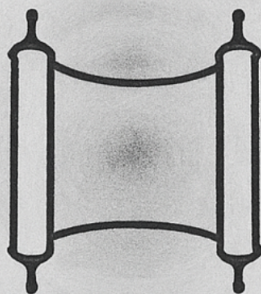


בס"ד

The Maggid of Mezritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Vayeitzei



Dedicated To:

טניה מלכה בת דינה דבורה
דפואה שלמה

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Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah Parshas Vayeitzei

Siman #38

Introduction

The Maggid of Mezeritch, Rabbi Dov Ber ben Avraham (circa 1710–1772), the primary disciple and successor of the Baal Shem Tov, served as the central spiritual force shaping early Chassidus, guiding generations of students who later founded the great Chassidic dynasties. In this teaching, drawn from a maamar on the verse “And Yaakov went out from Be’er Sheva and went to Charan,” the Maggid reveals the inner dynamics of how Divine wisdom descends from the highest spiritual worlds into human consciousness, explaining the processes of contraction, illumination, and transmission through profound metaphors of a teacher and student. This maamar forms a foundation for understanding all spiritual influence from above to below.

To you is the explanation of the verse “And Yaakov went out from Be’er Sheva and he went to Charan” (Bereishis 28:10).

לך ביאור הפסוק ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע וילך
חרנה. (ראשית כ"ח י')

It will be understood according to a well known introduction that the Torah is primordial and not within time.

יובן על פי הקדמה ידועה שהתורה היא קדומה ואינה
בתוך הזמן.

And behold, what relevance is there to recounting the event concerning that which is prior to time.

והנה מה שיך ספור המעשה בדבר הקדום לזמן.

Rather, certainly the recounting of this event is something that is occurring constantly, and also in the human being who is called a small world, there is within him also this recounting of the event.

אלא בודאי שספור המעשה הזאת היא ההנהגה תמיד
וגם באדם הנקרא עולם קטן יש בו גם כן ספור
המעשה ההוא.

Behold, it is written “You made them all with wisdom” (Tehillim 104:24), for all the flow, everything, flows from wisdom.

הנה כתיב כלם בחקמה עשית (תהלים ק"ד כ"ד) כי
כל השפע הכל נשפע מן החכמה.

And already we have explained regarding the constriction that occurred for the rectification of the world and its existence, for if not for the constriction they would not be able to receive the brightness and to bear it from the greatness of its brightness, and they would be nullified out of existence.

וכבר בארנו בענין הצמצום שהיה לתקון העולם
וקיומו כי לולי הצמצום לא היו יכולים לקבל
הבהירות ולסבולו מגדל בהירותו והיו בטלים
במצאות.

And behold it is known that the attribute of awe is that which contracts and limits, and all of it is through the wisdom that enclothes itself within it.

והנה ידוע שמדת יראה היא המצמצמת והמגבלת
והכל על ידי החכמה המתלבשת בתוכה.

All the more so because it is said “The beginning of wisdom is the awe of Hashem” (Tehillim 111:10).

ומה גם שנאמר ראשית חכמה יראה יי (תהלים קי"א
י').

For behold it is known that wisdom is the letter Yud, the smallest of all the letters, because it makes itself small and contracts itself.

כי הנה ידוע שהחכמה היא יו"ד הקטנה מכל
האותיות מפני שהיא מקטנת את עצמה ומצמצמת
את עצמה.

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Because it is the beginning of everything and is close to the Cause of all causes, as it is written in the Zohar and in the Tikkunim.

מפני שהיא ראשית הכל וקרובה לעלת כל העלות
כמו שכתוב בזהר ובתקונים

Even the supernal Keter, which is a pure and refined light, darkens before it and not actual darkness Heaven forbid, for its light is abundant and great without end.

אפילו כתר עליון שהוא אור צח ומצוחצח חשכין
קמיה ולא חשכין ממש חס ושלום כי אורו רב וגדול
עד אין קץ

However, because it is close to the Infinite, from the greatness of the awe and the shame, they diminish and darken themselves.

אבל מחמת שהוא קרוב לאין סוף מגדל היראה
והבושה הם מקטינים ומחשיכין את עצמם

For shame causes awe and constriction, for awe comes because of his lowliness in his own eyes, and all the more so because it is necessary to contract in order that the lower beings should be able to receive it.

כי הבושה גורמת היראה והצמצום כי היראה באה
מחמת שפלותו בעיני עצמו ומה גם שמן ההכרח
לצמצם כדי שיוכלו התחתונים לקבלו

And we will give a parable for this, like a teacher who learns with a student.

ונמשיל לזה כמו הרב הלומד עם התלמיד

And if the student is in awe of the words of the teacher and places his heart to his words, the teacher can open for him and reveal to him the doors of the gates of wisdom.

ואם התלמיד הוא חרד אל דברי הרב ומשים לבו אל
דבריו יכול הרב לפתח לו ולגלות לו דלתות שערי
חכמה

Although he cannot teach him all his great and mighty wisdom, nevertheless, because the student is a companion-student, he can grasp almost close to the wisdom of the teacher.

הגם שאינו יכול ללמדו כל חכמתו הגדולה והעצומה
עם כל זה מחמת שהתלמיד הוא תלמיד חבר יכול
להשיג כמעט עד קרוב לחכמת הרב

But if the student is limited in understanding and comprehension, the teacher is forced to diminish his wisdom and constrict his great wisdom and learn with him according to the level of the student.

אבל אם התלמיד הוא קצר הבנה והשגה מכרח הרב
להקטין חכמתו ולצמצם חכמתו הגדולה וללמד עמו
כפי ערך התלמיד

For if he would increase to teach him or reveal to him deep and hidden things, the student would become confused and nullified, and even the little that he could have grasped he would not grasp.

כי אם הנה מרבה ללמדו או לגלות לו דברים עמוקים
ונעלמים הנה התלמיד מתבלבל ומתבטל ואפילו
המעט שהיה יכול להשיג לא היה משיג

Therefore, he must diminish his wisdom to close to the comprehension of the student.

לכן צריך להקטין חכמתו עד קרוב להשגת התלמיד

And this is what it says “And He shone forth from Seir to them” (Devarim 33:2).

וזהו שאמר וזרח משעיר למו

And our sages of blessed memory said “There is no separation between the upper waters and the lower waters except the width

ואמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה אין בין מים
העליונים לתחתונים אלא כמלא ניקמה פירוש בין
יו"ד עילאה ליו"ד תתאה

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of a hair,” meaning the separation between the upper Yud and the lower Yud.

Meaning, for it is known that the letter Yud is three Yuds: an upper point and a lower point and the body of the Yud, head middle end.

And behold we explained elsewhere that there is a very refined and bright supernal intellect which influences the wisdom, and we explained there several reasons.

And furthermore since wisdom is called “the head,” it is necessary that it is not primordial, for the primordial is not in number, and “beginning” is within number, and a beginning has a second, but the primordial is called one and there is no second to it.

And if so it is possible to say that the three Yuds in the letter Yud indicate this: the upper point is the intellect which influences wisdom, the body of the Yud is wisdom itself, and the lower point which is the lower Yud is the aspect in which the teacher diminishes his wisdom in order to influence the student.

And this aspect is called Yaakov, Yud Akev, Yud at the end.

And this is “There is no separation between the waters and the waters,” meaning between the Yud and the Yud as mentioned.

Meaning, because the teacher is forced to diminish and constrict his wisdom to almost the level of the student’s comprehension so that he can receive it, it turns out there is no difference between the wisdom of the teacher and the wisdom of the student except the width of a hair.

And this is “There is no separation between the upper waters...” meaning there is no separation between Yud and Yud as mentioned.

And this is “And He shone forth from Seir to them,” meaning the shining which illuminates and shines the supernal light to the lower is “from Seir,” the measure of hair, like two things hanging on one hair and the hair connects them.

And the word “I’mo” meaning Lamed Mem Vav, and its explanation is explained elsewhere.

רצונו לומר כי ידוע כי אות יו"ד היא תלת יודין קוץ
עליון ותחתון וגוף הי"ד ראש תוף סוף

והנה בארנו במקום אחר כי יש שכל זך ובהיר עליון
מאד המשפיע אל התקמה ובארנו שם כמה טעמים

ועוד כי התקמה נקרא ראש מרחק הוא שאינו קדמון
כי הקדמון אינו במספר וראשית הוא בתוף המספר
ולראשית יש שני אכל הקדמון נקרא אחד ואין שני
לו.

ואם כן ואפשר לומר ששלשת היודין שבאות יו"ד
מורים על כך הקוץ העליון הוא השכל המשפיע
לתקמה וגוף הי"ד הוא תקמה בעצם וקוץ התחתון
שהוא יו"ד תמאה היא הבחינה שהרב מקטן חכמתו
כדי להשפיע לתלמיד

וזו הבחינה נקרא יעקב יו"ד עקב יו"ד בסוף

וזהו אין בין מים למים כמו שנאמר שהוא בין יו"ד
ליו"ד כנזכר

רצונו לומר מחמת שהרב מרחק להקטין ולצמצם
חכמתו עד קרוב ממש להשגת חכמת התלמיד כדי
שיוכל לקבלו נמצא אין בין חכמת הרב לחכמת
התלמיד אלא כמלוא נימה

וזהו אין בין מים עליונים אין בין יו"ד ליו"ד כנזכר

וזהו ונרח משעיר למו כלומר הנריקה שמאיר וזורח
אור העליון אל התחתון היא משעיר כמלוא שערה
כמו שני דברים תלויים בשער אחד והשער מחברם

ומלת למו רצונו לומר למ"ו ופירושו נתבאר במקום
אחר בסימן

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And this is what the ancient ones established in the prayer of Shabbos: "He who opens each day the doors of the gates of the East and splits the windows of the firmament."

וזהו שישדו הקדמונים בנוסח תפלת שבת הפותח בכל יום דלתות שערי מזרח ובוקע חלונות רקיע.

And it needs examination for at first they compared the shining to the opening of a door and gates, and afterward to windows, and a window is only one fourth of a door, and also what is the meaning of "splitting" that they said "and He splits the windows of the firmament."

ויש לדקדק כי מתחלה דמו הנריחה לפתיחת הדלת ושערים ואחר כך לחלונות וארוכה הוא חלק רביעי מן הדלת וגם מה זה ענין הבקיעה שאמר ובוקע חלונות רקיע.

And according to what was mentioned it will be understood.

ועל פי הנזכר יובן.

For at first it says "He who opens the doors..." this refers to the shining and influence to the uppermost worlds, for the higher worlds are able to receive the brightness of the light more, like the student-companion who learns and receives from the teacher, where the teacher can reveal to him and open for him large openings and gates of his wisdom and he can bear it and comprehend.

כי מתחלה אמר הפותח דלתות וכו' הוא מדבר בענין הנריחה והשפעה לעולמות העליונים ביותר כי העולמות העליונים יכולים לקבל האור בהירות יותר כדמיון התלמיד חבר הלומד ומקבל מהרב שהרב יכול לגלות לו ולפתחו לו פתחים ושערים גדולים מחכמתו והוא יכול לסבול ולהשיג.

And "He splits the windows of the firmament" refers to a lower level, to the lower world, which is like the second type of student mentioned above, who cannot grasp the teachings of the teacher unless the teacher constricts and diminishes his wisdom until it is almost equal to the level of the student's comprehension.

ובוקע חלונות רקיע זה מדבר ממדרגה תחתונה מעולם התחתון שהוא כדמיון התלמיד הביתי הנזכר לעיל שאינו יכול להשיג תלמודי חכמת הרב אם לא שניצמצם ויטון הרב חכמתו שיהיה כמעט שונה בערך השגת התלמיד.

And behold there is a student who, even though the teacher constricts himself and speaks with him according to the measure of his comprehension, nevertheless he still cannot grasp or receive it.

והנה יש איזה תלמיד שאף על פי שהרב מצמצם עצמו ומדבר עמו כפי ערך כח השגתו אף על פי כן אינו יכול להשיג ולקבלו.

And behold the teacher is forced to add word upon his words and letters upon his letters and to explain further to him, for it is necessary for the teacher to train him and teach him according to his way and to add reasons and parables and easy ideas so that through this he will understand somewhat and receive from him the little.

והנה מכרח הרב לוסיף לו דבור על דבריו ואותיות על אותיותיו ולהמליץ לו כי מן הצורך לרב להנכו ולקמחו לפי דרכו ולהוסיף טעמים ומשלים וסברות קלות כדי שכל ידי זה יבין קצת ומקבל ממנו המעט.

Like the analogy of one who splits a thick and hard piece of wood, and he is not able to split it and accomplish his task with that piece of wood, he adds and brings another thin piece of

כדמיון המבקע עץ עבה וקשה ואינו יכול לבקע ולעשות פעולתו בעץ שהוא הוא מוסיף ומביא עוד עץ דק ותוקע בו וגזה יכול לגמר פעולתו.

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wood and inserts it into it, and through this he is able to finish his work.

And this is “He splits the windows of the firmament,” meaning that even though it is a small illumination like the measure of a window compared to the measure of a door or a gate, nevertheless it is necessary to constrict and split it so that they can receive it.

וזהו ובוקע חלונֵי רקיע רצונו לומר אף שהיא זריחה קטנה כמו ערך חלון נגד ערך פתח ושער אף על פי כן מן ההכרח לצמצם ולבקעו כדי שיוכלו לקבלו.

And the illumination and the influence is called “firmament,” as is known, for it is the Vay, the firmament, which is something that spreads.

והזריחה והשפעה נקרא רקיע כנודע שהוא ו"ו רקיע. שהוא דבר המתפשט.

And this is “And Yaakov went out,” Yud Akev, which is the lower Yud that is called “maskil,” and the lower wisdom which receives from the upper wisdom.

וזהו ויצא יעקב יו"ד עקב שהוא יו"ד תתאה הנקרא משפיל וחקמה תתאה המקבלת מחכמה עילאה.

And this supernal intellect goes out from Be'er Sheva, meaning it receives from the upper worlds the spring which flows and is full of all goodness and kindness and mercies.

והשכל העליון הזה יוצא מבאר שבע רצונו לומר מקבל מעלמות העליונים מעין הנובע ושבע מכל טוב וחסד ורחמים.

And this is what our sages said “And Yaakov went out — the departure of a tzaddik leaves an impression,” they hinted to the above.

וזהו שאמרו חכמינו זכרונם לברכה ויצא יעקב יציאת צדיק עושה רושם רמזו להנזכר.

And this matter is explained elsewhere at length.

ובמקום אחר מבואר באריכות.

[NOTE Summary:

The Maggid begins with the principle that the Torah is beyond time, so every story represents an ongoing reality within each person. The departure of Yaakov symbolizes the continual descent of supernal wisdom into the human soul. The worlds receive Divine influence through the channel of wisdom, yet this flow must be constricted, for without tzimtzum the lower beings could not withstand or receive the brightness of the light. Awe causes this constriction, for awe arises from a sense of lowliness, producing contraction that makes reception possible.

The Maggid explains that the letter Yud itself contains three parts: the upper point, the body, and the lower point. These correspond to the supreme intellect that influences wisdom, the essence of wisdom itself, and the diminished form of wisdom that descends to the lower realms. These levels mirror the process of a teacher transmitting wisdom. If the student is refined and attentive, the teacher may reveal deeper insights. But if the student is limited, the teacher must greatly contract and diminish his wisdom to suit the student's ability. Sometimes the teacher must add further explanations, metaphors, and additional layers of speech to create an opening through which the student can receive even a small portion.

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This dynamic is hinted in the teaching “There is no separation between the upper waters and the lower waters except the width of a hair,” referring to the slight separation between the upper Yud and the lower Yud. The Maggid teaches that the descent of wisdom from its highest origin to the level of the student is no more than the width of a hair, for the teacher must move almost entirely into the student’s frame. This is the meaning of “And He shone forth from Seir to them,” that the higher light illuminates the lower level through a passage as narrow as a hair, symbolizing the delicacy of this transmission.

The Maggid then explains the prayer “He opens every day the doors of the gates of the East and splits the windows of the firmament.” The opening of the great gates refers to the higher worlds, which can receive great radiance like the advanced student. The splitting of windows refers to lower worlds that can receive only small illumination. Some students cannot receive even this, so the teacher must split and penetrate with ever finer explanations, just as one splits a thick piece of wood by inserting a thin wedge. This illustrates how Divine influence enters the lower worlds in carefully measured forms.

Ultimately, “And Yaakov went out” refers to the lower Yud, the aspect of wisdom that goes out to illuminate the lower realms, receiving from Be’er Sheva, the source of spiritual abundance. The departure of a tzaddik leaves an impression, for the flow of supernal wisdom leaves marks and traces as it descends through the worlds. All of this is elaborated at length in this maamar, forming a complete system describing how Divine wisdom descends through contraction, illumination, and delicate transmission into the human mind.

Practical Takeaway:

The Maggid teaches that every person receives Divine wisdom according to the vessel they create. Awe, humility, and careful preparation allow the light to enter. If a person feels too coarse to receive, they should know that Heaven contracts the light again and again for their sake, providing wedges of understanding like the teacher inserting a thin piece of wood to split the thick log. One must therefore develop humility, patience, and a desire to listen, for through these traits the soul becomes a vessel for the subtle light of Divine wisdom.

Chassidic Story:

A well-attested story from the early Chassidic circle tells of the Maggid’s student, Rabbi Shmelke of Nikolsburg, who struggled with understanding one of his master’s deep teachings. Rabbi Shmelke later told that when he approached the Maggid in private to ask for explanation, the Maggid looked at him for a long moment, closed his eyes, and then slowly began speaking again. But this time, Rabbi Shmelke felt the words descending into him in a way entirely different from before. The Maggid’s tone softened, his phrasing changed, and he began presenting images and metaphors that would never have been needed for the more advanced students.

When Rabbi Shmelke finally understood, he asked the Maggid what had happened. The Maggid replied, “A teacher must become small in order that the student may grow. When one piece of wood is too thick to split, a thinner piece must be inserted. Heaven does the same with us.” Rabbi Shmelke later testified that from that moment on he understood the Maggid’s entire approach to the transmission of Divine wisdom. The contraction

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he witnessed taught him more than any concept: he saw firsthand how a tzaddik bends his own light so another may receive it. **END NOTE]**

Siman #39

“And Hashem will be for me as God” (Bereishis 28:21).

וְהָיָה יי' לִי לֵאלֹהִים.

Meaning, “In all your ways know Him” (Mishlei 3:6), whether good or whether bad.

רְצוֹנוֹ לומר בְּכָל דְּרָכָיו דַּעְהוּ (מְשָׁלִי ג' ו') הֵן טוֹב הֵן רָע.

When something bad happens to him Heaven forbid, he should think that certainly it is to atone for his sin.

כַּאֲשֶׁר יֵאָרֶע לוֹ חֵס וְשְׁלוֹם אֵינָהּ רָע יִחַשֵׁב כִּי בְּרָדָא הוּא לְכַפֵּר עֲוֹנוֹ.

But the tzaddik must also be concerned even along the path of good, for perhaps they are deducting from his merits.

אָבֵל הַצַּדִּיק אַף עַל דְּרָךְ הַטוֹב יֵשׁ לוֹ לְדַאֵג כִּי אוֹלִי מִנִּכְיֹתָיו.

And this is “And Hashem will be for me as God,” that He is Havayah, the attribute of mercy, yet perhaps it is the attribute of judgment, which is called Elohim.

וְהוּא וְהָיָה יי' לִי לֵאלֹהִים שֶׁהוּא הַנּוֹנֶה מִדַּת רַחֲמִים אוֹלִי הוּא מִדַּת הַדִּין שֶׁנִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים.

And I must add merits constantly.

וְנִצְרִיד אֲנִי לְהוֹסִיף זְכוֹת בְּתַמִּידוֹת.

[NOTE Summary:

In this teaching the Maggid explains the inner meaning of the verse “And Hashem will be for me as God.” The verse teaches that a person must recognize the Divine in every experience, whether good or bad. When something painful occurs, one should view it as a cleansing of sin, a hidden mercy. But even when good things happen, the tzaddik remains concerned, for perhaps this kindness is being drawn from his accumulated merits. Thus the name Havayah, which is mercy, may at times act as Elohim, the attribute of judgment, depending on the spiritual state of the person. Therefore one must continually increase merits so that blessings come from pure compassion rather than from deductions.

Practical Takeaway:

A person should not judge Divine experiences at face value. Pain may be a concealed kindness, and blessing may be a spiritual warning. The way to respond to both is the same: increase goodness, deepen awareness, and add merit each day. Through steady growth one ensures that life's blessings flow from compassion and not from hidden judgment. **END NOTE]**

Siman #40

And Yaakov lifted his feet and went to the land of the people of the East” (Bereishis 29:1).

וַיָּשָׂא יַעֲקֹב רַגְלָיו וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶרֶצָה בְּנֵי קְדָם. בְּרֵאשִׁית כ"ט א'

Meaning, “his feet” is an expression of guidance, that he lifted his feet, meaning his guidance.

רְצוֹנוֹ לומר רַגְלָיו לְשׁוֹן הַדְרָכָה שֶׁנֶּשָׂא רַגְלָיו הֵינּוּ הַדְרָכָתוֹ.

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“And he went to the land of the people of the East,” meaning that he went from his earthliness, meaning his physicality.

וילך ארצה בני קדם שהלך מארציות שלו כלומר הגשמיית שלו.

To the service of Hashem, blessed is He, a portion of Divinity, “to the people of the East,” meaning the trait of the tzaddikim who turn toward cleaving to the Primordial One of the world.

אל עבודת יי יתברך חלק אלקות אל בני קדם רצונו לומר מדת הצדיקים הפונים לדבקות קדמות של עולם.

[NOTE Summary:

The Maggid teaches that the verse “And Yaakov lifted his feet and went to the land of the people of the East” reveals a profound spiritual process. “Feet” symbolize one’s direction and guidance in life. When Yaakov “lifted his feet,” it means he elevated his manner of walking, his entire way of progressing in the world. He rose above his own earthliness and physicality, and redirected his movement toward holiness. This ascent is described as going “to the land of the people of the East,” referring to the qualities of the tzaddikim who turn themselves toward cleaving to the Primordial One of the world. Yaakov’s journey thus represents the soul’s movement away from coarse materiality toward an elevated path of Divine service, guided by purity and longing for closeness to the Eternal.

Practical Takeaway:

Every person has the ability to “lift their feet” — to elevate their daily conduct, choices, and direction. One must not remain stuck in old habits or the heaviness of material focus. By consciously directing one’s inner movement toward holiness and toward cleaving to Hashem, even small steps become a spiritual ascent. Every day we can choose a higher path. **END NOTE]**

Siman #41

And Rachel came with the flock. Bereishit 29:9.

וְרַחֵל בָּאָה עִם הַצֹּאן

It is stated in the Midrash that it was in order to cling to her beauty, and this is difficult to understand.

אימתא במדרש כדי לדבק ביופיה ולקאורה אינו מבין.

But the true explanation is that Rachel refers to the supernal Rachel, that through seeing this Rachel, Yaakov would cling to the supernal Rachel, for all the beauty of this lower one comes from the upper one.

אכל פירוש האמתי רחל העליונה שעל ידי שיראה רחל זו ידבק יעקב ברחל עליונה שכל היפי של זו המתחתונה בא מן העליונה.

And this is also the explanation of “And Yosef came into the house to do his work” (Bereishis 39:11), and our sages said that he saw the image of his father.

וזהו פירוש גם כן ויבא יוסף הביתה לעשות מלאכתו (בראשית ל"ט י"א) ואמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה שראה דיוקנא דאביו.

Meaning, because it is known that the wife of Potiphar would adorn herself before him exceedingly, as is explained in the Midrash: the garments she wore for him in the morning she did not wear in the evening, in order to entice him.

פירוש לפי שידוע שאשת פוטיפר היתה מתפארת לפניו עד מאד כדי לפתותו בדאיתא במדרש שהבגדים שלבשה לו בצפרא לא לבשה ברמשא כדי לפתותו.

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And Yosef the tzaddik did not desire this physical adornment, but he desired and was enflamed from this adornment toward the supernal adornment, which is the image of his father, the glory of Israel.

ויוסף הצדיק לא היה חפץ בהתפארות זו הגשמית
אבל היה חפץ ומתלהב מהתפארות זו להתפארות
העליון שהוא דיוקנא של אביו תפארת ישראל.

And this is the explanation of “And he fled and went outside” (Bereishis 39:12), meaning he fled from this physical adornment and was enflamed to flee outside, outside this world, and to cleave to the supernal glory.

ונהו פירוש וינס ויצא החוצה (בראשית ל"ט י"ב)
רצונו לומר שנס מהתפארות זו הגשמית ונתלהב
לנוס החוצה חוץ לעולם הזה והדבק בתפארת
העליון.

[NOTE Summary:

In this maamar the Maggid reveals the inner dimension of the episode in which “Rachel came with the flock.” Chazal state that this was “to cling to her beauty,” which at first seems puzzling. The Maggid explains that “Rachel” here hints to *Rachel ha'elyonah*, the supernal spiritual manifestation of beauty. When Yaakov saw Rachel below, her physical beauty served only as a reflection of the supernal Rachel above, drawing his heart toward that higher source. All beauty in the lower realm is merely an emanation from its upper, spiritual root.

This idea parallels Yosef’s experience in Egypt. When he entered the house “to do his work,” Chazal teach that he saw the image of his father. Potiphar’s wife constantly adorned and beautified herself to entice him, changing garments morning and evening to attract his attention. Yosef did not desire her physical allure. Instead, her act of beautification stirred within him a longing for the *true* beauty — the spiritual splendor embodied in the “image of his father,” the attribute of Tiferes Yisrael. Rather than being drawn downward by physical seduction, Yosef was uplifted upward, his heart ignited toward the supernal brilliance.

Thus the verse “And he fled and went outside” signifies far more than physical escape. Yosef fled from the lower form of beauty and ran “outside”—outside the constriction of this world—so that he could attach himself to the higher beauty, the radiance of the upper realms. Segment 4 therefore teaches that every instance of beauty a person encounters can either lower them or elevate them. When perceived correctly, it becomes a ladder leading toward its spiritual source in the worlds above.

Practical Takeaway

The Maggid teaches that physical attractiveness, charm, or aesthetic pull in this world can either trap a person or uplift them. The key is to look through the external form to its Root. Whenever something beautiful catches the heart, one should immediately ask: “What higher beauty is this pointing to?” Redirecting fascination toward the Divine source elevates the moment and protects one from being drawn into lower desire. In this way, even tests and temptations become pathways to cleaving to Hashem.

Chassidic Story

A well-known and historically attested story describes how Rabbi Avraham HaMalach, the saintly son of the Maggid of Mezeritch, internalized this very teaching. Rabbi Avraham was renowned for extraordinary purity;

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from his youth he would not gaze at physical beauty, fearing that it might pollute the clarity of his mind. Yet once, while walking through Mezeritch, a noblewoman of great beauty appeared in the marketplace, and all who saw her were startled by her appearance. Rabbi Avraham happened to pass by at that moment. Witnesses later recounted that he closed his eyes instantly, yet his face became illuminated with great light.

When he returned home, his attendant asked what had happened. Rabbi Avraham answered, "I felt a pull, but I remembered my father's teaching that beauty below is only a thread from the radiance above. So I pulled my heart upward to its source. The moment I did so, all desire vanished, and in its place came a great longing for the beauty of the Shechinah." This incident became foundational in the Chassidic circles of Mezeritch, illustrating how the Maggid's teaching could be lived in real time — turning a moment of danger into a moment of ascent. **END NOTE]**

Siman #42

And Rachel was beautiful of form, etc., and Yaakov loved Rachel. Bereishit 29:17

וְרַחֵל הָיְתָה יְפֵת תֹּאֵר וְגו' וַיֹּאחֲזֵב יַעֲקֹב אֶת רַחֵל.

This was because Yaakov possesses the attribute of Tiferes.

זֶה הָיָה בְּעִבּוּר שֵׁשׁ לַיַּעֲקֹב מִדַּת הַתְּפָאֶרֶת.

Everything that he would see that was beautiful, he would say: "If this physical thing is beautiful, how much more so if this thing contained praise and exaltation to Hashem."

כָּל מָה שֶׁהָיָה רוֹאֶה דְּבָר נָאֵה אָמַר אִם לְגִשְׁמִי זֶה נָאֵה
כָּל שָׂכָן אִם הָיָה בְּזֶה הַדְּבָר הַקְּלִיל וְהַשְּׂבִיחַ לַיְי.

[NOTE Summary:

The Maggid teaches that Rachel's physical beauty, described as "beautiful of form," awakened Yaakov's love because it resonated with his own spiritual attribute of Tiferes, the quality of harmonious beauty and elevated balance. Yaakov did not experience beauty as something merely physical. Whenever he encountered something aesthetically pleasing in the physical world, he would immediately reflect: "If this material thing is so beautiful, how much more so would this beauty be if it were directed toward praising and elevating Hashem." Rachel's beauty therefore did not pull him downward but lifted him upward, serving as a window through which he perceived the higher Divine beauty that the lower world only reflects.

Practical Takeaway:

Beauty in this world is not an end in itself. When approached like Yaakov, beauty becomes a spiritual trigger, prompting the heart to seek its Divine source. Instead of being captivated by externals, one can ask: "How much more beautiful would this be if used for holiness?" This transforms physical attraction into spiritual elevation, aligning one's inner response with the attribute of Tiferes. **END NOTE]**

Siman #43

And she called his name Gad. Bereishit 30:11

וַתִּקְרָא אֶת שְׁמוֹ גָּד.

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The matter is that it is stated “And to Him shall you cleave” (Devarim 10:20), meaning to cleave to His attributes.

הַעֲנִינוּ דְּאִיתָא וְבוּ תִדְבָּקוּן הַדְּבָק בְּמִדּוֹתָיו

And meaning: an attribute is called a garment, as in “And the priest shall wear linen garments” (Vayikra 6:3).

וְרָצוֹנוּ לוֹמַר מִדָּה נִקְרְאת לְבוּשׁ עַל דְּרָךְ וְלְבוֹשׁ הַכֹּהֵן מִדּוּ בִּד

For example, when a father loves his son, he constricts his great intellect into the small intellect in order to speak with his young son.

לְמַשֵּׁל כְּשֶׁהָאָב אוֹהֵב אֶת בְּנוֹ אֵז מְצַמְצֵם אֶת שְׂכָלוֹ הַגָּדוֹל בְּשִׂכְלָא דְקִטְנוּת לְדַבֵּר עִם בְּנוֹ הַקָּטָן

It turns out that the love that the father has for his son constricted his intellect and became for it a garment.

נִמְצָא כִּי הָאֵהָבָה שֵׁשׁ לָאֵב עִם בְּנוֹ הִיא צְמֻצָּמָה אֶת שְׂכָלוֹ וְנִצְשָׁתָה לָהּ לְבוּשׁ

And similarly all the attributes are garments.

וְכָן עַל דְּרָךְ זֶה כָּל הַמִּדּוֹת הֵם לְבוּשִׁים

And in truth even Chochmah is called a garment and an attribute to the Infinite One, blessed is He.

וּבִאֲמָת גַּם חֻכְמָה נִקְרְאת לְבוּשׁ וּמִדָּה לְאִין סוּף יִתְבָּרַךְ

But the difference between Chochmah and the other attributes is this:

אֲבָל הַחֲלּוּק שֶׁבֵּין הַחֻכְמָה לְשָׂאֵר הַמִּדּוֹת הוּא זֶה

That everything the Holy One, blessed is He, created, apart from Himself, is male and female.

כִּי כָּל מַה שֶּׁבְּרָא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְבַד מִמֶּנּוּ הוּא דְּכָר וְנוֹקְבָא

And in truth He also influences life to all the worlds and receives delight from them, like the concept “Israel sustain their Father in Heaven” (Yalkut Shimoni Yeshayah 503).

וּבִאֲמָת גַּם הוּא יִתְבָּרַךְ מְשַׁפִּיעַ חַיּוֹת לְכָל הָעוֹלָמוֹת וּמִקְבֵּל תַּעֲנוּג מֵהֶם עַל דְּרָךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל מְפָרְנִים וְכוּ' וְכֵמוֹ שֶׁכְּתוּב בֶּן חֲכָם יִשְׁמַח אָב רָצוֹנוֹ לוֹמַר כְּשֶׁאֲנִיחֵנוּ חֻכְמִים יֵשׁ לָהּ תַּעֲנוּג מִזֶּה

But the difference between the Holy One, blessed is He, and the created beings is this:

אֲבָל הַחֲלּוּק שֶׁבֵּין הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לַנִּבְרָאִים הוּא זֶה

That the Holy One, blessed is He, at first is in the aspect of male, for He influences life and wisdom to all the worlds.

כִּי הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּתַחֲלָה הוּא בְּחִינַת דְּכָר כִּי מְשַׁפִּיעַ חַיּוֹת וְחֻכְמָה לְכָל הָעוֹלָמוֹת

And afterwards He is in the aspect of female, for He receives delight from them.

וְאַחֵר כֵּךְ הוּא בְּחִינַת נוֹקְבָא שֶׁהוּא מִקְבֵּל תַּעֲנוּג מֵהֶם

And the created beings are the opposite: first they receive life from Him, and afterwards they give delight and joy to Him.

וְהַנִּבְרָאִים הֵם לְהִפּוֹךְ כִּי מִתְחִלָּה הֵם מִקְבָּלִים חַיּוֹת מִמֶּנּוּ יִתְבָּרַךְ וְאַחֵר כֵּךְ מְשַׁפִּיעִים תַּעֲנוּג וְשִׂמְחָה לוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ

And this is “A daughter first is a good sign for sons only, and not for Him” (Niddah 31a).

וְזֶהוּ בַּת תְּחִלָּה סִימָן יָפֵה לְבָנִים בְּלִבָּד וְלֹא לוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ

And so with all attributes: at first they receive, and afterwards they influence that which is below them, and then they cause delight above.

וְכֵן כָּל הַמִּדּוֹת בְּתַחֲלָה הֵם מִקְבָּלִים וְאַחֵר כֵּךְ הֵם מְשַׁפִּיעִים לְמַה שֶּׁלְּמִטָּה מֵהֶם וְאֵז עוֹשִׂים תַּעֲנוּג לְמַעַלָּה

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And the difference between Chochmah and the other attributes is that the other attributes, since they are within time, cannot receive and influence at one moment.

והחלוק בין החכמה לשאר המדות כי שאר המדות לפי שהם בזמן אינם מקבלים ומשפיעים בפעם אחת.

Not so with Chochmah, which is the first substance that removes one form and clothes another, meaning that it does not remain in one place.

משאין כן החכמה שהיא חומר הראשון שהוא פושט הצורה ולובש דהינו שאינה עומדת על מקום אחד.

And it constantly, without interruption, gives to that which is below it and receives flow from that which is above it without interruption, like the blink of an eye, without time.

ותמיד בלי הפסק נותנת למה שלמטה ממנה ומקבלת שפע ממה שלמעלה ממנה בלי הפסק כהרף עין בלי זמן.

And they cannot grasp it.

ואין יכולים לעמוד עליה.

For example, the letters of thought constantly flow from the precedence of the intellect, meaning Chochmah, without interruption.

למשל אותיות המחשבה נובעים תמיד מקדמות השכל דהינו חכמה בלי הפסק.

And every moment other letters come from the precedence of the intellect, which she removes and gives to thought, and clothes others and gives them without interruption.

וכל רגע באות אותיות אחרות מקדמות השכל מה שהיא פושטן ונותנתן למחשבה ולובשת אחרות ונותנת בלי הפסק.

And upon itself they cannot stand.

ועליה עצמה אין יכולים לעמוד.

And behold Israel is called "holy," as it is written "Israel is holiness to Hashem, the first" (Yirmiyahu 2:3).

והנה ישראל נקרא קדוש כמו שכתוב קדוש ישראל ראשית.

They must always cleave to this attribute.

צריכין תמיד להיות דבוקים במדה זו.

And this is "A poor person who is sustained from charity must give charity."

וזהו עני המתפרנס מן הצדקה צריך לתן צדקה.

Meaning they must always influence and receive at one moment, like this attribute.

והינו שיהיו תמיד משפיעים ומקבלים בפעם אחת כמו מדה זו.

And this was truly the intention of Leah.

וזה היה באמת כונת לאה.

For it is written "And Leah saw that she had ceased from bearing" (Bereishis 30:9).

אמנם כתיב ותרא לאה כי עמדה מלדת.

And she needed to attach herself to this attribute.

והיתה צריכה לקשר עצמה למדה זו.

What did she do? She gave her maidservant to her husband.

מה עשתה נתנה שפחתה לבעלה.

And in truth a maidservant always receives from her mistress, but here Leah influenced to her maidservant and received delight from her at the same moment when this son was born.

ובאמת השפחה מקבלת מגבירתה תמיד וכאן היתה לאה משפעת לשפחתה ומקבלת תענוג ממנה בפעם אחת כשנולד הבן הזה.

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And she called his name Gad, meaning Gomel Dalim, meaning she bestows on one side, meaning influences, and the aspect of Dalet on one side, meaning she desires to receive delight.

וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ גָּד רְצוֹנוֹ לְזִמְרָה גוֹמֵל דָּלִים דְּהִינּוּ שְׁהִיא גוֹמֵלֶת בְּצַד אֶחָד דְּהִינּוּ מִשְׁפַּעַת וּבְהִינּוּת דְּלֶת בְּצַד אֶחָד שְׁהִיא רוֹצָה לְקַבֵּל תַּעֲנוּג.

And this is called Mazal, as in “His buckets shall flow with water” (Bamidbar 24:7), for this attribute always flows.

וְזֶהוּ נִקְרָא מַזָּל עַל דְּרֹד יוֹל מִים מְדֻלִּיּוּ כִּי הַמָּדָה הַזֹּאת נוֹזֶלֶת תָּמִיד.

[NOTE Summary:

In this teaching the Maggid expounds upon the naming of Gad and reveals the profound spiritual structure behind Divine attributes and human spiritual work. The verse “And she called his name Gad” prompts an exploration of a foundational principle: “And to Him shall you cleave,” which Chazal interpret as cleaving to His attributes. The Maggid explains that a *middah* is like a garment. Just as a garment shapes and expresses a person, a Divine attribute serves as the garment through which the Infinite expresses Himself. He illustrates this through the example of a father who loves his child. The father contracts his great intellect into a form the child can understand. The love becomes a garment that enclothes the intellect, revealing that emotions themselves are garments of inner wisdom.

The Maggid then teaches that even Chochmah, the highest intellectual faculty, is itself only a garment of the Infinite. The difference between Chochmah and the other attributes is that all created realities exist in male-and-female form and flow in a cycle of influence and reception. Hashem, too, gives life and wisdom to all worlds and receives delight from them, in the sense that “Israel sustain their Father in Heaven.” Yet with Hashem the order is first to influence and then to receive delight, whereas created beings first receive vitality and only afterwards give delight upward. This explains the saying “A daughter first is a good sign for sons, but not for Him,” meaning that the pattern of receiving before giving is suited to creations but not to the Creator.

All middos function similarly: first they receive from the attribute above them, and then they influence the level beneath them, creating delight above. But Chochmah is different because it is not bound by time. It receives and influences at once, constantly shedding and clothing new forms like letters of thought streaming continuously from the depth of the mind. One cannot grasp the essence of Chochmah because it never rests in one state; it is always in motion, giving downward and receiving upward in a single, timeless moment.

Israel is called “holy,” and therefore they must cleave to this attribute, receiving and giving simultaneously. This is why a poor person sustained by charity must also give charity: one must never remain only a receiver, but must emulate the Divine pattern of receiving and giving at once. Leah embodied this lesson. Seeing that she had ceased bearing children, she sought to attach herself to this attribute of simultaneous reception and influence. She therefore gave her maidservant to Yaakov — though a maidservant normally receives from her mistress, here Leah became a giver to her maidservant while simultaneously receiving delight from her when the child was born. For this reason the child was named Gad, interpreted as Gomel Dalim, one who bestows on

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Ohr Torah

Parshas Vayeitzei

the poor, symbolizing an attribute that both gives and receives. This is the essence of *mazal*, like the verse “His buckets shall flow with water,” indicating a flow that moves constantly and unceasingly.

Practical Takeaway:

A person must not be content merely to receive spiritual vitality; one must strive to give at the same moment. Just as Chochmah flows simultaneously upward and downward, so too should a person aim to be both a vessel and a channel. Whenever Divine goodness flows into your life, let it immediately pass through you in the form of kindness, generosity, prayer, or teaching. This aligns a person with the holy attribute described by the Maggid — the ability to receive and give in a single movement, creating delight above.

Chassidic Story:

A reliable tradition from the circles of the Maggid relates that one of his greatest disciples, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, once modeled this teaching in an unforgettable way. During a harsh winter, the Berditchever discovered a poor man at the door of the synagogue who had collapsed from cold and hunger. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak himself had not eaten, for he had been fasting and praying intensely since dawn. Yet upon seeing the man shivering and faint, he immediately lifted him, wrapped him in his own cloak, and hurried him inside. Those present later recounted that the tzaddik seemed to come alive with an inward light precisely as he exerted himself to help the man.

When someone wondered aloud how he could give so much strength and warmth while he himself was weak and fasting, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak replied, “When one receives a spark from Above, one must let it pass through immediately. If you try to hold it only for yourself, it disappears. But when you release it onward, Heaven sends more.” His words echoed exactly the Maggid’s teaching of Segment 6: the holy path is to receive from Above and give below in the same breath. This is the flow of Gad, the *mazal* that never ceases to pour forth blessing.

END NOTE]