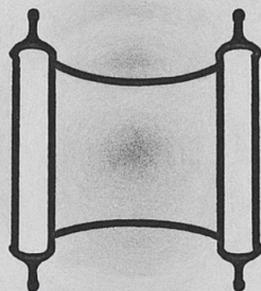


ד"ר

The Maggid of Mezritch
Ohr Torah
Parshas Bo



Dedicated in Honor of the
Yahrzeit of

לע"נ

שׂוֹרֵה מְרִים בֵּית אַבְרָהָם

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Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah Parshas Bo

Siman #81

In order that I place My signs, etcetera, these within him, because the Holy One, blessed be He, wanted to refine all the sparks from Egypt, from the shattering.

למען שיתי אתומי (וכו') אלה בקרבו, לפי שהקדוש ברוך הוא הנה רוצה לקבץ כל הניצוצות ממצרים מן השבירה.

And what is the matter of refining the sparks, that is, all the idle matters of Pharaoh and of Egypt, which are letters.

ומהו ענין ברור הניצוצות, הינו כל הדברים הבטלים של פרעה ושל מצרים שהם אותיות.

For what difference is there for me between letters of idle matters and letters of the Torah, only the distinction is that letters of idle matters are from the shattering, and the Holy One, blessed be He, wanted to refine them.

כי מה לי אותיות של דברים בטלים ומה לי אותיות של התורה, רק החלוקה הוא שאותיות של דברים בטלים הם מן השבירה, ורצה הקדוש ברוך הוא לקבצם.

That is, in this will be the refinement, that He inserted these speeches and these letters into the Torah, and made from them another combination of holiness, and this is their refinement.

דהינו בזה יהנה הברור, שהכניס הדבורים והאותיות האלו בתורה, ועשה מהם צירוף אחר של קדושה, וזהו הברור שלהם.

And this is the secret of one of the stories of the Torah, aside from the other secrets that are hinted in the stories, until there is no end and no number, in every single letter and letter, for the Holy One, blessed be He, and the Torah and Israel are one.

וזהו סוד אקד מספורי התורה, לבד שאר סודות הנרמזים בספורים עד אין קץ ומספר בכל אות ואות, כי הקדוש ברוך הוא והתורה (וישראל) חד הוא.

And we return to the first matter, that if He had not brought upon Egypt these additional three plagues, several stories would have been lacking that would not have been written in the Torah, and all the sparks would not have been refined.

ונחזור לענין הראשון, שאם לא הביא על מצרים עוד אלו שלוש מכות, היו חסרים כמה ספורים שלא הנה נכתב בתורה, ולא היו מתבררים כל הניצוצות.

And this is the hint of the verse “In order that I place these My signs,” meaning letters of the shattering, and I need to refine them through the Torah, therefore it is of necessity to send upon them an additional three plagues, in order to insert them into the letter-combinations of the Torah as above, and understand.

וזהו רמז הפסוק למען שיתי אתומי אלה, רצה לומר אותיות של השבירה, וצריך אני לקבצם על ידי התורה, לכן הוא מן ההכרח לשלוח עליהם עוד שלוש מכות בכדי להכניסם באותיות צירופים. ושבירה כפ"ל, והבן.

(Exodus 10:1)

[NOTE Summary:

In this maamar, the Maggid of Mezritch explains the deeper purpose of the plagues in Egypt through the Kabbalistic concept of *birur hanitzotot*, the refinement of sparks. Egypt is portrayed not merely as a place of physical bondage, but as a spiritual repository of shattered divine sparks that descended through the process known as the shattering. These sparks express themselves as the “idle matters” of Pharaoh and Egypt, which are themselves constituted of letters and speech.

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Bo

The Maggid emphasizes that, at their root, there is no intrinsic difference between the letters of mundane or idle speech and the letters of Torah. Both are composed of divine letters. The distinction lies in their spiritual state: letters of idle matters originate in brokenness and concealment, whereas letters of Torah are already arranged in holy combinations. The divine task, therefore, is not to discard the letters of Egypt, but to redeem them. This redemption occurs by reconfiguring those very letters and utterances into new, sanctified combinations within the Torah.

This explains why the additional three plagues were necessary. Had these plagues not occurred, entire narratives would have been absent from the Torah, and consequently, the sparks bound up in those events would have remained unrefined. The Torah's narratives are not incidental historical records, but deliberate vehicles for cosmic repair. Every story, every letter, and every detail serves the purpose of elevating sparks from brokenness into holiness. This is why the Maggid stresses that the Torah contains endless layers of secrets within its stories, down to each individual letter. The statement that the Holy One, blessed be He, the Torah, and Israel are one underscores that this process of refinement is unified across divine will, divine wisdom, and the soul of Israel.

Thus, the verse “in order that I place these My signs within him” is read as an allusion to inserting the letters of shattering into the Torah itself, transforming them into signs of holiness. The plagues, the narratives, and the Torah's very text all function together as instruments of spiritual clarification and redemption.

Practical Takeaway:

The Maggid's teaching reframes how one views ordinary speech, experiences, and even moments of spiritual brokenness. Nothing is inherently worthless or irredeemable. Words, actions, and situations that seem mundane or even spiritually empty may contain concealed sparks awaiting refinement. Through Torah study, mindful speech, and intentional action, a person can take the raw material of everyday life and reorganize it into holiness. One should therefore not despair over spiritual descent or engagement with the mundane, but instead view them as opportunities for elevation, provided they are consciously reconnected to Torah and divine purpose. **END NOTE]**

Siman #82

And in the Midrash Rabbi Yannai said: the Torah should not have begun except from “This month is for you.” (Exodus 12:2)

And why did He reveal to them the account of Creation, for Israel, because they said “We will do and we will hear.” (Exodus 24:7)

וּבַמִּדְרָשׁ אָמַר רַבִּי יַנַּי, לֹא הָיָה צָרִיךְ לְהַתְחִיל
הַתּוֹרָה אֶלָּא מִהַחֲדָשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם

וְלָמָּה גָּלָה לָהֶם מַעֲשֵׂה בְרָאשִׁית, בְּשִׁבִיל יִשְׂרָאֵל,
מִפְּנֵי שֶׁאָמְרוּ נַעֲשֵׂה וְנִשְׁמָע

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Bo

In the manner that the Sages of blessed memory said: Israel arose in thought. (Bereishit Rabbah 1:4)

על דרך שאמרו רז"ל, ישראל עלה במחשבה

The precedence of the will was in order that Israel would be righteous in every generation and generation,

קדימת הרצון הנה בשביל שיהיו ישראל צדיקים
בכל דור ודור

and He contracted, as it were, His brightness, like the parable of a father who contracts his intellect and speaks words of smallness for his small son.

וצמצם השם ותפרד פביכול את בהירותו, כמשל אב
המצמצם את שכלו ומדבר דברי קטנות בשביל בנו
הקטן.

And also all the attributes, deeds of youth, are born in the father, who loves the deeds of youth, in order that the son will have delight and splendor with him.

וגם כל המדות, מעשה נערות, נולדים באב, שאוהב
את מעשה הנערות כדי שיהיה לבן תענוג ומפואר
אצלו.

And with the Holy One, blessed be He, the past and the future are equal with Him, and He, may He be blessed, was delighting from the deeds of the righteous and contracted Himself.

ובהקדוש ברוך הוא, העבר והעתיד שוים אצלו,
והיה הוא ותפרד מתענג ממעשי הצדיקים וצמצם את
עצמו.

And the contraction is called wisdom, for wisdom is nothingness, in the manner of “And wisdom, from nothingness, is found.” (Job 28:12)

והצמצום נקרא חכמה, פי החכמה היא האין, על דרך
והחכמה מאין תמצא.

And the contraction was for Israel, and also love caused the contraction, and this is “And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham begot,” and so forth. (Genesis 25:19)

והצמצום הנה בשביל ישראל, וגם האהבה גרמה את
הצמצום, וזהו ואלה תולדות יצחק אברהם הוליד,
וגומר.

[NOTE Summary:

In this segment, the Maggid of Mezritch addresses a well-known teaching cited in the Midrash in the name of Rabbi Yannai, that the Torah should have begun with the commandment “This month is for you,” the first mitzvah given to Israel. The Maggid explains that the reason the Torah nevertheless opens with the account of Creation is not incidental or historical, but purposeful and bound up with the essence of Israel. The narrative of Creation was revealed specifically for Israel because they declared “We will do and we will hear,” demonstrating a willingness to submit themselves entirely to divine will even before comprehension.

This idea aligns with the teaching of the Sages that Israel arose in thought first. The Maggid explains that the precedence of divine will was oriented toward the emergence of Israel as righteous individuals in every generation. In order for this to be possible, the Holy One, blessed be He, performed a contraction, a self-limitation of divine radiance. This contraction is illustrated through the parable of a father who reduces and simplifies his intellect, speaking in childlike terms so that his young son can receive and delight in his words.

The Maggid deepens this metaphor by explaining that even the attributes and youthful behaviors of a child are already present within the father. The father loves these immature expressions, not despite their simplicity but because they allow the child to experience closeness, delight, and a sense of beauty in the relationship. Similarly, with the Holy One, blessed be He, past and future are equal. All future righteous deeds of Israel were

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Bo

already known and present before Him, and He derived delight from them in advance. For the sake of that delight, He contracted Himself, allowing the world and Torah to be expressed in a form accessible to finite beings.

This contraction is identified with wisdom. Wisdom is described as “nothingness,” as stated in the verse “Wisdom is found from nothingness.” The Maggid explains that this state of self-nullification and concealment is precisely what allows revelation to occur. The contraction, called wisdom, was undertaken for Israel, and it was love that ultimately caused it. This love is hinted to in the verse “And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham begot,” indicating a transmission born not merely of causality, but of deep affection and continuity.

Practical Takeaway:

This teaching reframes spiritual limitation not as a deficiency, but as an act of love. When complexity is reduced, when depth is concealed, or when divine truth appears in simple narratives and accessible commandments, it is not because of distance, but because of closeness. A person should not mistake simplicity for absence. On the contrary, the most profound wisdom often appears in a contracted form so that it can be received, lived, and delighted in. This applies both to Torah study and to human relationships, where true connection often requires lowering oneself, speaking in simpler terms, and valuing small, imperfect expressions as vehicles for genuine closeness. **END NOTE]**

Siman #83

“**This month is for you.**” It is stated in the Zohar, in Saba of Mishpatim: Nisan is called spring, for it is Aleph Bet in order, it is yours; Tishrei is letters backward, it is Mine. (Zohar, Mishpatim, Saba)

And it will be understood according to what is stated: “Like an eagle that arouses its nest, hovers,” touches and does not touch. (Deuteronomy 32:11)

And the matter is that the eagle is compassionate toward its children and wants to bestow upon them and to protect them, but because it is large of limb and feather, if it were to touch them actually, they would not be able to bear it, therefore it touches and does not touch.

Thus He, may He be blessed, the world was not able to bear the brightness of His light and His influence, and they would be nullified from existence, He needed to contract His light.

הַחֲדָשׁ הַזֶּה לְכֶם. אֵימָא (בְּזוֹהַר) בְּסַבָּא דְּמִשְׁפָּטִים,
נִסָּן קְרוּי אָבִיב שְׁהוּא א"ב כְּסִדְרָן הוּא דִּילְכוֹן, תִּשְׁרֵי
אוֹתִיּוֹת לְמִפְרָע הוּא דִּילֵי

וְיֻבֵן עַל פִּי שְׁנַאמֵר כְּנֶשֶׁר יַעִיר קִנּוּ וְגו' יִרְחַף, נוֹגֵעַ
וְאֵינוֹ נוֹגֵעַ

וְהַעֲנִין כִּי הַנֶּשֶׁר רַחֲמָנִי עַל בְּנָיו וְרוֹצֵה לְהַשְׁפִּיעַ לָהֶם
וְלִהְיוֹן עֲלֵיהֶם, אִךְ מִתְחַמֵּת שֶׁהוּא גָדוֹל הָאֵבֶר וְהַנּוֹצָה,
וְאִם יִגַּע בָּהֶם מִמֶּשׁ לֹא יוּכְלוּ לְסַבֵּלוּ, עַל כֵּן הוּא נוֹגֵעַ
וְאֵינוֹ נוֹגֵעַ

כִּף הוּא יִתְבַּרֵךְ, לֹא הָיוּ הָעוֹלָם יְכוּלִים יְסַבֵּל בְּהִירוֹת
אוֹרוֹ וְהַשְׁפָּעוֹתוֹ, וְהָיוּ בְּטִלִים מִמְּצִיאֹתוֹ, הִצְרִיךְ
לְצַמְצֵם אוֹרוֹ

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Bo

And behold, the letters in order indicate His influence, may He be blessed, from above to below, and letters reversed backward indicate the contraction.

והנה האותיות כסדרן הם מורים על השפעתו יתברך מעילא לתתא, ואתון מהפכים למפרע הם מורים על הצמצום.

And also in the matter of the combinations of the Tetragrammaton, may He be blessed, so it is; if it is in order it indicates mercy.

וגם בענין צירופי הו"ה יתברך כן הוא, אם הוא כסדרן מורה על רחמים.

And this is what is said: Nisan, letters in order, it is yours, meaning for the sake of My love for you and My compassion upon you, to bestow and to protect you.

וזהו שצאמר ניסן אתון כסדרן הוא דילכון, רצה לומר בשביל אהבתי אתכם ורחמנותי עליכם להשפיע ולהגן עליכם.

But Tishrei, which are letters backward, indicates the contraction, and even though this also is for you and for your benefit, so that you will be able to bear My brightness, nevertheless it is called Mine, meaning it is called by My name, because due to the greatness of My light and My brightness, it is the prevention from bestowing upon you My abundant kindnesses and the greatness of My goodness, therefore it is Mine.

אבל תשרי שהם אתון למפרע מורה על הצמצום, ואף על פי שגם זה הוא בשבילכם ולטובתכם שתהיו יכולים לסבל הבהירות שלי, עם כל זה הוא נקרא דילי, רצה לומר נקרא על שמי, כי מחמת גדל האור והבהירות שלי היא המניעה להשפיע עליכם חסדי המרבים וגדל טובי, לכן הוא דילי.

But Nisan, which is the aspect of the bestower, is yours. And this is what is said: “This month is for you,” specifically for you, and therefore the combination of “this month” is the Tetragrammaton in order.

אבל ניסן שהוא בחינת המשפיע הוא דילכון. וזהו שצאמר החודש הזה לכם, לכם דיקא, ולכן הצרוף של החודש הזה הוא הו"ה כסדרא.

[NOTE Summary:

In this maamar, the Maggid of Mezritch explains the inner meaning of the verse “This month is for you” by contrasting the spiritual nature of the months of Nisan and Tishrei. Drawing on the Zohar, he teaches that Nisan is associated with letters arranged in their proper order, while Tishrei is associated with letters arranged in reverse. These two arrangements represent two distinct divine modes: revelation and contraction.

The Maggid clarifies this distinction through the verse describing the eagle that “hovers over its nest,” touching and not touching at once. The eagle is compassionate and desires to nurture and protect its young, yet because of its size and strength, direct contact would overwhelm them. Therefore, it remains close while holding back. This metaphor explains divine conduct. The Holy One, blessed be He, desired to bestow His light and influence upon the world, but the world could not withstand the full brilliance of that light. Without restraint, creation would dissolve from existence. As a result, divine light had to be contracted.

Letters arranged in proper order represent divine influence flowing from above to below, a mode of open giving and mercy. Reversed letters represent contraction, concealment, and restraint. This pattern is reflected as well in

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Bo

the various permutations of the Divine Name. When the Divine Name appears in its proper order, it indicates mercy and revealed beneficence. When reversed, it indicates contraction.

Nisan, whose letters are in order, is described as “yours,” because it reflects God’s love and compassion for Israel, a time of revealed bestowal and protection. Tishrei, whose letters are reversed, reflects contraction. Although this contraction is also for Israel’s benefit, allowing them to exist and receive divine light without being overwhelmed, it is called “Mine,” because it arises from the sheer intensity of divine light itself, which necessitates restraint.

Thus, the Maggid explains that “This month is for you” refers specifically to Nisan, the month of revealed giving. For this reason, the spiritual combination of that month corresponds to the Divine Name arranged in its proper order, emphasizing mercy, closeness, and open flow from God to Israel.

Practical Takeaway:

This teaching reframes concealment and limitation as expressions of care rather than distance. Not every moment of restraint, difficulty, or spiritual concealment is a sign of abandonment. Sometimes it is precisely because the light is too great that it must be filtered. A person should learn to recognize both modes in their life: moments of open inspiration and moments of constriction. Both serve growth. The revealed light of “Nisan” nourishes and uplifts, while the restraint of “Tishrei” protects and preserves. Awareness of this balance allows a person to respond to both expansion and limitation with trust and clarity.

Chassidic Story:

There is a well-documented account involving Rabbi Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezritch, and one of his close students who once complained that he no longer felt the spiritual illumination he had experienced when first arriving in Mezritch. In earlier years, his prayer had been filled with emotion and clarity, while now it felt restrained and distant.

The Maggid listened and then pointed to a candle burning nearby. He asked the student what would happen if oil were poured onto the flame all at once instead of drop by drop. The student answered that the flame would be extinguished. The Maggid explained that in the beginning, Heaven sometimes allows a person to experience open illumination to draw them close. Later, that light is measured and constrained so that it can be integrated into daily life without overwhelming the soul. The absence of overt inspiration was not rejection, but protection and maturation.

This story embodies the Maggid’s teaching in this maamar. Divine closeness does not always appear as revealed warmth. Sometimes it appears as careful restraint, ensuring that the relationship endures and that the recipient can truly receive. **END NOTE]**

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Bo

Siman #84a

“Draw and take for yourselves sheep.” For in Egypt there was no arousal from below, for there were idolatrous abominations within them, and therefore they required arousal from above.

משכו וקחו לכם צאן. כי במצרים לא הייתה התעוררות מלמטה, שהיה קיח בהם גילולי עבודה זרה, ולכן הצרכו התעוררות מלמעלה.

And therefore it is written “I am the Lord,” I and not another.

ולכן פתיב אני ה', אני ולא אחר.

And this is what is said: “And Israel saw the great hand that the Lord performed in Egypt,” because He promised Abraham and afterward they went out with great wealth, and Abraham is called the great hand, that is, love. (Exodus 14:31)

וזהו שנאמר וירא ישראל את היד הגדולה אשר עשה ה' במצרים, משום שהבטיח לאברהם ואחר פו יצאו ברכוש גדול, ואברהם נקרא יד הגדולה, דהינו אהבה.

And love was what caused this arousal from above, even though there was no arousal from below, as it is stated in the Zohar: “My bride in the tanner’s market is similar to me as a spice market.” (Zohar)

ואהבה הייתה גורמת לזה התעוררות מלמעלה, אף על פי שלא הייתה התעוררות מלמטה, כדאיתא בזהר כלתי בשוק של בורסי דומה עלי כשוק של בושם.

And this is what is said: “And My Name the Lord I was not known to them,” meaning that today there would be recognizable the expansion of great kindnesses in tangible experience, where there was no arousal from below and nevertheless there was arousal from above. (Exodus 6:3)

וזהו שנאמר ושמתי ה' לא נודעתי להם, שיהיה נכר היום התפשטות חסדים גדולים בחוש, שלא הייתה התעוררות מלמטה ואף על פי כן הייתה התעוררות מלמעלה.

But the Name Shaddai indicates contraction, the removal of expansion, the letter yod into the three lines of shin to dalet, and this was by way of contraction, that He said to His world “enough,” as explained elsewhere.

אבל שם שדי מורה על הצמצום, סור ההתפשטות היוד בגי' קויו דשי"ן לדל"ת, וזה היה דרך צמצום שאמר לעולמו די, כמבואר במקום אחר.

But here, at the Sea of Reeds, there was expansion from a tower that flies in the air, which is lamed, which is the numerical value twenty six, through the three lines of the shin, with the closed mem and the open mem, which is also twenty six.

אבל כאן בים סוף הייתה התפשטות ממגדל הפורח באויר, שהוא למ"ד, שהוא כ"ו, דרך גי' קני השי"ן, למ"ם סתומה ולמ"ם פתוחה, שהוא גם כ"ו.

And therefore it is written, and this is the combination “draw,” that the mem is open, from “draw” is twenty six, that the open mem receives through the shin from twenty six, that is, the lamed, which is bina.

ולכן פתיב משכו, שהמ"ם פתוחה משכו כ"ו, שהמ"ם הפתוחה מקבלת על ידי השי"ן מכ"ו, דהינו למ"ד שהיא בינה.

And therefore it is called the Great Sabbath, for it is stated in the Zohar that there is an eve of Sabbath and the Sabbath itself, and the Great Sabbath is the daytime Sabbath, to indicate that in every place one must elevate from below to above, and here the Great Sabbath was extended downward.

ולכן נקרא שבת הגדול, דאיתא בזהר שיש מעלי שבתא ושבתא, ושבת הגדול הוא שבת דיומא, להורות שבכל מקום צריך להעלות מתמא לעילא, וכן היה שבת הגדול נתפשט למטה.

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Bo

And to this the question of the legal decisors is difficult. And this is what is said in the Zohar: upper days are three hundred sixty six, lower days are three hundred sixty five, and it is also stated there “in Atika the matter depends.”

וְלֹאִיָּה קוֹשֶׁה קוֹשֵׁת הַפּוֹסְקִים. וְזֶהוּ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בְּזֶהר יָמִין
עֵלְאִין וְשִׁס״ו, יָמִין תַּתְּאִין וְשִׁס״ה, וְגַם אֵיתָא שָׁם
בְּעֵתִיקָא תְּלִיא מִיְלְתָא.

And this is what is said: “to the One Who smote Egypt through their firstborn,” for an upper level is called firstborn. (Psalms 136:10)

וְזֶהוּ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר לְמִפְנֵי מִצְרַיִם בְּבְכוֹרֵיהֶם, כִּי מִדְּרָגָה
עֲלִיוֹנָה נִקְרְאוֹת בְּכוֹר.

And this is what is said: “I caused you to increase like the growth of the field,” for there are four levels in number: tens, hundreds, thousands, myriads, and this is in number, that is, the lowest level of all the worlds of Atzilut, Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah, and the level of myriads is “myriad like the growth of the field,”

וְזֶהוּ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר רַבְּבָה כְּצֻמַח הַשָּׂדֶה נִתְתִּירָה, כִּי ד'
מִדְּרָגוֹת יֵשׁ בַּמִּסְפָּר, עֲשִׂירִיּוֹת מֵאוֹת אֲלָפִים רַבְבוֹת,
וְזֶהוּ בַּמִּסְפָּר, הֵינּוּ מִדְּרָגָה תַּתְּאָה מְכַל הָעוֹלָמוֹת
אֲצִילוֹת בְּרִיאָה יְצִירָה עֲשִׂיָּה

and the level of myriads is “myriad like the growth of the field,” and you came with adornments upon adornments, meaning in the world of adornment, adorned from Atzilut, Beriah, Yetzirah to Asiyah, and you were naked and bare, without arousal from below, etcetera. (Ezekiel 16:7)

וּמִדְּרָגַת רַבְּבָה הִיא רַבְּבָה כְּצֻמַח הַשָּׂדֶה, וְתַבּוּאֵי בְּעַדֵּי
עַדִּימִים, כְּלוּמַר בְּעוֹלָם הַתְּקִשְׁטוֹת מֵאֲצִילוֹת בְּרִיאָה
יְצִירָה לְעֲשִׂיָּה, וְאֵת עֵרוֹם וְעָרְיָה, כְּלִי הַתְּעוֹרְרוֹת
דְּלִמְטָה וְכוּ'

[NOTE Summary:

In this maamar, the Maggid of Mezritch explains the command “Draw and take for yourselves sheep” as reflecting a unique spiritual condition of the Jewish people in Egypt. In Egypt there was no genuine arousal from below, because Israel was deeply entangled in idolatrous defilement. Since there was no inner awakening capable of initiating redemption, redemption had to come entirely through arousal from above. This is why the revelation is framed as “I am the Lord, I and not another,” emphasizing exclusive divine intervention without human initiative.

The Maggid connects this to the verse “And Israel saw the great hand that the Lord performed in Egypt.” This “great hand” is identified with Abraham, who embodies love. God’s promise to Abraham necessitated redemption, and it was love that activated the arousal from above, even in the absence of any arousal from below. This is reinforced through the Zohar’s teaching that even when the bride stands in an unpleasant marketplace, she is still beloved, appearing as fragrant as a spice market. Divine love is not diminished by spiritual filth; on the contrary, it can override it.

This idea explains the statement “And My Name the Lord I was not known to them.” The Maggid understands this as referring to a tangible, experiential revelation of expansive kindness, a revelation that does not depend on human initiative. In contrast, the divine Name Shaddai represents contraction and limitation, the divine act of saying “enough” to expansion so that the world can exist. That mode characterized earlier eras. In Egypt and

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Bo

at the splitting of the sea, however, there was a radical expansion of divine light, flowing downward rather than being drawn upward.

The Maggid then interprets the symbolic structure of divine letters and numerical values. The expansion at the sea is described as flowing through the structure of the letters associated with the Divine Name, expressing full revelation rather than restriction. This is why the term “draw” is written in a way that hints at openness and receptivity. The flow comes from above and is received below, not generated by the recipient.

This dynamic explains the designation “the Great Sabbath.” Ordinarily, spiritual ascent works from below to above, especially on Shabbat. Here, however, the Great Sabbath signifies a downward extension of holiness into the lower realms. The Zohar’s distinction between upper days and lower days, and its statement that everything depends on the most hidden level, indicates that this redemption was driven from the highest spiritual source. Accordingly, the plague of the firstborn struck Egypt’s highest level, since the firstborn represents the uppermost rung.

Finally, the Maggid explains the verse “I caused you to increase like the growth of the field” as describing structured spiritual growth through numerical levels, culminating in the level of myriads. Israel is depicted as adorned with divine embellishments descending through all worlds, yet remaining “naked and bare,” meaning without inner arousal from below. Even so, divine beneficence flowed downward, completing the redemption entirely through love and grace rather than merit.

Practical Takeaway:

This maamar reframes redemption as something that can occur even when a person feels spiritually empty or incapable of self-initiation. There are moments when growth depends not on effort from below but on trust in divine compassion from above. While personal responsibility and inner awakening are essential in most spiritual work, there are times when healing, rescue, or transformation arrives purely through grace.

Recognizing this prevents despair and cultivates humility. A person can learn to accept help, illumination, and renewal even when they feel undeserving, understanding that love itself can be the catalyst for redemption.

END NOTE]

Siman #84b

Or it may be said, or it is possible to explain in another matter, for it is stated: Israel sustain their Father in Heaven.

And every person needs to have great faith in this, that when he performs a commandment, or in Torah study and prayer, from what he does below a great delight will be aroused above.

או יאמר (נ"א: או יש לפרש בענין אחר). דאיתא
ישׂראל מפרנסים לאביהם שבשמים.

וְצַדִּיק לְכֹל אֲדָם לְהִיּוֹת לוֹ אֲמוּנָה גְדוֹלָה לְזֶה, כִּשְׁהוּא
עוֹשֶׂה מִצְוָה אוּ בְלִמּוּד תּוֹרָה וּתְפִלָּה, שְׂמֵחָה שְׁהוּא
עוֹשֶׂה לְמִטָּה יִתְעוֹרֵר תְּעוּגָה גְדוֹלָה לְעֵילָא.

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Bo

And he should not say, how is it possible that I will make a great delight above, regarding this it is stated: “And a whisperer separates the Master.” (Proverbs 16:28)

ולא יאמר איך אפֿשֿר שְׁאֲנִי אֶעֱשֶׂה תַעֲנוּג גָּדוֹל לְעִילָא, עַל זֶה נֶאֱמַר וְנִרְגָן מִפְּרִיד אֱלוֹהִי.

For the Congregation of Israel is called faith, faith is a nurturer.

כִּי כְּנֶסֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל נִקְרָאת אֱמוּנָה, אֱמוּנָה אוֹמֵן.

And in every performance of commandments he should think that there will be great delight above, as it were, that he will bring all matters to the world of delight, where there was no shattering, in the manner of “and wisdom will give life,” and it gives him life. (Ecclesiastes 7:12)

וּבְכָל עֲשִׂית הַמִּצְוֹת יִחַשֵׁב שְׂיִהְיֶה תַעֲנוּג גָּדוֹל לְעִילָא כְּבִיכּוֹל, שְׂיִבִיא כָּל הַדְּבָרִים לְעוֹלָם הַתַּעֲנוּג שְׁשֵׁם לֹא הִיָּתַר שְׂבִירָה, עַל דְּרַף וְהַחֲכֵמָה תַּחֲזִיק וְגוֹ', וּמְחִיָּה אוֹתוֹ.

But if so, a person will say in his heart that he is very great, or that he is a great righteous one, and he will come to self-importance, Heaven forbid.

אִךְ אִם כֵּן יֹאמֵר אָדָם בְּלִבּוֹ שֶׁהוּא גָּדוֹל מְאֹד (ב"א: שֶׁהוּא צַדִּיק גָּדוֹל) וְיָבֵא לְגַדְלוֹת חֵס וְשְׁלוֹם.

And for this it says: “Myriad like the growth,” and “you came with adornment upon adornment,” with three adornments, the breasts were formed, as it is stated: He did not move from cherishing her until He called her My mother, meaning that they sustain, as mentioned.

וְלִזֶּה אָמַר רַבְּבָה כְּצֻמַח וְגוֹ' וּתְבוֹאֵי בְעֲדֵי עֲדָיִים, בְּגִי הַתְּקַשְׁטוּת, שְׂדֵיִם נִכְנֹו, דְּאִיתָא לֹא זָו מִחֲבָבָה עַד שֶׁקָּרְאָהּ אִמִּי, פְּרוּשׁ שֶׁהֵם מִפְּרָנְסִים בְּנִזְכָּר.

And even so, “and you were naked and bare,” for who gave you this power, is it not I.

וְאִף עַל פִּי כֵן וְאֵת עָרוֹם וְעָרְיָה, כִּי מִי נָתַן לָךְ אֵת הַכֹּחַ הַזֶּה, הֲלֹא אֲנִי הוּא.

And this is a great principle, that one must be aroused from below with enthusiasm, meaning his delight, that is, that he should have actual delight in what he does, the will of the Creator, may He be blessed, in order that he come to the world of delight.

וּכְלַל גָּדוֹל הוּא שֶׁצָּרִיךְ לְהַתְּעוֹרֵר מִלְּמַטָּה הַהִתְלַהֲבוּת, דְּהֵינּוּ הַתַּעֲנוּג שְׁלוֹ, רְצָה לוֹמַר שְׂיִהְיֶה לוֹ תַעֲנוּג מִמַּשׁ בְּמֵה שֶׁהוּא עוֹשֶׂה רְצוֹן הַבּוֹרָא יִתְבָּרַךְ, כְּדֵי שְׂיִבֹּא לְעוֹלָם הַתַּעֲנוּג.

And if the heart of a person becomes materialized at times, its remedy is to bind himself to the holy Torah, and by this he slaughters his inclination.

וְאִם יִתְגַּשֵּׁם לֵב הָאָדָם לְפַעֲמִים, תִּקְנָתוֹ לְהִתְקַשֵּׁר בְּתוֹרַה הַקְּדוּשָׁה וּבְכֹה זוֹכֵחַ יִצְרוּ.

And this is the explanation of “This is the law of the burnt offering,” from Torah there will be ascent, “on its pyre,” on the altar, all the night, that there should be strength of the fire of enthusiasm even at night, when it has become materialized and is called night, that it does not illuminate his soul well, on the altar, for by this he slaughters his inclination. (Leviticus 6:2)

וְנִהוּ פְּרוּשׁ זֹאת תּוֹרַת הָעֹלָה, מִתּוֹרַה תִּהְיֶה עֲלִיָּה, עַל מוֹקְדָה עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כָּל הַלַּיְלָה, שְׂיִהְיֶה תִּקְוָה אֵשׁ הַהִתְלַהֲבוּת אִף בַּלַּיְלָה, שְׂנִתְגַּשֵּׁם וְנִקְרָא לַיְלָה שְׂאִינוּ מְאִיר לְנִשְׁמָתוֹ הַיָּטִב, עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ, שְׂבִנָּה הוּא זוֹכֵחַ אֵת יִצְרוֹ.

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Bo

[NOTE Summary:

In this maamar, the Maggid of Mezritch presents an additional explanation centered on the striking statement that Israel “sustain their Father in Heaven.” He explains that every individual must possess deep faith that through performing a mitzvah, studying Torah, or engaging in prayer, a great delight is aroused Above. What is done below is not insignificant; rather, it awakens pleasure in the supernal realms. A person must therefore not fall into the corrosive doubt of asking how a finite human being could possibly cause delight Above. Such inner cynicism is described as a force that separates closeness and unity.

The Maggid identifies the Congregation of Israel with faith itself, describing faith as a nurturing force. Through mitzvot, a person should consciously intend that their actions bring delight Above, drawing all matters into the “world of delight,” a realm untouched by the shattering. In this sense, Torah and mitzvot are not merely obligations but conduits of vitality, echoing the verse that wisdom gives life. Through this orientation, one’s actions become life-giving both Above and below.

However, the Maggid is careful to warn of a subtle danger. If a person internalizes that their actions bring delight Above, they may mistakenly conclude that they themselves are exceedingly great or a righteous individual of high stature, leading to spiritual arrogance. To counter this, the Maggid recalls the imagery of Israel being adorned with multiple adornments and called beloved, even “mother,” because they sustain and nourish. Yet immediately afterward comes the reminder that they are still “naked and bare.” This paradox teaches that all power to arouse delight Above is itself a divine gift. The human being is not the source, but the channel.

From this tension emerges a fundamental principle: authentic spiritual life requires arousal from below in the form of enthusiasm and delight. One must experience genuine pleasure in doing the will of the Creator, not merely compliance or habit. This personal delight is what enables ascent into the world of delight Above. Yet this delight must be held together with humility, recognizing that its very possibility is granted from Above.

The Maggid then addresses moments when the heart becomes coarse or materialized. Such spiritual heaviness is inevitable. The remedy is deep attachment to the holy Torah. Torah engagement becomes an inner offering through which a person subdues and refines the inclination. This is expressed in the interpretation of “This is the law of the burnt offering”: from Torah comes ascent. Even during “night,” a time of inner darkness when the soul does not shine clearly, the fire of enthusiasm must remain burning on the altar. Through Torah, even darkness is transformed into elevation, and the inclination itself is offered and refined.

Practical Takeaway:

This maamar teaches a balanced path between confidence and humility. A person should live with the awareness that their actions truly matter and bring delight Above, cultivating joy and enthusiasm in serving the Creator. At the same time, they must remember that this capacity is not self-generated but granted, preventing arrogance. When inspiration wanes and the heart feels heavy, the response is not despair but deeper attachment

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Bo

to Torah. Even in moments of inner night, steady engagement and sincere delight in divine service can reignite the fire and turn struggle itself into ascent. **END NOTE]**

Siman #85

“And you shall say, it is a Paschal sacrifice, etcetera.” For behold, there are two delights: one is to defeat enemies, and this is the delight in the fact that he defeats; and the second is to save his son from something that is not good for him, and this comes from his love for his son.

And behold, in the exodus from Egypt there were, as it were, two delights together, namely to strike the Egyptians and to save Israel.

And behold, there is another, third delight, which is higher than the two mentioned, and this is what is written: “And the Lord will strike Egypt, striking and healing,” and the Sages of blessed memory expounded: striking Egypt and healing Israel, that He healed them from the pain of circumcision. (Isaiah 19:22)

And this delight comes from the compassion of the father for his son, and it is higher than the two delights mentioned, for those are in revelation and this is in concealment, and furthermore, it is to heal his son from the blows that already cause him pain.

And behold, it is written: “And God created man in His image; in the image of God He created him,” meaning that there is one image that is above nature, and a second image that is from nature; nature in numerical value is God, and this is the image of God mentioned in the verse, and it is the aspect of the body that is under nature, and it is called the occurrence of nature.

But the thought, which is the vitality, endures forever; therefore there are righteous individuals over whom nature did not rule, such as Abraham our father, peace be upon him, and others like him, who were attached to that which is above nature.

And it is known that the exodus from Egypt was in the merit of Abraham, that is, on account of love; even though there were severities in Egypt, this is severity within kindness, due to His love for His children, He strikes their enemies.

וְאִמְרָתֶם זִבַּח פֶּסַח הוּא וְגו'. כִּי הִנֵּה יֵשׁ ב' תַּעֲנוּגִים, א' לְנִצָּחַת אוֹיְבִים, וְזֶהוּ הַתַּעֲנוּג מֵה שֶׁהוּא מְנַצֵּחַ, וְהַב' לְהַצִּיל אֶת בְּנוֹ מִדְּבַר שֶׁאִינוֹ טוֹב לוֹ, וְזֶה בָּא מֵאַהֲבַתוֹ אֶת בְּנוֹ.

וְהִנֵּה בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם הָיוּ כְּכֹיכּוֹל ב' תַּעֲנוּגִים בְּיַחַד, דִּהְיָנוּ לְנַגֵּף אֶת הַמִּצְרַיִם וְלְהַצִּיל אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל.

וְהִנֵּה יֵשׁ עוֹד תַּעֲנוּג ג' שֶׁהוּא גְבוּהַ מִב' הַנִּזְכָּר, וְהוּא מֵה שֶׁכְּתוּב וְנִגַּף ה' אֶת מִצְרַיִם נִגַּף וְרָפוּא, וְדָרְשׁוּ רַז"ל נִגַּף אֶת מִצְרַיִם וְרָפוּא לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, שֶׁרָפְאֵם מִכָּאֵב הַמִּילָה.

וְתַעֲנוּג זֶה בָּא מִרַחֲמַנּוּת הָאָב עַל בְּנוֹ, וְהוּא גְבוּהַ יוֹתֵר מִב' הַתַּעֲנוּגִים הַנִּזְכָּרִים, כִּי הֵם בְּאַתְגָּלְיָא וְזֶה בְּאַתְפָּסְיָא, וְעוֹד שֶׁהוּא לְרַפֵּא אֶת בְּנוֹ מִן הַמַּכּוֹת שֶׁכּוֹאֲבִים לוֹ כְּבָר.

וְהִנֵּה כְּתִיב וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹקִים אֶת הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצַלְמֵ אֱלֹקִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ, דִּהְיָנוּ שְׁנַיִם צַלְמֵ אֶחָד שֶׁהוּא לְמַעַלָּה מִן הַטָּבַע, וְצַלְמֵ ב' שֶׁהוּא מִן הַטָּבַע, הַטָּבַע בְּגִימְטְרִיא אֱלֹקִים, וְזֶהוּ צַלְמֵ אֱלֹקִים שֶׁבְּכַתּוּב, וְהוּא בְּחִינַת הַגּוּף שֶׁתַּחַת הַטָּבַע, וְנִקְרָא מְקַרְהַ הַטָּבַע.

אָבֵל הַמַּחְשָׁבָה שֶׁהִיא חַיּוּת הִיא קִיּוּמָת לְעַד, עַל כֵּן כְּמָה צְדִיקִים שֶׁלֹּא שָׁלְטָה בָּהֶם הַטָּבַע, כְּגוֹן אַבְרָהָם אֲבִינוֹ עָלְיוֹ הַשְּׁלוֹם וְכִיּוּצָא בָּהֶם, שֶׁהָיוּ דְבוּקִים בְּמַה שֶׁלְּמַעַלָּה מִן הַטָּבַע.

וְנוֹדַע כִּי יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם הִיְתָה בְּזִכּוּת אַבְרָהָם, דִּהְיָנוּ מִחֲמַת אַהֲבָה, אַף עַל פִּי שֶׁהָיוּ גְבוּרוֹת בְּמִצְרַיִם, זֶהוּ גְבוּרָה שֶׁבְּחֶסֶד, מִחֲמַת אַהֲבַתוֹ אֶת בְּנָיו מִכָּה שׁוֹנְאֵיהֶם.

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Bo

And this is what is said: “And the Lord passed through to strike,” meaning the Name Havayah, the attribute of compassion and love, passed beyond its attribute to strike Egypt, and all is from the aspect of His love for His children.

וְזֶהוּ וְעָבַר ה' לְנִגְף, דְּהִיְנוּ הַיְיָ, מִדַּת הַרַחֲמָנוּת וְהֵאֱהָבָה, הַעֲבִיר עַל מִדְתּוֹ לְנִגְף אֶת מִצְרַיִם, וְהִפְלִ מִבְּחִינַת אֱהָבָתוֹ לְבָנָיו.

And it is known that the world of delight is the concealed world, it is called “He,” as it is written: “Then you shall delight upon the Lord,” above the Name Havayah, blessed be He, which is Tiferet, the six extremities, and which are intellects. (Isaiah 58:14)

וְנוֹדַע כִּי עוֹלָם הַתַּעֲנוּג הוּא עוֹלָם דְּאִתְכַסְיָא, נִקְרָא הוּא, כְּמוֹ שְׂפָתוֹב אֲזַ תַּתְעַנֵּג עַל ה', לְמַעְלָה מִהַיְיָ, בְּרוּךְ הוּא, שֶׁהוּא תַפְאֲרַת, שֶׁשׁ קְצוֹת וְזֶה ז"א שֶׁהוּא מוֹחִין.

And this is what is said: “And it shall be that when your son will ask, what is this service,” and you shall say, that through service we draw the delight called “He” into Havayah, and this is Pesach, an expression of skipping, that it skips the world of delight and comes to the Name Havayah, blessed be He, as it was at the time of the exodus from Egypt. (Exodus 12:26)

וְזֶהוּ שְׁנַאֲמַר וְהִיָּה כִּי יִגְוֹ מֶה הַעֲבָדָה יִגְוֹ וְאִמְרַתֶּם, שֶׁבַעבֹדָה אָנוּ מִמְשִׁיכִים תַעֲנוּג הַנִּקְרָא הוּא לְהַיְיָ, וְהִיְנוּ פֶסַח, לְשׁוֹן דְּלוּג, שֶׁמְדַלֵּג עוֹלָם הַתַּעֲנוּג וְבָא לְשֵׁם הַיְיָ בְּרוּךְ הוּא כְּמוֹ שֶׁהִיָּה בְּעֵת יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם.

And this is what is written: “And the Lord passed over the doorway,” and it is explained in the Zohar: the doorway of the body, that He healed them from the pain of circumcision, and this is the third delight mentioned, and contemplate well. (Zohar; Exodus 12:23)

וְזֶהוּ מֶה שְׂפָתוֹב וּפֶסַח ה' עַל הַפֶּתַח, וּפְרַשׁ בְּזֵהָר פֶּתַח דְּגוּפָא, שֶׁרַפְאֵם מִכָּאֵב הַמִּילָה, וְהִיְנוּ הַתַּעֲנוּג הַג' הַנִּזְכָּר, וְדוּק.

[NOTE Summary:

In this maamar, the Maggid of Mezritch explains the depth of the statement “And you shall say: it is a Pesach offering,” by revealing multiple layers of divine delight present at the Exodus from Egypt. He begins by distinguishing between two forms of delight. One delight is experienced in defeating an enemy, the satisfaction of victory itself. The second delight is the joy of rescuing one’s child from danger, which flows directly from love. At the Exodus, both of these delights were present simultaneously: Egypt was struck, and Israel was saved.

However, the Maggid introduces a third delight, higher than the previous two. This is alluded to in the verse “And the Lord will strike Egypt, striking and healing,” which the Sages interpret as striking Egypt while healing Israel, specifically healing them from the pain of circumcision. This third delight stems from a father’s compassion in healing his child from suffering that already exists. Unlike the first two delights, which are revealed and outward, this delight is concealed. It is more inward, more subtle, and therefore higher.

The Maggid then explains the spiritual structure underlying this process through the concept of two “images” in which man was created. One image is above nature, and the other is within nature. The natural order corresponds to the Divine Name associated with limitation and law, and it governs the physical body and the

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Bo

apparent randomness of worldly events. Above this, however, stands thought, which is the vitality of a person and endures beyond natural constraints. Certain righteous individuals, such as Abraham, attached themselves to what is above nature and were therefore not ruled by natural forces.

The redemption from Egypt occurred in the merit of Abraham, whose defining trait is love. Even the harsh judgments inflicted on Egypt are understood as expressions of love, specifically a form of severity that emerges from kindness. God strikes the enemies of Israel not out of cruelty, but out of love for His children. This is why the verse states “And the Lord passed through to strike,” emphasizing the Divine Name associated with mercy and compassion. God, as it were, went beyond the normal bounds of judgment, acting solely from love.

The Maggid then situates this within a broader spiritual map. The “world of delight” is described as a concealed realm, referred to as “He,” which is higher than the revealed Divine Name associated with structured revelation. The verse “Then you shall delight upon the Lord” points to this higher level. Through service and labor, Israel draws this concealed delight into the revealed Divine Name. This is the deeper meaning of Pesach, understood as a “skipping” or leap, where delight bypasses its concealed source and enters revealed reality, just as it did at the Exodus.

Finally, the Maggid explains the verse “And the Lord passed over the doorway,” which the Zohar interprets as the doorway of the body. This passing over refers to the healing of Israel from the pain of circumcision and completes the picture of the third, highest delight. Redemption is thus not only rescue and victory, but healing, restoration, and intimate compassion flowing from the deepest level of divine love.

Practical Takeaway:

This maamar teaches that the highest form of divine closeness is not always expressed through dramatic miracles or visible victories, but through quiet healing and inner restoration. In personal spiritual life, a person may experience moments of triumph and moments of rescue, but the deepest connection often emerges when pain itself is transformed and healed. Acts of service that draw hidden delight into daily life require trust, perseverance, and openness to subtle forms of growth. Recognizing this allows a person to value inner repair as much as outward success, and to understand that concealed compassion may be the greatest gift of all.

Chassidic Story:

There is a recorded account among early Chassidic circles about a student of the Maggid of Mezritch who struggled deeply after a prolonged illness. Though he had recovered physically, he felt spiritually diminished and distressed that his former intensity in prayer and study had not returned. He expressed gratitude for being saved, yet remained troubled by the lingering weakness he felt inside.

When he came before the Maggid, he spoke of the miracle of survival but lamented the absence of renewed inspiration. The Maggid responded by explaining that rescue and victory are not the final stages of divine kindness. Sometimes the most profound mercy is the slow healing that follows, when strength is rebuilt quietly

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Bo

and the soul is restored in hidden ways. The Maggid told him that this stage reflects a higher love than the initial salvation, because it addresses pain that already exists rather than danger that might occur.

Over time, the student came to understand that his gradual return to inner stability was itself an expression of divine delight. This story reflects the teaching of this maamar: redemption is complete not when the threat is removed, but when the wound itself is healed. **END NOTE]**

Siman #86

“And you shall guard this statute for its appointed time, from days to days.” For there are days, and there is “from days to days,” meaning there are days that are an aspect of male, and there are days that are an aspect of female.

(Exodus 13:10)

And they are in this manner, by way of example: when the Holy One, blessed be He, created man, He created only Adam the first and his female, and from them the entire world came forth; it follows that they, Adam and his female, are an aspect of male relative to the entire world, and all of them are an aspect of female toward them, for they receive from them.

And this is in the aspect of soul, and likewise in world and year, and that is time.

For example, the six days of Creation are an aspect of male, for within them the Holy One, blessed be He, created all that exists, and all the other days are an aspect of female, which receive from them, each day from its corresponding day of Creation; for example, the first day from the first day of Creation, and the second day from the second day of Creation, and so with all of them. (Genesis 1)

And likewise in all the festivals; for example, the festival of Passover is an aspect of female relative to the first Passover at which the children of Israel went out from Egypt, and that is an aspect of male relative to all of them.

And likewise with all the festivals. And this is why we say on all the festivals “a remembrance of the exodus from Egypt,” because every festival is an aspect of female relative to the festival of the exodus from Egypt, and within it that illumination which was revealed at that time is revealed.

וְשִׁמְרֶתְךָ אֶת הַחֻקָּה הַזֹּאת לְמוֹעֲדָהּ מִיָּמִים מִיָּמִים.
לְפִי דְאִיתָ יָמִים וְאִיתָ מִיָּמִים, רְצָה לֹאמַר יֵשׁ יָמִים
שֶׁהֵם בְּחֵינַת זָכָר, וְיֵשׁ יָמִים שֶׁהֵם בְּחֵינַת נְיוּקָבָא

וְהֵם בְּדִרְוֹ זֶה, עַל דְּרֹף מְשַׁל כְּשֶׁהַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ בְּרָא
אֶת הָאָדָם לֹא בְּרָא אֶלָּא אָדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן וְנִוְקְבָתוֹ,
וּמֵהֶם יֵצְאוּ כָּל הָעוֹלָם, נִמְצָא הֵם אָדָם וְנִוְקְבָתוֹ הֵם
בְּחֵינַת זָכָר נִגְדָּ כָּל הָעוֹלָם, וְכֵלָם בְּחֵינַת נְיוּקָבָא אֲצֵלָם
כִּי מְקַבְּלִים מֵהֶם.

וְזֶהוּ בְּחֵינַת נְפֹשׁ, וְכֵן בְּעוֹלָם וּבְשָׁנָה וְהוּא הַזְּמַן

לְמִשְׁלַל שְׁשֵׁת יָמֵי בְּרֵאשִׁית הֵם בְּחֵינַת זָכָר שֶׁבָּהֶם בְּרָא
הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא כָּל הַנִּמְצָאִים, וְכָל שְׂאֵר הַיָּמִים הֵם
בְּחֵינַת נְיוּקָבָא שֶׁמְקַבְּלִים מֵהֶם, כָּל יוֹם מִיוֹם רִאשׁוֹן
שֶׁל מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית, לְמִשְׁלַל יוֹם א' מִיוֹם א' שֶׁל
מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית, וְיוֹם ב' מִיוֹם ב' שֶׁל מַעֲשֵׂה
בְּרֵאשִׁית, וְכֵן כָּלָם.

וְכֵן בְּכָל בְּחֵינַת הַמוֹעֲדִים, לְמִשְׁלַל חַג הַפֶּסַח הוּא
בְּחֵינַת נְיוּקָבָא אֶל חַג הַפֶּסַח הָרִאשׁוֹן שֶׁבּוּ יֵצְאוּ בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם, וְהוּא בְּחֵינַת זָכָר אֲצֵל כָּלָם

וְכֵן בְּכָל הַמוֹעֲדִים. וְזֶהוּ שְׂאוּמְרִים בְּכָל הַמוֹעֲדִים זָכָר
לְיִצְיַאת מִצְרַיִם, לְפִי שֶׁכָּל מוֹעֵד הוּא בְּחֵינַת נְיוּקָבָא
לְמוֹעֵד שֶׁל יִצְיַאת מִצְרַיִם, וּבּוּ נִתְגַּלָּה אוֹתוֹ הָאֵרָה
שֶׁנִּתְגַּלָּה בְּאוֹתוֹ הַפֶּעַם

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Bo

And behold, this is in the hand of Israel to do, as our Sages of blessed memory said: “You,” even deliberately, because everything is done through speech, as it is written: “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made.” (Psalms 33:6)

וְהִנֵּה זֶה בְּיַד יִשְׂרָאֵל לַעֲשׂוֹת, כְּמָה שֶׁאָמְרוּ רַז"ל אֲתֵם, אֶפְלוּ מְזִידִים, לְפִי שֶׁהִכַּל נַעֲשֶׂה בְּדַבּוּר, כְּמָה שֶׁפְּתוּב בְּדָבָר ה' שְׁמַיִם נַעֲשׂוּ.

Therefore even today that illumination is revealed through Israel, because the world of speech is with them, as is known to those initiated, for the sake of His bride.

עַל כֵּן גַּם הַיּוֹם נִתְגַּלָּה אוֹתָהּ הָאָרֶז עַל יְדֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁעוֹלָם הַדַּבּוּר הוּא אֶצְלֵיהֶם, כְּנוֹדָע לְכָלֵתָם, בְּשִׁבִיל כְּלָה דִּילֵיהּ.

And also because Israel precede time, therefore it is in their hand to do within time whatever they wish.

וְגַם בְּשִׁבִיל שִׁישְׂרָאֵל הֵם קוֹדְמִים לְזֶמַן, עַל כֵּן בְּיָדָם לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּזֶמַן מַה שִׁירְצוּ.

And specifically through sages the month is sanctified, because the illumination is wisdom, that is, inner vitality, and wisdom is vitality, as it is written: “And wisdom gives life to its owner.” (Ecclesiastes 7:12)

וְדוּקָא עַל יְדֵי חֲכָמִים נִתְקַדֵּשׁ הַחֹדֶשׁ, לְפִי שֶׁהָאָרֶז הִיא חֲכָמָה, דְּהִנְנוּ חַיִּוֹת פְּנִימִית, וְהַחֲכָמָה הִיא הַחַיּוֹת, כְּמָה שֶׁפְּתוּב וְהַחֲכָמָה תְּחַיֶּה בְּעַלְיָהּ.

And behold, “its appointed time” is an expression of adornment and ornament, an expression of jewelry and ornaments.

וְהִנֵּה מוֹעֵדָה הוּא לְשׁוֹן קִישׁוּט וְתַכְשִׁיט, לְשׁוֹן עֲדֵי עֲדֵי.

And behold, that illumination which is revealed on a festival day is called adornment and ornament, which adorns that day.

וְהִנֵּה אוֹתָהּ הָאָרֶז שֶׁנִּתְגַּלָּה בְּיוֹם טוֹב נִקְרָאת קִישׁוּט וְתַכְשִׁיט שֶׁמְקַשֵּׁט אוֹתוֹ הַיּוֹם.

And this is “And you shall guard this statute for its appointed time,” meaning to adorn it through speech, in the manner of the commandment to recount the exodus from Egypt.

וְזֶהוּ וְשִׁמְרָתְךָ אֵת הַחֻקָּה הַזֹּאת לְמוֹעֵדָה, דְּהִנְנוּ לְקַשְׁטָהּ בְּדַבּוּר, עַל דְּרֹךְ מִצְוֵה לְסַפֵּר בְּיַצִּיאַת מִצְרַיִם.

“From days to days,” that you should see to adorn it through speech, to expound from the matter of the day, in order that illumination and adornment be revealed from “days” to “days,” the intent being to draw from male to female, for the letter hei at the end is a sign for female.

מִיָּמִים יְמִימָה, שֶׁתִּרְאֶה לְקַשְׁטָהּ בְּדַבּוּר לְדְרוֹשׁ מֵעֲנִינּוּ שֶׁל יוֹם, כְּדִי שִׁיתְגַּלָּה הָאָרֶז וְקִישׁוּט מִיָּמִים לְיְמִימָה, שֶׁהַפְּנִיָּה לְהַמְשִׁיךְ מִדְּבָר לְנוֹקְבָא, כִּי הֵיאֵשׁוּב שְׁבִסוּף הִיא סִימָן לְנוֹקְבָא.

[NOTE Summary:

In this maamar, the Maggid of Mezritch explains the verse “And you shall guard this statute for its appointed time, from days to days” as a deep structure governing time, sanctity, and revelation. He distinguishes between two categories within time itself: “days” and “from days to days.” These correspond to masculine and feminine spiritual modalities. Masculine days are generative sources, while feminine days are receptive, receiving and actualizing what flows from their source.

This pattern is illustrated through creation itself. When the Holy One, blessed be He, created humanity, He created Adam and his female counterpart, from whom the entire world emerged. Relative to the rest of creation, they function as the masculine source, while all subsequent existence is feminine, receiving life from them.

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Bo

This structure repeats across the dimensions of soul, world, and year, meaning across human consciousness, cosmic reality, and time.

The six days of Creation are described as masculine days, because within them all existence was brought forth. All later days are feminine, drawing their vitality from the corresponding day of Creation. Each Sunday draws from the first day of Creation, each Monday from the second, and so forth. The same structure applies to sacred times. Each festival observed throughout history is feminine in relation to the original festival at the Exodus from Egypt, which stands as the masculine source. For this reason, every festival is described as a remembrance of the Exodus, because it receives and re-manifests the same illumination that was revealed at that original moment.

The Maggid then explains that this process is placed in the hands of Israel. As the Sages taught, Israel sanctifies time even if they err intentionally. This is because all creation operates through speech, as stated “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made.” Since Israel is entrusted with the realm of speech, they possess the capacity to reveal divine illumination anew in every generation. Israel precedes time itself, and therefore has the power to shape time and draw holiness into it.

This is why the sanctification of the new month must be performed specifically by sages. The illumination being drawn is wisdom, which is inner vitality. Wisdom is life itself, as Scripture states that wisdom gives life to its owner. Through the sages, this inner vitality is channeled into time.

The Maggid further explains that the word “appointed time” also means adornment and ornament. The illumination revealed on a festival day is a spiritual adornment that beautifies that day. Guarding the statute for its appointed time means actively adorning the day through speech, particularly through recounting the Exodus from Egypt and expounding on the meaning of the day. Through sacred speech, illumination flows from masculine to feminine, from source to recipient. The final letter hei alludes to the feminine vessel that receives this flow, completing the process of revelation within time.

Practical Takeaway:

This maamar teaches that holiness in time is not automatic. Sacred days must be actively adorned. Through speech, teaching, storytelling, and reflection, a person draws inner vitality into the day and allows it to shine again. Festivals are not commemorations of the past, but living channels of the original illumination. Each person, through conscious engagement and sacred speech, participates in shaping time itself. Spiritual vitality depends not only on divine flow from above, but on human responsibility to receive, articulate, and reveal it.

Chassidic Story:

It is related that one year, a group of simple Jews gathered on the first night of Passover in a remote village with little formal learning. There was no scholar among them capable of delivering a learned discourse. As the Seder began, there was concern that the night would pass without depth or inspiration.

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Bo

One elderly villager stood up and said that although he did not know how to explain the secrets of the Exodus, he knew the story well. He began recounting the Exodus slowly, repeating each detail, adding heartfelt reflections about slavery, freedom, and gratitude. Others joined in, each adding what they understood, sometimes repeating the same ideas in different words. The night extended late, filled with sincere speech and warmth.

Later, a traveling חכם תלמיד passed through the village and heard about the Seder. He remarked that this was the true fulfillment of “And you shall guard this statute for its appointed time.” By adorning the night with speech, even simple speech, they had drawn the original light of the Exodus into their present moment. The illumination of the first redemption had been renewed, not through brilliance, but through devoted words spoken from the heart. **END NOTE]**

Siman #87

Every place where it is stated “and it shall be” is nothing other than joy.

כל מקום שנאמר והיה אינו אלא שמחה

Explanation: for when the son is small and does childish actions, the father has great delight from him, and even though his actions are with small intellect, nevertheless he has delight from him more than from his grown son.

פרוש, כי כשהבן קטן ועושה מעשה קטנות, האב יש לו תענוג גדול ממנו, ואף על פי שמעשיו הם בשכל קטן, אף על פי כן יש לו תענוג ממנו יותר מבנו הגדול.

It follows that when the father receives delight from this small son and from his actions, the father himself descends into a lower level, and he is below the son and his actions, and the son is more forceful than the father.

נמצא כי כשהאב מקבל תענוג מזה הבן הקטן וממעשיו, משתלשל האב עצמו במדרגה תחתונה, והוא למטה מן הבן וממעשיו, והבן הוא יותר תקיף מן האב.

Explanation: for when the small son begins to cry, then the father requests from him that he be silent.

פרוש, כי כשמתחיל הבן הקטן לבכות, אז מבקש האב ממנו שידום.

It follows that the permutation of the Name Havayah, blessed be He, is “and it shall be.”

נמצא כי הצרוף של שם הנו"ה ברוף הוא והיה

Explanation: the letters “and hei” hint to the son and daughter, who are above “yod hei,” which are father and mother.

פרוש, וה"א מרמז על הבן והבת, ושהם למעלה מ"ה ושהם אב ואם.

Alternative explanation: “vav hei” hints to the son and his actions, which are above “yod hei,” the father, the Holy One, blessed be He, who takes the son into the intellect and receives delight from him.

נוסחא אחרונה, ו"ה מרמז על הבן ועל מעשיו ושהם למעלה מ"ה, האב, הקדוש ברוף הוא, שנוטל הבן בשכל ומקבל תענוג ממנו.

And this is “it is nothing other than joy,” meaning delight, explanation: due to the delight, the father is below the son and his actions.

וזהו אינו אלא שמחה, רצה לומר תענוג, פרוש מתקמת התענוג האב הוא למטה מן הבן וממעשיו.

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Bo

[NOTE Summary:

In this maamar, the Maggid of Mezritch explains the statement of the Sages that every place where the Torah says “and it shall be” refers to joy. He defines this joy not merely as happiness, but as *ta'anug*, delight, and illustrates it through the relationship between a father and a small child. When a young child performs simple, undeveloped actions, the father experiences profound delight, even greater than the satisfaction he feels from the mature achievements of an older child. The delight does not stem from intellectual sophistication, but from love and closeness.

The Maggid explains that when the father derives delight from the child's actions, the father willingly lowers himself to the child's level. In this state, the father becomes, in a sense, subordinate to the child and his actions. This is evident when a small child cries and the father responds by pleading with the child to be quiet. The power shifts downward. Delight causes descent.

This dynamic is applied to the divine realm through the structure of the Divine Name. The permutation “and it shall be” reflects a configuration in which the lower elements, represented by the son or by action itself, rise above the higher intellect. The child and the child's deeds occupy a position above the father's intellect because the father receives delight from them. In divine terms, when God takes delight in the actions of Israel, He, as it were, descends from a higher plane and places Himself beneath their deeds, responding to them and being affected by them.

Thus, “it shall be” always implies joy because joy means delight, and delight means that the higher willingly descends toward the lower. The Maggid teaches that divine joy is not abstract emotion, but relational movement. God's delight in human action creates a reversal of hierarchy, where deeds performed in simplicity and sincerity draw the highest levels downward.

Practical Takeaway:

This maamar reframes spiritual significance. One should not measure the value of their service by intellectual sophistication or spiritual grandeur. Simple actions done with sincerity can generate profound delight Above. When a person serves God with childlike simplicity, trust, and authenticity, that service has the power to draw divine closeness more deeply than complex achievements. This awareness encourages humility, sincerity, and joy in simple mitzvot, knowing that delight, not brilliance, is what truly moves the highest levels.

Chassidic Story:

It is related about a simple villager who would come each Shabbat to the synagogue of the Maggid's students. He could not read Hebrew well and did not understand the prayers. During the service, he would softly recite the Hebrew alphabet repeatedly, saying that if God wanted prayers, He could arrange the letters properly Himself.

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch
Ohr Torah
Parshas Bo

Some scholars in the synagogue were disturbed by this behavior, but when the matter was brought before one of the Maggid's close disciples, he explained that this man's simple recitation caused immense delight Above. Like a father who delights in the imperfect words of a small child, Heaven rejoiced in the sincerity of this man's offering.

This story embodies the teaching of this segment. Divine joy is awakened not only by refined understanding, but by simple, heartfelt action. When delight is present, the highest descends to meet the lowest, and that meeting itself is called joy. **END NOTE]**