he needs immersion in a miqweh and becomes pure at sundown. If he has two emissions in one day or in two successive days, he is a source of severe impurity and cannot become pure unless he was seven consecutive days without symptoms. If he has three emissions in at most three consecutive days, he cannot ...

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11

הלכות אינן בטלים לעתיד לבא

The note refers there in connection with the teaching that the halachos will not be abolished.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ירוש' מגילה פ"א ה"ה. ראה מאמרי אדה"א נ"ך ע' תא.

12

שבתות וימים טובים . בחי' עליית העולמות

KEHOT's note points to where this is explained further: Etz Chaim.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה ע"ה שער פנימית וחיצונית דרוש ג.

13

עליית העולמות

In the Gate of the Inner and Outer Dimensions (Sha'ar 40), Etz Chaim discusses the ascent of the worlds in the week-day prayers and at the reception of Shabbos, when the worlds rise above their places. The Alter Rebbe builds on this teaching that Shabbos and festivals are times of ascent.

עץ חיים מ:ג:34 Sefer Etz Chaim

... והנה תבין מכמה דרושים כי חיצוניות העליון גדול מאד מפנימיות התחתון וכשעולה התחתון בעליון הנה הפנימיות של התחתון נעשה חיצוניות אל חיצון העליון וחיצוניות העליון נשאר בחי' פנימי אל החיצוניות שהוא בחי' פנימי התחתון וא"כ עם זה הדרוש נוכל לבאר טעם עליות העולמות בתפלת החול ובשבת מתערבין חיצוניות עם הפנימיות ע"ד הנ"ל ונעשה הכל חיבור א' אך אין נראה כך בשאר מקומות בספרינו כמו בקבלת שבת ובתפלת ר"ה וכיוצא אלא שכל חיצוניות בפ"ע והפנימיות בפ"ע. גם אמר במ"א כי כל בחי' המעשה הם לתיקון החיצוניות והפנימיות הכל במקומן עצמם ...

Sefer Etz Chaim (Public Domain)

PARAGRAPH 4

14

למכה מצרים

Psalm 136 thanks G-d for each of His works, in creation and in Israel's history, with the refrain "for His kindness is forever": "To Him Who struck Egypt through their first-born, for His kindness is forever" (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh). The Alter Rebbe reads the refrain as the purpose of the plague: the firstborn of Egypt were struck so that the supernal kindness could shine.

תהילים קל"ו:10 Psalms 136:10

למכה מצרים בככריהם כי לעולם חסדו:

To Him that smote Egypt in their first-born, For His mercy endureth for ever;

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים קלו, י.

15

שיאיר לעולם אור החסד עליון

The note refers to the Tzemach Tzedek's commentary on Psalm 136 in connection with this reading, that Egypt's firstborn were struck so that the light of the supernal Chesed would shine.

KEHOT'S NOTE

עי יהל אור אפסיתל קלו עי תקיד.

16

מי זאת עולה מן המדבר

Onlookers in the Song of Songs ask who it is who rises from the wilderness: "Who is this coming up from the desert like columns of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, from all the powders of the merchant?" Plainly it is a fragrant procession seen from afar, scented with the wares of travelling spice-sellers (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh). The maamar reads each phrase as a stage in the soul's ascent on Shabbos and festivals ([4]-[6]), hearing dibur (speech) in midbar (desert) and kitur (fine smoke) in mekuterer (perfumed).

שיר השירים ג:6 Song of Songs 3:6

מי זאת עלה מן המדבר כתימרות עשן מקטרת מר ולבונה מכל אבקת ריכל:

Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness Like pillars of smoke, Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, With all powders of the merchant?

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

שה"ש ג, ו. ועי אוה"ת שה"ש כרך ב עי תשיו.

17

אבקת ריכל

The Zohar expounds the same verse: in the desert the Shechinah went before Israel in a cloud that looked like smoke, because the fire kindled by Avraham and Yitzchak held to it; mekuterer is read as "bound" (miskatra) to the cloud of Avraham on the right and of Yitzchak on the left; and "all the powders of the merchant" is Yaakov, or Yosef.

The Kehot note refers here for "the powders of the merchant."

Zohar I, 176bb זח"א קעו, בבב

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה זח"א קעו, ב. נתבאר באוה"ת בראשית רכ, ב. רעא, ב.

18

כנס"י נקי זאת

Kehot's note points to Zohar III, 197a for these words.

Zohar III, 197a זח"ג קצו, א

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה זח"ג קצו, א.

19

כי כמו שעשן גשמי

The note refers there in connection with the analogy of physical smoke.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה סה"מ תש"ד עי 212. לקו"ש חט"ז עי 280.

20

ומכלה דבר ההפוך

A passage of this maamar appears in Or HaTorah, which adds: "Consuming the truly opposite thing is like the blue light (nehora techela) that comes from the consuming of the wick, which consumes the 'yesh' of the animal soul." The flame that consumes its wick is the image of burning away the animal soul's sense of self.

KEHOT'S NOTE

קטע באוה"ת פי ויקהל עי בירב ומוסיף: "והנה ענין שמכלה דבר ההפך ממש זהו כענין נהורא תכלא שנמשך מכליון הפתילה שמכלה היש דנפש הבהמית", ע"ש.

21

וגם היא מקוטרת . . ונשרף בעשן הקיטור

Kehot's note points to where this is explained further: Or HaTorah.

KEHOT'S NOTE

מובא באוה"ת ויקהל עי בירב.

PARAGRAPH 5

22

וכסה ענן הקטרת

In the Yom Kippur service that G-d commands through Moshe, the High Priest puts the incense on the coals before Havayah, "and the cloud of the incense shall cover the ark cover," a screen between him and the Presence (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh). The Alter Rebbe notes that the Torah calls the incense smoke a "cloud" because it is so fine.

ויקרא ט"ז:13 Leviticus 16:13

ונתן את הקטרת על־האש לפני ה' וכסה ענן הקטרת את־הכפרת אשר על־העדות ולא ימות:

And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the L-RD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the ark-cover that is upon the testimony, that he die not.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ויקרא טז, יג.

תהלים קמט, ב.

23

ואח"כ יהיה בבחי' מור

Earlier in Torah Ohr, Mordechai is linked to "pure myrrh" (mor deror), which the Targum renders mira dachya: above it is myrrh of freedom, and below it is bitterness (mar) and Gevuros drawn into the realm of pure and impure, the Torah as it is clothed in this physical world in exile and bitterness.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה לעיל צב, א.

24

בהגיע תור נערה ונערה

Each maiden came in her turn to King Achashverosh after twelve months of preparation: "six months with oil of myrrh and six months with spices and with the women's cosmetics." The Alter Rebbe reads the stages as the soul's preparation to come before G-d.

אסתר ב' י"ב:12 Esther 2:

ובהגיע תר נערה ונערה לבוא אל המלך אחשורוש מקץ היות לה כדת הנשים שנים עשר חדש כי כן מלאו ימי מרוקיהן ששה חדשים בשמן המר וששה חדשים בבשמים ובתמרוקי הנשים:

Now when the turn of every maiden was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that it had been done to her according to the law for the women, twelve months—for so were the days of their anointing accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six month with sweet odours, and with other ointments of the women —

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KEHOT'S NOTE

אסתר ב, יב.

25 | Kehot's note points to Megillah 13a:18 for these words.

מגילה י"ג א' י"ח:13 Megillah 13a:

"ששה חדשים בשמן המור". מאי "שמן המור"? רבי חייא בר אבא אמר: סטכת, רב הונא אמר: שמן זית שלא הביא שלישי. תנא, רבי יהודה אומר: אנפקינון — שמן זית שלא הביא שלישי, ולמה סכין אותו — שמשיר את השיער ומעזן את הבשר.

"Six months with the oil of myrrh" (Esther 2:12). What is the oil of myrrh? R. Hiyya b. Abba said: Stakat. R. Huna said: Oil from olives not a third grown. It has been taught: R. Judah says: Anpikon is oil of olives not a third grown. Why is it used for smearing? Because it removes hair and makes the skin soft.

William Davidson, Vocalized Aramaic (CC-BY-NC) • Daf Shevui (CC0)

26

ישמח ישראל בעושי

The psalmist calls on Israel to sing a new song: "Let Israel rejoice in its Maker; let the children of Zion be glad in their King." Here it describes the joy in G-d that the Alter Rebbe calls frankincense.

תהילים קמ"ט:2 Psalms 149:

ישמח ישראל בעושי בנציון גילו במלכם:

Let Israel rejoice in his Maker; Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

PARAGRAPH 6

27

"Six months with oil of myrrh and six months with spices and with the women's cosmetics": the second half of the maidens' preparation, read here as the joy and fervor of the soul.

אסתר ב' י"ב:12 Esther 2:

ובהגיע תר נערה ונערה לבוא אל המלך אחשורוש מקץ היות לה כדת הנשים שנים עשר חדש כי כן מלאו ימי מרוקיהן ששה חדשים בשמן המר וששה חדשים בבשמים ובתמרוקי הנשים:

Now when the turn of every maiden was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that it had been done to her according to the law for the women, twelve months—for so were the days of their anointing accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six month with sweet odours, and with other ointments of the women —

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28

בדשן נפשו

Through the prophet G-d calls on those who spend their money and toil on what does not satisfy: "Listen to Me and eat what is good, and let your soul delight in richness." The Alter Rebbe uses the phrase for the delight that a fragrance gives the soul.

ישעיהו נ"ה:ב' Isaiah 55:2:

למה תשקלו כסף בלוא לחם ויגיעכם בלוא לשבעה שמעו שמוע אלי ואכלו טוב ותתענג בדשן נפשכם:

Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? And your gain for that which satisfieth not? Harken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, And let your soul delight itself in fatness.

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29

מכל אבקת רוכל

The end of the verse "Who is this coming up from the desert": "from all the powders of the merchant." The many powders are read as the many kinds of fervor in Jewish souls.

שיר השירים ג' ו"ג Song of Songs 3:6:

מי זאת עלה מן המדבר כתימרות עשן מקטרת מר ולבונה מכל אבקת רוכל:

Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness Like pillars of smoke, Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, With all powders of the merchant?

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30

הנערה באה אל המלך

"And with this the maiden came to the king": after her preparation each maiden came before the king. The Alter

Rebbe reads it as the soul coming before G-d with all its kinds of fervor.

אסתר ב':י"ג

ובזה הנערה באה אליה המלך את כל־אשר תאמר ינתן לה לבוא עמה מבית הנשים עד־בית המלך:

when then the maiden came unto the king, whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house.

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PARAGRAPH 7

31 "And Esther came near and touched the top of the scepter." The Alter Rebbe makes "touching the top of the scepter" the name for every ascent of the soul.

אסתר ה':ב'

ויהי כראות המלך את־אסתר המלכה עומדת בְּחֶצֶר נְשָׂאָה חֹן בְּעֵינָיו וַיֻּשֶׁט הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאֶסְתֵּר אֶת־שֵׁרְבִיט הַזֶּהב אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ וַתִּקְרַב אֶסְתֵּר וַתִּגַּע בְּרֹאשׁ הַשֵּׁרְבִיט:

And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight; and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.

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32 את שרביט הזהב וחי

Esther sends word to Mordechai that whoever enters the king's inner court unbidden is put to death, unless the king extends the golden scepter to him, "and he shall live": plainly the scepter spares the one to whom it is held out. The Alter Rebbe reads it as showing that the scepter itself is life-force.

אסתר ד':יא

כִּלְעֵבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְעַם־מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ יָדְעִים אֲשֶׁר כָּל־אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר יָבוֹא־אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־הַחֲצֵר הַפְּנִימִית אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִקְרָא אֶחָת דָּתוֹ לְהִמָּיֵת לְבַד מֵאֲשֶׁר יוֹשִׁיט־לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־שֵׁרְבִיט הַזֶּהב וְחַיָּה וְאִנִּי לֹא נִקְרָאתִי לָבוֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ זֶה שְׁלוֹשִׁים יוֹם:

'All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law for him, that he be put to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live; but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.'

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KEHOT'S NOTE

אסתר ד', יא. ועיי ביהל אור הנסמן לעיל.

33 אהבה עזה כרשפי אש ושלחבת

The beloved woman asks to be set as a seal upon his heart, "for love is fierce as death... its flashes are flashes of fire, a

...ויושט המלך לאסתר את שרביט הזהב ותקם אסתר...

flame of G-d." The Alter Rebbe describes the glimmer at the top of the scepter in the verse's words.

Song of Songs 8:6

שִׁימֵנִי כַחוֹתָם עַל־לִבְךָ כַחוֹתָם עַל־זְרוֹעֶךָ כִּי־עֶזָה כַמוֹת אֶהְבֶּה קֶשֶׁה כִּשְׂאוֹל קִנְיָה רִשְׁפֶּיהָ רִשְׁפֵּי אֵשׁ שֶׁלִּהְבִּתֶּיהָ:

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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34

זהב התנופה

In the accounting of what was given for the Mishkan: "the gold of the wave offering (tenufah)," the gold lifted up and given for the work of the Sanctuary, twenty-nine talents and seven hundred and thirty shekels (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh). Here it names the fiery love that rises upward.

שמות ל"ח:כ"ד

כָּל־הַזָּהָב הָעֲשׂוּי לְמִלְאָכָה כָּל מִלְאָכַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ וַיְהִי זֶה־בַּתְּנוּפָה תִּשְׁעַ וְעֶשְׂרִים כָּכָר וּשְׁבַע מֵאוֹת וּשְׁלֹשִׁים שֶׁקֶל בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ:

All the gold that was used for the work in all the work of the sanctuary, even the gold of the offering, was twenty and nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary.

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35

לית מחשבה תפיסא ביה כלל

From Eliyahu's prayer in the introduction to the Tikkunei Zohar (Patach Eliyahu): "You are the Highest of all the high, the Hidden of all the hidden; no thought can grasp You at all." Here it describes G-d's very essence, beyond the "greatness" of filling and encompassing worlds.

Tikkunei Zohar 17a:10-12

אנת הוא עלאה על כל עלאין סתימא על כל סתימין. לית מחשבה תפיסא בך כלל. אנת הוא דאפיקת עשר תקונין. וקרינן לון עשר ספירן. לאנהגא בהון עלמין סתימין דלא אתגליין. ועלמין דאתגליין. ובהון אתכסיות (נ"א אתכסיא) מבני נשא. ואנת הוא דקשיר לון ומיחד לון. ובגין דאנת מלגאו. כל מאן דאפריש חד מן חבריה מאלין עשר. אתחשיב ליה כאלו אפריש בך.

Constantinople, 1740 (CC-BY-NC)

36

וקצוהו התחתון . . ממכ"ע וסוכ"ע

The note says the two ends of the scepter's tip, love from contemplating memalei and sovev and love from contemplating His essence, are explained in Or HaTorah on Megillas Esther, and refers also to Vayeshev.

KEHOT'S NOTE

נתבאר באוה"ת מג"א ע' קכא. ראה גם באוה"ת פ' וישב כרך ה תתפח, א.

37

ולא שייך ב' לשון גדולה ממכ"ע וסוכ"ע

The passage is quoted in Or HaTorah on Vayeira, which concludes that in "Yours, Havayah, is the greatness," the greatness and Chesed of Atzilus, memalei and sovev, are nullified before Him and bear no comparison to "His

greatness is unsearchable,” which is not in the category of worlds at all.

KEHOT'S NOTE

מובא באוה"ת וירא צב, א. ושם כי שמכ"ז מובן דפירוש לך ה' הגדולה שדמת הגדולה והחסד שבאצילות ממכ"ע וסוכ"ע בטל אצלו ואינו מערך בחי ולגדולתו אין חקר שאינו בגדר עלמין כלל, וזה היפך ממ"ש שבחי גדולה זהו הנמשך מבחי ולגדולתו אין חקר, ע"ש בארוכה. ובהמשך מים רבים תרל"ו פרק מח. ובהנחת כ"ק אדמו"ר מהורש"ב שם ע' תלב. וראה לעיל נו, ב. ובאוה"ת ואתחנן ע' רנד.

38

על הארה

Variant reading: Or HaTorah reads “of the glimmer of”), joining “glimmer” to the “drawing down of life-force” that follows.

KEHOT'S NOTE

באוה"ת ובמים רבים שם: על הארה.

39

שייך לומר

Variant reading: Or HaTorah reads “one can use the term” “filling” and “encompassing.”

KEHOT'S NOTE

באוה"ת שם ובמים רבים: שייך לומר לשון.

40

לגדולתו דוקא אין חקר

In David's psalm of praise: “Great is Havayah and highly praised, and His greatness is unsearchable,” that is, too vast for any praise to convey (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh). The Alter Rebbe reads it more strictly: “greatness,” and contemplating it, belong only to the Name Havayah, the flow of life-force to the worlds, while G-d Himself is beyond the category of greatness altogether ([7.6]).

Psalms 145:3 קמ"ה: תהילים

גָּדוֹל ה' וּמְהֻלָּל מְאֹד וְלִגְדֻלָּתוֹ אֵין חֶקֶר:

Great is the L-RD, and highly to be praised; And His greatness is unsearchable.

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41

פ"י דלא שייך כלל

The note refers there in connection with this explanation, that contemplating G-d's greatness applies only to the Name Havayah.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה אוה"ת פ' חקת ע' תשסג.

42

אני ה' לא שניתי

G-d tells Israel through Malachi, “For I, Havayah, have not changed, and you, the children of Yaakov, have not been consumed”: because He is constant, His people endure (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh). Here it shows that G-d is unchanged by creation; before Him the worlds are as nothing.

Malachi 3:6 מלאכי ג':

כִּי אֲנִי ה' לֹא שִׁנִּיתִי וְאַתֶּם בְּנֵי יַעֲקֹב לֹא קִלִּיתֶם:

For I the L-RD change not; and ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

מלאכי ג', ו.

43

המשכת אוא"ס ב"ה והוא הוא חיות כל העולמות

The Tzemach Tzedek comments on this passage: “It seems that this means the drawing down of the kav and thread from the Infinite Light”; he adds that the Mikdash Melech on Vayechi explains it as the mystery of joining Redemption to Prayer, and that Likkutei Torah, in the discourse “When you hearken to the voice,” explains it in a similar way.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ביהל אור ע' עג ע"פ הנחמדים מזהב מציון ע"ז: “וכפי הנראה ר"ל המשכת הקו וחוט מאוא"ס ובמק"מ פ' ויחי דרכ"ח ע"ב פ"י שה"ס סמיכת גאולה לתפלה וכעין זה פ"י בלק"ת בד"ה כי תשמע בקול". ראה אוה"ת ויצא קפב, א.

PARAGRAPH 8

44

גדול ה' ומהולל מאד

A song of the sons of Korach in praise of Jerusalem: “Great is Havayah and highly praised, in the city of our G-d, His holy mountain”; plainly, He is praised as He appears in His city and on His holy mountain (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh). The Sages read the second half as the condition of the first: He is called great “in the city of our G-d.”

Psalms 48:2 מ"ח:ב' תהילים

גָּדוֹל ה' וּמְהֻלָּל מְאֹד בְּעִיר אֱלֹקֵינוּ הִרְקָדְשׁוּ:

Great is the L-RD, and highly to be praised, In the city of our G-d, His holy mountain,

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים מח, ב.

45

אימתי נק' גדול

The Zohar asks when the Holy One, blessed be He, is called great, and answers: when Knesses Yisrael is with Him, as it says, “in the city of our G-d.”

Zohar II, 235a זח"ב רלה,

Zohar III, 5a זח"ג ה,

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה זח"ב רלה, א. זח"ג ה, א. זהר חדש תשא (מד, א). חקת (נא, ד). ראה לעיל י, ב. מז, א.

46

בבחי גדולה . . מלכותו מלכות כל עולמים

There the Alter Rebbe explains that “greatness” applies to G-d only in the spreading forth of radiance from His Malchus, “Your kingship is a kingship of all worlds”; the life-force that creates the worlds is only a radiance, like sunlight compared with the sun, and everything is as nothing before Him.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ע' לעיל פ' וראו נו, ב. ובתורת שמואל תרכ"ז ע' קעז.

47 מלכותו מלכות כל עולמים

“Your kingship is a kingship of all worlds.” The Alter Rebbe uses the verse for the purpose of G-d’s “greatness”: that He rule over all worlds.

Psalms 145:13: תהילים קמ"ה:י"ג

מלכותך מלכות כל־עלמים וממשלתך בכל־דור ודור:

Thy kingdom is a kingdom for all ages, And Thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

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PARAGRAPH 9

48 וישב ה' מלך לעולם

Near the end of David’s psalm of G-d’s voice in the storm: “Havayah sat enthroned at the Flood; Havayah sits as King forever.” Plainly it speaks of His enthronement; the Alter Rebbe reads “sitting” as a lowering of Himself in order to reign.

Psalms 29:10: תהילים כ"ט:י

ה' למבול יָשָׁב וישב ה' מלך לעולם:

The L-RD sat enthroned at the flood; Yea, the L-RD sitteth as King for ever.

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KEHOT’S NOTE

תהלים כט, י.

49 ואתה קדוש

In the psalm that opens “My G-d, my G-d, why have You forsaken me,” David says, “And You are holy, enthroned upon the praises of Israel.” Being “seated” on Israel’s praises is a humility for G-d, Who in truth is holy and apart.

Psalms 22:4: תהילים כ"ב:ד

ואתה קדוש יושב תהלות ישראל:

Yet Thou art holy, O Thou that art enthroned upon the praises of Israel.

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KEHOT’S NOTE

תהלים כב, ד.

50 אני ה' לא שניתי

“For I, Havayah, have not changed.” Here it names the level of G-d’s essence, beyond time, that will be revealed in the future; the Name Havayah itself joins “was, is and will be.”

Malachi 3:6: מלאכי ג':ו

כי אני ה' לא שניתי ואנכי בְּנִי־יַעֲקֹב לא אֶלֶּתֶם:

For I the L-RD change not; and ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

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51 וראו כל בשר

“And all flesh shall see together”: in the future G-d’s glory will be perceived even by physical eyes and the physical

mind.

Isaiah 40:5: ישעיהו מ':ה

ונגלה כבוד ה' וראו כל־בשר יחדו כי פי ה' דבר:

And the glory of the L-RD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the L-RD hath spoken it.

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PARAGRAPH 10

52 כעת יאמר ליעקב

From Bilam’s blessing: no sorcery works against Israel, and “now it shall be said of Yaakov and of Israel what G-d has wrought,” for their fate is G-d’s own doing (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh). The Sages read “at the time” of the future, when the angels will ask Israel’s tzaddikim.

Numbers 23:23: במדבר כ"ג:כ"ג

כי לא־נחש ביעקב ולא־קסם בישראל כעת יאמר ליעקב ולישראל מה־פעל אל:

For there is no enchantment with Jacob, Neither is there any divination with Israel; Now is it said of Jacob and of Israel: ‘What hath G-d wrought!’

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KEHOT’S NOTE

במדבר כג, כג.

53 מלא כל הארץ כבודו

In Isaiah’s vision the seraphim call one to another, “Holy, holy, holy is Havayah of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.” In the future the angels will say this as a statement, no longer asking where His glory is.

Isaiah 6:3: ישעיהו ו':ג

וקרא זה אל־זה ואמר קדוש קדוש קדוש ה' צבאות מלא כל־הארץ כבודו:

And one called unto another, and said: Holy, holy, holy, is the L-RD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory.

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PARAGRAPH 11

54 אשת חיל עטרת בעלה

Proverbs contrasts two wives: “A woman of valor is the crown of her husband, but one who shames him is like rot in his bones.” The Alter Rebbe reads it of Knesses Yisrael in the future, when she will stand above the light that is revealed to her now.

Proverbs 12:4: משלי י"ב:ד

אשת־חיל עטרת בעלה וחרקב בעצמותיו מבישה:

A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband; But she that doeth shamefully is as rottenness in his bones.

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55

נפלה לא תוסיף קום בתולת ישראל

Amos takes up a dirge over the house of Israel (5:1): "She has fallen; she will no more rise, the maiden of Israel." Here the words are read as a promise: she will no longer need to rise, for the light will come down to her.

Amos 5:2: עמוס ה' ב'.

נפלה לא תוסיף קום בתולת ישראל נטשה על אדמתה אין מקימה:

The virgin of Israel is fallen, She shall no more rise; She is cast down upon her land, There is none to raise her up.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

עמוס ה, ב.

56

דכתיב למכה מצרים בבכוריהם

The note quotes the Rebbe: this maamar calls "To Him Who struck Egypt through their firstborn" only iskafya (subduing), while the Purim miracle is above it, transformation, because here the verse is read, as in the Mechilta and Ibn Ezra, as referring to the plague of the firstborn itself, as the maamar says explicitly earlier (94a).

KEHOT'S NOTE

"ומי שם [הכוונה לתנ"א כאן] ש"למכה מצרים בבכוריהם" הו"ע דאתכפא בלבד (ונס פורים הוא למעלה מזה בחי' אתהפכא) — הרי זה מפני ששם קאי להפירוש (מכילתא פרשה יג. ראבי"ע לתהלים עה"פ) ש"למכה מצרים בבכוריהם" קאי על מכת בכורות כמפורש שם [הכוונה לתנ"א] צד, א". — ספר השיחות תשמ"ח כרך א ע' 359.

57

למכה מצרים בבכוריהם

"To Him Who struck Egypt through their firstborn." The verse is the example of subduing evil in past redemptions.

Psalms 136:10: תהילים קל"ו.

למכה מצרים בבכוריהם כי לעולם חסדו:

To Him that smote Egypt in their first-born, For His mercy endureth for ever;

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58

ויהרג מלכים אדירים

"And He slew mighty kings, for His kindness is forever," Sichon and Og, as the next verses name them: another instance of evil overcome by being broken.

Psalms 136:18: תהילים קל"ח.

ויהרג מלכים אדירים כי לעולם חסדו:

And slew mighty kings, For His mercy endureth for ever.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים קל"ח, יח.

59

אז אהפוך אל עמים שפה ברורה

After the judgment of the nations, G-d promises through Zephaniah: "For then I will turn to the peoples a clear language, that they may all call on the name of Havayah, to serve Him with one accord," that is, He will change their speech into a pure one (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh). The

verb ehpoach, "I will turn," is the language of transformation (is'hapcha).

Zephaniah 3:9: צפניה ג' ט.

כי אז אהפך אל עמים שפה ברורה לקרא כלם בשם ה' לעבדו שכם אהד:

For then will I turn to the peoples A pure language, That they may all call upon the name of the L-RD, To serve Him with one consent.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

צפניה ג, ט.

60

והלכו עמים רבים

In Isaiah's vision of the End of Days: "And many peoples shall go and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of Havayah... that He may teach us of His ways.'" The nations will be drawn to G-d of their own accord, to learn His Torah, not merely subdued.

Isaiah 2:3: ישעיהו ב' ג.

והלכו עמים רבים ואמרו לכו ונעלה אליהררה אל בית אללך יעקב וינינו מדרךיו ונלכה בארחתיו כי מציון תצא תורה ודבריה מירושלם:

And many peoples shall go and say: 'Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the L-RD, To the house of the G-d of Jacob; And He will teach us of His ways, And we will walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the L-RD from Jerusalem.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ישעיהו ב, ג.

PARAGRAPH 12

61

שנתהפך לב אחשוורוש לטוב

In the explanation of "Havayah your G-d would not listen to Bilam... and Havayah your G-d turned the curse into a blessing," the passage there distinguishes the transformation of the darkness of kelipas nogah into light, drawn from Shabbos, from turning into blessing even the curse below nogah, through teshuvah that makes deliberate sins into merits, as on Yom Kippur.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה לקו"ת פ' כי תצא ד"ה לא אבה מ, א. אוה"ת פ' כי תשא ע' ב"א. ראה סה"ש תש"נ ע' 349 הערה 101.

62

ואתו הפה עצמו

The Rebbe notes there that this passage explains "the very same mouth" as the transformation of darkness into light that will be in the Time to Come, which is above subduing (iskafya).

KEHOT'S NOTE

בלקו"ש ח"י"ח ע' 237 הערה 82 שכאן מבאר שזהו כענין אתהפכא חשובא לנהורא שיהי' לעת"ל (שלמעלה מאתכפא). ע"ש.

63

והעם לעשות בו כטוב בעיניך

Achashverosh to Haman: "The silver is given to you, and the people, to do with it as seems good in your eyes." With

these words the king handed the Jews over to Haman.

אסתר ג:11א

וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהֶמָּן הַכֹּסֶף נָתַן לְךָ וְהָעָם לַעֲשׂוֹת בּוֹ כְּטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ:

And the king said unto Haman: 'The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.'

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KEHOT'S NOTE

אסתר ג, יא.

64

ואתם כתבו על היהודים

Achashverosh to Esther and Mordechai: "And you, write concerning the Jews as seems good in your eyes, in the king's name," for a decree sealed with the king's ring could not be revoked. The same king, in the same words, now empowers their rescue.

אסתר ח:8א

וְאַתֶּם כָּתְבוּ עַל־הַיְּהוּדִים כְּטוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם בְּשֵׁם הַמֶּלֶךְ וְחַתְמוּ בְּטַבַּעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי־כָתַב אֲשֶׁר־נִכְתַּב בְּשֵׁם־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְנִחַתּוֹם בְּטַבַּעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ אִין לְהָשִׁיב:

Write ye also concerning the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring; for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.'

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KEHOT'S NOTE

אסתר ח, ח.

65

שהוא ענין אתהפכא חשוכא לנהורא

The note refers to a footnote on the same page of the Rebbe's talk that the note on [11.3] quotes on subduing and transformation.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה בספר השיחות תשמ"ח כרך א ע' 359 הערה 27.

66

ונגלה כבוד ה'

"The glory of Havayah shall be revealed": the future revelation, of which the Purim miracle was a foretaste.

ישעיהו מ"ה:5א

וְנִגְלָה כְבוֹד ה' וְרָאוּ כָּל־בָּשָׂר יַחְדָּו כִּי פִי ה' דִּבֶּר:

And the glory of the L-RD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the L-RD hath spoken it.'

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PARAGRAPH 13

67

ארו"ל על פסוק ברח דודי

The maiden's closing words to her beloved: "Flee, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young hart on the mountains of spices"; plainly she sends him off for now, sure that he will return (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh). The Zohar reads it through the gazelle's habit of looking back as it runs.

Song of Songs 8:14א

ברח דודי ודמה־לך לַצִּבִּי אוֹ לַעֲפֹר הָאֵילִים עַל הָרִי בְּשָׁמִים:

...ויושט המלך לאסתר את שרביט הזהב ותקם אסתר.

Make haste, my beloved, And be thou like to a gazelle or to a young hart Upon the mountains of spices.

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Zohar II, 14a, זח"ב יד,

KEHOT'S NOTE

שה"ש ח, יד. ראה זח"ב יד, א. נתבאר בארוכה במאמרי אדה"א נ"ך ע' תב ואילך.

68

כמו בבהמות בסדר קדשים ובמעות בסדר נזיקין

The note says these two examples, animals in Kodashim and money in Nezikin, are explained at length there.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ב' דוגמות אלו נתבארו באריכות במאמרי אדה"א נ"ך ע' תו.

PARAGRAPH 14

69

השיב אחר ימינו

The lament says that G-d "has turned His right hand backward before the enemy": He withdrew the hand that had shielded Israel (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh). Here the Alter Rebbe reads it as His right hand, His attributes, following His will into His "back," the physical matters of halachah. (Kehot: Lamentations 2:4)

Lamentations 2:3א

גָּדַע בְּחִירְיָאָה כָּל קֶרֶן יִשְׂרָאֵל הָשִׁיב אַחֲרֵי יָמֵינוּ מִפְּנֵי אוֹיֵב וַיִּכְעַר בְּיַעֲקֹב כָּאֵשׁ לִהְבֶּה אֶכְלָה סָבִיב:

He hath cut off in fierce anger All the horn of Israel; He hath drawn back His right hand From before the enemy; And He hath burned in Jacob like a flaming fire, Which devoureth round about.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

איכה ב, ד. ראה פי הפסוק בדרך מצותיך קצב, א. אוה"ת וארא ע' קכד.

70

ובחכמה אתברירו

Earlier in Torah Ohr the Alter Rebbe explains that the whole time of exile is the time of birurim, separating evil from good, and that this is done through Chochmah, "be-chochmah isbreru"; for this reason Chochmah is also called judgment (din).

KEHOT'S NOTE

נסמן לעיל ה, ד.

71

המחליף פרה בחמור

The mishnah rules on one who exchanges a cow for a donkey and the cow gives birth, when each side claims the calf. The Alter Rebbe contrasts the broker who makes such an exchange with the one who studies this law.

Mishnah Bava Metzia 8:4א

הַמַּחֲלִיף פֶּרָה בַּחֲמוֹר וְיָלְדָה, וְכֵן הַמּוֹכֵר שִׁפְחָתוֹ וְיָלְדָה, זֶה אוֹמֵר עַד שֶׁלֹּא מִכְרָתִי, וְזֶה אוֹמֵר מִשְׁלָקְחָתִי, יִחַלְקוּ. הֵיוּ לוֹ שְׁנֵי עֲבָדִים, אֶחָד גָּדוֹל וְאֶחָד קָטָן, וְכֵן שְׁתֵּי שְׂדוֹת, אֶחָת גְּדוֹלָה וְאֶחָת קְטָנָה, הַלּוֹקֵחַ אוֹמֵר גָּדוֹל לִקְחָתִי, וְהַקָּטָן אוֹמֵר אֵינִי יוֹדֵעַ, וְכֵן בְּגָדוֹל. הַמּוֹכֵר אוֹמֵר קָטָן מִכְרָתִי, וְהַקָּטָן אוֹמֵר אֵינִי יוֹדֵעַ, אֵין לוֹ אֶלָּא קָטָן. זֶה אוֹמֵר גָּדוֹל וְזֶה

אומר קטן, ישבע המוכר שהקטן מכר. זה אומר איני יודע וזה אומר איני יודע, יחלקו:

If one swapped a cow for a donkey, and it gave birth, So too if one sold his slave and she gave birth, [And] one (the seller) says, "It was born before I sold her", and the other (the buyer) says, "It was born after I bought her", they shall divide [the value of what was born]. If one had two slaves, one large and the other small, or two fields, one large and the other small, [And he sold one of them], If the buyer says, "I bought the large ...

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72 כמו בבהמות בסדר קדשים ובמעוות בסדר נזיקין

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

ב' דוגמות אלו נתבארו באריכות במאמרי אדה"א נ"ך ע' תו.

PARAGRAPH 16

73 שעוסק במצוה פטור ממצוה

The Talmud derives the rule that one engaged in a mitzvah is exempt from another mitzvah. The Alter Rebbe cites it for one guarding a lost object, who is meanwhile exempt from giving a perutah to the poor.

Sukkah 25a:11א"י: סוכה כ"ה א

והעוסק במצוה פטור מן המצוה מהקא נפקא? מהתם נפקא, דתנא: "ויחי אנשים אשר היו טמאים לנפש אדם וגו'" — אותם אנשים מי היו? נושאי ארונו של יוסף היו, דברי רבי יוסי הגלילי.

And one who is involved in a mitzvah is exempt from a mitzvah comes out from here? It comes from there, as it is taught in a Baraita: (Numbers 9:6) "There were people that were impure by the flesh of man..." Those people, who were they? They were the carriers of Yosef's body, the words of Rabbi Yose HaGlili.

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Zohar III, 186a, זח"ג קפו,

KEHOT'S NOTE

סוכה כה, א. זח"ג קפו, א.

PARAGRAPH 17

74 לצרכה לשטחה ולנערה

One who finds a garment "shakes it out once in thirty days and spreads it out for its own need, but not for his own honor." The Alter Rebbe draws on this law: tending the lost object for its own sake is the mitzvah.

Mishnah Bava Metzia 2:8ח"ב: משנה בבא מציעא ב' ח"ב: 2:8

מצא ספרים, קורא בהן אחת לשלשים יום. ואם אינו יודע לקרות, גוללן. אבל לא ילמד בהן בתחלה, ולא יקרא אחר צמו. מצא כסות, מנערה אחת לשלשים יום. ושוטחה לצרכה, אבל לא לכבודו. כלי כסף וכלי נחשת, משתמש בהן לצרכו. אבל לא לשחקו. כלי זהב וכלי זכוכית, לא יגע בהן עד שיבא אליהו. מצא שק או קפה, וכל דבר שאין דרכו לשל, הרי זה לא תשל:

...ויושט המלך לאסתר את שרביט הזהב ותקם אסתר...

If he found scrolls he must read them once every thirty days, and if he does not know how to read he should unroll them. But he may not learn from them something he has not yet learned, nor may another read with him. If he found clothing he must shake it out once every thirty days, and spread it out for [the clothing's] own good, but not for his own honor. [If he found] silver or copper vessels he must use them for their own good but not so ...

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PARAGRAPH 18

75 הנה זה עומד אחר כתלנו

The maiden hears her beloved coming like a gazelle: "behold, this one stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattices," present but glimpsed only through openings in the wall (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh). The Alter Rebbe reads "this one" as G-d's will revealed in the Torah, hidden behind a wall.

Song of Songs 2:9ט"ז: שיר השירים ב' ט"ז: 2:9

דומה דודי לצבי או לעפר האילים הנה זה עומד אחר כתלנו משגיח מן החלונות מציץ מן ההרקים:

My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart; Behold, he standeth behind our wall, He looketh in through the windows, He peereth through the lattice.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שה"ש ב, ט.

76 שעונותיכם מבדילין

The prophet tells the people that G-d's hand is not too short to save: "But your iniquities have separated between you and your G-d." The sins are the wall that keeps the light from being felt.

Isaiah 59:2ב"ט: ישעיהו נ"ט: 2:59

כי אם-עונותיכם היו מבדילים בינכם לבין אלקיכם וחסאונותיכם הסתירו פנים מכם משמוע:

But your iniquities have separated Between you and your G-d, And your sins have hid His face from you, That He will not hear.

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PARAGRAPH 19

77 משגיח מן החלונות מציץ מן החרקים

"Gazing through the windows, peering through the lattices." The windows and lattices are read as openings in the wall, made by a broken heart.

Song of Songs 2:9ט"ז: שיר השירים ב' ט"ז: 2:9

דומה דודי לצבי או לעפר האילים הנה זה עומד אחר כתלנו משגיח מן החלונות מציץ מן ההרקים:

My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart; Behold, he standeth behind our wall, He looketh in through the windows, He peereth through the lattice.

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78

פתחי לי

The maiden, asleep with her heart awake, hears her beloved knocking: "Open for me, my sister, my beloved": the verse on which the Sages based the saying about an opening like the point of a needle.

Song of Songs 5:2: שיר השירים ה:ב

אני ישנה ולבי ער קול דודי דופק פתחי לי אחתי רעיתי יונתי תמתי
שראשי נמלא טל קוצותי רסיטי לילה:

I sleep, but my heart waketh; Hark! my beloved knocketh: 'Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; For my head is filled with dew, My locks with the drops of the night.'

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79

פתחי לי כחודה של מחט

The Zohar on the same verse: "Open for Me an opening like the point of a needle, and I will open for you supernal gates."

Zohar III, 95a: זח"ג צה, א

KEHOT'S NOTE

"כ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע בספר המאמרים תש"ג ע' קצח העיר ע"ז: "הובא בכ"מ בדא"ח, ולע"ע צ"ע מקומו. ויעוין לקו"ת קרח (נה, א). וראה שהש"ר ע"פ אני ישנה. יליש שם. זח"ג צה, א. פסיקתא רבתי פט"ו. פסיקתא דר"כ פרשת החודש", עכ"ל. וראה הערה הנ"ל בשינויים בלקו"ש ח"א ע' 191 הערה 17.

80

פתחי לי כחודה של מחט

The Midrash on "Open for Me": G-d says to Israel, "Open for Me one opening of teshuvah like the point of a needle, and I will open for you openings through which wagons and carriages can enter." The Rebbe's remark in the Kehot note lists it among the places to see for this saying, whose exact source he had not yet located.

Shir HaShirim Rabbah 5:3: שיר השירים רבה ה:ג

פשטתי את כתנתי, אמר רבי יוחנן אפלו תמה שבתמות יודעת לפשט וללבש, ואת אמרת פשטתי את כתנתי, רבי חנינא ורבי יוחנן אמרי יום שנדוג להם נבוכדנצר הרשע לישאל פשט מהם שני לבושים גדולים, לבוש כהנה ולבוש מלכות. רחצתי את רגלי, משגוף עבודת כוכבים, יודעת הייתי שאבק של אותו מקום משיאני לעבודת כוכבים, אף על פי כן דודי שלח ידו מן החור. אמר רבי אבא פר כהנא, וכי מה טיבו של חור זה להיות ...

"I have removed my tunic; how can I don it? I have washed my feet; how can I soil them? My beloved extended his hand through the hole, and my core was stirred for him" (Song of Songs 5:3-4). "I have removed my tunic" - Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Even the simplest of the simple knows how to undress and dress, and you say: "I have removed my tunic"? Rabbi Ḥanina and Rabbi Yoḥanan say: On the day that the wicked Nebuchadnezzar attacked Israel, he removed from them two great garments: ...

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...ויושט המלך לאסתר את שרביט הזהב ותקם אסתר

81

רוח נשברה לב נשבר

In the psalm David said after the prophet Nossan rebuked him: "The offerings of G-d are a broken spirit; a broken and crushed heart, G-d, You will not despise." The broken heart is the opening in the wall.

Psalms 51:19: תהילים נ"א:י"ט

זבחי אלקים רוח נשברה לב נשבר ונדכה אלקים לא תבזה:

The sacrifices of G-d are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O G-d, Thou wilt not despise.

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PARAGRAPH 20

82

המלכה עומדת בחצר

"When the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she found favor in his eyes." The court is read as the place of ascent, short of the king's house.

אסתר ה:ב: Esther 5:2

ויהי כראות המלך את אסתר המלכה עומדת בחצר נשאה חן בעיניו ויושט המלך לאסתר את שרביט הזהב אשר בידו ותקרב אסתר ותגע בראש השרביט:

And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight; and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.

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83

זאת עולה מן המדבר

"Who is this coming up from the desert": the soul's ascent from physical concerns, explained in [4]-[6].

Song of Songs 3:6: שיר השירים ג:ו

מי זאת עלה מן המדבר כתימרות עשן מקשרת מר ולבונה מכל אבקת רוכל:

Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness Like pillars of smoke, Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, With all powders of the merchant?

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PARAGRAPH 21

84

ותגע בראש השרביט

"And Esther came near and touched the top of the scepter": her first approach, read as the ascents that reach only a glimmer.

אסתר ה:ב: Esther 5:2

ויהי כראות המלך את אסתר המלכה עומדת בחצר נשאה חן בעיניו ויושט המלך לאסתר את שרביט הזהב אשר בידו ותקרב אסתר ותגע בראש השרביט:

And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight; and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his

hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.

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85 ותבך ותתחנן לו להעביר את רעת המן האגגי אשר חשב על היהודים

“And Esther spoke again before the king, and fell at his feet, and wept and pleaded with him to avert the evil of Haman the Agagite and his design that he had devised against the Jews.” The Alter Rebbe reads Haman’s “design” as the thoughts of arrogance that come from him.

אסתר ח':ג' Esther 8:3

ותוסף אסתר ותדבר לפני המלך ותפל לפני רגליו ותבך ותתחנן לו להעביר את רעת המן האגגי ואת מחשבתו אשר חשב על היהודים:

And Esther spoke yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews.

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PARAGRAPH 22

86 ויושט המלך לאסתר את כל השרביט הזהב

“And the king extended to Esther the golden scepter, and Esther arose and stood before the king”: the verse the maamar set out to explain. The Alter Rebbe reads it as the whole scepter, adding the word “whole” (kol).

אסתר ח':ד' Esther 8:4

ויושט המלך לאסתר את שרביט הזהב ותקם אסתר ותעמד לפני המלך:

Then the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre. So Esther arose, and stood before the king.

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87 א"ח ע"ב

Kehot's note points to Proverbs 12:4 for these words.

משלי י"ב:ד' Proverbs 12:4

KEHOT'S NOTE

משלי יב, ד.

88 במ"ש פ' ראה ע"פ כי תשמע בקול

There the inner court is the Shema and its blessings, and the king's house, where he sits on his royal throne, is the Shemoneh Esreh prayer, a state of bittul; from there “the king extended the golden scepter,” the fiery love, from the house to the inner court, so that this love is revealed in the Shema too.

KEHOT'S NOTE

לקו"ת פ' ראה כג, ב.

89 ובמק"מ ח"א פ' ויחי (רכ"ח ע"ב)

The note quotes it: “And the king extended to Esther” is the mystery of joining Redemption to Prayer, for Redemption brings down a radiance from above and raises the prayer, the mystery of Malchus in Atzilus... and afterwards the prayer rises with the Redemption itself.”

KEHOT'S NOTE

...ויושט המלך לאסתר את שרביט הזהב ותקם אסתר

“ובספר חמדת הימים דף קט בסוד המגילה כתב וז"ל ויושט המלך לאסתר ה"ס סמיכת גאולה לתפלה כי גאולה מוריד הארה מלמעלה ומעלה את התפלה סוד המלי באצילות . . ואח"כ עולה התפלה עם הגאולה עצמה” — וראה גם באוה"ת מגלת אסתר (הוצאת תש"ג) ע' קג.

90 השמים כסאי אי זה בית

G-d says through Isaiah: “The heavens are My throne and the earth is My footstool; where is the house that you would build for Me?” Its opening words are the title of the maamar to which the text refers.

ישעיהו ס"ו:א' Isaiah 66:1

כה אמר ה' השמים כסאי והארץ ה' רגלי איזה בית אשר תבנו לי ואיזה מקום מנוחתי:

Thus saith the L-RD: The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool; where is the house that ye may build unto Me? And where is the place that may be My resting-place?

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91 ע"פ תשמור את חצרי

There “You shall guard My courts” is explained: “My courts” are the animal soul.

KEHOT'S NOTE

לעיל ל, ד.

92 תשמור את חצרי

From the Haftarah of Shabbos Chanukah, the angel's charge to Yehoshua the High Priest: “Thus says Havayah of hosts: If you walk in My ways... you shall also judge My house and also guard My courts.” Its words are the title of the maamar to which the text refers.

זכריה ג':ז' Zechariah 3:7

כה אמר ה' צבאות אם בך רכי תלך ואם את משמרת תשמר וגם אתה תדין את ביתי וגם תשמר את חצרי ונתתי לך מהלכים בין העמדים האלה:

“Thus saith the L-RD of hosts: If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, and wilt also judge My house, and wilt also keep My courts, then I will give thee free access among these that stand by.

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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/](https://www.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