TORAH OHR • PARSHAS TOLDOS • MAAMAR 4

ויחפרו עבדי יצחק בנחל כו׳

“And Yitzchak’s servants dug in the valley… a well that princes dug”

The G-dliness a person draws down in the morning through the Shema, prayer and Torah study goes “underground” during a day of worldly business; mitzvos done with a humbled heart bring it up again as a well of living water, refined by passing through the earth of the body and sweet to one who feels how far he is from G-d.

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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

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THE BIG IDEA

The G-dliness a person draws down in the morning through the Shema, prayer and Torah study goes "underground" during a day of worldly business; mitzvos done with a humbled heart bring it up again as a well of living water, refined by passing through the earth of the body and sweet to one who feels how far he is from G-d.

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 Talmud teaches that the Perat is the original river of Eden and that every spring is fed from it underground. Why, then, is a well called "living water" if its water is really the river's? The Alter Rebbe answers with the river that goes out from Eden to water the garden, the Torah. Accepting G-d's kingship in the Shema draws G-dliness down, and it finds its place in the Torah studied right after prayer. But a working day covers it over: the body's concerns and one's limited understanding push the morning's awareness out of mind. For this G-d gave the practical mitzvos, holy in their own root and effective without special intentions. The one intention asked is to reflect how far one is from G-d and to be humbled, while still wanting to come close. Then the mitzvah brings the hidden river up through the "earth" of the body, and like well water refined by passing through soil it becomes living water, sweet to the one who is hungry for G-d. This is why the Arizal rejoiced so much in mitzvos, and this is the "well that princes dug."

OUTLINE

1 **The river beneath every spring** ¶1

The Perat is the original river; all springs are fed from it underground, so a little digging finds living water.

2 **The river from Eden: accepting G-d's unity** ¶2

Why call a well "living" if it comes from a river? The answer begins with "a river goes out from Eden": G-d's unity, accepted wholeheartedly in the Shema, still needs a place to rest.

3 **Torah, the day, and the mitzvos** ¶3

G-d's unity rests in the Torah; the day hides it; the mitzvos, holy in themselves and done with a broken heart, bring it up again like water through earth.

4 **The living well in practice** ¶4–5

Relying on the morning's commitment, a person does mitzvos all day, and the little he does is sweet to him.

5 The Arizal's joy and the hungry soul ¶6

Joy in mitzvos born of humility; to the hungry every bitter thing is sweet; this is "a well that princes dug."

KEY CONCEPTS

A well of living water באר מים חיים

Spring water fed from a hidden river and refined by passing through the earth; the image of a mitzvah done in the middle of a worldly day.

A river goes out from Eden נהר יוצא מעדן

The drawing down of G-dliness from G-d Himself ("Eden"), brought about by accepting His kingship in the Shema and prayer.

The garden גן

Numerically 53, the fifty-three portions of the Torah: the place where G-d's unity rests.

Accepting the yoke of the kingship of Heaven קבלת עול מלכות שמים

The complete faith and acceptance of G-d's unity and rule, above all in the Shema; the first step of divine service.

Mitzvos do not require intention מצות אין צריכות כוונה

The mitzvos are holy in their own root and draw down G-dliness by themselves, not by virtue of the doer's spiritual state.

Humility ענוה / שפלות

Feeling how far one is from G-d and seeing others as closer to Him; the source of the Arizal's joy in the mitzvos.

SECTION 1 • ¶1

The river beneath every spring

1 ויחפרו עבדי יצחק בנחל כו׳. באר חפרוה שרים[1] וגו׳. דהנה איתא בגמ׳ [בגמרא] ע״פ והנהר הרביעי הוא פרת[2] הוא דמעיקרא[3] שממנו נפרדו לארבעה ראשים דהיינו ג׳ יצאו ממנו והרביעי

"And Yitzchak's servants dug in the valley," etc. "A well that princes dug," etc. For behold, it is stated in the Gemara on [the verse] "And the fourth river, it is Perat": "It is the one from the beginning," from which [the river] parted into four heads; that is, three went out from it, and the fourth

> The maamar opens with two verses about wells: Yitzchak's servants digging in the valley and finding living water (Genesis 26:19), and the Song of the Well sung by Israel in the desert. To explain them it turns to a Talmudic teaching on the four rivers that flow out of Eden, the fourth of which is the Perat (Euphrates): the Perat is "the one from the beginning," the original river from which the others branched off.

הוא בעצמו ואמרו כל הנהרות למטה מפרת וכל מעיינות שבעולם נובעים מסולמא דפרת פי׳ מתחת לקרקע נוקב והולך עד שבחפירה מועטת ימצא באר מים חיים[4].

is [Perat] itself. And they said: All the rivers are lower than Perat, and all the springs in the world well up from the ladder of Perat. Meaning: beneath the ground it bores its way onward, until with a little digging one finds a well of living water.

> The Talmud adds that all rivers lie lower than the Perat and that every spring in the world is fed from it along an underground "ladder." The Alter Rebbe reads this as a picture: the Perat's water runs beneath the earth, so that wherever one digs a little, one strikes a well of "living water," fresh spring water.

SECTION 2 • ¶2

The river from Eden: accepting G-d's unity

2 ולכאורה תמוה מפני מה יקרא באר מים חיים כיון שעיקר נביעתו הוא מנהר פרת. והענין דהנה כתיב ונהר יוצא מעדן להשקות את הגן[5] כו׳

At first glance it is puzzling: why should it be called a well of living water, since the essence of its welling up is from the river Perat? The explanation is this. Behold, it is written, "And a river goes out from Eden to water the garden," etc.

> The question: if a well's water really comes from the Perat, why is it called "living water," as if it were a source of its own? To answer, the Alter Rebbe turns to the river that goes out from Eden to water the garden, the source of all four rivers.

ג"ן סדרי דאורייתא פי' כידוע שבתחלה צריך לקבל עומ"ש [עול מלכות שמים] בשלימות דהיינו להאמין באמונה שלימה באחדות ה'

"The garden" (ג"ן, gan, 53): the fifty-three portions (sidros) of the Torah. Meaning: as is known, at first one must accept the yoke of the kingship of Heaven completely, that is, believe with complete faith in the unity of G-d,

> The Zohar reads the letters of gan ("garden," גן, numerically 53) as the fifty-three weekly portions of the Torah. The explanation begins from the first step of divine service: accepting the "yoke of the kingship of Heaven" (kabbalas ol), a complete faith that G-d is one.

שהוא המהווה כל העולמות וכולא קמיה כלא חשיב וכולא חד כו' וכאשר יתבונן האדם בק"ש [בקריאת שמע] וישים ללבו היטיב ענין האחדות ויקבל עליו באמת עול מל'

that He brings all the worlds into being, and all before Him is considered as nothing, and all is one, etc. And when a person contemplates during the Shema and sets his heart well upon the matter of [G-d's] unity, and truly accepts upon himself the yoke of [His] kingship —

> That faith has content: G-d brings every world into being, all of creation is as nothing before Him, and all is one with Him. A person takes this on especially in the Shema, when he dwells on G-d's unity and sincerely accepts G-d as King.

כי יעקב חבל נחלתו[6] חפצם לדבקה בו בכל לבבם ומאמינים באחד וחפצים בו אבל אין מקום שישרה בו בחי' אחד לאחר שקבל עליו.

for "Yaakov is the lot of His inheritance": their desire is to cleave to Him with all their heart, and they believe in the One and desire Him — yet there is no place in which the level of "One" may rest after he has accepted [it] upon himself.

> The verse "Yaakov is the lot of His inheritance" describes every Jew: deep down each one wants to cleave to G-d and believes in Him. But the paragraph ends on a problem: having accepted G-d's unity in the Shema, where can that "One" actually come to rest?

SECTION 3 • ¶3

Torah, the day, and the mitzvos

3 ואין לו מקום אלא בתורה שהיינו שמיד אחר קבלת מ"ש ילמוד בעיון מחשבתו ושכלו ודבורו בתורה שבע"פ [שבעל פה] וקודם למודו יתבונן באחדות ה' כו'

And it has no place except in the Torah. That is: immediately after accepting the kingship of Heaven, he should study the Oral Torah in depth, with his thought, his intellect and his speech; and before his study he should contemplate the unity of G-d, etc.

> The answer to the problem: G-d's unity finds its place only in the Torah. So right after accepting G-d's kingship (in the Shema and prayer), one should study the Oral Torah in depth, preceded by a moment of contemplating G-d's unity.

ועי"ז יגרום לו העסק בתורה בכל עומק מחשבתו ולבבו וכו' וזהו נקי ונהר יוצא מעדן[7] פי' מעדן מעם הקב"ה שנק' עדן ונהר הוא לשון המשכה

And through this, engagement in Torah with all the depth of his thought and his heart, etc., will come about for him. And this is called "And a river goes out from Eden." Meaning: "from Eden" — from the Holy One, blessed be He, who is called "Eden"; and "river" is a term for drawing down.

> That contemplation makes his Torah study wholehearted and deep. This is the "river that goes out from Eden": Eden is G-d Himself, and "river" means a drawing down, a flow of G-dliness from its source.

פי' כאשר יומשך אלהות מלמעלה' [מלמעלה] למטה בקבלת מ"ש המשכה זאת משקה את הגן היא התורה שהיא ד' אמות של הלכה[8] במקום קדשי קדשים אורייתא היכלא דמלכא שבה שורה אחדות ה' כו'

Meaning: when G-dliness is drawn down from above to below through the acceptance of the kingship of Heaven, this drawing-down waters the garden, which is the Torah, which is "the four cubits of halachah," in the place of the Holy of Holies — "the Torah is the King's palace" — in which the unity of G-d rests, etc.

> The G-dliness drawn down through accepting G-d's kingship "waters the garden," the Torah. The Talmud says that since the Temple was destroyed G-d has in His world only "the four cubits of halachah," so halachah is now His place, like the Holy of Holies; and the Torah is called "the King's palace": it is the place where G-d's unity dwells.

כאשר יתקיים בו בחי׳ נהר יוצא מעדן בתפלתו ושעור למודו מיד אחר התפלה אבל אחה״כ צריך לעסוק בכל מחשבתו כו׳

When the level of "a river goes out from Eden" is fulfilled in him in his prayer and in his set study immediately after prayer — but afterwards he must occupy all his thought, etc.,

> This "river from Eden" is present during prayer and the study session that follows it. But the day goes on, and a person must turn his whole mind to other things.

בעניני עולם השפל ושוכח כל התבוננותו בקבלת מ״ש מפני גשמיות גופו על מעוט דעת שלו ויתרחק מאד מבחינה שהיה לו דעת בתפלתו ועבודתו בתורה כו׳

with the affairs of the lowly world, and he forgets all his contemplation in accepting the kingship of Heaven because of the physicality of his body, on account of his meager understanding (daas), and he becomes very distant from the state in which he had understanding in his prayer and his service in Torah, etc. —

> Busy with the affairs of this lowly world, he forgets the contemplation of the morning. The body's physicality and his limited daas (the ability to hold an idea firmly in mind) leave him far from the awareness he had in prayer and study.

לכך נתן לנו מצות לעשותם כל היום כי ענין המצות מעשיות הם הגבה למעלה מעלה בפנימיותם[9] ושרשם

therefore He gave us mitzvos to perform all day. For the matter of the practical mitzvos is that they are lofty, exceedingly high in their inner dimension (pnimiyus) and their root,

> For this G-d gave us mitzvos, practical commandments to be done throughout the day. In their inner dimension and root they are very high, higher than the level a person reaches through his own understanding.

אך[10] שנתלבשו בכמה לבושים בהשתלשלות העולמות כו׳ ומ״מ רומזים על מדרגה הגבוה שבשרש׳ [שבשרשם] כמו מצות[11] ציצי׳ [ציצית] שענינה למעלה בעולמות עליונים ונתלבשה מצותה בשמונה חוטין של צמר וה׳ קשרים כו׳

only they have been clothed in many garments in the chain of descending worlds (hishtalshelus), etc. Nevertheless, they allude to the lofty level that is in their root: for example, the mitzvah of tzitzis, whose meaning is on high in the supernal worlds, and its mitzvah has been clothed in eight threads of wool and five knots, etc.

> They come down through many "garments," the chain of descending worlds, until they take physical form; yet the physical form still points to its lofty root. Tzitzis are the example: a mitzvah whose meaning is in the highest worlds is clothed in eight woollen threads and five knots.

ולכן המצות לא תצטרך להם עבודת האדם לתקנם ולכוון אל אמתתם כי מצות א״צ [אין צריך / אינו צריך] כוונה לפי שהן בעצמם מתוקנים ונשתלשלו ממעלה למטה כו׳ והעושה המצוה המשכת אלהות שגורם אינה מצד עבודתו רק מחמת המצות עצמן כו׳.

Therefore the mitzvos do not need a person's service to rectify them and to aim at their true essence, for "mitzvos do not require intention," since they themselves are rectified and have descended step by step from above to below, etc. And [for] one who performs the mitzvah, the drawing-down of G-dliness that he brings about is not by virtue of his service, but only because of the mitzvos themselves, etc.

> So a mitzvah does not depend on a person's effort to perfect it or to grasp its inner meaning, for "mitzvos do not require intention." That is Rava's view in the Talmud (Rosh Hashanah 28b): a mitzvah done without intending it still counts, though the halachah is disputed and the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 60:4) rules that intention is needed to fulfill one's obligation. The maamar gives the reason: the mitzvos come "ready-made" from above, so the G-dliness they draw down comes from the mitzvah itself, not from the doer's spiritual state.

משא״כ בתורה ותפלה שהיא עבודת הלב תלויה דוקא בכוונת האדם כו׳ ועיקר הכוונה הצריכה בעשיי׳ [בעשייה] המצות הוא שיתבונן בתחילה איך שהוא מאד רחוק[12] מה׳

This is not so with Torah and prayer, which is the service of the heart: it depends specifically on the person's intention, etc. And the main intention needed in performing the mitzvos is that he first contemplate how very far he is from G-d,

> Torah study and prayer ("the service of the heart") are different: their effect depends on the person's intention. Even so, there is an intention that matters in doing mitzvos: to begin by reflecting how very far one is from G-d.

ע״י טרדתו כל היום בהבלי חפצי העוה״ז וגשמיות חומרו ועוונותיו מסך מבדיל לבלתי התקרב אל ה׳ אפי׳ [אפילו] מעט ויתבונן

through his being taken up all day with the vanities of the concerns of this world, and the physicality of his material nature, and his sins — a separating screen, [keeping him] from drawing near to G-d even a little. And he should contemplate

> What distances him: being taken up all day with worldly vanities, his physical nature, and his sins, which form a "screen" between him and G-d.

בזה היטב הדק וישבור לבו בהתבוננו' [בהתבוננות] זה ויכנע לבבו מפני שמ"מ חפץ הוא להתקרב אל ה' בתורתו כו' ויכוון במצוה[13] שנזדמנה לידו בעשותו אותה.

this thoroughly and minutely, and break his heart with this contemplation, and his heart will be humbled — because nevertheless he does desire to draw near to G-d through His Torah, etc. And he should have [this] intention in a mitzvah that comes to his hand, while performing it.

> He should dwell on this until his heart breaks and is humbled, precisely because he still wants to come close to G-d through the Torah. With that feeling he does whatever mitzvah comes his way.

שהוא כמו באר מ"ח שנובע מתחת הקרקע מנהר א' שאע"פ [שאף על פי] שהנהר אינו נק' מ"ח אבל המים היוצאים ממנו ונוקב והולך עובי עפר הקרקע נק' מים חיים מפני שמתברר ומתלבן ע"י דחקם לצאת בעפר החומרי

For this is like a well of living water that wells up from beneath the ground from a river: although the river is not called "living water," the water that comes out of it and bores its way through the thickness of the ground's earth is called "living water," because it is refined and purified by being pressed to come out through the material earth.

> Now the image returns. The river itself is not called "living water," but the water that pushes up through the thick earth is, because passing through the earth refines and purifies it. This answers the question of paragraph 2: it is the passage through the earth that makes the well "living."

וכן ממש עשיית המצוות כשהי' [כשהיה] לו בתחלה בתפלתו ועבודתו בחי' נהר יוצא מעדן[14] הנ"ל רק שנכסה ונעלם בתוכו ע"י גשמיות תשוקת גופו כל היום.[15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27]

And exactly so is the performance of the mitzvos: at first, in his prayer and service, he had the level of "a river goes out from Eden" mentioned above, only it became covered and hidden within him through the physicality of his body's longing all day.

> So too with mitzvos: the "river from Eden" a person had in the morning is not lost; it has gone underground, covered by the body's desires through the day. The mitzvah is the well through which it rises again.

> **EXPLAINED ELSEWHERE** • AI research: where the maamar leaves something unexplained, found in the library and checked against each source; not yet reviewed by a person
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> **EXPLAINED BY THE REBBE RASHAB**
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> The maamar asks for a broken heart before each mitzvah and says the morning's „ונהר יוצא מעדן" ("river going out from Eden") is still there, hidden; the Kehot notes (20:23, 20:25) point to the Rebbe Rashab's reading of both, which our explain and deeper do not bring.
>
> The Rebbe Rashab cites this paragraph in his Hemshech 5672 for the bittul in the mitzvos: „להתבונן בתחלה איך שהוא מאד רחוק" (first contemplating how very far one is) from G-d, and breaking one's heart over it. That broken heart, he explains, is the „כלי ריקן" ("empty vessel") that can hold G-dliness, the bittul that builds the vessels, which in Kabbalah is the drop of "feminine waters"

(mayin nukvin) that rises from below. And the "river going out from Eden" that, our paragraph says, a person had at first in his prayer may be, he suggests, „טפת מ״ד המברר" (the drop of "masculine waters," mayin duchrin, that refines).

the Rebbe Rashab: Hemshech 5672 (Ayin-Beis), vol. ב, p. א'יג (the page Kehot cites)

SECTION 4 • ¶4-5

The living well in practice

4 וכשעושה המצוה שנובעת מנהר הנ״ל פי׳ מפני שזוכר שכבר קבל ע״ע [על עצמו / על עצמך] מ״ש בכל לבבו ולכך עושה מצותיו ליכנס בעול מלכותו אע״פ [אף על פי] שעכשיו אין לו בחי׳ נהר הנ״ל סומך לבו על שכבר גמר בלבו לעבוד ה׳ באמת זהו

And when he performs the mitzvah that wells up from the river mentioned above — meaning, because he remembers that he has already accepted upon himself the kingship of Heaven with all his heart, and therefore he performs his mitzvos to enter under the yoke of His kingship; even though now he does not have the level of the river mentioned above, he relies in his heart on having already resolved in his heart to serve G-d in truth — this is

Now the living well in practice. Later in the day the morning's "river" is no longer felt, but the person remembers that he has already accepted G-d's kingship with all his heart. He relies on that decision and does his mitzvos as an act of submitting to G-d's rule.

כמו באר מ״ח מפני שמאד ערב לו זאת המעט בעבודת ה׳ מפני שהתבונן שמאד מאד רחוק הוא מה׳.

like a well of living water, because this small measure in the service of G-d is very pleasant to him, since he has contemplated that he is very, very far from G-d.

This is the "well of living water": because he has reflected how very far he is from G-d, even this small bit of service tastes sweet to him.

5 ועושה המצוה הוא ע״ד הנ״ל שמאד מתוק וערב לו לעשות המצוה כו׳ כמו הבאר כשחופרין בקרקע ומוצאים מים הם מ״ח מפני שעברו עובי העפר כן עשיית המצות עשייתו אותה נובעת מנהר הנ״ל כו׳.

And [when] he performs the mitzvah in the manner described above, [so] that it is very sweet and pleasant to him to perform the mitzvah, etc. — like the well: when one digs in the ground and finds water, it is living water because it has passed through the thickness of the earth; so too the performance of the mitzvos: his performance of it wells up from the river mentioned above, etc.

Doing the mitzvah this way makes it sweet. Just as water found by digging is "living" because it has passed through the earth, so the mitzvah done after a day of worldly struggle carries the morning's river up through the "earth" of the body, and that is what makes it "living."

SECTION 5 • ¶6

The Arizal's joy and the hungry soul

6 וזהו שהיה האריז״ל [האר״י זכרונו לברכה] שמח מאד בעשיית המצות ולכך זכה לרה״ק [לרוח הקודש][28] ולא שמח בעבודתו כו׳ כי המצות בפני עצמם קדושתם כו׳

And this is [why] the Arizal rejoiced greatly in performing the mitzvos, and therefore merited the holy spirit (ruach hakodesh), and did not rejoice in his [own] service, etc.; for the mitzvos in themselves, their holiness [is their own], etc.,

> This is why the Arizal (Rabbi Yitzchak Luria) rejoiced so much in doing mitzvos, and why he merited ruach hakodesh, the holy spirit. His joy was not in his own spiritual work but in the mitzvos, whose holiness is their own, as explained above.

כנ״ל ועשיותה בא מהתבוננות שפלות התקרבותו אל ה׳ שזו היא מדת ענוה באמת שנאמר על מרע״ה [משה רבינו עליו השלום][29] כי עיקר השפלו׳ בפני כל אדם שאמרו א״א להיו׳ [להיות] כ״א עד״ז שרואה בחבירו שהוא יותר קרוב להי׳ כו׳

as [explained] above. And his doing it came from contemplating how lowly his closeness to G-d is. For this is the true trait of humility that is said of Moshe our teacher, peace be upon him; for the essence of lowliness before every person — which, they said, is impossible except in this way — is that he sees in his fellow that he is closer to G-d, etc.

> His joy grew out of his sense of how little he had come close to G-d. That is true humility, the humility the Torah ascribes to Moshe: to feel lowly before every person, which is possible only by seeing in each one someone closer to G-d than oneself.

וזהו נפש שבעה[30] תבוס נופת שאפילו הדבש מר לו אבל נפש רעבה כל מר מתוק

And this is [the meaning of] "A sated soul tramples honeycomb" — even honey is bitter to it — "but to a hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet."

> The verse in Proverbs describes the two states: to the sated even honey is bitter, but to the hungry even the bitter is sweet.

פי׳ באר מ״ח הנ״ל ע״י חפירותו בעפר גופו כשיוצא מעט מים מתוקים ערבים לו מאד מפני שגופו רעבה בעבודת ה׳ וזהו באר חפרוה שרים:[31,32]

Meaning: the well of living water mentioned above — through his digging in the earth of his body, when a little water comes out, it is sweet and very pleasant to him, because his body is hungry in the service of G-d. And this is "A well that princes dug."

> So too the living well: when a person has "dug" through the earth of his body and a little water comes up, it is very sweet to him, because he is hungry for the service of G-d. And this is the verse the maamar opened with: "A well that princes dug."

> **EXPLAINED ELSEWHERE** • AI research: where the maamar leaves something unexplained, found in the library and checked against each source; not yet reviewed by a person
>
> **EXPLAINED BY THE ALTER REBBE**
>
> "כי עיקר השפלו' בפני כל אדם שאמרו": the maamar cites a saying of the Sages, lowliness "before every adam", without naming it, and says it can be kept only by seeing one's fellow as closer to G-d.
>
> "They said" is the Mishnah in Avos (4:10): „הוי שפל רוח בפני כל אדם" ("Be lowly of spirit before every person," adam). In his Siddur (Shaar HaElul, on "Atem nitzavim") the Alter Rebbe explains this saying too: one is to be lowly before every person „לא מצד השפלות לבד אלא מצד האמת שבאמת יש יתרון מעלה בזולתו" ("not from lowliness alone but from the truth, for truly there is a superior quality in one's fellow"), since each Jew finds what he lacks in his fellow, as the limbs of one body complete each other. Perhaps (biur b'derech efshar) our paragraph's „שרואה בחבירו שהוא יותר קרוב לה׳" ("seeing in his fellow that he is closer to G-d") is that truth at a higher rung: in his letter on this wording the Rebbe brings the Siddur for love of a fellow Jew, and our maamar for a loftier service, aspiring to a fellow who stands higher (Igros Kodesh vol. 2, letter 219).
>
> the Alter Rebbe: Siddur im Dach (new edition), Shaar HaElul, dibbur hamaschil Atem nitzavim, vol. ב, p. 672 (old edition רלא, ג)

IN ONE'S AVODAH

Begin the day by accepting G-d's kingship in the Shema and studying Torah right after prayer. Through the busy day, do each mitzvah that comes your way relying on that morning commitment, first reflecting how far worldly concerns and sins have taken you from G-d. Then even a small act of service becomes sweet, and the joy in the mitzvos grows out of humility.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why does passing through the earth make well water "living" rather than detract from it, and what is the "earth" in a person's day?
2. Why does G-d's unity, accepted in the Shema, find its place only in the Torah?
3. If "mitzvos do not require intention," what intention does the maamar still ask for, and why that one?
4. How can a sense of one's distance from G-d produce joy rather than sadness?
5. What does it mean to see in every other person someone closer to G-d than oneself?

FOR CHILDREN · AGES 9–13

For the children at the table

The well of living water

THE BIG IDEA

The closeness to G-d we feel in the morning prayer goes into hiding during a busy day, and each mitzvah we do brings it up again, fresh and sweet, like water from a well.

The Gemara teaches that the river Perat flows beneath the ground, and that every spring comes from it; with a little digging one finds a well of living water. The maamar asks: if the water really comes from the river, why is a well called "living water"? It answers with the verse, "A river goes out from Eden to water the garden." The river is the closeness to G-d that we draw down in the morning, when we say the Shema and accept G-d as our King. The garden is the Torah, which we study right after prayer. Then the day begins, with its many tasks and worries, and the morning's feeling is forgotten, as if the river had gone under the ground. For this G-d gave us mitzvos to do all day. A mitzvah is holy in itself, even without special thoughts. Before doing it, we think about how far the busy day has taken us from G-d, and our heart becomes humble, while we still want to come close. Then the mitzvah brings the hidden river up again, and even a small mitzvah tastes sweet. The Arizal rejoiced in every mitzvah. This is "a well that princes dug."

THE MASHAL

The water of a great river is not called living water. But when it pushes its way up through the thick earth and comes out in a well, it is cleaned and made pure, and then it is called living water. So too, a mitzvah done in the middle of a busy day brings up the closeness of the morning, and because it has passed through the "earth" of the body, it is fresh and sweet.

QUESTIONS FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

1. The maamar says that to a hungry person even something bitter tastes sweet. How does feeling far from G-d make a small mitzvah taste sweet?
2. What does water pushing up through the earth into a well teach us about our mitzvos?
3. This week, which mitzvah can you do in the middle of a busy day, remembering that you accepted G-d as your King in the morning Shema?

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SOURCES AND REFERENCES

Notes

PARAGRAPH 1

1 **באר חפרוה שרים**

From the song Israel sang to the well in the desert: “A well that princes dug, that the nobles of the people delved.” The maamar returns to this verse at its close.

Numbers 21:18 במדבר כ״א:י״ח

בְּאֵר חָפָרוּהָ שָׂרִים כָּרוּהָ נְדִיבֵי הָעָם בִּמְחֹקֵק בְּמִשְׁעֲנֹתָם וּמִמִּדְבָּר מַתָּנָה:

The well, which the princes digged, Which the nobles of the people delved, With the sceptre, and with their staves. And from the wilderness to Mattanah;

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2 **והנהר הרביעי הוא פרת**

The verse naming the fourth of the rivers that go out from Eden, which the Talmud expounds.

Genesis 2:14 בראשית ב׳:י״ד

וְשֵׁם הַנָּהָר הַשְּׁלִישִׁי חִדֶּקֶל הוּא הַהֹלֵךְ קִדְמַת אַשּׁוּר וְהַנָּהָר הָרְבִיעִי הוּא פְּרָת:

And the name of the third river is Tigris; that is it which goeth toward the east of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

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3 **הוא דמעיקרא**

The Gemara calls the springs that rise from the ground “the ladders of Perat” and explains the verse “it is Perat” as “the Perat of the beginning.” The maamar draws from this that every spring is fed by the Perat beneath the earth.

Bekhorot 55b:2–4 בכורות נ״ה ב:ב׳-ד׳

וְהָא כְּתִיב: ״וְהַנָּהָר הָרְבִיעִי הוּא פְּרָת״! אָמַר רַב נַחְמָן בַּר יִצְחָק, וְאִיתֵּימָא רַב אַחָא בַּר יַעֲקֹב: הוּא פְּרָת דְּמַעִיקָּרָא. תַּנְיָא, רַבִּי מֵאִיר אוֹמֵר: ״יוּבַל״ שְׁמוֹ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: ״וְהָיָה כְּעֵץ שָׁתוּל עַל מַיִם וְעַל יוּבַל יְשַׁלַּח שָׁרָשָׁיו״, וְלָמָּה נִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ ״פְּרָת״? שֶׁמֵּימָיו פָּרִים וְרָבִים.

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4 Yitzchak’s servants dig in the valley and find a well of living water. The maamar will read their digging as the work of serving G-d through the body.

Genesis 26:19 בראשית כ״ו:י״ט

וַיַּחְפְּרוּ עַבְדֵי־יִצְחָק בַּנָּחַל וַיִּמְצְאוּ־שָׁם בְּאֵר מַיִם חַיִּים:

And Isaac’s servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of living water.

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PARAGRAPH 2

5 **ונהר יוצא מעדן להשקות את הגן**

The river that goes out from Eden to water the garden and then divides into four heads. The maamar reads it as the drawing down of G-dliness into the Torah.

Genesis 2:10 בראשית ב׳:י׳

וְנָהָר יֹצֵא מֵעֵדֶן לְהַשְׁקוֹת אֶת־הַגָּן וּמִשָּׁם יִפָּרֵד וְהָיָה לְאַרְבָּעָה רָאשִׁים:

And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became four heads.

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6 **כי יעקב חבל נחלתו**

In Moshe’s song: “For G-d’s portion is His people; Yaakov is the lot of His inheritance.” The Alter Rebbe takes it to mean that every Jew, being G-d’s own portion, inwardly desires to cleave to Him.

Deuteronomy 32:9 דברים ל״ב:ט׳

כִּי חֵלֶק ה׳ עַמּוֹ יַעֲקֹב חֶבֶל נַחֲלָתוֹ:

For the portion of the L-RD is His people, Jacob the lot of His inheritance.

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PARAGRAPH 3

7 **ונהר יוצא מעדן**

In the account of Eden, a river goes out from Eden to water the garden and from there divides into four heads. Here “Eden” is the Holy One, blessed be He, and the river is the G-dliness drawn down through accepting His kingship, which waters the garden, the Torah.

Genesis 2:10 בראשית ב׳:י׳

וְנָהָר יֹצֵא מֵעֵדֶן לְהַשְׁקוֹת אֶת־הַגָּן וּמִשָּׁם יִפָּרֵד וְהָיָה לְאַרְבָּעָה רָאשִׁים:

And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became four heads.

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KEHOT’S NOTE

בראשית ב, י׳.

8 **ד׳ אמות של הלכה**

Ulla’s teaching: since the Temple was destroyed, the Holy One, blessed be He, has in His world only the four cubits of halachah. The maamar uses it to call the Torah the place where G-d’s unity rests, like the Holy of Holies.

Berakhot 8a:18–19 ברכות ח׳ א:י״ח-י״ט

וְהַיְינוּ דְּאָמַר רַבִּי חִיָּיא בַּר אַמֵּי מִשְּׁמֵיהּ דְּעוּלָּא: מִיּוֹם שֶׁחָרַב בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ אֵין לוֹ לְהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא בְּעוֹלָמוֹ אֶלָּא אַרְבַּע אַמּוֹת שֶׁל הֲלָכָה בִּלְבַד. וְאָמַר אַבָּיֵי: מֵרִישׁ הֲוָה גָּרִיסְנָא בְּגוֹ בֵּיתָא וּמְצַלֵּינָא בְּבֵי כְנִישְׁתָּא. כֵּיוָן דִּשְׁמַעְנָא לְהָא דְּאָמַר רַבִּי חִיָּיא בַּר אַמֵּי מִשְּׁמֵיהּ דְּעוּלָּא — מִיּוֹם שֶׁחָרַב בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ אֵין לוֹ לְהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא בְּעוֹלָמוֹ אֶלָּא אַרְבַּע אַמּוֹת שֶׁל הֲלָכָה בִּלְבַד — לָא הֲוָה מְצַלֵּינָא אֶלָּא הֵיכָא דְּגָרִיסְנָא.

That agrees with what R. Hiyya b. Ammi said in the name of 'Ulla : Since the day the Temple was destroyed, there is left to the Holy One, blessed be He, in His Universe the four cubits of Halakah alone. And Abbai said ; At first I used to study

at home and pray in Synagogue, but after hearing the statement of R. Hiyya b. Ammi in the name of 'Ulla — "Since the day the Temple was destroyed, there is left to the Holy One, blessed be He, ...

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9 **למעלה מעלה בפנימיותם**

There (Beshalach 64c) the Alter Rebbe explains that the joy of a mitzvah reaches G-d's very essence, above the whole chain of worlds: the mitzvos are "limbs of the King," and as taking a person by his arm draws his soul along, so the mitzvos draw down G-d's essence, an arousal from above that no arousal from below could evoke.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ע׳ לקמן פ׳ בשלח סד, ג. שענין המצות בעצם הוא בחי׳ שלמעלה מאתעדל״ת, וע׳ באוה״ת דרושים לר״ה ע׳ אישה שמציין לכאן בענין מצות אין צריכים כוונה.

10 **לעשותם כי ענין המצות — אך**

The manuscript has a fuller reading here: "for the matter of the practical mitzvos is that they are exceedingly high, their inner dimension and root, to which they allude; only they have been clothed..."

KEHOT'S NOTE

בבוך 1064 קח, א נוסף: כי ענין המצות מעשיות הוא שהם למעלה מעלה פנימיותם ושרשם למה רומזים: אך שנתלבשו.

11 **כמו מצות ציצית**

There Likkutei Torah says that the "well of living water" in serving G-d is the practical mitzvos done with the heart's desire, citing this maamar: the mitzvah is made of something taken from the physical world, the wool of tzitzis or the parchment of tefillin, and it rises and is absorbed into holiness, like water welling up from beneath the ground.

KEHOT'S NOTE

לקו״ת פ׳ חקת סד, א מציין לכאן בענין המצות מעשיות ברעותא דליבא.

12 **ועיקר הכוונה . . איך שהוא מאד רחוק**

This passage on the main intention in doing mitzvos, reflecting how far one is from G-d, is quoted there.

KEHOT'S NOTE

מובא בהמשך תער״ב ח״ב ע׳ אי״ג.

13 **ויכוון במצוה . . שנובעת מנחר הנ״ל**

As the note quotes it, Or HaTorah draws the lesson: the mitzvah is called a well of living water precisely because it has passed through the thick earth, the body's physical dealings in business all day; when afterwards, with that strength, he does the mitzvah, it becomes a well of living water.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה אוה״ת פ׳ ויצא כרך א רג, ב: הרי מובן שמה שהמצוה נק׳ באר מ״ח זהו דוקא לפי שעברו דרך עובי עפר הקרקע דהיינו גשמיות עסקי גופו כל היום במו״מ כשמ״מ אח״כ בכח זה עושה המצוה נעשה בחי׳ באר מ״ח. עכ״ל.

14 **כשהי׳ לו בתחלה . . בחי׳ נהר יוצא מעדן**

There this line is glossed: it may be the "drop of mayin nukvin" (the upward-reaching feminine waters) that refines, i.e. the morning's inspiration becomes the force that refines the day.

KEHOT'S NOTE

בהמשך תער״ב ח״ב ע׳ אי״ג מציין ע״ז: י״ל שזהו טפת מ״ד המברר כו׳.

15 **והוא ע״י הכתר שהוא הממוצע**

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה אוה״ת שמות ע׳ פב. ושם ציין הצ״צ ללקו״ת פ׳ צו בד״ה והיה אור הלבנה פ״ג. נסמן לקמן כב, ד.

16 **ונאם הגבר הוקם ע״ל**

The words here quote II Samuel 23:1; the passage is shown below.

II Samuel 23:1 שמואל ב כ״ג:א׳

וְאֵלֶּה דִּבְרֵי דָוִד הָאַחֲרֹנִים נְאֻם דָּוִד בֶּן־יִשַׁי וּנְאֻם הַגֶּבֶר הֻקַם עַל מְשִׁיחַ אֱלֹקֵי יַעֲקֹב וּנְעִים זְמִרוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל׃

Now these are the last words of David: The saying of David the son of Jesse, And the saying of the man raised on high, The anointed of the G-d of Jacob, And the sweet singer of Israel:

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שמואל-ב כג, א.

17 **שהיו מתים ק׳ אנשים בכל יום**

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

במדבר רבה פ׳ יח, כא. תנחומא ס״פ קרח.

18 **שע״י המאה ברכות פסקו מלמות**

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

ע׳ אוה״ת פ׳ עקב ע׳ תקפח. תקצד.

19 **ויחפרו עבדי יצחק**

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה לעיל בציונים לכ״ק אדמו״ר זי״ע.

20 **ויחפרו עבדי יצחק בנחל**

The words here quote Genesis 26:19; the passage is shown below.

Genesis 26:19 בראשית כ״ו:י״ט

וַיַּחְפְּרוּ עַבְדֵי־יִצְחָק בַּנָּחַל וַיִּמְצְאוּ־שָׁם בְּאֵר מַיִם חַיִּים׃

And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of living water.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

בראשית כו, יט.

21 **באר חפרוה שרים**

The words here quote Numbers 21:18; the passage is shown below.

Numbers 21:18 במדבר כ״א:י״ח

בְּאֵר חָפָרוּהָ שָׂרִים כָּרוּהָ נְדִיבֵי הָעָם בִּמְחֹקֵק בְּמִשְׁעֲנֹתָם וּמִמִּדְבָּר מַתָּנָה׃

The well, which the princes digged, Which the nobles of the people delved, With the sceptre, and with their staves. And from the wilderness to Mattanah;

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KEHOT'S NOTE

במדבר כא, י״ח.

22 **איתא בגמרא ע״פ והנהר הרביעי**

The words here quote Bekhorot 55b:2–4; the passage is shown below.

Bekhorot 55b:2–4 בכורות נ״ה ב:ב׳-ד׳

וְהָא כְּתִיב: ״וְהַנָּהָר הָרְבִיעִי הוּא פְּרָת״! אָמַר רַב נַחְמָן בַּר יִצְחָק, וְאִיתֵּימָא רַב אַחָא בַּר יַעֲקֹב: הוּא פְּרָת דְּמֵעִיקָּרָא. תַּנְיָא, רַבִּי מֵאִיר אוֹמֵר: ״יוּבַל״ שְׁמוֹ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: ״וְהָיָה כְּעֵץ שָׁתוּל עַל מַיִם וְעַל יוּבַל יְשַׁלַּח שָׁרָשָׁיו״, וְלָמָּה נִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ ״פְּרָת״? שֶׁמֵּימָיו פָּרִים וְרָבִים.

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

בכורות נה, ב. ראה לקו״ת פ׳ צו י״ז, א. ובמאמרי אדה״א בס׳ נר מצוה ותו״א פג, ב.

23 **מסולמא דפרת**

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

וכ״ה בלקו״ת פ׳ חקת סב, ב. אבל הגי׳ בש״ס ווילנא: סולמי דפרת (וכ״ה באוה״ת פ׳ חקת ע׳ תתס). ורש״י פי׳ ״מקלחין תחת הקרקע ועולין בהרים כמו סולם״. ובשיטה מקובצת שם גורס ברש״י ״דפרת מראש פרת מקלחין״.

24 **ולכאורה תמוה מפני מה יקרא . . שעיקר נביעתו הוא מנהר פרת**

Kehot's note points to where this is explained further: Sefer HaMaamarim 5661.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה בסה״מ תרס״א ע׳ רטו ב׳ דיעות איך המים באים לנהרות.

25 **ג״ן סדרי דאורייתא**

Kehot's note points to where this is explained further: Likkutei Sichos.

KEHOT'S NOTE

זח״א (מהנ״ע) קד, ב. וראה נצו״א לזח״ב רו, ב. לקו״ש ח״ט ע׳ 298 ובהערה 3 שם.

26 **כי יעקב חבל נחלתו**

The words here quote Deuteronomy 32:9; the passage is shown below.

Deuteronomy 32:9 דברים ל״ב:ט׳

כִּי חֵלֶק ה׳ עַמּוֹ יַעֲקֹב חֶבֶל נַחֲלָתוֹ׃

For the portion of the L-RD is His people, Jacob the lot of His inheritance.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

דברים לב, ט.

27 **שו״ה כו׳ — ומ״מ רומזים . . שבשרש׳**

The words "Nevertheless, they allude to the lofty level that is in their root" are missing in this manuscript.

KEHOT'S NOTE

בכת״י 1064 ליתא.

PARAGRAPH 6

28 **ולכך זכה לרוה״ק**

Cited in the note on the connection between joy and ruach hakodesh.

KEHOT'S NOTE

השייכות לרוה״ק — ראה ירושלמי סוכה רפ״ה וע׳ בלקו״א להה״מ ד״ה וסוכה תהי׳. לקו״ש ח״ט ע׳ 252. לקו״ש חכ״ד ע׳ 639. ועוד. נסמן בארוכה במאמרי אדה״א במדבר ח״ג ע׳ א׳רפ.

29 **שנאמר על מרע״ה**

"And the man Moshe was very humble, more than any man on the face of the earth," the verse that describes Moshe's humility.

Numbers 12:3 במדבר י״ב:ג׳

וְהָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה עָנָו מְאֹד מִכֹּל הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה׃

Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth.—

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30 **נפש שבעה**

King Shlomo's proverb: "A sated soul tramples honeycomb, but to a hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet": the full man spurns even honey, while to the hungry even bitter food tastes sweet. The Alter Rebbe applies it to one who is hungry for G-d's service.

Proverbs 27:7 משלי כ״ז:ז׳

נֶפֶשׁ שְׂבֵעָה תָּבוּס נֹפֶת וְנֶפֶשׁ רְעֵבָה כָּל־מַר מָתוֹק׃

The full soul loatheth a honeycomb; But to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

משלי כז, ז.

31 **וזהו שהי׳ האריז״ל**

Chapter 26 teaches that the evil inclination cannot be overcome with sadness and heaviness, only with alacrity that comes from joy; bitterness over one's sins has value only for the true joy in G-d that follows it.

Tanya, Likkutei Amarim 26 תניא, חלק ראשון; ליקוטי אמרים כ״ו

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה שעהמ״צ (להאריז״ל) בתחלתו. וראה תניא פכ״ו. לא.

32 **באר חפרוה שרים**

The verse from the Song of the Well that opened the maamar, now read as the well dug through the earth of the

body.

Numbers 21:18 במדבר כ״א:י״ח

בְּאֵר חֲפָרוּהָ שָׂרִים כָּרוּהָ נְדִיבֵי הָעָם בִּמְחֹקֵק בְּמִשְׁעֲנֹתָם וּמִמִּדְבָּר מַתָּנָה׃

The well, which the princes digged, Which the nobles of the people delved, With the sceptre, and with their staves. And from the wilderness to Mattanah;

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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