



TORAH OHR • MEGILLAS ESTHER • MAAMAR 9

ובבואה לפני המלך אמר עם הספר וגו'

“And when she came before
the king, he said with the book”



All the ascents and delights of the souls, even the rest of the seventh millennium, are only G-d's “Name,” His Malchus; the will of Israel, rising through teshuvah and the mitzvos, comes “before the King” and above that level, to G-d Himself. That ascent from below calls forth a sifting in the supernal thought, the “book,” which casts evil out, as Haman's scheme returned upon his own head.

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

All the ascents and delights of the souls, even the rest of the seventh millennium, are only G-d's "Name," His Malchus; the will of Israel, rising through teshuvah and the mitzvos, comes "before the King" and above that level, to G-d Himself. That ascent from below calls forth a sifting in the supernal thought, the "book," which casts evil out, as Haman's scheme returned upon his own head.

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 explains Esther 9:25: when Esther came before the king, he ordered with a written decree (sefer) that Haman's scheme return upon his own head. The six thousand years of this world are descents for the sake of ascents: for souls, through the levels of Gan Eden, each step through the river of fire that erases the former level; for bodies, in the days of Mashiach and the Resurrection; and finally the seventh millennium, a rest beyond all ascents. Yet "do not read shamos (desolations) but shemos (names)": all of this is only G-d's Name, His Malchus. The souls' delight, which comes through their comprehension, is the reward of "tomorrow"; the mitzvos of "today" are His will, which is above comprehension, so one hour of teshuvah and good deeds is better than all the World to Come. When Knesses Yisrael, the inner point of the heart, rises before the King, a sifting follows in the supernal "book" of thought: evil, raised where it cannot stand, is thrown out, as Haman was raised before his fall. So too in each person: the G-dly soul rises first through Torah and mitzvos, and then the animal soul can be refined.

OUTLINE

- 1 Six thousand years of rise and fall** ¶1-4
Descent is for the sake of ascent: the souls rise through the levels of Gan Eden, passing through the river of fire and the "pillar" between worlds; the bodies rise in the days of Mashiach and the Resurrection; the seventh millennium is the final rest.
- 2 Not desolations but names** ¶5
"Do not read shamos but shemos": even that final rest, and all the souls' delight in the radiance of the Shechinah, belong only to G-d's Name, His Malchus, while no thought grasps G-d Himself.

3 Delight and will

¶16-8

Delight is the reward of “tomorrow”; the mitzvos of “today” are the Supernal Will, the 620 pillars of light. The will in the depth of the heart rises until it wants G-d alone, which is why one hour of teshuvah and good deeds surpasses the whole World to Come.

4 Before the King

¶9

Esther’s coming before the king is the ascent of Knesses Yisrael above the level of “King” to G-d Himself; then “he said with the book.”

5 Sifting in thought

¶10-12

All service is birur, done through the bittul of Chochmah, koach mah, which lifts things out of the separateness that kingship needs. Sifting happens in thought, the “book”; Israel’s arousal from below calls forth a sifting in the supernal thought that pushes evil out.

6 Raised up to be cast out

¶13-16

Evil is expelled by being raised to a level where it cannot stand, while below it lies like dregs in wine; so Haman was raised before his fall. But this can happen only after Knesses Yisrael has itself risen.

7 Within each person

¶17

The animal soul can be refined only after the G-dly soul is refined and lifted through Torah and mitzvos, the Supernal Will that binds the soul “in the bundle of life” and raises it to the level of gulgalta.

KEY CONCEPTS

Shamos and shemos (desolations and names) / שמות / שמו

The Sages’ reading of Psalms 46:9. The “desolation” of the seventh millennium, the rest that crowns all ascents, is still only G-d’s “names”: His Malchus, how He is known to the worlds, not His essence.

Will and delight / רצון ותענוג

Will is the outer side of delight, for one wants what gives pleasure. The souls’ delight in the World to Come comes through their comprehension; the mitzvos are the Supernal Will itself, which is above comprehension, like the skull above the brain.

Knesses Yisrael, the inner point of the heart / כנסת ישראל / נקודת פנימיות הלב

The will in the depth of the heart, which can rise until it desires nothing but G-d. Esther coming before the king is its ascent above the level of “King.”

Sifting (birur) / בירור

Separating good from evil, the purpose of a person’s service in this world. It is done through the bittul of Chochmah, and it happens in thought, as a person accepts the good and pushes away the bad.

Sefer, the supernal thought / ספר / מחשבה עליונה

Thought is called “sefer,” a book, because it is made of combinations of letters. When Israel rises, evil is lifted into the supernal thought, where it cannot stand, and is “blotted out of the book of life.”

The river of fire / נהר די נור

The river in which a soul immerses between one level of Gan Eden and the next; it makes the soul forget its former level so that it can be absorbed in the higher one.

Gulgalta (the skull) / גולגלתא

The skull that covers the brain: an image for the Supernal Will, which is above intellect and comprehension and encompasses them.

SECTION 1 • 11-4

Six thousand years of rise and fall

1 ובכואה לפני המלך^{1,2} אמר עם הספר וגו'. הנה ארז"ל [אמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] שית אלפי שנים³ הוי עלמא וחד חרוב⁴ שהוא בבחי' מנוחה שאין בו עליות וירידות

“And when she came before the king, he said with the book (sefer),” etc. Now, our Sages, of blessed memory, said: “The world exists for six thousand years, and for one [thousand] it is desolate,” which is in the aspect of rest (menuchah), in which there are no ascents and descents;

The maamar opens with Esther 9:25, the Megillah's summary of how Haman's plot was overturned: when Esther came before the king, he ordered in writing that Haman's evil scheme return upon his own head. It then brings the Sages' teaching that the world as we know it lasts six thousand years and lies “desolate” for the seventh thousand, which the Alter Rebbe calls a state of rest, with no more ascents and descents.

כי כל ימות עוה"ז שית אלפי שנים הן בבחינת ירידות ועליות הן בנשמות הן בגופות שכמה פעמים היו ישראל בשלוה ואח"כ ירדו כו'.

for all the days of this world, six thousand years, are in the aspect of descents and ascents, both in souls and in bodies; for many times Israel were at peace, and afterwards they descended, etc.

The six thousand years of this world are a time of rises and falls, for souls and for bodies alike. Jewish history shows it: many times Israel lived in tranquility and afterwards fell from it.

2 והנה ירידה צורך עליי [עלייה] היא ועלייה זו בכללה נחלקת לשנים שהן ארבע. דהיינו שנים לנפשות שהן ג"ע [גן עדן] התחתון והעליון. ושנים לגופות שהם ימות המשיח ותחיית המתים.

Now, descent is for the sake of ascent. And this ascent, as a whole, divides into two which are four: that is, two for the souls, which are the lower and the upper Gan Eden, and two for the bodies, which are the days of Mashiach and the Resurrection of the Dead.

A principle: every descent exists for the sake of the ascent that follows it. The ascents fall into two pairs: for the souls, the lower Gan Eden and the upper Gan Eden; and for the bodies, the days of Mashiach and the Resurrection of the Dead.

ועל עליות הללו נאמר ילכו מחיל אל חיל⁵ שיש כמה מיני מדרגות שונות בעליות הנפשות.^{6,7}

And of these ascents it is said, “They go from strength to strength,” for there are many kinds of different levels in the ascents of the souls.

Psalms 84:8, “They go from strength to strength,” describes these ascents, because the souls rise through many different levels, not just one. In Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar, the Alter Rebbe explains that although the books mention only two levels of Gan Eden, lower and upper, there are in truth many, one above the other without end, alluded to in this verse.

3 וכמה מיני היכלות בית הנשים ובית הנשים שני⁸ גי'ע [גן עדן] תחתון וגי'ע [וגן עדן] עליון. ויש נהר די נור המפסיק⁹ בין עליות

And [there are] many kinds of chambers (heichalos): “the house of the women” and “the second house of the women” — the lower Gan Eden and the upper Gan Eden. And there is a river of fire (nehar di-nur) that separates between ascents;

In Esther 2, the maidens brought to the king stayed in “the house of the women,” and after going to the king they moved to “the second house of the women.” The Alter Rebbe reads these as the lower and upper Gan Eden, chambers through which the souls ascend, and says that between one ascent and the next flows the “river of fire” of Daniel 7:10.

כי בעליות הנשמה מבחינה זו לבחינה ומדרגה אחרת למעלה הימנה טובלת בנהר די נור שהוא בחי' המבטל ומשכח מעלתו הראשונה להחשיבה כלא וכאין בכדי שתהא בבחי' בטול והתכללות בעלייה אחרת שלמעלה הימנה.¹⁰

for in the ascents of the soul from this level to another level and rung above it, it immerses in the river of fire, which is the aspect that nullifies [it] and makes [it] forget its former standing, so as to regard it as nothing and as naught, in order that it be in a state of self-nullification (bittul) and inclusion in another ascent, which is above it.

Before rising to a higher level, the soul immerses in the river of fire, which makes it forget its former level and count it as nothing; only by letting go of what it attained can it be nullified and absorbed into the level above. In Torah Ohr, Miketz, the Alter Rebbe explains that even a perfectly righteous person must immerse in the river of fire to forget this world before entering Gan Eden, and again each time he goes “from strength to strength,” to forget even what he grasped there.

4 וכמ"ש ובוה הנערה באה אל המלך¹¹ ובוה הוא העמוד¹² שבין עולם לעולם שבו ועל ידו נכללות הנשמות להיות בבחי' בטול¹³ כי זה השער להי¹⁴ כו'.

As it is written, “And with this the maiden came to the king.” And “with this” is the pillar between one world and another, in which and through which the souls are included, so as to be in a state of self-nullification (bittul); for “this is the gate to Havayah,” etc.

Esther 2:13 says that “with this” the maiden came to the king. The Alter Rebbe reads “this” as the pillar between one world and the next, through which the souls rise and are absorbed in a state of bittul, and links it to Psalms 118:20, “This is the gate to Havayah.” Torah Ohr explains below that this pillar, between the lower and the upper Gan Eden, is bittul, since no ascent can come without bittul first.

וכן עד"ז בעליות הגופות לימות המשיח ותח"מ [ותחיית המתים]. אבל אחד חרוב הוא אלף השביעי שבו תכלית השלימות של כל העליות עד שאין עוד עלייה למעלה הימנו

And so too, in the same way, with the ascents of the bodies, to the days of Mashiach and the Resurrection of the Dead. But "and one [thousand] desolate" is the seventh millennium, in which is the ultimate perfection of all the ascents, to the point that there is no further ascent above it;

The bodies ascend in the same way, in the days of Mashiach and at the Resurrection. The seventh millennium, by contrast, is the culmination of all ascents, with no ascent beyond it.

שהוא סוף וקץ לכל המדרגות והעליות שאפשר להיות לפי מזג ותכונת השמיטה ההיא שית אלפי שנים אחד חרוב

for it is the end and limit of all the levels and ascents that can be, according to the temperament and nature of that shemitah [cycle]: "six thousand years, and one [thousand] desolate."

Each cosmic cycle of six thousand years and one desolate is called a shemitah, and each has its own nature and measure; its seventh millennium is the furthest ascent that this nature allows.

ובכל שמיטה ושמיטה לפי מה שהיא כך הוא עליית אלף הז' שבה שהיא תכלית השלימות של כל העליות ונק' בחי' מנוחה שהיא בחי' עלייה שאין למעלה הימנה עוד עלייה וזהו אחד חרוב שהוא בבחינת מנוחה:

And in each and every shemitah, according to what it is, so is the ascent of its seventh millennium, which is the ultimate perfection of all the ascents, and it is called the level of rest (menuchah), which is the level of an ascent above which there is no further ascent. And this is "and one [thousand] desolate," which is in the aspect of rest.

So every shemitah reaches its own culmination in its seventh millennium. That final ascent, beyond which there is none, is called "rest," and this is the meaning of "one [thousand] desolate."

SECTION 2 • 15

Not desolations but names

5 והנה כתיב לכו חזו מפעלות אלקים¹⁵ אשר שם שמות בארץ ואמרז"ל אל תקרא שמות אלא שמות.¹⁶

Now, it is written, "Go, behold the works of G-d, Who has set shamos (desolations) on the earth," and our Sages, of blessed memory, said: "Do not read shamos, but shemos (names)."

Psalms 46:9 speaks of the works of G-d, "Who has set shamos (desolations) on the earth." The Sages read it as shemos, "names," to teach that a name has an effect.

והענין כי הנה בחי' שמות הוא ענין חד חרוב דהיינו בחינת מנוחה סוף ותכלית כל העליות

The explanation is that the level of shamos (desolations) is the matter of "one [thousand] desolate," that is, the level of rest, the end and culmination of all the ascents.

The Alter Rebbe identifies the "desolations" with "one [thousand] desolate," the rest that is the end and peak of all ascents.

ואעפ"כ כל זה הוא רק בחי' שמות¹⁷ שאין זה אלא מבחי' שמו מדת מלכותו ית' כמאמר יחיד חי העולמים מלך כו'.

And even so, all this is only the level of shemos (names), for this is only from the level of His Name, the attribute of His Malchus (sovereignty), may He be blessed, as in the saying: "Unique, Life of the worlds, King," etc.

Yet even this peak is only shemos, "names." A name is not the essence of the one who bears it; it is how he is called and known. So too, all of this comes only from G-d's Name, His attribute of Malchus, His sovereignty over the worlds, as the words of Baruch She'amar in the morning prayers, "Unique, Life of the worlds, King," express.

כלומר שהוא יחיד ומיוחד לבדו כמו קודם שנברא העולם שאינו בגדר עלמין כלל

That is to say, He is unique and singular, alone, as [He was] before the world was created, for He is not within the bounds of worlds at all.

G-d in Himself is unique and alone, just as before creation; worlds are not a category that applies to Him at all.

ומה שהוא חי העולמים הנה החיות המתפשט בעולמות אינו אלא בבחי' מלך

And as for His being "Life of the worlds," the life-force that spreads through the worlds is only on the level of "King."

That He is also "Life of the worlds" is explained: the life-force that spreads into the worlds comes only from the level of "King."

ומלכותך מלכות כל עולמים¹⁸ כתיב שכל העליות וכל העולמות עד רום המעלות בכל שמיטה ושמיטה וכמה שמיטין ויובלות כו' הן הם רק בחי' מלכותו ית' שמתענגים ונהנין מזיו השכינה¹⁹ ובעונג זה יש כמה מדרגות ועליות עד רום המעלות

And it is written, “Your kingship is a kingship of all worlds”: for all the ascents and all the worlds, up to the very highest of levels, in each and every shemitah, and many shemitos and jubilees, etc., are only the level of His Malchus, may He be blessed, in that they delight in and enjoy the radiance of the Shechinah (Divine Presence); and in this delight there are many levels and ascents, up to the very highest of levels.

As Psalms 145:13 says, “Your kingship is a kingship of all worlds”: all worlds and ascents, in every cosmic cycle and through many cycles and jubilees, are only His Malchus, the souls’ delight in the radiance of the Shechinah, the reward of the righteous in the World to Come. That delight has many levels, rising very high.

וכל זה הוא רק התפשטות זיו כבוד מלכותו ית' אבל בו ית' בכבודו ובעצמו לית מחשבה תפיסא ביה כלל:

And all this is only the spreading forth of the radiance of the glory of His Malchus, may He be blessed. But as for Him, may He be blessed, in His own glory and essence, no thought can grasp Him at all.

Yet all of it is only the radiance of His sovereignty spreading forth; G-d Himself, in His own essence, no thought can grasp at all. Later in Torah Ohr (Megillas Esther, on why the Megillah has no Name of G-d) the Alter Rebbe explains that a Name, the revelation within the chain of descent, is only a drop next to the sea of the Infinite Light’s essence, and refers back to this maamar.

SECTION 3 • ¶6-8

Delight and will

6 והנה בחי' ענג זה בכללו הוא בחי' למחר לקבל שכרם ובהיום לעשותם^{20,21} הוא בחי' התפשטות הרצון שהרצון הוא חיצוניות עונג כנודע²² בחוש שכל דבר שיש בו תענוג לזה נוטה הרצון.

Now, this aspect of delight, as a whole, is the aspect of “tomorrow, to receive their reward”; and in “today, to do them” is the aspect of the spreading forth of the will. For will is the outer dimension (chitzoniyus) of delight, as is known from experience: whatever holds delight, toward that the will inclines.

The Sages read “today, to do them” (Deuteronomy 7:11) as “today to do them, and tomorrow to receive their reward.” The souls’ delight just described is the “tomorrow,” the reward; the “today,” the doing of the mitzvos, is a spreading forth of G-d’s will. Will is the outer side of delight, as experience shows: a person always wants what gives him pleasure.

והיינו התפשטות רצונו וחכמתו ית' בתרי"ג מצות דאורייתא וז' דרבנן²³ שהם תרי"ך עמודי אור²⁴ הנמשכים מעונג העליון.

That is, the spreading forth of His will and wisdom, may He be blessed, in the 613 mitzvos of the Torah and the seven of the Rabbis, which are the 620 pillars of light that are drawn from the supernal delight.

G-d's will and wisdom spread into the 613 mitzvos of the Torah and the seven rabbinic mitzvos. Together they number 620, the "pillars of light" that come down from the supernal delight; 620 is the numerical value of Keser, the "crown."

וכל מצות צריכות כוונת הלב²⁵ שהוא נקודת פנימיות הרצון שכלב לדבקה בו ית' על ידי מצותיו כמאמר אשר קדשנו במצותיו.

And all mitzvos require the intention of the heart, which is the point of the inner dimension (pni-miyus) of the will that is in the heart: to cleave to Him, may He be blessed, through His mitzvos, as in the words: "Who has sanctified us with His mitzvos."

Mitzvos require the heart's intention, the inner point of will in the heart, whose aim is to cleave to G-d through His mitzvos. The words of the blessing over a mitzvah, "Who has sanctified us with His mitzvos," express this bond.

7 והנה כמו שיש בעונג עילוי אחר עילוי עד רום המעלות כך ברצון נקודה פנימית הלב עומקא דלכא הנקרא בשם כנסת ישראל כמ"ש במ"א יש ג"כ עילוי אחר עילוי

Now, just as in delight there is elevation after elevation, up to the very highest of levels, so in the will — the inner point of the heart, the depth of the heart (umka d'liba), which is called by the name Knesses Yisrael (the Congregation of Israel), as is explained elsewhere — there is also elevation after elevation,

Just as the souls' delight rises level upon level, so does the will. The will meant here is the inner point of the heart, the "depth of the heart," which is called Knesses Yisrael, the Congregation of Israel.

עד שיהיה גלוי הרצון הנמשך למטה בנפש בעומקא דלבא בבחי' מאד מאד עד רום המעלות להיות
בבחי' מי לי בשמים ועמך לא חפצתי בארץ כלה שארי ולבבי.^{26, 27}

until the revelation of the will that is drawn down below into the soul, in the depth of the heart, is in the state of me'od me'od ("very, very [much]"), up to the very highest of levels, so as to be in the state of "Whom have I in heaven? And with You I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart pine away."

The will drawn down into the soul can grow until it is me'od me'od, "very, very much," up to the very highest levels. It reaches the Psalmist's cry: "Whom have I in heaven? And with You I desire nothing on earth; my flesh and my heart pine away" (Psalms 73:25-26).

8 ובארץ הוא בחי' שמות בארץ²⁸ שלא יהיה חפץ זה בתערוכות עם עמך רק אליו לכדו ית' כלתה נפשי ולבבי.

"On earth" is the level of "names on the earth": that this desire should not be mixed [with anything] "with You," but only for Him alone, may He be blessed: "my soul and my heart pine away."

"On earth" in that verse is read as the "names on the earth" of Psalms 46:9, the realm of Malchus and its delights. "With You I desire nothing on earth" means that the soul's desire has nothing else mixed in with it alongside G-d; it is for Him alone, until "my soul and my heart pine away."

וזהו יפה שעה אחת²⁹ בתשובה ומעשים טובים בעוה"ז מכל חיי עולם הבא³⁰

And this is [the meaning of] "Better one hour of teshuvah (return) and good deeds in this world than all the life of the World to Come."

This explains the Mishnah in Avos: "Better one hour of teshuvah and good deeds in this world than all the life of the World to Come."

שכל חיי העולם הבא שהם עליות עד אין קץ בבחי' עונג עליון להתענג בהוי"ה וליהנות מזיו השכינה
שהיא בחי' מלך בלבד מבחינת שמות בארץ

For all the life of the World to Come, being ascents without end in the level of supernal delight, to delight in Havayah and to enjoy the radiance of the Shechinah (Divine Presence), which is the level of "King" alone, is from the level of "names on the earth";

All the life of the World to Come consists of endless ascents in supernal delight and the enjoyment of the radiance of the Shechinah. The Shechinah is only the level of "King," the "names on the earth."

אבל תשובה ומעשים טובים שעיקר התשובה הוא בנקודת פנימיות הלב מעומקא דלבא מפנימיות הלב היא מלובשת במעשים טובים שהם תרי"ג מצות דאורייתא וז' דרבנן שהן הן גלוי רצון העליון ב"ה הוא העולה למעלה מעלה מבחי' העונג

but teshuvah and good deeds — for the essence of teshuvah is in the point of the inner dimension (pnimiyus) of the heart, from the depth of the heart, from the inner dimension of the heart, [and] it is clothed in good deeds, which are the 613 mitzvos of the Torah and the seven of the Rabbis, which are themselves the revelation of the Supernal Will, blessed be He — it is this that rises higher and higher above the level of delight.

Teshuvah, by contrast, comes from the inner point and depth of the heart, and it is clothed in good deeds, the 613 Torah mitzvos and the seven rabbinic ones. These are the revelation of the Supernal Will itself, and so they reach above delight.

כי העונג הבא לנשמות הוא ע"י התלבשות בהשגת הנשמה שתהא הנשמה מתענגת לפי השגתה

For the delight that comes to the souls is through being clothed in the soul's comprehension, so that the soul delights according to its comprehension;

Delight comes to a soul only clothed in its comprehension, so each soul delights according to what it grasps.

אבל הרצון הוא למעלה מההשגה שהוא בבחי' גולגלתא דחפיא על מוחא וכמ"ש במ"א על פסוק אשת חיל עטרת בעלה.^{31, 32}

but the will is above comprehension, for it is in the level of the gulgulta (skull) that covers over the brain, as is explained elsewhere on the verse "A woman of valor is the crown of her husband."

Will, though, is above comprehension, like the gulgulta, the skull that covers the brain: in the Kabbalah's image of the divine "head," will is the skull that surrounds the intellect. The Alter Rebbe refers to his explanation of "A woman of valor is the crown of her husband" (Proverbs 12:4), for which the Kehot note points to Iggeres HaKodesh 29.

SECTION 4 • 19

Before the King

9 וזהו ובבואה לפני המלך³³ היא עליית כנסת ישראל לפני בחי המלך ולמעלה הימנו בהתעלות הרצון לדבקה בו ית' בכבודו ובעצמו למעלה מעלה מבחי שמו ומלכותו. ואזי אמר עם הספר ישוב מחשבתו וגו':

And this is [the meaning of] “And when she came before the king”: it is the ascent of Knesses Yisrael (the Congregation of Israel) before the level of “the King,” and above it, through the elevation of the will to cleave to Him, may He be blessed, in His own glory and essence, far above the level of His Name and His Malchus (sovereignty). And then “he said with the book (sefer): his scheme shall return,” etc.

Now the verse is read: “when she came before (lifnei) the king” is the ascent of Knesses Yisrael, the inner will of Israel, to the level of “King” and above it, reading “before” as reaching what precedes and stands above the King, as the will rises to cleave to G-d Himself, beyond His Name and His Malchus. Then “he said with the book (sefer)”: the evil scheme returned upon its author’s head.

SECTION 5 • 110-12

Sifting in thought

10 וביאור הענין כי הנה כל עבודת האדם בעוה"ז הוא לברר הטוב מהרע ויש בירור אחר בירור³⁴ עד רום המעלות.

The explanation of the matter: all of a person’s service in this world is to sift out the good from the evil, and there is sifting (birur) after sifting, up to the very highest of levels.

The maamar now explains how this ascent overturns evil. A person’s whole service in this world is birur, sifting the good out of the evil, and there are ever higher siftings.

הבירור הוא ע"י חכמה כח מ"ה [מה] שהוא בחי הביטול ליבטל וליכלל אליו ית' והוא לפני המלך

The sifting is through Chochmah (wisdom), koach mah (the potential of “what”), which is the level of self-nullification (bittul): to be nullified and included in Him, may He be blessed. And this is “before the king,”

Sifting is done through Chochmah, whose letters (חכמה) can be read koach mah, “the potential of ‘what’”: the bittul of one who regards himself as nothing and is absorbed in G-d. That is “before the king.”

כי בחי' מלך הוא בבחי' העולם לשון העלם והסתר פנים להיות כמה צמצומים רבים ועצומים שיהיה בחי' עם לשון עוממות דברים זרים ונפרדים כו'.

for the level of "king" is in the level of olam (world), a term related to he'elem (concealment) and the hiding of the Face, there being many contractions (tzimtzumim), numerous and mighty, so that there be the level of am (people), a term related to omemus (dimness): things foreign and separate, etc.

The level of "King" belongs to olam, "world," a word related to he'elem, concealment: G-d's Face is hidden through many great contractions, so that there can be am, a "people," related to omemus, dimness, meaning beings that feel foreign and separate.

כי אין מלך בלא עם³⁵ ובחי' חכמה הוא כח מ"ה [מה] דהיינו להעלות מעלמא דפרודא לקשר ולייחד אליו ית' בבחי' בטול אליו לבדו.

For there is no king without a people. And the level of Chochmah is koach mah: that is, to raise [things] up from the world of separation (alma d'peruda), to bind and unite [them] with Him, may He be blessed, in a state of bittul to Him alone.

"There is no king without a people": kingship needs subjects who feel separate. Chochmah, koach mah, lifts things out of the "world of separation" and binds them to G-d in bittul to Him alone.

11 והנה הבירור הוא במחשבה כמו שנראה בחוש בגשמיות שכאשר יפול לאדם איזה ענין הוא חושב ומהרהר בו

Now, sifting is in thought, as is seen plainly in physical matters: when some matter comes to a person, he thinks and reflects on it;

Sifting takes place in thought, as anyone can observe: when a matter comes up, a person thinks it over.

ואת הטוב יקבל ונקלט במוחו ומחשבתו להיות גומר כך בדעתו שיקום הדבר ויהיה כך בפועל ממש ואת הרע דוחה לחוץ ובחי' מחשבה הוא נקרא ספר בחי' צירופי אותיות.

and the good he accepts, and it is absorbed in his mind and his thought, to the point that he concludes thus in his mind that the thing shall come about and be so in actual deed; and the evil he pushes outside. And the level of thought is called sefer (book), the level of combinations of letters.

He accepts the good in it and absorbs it into his mind until he resolves that it will actually happen, while the bad he pushes away. Thought is called sefer, "book," because it is made of combinations of letters; this is the "book" of the verse.

12 והנה באתערותא דלתתא בכואה לפני המלך בבחי' חכמה ובבחי' בירור כנ"ל. אזי אתעדל"ע [אתערותא

דלעילא] להיות אמר עם הספר שיהיה בירור בחי' חכמה במחשבה העליונה בחי' ספר צירופי אותיות

Now, through an arousal from below — “when she came before the king” in the level of Chochmah (wisdom) and in the level of sifting, as mentioned above — then [comes] an arousal from above, so that there be “he said with the book”: that there be a sifting of the level of Chochmah in the supernal thought, the level of sefer (book), combinations of letters,

When the arousal from below takes place, “when she came before the king,” Knesses Yisrael’s ascent through Chochmah and sifting, an arousal from above follows: “he said with the book.” The sifting then takes place in the supernal thought, the “book” of letter-combinations above.

שידחה הרע לחוץ ופסולת וסיגים שלוחי הדין והקטרוג המעכבים ומונעים את האדם בעבודת ה' מבית ומבחוץ בגשמיות ורוחניות וישוב מחשבתו הרעה על ראשו.³⁶

so that it push the evil outside, and the waste and dross — the agents of judgment and of accusation that hinder and hold back a person in the service of G-d, from within and from without, in physical and in spiritual matters — and “his evil scheme shall return upon his own head.”

That supernal sifting pushes the evil outward: the waste and dross, the agents of judgment and accusation that hinder a person in serving G-d, from within and from without, in physical and in spiritual matters. Then “his evil scheme returns upon his own head,” as happened to Haman.

SECTION 6 • ¶13-16

Raised up to be cast out

13 ובירורם הוא ע"י העלאתם לבחי' מחשבה העליונה דייקא שעלייה זו גורמת להם הירידה והדחיה לחוץ

And their sifting is through raising them specifically to the level of supernal thought; for this ascent brings upon them the descent and the expulsion outside.

These hindering forces are sifted precisely by being raised to the level of supernal thought: the very ascent brings about their descent and expulsion.

כי הנה בהיותם למטה אין תופסין מקום כלל שממית בידיים תתפש³⁷ וגו'. והם כמשל השמרים שהם ב"יין.

For when they are below, they take up no place at all: “The spider can be grasped with the hands,” etc. And they are as in the analogy of the dregs that are in wine.

Down below they take up no place at all, like the spider of Proverbs 30:28 that can be caught by hand; the verse goes on to say, “yet it is in the king’s palaces.” They are like the dregs in wine.

14 וכמ"ש ויגר מזה³⁸ אך שמריה ימצו וגו' שהם הם בחי' שמרים שכשהם למטה כך יפה להם.

As it is written, "He pours out from this; but its dregs they shall drain," etc.: for it is they who are the level of dregs: when they are below, it is well for them so.

Psalms 75:9 speaks of a cup in G-d's hand from which He pours, whose dregs all the wicked of the earth will drain. The forces of evil are those dregs, and lying at the bottom suits them.

וזו היא הסיבה שכל הרשעים מגביהים את עצמם קודם מפלתם וכמו שהיה בהמן שגדלו ונשאו על כל השרים וגו'.

And this is the reason that all the wicked raise themselves up before their downfall, as it was with Haman, "whom [the king] promoted and advanced above all the officials," etc.

This is why the wicked lift themselves up before their fall, as the Megillah tells of Haman, whom the king promoted and raised above all the officials.

15 וכמ"ש לפני שבר גאון. והיינו דכתיב אם תגביה כנשר³⁹ וגו' משם אורידך נאום ה' משם דייקא

As it is written, "Pride goes before a fall." And this is what is written: "Though you soar as high as the eagle," etc., "from there I will bring you down, says Havayah" — "from there," specifically:

Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goes before a fall," and Obadiah 1:4, "Though you soar as high as the eagle... from there I will bring you down, says Havayah," make the same point. The Alter Rebbe stresses "from there": the height itself is the cause of the fall.

שהגבהתם ועלייתם למעלה היא הגורמת השפלתם ומפלתם⁴⁰ לפי שלא יוכלו לעמוד במקום גבוה ומדרגה העליונה בחי' ספר לפיכך ימחו מספר חיים⁴¹ כתיב.

for their being raised high and their ascent above is what causes their abasement and their downfall, since they cannot stand in a high place and in the supernal level, the level of sefer (book). Therefore it is written, "Let them be blotted out of the book of life."

Their rise causes their downfall because they cannot exist in a high place, the level of sefer, the supernal "book." Therefore Psalms 69:29 says, "Let them be blotted out of the book of life": it is from the book that they are erased.

משא"כ כשהם למטה אין תופסין מקום כלל כמשל צואה כשהיא בבית הכסא ובאשפה שם מקומה הראוי לה משא"כ כשמכניסין אותה לבית דוחין אותה לחוץ.

Whereas when they are below, they take up no place at all — as in the analogy of excrement: when it is in the privy and on the dunghill, that is its proper place; whereas when it is brought into a house, it is pushed outside.

Below, however, they take up no space, like excrement, which in the privy or on the dunghill is in its proper place. Only when it is brought into a house is it thrown out.

16 והנה התעלותם לבחי' ספר ומחשבה עליונה הוא אחרי התעלות כנס"י [כנסת ישראל] שהוא בחי' נקודת פנימיות הלב לבחי' ומדרגת לפני המלך

Now, their being raised to the level of sefer (book) and supernal thought comes after the elevation of Knesses Yisrael (the Congregation of Israel), which is the level of the point of the inner dimension (pnimiyus) of the heart, to the level and rung of "before the king";

The forces of evil can be raised to the supernal "book" only after Knesses Yisrael, the inner point of the heart, has itself risen to the level of "before the king."

משא"כ כשהיא למטה וצריכה היא בעצמה להתברר עדיין אי אפשר להיות ברור אחר במדרגת השמרים.

whereas when it is below and itself needs to be sifted, there cannot yet be another sifting, on the level of the dregs.

While that inner point is still below and itself needs sifting, no further sifting of the dregs can take place.

SECTION 7 • 117

Within each person

17 וככה הוא ממש בנפש הבהמית⁴² שבכל אדם בפרטות אי אפשר להתברר דהיינו להפריד הרע שבה מהטוב ולהפך הטוב שבה מחשוכא לאורה כו' לסטרא דקדושה אם לא שתתברר תחלה נפש האלהית ותתעלה למעלה מעלה

And so it is exactly with the animal soul in each person individually: it cannot be sifted — that is, to separate the evil in it from the good, and to transform the good in it from darkness to light, etc., to the side of holiness — unless the G-dly soul is first sifted and elevated higher and higher,

The same holds within each individual: the animal soul cannot be sifted, its evil separated from its good and its good turned from darkness to light, to the side of holiness, unless the G-dly soul is first sifted and lifted higher.

ע"י בירור לבושין דקדושה שהם מחשבה דבור ומעשה המתבררים ע"י עסק התורה ומצותיה שהם התפשטות והשתלשלות רצון העליון ב"ה.

through the sifting of the garments of holiness, which are thought, speech and action, which are sifted through occupation with the Torah and its mitzvos, which are the spreading forth and step-by-step descent (hishtalshelus) of the Supernal Will, blessed be He.

The G-dly soul rises through the refining of its holy garments, thought, speech and action, and these are refined through Torah study and mitzvos, which are the Supernal Will drawn down.

וזהו והיתה נפש אדני צרורה⁴³ בצרור החיים את ה' וגו' הוא רצון העליון המלביש הנפש ומעלה אותה למעלה מעלה לבחינת גלגלתא כנ"ל. וכמ"ש במ"א ע"פ שאו את ראש⁴⁴ כל עדת בני ישראל וגו' לגלגלתם⁴⁵ וגו':

And this is [the meaning of] "The soul of my lord shall be bound up in the bundle of life with Havayah," etc.: this is the Supernal Will, which clothes the soul and raises it higher and higher, to the level of gulgalta, as mentioned above. And as is explained elsewhere on the verse "Lift up the head of all the congregation of the Children of Israel," etc., "by their skulls (legulgelosam)," etc.

Avigail's blessing to David, "the soul of my lord shall be bound up in the bundle of life with Havayah" (I Samuel 25:29), alludes to this: the Supernal Will clothes the soul and lifts it to the level of gulgalta, the "skull" above intellect. In Torah Ohr, Mishpatim, the Alter Rebbe explains "bound up" (tzerurah) as a stone bound in a sling and so hurled upward: the soul rises through the garments of Torah and mitzvos. The Alter Rebbe also refers to his explanation of "Lift up the head... by their skulls" (Numbers 1:2), which the Kehot note suggests is Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar 1a.

IN ONE'S AVODAH

Not to aim at spiritual delight or reward, even that of Gan Eden, but to want G-d Himself from the depth of the heart, as in “with You I desire nothing on earth,” and to express that will in teshuvah and in the mitzvos, which are His will. A person’s own ascent comes first: the G-dly soul is refined through Torah and mitzvos in thought, speech and action, and then the animal soul, and the hindrances from within and without, can be sifted out and fall away.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why does the maamar say that even the seventh millennium, the rest beyond all ascents, is only “shemos,” G-d’s names?
2. How does the difference between will and delight explain why one hour of teshuvah and good deeds in this world is better than all the life of the World to Come?
3. Why must the soul forget its former level in the river of fire before it can be included in a higher one?
4. Why does raising evil to a high place bring about its downfall, and how do the dregs of the cup and Haman illustrate this?
5. Why can the animal soul be refined only after the G-dly soul has first been refined and lifted?

SOURCES AND REFERENCES

Notes

PARAGRAPH 1

1 ובבואה לפני המלך

The note records another version of this maamar: the transcript written down by the Mitteler Rebbe, printed among the Alter Rebbe's maamarim of 5565, with an explanation of it printed in the same volume.

KEHOT'S NOTE

הנחת אדה"א בספה"מ תקס"ה ע' שצח, וביאור נדפס שם ע' תה. ראה לעיל בציונים לכ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע. אוה"ת מג"א ע' קפח. מאמר אדה"א נ"ך ע' תסה מיוסד על מאמר זה. בלקו"ת בהעלותך לג, ד מציין לדי"ה זה בענין שבחי הרצון יש בו התלבשות התענוג.

2 ובבואה לפני המלך

Mordechai's letter sums up the end of Haman's plot: "when she came before the king" (Esther; or, "when it came," the plot), he ordered by a written decree (sefer) that the evil scheme Haman had devised against the Jews return upon his own head. The maamar reads "she" as Knesses Yisrael and sefer as the supernal thought; the whole maamar explains this verse. (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh)

אסתר ט:כ"ה ט: Esther 9:25

ובבואה לפני המלך אמר עם הספר ישוב מחשבתו הרעה אשר חשב על-יהודים על-ראשו ותלו אותו ואת בניו על-העץ:

but when ashe came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he had devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head; and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

אסתר ט, כה.

3 שית אלפי שנין הוי עלמא וחד חרוב

Rav Ketina says that the world exists for six thousand years and is desolate for one [thousand]; a baraisa there compares this to the Sabbatical year. The Kehot note also gives Avodah Zarah 9a, where a baraisa likewise speaks of the world's six thousand years.

ראש השנה ל"א א:ח-ט-8:31a Rosh Hashanah

וקמיפלגי בדרב קטינא, דאמר רב קטינא: שיתא אלפי שני הוה עלמא וחד חרוב, שנאמר: "ונשגב ה' לבדו ביום ההוא". אמר אב"י: תרי חרוב, שנאמר: "יחיינו מיומנים". במוספי דשבתא מה היו אומרים? אמר רב ענן בר רבא אמר רב: "היו לה".

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

Sanhedrin 97a:12 סנהדרין צ"א א:12

אמר רב קטינא: שית אלפי שני הוי עלמא, וחד חרוב, שנאמר: "ונשגב ה' לבדו ביום ההוא". אב"י אמר: תרי חרוב, שנאמר: "יחיינו מיומנים ביום השלישי יקמנו ונחיה לפננו".

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עבודה זרה ט' א' Avodah Zarah 9a

KEHOT'S NOTE

ר"ה לא, א. סנהדרין צו, א. ע"ז ט, א. ראה לעיל עו, א ובמ"מ לשם.

4 וחד חרוב

In these two manuscript volumes the words "פי חד חרוב" ("explanation of 'one desolate'") are added after "וחד חרוב."

KEHOT'S NOTE

בבוקר תניא-ברוק ובבוקר 2065 נוסף אח"כ: פי חד חרוב. בדי"ה אלו דברים תרני"א ע' קצד הקשה: "הלא אלף השביעי הוא יום שכולו שבת ואיך אומרים עליו וחד חרוב, והענין שהכוונה שיהי חרוב מהלבושים דק"נ. ע"ש. בלקו"ת במדבר ד, ג מציין לכאן.

PARAGRAPH 2

5 ילכו מחיל אל חיל

The psalm describes pilgrims who go "from strength to strength" on their way to appear before G-d in Zion. The maamar applies it to the souls' ascents from level to level.

תהילים פ"ד:ח'84 Psalms

ילכו מחיל אל-חיל יראו אל-אלקים בציון:

They go from strength to strength, every one of them appeareth before G-d in Zion.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים פד, ח. ראה לקו"ת פי ואתחנן ט, א.

6 שו"ה ואח"כ — והנה ירידה צורך עליי היא

The note sends the reader to the Mitteler Rebbe's maamar beginning "Al Tatzar" for the principle that descent is for the sake of ascent.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה ד"ה אל תצר במאמרי אדה"א דברים ע' סד ואילך.

7 הגם שלא נזכר בספרים

The note is on the words "although it is not mentioned in the books," which the text printed here does not have.

KEHOT'S NOTE

וכ"ה בלקו"ת במדבר יח, א: אלא שהספרים לא דברו מהם.

PARAGRAPH 3

8 בית הנשים שני

Each maiden went to the king in the evening and in the morning returned to "the second house of the women." The maamar reads the first and second house as the lower and upper Gan Eden.

אסתר ב:י"ד-14 Esther

בערב היא באה ובבוקר היא שבה אל-בית הנשים שני אל-יד שעשנו סריס המלך שמר הפילגשים לא-תבוא עוד אל-המלך כי אם-חפץ בה המלך ונקראת בשם:

In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, who kept the concubines; she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and she were called by name.

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9 ויש נהר די נור המפסיק

There the Alter Rebbe explains that even a perfectly righteous person entering Gan Eden must immerse in the river of fire to remove the memory of this world, and must immerse again in another river of fire when he goes "from strength to strength," to forget even what he grasped in the lower and upper Gan Eden.

KEHOT'S NOTE

נסמן לעיל לא, א.

- 10 In Daniel's vision a river of fire streams forth from before the divine throne. The maamar takes it as the river in which a soul immerses between one level of ascent and the next.

דניאל ז':10 Daniel 7:10

נהר די־נור נגד ונפק מן־קדמוהי אֶלְף אֶלְפִין יִשְׁמֹשְׁנָה וְרָבוּ רַבְּבֵי קְדֻמוֹהִי יְקוּמוּן דִּינָא יִתָּב וְסַפְרִין פְּתִיחוּ:

A fiery stream issued And came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, And ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; The judgment was set, And the books were opened.

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PARAGRAPH 4

11 ובוה הנערה באה אל המלך

In the Megillah, "with this the maiden came to the king": whatever she asked for was given her to take from the house of the women to the king's palace. The Alter Rebbe reads "this" as the pillar through which souls pass from one world to the next.

אסתר ב':13 Esther 2:13

ובְּזֶה הִנְעִרָה בָּאָה אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר יִנָּתֶן לָהּ לְבוֹא עִמָּה מִבֵּית הַנָּשִׁים עַד־בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ:

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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KEHOT'S NOTE

אסתר ב, יג.

12 ובוה הוא העמוד

There, at the start of the maamar on "And with this the maiden came," "with this" is the pillar between the lower and the upper Gan Eden, in which and through which the souls rise from one to the other.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה להלן ק, ב.

13 נכללות הנשמות להיות בבחי' ביטול

The note points there for the souls' being included in a state of bittul as they ascend.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה תו"ח פ' חיי שרה ד"ה והאיש משתאה ס"י.

14 זה השער לה'

At the Temple gates the psalmist gives thanks: "This is the gate to Havayah; the righteous shall enter through it." The word "this" links the verse to "with this the maiden came," the passage of the souls upward. (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh)

Psalms 118:20 תהילים קי"ח:כ

זֶה־הַשַּׁעַר לַיהוָה צְדִיקִים יָבֹאוּ:

This is the gate of the L-RD; The righteous shall enter into it.

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PARAGRAPH 5

15 לכו חזו מפעלות אלקים

The psalm calls on all to behold the works of G-d, "Who has set shamos (desolations) on the earth": plainly, the ruin He brought upon Israel's enemies. The maamar builds on the Sages' reading of the word as shemos, "names." In the verse the Name is Havayah; the text here has Elokim. (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh)

Psalms 46:9 תהילים מ"ו:ט

לְכוּ־חֲזוּ מַפְעָלוֹת ה' אֲשֶׁר־שָׂם שְׁמוֹת בָּאָרֶץ:

Come, behold the works of the L-RD, Who hath made desolations in the earth.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים מו, ט.

16 א"ת שמות אלא שמות

The Gemara learns from this verse that a name has an effect: "Do not read shamos but shemos." The Alter Rebbe uses the reading to show that the "desolation" of the seventh millennium is still only G-d's "names." The Kehot note also cites the Zohar, vol. II, 4a.

ברכות ד' ב:י"א Berachot 7b:10-11

מָנָא לֹא דְשָׂמָא גְרִים? אָמַר רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר, דְּאָמַר קָרָא: "לְכוּ חֲזוּ מַפְעָלוֹת ה' אֲשֶׁר שָׂם שְׁמוֹת בָּאָרֶץ", אֵל תִּקְרִי "שְׁמוֹת" אֶלָּא "שְׁמוֹת". וְאָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן מִשּׁוּם רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן יוֹחִי: קָשָׁה תִּרְבּוּת רָעָה בְּתוֹךְ בֵּיתוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם יוֹתֵר מִמִּלְחָמַת גּוֹג וּמָגוּג. שְׁנָאֵמַר: "מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד בְּכִרְחוֹ מִפְּנֵי אֲבִשְׁלוֹם בְּנוֹ", וּכְתִיב בְּתַרְיָה: "ה' מָה רָבוּ צָרֵי רַבִּים קָמִים עָלָי", וְאֵילוּ גְבִי מִלְחָמַת גּוֹג וּמָגוּג, כְּתִיב: "לָמָּה רָגַשׁוּ גּוֹיִם וּלְאֻמִּים יִהְיֶה רִיב". וְאֵילוּ "מָה רָבוּ צָרֵי" לֹא כְּתִיב.

Whence do we learn that the name of a person affects his life? R. Eleazar said : Because the Scriptures declare, "Come, behold the works of the L-rd, Who hath made sham-mot ['desolations'] in the earth" (Ps. xli. 9). Read not sham-mot but shemot "names." R. Johanan also said in the name of R. Simeon b. Johai : More painful is filial impiety in a

man's house than the wars of Gog and Magog; as it is said, "A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son" (ibid. ...

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Zohar II, 4a, ד, זח"ב

KEHOT'S NOTE

ברכות ז, ב. זח"ב ד, א. לקמן ק, ב. ובלקו"ת ויקרא ג, ג. ובדרך מצותיך קפח, א מצינים לכאן.

17

רק בחי שמות

The note sends the reader to Or HaTorah on Devarim on this point, that all the ascents are only "names."

KEHOT'S NOTE

ע' באוה"ת פ' דברים ע' ל.

18

ומלכותך מלכות כל עולמים

"Your kingship is a kingship of all worlds, and Your dominion is in every generation." Olamim means both "eternities" and "worlds": plainly, G-d's kingship is eternal; the maamar reads it to say that all worlds, however high, belong to G-d's Malchus. (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh)

Psalms 145:13: תהילים קמ"ה:יג

מלכותך מלכות כל עולמים וממשלתך בכל דור ודור:

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

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים קמה, יג.

19

ונהנין מזיו השכינה

The Gemara teaches that in the World to Come there is no eating or drinking; the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads and enjoy the radiance of the Shechinah. The maamar places all of this within G-d's Malchus.

Berakhot 17a:12: ברכות י"ז א:י"ב

מרנא לא בפומיה דרב: לא בעולם הנה העולם הבא. העולם הבא אין בו לא אכילה ולא שתיה ולא פריה ורביה ולא משא ומתן ולא קנאה ולא שנאה ולא תחרות, אלא צדיקים יושבין ועטרתיהם כראשיהם ונהנים מזיו השכינה, שנאמר: "ויחזו את האלקים ויאכלו וישתו".

It was a favourite saying of Rab : Not like this world is the world to come. In the world to come there is neither eating nor drinking; no procreation of children or business transactions; no envy or hatred or rivalry ; but the righteous sit enthroned, their crowns on their heads, and enjoy the lustre of the Shekinah; as it is said, "And they beheld G-d, and did eat and drink" (Exod. xxiv. II).

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PARAGRAPH 6

20

היום לעשותם

The verse speaks of the commandments "which I command you today, to do them." The maamar ties this

"today," the doing, to the spreading forth of G-d's will.

Deuteronomy 7:11: דברים ז:יא

ושמרת את המצוה ואת החקים ואת המשפטים אשר אנכי מצוך היום לעשותם:

Thou shalt therefore keep the commandment, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which I command thee this day, to do them.

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21

למחר לקבל שכרם ובהיום לעשותם

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi reads "which I command you today, to do them": today to do them, and tomorrow to receive their reward. The maamar calls the souls' delight, the reward, "tomorrow," and the doing of the mitzvot, the spreading forth of the will, "today."

Eruvin 22a:5-6: עירובין כ"ב א:ה-ו

והיינו דאמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: מאי דכתיב "אשר אנכי מצוך היום לעשותם", "היום לעשותם" — ולא למחר לעשותם, "היום לעשותם" — למחר לקבל שכרם. אמר רבי חגי, ואיתימא רבי שמואל בר נחמני: מאי דכתיב "אך אפי'?" "אך אך" מבני לקה!

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22

שהרצון הוא חיצוני עונג כנודע

According to the note, the difference between will and delight is explained there at length.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ההפרש בין רצון לעונג נתבאר בארוכה במאמרי אדה"א נ"ך ע' תפ, ונעתק בסה"מ תרס"ו ע' סג ואילך עם הוספת.

23

בתרי"ג מצות דאורייתא וז' דרבנן

At 10b the Alter Rebbe explains that the 613 Torah mitzvot and the seven rabbinic ones are 620 pillars of light, the numerical value of Keser.

KEHOT'S NOTE

פרדס שער ח' פ"ג. וראה לעיל י, ב. יא, ג. יט, ד. ובכ"מ.

24

תר"ץ עמודי אור

The Pardes records the tradition that the Sefirah of Keser holds 620 pillars of light, as the numerical value of Keter. The maamar identifies them with the 613 mitzvot of the Torah and the seven of the Rabbis.

Pardes Rimmonim 8:5-6: פרדס רמונים ח:ה-ו

... ונ"ל כי נכנסו בזה בראותם כי גדולה קודמת לגבורה והוא החסד והלובן ואחר הגדולה נאצלה הגבורה והיא דין ואדם ואחר כך נאצל תפארת העומד בין שניהם להכריע בין האדם והלובן והוא גוון אדם ולובן מעורב. ר"ל כי כענין ג' אלה כן דרך שלשה הראשונות כי ג' הראשונות הם שרשים וגי' אבות ענפים להם ומן הענפים נדון להשרשים. ולכן אמרו שהכתר הראשון לאצילות הוא הזקן והלובן ולכן נקרא עתיק יומין שהוא כח הלובן והוא כנגד הגדולה והנמשך אחריו שהוא החכמה הוא כנגד הגבורה והיא אדומה. כי כמו שאחר הלובן

חסד ...

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25

מצות צריכות כוונת הלב

The Gemara concludes from the Mishnah's "if he directed his heart" that mitzvos require intention. The Kehot note also cites the Zohar, vol. III, 306b.

ברכות י"ג א:כ"ב-ה"ה 22-25a: Berakhot 13a:

גמי שמע מינה מצות צריכות כוונה. מאי "אם כוון לבו" — לקרות. לקרות! והא קא קרי! בקורא להגיה. תנו רבנן: קריאת שמע ככתבה, דברי רבי. וחקמים אומרים: בכל לשון.

GEMARA Is the conclusion to be drawn [from the opening sentence of the Mishnah] that the performance of the commandments requires Kawwanah? No; for] what means If he directed his heart to read? Just to read [in the Torah for the sake of study]. But he was reading! [It is to differentiate him] from one who is reading [the Torah] for the purpose of correcting. Our Rabbis have taught: The Shema' must be read as it is written: These are the words of Rabbi; but the Sages say ...

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ברכות יג, א. זה"ג שו, ב.

PARAGRAPH 7

26

מי לי בשמים . . כלה שארי ולבבי

The words here quote Psalms 73:25; the passage is shown below.

תהילים ע"ג:כ"ה Psalms 73:25

מי לי בשמים ועמך לא־חפצתי בארץ:

Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And beside Thee I desire none upon earth.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים עג, כה. כו.

27

מי לי בשמים ועמך לא חפצתי בארץ כלה שארי ולבבי

Asaf declares that he has no one in heaven and desires nothing on earth but G-d, though his flesh and heart fail. The maamar takes this as the highest elevation of the will, wanting G-d alone, and reads "with You I desire nothing" as a desire with nothing else mixed in alongside Him. (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh)

תהילים ע"ג:כ"ה-כ"ו Psalms 73:25-26

מי לי בשמים ועמך לא־חפצתי בארץ: כלה שארי ולבבי צור־לבבי וְחִלְקִי אֱלֹקִים לְעֹלָם:

Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And beside Thee I desire none upon earth. My flesh and my heart faileth; But G-d is the rock of my heart and my portion for ever.

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PARAGRAPH 8

28

שמות בארץ

"Who has set shamos on the earth," read as shemos, "names": the maamar uses "on the earth" to place all the

delights of the World to Come among G-d's "names."

תהילים מ"ו:ט' Psalms 46:9

לְכוּ־חֲזוּ מַפְעָלוֹת ה' אֲשֶׁר־שָׂם שְׁמוֹת בָּאָרֶץ:

Come, behold the works of the L-RD, Who hath made desolations in the earth.

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29

יפה שעה אחת

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

אבות ד, יז.

30

יפה שעה אחת בתשובה ומעשים טובים בעוה"ז מכל חיי עולם

הבא

The Mishnah teaches that one hour of teshuvah and good deeds in this world is better than all the life of the World to Come, and one hour of the World to Come's tranquility is better than all the life of this world. The maamar explains the first half by the superiority of will over delight.

משנה אבות ד':י"ז Pirkei Avot 4:17

הוא ה"ה אומר, יפה שעה אחת בתשובה ומעשים טובים בעולם הזה, מכל חיי העולם הבא. ויפה שעה אחת של קורת רוח בעולם הבא, מכל חיי העולם הזה:

He used to say: more precious is one hour in repentance and good deeds in this world, than all the life of the world to come; And more precious is one hour of the tranquility of the world to come, than all the life of this world.

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31

וכמ"ש במ"א על פסוק אשת חיל עטרת בעלה

Epistle 29 opens with "A woman of valor is the crown of her husband" and asks why the halachos are called the Torah's "crown." It explains that the Supernal Will, the outer dimension and "back" of the supernal delight, is called the Supreme Crown (Keser Elyon), in which are 620 pillars of light, and that the soul can enjoy the hidden light only through a garment.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה אנה"ק סי' כט.

32

אשת חיל עטרת בעלה

"A woman of valor is the crown of her husband." The maamar refers to its explanation elsewhere, where the crown stands for the Supernal Will, above intellect.

משלי י"ב:ד' Proverbs 12:4

אִשְׁת־חֵיל עֲטֶרֶת בַּעֲלָהּ וְכִרְקַב בַּעֲצָמוֹתָיו מְבִישָׁה:

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

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PARAGRAPH 9

33 ובכבואה לפני המלך

The verse's first words, "when she came before the king," are now read as the ascent of Knesses Yisrael beyond the level of "King"; its continuation, "his scheme shall return," follows from that ascent.

אסתר ט:כ"ה ט'

ובכבואה לפני המלך אמר עם הספר לשוב מחשבתו הרעה אשר חשב על-היהודים על-ראשו ותלו אותו ואת-בניו על-העץ:

but when ashe came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he had devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head; and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

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PARAGRAPH 10

34 בירור אחר בירור

According to the note, the idea of one sifting after another is explained there.

KEHOT'S NOTE

נתבאר באוה"ת מג"א ע"י קפח ואילך.

35 אין מלך בלא עם

At 5a "there is no king without a people" explains the Name Elokim as lordship: through gevuros and contractions the light is hidden so that created beings can exist as separate "somethings," in order that afterwards the "something" be nullified into "nothing." This level is also called the Shechinah, for through it G-d dwells within created beings.

KEHOT'S NOTE

נסמן לעיל ה, א, נג, ד.

PARAGRAPH 12

36 וישוב מחשבתו הרעה על ראשו

The king's written decree turned Haman's plot back on his own head. The maamar reads the "book" as the supernal thought, in which evil is sifted out and returns upon itself.

אסתר ט:כ"ה ט'

ובכבואה לפני המלך אמר עם הספר לשוב מחשבתו הרעה אשר חשב על-היהודים על-ראשו ותלו אותו ואת-בניו על-העץ:

but when ashe came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he had devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head; and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

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PARAGRAPH 13

37 שממית בידיים תתפש

Among four small creatures that are exceedingly wise, Agur names the shemamis (the spider, or the gecko): "it

can be grasped with the hands, yet it is in the king's palaces." The maamar cites it for these forces when they are below: small, taking up no place at all. (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh)

משלי ל:כ"ח Proverbs 30:28

שְׁמַמִּית בְּיָדַיִם תִּתְפַּשׁ וְהִיא בְּהִיכָלִי מְלֶכֶךְ:

The spider thou canst take with the hands, Yet is she in kings' palaces.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

משלי ל, כח.

PARAGRAPH 14

38 ויגר מזה

The psalm describes a cup in G-d's hand: He pours from it, and its dregs all the wicked of the earth will drain. The maamar compares the forces that hinder holiness to those dregs, which belong at the bottom.

תהילים ע"ה:ט' Psalms 75:9

כִּי כוֹס בְּיַד־ה' וַיִּזֶן חֶמֶר מִלֵּא מִסֶּךָ וַיִּגַּר מִזָּה אֶרֶץ־שֹׁמְרֵיהָ יִמְצוּ וְשֵׁתוּ כָל־רִשְׁעֵי־אֶרֶץ:

For in the hand of the L-RD there is a cup, with foaming wine, full of mixture, And He poureth out of the same; Surely the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall drain them, and drink them.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהילים עה, ט.

PARAGRAPH 15

39 אם תגביה כנשר

In Ovadyah's prophecy to Edom: though it nest as high as the eagle and set its nest among the stars, "from there I will bring you down, says Havayah." The Alter Rebbe stresses "from there": the height itself brings the fall.

עובדיה א':ד' Obadiah 1:4

אִם־תִּגְבִּיֶה כְּנֹשָׁר וְאִם־בֵּין כּוֹכְבִּים שֵׁם קִנְךָ מִשָּׁם אוֹרִידְךָ נְאֻמִּי:

Though thou make thy nest as high as the eagle, And though thou set it among the stars, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the L-RD.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

עובדי' א, ד.

40 לפני שבר גאון . השפלתם ומפלתם כו

"Pride goes before a fall, and a haughty spirit before stumbling." The maamar uses it to show that the rise of the wicked comes before their downfall.

משלי ט"ז:18 Proverbs 16:18

לפני־שֹׁכַר גָּאוֹן וְלפני־כָּשְׁלוֹן גְּבוּהַ רוּחַ:

Pride goeth before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

משלי טז, יח. קטע זה מובא במילואים ליהל אור עי תרמ.

41

ימחו מספר חיים

David prays against those who persecute him: "Let them be blotted out of the book of life, and not be written with the righteous." The maamar links "the book" (sefer) to the supernal thought: it is on reaching it that they are erased. (Kehot: Psalms 69:25)

Psalms 69:29 ט"ט: כ"ט

ימחו מספר חיים ועם צדיקים אל יכתבו:

Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, And not be written with the righteous.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים טז, כה.

PARAGRAPH 17

42

וככה הוא ממש כנפש הבהמית . . א"א להתברר . . אם לא שתתברר תחלה נה"א

According to the note, this passage, that the animal soul cannot be refined unless the G-dly soul is refined first, is quoted there.

KEHOT'S NOTE

מובא באוה"ת פי בשלח עי תנג ע"ש.

43

והיתה נפש אדוני צרורה

Avigail blesses David: though a man pursues him, "the soul of my lord shall be bound up in the bundle of life with Havayah your G-d," while the souls of his enemies are slung away as from a sling. The maamar reads it as the Supernal Will that clothes the soul and raises it to the level of gulgalta. (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh)

I Samuel 25:29 ט"ט: כ"ט

וְיָקָם אָדָם לְרֹדְפָךָ וּלְבַקֵּשׁ אֶת־נַפְשְׁךָ וְהָיְתָה נֶפֶשׁ אֲדֹנִי צְרוּרָה בְּצִרּוֹר הַחַיִּים אֵת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְאֵת נֶפֶשׁ אֹיְבֶיךָ יַקְלִעְנָה בְּתוֹךְ כַּף הַקַּלָּע:

And though man be risen up to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul, yet the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the L-RD thy G-d; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as from the hollow of a sling.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שמואל א-כה, כט. ראה לעיל עו, א.

44

וכמ"ש במ"א ע"פ שאו את ראש

The note says this is perhaps the place meant.

KEHOT'S NOTE

אולי הכוונה ללקו"ת פי במדבר א, א ואילך.

45

שאו את ראש כל עדת בני ישראל וגו' לגלגלתם

G-d commands Moshe to "lift up the head" of all the congregation of Israel, counting them "by their skulls (legul-gelosam)." The maamar alludes to an explanation of this

verse elsewhere that links the skull (gulgalta) to the Supernal Will above intellect.

במדבר א': כ"ב Numbers 1:2

שאו את־ראש כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם בְּמִסְפָּר שְׁמוֹת כָּל־זָכָר לְגִלְגָּלְתָּם:

'Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, by their families, by their fathers'houses, according to the number of names, every male, by their polls;

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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/

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מוקדש לכבוד הגאון המקובל רבי לוי יצחק שניאורסאהן זצ"ל

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