

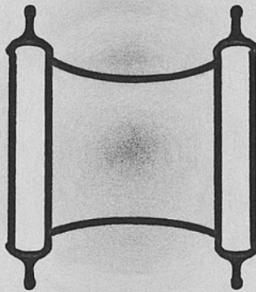
בס"ד

Alter Rebbe

Torah Ohr

Parshas Bereshis

יבָּל הוּא הָיָה אָבִי יוֹשֵׁב אַהֲלָו וּמִקְנָה



Dedicated To:

ר' נחום אהרון & היר

לייטש קאומוסקי

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Introduction

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (1745–1812), the Alter Rebbe of Chabad, authored the teachings from which this maamar is drawn, presenting a profound system explaining how spiritual ascent depends on bittul and on the mystical structure of song. This introduction now leads into the maamar, which traces the roles of Yaval and Yuval in Bereishit as metaphors for the dynamics of makif, bittul, and the elevation brought by song.

Yaval, he was the father of one who dwells in a tent and with livestock (Bereishit 4:20). And the name of his brother was

Yuval, he was the father of all who grasp the harp and flute (Bereishit 4:21). Behold, our Sages said that all masters of song emerge through song, and so on. The explanation is that every level of ascent from one essence to another, such as from the lower Gan Eden to the higher Gan Eden and similar, is through song, which is the aspect of nullification of somethingness.

And it is known that one cannot come into being from something to something unless the something first becomes as nothing, then another something can come into being from it with additional blessing. Like the parable of a seed sown in the earth, which must first rot in the earth, and afterwards many seeds can sprout from it.

And similarly above, in souls and angels, in order that they have an ascent with added comprehension, they must first be in a state of nullification of somethingness and of the first comprehension they had, and afterwards they can ascend to a greater comprehension. This is the aspect of the pillar between the lower Gan Eden and the higher Gan Eden, it is an aspect of nullification.

And this is [the meaning of] that all masters of song go out in their comprehension and are drawn to rise upward through song. Therefore, at the time of offering a sacrifice there also needed to be song, because the matter of sacrifices is elevation from below to above, “a fire-offering, a pleasing aroma” (Vayikra 1:9), and for this too is needed the aspect of song, the aspect of nullification, so that it can ascend.

יבָּל הָוּא קִיה אָבִי יוֹשֵׁב אָהָל וּמִקְנָה (בראשית ד'כ') . וְשֵׁם אֲחֵיו יוֹבֵל הָוּא קִיה אָבִי כֵּל תּוֹפֵשׁ כְּנֻסָּה (בראשית ד'כ'א) . הַנֵּה אָמַרְוּ רְבָותֵינוּ זְכָרוֹנוּ לְבָרְכָה שְׁכָל בְּעֵלִי הַשִּׁיר יוֹצָאים בְּשִׁיר וּכְנוּ וּכְנוּ וְפָרוֹישׁ שְׁכָל בְּחִינַת הַהְעַלְאהָ מִמְהוּת לְמִהוּת כְּמוֹ מַעַן עַדְן כְּפַתְחָתוֹ לְגַן עַדְן קָעָלִיוֹן וּכְדוּמָה הָוּא עַלְיִזְרִי הַשִּׁיר שָׁהָוָא בְּחִינַת בְּטוּל הַיּוֹשֵׁב

וּכְנוֹעַ שְׁלָא יוּכֵל לְהַתְּהוּת מִישׁ לִישׁ אַלְא אַמְ-כָּן נַעֲשָׂה הַיּוֹשֵׁב תְּחִלָּה בְּחִינַת אָנוֹ וְאָז יוּכֵל לְהַתְּהוּת מְאָנוֹ יִשְׁאַל אַחֲר בְּטוּסָת בְּרָכָה. כְּמַשֵּׁל הַגְּרָעִין הַנְּזָרָעִים בָּאָרֶץ שְׁאָרֵיךְ לְהִיּוֹת גְּרָקָב בָּאָרֶץ וְאַחֲר כֵּה יוּכֵל לְאַמְתַּח מִזָּהָר בְּרָבָה גְּרָעִים

וּכְמוֹכָנוּ לְמַעַלָּה בְּנַשְׁמָוֹת וּמְלָאכִים כְּדֵי שִׁיחָה לְזַהֲרָה עַלְיִזְרִי בְּטוּסָת הַשְׁגָה אַרְיךְ מְקוּדָם לְהִיּוֹת בְּבְחִינַת בְּטוּל הַיּוֹשֵׁב וּהַשְׁגָה רַאשׁוֹנָה שִׁיחָה לוֹ וְאַחֲר כֵּה יוּכֵל לְעַלְוָת הַשְׁגָה גְּדוֹלָה יוֹתָר. וְזֹהוּ בְּחִינַת עַמּוֹד שְׁבִין גַּן עַדְן כְּפַתְחָתוֹ לְגַן עַדְן קָעָלִיוֹן הָוּא בְּחִינַת בְּטוּל

וְזֹהוּ כֵּל בְּעֵלִי הַשִּׁיר יוֹצָאים בְּהַשְׁגָה מִגְ-מְשָׁכִים לְעַלְוָת לְמַעַלָּה עַלְיִזְרִי הַשִּׁיר. וְלֹכֶן בְּשִׁעַת הַקְּרָבָה הַקְּרָבָה קִיה אַרְיךְ לְקִיּוֹת גַּמְ-כָּן שִׁיר כֵּי עַנְנָה הַקְּרָבָה מַעַלָּה אַשְׁהָרִים נִיחּוּ (וַיָּקֹרְא א' ט') וְאַרְיךְ לְזַהָּר גַּמְ-כָּן בְּחִינַת שִׁיר בְּחִינַת בְּטוּל כְּנַלְעַיל שִׁיוּכֵל לְהַתְּלָלוֹת

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And behold, there is a simple song and a doubled song, and it is known that in the pillar there are three colors: white and red, which are the aspect of kindness and severity, and green, the aspect of inclusion. For behold, in the aspect of nullification there are many levels. There is the aspect of simple nullification, one point, the aspect of the letter Yod.

And there is the aspect of nullification in which are included also the attributes, the aspect of love or fear, and so on. And similarly, in the externality of the attributes, which are kindness and severity, there is also inclusion, such as kindness within severity, like one who strikes his son, which is an aspect of severity, yet included within it is the aspect of kindness and love, for because of love he desires to guide him on the straight path, and therefore specifically strikes his son and not another, for “whom He loves He rebukes.”

And when the nullification is simple nullification, it is called a simple song. And when there is in it yet one more attribute, love or fear (as explained in the commentary on the Zohar, Parashat Korach, on the verse “Kru’ei Moed”), it is called a doubled song.

And when there is inclusion of the attributes (love and fear, both of them in nullification), it is called a tripled song. And similarly, there is also a quadrupled song (as explained regarding tekhelet, argaman, tola’at shani, and shesh moshzar, which are the inclusion of four aspects together: love, fear, mercy, and the aspect of shesh, which is hidden love), for “as the four winds of the heavens I have spread you,” which is the inclusion from north to south through the wind that blows from north to south, and likewise from east to west.

And sometimes there is inclusion of all four aspects—east, west, north, and south—through the wind that blows thus. And this is also the matter of the movement of the sun from east to west. It is also the matter of nullification, and it is the aspect of the soul within the sun, which is the aspect of its comprehension, and because of this the body of the sun moves constantly in the

זהנה יש שיר פשוט ושיר כפול וכפודע שבעמדו יש שלשה גנים חור וסומק שהוא בוחינת חסד וגבורת וירוק בוחינת התפללות. כי הנה בוחינת בטול יש הרבה מקרים. יש בוחינת בטול פשוט נקודה אחת בוחינת יוא"ז.

ויש בוחינת בטול שכלל בזה גם מדרות בוחינת אקה או ירא ויכול. וכן בוחינות המדרות שהן חסד וגבורת יש התפללות גמ-כן חסד שבגבורה כמו המפה את בנו שהוא בוחינת גבורה ונכלל בזה בוחנת חסד ואקה שמחמת אקה רצונו להזכיר בזאת הישר וכן מכה דיקא בנו ולא אחר כי את אשר לאhab יוכית.

וכשהבטול הוא בטול פשוט נקרא שיר פשוט. וכשיש בזה עוד מדה אחת אקה או ירא (כאמ' מבוואר בפירוש הקהר פרשת קורה על-פי קרוואי מועד) נקרא שיר כפול.

וכשיש התפללות המדרות (אהקה ויראה גם שתיין בטוטול) נקרא שיר משלש. ועל-זאת זה יש גמ-פ' שיר מרבע (כאמ' מבוואר בעניין תכלת וארכמן ותכלעת שני ירא ויש מושר שחון התפללות ד' בוחינות יחד אקה ירא רחמנית ובחינת שיש היא האקה הפטורת). כי ארבע רוחות השמים פרשתי אתכם שהוא התפללות מREP'ן לרום לעלי'יך קרותה המנשב מREP'ן לרום וכן מפורה למערב.

ולפעמים יש התפללות כל ד' בוחינות מזרח מערבREP'ן לרום על-ידי קרותה המנשב בה. וזהו גמ-פ' עניין הליכת השם מזרח למערב הוא גם גמ-פ' עניין בטול והוא בוחינת נפש שבנפש שהוא בוחינת השם ומוחמת זה גוף השם הולך תמיד בנטמיות בוחינת בטול (כאמ' מבוואר בעניין שם בגבון דום בקריש). ד' חרבנות צורים.

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physical in a state of nullification (as explained regarding “Sun, stand still in Givon” in the discourse “Of the flint knives”).

And in this there are two opinions regarding its movement: whether it is from love and yearning or from simple nullification. And in truth, sometimes it is simple nullification and sometimes there is also the aspect of love in it, as mentioned above.

And this is the meaning of “and the sun rises... it goes to the south and circles to the north,” and so on, as explained on this in the Zohar, beginning of Parashat Vayetze, that this is to be the inclusion of the four aspects—east, west, north, and south—and “rises and sets” are east and west.

And this is the matter of Yuval, the father of all who grasp the harp, and so on. The explanation is that **Yuval** is a term of leading, that he leads and draws upward through the harp and flute, the aspect of song mentioned above, for through song is the ascent, “they go out through song,” and so on.

And **Yaval**, he was the father of one who dwells in a tent and with livestock, for it is written “the sun He placed a tent in them” (Tehillim 19:5). The explanation is that in order for the sun to have this quality, that it should have the aspect of nullification and yearning, it is through “a tent in them.” A tent is an encompassing level from above.

From this encompassing radiance there is drawn down this illumination, that the sun should always be in a state of nullification. And this is the aspect of **Yaval**, from the term “and he will mix for the donkeys,” which is the concept of mixture and blending. The explanation is that it is an illumination from the level of makif, where there is no division, and everything can intermingle.

Thus the illumination can extend even below, so that afterwards there can be **Yuval**, the father of all who grasp the harp, which is the aspect of nullification mentioned above.

ויש בזה שמי דעתות בקהליטה אם הוא מצד אהבה ותשוקה או מצד בטול הפשוט. ובאמת יש לפעמים בטול פשוט ולפעמים יש בזה גם-בון בבחינת אהבה בנגוף לעיל

וזה וורה הטעמץ כי הולך אל דרום וסובב אל צפון וkräפיש עליה בזוהר ריש פרשת ויצא שהו להו בבחינת הטעמץ ד' בchniot מורה ומערב צפון ודרים. וורה ובא הוא מורה ומערב

וזה ענן יובל אבי כל תופש כבור וכי. פירוש יובל לשון הולכה שטמבל וטמיש למלعلا עליידי כבור ונוגב בבחינת שיר בנגוף לעיל שעליידי השיר היא העלה יוצאים בשיר וכי

ונבל הוא קיה אבי יושב אָהָל ומקנה כי כתוב “לשונם שם אָהָל בָּהָם” (תהלים י"ט:ה). פירוש כדי שייהיה לשונם בבחינה זו שייהי לה בבחינת בטול ותשוקה הוא עליידי “אָהָל בָּהָם”. אָהָל הוא בבחינת מכך מלמעלה

גמשה הארץ זו שתהיה תמיד בבחינת בטול. וזה בבחינת יובל לשון “ונבל ל夸ורים” שהו ענן בלבול וערב. פירוש שיהיא הארץ מבחן מכך שם הוא ביל הטעמאות וובל להתערב הפל

שיזומש הארץ גם למטה שייכל להיות אחרא-ה
 בבחינת יובל אבי כל תופש כבור שהוא בבחינת בטול
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And this is “the father of one who dwells in a tent and with livestock,” for the aspect of a tent is the aspect of makif, and therefore it can also reach to livestock, to draw downward.

For in makif there is no higher and lower, as it is said “and underneath are the everlasting arms” (Devarim 33:27).

Like Jacob, who was a shepherd of sheep with the peeled rods of white, moist, and so on (the inclusion of chesed, gevurah, tiferet; see Zohar, Vayetze). For another person who shepherds sheep does so physically, whereas Jacob, who sat in tents, drew from the levels of makif to be a shepherd of sheep.

And this is “one who dwells in a tent and with livestock,” as mentioned above.

And see what is written regarding Yuval in Parashat Shelach on the verse “Mekosheish,” and see further regarding livestock in Parashat Vayetze on the verse “And for six years your sheep,” and on the verse “And these are the ordinances.”

[NOTE Summary:

The Alter Rebbe explains that the Torah’s mention of Yuval, “the father of all who grasp the harp,” alludes to the spiritual force of song, which elevates all beings upward. Song represents bittul, the nullification of self that allows a lower level to rise into a higher one. Without bittul, no true spiritual ascent is possible. This is why “all who engage in song go out through song,” for song releases the soul from its prior state and draws it toward the Infinite.

He then connects this with Yaval, “the father of those who dwell in tents and with livestock.” Citing the verse “for the sun He placed a tent within them,” the Alter Rebbe teaches that a tent symbolizes makif, an encompassing light from above that does not divide or differentiate. Makif generates the capacity for consistent bittul and yearning, just as the sun’s constant movement reflects its inner nullification. Yaval’s name also hints at “mixture,” expressing how the undivided light of makif blends all qualities, enabling them to descend even to lowly places.

Through this makif, the light of bittul can reach even “mikneh”—livestock—symbolizing the lowest levels, thereby empowering them eventually to reach the state of Yuval, the musical elevation of nullification. This is why Jacob, a “dweller of tents,” could shepherd sheep in a spiritually transformative manner, unlike others who shepherd only physically. Makif enables the Divine light of bittul to penetrate all levels of existence.

Practical Takeaway:

Spiritual growth requires two complementary forces: bittul, the inner surrender that allows true ascent, and

ונזהו “אָבִי יוֹשֵׁב אָכָל וּמִקְנָה” שבחינת אָכָל הוּא בחינת מַקִּיף כְּנַזְכָּר לְעַיל וְלִכְנָן יוּכָל לְהִוָּת גַּם לְמִקְנָה לְהַמְשִׁיךְ לְמִטְהָה.

כִּי הַמַּקִּירִיךְ אֵין בָּו מַעַלָּה וּמִטְהָה כְּמוֹ שְׁבָתוֹב “וּמִתְחַת כָּרְעָת עַלְמָם” (הַבְּרִים ל'ג:ב'ז).

כְּמוֹ יַעֲקֹב שְׁהִיה רֹוֶשׁ צָאן מִקְלָל לְבָנָה לְחַזְקִי (הַתְּפִלּוֹת חָסֵד גְּבוּרָה תִּפְאָרָת עַזְזָן זָהָר וִיצָא) שָׁאָדָם אַחֲרָ רֹוֶשׁ צָאן הוּא רֹוֶשׁ בְּגִשְׁמִיּוֹת מַה-שָׁאָדָם יַעֲקֹב שְׁהִיה יוֹשֵׁב אָכָלִים הַמְּשִׁיךְ מִבְּחִינָת מַקִּירִים לְהִוָּת רֹוֶשׁ צָאן.

ונזהו יוֹשֵׁב אָכָל וּמִקְנָה כְּנַזְכָּר לְעַיל

וְעַזְנָיו מַה-שְׁבָתוֹב בְּעַנְנֵנוּ יוּכָל בְּפֶרֶשֶׁת שְׁלָח עַל-פִּי “אַקְשָׁשׁ” וְעַזְנָיו מַקְנָה בְּפֶרֶשֶׁת וַיֵּצֵא עַל-פִּי “וְשִׁשׁ שָׁנִים בְּצָאנָךְ” וְעַל-פִּי “וְאַלְהָ הַמְּשִׁפטִים

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makif, the higher illumination that surrounds us even before we internalize it. When a person places themselves within an environment of “tents”—holy influences, learning, prayer, and mentorship—they receive a makif that softens and blends their inner traits, allowing even their lower impulses (“mikneh”) to be uplifted. With this foundation, one can then enter the state of “Yuval,” using heartfelt “song”—deep feeling, sincerity, and inner honesty—to rise higher than before.

Chassidic Story:

The Mitteler Rebbe once described his father, the Alter Rebbe, in a way that beautifully reflects the themes of this maamar. A chassid asked how the Alter Rebbe could pray for hours with such intense dveikut, seemingly without being bound by time at all. The Mitteler Rebbe answered with a parable: “When a musician plays a melody that touches the soul, time dissolves. My father’s soul was always hearing that melody.”

He explained that the Alter Rebbe lived continually with bittul, like the maamar’s description of song lifting a soul upward. His prayer was not an act of emotional display but of *inner song*, the same spiritual principle that enables all ascent. And yet, the Alter Rebbe was also immersed in the world, guiding simple folk, teaching merchants, and assisting farmers with their problems—just as the maamar teaches that makif descends even to ‘mikneh,’ the lowest levels.

One evening, after delivering a profound maamar, the Alter Rebbe stepped outside and saw a poor wagon-driver trying unsuccessfully to repair a wheel. Without hesitation, he rolled up his sleeves and helped him fix it, speaking gently to him the entire time. The chassidim who witnessed this later said that at that moment they understood: His greatness was not in ascending above the world, but in drawing the light of makif into every corner of it, illuminating even the simplest soul with Divine tenderness.

END NOTE]