

Introduction

This discourse by the Alter Rebbe—Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of Chabad Chassidus—was delivered on the verse "I am for my Beloved and my Beloved is for me, who grazes among the roses," traditionally associated with the month of Elul. The Alter Rebbe (1745–1812), a disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch and spiritual father of Chabad, reveals in this maamar a profound mystical structure behind Elul, teshuvah (repentance), and the roles of Torah and mitzvos. It bridges cosmic energies—Sovev Kol Almin (the Infinite, surrounding light) and Memaleh Kol Almin (the immanent light)—with daily Divine service. The discourse calls for a full-hearted return that encompasses both action and inward transformation, drawing upon the deepest lights of the soul and of the Divine.

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I am for my Beloved and my Beloved is for me, Who grazes among the roses. Now a rose has thirteen petals corresponding to the thirteen attributes of mercy in the verse "Who is a G-d like You," and in the verse "G-d, merciful" from which is the source of repentance, to bear iniquity, etc.	אָנִי לְדוֹדִי וְדוֹדִי לִּי הָרוֹעֶה בַּשׁוֹשַׁנִּים. הָנֵה שׁוֹשַׁנָּה יֵשׁ בָּה תְּלִיסַר עֲלִין כְּנָגָד י״ג מְכִילִין דְרַחֲמֵי שֶׁבַּפָּסוּק מִי אֵל כָּמוֹך וּשְׁבַּפָּסוּק אֵל רַחוּם כו׳ שֶׁמִשֶׁם הוּא מְקוֹר הַתְּשׁוּבָה לָהְיוֹת נוֹשֵׂא עָוֹן כו׳
And they are revealed on Rosh Chodesh Elul, for then is a time of favor. For from Rosh Chodesh Elul until after Yom Kippur are forty days—when Moshe Rabbeinu ascended on high to receive the second tablets. And just as the first days were with favor, etc.	וְהֵם הַמִּתְגַלִּים בְּרֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ אֱלוּל שֶׁאָז הוּא בְּחִינַת עת רָצוֹן כִּי מֵרֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ אֱלוּל עַד אַחַר יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים הֵם מ׳ יוֹם שֶׁעָלָה מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּע״ה לַמָּרוֹם לְקַבֵּל לוּחוֹת הָאַחֲרוֹנוֹת וּמֵה יָמִים הָרָאשׁוֹנִים בִּרְצוֹן כו׳
And this is what it says, "Who grazes among the roses," in the verse "I am for my Beloved and my Beloved is for me," whose initials spell Elul.	וְזֶהוּ הָרוֹעֶה בַּשׁוֹשַנִּים אַצֶּל אֲנִי לְדוֹדִי וְדוֹדִי לִי שֶׁהוּא רֵ״ת אֱלוּל.
And it needs to be understood: what is the concept of the thirteen attributes of mercy in the month of Elul? It is understandable during the Ten Days of Repentance, for those are days of forgiveness and atonement, and therefore we say during those days "And Hashem passed"	ְצָרִיךְ לְהָבִין מַהוּ עָנְיַן י״ג מִדּוֹת הָרַחְמִים בְּחֹדֶשׁ אֱלוּלֹ. בְּשָׁלְמָא בַּעֲשֶׂרֶת יְמֵי תְּשׁוּבָה יִתָּכֵן שֶׁהַם יְמֵי סְלִיחָה וּמְחִילָה וְלָכֵךְ אוֹמְרִים בַּעֲשֶׂרֶת יְמֵי תְּשׁוּבָה יוַיַּעֲבוֹר הוי׳" כו׳
But the matter is as follows: repentance is not only for sins—for it is necessary to be in repentance all his days. Rather, the aspect of repentance is that he returns from his previous path, as it says, "And return us in complete repentance before You," etc.	ְוָהָעַנְיֶן הוּא דְהַנֵּה הַתְּשׁוּבָה אֵינָה עַל עֲוֹנוֹת דַּוְקָא שֶׁהָרִי צָרִיךְּ לִהְיוֹת כָּל יָמָיו בִּתְשׁוּבָה אֶלָּא בְּחִינַת תְשׁוּבָה הוּא שֶׁשָּׁב מִדַּרְכּוֹ הָרָאשׁוֹן וּכְמַ״שׁ וְהַחֲזִירֵנוּ בִּתְשׁוּבָה שְׁלֵמָה לְפָנֶיךְּ כו׳.

And the explanation is as follows: Behold in the words of our Sages (end of Kiddushin), there are two opinions—one says "study is greater," and one says "deed is greater," and they voted and concluded: study is greater because it leads to deed.

ּוּבֵיאוּר הָעִנְיָן הָנֵּה בִּדְבָרֵי חֲז״ל (סו״פּ דְּקִדּוּשִׁין) יֵשׁ ב׳ דַעוֹת אֶחָד אוֹמֵר תַּלְמוּד נָּדוֹל וְאֶחָד אוֹמֵר מַעֲשֶׂה בָּדוֹל וְנִמְנוּ וְגָמְרוּ תַּלְמוּד נָּדוֹל שָׁמֵּבִיא לִידִי מַעֲשֶׂה.

And to understand the subject of their argument, and what they are arguing about, we must first preface the verse "The heavens and the earth I fill." But does it not say "the whole earth is filled with His glory"? And heaven is not mentioned. And there it says "I fill," and here it says "His glory."

וּלְהָבִין עִנְיַן מַחָּלוֹקְתָם וּבְמַאי קָא מִיפְלְגֵי יֵשׁ לְהַקְדִּים לְהָבִין תְּחִלָּה מַ״שׁ אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ אֲנִי מָלֵא. וְהָלֹא כְּתִיב מְלֹא כָל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ וְלֹא נִזְכַּר שָׁמַיִם וְגַם שָׁשָׁם נָאֱמֵר אֲנִי מָלֵא וּכָאן כְּתִיב בּבוֹדוֹ

However, behold it is known that there is Memale Kol Almin and Sovev Kol Almin. And the meaning of Memale is the aspect of Divine illumination that is drawn into the created beings to give them life, from the statement "Let there be light," etc., by the word of Hashem, etc., which is enclothed in their inwardness and very inner core, drawn into their midst to be their life-force. And it is divided into parts to enliven each according to its measure.

אֲבָל הָנֵּה יָדוּעַ דְיֵשׁ מְמֵלֵּא כָּל עָלְמִין וְסוֹבֵב כָּל עַלְמִין וּפִירוּשׁ מְמַלֵּא כָּל עָלְמִין הוּא בְּחִינַת הַאֲרַת הָאֱלֹקוּת הַנִּמְשֶׁבֶת בַּנִּבְרָאִים לְהַחִיוֹתֶם מֵעִנְיֵן "יְהִי אוֹר" כו׳ "בִּדְבַר הויי" כו׳ שֶׁהוּא מִתְלַבֵּשׁ בִּפְנִימִיּוּתָם וְתוֹךְ תּוֹכָם מַמָּשׁ שֶׁנִּמְשָׁךְ בְּקַרְבָּם לְהְיוֹת הַיּוּת לָהֶם וְהוּא מִתְחַלֵּק לְחַלָּקִים לְהִיוֹת מְחַיֶּה כָּל הַד לְפוּם שִׁעוּרָא דִילֵיה

And by way of example in physicality—in the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms: although the inanimate also came into being from the ten utterances, and Divine vitality also extends into it from that same utterance, just as Divine vitality is drawn into the vegetative and animal levels—nonetheless, its vitality is extremely limited.

ְוַעַד״מ בַּגַּשְׁמִיּוּת בְּדַצַ״חַמְ שֶׁהַדּוֹמֵם הַגַּם שֶׁנִּתְהַוָּה ג״כ מֵצֲשָׂרָה מַאֲמָרוֹת וְנִמְשָׁךּ בּוֹ ג״כ חַיּוּת אֱלֹקוּת מֵאוֹתוֹ הַמַּאֲמֶר כְּמוֹ שֶׁנִּמְשָׁךְ חַיּוּת אֱלֹקוּת בַּצוֹמֵחַ וְחַי מ״מ חַיּוּתוֹ מִצוּמָצֵם זְעִיר זְעֵיר

And the vegetative has more vitality, and the animal more than the vegetative, and the human even more, etc. And according to this measure, also in the spiritual worlds there are many differentiated levels.

וְהַצּוֹמֵחַ יֵשׁ בּוֹ חַיּוּת יוֹתֵר וְהַחַי יוֹתֵר גַּם מִן הַצּוֹמֵחַ וְהַמְדַבֵּר יוֹתֵר כו׳ וּלְפִי עֵרֶךְ זֶה גַּם בָּעוֹלָמוֹת הָרוּחָנִיִּים יֵשׁ הִתְחַלְּקוּת מַדְרֵגוֹת רַבּוֹת

And to all of them, a distinct and separate vitality is drawn—different from the vitality that is drawn to another. And this is from the attribute of His Kingship, may He be blessed, which is called Memaleh Kol Alman, which enclothes itself in the innermost part of the worlds themselves.

וּלְכוּלֶם נִמְשָׁךְ חַיּוּת מְשֵׁנֶּה וּנְבְדֶּל מֵחַיּוּת הַנִּמְשָׁךְ לְזוּלָתוֹ וְהַיִינוּ מִמְּדַת מַלְכוּתוֹ יִתְבָּבִךְ שֶׁהוּא הַנִּקְרָא מְמֵלֵּא כָּל עַלְמִין שָׁמִּתְלַבֵּשׁ בְּתוֹךְ תּוֹךְ הָעוֹלָמוֹת מַמְשׁ

But the aspect of Sovev Kol Alman is the influence and illumination of Divinity that is not drawn and enclothed within the worlds in a revealed way, to be grasped in their perception.	אָבָל בְּחִינַת סוֹבֵב כָּל עָלְמִין הוּא בְּחִינַת הַשְּׁפָעָה וְהַאֲרַת אֱלֹקוּת שֶׁאֵינוֹ נִמְשָׁךְ וְנִתְלַבֵּשׁ בְּתוֹךְ הָעוֹלָמוֹת בִּבְחִינַת גִּילֹוּי לִהְיוֹת מוּשָׂג בְּהַשְׂגָּתָם
Rather, it is in a surrounding manner above them. And therefore it is called "Sovev" (surrounding), for it encompasses them all equally, without division—since it is not enclothed in revealed fashion to be perceived.	אֶלָא הוּא בִּבְחִינַת מַקּיף עֲלֵיהֶם מִלְמַעְלָה וְעַל כֵּן נִקְרָא סוֹבֵב כָּל עָלְמִין שֶׁסוֹבֵב לְכוּלָם בְּשָׁוֶה שֶׁאֵין בּוֹ הִתְחַלְקוּת מֵאַחַר שֶׁאֵינוֹ מִתְלַבֵּשׁ בִּבְחִינַת גִּילוּי בְּהַשָּׂגָה
So that one could say, to this one He shines and is revealed in this way, and to that one differently, etc.—this does not apply. Therefore it is equal and unifying, etc.	שָׁיִּתָּכֵן לוֹמַר שֶׁלְזֶה הוּא מֵאִיר וּמִתְגַלֶּה כָּךְ וּלְזֶה כָּךְ כו׳. וְעַל כֵּן הוּא שָׁוָה וּמְשֵׁוֶּה כו׳
And about it is said, "The heavens and the earth I fill"—this refers to the level of Sovev Kol Alman, for there is no place empty of Him.	וּבוֹ הוּא שֶׁנֶּאֶמֵר אָת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ אֲנִי מָלֵא דְּהַיִינוּ בְּחִינַת סוֹבֵב כָּל עָלְמִין דְלֵית אֲתַר פָּנוּי מִנֵּיה
But that which is stated, "the whole earth is filled with His glory," refers to the aspect of Memaleh Kol Alman, which is called "glory."	וּמַה שֶׁנֶּאֱמֵר מָלֹא כָל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ הוּא בְּחִינַת מְמַלֵּא כָּל עָלְמִין שֶׁנָּקָרָא כָּבוֹד
And behold, our Sages said: "There is no 'glory' but Torah" (Berachos 43b; see also the discourse on "For upon all glory shall be a canopy").	וְהַנֵּה אָמְרוּ רַזַ״ל אֵין כָּבוֹד אֶלָּא תּוֹרָה (וְעַיֵּן מַ״שׁ עַל (פָּסוּק כִּי עַל כָּל כָּבוֹד חֻפָּה)
And this is because the Torah emerges from Wisdom (Chochmah), for from Wisdom extend the thirty-two paths.	וְהַיִּינוּ מִשׁוּם דְּאוֹרַיִיתָא מֵחָכְמָה נָפְקָת שֶׁמֵּחָכְמָה נָמְשָׁכִים ל״ב נְתִיבוֹת
And like a "path" or "trail" that is made for travel from one place to another—so too, from the level of Supernal Wisdom the influence extends in a divided manner, to become Memaleh Kol Alman.	וּכְמָשָׁל הַנְּתִיב וְהַשְּׁבִיל שָׁנַּעֲשֶׂה לַעֲבוֹר בּוֹ מִמָּקוֹם לְמָקוֹם כָּךְ מִבְּחִינַת חָכְמָה עִילָּאָה נִמְשֶׁכֶת הַהַשְׁפָּעָה בִּבְחִינַת הִתְחַלְּקוּת לִהְיוֹת מְמַלֵּא כָּל עַלְמִין
Until it is drawn into actual physicality, specifically into the laws of Torah—kosher and invalid, etc.—which deal with physical matters, like tithes and offerings, as is known.	עַד שֶׁיִּמָשֵׁךְ בַּגַּשְׁמִיּוּת מַמְשׁ בִּפְרָטוּת דִּינֵי הַתּוֹרָה כָּשֵׁר וּפָסוּל כו׳ שֶׁהֵם בְּעִנְיָנִים גַּשְׁמִיִּים תְּרוּמוֹת וּמֵעַשְׂרוֹת כו׳ וּכְנוֹדָע
But through the mitzvos there is drawn a revelation of light from the level of Sovev Kol Alman, which is the encompassing light.	אֲבָל עַל יְדֵי הַמִּצְוֹת נִמְשֶׁךְ גִּילוּי אוֹר מִבְּחִינַת סוֹבֵב כָּל עַלְמִין שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת הַמַּקִיף
And the matter is as follows: Behold, it is known that the Torah becomes nourishment for the Divine soul, as it is written, "And Your Torah is within my innards"—for it is like, by way of	ְוְהָעִנְיֶן כִּי הָנֵּה יָדוּעַ שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה נַעֲשֶׂה מָזוֹן לַנֶּפֶשׁ הָאֱלֹקִית וּכְמַ״שׁ וְתוֹרָתְךְּ בְּתוֹךְ מֵעָי שֶׁהוּא כְּמוֹ עַד״מ הַמָּזוֹן שֶׁנְכָנָס בְּתוֹךְ תּוֹךְ הָאָדָם וְנַעֲשֶׂה חַיּוּת בִּפְנִימִיּוּתוֹ

example, food that enters into the inner parts of a person and becomes vitality within his inwardness.	
And so too, through Torah there is drawn a revelation of the radiance of Chochmah (wisdom) to be comprehended in actual comprehension—"And I will place My words in your mouth."	וְכָךְּ עַל יְדֵי הַתּוֹרָה נִמְשָׁךְּ גִּילוּי הָאַרַת הַחָּכְמָה לִהְיוֹת מושָׂג בְּהַשָּׂגָה מַמָּשׁ וְאָשִים דְּבָרֵי בְּפִיךְּ
And this is from the level of Memaleh Kol Alman, which is enclothed in the worlds in actual inwardness.	וְהַיִינוּ מִבְּחִינַת מְמַלֵּא כָּל עָלְמִין שֶׁמִּתְלַבֵּשׁ בְּעָלְמִין בִּרְחִינַת פְּנִימִיּוּת מַמָּשׁ
But the mitzvos become garments for the Divine soul, which is like—by way of example—clothing on the human body from above, and it does not enter into his inwardness.	אָבָל הַמִּצְוֹת נַעֲשִׂים לְבוּשִׁים לַנֶּפֶשׁ הָאֱלֹקִית שֶׁהוּא כְּמוֹ עַד״מ הַלְּבוּשׁ הוּא עַל גוּף הָאָדָם מִלְמַעְלָה וְאֵינוֹ נִכְנָס בִּפְנִימִיוּתוֹ
And so, the flow that is drawn through mitzvos is in a surrounding manner (makif), since it is from the level of Sovev Kol Alman, which is beyond comprehension.	וְכָךְ הַהַמְשָׁכָה הַנִּמְשֶׁכֶת עַל יְדֵי הַמִּצְוֹת הוּא בִּבְחִינַת מַקִּיף מִפְּנֵי שָׁהִיא מִבְּחִינַת סוֹבֵב כָּל עָלְמִין שֶׁהוּא לְמַעְלָה מֵהַשָּׂגָה
And therefore, garments are more precious in their essence than food, for their root is higher.	וְעַל כֵּן הַלְּבוּשִׁים יוֹתֵר יְקָרִים בְּטִבְעָם מֵהַמָּזוֹן לְהִיוֹת שֶׁבְּשָׁרְשָׁם הֵם יוֹתֵר נַעֲלִים
[See what is written on this in the discourse "Mizmor Shir Chanukas HaBayis" regarding the three levels of nourishment, garment, and house.]	וְעַיֵּן מַ״שׁ מָזָּה בְּד״ה מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר חֲנֻכַּת הַבַּיִת בְּעִנְיַן] [ג׳ בְּחִינוֹת מָזוֹן לְבוּשׁ בַּיִת
And this is what is written concerning the mitzvos: "Because you did not serve amid abundance." The explanation of "abundance" (רֹב בֹל) is the level of Gan Eden—see what is written in the discourse "VeAtah Tetzaveh"—which is the perception of Divinity.	וְזֶהוּ שֶׁכֶּתוּב בַּמִּצְוֹת תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא עֲבַדְתָּ כו׳ מֵרֹב כּּל פֵּירוּשׁ רֹב כֹּל הוּא בְּחִינַת גַּן עֵדֶן [עַיֵּן מַ״שׁ בְּד״ה וְאַתָּה תְצַנֶּה] הַשָּׁגַת אֱלֹקוּת
That the mitzvos are even higher, for they are from the level of encompassing lights (makifim), which are beyond Gan Eden, which is an inward level of perception.	שֶׁהַמִּצְוֹת הֵם יוֹתֵר גְּבוֹהִים שֶׁהֵם מִבְּחִינַת מַקִּיפִים שֶׁלְמַעְלָה מָגַּן עֵדֶן שֶׁהוּא הַשָּׂגָה בִּבְחִינַת פְּנִימִיּוּת
And from this perspective, the one who said that "deed is greater than study" was correct.	וּמִצֵד זֶה אָמַר הָאוֹמֵר מַעֲשֶׂה גָּדוֹל מִן הַתַּלְמוּד
However, nevertheless, they voted and concluded that study is greater, for it leads to action.	אָבָל אַף עַל פִּי כֵן נִמְנוּ וְגָמְרוּ תַּלְמוּד גָּדוֹל שֶׁמֵבִיא לִידֵי מַעֲשֶׂה
And the idea is that it is impossible to awaken the drawing down of Sovev Kol Alman through practical mitzvos—such as tzitzis made of wool or tzedakah with physical money—except through Torah, which is the intermediary that connects them.	ְוָהָעָנָיָן כִּי אִי אֶפְשָׁר לִהְיוֹת הָתְעוֹרְרוּת הַמְשָׁכַת סוֹבֵב כָּל עָלְמִין עַל יְדֵי הַמִּצְוֹת מַעֲשִׁיּוֹת שֶׁהֵם דְּבָרִים גַּשְׁמִיִּם צִיצִית מִצֶּמֶר צְדָקָה בְּמָמוֹן גַּשְׁמִי אָם לֹא עַל יְדֵי הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁהִיא הַמְּמוּצֵע הַמְחַבְּרָם

And like the analogy of a person, in whom speech is the intermediary that connects and reveals the hidden thoughts into expression, etc.	וּכְמוֹ עַד״מ בָּאָדָם שֶׁהַדְּבּוּר הוּא הַמְּמוּצָע הַמְחַבֵּר וּמוֹצִיא הָעְלֵם הַמַּחֲשֶׁבָה לִידֵי גִילוּי כו׳
(ב)	
And behold, it is written: "Today, to do them." "Today" specifically—meaning in this world, which is called the "world of action," and one is able to do teshuvah (repentance).	וְהָנֵה כְּתִיב הַיּוֹם לַעֲשׁוֹתָם. הַיּוֹם דַּוְקָא שֶׁבָּעוֹלָם הַנֶּה הוא הַנִּקָרָא עוֹלַם הַמַּעֲשֶׂה וּיְכוֹלִים לַעֲשׁוֹת הְּשׁוּבָה
But not so in the World to Come, for as he is, so he remains—he does not have the power to transform himself from how he is, unless they remove from him the soiled garments through "Kaf HaKela," etc. But he himself cannot.	מַשְׁאֵ"כ בָּעוֹלָם הַבָּא הָנֵּה כְּמוֹ שֶׁהוּא כָּךְּ יִשְׁאֵר שֶׁאֵין לוֹ כֹּחַ לַהָפוֹךְ עַצְמוֹ מִכְּמוֹ שֶׁהוּא אִם לֹא שֶׁיָסִירוּ מִמֶּנּוּ הַלְבוּשִׁים הַצּוֹאִים עַל יְדֵי כַּף הַקֶּלַע כו׳ אֲבָל הוּא עַצְמוֹ אֵינוֹ יָכוֹל
And the reason is because in the World to Come, they said: "They sit and enjoy the radiance of the Divine Presence." That is because they perceive Divinity in a manner of comprehension and actual revelation.	ְוָהַטַּעַם הוּא מִשׁוּם שֶׁבָּעוֹלָם הַבָּא אָמְרוּ יוֹשְׁבִין וְנֶהָנִין שָׁהוּא לְפִי שֶׁמַשִּׂיגִים אֱלֹקוּת בִּבְחִינַת הַשָּׂנָה וְגִילוּי מַמָּשׁ
And if so, it is from the level of Memaleh Kol Alman, which is enclothed in a revealed manner. And in the level of Memaleh Kol Alman, it is in a state of differentiation, as mentioned earlier.	וְאָם כֵּן הוּא מִבְּחִינַת מְמֵלֵּא כָּל עָלְמִין שֶׁמְּתַלַבֵּשׁ בִּבְחִינַת גִּילוּי וּבִבְחִינַת מְמֵלֵּא כָּל עָלְמִין הוּא בִּבְחִינַת הִתְחַלְקוּת כַּנַ"ל
Therefore, if he is in that level, he cannot transform into another level, since they are divided and separated from one another, and each one comes to its proper place.	ְוַעַל כֵּן אָם הוּא בְּבְחִינָה זוֹ אִי אֶפְשָׁר לוֹ לְהַהָפֹּךְ לְבְחִינָה אַחֶרֶת אַחַרֵי שֶׁהֵם מְחֻלָּאִים וּנְבְדָּלִים זָה מִזֶּה וְכָל אֶחָד עַל מְקוֹמוֹ בָּא
But in this world, there is an illumination of Sovev Kol Alman, and although it is in a hidden state—not apprehended—nevertheless, it has effect here.	אֲבָל בָּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה יֵשׁ בְּחִינַת הָאַרַת סוֹבֵב כָּל עַלְמִין וְאַף עַל גַּב דְהוּא בִּבְחִינַת הָעְלֵם שָׁאֵינָם מַשִּׂיגִים בּוֹ מ״מ פּוֹעֵל הוּא כָּאן
And because it is from the level of Sovev Kol Alman, which is equal and equalizing—"If you are righteous, what do you give Him?" etc.—therefore one can do teshuvah.	ּוּלְפִי שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת סוֹבֵב כָּל עָלְמִין שֶׁשֶׁוֶה וּמְשֵׁוֶּה כוי וֹןאָם צָדַקְהָּ מַה תִּתֶּן לוֹ'' כו׳ וְעַל כֵּן יְכוֹלִים לַעֲשׁוֹת הְשׁוּבָה
For even if he is presently a complete rasha (wicked person), utterly low, he can transform to become a complete tzaddik due to the illumination of the Sovev, etc.	שֶׁאַף שֶׁהוּא כְּעֵת רָשָׁע גָּמוּר וְהוּא לְמַטָּה מַטָּה יָכוֹל לְהָתְהַפֵּּךְ לִהְיוֹת צַדִּיק גָּמוּר מִצֵּד הָאַרַת הַסּוֹבֵב כו׳
As explained elsewhere at length on the verse "Command the children of Israel and say to them: My offering, My bread…" etc.	וּכְמַ״שׁ בְּמָקוֹם אַחֵר בְּאֲרִיכוּת עַל פָּסוּק צַו אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלַהָם אֶת קָרְבָּנִי לַחְמִי כו׳ עַיֵּן שָׁם

And this is what our Sages said: "Better one hour of teshuvah and good deeds in this world than all the life of the World to Come."	וְזָהוּ שֶׁאָמְרוּ חֲזַ״ל יָפָה שָׁעָה אֶחַת בִּתְשׁוּבָה וּמַּצְשִּׁים טוֹבִים בָּעוֹלָם הַזָּה מִכָּל חַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא
Because the life of the World to Come is only from the level of Memaleh Kol Alman, which is through gevuros (severities) and contractions—"With the letter yud, the World to Come was created," etc.	כִּי חַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא הוּא רַק מִבְּחִינַת מְמַלֵּא כָּל עָלְמִין שֶׁהוּא עַל יְדֵי גְּבוּרוֹת וְצִמְצוּמִים "בְּיו״ד נִבְרָא הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא" כו׳
But Torah and good deeds in this world are from the level of Sovev Kol Alman.	אֲבָל בַּתוֹרָה וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים בָּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה הוּא מִבְּחִינַת סוֹבֵב כָּל עָלְמִין
(λ)	
However, if he caused a blemish through some sin—whereby he lowered and drew vitality to the sitra achra (other side), not refining it and reversing it as explained above—then everything that is needed for this is the concept of teshuvah: "And return us in complete repentance before You."	אֲבָל אִם פָּגַם עַל יְדֵי אֵיזֶה חֵטְא שֶׁהוֹרִיד וְהִמְשִׁיךְ חַיּוּת לִסְטָרָ״א שֶׁלֹּא בֵבר וְהִפֵּךְ כַּנַּ״ל כָּל מַה שֶׁהָיָה צָרִיךְּ עַל זֶה הוּא עִנְיַן הַתְּשׁוּבָה ''וְהַחֲזִירֵנוּ בִּתְשׁוּבָה "שְׁלֵמָה לְפָנֶיךְ
And behold, although our Sages said, "He does not move from there until they forgive him"—nevertheless, although he is forgiven, the deficiency still remains: what he had not fulfilled in drawing down [Divine light], etc.	וְהָנֵּה הַנֵּם שֶׁאָמְרוּ רַזַ״ל לֹא זָז מִשֶּׁם עַד שֶׁמוֹחֲלִין לוֹ, הָנֵּה הָרֵי מִ״מ אַף שֶׁמוֹחֲלִין לוֹ הַחָּסָּרוֹן בִּמְקוֹמוֹ עוֹמֵד מַה שֶׁלֹא הִשְׁלִים הַהַמְשֶׁכָה שֶׁהָיָה מַמְשִׁיךּ כו׳
But this is the idea of teshuvah that we request—"Return us in complete repentance before You," meaning to Your inwardness, which is even higher than the level of Sovev Kol Alman.	אֲבָל זָהוּ עִנְיַן הַתְּשׁוּבָה שֶׁאֲנַחְנוּ מְבַקְשִׁים "וְהַחֲזִירֵנוּ בִּתְשׁוּבָה שְׁלֵמָה לְפָנֶידְ" פֵּירוּשׁ לְפְנִימִיּוּתְדְּ שֶׁהוּא לְמַעְלָה גַּם מִבְּחִינַת סוֹבֵב כָּל עָלְמִין
For it is not called "sovev" or "encompassing" except relative to the worlds—but His Essence and Being, may He be blessed, is higher than even that.	שֶׁאֵינוֹ נִקְרָא סוֹבֵב וּמַקִּיף אֶלֶּא לְגַבֵּי עָלְמִין אֲבָל עַצְמוּתוֹ וּמַהוּתוֹ יִתְבָּרַךּ הוּא לְמַעְלָה גַּם מִזֶּה
And through teshuvah, one draws down a new light through the revelation of His Essence, may He be blessed, to fill all the blemishes and deficiencies, etc.	וְעַל יְדֵי הַתְּשׁוּבָה שֶׁיַּמְשִׁיךּ אוֹר חָדָשׁ עַל יְדֵי גִּילּוּי עַצְמוּתוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ יְמֵלֵּא כָּל הַפְּגָמִים וְהַחֲסָרוֹנוֹת כו׳
But how can a person arouse something so high—His Essence, may He be blessed—to draw a new light from Him?	אֲבָל אֵידְ יָכוֹל הָאָדָם לְעוֹרֵר כָּכָה לְמַעְלָה בְּעַצְמוּתוֹ יִתְבָּרֵדְ לְהַמְשִׁידְ אוֹר חָדָשׁ מִמֶּנּוּ
But this is what he requests: "And return us in repentance," etc.—"Bring us back to You," meaning, You should pour upon us a spirit from on high, and influence upon us abundant mercies from the Source of Mercies.	אֲבָל עַל זֶה הוּא מְבַקֵּשׁ ''וְהַחֲזִירֵנוּ בִּתְשׁוּבָה'' כו׳ ''הָשִׁיבֵנוּ אֱלֶידָ'' כְּלוֹמֵר אַתָּה תַּעֲרָה עָלֵינוּ רוּחַ מִמֶּרוֹם וְתַשְׁפִּיעַ עָלֵינוּ רַחֲמִים רַבִּים מִמְּקוֹר הָרַחֲמִים

From the level of the thirteen attributes of mercy—"Who is a G-d like You, who pardons iniquity," etc.—so that we can do teshuvah.	מְבְּחִינַת י״ג מְכִילִין ''מִי אֵל כָּמוֹדְּ נוֹשֵׂא עָוֹן'' כו׳ שָׁיְהִיוּ אֲנַחְנוּ יְכוֹלִים לַעֲשׁוֹת הְשׁוּבָה
And this is the concept of the illumination of the thirteen attributes of mercy in the month of Elul—it is a preparation that enables us to do teshuvah, to become "I am for my Beloved," etc.	ְוָזֶהוּ עִנְיֵן הָאַרַת י״ג מְכִילִין דְרַחֲמֵי בְּחֹדֶשׁ אֱלוּל שָׁהוּא הַכָנָה שֶׁיְהִיוּ יְכוֹלִים לַצְשׁוֹת תְּשׁוּבָה לְהִיוֹת "אֲנִי לְדוֹדִי" כו׳
And although throughout the year we say the thirteen attributes of mercy—"Hashem, Hashem, G-d, merciful and gracious…"—they are only mercy upon bodily life.	וְאַף שֶׁבְּכָל הַשָּׁנָה אוֹמְרִים י״ג מִדּוֹת הָרַחֲמִים "הויי הויי אֵל רַחוּם" כוי הֵם רַק הָרַחֲמִים עַל חַיֵּי הַגּוּף בִּלְבָד
But the thirteen attributes of mercy that shine in the month of Elul are mercies upon the life of the soul, to awaken it to teshuvah.	אֲבָל י״ג מְכִילִין דְּרַחֲמֵי הַמֵּאִירִים בְּחֹדֶשׁ אֱלוּל הֵם הָרַחֲמִים עַל חַיֵּי הַנָּפֶשׁ לְעוֹרְרָהּ בִּתְשׁוּבָה
And this is what it means: "Who grazes among the roses"—meaning, He grazes and sustains the Jewish people so that they are able to do teshuvah.	וְזֶהוּ ''הָרוֹעֶה בַּשׁוֹשַׁנִּים'' פֵּירוּשׁ רוֹעֶה שֶׁמְפַרְנֵס אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהִיוֹת יְכוֹלִים לַעֲשׁוֹת תְּשׁוּבָה
He grazes and sustains them "among the roses," for behold, all year we say in Shema: "And I will give grass in your field for your animal."	הוּא רוֹעֶה וּמְפַרְנֵס אוֹתָם בַּשׁוֹשַׁנִּים כִּי הָנֵּה בְּכָל הַשָּׁנָה אָנוּ אוֹמְרִים בְּקְרִיאַת שְׁמַע "וְנָתַתִּי עֵשֶׂב "בְּשָׁדְדּ לְבָהֶמְתֶּדְ
The meaning of "your animal" is the animal soul and the intellectual soul, that in order for them also to agree that "you shall love Hashem" they established to first say before prayer the blessing of Yotzer, two before [the Shema] "and the Ofanim and Chayos" etc.	פֵּירוּשׁ ''בָּהֶמְתֶּדְ'' הַיְנוּ הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַבַּהְמִית וְהַנֶּפֶשׁ הַשִּׂכְלִית שֶׁבִּשְׁבִיל שֶׁיְהֵיוּ גַּם הֵם מֵסְכִּימִים שֶׁיְהֵא ''וְאָהַרְתָּ אֵת ה''' כו' תִּקְנוּ לוֹמֵר תְּחִלֶּה קֹדֶם הַתְּפִלָּה בִּרְכַּת יוֹצֵר שְׁתַּיִם לְפָנֶיהָ ''וְהָאוֹפַנִּים וְחַיּוֹת'' כו'
And Pesukei DeZimra is the aspect of extended contemplation on the greatness of Hashem, may He be blessed, until even the animal soul and the intellectual soul agree that "To Him is fitting" etc.	וּפְסוּקֵי דְּזַמְרָא שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת הָאֲרִיכוּת בְּהִתְבּוֹנְנוּת גְּדוּלַת ה׳ יִתְבָּרֵךְ עַד שֶׁגַּם הַנָּפֶשׁ הַבַּהְמִית וְהַשִּׂכְלִית יַסְכִּימוּ שֶׁלוֹ יָאָתֵי כו׳
But for arousing love within the G-dly soul itself, there is no need for such deep contemplation.	אֲבָל בִּשְׁבִיל הָתְעוֹרְרוּת הָאַהֲבָה בַּנֶּפֶשׁ הָאֱלֹקִית עַצְמָה אֵין צֹרֶךְ לְהִתְבּוֹנְנוּת כָּל כָּךְ
For "The soul of man is the lamp of Hashem"—it is embedded in the natural essence of all Jewish souls from their source, that their desire and yearning is to be absorbed in the light of Hashem and to cling to Him.	שֶׁהַרֵי ''נֵר ה' נִשְׁמַת אָדָם'' שֶׁכָּךְ מֵטְכֵּע בְּכָל נְפָשׁוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּטֶבַע תּוֹלְדוֹתָם מִמְּקוֹרָם לִהְיוֹת חֶפְצָם וּתְשׁוּקָתָם לְהִבָּלֵל בְּאוֹר ה׳ וּלְדָבְקָה בּוֹ

And this is what it says: "And I will give grass in your field for your animal."	יָן זֶהוּ שֶׁכָּתוּב ''וְנַתַתִּי עֵשֶׂב בְּשָׂדְךּ לִבְהָמְהֶּךּ"
The meaning of "grass" is the angels—the agents of influence—through whom comes the flow from above, giving him strength and power to transform the animal soul.	פֵּירוּשׁ "עֵשֶׂב" הֵם הַמַּלְאָכִים שְׁלוּחֵי הַהַשְׁפָּעָה שָׁבָּהָם וְעַל יְדֵי זֶה נִמְשֶׁכֶת הַהַשְׁפָּעָה מִלְמַעְלָה לִהְיוֹת לוֹ כֹּחַ וָעוֹז לַהָפוֹךְ הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַבַּהָמִית
As it is written in the Zohar, Parshas Bereishis (18b) on the verse: "He causes grass to grow for the animal" "A thousand mountains," etc. "And grass for the work of man"	וּכְמוֹ שֶׁכֶּתוּב בַּזּהַר פ׳ בְּרֵאשִׁית (דף י״ח ע״ב) עַל פָּסוּק "מַצְמִיחַ חָצִיר לַבְּהַמָּה" "אֶלֶף טוּרִין" כו׳ "וְעֵשֶׂב לַעֲבֹדַת הָאָדָם" כו׳
[See also what is written in the discourse "Ki Seitzei" about the two blessings before Shema.]	ָןעַיֵּן מַ״שׁ בְּד״ה כִּי תַצֵא מֵענְיַן שְׁתַּיִם לְפָנֶיהָ] [דְּקָרִיאַת שָׁמַע
And all of this applies specifically during the rest of the year.	וְכָל זֶה הוּא בְּכָל הַשְּׁנָה דַּוְקָא
But in the month of Elul it is written, "Who grazes among the roses"—these are the thirteen attributes of mercy that shine and are revealed in the month of Elul, enabling teshuvah to be done, so that all deficiencies are repaired.	אֲבָל בְּחֹדֶשׁ אֱלוּל כְּתִיב ''הָרוֹעֶה בַּשׁוֹשַנִּים'' שֶׁהַן בְּחִינַת י״ג מְכִילִין דְרַחֲמֵי הַמֵּאִירִים וּמִתְגַלִּים בְּחֹדֶשׁ אֱלוּל לְהָיוֹת עוֹשִׁים תְּשׁוּבָה שֶׁיִּמְּלֵא כָּל הַחֲסָרוֹנוֹת
[And this drawing down of "roses" is also needed for the G-dly soul itself. For although this yearning is embedded in every soul by nature as said above—]	וְהַמְשָׁכָה זוֹ דְשׁוֹשַׁנִּים הָיא צְרִיכָה גַּם בִּשְׁבִיל הַנֶּפֶשׁ] הָאֱלֹקִית עַצְמָה כִּי הַגַּם שֶׁכָּךְ מֻטְבַּע בְּכָל נֶפֶשׁ כו׳ [כַּנַּ״ל
However, the matter is that there is an elevation of feminine waters (mayin nukvin) that comes from the essence of the soul, naturally and on its own.	אֲבָל הָעִנְיָן כִּי יֵשׁ הַעֲלָאַת מ״ן שֶׁנִּמְשֶׁךּ מִצַּד עֶצֶם הַנָּפֶשׁ בְּטִבְעָה וּמֵאֵלֶיהָ
But to reach the level of elevating feminine waters that is teshuvah—which is in greater power, higher than what the soul can naturally bear—this requires a drawing from above specifically.	אֲבָל כְּדֵי לָבוֹא לִבְחִינַת הַעֲלָאַת מ״ן דְּבְחִינַת תְּשׁוּבָה שֶׁהוּא בְּחֵילָא יְתֵיר לְמַעְלָה מִכְּדֵי שֶׁתּוּכַל הַנָּפֶשׁ לִשְׁאֵת עַל זָה צָרִיךְ לְהִיוֹת הַמְשֶׁכָה מִלְמַעְלָה דַּיִיקָא
And this will be understood from what is written elsewhere on the verse "As the fragrance of a field that Hashem has blessed"—meaning the fragrance of the traitor, which is teshuvah, and thus it says "that Hashem has blessed," i.e., it needs assistance from Above.	ְיוּבַן זֶה מִמַּה שֶּׁכָּתוּב בִּמְקוֹם אַחֵר עַל פָּסוּק "כְּרֵיחַ שָׁדָה אֲשֶׁר בֵּרְכוֹ ה׳" וְהַיְינוּ לְהִיוֹת "רֵיחַ בּוֹגְדָיוֹ" שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת תְּשׁוּבָה עַל זֶה צָרִידְ לוֹמַר "אֲשֶׁר בֵּרַכוֹ ה׳" שֶׁהוּא סִיּוּעַ מִלְמַעְלָה כו׳ עַיֵּן שָׁם
And this is the concept of "Return us to You," etc.—and about this drawing from above it is said: "Who grazes among the roses."	וְזֶהוּ עִנְיֵן "הֲשִׁיבֵנוּ אֵלֶיףּ" כו׳ וְעַל הַמְשֶׁכָה זוֹ "שָׁמִּלְמַעְלָה נָאֱמַר "הָרוֹעֶה בַּשׁוֹשַׁנִּים

And behold, our Sages said: "Do not read 'shoshanim' (roses), but rather 'sheshonim' (those who learn)." The meaning of "sheshonim" refers to the level of Torah, from the concept of "one who reads and learns," etc.	וְהָנֵּה אָמְרוּ רַזַ״ל אַל תִּקְרֵי שׁוֹשַׁנִּים אֶלָּא שֶׁשׁוֹנִים פֵּירוּשׁ "שֶׁשׁוֹנִים" הוּא בְּחִינַת תּוֹרָה מֵעִנְיַן "קוֹרֵא וְשׁוֹנֶה" כו׳
And the idea is that teshuvah must fill all the deficiencies—whether the deficiency caused by the absence of mitzvos, which prevents and withholds the revelation of the light of Sovev Kol Alman that is drawn through mitzvos,	ְוָהָעָנְיָן כִּי הַתְּשׁוּבָה צָרִידְּ לִמְלֹא כָּל הַחֲסָרוֹנוֹת הֵן הַחִּסָּרוֹן שָׁנַּעֲשָׂה בְּהֶעְדֵּר הַמִּצְוֹת שֶׁמוֹנֵעַ וּמַחֲסִיר גִּילּוִי אוֹר דְסוֹבֵב כָּל עָלְמִין הַנִּמְשֶׁדְּ עַל יְדֵי הַמִּצְוֹת
and whether the deficiency caused in Torah, which is the source of the level of Memaleh Kol Alman.	וְהֵן הַחִּסֶּרוֹן שֶׁנַּצְשָׂה עַל יְדֵי הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁהִיא מָקוֹר בְּחִינַת מְמַלֵּא כָּל עָלְמִין
And this is what it says: "And return us in complete repentance before You"—"complete" specifically.	וְזֶהוּ שֶׁכָּתוּב ''וְהַחֲזִירֵנוּ בִּתְשׁוּבָה שְׁלֵמָה לְפָנֶידְּ'' שְׁלֵמָה דַּיִיקָא כו׳
And this is what it says: "Who grazes among the shoshanim"—within this are both levels: "shoshana" in the literal sense is the arousal of the thirteen attributes of mercy, which are from the level of Sovev Kol Alman, and "sheshonim" is from the level of Memaleh Kol Alman, etc.	ְוֶזֶהוּ שֶׁכֶּתוּב "הָרוֹעֶה בַּשׁוֹשֵׁנִּים" שֶׁבְּכְלֵל זֶה יֵשׁ ב׳ הַמַּעֲלוֹת "שׁוֹשֵׁנָּה" כְּפְשׁוּטוֹ הוּא הִתְעוֹרְרוּת י״ג מְכִילִין דְּרַחֲמֵי שָׁהֵם מִבְּחִינַת סוֹבֵב כָּל עָלְמִין וְ"שָׁשׁוֹנִים" מִבְּחִינַת מְמֵלֵּא כָּל עָלְמִין כו׳
And this is the idea of Simchas Torah, which follows Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. It is the aspect of drawing joy of the mitzvah for the entire year.	וְזֶהוּ עִנְיַן שִׁמְחַת תּוֹרָה שֶׁאַחַר ר״ה וְיוֹם הַכִּיפּוּרִים שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת הַמְשָׁכַת שִׁמְחָה שֶׁל מִצְוָה עַל כְּלֶלוּת הַשָּׁנָה
For since during the entire year a person causes lack and blemish in the illumination of Sovev Kol Alman by not properly performing mitzvos,	פִּי מֵאַחַר שֶׁבְּכָל הַשָּׁנָה עוֹשִׁים חָסָרוֹן וּפְגָם בְּהַאֲרַת סוֹבֵב כָּל עָלְמִין עַל יְדֵי שֶׁאֵינָם מְקַיְמִים הַמִּצְוֹת כַּהִלְכָּתָן
and when on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur the deficiency is repaired, then comes the joy of mitzvah, etc.	וְכַאֲשֶׁר נִמְשֶׁךְ בְּר״ה וְיוֹם הַכִּיפּוּרִים מִלּוּא הַחִּסָּרוֹן אָז נַעֲשֶׂה בְּחִינַת שִׁמְחָה שֶׁל מִצְוָה כו׳
[And furthermore, the concept of "shoshanim"/"sheshonim" can be understood from what is explained in the discourse "VeAchalta VeSavata UVerachta" about the mention of the covenant and Torah in the blessing of the land.	ָןעוֹד יוּבַן עִנְיַן ''שׁוֹשַנִּים'' ''שֶׁשׁוֹנִים'' עַל דֶּרֶדְ מַה] שֶׁנִּתְבָּאֵר בְּד״ה ''וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתַּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ'' בְּעִנְיַן [זְכִירַת בְּרִית וְתוֹרָה בִּבְרָכַת הָאָרֶץ
One must mention the covenant before the Torah, for the covenant was given with three covenants and the Torah with thirteen covenants. And it is explained there that the thirteen covenants correspond to the thirteen attributes of mercy.	וְצָרִיךְ שֶׁיַּקְדִּים כָּרִית לְתוֹרָה שֶׁזוֹ נִהְּנָה בָּג׳ בְּרִיתוֹת וְזוֹ נִהְּנָה בְּי״ג בְּרִיתוֹת וּמְבוֹאַר שָׁם דְּעִנְיַן י״ג בְּרִיתוֹת הֵם י״ג מִדּוֹת הָרַחֲמִים

And their drawing down is through the Torah, etc. And this is also what it says: "And Hashem your G-d will circumcise your heart and the heart of your seed."	וְהַמְשֶׁכָתָם הוּא עַל יְדֵי הַתּוֹרָה כו׳ וְזֶהוּ גַּם כֵּן "וּמָל "הי אֱלֹקֶיךָ אֶת לְבָרָדְ וְאֶת לְבַב זַרְעָדְּ
That in this verse are the initial letters (rashei teivos) of Elul. And this means entering into the aspect of the inwardness of the heart, as is written in Iggeres HaKodesh on the discourse "Israel will only be redeemed through charity."	שֶׁיֵשׁ בָּזֶה רָ״ת אֱלוּל. וְהַיְינוּ לָבוֹא לִבְחִינַת פְּנִימִית הַלֵּב וּכְמַ״שׁ בְּאִגֶּרֶת הַקּדֶשׁ בְּד״ה ''אֵין יִשְׂרָאֵל ''נִגְאָלִין אֶלָּא בִצְדָקָה
And this drawing down is from the level of the thirteen covenants, which are the thirteen attributes of mercy.	וְהַמְשָׁכָה זוֹ הִיא מִבְּחִינַת י״ג בְּרִיתוֹת שֶׁהֵן י״ג מִדּוֹת הָרַחֲמִים
However, this drawing down is through the Torah. And this is the idea of "shoshanim" and "sheshonim" in halachos.	אֲבָל הַמְשָׁכָה זוֹ הִיא עַל יְדֵי הַתּוֹרָה וְזֶהוּ עִנְיַן "שׁוֹשַׁנִּים" וְ"שֶׁשׁוֹנִים" בַּהְלָכוֹת
And also because the thirteen methods by which the Torah is expounded are from the level of the thirteen attributes of mercy.	וְגַם כִּי י״ג מִדּוֹת שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה נִדְרֶשֶׁת בָּהֶן הֵם מִבְּחִינַת י״ג מִדּוֹת הָרַחֲמִים
And therefore the Gemara says: "And the Merciful One said"—meaning, that in them and through them is the drawing from the Written Torah, which is Supernal Wisdom, to the Oral Torah, which is the lower Chochmah.	וְלָכֵן נִזְכַּר בַּגָּמָרָא "וְרַחֲמָנָא אָמַר" וְהַיְינוּ שֶׁבָּהָן וְעַל יָדָם הַמְשָׁכָה מִתּוֹרָה שֶׁבִּכְתָב שֶׁהִיא חָכְמָה עִילָּאָה לְתְּשׁוּבָ״ע שֶׁהִיא חָכְמָה תַּתָּאָה
And this is [the meaning of the verse:] "And you shall honor the presence of the elder"—this refers to one who has acquired wisdom. For they are thirteen. The end.	וְזֶהוּ ''וְהָדַרְתָּ פְּנֵי זָקּן'' – זָה שֶׁקּנָה חָכְמָה כִּי הֵן י״ג. תַּ״ד

NOTE Summary

The discourse opens by interpreting the verse "אָנִי לְדוֹדִי וְדוֹדִי לִי מוֹ as an acronym for Elul and connects it to the image of a rose with thirteen petals, representing the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. These attributes, originating from the inner supernal source of compassion, shine in Elul as a preparation for teshuvah. The Alter Rebbe distinguishes between two types of Divine energy: **Sovev Kol Almin** (surrounding light), which is infinite and not grasped, and **Memaleh Kol Almin** (filling light), which is measured and revealed in the world. Teshuvah operates through Sovey, allowing even a complete rasha to transform instantly.

Mitzvos draw Sovev, while Torah draws Memaleh. Therefore, both are needed to repair the spiritual damage caused by sin or neglect. Torah is likened to internal food, nourishing the soul, whereas mitzvos are external garments—yet the garments derive from a higher source. True teshuvah requires connecting to the **Essence** of Hashem, beyond even Sovev. This level can only be accessed with Divine help—hence the request, "בחשובה שלימה לפניך," meaning repentance before **Your Essence**, beyond all levels.

The month of Elul is unique: while normally the Thirteen Attributes are only compassion for the physical life, in Elul they illuminate the soul itself, awakening deep teshuvah. The Alter Rebbe elaborates on the spiritual role of **angels as "grass"**, nourishing the animal soul (בהמה), helping even the nefesh sichlis join in love of G-d. But the Elul light transcends even that—it touches the Divine soul, not by natural pull but by arousing a powerful, supra-rational longing, requiring help from Above.

The maamar also explains how the **word "shoshanim" (roses)** is read by Chazal as **"sheshonim" (those who learn)**—hinting that Torah study itself, especially halacha, facilitates this Divine flow. The **Thirteen Methods** by which Torah is expounded (י"ג מידות שהתורה נדרשת בהן) mirror the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, enabling light to flow from Torah Shebichtav to Torah Shebaal Peh, from supernal Chochmah to lower Chochmah.

Ultimately, this framework reaches Simchas Torah—following Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur—where joy replaces the previous deficiency. The joy of mitzvah is possible only after the soul has undergone repair, and the higher lights accessed in Elul and the Yamim Nora'im are fully drawn down into the year.

Practical Takeaway

Elul is not merely a time of preparation; it is a window into the deepest Divine compassion. The ability to do teshuvah, even from the lowest state, comes not from personal effort alone but from the radiance of Sovev Kol Almin aroused by Divine kindness. One must engage both aspects of Divine service: **Torah study** (to draw Memaleh) and **mitzvah observance** (to draw Sovev). The soul's return should aim beyond just behavioral improvement—it should reach toward the Essence of Hashem. To do this, one must beseech Hashem for help: "הַשִּיבְנוּ אַלִיךְ"—draw us back to You from Above.

Chassidic Story

The Alter Rebbe once encountered a simple wagon driver in the days of Elul, who wept while reciting Tehillim. Asked what moved him so, the man replied, "I read, 'Hashem is close to all who call upon Him in truth.' And I think, maybe even someone like me, with my coarse heart and hands, can also speak truth to Him. Maybe even I can come close." The Alter Rebbe, upon hearing this, was overcome and said, "This is the essence of Elul—the Ani Ledodi begins not from knowledge, but from truth."

(Source: Beis Rebbe, vol. 1)

TPX (Therapeutic-Psychological Integration)

The Alter Rebbe's discourse reveals a psychological map for inner transformation and emotional repair, centered on the month of Elul. At its core is the dynamic between two levels of Divine energy: the immanent, structured, and comprehensible ("Memaleh Kol Almin"), and the transcendent, infinite, and unknowable ("Sovev Kol Almin"). These two forces correspond to two parallel human experiences.

Memaleh Kol Almin represents the internal processes: cognitive insight, disciplined growth, learned behaviors, and acquired skills. This is the level we typically work within therapy or self-development—understanding our triggers, patterns, and consciously modifying responses.

But **Sovev Kol Almin** speaks to something much deeper: the infinite, non-linear capacity for transformation that exists beyond what we've earned or understood. It mirrors moments in therapy where a patient suddenly shifts—not due to cumulative insight but due to something deeper breaking open: grace, surrender, existential yearning, or a cry of the soul. In Elul, this Sovev energy becomes accessible. The Alter Rebbe teaches that even the most broken individual can leap into connection with G-d because of this surrounding, unearned compassion.

The month of Elul, then, is a therapeutic container. It is a time when the Divine system opens an invisible door: the power to return not just to "doing better" but to **becoming someone new entirely**—even without fully understanding how. It's the soul's version of trauma integration—not just repair, but post-traumatic transformation.

The discourse also speaks to the **divided self**: the intellectual self (nefesh sichlis), the animal soul (nefesh habehamis), and the Divine soul (nefesh Elokis). The Alter Rebbe teaches that while the intellectual and animal selves can be persuaded through contemplation (hisbonenus) and guidance, the G-dly soul doesn't need persuasion—it *yearns* innately. But to release that yearning—to allow the soul to erupt past emotional repression, past inner resistance—requires an **outside trigger**. In trauma therapy, this may be a compassionate presence, a catalytic moment, or accessing a memory that cracks the shell. Spiritually, it's the Divine light of Elul that awakens this.

Teshuvah, then, is not a guilt-driven remorse. It is a profound **return to truth**, to essence. Yet this return, the Alter Rebbe notes, is only possible because **G-d initiates it first**: "השיבנו אליך"—You, Hashem, must bring us back. The therapeutic analogue is the recognition that healing does not emerge purely from effort or intellect—it often requires **permission** to feel, **compassion** from another, and a **graceful rupture** of our normal defenses.

Even those who feel far gone, trapped in entrenched behaviors or shame, are not stuck. Teshuvah accesses a higher source than sin ever touched. The parts of ourselves that feel irreparably broken are not healed by logic—they are healed by love that transcends deserving.

Story

In a small town in Poland, a once-prominent community leader fell into disgrace after a public moral failure. Ashamed and alienated, he stopped entering the shul. One Elul, the town's Rebbe walked to the man's home and sat silently beside him. After a long pause, the Rebbe said, "You think Hashem wants your perfection. He doesn't. He wants *you*. All of you." The man wept and asked, "But how can I return when I no longer know who I am?" The Rebbe replied, "You're not returning to who you were. You're returning to who you always were—even if you never met that version of yourself yet."

(Source: Adapted from oral traditions recorded in *Chassidim Mesaprim*) **END NOTE**]