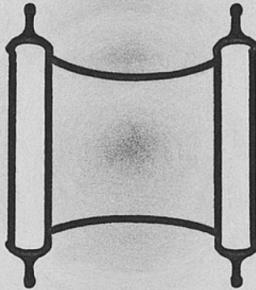


בב"ה

The Maggid of Mezritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Vayechi



Dedicated To:

אלגה דבורה בת שרה מפרץ

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Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

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Siman #58

And he blessed Joseph and said, etc.; “the Angel who redeems,” etc., “shall bless the youths.” The Zohar explains this as the blessing of children, and so forth.

Even though he is complete from his own perspective, regarding children his delight is not complete until his completion is finished, meaning the completeness of his children.

As our sages said: May it be the will that the offspring of your loins be like you. If he had no children, there would be no need for this.

And the wise son seeks everything for the delight of his father, and when the father sees that this is so, he gives it to him for the sake of his children.

This is “and He will return the heart of fathers to the children,” etc., and this is the concept of blessings that Israel blesses their Father in Heaven.

This is beyond you.

[NOTE Summary:

This maamar explains the inner meaning of the blessing “the Angel who redeems shall bless the youths,” which the Zohar identifies as a blessing of children. Even when a person is spiritually complete in their own avodah, their inner delight is not yet whole until that completeness is extended and finalized through their children. A parent’s true fulfillment is bound up with the spiritual wholeness of the next generation, as expressed in the teaching of our sages that one’s children should reflect one’s own inner stature.

The maamar further teaches that a wise child does not seek blessings for personal gain, but for the delight of the father. When the father perceives that the request is motivated by this higher intention, he grants abundance not only to the child, but through the child, for the sake of future generations. This dynamic explains the verse “He will return the heart of fathers to children,” and it frames the deeper meaning of blessings that Israel directs toward their Father in Heaven. These blessings are not self focused requests, but expressions of a desire to bring pleasure to the Divine by ensuring the spiritual continuity and growth of His children.

Practical Takeaway:

Spiritual growth is not meant to end with personal refinement. True completion comes when one’s inner work translates into responsibility for others, especially those who come after. When prayer, mitzvot, and requests

ויברך את יוסף ויאמר וגוי הפלך הילך הילך וגוי יברך
את הבנורים. פירוש בזוהר ברקחתא הבנין (וכי).

אף על פי שהוא שלם מzechro, מצד הבנין אין פענו
[שלם עד שיגמר (שלימותו) [שלימות בנו].

כמו שאמר ר' זעירין רצון שיהיו צאצאי משיח
כמו. מה שאין כן אם לא היה לו בנו אין צורך זהה.

וכבון החקם מבקש הכל בשבייל פענו אביו, ואביו
בראותו כי כן נתן לו בשבייל (נ"א בשכל) בנו

וזהו והשיב לב אבות על בנים וגוי, וזה ענין
ברכות ד' שabbrכין ישראל לאביהם שבשימים.

קשות ממק

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from Above are motivated by a desire to bring delight to Hashem and to strengthen the next generation, they become vessels for a deeper and more enduring blessing.

Chassidic Story:

It is told of a chassid who once came to his Rebbe asking for a blessing for success in his learning and livelihood. The Rebbe listened carefully and then asked him a simple question: "And what will you do with that success?" The chassid answered that he hoped to grow, to serve Hashem better, and to raise his children in a path of Torah and yirat Shamayim.

The Rebbe smiled and said, "Now you are asking correctly." He explained that when a person seeks blessing only for themselves, the vessel is narrow. But when the request is for the sake of transmitting light further, to children, students, or others who depend on them, the vessel widens. The blessing then rests not only on the individual, but on generations. **END NOTE]**

Siman #59

"Ephraim and Menasheh shall be to Me like Reuven and Shimon."

For there are two kinds of spiritual levels. The first is that through Torah and prayer one strengthens more in the service of Hashem.

The second is that even though one serves without intellectual understanding, nevertheless one yearns more for the service of the Creator, like the parable of a person who traveled many miles toward a city.

Even if they incite him not to go to that city, he says: Behold, I have already traveled so far; how can I leave it in the middle.

The tzaddik is called "kol," for everything goes through his hands, and he is called Ephraim, for he is fruitful and multiplies through his mitzvot, as mentioned.

There is another level called Menasheh, from the language of forgetting, as in "for God has made me forget my father's house," where one forgets himself in God.

A person should take to heart that he has not truly served Hashem, for a person is not called a servant of Hashem except through awe and love.

Awe is when awe falls upon him, not when he merely arouses himself to awe, for that is only the elevation of feminine waters.

אפרים ומנשה קראוכו ושמעוון יהיו לי. כי יש שני מיני מדרגות. האחת, מלחמת תורה ותפלת מזיקה. יותר לעובדות ה.

השנית, אף על פי שעובד בלא שלל, אף על פי כי מתחאה יותר לעובדות הבורא, כמו של אחד שנסע ברכבה מילין לעיר.

אף על פי שפעיתין אותו שלא יטע לעיר בהיא, אומר שלא נסעה ברכבה, איך אנית באמצע.

הצדיק נקרא כל, שהפל הולך על ידיו, ונקרא אפרים, שפירה ורבה מלחמת מצותיו בנצח.

ויש עוד מדרגה שנקרא מנשה, שהוא לשון שכחה, על דבר כי נשני מבית אב, ששוכת בקדושים ברוח, הוא.

והאדם יטנו אל לפבו קילא לא עבדתי את ה', כי אין. האדם נקרא עובד ה' אלא ביראה ואהבה.

ויראה היה מה שתפקיד עליו יראה, ולא מה שמעורר את עצמו ליראה, כי זה הוא רק הצלאת מין. נוקבini.

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Rather, the essential awe is when trembling and dread fall upon him, and from fear he does not know where he is, his intellects are refined, and tears descend on their own.

But when it is not so, even though it appears to him that he serves and loves Hashem, it is certainly nothing.

For this is the gate to Hashem; awe is the gate to love, and if one is not in this gate called awe, how can he come to love.

As in “her husband is known in the gates,” when a person is with the Shechinah, meaning with awe, the Holy One connects to him.

The way of a man is to pursue a woman; the Holy One, who is called “man,” pursues one who possesses awe, which is called “woman,” and then he is called “with Hashem.”

But one who serves and is not even a servant, and certainly not on this level, serves Hashem only by rote, thinking he loves Hashem, yet this is merely frivolous joy.

Therefore he should return to Hashem and serve Him with far greater yearning; this is called Menasheh, for through forgetting himself he serves Hashem more.

Reuven also is explained like Ephraim above, in the sense of “see with what I come before you,” and Shimon is explained as “there is sin.”

[NOTE Summary:

In this maamar, the Maggid explains the verse “Ephraim and Menasheh shall be to Me like Reuven and Shimon” as a map of inner avodah, outlining multiple spiritual levels through which a person relates to the service of Hashem. There are two primary approaches. One is structured service, built through Torah study and prayer, where understanding, discipline, and clarity strengthen one’s commitment. The second approach operates even without clear intellectual comprehension, yet is fueled by deep desire and persistence. This is compared to a traveler who has already journeyed many miles toward a city and refuses to turn back, saying that having come so far, he cannot abandon the path midway.

Ephraim represents growth, expansion, and fruitfulness. The tzaddik is called “kol,” because divine flow passes through him to the world, and this abundance multiplies through mitzvot. Ephraim embodies service that increases and spreads, producing visible spiritual results. Menasheh, by contrast, comes from the idea of forgetting, as in “for God has made me forget my father’s house.” This does not mean forgetfulness of God, but

רק הינה הטענה בטהפל עליו חיל ורעיד, ומחייב
הפה אינו יודע היכן הוא, ומהו חינן נזדקכו, וירידי
צמאות מלאיקון.

אבל בשיינו כה, אף על פי שנראה לו שהוא עובד
ואוקב את השם יתברך, בודאי אינו קלום
בי זה השער לה, נראה היא השער לאהבה, ואם אינו
בשער זהה הנקרה נראה איך אפשר לו לבוא
לאהבה.

על זה נודע בשערים בעלה, בטהרכם עם השכינה,
פירות עם היראה, מתחבר אליו הקדוש ברוך הוא.

דרכו של איש ל夸זר אחר אשיה, הקדוש ברוך הוא
שנראה איש מתר אחר מי שיש בו נראה שנראת
אשר, אז נראה עם ה

אבל מי שעבד ואינו אפלו עבד, ומכל שפנ שאיינו
במדרגה זו שטפל עליו היראה, ועובד את ה רך
מצות אנשימים אלומדה

על כן ישוב אל ה ויעבד בחשך גדול יותר, וזהו
נראה מנשה, כי מחייב שישבה את עצמו עובד אותן
יוטר.

וראינו גם כן פירושו כמו אפרים ולעיל, על זה
הוזי במא ברא אתינו לגביה. ושם פירושו שם
עון.

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forgetting oneself in relation to God. Menasheh represents the stage where a person recognizes that his previous service was incomplete, because true service requires both awe and love.

The Maggid emphasizes that genuine yirah is not something a person merely manufactures through effort. Self-induced fear is only an initial stirring from below. True awe is when fear and trembling fall upon a person unexpectedly, shaking them to the core, refining the mind, and sometimes bringing spontaneous tears. This awe is the gate to love. Without passing through the gate of yirah, love cannot be authentic. One who imagines that joy alone constitutes divine service, without awe, mistakes superficial emotional excitement for true spiritual connection.

The maamar uses the verse “her husband is known in the gates” to explain that when a person is “with the Shechinah,” meaning rooted in awe, then the Holy One attaches Himself to that person. Just as it is the way of a man to pursue a woman, so Hashem, who is called “man,” seeks out one who possesses yirah, which is likened to “woman.” Only then is a person called “with Hashem,” meaning truly bound to Him. One who serves merely by habit, through rote observance and emotional excitement without awe, is not even considered a servant in the full sense. Such service must be reevaluated, leading a person to return to Hashem with greater intensity and deeper sincerity. This return itself is called Menasheh, because through forgetting complacency and self-satisfaction, one comes to serve Hashem more truthfully.

Reuven and Shimon parallel these ideas. Reuven aligns with Ephraim, representing awareness and forward movement, “see with what I come before You.” Shimon, interpreted as “there is sin,” reflects inner listening and self-scrutiny, the recognition that opens the way to awe. Together, these paths form a complete structure of avodah that integrates growth, humility, awe, and love.

Practical Takeaway:

A person should regularly examine whether their service of Hashem is rooted in true awe or only in habit and emotional enthusiasm. Growth requires both persistence and honest self-forgetting. Passing through the gate of yirah allows love, joy, and expansion to become real and enduring.

Chassidic Story:

A chassid once complained to his teacher that although he prayed with enthusiasm and felt uplifted, his inner life did not truly change. The teacher asked him whether he had ever felt genuinely shaken in prayer, as though standing before something far greater than himself. When the chassid hesitated, the teacher explained that joy without awe can excite the heart but leave the soul untouched.

He told the chassid that when a person allows themselves to feel small before Hashem, without defenses or self-satisfaction, that humility opens the gate. Through that gate, love and closeness follow naturally. The chassid later said that this teaching transformed his avodah, not by making him sad, but by giving his joy weight, depth, and truth. **END NOTE]**

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Siman #60

In the Midrash on “the God who shepherds me,” etc.: Rabbi Yochanan and Reish Lakish. Rabbi Yochanan said: like a shepherd who stands and watches the flock walking before him. And Reish Lakish said: like a prince who walks, with elders walking before him. According to Rabbi Yochanan, we need Him for His honor. According to Reish Lakish, He needs us for our honor.

This may be explained according to what our sages said: Israel sustain, etc. At first glance, this is difficult to understand: what kind of sustenance applies Above.

It appears to me according to what is written: “Israel, in whom I take pride,” that Hashem has glorification from the deeds and Torah of the righteous.

As it is written: “My son, be wise,” etc., which causes satisfaction and joy Above. It is known that joy comes from delight and contentment that preceded it.

And after delight comes joy. Delight and contentment are the source that bestows, as in the parable of a person who eats food and is satiated by it.

It is clearly sensed that satiation comes from the vitality and spirituality within the food, not from the physical food itself.

Rather, it comes from the delight and refinement within the food, which is spiritual. There is further proof: when a person experiences delight and satisfaction, he is full and not desirous to eat.

Thus we see that delight satiates. So too, as it were, the righteous cause joy and delight Above, and this is called, as it were, a form of sustenance.

We will preface this with what is written: “Gather and hear, sons of Jacob, and hear Israel your father.” It is difficult: why are they first called sons of Jacob, and afterward Israel your father.

He explains: all influence comes from wisdom, which is the letter yod. The letter yod has a head, middle, and end.

במידר'ש הַאֲלָקִים הַרְוָעָה אָתֵי וְגֹו', רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן וַרְישָׁ לְקִישׁ. רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן אָמַר לְרוֹעָה הַעֲזָם וּמְבִיט בְּצָאן הַהְלָכִים לְפָנָיו.

וַרְישָׁ לְקִישׁ אָמַר לְנַשְׁיָא שֶׁהָוָא הַזָּלָק וּזְקָנִים הַוְלָכִים לְפָנָיו. עַל דָּעַתְּהָ דָּרְבִּי יוֹחָנָן אָנוּ אַרְיכָנוּ לְכִבּוֹד, וְעַל דָּעַתְּהָ דָּרְבִּי לְקִישׁ הָוָא אַרְיךָ לְכִבּוֹדִינוּ.

וְאָפָּשָׁר עַל פִּי מָה שָׁאָמְרוּ רְזִ"ל יִשְׂרָאֵל מִפְּרָנָסִים נָכוֹן. וְלֹכָאָרָה אִינּוּ מָכוֹן, אַיזָּה פְּרָסָה שִׁיךְ לְמַעַלָּה.

וּנוֹרָא לִי עַל קָרְךָ מָה שְׁבַתּוֹב יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר בְּ אַחֲפָאָר, שִׁישָׁ לְהַשְׁמָן יַחֲבֹר הַחֲפָאָרוֹת מִמְעָשֵׁי הַצְּדִיקִים וּמִתּוֹרָתוֹ.

וְכָמוֹ שְׁבַתּוֹב חַכְמָה בְּנֵי וְגֹו', וְגָוָרִים נְמַת וְשְׁמַמָּה לְעַילָּא. וַיַּדְעֵץ כִּי הַשְּׁמָמָה בָּאָה מְחֻמָּת מַעֲנוֹג וּגְנַחַת שְׁהִיה לוּ.

וְאַמְרָה בְּחַוּשׁ גְּנָאָה שְׁהַשְׁבָּעַ בָּא לְאָדָם מִכְּה הַחַיָּה. וְהַגְּנַחַת הַמַּשְׁפִּיעַ, כְּמַשְׁלֵל אָדָם אָזְזֵל אַיִלָּה וְשָׁבָע מִמְּנָה.

הַגְּנַחַת בְּחַוּשׁ גְּנָאָה שְׁהַשְׁבָּעַ בָּא לְאָדָם מִכְּה הַחַיָּה וְהַרְוּחַנִּיות שְׁבַתּוֹב הַמְּאָכֵל, וְלֹא מִהְמַאְכֵל הַגְּנַשְׁמִי.

רַק מִהְפַּעַנְגָּה וְהַעֲדֹון שְׁבַתּוֹב הַמְּאָכֵל שֶׁהָוָא רַוְחָנִי. וְעַד יָשָׁרְאָה, כִּי כָּאַשְׁר בָּא אֶל הָאָדָם אַיזָּה פְּעָנוֹג שְׁיִשְׁלֵל נְחַת מִמְּנוֹ הָוָא שְׁבָע.

אִם בָּן רְזִ"ל אָנוּ בְּחַוּשׁ שְׁהַפְּעָנוֹג מִשְׁבִּיעַ. כֵּה הָוָא כְּבִיכּוֹל הַצְּדִיקִים גּוֹרָמִים שְׁמַמָּה וּפְעָנוֹג לְעַילָּא, וְנִקְרָא זוּ כְּבִיכּוֹל בְּעֵינֵי פְּרָנָסָה.

וְנִזְדִּים לְזַהָּה מָה שְׁבַתּוֹב הַקְּבָצָו וְשְׁמַעְוּ בְּנֵי יִצְחָק וְשְׁמַעְוּ אֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲבֵיכֶם. קַשְׁה לְאָהָה קֹוָרָא אָזְטָם תְּחִלָּה בְּנֵי יִצְחָק וְאַחֲרָה כִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲבֵיכֶם.

וְאָמַר לְקָם כִּי הַגְּנַחַת יְדֹועַ כִּי כָּל הַהְשִׁפְעָה בָּאָה מִהְחַקְמָה שֶׁהָיָא יוֹ"ד. וְהַגְּנַחַת בָּאָות יוֹ"ד יְשַׁרְאֵל תָּוֹךְ סָוּר.

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These are the upper thorn, the lower thorn, and the body of the yod, which are three yods.

The upper thorn hints to Israel, “li rosh,” the head. The lower thorn hints to Jacob, “yod eikev,” the lower level.

The body of the yod hints to the name Yeshurun, for dwelling does not occur with fewer than three.

These are the three names: Israel, Yeshurun, and Jacob, all beginning with the letter yod. Jacob is called the central bar that extends from end to end.

It is written: “All of them You made with wisdom,” for all vitality and existence of the worlds are drawn from supernal wisdom.

Israel is the upper thorn, the head of wisdom. Yeshurun is the body of the yod, the extension downward.

Jacob is the lower yod, which is contemplation, known to be a lower level within wisdom. This is called “the eye of Jacob.”

An eye is called wisdom, as in “the eyes of the congregation.”

We can illustrate this with the analogy of a father teaching his son. The son receives the father’s wisdom, and all that he grasps is through the father’s words.

For the father’s wisdom is exceedingly great and concealed in profound concealment. What the son grasps is only because the father contracts his wisdom.

He diminishes it according to the son’s capacity and clothes it within words. The son, when he directs his thought to the words, receives from there.

For there, a single unity is formed. This is as it is said: “Open your mouth and your words will shine.”

Meaning that wisdom shines within speech, and through this it also illuminates others, so that the student can grasp it.

At that point, the father has delight, like a small child who asks something of his father, and when the father fulfills his wish, he has pleasure.

שַׁהְוָא קֹצָא דְלַעַילָא וּקֹצָא דְלַמְתָא וְגַוַּף הַיּוֹ"ד, שְׁהָם
שְׁלֹשׁ יוֹדָן.

וְאָמָר לְהָם כִּי הַקֹּצָא דְלַעַילָא רֹמֶז לִיְשָׁרָאֵל, לִי
רָאֵשׁ. וּקֹצָא דְמִתְפָּאָה רֹמֶז לִיעַקְבָּר, יוֹ"ד עַקְבָּר
וְגַוַּף הַיּוֹ"ד רֹמֶז לִשְׁמֵיְשָׁרָוּן, כִּי אֵין שְׁרִיחָה בְּפֶחוֹת
מְשֻׁלָּוֹת.

וְהָם שְׁלֹשָׁה שְׁמוֹת יִשְׁרָאֵל יִשְׁרָוּן עַקְבָּר, הַמְתִיחִילִים
בָּאוֹת יוֹ"ד. וּעַקְבָּר הוּא הַגְּנָךְרָא בְּרִית הַתִּיכְוֹן הַמְּבָרִיחָה
מִן הַקָּצָה אֶל הַקָּצָה.

וְכַתְּוִיב בְּלָם בְּחַכְמָה עֲשֵׂית, כִּי כָל הַחַיּוֹת וְהַהְיוֹת שֶׁל
הַעוֹלָמָה בְּלָם נָמְשָׁכוּ מִחַכְמָה עַלְלָה הַגְּנָךְרָא
רָאֵשָׁת.

וְאָמָר לְהָם שַׁזְּהָוּ הַקּוֹז הַעַלְיוֹן הַגְּנָךְרָא לִי רָאֵשׁ, הוּא
רָאֵשָׁת חַכְמָה. וּיְשָׁרָוּן הוּא גַּוַּף הַיּוֹ"ד שַׁהְוָא הַמְּשֻׁכָּה
מְעַילָא לְתִפְאָה.

וּעַקְבָּר הָוּ יוֹ"ד מַפְתָּחָה שַׁהְיָא הַהְסְתְּכָלוֹת, כְּפֹרָעָה
שַׁהְהַסְּתְּכָלוֹת הִיא מִזְרָגָה תְּחִתּוֹנוֹ שְׁבַחַכְמָה, וְזֶה
הַגְּנָךְרָא עַיִן יִעַקְבָּר.

וְעַזְנָן הַגְּנָךְרָא, כָּמוֹ עַזְנִי הַעֲדָה
וְהַגָּהָה נָמְשִׁיל זֶה דָמִיוֹן אָב הַמְּלֵיד אֶת בָנָו. הַבָּהָה הַבָּן

מְקַבֵּל חַכְמָת הָאָב, וְמָה שְׁמַשְׁיג הַבָּן הִיא מִכְחָה
הַדְּבָרִים שֶׁל הָאָב.

כִּי חַכְמָת הָאָב גְׁדוֹלָה הִיא עַד מָאֵד וְנוּעָלָמָת בְּהָעוֹלָם
גְׁדוֹלָה. רַק מָה שְׁמַשְׁיג הַבָּן הִיא מִכְחָה שֶׁהָאָב מִצְמָצָם
חַכְמָתוֹ.

וּמְקַטְנָה כַּפִּי עַרְקָד הַשְּׁגָתָה הַבָּן וּמִלְבִּישָׁה בְּדָבָרִים,
וְגַם הַבָּן כִּאֵשֶׁר הוּא שֶׁמְחַשְּׁבָתוֹ וּרְעִיוֹנוֹ אֶל
הַדְּבָרִים מְקַבֵּל מִשְׁם.

כִּי שֶׁמְנַעַשְׁתִּית אֲחֻזּוֹת אָחָד. וְזֶה שְׁגָנָא מְרַפְּתָח פִּיהָ
וְיִאָרוּ דְבָרִיךְ.

פִּירּוֹשׁ כִּי הַחַכְמָה מְאִירָה בְּתוֹךְ הַדָּבָר, וּמִפְּנֵי זֶה גַם
כִּי יִאָרוּ לְזֹוְלָתוֹ שְׁיוֹכְלָה הַמְּלֵיד לְהַשְׁגָוֹ

וְאֵי יִשׁ לְאָב תְּעִנוֹג, כְּמַשְׁלֵל הַתִּינְזָק הַמְּבָקֵשׁ אֵיזָה דְבָר
מְאָכֵין, וְכַשְׁהָאָב עֹזֶה רְצֹן הַתִּינְזָק וּנוֹתֵן לוֹ אֶזֶת
הַדְּבָר יִשׁ לְאָב פְּצָנָג מִזָּה.

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This is “the righteous rules,” etc., for His will and the will of the righteous become one.

ונז"ה צדיק מושל ונז", כי רצונו יתברך ורצון הצדיק
נעשה א"ז.

Whatever the righteous desires is His will, and he can transform the attribute of judgment into mercy.

ומה שצדיק רוצה זהו רצונו יתברך, וכי יכול להפוך
מצת דין לרפאים.

This explains what our sages said: If the righteous wished, they could create worlds.

ונז"ה שאמורי רז"ל א"י בעו צדיקיא הו מבריך עלמא

For the heavens were made by the word of Hashem, and it is written: “He breathed into his nostrils a living soul,” which is translated as a speaking spirit.

כי הלא בזכור ה' שמים נעשו, וככתוב וiph באפניו
ונשמה חיים, ומברגמין רוח מללא

In Hashem there are no parts, for He is infinite, and in the infinite there cannot be parts.

וננה בהשם יתברך לא שיק לומר חלקיים, כי הוא
אין סוף, ובאיון סוף לא שיק לומר חלק

Therefore, in speech everything is included. Accordingly, if the righteous desire, they could create worlds.

ואם כן בדבורה הוא בכלל הכל. נמצא לפי זה א"י בעו
צדיקים הו מבריך עלמא

For the speech of the righteous is pure and refined, without any separating barrier.

כי דברו של הצדיק הוא זך ונקי כל שום מסק
המבדיל

Not like the complainer who separates the Master of the world, but the righteous person's speech is bound to its root.

ולא כמו חס ושלום הגרון מפריד אלופו, אלופו של
עולם, רק דברו של הצדיק הוא מזבק ומאשר
לש"ו.

It is truly like the speech of Hashem, from which the heavens were made, especially since the will of the righteous is His will.

ונהרי הוא ממש כמו דברו של השם יתברך אשר
מאנו שמים נעשה, ומה גם כי רצון הצדיק הוא רצונו
יתברך פנצר.

It is known that speech is drawn from the heart to the wings of the lungs, from there the voice emerges, and from there speech is formed.

וננה הבנת הלב על פרח שמקבילה מזכר אחר
שהוא המתחשה, כי על זהה גזרא הלב מבין

The understanding of the heart must receive from something else, namely thought, for through this the heart is called understanding.

פירוש שאמין זכר מתוך זכר, שמקביל מזכר אחר
ההבנה, שהיא המתחשה, ונעשה נבון.

Meaning, it understands one thing from another, receiving understanding from thought and becoming discerning.

וניה, המתחשה הטעורה, היא החזקתה בהבנה,
ונקול הוא החזק בדבורה, נמצא כי אלופים אלו

This pure thought engraves within understanding, and the voice engraves within speech. Thus these two engravings are clothed within one another.

שתי חיקיות זה בזה.

This is called “the pavement of sapphire,” for sapphire means radiance and clarity, which is the contemplation of thought called the eye.

ונזה גזרא לבנת הספיר, כי ספיר הוא לשון זהר
ובחריות, שהוא הסתכלות המתחשה הגזרת עין.

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Like lightning that flashes and illuminates suddenly, so thought engraves and illuminates the heart's understanding in an instant.

This is the supernal engraving. Additionally, sapphire also means counting, referring to the lower engraver, which is the voice that engraves speech.

This is what is meant by "The scepter shall not depart from Judah," for the Jewish man, the righteous one, is called Judah. The scepter and rule do not depart from him, for the righteous rules through awe of God.

"And a lawgiver from between his feet" refers to the two engravings of the sapphire pavement, as stated.

As it is said, "and under His feet was like the work of a sapphire pavement," which is the attribute of the righteous, the concealed world.

When the righteous nullifies decrees of the Holy One, He has satisfaction and great delight from this.

As our sages said: Rabbi Yehoshua said, "We do not heed a heavenly voice," and the Holy One smiled and said, "My children have defeated Me."

This explains the Midrash cited earlier: "the God who shepherds me," etc. Both opinions are the words of the living God and do not disagree.

Rabbi Yochanan speaks of influence from Above to below, for we surely need His honor.

Reish Lakish speaks of the ultimate purpose of creation, to cause delight Above, and in that sense He "needs" our honor.

As the sages said that Israel "sustain" Above, for He has satisfaction and delight when He fulfills our will.

And, as it were, He needs our honor.

כמו ברוך המבahir ומבהיר פתאום, כד המקששה חוקקת ומארה לבנות הלב, והוא כמו עין המבahir ומביט פתאום בחרף עין.

ונזה חקיקה עליזה. ועוד, כי ספיר הוא לשון ספירה דברים, והוא המחוק הפטחותן, שהוא הקול החזק הקבור.

ונזה שאמր לא יסור שבט מיהוקה וגוי, פירוש כי איש ישראל, הצדיק הנזכר על שם איש יהוּה לא יסור שבט ומושל מושג, כי הצדיק מושל ביראת אלקים וגוי.

ומוחזק מבין רגליו, שהוא שמי حقיקות לבנתה הופיע בפניך.

שנאמר ותחת רגליו כמעשה לבנת הופיע, שהוא מעת הצדיק עלמא דאתפסיא בידוע.

והנה הצדיק האבטל גורומיו של מקדוש ברוך הוא, יש לו יתברך נחת מזה ומענו גדוֹל כמו שאמרו רוז"ל רבי יהושע אומר אין משגיחין ב בת קול, ומקדוש ברוך הוא מא עביד, קא פניך. ואמר נאחוני בני.

ונזה פירוש הפרק הנזכר, אלקים קרוּעה אותי וגוי, ואלו ואלו דברי אלקים חיים ולא פלייגי.

רבי יוחנן אמר קרוּעה שהוא מבית בצאננו, והוא מדבר בהשפה מעילא למתקא, כי בודאי אנו אריכין לבבוזו יתברך.

וניש לא קיש אמר לנו שאזנים הולכים לפניו, הוא מדבר בערך מחלוקת הבראה לעשות נחת ורצון. לעילא.

כמו שאמרו רוז"ל ישראל מפרנסים וכו', ובזה העריך אריך הוא לבבזינו, כי יש לו מזה נחת רוח ומענו כשבועה רצונינו.

ובכינול הוא אריך לבבזינו.

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[NOTE Summary:

In the Midrash on “the God who shepherds me,” Rabbi Yochanan and Reish Lakish present two images of the Divine relationship with Israel. Rabbi Yochanan describes Hashem as a shepherd who stands and watches the flock as it walks before Him. In this view, the flock depends entirely on the shepherd, and Israel requires Hashem for His honor and sustenance. Reish Lakish, however, describes Hashem as a nasi, a leader who walks while elders go before Him. In this framing, the leader’s honor is generated by those who precede Him. The Maggid explains that these two views are not contradictory. Rather, they describe two complementary dimensions of the Divine purpose.

This teaching opens the meaning of the statement of the sages that Israel “sustain” Above. This does not refer to physical sustenance, but to delight, satisfaction, and joy. Hashem takes pride and pleasure in the deeds and Torah of the righteous, as expressed in “Israel, in whom I take pride,” and “My son, be wise.” Joy is born from delight and inner satisfaction, just as physical satiation comes not from the coarse matter of food, but from the life force and refinement within it. When a person experiences true delight, they are full and no longer crave more. So too, the righteous generate delight and joy Above, and this is called, in borrowed language, sustenance.

The Maggid then explains the verse “Gather and hear, sons of Jacob, and listen to Israel your father,” by mapping it onto the structure of wisdom. All divine flow comes from wisdom, symbolized by the letter yod, which contains an upper point, a body, and a lower point. These correspond to three names: Israel, Yeshurun, and Jacob. Israel represents the upper point, the head of wisdom. Yeshurun represents the body of the yod, the extension of divine flow downward. Jacob represents the lower point, associated with contemplation and perception, a lower level within wisdom itself. Jacob is also called the central bar, connecting from one end to the other, binding higher and lower together.

The maamar continues with the analogy of a father teaching his son. The father’s wisdom is vast and concealed, far beyond the child’s capacity. What the child receives comes only because the father contracts his wisdom and clothes it in words suited to the child. When the child focuses on those words, a unity is formed between them. This is the meaning of “Open your mouth and your words will shine,” that wisdom shines within speech, enabling it to illuminate another. When the child understands, the father experiences delight, just as a parent takes pleasure in fulfilling a child’s request.

This dynamic explains the power of the righteous. “The righteous rules,” because the will of the righteous and the Divine will become unified. The speech of the righteous is pure, refined, and attached to its source, unlike speech that separates and distorts. Since creation itself came through Divine speech, the sages say that if the righteous wished, they could create worlds. Their words are transparent vessels for Divine will.

The Maggid deepens this by explaining the inner structure of speech. Speech flows from the heart, through the lungs, into voice, and from voice into articulated words. The heart’s understanding itself receives from

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thought. Pure thought engraves understanding in the heart, while voice engraves speech. These two engravings are interwoven, and this is called “the pavement of sapphire.” Sapphire signifies both radiance and clarity, like a sudden flash of insight, and also counting and articulation, referring to the structured flow of speech. This is the hidden attribute of the righteous, described as “under His feet was like the work of a sapphire pavement,” the concealed world.

When a righteous person nullifies a harsh decree, this brings Hashem profound delight, as illustrated by the sages’ statement that Hashem smiled and said, “My children have defeated Me.” This delight is the fulfillment of the ultimate purpose of creation. Thus, both Rabbi Yochanan and Reish Lakish speak truth. On one level, Israel depends on Hashem for honor and life. On a deeper level, the purpose of creation is that Israel’s deeds bring delight Above, and in this sense, as it were, Hashem needs our honor, because it is through us that His will and pleasure are realized.

Practical Takeaway:

A person should recognize that their avodah is not only about receiving from Heaven, but about giving delight Above. Words spoken with sincerity, prayer said with inner clarity, and deeds done with alignment of will are not small acts. They become vessels through which Divine wisdom flows into the world and through which Hashem’s purpose is fulfilled.

Chassidic Story:

It is related that a chassid once asked his teacher how a finite human being could possibly matter to the Infinite. The teacher answered by pointing to a small child learning to speak. Each word the child forms is imperfect, limited, and small, yet it brings immense joy to the parent. Not because the parent lacks speech, but because the child’s words express connection and relationship.

“So it is above,” the teacher said. “Hashem does not lack power or wisdom. But He desires relationship. When a Jew speaks words of Torah, prayer, or truth, those words are precious not because Heaven needs them to function, but because they fulfill the purpose for which the world was created.”

END NOTE]

Siman #61

“Dark of eyes from wine, and white of teeth from milk.”

There are two kinds of redness. One is severities, and the second is from wine, which is joy.

And in the second redness, on the contrary, all the first rednesses are sweetened. This is like a parable of a king.

When he is in joy, then permission is granted to enter before him even to one who is not otherwise fit and proper.

חכלילי עינים מין ולבן שנים ממלח. פירוש כי יש שני מיני אידמות. אחת היא גבירות, והשנית היא מין שהוא שמחה.

ובאדימות השנית, אדרבה נמתקין כל האידימות קראשנות. משל למלך.

כolumbia הוא בשמחה או רשות לפניו אף למי שאין ראי והגון בלאו כי.

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This is “dark of eyes from wine.” And then “white of teeth from milk.”

Meaning, even one who is unfit and hard like a tooth, as in the term “tooth of rock,” becomes whiter than milk.

And the reason the letter ח of “חכָלִיל” is large is because there is a parable concerning large letters.

It is of one who built a city surrounded by a wall and made within it towers that are high.

They serve for two purposes: one is as a vessel and place for observation to see afar.

And the second is that the guards of the city sit there.

It is written, “To You, Hashem, is greatness,” meaning the letter ח of greatness, the first ח, the letters of thought.

They too are vessels for observation, namely wisdom that rests upon them.

And they are also guards. Meaning, if at times the intellects weaken and love and awe cease in the middle of prayer.

Or if one speaks in prayer without love and awe, through the letters of thought one can renew them.

And to speak again with awe and love as at the beginning. These are the guards of love and awe.

Here Scripture speaks of wine, which is joy, which is thought, letters in joy.

Upon which is the pomegranate, and the letter ח which is understanding, the form of a nun.

Which is the form of vav-zayin, meaning son and daughter, voice and speech.

And when son and daughter are together, then “go forth and see,” etc., the crown his mother crowned him with.

This is the crown upon the letter ח. Therefore the ח here is large, and the enlightened one will understand.

ונזהו מְכָלִילִי עֵינִים מִזּוֹן. וְאֹז וְלֹכְן שְׁנִים מְחַלֵּב

רְאֵה לֹאָמֵר כִּי גַם מֵשָׁאַיָּנוּ הָגּוֹן וְקַשְׁתָּה כְּמוֹ שָׁן, לְשׁוֹן
שָׁן סְלָעַ, נְעַשָּׂה לְכָן יוֹתֵר מְחַלֵּב

וְמַה שְׁאֹות חַיָּת מְחַלִּילִי הוּא גָּדוֹל, כִּי יִשְׁמַל עַל
קָאוֹתִיּוֹת הַגְּדוֹלוֹת

לְאַחֲר שְׁבָנָה עִיר מְקַפֵּת חֹמָה וְעַשָּׂה בְּתוֹכָה [נ"א
בְּחֹמָה] מְגַקְּלִים גְּבוּהִים

וְהֵם בְּשִׁבְיל שְׁנִי דְּבָרִים. הַאֲחָד שַׁהוּא כָּלִי וּמִקּוֹם
לְהַסְּפָלּוֹת הַצּוֹפָה לְמִרְחָזָק

וְהַשְׁנִי שְׁשֹׁמְרִי הָעִיר יוֹשְׁבִים שֶׁם

וְכַתּוֹב לְהֵי הַגְּדוֹלָה, דַּקְּינוּ הָא גָּדוֹלָה שַׁהְיָא הָא
רָאשָׁוֹתָה, דַּקְּינוּ אֹתוֹתִיּוֹת שֶׁל הַמְּפַשְׁבָּה

וְהֵם גַּם כָּנוּ כָּלִים לְהַסְּפָלּוֹת, דַּקְּינוּ חַכְמָה שְׁשָׁוֶרֶת
[עַלְיכֶם [נ"א כִּי רָאֵה הִיא חַכְמָה

וְהֵם גַּם שְׁוֹמְרִים. דַּקְּינוּ לְפָעָמִים אֶם נְחַלְשׁוּ
הַמּוֹחַן וְתַמּוּ בְּאַמְצָע הַתְּפִלָּה אֲחָבָה וִירָאָה

נִ"א בָּמוֹ בְּאַמְצָע הַתְּפִלָּה וּמְדַבֵּר בְּלֹא אֲחָבָה וִירָאָה [],
הַגָּה עַל יְדֵי אֹתוֹתִיּוֹת הַמְּפַשְׁבָּה בְּכָל לְמִדְשָׁם

וְלִדְבֵּר שׁוּב בְּקָרְחָלוּ וַרְחִימָו בְּבַתְחָלָה, וְהֵם הַשׁוֹמְרִים
מִדְתָּא אֲחָבָה וּמִדְתָּא יְרָאָה

וְהַגָּה בְּאָן מְשֻׁתִּי קָרָא מִזּוֹן שַׁהוּא שְׁמָקָה בְּנֵזֶר,
שַׁהוּא מְפַשְׁבָּה, אֹתוֹתִיּוֹת בְּשִׁמְקָה

שְׁעַלְיכָה רָמֶן, וּבְלֹא הֲכִי אֹתְחַיְתָה שַׁהְיָא תְּבֻוָּה,
תְּמִינָתָה נוֹן

שַׁהְיָא תְּמִונַת נַ"ו וּזַיְן, שַׁהְיָא בָּן וּבָת, רְאֵה לֹאָמֵר קָול
וְדָבָר

וְקַשְׁבָּנוּ וְקַבְּתָה הַם קִיְּמָד [נ"א נִאמֵר בְּיִיחָד], אֵז צָאִינָה
וְרָאִינָה וְגַוְיִן בְּעַטְרָה שְׁעַטְרָה לוֹ אָמוֹן

וְנַזְהָר עַטְרָה עַל גַּבְיַה הַחַיִת, עַל כָּנָה הַחַיִת שְׁבָכָאָן גָּדוֹלָה,
וְהַמְּפַשְׁבָּיל יְבִין

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[NOTE Summary:

This maamar explains the verse “Dark of eyes from wine, and white of teeth from milk” as a description of two kinds of inner redness. One redness comes from gevurot, severity and constriction. The other redness comes from wine, which represents joy. When the redness of joy is present, it sweetens and dissolves the redness of severity. The Maggid illustrates this with a parable of a king. When the king is in a state of joy, permission is granted to enter before him even to one who would otherwise be unfit. Joy opens gates that strict judgment keeps closed.

This is the meaning of “dark of eyes from wine.” Through joy, even those who are hard and unrefined, likened to teeth of stone, are transformed. “White of teeth from milk” teaches that what was previously rigid and impure becomes whitened and softened, even more than milk itself. Milk represents kindness and nurturing, and joy has the power to elevate even those who seemed distant from refinement.

The Maggid then turns to the large letter het in the word “ḥakhlini.” Large letters are compared to towers built into the walls of a city. These towers serve two functions. One is observation, allowing one to see far into the distance. The other is protection, serving as a guard for the city. So too, the letters of thought, associated with the first letter hei of the Divine Name, function both as vessels of insight and as guardians. They are instruments of wisdom and vision, and they also protect love and awe when these qualities weaken during prayer.

When a person finds that love and awe have faded in the middle of prayer, the letters of thought have the power to renew them. By returning inwardly to focused thought, one can again speak with awe and love as at the beginning. In this way, thought guards and preserves emotional vitality in avodah.

Wine, identified with joy, is associated with thought, joyful letters, and inner illumination. The letter het is linked to understanding and structure, and it unites voice and speech, symbolized as son and daughter. When these are joined together, the verse “Go forth and see, crowned by his mother” is fulfilled. This is the crown placed upon the letter het, which is why it appears enlarged. The enlarged het hints to expanded consciousness, integrated joy, and the harmonization of inner faculties.

Practical Takeaway:

When judgment, heaviness, or inner rigidity arise, the path forward is not force but joy. Genuine joy has the power to sweeten inner severity and reopen blocked spiritual access. When love and awe weaken, returning to mindful thought can restore them. Thought protects emotion, and joy revitalizes the entire inner structure of avodah.

Chassidic Story:

It is told that a chassid once came to his Rebbe distressed that his prayers felt dry and mechanical. He complained that no matter how hard he tried, his heart felt closed. The Rebbe asked him a simple question:

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“Did you enter prayer with fear, or with joy?” The chassid answered that he entered with seriousness and pressure, afraid of failing.

The Rebbe responded that seriousness without joy builds walls, but joy builds gates. He instructed the chassid to begin prayer by recalling one kindness Hashem had done for him and to allow himself to feel gratitude and quiet joy. The chassid later said that this small shift softened his heart. What had felt hard and distant became approachable, and his prayer regained warmth and clarity. **END NOTE]**

Siman #62

“The one who bites the heels of the horse,” etc.; “for Your salvation I hoped,” etc. It is stated in the holy Zohar that letters are called a horse and the vowel points are called a bridle.

The intellect, which is the cantillation marks, is the rider upon the horse, for the letters themselves are essentially like unformed matter.

Unless there are vowel points, through which the letters are conducted. And the one who guides them is the intellect.

Because it desires to reveal its wisdom and its form.

Letters of Torah, or letters of prayer, through which one is refined for the service of Hashem, ascend to their root and have delight.

They come to their root and experience pleasure.

Other forms of speech, which are not of this kind, are also letters like these, but their combinations are different.

And the intellect riding upon them is a low intellect, and shells rest upon it.

The letters themselves become jealous of the letters of the Torah. These are the lower waters that weep.

When a discerning and wise person hears them, he elevates those letters from the shattering.

He looks at the holy combination within them, identifying from which attribute it derives.

Through that attribute, he binds himself to Hashem.

He elevates those letters and brings divinity into them.

הנושך עקביו סוס וגוי לישועת קומי וגו'. איתא בזוהר הקדוש כי אותן נקאות נקראים סוס והנאות נקראות רסן.

והנה השלל, שהם הטעמים, הוא רוכב על הטעים, כי אותן נקאות הם בעצם פגולים.

אלא) [אם לא] הקאות שעל ידו מתקנים. אותן המנהגין הוא השלל.

בשביל שהוא רוץ לגלות חכמתו וצורתו.

וננה אותן הטעמה או אותן (הפלגה) שעל ידי נזכר [נ"א מזבח] לעבודת השם יתברך.

הם באים לשדרם ויש להם מענה.

אבל שאר דבריהם שאינם מזה הענן, הם גם כן אותן במו זה הענן, אבל הארוופים הם אחרים.

והשלל שהוא רוכב עליהם הוא של שפל ושורים עליון קליפות.

ו אותן הטעמנים בוכים וכו'.

וכשושם איש נלכד וחכם איז מעלה גם כן אותן נקאות מתחזק השבירה.

ש於是 על הארווף הקדוש שבתוכם מאייה מדה קייא.

ונעל ידי הנקה מזבק את עצמו להשם יתברך.

ואיז מעלה אותן נקאות בהם מוכנים בהם אלקות.

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Through this, when one relates before him an incident containing some evil, God forbid.

When he hears it, he elevates the holy spark and inserts divinity into the letter-combination.

Then the matter can be rectified immediately, for the salvation of Hashem is in an instant.

And for His sake, blessed be He, He acts to restore the matter to its rectification.

Then all workers of iniquity are scattered.

That is, all the evil intellect that initially rested upon the letter-combination.

This is “Dan shall judge,” meaning what was formerly the level of dalet now becomes a simple nun.

Which is the world of freedom. “The one who bites the heels of the horse,” meaning the lower letters that were in the heels.

“And its rider falls backward,” meaning the evil intellect that rested upon them.

When this occurs, “For Your salvation I hoped, Hashem,” for it is already the salvation of Hashem, as explained.

And understand.

NOTE Summary:

This maamar explains the verse “the one who bites the heels of the horse... for Your salvation I hoped, Hashem” through the inner structure of speech and thought. The Zohar teaches that letters are called a “horse,” vowel points are the “bridle,” and the intellect, expressed through the cantillation marks, is the rider. Letters by themselves are like raw matter, unformed and directionless. The vowel points give them movement and expression, but it is the intellect that guides them, because it seeks to reveal wisdom and form.

Letters of Torah and prayer, through which a person becomes refined in the service of Hashem, naturally return to their root and experience delight. Other forms of speech are also composed of letters, but their combinations are different, and the intellect riding upon them is low and constricted. Such speech is surrounded by spiritual husks, and the letters themselves “envy” the letters of Torah. This is the meaning of the “lower waters weeping,” the longing of fallen letters to be elevated.

When a discerning and wise person hears such speech, even when it contains negativity or wrongdoing, they have the ability to elevate the letters within it. By identifying the holy root and attribute hidden within the letter-combination, and by attaching themselves to Hashem through that attribute, they raise the letters out of their broken state and infuse them with Divinity. Through this elevation, even a situation that appears negative

ונעל יקי זה, כשבספרו לפנינו איזה מעשה שישי בז איזה רע חס ולשלם.

כששומע זה מצללה ניצוץ הקדוש בז'נבר, ואז מכך נס.

אלקות באירוע האותיות הנטבריות או יכול [תכל] (לחתתקו) [לטגן] הזכר והוא, כי תשועת ה' בחר עין.

ולמענו יתברך יעשה להעמיד הזכר על תקונו.

ואז יתפרקו כל פועליו אנו.

דហינו שכל הרע ששינה מתחלה שורה על צרוף האותיות [מתחלה].

ונזהו [נזהר], דהינו מה ששינה בჩינתן קלא"ת עעה נטענה נון פשוטה.

שיהיא עלמא דחרירות. הנושך עקיבי סוס, דהינו אותיות המתחוננים ששינוי בעקבבים.

ויפול רכבו אחור, דהינו השבל הרע ששינה שורה עליהם.

וכשהוא כן, לישועת קומי ה', כי בבר הוא ישועת ה' בז'נבר.

ונחן.

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can be rectified immediately, because the salvation of Hashem comes in an instant. For His sake, Hashem restores the matter to its proper state, and the forces of evil that once rested on those letters are scattered.

This process is alluded to in the transformation of Dan. What was once a constricted level, symbolized by the letter dalet, becomes a simple nun, representing the world of freedom. “Biting the heels of the horse” refers to engaging and transforming the lowest letters, those at the heels. When this happens, “the rider falls backward,” meaning the corrupt intellect that once governed those letters collapses. At that point, one can truly say, “For Your salvation I hoped, Hashem,” because the transformation itself reveals Divine salvation.

Practical Takeaway:

No experience, conversation, or even troubling information is spiritually neutral. Words carry letters, and letters carry sparks. When one listens with wisdom and inner clarity, even difficult or negative speech can be transformed into an opportunity for elevation and repair. By focusing on the inner root rather than the surface content, a person can help restore balance and holiness, both within themselves and in the world around them.

Chassidic Story:

It is told that a chassid once came to his teacher disturbed after hearing a troubling report about another person. He felt weighed down by the negativity and unsure what to do with what he had heard. The teacher told him that hearing such a story was not an accident. “If it reached your ears,” he said, “it means you have the strength to lift something within it.”

The teacher instructed him to pause, identify a positive quality or intention hidden beneath the report, and turn that awareness into a quiet prayer. The chassid later said that this practice changed how he listened to the world. Instead of feeling burdened by negativity, he began to experience himself as an active participant in repair, discovering that even fallen words could be lifted and transformed. **END NOTE]**

Siman #63

“A charming son is Joseph.” A parable of a king’s son who was captured by one of the servants, frivolous and loving revelry and drunkenness.

The son wished that his thought be bound with the thought of his father, so that he would be remembered in the heart of the king.

What did that son do. He bound himself constantly to delight, for his father surely is always engaged in delight, as befits a king.

Through this, his thought became bound with the thought of his father.

בן פרת יוסף. משל לבן מלך שנשכה לידי אחד מן העברים, פוזן ואזהב הוללות ושרחות.

וניה הבן רוזה שיקשר מתחבתו עם מתחבת אביו כדי שיכר בלב המלך.

מה עשה [אותו הבן], התקשר (את עצמו פמייד) בחרנו, שאביו בודאי עסוק תמיד בחרנו כמשפט הפלך.

ובזה מקשרת מתחבתו עם מתחבת אביו.

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The frivolous servant wished to go intoxicate himself and draw after wine, and he feared lest the captive escape, so he took him with him.

Both engage in drunkenness and go in joy, but their intentions are not the same.

For the king's son, even though he went in joy to the house of wine, his intent was not the materiality of the feast.

Through that he would not bind his thought with his father's thought, for it is not the way of a king to be drawn after wine.

Rather, his essential intent was that through this he would come to delight and joy.

And his thought would bind with the thought of his father, and he would be remembered before his father.

But the servant, his joy in going to the house of wine was focused on the materiality of the feast.

The application to a human being, that every person must always cleave to spiritual delight.

Even when a delight of this world comes to him, such as on Shabbat and festivals.

He should also be bound to the spiritual delight within that matter, which is the vitality of that thing.

And not to the materiality of the thing. Through this he is remembered before Hashem, blessed be He.

For He too, blessed be He, is always bound to spiritual delight, which we cannot grasp.

That delight is within the thing itself, which is its vitality, even though it is filled with materiality.

But when one cleaves to the materiality of the thing, such as eating delicacies, he is distanced from the Creator.

On the contrary, through this he is distanced from the Creator, blessed be He, as explained above in the parable.

When Israel pray and bind themselves to Hashem, a voice goes out: "Go forth and see, daughters of Zion."

Meaning, one for whom cleaving and unification are pleasant to him should "see."

ונגהה (העכד) הפוֹחוֹ רוזָה לִילָה לְשִׁפְרָעָעָם וְלִמְשָׁכוֹ
בֵּין, וַיַּרְא שָׁפָא יִבְרָח הַשְׁבּוֹי, וַיָּקַחוּ עָמוֹ

וְשְׁנֵיהם עֹסְקִים בְּשִׁכְרִית וְהַלְקִים בְּשִׁמְחָה, אֲבָל אֵין
כְּנוּתָם שָׁנוֹה

כִּי בָּוּ פָּלָךְ, אֲרָעֵל פִּי שְׁהָלָךְ [בְּשִׁמְחָה] לְבֵית הַיּוֹן,
אֵין כְּנוּתָו בְּחַמְרִיּוֹת הַמְּשִׁפְתָּה

כִּי בָּזָה לֹא יִתְקַשֵּׁר מַחְשְׁבָתוֹ עִם מַחְשְׁבַת אָבִיו, כִּי
אֵין זָרָה הַפְּלָךְ לְמַשְׁךְ בֵּין

רַק עַקְרָב מַחְשְׁבָתוֹ הִיְתָה שְׁמַחַת זֶה יָבוֹא לִידֵי מַעֲנָג
וְשִׁמְחָה

וְתַחַקְשֵׁר מַחְשְׁבָתוֹ בְּמַחְשְׁבַת אָבִיו, וַיַּכְרֵב אֶל אָבִיו

וְהַעֲכָד [שְׁמַחַתוֹ בְּהַלְיכָתוֹ אֶל בֵּית הַיּוֹן קִימָה] עַקְרָב
מַחְשְׁבָתוֹ בְּחַמְרִיּוֹת הַמְּשִׁפְתָּה

וְהַמְּמַלֵּל לְזֹנוֹ אָדָם [נֵא שְׁבַנְוּ כָל אָדָם] אֶזְרִיךְ לְהִיוֹת
וּפְמִיד דָּבָוק בְּתַעֲנָג רַוְחָנִי (נֵא רַוְחָנִי)

וְגַם כְּשִׁזְׁזָנוֹ לֹא מַעֲנָג מַתְעָנוֹגִי עַזְלָם הַזָּה [כִּמוֹ]
[בְּשִׁבְתָּה וַיּוֹם טוֹב

וְהִיָּה גַם כִּי דָּבָוק בְּתַעֲנָג רַוְחָנִי (נֵא רַוְחָנִי) שְׁבַדְבָּר
הַהְוָא, שַׁהְוָא חַיְוָת שֶׁל הַדְּבָר

וְלֹא לְחַמְרִיּוֹת הַדְּבָר]. וְבָזָה [נֵא שְׁעַל יְדֵי שַׁהְוָא]
דָּבָוק בְּתַעֲנָג רַוְחָנִי] נִזְכֵּר אֶל הַשָּׁם יִתְבְּרָךְ

כִּי [גַם] הַוָּא יִתְבְּרָךְ דָּבָוק פְּמִיד בְּתַעֲנָג רַוְחָנִי (נֵא
רַוְחָנִי), שָׁאַיְן אָנוּ יִכּוֹלִים לְהִשְׁגַּגְוָה

שְׁבַדְבָּר הַהְוָא, שַׁהְוָא חַיְוָת שֶׁל הַדְּבָר מְלָא חַמְרִיּוֹת

אֲבָל כִּשְׁהָוָא דָּבָוק לְחַמְרִיּוֹת הַדְּבָר, בְּגַזְוּ אָזְכֵל
מַעֲדָנִים (נֵא בְּגַזְוּ אָזְכֵל עַל דָּרָךְ מַשְׁלָחָן הַפְּנִיל

אֲזְרָבָא (בָּזָה) הַוָּא מַרְדָּק מִן הַבּוֹרָא יִתְבְּרָךְ כִּנְזָר
לְעַזְלָבְּמַשְׁלָחָן.

וְנִגְהָה כְּשִׁיְשָׁרָאֵל מַתְפְּלִילִים וּמַתְדְּבָקִים אֶת עָצָם
לְהַשָּׁם יִתְבְּרָךְ, קָלָא נִפְיקָא צַאֲנָה וּרְאַיָּה בְּנֹתָ צַיּוֹן

דְּהַיּוֹן, מַי שְׁשִׁיקָה לֹא הַקְּבָקוֹת וּמִיחְיָה וּנִיחָא לִיהְיָה
[יְרָאָה], וְזָהָוּ וּרְאַיָּה.

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And one for whom cleaving is not pleasant should go out.

When the forces of impurity hear this voice, they wish to nullify the person from his prayer.

Through a foreign thought and through pleasure of the time.

The vitality of that pleasure also runs together with the materiality and shell of that pleasure.

For the vitality is a holy spark, and it is like the king's son mentioned earlier.

For the spark desires to cleave to its Father, therefore it too runs to cleave in joy.

If the person is discerning, he will thereby cleave even more to Hashem.

By thinking that Hashem gives life to that thing which falls into his thought.

That thought itself is wisdom, for "all were made with wisdom," and "Hashem with wisdom."

Meaning, the power of the Creator rests in wisdom.

According to this, there is a portion of divinity in the foreign thought.

It is the power of the actor that gives life to that thing.

Immediately he clothes himself in love and awe because of the holy spark in that thing.

He says in his heart: if not for the divine portion giving it life, it could not exist.

Why then should I cleave to its materiality. Better that I cleave to its vitality.

Which is one of the powers of Hashem.

Therefore he binds himself in love and awe of Hashem.

Through this he elevates the spark within that matter.

Likewise in eating and other pleasures, with the stated intention, he elevates the sparks within them.

ומי שאין כקבות ניחא ליה יצא, וזה איננה לי.

וכשושומעים הקליפות הקול הזוה, או רוצים [נ"א רצים] לבטל האדם [הזה] מתקפתו.

במתקשה זרה וכתענוג [נ"א מטענוג] הזמן.

ונקליפה הטענוג הוה.

כִּי הַחַיָּה הוּא נִצּוֹן קְדוּשָׁו, וְהִיא כָּבוֹן הַפְּלָד הַזָּקָר.

כִּי הַנִּצּוֹן חַשְׁקָוּ לְהַקְּבִּיק בְּאָבִיו, וְעַל פָּנָיו גָּמְנִי [רָק].

כִּי אִם יָהִיה קָאִישׁ [הזה איש] גַּלְבָּב, קִיה מַדְבִּיק [נ"א או יַדְבִּיק אֶת עָצָמוֹ] עַל יָקִי זֶה יוֹמָר לְהַשְׁמָן יַתְּבִּרְךָ.

בְּחַשְׁבּוֹ [נ"א בְּמַחְשְׁבָתוֹ] שָׁבָרִי [היוֹצָר] הַמִּחְיָה אָתוֹ קָבָר חַנוֹפֵל [נ"א וְחַנוֹפֵל]. וּנ"א שְׁנִפְיָלָה [בְּמַחְשְׁבָתוֹ].

הָוָא חַכְמָה, כִּי כָּלָם בְּחַכְמָה עֲשִׂיתָ, וְכַתְּבוֹת ה' בְּחַכְמָה.

זָהִינָּנוּ פָּנָח הַבּוֹרָא שָׂוֹרָה בְּחַכְמָה.

אִם כֵּן לְפִי זֶה יִשְׁ [הַלְּקָ] אַלְקּוֹת בְּמַחְשָׁבָה זָרָה.

כִּי הַפּוּעַל הַמִּתְּהִיר אָתוֹ קָרְבָּן.

וְתַכְפִּי מַלְבִּישׁ [את] עָצָמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה וִירָאָה מִפְנֵי הַנִּצּוֹן הַקְּדוֹשָׁ שְׁבָרָבָר הַהוּא.

בְּאָמָרוּ בְּלִבּוֹ, כִּיּוֹן שְׁלׂוּלִי חַלְקָ אַלְקּוֹת הַמִּחְיָה אֵת קָבָר לֹא הִיא יִכּוֹל לְהִיוֹת.

וְאִם כֵּן לְאָהָרְבָּה לִי לְהַקְּבִּיק בְּחַמְרִיּוֹת קָבָר, מַוְעַב שָׁאָנִי אַדְבָּק בְּחַיּוֹתָו.

וְהָוָא כִּי מַלְחֹות הַשֵּׁם יַתְּבִּרְךָ.

לְכֹן מַתְּלַבְּשָׁ [נ"א מַדְבִּיק] אֶת עָצָמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה וִירָאָת ה' יַתְּבִּרְךָ.

וְבָזָה מַעַלָּה הַנִּצּוֹן [שְׁמַדְבָּר] [שְׁפְּתֹוחַ קָרְבָּר] הַהְיָא.

וְכֹן בְּאַכְילָה וּבְשָׁאָר מַעֲנָגִים בְּכָנוֹתָה הַגְּזָר מַעַלָּה הַנִּצּוֹצָת שְׁבָתוֹתָם.

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Therefore both the spark and the shell run in joy.

לְכָו שְׁנֵיכֶם, הַנִּצְזֹן וְהַקְלִיפָה, רָצִים בְּשָׁמָה

It is stated: the sons inherit and the daughters are sustained.

וְאִתָּא הַבְּנִים יִרְשׁוּ וְהַבְּנָות יִזְנוּ

The letters with which he prays now are called sons of the Holy One.

פִּירֹשׁ הַאֲוֹתִיות שֶׁהוּא מַתְפִלֵל [כְּעֵת] הַם נִקְרָאים בְּנִים לְהַקְדּוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא

They inherit. And the daughters are sustained.

הַם יִרְשׁוּ, וְהַבְּנָות יִזְנוּ

These are the letters of foreign thought, called daughters, as daughters of Zion.

דְּהַנִּינוּ אֲוֹתִיות שֶׁל מַחְשָׁבָה זָרָה, וּנִקְרָאוּ בְּנָות עַל שֵׁם בְּנָות צִוּן.

They are sustained now from the vitality received from the elevation just effected.

זְנוּנוּ, שְׁמַקְבּוֹלוֹת עַתָּה סִוִות מֵאֹתוֹ הַעַלְיהָ שְׁנִיתָה
לְכָו [נ"א שְׁנַתְעַלְוֹן] עַתָּה

For complete elevation cannot yet occur, as it is written "there is a time for every desire."

כִּי עַלְיהָ גָּמָרָה אֵין יָכֹלָה? לְהִיּוֹת עַתָּה, דְּכִתְיבַּ וְעַתָּה
לְכָל חֶפֶץ.

But this action is performed now, so that when the time arrives they will immediately ascend fully.

אֵךְ זֶה הַפְּעוֹולָה נְעִשִית עַתָּה, שְׁכַשְׁגִיּוּת הַעַת מַעֲשָׂה
לְכָו עַלְיהָ גָּמָרָה פָּכָר.

For now they receive vitality and sustenance until that time.

וְעַתָּה מַקְבּוֹלוֹת חַיּוֹת וּמְזוֹנוֹת עַד הַעֵת [נ"א חַיָּת

וּמְזוֹנוֹת עַל יְדֵי מִין נַקְבִּין] הַהוּא
וְהַיִינָנוּ יִזְנוּ.

And this is the meaning of "they are sustained."

This is "a fruitful son is Joseph." Meaning, the "son" refers to the letters with which he is praying now, and they are called sons, as explained above.

וְזַהֲוּ בָן פָּרָת יוֹסֵף, דְּהַנִּינוּ בָנוּ הַם קָאוֹתִיות שֶׁהוּא
(מַתְפִלֵל כְּעֵת, וּנִקְרָאוּ בְּנִים (כְּנֵל

They are "fruitful," meaning that they increase. Joseph means an addition of delight in Hashem.

הַם פָּרִתִים, רָצָה לְוָמֵר (שְׁהָם) מְרַבִּים. יוֹסֵף, הוּא
תוֹסֶף תְּפִעָנוֹג בְּהָשָׁם יִתְבָּרֵךְ.

"A fruitful son above the eye," for the eye is wisdom. Through wisdom they increase delight.

בְּנֵי פָרָת עַלְיָן זָוּן, כִּי עַזְן הִיא חִכָּמָה, דְּהַנִּינוּ שְׁעַל יְדֵי
חִכָּמָה (הַם) מְרַבִּין תְּפִעָנוֹג.

For all are refined through wisdom, as explained above, that through wisdom sparks are elevated.

כִּי בְּלָם בְּחִכָּמָה אַתְּבִרְרָיו, כִּמו שְׁנָאָמָר לְעַיל שְׁעַל
יְדֵי חִכָּמָה מַעַלְהָ נִצְצָוֹת.

This is "and wisdom gives life," etc. He then explains how through a foreign thought one adds delight.

וְהַיִינָנוּ וְהַקְרָבָה תִּפְתַּחְתָּה וְגַוּ. וּמִפְרַשׁ אֵיךְ שְׁעַל יְדֵי
מַחְשָׁבָה זָרָה מַזְרִיף תְּפִעָנוֹג

Alternatively, he explains how one comes to a foreign thought, through which he adds delight.

נ"א וּמִפְרַשׁ אֵיךְ בָּא לִיְדֵי מַחְשָׁבָה זָרָה שְׁעַל יְדֵי כָּן
(הַוָּא מַזְרִיף תְּפִעָנוֹג).

"Daughters" are the letters of foreign thought, as mentioned above.

בְּנָות הַם אֲוֹתִיות שֶׁל מַחְשָׁבָה זָרָה בְּנָכְרָה.

"They stepped upon the wall," a term of seeing, for they saw that now was a time of favor to ascend.

אֲשֶׁר עַלְיָ שָׁוֹר, לְשֹׁוֹן רַאְיהָ, שְׁרָאוּ שְׁכָעָת הַוָּא עַת
רְצֹוּ לְעַלּוֹת.

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Because they heard the voice of the herald, as explained above, therefore they stepped and came.

כִּי אָשָׁר שָׁמַעוּ קֹל הַפְּרוֹז (פְּנַיְלָ), לְכָנו אֲשָׁר וּבָאָו.

“They embittered him and shot at him and hated him, the masters of arrows,” meaning the shells of foreign thought.

וַיִּמְבַּרְהוּ וּרְבוּ וַיִּשְׁתַּמְחוּ בְּעֵלִי חָזִים, הַיּוֹנָה הַקָּלִיפּוֹת (שְׁלֵמֶתֶשֶׁבָּה זֶרֶה).

They wish to nullify him from his prayer. Therefore, if the discerning person thinks as stated.

שְׁרוֹצִים לְבַשְׁלֹו מַתְּפִלְתּוֹ. עַל כֵּן אִם אִישׁ הַגְּלַבְבָּן. נִחְשֵׁב בְּנַזְבָּן.

“His bow remained firm,” meaning his prayer rises with great delight called Eitan.

וַתִּשְׁבַּב בְּאִתָּנוֹ קָשְׁתּוֹ, דְּהַיָּנוּ שְׁתִּפְלָתוֹ עַזָּה בְּתַעֲנוֹג. גָּדוֹל הַגְּדָרָא אִיטָּן.

As it is written: “Eitan, this is Abraham.”

כְּמוֹ שְׁכָתוֹב אִיטָּן זוֹ הַאֲבָרָהָם.

[NOTE Summary:

“A charming son is Joseph.” The Maggid explains this verse through a parable of a king’s son who was captured by a servant who loved revelry and drunkenness. The son longed to reconnect his thoughts with the thoughts of his father so that he would be remembered in the king’s heart. To do so, he attached himself not to the external behavior of the servant, but to delight itself, knowing that a king is always associated with delight befitting royalty. Through delight, the son bound his thoughts to his father’s thoughts and was remembered by him.

Although both the servant and the king’s son went together to the house of wine, their intentions were entirely different. The servant sought the physical pleasure of the feast, while the king’s son had no interest in the materiality of the wine, since this could not connect him to his father. Rather, he sought the inner delight and joy that would realign his consciousness with that of the king. The same external action thus concealed two opposite inner orientations.

This parable becomes the foundation for understanding avodah. A person must always be attached to spiritual delight. Even when worldly pleasures arise, such as on Shabbat or festivals, one must seek the spiritual vitality within them rather than the physical gratification. Through attachment to the inner life force of the pleasure, a person is remembered before Hashem, because Hashem Himself is constantly bound to spiritual delight that transcends human comprehension.

The Maggid then explains what happens during prayer. When Israel pray and cleave to Hashem, a proclamation goes forth, “Go forth and see, daughters of Zion.” Those who find delight in cleaving remain and “see,” while those for whom cleaving is uncomfortable are sent away. At that moment, forces of distraction rush in, attempting to derail prayer through foreign thoughts and temporal pleasures. Yet even these distractions contain vitality, a holy spark that yearns to return to its source, like the king’s son yearning for his father.

If the person praying is discerning, they recognize that the thought which intrudes exists only because divine wisdom gives it life, as all things were made through wisdom. By focusing on the divine vitality within the thought rather than its material shell, the person immediately clothes themselves in love and awe of Hashem. In doing so, they elevate the spark within the distraction. The same principle applies to eating and other pleasures

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when approached with conscious intent. As a result, both the spark and even the external shell appear to move with joy, because the inner life force is being lifted.

The Maggid further explains the teaching that “the sons inherit and the daughters are sustained.” The letters of prayer are called sons, and they inherit their place above. The letters of foreign thought are called daughters. They cannot yet ascend fully, because every ascent has its appointed time, but they are sustained by the vitality received through partial elevation. When the proper time arrives, they will rise completely.

This culminates in the explanation of “A charming son is Joseph.” The “son” refers to the letters of prayer, which multiply and increase. Joseph signifies addition, the increase of delight above. “A charming son above the eye” teaches that through wisdom, symbolized by the eye, delight is multiplied, because wisdom refines and elevates sparks. The verse “they embittered him and shot at him” refers to the forces of distraction that seek to undermine prayer. Yet when a discerning person responds correctly, “his bow remains firm,” meaning the prayer ascends with great delight called Eitan, the enduring strength associated with Abraham.

Practical Takeaway:

Distractions, pleasures, and even intrusive thoughts are not obstacles by definition. When approached with awareness, they can become gateways to deeper attachment. The task is not to flee experience, but to seek its inner vitality and bind it back to its source through love and awe.

Chassidic Story:

A chassid once complained that during prayer his mind constantly wandered to mundane concerns, and he felt ashamed that he could not maintain pure focus. His teacher told him that the wandering itself was not the problem. “If those thoughts came to you,” he said, “it is because there is something in them that wants to return upward.”

He advised the chassid to pause when distracted and say silently, “You exist only because Hashem gives you life.” Instead of fighting the thought, the chassid learned to redirect it toward awareness of its Source. Over time, he found that his prayers became steadier and deeper. What once felt like interruption became a quiet invitation to greater closeness. **END NOTE]**

Siman #64

“His bow remained firm, and the arms of his hands were strengthened.” When a person prays, God forbid that he place all his desire upon the physical thing for which he is praying.

For there is no greater ulterior motive than this. Rather, he should set his thought on this: the giver desires to give more than the recipient desires to receive.

ותשב באיתנו קשתו ויפזו זרעינו יקדו. הנה קשאותם מתחפל חס וחלום לו לשום כל קשא בשביל אותן. כבר גופני שהוא מבקש עליו

כי אין לך פניה גדולה מזו, כי אם ישים מחשباتו. בזה שהרין אמרו יותר משעה געל וכוי.

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Meaning, the one who bestows wishes to bestow more than the recipient wishes to receive.

So too Hashem has great delight when He bestows abundance upon His creatures, more than the creatures delight in receiving from Him.

It is stated in the Zohar, in the Tikkunim, that “bow” is close to the term “request.”

This is “his bow remained firm,” meaning that he does not ask with intent for bodily pleasure.

Rather, he asks for the sake of Eitan, meaning the great delight that Hashem has when He bestows.

Then “the arms of his hands were strengthened,” meaning all his deeds and actions at this level are precious beyond measure.

When a father loves his son, the image of the son is engraved upon the tablet of his heart.

When he sees his son performing an act of wisdom, the father gazes at him.

At that moment, the engraving of the son in the father’s heart is entirely within the son.

For at that time the father places his eyes and heart entirely on the son.

The engraving itself is not visible even to the father as a separate image.

For it is entirely within the son.

Afterwards, when the son completes the act of wisdom, the father’s mind expands.

He then has great delight and takes pleasure in the engraving of the son engraved in his heart.

At that time there is an elevation of that engraving in the father’s heart.

This engraving is in truth the father himself, only engraved in the form of the son.

When it arose in primordial thought that Israel would exist, they were engraved upon His Throne of Glory.

וְהִנֵּנוּ כִּי הַמְשִׁפֵּיעַ רֹצֶחֶת לְהַשִּׁפֵּיעַ יוֹתֵר מִמֶּה שַׁהְגַּשְׁפֵּעַ
[רוֹצֶחֶת לְהַבְּלֵל] הַהַשִּׁפֵּעה.

כִּי הַשְּׁם יַחֲבֹר יְשֵׁל לֹא פָעֻנוֹג גָּדוֹל כַּשְׁהוּא מַשְׁפֵּיעַ
שַׁפֵּעַ לְבָרִיּוֹתִיו, יוֹתֵר מִן הַבָּרוֹאִים הַנְּשִׁפְעִים מִמֶּנּוּ
יַחֲבֹר.

וְאַתָּא (בָּזָה) [בְּתַקְוִינִים] דַּקְשַׁתָּא הוּא קָרוֹב לְלָשׁוֹן
בְּקָשָׁה.

וְזַהֲיוֹ וְתַשְּׁבָּב אֲיִתָּן קַשְׁתָּו, דַּהֲנֵנוּ שַׁאַיָּנוּ מַבְקָשׁ וּמַתְפִּוּן
לְהַנְּאָתָגְוּפּוּ.

כִּי אִם הוּא מַבְקָשׁ בְּשִׁבְיל אַיִתָּן, דַּהֲנֵנוּ פָעֻנוֹג גָּדוֹל
שַׁיְשַׁל לְהַשְּׁם יַחֲבֹר מִהָּה שַׁהְוָא מַשְׁפֵּיעַ

אוֹ וַיְפֹזּוּ זָרְעֵי יְהִיוּ, דַּהֲנֵנוּ כָּל מַעֲשָׂה יְהִיוּ וְכָל
עֲבוֹדֹתָיו שְׁלֹו, כַּשְׁהוּא בְּמִקְרָגָה זֹו, הַמִּקְרָים מִפּוֹ

וְהַנְּהָה כְּשַׁהָּאָב אָוֹהָב אֶת בָּנוֹ אָז תִּמְינֵת בְּנֵו חַקּוֹתָה עַל
לוֹת לְבָבוֹ.

וְכַשְׁהָוָא רֹצֶחֶת אֶת בָּנוֹ שַׁעֲוֹשָׁה דַּבְּרָחַכְמָה אָז הָאָב
מִסְתַּבֵּל בְּבוֹ.

וְכָבֵד הַסְּתָבְּלוּתָו בְּזַהֲקִיקָה שֶׁל הַבָּן שְׁבָלֵב הָאָב
הָיָה בְּקָלָה בְּבָנוֹ.

כִּי הָאָב מִשְׁים בָּעֵת הַהִיא עַיִנִּיו וְלָבּוּ בְּבָנוֹ
וְאַיִתָּה נְרָאֵית הַסְּתָבְּלוּתָה הַנְּגַכֵּר אֲפִילוּ לְאָבָל תִּתְמֹונָה
בְּפָנֵי עַצְמָה.

כִּי בְּקָלָה בְּבָנוֹ.

אָכְלָל אַחֲרָכוֹ, כְּשִׁיגָּמֶר הַבָּן הַדָּבָר חַכְמָה, אָז גַּתְרָחָב
וְהַדְּעָת שֶׁל הָאָב

וַיְשַׁל פָעֻנוֹג גָדוֹל, וּמַתְהָנָה וּמַתְעָנָג (אֶת עַצְמוֹ)
בְּזַהֲקִיקָה הַבָּן שְׁחַקּוֹק בְּלָבּוֹ

וְהַנְּהָה הַהִיא יִשְׁעַלְיָה לְאֹוֹתָה זַהֲקִיקָה שְׁבָלֵב הָאָב וְזֶה
לְאַמְּבִין.

וְהַנְּהָה זַהֲקִיקָה הַנְּגַכֵּר הָיָה בְּאַמְּתָה הָאָב עַצְמוֹ, אָלֶא
שַׁהָּיָה חַקּוֹתָה עַל תִּמְינָת הַבָּן

וְהַנְּהָה כְּשַׁעַלְלָה בְּמַחְשָׁבָה הַקְּדוּמָה שַׁיְהִיוּ יִשְׁרָאֵל
בְּעֹלָם, אָז נְחַקְקָוּ עַל כְּפָא כְּבָזָז יַחֲבֹר.

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This was due to His love for them. Therefore they are called Israel, “li rosh,” for in their hands is to make a head.

As in a parable, when a person sees his son in pain he says, “I am going without a head.”

When his son is filled with goodness, he is complete.

Israel, this engraving, was not completed until the existence of Jacob in the world of action.

That is, complete existence within the world of action, therefore we are called Jacob, from the term heels.

When we perform good deeds, there is delight for Hashem, as it were.

Then the engraving rests upon Him. Afterwards there is an elevation of that engraving, as explained.

This explains why “the arms of his hands were strengthened,” for from the Mighty One of Jacob.

Meaning, through our good deeds, from there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel.

The Targum explains “stone” as father and son.

Meaning, the engraving is in essence the father himself, but it is in the form of the son.

Therefore it is called “stone,” father and son, and it is nourished from our good deeds.

Understand this very well.

[NOTE Summary:

This maamar centers on the verse “And his bow remained firm, and the arms of his hands were strengthened,” interpreting it as a foundational principle in prayer and divine service. The Maggid teaches that when a person prays, they must never direct their entire desire toward the physical object they are requesting. To do so is the greatest form of self-interest, because it turns prayer into a demand for personal gratification rather than a meeting of wills. Instead, one must recognize that the true desire of the Giver exceeds the desire of the receiver. Hashem’s delight in bestowing good is greater than the created being’s delight in receiving it.

Prayer, therefore, is not meant to extract benefit, but to create a channel through which divine delight can flow. The Zohar explains that the word “bow” is linguistically close to “request.” “His bow remained firm” means that one’s request is stable and upright only when it is aimed not at bodily pleasure, but at the delight that

מחלוקת אהבתו אותם. ועל שם כן נקראו ישראל, לי.
ראש, שביבם לעשות ראש.

על דרכ משל, כשהאדם רואה עצער בנו או אומר אני
הולך בלי ראש.

וכשננו הוא מ מלא כל טוב או הוא שלם.

והפה ישראל, שהוא החקיקה הנזקרת, לא נגירה עד
בognition מציאות יעקב.

דינו מציאות שלם בעולם העשיה, וכך אנו
גקריםם יעקב, לשון יעקב.

וכשננו עושים מעשים טובים או יש תענוג להשם
יתברך בכוכב.

ושורה עליו החקיקה הנזקרת. ואחר כן יש עלה
לחיקקה הנזקרת בכוכב נזקבר.

וזהו שמאפרש אמא ויפזו זרעי יזרע פזקבר, לפי
שמינדי אבר יעקב.

דינו ממעשה (על ידי מעשה) ידינו הטובים,
מן רעה אבו ישראל.

ומפרש התרגומים אב ובן.

דינו החקיקה הנזקרת היא בעצם האב בעצמו, אלא
ש היא על שם תפונת לבנו.

על כן נקרא אבו, [שהוא] אב ובן, והוא רעה, דינו
ניזון, ממעשה ידינו הטובים כבנפר לעיל.

והבנו זה מאד.

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Hashem experiences in giving. When a person prays in this way, their actions become precious beyond measure, likened to refined gold, because they are aligned with the inner will of the Creator.

The Maggid then illustrates this dynamic with a powerful analogy of a father and son. When a father loves his son, the image of the son is engraved upon the tablet of his heart. When the father watches the son performing an act of wisdom, the father's entire awareness is absorbed in the son, to the point that the engraved image no longer exists as something separate. Only after the son completes his action does the father experience expanded delight, taking pleasure in the engraved image within himself. This engraving is not something external to the father. It is the father himself, expressed through the form of the son.

So too, when it arose in primordial thought that Israel would exist, they were engraved upon the Throne of Glory because of divine love. This is why Israel are called "Israel," interpreted as "li rosh," meaning "they make Me a head." When Israel are in distress, it is as if the Head is incomplete. When Israel act rightly, the Head is whole. However, this engraving is not completed until Israel exist fully in the world of action, which is why they are also called Jacob, from the word "heel," referring to physical, grounded existence.

When Israel perform good deeds and pray with the proper intention, they generate divine delight, as it were. The engraving of Israel then rests upon Hashem, and afterward rises to a higher level. This explains the continuation of the verse: "from the Mighty One of Jacob, from there the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel." The Targum explains "stone" as father and son together. The engraving is essentially the Father Himself, yet it appears in the form of the son. This "stone" is nourished by the good deeds of Israel, meaning that divine delight is drawn forth through human action aligned with divine will.

Practical Takeaway:

Prayer is not about persuading Hashem to give, but about aligning oneself with Hashem's desire to give. When a person prays without self-interest and focuses on being a vessel for divine delight, their actions gain enduring spiritual weight. True avodah is not measured by what one receives, but by how deeply one becomes aligned with the divine will expressed through giving.

Chassidic Story:

It is recorded in early chassidic tradition that a scholar once came to the Maggid of Mezritch deeply troubled. He explained that he prayed fervently for success in his livelihood, but felt that his prayers were heavy and resisted, as though they could not rise. He feared that his requests were being ignored.

The Maggid asked him a single question: "When you pray, whose joy fills your mind, yours or His?"

The scholar was silent.

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The Maggid then explained that a father takes no pleasure in a child who demands gifts for himself alone. The father's joy awakens when the child delights in the relationship itself. He told the scholar to return to prayer and say: "Master of the world, I do not ask so that I may have ease, but so that Your generosity may be revealed."

Sometime later, the scholar returned and said that although his circumstances had not yet changed, his prayer had become lighter, steadier, and filled with calm joy. The Maggid responded that this itself was the sign of success. "When your prayer gives Him pleasure," he said, "the engraving is complete. What must follow will follow in its proper time."

END NOTE]