

Alter Rebbe

Likkutei Torah

דרושים לסוכות ושמ"ע

ושאבתם מים בששון ממעיני הישועה

Introduction:

In this segment, the Alter Rebbe explains the inner meaning of the water libation on Sukkos and the verse, "You shall draw water with joy from the wellsprings of salvation" (Yeshayahu 12:3). Building on the previous discussion of the heavenly fire upon the Mizbe'ach, he now reveals a level beyond spiritual fire: the "water" of bittul. Fire represents the soul's passionate thirst to come close to Hashem, while water represents the deeper state reached when the soul no longer experiences itself as distant. Like a child who cries out for his father while far away, but becomes quiet when resting in his father's presence, the soul's fiery yearning becomes a quiet, inward love when it senses that it is standing before Hashem.

"And you shall draw water with joy from the springs of salvation" (Yeshayahu 12:3).
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It is written, "On the eighth day, there shall be an assembly for you" (Bamidbar 29:35).
בתיב ביום הש"ע תהיה לכם.

The explanation is that throughout the year, bulls, rams, sheep, and goats were offered upon the altar.
פי' כי בכל השנה היו מקריבין על גבי המזבח פרים ואילים וכבשים ושעירים.

A heavenly fire would descend upon the altar in the form of a crouching lion and consume them.
ואש של מעלה ה' יורד על המזבח כדמות אריה רובץ ותאכל אותם.

During the festival of Sukkos, water was poured upon the altar, and the water libation was performed throughout all seven days.
ובחג הסוכות היו מנסכין מים על גבי המזבח וניסוף המים כל שבועה.

But on the eighth day, "there shall be an assembly for you," gathering together all these aspects.
אך ביום השמיני עצרת תהיה לכם לכל הבחינות הללו.

The explanation of this matter is that now, when we have neither the Beis HaMikdash nor the altar,
וביאור ענין זה כי הנה עכשיו שאין לנו בית המקדש ולא מזבח,

each person must find these desirable matters within his own soul.
צריך כל אחד למצא דברי חפץ בנפשו,

He must understand how all these lofty aspects Above are present below in each person's service of Hashem within the heart.
ולקבין איך כל הבחינות עליונות של מעלה הם למטה בעבודת ה' שכלב כל אחד ואחד.

In every generation, a person must perceive within himself the aspect of the fire that burns and consumes the offerings, the bulls, rams, sheep, and so forth.
ובכל דור חייב אדם לראות בנפשו ענין בחינת אש ששורף ומכלה את הקרבנות פרים ואילים וכבשים כו'.

He must likewise perceive the aspect of the water libation of Sukkos,
ובחינת ניסוף המים שבחג,

and the aspect of the eighth day, when all the aforementioned aspects are gathered together.
ובחינת יום השמיני שבו עצרת כל הבחינות הנ"ל.

Our Sages said, "The prayers were instituted corresponding to the daily offerings" (Berachos 26b).
והנה אמרו רז"ל תפלות כנגד תמידין תקנום.

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The meaning is that "service of the heart" is prayer, and the heart corresponds to the altar.

והענין כי עבודה שבלב זו תפלה והלב הוא רומז כנגד המזבח.

Just as there were two altars, an inner altar and an outer altar, so too, within the heart there are two aspects: the externality of the heart and the inwardness of the heart, as is known.

וכשם שהיו ב' מזבחות פנימי וחיצוני, כך יש בלב ב' בחי' חיצוניות הלב ופנימיות הלב כנודע.

As stated in Zohar III, Parashas Tzav 30b, the inner altar is called "a still, small voice," which is the aspect of the inner voice.

וכמ"ש בנח"ג פ' צו ד"ל ע"ב דמזבח הפנימי נק' קול דממה דקה שהוא בחי' קלא פנימא.

It is also called the golden altar, and it is the aspect of ahavah rabbah, great love, corresponding to the superiority of gold over silver, and so forth.

ונקרא ג"כ מזבח הזהב והיא בחי' אהבה רבה שמבחינת כמעלת הזהב על הכסף כו'.

See also Zohar III, Parashas Beha'aloscha 151b, and Pardes, Shaar Erchei HaKinnuyim, entry "Mizbe'ach."

וע' מזה ג"כ בנח"ג פרשה בהעלתך דקנ"א ע"ב ובפרדס בעה"כ ערך מזבח.

These two aspects may be further understood from what is explained in the discourse Shir HaShirim concerning the two aspects of kallah; see there.

ויובן עוד ענין ב' בחי' אלו ממ"ש בד"ה שיר השירים בענין ב' בחי' כלה ע"ש.

This itself is the concept of the two aforementioned aspects of the altar.

וזהו עצמו ענין ב' בחי' מזבח הנ"ל.

Just as all the offerings, bulls, rams, sheep, and so forth, were brought upon the outer altar,

וכשם שהיו מקריבין על מזבח החיצון כל הקרבנות פרים ואילים וכבשים כו'.

so too, each person must awaken during his prayer the natural love within his heart.

כך צריך כל אחד בתפלתו לעורר את האהבה הטבעית בלבבו.

This is only the aspect of the externality of the heart, which must blaze like fiery flames in the revealed emotions of the heart.

שהוא בחינת חיצוניות שבלב בלבד שתתלהט פרשפי אש בהתגלות הלב.

This is the aspect of the heavenly fire that descended in the form of a lion to consume the offerings.

והוא בחינת אש של מעלה שיוירד בדמות אריה לשרף הקרבנות.

See Zohar, Parashas Tzav 32b-33a, on the verse "And a fire went forth," where it states, "This is Uriel," and see the explanation of the Ramaz there.

וע"ש פרשה צו דל"ב ע"ב ודל"ג א' ע"פ ותצא אש דא אוריאל ובפ"י הרמ"ז שם.

On page 27, it states that the numerical value of Uriel is equal to Avraham.

ובדף כ"ז כתב דאוריאל גימטריא אברהם.

It is known that the natural love within the G-dly soul is our inheritance from the aspect of "chesed to Avraham."

ונודע דאהבה הטבעית שבנפש האלקית היא ירושה לנו מבחי' חסד לאברהם.

Accordingly, it is explained here that awakening and revealing this natural love is the aspect of the heavenly fire.

ועד"ז נתבאר פאן שבחי' התעוררות גילוי אהבה הטבעית וזהו בחי' אש שלמעלה.

See also Zohar, Bereishis 6b, and the explanation of the Ramaz there, that the aspect of the lion has the numerical value of 216.

וע' עוד בזהר בראשית ד"ו ע"ב ובפ"י הרמ"ז שם דבחי' אריה בגימ' רי"ו.

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It derives from the aspect of the “spirit that he left within her”;
see there.

והוא מבחי' רוחא דשביק בה ע"ש.

In this manner as well, we can understand the connection of this
aspect to natural love.

וגם עד"ז יובן שזכות בחי' זו לאהבה הטבעית.

This follows what is explained elsewhere in the discourse
Vayelaket Yosef, Parashas Vayigash, concerning sefichim,
aftergrowth.

והוא ע"פ מ"ש במ"א בד"ה וילקט יוסף בפרשה
ויגש בענין הספחים.

There it is explained that this is comparable to the “spirit that he
left within her,” and so forth.

שנהו בענין רוחא דשביק בה כו'.

See also what is explained concerning natural love in the
discourse explaining the concept of Yom Kippur.

ועמ"ש מענין אהבה הטבעית בד"ה לבאר ענין
יוהכ"פ.

See also what is explained concerning the lion in the discourse
VeAryeh KaBakar Yochal Teven.

ועמ"ש מענין אריה בד"ה ואריה כבקר יאכל תבן.

This is along the lines of the verse, “They shall follow Hashem;
He shall roar like a lion” (Hoshea 11:10).

והוא ע"ד מ"ש אחרי ה' ילכו באריה ישאג.

It refers to the love that flames and blazes within a person's
heart when he remembers Hashem,

שהיא אהבה המתלהבת ומתלהטת בלב האדם בזכרו
את ה',

for he does not wish, G-d forbid, to be separated from Him.

שאינו רוצה להיות נפרד ח"ו.

And it is written, “For Hashem your G-d is a consuming fire”
(Devarim 4:24).

ובתיב כי ה' אלקיך אש אכלה הוא.

He is a consuming fire, a fire that burns and consumes all the
fires that are not directed toward Hashem.

אש אוכלה, אש ששורף ומכלה את כל האשיות אשר
לא לה' המה.

These are called “strange fire,” and the fire must be directed
toward Hashem alone.

הנקרא בשם אש זרה, ולא להיות האש כי אם לה'
לבדו.

Therefore, our Sages said that it is forbidden to eat before prayer
(Berachos 10b).

ולכן אמרו רז"ל שאסור לאכל קודם התפלה.

For when a person wishes to eat something, such as physical
bread, he must necessarily stand on a higher level than the
bread.

כי מאחר שהוא רוצה לאכל איזה דבר כמו לחם
גשמי, מכרח הוא להיות במעלה הגבוהה ויתרה מן
הלחם.

Because of his superior level, it is fitting that he should rule over
it and eat from it.

שמצד מעלתו היתרה עליו ראוי לשלוט בו ולאכל
ממנו.

But before prayer, he has not yet eliminated and burned away
his excesses with the heavenly fire.

וכיון שהוא קודם התפלה שעדין לא בער ושרף את
המותרות שלו באש של מעלה,

Since he is still bound up with worries about earning a
livelihood, he remains attached below.

והרי הוא מקשר בדאגת הפרנסה, הרי הוא מקשר
למטה.

He descends to the level of other physical matters and is
therefore on the same level as the bread that he eats.

ונופל במדרגות שאר ענינים גשמיים, הרי הוא שונה
במדרגה אל הלחם אשר הוא אוכל.

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It is therefore not fitting for him to rule over it and eat from it. ואין ראוי לשלוט בו ולאכל ממנו.

See also the discourse Koh Sevarchu in Parashas Naso. ועמ"ש מזה בד"ה כה תברכו בפ' נשא.

This is man's service during prayer: to burn away his worries about earning a livelihood. וזהו עבודת האדם בתפלה לשרף דאגת הפרנסה.

This corresponds to the fine wheat flour that was offered upon the altar as meal offerings. וכמו שהיו מקריבין ע"ג המזבח סלת חטים למנחות.

This does not refer to earning a livelihood itself, for livelihood is necessary. ולא ענין הפרנסה עצמה, כי היא צריכה.

Indeed, Scripture praises it, saying, "When you eat the labor of your hands, fortunate are you..." (Tehillim 128:2). והכתוב משבח ואומר יגיע כפיה כי תאכל אשריה וגו'.

Rather, it refers to the worry, when a person becomes distressed and anxious about his livelihood. אבל הדאגה שאדם מיצר ודואג על זה,

This worry derives from the element of fire and heat within his animal soul. הנה הוא מיסוד האש והחמימות שבנפש הבהמית.

This is a "strange fire," which must be burned away by the heavenly fire during prayer, as explained above. אשר זהו אש זרה וצריכה לשרפה באש של מעלה בתפלה כנ"ל.

Summary of Ois 1:

The Alter Rebbe explains that the service of the Beis HaMikdash continues spiritually within every Jew. Although today we do not have the physical Mizbe'ach, korbanos, heavenly fire, or water libation, each of these represents something that must take place within a person's own service of Hashem.

Chazal teach that tefillah was established in place of the daily korbanos. Therefore, the heart corresponds to the Mizbe'ach, and tefillah is the time when a person brings his own inner "korbanos." Just as there were an outer Mizbe'ach and an inner Mizbe'ach, there are also two levels within the heart: the external part of the heart and its deeper, inner dimension.

On the outer Mizbe'ach, the korbanos were consumed by a heavenly fire that descended in the form of a lion. In a person's avodah, this heavenly fire represents the natural love for Hashem inherited by every Jewish soul from Avraham Avinu. During tefillah, a person must awaken this hidden love until it becomes revealed and burns strongly within his heart. He reaches the awareness that he does not want to be separated from Hashem.

This holy fire must consume the "strange fires" within a person. The Alter Rebbe explains the verse, "For Hashem your G-d is a consuming fire" (Devarim 4:24), as meaning that the holy fire of Hashem consumes those passions and forms of emotional excitement that are directed somewhere other than toward Hashem.

One example is worry about parnassah. The Alter Rebbe is careful to distinguish between earning a livelihood and worrying about it. Working for one's livelihood is necessary and proper, and the verse itself praises a person who eats from the labor of his hands (Tehillim 128:2). The problem is the excessive anxiety, agitation,

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and emotional heat a person invests in his livelihood. That emotional heat comes from the “fire” of the animal soul and must be consumed by the higher fire awakened during tefillah.

This also explains why Chazal prohibit eating before tefillah. In order to eat and elevate physical food, a person must first stand spiritually above it. Before tefillah, however, he has not yet burned away his excessive attachment to physical concerns. He is therefore still bound to the same physical world as the food itself. Through tefillah, he rises above that state and becomes capable of properly engaging with and elevating the physical world.

The central message of Ois 1 is that tefillah is an inner reenactment of the service of the Mizbe'ach. A Jew awakens the natural love for Hashem hidden within his soul until it becomes a holy fire. That fire does not destroy ordinary physical life. Rather, it burns away the anxiety, misplaced passion, and attachment surrounding physical life, so that a person can afterward engage with the world while remaining connected to Hashem.

(ב)

Our Sages said that although fire descends from Heaven, there is a mitzvah to bring fire from an ordinary source (Yoma 21b).

והנה אמרו רז"ל אע"פ שאש יורד מלמעלה מן השמים מצוה להביא מן ההדיוט.

This is in order to prepare for the heavenly fire to descend through it.

כדי לעשות הקנה לאש של מעלה שתירד ע"י זה.

To understand this in the service of Hashem, Hashem is called “He Who sows acts of righteousness and causes salvations to sprout.”

ולקבץ ענניו זה בעבודת ה' הנה הקב"ה נקרא זורע צדקות ומצמיח ישועות.

This can be understood by first explaining the verse, “His left hand is beneath my head, and His right hand embraces me” (Shir HaShirim 2:6).

וביאר ענניו זה יובן בהקדים מה שכתוב שמאלו תחת לראשי וימינו תחבקני.

See what is explained concerning this verse in Parashas Ki Sisa.

עמ"ש על פסוק זה בפ' כי תשא.

“His right hand embraces me” means that there is an abundant drawing down of the aspect of chesed, the right arm.

פי' וימינו תחבקני שנמשך כל כך בחינות חסד דרושא מינא.

For “the right hand draws near,” bringing all the sparks and all the souls of Israel close,

וימין מקרבת כל ניצוצות וכל נשמות ישראל,

so that they become united with Hashem, the One and Only, as it is written, “the people who are close to Him” (Tehillim 148:14).

להיות מיוחדים לה' יחיד ומיוחד לבדו כדכתיב עם קרבו.

This closeness reaches the level of an actual embrace, like a person embracing his fellow so that he cannot separate from him in any way.

עד שהוא בבחינת חיבוק ממש כאדם המחבק לחבירו שאינו יכול להפריד ממנו בשום אופן.

Likewise below, an ahavah rabbah, a great love, for Hashem alone is drawn down and revealed, so that one does not wish, G-d forbid, to separate from Him.

וכך למטה נמשך ונתגלה אה"ר לה' לבדו שלא ליפרד ממנו ח"ו.

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See what is explained concerning this in the explanation of the verse "Place me like a seal," regarding the straps that hang over the heart.

עמ"ש מזה בביאור ע"פ שימני כחותם בענגן רצועות דתלין על לבא.

However, to merit the level and quality of this ahavah rabbah, one must first experience "His left hand is beneath my head."

אף לזכות למעלת ובחינת אהבה רבה זו צ"ל מתחלה בבחי' שמאלו תחת לראשי.

For "the left hand pushes away."

כי שמאל דוחה.

This means that a person pushes himself down and humbles himself when he takes to heart, and deeply concentrates his mind and thought,

פי' שדוחה ומשפיל את האדם באשר ישם אל לבו ונעמיק דעתו ומחשבתו,

on how exceedingly distant he is from Hashem, G-d forbid, and similar matters.

איך שהוא רחוק מה' בתכלית ח"ו וכיוצא באלו הענינים.

All of this derives from the left side, as is known.

אשר כל זה נמשך מסטרא דשמאלא בנודע.

This does not mean, G-d forbid, that the left hand of Hashem Himself pushes the person away,

ולא שיהיה בחינת שמאל של הקב"ה עצמו הוא הדוחה ח"ו.

for "none who are banished will remain banished from Him" (II Shmuel 14:14).

כי לא ידח ממנו נדח.

Rather, when a person takes these matters to heart, this aspect is drawn down into the level of "beneath my head."

אלא באשר ישם אל לבו וכו' ונמשך ונשתלשל למטה בבחי' תחת לראשי.

That is, when I bring this awareness deeply into my own thought,

פי' באשר אני נוטל בחינה זו להמשיך למטה תחת לראשי,

I myself push down and humble myself from the level at which I had previously regarded myself.

דהיינו בעומק מחשבתי הרי אני בעצמי הוא הדוחה ומשפיל את עצמי ממדרגתי שהייתי מחזיק עצמי בעיני מתחלה.

See what is explained concerning this in the discourse Chayav Inish Levesumei BePuraya.

ועמ"ש מזה בד"ה חיב אינש לבסומי בפורי'א.

In this manner, our Sages arranged all the confessions of Yom Kippur, in which we confess concerning ourselves,

וע"ד זה סדרו רז"ל כל הוידוים נשביום כפור שמתודים על נפשם,

saying, "We have rebelled, we have acted abominably," and similar expressions.

ואומרים סררנו תעבנו וכיוצא בהם.

Through them, people humble themselves greatly before Hashem and acknowledge how very distant they are from Him.

שמשפילים את עצמם לפני הקב"ה מאד ואומרים איך שהם רחוקים מאד ממנו ית'.

These very thoughts awaken love and thirst, causing one's yearning to be directed toward Hashem.

והו' הם הדברים המעוררים את האהבה והצמאון להיות אליו ית' תשוקתו.

Through this, one comes to merit the level and quality of ahavah rabbah that is revealed during Sukkos.

ובזה בא ויגיע להיות זוכה לבחינת ומעלת אהבה רבה שבתג הסוכות.

This is the meaning of "He sows acts of righteousness."

וזהו זורע צדקות.

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For Knesses Yisrael is called "tzedakah," based on the verse, "Through righteousness you shall be established" (Yeshayahu 54:14).

כי הנה כנסת ישראל נק' בשם צדקה על שם הפסוק בצדקה תכונני.

Furthermore, the Jewish people below are filled with mitzvos of tzedakah and chesed.

וגם כללות ישראל למטה מלאים מצות צדקה וחסד.

During the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, all of this is in a state of sowing.

ובעשרת ימי תשובה הוא בבחינת זריעה.

For just as a seed must be sown upon soil that has been thoroughly plowed,

פי כמו הגרעין שזורעין צריך לזרע ע"ג עפר שנוחרש היטב.

whereas nothing can be properly sown or caused to grow in hard soil,

משא"כ עפר קשה לא יזרע ולא יצמח בה כלל.

so too, all the mitzvos of tzedakah and chesed that the Jewish people perform and accumulate throughout the year

כך כל המצות צדקה וחסד שישאל עושין ומסגלין כל ימות השנה,

cannot be sown, sprout, or produce fruit Above except through the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah.

הנה לא יזרע ולא יצמיח בה כלל ולא יעשה פרי למעלה כ"א ע"י בחינת עשרת ימי תשובה.

During these days, they break their hearts, push themselves down, and humble themselves like soil that has been plowed.

שמשבירין את לבם ודוחין ומשפילין את עצמם כעפר שנוחרש.

This is the aspect of plowing, which loosens the earth.

בבחינת חרישה דמרפי ארעא.

See the lengthy explanation of this at the end of the discourse Haazinu HaShamayim.

ועמ"ש מזה באריכות סד"ה האזינו השמים.

There it is explained that, in a general sense, this plowing begins on Rosh Hashanah, and this is the concept of the shevarim,

איך שחרישה זו מתחיל דרך כלל בר"ה וזהו ענין שברים כו'.

while the sprouting takes place on Sukkos; see there.

ושחצמיחה היא חג הסוכות ע"ש.

We likewise see this clearly with those who give tzedakah: a person will truly give only when he makes himself like dust.

וכן אנו רואים בחוש בעושי צדקה שלא יתן כ"א ע"י שישים את עצמו כעפר.

But if he considers himself to be an independent and important existence, he will give only from whatever he considers extra.

משא"כ אם מחשיב את עצמו ליש ודבר לא יתן כ"א איזה מותרות ממה שיש לו.

He will not give from his own labor, toil, and that which represents his very life.

אבל לא יגיעו ועמלו וחי נפשו ממש.

For this, he must break the desires of his heart that arise from his own arrogance,

שלקח צריך לשבר תאוות לבו הנמשכים מגסות רוחו.

and consider himself equal to the person who receives from him.

ולהחשיב את עצמו שוה כמו חבירו המקבל ממנו.

"Why do you think that your blood is redder?" (Pesachim 25b).

ומאי תזית דדמא דידך סומק טפי כו'.

Why should he have food and drink while the poor person has nothing? What is the difference between them, and why should the other person have less?

שיהיה לו מה לאכל ולשתות ולרש אין כל, מאי שנא ולמה יגרע.

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After all, "Have we not all one Father?" (Malachi 2:10).	הלא אב א' לכולנו כו'.
See also what is explained in the discourse Eretz Harim U'Veka'os.	ועמ"ש בד"ה ארץ הרים ובקעות.
Through this, the aforementioned aspect of tzedakah is sown.	ועל ידי זה נזרע בחינת הצדקה הנ"ל.
During the days between Yom Kippur and Sukkos, it is in the stage of sprouting.	ובימים שבין יום כפור לסוכות הוא בחי' הצמיחה.
Until, on the first day of Sukkos, the aspect of Avraham, supernal chesed, grows and sprouts.	עד שביום ראשון של חג הסוכות נגדל ונצמח בחי' אברהם חסד עליון.
This is the aforementioned aspect of "His right hand embraces me."	בחינת וימינו תחבקני הנ"ל.
The level and quality of Avraham likewise came through his saying, "I am dust and ashes" (Bereishis 18:27).	וגם בחינת ומעלת אברהם הוא ע"י שאמר ואנכי עפר ואפר.
This is the aspect of earth in which one sows and which causes growth, as explained above.	דהיינו בחי' עפר שזורעין בו ומצמיח כנ"ל.
This is the meaning of "and causes salvations to sprout."	וזהו מצמיח ישועות.
It is along the lines of the verse, "Save with Your right hand" (Tehillim 60:7).	והוא ע"ד מ"ש הושיעה ימינך.
For it is written, "He has drawn back His right hand" (Eichah 2:3).	כי הנה כתיב השיב אחור ימינו.
The aspect of chesed and the right hand is clothed within the aspect of achorayim, external matters.	שבחי' חסד והימין מלובש בבחי' אחרים דברים חיצונים.
His hand must therefore be saved for Him, to return to holiness.	וצריך להושיע ידו לו לחזור אל הקדושה.
See the discourse VaEhyeh Etzlo Amon concerning "a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing."	ע' מ"ש בד"ה ואהיה אצלו אמן גבי עת לחבק ועת לרחק מחבק.
See concerning "He has drawn back His right hand" in Zohar, Parashas Vayeitzei 163b, Parashas Beshalach 57a, Parashas Terumah 143b, and Mikdash Melech there.	וע' מענין השיב אחור ימינו בזהר פ' ויצא קס"ג סע"ב פרשה בשלח דנ"ז סע"א ובפרשה תרומה דקמ"ג ע"ב ובמק"מ שם.
The right hand being clothed within achorayim means that below, a person lowers his love into physical matters.	וענין שהימין מלובש בבחינת אחרים היינו למטה בשהאדם משפיל אהבתו בענינים גשמיים.
He is drawn after the desires of the body and the animal soul, and calls the left "right."	לימשך אחר תאוות הגוף והנה"ב כו' ואומר על שמאל שהוא ימין.
Through this, G-d forbid, the Divine flow is caused to descend to the external forces.	ועל ידי זה גורמים ח"ו השפלת השפעת לחיצונים.
See the beginning of Parashas Beshalach concerning "How great is His patience," and so forth.	ועמ"ש ר"פ בשלח בענין כמה ארוך אפים כו'.

וְזֶהוּ עֵינֵן הַסֵּפֶה עִפְמ"ש בַּפֶּע"ח שְׁעַר חֵג הַסִּפּוֹת פ"ד.

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The walls of the sukkah, “two according to their law, and the third even a handbreadth,” correspond metaphorically to the three sections of the right arm.

דְּדִפְנוֹת הַסִּכָּה שְׁתֵּימָה כְּהִלְכֶתָן וְשְׁלִישִׁית אֶפְלוּ טַפַּח וְהוּ עַד"מ כְּנֶגֶד ג' פְּרָקִי יָד יָמִין כו'.

This is the aspect of “His right hand embraces me.”

וְהוּא בְּחִי' וְיָמִינוּ תִּחְבְּקֵנִי.

The sechach is the aspect of “the shade by day,” which encompasses the aspect of the right hand; see there.

וְהַסִּכָּךְ זֶהוּ בְּחִי' צֵל יוֹמָם הַמְקִיף עַל בְּחִי' יָמִין כו' ע"ש.

The revelation of the aspect of Hashem's right hand within the human soul can be understood from the discourse Tze'enah U'Re'enah.

וְבִיאור עֲנִינֵי גִלּוּי בְּחִי' יָמִינוּ שֶׁל הַקִּבְ"ה בְּנִפְשׁ הָאָדָם יוֹבֵן מִמִּשׁ כְּדִ"ה צִאֲיָנָה וְרִאֲיָנָה.

See there concerning “Raise your hands in holiness,” and so forth.

כְּעֲנִין שָׂאוּ יְדֵיכֶם קֹדֶשׁ כו' ע"ש.

In Midrash Rabbah, the concept of “Save with Your right hand” is mentioned in Eichah Rabbah, at the end of the section Gada BeChari Af.

וּבְרַבּוֹת גִּזְכָּר מַעֲנִין הוֹשִׁיעָה יְמִינָהּ בְּמִדְרַשׁ אֵיכָה ס"פ גִּדְעַת בְּחָרִי אף.

See also Zohar I, Parashas Vayeitzei 163b, and Parashas Pekudei 235a.

וּבִזְנוּחַ א' ב'פ' וַיֵּצֵא דָקס"ג סע"ב וּב'פ' פְּקוּדֵי דרל"ה ע"א.

See also Parashas Shemini 37a, Parashas Chukas 181b, and Parashas Terumah 169a.

וּב'פ' שְׁמִינִי דל"ז ע"א וּב'פ' תְּחַקֵּת דקפ"א ע"ב וּב'פ' תְּרוּמָה דקס"ט ע"א.

There, concerning the “cup of salvations,” it discusses “Save with Your right hand,” and so forth.

גַּבִּי כּוֹס יְשׁוּעוֹת כו' הוֹשִׁיעָה יְמִינָהּ כו'.

Also relevant is what is stated in Zohar, Parashas Sisa 189b, and in the explanation of the Ramaz there.

וְשִׁיב לְזֶה ג"כ מ"ש בְּזֹהַר פ' תִּשָּׂא דקפ"ט ע"ב וּב'פ' הַרְמִיז שָׁם.

See also Parashas Noach 62b concerning “the end of the right.”

וּב'פ' נֹחַ ס"ב ב' בְּעֲנִין קוֹץ הַיָּמִין.

See Zohar, Parashas Chayei Sarah 123a-b, concerning “His right hand brought salvation for Him,” and so forth.

וְע' בְּזֹהַר פְּרָשָׁה חַיֵּי שָׂרָה דקכ"ג סע"א וּסע"ב בְּעֲנִין הוֹשִׁיעָה לוֹ יָמִינוּ כו'.

In Parashas Beshalach 58a, “Your right hand, Hashem, is majestic in strength” refers to the Torah.

וּב'פ' בְּשַׁלַּח דנ"ח סע"א יְמִינָהּ ה' נִאֲדָרִי בְּכַח דָּא אֲוִרִיתָא.

This may be understood according to what is explained later in the discourse BeYom HaShemini Atzeres.

י"ל כְּמִשׁ לְקַמֵּן בְּד"ה בְּיוֹם הַשְּׁמִיעָה צ'.

There, concerning “I have placed My words in your mouth, and with the shadow of My hand I have covered you,” it is explained that the Torah produces the aspect of sukkah, the aspect of shade, and so forth.

כְּעֲנִין וְאֲשִׁים דְּבָרֵי בְּפִיהּ וּבְצֵל יָדִי כְּסִיתִיהּ שְׁמֵן הַתּוֹרָה נַעֲשֶׂה בְּחִי' סִכָּה בְּחִי' צֵל כו'.

Thus, this is comparable to the aspect of “shade by day,” the aspect of “Save with Your right hand,” and so forth.

נִמְצָא זֶהוּ כְּמוֹ בְּחִי' צֵל יוֹמָם בְּחִי' הוֹשִׁיעָה יְמִינָהּ כו'.

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This aspect can also be understood within the soul: the Torah gives strength and power to the aspect of the right hand and the love of Hashem.

וגם בנפש יובן בתי' זו שהתורה נותנת כח ועז לבחינת זמין ואהבת ה'.

This follows what is explained in the discourse BaChodesh HaShelishi in Parashas Yisro, concerning the Torah being called "strength"; see there.

עפמשנ"ת בד"ה בחדש השלישי בפי' יתרו בענין שהתורה נקראת עז כו' ע"ש.

This is also the meaning of "Your right hand, Hashem, crushes the enemy" (Shemos 15:6).

וזהו ג"כ זמין ה' תרעץ אויב.

This refers to all the desires of the yetzer hara and the animal soul.

היינו כל תאוות היצר הרע ונה"ב.

The word "עצרת", and it crushes," contains the letters of "עצרת, Atzeres."

ותרעץ אותיות עצרת.

For Shemini Atzeres is the aspect of "so that all the peoples of the earth may know" (I Melachim 8:60),

כי שמיני עצרת הוא בתי' למען דעת כל עמי הארץ.

as explained in the discourse Hashem Li BeOzrai.

כמ"ש בד"ה ה' לי בעוזרי.

This is the meaning of what our Sages said: "It is a mitzvah to bring fire from an ordinary source."

וזהו שאמרו רז"ל מצוה להביא מן הקדושים.

"Ordinary" means simple, lower matters.

פי' הקדושים היינו דברים תחתונים פשוטים.

"Ordinary matters" means that a person takes to heart and becomes one of the "masters of accounting," examining himself carefully.

וממילי דהקדושה היינו כאשר ישם האדם אל לבו להיות ממארי דחושבנא.

He makes an accounting of all his ordinary matters,

כל מילי דהקדושה.

and of every thought, speech, and action that was not directed toward Hashem throughout his life.

וכל המחשבה דבור ומעשה אשר לא לה' המה שהיו בו כל ימיו.

He considers how exceedingly distant he is from Hashem,

ואיך שהוא רחוק מה' בתכלית.

and how repulsive and abominable he has become, and so forth.

ומשקץ ומתעב כו'.

This is the aspect of "the left hand pushes away," and so forth.

שהוא בתי' שזמאל דוחה כו'.

He lowers himself even further, becoming lowly and despised in his own eyes and weary of his life.

ונקלה עוד מזאת והיה שפל ונבזה בעיניו ומואס בחייו.

He then becomes deeply embittered and cries out to Hashem in his distress,

ואזי יתמרמר מאד ויצעק אל ה' בצר לו.

as it is written, "Their heart cried out" (Eichah 2:18).

וכדכתיב צעק לבם.

This bitterness brings him to prepare for the heavenly fire,

ומיריות הזאת היא מביאת לעשות הקנה לאש של מעלה.

which is the love of Hashem within his G-dly soul,

הוא בחינת אהבת ה' שבתפשו האלקית.

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so that it awakens and blazes within his heart, as explained above.

שתתעורר ותתלהט בלבו כנ"ל.

See further concerning "it is a mitzvah to bring fire from an ordinary source" in the discourse Inyan Chanukah in Parashas Mikeitz.

ועמ"ש עוד בענין מצוה להביא מן ההדיוט בד"ה ענין חנכה בפ' מקץ.

There it is explained somewhat differently, namely that this is the love that a person derives from contemplating the worlds and the aspect of Hashem's sovereignty, and so forth; see there.

דלשם נתבאר בע"א קצת דהיינו שנהו האהבה שהאדם לוקח מתחת העולמות מבחי' מלכותו ית' כו' ע"ש.

See also the discourse explaining the concept of Yom Kippur.

ובד"ה לברך ענין יוהכ"פ.

According to this, it may be said that what is explained here, becoming one of the "masters of accounting" and contemplating how distant one is, and so forth,

ולפ"ז י"ל דענין הנז' כאן להיות ממארי דחושבנא כו' ואיך שהוא רחוק כו'.

corresponds to the mitzvah of removing the ashes from the altar.

זהו ענין מצות תרומת הדשן.

This serves as a preparation for the revelation of the fire, and so forth.

אשר זהו הכנה לגילוי האש כו'.

See also the end of the discourse Vayehi Beshalach Pharaoh.

ועמ"ש סד"ה ויהי בשלח פרעה.

This is also the meaning of "Your right hand, Hashem, crushes the enemy" (Shemos 15:6).

Summary of Ois 2:

The Alter Rebbe explains the teaching of Chazal that although the fire on the Mizbe'ach descended from Heaven, there was still a mitzvah to bring an ordinary fire from below. Spiritually, this means that the powerful love of Hashem that comes from Above requires preparation from the person below. We cannot simply wait for inspiration. We must first prepare ourselves to receive it.

This preparation is expressed in the verse, "His left hand is beneath my head, and His right hand embraces me" (Shir HaShirim 2:6). The "left hand" represents pushing away and humbling oneself. A person honestly examines his thoughts, speech, and actions, recognizes how far he has allowed himself to drift from Hashem, and breaks the sense of self-importance that prevents him from changing. Importantly, this does not mean that Hashem is rejecting him. The Alter Rebbe emphasizes that "none who are banished will remain banished from Him." Rather, the person lowers his own ego through honest self-examination.

This explains the avodah of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The brokenheartedness of teshuvah is compared to plowing hard earth. A seed cannot grow properly in hard, unbroken soil. First the earth must be opened and softened. Similarly, the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah soften and break open the heart, making it capable of receiving what will be revealed afterward.

Then comes Sukkos, which represents "His right hand embraces me." The seed planted in the broken and softened earth now begins to grow. The great love, chesed, and closeness to Hashem associated with Avraham

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Avinu become revealed. Avraham himself expressed the humility necessary for this when he said, "I am dust and ashes" (Bereishis 18:27). His humility became the "earth" from which his tremendous chesed could grow.

This is also the deeper meaning of the sukkah. Its walls are compared to the sections of an embracing right arm, while the sechach represents a higher Divine light surrounding that embrace. After the distance and self-examination of the Yamim Nora'im, Sukkos reveals an extraordinary closeness, as though Hashem is embracing the person.

The Alter Rebbe then returns to the idea of bringing fire "from an ordinary source." The ordinary fire is the person's own effort. He becomes a marei d'chushbana, one who makes an honest spiritual accounting, examining where his thoughts, speech, actions, and desires have been directed. The resulting genuine bitterness and longing for Hashem become the preparation through which the heavenly fire, the natural love of Hashem already present within the G-dly soul, can burst into flame.

The progression of Ois 2 is therefore very precise: first comes plowing, then planting, then growth. First comes honest self-examination and humility during the Yamim Nora'im. This breaks open the hardened heart. Then the hidden love of the soul can grow and become revealed on Sukkos as "His right hand embraces me." The descent and brokenheartedness are not the goal. They prepare the person for a much deeper closeness to Hashem.

Chassidic Illustration:

A farmer once showed his young son a field immediately after it had been plowed. The boy was shocked. Only days earlier the field had looked smooth and beautiful. Now it was torn apart, filled with deep cuts and overturned earth. "Why did you ruin the field?" he asked.

His father picked up a seed and pressed it into the freshly opened soil. "I did not break the earth because I wanted it broken," he explained. "I broke it because earth that refuses to open cannot receive a seed."

Weeks later, the father brought his son back. The field that had looked destroyed was now filled with new growth.

The Alter Rebbe explains the Yamim Nora'im and Sukkos in this way. During Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, a Jew examines himself honestly and breaks through the hardness of his heart. This is the plowing. The purpose is not to remain broken. The broken earth can now receive the seed. Then, on Sukkos, what was planted begins to grow into "His right hand embraces me," a revealed love and closeness to Hashem. The broken heart of Yom Kippur becomes the soil from which the embrace of Sukkos grows.

(ג)

All of this is the aspect of fire upon the Mizbe'ach.

וְהָיָה כָּל זֶה הוּא בְּחִי' אֵשׁ שְׁע"ג הַמִּזְבֵּחַ.

But there is another aspect, greater and higher than this.

אֲדָּ יֵשׁ בְּחִינָה אַחֶרֶת גְּדוּלָּה וְגִבּוּרָה מְנָה.

It is the aspect of the water poured upon the Mizbe'ach on Sukkos.

וְהוּא בְּחִי' מִיָּם שְׁמִנְסְכִין ע"ג הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בְּחַג הַסֻּכּוֹת.

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The water quenches the thirst that comes from the element of fire.

שֶׁהַמַּיִם מְרוּיִן צִמְאוֹן הַבָּא מִסּוּד הָאֵשׁ.

As it is written, "Ho, everyone who is thirsty, go to the water" (Yeshayahu 55:1).

וּכְמ"ש הוּא כָּל צִמְאָא לְכוּ לַמַּיִם.

Within the aspect and level of water itself, there are several different levels, one higher than another.

וְגַם בְּבַחֲיִנַת וּמִדְרַגַת מַיִם יֵשׁ כַּמָּה בְּחִינּוֹת שׁוֹנוֹת זוֹ לְמַעְלָה מִזֹּו.

As it is written, "You have been shown to know that Hashem is G-d... in the heavens... there is nothing else besides Him" (Devarim 4:35, 39).

כְּדִקְתִּיב אֶתָּה הָרְאֵתָ לְדַעַת כִּי ה' הוּא הָאֱלֹקִים בְּשִׁמְיֵם כּו' אֵין עוֹד מְלַבְדּוּ.

This is a tangible perception, an aspect of complete bittul b'metzius through seeing, as explained elsewhere.

בְּרֵאֵיהֶם חוֹשִׁית שֶׁהוּא בְּחִי' בְּטוֹל בְּמַצִּיאוֹת לְגַמְרֵי בְּבַחֲיִנַת רֵאֵיהֶם כְּמ"ש בְּמ"א.

This level is called "water," which cools and extinguishes the heat of the fire.

וּבְחִינָה זוֹ נִק' בְּחִי' מִיָּם שֶׁמְקַרֵּר וּמַכְבֶּה אֶת חֹם הָאֵשׁ.

For when a person is in a state of complete bittul b'metzius to Hashem,

כִּי מֵאַחֵר שֶׁהוּא בְּבַחֲי' בְּטוֹל בְּמַצִּיאוֹת לְגַמְרֵי אֱלֹו ית'.

the heat of the natural fire within his G-dly soul automatically becomes cooled.

הָרִי מִמִּילָא וּמֵאֱלֹו מִתְקַרֵּר חֹם הָאֵשׁ הַטְּבָעִי אֲשֶׁר בְּנִפְשׁוֹ הָאֱלֹקִית.

So too does the thirst that burns like fiery flames.

וְהַצִּמְאוֹן כְּרִשְׁפֵי אֵשׁ שֶׁלֹּהֶבֶת.

This can be understood through the example of a son's love for his father.

וּכְמוֹ לְמִשְׁלַל אֶהְבֵּת הֵבֶן אֶל הָאָב.

When he wishes to draw close to his father but is still somewhat distant,

כְּשֶׁרוֹצֶה לְהִתְקַרֵּב אֵלָיו וְעַדִּין הוּא קָצֵת רְחוֹק.

his love becomes visible and revealed outwardly from his heart, and he cries, "Father! Father!"

אֲזִי הָאֶהְבָּה נִרְאִית וְנִגְלִית מִן הַלֵּב וְלַחוּץ שֶׁצּוֹעֵק אָבָא אָבָא.

But when he is actually together with his father,

מִשָּׂא"כ כְּשֶׁהוּא אֵצֶל אָבִיו מִמֶּשׁ.

his heart is inwardly filled with love, but it is not visible and revealed outside the heart.

הִנֵּה הַלֵּב תּוֹכוֹ רְצוּף אֶהְבָּה אָבֵל אֵינָה נִרְאִית וְנִגְלִית חוּץ מִן הַלֵּב.

It is therefore called "water," because it cools the fire so that it does not reveal itself outwardly.

וְלָכֵן נִקְרָא בְּחִינַת מַיִם שֶׁמְקַרֵּר בְּחִינַת הָאֵשׁ שֶׁלֹּא תִתְגַּלֶּה לַחוּץ.

Rather, the love remains concealed within the heart.

כִּי אִם נִסְתַּמְרֵת בְּתוֹךְ הַלֵּב.

As explained elsewhere concerning the concept of concealed chasadim, and so forth.

וּכְמ"ש בְּמ"א בְּעֵנִין חֲסִדִּים הַמְכֻסִּים כּו'.

See also the discourse Veyadata Hayom concerning "all my innards and kidneys shall sing."

וְעַמ"ש בְּד"ה וְיִדְעַת הַיּוֹם בְּעֵנִין וְכָל קֶרֶב וּכְלִיּוֹת יִזְמְרוּ.

See also the end of the discourse Vehayah Bayom Hahu Yitaka BeShofar Gadol concerning "on the holy mountain."

וּמ"ש סד"ה וְהִנֵּה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִתְקַע בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל גָּבִי עֲנִין בְּהַר הַקֹּדֶשׁ.

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This is the meaning of Shemoneh Esrei being recited quietly and silently.	וזהו ענין תפלת שמונה עשרה בלחש ובחשאי.
For during Pesukei DeZimrah, a person awakens love like fiery flames.	פי בפסוקי דזמרה הוא מעורר את האהבה בראשפי אש.
This love burns and consumes the fires that are "strange fire," as explained above.	להיות שורף ומכלה את האשם אשר הם אש זרה בפ"ל.
At that stage, it is as though he is still distant from the King.	והרי הוא כאלו עדין רחוק מן המלך.
But during Shemoneh Esrei, it is as though he is standing before the King.	משא"כ בתפלה שהרי הוא כאלו עומד לפני המלך.
And he says, "Baruch Atah," and so forth.	ואומר ברוך אתה וכו'.
"Baruch" means an aspect of drawing down His unity below.	פי' ברוך בחינת המשכה שממשיך יחודו ית' למטה.
So that the person himself becomes nullified to Hashem.	שיהיה הוא בבחינת בטול אליו ית'.
In this manner, our Sages instituted "Modim anachnu Lach," which is an aspect of bittul, as explained elsewhere.	ועד"ז תקנו מודים אנחנו לך שהוא בחי' בטול כמ"ש במ"א.
This is also the meaning of the bowings and prostrations, and so forth.	וזהו ענין הכריעות והשתחויות כו'.
Therefore, Shemoneh Esrei is recited quietly and silently.	לכן הוא בלחש ובחשאי.
See Zohar, Parashas Terumah 137a, Parashas Bereishis 50b, and Parashas Shemini 39a.	וע' בזוהר פ' תרומה דקל"ז ע"א ובפ' בראשית ד"ג ע"ב ובפ' שמעני דל"ט ע"א.
However, for this level to become fixed and planted within a person's heart throughout the entire day,	אף להיות בחי' ומדרגה זו קבועה ונטועה בלב האדם כל היום.
so that he does not move away from it, a person must devise means within his soul.	שלא ימוט מזה צריך האדם לשית עצות בנפשו.
For we plainly see that after Shemoneh Esrei, a person returns to being as he was before.	פי הנה אנו רואים בחוש שאחר תפלת שמונה עשרה חוזר להיות כבראשונה.
The true advice is to engage in Torah and its halachos.	והעצה האמתית הוא עסק התורה והלכותיה.
Although they are clothed in lower physical matters,	עם היותן מלכשים בדברים גשמיים תחתונים.
such as the subjects of Zera'im, Moed, and so forth,	כמו בעניני זרעים מועד כו'.
they are the ultimate unity and deveikus with Hashem, as explained elsewhere.	הן הנה תכלית היחוד והדבקות בו ית' כמ"ש במ"א.
A person must nullify and include himself within Hashem,	וצריך האדם להבטל ולהכלל אליו ית'.
becoming a vessel for His unity.	להיות מכון ליחודו ית'.
He must nullify and relinquish himself from all his desires and thoughts.	ויבטל ויפקיר את עצמו מכל רצונותיו ומחשבותיו.

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As explained elsewhere concerning the verse, "A land that consumes its inhabitants," and so forth (Bamidbar 13:32).	וּכְמִ"שׁ כְּמִ"א עַל פְּסוּק אֶרֶץ אֹכֶלֶת יוֹשְׁבֶיהָ וְגו'.
On this level, the study of Torah is literally equal to Shemoneh Esrei.	וּבְחִינָה זוֹ הֵנָּה עֶסֶק הַתּוֹרָה שְׁוֶה מִמָּשׁ כְּמוֹ תַּפְּלַת שְׁמוֹנֶה עֶשְׂרֵה.
A person can thereby make the impression of the bittul of Shemoneh Esrei	וְיָכוֹל הָאָדָם שְׂיִהְיֶה רֹשֶׁם בְּחִינַת הַבְּטוּל שְׁבִתְפִלַּת שְׁמוֹנֶה עֶשְׂרֵה.
fixed and firmly planted, like nails that can never be moved,	קְבוּעַ וְנִטְוֶעַ בְּמַסְמְרוֹת בַּל יִמוּט לְנִצָּח.
throughout the entire day while he engages in Torah.	כָּל הַיּוֹם בְּעֶסֶקוֹ בַּתּוֹרָה.
This is the meaning of "On the eighth day, there shall be an Atzeres for you" (Bamidbar 29:35).	וְזֶהוּ בְּיוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי עֲצֶרֶת תִּהְיֶה לָכֶם.
There should be for you an atzeres, a retention and absorption,	שֶׁתִּהְיֶה לָכֶם עֲצֶרֶת וּקְלִיטָה.
of the aforementioned aspect of water.	לְבַחִי מִיֵּם הַנִּ"ל.
It should be absorbed and retained within you, so that you do not expel it, G-d forbid.	שְׂיִקְלֹט וְיִתְפַּס בְּתוֹכְכֶם לְבַלְתִּי תִהְיוּ פוֹלְטִים ח"ו.
See the additions to Zohar I, end of section 25,	וְע' בְּהַשְׁמָטוֹת שְׁבוּזָהר ח"א סס"י כ"ה.
that this is the meaning of "The earth shall be filled with knowledge of Hashem, as the waters cover the sea" (Yeshayahu 11:9).	שְׁוֶהוּ עֲנִנּוּ כִּי מְלֵאָה הָאֶרֶץ דְּעָה אֵת ה' כַּמִּים לַיָּם מְכַסִּים.
See also what is explained concerning this in the explanation of "Veyadata Hayom" in Parashas Va'eschanan.	וְעַמִּי"שׁ מִזֶּה בְּבִיאוֹר עַל פְּסוּק וַיְדַעַת הַיּוֹם בְּפָרָשָׁה וְאַתְחַנֵּן.
For after davening, a person can return to being as he was before.	כִּי אָדָם יָכוֹל לִהְיוֹת אַחֵר הַתַּפְּלָה חוּזֵר כְּבָרָא שׁוֹנֶה.
The remedy for this comes through the aspect of "on the eighth day,"	וְהִינּוּ ע"י בְּחִינַת בְּיוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי.
which is the aspect of Binah, "Binah is the heart."	שֶׁהוּא בְּחִי בִּינָה לְבָא.
This means that bittul should penetrate the innermost point of his heart, as explained above.	דְּהִינּוּ שְׂיִהְיֶה בּוֹ בְּחִינַת בְּטוּל בְּעוֹמֶק נִקְדַּת הַלֵּב כַּנִּ"ל.
For the revelation of Atik is within Binah, the world of delight.	וְהִינּוּ לִפִּי שֶׁהַתְגַּלוּת עֲתִיק הוּא בְּבִינָה עוֹלָם הַתַּעֲנוּג.
Through this, there is drawn down an atzeres and absorption	לְכֵן ע"ז נִמְשָׁךְ לִהְיוֹת עֲצֶרֶת וּקְלִיטָה.
for the aforementioned aspect of water.	לְבַחִי מִיֵּם הַנִּ"ל.
This is the aspect of ahavah b'taanugim, love experienced as delight, and so forth,	שֶׁהוּא בְּחִי אֲהָבָה בְּתַעֲנוּגִים כו'.
like the son when he is actually together with his father, as explained above.	כְּמִשַּׁל הֶבֶן כְּשֶׁהוּא אֶצֶל אָבִיו כו' כַּנִּ"ל.

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This is the meaning of "You shall draw water with joy from the wellsprings of salvation" (Yeshayahu 12:3).	וזהו ושאבתם מים בששון ממעיני הישועה.
For the aforementioned aspect of water must have the quality of a spring.	כי בחינת מים הנ"ל צריך להיות בבחי' מעין.
As it is written, "They have forsaken Me, the source of living waters" (Yirmiyahu 2:13).	כדכתיב אותי עזבו מקור מים חיים כו'.
By way of analogy, it is like a source that flows from beneath the earth.	דהיינו ע"ד משל במקור הנובע מתחת לארץ.
Only the water flowing from it can be seen and perceived.	ואינו נראה ומשג כי אם הנביעה.
The source itself, however, is exceedingly deep, "who can find it?"	משא"כ המקור עצמו עמק עמק מי ימצאנו.
See concerning this in Ra'aya Mehemna, end of Parashas Bo, 43b.	וע' מזה ברע"מ ס"פ בא דמ"ג ע"ב.
See further concerning "They have forsaken Me, the source of living waters" in Zohar, end of Parashas Va'eschanan 266a, and in Mikdash Melech and the Ramaz there,	ועין עוד מעגן אותי עזבו מקור מים חיים בזהר ס"פ ואתחנן דרס"ו ע"א. ובמק"מ ובהרמ"ז שם.
and in Parashas Vayeilech 286a, concerning sanctifying the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He, through Amen.	ובפ' וילך דרפ"ו ע"א לקדשא שמה דקוב"ה באמן.
See concerning Amen in Ra'aya Mehemna, Parashas Eikev 271a,	וע' מעגן אמן ברע"מ פ' עקב דרע"א ע"א.
and in the explanation of the Ramaz there, and see also Zohar, Vayikra 12a.	ובפ' הרמ"ז שם וע' עוד בזהר ויקרא די"ב ע"א.
Similarly, through an awakening from below, a person must dig into the depths of the spring.	וכן צריך האדם באתערוותא דלתתא ג"כ לחפר בעומק המעין.
He must reach that which flows from the source that is exceedingly deep beneath the earth.	כמה שהוא נובע מן המקור עמק עמק מתחת לעפר.
This means that he must attain the state of "May my soul be as dust to everyone."	דהיינו שיהיה בבחי' ונפשי כעפר לכל תהיה.
He must also deeply apply his intellect to the study of Torah and its halachos.	וגם להעמיק עיון שכלו בעסק התורה והלכותיה.
See the end of the discourse Haazinu HaShamayim concerning "like showers upon vegetation" (Devarim 32:2).	ועמ"ש סד"ה האזינו השמים גבי כרביבים עלי עשב.
Torah is the aspect of Chochmah Ila'ah, the beginning of everything.	שהיא בחי' ח"ע ראשיתה דכולא.
It is drawn from the supernal Source of living waters.	נמשך ממקור מים חיים העליונים.
Yet it descended and underwent many stages of descent,	ולמטה ירדה ונשתלשלה מאד.

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until it became, as it were, "beneath the earth."	עד שהם בבחינת מתחת לעפר.
It is clothed within physical subjects, such as Zera'im, Moed, and so forth.	ענינים גשמיים זרעים מועד כו'.
From there, they flow forth to become "the wellsprings of salvation."	ומשם הם נובעים להיות מעיני הישועה.
This is why "wellsprings" is plural, for there are two aspects.	וזהו מעיני תרי שהם ב' בחינות.
The first is "May my soul be as dust to everyone."	בחינת ונפשי כעפר לכל תהיה.
The second is the Torah that is clothed within physical "earth," as explained above.	ובחי' התורה שכלבשת כעפר גשמי כנ"ל.
Specifically through this, the water is called "living water."	ועל ידי זה נקרא נקרא בחינת מים חיים.
For water that is upon the surface of the earth is not called living water, as is known.	פי המים אשר על פני הארץ אינם נקראים מים חיים כידוע.
The explanation of the two aspects of earth that are the sources of these two springs is as follows.	וביאור ענין ב' בחי' עפר שהם מקור ב' מעינות הנ"ל.
The aspect of "May my soul be as dust to everyone" is what is stated in Zohar, Parashas Vayishlach 170a:	הנה בחי' ונפשי כעפר לכל תהיה זהו מ"ש בזהר פ' וישלח דק"ע ע"א.
"What is the difference between earth and dust?" and so forth.	מה בין עפר לאבק כו'.
"Earth is that from which all fruits emerge."	עפר דכל איבין נפקין מיניה.
See what is explained concerning this in Parashas Vayishlach, at the end of the discourse Vaye'avek Ish Imo.	ועמ"ש מנה בפי' וישלח סד"ה ויאבק איש עמו.
See also the discourse Vayigash Eilav Yehudah, concerning the concept that "in thought, the earth preceded."	ובד"ה ויגש אליו יהודה גבי ענין במחשבה ארץ קדמה כו'.
Therefore, through this, a person can draw down the aspect of "a well of living water."	לכן עי"ז יוכל להמשיך בחי' באר מים חיים.
This is the love that is in the aspect of water,	שהיא האהבה שבבחי' מים.
which is the aspect of bittul.	שהוא בחי' בטול.
The second aspect of "earth" is as explained in the commentary on the verse, "Who can count the dust of Yaakov" (Bamidbar 23:10).	ובחי' עפר הב' היינו כמ"ש בביאור ע"פ מי מנה עפר יעקב.
This refers to the study of Torah, which is called "earth."	דקאי על עסק התורה שנק' עפר.
For it is something that is not within the category of number.	שהוא דבר שאינו בגדר מספר.
This is the aspect of "Before One, what can you count?" and so forth; see there.	בחי' ולפני אחד מה אתה סופר כו' ע"ש.

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See also what is explained elsewhere concerning "Lech lecha me'artzecha," regarding Avram.

ועמ"ש במ"א בענין לך לך מארצך דגבי אברם.

There it refers to the revelation and drawing down of Chochmah Ila'ah from its source, and so forth.

שהוא גלוי המשכת ח"ע ממקורה כו'.

See Likkutei Torah there, and Pardes, Shaar Erchei HaKinuyim, under the entry "Eretz."

וע' בלק"ת שם ובפרדס בעה"כ בערך ארץ.

There it explains that the "supernal land" is Binah, and similarly under the entry "Afar."

עליונה היא הבינה וכ"כ בערך עפר.

Ma'orei Or likewise explains under the entry "Afar" that this is the concept of "gold dust."

וכ"כ במאורי אור ערך עפר שזהו ענין עפרות זקב.

This is also the meaning of "Everything came from the earth, even the sphere of the sun," as mentioned in Koheles Rabbah.

וזהו הכל היה מן העפר ואפלו גלגל חמה כנזכר ברבות בקהלת.

See also concerning this in Zohar, Parashas Tzav 34b.

וענין מזה ג"כ בזהר פ' צו דף ל"ד ע"ב.

See also the end of the discourse Vayeishev Yaakov BeEretz Megurei Aviv.

ועמ"ש סד"ה וישב יעקב בארץ מגורי אביו.

See also the explanation of the verse Haba'im Yashreish concerning the concept of "a desirable land," and so forth.

ועמ"ש בביאור ע"פ הבאים ישרש בענין ארץ חפץ כו'.

It is called the aspect of "earth," along the lines of "He makes darkness His concealment" (Tehillim 18:12).

ונקרא בחי' עפר ע"ד ישת חשך סתרו.

For even Kesser, the source of Chochmah Ila'ah,

כי גם הפתר מקור הח"ע.

is drawn from the lower aspect within the Emanator, Malchus of Ein Sof, and so forth.

נמשך מבחי' תחתונה שבמאציל מל' דא"ס כו'.

Concerning the study of Torah, it is therefore said, "Who can count the dust of Yaakov," and so forth.

וע"ז נאמר על עסק התורה מי מנה עפר יעקב כו'.

This is the concept of the two aspects of Chochmah: "Chochmah at the beginning" and "Chochmah at the end."

וזהו ענין ב' בחי' חכמה בראש חכמה בסוף.

They are drawn from the two aforementioned aspects of "earth."

שהם נמשכים מב' בחי' עפר הנ"ל.

This is the meaning of, "May my soul be as dust to everyone; open my heart to Your Torah."

וז"ש ונפשי כעפר לכל תהיה פתח לבי בתורתך.

The two depend upon one another.

דהא ביהא תלויא.

For "their end is embedded in their beginning."

כי נעוץ סופן בתחלתו.

In Zohar, at the end of Parashas Balak, "from the wellsprings of salvation" refers to Abba and Imma.

ובזהר ס"פ בלק ממעיני הישועה אליון וא"א.

This is because the two aforementioned springs are the aspects of mayin nukvin and mayin duchrin.

הינו כי ב' מעינות הנ"ל הן בחי' מ"נ ומ"ד.

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Their roots are in the two yesodos of Abba and Imma.

וְשָׂרְשָׁן מִבְּיְסוּדוֹת דָּאו"א.

They receive from the two mazalos, "Notzer" and "Venakeh."

וְהֵם מִקְבָּלִים מִבְּמַזְלוֹת וְנוֹצֵר וְנִקְהָה.

See Mishnas Chassidim 21:1-2.

וְעַ' בְּמ"ח דכ"א א' ב'.

Summary:

The Alter Rebbe begins by distinguishing between the fire and water of the Mizbe'ach. Fire represents yearning. When a Jew feels distant from Hashem, his soul burns with a desire to come closer. Water represents something higher: bittul b'metzius, when the awareness of Hashem becomes so real that the soul's separate sense of self becomes quiet. The love has not diminished. On the contrary, it has become deeper and more inward, like a child whose love no longer needs to cry out once he is actually with his father.

This explains the progression of davening. During Pesukei DeZimrah, a person awakens a fiery love that burns away the "strange fires" of misplaced desires. In Shemoneh Esrei, however, he stands as though directly before the King. The avodah therefore becomes quiet. The whispered words, the bowing, and especially Modim express bittul rather than distance and longing.

The problem is that this state often disappears when davening ends. The Alter Rebbe therefore identifies Torah study as the means of making the bittul of Shemoneh Esrei permanent. Although Torah is clothed in seemingly ordinary physical subjects, its halachos are Hashem's wisdom and will. By surrendering his own will and thought to Torah, a person can carry the bittul of Shemoneh Esrei into the rest of the day.

This is the inner meaning of Shemini Atzeres. "Atzeres" indicates holding, retaining, and absorbing. The spiritual "water" revealed on Sukkos must not simply pass through a person and disappear. It must be absorbed into him. Shemini Atzeres gives the power for the bittul and closeness experienced during the Yamim Tovim to become firmly planted within the heart.

The Alter Rebbe then explains why the verse speaks specifically of drawing water "from the wellsprings of salvation." Living water comes from a hidden underground source. The water is visible, but its source lies deep beneath the earth. Similarly, a Jew must "dig" beneath the surface to reach the deepest source of his connection with Hashem.

This digging involves two forms of "earth." The first is personal humility, expressed in "May my soul be as dust to everyone." The second is Torah itself, which descends from the highest Divine wisdom and becomes clothed in earthly, physical subjects. Through the combination of deep humility and deep immersion in Torah, the hidden source is reached and the "living waters" of bittul flow into the person's life.

Thus, the Alter Rebbe describes a progression from fire to water, and from inspiration to permanence. Fiery longing brings the person toward Hashem. Bittul allows him to experience closeness to Hashem. Torah then gives that closeness a vessel in which it can remain. The goal is not merely to experience a powerful moment during davening or Yom Tov, but to allow that awareness of Hashem to become part of the person throughout the entire day.

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Practical Takeaway:

A powerful davening or Yom Tov experience is only the beginning. The question is what remains afterward. The Alter Rebbe teaches that Torah is what gives spiritual inspiration permanence. When a person finishes davening and then learns Torah with humility, setting aside his own assumptions and submitting himself to Hashem's wisdom, he gives the bittul of davening somewhere to take root. The goal is not always to feel spiritual fire. Sometimes the deeper avodah is the quiet "water" of living with Hashem so consistently that the connection no longer depends upon an emotional high.

Chassidic Illustration:

A traveler crossing a dry region became desperately thirsty. From a distance he saw water glistening on the ground and ran toward it, only to discover that it was a shallow puddle left by the rain. He drank, but soon the heat dried it up. Later he met a man digging deep into the earth. "Why work so hard?" the traveler asked. "There was water right on the surface."

The man continued digging until water began rising from below. "Surface water lasts only as long as conditions allow," he explained. "A spring comes from a source beneath the ground. Once you reach the source, it continues to flow."

This is the Alter Rebbe's distinction. A person may experience tremendous inspiration during davening, but inspiration that remains only on the surface can disappear when ordinary life returns. To reach "living water," he must dig deeper through humility and Torah. When he reaches that hidden source, his connection to Hashem is no longer only a passing feeling. It becomes something rooted within him that can continue flowing throughout the day.

Therapeutic Psychological Integration:

From Emotional Fire to Inner Security:

The Alter Rebbe distinguishes between fire and water as two different experiences of closeness. Fire represents longing. When we feel distant from someone important to us, the emotional system becomes activated. We search, reach, worry, and yearn. The Alter Rebbe's image of a child crying "Abba, Abba" captures this perfectly. The crying does not indicate a lack of love. It expresses love experienced through distance. Water represents something psychologically different: the quiet that comes when connection feels secure. When the child is finally beside his father, he may stop crying. The relationship has not weakened. He no longer needs emotional intensity to prove that the relationship exists. In spiritual life as well, maturity means learning that closeness to Hashem is not measured only by how intensely we feel it.

Not Every Powerful Feeling Is the Destination:

We often assume that the strongest emotional experience must also be the deepest. The Alter Rebbe reverses that assumption. Pesukei DeZimrah contains the fire of awakening, struggle, and yearning, while Shemoneh Esrei moves toward silence, bowing, and bittul. Psychologically, there are times when strong emotion is necessary because it helps us break through numbness, distraction, or unhealthy attachment. But once we arrive at a deeper place, the emotional noise can become quieter. Growth is not always becoming more excited. Sometimes growth means becoming more settled, present, and internally aligned.

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Why Inspiration Disappears:

The Alter Rebbe acknowledges something deeply human: a person can experience genuine bittul during Shemoneh Esrei and soon afterward return to his previous state. We experience the same pattern after an inspiring Yom Tov, meaningful conversation, retreat, class, or moment of clarity. During the experience, change feels obvious. Yet ordinary life returns and familiar patterns reappear. This does not necessarily mean the original experience was false. There is a difference between entering a temporary state and developing a lasting trait. A powerful moment can show us what is possible, but repetition and integration are what gradually make it part of who we are.

Turning a State Into a Trait:

This is why the Alter Rebbe calls Torah the “true advice.” Torah creates continuity between the elevated moment and ordinary life. Psychologically, lasting change requires structures that repeatedly reconnect us to what we discovered when we were most clear. A realization that remains only in the emotional world is vulnerable to the next mood, distraction, or stress. When it becomes connected to consistent behavior, thought, and practice, it begins to reshape the person. Torah brings bittul out of Shemoneh Esrei and into the mind, schedule, choices, relationships, and physical details of everyday life.

Learning to Hold an Experience:

The Alter Rebbe interprets Shemini Atzeres as “atzeres and kelitah,” retaining and absorbing. This describes an essential psychological capacity. Some people repeatedly have meaningful experiences but struggle to internalize them. They feel deeply, become inspired, make resolutions, and then move on to the next experience. Kelitah means allowing something meaningful to remain long enough to change us. Instead of constantly asking, “What can inspire me next?” a person can ask, “What from my last experience have I actually absorbed?” Growth sometimes requires fewer new experiences and more time digesting the ones we have already had.

Digging Beneath the Surface:

The Alter Rebbe compares the deepest relationship with Hashem to a spring hidden beneath the earth. Surface water is exposed and can disappear, while a spring continues flowing because it remains connected to a source that cannot be seen. Human beings also have a surface self and a deeper self. On the surface are changing moods, anxieties, desires, reactions, and self-perceptions. Beneath them can exist commitments and relationships far deeper than what we happen to feel today. Emotional health includes learning not to define ourselves entirely by the emotion currently passing through us. Sometimes we must “dig” beneath what we feel in order to rediscover what we know, value, and are connected to at a deeper level.

Humility Creates Space for Growth:

The Alter Rebbe connects the spring with “וּנְפָשִׁי כְּעָפָר לְכָל תְּהִיָּה,” making oneself like earth. Healthy humility does not mean believing that one is worthless. It means becoming less imprisoned by the need to protect one’s ego, defend every position, control every outcome, or always be right. This explains the immediate continuation, “פָּתַח לִבִּי בְּתוֹרָתְךָ.” When the ego loosens its grip, the heart becomes capable of receiving something beyond itself. Psychologically, humility creates the flexibility necessary to learn, reconsider, apologize, listen, and change.

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Therapeutic Takeaway:

The goal is not to live permanently in emotional fire. Fire can awaken us, but water teaches us how to remain connected without constantly needing emotional intensity. When an experience matters, give it a vessel. Translate it into one repeated practice, one changed behavior, or one new way of thinking. Then allow humility to keep you open enough for that practice to reshape you. The deepest changes are often not the ones that continue to feel dramatic. They are the ones that eventually become so integrated that they simply become part of how you live.

Modern Story:

Daniel had spent years trying to repair his relationship with his teenage son. Every few months something dramatic would happen. They would have a huge argument, eventually sit together late at night, both become emotional, apologize, and promise that things would be different. For several days, they were unusually close. Then life resumed, and slowly they returned to the same pattern.

After one particularly emotional conversation, Daniel told a counselor, "I don't understand. We really mean it when we talk. Why doesn't anything change?"

The counselor asked him, "What happens differently on Tuesday morning because of what happened Sunday night?" Daniel had no answer. They decided to stop measuring the relationship by its dramatic conversations. Instead, Daniel made several small changes. He put his phone away when his son came into the room. Twice a week they drove somewhere together, even if neither had much to say. When his son disagreed with him, Daniel practiced listening before explaining why he thought the boy was wrong. Most importantly, he stopped demanding evidence that their relationship was improving.

Several months later, Daniel realized something strange. They had not had one of their long emotional conversations in quite some time. Yet his son had begun sitting in the kitchen while Daniel made dinner. Sometimes they talked. Sometimes his son simply sat there doing homework.

One evening Daniel noticed that his son had been sitting beside him for almost forty minutes without saying anything important. Daniel suddenly understood that this quietness was not emptiness. It was security.

For years he had mistaken the emotional reconciliation for the relationship itself. The intense conversations had been necessary, but they were the fire. The relationship became real when the lessons of those conversations entered ordinary Tuesday mornings.

This is the Alter Rebbe's movement from fire to water, and ultimately to kelitah. A powerful moment can awaken a relationship, but the deepest relationship is built when what happened in that moment is absorbed into ordinary life. Eventually there may be less fire, less crying, and less drama, not because the connection has weakened, but because what was once an experience has become a home.