



TORAH OHR • PARSHAS YISRO • MAAMAR 2

משה ידבר והאלהים יעננו בקול

“Moshe speaks, and
G-d answers him with a voice”



At Sinai G-d gave Israel the power to unite His Infinite Light with this world of separation through physical mitzvos, something Avraham had achieved only in the higher worlds. This is “Moshe speaks, and G-d answers”: Moshe’s bittul, present in every Jew who learns and keeps the Torah, draws down the higher unity, and the world below “answers” by repeating it, in exact measure to that bittul.

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

At Sinai G-d gave Israel the power to unite His Infinite Light with this world of separation through physical mitzvos, something Avraham had achieved only in the higher worlds. This is “Moshe speaks, and G-d answers”: Moshe’s bittul, present in every Jew who learns and keeps the Torah, draws down the higher unity, and the world below “answers” by repeating it, in exact measure to that bittul.

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 verse “Moshe speaks, and G-d answers him with a voice” raises two questions: what exchange it describes, and why it is in the present tense. Rav Yosef’s praise of Shavuot raises a third: Avraham kept the whole Torah, so what did its giving add? The mitzvos are “the limbs of the King”: each draws one of G-d’s Names, and through it the Infinite Light, into Chochmah or Chesed, until they are one with Him. Avraham did this through love, kindness and humility, but mainly in the higher worlds; this world remained a world of separation. At Sinai the Torah was given so that the Infinite Light would be united with physical mitzvos below. Of G-d’s two “knowledges,” the higher and lower unity, the positive and negative mitzvos make the lower match the higher, and the Torah within and the mitzvos around consume the coarseness that makes the world seem separate. Shavuot reveals the Crown of Torah, beyond the chain of descent. Moshe’s bittul draws down the higher unity; the lower unity, Elokim, answers it; and since Moshe’s bittul is in every person, G-d answers each one according to his own.

OUTLINE

- 1 Two questions** ¶1-2
What exchange does “Moshe speaks, and G-d answers” describe, and why the present tense? And if Avraham kept the whole Torah, even eruv tavshilin, what did the day of the Giving of the Torah add?
- 2 The limbs of the King** ¶3-9
Each mitzvah draws down one of G-d’s seven Names, which are only “names” toward Him. Through the mitzvos the Infinite Light is clothed in Chochmah and Chesed and becomes one with them, as the soul’s life is one with the body’s limbs.
- 3 Avraham’s service above** ¶10-14
By love, kindness and humility Avraham drew the Infinite Light into Chochmah and Chesed, but mainly in the higher worlds, through G-d’s own “mitzvos,” such as visiting the lovesick soul and putting on tefillin. This world remained a world of separation.

- 4 What Sinai brought** ¶115
- The Torah was given so that the Infinite Light would be clothed in and united with the Chochmah and Chesed of physical mitzvos below: “Havayah descended upon Mount Sinai.”
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- 5 The two unities** ¶16–18
- “A G-d of knowledges”: the higher unity, in which the lower is nothing, and the lower unity, in which the lower seems most real. The negative and positive commandments make them equal, so that the yesh takes up no space and no void is left.
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- 6 A consuming fire** ¶19–21
- The mitzvos surround the soul and the Torah fills it, like fire inside and around a vessel, consuming the animal soul’s coarseness; so Gehinnom has no hold on a Torah scholar. This power is a gift given to Israel.
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- 7 The Crown of Torah** ¶22
- After seven weeks that match the seven Names, Shavuot reveals the Crown of Torah, from beyond the chain of descent where above and below are equal. Without it there are many “Yosefs,” adding only worldly knowledge.
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- 8 Moshe speaks, G-d answers** ¶23–25
- Moshe’s bittul draws down the higher unity; ha-Elokim, the lower unity, “answers” by repeating it below. The tense is present because Moshe extends into every generation as the bittul in each person.
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- 9 The voice of Moshe** ¶26–28
- G-d reads and studies opposite each person according to his bittul. The Shechinah speaks from the throat of the one who is nullified, so a Torah scholar is called Moshe, and his voice carries hidden wisdom into the open.
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KEY CONCEPTS

The seven Names that may not be erased ז' שמות שאינן במחקין

The divine Names through which G-d’s attributes come into being, such as El for Chesed and Havayah pointed with patach for Chochmah. Toward G-d Himself they are only “names,” existing for others.

The limbs of the King רמ"ח אברין דמלכא

The mitzvos, so called because the Infinite Light is clothed in them and one with them, as a soul’s life is one with the body’s limbs.

The higher and the lower unity יחודא עילאה ויחודא תתאה

Two views of G-d’s oneness: from above, where the lower a thing is the more it is nothing, and from below, where the lower a thing is the more it seems to exist. Torah and mitzvos make the lower match the higher.

Self-nullification (bittul) ביטול

Moshe’s “What are we?": the awareness that G-d fills the world as before creation. It is the channel through which the Torah is drawn down, and it extends into every Jew in every generation.

The Crown of Torah כתר תורה

The level above the Torah itself, revealed on Shavuot from beyond the chain of descent, where above and below are equal.

An arousal from below אתערותא דלתתא

Human action, here the performance of the mitzvos, on which the drawing of the Infinite Light into the attributes depends.

Encompassing and inner light מקיף ופנימי

The mitzvos surround the soul as garments; the Torah enters it as food. Together they consume the animal soul's coarseness from without and within.

SECTION 1 • 11-2

Two questions

1 משה ידבר^{1,2} והאלהים יענו בקול. בקולו של משה.³ ולהבין כי לא פירש בכתוב מה דבר משה⁴ ומה ענהו ה'

“Moshe speaks, and G-d (ha-Elokim) answers him with a voice”: “with a voice,” with the voice of Moshe. [We need] to understand [this], for the verse does not specify what Moshe spoke and what G-d answered him.

The maamar opens with a verse from Sinai: as the sound of the shofar grew ever stronger, “Moshe speaks, and G-d (ha-Elokim) answers him with a voice,” and the Gemara reads “with a voice” as Moshe’s own voice. The Alter Rebbe asks what Moshe said and what G-d answered, since the verse does not say. The Tzemach Tzedek (Or HaTorah, Yisro, cited by Kehot) notes that Rashi reads it as Moshe relaying the other commandments to the people, and that Ramban disputes this.

דלא קאי על עשרת הדברות דהא אנכי ולא⁵ יהיה לך מפי הגבורה שמענו וכתיב אנכי עומד בין⁶ ה' וביניכם להגיד וגו'.

For it does not refer to the Ten Commandments, since [the commandments] “I am” and “You shall have no” we heard from the mouth of the Almighty, and it is written, “I stand between Havayah and you, to tell [you],” etc.

The verse cannot be describing the Ten Commandments: the Sages taught that the first two, “I am” and “You shall have no [other gods],” the people heard directly from G-d, and Tanya (chapter 20) explains why, for these two contain the whole Torah, “I am” all 248 positive commandments and “You shall have no” all 365 prohibitions. For the rest, Moshe describes himself as standing between G-d and the people to tell them G-d’s word, so he was the one conveying, not one whom G-d answered.

הרי שלא נאמר בזה הענין שמשה הוא המדבר והקב"ה העונה וגם להבין מהו ידבר ומהו יענו לשון עתיד או הווה והוה ליה למימר משה דבר והקב"ה ענהו.

Thus in this matter it is not said that Moshe is the one who speaks and the Holy One, blessed be He, the one who answers. [We] also [need] to understand what yedaber (“speaks”) is and what ya’anenu (“answers him”) is, [being] in the future or present tense, when it should have said, “Moshe spoke, and the Holy One, blessed be He, answered him.”

Either way, nothing here fits a dialogue in which Moshe speaks and G-d answers. A second question: the verbs yedaber and ya’anenu are in a form that reads as future or as ongoing present, while a one-time event at Sinai should have been told in the past tense.

הענין הוא דאיתא בגמרא דאמר רב יוסף⁷ אי לאו האי יומא דקא גרים כמה יוסף איכא בשוקא.

The explanation is this. It is stated in the Gemara that Rav Yosef said, “Were it not for this day that brought it about, how many Yosefs are there in the marketplace!”

The answer begins with a saying in the Gemara. On Shavuot Rav Yosef had a choice calf prepared and said that were it not for this day, the day of the Giving of the Torah, which made him what he was, there would be many ordinary men named Yosef in the marketplace.

2 ולהבין מעלת האי יומא דוקא שהוא יום מתן תורה ומהו ענין מתן התורה. והלא קיים אברהם אבינו ע"ה [עליו השלום]⁸ את כל התורה עד שלא ניתנה ואפי' [ואפילו] עירובי תבשילין⁹ מפני שלמד את כל התורה כו' עד שלא נתנה.

And [we need] to understand the distinction of “this day” specifically, which is the day of the Giving of the Torah, and what the Giving of the Torah is. For did not Avraham our father, peace be upon him, fulfill the entire Torah before it was given, even eruvei tavshilin, because he learned the entire Torah, etc., before it was given?

To reach the answer, the Alter Rebbe first asks what made the day of the Giving of the Torah special. The Sages say Avraham kept the whole Torah before it was given, down to eruv tavshilin (the rabbinic arrangement that allows cooking on Yom Tov for Shabbos), because he had learned all of it; so what did Sinai add? In Torah Ohr, Lech Lecha (11d), the Alter Rebbe refers to this maamar and explains that Avraham kept the Torah in its inner dimension, while revealing G-dliness in a physical thing, such as the parchment of tefillin, needed a revelation from beyond the chain of descent.

SECTION 2 • 13-9

The limbs of the King

3 וכמ"ש וישמר משמרת¹⁰ מצותי חקותי ותורתי ובודאי לימד ג"כ ליצחק¹¹ בנו¹² ויצחק לימד ליעקב ובניו^{13,14} ומה חדוש נתחדש בנתינתה.

As it is written, “and he kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My teachings.” And he surely also taught [it] to Yitzchak his son, and Yitzchak taught Yaakov and his sons. So what new thing was brought about by its being given?

The verse says Avraham kept G-d's charge, commandments, statutes and teachings. The Alter Rebbe adds that he surely passed this on to Yitzchak, and Yitzchak to Yaakov and his sons, so the Torah was already known and kept by the Patriarchs; this sharpens the question of what its giving added.

אך הנה נודע ענין המצות דרמ"ח פקודין¹⁵ אינן רמ"ח אברין דמלכא. ולכאורה אינו מוכן לשון אברין והלא אין לו דמות הגוף וכו'.

But now, the matter of the mitzvos is known: "The 248 commandments are the 248 limbs of the King." At first glance the expression "limbs" is not understood, for surely He has no likeness of a body, etc.

The answer begins with what the mitzvos are. A known teaching calls the 248 commandments the 248 "limbs of the King," but this is puzzling, since G-d has no body or likeness of a body.

אך יובן ע"פ מ"ש בזהר דכל מעשה המצות הן לאתקנא רזא דשמיא¹⁶ שבמצוה זו ממשיך שם זה ובמצוה זו ממשיך שם זה והענין כי שמותיו של הקב"ה הם שבעה שמותיו שאינן¹⁷ נמחקין.

But it will be understood from what is written in the Zohar, that all the performance of the mitzvos is "to rectify the mystery of His Name": through this mitzvah one draws down this Name, and through that mitzvah one draws down that Name. The explanation is that the Names of the Holy One, blessed be He, are His seven Names that may not be erased.

The key is the Zohar's statement that all the mitzvos are done "to rectify the mystery of His Name": each mitzvah draws down a particular divine Name. These are the seven Names of G-d that may not be erased, which the next paragraphs explain. In Torah Ohr, Shemos (49d), the Alter Rebbe explains the same Zohar this way: each mitzvah draws one Name into one attribute, El into Chesed and Elokim into Gevurah.

4 והם הם בחינת התפשטות החיות והשפעה להתהוות מדותיו ית' לך ה' ¹⁸ הגדולה והגבורה והתפארת וגו'.

And these are precisely the level of the extension of the life-force and the flow of influence for His attributes, may He be blessed, to come into being: "Yours, Havayah, are the greatness (gedulah), the might (gevurah) and the beauty (tiferes)," etc.

The divine Names are what spread G-d's life-force and influence so that His attributes come into being: the attributes King David named when he blessed G-d before the whole assembly, "Yours, Havayah, are the greatness, the might, the beauty" and the rest.

שאינן אלא בחי' שם לבד ע"ד משל כמו השם שאינו אלא לזולתו שיקראנו בשמו כי הוא ית' רם ונשא וכו'.

These are nothing but the level of a name alone; by way of analogy, like a name, which exists only for another, so that he may call him by his name. For He, may He be blessed, is high and exalted, etc.

Toward G-d Himself these attributes are nothing more than a "name." A name is not the person himself; it exists only for others, so they can call him. So too G-d's attributes do not capture His essence, which is "high and exalted" beyond them; they are how He is called and related to by what He creates.

5 וכמ"ש בתקוני זוהר לאו מכל אליו מדות כלל ואנת הוא¹⁹ חכים ולא בחכמה ידיעא.

As is written in Tikkunei Zohar: "Not of any of these attributes at all," and "You are wise, but not with a known wisdom."

Eliyahu's prayer at the opening of Tikkunei Zohar (Patach Eliyahu), addressed to G-d, says He is "not of any of these attributes at all," and that He is wise but not with a known wisdom.

כי החכמה הידיעא היא בנבראים שנק' בשם חכמה שהיא השכלה להשכיל דבר מושכל אבל אצלו ית' לא שייך זה

For the known wisdom is in created beings, [the faculty] that is called by the name "wisdom": it is intellection, comprehending an intelligible thing. But with Him, may He be blessed, this does not apply.

"Known wisdom" is the wisdom of created beings: the mind grasping an idea. Such wisdom does not apply to G-d.

כי אפי' [אפילו] בחי' המחשבה שהיא למטה מחכמה נאמר עליה כי לא מחשבותי מחשבותיכם²⁰ וגו' אלא שנק' חכמה ומחשבה לפי שהיא מקור המחשבה ומקור החכמה.²¹

For even of the level of thought, which is below Chochmah (wisdom), it is said, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts," etc. Rather, it is called Chochmah and thought because it is the source of thought and the source of Chochmah.

Even G-d's "thought," which ranks below Chochmah, is said to be utterly unlike ours: in Isaiah G-d says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts." If even His "thought" is beyond ours, so is His "wisdom"; the divine level is called Chochmah and thought only because it is the source from which thought and wisdom come.

6 וכמ"ש כי עמך מקור חיים²² באורך נראה אור. פירוש באורך כשנמשך האור למטה אזי נראה ומושג אור החכמה והמחשבה כו'.

As it is written, "For with You is the source of life; in Your light we see (nir'eh) light." The meaning of "in Your light" is: when the light is drawn down below, then the light of Chochmah and thought is seen (nir'eh) and grasped, etc.

David praises G-d: "With You is the source of life; in Your light we see light." The maamar reads nir'eh, "we see," as nir'eh, "is seen": only when G-d's light is drawn down below does the "light" of wisdom and thought become visible and graspable, while divine wisdom as it is in itself is not perceived.

וכן בחי' החסד כמ"ש ועשה חסד לאלפים.²³ שיש אלפים מדרגות שהם רבוי הצמצומים והמשכות עד שיהיה התהוות חסד.

So too the level of Chesed (kindness), as it is written, "and showing kindness to thousands": there are thousands of levels, which are the many contractions (tzimtzumim) and drawings-down, until Chesed comes into being.

The same is true of Chesed. In the Ten Commandments G-d shows kindness "to thousands," plainly to a thousand generations; the maamar reads it as thousands of levels of contraction and drawing down that the light passes through before it becomes a kindness that can exist.

7 וכמ"ש עולם חסד יבנה²⁴ שצריך הוא להיות נבנה שיהיה חסד. והמשכה זו להיות התפשטות החיות בבחי' חכמה וחסד הוא מז' שמות שאינם נמחקין הוי"ה בנקוד פת"ח היא בחכמה²⁵ ושם אל בחסד.

As it is written, "Kindness shall be built forever" (olam chesed yibaneh): that is, it has to be built in order for there to be Chesed. And this drawing down, for the life-force to extend into the level of Chochmah and Chesed, is from the seven Names that may not be erased: Havayah with the vowel patach is in Chochmah, and the Name El is in Chesed.

Psalms says "kindness shall be built forever": kindness itself has to be built up, through the stages just described, before it exists. This drawing down into Chochmah and Chesed comes through two of the seven Names: Havayah pointed with the vowel patach, which belongs to Chochmah, and the Name El, which belongs to Chesed.

וכמ"ש חסד אל כל היום²⁶ שהם בחי' שם בלבד.

As it is written, "The kindness of El is all the day"; and these are only the level of a name.

The verse "The kindness of El is all the day," said by David against Doeg's boasting, links the Name El with kindness. Yet these Names are still only "names," outward expressions, not G-d's essence.

אך מ"מ אחר שנמשך ובא לידי גילוי מדת החסד והחכמה הנה המשכה ההיא היא מלובשת ממש במדת החסד והחכמה עד שמתאחדת עמהם וזהו ענין איהו וחיהי חד.²⁷ איהו וגרמוהי חד.²⁸

Nevertheless, after it has been drawn down and come to the revelation of the attribute of Chesed and Chochmah, that drawing down is actually en clothed in the attribute of Chesed and Chochmah, until it becomes one with them. This is the meaning of "He and His life-forces are one; He and His vessels are one,"

Even so, once drawn down, the divine flow is truly en clothed in these attributes and becomes one with them. This is what Tikkunei Zohar means in saying of the Sefiros of Atzilus, "He and His life-forces are one; He and His vessels are one."

דהיינו כענין הוא המדע הוא היודע²⁹ כו'. וכמ"ש לך ה' הגדולה והגבורה³⁰ פי' שמתאחדת ונעשית בבחי' לך ה' ממש.³¹

that is, like the concept of “He is the Knowledge, He is the Knower,” etc. And as it is written, “Yours, Havayah, are the greatness and the might”: meaning, that it is united and becomes truly the level of “Yours, Havayah.”

The comparison is to Rambam's principle (Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah 2:10) that G-d is Himself the knower, the known and the knowledge: His wisdom is not something apart from Him. So in “Yours, Havayah, are the greatness and the might,” the attributes become truly “Yours,” one with Havayah.

8 והנה המשכת החיות³² להיות התפשטות אוא"ס [אור אין סוף] ב"ה והתלבשותו במדת החסד והחכמה שאין ערך אליו דאנת הוא חכים ולא בחכמה ידיעא ולא מכל מדות אליו כלל³³

Now, the drawing down of the life-force, so that there be an extension of the Infinite Light (Or Ein Sof), blessed be He, and its enclothing in the attribute of Chesed and Chochmah, which bear no comparison to Him — for “You are wise, but not with a known wisdom,” and “not of any of these attributes at all” —

The Infinite Light must be drawn down to spread into Chesed and Chochmah and be enclothed in them. Yet these attributes bear no comparison to Him, as the words of Tikkunei Zohar quoted again here say.

באתערותא דלתתא תליא מילתא ע"י מעשה המצות שע"י מצוה שהיא בחכמה ממשיך אור א"ס ב"ה בחכמה.

the matter depends on an arousal from below (isarusa dilesata): through the performance of the mitzvos. Through a mitzvah that is in Chochmah, one draws down the Infinite Light, blessed be He, into Chochmah.

The principle that “the matter depends on an arousal from below” gives the answer: human action, the performance of the mitzvos, brings it about. A mitzvah connected with Chochmah draws the Infinite Light into Chochmah.

9 ועיי מצוה שבחסד ממשיך אור א"ס ב"ה בחסד. והן הן המשכת שמותיו ית' והתלבשותו בחכ' [בחכמה] וחסד הוי"ה בנקוד פת"ח בחכמה³⁴ כו' ולכן נקראו המצות בשם אברין דמלכא

And through a mitzvah that is in Chesed, one draws down the Infinite Light, blessed be He, into Chesed. These are precisely the drawing down of His Names, may He be blessed, and its enclothing in Chochmah and Chesed: Havayah with the vowel patach in Chochmah, etc. Therefore the mitzvos are called by the name “the limbs of the King.”

Likewise a mitzvah connected with Chesed draws the Infinite Light into Chesed. This is what it means that the mitzvos draw down G-d's Names, such as Havayah pointed with patach into Chochmah, and it is why they are called “the limbs of the King.”

דכמו שמלובש חיות הנפש באברין ע"ד משל עד שמתאחדת עמהם כך מלובש אור א"ס ב"ה המשכת בחי' שמותיו ית' בבחי' חכמה וחסד שבמעשה המצות עד שמתאחדת ממש באור א"ס ב"ה הנמשך בהם.

For just as the life-force of the soul is enclothed in the limbs, by way of analogy, until it becomes one with them, so the Infinite Light, blessed be He, the drawing down of the level of His Names, may He be blessed, is enclothed in the level of Chochmah and Chesed that is in the performance of the mitzvos, until [that level] is truly united with the Infinite Light, blessed be He, that is drawn into them.

In a person the life-force becomes one with the limbs it animates. In the same way the Infinite Light, drawn down through G-d's Names, is clothed in the Chochmah and Chesed of the mitzvos until they are wholly united with it; this is how G-d, who has no body, can be said to have “limbs.”

SECTION 3 • ¶10-14

Avraham's service above

10 ובזה יובן ענין המצות שכתוב באברהם וישמר משמרת מצותי³⁵ וגו'. דהיינו שגרם ירידת והמשכת אור א"ס ב"ה והתלבשותו במדת החכמה וחסד

With this, the matter of the mitzvos written of Avraham, “and he kept My charge, My commandments,” etc., will be understood. That is, he brought about the descent and drawing down of the Infinite Light, blessed be He, and its enclothing in the attribute of Chochmah and Chesed,

This explains the verse about Avraham, “he kept My charge, My commandments.” His mitzvos brought about the descent of the Infinite Light into Chochmah and Chesed.

ע"י שנעשה מרכבה אליו ית' במדת האהבה הלך ונסוע הנגבה³⁶ בבחי' רצוא ושוב³⁷ כי רוח אייתי רוח³⁸ ואמשיך רוח.

by becoming a chariot (merkavah) for Him, may He be blessed, through the attribute of love: "going and journeying toward the south," in the mode of "running and returning" (ratzo vashov). For "spirit brings spirit and draws down spirit."

He did so by becoming a "chariot" for G-d, wholly given over to Him, through the attribute of love. The Torah describes him "going and journeying toward the south," the side Kabbalah links with Chesed, in the rhythm of "running and returning" that Yechezkel saw in the living creatures; and the Zohar teaches that a spirit from below brings and draws down a spirit from above.

11 וכמ"ש אם ישם אליו לבו³⁹ וגו'. וגם מחמת שהרבה חסד בעולם. ויטע אשל⁴⁰ וגו'. וע"י שהיה שפל רוח מאד. וכמ"ש ואנכי עפר ואפר.⁴¹

As it is written, "If he sets his heart toward Him," etc. And also because he increased kindness in the world: "And he planted an eshel," etc. And through his being very lowly of spirit, as it is written, "and I am dust and ashes."

Three of Avraham's qualities are named. He set his heart toward G-d, the verse the Zohar connects with spirit drawing spirit; he increased kindness in the world, as with the eshel he planted in Be'er Sheva; and he was deeply humble, calling himself "dust and ashes" as he pleaded for Sedom.

לכן ע"י כמים הפנים⁴² וגו'. ע"י מדת ענוה המשיך ירידת אור א"ס ב"ה בחכמה וחסד שהוא בחי' ירידה ושפלות לגבי אור א"ס ב"ה

Therefore, through this, "As water [mirrors] the face," etc.: through the attribute of humility he drew down the descent of the Infinite Light, blessed be He, into Chochmah and Chesed, which is a descent and a lowering relative to the Infinite Light, blessed be He.

"As in water face answers to face, so the heart of man to man": the response from above mirrors the person's stance below. Because Avraham lowered himself in humility, the Infinite Light likewise lowered itself into Chochmah and Chesed, which for it is a descent.

דאנת הוא חכים ולא בחכמה ידיעא ולא מכל מדות אלין כלל⁴³ שאין ערוך אליו. וכמאמר רז"ל [רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] במקום שאתה מוצא גדולתו⁴⁴ של הקב"ה שם אתה מוצא ענותנותו כו':

For “You are wise, but not with a known wisdom,” and “not of any of these attributes at all”: they bear no comparison to Him. And as our Sages, of blessed memory, said, “In the place where you find the greatness of the Holy One, blessed be He, there you find His humility,” etc.

Chochmah and Chesed are a lowering for the Infinite Light because they bear no comparison to it, as Tikkunei Zohar says. The Sages’ saying that G-d’s greatness and His humility are found together fits this: in Torah Ohr, Chayei Sara (16a), the Alter Rebbe explains that His giving life to the worlds is not His greatness but His humility, a lowering of Himself.

12 אך הנה עיקר המשכות אברהם אבינו⁴⁵ ע"ה [עליו השלום] היה בעולמות עליונים⁴⁶ הגם שהמשיך אור א"ס ב"ה למטה ג"כ להיות גילוי אלהות בעולם וכמ"ש ויקרא שם בשם^{47,48} ה' אל עולם.

But the main [part] of the drawings-down of Avraham our father, peace be upon him, was in the higher worlds — even though he also drew the Infinite Light (Or Ein Sof), blessed be He, down below, so that there be a revelation of G-dliness in the world, as it is written, “And he called there in the Name of Havayah, the G-d (El) of the world.”

The maamar now sets Avraham’s work apart from what Sinai brought. Avraham did draw G-dliness down into this world, making G-d known: he “called there in the Name of Havayah, El Olam,” which can mean the G-d of eternity or, as here, the G-d of the world; but the main effect of his service was in the higher worlds.

וגם הנפש אשר עשו בחרן⁴⁹ ונטע אמונת ה' בלבם

And also “the souls that they had made in Charan,” and he planted faith in G-d in their hearts.

He also brought “the souls they had made in Charan” to faith, planting belief in G-d in their hearts. Plainly the verse speaks of the people they had acquired; Rashi, following the Sages, reads “made” as the people they brought under the wings of the Shechinah, the reading used here.

מ"מ אין זה ערך לגבי המשכות שהמשיך למעלה בעולמות עליונים להיות תוספת גילוי אור א"ס ב"ה בבחינת חכמה וחסד עליון דאצי" ושם היה עיקר עבודת אברהם וישמר משמרת מצותי^{50,51} וגוי.

Nevertheless, this bears no comparison to the drawings-down that he drew down above, in the higher worlds, so that there be an added revelation of the Infinite Light, blessed be He, in the level of the supernal Chochmah and Chesed of the World of Atzilus (Emanation). And there was the main [focus] of Avraham’s service: “and he kept My charge, My commandments,” etc.

Yet all this effect on our world bears no comparison to what he drew down above: an added revelation of the Infinite Light into the supernal Chochmah and Chesed of Atzilus, the highest world. There lay the main point of his service, and this is what the verse means by his keeping G-d’s charge and commandments.

מצותי דוקא מצות שהקב"ה עושה בעצמו הקב"ה מבקר חולים⁵² שענין החולים בעולמות עליונים הוא כמ"ש סמכוני באשיות⁵³ וגוי כי חולת אהבה אני.

"My commandments" specifically: commandments that the Holy One, blessed be He, does Himself. "The Holy One, blessed be He, visits the sick"; and the matter of the sick in the higher worlds is as it is written, "Sustain me with flagons," etc., "for I am sick with love."

"My commandments" means mitzvos that G-d Himself, as it were, performs, like the Sages' "The Holy One, blessed be He, visits the sick." In the higher worlds "the sick" are the lovesick soul of the Song of Songs, where the beloved says, "Sustain me with flagons... for I am sick with love." In Torah Ohr, Miketz (34d), the Alter Rebbe likewise stresses "His commandments": the mitzvos are G-d's own, the limbs of the King, one with the Infinite Light as a limb is one with the life within it.

שבחי חולת אהבה היא מחמת ההסתר וההעלם שכל בחי ממלא וסובב כל עלמין אינן אלא בחי זיו ורק הודו על ארץ ושמים⁵⁴ וגוי.

For the state of being sick with love comes from the hiddenness and concealment: that the whole level of the light that fills all worlds and the light that encompasses all worlds (memalei and sovev kol almin) is nothing but the level of a radiance (ziv), and only "His splendor is over earth and heaven," etc.

This lovesickness comes from G-d's hiddenness: all the light that fills the worlds and all the light that encompasses them is only a radiance of Him. As the verse says, "His splendor is over earth and heaven": only His splendor, not His essence.

13 ואי לזאת תכסף ותכלה הנפש לדבקה בא"ס ב"ה ממש. ועל זה נאמר סמכוני באשיות רפדוני בתפוחים⁵⁵ שהם ענין התגלות אור א"ס ב"ה מההסתר וההעלם שגילוי זה הוא רפואה לחולת אהבה זו.

And therefore the soul yearns and pines to cleave to the Infinite One (Ein Sof), blessed be He, Himself. And of this it is said, "Sustain me with flagons, spread apples about me": these signify the revelation of the Infinite Light, blessed be He, out of the hiddenness and concealment, for this revelation is the cure for this sickness of love.

Because of this hiddenness the soul yearns and pines to cleave to the Infinite One Himself, not only to His radiance. The "flagons" and "apples" that sustain the lovesick are the revelation of the Infinite Light out of its concealment; that revelation is the cure, and it is G-d's "visiting the sick."

14 וכן אמרו הקב"ה מניח תפלין.⁵⁶ כי תפלין מלשון התקשרות⁵⁷ שהוא התקשרות אור א"ס ב"ה בחכמה. והיינו דאמרין תפלין דמארי עלמא מה כתיב בהו ומי כעמך ישראל⁵⁸ וגו'.

So too they said, "The Holy One, blessed be He, puts on tefillin." For tefillin is an expression of binding (hiskashrus), which is the binding of the Infinite Light, blessed be He, with Chochmah. And this is what we say: "The tefillin of the Master of the world — what is written in them? 'And who is like Your people Israel,'" etc.

Another of G-d's own mitzvos: the Gemara says He puts on tefillin. "Tefillin" is read as binding (hiskashrus), the Infinite Light binding itself with Chochmah, a reading Kehot traces to Erchei HaKinuyim, under "Tefillin." And the Gemara says G-d's tefillin contain the verse praising Israel from David's prayer, "And who is like Your people Israel."

כי ישראל עלו במחשבה⁵⁹ בראשית בשביל ישראל⁶⁰ שנקראו ראשית^{61,62} והתפלין הם ההתקשרות של אור א"ס ב"ה בבחי' ישראל שנקראו ראשית הוא בחי' חכמה

For Israel arose in [G-d's] thought; "In the beginning" (bereishis) [is] for the sake of Israel, who are called "beginning" (reishis). And the tefillin are the binding of the Infinite Light, blessed be He, with the level of Israel, who are called "beginning," which is the level of Chochmah.

Israel "arose in G-d's thought" before creation, and the Sages read Bereishis, "In the beginning," as bereishis, "for the sake of reishis": for the sake of Israel, who are called "beginning" (reishis). "Beginning" is the level of Chochmah, so G-d's tefillin bind the Infinite Light with Israel, who are rooted in Chochmah.

וע"ד זה שאר המצות של הקב"ה הן המשכות מאור א"ס ב"ה בעולמות עליונים ושם גילוי המשכת אור א"ס ב"ה והתלבשותו בחכמה וחסד בבחי' איהו וחיוהי חד איהו וגרמוהי חד. אבל האי עלמא עלמא דפרודא כמ"ש ומשם יפרד⁶³ וגו'.

And in this way the other mitzvos of the Holy One, blessed be He, are drawings-down from the Infinite Light, blessed be He, in the higher worlds; and there is the revelation of the drawing down of the Infinite Light, blessed be He, and its enclothing in Chochmah and Chesed, in the mode of "He and His life-forces are one; He and His vessels are one." But this world is a world of separation, as it is written, "and from there it divides," etc.

The same holds for G-d's other mitzvos: they draw down the Infinite Light in the higher worlds, where it is clothed in Chochmah and Chesed in complete unity. This world, though, is "a world of separation," as the verse about the river that leaves Eden says, "and from there it divides."

SECTION 4 • ¶15

What Sinai brought

15 וכדי להיות המשכת אור א"ס ב"ה בבחי' איהו וחיוהי חד כו' גם למטה בעולם הפירוד נתנה התורה לישראל שתהא התלבשות והתאחדות אור א"ס ב"ה ממש בחכמה וחסד שלמטה במעשה המצות וקיומן בעשיה גשמית.

And in order for the drawing down of the Infinite Light, blessed be He, in the mode of "He and His life-forces are one," etc., [to be] also below, in the world of separation, the Torah was given to Israel: so that there be an actual enclothing and uniting of the Infinite Light, blessed be He, in the Chochmah and Chesed below, in the performance of the mitzvos and their fulfillment in physical action.

To make that unity real below as well, in the world of separation, the Torah was given to Israel. Through physical mitzvos the Infinite Light itself is clothed in, and united with, the Chochmah and Chesed found below.

וכמ"ש וירד ה' על הר סיני.⁶⁴ וע"ז אמרו דהאי יומא הוא דקא גרים:

As it is written, "And Havayah descended upon Mount Sinai." And of this they said that it is "this day that brought it about."

This is the meaning of "Havayah descended upon Mount Sinai": the divine came down into the lowest world. That is what Rav Yosef meant by "this day that brought it about."

SECTION 5 • ¶16-18

The two unities

16 והענין הוא הנה כתיב כי אל דעות⁶⁵ הוי"ה. פי' ב' דעות יחודא עלאה ויחודא תתאה.

The explanation is this. It is written, "For Havayah is a G-d of knowledges (El de'os)." Meaning: two [kinds of] knowledge, the higher unity (yichuda ila'ah) and the lower unity (yichuda tata'ah).

To explain how this works, the Alter Rebbe turns to Chanah's song: "Havayah is a G-d of knowledges," in the plural. The two knowledges are two ways of seeing G-d's unity: the higher unity and the lower unity.

יחודא עלאה מלמעלה למטה שכל מה שלמטה מטה הוא יותר כלא וכאין וכל מה שהוא למעלה יותר יותר נחשב ליש.

The higher unity is from above to below: the lower anything is, the more it is as naught and as nothing, and the higher anything is, the more it is considered to be something (yesh).

The higher unity looks from above downward. From that view, the lower a thing is, the more it is as nothing; only what is higher counts as real existence (yesh).

17 וכמ"ש להנחיל אוהבי יש.⁶⁶ ויחודא תתאה ממטה למעלה היא בחי' יש מאין שכל מה שלמטה מטה נחשב יותר ליש ונראה לעיני בשר דבר בפני עצמו ומורגש

As it is written, "To cause those who love me to inherit yesh." And the lower unity, from below to above, is the level of something from nothing (yesh me'ayin): the lower anything is, the more it is considered something, and it appears to eyes of flesh as a thing in its own right, and is felt;

Proverbs speaks of yesh, "substance," as the inheritance of those who love wisdom: true existence belongs to the higher levels. The lower unity looks from below upward; it is the view of creation, something from nothing, in which the lower a thing is, the more it seems to exist, appearing to physical eyes as a thing in its own right.

ומה שהוא למעלה מעלה הוא ענין שאינו נראה ולא מורגש ומושג ובשם זה של אל כולל ב' הדעות and whatever is higher is a matter that is not seen, nor felt and grasped. And in this Name, El, both kinds of knowledge are included:

From this view, what is higher is unseen, beyond feeling and grasp. Both views are included in the Name El of "a G-d of knowledges."

שכשם שמלמעלה למטה כל מה שלמטה הוא כלא ואינו תופס מקום כך הוא ממטה למעלה ג"כ מפני כי ולו נתכנו עלילות⁶⁷ ולא כתיב באלף והקרי ולו בוי"ו.

just as from above to below whatever is below is as naught and takes up no space, so it is also from below to above. This is because of "and by Him (velo) actions are weighed": velo is written with an alef ["not"], and the reading is velo with a vav ["by Him"].

Just as from above the lower is as nothing and takes up no space, so it must be from below upward too. The proof is the next words of the verse, where velo is written with an alef ("not") and read with a vav ("by Him"), as the next paragraph explains. In Torah Ohr, Lech Lecha (11d), the Alter Rebbe explains another such word, in "He made us, velo we" (Psalms 100:3): the alef stands for Keser, above the chain of descent, and through it the reading with a vav, "we are His," can be true even below.

18 ולא באלף הם מצות לא תעשה. ולו בוי"ו הם מצות עשה. נתכנו להיות שוים יחודא עלאה ויחודא

תתאה

Velo with an alef: these are the prohibitive commandments. Velo with a vav: these are the positive commandments. "Are weighed": so that they be equal, the higher unity and the lower unity,

The spelling with an alef, "not," stands for the prohibitions, and the reading with a vav, "by Him," for the positive commandments. Together they make the two unities "weighed," that is, equal.

להיות למטה כמו למעלה ממש שלא יהיה היש תופס מקום כלל כי על התורה ומצות נאמר נעשה אדם בצלמנו⁶⁸ כדמותנו.

so that it be below exactly as above, so that the yesh takes up no space at all. For of the Torah and mitzvos it is said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

The aim is that below be exactly as above, so that the yesh, the sense of separate existence, takes up no space at all. The verse "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" refers to the Torah and mitzvos.

בצלמנו בחיי התורה.⁶⁹ כדמותנו בחיי המצות שהן הן בחיי אדם שעל דמות הכסא⁷⁰ כו' שהן הן פנימיות רצונו וחכמתו ית' בלי שום הסתר פנים ואין היש מעלים ומסתיר על אור א"ס ב"ה השורה בתוכם

"In our image" is the level of the Torah; "after our likeness" is the level of the mitzvos. These are precisely the level of the "man" who is upon "the likeness of the throne," etc.; for they are precisely the inner dimension (pnimiyus) of His will and His wisdom, may He be blessed, without any hiding of the Face, and the yesh does not conceal and hide the Infinite Light, blessed be He, that rests within them.

"Our image" is the Torah and "our likeness" the mitzvos: the "man" that Yechezkel saw upon the likeness of the throne. They are the inner dimension of G-d's will and wisdom, with no hiding of His face, so in them the yesh does not conceal the Infinite Light that rests within.

ובהם ועל ידם ממשיך אור א"ס ב"ה להיות למטה כמו למעלה בבחי' אין עוד מלבדו⁷¹ ולא תחללו⁷² את שם קדשי שלא לעשות חלל⁷³ כו' ולא להיות דוחק רגלי השכינה⁷⁴ רק ואשים דברי בפיו⁷⁵ דברי ממש.

And in them and through them one draws down the Infinite Light, blessed be He, so that it be below as above, in the mode of "there is nothing else besides Him." And "You shall not profane (sechalelu) My holy Name": not to make a void (chalal), etc., and not to be [one who] "pushes the feet of the Shechinah"; but rather, "And I have put My words in your mouth," My very words.

In them and through them the Infinite Light is drawn down so that below is as above, "there is nothing else besides Him." "You shall not profane (sechalelu) My holy Name" is read as "do not make a chalal," a void empty of G-d, and do not "push the feet of the Shechinah" with self-importance; instead, "I have put My words in your mouth," G-d's own words.

SECTION 6 • ¶19-21

A consuming fire

19 והנה המצות הן לבושיך ומקיפין והתורה היא מזון ופנימיות שבהם ממשיך אור א"ס ב"ה להיות שורה על נפשו בבחי' מקיף וגם להיות הנפש תוכה רצוף אהבה⁷⁶ בבחי' פנימית.

Now, the mitzvos are garments and encompassing [lights] (makifin), and the Torah is food and the inner dimension. Through them one draws down the Infinite Light, blessed be He, to rest upon one's soul as an encompassing [light] (makif), and also so that the soul's "inside is inlaid with love," in an inner mode.

The mitzvos are "garments" and encompassing lights (makifin), surrounding the soul from outside; the Torah is "food" and inner light, taken in. Through them the Infinite Light rests upon the soul as a makif and also fills it from within, so that its inside is "inlaid with love," as the Song of Songs says of Shlomo's palanquin.

ועי' נאמר כי הוי"ה אלהיך אש אוכלת הוא. פי' הוי"ה בחי' תורה.⁷⁷

And of this it is said, "For Havayah your G-d (Elokecha) is a consuming fire." Meaning: Havayah is the level of Torah,

Moshe's warning "For Havayah your G-d is a consuming fire" is read accordingly: "Havayah" stands for the Torah, and, as the next part says, "your G-d" (Elokecha) for the mitzvos.

20 ואלהיך פי' בחי' מצות הן הם כמו האש ע"ד משל שאם נותנים אש תוך הכלי וסביבותיו הרי ממילא שולט האש מעבר אל עבר ושורף ומכלה לגמרי.

and “your G-d” (Elokecha) means the level of mitzvos. They are like fire, by way of analogy: if one puts fire inside a vessel and around it, then the fire naturally takes hold from side to side, burning and consuming entirely.

“Your G-d” stands for the mitzvos. Fire placed both inside a vessel and around it takes hold through and through and consumes it completely; so the Torah within and the mitzvos around work together.

כך התורה והמצות ע"י שהם בבחי' פנימיות ובבחינת מקיפין הרי יש בהן כח לכלות ולשרוף לגמרי את חומריות נפש הבהמית וגסותה

So too the Torah and mitzvos: since they are in the mode of inwardness (pnimiyus) and in the mode of encompassing (makifin), they have the power to consume and burn up entirely the materiality of the animal soul and its coarseness,

Because the Torah and mitzvos act both from within and from around, they can burn away entirely the materiality and coarseness of the animal soul.

שהיא המסתרת ומעלמת על אור ה' א"ס ב"ה להיות נראה ליש ודבר בפני עצמו שלכן היא צריכה למירוק בגיהנם

which is what hides and conceals the light of G-d, the Infinite One (Ein Sof), blessed be He, so that there appears to be a yesh, a thing in its own right. That is why it needs to be scoured in Gehinnom.

That coarseness is what hides G-d's light and makes things seem to be a yesh, a separate existence. This is why the animal soul needs to be scoured in Gehinnom.

אבל תלמיד חכם⁷⁸ אין אור של גיהנם שולט בו כי התורה והמצות הם הממרקות מבית ומבחוץ ונגלה כבוד⁷⁹ ה' למטה כמו למעלה.

But over a Torah scholar the fire of Gehinnom has no power, for the Torah and mitzvos are what scour [him] from within and from without; and “the glory of Havayah is revealed” below as above.

The Gemara says the fire of Gehinnom has no power over a Torah scholar, because the Torah and mitzvos have already scoured him from within and from without. In him G-d's glory is revealed below as above.

וזהו שכתוב והר סיני עשן⁸⁰ כלו מפני אשר ירד עליו ה' באש וידבר הוי"ה אליכם מתוך האש⁸¹ וגוי:⁸²

This is [the meaning of] what is written, “And Mount Sinai was all in smoke, because Havayah descended upon it in fire,” and “Havayah spoke to you from the midst of the fire,” etc.

This is the meaning of the verses about Sinai: the mountain was all smoke because G-d descended on it in fire, and He spoke from the midst of the fire. The fire of Sinai is the Torah and mitzvos, which consume coarseness and reveal G-d below.

21 והנה כח זה להמשכה זו ניתן לישראל שהם הם הממשיכים תורתו ומצותיו ע"י עסק תורתם ועבודתם בבחינת ולא תחללו⁸³ וגוי.

Now, the power for this drawing down was given to Israel, for it is they who draw down His Torah and His mitzvos, through their occupation in Torah and their service, in the mode of “You shall not profane,” etc.

The power to draw G-dliness down through Torah and mitzvos was given to Israel: they draw down G-d's Torah and mitzvos through their study and service, in the spirit of “You shall not profane,” leaving no void.

מה שא"כ עכו"ם [עובדי כוכבים ומזלות] אפי' [אפילו] אם מקיימין תורה ומצות אין ממשיכין כלום והיא בחי' מתנה טובה.

This is not so with idolaters: even if they fulfill Torah and mitzvos, they draw down nothing. And this is the level of “a good gift.”

This power is not built into the deeds themselves but was given to Israel, so the Alter Rebbe says that idolaters who perform the same acts draw down nothing. He calls it “a good gift,” the term the next paragraph takes from the Sages.

SECTION 7 • 122

The Crown of Torah

22 וכמארז"ל [וכמאמר רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] שלש מתנות טובות כו'.⁸⁴ וזמן מתנה זו היא בחג השבועות זמן מתן תורה גלוי בחי' כתר תורה שהיא למעלה מבחי' התורה.

As our Sages, of blessed memory, said, “Three good gifts,” etc. And the time of this gift is on the festival of Shavuot, the time of the Giving of the Torah: the revelation of the level of the Crown of Torah (Keser Torah), which is above the level of the Torah [itself].

The Sages speak of three good gifts G-d gave Israel, the Torah among them. The gift of drawing G-dliness down through Torah and mitzvos comes on Shavuot, the time of the Giving of the Torah, as a revelation of the “Crown of Torah” (Keser Torah), a level above the Torah itself.

וזהו אי לאו האי יומא דקא גרים כמה יוסף איכא בשוקא⁸⁵ כמה בחי' יוסף. יוסף דעת יוסף מכאוב⁸⁶

This is [the meaning of] “Were it not for this day that brought it about, how many Yosefs are there in the marketplace”: how many levels of yosef (“adding”)! “He who adds (yosef) knowledge adds (yosef) pain.”

Now Rav Yosef’s saying is explained by reading his name, Yosef, as the word yosef, “adds”: without this day there would be many kinds of “adding.” Koheles says that one who adds knowledge adds pain.

וכמה מיני חכמות זרות דכתיב בהם חכמים הם להרע⁸⁷ ולהטיב לא ידעו כי משם יפרד⁸⁸ אבל האי יומא הוא גלוי חכמתו ורצונו ית' המלובשת בתורה שבה התלבשות אוא"ס [אור אין סוף] ב"ה וגלוי למטה כמו למעלה.

And how many kinds of foreign wisdoms, of which it is written, “They are wise to do evil, but to do good they do not know,” for “from there it divides.” But this day is the revelation of His wisdom and will, may He be blessed, which is en clothed in the Torah, in which there is the enclothing of the Infinite Light (Or Ein Sof), blessed be He, and a revelation below as above.

There are also many kinds of foreign wisdom, of which G-d says through Yirmeyahu, “They are wise to do evil, but to do good they do not know”; such wisdom belongs to the world of separation. But this day revealed G-d’s own wisdom and will, clothed in the Torah, in which the Infinite Light itself is clothed and revealed below as above.

כי האי יומא הוא ממחרת השבת אחר ימי הספירה שבועה שבועות שהם מבחי' ז' שמות שאינן נמחקין שהם בסדר השתלשלות⁸⁹

For this day is “on the morrow of the Shabbos,” after the days of the Counting, seven weeks, which are from the level of the seven Names that may not be erased, which are within the order of the chain of descending worlds (hishtalshelus).

Shavuot is “the morrow of the Shabbos” of the verse: the Torah counts seven weeks and brings the new offering on the morrow of the seventh (Leviticus 23:15-16). Those seven weeks correspond to the seven Names that may not be erased, which belong to the ordered chain of descent; the explanation printed after this maamar in Torah Ohr (Yisro 3, 68d) says that these Names are the lights of the seven attributes.

שכך צריך להיות תחלה ההמשכה מעט מעט עד שבחג השבועות בא הגלוי מלמעלה מסדר ההשתלשלות שמעלה ומטה שוין שם רוחניות כמו גשמיות.

For so it must be: first the drawing down, little by little, until on the festival of Shavuot the revelation comes from above the order of the chain of descent, where above and below are equal, the spiritual like the physical.

So the drawing down must first come little by little, step by step; then on Shavuot a revelation comes from beyond the chain of descent, where above and below, spiritual and physical, are equal.

כמ"ש המשפילי לראות בשמים ובארץ⁹⁰ וגוי כמ"ש במ"א. והוא ענין כתר תורה. ולכן בא לידי גלוי למטה כמו למעלה.

As it is written, "Who looks down low upon heaven and earth," etc., as is explained elsewhere. And this is the matter of the Crown of Torah; and therefore it comes into revelation below as above.

This is the psalmist's "Who looks down low upon heaven and earth": to the One who sits on high, heaven and earth are equally low. This is the Crown of Torah, and that is why on Shavuot it is revealed below as above.

SECTION 8 • ¶23-25

Moshe speaks, G-d answers

23 והנה על המשכת התורה בבחי' זו כתיב משה ידבר.⁹¹ משה בחינת בטול והאיש משה ענו מאד מכל האדם אשר על פני האדמה. ונחנו מה.^{92,93}

Now, of the drawing down of the Torah in this mode it is written, "Moshe speaks." Moshe is the level of self-nullification (bittul): "And the man Moshe was very humble, more than any man on the face of the earth," and "What are we?"

Now the opening verse is explained: the drawing down of the Torah in this way is "Moshe speaks." Moshe is bittul: the Torah calls him the humblest of all men on the face of the earth, and he said of himself and Aharon, "What are we?"

ידבר מלשון המשכה והנהגה. כמו ידבר עמים⁹⁴ דהיינו שממשיך אוא"ס [אור אין סוף] ב"ה למטה ע"י בחי' בטול⁹⁵

Yedaber ("speaks") is an expression of drawing down and leading, as in "He leads (yadber) peoples"; that is, he draws down the Infinite Light (Or Ein Sof), blessed be He, below through the level of bittul.

Yedaber, "speaks," also means leading and drawing down, as yadber in "He subdues peoples under us," so "Moshe speaks" means that Moshe draws the Infinite Light down below through bittul. In Torah Ohr, Bereishis (4a), the Alter Rebbe derives medaber, the "speaking" creature, from the same verse: man leads all the levels of creation by raising them through his service.

כי החכמה מאין תמצא⁹⁶ מבחי אין. ובמקום שאתה מוצא גדולתו שם אתה מוצא ענותנותו.⁹⁷ והיינו עיי בחי ענוה.

For “wisdom is found from ayin,” from the level of ayin (nothing). And “In the place where you find His greatness, there you find His humility”; that is, through the level of humility.

Job asks, “Wisdom, from where (me’ayin) shall it be found?”; the maamar reads me’ayin as “from ayin,” from nothingness: Chochmah comes through self-nullification. And as with G-d’s own greatness and humility, the drawing down comes through humility.

24 והנה משה הוא הממשיך מלמעלה למטה. כי משה שושבינא דמלכא^{98,99} ואיש האלהים בעלה דמטרוניתא דהיינו שהוא ממשיך בחי יחודא עלאה שכל מה שלמטה מטה הוא כאין ואין עוד מלבדו¹⁰⁰ וגו’

Now, Moshe is the one who draws down from above to below. For Moshe is “the groomsman of the King,” and “the man of G-d” (ish ha-Elokim) [is] “the husband of the Matrona”; that is, he draws down the level of the higher unity (yichuda ila’ah), in which the lower anything is, the more it is as nothing, and “there is nothing else besides Him,” etc.

Moshe draws from above to below. The Zohar calls him “the groomsman of the King,” and “the man (ish) of G-d” is read as “the husband of the Matrona,” the Shechinah, since ish means both “man” and “husband”; he draws down the higher unity, in which the lower is as nothing and “there is nothing else besides Him.” In Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar (2d), the Alter Rebbe explains the image: as a groomsman leads the groom to the bride, Moshe draws the unity of the Infinite Light down to rest in a person’s soul.

והאלהים הוא בחי יחודא תתאה שהוא בחי כסא הכבוד שהוא מקור לנפש הבהמית פני אריה פני שור¹⁰¹ כו. משאכ משה בחי מה היינו בחי אדם שעל הכסא¹⁰² כו אדם בגימטריא מ”ה [שם מ”ה].^{103,104}

And ha-Elokim is the level of the lower unity (yichuda tata’ah), which is the level of the Throne of Glory, which is the source of the animal soul: “the face of a lion,” “the face of an ox,” etc. Not so Moshe, the level of mah (“what”), that is, the level of the “man” (adam) who is upon the Throne, etc.; adam has the numerical value of mah.

Ha-Elokim, the second half of the verse, is the lower unity: the Throne of Glory, source of the animal soul, as in the faces of the lion and the ox in Yechezkel’s chariot. Moshe, by contrast, is mah (“what”), the “man” upon the Throne, for the letters of adam (1+4+40) add up to mah (40+5), forty-five; in Torah Ohr, Shemos (52b), this “man” of Atzilus is the Name Mah, Havayah spelled out with alefs, which also adds up to forty-five.

25 והוא בחי' הצמצום להיות יש מאין כי אלהים לשון שררה כי אין מלך בלא עם¹⁰⁵ מלשון עוממות.

And this is the level of the tzimtzum, for there to be something from nothing (yesh me'ayin). For Elokim is a term for rulership, for “there is no king without a people (am)” — from the term omemus (dimness).

The lower unity is the tzimtzum that lets something come from nothing. Elokim means rulership, and “there is no king without a people”; a people (am) is named from omemus, dimness, beings distant enough from the king to be ruled. In Torah Ohr, Bereishis (5a), the Alter Rebbe explains that the Name Elokim hides the light through contractions so that separate beings can exist, and that this is also called the Shechinah, G-d dwelling within creation.

והאלהים יענו הנה לשון עניה בלשון הקודש הוא כמארוז"ל [כמאמר רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] גבי הלל עונה אחריהם מה שהם אומרים¹⁰⁶ שמה שהשומע אומר מה שאומר המדבר נקי עונה.

“And ha-Elokim answers him (ya'anenu)”: the term “answering” in the Holy Tongue is as our Sages, of blessed memory, said regarding Hallel, “he responds after them what they say”; for when the listener says what the speaker says, it is called “answering.”

“Answering” in the Holy Tongue means repeating the speaker's words, as the Mishnah says of Hallel: one who hears it from a reader “responds after them what they say.”

וזהו והאלהים יענו שבחי' יחודא תתאה יענה להמשכה זו של משה¹⁰⁷ שהמשיך מבחי' יחודא עלאה להיות מלמטה למעלה כמו מלמעלה למטה.

This is [the meaning of] “and ha-Elokim answers him”: the level of the lower unity answers this drawing down of Moshe, who drew down from the level of the higher unity, so that it be from below to above as it is from above to below.

So “ha-Elokim answers him” means that the lower unity repeats what Moshe draws down from the higher unity: from below upward becomes as from above downward.

וענין ידבר ויענו לשון הווה. הנה אתפשטותא דמשה בכל דרא^{108, 109} היא בחי' הבטול שיש בכל אדם לפום מאי דמשער בלביה בקיום התורה והמצות בבחי' בטל רצונך:¹¹⁰

And the matter of yedaber and ya'anenu [being] in the present tense: the extension of Moshe in every generation is the level of bittul that is in every person, “according to what he measures in his heart,” in fulfilling the Torah and mitzvos in the mode of “Nullify your will.”

This answers the question of the present tense. Moshe extends into every generation, as Tikkunei Zohar says: his extension is the bittul in every person, each according to what he “measures in his heart,” when he keeps the Torah and mitzvos in the spirit of “Nullify your will.” So “Moshe speaks, and G-d answers” is ongoing, not only a past event.

SECTION 9 • ¶26-28

The voice of Moshe

26 וזהו שאמרו רז"ל [רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] כל הקורא ושונה¹¹¹ הקב"ה קורא ושונה כנגדו.¹¹²

This is what our Sages, of blessed memory, said: "Whoever reads and studies, the Holy One, blessed be He, reads and studies opposite him."

This explains the Sages' saying that whoever reads and studies Torah, the Holy One, blessed be He, reads and studies opposite him.

לא הכל שוים בבחינה אחת אלא כל חד לפום שיעורא דיליה בבחי' הבטול לאור א"ס ב"ה בחי' אין עוד מלבדו¹¹³ ואני ה' לא שנית.¹¹⁴

Not all are equal, on one level; rather, each one according to his own measure in the level of bittul to the Infinite Light, blessed be He: the level of "there is nothing else besides Him" and "I, Havayah, have not changed."

Not everyone is on one level in this: each person draws it according to his own measure of bittul to the Infinite Light, the awareness that "there is nothing else besides Him" and that "I, Havayah, have not changed."

27 וכמו שהיה אוא"ס [אור אין סוף] ב"ה ממלא כל חלל זה דעוה"ז קודם שנברא עולם הזה כך הוא ממש לאחר שנברא והוא בחי' משה ונחנו מה.¹¹⁵

Just as the Infinite Light, blessed be He, filled this whole space of this world before this world was created, so it is, exactly, after it was created. And this is the level of Moshe: "and what are we?"

The bittul meant here is the recognition that the Infinite Light fills the space of this world after creation exactly as it did before. That is Moshe's "What are we?"

ושכינה מדברת¹¹⁶ מתוך גרונו של משה וכן בכל דור ודור. כמו שאמר המגיד להבית יוסף אני המשנה המדברת בפיו.¹¹⁷

And "the Shechinah speaks from within the throat of Moshe"; and so in each and every generation, as the Maggid said to the Beis Yosef, "I am the Mishnah that speaks in your mouth."

Because Moshe was wholly nullified, "the Shechinah spoke from within his throat"; and so in every generation, as the heavenly Maggid told the Beis Yosef, Rabbi Yosef Karo, "I am the Mishnah that speaks in your mouth." In Torah Ohr, Va'eira (56a), the Alter Rebbe explains that because Moshe said "What are we?" in total bittul, the Torah was given through him in speech: one who does not feel himself at all simply says what G-d says.

28 ולכן נק' התלמיד חכם בשם משה כדאיתא בגמ' [בגמרא] משה שפיר קאמרת.¹¹⁸ כי התלמיד חכם הוא המקבל מבחי' חכמה עלאה כח מ"ה [מה] ואבא יסד ברתא¹¹⁹ כמ"ש ה' בחכמה יסד ארץ¹²⁰ הוא דבר ה' זו הלכה¹²¹ שבפי ת"ח [תלמיד חכם / תלמידי חכמים].¹²²

Therefore a Torah scholar is called by the name Moshe, as is found in the Gemara: “Moshe, you have spoken well.” For the Torah scholar is the one who receives from the level of supernal Chochmah (wisdom), [which is] koach mah (“the power of what”); and “Abba founded the daughter,” as it is written, “Havayah founded the earth with wisdom”: this is “the word of Havayah”: this is the halachah” in the mouth of a Torah scholar.

This is why the Gemara addresses a Torah scholar as “Moshe”: “Moshe, you have spoken well.” The scholar receives from supernal Chochmah, read as koach mah, “the power of what,” Moshe’s level; and as the Zohar says, “Abba founded the daughter”: Chochmah founded the “earth,” which is “the word of Havayah,” the halachah in the scholar’s mouth. The Tzemach Tzedek (Or HaTorah, Yisro, p. 832) refers to this passage and writes that the Alter Rebbe holds with Avodas HaKodesh that Israel understood all the commandments from G-d’s own mouth, without any intermediary, unlike Rashi and Ramban.

וזהו בקולו של משה¹²³ כי קול הוא בחי' המשכה מהעלם אל הגלוי כמו מהבל הלב אל הגרון ע"ד משל כנודע מ"ש על פסוק קנה חכמה¹²⁴

This is [the meaning of] “with the voice of Moshe”: for voice is the level of drawing down from the hidden to the revealed, as from the breath of the heart to the throat, by way of analogy, as is known from what is said on the verse “Acquire wisdom.”

Now the words “with a voice,” Moshe’s voice, are explained. Voice is a drawing from the hidden to the revealed, as breath rises from the heart to the throat. The Alter Rebbe calls this known from what is said on “Acquire (kneh) wisdom”; kneh is spelled like kaneh, the windpipe through which the voice rises.

כלומר כפי ערך המשכת בחי' הבטול לאור א"ס ב"ה ככה ממש האלהים יענו להיות קורא ושונה כנגדו:

That is to say: according to the measure of the drawing down of the level of bittul to the Infinite Light, blessed be He, exactly so “ha-Elokim answers him,” reading and studying opposite him.

So ha-Elokim answers in exact measure to the bittul drawn down: G-d reads and studies opposite each person according to it.

IN ONE'S AVODAH

Each person has a share of Moshe: the bittul with which he keeps the Torah and mitzvos in the spirit of “Nullify your will.” As his bittul, so G-d’s response: the Holy One, blessed be He, reads and studies opposite him according to his own measure. Like Avraham, he draws G-d down through humility, not through self-importance, which would make a “void” and push away the Shechinah; and through Torah within and mitzvos around he consumes the coarseness of the animal soul, so that G-d’s glory is revealed below as above.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. If Avraham kept the whole Torah before Sinai, what exactly did the Giving of the Torah add, according to this maamar?
2. Why are the mitzvos called “the limbs of the King” when G-d has no body, and what does the comparison to a soul in its limbs explain?
3. What is the difference between the higher unity and the lower unity, and how do positive and negative commandments make them “equal”?
4. Why does the Torah need to work both as an inner light and as an encompassing light, as in the image of fire inside and around a vessel?
5. How does Moshe’s bittul in every generation explain the present tense of “Moshe speaks, and G-d answers,” and what does it ask of a person who learns Torah?

SOURCES AND REFERENCES

Notes

PARAGRAPH 1

1 משה ידבר

Kehot identifies this as the Mittlerer Rebbe's transcript of the maamar, printed there under the heading "Chag HaShavuot." One manuscript adds that it was said in the holy community of Liozna.

KEHOT'S NOTE

הנחת כ"ק אדמו"ר האמצעי בטה"מ תקס"ו ע' רד, "חג השבועות". ובכת"י א' נוסף "בק"ק לאזני". ראה לעיל בציונים לכ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע. הנחה אחרת עם הגהות באוה"ת יתרו ע' תתמג, עוד הערות בע' תתלג. ראה שער אמונה לאדמו"ר א"א פרק נד (דף פז, א). ד"ה זה נזכר בטה"מ תרס"ה ע' ה.

2 משה ידבר והאלקים יענו בקול

At Sinai, as the sound of the shofar grew ever stronger, "Moshe speaks, and G-d answers him with a voice." This is the maamar's opening verse; its explanation comes in paragraphs 23-28.

שמות י"ט:19 Exodus 19:19

וַיְהִי קוֹל הַשֹּׁפָר הוֹלֵךְ וְחֹזֵק מֵאֵד מֹשֶׁה יְדַבֵּר וְהָאֱלֹקִים יַעֲנֵנוּ בְּקוֹל:

And when the voice of the horn waxed louder and louder, Moses spoke, and G-d answered him by a voice.

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

שמות י"ט, יט.

3 בקולו של משה

The Gemara learns from this verse that the translator may not raise his voice above the voice of the one reading the Torah: "with a voice" means with the voice of Moshe. The Alter Rebbe returns to these words at the end of the maamar.

ברכות מ"ה א"ח:8 Berakhot 45a:8

אמר רבי שמעון בן פאי: מניין שאין המתרגם רשאי להגביה קולו יותר מן הקורא, שנאמר: "משה ידבר והאלקים יענו בקול", שאין תלמוד לומר "בקול", ומה תלמוד לומר "בקול" — בקולו של משה.

R. Simeon b. Pazzi said: Whence is it that the translator is not permitted to raise his voice above that of the reader? As it is said, "Moses spoke, and G-d answered him by a voice" (Exod. xix. 19) — there was no need to say "by a voice"; what, therefore, does the teaching "by a voice" tell us? By a voice [equal to that] of Moses.

William Davidson, Vocalized Aramaic (CC-BY-NC) • Tractate Berakot by A. Cohen, Cambridge University Press, 1921 (Public Domain)

KEHOT'S NOTE

ברכות מה, א.

4 מה דבר משה

Or HaTorah notes that Rashi on the verse explains "Moshe speaks" as referring to the other commandments, and that Ramban disputed this.

KEHOT'S NOTE

באוה"ת פ' יתרו ע' תתמד: ורש"י פ"י בחומש דמשה ידבר קאי על שאר הדברות... והרמב"ן השיג ע"ז.

5 אנכי ולא יהי לך מפי הגבורה שמענו

Rav Hamnuna explains that "Torah," whose numerical value is 611, is the number of commandments Moshe commanded us, while "I am" and "You shall have no," completing the 613, we heard from the mouth of the Almighty. The Alter Rebbe uses this to show that the verse's exchange cannot be those two commandments.

מכות כ"ד א"א:ג'1-3 Makkot 24a:1-3

שית מאה וחד סרי הוי, "אנכי" ו"לא יהיה לך" — מפי הגבורה שמענו. (סימן דמשמק סק). בא דוד והעמידן על אחת עשרה, דכתיב "מזמור לדוד [ה'] מי גבור באהלה מי ישכן בהר קדשה. הולך תמים ופועל צדק ודבר אמת בלבבו, לא רגל על לשנו לא עשה לרעהו רעה וחרפה לא נשא על קרבו. נבזה בעיניו נמאס ואת יראי ה' יכבד נשבע להרע ולא ימר. כספו לא נתן בנשה ושהד על נקי לא לקח עשה אלה לא ימוט לעולם".

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KEHOT'S NOTE

מכות כד, א. ע' מו"נ ח"ב פל"ג. תניא פרק כ.

6 אנכי עומד בין ה'

Moshe recalls: "I stood between Havayah and you at that time, to tell you the word of Havayah, for you were afraid of the fire." Here Moshe conveys G-d's word to the people; he is not the one whom G-d answers.

דברים ה':5 Deuteronomy 5:5

אנכי עמד ביניה וביניכם בעת ההוא להגיד לכם את־דבר ה' כי יראתם מפני האש ולא־עליתם בהר לאמר:

I stood between the L-RD and you at that time, to declare unto you the word of the L-RD; for ye were afraid because of the fire, and went not up into the mount—saying: .

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

דברים ה, ה.

7 דאיתא בגמרא דאמר רב יוסף

On the day of Atzeres (Shavuot) Rav Yosef asked for a choice calf to be prepared, saying: were it not for this day that brought it about, how many Yosefs are there in the marketplace! The maamar asks what this day added, and answers in paragraph 22.

פסחים ס"ח ב"10 Pesachim 68b:10

(עב"ם סימן) אמר רבי אלעזר: הכל מודים בעצרת דבעינו נמי לכם. מאי טעמא? יום שניתנה בו תורה הוא. אמר רבה: הכל מודים בשבת דבעינו נמי לכם. מאי טעמא? "וקראת לשבת עונג". אמר רב יוסף: הכל מודים בפורים דבעינו נמי לכם. מאי טעמא? "מי משתה ושמה" כתיב בקה.

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

פסחים סח, ב.

PARAGRAPH 2

8 ומהו ענין מ"ת . . אברהם אבינו ע"ה

Torah Ohr on Lech Lecha refers to this maamar for the difference between Avraham's keeping of the whole Torah and the Giving of the Torah.

KEHOT'S NOTE

לעיל יא, ד מציין לכאן "ועמ"ש ע"פ משה ידבר שם נתי' היטב ההפך בין מה שקיים אברהם כל התורה כו' למ"ת עולה בקנה א' עם מ"ש כאן [בתו"א יא, ד]. ראה מאמרי אדמו"ר הזקן — הנחות הר"פ ז"ל ע"ז. אוה"ת דרושים לשבועות ע"י קסח. ד"ה זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק תרנ"ד.

9 קיים אברהם אע"ה . . ואפי' עירובי תבשילין

Rav says Avraham our father fulfilled the entire Torah, as it says, "because Avraham obeyed My voice"; and a further teaching, which some attribute to Rav Ashi, adds that he fulfilled even eruv tavshilin, since "My teachings" means both the Written and the Oral Torah. The Alter Rebbe quotes this to set up the question of what the Giving of the Torah added.

Yoma 28b:10-11א"י-י"א יומא כ"ח ב"י-י"א

אמר (רב), ואיתימא רב אשי: קיים אברהם אבינו אפילו עירובי תבשילין, שנאמר: "תורתִי", אחת תורה שכתב ואחת תורה שבעל פה. מתיא בן שמואל אומר וכו' והוא אומר הן. מאן אומר "הן"? אילימא הך דקאי אאיגרא — הוא חלים והוא מפשר? אלא הך דקאי אארעא, מנא ידע?

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

Kiddushin 82a פ"ב ידושין

KEHOT'S NOTE

יומא כח, ב. ראה קידושין פב, א. ראה לקמן צו, ג ואילך. אוה"ת פ' ראה ע' תשנו. הענין בארוכה בשה"מ תקס"ב ע' יא. אוה"ת תשא ע' איתתקסו. וראה בשה"מ תרכ"ז (הוצאת תש"ס) ע' יב.

PARAGRAPH 3

10 וישמר משמרת

G-d tells Yitzchak He will bless him "because Avraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My teachings." The Sages read it as proof that Avraham kept the whole Torah.

בראשית כ"ו:5

עקב אשר שמע אברהם בקלי וישמר משמרת מצותי חקותי ותורתי:

because that Abraham hearkened to My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.'

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KEHOT'S NOTE

בראשית כו, ה.

11 ובודאי לימד ג"כ ליצחק

The Midrash says that wherever Yaakov sat he studied Torah as his fathers had, though the Torah was not yet given, citing "and he kept My charge" of Avraham; Kehot

quotes its words that Avraham kept the fine points of the Torah and taught his sons. The same passage tells that Yaakov sent Yehudah ahead to Egypt to set up a house of study, and that Yosef had parted from Yaakov while they studied the section of the eglarufah.

בראשית רבה צ"ה:3 Bereshit Rabbah

... ויתן להם יוסף עגלות על פי פרעה, ללמדך, שבכל מקום שהיה יעקב יושב, היה עוסק בתורה כשם שהיו אבותיו, ועד עכשיו לא נתנה תורה, וכתוב באברהם (שם כז): וישמר משמרת. ומהיכן למד אברהם את התורה? רבן שמעון אומר: נעשו שתי כליותיו כשתי כדים של מים, והיו נובעות תורה. ומנין שכן הוא? שנאמר (תהלים טז): אף לילות יסרוני וגו'. רבי לוי אומר: מעצמו למד תורה, שנאמר (משלי יד): מדרכיו ישבע סוג לב ומעליו איש טוב. ר' יונתן שר הבירה אומר: אפילו עירובי תבשילין היה אברהם יודע, שנאמר (בראשית כז): עקב ...

Another matter, "he sent Judah before him." Rabbi Hanina son of Rabbi Aha, and Rabbi Hanina, one said: To arrange a residence for him. And one said: To arrange an academy in which he would teach Torah matters and in which the tribes would study. Know that it is so; when Joseph departed from him, he knew at which chapter that he was teaching him he left him. When Joseph's brothers came to him and said to him: "Joseph is still alive... his heart was faint [because he did not ...

Daat Bereshit Rabbah (Public Domain) • The Sefaria Midrash Rabbah, 2022 (CC-BY)

בראשית כ"ו:5 Genesis 26:5

עקב אשר שמע אברהם בקלי וישמר משמרת מצותי חקותי ותורתי:

because that Abraham hearkened to My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.'

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ב"ר פצ"ה ג': והי' [אברהם] משמר דקדוקי תורה והי' מלמד את בניו. ראה רמב"ם הל' ע"ז פ"א ה"ג. וראה רמב"ן עה"ת בראשית כו, ה. והמאירי בפתיחה למסכת אבות כתב "למדו יוסף הנהגותיו והליכותיו הליכות אלי מלכי בקדוש, ומסר לו סודות חכמתו חקותיו ותורותיו".

12 וישמר משמרת מצותי חקותי ותורתי ובודאי לימד ג"כ ליצחק בנו

Ramban quotes Rashi's reading of the verse and the Midrash that Avraham kept even the fine points of the Torah and taught his sons, and then asks how, if so, Yaakov could set up a pillar and marry two sisters. Kehot cites it on Avraham's teaching of the Torah before Sinai.

רמב"ן על בראשית כ"ו:5 Ramban on Genesis 26:5

... וכן אמרו (ב"ר צד ג) בפסוק "ויתן להם יוסף עגלות" (בראשית מ"ה:כ"א), שפרש ממנו בפרשת עגלה ערופה, שהיה עוסק בתורה כשם שהיו אבותיו, ועד עכשיו לא נתנה תורה, והרי כתוב "ויהי וישמר משמרת מצותי חקותי ותורתי", ושם אמרו שהיה משמר אפילו דקדוקי תורה, והיה מלמד לבניו וכו'. ויש לשאל, אם כן איך הקים יעקב מצבה (בראשית כ"ח:י"ח), ונשא שתי אהיות, וכדעת רבותינו (ב"ר עד יא) ארבע, ועמרם נשא דודתו (שמות ו כ), ומשה רבינו הקים ...

AND HE KEPT MY CHARGE. Rashi comments: "As a reward that Abraham hearkened to My voice when I tested him. And he kept My charge — these are the precautionary decrees in-

stituted by the Sages, which are intended to make us avoid the violation of Biblical laws, such as Second Degrees of forbidden marriages and certain prohibited acts on the Sabbath. My commandments — these are precepts which, had they not been written in the Torah, were requisite to have been written, such as robbery and murder. My statutes — ...

Vocalized Edition (CC-BY) • Commentary on the Torah by Ramban (Nachmanides). Translated and annotated by Charles B. Chavel. New York, Shilo Pub. House, 1971-1976 (CC-BY)

13

ליעקב ובניו

Or HaTorah adds a proof that Yaakov taught his sons: Rashi in Vayigash, on “he saw the wagons,” explains that Yosef had parted from Yaakov while they were studying the section of the eglā arufah.

KEHOT'S NOTE

באוה"ת פ' יתרו ע' תתמד מוסיף: "כפי" רש"י פ' ויגש ע"פ וירא את העגלות כו' בפי' עגלה ערופה פירש ממנו".

14

לימד ג"כ ליצחק בנו ויצחק לימד ליעקב ובניו

Rambam tells how Avraham taught the knowledge of the One G-d and made it known to Yitzchak his son; Yitzchak taught it to Yaakov, and Yaakov taught all his sons and appointed Levi to head the academy so that the learning would not be forgotten. Kehot cites it for the same chain of teaching.

Mishneh Torah, Foreign Worship and Customs of the Nations 1:3:3
משנה תורה, הלכות עבודה זרה וחוקות הגוים א:ג:3

... וכיון שהיו העם מתקבצין אליו ושואלין לו על דבריו היה מודיע לכל אחד ואחד כפי דעתו עד שיחזירוהו לדרך האמת עד שנתקבצו אליו אלפים ורבבות והם אנשי בית אברהם ושתל בלבם העקר הגדול הזה וחבר בו ספרים והודיעו ליצחק בנו. וישב יצחק מלמד ומזהיר. ויצחק הודיע ליעקב ומנהו ללמד וישב מלמד ומחזיק כל הנלומים אליו. ויעקב אכינו למד בגניו כלם והבדיל לוי ומנהו ראש והושיבו בשיבה ללמד דרך השם ...

As soon as this giant was weaned he commenced to busy his mind, in his infancy he commenced to think by day and by night, and would encounter this enigma: How is it possible that this planet should continuously be in motion and have no leader—and who, indeed, causes it to revolve, it being impossible that it should revolve itself? Moreover, he neither had a teacher nor one to impart aught to him, for he was sunk in Ur of the Chaldeans among the foolish worshipers of stars, and his ...

Torat Emet 363 (Public Domain) • Mishnah Torah, Yod ha-hazakah, trans. by Simon Glazer, 1927 (Public Domain)

15

דרמ"ה פקודין

Tikkun 30 speaks of the 248 commandments as G-d's commandment “in each and every limb of the King.” The Alter Rebbe cites the known teaching that the mitzvot are the King's limbs, and then asks what “limbs” can mean.

Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 30 • 74a:8

ועוד מצוה דא עמודא דאמצעימא, דאיהו מצוה מסטרא דאבא דאיהו ראש, ומסטרא דאימא דאיהו אש"ר, והכי צדיק מצוה ועושה

מתרנייהו, ובגין דא אתמר על תרנייהו אשר קדשנו, אמא קדשנו ואבא צונו, על מאן על שכינתא תתא, דאיהי פטר כל רחם, פתיחו דרחם, דאיהו רמ"ח פקודין, איהי מצות יהו"ה בכל אבר ואבר דמלכא, איהי מצוה, ועוד אשר קדשנו מסטרא דאבא

Tikkunei Zohar - Vocalized (Public Domain)

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה ת"ז תי' ל. ראה בד"ה אדון עולם תש"ג ע' 14. ושם מציין שבד"ה זה "מבאר דהגדלות בכלים דו"א נעשה ע"י המשכת האור, דאשר הכלי הוא כלי לקבל את האור הנה ע"י ריבוי האור בהכלי נעשה הגדלה בהכלי כמו שאנו רואים במוחש בהשוקדים במושכלות הנה כל מה שמרבים לשקוד הנה מתרחב כלי שכלם". ע"ש.

16

ע"פ מ"ש בוהר . . לאתקנא רוא דשמיה

Torah Ohr on Shemot explains the same Zohar: of the seven Names that may not be erased, El is in Chesed and Elokim in Gevurah, and drawing G-d into His attributes is done through Torah and mitzvot, each mitzvah drawing one Name into one attribute.

Song of Songs 3:1א' שיר השירים ג:1א'

על-משכבי בלילות בקשתי את שאהבה נפשי בקשתי ולא מצאתי:

By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth; I sought him, but I found him not.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה גם לעיל מט, ד. לקו"ת פ' מצורע כה, א. עקב טז, ב. שה"ש ג, א. בסה"מ תרס"ה ע' כה מציין לכאן.

17

שו"ה שאינו

This manuscript reads “that is not erased” (sheino), in the singular, instead of “that are not erased” (she'einan).

KEHOT'S NOTE

בכרך 1824: שאינו.

PARAGRAPH 4

18 King David blesses G-d before the whole assembly: “Yours, Havayah, are the greatness, the might, the beauty, the victory and the splendor.” Chassidus reads these words as the Sefiros from Chesed on; here they are G-d's attributes that come into being through His Names.

I Chronicles 29:11א' דברי הימים א כ"ט:11א'

לך ה' הגדלה והגבורה והתפארת והנצח וההוד כייכל בשמים ובארץ
לך ה' הממלכה והמתנשא לכל לראש:

Thine, O L-RD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the kingdom, O L-RD, and Thou art exalted as head above all.

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PARAGRAPH 5

19 In Eliyahu's prayer (Patach Eliyahu) at the opening of Tikkunei Zohar: You are wise, but not with a known wisdom, and not of any of these attributes at all. The Alter

שמות כ, ו.

Rebbe uses it to show that the Sefiros bear no comparison to G-d.

Tikkunei Zohar 17b:2 ב"ב: תקוני זוהר י"ז

וכל ספירין כל חד אית ליה שם ידיע. ובהון אתקריאו מלאכיא. ואנת לית לך שם ידיע. דאנת הוא ממלא כל שמהן. ואנת הוא שלימו דכלהו וכד אנת תסתלק מנהון אשתארו כלהו שמהן כגופא בלא נשמתא.

Constantinople, 1740 (CC-BY-NC)

20 כי לא מחשבותי מחשבותיכם

Through the prophet G-d urges the wicked to return to Him, for He forgives abundantly: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says Havayah." The Alter Rebbe uses it to show that even G-d's "thought," which is below His "wisdom," is beyond comparison with ours.

Isaiah 55:8 ח"ח: ישעיהו נ"ה

כי לא מחשבותי מחשבותיכם ולא דרכיכם דרכי נאם ה'

For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways, saith the L-RD.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ישעיי נה, ח.

21 וכמ"ש בת"ז

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

בהקדמה (פתח אליהו).

PARAGRAPH 6

22 כי עמך מקור חיים

David praises G-d: "For with You is the source of life; in Your light we see light." The Alter Rebbe reads nir'eh, "we see," as "is seen": the light drawn down below is what lets the light of wisdom be seen and grasped.

Psalms 36:10 י"י: תהילים

כ"עמך מקור חיים באורך נראה-אור:

For with Thee is the fountain of life; In Thy light do we see light.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים לו, י.

23 ועושה חסד לאלפים

In the second of the Ten Commandments G-d describes Himself as "showing kindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments," plainly to a thousand generations. Here "thousands" are the many stages through which kindness comes into being.

Exodus 20:6 ו': שמות כ

ועשה חסד לאלפים לאהבי ולשמרי מצותי:

and showing mercy unto the thousandth generation of them that love Me and keep My commandments.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

PARAGRAPH 7

24 עולם חסד יבנה

The psalmist, Eitan the Ezrachite, says: "For I said, kindness shall be built forever (olam); in the heavens You establish Your faithfulness." The words are often read "the world (olam) is built on kindness"; the Alter Rebbe reads them to mean that kindness itself must be built, coming into being through stages.

Psalms 89:3 ג"ט: תהילים

כ"אמרת עולם חסד יבנה שמים תכן אמונתך כהם:

For I have said: 'For ever is mercy built; In the very heavens Thou dost establish Thy faithfulness.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים פט, ג.

25 הוי"ה בנקוד פת"ח היא בחכמה

Sefer HaMaamarim 5655 adds here that Pardes Rimoni (Sha'ar HaShemos, ch. 3) gives the Name Yah as the Name of Chochmah.

KEHOT'S NOTE

בסה"מ תרנ"ה ע' נ נוסף: ובפרד"ס שער השמות פ"ג כ' דשם י"ה הוא השם דבחי"כ.

26 חסד אל כל היום

David rebukes Doeg: "Why do you boast of evil, mighty man? The kindness of El is all the day." The verse pairs the Name El with kindness, the basis for linking that Name with the Sefirah of Chesed.

Psalms 52:3 ג"ב: תהילים

מה-תתהלל ברעה הגבור חסד אל כל-היום:

Why boastest thou thyself of evil, O mighty man? The mercy of G-d endureth continually.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים נב, ג.

27 איהו וחיוהי חד

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

בת"ז בהקדמה (ג, א).

28 איהו וחיוהי חד. איהו וגרמוהי חד

The introduction to Tikkunei Zohar says that in the ten Sefiros of Atzilus the King is one with His life-forces and one with His vessels, which is not so in the Sefiros of Beriah. Here it describes how the drawn-down light is one with Chochmah and Chesed. (Kehot's note here prints 3a;

Kehot's other notes on this phrase give 3b, where Sefaria has it.)

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

דְּעֶשֶׂר סְפִירוֹת דְּאֶצִּילוֹת מְלָכָא בְּהוֹן, אִיהוּ וְגִרְמִיָּה חַד בְּהוֹן, אִיהוּ וְחִיָּיָה חַד בְּהוֹן, מֶה דְּלָאוּ הָכִי בְּעֶשֶׂר סְפִירוֹת דְּבְרִיָּאָה, דְּלָאוּ אֵינֻן וְחִיָּהוֹן חַד, לָאוּ אֵינֻן וְגִרְמִיָּהוֹן חַד. וְעֵלֶת עַל כָּלָא הוּא נְהִיר (נ"א נחית) בְּעֶשֶׂר סְפִירוֹת דְּאֶצִּילוֹת, וּבְעֶשֶׂר סְפִירוֹת דְּבְרִיָּאָה, וְנְהִיר בְּעֶשֶׂר כְּתוֹת דְּמְלָאכְיָא, וּבְעֶשֶׂר גִּלְגְּלֵי דְרִקְעָא, וְלֹא אֲשֶׁנִּי בְּכָל אֲתֵר.

Tikkunei Zohar - Vocalized (Public Domain)

29 דהיינו כענין הוא המדע הוא היודע

Torah Ohr later in Yisro uses the same comparison: when the Infinite Light is en clothed in Chochmah it becomes "He and His life-forces are one," for He is the knowledge and the known, and He and His wisdom are one; "He and His vessels" refers to the letters of thought.

KEHOT'S NOTE

וכ"ה לקמן עא, א. ובסה"מ תקס"ו ע' ר' כתב: כמו עדי"מ האדם בחיות נפשו שמלוּבשת באיבריו שמתאחד הוא עם האיברים והכל נחשב כא' כך גם בחי' התפשטות ההארה מאור א"ס בנאצלים באורות וכלים. . מפני שהמה מיוחד"י בו בתכלית, ע"ש.

30 לך ה' הגדולה והגבורה

"Yours, Havayah, are the greatness and the might." The Alter Rebbe reads "Yours" as saying that the attributes become truly G-d's own, one with Him.

I Chronicles 29:11א"י כ"ט דברי הימים א

לָךְ ה' הַגְּדֻלָּה וְהַגְּבוּרָה וְהַתְּפָאֶרֶת וְהַנִּצָּחַ וְהַהוֹד כִּי כָל בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ לָךְ ה' הַמְּמֻלָּכָה וְהַמִּתְנַשֵּׂא לְכָל לְרֹאשׁ:

Thine, O L-RD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the kingdom, O L-RD, and Thou art exalted as head above all.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

דה"א כט, יא.

31 בשיעורים לתניא אגה"ק סי' כ' נסמן

A commentary on Tanya; on Iggeres HaKodesh 20 it gives Etz Chaim, Sha'ar 7, chapter 12, and other places as the source for this idea.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ע"ח שמ"ז פ"ב. ובכ"מ.

PARAGRAPH 8

32 המשכת החיות

The glosses on this maamar printed in Or HaTorah read "the coming into being (hishavus) of the life-force" instead of "the drawing down of the life-force."

KEHOT'S NOTE

באוה"ת הגהות למאמר זה ע' תתמה הגי': התהוות.

33 דאנת הוא חכים ולא בחכמה ידיעא ולא מכל מדות אלין כלל

Eliyahu's prayer: You are wise, but not with a known wisdom, and not of any of these attributes at all. It is repeated here to stress how great a descent it is for the Infinite Light to be en clothed in these attributes.

Tikkunei Zohar 17b:3-4ג' ב:ג'-ד' Tikkunei Zohar 17b:3-4

אנת חכים ולא בחכמה ידיעא. אנת הוא מבין ולא מבינה ידיעא. לית לך אתר ידיעא אלא לאשמתודעא תוקפך וחילך לבני נשא. ולאחזאה לון איך אתנהיג עלמא בדינא וברחמי דאינון צדק ומשפט כפום עובדיהון דבני נשא. דין איהו גבורה. משפט עמודא דאמצעייתא. צדק מלכותא קדישא. מאזני צדק *תרין סמכי קשוט. הין צדק אות ברית. כללא לאחזאה איך אתנהיג עלמא.

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PARAGRAPH 9

34 ה' בנקוד פתח בחכמה

This points back to paragraph 7 of this maamar, where Havayah with patach was first assigned to Chochmah and El to Chesed.

KEHOT'S NOTE

לעיל סז, ד. פרסם שער הנקודות פ"ה. פע"ח שער העמידה פ"ט. וראה באוה"ת ואתחנן ע' שעט.

PARAGRAPH 10

35 וישמר משמרתי מצותי

"And he kept My charge, My commandments." The Alter Rebbe now explains what Avraham's mitzvos were: drawing the Infinite Light into Chochmah and Chesed.

בראשית כ"ו:ה' Genesis 26:5

עֲקֵב אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַע אַבְרָהָם בְּקוֹלִי וַיִּשְׁמַר מִשְׁמַרְתִּי מִצְוֹתַי חֻקוֹתַי וְתוֹרוֹתַי:

because that Abraham hearkened to My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.'

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36 הלוך ונסוע הנגבה

"And Avram journeyed, going and journeying toward the Negev," the south of the land, moving on stage by stage. The Alter Rebbe reads the repeated motion as Avraham's running and returning in love, and the south as the side of Chesed.

בראשית י"ב:ט' Genesis 12:9

וַיֵּסַע אַבְרָם הָלוֹךְ וְנֹסֵעַ הַנִּגְבָּה:

And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.

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37 רצוא ושוב

In Yechezkel's vision of the chariot, "the living creatures ran and returned." The phrase names the soul's longing to rise to G-d and its return to its task.

יחזקאל א':יד' Ezekiel 1:14

וְהַחַיּוֹת רָצוּא וְשׁוּב כְּמִרְאָה הַקֶּזֶק:

And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.

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38

רוח אייתי רוח

The Zohar says everything depends on will: spirit draws spirit and brings spirit, with the sign “If he sets his heart toward Him”; when a person arouses love for the Holy One, blessed be He, His right side is aroused toward him. The Alter Rebbe uses it for how Avraham’s love drew down G-d’s light.

Zohar II, 162b, זח”ב קסב,

KEHOT’S NOTE

זח”ב קסב, ב. ראה לעיל א, א.

PARAGRAPH 11

39

אם ישים אליו לבו

Elihu says that if G-d were to set His heart upon man and gather to Himself man’s spirit and breath, all flesh would perish together. The Zohar reads the words the other way, as the Alter Rebbe does here: when a person sets his heart toward Him, G-d’s spirit and breath are drawn to him.

Job 34:14, איוב ל”ד:

אם ישים אליו לבו רוחו ונשמתו אליו יאסף:

If He set His heart upon man, If He gather unto Himself his spirit and his breath;

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KEHOT’S NOTE

איוב ל”ד, יד.

40

ויטע אשל

“And he planted an eshel in Be’er Sheva, and called there in the Name of Havayah, El Olam.” The Sages explain the eshel as an orchard or an inn for wayfarers; the Alter Rebbe cites it for Avraham’s acts of kindness.

Genesis 21:33, בראשית כ”א:ל”ג:

ויטע אשל בבאר שבע ויקרא שם בשם ה’ אל עולם:

And Abraham planted a tamarisk-tree in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of the L-RD, the Everlasting G-d.

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KEHOT’S NOTE

בראשית כא, לג.

41

ואנכי עפר ואפר

Pleading for Sedom, Avraham says, “I have begun to speak to my L-rd, and I am dust and ashes.” It is the Torah’s picture of his humility.

Genesis 18:27, בראשית י”ח:כ”ז:

ויען אברהם ויאמר הנה נא הואלתי לדבר אל-אדני ואנכי עפר ואפר:

And Abraham answered and said: ‘Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the L-rd, who am but dust and ashes.

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KEHOT’S NOTE

בראשית יח, כז.

42

כמים הפנים

“As in water face answers to face, so the heart of man to man.” Chassidus applies it to the relation between a person and G-d: the response from above mirrors the stance below.

Proverbs 27:19, משלי כ”ז:י”ט:

כמים הפנים לפנים כן לבי האדם לאדם:

As in water face answereth to face, So the heart of man to man.

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43

דאנת הוא חכים ולא בחכמה ידיעא ולא מכל מדות אליו כלל

Eliyahu’s prayer: You are wise, but not with a known wisdom, and not of any of these attributes at all. It shows why entering Chochmah and Chesed is a lowering for the Infinite Light.

Tikkunei Zohar 17b:3-4, תקוני זוהר י”ז ב”ג:ד’-ב’:

אנת חכים ולא בחכמה ידיעא. אנת הוא מבין ולא מבינה ידיעא. לית לך אתר ידיעא אלא לאשתמודעא תוקפך וחילך לבני נשא. ולאחזאה לון איך אתנהיג עלמא בדינא וברחמי דאינון צדק ומשפט כפום עובדיהון דבני נשא. דין איהו גבורה. משפט עמודא דאמצעייתא. צדק מלכותא קדישא. מאזני צדק *תרין סמכי קשוט. הין צדק אות ברית. כללא לאחזאה איך אתנהיג עלמא.

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44

במקום שאתה מוצא גדולתו

Rabbi Yochanan says that wherever you find the might of the Holy One, blessed be He, you find His humility, and shows it in the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings. The Alter Rebbe quotes it with “greatness.”

Megillah 31a:12-13, מגילה ל”א א”יב-י”ג:

אמר רבי יוחנן: כל מקום שאתה מוצא גבורתו של הקדוש ברוך הוא, אתה מוצא ענוותנותו. דבר זה כתוב בתורה, ושנוי בנביאים, ומשולש בכתובים. כתוב בתורה: “כי ה’ אלקיכם הוא אלקי האלקים ואדוני האדונים”, וכתוב בתריה: “עושה משפט יתום ואלמנה”. שנוי בנביאים: “כה אמר ה’ ונשא שוכן עד וקדוש וגו’”, וכתוב בתריה: “ואת דכא ושלפ רוח”, משולש בכתובים, וכתוב: “סולו לרוכב בערכות בקה שמו”, וכתוב בתריה: “אבי יתומים ...

Yohanan said: Wherever you find [mentioned in the Bible] the power of the Holy One, blessed be He, you also find his humility. This fact is stated in the Torah, repeated in the Prophets, and stated a third time in the [Sacred] Writings. It is written in the Torah, “For the L-rd your G-d, He is the G-d of gods and L-rd of lords,” and it says immediately afterwards, “He executes justice for the orphan and widow” (Deuteronomy 10:17). It is repeated in the Prophets: “For thus said He who ...

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KEHOT’S NOTE

מגילה לא, א. ראה בהנסמן לעיל טז, א.

Rebbe stresses that only His splendor, a radiance, is in the worlds, while His Name alone is exalted above them.

Psalms 148:13: תהילים קמ"ח:י"ג

יְהַלְלוּ אֶת־שֵׁם ה' בִּיַּנְשָׁנָב שָׁמוּ לְבָדוֹ הוֹדוּ עַל־אָרֶץ וְשָׁמַיִם:

Let them praise the name of the L-RD, For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and heaven.

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PARAGRAPH 13

55 סמכוני באשיות רפדוני בתפוחים

"Sustain me with flagons, spread apples about me, for I am sick with love." The flagons and apples are read as revelations of the Infinite Light that heal the soul's longing.

Song of Songs 2:5: שיר השירים ב':ה

סִמְכוֹנִי בְּאַשִׁישׁוֹת רִפְדוֹנִי בְּתַפּוּחִים כִּי־חֹלֶת אֶהְיֶה אֲנִי:

'Stay ye me with dainties, refresh me with apples; For I am love-sick.'

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PARAGRAPH 14

56 הקב"ה מניח תפילין

Rabbi Avin bar Rav Ada says in the name of Rabbi Yitzchak that the Holy One, blessed be He, puts on tefillin, learning it from "G-d swore by His right hand and by the arm of His strength." The Alter Rebbe counts it among G-d's own mitzvos.

Berakhot 6a:17-18: ברכות ו' א:י"ז-י"ח

אָמַר רַבִּי אֲבִין בַּר רַב אָדָא, אָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק: מִנֵּין שֶׁהַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְנִיחַ תְּפִלִּין שְׁנָאֵמַר: "נִשְׁבַּע ה' בְּיָמִינוּ וּבְיָרְוֵעַ עֲזוֹ." "בְּיָמִינוּ" — זו תוֹרָה, שְׁנָאֵמַר: "מִיָּמִינוּ אֵשׁ דָּת לָמוֹ," וּבְיָרְוֵעַ עֲזוֹ" — אֵלּוּ תְּפִלִּין, שְׁנָאֵמַר: "הִי עוֹ לְעֲמּוֹ יְתִין."

Rab Abin b. Rab Adda said in the name of R. Isaac: Whence is it that the Holy One, blessed be He, lays Tefillin? As it is said, "The L-rd hath sworn by His right hand, and by the arm of His strength" (Is. Ixii. 8). "By His right hand" means Torah; as it is said, "At His right hand was a fiery law unto them" (Deut. xxxiii. 2); "by the arm of His strength" means Tefillin, as it is said, "The L-rd will give strength unto ...

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ברכות ו, א. ראה גם לעיל לה, ב ובמ"מ לשם.

57 תפילין מלשון התקשרות

Kehot traces the reading of tefillin as "binding" to this dictionary of Kabbalistic terms, under the entry Tefillin.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה בערכי הכינויים לבעל סה"ד מערכת תפילין. מובא באוה"ק ויקרא כרך ג ע' תתקטז.

58 ומי כעמך ישראל

In David's prayer of thanks after G-d promised him a lasting dynasty: "And who is like Your people Israel, one na-

tion on earth." This is the verse in G-d's tefillin.

I Chronicles 17:21: דברי הימים א י"ז:כ"א

וְיָמִי כְעֶמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל גּוֹי אֶחָד בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר הָלַךְ הָאֱלֹקִים לְפָדוֹת לוֹ עַם לְשׁוֹם לָךְ שֵׁם גְּדֻלוֹת וְנִרְאֻת לְגִרְשׁ מִפְּנֵי עַמְּךָ אֲשֶׁר־פָּדִיתָ מִמִּצְרַיִם גּוֹיִם:

And who is like Thy people Israel, a nation one in the earth, whom G-d went to redeem unto Himself for a people, to make Thee a name by great and tremendous things, in driving out nations from before Thy people, whom Thou didst redeem out of Egypt.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

דה"א יז, כא.

59 ישראל עלו במחשבה

Tikkun 6 speaks of the Torah scholar as being "from the side of thought," of which it is said that Israel arose in thought to be created. Kehot gives it with the Midrash.

Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 6 • 23b:3-4: תקוני תיקון 6 • 23b:3-4

א"ל אבא. אם כן ת"ח דאיהו מסטרא דמחשבה דאתמ' ביה ישראל עלה במחשבה ליבראות האי אוריתא איהי בן לתלמיד חכם. אם כן אתתא דיליה אמאי צריכא יבום. דהא לא שוו אפרשותא מארי מתניתין לת"ח משאר בני נשא. א"ל ברי (איהי) ודאי צריכה יבום לאלין נשמתין דאולין ערטילאין משית יומי בראשית.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ב"ר בתחילתו. ת"ח ת"י ו' בסופו. נסמן לעיל ג, ב.

60 בראשית בשביל ישראל

The Midrash lists things that preceded creation: some were created, and some, among them the Patriarchs and Israel, "arose in thought" to be created; one view says the thought of Israel preceded everything. The Alter Rebbe uses it for Israel's root in G-d's first thought, Chochmah.

Bereshit Rabbah 1:4: בראשית רבה א:ד

"בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹקִים" ששה דברים קדמו לבריאת העולם יש מהן שנבראו ויש מהן שעלו במחשבה להבראות. התורה והכסא הכבוד נבראו תורה מנין שנאמר (משלי ח, כב): "הי קנני ראשית דרכו" כסא הכבוד מנין דכתיב (תהלים צג, ב): "נכון כסאך מאז וגו'". האבות וישראל ובית המקדש ושמו של משיח, עלו במחשבה להבראות האבות מנין שנאמר (הושע ט, י): "כענבים במדבר וגו'" ישראל מנין שנאמר (תהלים עד, ב): "זכור עדתך קנית קדם" בית המקדש מנין שנאמר (ירמיה יז, יב): "כסא כבוד מרום מראשון וגו'" שמו של משיח מנין שנאמר (תהלים עב, יז): ...

"In the beginning, G-d created" - six items preceded the creation of the world; some of them were [actually] created, and some of them G-d contemplated creating, [though He did not actually do so]. The Torah and the Throne of Glory were created. Torah, from where is it derived? As it is stated: "The L-rd made me at the beginning of His way" (Proverbs 8:22). The Throne of Glory, from where is it derived? "Your throne stands firm from earliest time, [You are from eternity]" (Psalms 93:2). The patriarchs, Israel, ...

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ויקרא רבה ל"ד:4 לוי"ו

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה ב"ר א, ד. ויק"ר לו, ד. רש"י ורמב"ן בראשית א, א.

61

בראשית בשביל ישראל שנקראו ראשית

Rashi says the verse calls for interpretation, as the Sages taught: for the sake of the Torah, called "the beginning of His way," and for the sake of Israel, called "the first of His produce." The Alter Rebbe quotes this reading.

Rashi on Genesis 1:2: רש"י על בראשית א:ב

תהו ובהו. תהו לשון תמה ושממון, שאדם תוהא ומשתומם על בהו שבה: תהו. אשטורדי"שון בלע"ז: בהו. לשון רקות וצדו: על פני תהום. על פני המים שעל הארץ: ורוח אלקים מרחפת. כסא הכבוד עומד באויר ומרחף על פני המים ברוח פיו של הקב"ה ובמאמרו, כיונה המרחפת על הקן, אקוב"סיר בלע"ז:

DESOLATE AND VOID — The word signifies astonishment and amazement, for a person would have been astonished and amazed at its emptiness. תהו is estordison in old French. VOID — The word signifies emptiness and empty space. ON THE FACE OF THE DEEP — i. e. the waters which were upon the earth. AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD WAS HOVERING — The throne of Divine Glory was standing in space, hovering over the face of the waters by the breath ...

Pentateuch with Rashi's commentary by M. Rosenbaum and A.M. Silbermann, 1929-1934 (Public Domain) • Pentateuch with Rashi's commentary by M. Rosenbaum and A.M. Silbermann, 1929-1934 (Public Domain)

62

בראשית בשביל ישראל שנקראו ראשית

Ramban quotes Rashi's reading, for the sake of the Torah and for the sake of Israel, both called "beginning," and calls this teaching of the Sages very closed and sealed. Kehot cites it alongside Rashi.

Ramban on Genesis 1:2-3: רמב"ן על בראשית א:ב-ג

... (שמואל א כ ד), מה תרצה ותחפץ, וכן "ותהי אשה לכן אדניך כאשר דבר ה'" (בראשית כ"ד:ג"א), כאשר רצה; כי כן הוא הרצון לפניו. או הוא כגון מחשבה, כמו "האמרה בלבך" (ישעיהו ח ז); "ואמרו אלפי יהודה בלבם" (זכריה יב ה). והענין, לומר שלא היה בעמל. וכך קראו רבותינו לזה "מחשבה"; אמרו: מחשבה - ביום; המעשה - עם דמיומי חמה. והוא להורות על דבר מחשב שיש בו טעם, לא חפץ פשוט בלבד. ומילת הויה - מורה על מעשה הזמן העומד, כמו ...

AND G-D SAID, 'LET THERE BE LIGHT.' The word "saying" here indicates Will, as in the verse, What dost thy soul say, that I should do it for thee? which means, "What do you want and desire?" Similarly, And let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Eternal hath spoken means, "...as He hath willed, for such is the Will before Him." Or, it may be [that the word "saying" here means] "thinking," as in the verses, Thou sayest in thy heart; And the chiefs of Judah shall say ...

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63

ומשם יפרד

"A river goes out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four heads." The Alter Rebbe uses it for this world as a world of separation.

Genesis 2:10: בראשית ב:י

ונהר יצא מעדן להשקות את הגן ומשם יפרד והיה לארבעה ראשים:

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.

PARAGRAPH 15

64

וירד ה' על הר סיני

"And Havayah descended upon Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain," and called Moshe up. The Alter Rebbe reads the descent as the Infinite Light coming to be united with mitzvos in the physical world.

Exodus 19:20: שמות י"ט:כ

וירד ה' על-הר סיני אל-ראש ההר ויקרא ה' למשה אל-ראש ההר ויעל משה:

And the L-RD came down upon mount Sinai, to the top of the mount; and the L-RD called Moses to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שמות יט, כ.

PARAGRAPH 16

65

כי אל דעות ה'

In Chanah's song of thanks she warns the arrogant: "Do not speak so very proudly... for Havayah is a G-d of knowledges, and by Him actions are weighed." The Alter Rebbe reads the plural "knowledges" as the higher and the lower unity.

I Samuel 2:3: שמואל א ב:ג

אל-תרבו תדברו גבהה גבהה יצא עתק מפיכם כי אל דעות ה' ואל תתקנו עלילות:

Multiply not exceeding proud talk; Let not arrogancy come out of your mouth; For the L-RD is a G-d of knowledge, And by Him actions are weighed.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שמואל א ב, ג. ראה המשך ר"ה תרצ"ד (נדפס בספר המאמרים ה'תשי"א). תשי"ג ע' 126.

PARAGRAPH 17

66

להנחיל אוהבי יש

Wisdom says: "To cause those who love me to inherit substance (yesh), and I will fill their treasuries." The Alter

Rebbe cites it to show that above, the higher levels are the true yesh.

משלי ח': כ"א:21 Proverbs

לְהַנְחִיל אֶת־כִּי יֵשׁ וְאַצְרִיתֵיהֶם אֲמֵלָא:

That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance, And that I may fill their treasuries.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

משלי ח, כא.

67

ולו נתכנו עלילות

The verse ends "and by Him actions are weighed": the word velo is written with an alef ("not") and read with a vav ("by Him"). The Alter Rebbe builds the next paragraph on both.

I Samuel 2:3:ג' א ב:שמואל

אֶל־תִּרְבּוּ וְתִדְבְּרוּ גִבְהָה גִּבְהָה יֵצֵא עֵתָק מִפִּיכֶם כִּי אֵל יַדְעוֹת ה' וְלוֹ נִתְכְּנוּ עֲלִילוֹת:

Multiply not exceeding proud talk; Let not arrogancy come out of your mouth; For the L-RD is a G-d of knowledge, And by Him actions are weighed.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שמואל א-ב, ג. ראה לעיל יא, ד.

PARAGRAPH 18

68

נעשה אדם בצלמנו

"And G-d said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." The Alter Rebbe reads "our image" as the Torah and "our likeness" as the mitzvos.

Genesis 1:26:י"א:כ"ו בראשית

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדִמוּתֵנוּ וַיְרִדּוּ בְדִגְתַּי הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל־הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל־הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל־הָאָרֶץ:

And G-d said: 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.'

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KEHOT'S NOTE

בראשית א, כו.

69

בצלמנו בחי התורה

Kehot refers to Or HaTorah on Bereishis for "in our image" as the Torah.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה אוה"ת בראשית כרך ג תקד, א.

70

אדם שעל דמות הכסא

Above the firmament Yechezkel saw the likeness of a throne, "and upon the likeness of the throne, a likeness as

the appearance of a man upon it from above." Here that "man" is the mitzvos, G-d's inner will.

Ezekiel 1:26:י"א:כ"ו יחזקאל

וּמִמַּעַל לָרָקִיעַ אֲשֶׁר עַל־רֹאשָׁם כְּמֵרָאָה אֶבֶן־סַפִּיר דְּמוּת כֶּסֶף וְעַל דְּמוּת הַכֶּסֶף דְּמוּת כְּמֵרָאָה אָדָם עָלָיו מְלֻמָּעָה:

And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was a likeness as the appearance of a man upon it above.

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71

אין עוד מלבדו

Moshe tells Israel: "You have been shown, to know that Havayah is the G-d (ha-Elokim); there is nothing else besides Him." The Torah and mitzvos make this true below as it is above.

Deuteronomy 4:35:ד' ל"ה דברים

אֵתָה הָרָאָתָ לְדַעַת כִּי ה' הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים אֵין עוֹד מִלְּבָדּוֹ:

Unto thee it was shown, that thou mightiest know that the L-RD, He is G-d; there is none else beside Him.

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72

ולא תחללו שלא לעשות חלל

"And you shall not profane My holy Name, and I will be sanctified among the children of Israel." The Alter Rebbe reads "profane" (chilul) as making a void (chahal).

Leviticus 22:32:כ"ב ל"ב ויקרא

וְלֹא תַחֲלִלוּ אֶת־שֵׁם קֹדֶשִׁי וְנִקְדַּשְׁתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי ה' מְקַדְּשָׁם:

And ye shall not profane My holy name; but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel: I am the L-RD who hallow you,

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ויקרא כב, לב. וראה לקמן פג, ב.

73

שלא לעשות חלל

The Gemara quotes "You shall not profane My holy Name" for the sin of desecrating G-d's Name, which it lists with false oaths and desecrating Shabbos. Kehot cites it on the words "not to make a void."

Shabbat 33a:ג' א:ל"ג שבת

בְּעוֹן שְׁבוּעַת שְׁוֹא וּשְׁבוּעַת שֶׁקֶר וְחִילוּל הַשֵּׁם וְחִילוּל שַׁבָּת — חֵיָה רַעָה רָבָה, וּבִהְמָה כָּלָה, וּבְנֵי אָדָם מִתְמַעֲטִין, וְהַדְרָכִים מִשְׁתַּמְּמִין. שְׁנֵאמַר: "וְאִם בְּאֵלָה לֹא תִסְרוּ לִי" — אֵל תִּקְרִי "בְּאֵלָה", אֵלָּא "בְּאֵלָה". וּכְתִיב: "וְהִשְׁלַחְתִּי בָכֶם אֶת חֵיַת הַשָּׂדֶה וְגוֹ", וּכְתִיב בְּשִׁבוּעַת שֶׁקֶר: "וְלֹא תִשָּׁבַע בִּשְׁמִי לִשְׁקֹר וְחִלַּלְתָּ אֶת שֵׁם אֱלֹהֶיךָ", וּבְחִילוּל הַשֵּׁם כְּתִיב: "וְלֹא תַחֲלִלוּ אֶת שֵׁם קֹדֶשִׁי". וּבְחִילוּל שַׁבָּת כְּתִיב: "מִחֻלְלֶיהָ מוֹת יוֹמָת", וְלִי "חִילוּל" "חִילוּל" מִשְׁבוּעַת שֶׁקֶר.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שבת לג, א.

74

דוחק רגלי השכינה

One who walks with a haughty, upright bearing even four cubits is as if he pushes the feet of the Shechinah, for “the whole earth is full of His glory.” Self-importance leaves no room for G-d’s presence.

ברכות מ”ג ב”ט: Berakhot 43b:19-20

וְשֶׁאִמְרִים, אִם לֹא יִפְסִיעַ פְּסִיעָה גְּסָה: דָּאֵמַר מֶר, פְּסִיעָה גְּסָה נוֹטֶלֶת אֶחָד מִחֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת מֵאָזוּר עֵינָיו שֶׁל אָדָם. מֵאִי תִקְנֶתֶיהָ? לְהַדְרִיחַ בְּקִדּוּשָׁא דְּבִי שְׁמַיָּי. וְאֵל יִהְיֶה בְּקוֹמָה זְקוּפָה: דָּאֵמַר מֶר הַמְהִילָה בְּקוֹמָה זְקוּפָה אֶפִּילוֹ אַרְבַּע אַמּוֹת, כְּאִילוֹ דּוּחֵק רִגְלֵי שְׁכִינָה, דְּכִתִּיב: “מִלֹּא כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ”.

Some declare he should not walk with a big stride. For the teacher has said : A big stride takes away one five hundredth part of the light of a man's eyes. What is the remedy for if ? He may restore it [by drinking the wine of] Sanctification on the [Sabbath] night. He should not walk with an erect carriage. For the teacher has said: He who walks with an erect carriage, even a distance of four cubits, is as though he pushed against the feet of the Shekinah; ...

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ברכות מג, ב.

75

ואשים דברי בפיו

“And I have put My words in your mouth, and covered you in the shadow of My hand.” The Alter Rebbe stresses “My words”: in Torah study G-d’s own words are spoken.

ישעיהו נ”א:ט”ז Isaiah 51:16

וְאֶשֶׁם דְּבָרֵי בְּפִי וּבִצֵּל יָדִי כְּסִיתִיהָ לְנֹטַע שְׁמַיִם וְלִיסַד אֶרֶץ וְלֹאֲמַר לְצִיּוֹן עֲמִי־אֶתָּה:

And I have put My words in thy mouth, And have covered thee in the shadow of My hand, That I may plant the heavens, And lay the foundations of the earth, And say unto Zion: ‘Thou art My people.’

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ישעיי נא, טז.

PARAGRAPH 19

76

תוכה רצוף אהבה

Of King Shlomo’s palanquin: “its inside inlaid with love.” The Alter Rebbe applies it to the soul filled from within through the Torah.

Song of Songs 3:10 שיר השירים ג’:

עֲמֻדָיו עֲשָׂה כֶּסֶף רִפְיֶדְתּוֹ זָהָב מְרֻכָּבוֹ אֶרְגָּמָן תּוֹכוֹ רְצוּף אֶהְבָּה מִבְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם:

He made the pillars thereof of silver, The top thereof of gold, The seat of it of purple, The inside thereof being inlaid with love, From the daughters of Jerusalem.

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77

כי ה' אלקיך אש אוכלת

Moshe warns Israel against making any image: “For Havayah your G-d is a consuming fire, a jealous G-d.” The Alter Rebbe reads Havayah as the Torah and “your G-d” as the mitzvos.

דברים ד’:כ”ד Deuteronomy 4:24

כִּי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵשׁ אוֹכֶלֶת הוּא אֵל קָנָא:

For the L-RD thy G-d is a devouring fire, a jealous G-d.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

דברים ד, כד.

PARAGRAPH 20

78

אבל תלמיד חכם

Kehot points to a note in Likkutei Sichos on this statement about the Torah scholar.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה לקו"ש חט"ז ע' 437 הערה 26.

79

ונגלה כבוד ה'

In his prophecy of comfort Yeshayahu foretells: “And the glory of Havayah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see together.” The Alter Rebbe uses Isaiah’s words for the revelation that Torah and mitzvos bring about below as above.

ישעיהו מ"ה:5 Isaiah 40:5

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

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

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80

והר סיני עשן

“And Mount Sinai was all in smoke, because Havayah descended upon it in fire.” The fire of Sinai is read as the Torah and mitzvos that consume the coarseness of the animal soul.

שמות י"ט:18 Exodus 19:18

וְהָרַ סִינַי עָשָׁן כָּל־וּמָנִי אֲשֶׁר יָרַד עָלָיו ה' בָּאֵשׁ וַיַּעַל עָשָׁנוּ כַּעֲשָׁן הַכִּבְשָׁן וַיִּתְּרַד כָּל־הָהָר מְאֹד:

Now mount Sinai was altogether on smoke, because the L-RD descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שמות יט, יח.

81

וידבר הוי"ה אליכם מתוך האש

Moshe reminds Israel: “And Havayah spoke to you from the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of words.” The

Torah was given from within fire.

דברים ד':י"ב:12 Deuteronomy

וַיִּדְבֹר ה' אֲלֵיכֶם מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ קוֹל דְּבָרִים אֲתֶם שְׁמָעִים וְתִמְוָנָה אֵינְכֶם רְאִים זִוְלָתִי קוֹל:

And the L-RD spoke unto you out of the midst of the fire; ye heard the voice of words, but ye saw no form; only a voice.

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82

ת"ח אין אור של גינהם שולט בו

Rabbi Abahu in the name of Rabbi Elazar: the fire of Gehinnom has no power over Torah scholars, by inference from the salamander, for their whole body is fire, as it says, "Is not My word like fire?" The Alter Rebbe explains that the Torah and mitzvos have scoured them already.

חגיגה כ"ז א:ז'-ח"א:7-27a Chagigah

אמר רבי אבהו אמר רבי אלעזר: תלמידי חכמים אין אור של גיהנם שולטת בהן, קל וחומר מסלמנדרא: ומה סלמנדרא שתולדת אש היא — הסך מדמה אין אור שולטת בו, תלמידי חכמים שכל גופן אש, דכתיב: "הלוא כה דברי כאש נאם ה'" — על אחת כמה וכמה. אמר ריש לקיש: אין אור של גיהנם שולטת בפושעי ישראל, קל וחומר ממזבח הזהב: מה מזבח הזהב שאין עליו אלא כעובי דינר זהב — כמה שנים אין האור שולטת בו, פושעי ישראל שמלאין ...

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KEHOT'S NOTE

חגיגה כז, א.

PARAGRAPH 21

83

ולא תחללו

"And you shall not profane My holy Name." As in paragraph 18, the service of Torah and mitzvos must leave no void empty of G-d.

ויקרא כ"ב:ל"ב:22 Leviticus

ולא תחללו את־שם קדשי ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל אני ה' מקדשכם:
And ye shall not profane My holy name; but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel: I am the L-RD who hallow you,

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PARAGRAPH 22

84

שלש מתנות טובות כו'

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai says the Holy One, blessed be He, gave Israel three good gifts, all of them only through suffering: the Torah, the Land of Israel and the World to Come. The Alter Rebbe calls the power to draw down G-dliness through Torah and mitzvos such a gift.

ברכות ה' א:כ"א:20-21a Berakhot

תנא, רבי שמעון בן יוחאי אומר: שלש מתנות טובות נתן הקדוש ברוך הוא לישראל, וכולן לא נתן אלא על ידי יסורים, אלו הן: תורה וארץ ישראל והעולם הבא. תורה מגזין — שנאמר: "אשרי הגבר אשר תיסרנו קה ומתורתך תלמדנו".

There is a teaching : R. Simeon b. Johai said : Three precious gifts did the Holy One, blessed be He, give to Israel, and all of them He gave only through the medium of suffering ; they are : Torah, the land of Israel, and the world to come. Whence is it deduced that Torah [was given through the medium of suffering]? As it is said : "Happy is the man whom Thou chastenest, O L-rd, and teachest him out of Thy law " (Ps. xciv. 12).

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ברכות ה, א.

85

אי לאו האי יומא דקא גרים כמה יוסף איכא בשוקא

Rav Yosef's words on Shavuot, quoted in paragraph 1, are explained here: the day of the Giving of the Torah revealed G-d's wisdom below, unlike the many kinds of "adding."

פסחים ס"ח ב:י"ב-י"ג:68b Pesachim

רב יוסף ביומא דעצרתא אמר: עבדי לי עגלא תלתא. אמר, אי לא האי יומא דקא גרים — כמה יוסף איכא בשוקא. רב ששת כל תלתין יומין מחדר לקה תלמודיה, ותלי וקאי בעיברא דדשא, ואמר: חדאי נפשאי, חדאי נפשאי, לה קראי לה תנאי. איני? והאמר רבי אלעזר: אילמלא תורה לא נתקיימו שמים וארץ, שנאמר: "אם לא בריתי יומם ולילה חקות שמים וארץ לא שמתיי! מעיקרא כי עבד איניש — אדעתא דנפשיה קא עבדי.

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

86

יוסף דעת יוסף מכאוב

Koheles: "For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who adds knowledge adds pain." The verse reads yosif (יוסף); the maamar writes the word יוסף, the letters of the name Yosef, for knowledge that does not reveal G-d.

קהלת א':י"ח:1 Ecclesiastes

כי ברב חכמה רב־כעס יוסיף דעת יוסיף מכאוב:

For in much wisdom is much vexation; And he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

קהלת א, יח.

87

חכמים הם להרע

G-d laments through Yirmeyahu that His people are foolish: "They are wise to do evil, but to do good they do not know." The Alter Rebbe applies it to wisdom that belongs to the world of separation.

ירמיהו ד':כ"ב:4 Jeremiah

כי אֵוִיל עַמִּי אוֹתִי לֹא יָדְעוּ בָנִים סְכָלִים הֵמָּה וְלֹא נְבוֹנִים הֵמָּה חֲכָמִים הֵמָּה לְהָרַע וּלְהִיטִיב לֹא יָדְעוּ:

For My people is foolish, They know Me not; They are sottish children, And they have no understanding; They are wise to do evil, But to do good they have no knowledge.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ירמיה ד, כב.

88

כי משם יפרד

“And from there it divides and becomes four heads.” As in paragraph 14, the verse describes this world as a world of separation.

בראשית ב'י"ד:10 Genesis 2:10

וַיֵּצֵא מַעְדֵן לְהַשְׁקוֹת אֶת-הַגֶּן וּמִשָּׁם יִפְרָד 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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89

ז' שמות . . בסדר השתלשלות

That maamar refers to this passage: the seven Names here are lights clothed in vessels, as the gloss in Torah Ohr (68d) explains, and Moshe is the level of the essence of Chochmah.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה בד"ה מאי הנוכה תרע"ג "ומש"ש [בתו"א כאן] בענין ז' שמות כו' הן אורות המתלבשים בכלים כמש"ש בהביאור בהג"ה [לקמן סח, ד] ומשה הוא בבחי' עצם החכמה", ע"ש.

90

המשפילי לראות בשמים ובארץ

The psalmist praises G-d “who sits on high, who looks down low upon heaven and earth”: even heaven is below Him, no higher in His sight than the earth. Read here as the level above the chain of descent, from which heaven and earth are equal. (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh)

תהילים קי"ג:6 Psalms 113:6

הַמְשַׁפִּילִי לְרֹאוֹת בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ:

That looketh down low Upon heaven and upon the earth?

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים קיג, ו.

PARAGRAPH 23

91

על המשכת התורה . . ידבר

Kehot points to Or HaTorah on Yisro for the drawing down of the Torah expressed in “Moshe speaks.”

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה אוה"ת פי' יתרו ע' תתלב.

92

והאיש משה ענו מאד . . ונחנו מה

“And the man Moshe was very humble, more than any man on the face of the earth,” said when Miriam and Aharon spoke against him. Moshe's humility is the bittul through which he draws down the Torah.

במדבר י"ב:3 Numbers 12:3

וְהָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה עָנּוּ מְאֹד מִכָּל 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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KEHOT'S NOTE

במדבר יב, ג. בשלח טז, ח.

93

ונחנו מה

Moshe tells the people that their complaints are not against him and Aharon: “What are we?” The phrase is Chassidus's classic expression of Moshe's bittul.

שמות ט"ז:8 Exodus 16:8

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה בְּתַת ה' לָכֶם בָּעֶרֶב בָּשָׂר לֶאֱכֹל וּלֶחֶם בַּבֹּקֶר לְשַׂבֵּעַ בְּשֹׁמֶעַ ה' אֶת-תְּלַנְתִּיכֶם אֲשֶׁר-אַתֶּם מְלִינִם עָלָיו וְנַחֲנוּ מֶה לֹא-עֲלִינוּ תְלַנְתִּיכֶם כִּי עַל-ה'

And Moses said: ‘This shall be, when the L-RD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the L-RD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against Him; and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the L-RD.’

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94

ידבר עמים

The psalmist sings of G-d: “He subdues (yadber) peoples under us, nations beneath our feet.” The Alter Rebbe takes the verb in the sense of leading, and so reads yedaber in the opening verse as drawing down and leading.

תהילים מ"ד:4 Psalms 47:4

יְדַבֵּר עַמִּים תַּחְתֵּינוּ וְלְאֻמִּים תַּחַת רַגְלֵינוּ:

He subdueth peoples under us, and nations under our feet.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים מז, ד. ראה גם לעיל ד, א. נו, א. פב, ג.

95

משה בחי' בטול

Likkutei Torah on Pekudei explains “by the mouth of Moshe”: Moshe was so wholly nullified that the Shechinah spoke from his throat, and it refers for this to “the maamar Moshe yedaber.” It adds that every person has a spark of Moshe, reached through the bittul of the Shema, after which “my tongue will answer Your word.”

KEHOT'S NOTE

בלקו"ת פקודי ה, ד מציין לד"ה משה ידבר בענין בטול, ואולי הכוונה לכאן.

96

החכמה מאין תמצא

Job asks: “And wisdom, from where (me'ayin) shall it be found, and where is the place of understanding?” Chassidus reads me'ayin as “from nothingness”: wisdom comes through bittul.

איוב כ"ח:12 Job 28:12

וְהַחֲכָמָה מֵאֵין תִּמְצָא וְאֵי זֶה מְקוֹם בִּינָה:

But wisdom, where shall it be found? And where is the place of understanding?

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97 ובמקום שאתה מוצא גדולתו שם אתה מוצא ענותנותו

Rabbi Yochanan: wherever you find the might of the Holy One, blessed be He, you find His humility. As in paragraph 11, the drawing down comes through humility.

מגילה ל"א א"י"ב-י"ג: Megillah 31a:12-13

אמר רבי יוחנן: כל מקום שאתה מוצא גבורתו של הקדוש ברוך הוא, אתה מוצא ענותנותו. דבר זה כתוב בתורה, ושנוי בנביאים, ומשולש בכתובים. כתוב בתורה: "כי ה' אלקיכם הוא אלקי האלקים ואדוני האדונים", וכתוב בתורה: "עושה משפט יתום ואלמנה". שנוי בנביאים: "כה אמר רם ונשא שוכן עד וקדוש וגו'", וכתוב בתורה: "ואת דבא ושפל רוח", משולש בכתובים, דכתיב: "סולו לרוכב בערכות בקה שמו", וכתוב בתורה: "אבי יתומים ...

Yohanan said: Wherever you find [mentioned in the Bible] the power of the Holy One, blessed be He, you also find his humility. This fact is stated in the Torah, repeated in the Prophets, and stated a third time in the [Sacred] Writings. It is written in the Torah, "For the L-rd your G-d, He is the G-d of gods and L-rd of lords," and it says immediately afterwards, "He executes justice for the orphan and widow" (Deuteronomy 10:17). It is repeated in the Prophets: "For thus said He who ...

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PARAGRAPH 24

98 משה שושיבנא דמלכא

Two later places in Torah Ohr that Kehot lists for Moshe as "the groomsman of the King."

Zohar III, 20a כ, זח"ג

KEHOT'S NOTE

זח"ג כ, א. נג, ב. ערה, ב. ראה לקמן קי, א. קיא, א. לקו"ת במדבר ב, ד. אוה"ת נ"ך כרך ב ע' תתסג. בלקו"ת בהעלותך לב, ב מציינ לכאן.

99 משה שושיבנא דמלכא

The Zohar asks which is higher, Moshe or Aharon, and answers: Moshe is the groomsman of the King, Aharon the groomsman of the Matrona. Kehot also gives Zohar 3:20a and 3:275b, where the same pair appears.

ספר הזוהר, מצורע ד': י"ח-י"ז: כ"ה: Zohar, Metzora 4:18-7:25

He replied: 'It is written here, "two living clean birds and cedar wood and scarlet and hyssop". "Living" is a reference to two of the "living creatures" (Hayoth) that Ezekiel saw, denoting the place from which the true prophets draw inspiration. "Cedar wood" we have explained. "Scarlet" indicates the place of Severity, which is associated with him at first. "Hyssop" is the lesser Vau which gives sustenance to the Community of Israel. All these again rest upon him because he has been purified.' R. Judah and R. Isaac were once ...

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

100 ואין עוד מלבדו

"There is nothing else besides Him." This is the higher

unity that Moshe draws down.

דברים ד': ל"ה: Deuteronomy 4:35

אתה הראת לדעת כי ה' הוא האלקים אין עוד מלבדו:

Unto thee it was shown, that thou mightiest know that the L-RD, He is G-d; there is none else beside Him.

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101 פני אריה פני שור

In Yechezkel's vision each creature had the face of a man, the face of a lion on the right, the face of an ox on the left and the face of an eagle. The lion and the ox stand here for the source of the animal soul in the Throne.

יחזקאל א': י"ז: Ezekiel 1:10

ודמות פניהם פני אדם ופני אריה אלהימין לארבעתם ופני שור מהשמאול לארבעתן ופני נשר לארבעתן:

As for the likeness of their faces, they had the face of a man; and they four had the face of a lion on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four had also the face of an eagle.

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102 אדם שעל הכסא

"And upon the likeness of the throne, a likeness as the appearance of a man upon it from above." Moshe is this "man" above the Throne.

יחזקאל א': כ"ו: Ezekiel 1:26

וממעל לרקיע אשר על ראשם כמראה אבן ספיר דמות כסא ועל דמות הכסא דמות כמראה אדם עליו מלמעלה:

And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was a likeness as the appearance of a man upon it above.

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103 ואיש האלקים

"And this is the blessing with which Moshe, the man of G-d, blessed the children of Israel." The Alter Rebbe reads "the man of G-d" as the husband of the Matrona.

דברים ל"ג: א' Deuteronomy 33:1

וזאת הברכה אשר ברח משה איש האלקים את בני ישראל לפני מותו:

And this is the blessing wherewith Moses the man of G-d blessed the children of Israel before his death.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

דברים לג, א.

104 אדם בגימט' מ"ה

Torah Ohr on Shemos gives the sources for the equation: the "man" of Atzilus upon the Throne is the Name mah, whose numerical value equals adam.

KEHOT'S NOTE

נסמן לעיל נב, ב.

PARAGRAPH 25

105 אין מלך בלא עם

Torah Ohr on Bereishis explains that the Name Elokim hides the strength of the light through contractions so that separate existence can come to be; this is the meaning of Elokim as rulership, “there is no king without a people,” and it is also called the Shechinah.

KEHOT'S NOTE

נסמן לעיל ה, א. נג, ד.

106 כמארו"ל גבי הלל עונה אחריהם מה שהם אומרים

The Mishnah: one for whom a slave, a woman or a minor reads Hallel repeats after them what they say. The Alter Rebbe learns from it that “answering” means saying the speaker’s words.

Sukkah 38a סוכה ל"ח

KEHOT'S NOTE

סוכה לח, א.

107 יענה להמשכה זו של משה

Kehot refers to Or HaTorah on Nach for the lower unity “answering” Moshe’s drawing down.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה אוה"ת נ"ך כרך ב ע' אקיו.

108 אתפשטותא דמשה בכל דרא

Kehot's note points to Zohar III, 216b for these words.

Zohar III, 216b זח"ג רטז,

KEHOT'S NOTE

ת"ז תס"ט (קרב, א. קיד, א). ועייג"כ זח"ג רטז, ב. רעג, א. ת"ז ת"ע (תלח, ב).

109 אתפשטותא דמשה בכל דרא

Tikkunei Zohar (Tikkun 69) speaks of the extension of Moshe in every generation. Kehot also gives Zohar 3:216b and 273a and Tikkun 70.

Tikkunei Zohar 112a:13-14 י"ג-י"ד זח"ג

... אמר רבי אלעזר אשתמודע מהכא דמשה מאתווי משמע דאיהו הכל ואיהו שת ואיהו משה, ואתפשטותיה דמשה בכל דרא ודרא ובכל צדיק וצדיק, ואיהו אזיל בתלת תלת, ובכל תלת דאיהו רכיב אתמר בהון לא ימוש מפיה ומפי זרעה ומפי זרע ורעה, מהכא אשתמודע דאיהו לא אשתכח אלא באתר דאית בקה אורייתא, ובגין דא זכור תורת משה עבדי. אמר לקה רבי יהודה אתפשטותא דיליה בכני נשא אית לקה שעורא, אמר לקה אין, עד שתין רבוא, ...

Tikkunei Zohar - Vocalized (Public Domain)

110 בטל רצונך

Rabban Gamliel, son of Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi: “Nullify your will before His will.” This is the bittul with which each person keeps the Torah and mitzvos.

Pirkei Avot 2:4 משה אבות ב'ד'

הוא היה אומר, עשה רצונך כרצונה, כדי שיעשה רצונה כרצונך. בטל רצונה מפני רצונך, כדי שיבטל רצון אחרים מפני רצונך. הלל אומר,

אל תפרש מן הצבור, ואל תאמין בעצמך עד יום מותך, ואל תדין את חברך עד שתגיע למקומו. ואל תאמר דבר שאי אפשר לשמע, שסופו להשמע. ואל תאמר לכשאפנה אשנה, שמה לא תפנה:

He used to say: do His will as though it were your will, so that He will do your will as though it were His. Set aside your will in the face of His will, so that he may set aside the will of others for the sake of your will. Hillel said: do not separate yourself from the community, Do not trust in yourself until the day of your death, Do not judge your fellow man until you have reached his place. Do not say something that cannot be ...

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PARAGRAPH 26

111 כל הקורא ושונה

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה תדב"א רבה רפ"ח.

112 כל הקורא ושונה הקב"ה קורא ושונה כנגדו

Every Torah scholar who sits, reads, studies and engages in Torah, the Holy One, blessed be He, sits opposite him and reads and studies with him. The Alter Rebbe reads this as G-d's “answering” each person's bittul.

Tanna DeBei Eliyahu Rabbah 18:1-2 י"ח-י"א ב'י-א'

... איכ למה נאמר בכל צרתם לו צר אלא אמר הקב"ה בכל צער וצער שיש לישראל כביכול אני עמהם שנאמר לו צר אית לו צר אלא לי צר שנאמר (ישעיהו מ"ט:ג) ויאמר לי עבדי אתה ישראל אשר כך אתפאר לכך נאמר קומי רני בלילה וגוי מאי שפכי כמים לבך נכח פני ה' מכאן אמרו כל ת"ח שיושב וקורא ושונה ועוסק בתורה הקב"ה יושב כנגדו וקורא ושונה עמו שכאן נאמר נכח פני ה' ולהלן הוא אומר ויחנו אלה נוכח אלה וגוי (מלכים א' כ"ט) מה להלן פניהם של אלו נוכח פניהם ...

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113 אין עוד מלבדו

“There is nothing else besides Him.” This awareness is the bittul each person brings to his learning.

Deuteronomy 4:35 דברים ד' ל"ה

אתה הראת לדעת כי ה' הוא האֱלֹהִים אֵין עֹד מִלְּבָדּוֹ:

Unto thee it was shown, that thou mightiest know that the L-RD, He is G-d; there is none else beside Him.

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114 ואני ה' לא שנית

Through Malachi G-d tells Israel: “For I, Havayah, have not changed, and you, children of Yaakov, have not come to an end.” Here it means that creation made no change in G-d; He is as He was before the world was created.

Malachi 3:6 מלאכי ג' ו'

כי אני ה' לא שנית ואתם בני יעקב לא כליתם:

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

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PARAGRAPH 27

115

ונחנו מה

Moshe's words, "What are we?" Here they express the awareness that G-d fills the world as before creation.

שמות ט"ז:ח: Exodus 16:8

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה בְּתַת ה' לָכֶם בְּעֶרְבַּי בָּשָׂר לֶאֱכֹל וּלֶחֶם בַּבֹּקֶר לְשִׁבְעָה בְּשִׁמְעֵי ה' אֶת־תְּלַנְתִּיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם מְלִינִם עָלַי וְנַחֲנוּ מֶה לֹא־עֲלִינוּ תְּלַנְתִּיכֶם כִּי עַל־ה'

And Moses said: 'This shall be, when the L-RD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the L-RD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against Him; and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the L-RD.'

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

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ושכינה מדברת

Torah Ohr on Va'eira explains that because Moshe said "What are we?" in total bittul, the Torah was given through him in speech, and the Shechinah spoke from his throat; one who does not feel himself at all follows and says what G-d says, and so draws down G-d's unity as before the world was created.

KEHOT'S NOTE

נסמן לעיל נו, א.

117

אני המשנה המדברת בפיר

The record of the teachings the heavenly Maggid gave the Beis Yosef; Kehot locates these words there.

KEHOT'S NOTE

מגיד משרים להב"י ר"פ ויקרא. ועוד.

PARAGRAPH 28

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משה שפיר קאמרת

Rav Safra challenges Rava, addressing him as "Moshe": "Moshe, are you speaking well?" The Alter Rebbe takes the title as showing that a Torah scholar is called Moshe.

Shabbat 101b:3 שבת ק"א ב:ג

אמר לקה רב ספרא: משה, שפיר קאמרת! "מטלטלין מזו לזו" תנו! אלא אמר רב ספרא: לא נצרכה אלא לערב ולטלטל מזו לזו, וכדתנא: ספינות קשורות זו בזו — מערבין ומטלטלין מזו לזו. נפקו — נאסרו. קרו ונקשרו, בין שוגגין ובין מזידין בין אנוסין בין מוטעין — קרו להיתרן הראשון.

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

שבת קא, ב ושי"נ.

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ואבא יסד ברתא

The Zohar explains "with wisdom He founded the earth": wisdom is Abba, the earth is the daughter. The Alter Rebbe

reads the "earth" as the halachah in a Torah scholar's mouth.

Zohar III, 248a זח"ג רמח, א

Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 21 • 61b:4-5 תקו"ז תיקון כא-5

וכד אית בישראל משכילים בחכמה דאיהי י' מחשבה עלאה. ידעין לזרקא לה להאי אבנא דאיהי בת יחידה לההוא אתר דאתגזרת בגין דברתא באבא אתעבדית. הה"ד יי' בחכמה יסד ארץ. בחכמה דאיהו אבא יסד ברתא דאיהי ארץ הדום רגליו וההוא חוט דילה איהו ו'. דאבנא דאיהי תגא. עטרי על רישיה עטרה דס"ת. ובגינה אתמר ודאשתמש בתגא חלף איהו כתר תורה ודאי. דתלת כתרין אינון כתר תורה וכתר כהונה וכתר מלכות. וכתר תורה (נ"א וכתר שם טוב) על גבייהו.

Constantinople, 1740 (CC-BY-NC)

KEHOT'S NOTE

זח"ג רמח, א. רנו, ב. רנח, א. ת"ז ת"י כא.

120

ה' בחכמה יסד ארץ

Shlomo teaches: "Havayah founded the earth with wisdom; He established the heavens with understanding." The Zohar reads "wisdom" as Abba and "earth" as the daughter, Malchus, which the Alter Rebbe identifies with the halachah in a Torah scholar's mouth.

Proverbs 3:19 משלי ג:י"ט

ה' בַּחֲכָמָה יִסַּד־אֶרֶץ כּוֹנֵן שָׁמַיִם בְּתִבּוּנָה:

The L-RD by wisdom founded the earth; By understanding He established the heavens.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

משלי ג, יט.

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דבר ה' זו הלכה

On "they will roam to seek the word of Havayah and will not find it" (Amos 8:12), the Gemara says: "the word of Havayah" is halachah. The Alter Rebbe identifies it with the halachah in a Torah scholar's mouth.

Shabbat 138b:11-12 שבת קל"ח ב:י"א-י"ב

"דבר ה'" — זו הלכה, "דבר ה'" — זה הקץ, "דבר ה'" — זו נבואה. ומאי "ישוטטו לבקש את דבר ה'"? אפרו: עתידה אשה שתטול כפר של תרומה ותחזור בכתי כנסיות ובכתי מדרשות לידע אם טמאה היא ואם טהורה היא, ואין מבין.

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

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זו הלכה שבפי ת"ח

Or HaTorah refers to this passage and writes that the Alter Rebbe holds with Avodas HaKodesh (part 4, ch. 33) that Israel understood all the commandments from G-d's mouth without any intermediary, as the author of the Akeidah also wrote, unlike Ramban and Rashi, and certainly unlike Rambam.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה אוה"ת יתרו ע' תתלב שציין לכאן וכתב שאדה"י ס"ל כדעת העבודת הקדש ח"ד פל"ג שכל הדברות הבינו ישראל מפיו בלי שום אמצעי ושכן כתב בעל העקדה ודלא כהרמב"ן ורש"י וכ"ש דלא כהרמב"ם, ע"ש. העבודה"ק נתבאר ג"כ בארוכה באוה"ת יתרו ע' תתמד ואילך.

123

בקולו של משה

The Gemara's reading of "with a voice" as the voice of Moshe, quoted at the start of the maamar, is explained here as the voice of each Torah scholar's bittul.

ברכות מ"ה א' ח"א:8 Berakhot 45a

אמר רבי שמעון בן פאי: מניין שאין המתרגם רשאי להגביה קולו יותר מן הקורא, שנאמר: "משה ידבר והאלקים יענו בקול", שאין תלמוד לומר "בקול", ומה תלמוד לומר "בקול" — בקולו של משה.

R. Simeon b. Pazzi said : Whence is it that the translator is not permitted to raise his voice above that of the reader? As it is said, "Moses spoke, and G-d answered him by a voice" (Exod. xix. 19) — there was no need to say "by a voice" ; what, therefore, does the teaching "by a voice" tell us? By a voice [equal to that] of Moses.

William Davidson, Vocalized Aramaic (CC-BY-NC) • Tractate Berakot by A. Cohen, Cambridge University Press, 1921 (Public Domain)

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קנה חכמה

A father urges his son: "Acquire wisdom, acquire understanding." The verb kneh, "acquire," is spelled like kaneh, the windpipe; the Alter Rebbe points to a known explanation of this verse for the voice that brings hidden wisdom out.

משלי ד' ה' Proverbs 4:5

קנה חכמה קנה בינה אל־תשכח אל־יתט מאמרי־פי:

Get wisdom, get understanding; Forget not, neither decline from the words of my mouth;

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KEHOT'S NOTE

משלי ד, ה.



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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