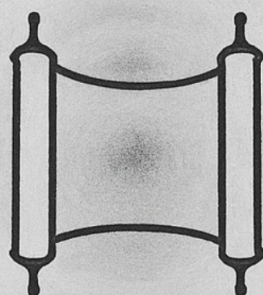


בס"ד

The Maggid of Mezritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Vayishlach



Dedicated To:

טנייה מלכה בת דינה דבורה
דפואה שלמה

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Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Vayishlach

Siman #44

Introduction

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezritch (1710–1772), the great Maggid and successor of the Baal Shem Tov, was renowned for revealing the inner dynamics of Divine flow, spiritual ascent, and the structure of the soul's avodah. In this maamar he opens the profound mechanics of Yaakov's spiritual power, the nature of the tzaddik's word, and the inner battle with the yetzer hara, illuminating how every aspect of creation is rooted in the Divine will and how the righteous serve as conduits between worlds.

In the Midrash: "And there was to me an ox and a donkey."

An ox refers to Yosef, and a donkey refers to Yissachar, etc.

They further said: The ox refers to Mashiach son of Yosef, as it is stated "His firstling ox has majesty" (Devarim 33:17), and the donkey refers to Mashiach son of David, as it is stated "A poor man riding upon the donkey" (Zechariah 9:9).

Our Sages said regarding the verse "And it was when Rachel bore Yosef" that the adversary of Esav was born, as it is stated "And the house of Yaakov shall be a fire, and the house of Yosef a flame, and the house of Esav like straw" (Ovadia 1:18). And they said: fire without a flame does not travel far.

And it is possible that this hints to what our Sages said: Who is mighty? The one who conquers his inclination. And it is known that there are two types of the evil inclination, as explained elsewhere: one that heats a person toward sin, Heaven forbid, and one that prevents him from fulfilling positive commandments.

And corresponding to them the Holy One, blessed be He, created a spice which is the Torah and the commandments, as our Sages said: If this one (the evil inclination) encounters you, draw him to the study hall, and occupy yourself with Torah with fear and love, and through this he can conquer both forms of the inclination.

And their saying: If it is iron it shatters, and if it is stone, etc.—they spoke only regarding the type of evil inclination that cancels a person from positive commandments, namely that it

במדרש ויהי לי שור וחמור. שור זה יוסף וחמור זה יששכר וגו'. עוד אמרו, שור זה משיח בן יוסף, שנאמר בכור שורו הדר לו (דברים ל"ג:י"ז), וחמור זה משיח בן דוד שנאמר עני ורוכב על החמור ((זכריה ט:ט)).

הנה אמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה על פסוק ויהי כאשר ילדה רחל את יוסף וגו', שנוולד שוטנו של עשו, שנאמר והיה בית יעקב אש ובית יוסף להבה ובית עשו לקש (עובדיה א':י"ח). והנה אמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה, אש בלא להבה אינו הולך למרחוק.

ואפשר שנה רומז על פי מה שאמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה איזהו גבור הכובש את יצרו. וידוע שיש שני מיני יצר הרע, כמו מבואר במקום אחר. האחד הוא המתחממו לעבירה חס ושלום, והשני המבטל אותו מלקיים מצות עשה.

וכנגדם ברא הקדוש ברוך הוא תבלין שהוא התורה והמצוות, כמו שאמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה אם פגע בך וכו' משכהו לבית המדרש, ויעסק בתורה ברחילו ורחימו, ובזה יכול הוא לכבש את שניהם.

ואמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה אם ברזל הוא מתפוצץ ואם אבן הוא וכו', לא דברו אלא מסוג יצר הרע המבטל ממצות עשה, שהוא מכביד את איברי

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makes a person's limbs and body heavy like iron and stone and weakens him from performing positive commandments.

And corresponding to this evil inclination our Sages said: One should strengthen himself like a lion to do the will of his Father in Heaven—the opposite of what makes him heavy and weak. Rather, he should do the will of his Creator, meaning positive commandments, with strength and with great fiery enthusiasm.

And elsewhere our Sages said: “Lazy and rewarded,” meaning that a person must be lazy from transgressing, Heaven forbid, a negative commandment, as it is written “The lazy one said: ‘A lion is in the streets’” (Mishlei 26:13), meaning the evil inclination which is compared to a lion.

And this person is compared to a son who has yearning and extra love for his father, and he does not wish to move from before his father even one step outside. So too the righteous person is always in holy thoughts and is not idle even for a moment.

And it is obvious that he is “lazy” in this sense from transgressing a sin, Heaven forbid, for how can he transgress a sin? A sin—its name tells its nature—means to pass away from before his Father in Heaven; and he cannot separate or leave his Father even for a moment, so to speak.

And such a “lazy” one is certainly rewarded. And it is known that the one who serves out of love has enthusiasm, while the one who serves out of fear does not have so much enthusiasm, but he is ashamed and serves the Creator.

And everything must be sweetened in its root, and it would seem appropriate to overpower enthusiasm against the enthusiasm of the evil inclination, and the trait of fear against the laziness that comes from the second type of evil inclination. And above we said the opposite.

But there is a trait that mediates between the two traits, and it is comparable to fire without a flame, which is intermediate between the flame—meaning enthusiasm—and the laziness, which is materiality and heaviness.

האדם וגופו כפרזל וכאבן ומרשלו מלקים מצות עשה.

ונגד זה היצר הרע אמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה יתגבר פארי לעשות רצון אביו שבשמים, הקפד שמכבידו ומרשלו, רק יעשה רצון בוראו, הוא מצות עשה, בגבורה ובהתלהבות גדולה.

ובמקום אחר אמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה עצל ונשכר, רצון לוומר שצריך אדם להיות עצל מלעבור חס ושלום על לא תעשה, כמו שנאמר אמר עצל ארי בין הרחובות (משלי כ"ו:י"ג), כלומר יצר הרע הנמשל לארי.

ונה האדם נמשל לבן שיש לו געגועים ואהבה יתרה אל אביו, ואינו רוצה לזוז מפני אביו אפילו פסיעה אחת לחוץ. כך האדם הצדיק הוא תמיד במחשבות קדושות, ואינו בטל אפילו רגע אחד.

ופשיטא שהוא עצל בזה מלעבור עבירה חס ושלום. פי איך יעבר עבירה חס ושלום, הלא עבירה כשמה כן היא, שהוא עובר מאת פני אביו שבשמים, והוא אינו יכול להתפרד ולעזוב את אביו אף רגע כמימרא.

ועצל בזה וודאי נשכר. והנה ידוע פי העובד מאהבה יש לו התלהבות, והעובד מיראה אין לו התלהבות כל כך רק שהוא בוש ועובד את הבורא.

והנה צריך לכל דבר להמתיקו בשורשו פיידוע, והנה ראוי להגביר התלהבות נגד התלהבות היצר הרע, ומדת היראה נגד העצלות הפא מיצר הרע השני. ולעיל אמרנו בהקפד.

אבל יש מדה המכריע בין שתי המדות, והוא דמיון האש בלא להבה שהיא ממוצע בין להבה שהיא התלהבות, ובין העצלות שהיא חומריות וכבדות.

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And the entire aim of Yaakov was to subdue the husk of Esav, which is the evil inclination. And this is what is meant by “And there was to me an ox”—meaning that even against its nature, which is the trait of fire that burns the straw, it certainly cannot withstand him, for this trait is the essential one that subdues the two types of the evil inclination.

And all the more so: “I have a donkey”—this is materiality and laziness from transgressing a negative commandment; this is Yissachar, meaning that such a “lazy” one certainly has reward. “Lazy and rewarded,” as our Sages said: One who sits idle and does not transgress receives reward as though he performed a commandment—this is “there is reward.”

Meaning: Even though he does not perform a mitzvah in actuality, but the refraining and laziness is because of his cleaving to Hashem, blessed be He, nevertheless he receives reward, and all the more so if he performs a commandment in actuality, as their teaching states.

And especially when he performs it with great enthusiasm, he effects an elevation of the upper worlds, as our Sages said: “Israel sustains...” etc. And this is the meaning of “For Hashem your God is a consuming fire” (Devarim 4:24).

Meaning: The fire and enthusiasm from the lower righteous one is food and sustenance above; this is “a consuming fire,” and this enthusiasm is called “Seraphim.”

Or it is possible to interpret in another manner, based on what our Sages said: “And He called him El, the God of Israel” (Bereishit 33:20), meaning that the Holy One, blessed be He, called Yaakov “El.” And it is seemingly difficult to say such a thing, that He called the lower Yaakov “El.”

And one may say it according to its simple meaning: for “El” is an expression of ability, as in “There is power to my hand” (Bereishit 31:29). Thus He called him “El,” meaning ability, as it is written “A righteous one rules in the fear of God” (Shmuel II 23:3).

והנה כל מגמת יעקב היתה להכניע קליפת עשו שהוא היצר הרע. וזהו שאמר ויהי לי שור, רצון לומר הגם שאף נגד מדתו, שהיא מדת אש השורפת את הקש, לא תוכל לעמוד בו ונדאי, כי זאת המדה היא העיקרית המכניע שני סוגי היצר הרע.

ומה גם יש לי חמור, זה חומריות ועצלות מלעבור על לא תעשה, זה יששכר, רצון לומר לעצל כזה ונדאי יש שכר, עצל ונשכר, כמו שאמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה היושב בטיל ואינו עובר עבירה מקבל שכר בעושה מצוה, וזהו יש שכר.

כלומר אף על פי שאינו עושה מצוה בפועל רק שהמניעה והעצלות הוא מחמת דבקותו בה' יתברך בשם, אף על פי כן מקבל שכר, ומכל שכן אם הוא עושה מצוה בפועל כמאמרם.

ובפרט כשהוא עושה בהתלהבות גדולה, עושה פעולה בעליות העולמות העליונים, כמו שאמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה ישראל מפרנסים וכו'. וזהו (פי ה' אש אכלה הוא (דברים ד':כ"ד).

רצון לומר האש והתלהבות מהצדיק התחתון הוא אכילה ופרנסה למעלה, וזהו אש אכלה, וזו התלהבות נקראת שרפים.

או אפשר לפרש בדרך אחרת, על פי שאמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה ויקרא לו אל אלהי ישראל (בראשית ל"ג:), הקדוש ברוך הוא קרא ליעקב אל. ולכאורה קשה הדבר לאמרו שקרא ליעקב התחתון אל.

ואפשר לומר בפשוטו, כי אל הוא לשון יכולת, כמו יש לאל ידי (בראשית ל"א:כ"ט). כך קרא שמו אל, שהוא היכולת, כמו שנאמר צדיק מושל יראת אלקים ((שמואל ב' כ"ג:)).

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And likewise we find regarding Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa: that by his will he brought down rain to the earth and by his will he withheld the rain. This is “rules”—for he rules in the upper worlds, as our Sages said: the Holy One, blessed be He, decrees and the righteous one nullifies.

And it is obvious that by his prayer and his speech he makes ascents in the upper worlds. For if the speech of a righteous person is pure and clean without any dross or ulterior motive, as is the way of a tzaddik, then automatically and without any technique he can elevate his speech upward.

As it is written “And He breathed into his nostrils a living soul” (Bereishit 2:7), and we translate it: “for a speaking spirit.” And anyone who breathes, breathes from within himself and his essence.

This is the vapor called the breath of life, which is in the aspect of “reaching and not reaching,” as we explained elsewhere at length. And this is the secret of “Every soul shall praise Yah” (Tehillim 150:6), for every breath and breath—being the aspect of “reaching and not reaching.”

Thus when the tzaddik emits the holy breath from his mouth and his pure speech, immediately and without any toil or effort his breath cleaves to the higher breath, and his speech to the speech above, and he elevates the worlds.

And he causes great delight and pleasure above, that such a small creature as he rules and moves and arouses all the upper worlds, and arouses the supernal will.

And when he arouses the Will, the letters of *ratzon* (רצון) become *tzinor* (צנור), and he himself becomes like a conduit through which the flow is brought down by his hand.

And this is the meaning of “A righteous one lives by his faith” (Chavakuk 2:4). Meaning: this is the occupation of the righteous one—the speech and breath that he emits from his mouth. He needs no other occupation, for through this he performs his craft, which is his activity of elevating his words upward.

וּכְמוֹ שֶׁמֵּצִינוּ בְּרַבִּי חֲנִינָא בֶּן דּוֹסָא שֶׁבִּרְצוֹנוֹ הוֹרִיד מָטָר לְאַרְצָא וּבִרְצוֹנוֹ מְנַע הַמָּטָר. וְזֶהוּ מוֹשֵׁל, כִּי מוֹשֵׁל בְּעוֹלָמוֹת הָעֲלִיּוֹנִים, וּכְמוֹ שֶׁאָמְרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ זְכוֹרֵם לְבִרְכָּה הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא גּוֹזֵר וְהַצְדִּיק מְבַטֵּל.

וּפְשִׁיטָא שְׁעוֹשֶׂה עֲלִיּוֹת בְּעוֹלָמוֹת בְּתַפְלִיתוֹ וּבְדַבּוּרוֹ. כִּי אִם הַדְּבּוּר שֶׁל אָדָם צָדִיק זֶה וְנִקְי בְּלִי שׁוּם סִיג וּפְנִיָּה בְּדַרְכוֹ שֶׁל צָדִיק, מִמֵּילָא בְּלִי שׁוּם תַּחְבּוּלָה יָכוֹל לְהַעֲלוֹת דְּבּוּרוֹ לְעֵילָא.

כְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפּוֹ נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים (בְּרֵאשִׁית ב':ז), וּמִתְרַגְּמֵינוּ לְרוּחַ מְמַלְלָא, וְכָל הַנוֹפֵחַ מֵתוֹכוֹ וּמַעֲצָמוֹתוֹ נוֹפֵחַ.

שֶׁהוּא הַהֶבֶל הַנִּקְרָא רוּחַ חַיִּים שֶׁהוּא בְּבַחֲיוֹנֵת מִטִּי וְלֹא מִטִּי, כְּאֲשֶׁר בְּאַרְנוֹ בְּמָקוֹם אַחֵר בְּאַרְיִכוֹת. וְזֶה סוּד כָּל הַנִּשְׁמָה תַּחֲלִיל יָהּ (תַּהֲלִים ק"ו:), עַל כָּל נִשְׁמָה וְנִשְׁמָה, שֶׁהוּא בְּבַחֲיוֹנֵת מִטִּי וְלֹא מִטִּי.

נִמְצָא כִּי כְּאֲשֶׁר מוֹצִיא הַצְדִּיק הַהֶבֶל הַקְדוּשׁ מִפִּיו וּדְבָרוֹ הַזֶּה, תִּיכַף בְּלִי שׁוּם טְרָחָא וְיִגִּיעָה מִתַּדְבָּק הַהֶבֶל שְׁלוֹ בְּהֶבֶל דְּלֵעִילָא, וּדְבָרוֹ אֶל דְּבּוּר דְּלֵעִילָא, וּמַעֲלָה הָעוֹלָמוֹת.

וְעוֹשֶׂה שְׁעוֹשֶׂה וְתַעֲנוּג גָּדוֹל לְעֵילָא, שֶׁבְּרִיָּה קִטְנָה כְּמוֹתוֹ מוֹשֵׁל וּמְנַעַע וּמַעֲזִיר כָּל הָעוֹלָמוֹת הָעֲלִיּוֹנִים, וּמַעֲזִיר הָרָצוֹן הָעֲלִיּוֹן.

וְכִשְׁהוּא מַעֲזִיר הָרָצוֹן נַעֲשֶׂה מֵאוֹתִיּוֹת רָצוֹן צְנוּ"ר, וְנַעֲשֶׂה הוּא עֲצָמוֹ עֲזָמַת צְנוּר לְהוֹרִיד הַשֶּׁפַע עַל יָדוֹ.

וְזֶהוּ צָדִיק בְּאַמְנוּתוֹ יִתְּנָה (תְּבַקוּק ב':ד'), כְּלוּמַר זֹאת הִיא אוֹמְנוּתוֹ שֶׁל צָדִיק, הַדְּבּוּר וְהַהֶבֶל שֶׁמוֹצִיא מִפִּיו, וְאֵין צָרִיךְ לְאוֹמְנוּת אַחֶרֶת, כִּי בְּזֶה הוּא עוֹשֶׂה אוֹמְנוּתוֹ שֶׁהִיא הַפְּעוּלָה שְׁלוֹ, שֶׁמַּעֲלָה דְּבָרָיו לְעֵילָא.

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And the world of speech is called “faith,” as it is written in the Zohar: “He is truth and she is faith,” as mentioned above. And it is written “Hashem, Your word stands in the heavens” (Tehillim 119:89). “Stands” means establishment and endurance, for through the word of Hashem the heavens were made, and they have endurance by His word.

And this is the meaning of “And I will give you movers among these standers” (Zechariah 3:7). And this is “A righteous one lives by his faith”—meaning: this is the occupation of the tzaddik, to elevate upward and to draw down the flow, like the conduit mentioned above.

And our Sages have given several reasons why it arose in His simple will to create the worlds. The first is in order that His Divinity and Sovereignty be recognized by the created beings, for there is no king without a people.

Therefore all the names—aside from the Name Havayah, blessed be He—are called descriptive titles for this reason. For such titles are not His essential Names but are called so only via the created beings, like “king” and “master,” which apply only when one has a people and servants.

And therefore the descriptive titles are sometimes in the plural, such as “holy Gods” (Yehoshua 24:19) and similar expressions, for this reason. And likewise the name “El” indicates that He is the One possessing ability.

And the name “El” is the first of the Thirteen *Tikkunei Dikna*. And likewise there are thirteen hermeneutical principles by which the Torah is expounded, and the first of them is *kal vachomer*, corresponding to the name “El.”

And it has strength and ability to elevate even material things, all the more so light things. As explained elsewhere regarding the Mishnah “Stricter regarding kodash than terumah,” that one immerses vessels within vessels for terumah.

Meaning: the righteous person, not only does he elevate the holy letters in which he is engaged, but he even elevates with them those letters of materiality that come from a foreign thought.

ועולם הדבור נקרא אמונה, כמו שנאמר בזהר איהו אמת ואיהי אמונה כנזכר לעיל, וכתוב ה' דברך נצב בשמים (תהלים קי"ט:ט), נצב לשון העמדה וקיום, כי בדבר ה' שמים נעשו (תהלים ל"ג:ו'), ויש להם קיום והעמדה גם כן בדבריו ותפירה.

ונהו ונתתי לה מהלכים בין העומדים האלה (זכריה ג:ז). ונהו צדיק בצאמונתו יחיה, כלומר זאת היא אומנותו של צדיק, להעלות למעלה ולהוריד הנשפע כדמיון הנצור כנזכר.

והנה אמרו כמה טעמים למה שעלה ברצונו הפשוט לברוא העולמות, והאחד הוא בכדי שיוכר אלקותו ונאדנותו ותפירה לברואים, כי אין מלך בלא עם.

לכן כל השמות, לבד משם הנה ברוך הוא, כלם נקראים כנויים מטעם הנזכר, כי הכנויים אינם שמותיו ותפירה בעצם, כי אם על ידי הברואים נקרא כן, כדמיון שם מלך ואדון שאינו נקרא כן אלא אם כן יש לו עם ועבדים.

ולכן נקראים הכנויים לפעמים בלשון רבים, כמו אלקים קדשים (יהושע כ"ד:י"ט) וכיוצא, מטעם הנזכר. וכמו כן שם אל מורה שהוא בעל היכולת.

והנה שם אל הוא הראשון מ"ג תקוני דיקנא, וכמו כן יש י"ג מדות שהתורה נדרשת בהן, והראשון הוא מדת קל וחמר שהוא נגד שם אל.

ויש בו כח ויכולת להעלות אפלו דברים חומריים, וכל שכן דברים קלים, כמו שנאמר במקום אחר על המשנה חמר בקדש מביתרומה וכו', שמטבילין פלים בתוך פלים לתרומה.

כלומר האדם הצדיק לא מבעיא שמעלה אותן האותיות שהן של קדושה מה שהוא עוסק בהן, אלא אפלו מעלה עמהן אותן האותיות של חומריות שהן מן מחשבה זרה.

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And this is the meaning of “immersing vessels within vessels”—meaning the letters of materiality, called “vessels,” within the holy letters. And this is also the explanation of *kal vachomer*: if the tzaddik has the ability to elevate materiality, all the more so can he elevate the holy letters, which are light and easily rise.

And just as this attribute has the power to elevate everything, so too it has the power to draw down the flow, like the conduit mentioned above.

And this attribute is called “Di,” for the drawing down of Divine flow cannot descend except through the constriction called “Di,” as explained elsewhere at length. For the *mashpia* is called the letter Yud, because it is not grasped, and can only be designated by the smallest of letters.

And the influence cannot be without constriction, for due to its great brightness the lower beings could not receive it. And this constriction is called Dalet, meaning poverty and lowliness. When we combine the Yud, which is the influence, with the Dalet, which is the constriction, it becomes Yud-Dalet, “Yad,” “Di.”

And this is “the great hand,” which is kindness, the Name “El.” And when the flow descends from above to below, it is called “Yad.” And when ascending from below to above, it is called “Di,” for the Dalet comes first and becomes judgment.

And this is the meaning of “Until your lips wear out from saying ‘Di’.” And this is the Name Sha-Di, for through the three lines—the three strokes of the letter Shin—the flow descends below.

And although this is called “the mighty hand,” nevertheless it is great kindness, with which the Holy One, blessed be He, acts kindly with His creatures, constricting His great brightness so that they may receive it.

Therefore He is called “El Sha-Di”: “El” is kindness, as it is written “the kindness of El...” (Tehillim 52:3). This is the kindness through which He told His world “Di.”

וזהו מטבילין כלים בתוך כלים, פירוש האותיות של חומריה הנקראים כלים בתוך האותיות הקדושות. וזהו גם כן פירוש קל וחומר, רצון לומר אם יכולת ביד הצדיק להעלות החומריה, מכל שכן שיוכל להעלות אותיות הקדושות שהן קלים לעלות ולהדבק בשרשם.

ונכמו כן יש בה כח להוריד השפע כמו הצנור כנזכר.

וזאת המדה נקראת ד", כי השפעת השפע אי אפשר להורידה בלעדי הצמצום הנקרא די, כמו שנאמר במקום אחר באריכות כי המשפיע נקרא יו"ד על שם שאינו מושג ואין יכולים לכנותו רק בקטנה מכל האותיות.

וההשפעה אי אפשר להיות בלי צמצום, כי מגדל בהירותו לא היו יכולים התחתונים לקבלו. וזה הצמצום נקרא דל"ת, לשון דלות, ונצטרף אות יו"ד שהוא ההשפעה עם אות ה"ד, שהוא הצמצום, ונעשה י"ד, ד"י.

וזהו יד הגדולה שהוא חסד, שם א"ל. וזהו כשהוא למעלה למטה נקרא י"ד. וכשהוא מלמטה למעלה נקרא ד"י, שאות דל"ת הוא מתחלה ונעשה דין.

וזהו עד שיכלו שפתותיכם מלאמר ד"י. וזהו שם שד"י, כי על ידי שלשה קוים, שהם שלשה קווי הש"ן, יורד השפע למטה, וזהו ד"י.

ואף על פי שזהו נקרא יד החזקה, עם כל זה הוא חסד גדול שמתחסד הקדוש ברוך הוא עם בריותיו וצמצם בהירתו הגדול כדי שיוכלו לקבלו.

ולכן נקרא א"ל שד"י, א"ל הוא חסד, כמו שנאמר חסד א"ל וגו' (תהלים נ"ב:ג). וזה חסד שאמר לעולמו ד"י כנזכר.

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And our Sages shortened the matter and said in general that “He said to His world: ‘Di.’” But in truth all the worlds and all creations were created through this attribute of constriction, and through it they have existence.

And let us return to the matter: that the Holy One, blessed be He, called Yaakov “El,” although this is not the attribute of Yaakov, as is known. But since Yaakov is “the middle bar that passes from end to end” (Shemot 26:28), he is first in thought and last in deed.

As our Sages said: “For Israel, who are called ‘the beginning’...” And this is the meaning of “Back and front You have fashioned me” (Tehillim 139:5). Therefore he has the power to extend from one end to the other—from the beginning of the flow, which is Chokhmah, to the lowest level.

And it is known that Chokhmah—the Yud—is called “Iyuni,” meaning contemplation, related to the term “Shor,” meaning gazing, as in “I see him, but not now” (Bamidbar 24:17).

And it is possible to say that this is the meaning of the Midrash “And there was to me a Shor”—meaning: I possess the power to raise and lower the flow from Chokhmah, which is the contemplative Yud, as mentioned. And this was said by Yosef the righteous, for he is “the righteous one who understands a matter and sustains all the land.”

And this is the intent of “Mashiach son of Yosef,” as it is stated “His firstling ox...” (Devarim 33:17). And “the donkey,” this is Mashiach son of David, as it is stated “A poor man riding upon the donkey” (Zechariah 9:9).

[NOTE Summary:

A sweeping vision of the inner workings of Divine influence and the role of the tzaddik in drawing it into the world. The Midrashic phrase “And there was to me an ox and a donkey” becomes the foundation for understanding Yosef and Yissachar, their spiritual archetypes, and the messianic energies of Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben David. The Maggid connects Esav’s downfall to the birth of Yosef and teaches that fire without flame cannot reach far, symbolizing that spiritual passion must be joined with the steady firmness of positive action.

He distinguishes two types of yetzer hara: one that inflames toward sin, and one that creates heaviness and prevents mitzvot aseh. Hashem provided the antidote of Torah, pulling the person back to the beit midrash,

ורבותינו זכרונם לברכה קצרו הדבר ואמרו בכללות שאמר לעולמו ד", ובאמת כל העולמות וכל נבראים על ידי מדה זו, שהוא הצמצום, נבראו, ויש להם קיום.

ונחזור לענין שהקדוש ברוך הוא קרא ליצחק א"ל, הגם שזה אינו מדת יצחק כידוע. אבל מפני שיצחק הוא הברית התיכון המכריח מן הקצה אל הקצה, שהוא קודם במחשבה ואחר למעשה.

כמו שאמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה בשביל ישראל שנקראו ראשית וכו'. וזהו אחר וקדם צרתני (תהלים קל"ט:ה'). ומתמת כן יש כח בידו להכריח מן הקצה אל הקצה, מראשית השפע שהוא חכמה עד המדרגה התחתונה.

ונה ידוע שהחכמה, שהוא יו"ד, נקרא עיוני, שהוא לשון שור, לשון הבטה, כמו אשורנו ולא עתה ((במדבר כ"ד:י"ז)).

ואפשר לומר שזהו פירוש המדרש ויהי לי שור, כלומר שיש בידי כח להעלות ולהוריד השפע מחכמה הנקרא יו"ד עיוני כנזכר. ואמר זה יוסף הצדיק, שהוא הצדיק משפיל על דבר ומשביר לכל הארץ.

ונהי פונת משיח בן יוסף שנאמר בכור שורו וגו' (דברים ל"ג:י"ז). וזמור זה משיח בן דוד שנאמר (עני ורוכב על החמור) (זכריה ט:ט').

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cooling fire with clarity and warming heaviness with love. Likewise, a person must “be lazy” toward sin, avoiding even a single step away from the presence of the Father, like a devoted child who never wishes to leave.

He then presents a deep metaphysical model: enthusiasm (the flame), heaviness (the matter), and the intermediate spiritual state of “fire without flame,” which mediates between them. This becomes Yaakov’s secret: the ability to subdue Esav’s kelipah and to employ the combined powers of shor and chamor, fire and matter, passion and restraint. Even inactivity—merely refraining from sin out of cleaving to God—creates immense spiritual reward, for the tzaddik’s very breath ascends upward and unites with the supernal breath, forming a heavenly delight.

The Maggid proceeds to explain how Divine flow descends only through tzimtzum, represented by the letters of “Di,” combining the infinite Yud with the limiting Dalet to form the “Yad,” the channel of kindness expressed in the Name El Shaddai. This contraction, though called gevurah, is in truth enormous chesed, enabling the lower worlds to receive His light. Yaakov is called “El” because he is the *b’riach hatichon*, the inner bar connecting one end of existence to the other, able to draw from Chokhmah down to the lowest realm.

Chokhmah, symbolized by the contemplative Yud, is linked to “shor”—gazing, comprehension, and the power to raise and lower Divine influence. Yosef embodies this power, as “the righteous one who sustains,” and is the archetype of Mashiach ben Yosef. The donkey—materiality refined—is the mode of Mashiach ben David, who rides upon the chamor and subdues the world below.

Practical Takeaway:

A person’s breath, speech, and inner intention possess tremendous spiritual power. When our words are pure, sincere, and rooted in love and awe, they ascend immediately and bind to the Divine word above, drawing blessing into the world. One must be “lazy” toward sin—unwilling to move even a step away from God—yet enthusiastic in mitzvah performance. By cultivating both fiery passion and steady firmness, we become small conduits of Divine flow, raising our thoughts upward and drawing holiness downward into every aspect of life.

Chassidic Story:

It is recorded among the early disciples that one winter night in Mezritch, several chassidim sat around the Maggid as he explained how every breath of a tzaddik becomes united with the supernal breath. When the Maggid finished speaking, a young disciple—a future leader of Chassidut—asked: “Rebbe, does a word spoken without full purity truly rise all the way upward?”

The Maggid closed his eyes for a moment. Then he told him gently: “Come with me.”

They stepped outside into the freezing night. The wind howled through the wooden beams of Mezritch’s homes, and the snow creaked beneath their feet. After walking only a short distance, the Maggid pointed

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upward toward the sky. The disciple later related that at that moment the clouds parted, revealing a narrow stripe of shimmering starlight.

The Maggid whispered: “Do you see that light? In heaven they are opening a path. A single breath spoken with sincerity, even if mixed with weakness, can find its way through that narrow channel. Heaven opens to one who opens even a crack of his own heart.”

He then added: “But when a tzaddik speaks with full purity, there is no need for a path to open—his breath rises straight upward and unites instantly.”

This teaching remained with the disciple for the rest of his life, shaping his understanding of the power of even the smallest word and the great responsibility carried by the righteous. **END NOTE]**

Siman #45

The reason why at first it is called Peniel with a Yud, and afterwards Penuel with a Vav. The matter is that the trait of Yaakov and Yisrael is the trait of compassion. And in compassion there are two extensions.

For example: when a person is wealthy in any measure and sees someone who is poor in that measure, compassion awakens in him. First, before he acts with compassion, there is a first extension—he places his heart to look upon the suffering of the poor.

As it is written: “And God saw the children of Israel, and God knew” (Shemot 2:25), and Rashi explained: “He placed His heart upon them and did not hide His eyes.” This is the first extension.

And when the wealthy one places his heart on the poor, this is considered for the poor an ascent to his root for sweetening, since the benefactor in whose hand goodness lies is called his root.

And this extension has no revelation yet, for it is still in the heart of the wealthy. Afterwards comes the second extension: the actual act of beneficence.

And this hidden extension is called Yisrael, for it is more concealed; and the first extension is called Yaakov. In truth, the extension itself is called Yosef—“These are the generations of Yaakov, Yosef.”

הַטַּעַם לָמָּה בַּתְּחִלָּה נִקְרָא פְּנִיאל בְּיוֹד וְאַחַר כֵּן פְּנוּאל בְּוָו. וְהַעֲנֵנוּ כִּי יָדוּעַ שְׁמֵדַת יַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל הוּא מֵדַת רַחֲמָנוּת. וְהִנֵּה בְּמֵדַת רַחֲמָנוּת יֵשׁ שְׁתֵּי הַמְּשָׁכוֹת.

לְמַשָּׁל כְּשֶׁאֶחָד הוּא עָשִׂיר בְּאִיזוֹ מִדָּה שִׁיְהִיָּהּ, וְרוֹאֶה לְמִי שֶׁהוּא עָנִי בְּזוֹ הַמִּדָּה, וְנִתְעוֹרָר לוֹ מֵדַת רַחֲמָנוּת שֶׁמֵּרַחֵם עַל הָעָנִי, הִנֵּה מִתְחַלֵּה קֹדֶם שֶׁמֵּרַחֵם עָלָיו נַעֲשִׂית הַמְּשָׁכָה אֶחָת בְּמֵדַת רַחֲמָנוּת שִׁיתֵּן לְבֹו לְהִסְתַּכֵּל עַל עָנִיו שֶׁל הָעָנִי.

כְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹקִים אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֵּדַע אֱלֹקִים (שְׁמוֹת ב': כ"ה), וּפִרְשׁ רַשִׁ"י זָכְרוֹנוֹ לְבָרְכָה נִתֵּן לָב עֲלֵיהֶם וְלֹא הִעֲלִים עֵינָיו. זֹאת הִיא הַמְּשָׁכָה רִאשׁוֹנָה.

וּכְיֵן שֶׁנִּתְּנָה הָעֲשִׂיר לָב עַל הָעָנִי זֶה נִקְרָא אֶצֶל הָעָנִי עֲלֵיהָ לְשִׁרְשׁוֹ לְהִתְמַתֵּק. כִּי כֵּיֵן שֶׁבִּידוֹ לְהִיטִיב עִמּוֹ נִקְרָא שִׁרְשׁוֹ כִּי שֵׁם טוֹבֵו גִּנּוּז.

וְהִנֵּה הַמְּשָׁכָה זֹו אֵין לָהּ עוֹד הַתְּגִלוֹת כִּי הִיא עֲדִין בְּלֵב הָעָשִׂיר. וְאַחֵר כֵּן נַעֲשִׂית הַמְּשָׁכָה שְׁנִיָּהּ וְהוּא הַהִיטָב בְּעַצְמוֹ.

וְהִנֵּה הַמְּשָׁכָה זֹו נִקְרָאת יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁהוּא נַעֲלָם יוֹתֵר. וְהַמְּשָׁכָה הִרְאשׁוֹנָה נִקְרָאת יַעֲקֹב. וּבְאֵמַת הַמְּשָׁכָה עֲצָמָה נִקְרָאת יוֹסֵף וְזֶהוּ תוֹלְדוֹת יַעֲקֹב יוֹסֵף.

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But the beneficence itself, once revealed, is called Yaakov. And true beneficence, in whatever trait it appears, has its root in Chokhmah, for “wisdom gives life to its possessor” (Kohelet 7:12).

אבל ההיטב עצמו לאחר שנתגלה נקרא יעקב. והנה ההיטב באמת מאיזו מדה שתהיה נקראת היא מחכמה (פי החכמה תחיה בעליה) (קהלת ז"ב).

And it is the seminal influence drawn to Yosef—meaning the inward thought. Afterwards, when the trait becomes revealed from the wealthy to the poor, then it is called Yaakov.

והיא השפעה הנרעית הנמשכת ליוסף דהינו המושקה הנזכר. ואח"כ שנתגלה המדה ההוא מעשיר לעני אז נקרא יעקב.

And this is “Penuel” without a Vav a second time—the two extensions mentioned above.

וזהו לא עאיל בלי ו"ו שנית דהינו שתי המשכות הנזכר.

And this is the meaning: at first, when Yaakov overpowered the angel of Esav, there was still no revelation. For only Esav's minister-angel was affected above, and the verse says “Peniel” with a Yud—hidden.

וזהו מתחלה, כשגבר יעקב שרו של עשו, עדיו לא היה לו התגלות. פי לא היה עדיו התגלות פי אם שרו של עשו, דהינו פריו ממעל, פתיב פניא"ל ביו"ד, בזהלם.

And afterwards it is written: “And the sun rose for him when he passed...” (Bereishit 32:32), meaning he passed into the second extension, into revelation, and then he gained strength to overpower Esav.

ואחר כך פתיב ויזרח לו השמש כאשר עבר (בראשית ל"ב:ל"ב), דהינו שעבר המושקה שנית להתגלות, והיה לו כח שיגביר ידו על עשו.

Therefore he called the place Penuel with a Vav, for the influence had already been drawn in revelation.

על כן קרא המקום פנוא"ל בן"ו, שכבר נמשך בהתגלות.

And the one who understands will understand.

והמבין יבין.

[NOTE Summary:

This Maamar explains why the Torah first calls the place “Peniel” (with a Yud) and later “Penuel” (with a Vav). The Maggid teaches that Yaakov's essence is compassion, and compassion itself contains two distinct *hamshachot*—two descending waves of Divine influence.

The first stage is when the benefactor merely turns his heart toward the needy one; this is the inner stirring of compassion, hidden within the benefactor's mind. The Torah hints to this concealed, inward movement with the spelling פניאל containing a Yud—a letter associated with subtlety, concealment, and inner illumination. This stage lifts the needy one to his root, sweetening judgment at its source, but has not yet revealed tangible kindness.

The second stage is when the benefactor actually gives. This outward act is the revelation of the compassion that was previously concealed. This second *hamshachah* corresponds to the Vav, which symbolizes drawing influence outward into expression. Hence the Torah shifts to the spelling פנואל, signaling that the hidden compassion has now emerged into the world as a revealed beneficence.

The Maggid deepens this with the imagery of Yaakov contending with Esav's angel. At first, Yaakov overpowered only the spiritual root of Esav—still concealed and not yet manifest below—thus the Torah writes Peniel with a Yud. Later, as “the sun rose for him,” the influence moved into the state of revelation, enabling

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Yaakov to fully overcome Esav. At that moment, the location is called “Penuel” with a Vav—because the compassion and spiritual light had now entered the revealed world.

Practical Takeaway:

A person must recognize that compassion unfolds in two stages: the inner awakening of the heart and the outward act that expresses it. The Maggid teaches that God’s compassion for us works the same way—first hidden, then revealed—and our own avodah mirrors this pattern. When we awaken inwardly toward another’s pain—even before acting—we lift both ourselves and the other to a higher root. But the final fulfillment requires revealing that compassion through concrete help, transforming inner feeling into outward light. Aligning our actions with this Divine pattern allows us to become vessels for revealed kindness in the world.

Chassidic Story:

It is told among the early Chassidim that a wealthy villager once visited the Maggid of Mezritch seeking advice. He complained that although he felt occasional stirrings of compassion, he rarely translated them into action. The Maggid asked him: “When you feel compassion—what happens inside you?”

The man answered honestly: “Rebbe, I feel a heaviness in my chest, like I wish I could do more, but then I become distracted and the feeling disappears.”

The Maggid motioned for him to sit closer and said: “Know that the first stirring is already a great ascent. It is Peniel with a Yud—the hidden movement from Above that turns your heart. But the second movement, the revealed one, is Penuel with a Vav. If you stop after the first, the light remains concealed. But when you act—even with a small deed—you let God’s compassion reach the world through your hands.”

The villager later testified that this teaching transformed his life. He carried it with him constantly, repeating to himself: “A Yud begins compassion, but a Vav completes it.” In time, he became known as one of the great givers of his region, quietly helping the needy wherever he could. **END NOTE]**

Siman #46

“And you shall trade the land” (Vayikra 25:14). Behold, there are two types of love. The first is when a father loves the deeds of his wise son and takes pride in his displays of wisdom or his words of wisdom.

וְאֵת הָאֶרֶץ תִּסְחָרוּ (וַיִּקְרָא כ"ה: י"ד). הִנֵּה שְׁתֵּי אֲהָבוֹת יֵשׁ. אֶחָת שֶׁהָאָב אוֹהֵב מַעֲשֵׂה בְנוֹ הַחֲכָם, וּמִתְפָּאֵר בְּמַעֲשֵׂה הַחֲכָמָה שֶׁעוֹשֶׂה אוֹ בְּדִבְרֵי הַחֲכָמָה שֶׁמְדַבֵּר.

And the second is that he loves his son in essence, and whatever the son says before him is pleasing, because of his love for him.

וְהַשְּׁנִיָּת שֶׁאוֹהֵב אֶת בְּנוֹ בְּעֵצָם, וְכָל מָה שֶׁמְדַבֵּר לִפְנֵי הַכֹּל הֵגוֹן לִפְנֵי בִשְׁבִיל אֲהָבָתוֹ אוֹתוֹ.

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And behold, in the love of the name may He be blessed upon us, one love is mentioned, when the righteous one does good deeds and commandments, all with wondrous wisdom, and elevates the holy sparks from inanimate, growing, living, speaking, and then the name may He be blessed loves his deeds very much.

והנה באהבת השם יתברך עלינו אהבה אחת הנזכר, כשהצדיק עושה מעשים טובים ומצוות הכל בחכמה נפלאה, ומעלה ניצוצות הקדושים מדומם צומח חי מדבר, ואז השם יתברך אוהב מעשיו מאד.

And with this he also binds the externality of the worlds to the name may He be blessed and it will be elevated, that the name may He be blessed rests in all his deeds. And this will be rectified, if the name will desire, with the coming of Mashiach completely, speedily in our days, amen, as it is said, and the earth will be filled with knowledge of the Lord and so on (Isaiah 11:9).

ובזה מקשר גם חיצוניות העולמות לה' יתברך ויתעלה, שהשם יתברך שורה בכל מעשיו. וזה יתמקן אם ירצה השם בביאת משיח לגמרי במהרה ביימנו אמן, כמו שנאמר ומלאה הארץ דעה את ה' (ישעיהו י"א:ט).

And also animals and beasts, all of them will know the name may He be blessed; they will not harm and so on (Isaiah 11:9).

וגם בהמות וחיות כלם ידעו את השם יתברך, לא ירעו וגו' (ישעיהו י"א:ט).

And the second love that is mentioned is when the righteous one himself is bound to the name may He be blessed, and the name may He be blessed loves him very much, him in himself, and he does not do his deeds with wisdom like the first, but rather walks with great simplicity and is bound to the name may He be blessed; therefore the name may He be blessed loves him.

והאהבה השנית הנזכר הוא כשהצדיק עצמו מקשר לה' יתברך, והשם יתברך אוהבו מאד אותו בעצמו, ואינו עושה מעשיו בחכמה כמו הראשון רק הולך בתמימות גדולה ומקשר לה' יתברך, לכן השם יתברך אוהבו.

And this is called the ascent of the inner worlds, for the tzaddik himself is the inwardness of the worlds.

ונה נקרא עלית פנימיות העולמות, שהצדיק הוא פנימיות העולמות.

And this is what it said, and you shall devour the earth, meaning the letters when they are in earthliness, and Alef Tav are the letters that are from Alef to Tav when they are now placed in earthliness.

ונהו מה שנאמר ואם"ת הארץ, דהינו האותיות מה שהם בארציות, וא"ת הוא האותיות שהם מאל"ף עד ת"ו מה שהם מנחים פתחם בארציות.

For everything was created with letters—meaning the speech of God—and they are holy sparks. “You shall trade” means ascent, for it implies turning and revolving upward.

כי הכל נברא באותיות, דהינו הדבור של הקדוש ברוך הוא, והם ניצוצין הקדושים. תסחרו לשון עליה, שהוא לשון סבוב וגלגול.

[NOTE Summary:

This maamar teaches that Divine love appears in two distinct forms, illustrated through the love of a father for his son. The first form is when the father delights in his son's wise deeds—his insightful actions, his understanding, and the wisdom revealed in his behavior. Similarly, God loves the deeds of a tzaddik who performs mitzvot with profound wisdom and elevates holy sparks from all levels of creation—domem, tzomeach, chai, and medaber. Through this, even the most external layers of the world become connected to

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God, a process that will reach complete revelation in the era of Mashiach when “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of God” and all creatures will sense Divinity.

The second form of love is essential love: the father loves his son simply because he is his son. Everything the son expresses is beloved, not because of its wisdom, but because of the intrinsic bond. This corresponds to the tzaddik whose entire being is attached to God in simple purity, not through intellectual brilliance but through wholehearted cleaving. God loves him in his essence. This level is called the ascent of the inner worlds, for the tzaddik himself embodies their inwardness. The verse “And you shall trade the land” is interpreted as elevating the letters that lie in earthiness, for all existence was created through Divine letters. “Trade” implies ascent, rotation, and uplift, reflecting the movement of these letters returning upward.

Practical Takeaway:

A person must recognize that Divine service involves two kinds of love: wisdom-filled action and essential attachment. Refining creation through wise deeds elevates holy sparks, but pure heartfelt connection elevates the inner worlds themselves. One should strive for both—performing mitzvot with depth and understanding, while also cultivating simple, sincere attachment to God. Through this, even one’s most mundane thoughts and actions become letters that rise from earthiness back to their Divine Source. **END NOTE]**

Siman #47

“**And he reigned and he died**” (Bereishit 36:33), meaning: since he wished to be a king and said that *he* is something, therefore “and he died,” meaning he fell from his level.

וימלך וימת (בראשית ל"ו:ל"ג), רצון לומר לפי שרצה להיות מלך, ואמר שהוא יש, לכן וימת, רצון לומר נפל ממדרגתו.

“And there reigned in his place Hadar,” from the expression *hadur na'eh* (beautiful majesty). This is the new “Mah,” and through this came the rectification.

וימלך תחתיו הד"ר, מלשון הדור נאה, וזהו מ"ה הקדוש ובהנהיגה התקון.

[NOTE Summary:

This part of the maamar explains the spiritual dynamic behind the verse “He reigned and he died.” The king sought to assert his own independent existence, claiming a sense of “yesh”—selfhood. This self-assertion caused a fall from his level, symbolized by “and he died.” True kingship in holiness cannot rest upon ego or self-being. Because he wished to be something in his own right, his reign collapsed.

The verse continues, “And Hadar reigned in his place.” The name Hadar comes from the expression “beautiful majesty,” referring to a refined and properly aligned form of leadership rooted in the quality known as “Mah”—the spiritual posture of humility and self-nullification. This “new Mah” becomes the rectification for the fallen state, replacing self-importance with the beauty of humility and Divine alignment. Through Mah, proper kingship is restored.

Practical Takeaway:

Spiritual elevation depends on humility. When a person asserts “I am something,” he disconnects from Divine

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flow and falls from his level. But when he adopts the attitude of “Mah”—what am I?—he becomes a vessel for Divine light, allowing true beauty and kingship to manifest. The rectification for any spiritual fall begins with releasing ego and embracing humility.

END NOTE]