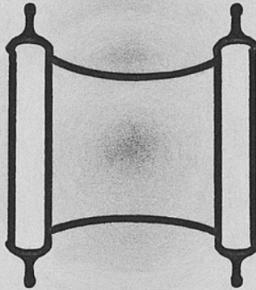


בב"ה

The Maggid of Mezritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Toldos



Dedicated To:

טניה מלכה בת רינה דבורה
רפואה שלמה

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Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

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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.

במדרש ואלה תולדות יצחק בו אברהם אברם
הוליד את יצחק והוא עזרת זקנים בני בני
ותפארת בניים אבותם לא נזול אברם מכבשו
האש אלא בזכותו של יעקב וכוכלי

מוכן על פי הפסוק בימים הפנימים אל הפנימים וגנו.
והנה במשל זה על דרך משל ראוון שאוהב
לשמעון אהבה עזה ומחמת ששמעון רואה שראובן
אהובו יותר מדי נתעורר אצל שמעון גם כן אהבת
ראובן.

נמצא כי אהבת ראוון שאוהב לשמעון נקראית אב
ואהבת שמעון שאוהב לראוון נקראית תולדת מפני
שנולדת אהבת שמעון מפה אהבת ראוון.

והנה יש אהבת אב לבנו בשני עניינים. האחד האב
אהוב לבנו מלחמת הטבעות וזה האב גורם שוגן הבן
אהוב את האב.

ויש אהבה אגדתית גדולה מזו שרוואה את בנו הולך
בדרך ה ישיר וצדיק מעשיו ותיכם בכלל החקומות פמו
שנאמר בני אם חכם לבך ישמה לבך גם אני.

או יש לאב תענוג גדול מזה ומזה נתהוה השמחה כי
השמחה היא בא מהתענוג שאין אדם שמא לא
אם יש לו תענוג מסוימת דבר בא לה השמחה
ומלחמת גקל התענוג והשמחה שיש לו מנו הבן

נתספה ונולדה לאב עוד אהבה יותר גדולה אל
הבן. הנה זה המשל שיקד 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 nursing."

כִּי קָדָם לִידַת הַבָּן אָז אָפָלוּ אָמָר לִידָתוֹ עַדְזָן אִינּוּ יְדַע מַה טִּיבוֹ וּמָה יְהִי מַעֲשָׂה הַבָּן עַל כֵּן אֵין לְאָבָן אַחֲרָה כֹּל כֵּן שֶׁהוּא הַבָּית הַנִּזְבֵּר רַק אַחֲרָה הַרְאָשׁוֹנָה שֶׁהִיא מִחְמַת טָבָע.

אָבָל אַצְלַת הַשָּׁם יַתְּפִרְךּ كְּאָמָר יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר בְּקָה אַחֲרָפָר כִּי אַצְלַו יַתְּפִרְךּ הַעֲבָר וְהַעֲתִיד הַכָּל שָׁוֹא לְפִי שֶׁהוּא קָדָם הַזָּמָן.

וּקְדָם שֶׁהִיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל הִיה גָּלוּי לְפָנָיו יַתְּפִרְךּ כֹּל צְדִיקָה וְצְדִיקָה עַם כֹּל מִעֲשָׂיו וְתוֹרָתוֹ וּמִתְחַלָּה מִכְּפָה כְּשֶׁעָלָה יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִתְּחַשְּׁבָה לְפָנָיו הִיה כְּבָר שָׁעַשׂ וּמַעֲשָׂוֹג. כְּבִיכּוֹל לְפָנָיו יַתְּפִרְךּ מִפְּלַצְדִּיק וְצְדִיק וּמִעֲשָׂיו.

וְהַנֶּה רָאָה לְזָה מַה שָׁמְצִינוּ שַׁהְקֹדֶשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא מִשְׁתְּعַשָּׁע בְּתוֹרָתוֹ שֶׁל הַצְדִיק כִּמו שָׁאָמָרוּ רְבּוֹתֵינוּ זְכּוּרָנִים לְבָרְכָה כְּשֶׁעָלָה מִשְׁה לְאָרָם מֵאָזָו לַהֲקֹדֶשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא שָׁאָמָר אַלְעָזָר בָּנִי אָמָר פָּרָה וְגוּ קָדָם בִּיאָת רַבִּי אַלְעָזָר כִּמֵּה מָאוֹת שָׁנִים.

וְכוּ מַה שָׁאָמָרוּ רְבּוֹתֵינוּ זְכּוּרָנִים לְבָרְכָה כֹּל מַה שְׁמַלְמָיד וְתִימָקָע עַתִּיד לְמַדֵּשׁ גַּם כֵּן הַוָּא הַקֹּדֶשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא אָמָר לְמִשְׁה כֵּה וְכֵה עַתִּיד תְּלִמְדִיד פָּלוּבִי לְחַדְשָׁ בְּדוֹרָו כִּי תּוֹרַת הַצְדִיק וּמִעֲשָׂיו הַוָּא הַשְׁעַשְׁוִי וְהַפְּעָנוֹג לְפָנָיו יַתְּפִרְךּ.

נִמְצָא כִּי זֶה הַפְּעָנוֹג וְהַשְּׁמָקָה וְהַאֲקָבָה נוֹלֶדֶת לוּ לְאָבָן מִפְּנָצְנָה. וְזֹהוּ מַה שָׁגַּאמֵּר בְּהָמָר הַקֹּדֶשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִפְּרָגָסִים וְכוּ.

כְּמַלְאֵל הָאָב שִׁיאַשׁ לֹא תִּעֲנַג מִבְּנָנוּ תְּבִיבָוּ אָז מַגְּלֵל הַפְּעָנוֹג וְהַשְּׁמָקָה אָוּמָר הָאָב כְּדַרְךּ הַכְּרִיּוֹת אָוּמָרִים בְּלִשּׁוֹן זֶה אַנְיִ נְעַשָּׂה מִהַּפְּעָנוֹג הַזָּה בְּרִיאָה וְשָׁמָן.

כֵּה מַגְּלֵל הַפְּעָנוֹג וְהַשְּׁעַשְׁוּעַ שִׁיאַשׁ לַהֲקֹדֶשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא כְּבִיכּוֹל כִּמו שָׁמְפָרָגִים אָוּתָוּ. וְזֹהוּ נְאַהֲרָה אַצְלָוּ אָמוֹן.

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Toldos

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 nursing.” 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.

וננה ר"ש ז"י זכרונו לברכה פירש כי התורה נתגדרה בחייבו של הקדוש ברוך הוא אלףים שנה וכו' אבל פשט הכתוב ממשמע שהتورה נעה אומן להקדוש ברוך הוא.

ונקשה הדבר לאמרו והלא הקדוש ברוך הוא קדמון לכל הקדומים. אבל לפ"ז ררכינו יתירוץ שהتورה משבחת את עצמה שהיתה אומן להקדוש ברוך הוא. נביבול.

דיהיינו גצל התענוג והשעשוע שהיה לו יתברך מז' הדינה מותורת כל צדיק וצדיק ומעשי הטובים שהם המצות הכתובים בתורה זה נעשה לו. יתברך בביבול אומן ופרקחה וכו'.

ונזה ונאה אצלו אמון. וידוע כי שם אהיה הוא מורה על השם והכינוי פירושו ונאה כלומר ארכל פ' שהתורה עתיקה להטנו לישראל ועדין לא נתנה ואם כן מהו השעשועים.

לכן אמר אצלו קינו אצלו יתברך בביבול הכל שווה העבר והעתיד והכל גליו לפניו יתברך לבן כייתי אליו אומן ושעשוע בנצח.

ונתזר לעגנון שיש אהבה שהוא אב וייש אהבה שהוא תולדת. וננה האם שמתענור לשבותיו יתברך מלחמת שרוואה אהבת הבורא עליו.

שבראו ויארו ומיקימו ומתחיו וננו ל אהבת הבורא ברוך הוא ועובדה וזהו שאמרו מי הקדימני ואשלאם לו.

הgam זה גם פנו עבודה נקי עכל זאת הוא מקורי צדיק לעצמו אבל אין כמו מדת הצדיק להשפיעו לאוולטו.

ונעל זה הצדיק אמר הכתוב אהות לנו קפזה וshedim אין לה. וידוע זה אומרים הפלאנים שנתקראים חברם לישראל.

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Toldos

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.

וכא"ש ר' ישראל הם במדה זו שאין להם אקה רק מלחמת אתערותא דלעילא אומרים אחות לנו קטנה. בלוmur אחות לשון דבקות והתחברות.

רצונו לומר אף על פי שהם זבוקים ומוחוקרים בה' יתברך אף על פי כן קטנה היא המאה קאות מפני שאין להם רק מלחמת אתערותא דלעילא והם מקרי צדיקים לעצם אבל אין צדיקים להשפיע לעילא לנו רם שעשו ומתענו ושמחה לאלוינו.

זיהו ושדים אין לה בלוmur שדים להניך ולהשפיעו לזרתם מה נטה לאחותנו להכיאם אל המאה השלימה הנקפר.

ובזה פורץ וינו גם המקרש שהחלה לנו. ואלה תולדות יצחק וגוי אברם הוליד את יצחק פירוש הכתוב בספר בשכחים שהגינו למלות פשלמות. שמיו שני מני אקה בם.

זהו ואלה תולדות יצחק בו אברם רצנו לומר ש יצחק הוא לשון אחות ושמחה הוליד רצנו לומר שגרים והוסיף לאברם מתענו ושמחה ואקה מגן צדקהו.

כפי מתחלה לא היה לאברם רק אקה בראשונה שהיא הולכת אברם ל יצחק שהיא אקה הנקראת אברם ואחריו כן עליה למלטה וגרם תוליה לאברם.

זיהו עצרת זקנים בני בנים רצנו לומר כי כמו שזה הפסוק מזכיר בתחלת משפט תולדות יצחק ואחר כן מתולדות אברם אף על פי שהולכת יצחק שניה להולכת אברם ומארחת מפני.

אף על פי כן מזכיר הכתוב תחלת הולכת יצחק לאברם מפני שהיא הפללה היוצר שלימה שאין למלטה מפנה ולא כו מזפירה תחלת אף על פי שהיא מאחרת. כן הפסוק זה עצרת זקנים בני בנים שהוא הפללה היוצר גודלה.

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Toldos

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.

[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 awaken 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

ומה שכתוב עטרת זקנים בני בני רצונו לומר גל
הפטנוג והשמחה שהבן גורם לאב הוא נקרא בני
בני.

כפי מתקלה הوليיד לאב את הבן ואחר כה הוליך וגרא
לאב הפטנוג קרי נקרא דהפטנוג חוץ ונעשה עטרה
לראש הבקון,
שהוא כמו אבי אביו לפטנוג והוא. ואחר כה אמר
ותפארת בני אביהם
שהיא אינה כל כה רק יש לו אהבה ראשונה מחתמת
הẤתירות והולכת אביו.

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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 מזאת הרחמים נתן והחסד נולד, כשהשורה דין על האדם נולד הרחמים מצד החסד. והוא ואלה תולדות יצחק אברהם הוליד את יצחק, פירוש אברהם, שהוא חסד, הוליד מזאת יצחק, שהוא רחמים, את יצחק, עם יצחק יעקב, שהוא הרחמים, את 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.

[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.

ואלה תולדות יצחק בן אברהם (בראשית כ"ה:י"ט). כי אלה, האל"ר הוא החקמה כמוו “וְאֶלְפָךְ חֲקָמָה” (איוב ל"ג:ל"ג).

ומלבד היא מפעשה, ועל ידי חמש מוצאות הפה הם התולדות אצל יצחק בן אברהם.

פירוש אחר, “ואלה תולדות” (בראשית כ"ה:י"ט) הוא בריאת עולם הנה על-ידי יצחק בן אברהם, והוא על-ידי התפללות אהבה ויראה.

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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.

ויאהָב יַצְחָק אֶת עַשְׂוֹ (בראשית כ"ה:כ"ה).
פִּירֹשׁ, יַצְחָק הוּא לְשׁוֹן צָהָק וְשָׁמָחָה, וְהוּא הַפְּטָעָנוֹג,
וְמַעֲנָג פְּמִידֵי אַינּוּ מַעֲנָג. לְכָנּוּ “וַיַּאֲהָב יַצְחָק אֶת
עַשְׂוֹ” — הַפְּטָעָנוֹג אַוְהָב קָרִיחָק, לְכָנּוּ בְּאֶעָשָׂו אֶל
.יַצְחָק

וַיַּהַי “וַיַּעֲשֵׂה לִי מִתְּעָמִים” (בראשית כ"ז:ד'), ר"ל כי
יִתְּרַבֵּה הַפְּטָעָנוֹג. וַיַּהַי “גָּדוֹלָה תָּשׁוּבָה שְׁזָדוֹנוֹת נִעְשָׂין
לֹא כְּזָכִיות” (יומא פ"ו), אֲםִם הִיא מַאֲהָבָה — ר"ל כָּל
מָה שַׁהְוָא חֲפֹץ לְעֹלּוֹת וְכַפֵּי חֲפֹצָו וְחַשְׁקָו כְּפָרָה
הַפְּטָעָנוֹג. לְכָנּוּ בְּזָה הַזָּדוֹנוֹת בָּא לֹא מַעֲנָג, לְכָנּוּ הַם
כְּזָכִיות.

וַיַּהַי “מַרְחֹק ה' נָרָא לִי” (ירמיהו ל"א:ג), אֲםִם אֲנִי
מַרְוַחַק — אֲזֶה הוּא נָרָא לִי. כִּי “שְׁלֹום לְרַחֹק”
(ישעיהו נ"ז:י"ט), עַל-יְדֵי רִיחָק.

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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 הילך ונגדל עד כי גדל מאד. והנה יש לנו קצת ומה קורא אותו בפסוק זה איש, וכל בא כל הפרשנה קורא אותו יצחק וכאן קוראינו איש. ועוד מהו כפל הגדלה ובכפל הגדלה

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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.

ונאפשר לומר על פי מה שאמרו בגמרא הילו אמרו אשרי ילדותינו שלא בישה את זקונתינו, והילו אמרו אשרי זקונתינו שכפרה על ילדותינו, ואלו לאו אמרים אשרי מי שלא חטא כו'

הפה יש לדקדק אומרים זקונתינו שכפירה כו'. הילו משמע שאומרים קיו הבעל תשובה שעשוי תשובה בימי זקונתם, אם כן מי אשרי, הילו דוד המלך ע"ה אמר אשרי קאייש, ואמרו רז"ל אשרי מי שהזיר בתשובה כשהוא [עדין] איש, ואמרו (בגמרא בז"ה) מפני شبאה פקום כו'

ונוד אמרו שכפירה [על] ילדותינו, דיו להפוך את עצם מעת תשובהם ואילך. ונוד אלו ואלו אומרים אשרי מי שלא חטא, הילו בזבר הזה מביאים לאומרים شبוי בימי זקונתם

ונוד מה שמשיםינו וממי שלא ימחול לו, וhilא כבר אמרו זקונתינו כפירה על ילדותינו, וairo מחלוקתם אריכים.

ונאפשר לומר פשוט [על פי] מה דאפליגו בגמרא חד אמר במקום שצדיקים גמורים עומדים אין בעלה תשובה כולם לנצח, וחד אמר במקום شبולי תשובה עומדים כו'

וילמר אמר קרא כו' ולא פלייגי. כי הילא ידווע מה שאמרו רז"ל השב מאהבה זدونות כו' והשב מיראה זدونות נצעשו בטענות

מן דאמר שהצדיקים גדולים יותר מדבר באותם شبוי מיראה, כי בודאי זכויות הצדיק ממעוריו מרבבים הם יותר מבעל תשובה. ומאו דאמר شبולי תשובה גדולים יותר מדבר באותם شبוי מאהבה, שזدونות נצעשו בזכויות, 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.”

ונשעתי טעם א' שהבעל תשובה יותר גדול, מפני שכך הבהיר חמור והתלהבותה הצענות, וכשהועשה תשובה וועסק בתורה ובמצוות עשו הפל בהתלהבותו ותשך גדול מפני שיזעך היטיב בהתלהבות, משאין כן. הצדיק שלא הבהיר זה מעולם

ונוד אמר מורי ורבי הטעם, מפני שאצל הצדיק נעשו מעשים טובים ולמוד תורה קרגל, ואני עוזן כל כך בהתלהבות, אכל בעל תשובה אצלו דבר קדש. ועוד, אם לא יעשה הפל בזקוקות יפל מזרגתו, בכך מושך הנטלה הוא לו לעובד בוראו. יתברך בהתלהבות גדולה

ו"ב, לפי טעמים הנזכר, גם השב מיראה הבהיר בהתלהבות, אך עם כל זה ידוע הוא כי עיקר בהתלהבות הוא מכך אהבה. משאין כן העובד מיראה, אפרע-על-פי שיש לו אש בהתלהבות, איןו כל כך גדולה כמו הצדיק העובד מאהבה

ועל פי זה ייל גם, הלו אומרים אשרי זקונינו, מיראי גם באוֹתן ששבו מאהבה, ובזה וודאי כפירה נידוקם ואף ששבו בימי השבה, ע"ז גדולה תשובהם שעשו מאהבה, ומפה זה גדלה בהתלהבות שלם ודקוקם מפני הטעמים הנזכרים ובזה וודאי כפירה להם מכך וכל ואין בהם (שום) רשות חטא, כי אורך נעשה זכיות מכם

ומה שאמרו אשרי מי שלא חטא, כי אלו ואלו מזיהרין ומזכירין לשאاري בעלי תשובה ששבו, ואליךם אמרו אשרי מי שלא חטא, וגם כי ארכין מחילה וכפירה כי קרי הצענות נעשן להם בשגנות והשוגג אריך כפירה, זו יש מי שלא חטא יאחזול לו

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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 אשרו ילודתינו שלא ביחסה זקונינו
אינו מכוון, כי הלא אמרנו שהה מדבר מצדיים
cumorim matchalam, אם בנו מהכי מיתני שיבושו מפני
הילדים שלהם והלא כלם שווים לטובה

אבל ייל פי אותם הצדיקים נכלו ונתקלו מפץ רגה
למזרגה עד רום המעלות, עד שהגיעו לעולם החקמה
ולשער חכמתן, כמ"ש וחתכמה מאיין תמציא (איוב
כ"ח:י"ב), חכמתה כה מה, כמ"ש (ואנחנו מה
(שמות ט"ז:ז), וחתכמה נקראה זקנה, זה קונה חכמתה,
ונקראה מה, ונקראה איין

והנה קרי נכלו ונתקלו מעת מפץ רגה למזרגה,
ונאף בהיוותם במזרגה היא, שהיא הפתחתונה לעליותם,
היו פיכר (בגלוות) [בגולה] ולא היה לך קטעות
כלל, שחרי קוראים אותם צדיקים מתחלמן

עם כל זה, כאמור עלו לזרגה היותר עליונה נקראה
הגולה היא ילדות וקטנות נוד ערך הגולה עולם
שלמעלה ממנה, כמ"ש בכתבי האר"י זלה
שפנימיות עולם הפתחתון נשעה חיצון לעולם העליון
מןנו.

ונזה שאמרו אשרו ילודתינו, כלומר אפ-על-פי
שבערה זקונינו נקראה הגולה היא ילדות וקטנות,
עם כל זה לא ביחסה זקונינו כי הפלום הפתחתון
קומה גולה גםור

ואפשר לומר שה ג"כ פירוש מה שפ"ד הפסוק. ויגדל
האיש (בראשית כ"ז:י"ג), ר"ל תיכר שגעה איש
שהוא בן י"ג שנה, מיד ויגדל, היה בגולה

ונילך קלווה, (כפול) [כפלות] ה kaliya שלא קינה עזם
במזרגה א' מזמי רק הילך פמיד kaliya אחר kaliya
מעולם לעולם.

ונזה קילך וגדל, עד שהגיע לגדלה הגמור, לזרגת
חתכמה ושער איין.

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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.

ז"הו עד מאד, שהוא אותיות א"מ שהוא גיטריה
מ"ה, כמו ואנחנו מה (שמות ט"ז:ז'), ובמלה מה
יכול לתקן כל השכירה, וכי יכול לאלו לעילא לעילא
עד רום הפעלות.

ואפשר לאמר שלזה רמזו ר' ז"ל שאמרו על זה
הפסוק ויגדל האיש וגוי (בראשית כ"ו:י"ג) עד שהיו
אומרים זכל פרודתו של יצחק ולא פספו זיהבו של
(אבירך) (בראשית ר' ב"ד:ז').

הנה אף שהוא משל, עם כל זה אינו מכו, וכי
בשובטני ע██קינו המזאים ספר זיהב ובוחרים זכל
לעקלם, אף אם הצלב שווה יותר.

ועד, אמרם ולא ספר זיהב משמע שאינם רוצים
כל בכספי זיהב, והוא כעין גוונם.

ואפשר לאמר כי החלוקת בין העובד הש"ה מצעיריו
ובין מי שהכיר את בוראו ושב אליו בימי הזקנה
וששיכה, כי מה שעושה הבעל תשובה עטירה לראשו
(עושה הצדיק יעקב לסנלו (נ"א: לסלותה)).

כי הבעל תשובה אינו מרגל לעשות מזות ומעשים
טובים, ובעתות איזה פעם הוא מחשיב ומדמה
בעצמו שאין עובד כמותו, מחתמת שבקשי וטרח גודל
עושה אותם, כי לא נסה בז.

ומפה זה הוא חושב (ומדה) שעושה יותר מז
המוחל עליו, ואינו זכר זה ששב לעת זקנותו במעט
הזמן או סוף למקו, והוא אינו מרגיש בז והולך
לאט בעבודתו.

ואינו שם על לבו כי במעט הזמן אשר יתקה עוד אין
די לתקן אשר עזת ברב השנים אשר עברו, ولو אף
שנים יתקה אין מספיק.

בר הוא מדמה עצמו לצדיק מעיקרו
אם הוא עוסק בתורה ותפללה איזה שעות ביום
אף ז' הוא נפרד והולך בטל, באמרו שבר יא ז' ז
חוותיו יותר מכך זרכו בפחים.

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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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

וكل זה בא מכך מה שאינו מרגל בעבודת הבורא ב"ה, וממה גם שלפעמים בא מכך מה לידי גבירות ובנהל. נוכל ח"ו לפול מפרקתו לבריא עמיה

אבל לא כן הצדיק מתחלו, שהוא מרגל ודש בעבודת הבורא וההרגל נעשה טבע.

וממה שהוא עושה מצות ומעשים טובים נקאה לו למעט, כי רצונו לחיות דברך תמיד בקיימה בלי הפסק, ולעלאות למקרגות עליונות הוא.

ונאף אם יוצא לדבר קשות, לענני ארכי עצמו, הוא פמhid דברך בה יתברך.

נמצא כי אין הפסק לעבוזתו, ואין זמו וקץ וגביול לעבוזתו, כי היא פמיה. וכל העבוזה שטרחה ונגע הבעל תשובה עד שייששה איזה דבר העבוזה, עושה זה הצדיק בכל עית ורגע.

ולא עוד אפשר שהבעל תשובה יהי לו איזה פניה, כמו גבירות וכיוצא, אבל זה כל מעשיו שם שם, ואין מחותיק תוכה לעצמו, ואין לו גבירות כלל מזה, כי העבוזה נעשית לו טבעית, ואי לא עבד יחולש.

ואפשר שלזה רמזו ר' רז"ל באמרים זבל פרוזמי, ולא אמרו זבל בהמותיו, כי היה לו מקנה צאן ומקנה בקר.

אבל רמזו בזה כי הנה הפסוק בזנבר מדבר בעניין הצדיק מתחלו, קמ"ש וילך האיש וגוי (בראשית כ"ו:י"ג) בזנבר.

זה שאמרו זבל כל פרוזמי, ר' רז'ל לא מיביא בעת שהצדיק והוא עוסק בזנבר קרשה הוא דברך בו יתברך, אלא אפילו אם הוא נפרד מדבר עסק הארש וויזא לדברי קרשאות לעשות מלאכה או משא ומתן אין מפריד מקשבותו ורבוקתו.

כמו שהיינו בעת לימודו או עסוק קרשה

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Ohr Torah

Parshas Toldos

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.

ונזה שאמרו זבל, שהוא לשונו מדור וביתו, כמ"ש
זבלני איש (הושע ב:ז), קלומר אפרעיל-פי שהוא
ויצא מעסיק הקשה למדור אחר שהוא עולם הקשה,
עולם הפירוד, עם כל זה הוא בכוון במקשכטו
ביחוקים הקדושים.

אפילו בעמדתו במדור התקהנו שם ביתו בעליונים.

כי הוא צדיק המטה אלקים הנקרא יצחק, לשונו
אחוך ושמחה, שנורם במעשי הטובים ובכונתו
הקדשה תענוג ושמחה לכל העולמות העליונים.

ולכך אמרו זבל פרודתו של יצחק
ואמרו ולא כספו זחבו של אבימלך, זה מדבר במי
שעוסק בתורה ובמצוות (נ"א: או מצות) בקביעות
עתים ואחר זה הולך בטל.

ונזה גורם לו מפני שרואה לפעים הצדיק גמור ג"כ
בטל מן התורה, אבל איןנו יוציא כי אפרעיל-פי שהוא
בטל עם כל זה לא יפריד מחשכטו מן הקשה.

ונזה קרויה מדעה את עצמו אליו והולך בטל מכל
כל מושג.

ונא אם חזר אח"ז למודו או לעסוק בדרכי קבשה,
הוא מלא סיגים ופסל מחשכבות זרות שגננסו בו
בחיותו בטל.

ונזה נקרא כספו זחבו של אבימלך, קלומר אף שהוא
עוסק בדרכי קבשה של אב"י מל"ה, אביו שבחמים
ומלך עולם,

ר"ל שhortורה ומצוות ספונים וחוויות אצלו יתברך
כמו כסף זחוב אצל מלך בשר ודם, גם שhortורה
נקראת כסף וזחוב, כי עקרה אהבה ויראה הנקרה
כסף וזחוב.

ונג אליו נקמה שהוא לומד בדוחלו ורחמים, אבל כל
זה לא יועיל לו, כי כל עסקייו מערב בסיגים
ומחשכבות זרות ופנויות בגנפר, ומה גם שבא לו מזה
ח"ו גבירות וגדלה.

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Ohr Torah

Parshas Toldos

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.

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

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.

NOTE: Summary

The Maggid teaches that the verse "וַיַּגְדֵּל הָאִישׁ וַיַּלְךְ הַלּוֹךְ וַיַּגְדֵּל עַד כִּי גָדַל מָאָד" 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 "אֲשֶׁר יָלֹדָתֵינוּ שֶׁלֹּא בִּישָׁה אֶת זְקָנָתֵינוּ": 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 "זֶבֶל פְּרָדוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁל יְצָחָק," 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 "כְּסֶפֶו וְזָהָבוּ שֶׁל אֲבִימֶלֶךְ"—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 Abimelech 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

וּפְשִׁיטָא כְּאֶשֶּׁר רֹצֶה לִיכְנֵס בְּפֶרְקַד"ס הַחֲכָמָה בְּרוֹזִין
דָּאוּרִיתָא מִדָּמָה בָּעֵצָמוֹ שֶׁהוּא כָּבֵן הַאֲלָד הַמְּחַפֵּשׁ
בְּגַנְגִּי אֹזֶרֶת אֲבִיו, כִּמֵּשׁ הַרְדִּיק וְלֹהֶה הַעַלְלָה
אֲבִימֶלֶךְ בָּנוּ גְּרָעָוֹן שְׁקָרָא עַצְמָוֹ אֲבִימֶלֶךְ, לְאָמָר אֶבְּגָד
מְלָד וְלוּ יָאָתָה הַאֲלֹוֹתָה, וְלֹכֶד לְכַד הַמְּלֹוֹתָה) וְהַרְגָּי.
כָּל אַפְּגָנָה

כָּה דָּמִיוֹן זֶה הַפְּכַל הַלּוֹמֶד עַמְּפִנְיָות בְּגַנְפָּר, וּבְונְדָאִי
וַיַּפְּוֹל מַפְּרָגָתָה לְאָרֶץ פְּתַחְתִּיתָה.

וְלֹהֶה רָמָזׁוּ זֶבֶל פְּרָדוֹתֵינוּ וְגֹזֵן וְלֹא כְּסֶפֶו וְזָהָבוּ וְגֹזֵן,
אֶלָּא לְהַתְּרַחֵק מִזְכָּרִים סְכָלִים וּשְׁטוֹתָה בְּאַלְוָן וּבְכִיוֹזָה,
בְּהַם, וְלֹילֶךְ בְּזָרְכִּי הַגִּשְׁרִים וְמִן הַשְׁמִים יִסְּעִוָּה,
(אָמֵן בְּנֵי רָצְוֹן).

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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 במקומות הנה. ויש לדחק, כי
לו לומר רק אין אהבת אלקים במקומות הנה, כי הלו
לא כיה לם רק אהבה רעה שהוא ניאוף. אך כל
דבר צויך להעלות בין אה.

כי אברם הוליד את יצחק, פירוש עם יצחק, הוליד
את יעקב, פירוש מזת 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. ונחות לענין ראשון, למשל
כשיש לאדם אהבה רעה פירוש ניאוף,

וקשנותן אל לבו יראה מהשם יתברך אין לו פאה
עוד. וזהו רק אין יראת אלקים, שאלו קיתה לך
יראה כי יכולם 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.

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

כִּי כּוֹא לְאָדָם מִקְשָׁבָה רְשָׁעָה אָרִיךְ ?יָרָא וְלֹשִׁים אֶל
לְבוֹ כִּי הַמִּקְשָׁבָה שֶׁל אָדָם הִיא מִרְכָּבָה לְה' יְתָבָרָה,
עַל ذָרָה קָאָבָות כֵּן הוּא מִרְכָּבָה כִּידּוּעַ, וְהִיא שׂוֹלֵךְ
לְהַן לְמַעְלֹות הַמִּקְשָׁבָה כִּידּוּעַ.

צָרִיךְ שִׁיהְיָה צִיר נָאָמָן וּנְפַשֵּׁת אֲדוֹנֵינוּ יְשִׁיבָה, כִּי כָל
אֵת ה' הַוָּא מִשְׁיבָה.

[NOTE: Summary]

The Maggid teaches that the verse “רַק אֵין יָרָאת אֱלֹקִים בָּמָקוֹם הַזֶּה” 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