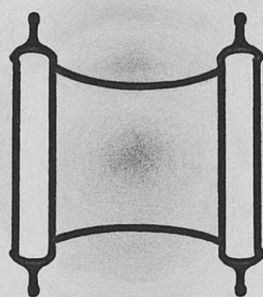


בס"ד

The Maggid of Mezritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Vayechi



Dedicated To:

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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.

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֶת יוֹסֵף וַיֹּאמֶר וְגו' הַמַּלְאָךְ הַגָּאֹל וְגו' יְבָרֶךְ (אֶת הַנְּעָרִים. פִּירוּשׁ בְּזוֹהַר בְּרַפְתָּא דְּבְנִין (וכו')

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.

אף על פי שהוא שלם מצדו, מצד בְּנִין אין תְּעֻנּוּגוֹ [שְׁלִימוֹתוֹ] (שְׁלִימוֹת בְּנִיו).

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.

כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמְרוּ רַז"ל יְהִי רְצוֹן שְׁיִהְיוּ צִאצְאֵי מַעֲיָה בְּמוֹד. מֵה שְׂאִין בֶּן אִם לֹא הָיוּ לוֹ בְּנִין אֵין צָרָה לָזֶה.

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.

וְהַבֵּן הַחָכָם מְבַקֵּשׁ הַכֹּל בְּשִׁבְלֵי תְעֻנּוּג אָבִיו, וְאָבִיו בְּרֹאוֹתוֹ כִּי בֶן נוֹתֵן לוֹ בְּשִׁבְלֵי (נ"א בְּשִׁבְלֵי) בְּנִיו.

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.

וְזֶה וְהָשִׁיב לֵב אָבוֹת עַל בְּנִים וְגו', וְזֶהוּ עֲנִין בְּרֻכּוֹת ד' שְׁמִבְרָכִין יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאֲבִיהֶם שְׁבִשְׁמֵיהֶם.

This is beyond you.

קִשְׁת מִמֶּךָ

[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

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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.

אֶפְרַיִם וּמְנַשֶּׁה כְּרֵאוּבֵן וְשִׁמְעוֹן יִהְיוּ לִי. כִּי יֵשׁ שְׁנֵי מִיְּנֵי מַדְרֵגוֹת. הָאֶחָת, מַחְמַת תּוֹרָה וּתְפִלָּה מְחַזְקִים יוֹתֵר לַעֲבוֹדַת ה'.

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.

הַשְּׁנִית, אִם עַל פִּי שְׁעוּבָה בְּלֹא שִׂכָּל, אִם עַל פִּי כּוֹ מַתְאַוֶּה יוֹתֵר לַעֲבוֹדַת הַבּוֹרָא, כְּמִשָּׁל אֶחָד שֶׁנָּסַע הֶרְבֵּה מֵיְלִין לְעִיר.

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.

אִם עַל פִּי שְׁמִסִּיתִין אוֹתוֹ שֶׁלֹּא יֵסַע לְעִיר הַהִיא, אֹמֵר הָלֹא נָסַעְתִּי כָּד הֶרְבֵּה, אִידֵּי אֵינִי בְּאֶמְצַע.

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.

הַצַּדִּיק נִקְרָא כָל, שֶׁהַכָּל הוֹלֵךְ עַל יָדָיו, וְנִקְרָא אֶפְרַיִם, שֶׁפֶּרָה וְרָבָה מַחְמַת מִצְוֹתָיו כְּנֶזֶקֶר.

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.

וַיֵּשׁ עוֹד מַדְרֵגָה שֶׁנִּקְרָא מְנַשֶּׁה, שֶׁהוּא לְשׁוֹן שְׁכָחָה, עַל דֶּרֶךְ כִּי נִשְׁכַּח מִבֵּית אָבִי, שֶׁשׁוֹכֵחַ בְּהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

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.

וְהָאָדָם יִתֵּן אֵל לְבוֹ הָלֹא לֹא עֲבָדְתִּי אֶת ה', כִּי אֵין הָאָדָם נִקְרָא עוֹבֵד ה' אֲלֵא בִירְאָה וְאַהֲבָה.

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

וְהִירְאָה הִיא מֵה שֶׁתּוֹפֵל עָלָיו יְרָאָה, וְלֹא מֵה שֶׁמְעוֹרֵר אֶת עַצְמוֹ לִירְאָה, כִּי זֶה הוּא רַק הַעֲלָאת מִן הַבּוֹקֵין.

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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 היראה העקרית כשתפול עליו חיל ורעד, ומחמת הפחד אינו יודע היכן הוא, והמוחין ננדככו, ויורדין דמעות מאליהן.

אבל כשאינו כה, אף על פי שנראה לו שהוא עובד ואוהב את השם יתברך, בודאי אינו כלום.

כי זה השער לה', יראה היא השער לאהבה, ואם אינו בשער הזה הנקרא יראה איך אפשר לו לבוא לאהבה.

על דרך נודע בשערים בעלה, כשהאדם עם השכינה, פירוש עם היראה, מתחבר אליו הקדוש ברוך הוא.

דרך של איש לחזור אחר אשה, הקדוש ברוך הוא שנקרא איש מחזר אחר מי שיש בו יראה שנקראת 'אשה, ואז נקרא עם ה'.

אבל מי שעובד ואינו אפילו עבד, ומכל שכן שאינו במדרגה זו שתפול עליו היראה, ועובד את ה' רק מצות אנשים מלומדה.

על כן ישוב אל ה' ויעבד בחשק גדול יותר, וזהו נקרא מנשה, כי מחמת ששכח את עצמו עובד אותו יותר.

וראו גם כן פירושו כמו אפרים דלעיל, על דרך חזי במאי ברא אתינא לגבך. ושמעון 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.

במדבר האלקים הרועה אותי וגו', רבי יוחנן וריש לקיש. רבי יוחנן אמר לרועה העומד ומביט בצאן ההולכים לפניו.

וריש לקיש אמר לנשיא שהוא הולך וזקנים הולכים לפניו. על דעתיה דרבי יוחנן אנו צריכין לכבודו, ועל דעתיה דריש לקיש הוא צריך לכבודינו.

ואפשר על פי מה שאמרו רז"ל ישראל מפרנסים וכו'. ולכאורה אינו מובן, איזה פרנסה שיהיה למעלה.

ונראה לי על דרך מה שכתוב ישראל אשר בך אתפאר, שיש להשם יתברך התפארות ממעשי הצדיקים ומתורתו.

וכמו שכתוב חכם בני וגו', וגורם נחת ושמחה לעיניו. וידוע כי השמחה באה מחמת תענוג ונחת שיהיה לו.

ואחר התענוג באה השמחה. והנה התענוג והנחת הוא המשפיע, כמשל אדם אוכל איזו אכילה ושבע ממנה.

הנה בחוש נראה שהשבע בא לאדם מכח החיות והרוחניות שבתוך המאכל, ולא מהמאכל הגשמי.

רק מהתענוג והעדון שבתוך המאכל שהוא רוחני. ועוד יש ראיה, כי כאשר בא אל האדם איזה תענוג שיש לו נחת ממנו הוא שבע.

אם כן רואים אנו בחוש שהתענוג משפיע. כך הוא בכלל הצדיקים גורמים שמחה ותענוג לעיניו, ונקרא זה בכלל כעין פרנסה.

ונקדים לזה מה שכתוב הקבצו ושמעו בני יעקב ושמעו אל ישראל אביכם. קשה למה קורא אותם. תחלה בני יעקב ואחר כך ישראל אביכם.

ואמר להם כי הנה ידוע כי כל ההשפעה באה מהתקמה שהיא יו"ד. והנה באות יו"ד יש ראש תוד סוף.

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

שהוא קוצא דלעילא וקוצא דלתתא וגוף הי"ד, שהם שלוש יודין.

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

ואמר להם כי הקוצא דלעילא רומז לישראל, לי ראש. וקוצא דלתתא רומז ליעקב, יו"ד עקב

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

וגוף הי"ד רומז לשם ישורון, כי אין שריה בפחות משלוש.

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.

והם שלושה שמות ישראל ישורון יעקב, המתחילים באות יו"ד. ויעקב הוא הנקרא בריח התיכון המכריח מן הקצה אל הקצה

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

וכתוב כלם בחקמה עשית, כי כל החיות וההיות של העולמות כלם נמשכו מחכמה עילאה הנקראת ראשית

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

ואמר להם שזהו הקוץ העליון הנקרא לי ראש, הוא ראשית חכמה. וישורון הוא גוף הי"ד שהוא המשכה מעילא לתתא

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

ויעקב הוא יו"ד תתאה שהיא ההסתכלות, פנודע שההסתכלות היא מדרגה תחתונה שבחכמה, וזהו הנקרא עין יעקב

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

ועין נקראת חכמה, כמו עיני העדה

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.

והנה נמשל זה דמיון אב המלמד את בנו. הנה הבן מקבל חכמת האב, ומה שמשיג הכל הוא מפח הדבורים של האב

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.

כי חכמת האב גדולה היא עד מאד ונעלמת בהעלם גדול. רק מה שמשיג הבן הוא מפח שהאב מצמצם חכמתו

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.

ומקטין כפי ערך השגת הבן ומלבישה בדבורים, וגם הבן באשר הוא שם מחשבתו ורעיונו אל הדבורים מקבל משם

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

כי שם נעשית אחדות אחד. וזהו שנאמר פתח פיה ויאירו דבריה

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

פירוש כי החכמה מאירה בתוך הדבור, ומפח זה גם בן יאירו לזולתו שיוכל התלמיד להשיגו

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.

ואז יש לאב תענוג, כמשל התינוק המבקש איזה דבר מאביו, וכשהאב עושה רצון התינוק ונותן לו אותו הדבר יש לאב תענוג מזה

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

וְהוּא צַדִּיק מוֹשֵׁל וְגו', כִּי רְצוֹנוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ וּרְצוֹן הַצַּדִּיק בְּעֶשְׂהָ אֶחָד.

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

וְיָמָה שֶׁהַצַּדִּיק רוֹצֶה זֶהוּ רְצוֹנוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ, וְיָכוֹל לְהַפֵּךְ מִדַּת הַדִּין לְרַחֲמִים.

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

וְזֶהוּ שֶׁאָמְרוּ רַז"ל אִי בָעוּ צַדִּיקָנָא הָווּ מַבְרִי עֲלָמָא.

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.

כִּי הָלֹא בְדִבְרֵי ה' שָׁמַיִם נַעֲשׂוּ, וְכַתוּב וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפִּיו נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים, וּמִתְרַגְּמִין רוּחַ מְמַלְלָא.

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

וְהִנֵּה בִּהְשֵׁם יִתְבָּרֵךְ לֹא שִׁינָה לִזְמַר חֲלָקִים, כִּי הוּא אֵין סוּף, וּבְאֵין סוּף לֹא שִׁינָה לִזְמַר חֲלָק.

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

וְאִם כֵּן בְּדִבּוּר הוּא נִכְלָל הַכֹּל. נִמְצָא לָפִי זֶה אִי בָעוּ צַדִּיקִים הָווּ מַבְרִי עֲלָמָא.

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

כִּי דִבּוּרוֹ שֶׁל הַצַּדִּיק הוּא וְהַיָּד וְנִקְי בְּלִי שׁוּם מַסָּךְ הַמַּבְדִּיל.

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

וְלֹא כְמוֹ חֵס וְשָׁלוֹם הַנִּרְגָּן מִפְּרִיד אֱלוֹהֵי, אֱלוּפּוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, רַק דִּבּוּרוֹ שֶׁל הַצַּדִּיק הוּא מְדַבֵּק וּמְקַשֵּׁר לְשִׁרְשׁוֹ.

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

וְהָרִי הוּא מִמָּשׁ כְּמוֹ דִּבּוּרוֹ שֶׁל הָשֵׁם יִתְבָּרֵךְ אֲשֶׁר מִמֶּנּוּ שָׁמַיִם נַעֲשׂוּ, וְיָמָה גַּם כִּי רְצוֹן הַצַּדִּיק הוּא רְצוֹנוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ כִּנּוּכָר.

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.

וְהִנֵּה יָדוּעַ כִּי הַדִּבּוּר נִמְשָׁךְ מֵהֶלֶב לְכַנְפֵי רִיאַה, וּמִשָּׁם יוֹצֵא הַקּוֹל, וּמִשָּׁם נַעֲשֶׂה הַדִּבּוּר.

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

וְהִנֵּה הַבִּנְת הֶלֶב עַל פְּרָחוֹ שֶׁמִּקְבֶּלֶת מִדְּבַר אַחֵר. אֲשֶׁהוּא הַמַּחְשְׁבָה, כִּי עַל יְדֵי נִקְרָא הֶלֶב מִבֵּין.

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

פִּירוּשׁ שֶׁמִּבֵּין דְּבַר מֵתוֹךְ דְּבַר, שֶׁמִּקְבֶּל מִדְּבַר אַחֵר הַהִבְנָה, אֲשֶׁהוּא הַמַּחְשְׁבָה, וְנַעֲשֶׂה זָכוֹן.

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

וְהִיא, הַמַּחְשְׁבָה הַטְהוּרָה, הִיא הַחוֹקֶקֶת בְּהִבְנָה, וְהַקּוֹל הוּא הַחוֹקֵק בְּדִבּוּר, נִמְצָא כִּי מְלוּבָשִׁים אֵלּוּ שְׁתֵּי חֲקִיקוֹת זֶה בְּזֶה.

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

וְזֶה נִקְרָא לְבִנְת הַסַּפִּיר, כִּי סַפִּיר הוּא לְשׁוֹן זֹהָר וּבְהִירוּת, אֲשֶׁהוּא הַסִּתְמָכְלוּת הַמַּחְשְׁבָה הַנִּקְרָאת עֵין.

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Like lightning that flashes and illuminates suddenly, so thought engraves and illuminates the heart's understanding in an instant.	כְּמוֹ בָּרָק הַמְּבַהֵיק וּמְבַהֵיר פְּתָאִים, כֵּן הַמַּחְשְׁבָה חוֹקֶקֶת וּמְאִירָה לְהִבְנֵת הַלֵּב, וְהוּא כְּמוֹ עֵין הַמְּבַהֵיק וּמְבִיט פְּתָאִים כְּהֶרֶף עֵין.
This is the supernal engraving. Additionally, sapphire also means counting, referring to the lower engraver, which is the voice that engraves speech.	וְזֶהוּ חֲקִיקָה עֲלִיוֹנָה. וְעוֹד, כִּי סִפֵּיר הוּא לְשׁוֹן סִפִּירַת דְּבָרִים, וְהוּא הַמְּחֻקֵּק הַתַּתָּוֹן, שֶׁהוּא הַקּוֹל הַחוֹקֵק הַדְּבוּר.
This is what is meant by "The scepter shall not depart from Judah," for the Jewish man, the righteous one, is called Judah.	וְזֶהוּ שֶׁאָמַר לֹא יִסּוֹר שִׁבְט מִיְּהוּדָה וְגו', פִּירוּשׁ כִּי אִישׁ הַיִּשְׂרָאֵלִי, הַצָּדִיק הַנִּקְרָא עַל שֵׁם אִישׁ יְהוּדָה.
The scepter and rule do not depart from him, for the righteous rules through awe of God.	לֹא יִסּוֹר שִׁבְט וּמוֹשֵׁל מִמֶּנּוּ, כִּי הַצָּדִיק מוֹשֵׁל בְּיָרֵאֵת אֱלֹקִים וְגו'.
"And a lawgiver from between his feet" refers to the two engravings of the sapphire pavement, as stated.	וּמְחֻקֵּק מִבֵּין רַגְלָיו, שֶׁהוּא שְׁתֵּי חֲקִיקוֹת לְבִנְת הַסִּפֵּיר בְּנִזְכָּר.
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.	שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וַתַּחַת רַגְלָיו כְּמַעֲשֵׂה לְבִנְת הַסִּפֵּיר, שֶׁהוּא מַדַּת הַצָּדִיק עֲלֵמָא דְּאַתְפְּסִינָא כְּפִדּוּעַ.
When the righteous nullifies decrees of the Holy One, He has satisfaction and great delight from this.	וְהִנֵּה הַצָּדִיק הַמְּבַטֵּל גְּזֵרוֹתָיו שֶׁל הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, יֵשׁ לוֹ יְתִבְרָךְ נַחַת מְזֶה וַתַּעֲנוּג גָּדוֹל.
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."	כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמְרוּ רַז"ל רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻעַ אָמַר אֵין מְשַׁגְּחִין בֵּית קוֹל, וְהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מָאִי עָבִיד, קָא חֲתִיד וְאָמַר נִצְחוּנִי בְּנֵי.
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.	וְזֶהוּ פִירוּשׁ הַמְּדַרְשׁ הַנִּזְכָּר, הָאֱלֹקִים הַרוֹעֶה אוֹתִי וְגו', וְאֵלּוּ וְאֵלּוּ דְּבָרֵי אֱלֹקִים חַיִּים וְלֹא פְּלִיגִי.
Rabbi Yochanan speaks of influence from Above to below, for we surely need His honor.	רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן אָמַר לְרוּעֶה שֶׁהוּא מְבִיט בְּצִאֲנוּ, הוּא מְדַבֵּר בְּהַשְׁפָּעָה מַעֲלָא לְתַתָּא, כִּי בְּיָדָאִי אֲנוּ צָרִיכִין לְכַבּוֹדוֹ יְתִבְרָךְ.
Reish Lakish speaks of the ultimate purpose of creation, to cause delight Above, and in that sense He "needs" our honor.	וְרִישׁ לָקִישׁ אָמַר לְנִשְׂיָא שְׂזֻקָּנִים הוֹלְכִים לְפָנָיו, הוּא מְדַבֵּר בְּעֶקֶר תְּקִלַּת הַבְּרִיאָה לַעֲשׂוֹת נַחַת וְרִצּוֹן לַעֲלִיא.
As the sages said that Israel "sustain" Above, for He has satisfaction and delight when He fulfills our will.	כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמְרוּ רַז"ל יִשְׂרָאֵל מְפָרְנִסִּים וְכו', וּבִזְהָ הָעֶרְךָ צָרִיךְ הוּא לְכַבּוֹדֵינוּ, כִּי יֵשׁ לוֹ מְזֶה נַחַת רוּחַ וַתַּעֲנוּג כְּשֶׁעוֹשֶׂה רְצוֹנֵנוּ.
And, as it were, He needs our honor.	וְכַבֵּיכּוֹל הוּא צָרִיךְ לְכַבּוֹדֵינוּ.

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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.

חֲכָלֵי עֵינַיִם מִיַּיִן וְלֶבָן שִׁנַּיִם מִחֶלֶב. פִּירוּשׁ כִּי יֵשׁ שְׁנֵי מִיַּיִם אֲדִימוֹת. אַחַת הִיא גְבוּרוֹת, וְהַשְּׁנִיָּה הִיא מִיַּיִן וְשֶׁהוּא שְׂמֵחָה.

וּבְאֲדִימוֹת הַשְּׁנִיָּה, אֲדִרְבָּה נִמְתְּקִין כָּל הָאֲדִימוֹת הָרִאשׁוֹנוֹת. מִשָּׁל לְמֶלֶךְ.

כְּאֲשֶׁר הוּא בְּשִׂמְחָה אֵז רְשׁוּת לְפָנֶיךָ לְפָנָיו אֶף לְמִי שֶׁאֵינוֹ רָאוּי וְהַגּוֹן בְּלֹא הֶכִי.

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This is “dark of eyes from wine.” And then “white of teeth from milk.”	וזהו חֲכָלִילִי עֵינַיִם מִיַּיִן. וְאֵז וּלְבָן שְׁנַיִם מִחֶלֶב.
Meaning, even one who is unfit and hard like a tooth, as in the term “tooth of rock,” becomes whiter than milk.	רָצָה לוֹמַר כִּי גַם מִי שְׁאִינוּ הִגּוֹן וְקוֹשֶׁה כְּמוֹ שֵׁן, לְשׁוֹן שֵׁן סֹלֶעַ, נִעְשֶׂה לָבָן יוֹתֵר מִחֶלֶב.
And the reason the letter נ of “חֲכָלִילִי” is large is because there is a parable concerning large letters.	וְמֵה שְׁאוֹת חֵית מִחֲכָלִילִי הוּא גָדוֹל, כִּי יֵשׁ מִשָּׁל עַל הָאוֹתִיּוֹת הַגְּדוֹלוֹת.
It is of one who built a city surrounded by a wall and made within it towers that are high.	לְאֶחָד שֶׁבָּנָה עִיר מְקַפֶּת חוֹמָה וְעָשָׂה בְּתוֹכָהּ [נ"א בְּחוֹמָהּ] מִגְדָּלִים גְּבוּהִים.
They serve for two purposes: one is as a vessel and place for observation to see afar.	וְהֵם בְּשִׁבִּיל שְׁנֵי דְבָרִים. הָאֶחָד שֶׁהוּא כְּלִי וּמָקוֹם לְהִסְתַּכְּלוֹת הַצּוֹפֶה לְמִרְחוֹק.
And the second is that the guards of the city sit there.	וְהַשְּׁנִי שֶׁשׁוּמְרֵי הָעִיר יוֹשְׁבִים שָׁם.
It is written, “To You, Hashem, is greatness,” meaning the letter ה of greatness, the first ה, the letters of thought.	וְכָתוּב לָךְ ה' הַגְּדוֹלָה, דִּהְיִנוּ הָא גְדוּלָה שֶׁהִיא הָא רִאשׁוֹנָה, דִּהְיִנוּ אוֹתִיּוֹת שֶׁל הַמַּחֲשָׁבָה.
They too are vessels for observation, namely wisdom that rests upon them.	וְהֵם גַּם כֵּן כְּלִים לְהִסְתַּכְּלוֹת, דִּהְיִנוּ חֻכְמָה שֶׁשׁוּרָה [עֲלֵיהֶם] נ"א כִּי רִאֲיָה הִיא חֻכְמָה.
And they are also guards. Meaning, if at times the intellects weaken and love and awe cease in the middle of prayer.	וְהֵם גַּם כֵּן שׁוּמְרִים. דִּהְיִנוּ לְפַעֲמִים אִם נִחְלָשׁוּ הַמוֹחִין וְתִמּוּ בְּאַמְצַע הַתַּפְלָה אֶהְבָּה וְיִרְאָה.
Or if one speaks in prayer without love and awe, through the letters of thought one can renew them.	נ"א כְּמוֹ בְּאַמְצַע הַתַּפְלָה וּמְדַבֵּר בְּלֹא אֶהְבָּה וְיִרְאָה], הִנֵּה עַל יְדֵי אוֹתִיּוֹת הַמַּחֲשָׁבָה יְכוּל לְחַדֵּשׁם.
And to speak again with awe and love as at the beginning. These are the guards of love and awe.	וְלִדְבַר שׁוֹב בְּדַחֲלוֹ וּרְחִימוֹ כְּבִתְחִלָּה, וְהֵם הַשׁוּמְרִים מִדַּת אֶהְבָּה וּמִדַּת יִרְאָה.
Here Scripture speaks of wine, which is joy, which is thought, letters in joy.	וְהִנֵּה כָּאן מִשְׁחֵי קָרָא מִיַּיִן שֶׁהוּא שִׂמְחָה כְּנֻזָּר, שֶׁהוּא מַחֲשָׁבָה, אוֹתִיּוֹת בְּשִׂמְחָה.
Upon which is the pomegranate, and the letter נ which is understanding, the form of a nun.	שֶׁעֲלֶיהָ רִמּוֹן, וּבְלֹא הִכִּי אוֹת חֵית שֶׁהִיא תְּבוּנָה, תְּמוּנַת נּוֹן.
Which is the form of vav-zayin, meaning son and daughter, voice and speech.	שֶׁהִיא תְּמוּנַת ו' ו' זַיִן, שֶׁהוּא בֶן וּבַת, רָצָה לוֹמַר קוֹל וְדְבוּר.
And when son and daughter are together, then “go forth and see,” etc., the crown his mother crowned him with.	וּכְשֶׁהֵבֶן וְהַבַּת הֵם בְּיַחַד [נ"א נֶאֱמַר בְּיַחַד], אֵז צְאִינָה וְיִרְאִינָה וְגו', בְּעֶטְרָה שֶׁעֲטָרָה לוֹ אָמוֹ.
This is the crown upon the letter נ. Therefore the נ here is large, and the enlightened one will understand.	וְזֶהוּ עֲטָרָה עַל גְּבִי הַחֵית, עַל כֵּן הַחֵית שֶׁכָּאן גְּדוּלָה, וְהַמְשַׁכֵּיל יָבִין.

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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 “hakhlili.” 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.

הנושף עקבי סוס וגוי' לישועתך קויתי וגוי'. איתא
בזהר הקדוש כי האותיות נקראים סוס והנקודות
נקראות רסן.

והנה השכל, שהם הטעמים, הוא הרוכב על הסוס, כי
האותיות הם בעצמם כגולמים.

אלא (אם לא) הנקודות שעל ידן מתנהגים
האותיות. והמנהיגם הוא השכל.

בשביל שהוא רוצה לגלות חכמתו וצורתו.

והנה אותיות התורה או אותיות (תפלה) שעל ידי
גזר [ג"א מזכה] לעבודת השם יתברך.

הם באים לשרשם ויש להם תענוג.

אבל שאר דבורים שאינם מזה הענין, הם גם כן
אותיות כמו זה הענין, אבל הצרופים הם אחרים.

והשכל שהוא רוכב עליהם הוא שכל ושרים
עליו קליפות.

והאותיות עצמם מתקנאים באותיות של התורה. והם
המים התחתונים בוכים וכו'.

וכששומעם איש נלכב ורחם אז מעלה גם כן
האותיות ההם מתוך השבירה.

שמסתכל על הצרופ הקדוש שבתוכם מאיזה מדה
היא.

ועל ידי המדה מדבק את עצמו להשם יתברך.

ואז מעלה האותיות ההם ומכניס בהם אלקות.

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Through this, when one relates before him an incident containing some evil, God forbid.	ועל ידי זה, כשספרו לפניו איזה מעשה שיש בו איזה רע חס ושלום.
When he hears it, he elevates the holy spark and inserts divinity into the letter-combination.	כששמע זה מעלה ניצוץ הקדוש כנזכר, ואז מכניס אלקות בצרוף האותיות הנזכרים.
Then the matter can be rectified immediately, for the salvation of Hashem is in an instant.	אז יכול [תכר] (להתקן) [לתקן] הדבר ההוא, כי תשיעת ה' כהרף עין.
And for His sake, blessed be He, He acts to restore the matter to its rectification.	ולמענו יתברך יעשה להעמיד הדבר על תקונו.
Then all workers of iniquity are scattered.	ואז יתפזרו כל פועלי און.
That is, all the evil intellect that initially rested upon the letter-combination.	דהינו שכל הרע שהיה מתחלה שורה על צרוף [האותיות] [מתחלה].
This is “Dan shall judge,” meaning what was formerly the level of dalet now becomes a simple nun.	וזהו [יהי דן, דהינו מה שהיה בחינת דל"ת עתה נעשה נון פשוטה].
Which is the world of freedom. “The one who bites the heels of the horse,” meaning the lower letters that were in the heels.	שהיא עלמא דחירות. הנושא עקבי סוס, דהינו אותיות התחתונים שהיו בעקבים.
“And its rider falls backward,” meaning the evil intellect that rested upon them.	ויפול רכבו אחור, דהינו השכל הרע שהיה שורה עליהם.
When this occurs, “For Your salvation I hoped, Hashem,” for it is already the salvation of Hashem, as explained.	וכשהוא כן, לישועתך קויתי ה', כי כבר הוא ישיעת ה' כנזכר.
And understand.	והבן.

[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

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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.

בן פֶּרֶת יוֹסֵף. מִשָּׁל לְבֵן מֶלֶךְ שֶׁנִּשְׁכַּח לִיד אֶחָד מִן הַעֲבָדִים, פּוֹחֵז וְאוֹהֵב הוֹלָלוֹת וְשִׁכְרוֹת.

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.

וְהָיָה הַבֵּן רוֹצֵה שֶׁיִּקְשָׁר מִחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ עִם מִחֲשַׁבַּת אָבִיו כִּדְי שִׁינָּכַר בְּלֵב הַמֶּלֶךְ.

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

מָה עָשָׂה [אוֹתוֹ הַבֵּן], הִתְקַשָּׁר (אֶת עֲצָמוֹ תָּמִיד) בְּתַעֲנוּג, שֶׁאָבִיו בּוֹדֵא עוֹסֵק תָּמִיד בְּתַעֲנוּג כְּמִשְׁפָּט הַמֶּלֶךְ.

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

וּבִזְה מִקְשָׁרֶת מִחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ עִם מִחֲשַׁבַּת אָבִיו.

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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.

והנה (העבד) הפותח רוצה לילך לשכר עצמו ולמשכו
בניו, וירא שמא יברח השבוי, ולקחו עמו.

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

ושניהם עוסקים בשכרות והולכים בשמחה, אבל אין
בונתם שנה.

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.

כי בן המלך, אף על פי שהלך [בשמחה] לבית היין,
אין בונתו בחמירות המשתה.

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.

כי בזה לא יתקשר מחשבתו עם מחשבת אביו, כי
אין דרך המלך למשוך ביו.

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

רק עקר מחשבתו היתה שמחמת זה יבוא לידי תענוג
ושמחה.

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

ותתקשר מחשבתו במחשבת אביו, ויזכר אצל אביו.

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

והעבד [שמחתו בהליכתו אל בית היין היתה] עקר
מחשבתו בחמירות המשתה.

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

והנמשל לבן אדם [נ"א שכן כל אדם] צריך להיות
(תמיד דבוק בתענוג רוחני (נ"א רוחני).

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

וגם כשיצדמן לו תענוג מתענוגי עולם הזה [כמו
[בשבת ויום טוב].

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

יהיה גם כן דבוק בתענוג רוחני (נ"א רוחני) שפדך
ההוא, שהוא החיות של הדבר.

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

ולא לחמירות הדבר. ובה [נ"א שעל ידי שהוא]
דבוק בתענוג רוחני נזכר אצל השם יתברך.

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

כי [גם] הוא יתברך דבוק תמיד בתענוג רוחני (נ"א
רוחני), שאין אנו יכולים להשיגו.

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

שפדך ההוא, שהוא חיותו של הדבר מלא חמירות.

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

אבל כשהוא דבוק לחמירות הדבר, כגון אוכל
(מעדנים) (נ"א כגון אוכל על דרך משל הנ"ל).

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

אדרבא [בזה] הוא מרחק מן הבורא יתברך כנזכר
לעיל במשל.

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

והנה כשישראל מתפללים ומתדבקים את עצמם
להשם יתברך, קלא נפיק צאניה וראניה בנות ציון.

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

דהינו, מי ששייך לו הדבקות והיחוד וניחא ליה
[יראה], וזהו וראניה.

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And one for whom cleaving is not pleasant should go out.	ומי שאין הדבקות נוחה ליה יצא, וזהו צאינה לי.
When the forces of impurity hear this voice, they wish to nullify the person from his prayer.	ובשומעים הקליפות הקול הזה, אז רוצים [נ"א רצים] לבטל האדם [הזה] מתפלתו.
Through a foreign thought and through pleasure of the time.	במחשבה זרה ובתענוג [נ"א מתענוגי] הזמן.
The vitality of that pleasure also runs together with the materiality and shell of that pleasure.	וגם החיות של התענוג שהוא רץ גם כן עם החמריות וקליפת התענוג שהוא.
For the vitality is a holy spark, and it is like the king's son mentioned earlier.	כי החיות הוא ניצוץ קדוש, והוא כבן המלך הנזכר.
For the spark desires to cleave to its Father, therefore it too runs to cleave in joy.	פי הניצוץ חשקו להדבק באביו, ועל כן גם הוא [רק]. [רוץ] לדבקו בשמחה.
If the person is discerning, he will thereby cleave even more to Hashem.	(פי) אם יהיה האיש [הזה איש] נלכב, הנה מדבק [נ"א אז ידבק את עצמו] על ידי זה יותר להשם יתברך.
By thinking that Hashem gives life to that thing which falls into his thought.	בחשבו [נ"א במחשבתו] שהרי [היוצר] המחיה אותו דבר הנופל [נ"א והנופל. ונ"א שגפילה] במחשבתו.
That thought itself is wisdom, for "all were made with wisdom," and "Hashem with wisdom."	הוא חכמה, כי כלם בדחמה עשית, וכתוב ה' בדחמה.
Meaning, the power of the Creator rests in wisdom.	דהינו כח הבורא שורה בדחמה.
According to this, there is a portion of divinity in the foreign thought.	אם כן לפי זה יש [חלק] אלקות במחשבה זרה.
It is the power of the actor that gives life to that thing.	כח הפועל המחיה אותו הדבר.
Immediately he clothes himself in love and awe because of the holy spark in that thing.	ותכף מלביש [את] עצמו באהבה ויראה מפני הניצוץ הקדוש שבדבר ההוא.
He says in his heart: if not for the divine portion giving it life, it could not exist.	באמרו בלבו, כיון שלולי חלק אלקות המחיה את הדבר לא היה יכול להיות.
Why then should I cleave to its materiality. Better that I cleave to its vitality.	ואם כן למה לי להדבק בחמריות הדבר, מוטב שאני אדבק בחיותו.
Which is one of the powers of Hashem.	והוא כח מכחות השם יתברך.
Therefore he binds himself in love and awe of Hashem.	לכן מתלבש [נ"א מדבק] את עצמו באהבה ויראת ה' יתברך.
Through this he elevates the spark within that matter.	ובזה מעלה הניצוץ [שמדבר] [שבתוך הדבר] ההוא.
Likewise in eating and other pleasures, with the stated intention, he elevates the sparks within them.	וכן באכילה ובשאר תענוגים ככונה הנזכר מעלה הניצוצות שבתוכם.

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Therefore both the spark and the shell run in joy.	לכן שניהם, הניצוץ והקליפה, רצים בשמחה.
It is stated: the sons inherit and the daughters are sustained.	ואיתא הבנים יירשו והבנות יזונו.
The letters with which he prays now are called sons of the Holy One.	פירוש האותיות שהוא מתפלל [כעת] הם נקראים בנים להקדוש ברוך הוא.
They inherit. And the daughters are sustained.	הם יירשו, והבנות יזונו.
These are the letters of foreign thought, called daughters, as daughters of Zion.	דהינו אותיות של מחשבה זרה, ונקראו בנות על שם בנות ציון.
They are sustained now from the vitality received from the elevation just effected.	יזונו, שמקבלות עתה חיות מאותו העליה שניתנה להן [נ"א שנתעלו] עתה.
For complete elevation cannot yet occur, as it is written "there is a time for every desire."	כי עליה גמורה אינה יכולה להיות עתה, דכתיב ועת לכל חפץ.
But this action is performed now, so that when the time arrives they will immediately ascend fully.	אף זה הפעולה נעשית עתה, ששפיגייע העת תעשה להן עליה גמורה תכף.
For now they receive vitality and sustenance until that time.	ועתה מקבלות חיות ומזונות עד העת [נ"א חיות ומזונות על ידי מין נוקבין] שהוא.
And this is the meaning of "they are sustained."	והינו יזונו.
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.	וזהו בן פרת יוסף, דהינו הבן הם האותיות שהוא (מתפלל כעת, ונקראו בנים (כנ"ל).
They are "fruitful," meaning that they increase. Joseph means an addition of delight in Hashem.	הם פרתים, רצה לומר (שהם) מרבים. יוסף, הוא תוספת תענוג בהשם יתברך.
"A fruitful son above the eye," for the eye is wisdom. Through wisdom they increase delight.	בן פרת עלי עין, כי עין היא חכמה, דהינו שעל ידי חכמה (הם) מרבין תענוג.
For all are refined through wisdom, as explained above, that through wisdom sparks are elevated.	כי כלם בחכמה אתברירו, כמו שנגמר לעיל שעל ידי חכמה מעלה ניצוצות.
This is "and wisdom gives life," etc. He then explains how through a foreign thought one adds delight.	והינו והחכמה תחיה וגו'. ומפרש אף שעל ידי מחשבה זרה מוסיף תענוג.
Alternatively, he explains how one comes to a foreign thought, through which he adds delight.	נ"א ומפרש אף בא לידי מחשבה זרה שעל ידי כן (הוא מוסיף תענוג).
"Daughters" are the letters of foreign thought, as mentioned above.	בנות הם אותיות של מחשבה זרה כנזכר.
"They stepped upon the wall," a term of seeing, for they saw that now was a time of favor to ascend.	צעדה עלי שור, לשון ראיה, שראו שבעת הוא עת רצון לעלות.

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

בְּאִשָּׁר שָׁמְעוּ קוֹל הַפְּרוֹז (כַּנ"ל), לָכֵן צָעְדוּ וּבָאוּ.

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

וַיִּמְרְרוּהוּ (וַיִּמְרְרוּהוּ) וַיַּשְׁטֵמֵהוּ בַּעֲלֵי חֲצִים, הֵינּוּ הַקְּלִיפּוֹת) שֶׁל מַחֲשָׁבָה זָרָה.

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

שְׂרוּצִים לְבַטְּלוֹ מִתְפִּלָּתוֹ. עַל כֵּן אִם אִישׁ הַנִּלְכָּב יִחְשַׁב כַּנֶּזֶק.

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

וַתֵּשֶׁב בְּאֵיתָן קִשְׁתּוֹ, דְּהֵינּוּ שְׂתִפְלָתוֹ עוֹלָה בְּתַעֲנוּג בְּדוֹל הַנִּקְרָא אֵיתָן.

As it is written: "Eitan, this is Abraham."

כִּמּוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב אֵיתָן זֶה אַבְרָהָם.

[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.

וְתִשָּׁב בְּאֵיתָן קִשְׁתּוֹ וַיִּפְּזוּ זְרָעֵי יָדָיו. הִנֵּה כְּשֶׁאֲדָם מִתְפַּלֵּל חֵס וְשְׁלוֹם לוֹ לְשׁוֹם כָּל חֶשֶׁקוֹ בְּשִׁבְלֵי אוֹתוֹ. דָּבָר גּוֹפְנֵי שֶׁהוּא מְבַקֵּשׁ עָלָיו.

כִּי אֵין לָהּ פְּנִיָּה גְדוּלָּה מִזֶּה, כִּי אִם יְשִׁים מִחֻשְׁבָּתוֹ בְּזֶה שֶׁהָרִי אָמְרוּ יוֹתֵר מִשֶּׁהָעֶגֶל וְכוּ'.

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

והיגנו כי המשפיע רוצה להשפיע יותר ממה שהנשפיע
[הנשפיעה]

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

כן השם יתברך יש לו תענוג גדול כשהוא משפיע
שפע לבריותיו, יותר מן הברואים הנשפעים ממנו
יתברך.

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

ואיתא (בזהר) [בתקונים] דקשמת הוא קרוב ללשון
בקשה.

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

וזהו ותשב באיתן קשתו, דהינו שאינו מבקש ומתכונן
להנאת גופו.

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

כי אם הוא מבקש בשביל איתן, דהינו תענוג גדול
שיש להשם יתברך מזה שהוא משפיע.

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

אז ויפזו זרעי ידיו, דהינו כל מעשה ידיו וכל
עבודותיו שלו, כשהוא במדרגה זו, הם יקרים מפיז.

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

והנה כשהאב אוהב את בנו אז תמונת בנו חקוקה על
לוח לבו.

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

וכשהוא רואה את בנו שעושה דבר חכמה אז האב
מסתכל בו.

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

ובעת הסתכלותו בו החקיקה של הבן שבלב האב
היא בלה בבן.

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

כי האב משים בעת ההיא עיניו ולבו בבן.

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

ואינה נראית החקיקה הנזכר אפילו לאב לתמונה
בקני עצמה.

For it is entirely within the son.

כי בלה בבן.

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

אבל אחר כן, כשיגמר הבן הדבר חכמה, אז נתרחב
הדעת של האב.

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

ויש לו תענוג גדול, ומתהנה ומתענג (את עצמו)
בחקיקת הבן שחקוק בלבו.

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

ובעת ההיא יש עליה לאותה חקיקה שבלב האב ודי
למבין.

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

והנה החקיקה הנזכרת היא באמת האב עצמו, אלא
שהיא חקוקה על תמונת הבן.

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

והנה כשעלה במחשבה הקדמונה שיהיו ישראל
בעולם, אז נחקקו על כסא כבודו יתברך.

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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.	מחמת אהבתו אותם. ועל שם כן נקראו ישראל, לי ראש, שבידם לעשות ראש.
As in a parable, when a person sees his son in pain he says, "I am going without a head."	על דרך משל, כשאדם רואה בצער בנו אז אומר אני הולך בלי ראש.
When his son is filled with goodness, he is complete.	וכשכנו הוא ממלא כל טוב אז הוא שלם.
Israel, this engraving, was not completed until the existence of Jacob in the world of action.	והנה ישראל, שהיא החקיקה הנזכרת, לא נגמרה עד בחינת מציאות יעקב.
That is, complete existence within the world of action, therefore we are called Jacob, from the term heels.	דהינו מציאות שלם בעולם העשייה, ולכך אנו נקראים יעקב, לשון עקבים.
When we perform good deeds, there is delight for Hashem, as it were.	וכשאנו עושים מעשים טובים אז יש תענוג להשם. יתברך כביכול.
Then the engraving rests upon Him. Afterwards there is an elevation of that engraving, as explained.	ושורה עליו החקיקה הנזכרת. ואחר כן יש עליה לחקיקה הנזכרת כביכול כנזכר.
This explains why "the arms of his hands were strengthened," for from the Mighty One of Jacob.	וזהו שמפרש אמאי ויפזו זרעי ידיו כנזכר, לפי שמדי אביר יעקב.
Meaning, through our good deeds, from there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel.	דהינו (שמעשה) [על ידי מעשה] ידינו הטובים, משם רעה אבן ישראל.
The Targum explains "stone" as father and son.	ומפרש התרגום אב ובן.
Meaning, the engraving is in essence the father himself, but it is in the form of the son.	דהינו החקיקה הנזכרת היא בעצם האב בעצמו, אלא שהיא על שם תמונת הבן.
Therefore it is called "stone," father and son, and it is nourished from our good deeds.	על כן נקרא אבן, [שהוא] אב ובן, והיא רעה, דהינו ניזון, ממעשה ידינו הטובים כנזכר לעיל.
Understand this very well.	והבן זה מאד.

[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

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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]