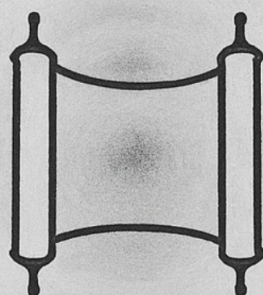


בס"ד

# The Maggid of Mezritch

## Ohr Torah

### Parshas Toldos



*Dedicated To:*

טנייה מלכה בת דינה דבורה  
דפואה שלמה

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# Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

## Ohr Torah Parshas Toldos

### Introduction

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezritch, the Maggid of Mezritch (circa 1710–1772), was the chief disciple and successor of the Baal Shem Tov and the central transmitter of early Chassidic teaching. In this maamar, he explains how love from above can grow into a higher love awakened from below, illuminating the verse “These are the generations of Yitzchak son of Avraham; Avraham begot Yitzchak.”

### Siman #31

**In the Midrash “These are the generations of Yitzchak son of Avraham; Avraham gave birth to Yitzchak,”** this is what is said: “The crown of elders is grandchildren, and the beauty of children is their fathers.” Avraham was not saved from the fiery furnace except by the merit of Yaakov, and so forth.

It is understood by means of the verse “As water reflects a face to a face,” and so forth. And behold, we will illustrate this by way of analogy: Reuven who loves Shimon with intense love, and because Shimon sees that Reuven loves him very much, Shimon is also awakened with love for Reuven.

It follows that the love of Reuven, who loves Shimon, is called “father,” and Shimon’s love that he loves Reuven is called “offspring,” because Shimon’s love was born from Reuven’s love.

And behold, there is a father’s love for his son in two matters. The first: the father loves his son because of natural instinct, and this father causes that the son also loves the father.

And there is another love greater than this: when he sees his son going in the straight path, and justifying his deeds, and wise in all wisdom, as it is said: “My son, if your heart is wise, my heart will also rejoice.”

Then the father has great delight from this, and from this comes joy, for joy comes from delight; a person only rejoices when he has delight in something, and from that delight the joy comes.

And because of the greatness of the delight and the joy that he has from the son, there is added and born to the father even greater love for the son. This parable applies to human beings.

**במדבר ואלה תולדות יצחק בן אברהם אברהם הוליד את יצחק** ההוא עטרת זקנים בני בנים ותפארת בנים אבותם לא נצול אברהם מכבשן האש אלא בזכותו של יעקב וכולי.

מובן על פי הפסוק כמים הפנים אל הפנים וגו'. והנה נמשיל לזה על דרך משל ראובן שאוהב לשמעון אוהבה עזה ומחמת ששמעון רואה שראובן אוהבו יותר מדי נתעורר אצל שמעון גם כן אוהבת ראובן.

נמצא כי אוהבת ראובן שאוהב לשמעון נקראת אב ואהבת שמעון שאוהב לראובן נקראת תולדה מפני שנתולדה אוהבת שמעון מכח אוהבת ראובן.

והנה יש אוהבת אב לבנו בשני ענינים. האחד האב אוהב לבנו מחמת הטבעיות וזה האב גורם שגם הבן אוהב את האב.

ויש אוהבה אחרת גדולה מזו שרואה את בנו הולך בדרך הישר ומצדיק מעשיו וחסם בכל החכמות כמו שנתאמר בני אם חכם לבך ישמח לבי גם אני.

אז יש לאב תענוג גדול מזה ומזה נהנה השמחה כי השמחה היא באה מהתענוג שאין אדם שמח אלא אם יש לו תענוג מאיזה דבר באה לו השמחה.

ומחמת גדל התענוג והשמחה שיש לו מן הבן נתוספה ונתולדה לאב עוד אוהבה יותר גדולה אל הבן. הנה זה המשל שייד לבני אדם.

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For before the birth of the son, or even after his birth, it is still not known what his nature is and what the deeds of the son will be; therefore the father does not yet have such love, which is the second one mentioned, only the first love which is from his nature.

But with the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is said: "Israel, in whom I glory," for with Him the past and the future are all equal, for He is prior to time.

And before Yisrael existed, it was revealed before Him every righteous person with all his deeds and his Torah, and from the beginning, immediately when Yisrael arose in thought before Him, there was already delight and pleasure, so to speak, before Him from every righteous person and his deeds.

And behold, a proof for this is from what we find that the Holy One, blessed be He, delights in the Torah of the righteous, as our sages said: When Moshe ascended on high, he found the Holy One, blessed be He, saying: "Elazar my son says about the laws of the red heifer," and so forth, many hundreds of years before the arrival of Rabbi Elazar.

And likewise what our sages said: "Everything that a diligent student will one day innovate," for so it is: the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moshe: "So-and-so student is destined to innovate such-and-such in his generation," for the Torah of the righteous and their deeds are the delight and pleasure before Him.

It follows that this delight, joy, and love were born to the father through the power of the son. And this is what is written in the holy Zohar: "Yisrael sustain," and so forth.

Like the parable of a father who has delight from his beloved son, then from the greatness of the delight and joy the father says—as people say in this expression—"I become from this delight healthy and fat."

So too, from the greatness of the delight and pleasure that the Holy One, blessed be He, has—so to speak—it is as though they sustain Him. And this is "And I was with Him as a nursling."

כי קודם לידת הבן או אפילו אחר לידתו עדין אינו יודע מה טיבו ומה יהיה מעשה הבן על פן אין לאב עדין אהבה כל כך שהוא הבית הנזכר רק אהבה הראשונה שהיא מחמת טבעו.

אבל אצל השם יתברך כאמר ישראל אשר כך אתפאר כי אצלו יתברך העבר והעתיד הכל שווה לפי שהוא קודם הזמן.

וקודם שהיו ישראל היה גלוי לפניו יתברך כל צדיק וצדיק עם כל מעשיו ותורתו ומתחלה תיכף כשעלה ישראל במחשבה לפניו היה כבר ששוע ועשונג כביכול לפניו יתברך מכל צדיק וצדיק ומעשיו.

והנה ראיה לזה מה שמצינו שהקדוש ברוך הוא משתעשע בתורתו של הצדיק כמו שאמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה כשעלה משה למרום מצאו להקדוש ברוך הוא שאומר אלעזר בני אומר פרה וגו' קודם ביאת רבי אלעזר כמה מאות שנים.

וכן מה שאמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה כל מה שתלמיד ותיק עתיד לחידש גם כן כך הוא הקדוש ברוך הוא אמר למשה כך וכך עתיד תלמיד פלוני לחידש בדורו כי תורת הצדיק ומעשיו הוא הששוע והתענוג לפניו יתברך.

נמצא כי זה התענוג והשמחה והאהבה נולדה לו לאב מכח בנו. וזהו מה שאמר בזהר הקדוש ישראל 'מפרנסים וכו'.

כמשל האב שיש לו תענוג מבנו וחיבו אצו מגדל התענוג והשמחה אומר האב כדרך הבריות אומרים בלשון זה אני נעשה מהתענוג הזה פריא ושמן.

כך מגדל התענוג והששוע שיש להקדוש ברוך הוא כביכול כמו שמפרנסים אותו. וזהו ואהיה אצלו אמון.



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And behold, Rashi of blessed memory explained that the Torah grew in the bosom of the Holy One, blessed be He, for two thousand years, and so forth. But the simple reading of the verse implies that the Torah became an artisan to the Holy One, blessed be He.

And this is difficult to say—for the Holy One, blessed be He, precedes all that precedes. But according to our way it is resolved: the Torah praises itself that it was an artisan to the Holy One, blessed be He, so to speak.

Meaning the greatness of the delight and pleasure that He, blessed be He, had from the Torah—that is, from the Torah of every righteous person and their good deeds, which are the commandments written in the Torah—this became for Him, so to speak, an artisan and sustenance.

And this is “And I was with Him as a nursling.” And it is known that the name Ehyeh indicates the future, and this is its explanation: “And I will be,” meaning although the Torah is destined to be given to Yisrael and has not yet been given, and if so, what is the delight?

Therefore it says “with Him,” meaning that with Him, blessed be He—so to speak—the past and the future are all equal, and everything is revealed before Him. Therefore, “I was for Him an artisan and delight,” as mentioned.

And let us return to the matter, that there is a love which is “father,” and there is a love which is “offspring.” And behold, a person who is aroused to the service of the Blessed One because he sees the love of the Creator upon him,

that He created him and formed him and sustains him and enlivens him and gives him the love of the Creator, blessed be He, and he serves Him—and this is what is said: “Who has preceded Me that I should repay him?”

even though this too is called service, nevertheless he is called “a righteous person for himself,” but he is not like the quality of the righteous who influence others.

And about this the righteous one said in the verse: “We have a little sister, and she has no breasts.” And it is known that this is said by the angels, who are called companions of Yisrael.

וְהִנֵּה רִשִׁי זְכוּרֹנוּ לְבָרְכָה פִּירֵשׁ כִּי הַתּוֹרָה נִתְגַּדְלָה בְּחִיקוֹ שֶׁל הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֲלֵפִים שָׁנָה וְכוּ' אֲבָל פָּשׁט הַכָּתוּב מְשַׁמֵּעַ שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה נַעֲשֶׂה אוּמָן לַהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

וְקוּשָׁה הַדָּבָר לֹאמְרוּ וְהִלֵּא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא קִדְמוֹן לְכָל הַקָּדוּמִים. אֲבָל לִפִּי דְרָבֵנוּ יִתְרוֹץ שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה מְשַׁבַּחַת אֶת עֲצָמָהּ שֶׁהִיטָה אוּמָן לַהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּכִיכּוֹל.

דְּהֵינּוּ גִדְל הַתַּעֲנוּג וְהַשְׁעָשׂוּעַ שֶׁהִיָּה לוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ מִן הַתּוֹרָה דְּהֵינּוּ מִתּוֹרַת כָּל צַדִּיק וְצַדִּיק וּמַעֲשִׂיו הַטּוֹבִים שֶׁהֵם הַמִּצְוֹת הַכָּתוּבִים בַּתּוֹרָה זֶה נַעֲשֶׂה לוֹ 'יִתְבָּרַךְ בְּכִיכּוֹל אוּמָן וּפְרִיָסָה וְכוּ'.

וְזֶהוּ וְאֵהִיָּה אֲצִלּוֹ אֲמוּן. וְיָדוּעַ כִּי שֵׁם אֵהִיָּה הוּא מוֹרָה עַל הָעֵתִיד וְהַכִּי פִּירוּשׁוֹ וְאֵהִיָּה כְּלוּמַר אֵף עַל פִּי שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה עֲתִידָה לְהֵתֵן לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַדִּין לֹא נִתְּנָה וְאֵם כֵּן מָהוּ הַשְׁעָשׂוּעִים.

לֵכֵן אָמַר אֲצִלּוֹ הֵינּוּ אֲצִלּוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ בְּכִיכּוֹל הַכֹּל שְׁוֶה הָעֶבֶר וְהָעֵתִיד וְהַכֹּל גְּלוּי לִפְנֵינוּ יִתְבָּרַךְ לֵכֵן הֵייתִי אֵלָיו אוּמָן וְשַׁעֲשׂוּעַ כְּנֻזָּר.

וְנִחְזֹר לַעֲנֹן שֵׁישׁ אֵהִיָּה שֶׁהוּא אֵב וְיֵשׁ אֵהִיָּה שֶׁהוּא תוֹלָדָה. וְהִנֵּה הָאֵדָם שֶׁמִּתְעוֹרֵר לְעִבּוּדָתוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ, מִחֲמַת שְׂרוּאָה אֵהִיָּה הַבּוֹרָא עָלָיו.

שֶׁבָּרָאוּ וְנָצְרוּ וּמְקִימוֹ וּמְחִייו וְנוֹתֵן לוֹ אֵהִיָּה הַבּוֹרָא בְּרוּךְ הוּא וְעוֹבְדָהוּ וְזֶהוּ שֶׁאָמְרוּ מִי הַקָּדִים מִי וְאֲשֵׁלֵם לוֹ,

הַגֵּם שֶׁזֶה גַם כֵּן עִבּוּדָה נִקְרִי עַל זֹאת הוּא מִקְרִי צַדִּיק לַעֲצָמוֹ אֲבָל אֵינּוּ כְּמוֹ מֵדַת הַצַּדִּיק לְהַשְׁפִּיעַ לַזּוּלָּתוֹ.

וְעַל זֶה הַצַּדִּיק אָמַר הַכָּתוּב אָחוֹת לָנוּ קִטְנָה וְשׂוֹדִים אֵין לָהּ. וְיָדוּעַ שֶׁזֶה אוֹמְרִים הַמַּלְאָכִים שֶׁנִּקְרָאִים חֲבֵרִים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל.

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And when Yisrael are in this measure, that they have love only because of an arousal from above, they (the angels) say: “We have a little sister,” meaning “sister” is an expression of attachment and connection.

Meaning: although they cleave and are connected to the Blessed One, nevertheless this quality is small, because they only have from the arousal above, and they are called righteous-for-themselves, but not righteous who influence above to cause delight, pleasure, and joy to the supernal beings.

And this is “and she has no breasts,” meaning breasts to nurse and to influence others, “What shall we do for our sister?”—to bring them to the complete measure mentioned.

And with this will also be resolved and understood the Midrash with which we began: “And these are the generations of Yitzchak... Avraham begot Yitzchak”—meaning, the verse recounts their praise that they reached the level of completeness, that they had two kinds of love within them.

And this is “And these are the generations of Yitzchak son of Avraham,” meaning Yitzchak is an expression of laughter and joy, “begot,” meaning he caused and added to Avraham delight, joy, and love from the greatness of his righteousness.

For at first Avraham only had the first love—that is the “birth of Avraham to Yitzchak,” which is the love called “Avraham,” and afterward he rose higher and caused offspring to Avraham.

And this is “The crown of elders is grandchildren,” meaning just as this verse begins by praising the offspring of Yitzchak, and afterwards the offspring of Avraham, even though the birth of Yitzchak is second to and later than the birth of Avraham,

nevertheless the verse mentions first the birth of Yitzchak to Avraham because that is the greater and more complete level, above which there is none. Therefore it is mentioned first, although it is later. So too this verse: “The crown of elders is grandchildren,” which is the greatest level.

ובאשר ישראל הם במדה זו שאין להם אהבה רק מחמת אתערותא דלעילא אומרים אחות לנו קטנה כלומר אחות לשון דבקות והתחברות.

רצונו לומר אף על פי שהם דבוקים ומחוברים בה יתברך אף על פי כן קטנה היא המדה הזאת מפני שאין להם רק מחמת אתערותא דלעילא והם מקרי צדיקים לעצמם אבל אינם צדיקים להשפיע לעילא לגרם שעשוע ותענוג ושמחה לעליונים.

וזהו ושרים אין לה כלומר שרים להניק ולהשפיע לזולתם מה נעשה לאחותנו להביאם אל המדה השלימה הנזכר.

ובנה יתרוץ ויבן גם המדרש שהתחלנו. ואלה תולדות יצחק וגו' אברהם הוליד את יצחק פירוש הכתוב מספר בשבחים שהגיעו למעלת השלמות שהיו שני מיני אהבה בהם.

וזהו ואלה תולדות יצחק בן אברהם רצונו לומר שייצחק הוא לשון צחוק ושמחה הוליד רצונו לומר שגרם והוסיף לאברהם תענוג ושמחה ואהבה מגדל צדקתו.

פי מתחלה לא היה לאברהם רק אהבה הראשונה שהיא הולדת אברהם ליצחק שהיא אהבה הנקראת אברהם ואחרי כן עלה למעלה וגרם תולדה לאברהם.

וזהו עשרת זקנים בני רצונו לומר כי כמו שנה הפסוק מדבר בתחלה משבח תולדות יצחק ואחר כך מתולדות אברהם אף על פי שהולדת יצחק שניה להולדת אברהם ומאחרת ממנו.

אף על פי כן מזכיר הכתוב תחלה הולדת יצחק לאברהם מפני שהיא המעלה היותר שלימה שאין למעלה ממנה ולכן מזכירה תחלה אף על פי שהיא מאחרת. כן הפסוק הנה עשרת זקנים בני רצונו שהיא המעלה היותר גדולה.

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And what is written “The crown of elders is grandchildren,” meaning the greatness of the delight and the joy that the son causes to the father is called “grandchildren.”

Because at first the father begot the son, and afterward he (the son) begot and caused for the father the delight; thus the delight returned and became a crown upon the head of the elder,

who is like the father of his father in regard to that delight. And afterward it says: “And the beauty of children is their fathers,”

which is not as great, but it has the first love, which is from the arousal and the birth of his father.

ומה שכתוב עטרת זקנים בני בנים רצונו לומר גדל התענוג והשמחה שהבן גורם לאב הוא נקרא בני בנים.

כי מתחלה הוליד האב את הבן ואחר כך הוליד וגרם לאב התענוג הרי הדרא דהתענוג חזר ונעשה עטרה לראש הזקן,

שהוא כמו אבי אביו לתענוג ההוא. ואחר כך אמר, ותפארת בנים אבותם,

שהיא אינה כל כך רק יש לו אהבה ראשונה מחמת האתעוררות והולדת אביו.

#### [NOTE Summary:

The maamar teaches that there are two forms of love. The first is the natural descending love from above, like a father who loves his child simply because he is his child. The second is a higher love born later when the father sees the child acting with righteousness and wisdom, which creates joy, and from that joy arises a deeper and renewed love. Humans only reach this second love after the child grows, but with Hashem — for whom past and future are the same — the delight from the Torah and good deeds of every tzaddik existed before creation. This explains why Moshe found Hashem teaching the parashah of Parah Adumah in the name of Rabbi Elazar, who lived centuries later: their Torah already gave Him pleasure.

This Divine delight is called “parnasah” above, as in “Israel sustains,” similar to how a father feels strengthened by the joy his beloved child gives him. The verse “I was with Him as an emun” means the Torah — meaning the Torah and mitzvot of each tzaddik — served as the Divine “artisan” and delight even before it was given. The maamar distinguishes between a “tzaddik for himself,” who serves Hashem because he receives life, kindness, and sustenance, and the higher tzaddik who serves in a way that brings pleasure above. The angels allude to the first type when they say, “We have a little sister and she has no breasts” — she is attached to Hashem but cannot yet “nurse,” meaning she cannot yet bring nourishment or joy above. Their question “What shall we do for our sister?” seeks to raise her to the higher love.

This clarifies the verse “The crown of elders is grandchildren.” Children receive love from their fathers — the first love. Grandchildren represent the delight the elder receives when the child’s righteousness brings him joy, which becomes a crown on the elder’s head. Spiritually, this is the highest level: when Israel awakens a rising love that becomes “bnei banim.” Yitzchak (whose name means laughter and joy) brought delight and added love to Avraham, transforming the first love into a higher love. Therefore the verse mentions Yitzchak’s generations before Avraham’s, because the rising love — “bnei banim” — is superior.

#### Practical Takeaway:

Each person must ask: “Which love am I serving Hashem with?” If my connection to Hashem is only based on what He gives me — life, health, blessings — this is good but still the first level. To reach “bnei banim,” I must

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shift to giving: “What can I do today that will give Hashem pleasure?” Practical steps include: pausing before davening to declare “This is for Your nachas,” choosing the honest or kind path for His sake, or dedicating one mitzvah a day as a personal gift to Hashem. These actions transform avodah into a rising love that places a crown above.

#### Chassidic Story:

A young iluy once came to Mezritch. His Torah brilliance and fiery tefillah amazed everyone, and many said he must be a great tzaddik. After watching him, the Maggid called him in gently: “You are a great tzaddik — for yourself.” The words struck him. “Rebbe, what am I lacking?”

The Maggid said, “Your learning inspires you. Your davening warms you. But does your avodah give pleasure above? Does it strengthen another Jew? Or does it mostly satisfy your own soul?” Shaken, the iluy spent time with an older, hidden chassid in a small village. There he met a simple Jew who barely read, yet rose before dawn, whispered a few pesukim with tears, helped the needy quietly, and ran his business with unwavering honesty. No one praised him, but often the iluy heard him whisper, “Ribono shel Olam, let me give You a little pleasure today.”

When the iluy returned to Mezritch, he still learned deeply and davened with fire, but now with humility, care for others, and the steady question, “Does this bring Hashem joy?” The Maggid smiled and said, “Now you have begun to be not only a tzaddik for yourself, but a ben ben — a grandchild — who places a crown upon the elders.” This is the essence of the maamar: not merely to receive love from above, but to generate joy above — the true meaning of “bnei banim,” the highest crown. **END NOTE]**

### Siman #32

**Abraham begot Yitzchak:** meaning that the trait of mercy and compassion is born when judgment rests upon a person, for compassion emerges from kindness. This is the meaning of “These are the generations of Yitzchak — Abraham begot Yitzchak,” meaning that Abraham, which is kindness, gave birth to the trait of Yaakov, which is mercy, to Yitzchak, [with Yitzchak].

אברהם הוליד את יצחק. פירוש כי מדת הרחמנות והחסד נולד, כששורה דין על האדם נולד הרחמנות מצד החסד. זהו ואלה תולדות יצחק אברהם הוליד את יצחק, פירוש אברהם, שהוא חסד, הוליד מדת [יעקב, שהוא הרחמנות, את יצחק, עם יצחק].

#### [NOTE Summary:

This segment teaches that compassion (rachamim) is born from kindness (chesed) when a person experiences judgment (din). When din rests upon someone, it awakens a deeper flow of mercy rooted in chesed. Thus the verse “These are the generations of Yitzchak — Abraham begot Yitzchak” means: Avraham, who embodies chesed, gives rise to the trait of Yaakov, which is rachamim, and this compassionate quality is expressed through Yitzchak.

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#### Practical Takeaway:

When facing difficulty, pressure, or judgment, one should not shut down emotionally. Instead, use the moment to awaken compassion — both compassion toward oneself and toward others — allowing the inner chesed to give birth to a higher, more tender understanding. Moments of din can become gateways to a deeper heart.

**END NOTE]**

#### Siman #33

**“And these are the generations of Yitzchak son of Avraham” (Bereshit 25:19).** For the word “eleh”: the letter alef is wisdom, as in “I will teach you wisdom” (Iyov 33:33).

And the lamed is thought. And through the five outlets of the mouth, they are the “offspring” with respect to Yitzchak son of Avraham.

וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת יִצְחָק בֶּן אַבְרָהָם (בראשית כ"ה:י"ט). כִּי אֵלֶּה, הָאֵלֶּף הוּא הַחֲכָמָה כְּמוֹ ("וְאֶאֱלָפֶךָ חֲכָמָה" (איוב ל"ג:ל"ג)).

וְהֵלָם"ד הִיא הַמַּחְשְׁבָה, וְעַל יְדֵי חֲמֵשׁ מוּצָאוֹת הַפֶּה הֵם הַתּוֹלְדוֹת אֲצֵל יִצְחָק בֶּן אַבְרָהָם.

#### [NOTE: Summary

This segment explains the deeper meaning of “These are the generations of Yitzchak son of Avraham.” The word *Eleh* (“these”) hints at inner spiritual processes: the letter alef represents wisdom, as seen in the verse “I will teach you wisdom” (Iyov 33:33). The letter lamed represents thought. Together, alef (wisdom) and lamed (thought) produce expression through the five outlets of the mouth, which are called “generations” or “offspring.” Thus the verse teaches that the spiritual flow beginning with Avraham (chesed) and manifesting in Yitzchak (gevurah) becomes expressed outwardly through spoken revelation that originates in wisdom and thought.

#### Practical Takeaway:

Speech is not random — it emerges from the inner structure of wisdom and thought. Before speaking, pause briefly and bring awareness to the source of your words. Ask: “Is what I’m about to say aligned with my higher wisdom and my truest thoughts?” This transforms speech from impulse to meaningful expression and turns words into spiritually productive “offspring.” **END NOTE]**

#### Siman #34

#### Another explanation: “And these are the generations”

(בראשית כ"ה:י"ט) refers to the creation of this world through Yitzchak son of Avraham — meaning through the integration of love and awe.

פִּירוּשׁ אֲחֵר, “וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת” (בראשית כ"ה:י"ט) הוּא בְּרִיאַת עוֹלָם הַנָּה עַל־יְדֵי יִצְחָק בֶּן אַבְרָהָם, הֵינּוּ עַל־יְדֵי הַתְּכַלְלוֹת אֱהָבָה וְיִרְאָה.



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#### [NOTE: Summary

This maamar offers a second explanation of the words “And these are the generations.” Here, it teaches that the creation of this physical world itself comes through “Yitzchak son of Avraham.” Spiritually, Avraham embodies love, and Yitzchak embodies awe. The maamar reveals that the world can only come into being — and continue to exist — through the integration and harmony of these two qualities. When love and awe unite, they create a balanced Divine flow that brings forth and sustains creation.

#### Practical Takeaway:

In daily life, we must consciously unite love and awe in our avodah. Love alone can lead to looseness; awe alone can lead to distance or severity. When facing decisions, mitzvot, or interactions with others, pause and ask: “Am I acting from love with respect, or from awe with warmth?” Blending the two brings inner stability and aligns the person with the Divine pattern that sustains the world itself. **END NOTE]**

### Siman #35

“And Yitzchak loved Esav” (Bereshit 25:28). The meaning is: Yitzchak is related to “laughter” and joy, which refers to delight. But a delight that is constant is not delight. Therefore, “Yitzchak loved Esav” — meaning that delight “loves” distance, for distance creates renewed pleasure. Thus Esav would come to Yitzchak.

This is the meaning of “Make me delicacies” (Bereshit 27:4), meaning that the delight will increase. And this is the meaning of “Great is repentance, for intentional sins become merits” (Yoma 86b) when done from love — meaning that the more a person yearns to ascend, according to his desire and longing, the more delight increases. Therefore, through those very intentional sins, delight comes to him, and they become like merits.

And this is the meaning of “From afar Hashem appeared to me” (Yirmiyahu 31:3): when I am distant, then Hashem appears to me. This is the meaning of “Peace to the distant” (Yeshayahu 57:19) — through distance.

#### [NOTE: Summary

This maamar teaches that Yitzchak, identified with laughter and joy, represents the quality of ta’anug, delight. But constant delight is not experienced as delight; it needs contrast in order to be renewed. Therefore, “Yitzchak loved Esav” — meaning that ta’anug “loves” and is drawn to distance, for distance allows delight to re-emerge. This is why Esav came to Yitzchak: the experience of remoteness creates a fresh awakening of pleasure.

וַיֵּאָהֵב יִצְחָק אֶת עֵשָׂו (בראשית כ"ה:כ"ח). פירושו, יצחק הוא לשון צחוק ושמחה, והוא התענוג, ותענוג תמיד אינו תענוג. לכן “וַיֵּאָהֵב יִצְחָק אֶת עֵשָׂו” — התענוג אוהב הריחוק, לכן בא עשו אל יצחק.

וְהָיוּ “וַעֲשֵׂה לִי מִטְעָמִים” (בראשית כ"ז:ד'), ר"ל כי יתרכה התענוג. וְהָיוּ “גְדוֹלָה תְּשׁוּבָה שְׂדֵדוֹנוֹת נַעֲשִׂין לוֹ כְּזָכוֹת” (יומא פ"ו), אם היא מאהבה — ר"ל כל מה שהוא חפץ לעלות וכפי חפצו וחסקו כד מרבה התענוג. לכן בזה הגדונו בא לו תענוג, לכן הם כזכויות.

וְהָיוּ “מֵרְחוֹק ה' נִרְאָה לִי” (ירמיהו ל"א:ג'), אם אני מרוחק — אז הוי' נראה לי. כי “שְׁלוֹם לְרְחוֹק” (ישעיהו נ"ז:י"ט), על-ידי ריחוק.

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This is also the meaning of “Make me delicacies,” that through situations of distance or effort, new delight is generated. Thus the maamar connects this with the teaching “Great is teshuvah, for intentional sins become like merits,” when teshuvah is motivated by love. When a person longs to rise, the very places of distance become the engines that intensify delight. Since the yearning is deep, even past misdeeds can be transformed into sources of renewed ta’anug, and thus become like merits.

This also explains the verse “From afar Hashem appeared to me”: precisely when one feels distant, Hashem’s revelation can appear more vividly. “Peace to the distant” likewise means that distance itself, when confronted with desire to return, becomes the channel through which new revelation and connection are formed.

#### Practical Takeaway:

When a person feels distant — uninspired, unfocused, or struggling — he should not despair. The maamar teaches that distance itself can become the very cause of renewed closeness. Use moments of low spiritual feeling as an opportunity to awaken longing. Instead of collapsing inward, say: “This very distance can bring me a deeper return.” The yearning that arises from struggle can generate a stronger, more vibrant ta’anug in avodah than what existed before.

#### Chassidic Story:

A young chassid once came to the Maggid upset and discouraged. “Rebbe,” he said, “when I first began learning and davening, everything was bright. Now it feels like everything has dimmed. I feel far, cold, and empty. What happened to me?” The Maggid looked at him with compassion and said, “When a father wishes to lift his child higher, he first takes a step back. The child thinks he is farther away, but in truth, the father is creating room for the child to rise.”

The chassid listened carefully as the Maggid continued, “This feeling of distance you describe is not a fall — it is an invitation. The distance awakens a deeper longing in you than you ever felt at the beginning. Your earlier inspiration came from above. This new yearning comes from within you. That is why it feels stronger, and also why it feels harder. But this is the path to real delight above.” The chassid later said that from that teaching onward, whenever he felt spiritually dry or distant, he remembered the Maggid’s words: “The father stepped back so I could take a step forward.” And with that, his longing turned the distance itself into renewed strength.

END NOTE]

### Siman #36

**On the verse “And the man became great and went on, going and becoming great until he became very great” (Bereshit 26:13).** One may question why in this verse he is called “the man,” whereas throughout the whole section he is called Yitzchak, and here he is called “man.” And what is the meaning of the doubling of greatness and the doubling of going?

בפסוק ויגדל האיש וילך הלך וגדל עד פי גדל  
מאד. והנה יש לדקדק למה קורא אותו בפסוק זה  
איש, והלא בכל הפרשה קורא אותו יצחק וכאן  
קראהו איש. ועוד מהו כפל הגדלה וכפל ההליכה.

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And it is possible to say according to what is stated in the Gemara: these said, “Fortunate is our youth that did not embarrass our old age,” and these said, “Fortunate is our old age which atoned for our youth,” and both say, “Fortunate is he who did not sin” (Shabbat 152a).

One must question their statement “our old age which atoned for our youth.” The wording implies they were ba’alei teshuvah who repented in old age. If so, what is “fortunate”? Did not David HaMelech say “Fortunate is the man” (Tehillim 1:1), and the Sages said “Fortunate is he who returns in repentance while still a man,” and they said in the Zohar “Before a hoary head you shall rise” (Vayikra 19:32)?

And further, they said “which atoned for our youth.” It is sufficient to remove themselves from now on from the time of their repentance and onward. And further, “both say fortunate is he who did not sin”—does that not embarrass those who repented in old age?

And further, what they conclude: “And one who sinned — may he be forgiven.” But they already said “our old age atoned for our youth,” so what forgiveness do they need?

And it is possible to say simply according to what the Gemara disagreed: one said “In the place where complete tzaddikim stand, ba’alei teshuvah cannot stand,” and one said “In the place where ba’alei teshuvah stand, complete tzaddikim cannot stand” (Berakhot 34b).

And one may say: one master said one thing and the other said another, and they do not disagree. For it is known what the Sages said: “One who repents out of love — his intentional sins become merits; one who repents out of fear — his intentional sins become like unintentional ones” (Yoma 86b).

He who said that the tzaddikim are greater speaks of those who repented out of fear; for certainly the merits of a tzaddik from his youth are more than those of a ba'al teshuvah. And he who said ba’alei teshuvah are greater speaks of those who repented out of love; for their intentional sins become like merits, and certainly they have more merits than the complete tzaddik.

ואפֿשר לומר על פי מה שאמרו בגמרא הללו אמרו  
אשרי ילדותינו שלא בישה את זקנותינו, והללו  
אמרו אשרי זקנותינו שפֿפרה על ילדותינו, ואלו  
ואלו אומרים אשרי מי שלא חטא כו'

הנה יש לזקק אומרים זקנותינו שפֿפרה כו'. הלשון  
משמע שאותם היו הבעלי תשובה שעשו תשובה  
בימי זקנותם, אם כן מאי אשרי, הלא דוד המלך ע"ה  
אמר אשרי האיש, ואמרו רז"ל אשרי מי שחזר  
בתשובה כשהוא [צעיר] איש, ואמרו (בגמרא)  
[בזהר] מפני שיבה תקום כו'

ועוד אמרו שפֿפרה [על] ילדותינו, דיו להפקיע את  
עצמם מעת תשובתם ואילך. ועוד אלו ואלו אומרים  
אשרי מי שלא חטא, הלא בדבר הזה מבישים לאותם  
ששובו בימי זקנותם

ועוד מה שמסימין ומי שחטא יחול לו, והלא כבר  
אמרו זקנותינו פֿפרה על ילדותינו, ואיזו מחילה הם  
צריכים

ואפֿשר לומר פשוט [על פי] מה דאפליגו בגמרא חד  
אמר במקום שצדיקים גמורים עומדים אין בעלי  
תשובה יכולים לעמוד, וחד אמר במקום שבעלי  
תשובה עומדים כו'

ו"ל מר אמר חדא כו' ולא פליגי. כי הלא ידוע מה  
שאמרו רז"ל השב מאהבה ודונות כו' והשב מיראה  
ודונות נעשו כשנגות

מאן דאמר שהצדיקים גדולים יותר מדבר באותם  
ששובו מיראה, כי בודאי זכויות צדיק מנעוריו מרבים  
הם יותר מבעל תשובה. ומאן דאמר שבעלי תשובה  
גדולים יותר מדבר באותם ששובו מאהבה, שדונות  
נעשו לו זכויות, נמצא כי יש לו יותר זכויות מן  
הצדיק

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And I heard one reason why the ba'al teshuvah is greater: because he has already experienced the heat and excitement of sins, and when he does teshuvah and occupies himself with Torah and mitzvot, he does everything with great excitement and desire, since he knows well what excitement is — unlike the tzaddik, who never experienced this at all.

And my teacher and master also said the reason: because for the tzaddik, good deeds and Torah study become habitual, and he does not perform them with such excitement. But for the ba'al teshuvah, it is something new. And furthermore, if he does not do everything with deveikut, he will fall from his level — therefore it is necessary for him to serve his Creator with great excitement.

And according to this, based on the reasons mentioned, even one who repents out of fear has recognized excitement; however, it is known that the main excitement comes from great love. One who serves from fear, even though he has the fire of excitement, does not have it as greatly as the tzaddik who serves from love.

According to this, one may also say that “those who say: fortunate is our old age” also refers to those who repented out of love. In their case, certainly their youth was atoned for, and even though they repented in old age, their teshuvah from love is great. Through this, their excitement and deveikut grow because of the reasons mentioned above, and certainly it atoned for them entirely, and there is no trace of sin in them — for on the contrary, sins become merits (Yoma 86b).

And what they said “fortunate is he who did not sin” — for both groups were warning and rebuking other ba'alei teshuvah who had repented. Concerning them they said “fortunate is he who did not sin.” And they also needed forgiveness and atonement, for their intentional sins become like unintentional sins, and one who sins unintentionally requires atonement. And this is the meaning of “and one who sinned — may he be forgiven.”

וְשִׁמְעָתִי טַעַם א' שֶׁהַבַּעַל תְּשׁוּבָה יוֹתֵר גָּדוֹל, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁכָּבֵר הַפִּיר חֲמוּם וְהַתְּלַהּבוֹת הָעוֹנוֹת, וְכִשְׁעוּשָׁה תְּשׁוּבָה וְעוֹסֵק בַּתּוֹרָה וּבִמִּצְוֹת עוֹשֶׂה הַכֹּל בְּהַתְּלַהּבוֹת וְחֶשֶׁק גָּדוֹל מִפְּנֵי שִׂיּוּדָע הֵיטֵב הַהַתְּלַהּבוֹת, מִשְׁאִין כֵּן הַצָּדִיק שֶׁלֹּא הִכִּיר זֶה מַעֲוָלָם.

וְעוֹד אָמַר מוֹרֵי וְרַבֵּי הַטַּעַם, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁאֲצֵל הַצָּדִיק נַעֲשׂוּ מַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים וְלִמּוּד תּוֹרָה הֶרְגֵּל, וְאִינוּ עוֹשֶׂה כָּל כֹּף בְּהַתְּלַהּבוֹת, אֲכָל הַבַּעַל תְּשׁוּבָה אֲצֵלוֹ הוּא דָּבָר חֲדָשׁ. וְעוֹד, אִם לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה הַכֹּל בְּדִבְקוּת יִפֹּל מִמִּדְרָגָתוֹ, לְכַף מִן הַהִכָּרָח הוּא לוֹ לַעֲבוֹד בּוֹרְאוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ בְּהַתְּלַהּבוֹת גָּדוֹלָה.

וְא"ב, לִפִּי טַעַמִּים הַנִּזְכָּר, גַּם הַשֵּׁב מִיִּרְאָה הַפִּיר הַהַתְּלַהּבוֹת, אִךְ עִם כָּל זֶה יָדוּעַ הוּא כִּי עֵינָךְ הַהַתְּלַהּבוֹת הוּא מַגִּדֵּל הָאֲהָבָה. מִשְׁאִין כֵּן הָעוֹבֵד מִיִּרְאָה, אֶף-עַל-פִּי שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ אֵשׁ הַהַתְּלַהּבוֹת, אִינוּ כָּל כֹּף גָּדוֹלָה כִּמוֹ הַצָּדִיק הָעוֹבֵד מֵאֲהָבָה.

וְעַל פִּי זֶה י"ל גַּם, הִלְלוּ אוֹמְרִים אֲשֶׁרִי זְקוּנוֹתֵינוּ, מִיִּרְאָה גַם בְּאוֹתָן שֶׁשָּׁבוּ מֵאֲהָבָה, וּבִזְהָ וְיִדְאִי כִּפְרָה יִלְדוּתָם וְאֶף שֶׁשָּׁבוּ בִּימֵי הַשִּׁיבָה, עַכ"ז גָּדוֹלָה תְּשׁוּבָתָם שֶׁעָשׂוּ מֵאֲהָבָה, וּמִכֹּחַ זֶה גָּדֹלָה הַהַתְּלַהּבוֹת שֶׁלָּקֶם וְדִבְקוּתָם מִפְּנֵי הַטַּעַמִּים הַנִּזְכָּרִים וּבִזְהָ וְיִדְאִי כִּפְרָה לָקֶם מְכַל וְכָל וְאִין בָּהֶם (שׁוּם) רָשָׁם חֲטָא, כִּי אֲדָרְבָּא נַעֲשֶׂה זְכוֹת מִקֵּם.

וּמֵה שֶׁאָמְרוּ אֲשֶׁרִי מִי שֶׁלֹּא חֲטָא, כִּי אֵלּוּ וְאֵלּוּ מִזְהִירִין וּמוֹכִיחִין לְשֹׁאֲרֵי בַּעֲלֵי תְּשׁוּבָה שֶׁשָּׁבוּ, וְעַלֵּיהֶם אָמְרוּ אֲשֶׁרִי מִי שֶׁלֹּא חֲטָא, וְגַם הָיוּ צָרִיכִין מַחִלָּה וּכְפָרָה כִּי הָרִי הַזֵּדוֹנוֹת נַעֲשׂוּ לָקֶם כְּשֶׁנִּגְזַר. וְהַשׁוֹגֵג צָרִיךְ כִּפְרָה, וְז"ש וּמִי שֶׁחֲטָא יִמְחֹל לוֹ.



## Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

### Ohr Torah Parshas Toldos

And what they said, “Fortunate is our youth, which did not embarrass our old age,” is not understood, for we said this refers to complete tzaddikim from their beginning. If so, why would their youth embarrass their old age, when all their deeds were equally good?

But it is possible to say: those tzaddikim advanced and grew from level to level, to the highest heights, until they reached the world of wisdom and the gate of ayin, as it is written, “Wisdom comes from ayin” (Iyov 28:12). Chokhmah is “ko’ach mah,” as in “And we are mah” (Shemot 16:7). And wisdom is called “old age” — “this one has acquired wisdom.” It is called mah, and called ayin.

And behold, they progressed and became great little by little, from level to level, and even when they were in their first level, which was the lowest relative to their ascent, they were already in greatness and had no smallness at all — for they are called tzaddikim from the beginning.

Nevertheless, when they ascended to the highest level, the first greatness is called “youth” and “smallness” relative to the greatness of the higher world above it, as the writings of the Ari explain that the inner dimension of a lower world becomes the outer dimension of the world above it.

And this is what they meant: “Fortunate is our youth,” meaning that even though relative to our old age the first greatness is considered youth and smallness, nevertheless it did not embarrass our old age, because the lower level was complete greatness.

And it is possible to say this is also the meaning of the continuation of the verse: “And the man became great” (Bereshit 26:13), meaning immediately when he became a man — thirteen years old — immediately he became great.

“And he went, going” — the doubling of going means he never remained in one level his whole life, but always proceeded, one going after another, from world to world.

And this is “going and becoming great,” until he reached the complete greatness, the level of chochmah and the gate of ayin.

ומה שאמרו אשרי ילדותינו שלא ביישה זקנותינו אינו מבוין, כי הלא אמרנו שנה מדבר מצדיקים גמורים מתחלתם, אם כן מהיכי תיתי שיבושו מפני הילדות שלהם והלא כלם שוים לטובה.

אבל י"ל כי אותם הצדיקים הלכו ונתגדלו ממדרגה למדרגה עד רום המעלות, עד שהגיעו לעולם החכמה ולשער הא"ן, כמ"ש והחכמה מאין תמצא (איוב כ"ח:י"ב), חכמ"ה כח מ"ה, (כמ"ש) ואנחנו מה (שמות ט"ז:ט), וחכמה נקרא זקנה, זה קנה חכמה, ונקרא מ"ה, ונקרא א"ן.

והנה הרי הלכו ונתגדלו מעט מעט ממדרגה למדרגה, ואף בהיותם במדרגה הא', שהיא התחתונה לעלייתם, היו תיכף (בגלות) [בגדלה] ולא היה להם קטנות כלל, שהרי קוראים אותם צדיקים מתחלתן.

עם כל זה, פאשר עליו למדרגה היותר עליונה נקרא הגדלה הא' ילדות וקטנות נגד ערך הגדלה עולם שלמעלה ממנו, כמ"ש בכתבי הא"ר זלה"ה שפנימיות עולם התחתון נעשה חיצון לעולם העליון ממנו.

וזהו שאמרו אשרי ילדותינו, כלומר אף-על-פי שבערך זקנותינו נקרא הגדלה הא' ילדות וקטנות, עם כל זה לא ביישה זקנותינו כי המקום התחתון היתה גדלה גמור.

ואפשר לומר שנה ג"כ פירוש המושך הפסוק. ויגדל האיש (בראשית כ"ו:י"ג), ר"ל תיכף שנעשה איש. שהוא בן י"ג שנה, מיד ויגדל, הנה בגדלה.

וילך הלוך, (כפול) [כפולות] ההליכה שלא היה עומד במדרגה א' ממי רק הלוך תמיד הליכה אחר הליכה מעולם לעולם.

וזהו הלוך ויגדל, עד שהגיע לגדלה הגמור, למדרגת החכמה ושער א"ן.

## Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

### Ohr Torah Parshas Toldos

And this is “until very great,” which is the letters adam, whose numerical value is mah, as in “And we are mah” (Shemot 16:7). And in the trait of mah one can repair all the breaking, and ascend higher and higher to the highest heights.

And it is possible to say that this is what the Sages hinted to when they said on this verse, “And the man became great...” (Bereshit 26:13), that people would say: “The manure of Yitzchak’s mules is better than the silver and gold of Avimelech” (Bereshit Rabbah 64:7).

Although this is a parable, it is still not understood: are we dealing with fools who despise silver and gold and choose manure, even if the manure is worth more?

Furthermore, their wording “and not silver and gold” implies they do not want silver and gold at all, which sounds like exaggeration.

And it is possible to say that the difference between one who serves the Creator from youth and one who recognizes his Creator and returns to Him in old age, is that what the baal teshuvah makes into a crown on his head, the tzaddik makes into the heel of his sandal.

For the baal teshuvah is not accustomed to mitzvot, and when he performs one, even once, he imagines that no one serves like him, since he exerts great effort, being unaccustomed.

And because of this he thinks he is doing more than required, forgetting that returning at old age, with little time left, does not suffice to repair what was distorted through many years.

And he does not take to heart that in the little remaining time, it is impossible to repair the many years that have passed; even if he lived a thousand years, it would not suffice.

Instead he imagines himself to be a natural-born tzaddik.

And if he learns Torah and prays for some hours a day and then goes idle, he says he has fulfilled his obligation more than necessary, twice over.

וְזֶהוּ עַד מְאֹד, שֶׁהוּא אוֹתִיּוֹת אָדָם שֶׁהוּא גִימְטְרִיָּא מִ”ה, כְּמוֹ וְאַנְחָנוּ מָה (שְׁמוֹת ט”ז:), וּבְמִדַּת מִ”ה יָכוֹל לְתַקֵּן כָּל הַשִּׁבְרָה, וְיָכוֹל לַעֲלוֹת לַעֲלֹת לַעֲלֹת עַד רוּם הַמַּעֲלוֹת.

וְאֶפְשָׁר לֵאמֹר שֶׁלְּזֶה רָמְזוּ רַז”ל שֶׁאֲמָרוּ עַל זֶה הַפָּסוּק וַיִּגְדַּל הָאִישׁ וְגו’ (בְּרֵאשִׁית כ”ו:י”ג) עַד שֶׁהָיוּ אוֹמְרִים זָבֵל פְּרִדּוֹתָיו שֶׁל יִצְחָק וְלֹא כֶסֶף וְזָהָב שֶׁל (אֲבִימֶלֶךְ) (בְּרֵאשִׁית רַבָּה ס”ד:ז’).

הִנֵּה אִם שֶׁהוּא מְשָׁל, עִם כָּל זֶה אֵינוֹ מִבֵּן, וְכִי בְּשׁוּפְטֵי עֶסְקִינוּ הַמּוֹאָסִים כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב וּבִוְחָרִים זָבֵל לְתַלְקָם, אִם הַזָּבֵל שְׁוֶה יוֹתֵר.

וְעוֹד, אֲמָרָם וְלֹא כֶסֶף וְזָהָב מְשַׁמֵּעַ שְׂאִינָם רוֹצִים כָּלֵל בְּכֶסֶף וְזָהָב, וְהוּא כְּעֵין גּוֹזְמָא.

וְאֶפְשָׁר לֵאמֹר כִּי הַחֲלוּק בֵּין הָעוֹבֵד הַשִּׁי”ת מִנְעוּרָיו וּבֵין מִי שֶׁהִפִּיר אֶת בּוֹרְאוֹ וְשָׁב אֵלָיו בִּימֵי הַזָּקֵנָה וְהַשִּׁיבָה, כִּי מִה שֶׁעוֹשֶׂה הַבַּעַל תְּשׁוּבָה עֲטָרָה לְרֹאשׁוֹ (עוֹשֶׂה הַצַּדִּיק עֲקֵב לְסִנְדָּלוֹ (נ”א: לְסוּלִיתוֹ).

כִּי הַבַּעַל תְּשׁוּבָה אֵינוֹ מְרָגֵל לַעֲשׂוֹת מִצְוֹת וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים, וּבַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ אֵינָהּ פֶּעַם הוּא מְחַשֵּׁב וּמַדְמָה בַּעֲצָמוֹ שֶׁאֵין עוֹבֵד כְּמוֹתוֹ, מִתְחַמֵּת שֶׁבִקְשִׁי וְטָרַח גָּדוֹל עוֹשֶׂה אוֹתָם, כִּי לֹא נִסָּה בָּזֶה.

וּמִכַּח זֶה הוּא חוֹשֵׁב (וּמַדְמָה) שֶׁעוֹשֶׂה יוֹתֵר מִן הַמוֹטֵל עָלָיו, וְאֵינוֹ זוֹכֵר זֶה שֶׁשָּׁב לַעֲת זִקְנָתוֹ בְּמַעַט הַזָּמַן אֵין סְפּוּק לְתַקֵּן, וְהוּא אֵינוֹ מְרַגֵּשׁ בָּזֶה וְהוֹלֵךְ לֵאסֵב בְּעִבּוּדוֹתוֹ.

וְאֵינוֹ שֹׁם עַל לְבוֹ כִּי בְּמַעַט הַזָּמַן אֲשֶׁר יִחְיֶה עוֹד אֵין דֵּי לְתַקֵּן אֲשֶׁר עָוַת בָּרַב הַשָּׁנִים אֲשֶׁר עָבְרוּ, וְלוֹ אֵלֶּף שָׁנִים יִחְיֶה אֵין מְסַפִּיק.

רַק הוּא מַדְמָה עֲצָמוֹ לַצַּדִּיק מַעֲיָקָרוֹ.

וְאִם הוּא עוֹסֵק בַּתּוֹרָה וּתְפִלָּה אֵינָהּ שְׁעוֹת בַּיּוֹם וְאַחֲ”ו הוּא נִפְרָד וְהוֹלֵךְ בְּטֵל, בְּאֲמָרוֹ שֶׁבִּקְרִי יָצָא יָדִי חוֹבָתוֹ יוֹתֵר מִכְּדִי צָרְכּוֹ כְּפִלַּיִם.

## Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

### Ohr Torah Parshas Toldos

All this comes because he is unaccustomed to serving the Creator; and furthermore, this can bring him to arrogance, and he may easily fall, God forbid, from his level into a deep pit.

וְכָל זֶה בָּא מִחֻמַּת שְׂאִינוּ מְרָגֵל בְּעִבּוּדַת הַבּוֹרָא ב"ה, וְמָה גַם שְׁלִפְעָמִים בָּא מִחֻמַּת זֶה לִיְדֵי גְבוּהוּת וּבְנִקָּל יָכוֹל ח"ו לִפּוֹל מִמִּדְרָגָתוֹ לְבִירָא עֲמִיקָתָא.

But not so the tzaddik from the beginning — he is accustomed and well-versed in serving the Creator, and habit becomes his nature.

אָבָל לֹא כֵן הַצַּדִּיק מִתְחִלָּתוֹ, שֶׁהוּא מְרָגֵל וְדָשׁ בְּעִבּוּדַת הַבּוֹרָא וְהִתְרָגֵל נַעֲשֶׂה טָבֵעַ.

And what he does in mitzvot and good deeds seems to him as little, for his desire is to be constantly attached to holiness without interruption, ascending to higher levels.

וְמָה שֶׁהוּא עוֹשֶׂה מִצְוֹת וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים נִדְמָה לוֹ לְמַעַט, כִּי רְצוֹנוֹ לִהְיוֹת דְּבוּק תָּמִיד בְּקִדְשָׁהּ בְּלִי הִפְסָק, וְלַעֲלוֹת לְמִדְרָגוֹת עֲלִיוֹנוֹת.

And even when he goes out to matters of permission, for his own needs, he remains attached to God, so that there is no interruption to his service.

וְאַף אִם יוֹצֵא לְדַבֵּר הֶרְשׁוֹת, לְעִנְיָנֵי צָרָכֵי עַצְמוֹ, הוּא תָּמִיד דְּבוּק בֵּה' יִתְבָּרַךְ.

And there is no time or boundary to his service, for it is continuous; and all the labor that the baal teshuvah strains to do even one act of service, the tzaddik does at every moment.

נִמְצָא כִּי אֵין הִפְסָק לְעִבּוּדָתוֹ, וְאֵין זְמַן וּקְצֵי וּגְבוּל לְעִבּוּדָתוֹ, כִּי הִיא תָּמִידִית. וְכָל הָעִבּוּדָה שֶׁטָּרַח וְגָע הַבַּעַל תְּשׁוּבָה עַד שֶׁיַּעֲשֶׂה אֵיזָה דְּבַר הָעִבּוּדָה, עוֹשֶׂה זֶה הַצַּדִּיק בְּכָל עֵת וְרִגַע.

And furthermore, the baal teshuvah may have ulterior motives, such as arrogance, but the tzaddik — all his deeds are for Heaven, and he holds no goodness for himself, and has no arrogance, for the service has become his nature, and if he would not serve, he would weaken.

וְלֹא עוֹד אֶפְשָׁר שֶׁהַבַּעַל תְּשׁוּבָה יִהְיֶה לוֹ אֵיזָה פְּנִיָּה, כְּמוֹ גְבוּהוּת וְכִיּוּצָא, אָבָל זֶה כָּל מַעֲשָׂיו לְשֵׁם שְׁמַיִם, וְאִינוּ מִחֲזִיק טוֹבָה לְעַצְמוֹ, וְאֵין לוֹ גְבוּהוּת כָּלֵל מִזֶּה, כִּי הָעִבּוּדָה נַעֲשִׂית לוֹ טְבַעִית, וְאִי לֹא עֲבַד יִחַלֵּשׁ.

And it is possible that this is what our Sages hinted to when they said “the manure of his mules,” and they did not say “the manure of his animals,” even though he had flocks of sheep and herds of cattle.

וְאֶפְשָׁר שֶׁלֹּזֶה רָמְזוּ רַז"ל בְּאֶמְרָם זָבָל פְּרֻדוֹתָיו, וְלֹא אָמְרוּ זָבָל בְּהֵמוֹתָיו, כִּי הָיָה לוֹ מִקְנֶה צֹאן וּמִקְנֶה בָּקָר.

Rather, they hinted because the verse mentioned above speaks about the tzaddik from the beginning, as it is written “And the man went forward...” (Bereshit 26:13), as mentioned.

אָבָל רָמְזוּ בְּזֶה כִּי הֵנָּה הַפָּסוּק הַנֶּזְכָּר מְדַבֵּר בְּעִנְיַן הַצַּדִּיק מִתְחִלָּתוֹ, כְּמ"שׁ וַיֵּלֶךְ הָאִישׁ וְגו' (בְּרֵאשִׁית כ"ו:י"ג) בְּנִזְכָּר.

And this is what they said: “the manure of his mules,” meaning not only when this tzaddik is engaged in holy matters is he attached to God, but even when he separates from holy activities and goes to matters of permission — to do work or business — he does not separate his thought or attachment.

וְזֶה שֶׁאָמְרוּ זָבָל פְּרֻדוֹתָיו, ר"ל לֹא מִיַּבְעִיָּא בְּעֵת שֶׁהַצַּדִּיק הֵהוּא עוֹסֵק בְּדַבְרֵי קִדְשָׁהּ הוּא דְּבוּק בּוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ, אֲלֵא אֶפְלוּ אִם הוּא נִפְרָד מִדַּבְרֵי עֵסֶק הַקִּדְשָׁה וְיוֹצֵא לְדַבְרֵי הֶרְשׁוֹת לַעֲשׂוֹת מְלָאכָה אוֹ מְשָׁא וּמִתֵּן אִינוּ מִפְּרִיד מִחֻשְׁבָּתוֹ וּנְדִבְקוּתוֹ.

Just as he was attached during his learning or holy activity.

כְּמוֹ שֶׁהָיָה דְּבוּק בְּעֵת לִימוּדוֹ אוֹ עֵסֶק קִדְשָׁהּ.

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And this is what they meant by “zevel,” which means dwelling or house, as in “yizbaleni ishi” (Hoshea 2:7), meaning that even when he goes out from holy activity to another dwelling — the world of action, the world of separation — nonetheless he remains attached in his thoughts to holy unifications.

Even while standing in the lower dwelling, his home is in the upper worlds.

For he is a tzaddik who brings joy to God, who is called Yitzchak — a term of laughter and joy — for through his good deeds and holy intention he causes delight and joy to all the upper worlds.

And therefore they said: “the manure of Yitzchak’s mules.”

And they said “and not his silver and gold” — this refers to one who studies Torah and performs mitzvot, or mitzvot, with set times, and afterwards goes idle.

This happens because sometimes he sees even a perfect tzaddik idle briefly from Torah, but he does not know that even when the tzaddik is outwardly idle, he does not separate his thought from holiness.

But this person, seeing him, imagines himself similar and becomes completely idle.

And even if he later returns to learning or holy pursuits, he is full of impurities and waste from foreign thoughts that entered during his idleness.

And this is called “the silver and gold of Avimelech,” meaning that even though he engages in holy matters of “the Father, King”—his Father in Heaven and King of the world—

meaning that Torah and mitzvot are hidden and precious to God like silver and gold are to a mortal king, and Torah itself is called silver and gold, for its essence is love and fear (kesef and zahav).

And although it seems to him that he is learning with awe and love, all of this does not help him, for all his pursuits are mixed with impurities, foreign thoughts, and ulterior motives, and furthermore can bring him to arrogance and pride.

וזה שאמרו זכ"ל, שהוא לשון מדור ובית, כמ"ש  
יזבלני אישי (הושע ב' ז'), כלומר אף-על-פי שהוא  
יוצא מעסק הקדשה למדור אחר שהוא עולם העשיה,  
עולם הפירוד, עם כל זה הוא דבוק במחשבתו  
ביוחידים הקדושים.

אפילו בעמדו במדור התחתון שם ביתו בעליונים.

כי הוא צדיק המשמח אלקים הנקרא יצחק, לשון  
צחוק ושמחה, שגורם במעשיו הטובים ובכוננתו  
הקדושה תענוג ושמחה לכל העולמות העליונים.

ולכך אמרו זכ"ל פרדותיו של יצחק

ואמרו] ולא כספו וזהבו של אבימלך, והו מדבר במי  
שעוסק בתורה ובמצות (נ"א: או מצות) בקביעות  
עתים ואח"כ הולך בטל

וזה גורם לו מפני שרואה לפעמים הצדיק גמור ג"כ  
בטל מן התורה, אבל אינו יודע כי אף-על-פי שהוא  
בטל עם כל זה לא יפריד מחשבתו מן הקדשה

וזה הרואה מדמה את עצמו אליו והולך בטל מכל  
וכל ממש

ואף אם חוזר אח"כ ללמוד או לעסק בדברי קדשה,  
הוא מלא סיגים ופסלת ממחשבות זרות שנכנסו בו  
בהיותו בטל

וזה נקרא כספו וזהבו של אבימלך, כלומר אף שהוא  
עוסק בדברי קדשה של אב"י מל"ה, אביו שבשמים  
ומלך עולם

ר"ל שהתורה ומצות ספונים וחשובים אצלו יתברך  
כמו כסף וזהב אצל מלך פשוט ודם, גם שהתורה  
נקראת כסף וזהב, כי עקרה אהבה ויראה הנקרא  
בכסף וזהב

וגם אליו נדמה שהוא לומד בדחילו ורחימו, אבל כל  
זה לא יועיל לו, כי כל עסקיו מערב בסיגים  
ומחשבות זרות ופניות כנזכר, ומה גם שפא לו מזה  
ח"ו גבהות וגדלה



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And certainly, when he wishes to enter the Orchard of Wisdom, in the secrets of the Torah, he imagines himself as the king's son searching through his father's treasury, as Radak explains concerning Avimelech son of Gideon, who called himself "Avimelech," meaning "my father is king," claiming the kingship.

וּפְשִׁיטָא כְּאֶשֶׁר רוּצָה לִיכְנֹס בְּפִרְדֵּי"ס הַחֲכָמָה בְּרִזִּין דְּאוֹרֵיתָא מְדַמָּה בְּעֵצְמוֹ שֶׁהוּא כֶּבֶן הַמֶּלֶךְ הַמְּחַפֵּשׁ בְּגִנְזֵי אוֹצְרוֹת אָבִיו, כְּמִ"שׁ הָרַד"ק זְלָה"ה עַל אַבִּימֶלֶךְ בֶּן גִּדְעוֹן שֶׁקָּרָא עֵצְמוֹ אַבִּימֶלֶךְ, לֵאמֹר אֲבִי מֶלֶךְ וְלוֹ יֵאָתֶה הַמְּלִיכָה, וְלִכְדֹּת הַמְּלִיכָה (וְהָרַג כָּל אֲחָיו.

So too, this foolish person, learning with ulterior motives, will certainly fall from his level to the lowest depths.

כִּי דַמְיוֹן זֶה הַסֵּכֶל הַלּוֹמֵד עִם פְּנוּיֹת כְּנֻזָּר, וּבּוֹדֵאֵי יָפוּל מִמְּדַרְגָּתוֹ לְאֶרֶץ תַּחְתִּית.

And this is what they hinted: "the manure of his mules... and not his silver and gold" — meaning to distance oneself from foolish and empty behaviors such as these, and to walk in upright paths, and Heaven will help him. Amen, may it be His will.

וְזֶה רָמְזוּ וְכָל פְּרִדּוֹתָיו וְגו', וְלֹא כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב וְגו', אֲלֵא לְהַתְרַחֵק מִדְּבָרִים סְכָלִיִּים וְשִׁטּוֹת כְּאֵלוֹ וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָהֶם, וְלִילֵךְ בְּדַרְכֵי הַיִּשְׁרִים וּמִן הַשָּׁמַיִם יִסְעִינָהוּ, (אָמֵן כִּי יְהִי רָצוֹן.

#### [NOTE: Summary

The Maggid teaches that the verse "ויגדל האיש וילך הלוך וגדל עד כי גדל מאד" hints to the lifelong ascent of a true tzaddik. Already at bar mitzvah he is called an איש, standing in spiritual maturity, yet he does not remain at any one level. He moves steadily from world to world, rising until he reaches the level of חכמה, the state of אין, where all prior greatness becomes like childhood compared to the radiance of higher wisdom. This is the meaning of "אשרי ילדותינו שלא ביישה את זקנותינו": even what is called "childhood" relative to loftier states was itself true greatness.

The Maggid explains the debate regarding tzaddikim and baalei teshuvah. Each statement refers to different types of return—those who return from awe and those who return from love. Teshuvah from love transforms past misdeeds into merits, giving the baal teshuvah a level that can surpass even the tzaddik. Yet the tzaddik possesses constancy: his avodah is unbroken, natural, and without interruption. Even when he must engage worldly matters, his mind remains attached above. This constancy is hinted in "זבל פרדותיו של יצחק," meaning that even in the lower dwelling place, the tzaddik's inner house is bound above, and his worldly activities remain saturated with holiness.

By contrast, the one who works intermittently, or who mistakes the occasional rest of a tzaddik for license to relax, misunderstands entirely. Such relaxation for him becomes spiritual descent, filling his thoughts with mixture and impurity. This is called "כספו וזהבו של אבימלך"—work that appears holy but is mixed with self-interest and foreign thoughts. The Maggid warns that such confusion leads to dangerous self-deception, like Avimelech who imagined royal privilege where none existed. Therefore one must avoid such folly, cling to sincerity, and follow the straight path, for Heaven will assist him.

#### Practical Takeaway:

The Maggid is teaching that real greatness does not come from dramatic moments but from steady, continuous ascent. A person should not be impressed by occasional intensity or outward excitement, but by inner

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constancy. Even when involved in worldly matters, one must keep the heart attached above. At the same time, one must avoid spiritual self-deception—imagining oneself more elevated than one truly is. Instead, commit to small, sincere, consistent steps, and let every action, even mundane ones, become a dwelling place for holiness.

#### Chassidic Story:

A chassid once came to the Maggid complaining that when he was young his davening burned like fire, but now, as a businessman, he felt distant and spiritually dimmed. The Maggid asked him: “When you walk in the market, what fills your mind?” The chassid answered: “I think of the price of goods, debts, and opportunities.” The Maggid said: “That is the difference between the baal teshuvah who has not yet stabilized and the tzaddik who has grown from level to level. The tzaddik also walks through a market, but his mind remains with Hashem. His ‘zebel,’ his marketplace, is still a dwelling of holiness. For you, the world is the world and tefillah is tefillah. For him, even the world becomes tefillah.”

The chassid asked how he could reach such a level. The Maggid replied: “Begin with one thought of Hashem that you refuse to put down. Carry it with you all day until it becomes part of you. When even your ‘marketplace’ holds that thought, then your steps will become haloch v’gadol—movement and growth without interruption. **END NOTE**

#### Siman #37

##### Only there is no fear of God in this place (Bereishis 20:11).

One may analyze that it should have said “only there is no love of God in this place,” for they had only corrupt love, which is adultery. But every matter must be elevated through fear.

For Abraham produced Isaac—meaning with Isaac—he produced Jacob, meaning the attribute of compassion. For there is compassion because of fear, when one behaves toward a person not good and has mercy on him.

And there is compassion because of love, like a father over a son, even when he treats him well. And to return to the first matter: for example, when a person has corrupt love, meaning adultery.

And when he sets to his heart fear of the Blessed God, then he has no desire anymore. This is “only there is no fear of God,” for if they had fear they could elevate the corrupt love.

רק אין יראת אלקים במקום הזה. ויש לדקדק, הנה לו לומר רק אין אהבת אלקים במקום הזה, כי הלא לא הנה להם רק אהבה רעה, שהיא ניאוף. אך כל דבר צריך להעלות ביראה,

כי אברהם הוליד את יצחק, פירוש עם יצחק, הוליד את יעקב, פירוש מדת רחמנות. כי יש רחמנות מחמת יראה, שמתנהג עם אדם לא טוב ומרחמים עליו,

ויש רחמנות מחמת אהבה כמו אב על הבן, אפלו שמתנהג עמו טוב. ונחזור לענין ראשון, למשל כשיש לאדם אהבה רעה פירוש ניאוף,

ובשנותיו אל לבו יראה מהשם יתברך אין לו תאוה עוד. וזהו רק אין יראת אלקים, שאילו הייתה להם יראה היו יכולים להעלות האהבה רעה.

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For when an evil thought comes to a person he must fear and set to his heart that the thought of man is a chariot for God, as the Patriarchs are the chariot, and he sends it upward to elevate the thought, as is known.

כִּי כְּבֹא לְאָדָם מַחְשְׁבָה רָעָה צָרִיךְ לִירֹא וְלִשִּׁים אֶל לְבוּ כִּי הַמַּחְשְׁבָה שֶׁל אָדָם הִיא מְרֻכָּה לֵה' יִתְגַּדֵּל, עַל דְּרֹךְ הָאֲבוֹת הֵן הֵן הַמְרֻכָּה כִּידוּעַ, וְהוּא שׁוֹלֵחַ לָהֶן לְהַעֲלוֹת הַמַּחְשְׁבָה כִּידוּעַ.

And he must be a faithful messenger and return the soul of his Master; as it were, he returns it to God.

וְצָרִיךְ שִׁיחֶיהָ צִיר נֶאֱמָן וְנֶפֶשׁ אֲדוֹנָיו יָשִׁיב, כְּכִיכּוֹל אֶת ה' הוּא מְשִׁיב.

#### [NOTE: Summary

The Maggid teaches that the verse “רק אין יראת אלקים במקום הזה” reveals a deep spiritual principle. One might have expected the Torah to speak of a lack of love, since the people’s corruption expressed itself in improper love. But the Maggid explains that every emotion—even a corrupt one—can be elevated when there is fear of Heaven. Fear is the power that subdues the ego and redirects one’s inner drives upward. Therefore, the true deficiency was not in love but in fear.

He then explains the lineage of the middos: Avraham generated Yitzchak, and with Yitzchak he generated Yaakov. This means that from love arises fear, and from their union comes compassion. Compassion itself has two forms—one that flows from fear and one that flows from love. Fear-based compassion appears when dealing with someone who is not good, yet one restrains harshness out of awareness of God. Love-based compassion resembles a father’s tenderness for a beloved child even when the child lacks nothing. Both must ultimately be rooted in fear.

The Maggid applies this to the struggle with improper thoughts. When a person is confronted with a corrupt love, such as immoral desire, he must awaken fear of God. Then the desire loses its hold. The reason is that human thought is a chariot for the Divine; just as the Patriarchs served as the chariot, so too every thought moves spiritual forces. One must therefore be a faithful messenger who “returns the soul of his Master,” lifting thoughts upward and not allowing them to become vehicles for impurity.

#### Practical Takeaway:

When a negative desire or thought arises, the Maggid teaches that the essential tool is fear of Heaven. Instead of fighting desire with more desire, one redirects the heart by remembering that every thought becomes a chariot for holiness. By pausing, awakening awe, and recalling that one’s mind carries the Divine presence, the corrupt love dissolves and can even be elevated. Cultivating steady awareness of God transforms one’s inner world so that even fleeting impulses become opportunities for compassion, refinement, and ascent.

#### Chassidic Story:

A young man once came to the Maggid troubled by impure thoughts that surfaced against his will. He complained that his heart pulled him downward and that he lacked the strength to resist. The Maggid asked

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him: "When a messenger of a king carries a sealed letter, does he dare open it, or does he fear the one who sent him?" The young man answered that the messenger would not dare tamper with the king's letter.

The Maggid said: "Your thoughts are the King's letters. You are His messenger. When a thought comes to you, it is placed in your hands so that you may deliver it upward. If you fear the One who sent you, the thought will not drag you into darkness. Instead, it will become purified, for fear guards the heart from wandering."

The young man asked how to begin. The Maggid replied: "Start with a single moment each day. When an unworthy thought appears, pause and remember: 'My mind is a chariot for God.' Hold that awareness. Even one such moment breaks the power of corrupt love and turns it toward holiness."

**END NOTE**