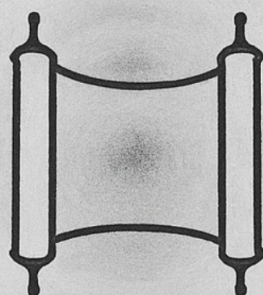


בס"ד

The Maggid of Mezritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Vayera



Dedicated To:

טנייה מלכה בת דינה דבורה
דפואה שלמה

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Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

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Siman #22

Introduction

In this Maamer, the Maggid of Mezritch opens with the Midrash: "In reward for that which Avraham said to the angels, 'and recline under the tree,' his descendants merited the mitzvah of sukkah." What seems at first a simple act of hospitality becomes, in the Maggid's interpretation, a profound mystical instruction. Through Avraham's words, we are invited to see beyond the physical and perceive the Divine vitality that lies "under the tree"—within every layer of Torah and creation. The Maggid transforms Avraham's encounter with the angels into a teaching about penetrating the garments of existence to reach its living soul.

In the Midrash: In reward for that which Avraham said to the angels, "and recline under the tree," his descendants merited the mitzvah of sukkah.

במדרש: בשכר שאמר אברהם למלאכים והשענו תחת העץ זכו בניו למצות סוכה.

And it is possible to explain this according to that which is said, "and the Tree of Life was in the midst of the garden."

ויש לומר על פי מה שנאמר ועץ החיים בתוך הגן.

Now, the Tree of Life refers to the Name Havayah, as is known.

והנה עץ החיים נקרא שם הוי"ה כידוע.

And the phrase "in the midst of the garden" means that it is en clothed within the inwardness and interior of the garden — the sections of the Torah.

ואמרו בתוך הג'ן פירוש שהוא מתלבש בתוכיות ובפנימיות הג'ן פ'רשיות שבתורה.

As mentioned earlier in the discourses, that the Name Havayah is what en clothes itself and spreads within all of them — within all the words and sayings.

כנזכר בסימן בדרושים הקודמים ששם הוי"ה הוא המתלבש ומתפשט בתוך כלן הדבורים והאמירות.

And behold, the Name Havayah, blessed be He, has numerous garments and screens without end.

והנה יש לשם הוי"ה ברוך הוא כמה וכמה לבושים ומסכים עד אין קץ.

For at first, it en clothes itself within the five outlets of the mouth, and afterwards letters are formed from it.

פי מתחלה הוא מתלבש בתוך ה' מוצאות הפה ואחר כך נתהוו ממנו האותיות.

And afterwards combinations are formed, from which words are made, and afterwards the narratives.

ואחר כך הצירופים שממם נעשים תיבות ואחר כך הספורים.

And it was said in the Zohar: "Whoever has eyes," meaning eyes of intellect, looks into the inwardness of the matters.

ואמרו בזהר מאן דאית ליה עינין פירוש עיני השכל הוא מסתכל בפנימיות הדברים.

But whoever does not have eyes looks only at the garment of the King and at the physical stories in their detail.

אבל מאן דלית ליה עינין הוא מסתכל בלבושא דמלכא ובספורי הגשמיים בפרטן.

And it is known that Avraham taught knowledge to all who came into the world.

והנה ידוע שאברהם למד דעת לכל באי עולם.

And it is possible to say that this is what he hinted to them — for they appeared to him in the likeness of men.

ואפשר לומר שזה רמז להם כי בדמות אנשים נדמו לו.

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And he said to them: when you perform any mitzvah or any act of holiness, let your intention be toward the inner essence of the matter, and not toward its simple or external meaning.

Therefore, he said: “and recline on what is under the tree” — meaning, upon that which is the vitality and being that brings into existence and gives life to all existence — which is therefore called the Tree of Life.

For the word “tree” refers to the body of man, as it is written: “for man is the tree of the field.”

And “adam” is the Name of Mah, and yet it is not called the true inwardness, for the main inwardness and vitality is the Name Havayah, blessed be He.

And this is hinted at in the word “life” that is written after the word “tree,” and together they are called “the Tree of Life.”

Therefore, he warned and said: “and recline under the tree,” meaning: do not look at the garments but at what is beneath the tree, as mentioned.

And it is known that in performing the mitzvot there is the aspect of A.D.M. — standing for Adam, Speech, and Action, as mentioned in Pri Etz Chayim, Hoshanah Rabbah.

And it is possible that he hinted to them about this as well, and said: “From me you shall see and so shall you do,” for Avraham our father, peace be upon him, when he performed kindness with them, fulfilled every level of the mitzvah, and his intention encompassed them all.

And behold, man, speech, and action were visible to the eyes, and he did not need to warn them about this.

And you already know that action is a branch of speech, and speech is a branch of man, and man is a branch of thought — “chashav” and “mah” being the letters of “machshavah.”

And behold, thought is hidden and not perceived by the senses, so he warned about it and said: “and recline under the tree” — meaning upon the inwardness of the tree, as mentioned.

ואמר להם בעשותכם איזה מצוה או איזה דבר שבקדושה יהיה פונתכם אל פנימיות הדבר ולא אל דברי פשטם ולבושם.

ולזה אמר והשענו על מה שתחת העץ שהוא החיות וההנהגה המהנה ומחיה לכל ההיות אשר על פו נקרא עץ החיים.

כי מלת עץ היא לשון גוף של האדם כמו שנאמר כי האדם עץ השדה.

ואד"ם הוא שם מ"ה ועם כל זה אינו נקרא פנימיות ממש כי עיקר הפנימיות והחיות הוא שם הוי"ה ברוך הוא.

וזהו מרומז במלת החיים שכתוב אחר תיבת עץ ושניהם יחד נקראים עץ החיים.

ולזה הזהיר ואמר והשענו תחת העץ רצון לומר אל תסתכלו בכל הלבושים כי אם על מה שתחת העץ כפונק.

והנה ידוע כי בעשיית המצוות יש בחינת אד"ם שהוא נוטריקון אדם דבור מעשה כמו שכתוב בפע"צ בהושענא רבה.

ואפשר שגם לזה רמז להם ואמר להם ממני תראו וכן תעשו כי אברהם אבינו עליו השלום בעשותו עמקם גמילות חסד קים כל בחינות המצוה וכונתו היתה לכל בחינה.

והנה האדם דבור מעשה נראה להם לעינים ולא הנה צריך להזהירם.

וכבר ידעת כי המעשה הוא ענף הדבור והדבור הוא ענף האדם וגם האדם הוא ענף המחשבה חש"ב מ"ה אותיות מחשבה.

והנה המחשבה היא סתומה ואינה נראית להם בחוש והזהיר עליה ואמר והשענו תחת העץ רצון לומר על פנימיות העץ כפונק.

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For speech and intention are like body and soul, and thought is called “contemplative,” for it is the inwardness of the inward.

פי הדבור והפונָה הם דמיון גוף ונשמה והנה
המחשבה נקראת עיונית מפני שהיא פנימיות לפני
ולפנים.

And contemplative vision is called “s’chayah,” as it is written, “and her father Yiscah” — and our sages expounded that she gazed with divine inspiration.

וההסתכלות העיונית נקראת סכיה כמו שנאמר אבי
יסקה ודרשו רז"ל שסכיה ברוח הקדש.

Moreover, Avraham’s intention in this mitzvah was to draw down the level of surrounding lights — which is the meaning of “and recline under the tree,” for it implies surrounding and covering — and all this is through thought, which is called “s’chayah.”

ומה גם שכונת אברהם אבינו עליו השלום היתה
להמשיך במצוה זו בחינת אורות המקיפים שהוא
לשון והשגנו תחת העץ שהוא לשון מקור וסכך והכל
על ידי המחשבה הנקראת סכיה.

[NOTE Summary

Avraham’s act of kindness—inviting the angels to rest beneath the tree—symbolized an invitation to all humanity: to rest, reflect, and look beneath the surface of reality. The Maggid explains that the “Tree of Life” represents the Divine Name Havayah, the infinite source of vitality that gives life to all worlds. The “garden” in which this Tree resides alludes to the Torah, whose stories and commandments serve as garments concealing the Divine essence.

Every word of Torah, every mitzvah, even the simplest narrative, contains an inner light. Just as the Name Havayah enclothes itself within countless layers—letters, words, and stories—so too must one with “eyes of intellect” see through these garments to perceive the Divine energy within. Those who lack such vision see only the “garment of the King,” the external narrative.

Avraham, the Maggid teaches, was a spiritual educator who taught all of humanity how to perceive the Divine within the material. When he told the angels “recline under the tree,” he was hinting that true rest is found when one connects to the inner life-force beneath the external form. The “tree” symbolizes the human being—body and action—while the “life” within it is the Divine vitality, the Name Havayah.

Avraham thus modeled the harmony of **thought, speech, and action (Adam, Dibur, Maaseh)**—all united in service of Hashem. He instructed that every mitzvah should be performed not only with external action but with conscious intention and inward contemplation. Thought, says the Maggid, is the innermost sanctuary—the realm of “s’chayah,” a spiritual vision akin to prophecy. Through such inward awareness, one draws down “makifim,” the surrounding Divine lights symbolized by the sukkah itself—“reclining under the tree,” under the holy shade of G-d’s presence.

Practical Takeaway

The Maggid’s message calls us to live with inner vision. Whether studying Torah, performing a mitzvah, or engaging with another person, we are invited to look “beneath the tree”—to see the Divine source within every

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form. Physical action is essential, but without inner focus, it remains a garment without soul. When one aligns thought, speech, and action—bringing awareness of Hashem into every layer—one transforms even ordinary deeds into revelations of Divine life. Each mitzvah then becomes a personal sukkah, drawing the sheltering presence of the Infinite around the soul.

Chassidic Story

Once, a disciple came to the Maggid of Mezritch boasting of a great insight he had attained in Torah. The Maggid asked him softly, “And where is Hashem in your thought?” The student hesitated, unsure how to respond. The Maggid closed his eyes and said, “My son, wisdom that does not lead you beneath the words to find the One who speaks them is not wisdom—it is only the garment of the King.” The student wept, and from that day forward, whenever he learned Torah, he imagined the light of Havayah shining through every word.

END NOTE]

Siman #23

In the Zohar it is stated: “Avraham, Avraham”—there is a pause-mark within it; “Moshe, Moshe”—there is no pause-mark within it.

For the Holy One, blessed be He, created all the worlds through speech,

and speech receives from thought; thus, in thought are found all the worlds.

And when the Holy One, blessed be He, spoke with a prophet, it means that He brought Himself to the level of thought, wherein the prophet was included, and His “portion,” as it were, spoke with him.

Therefore the prophet saw in the likeness of a man, because his root was from Adam, and the Holy One, blessed be He, contracted Himself, as it were, into that likeness.

And this is the meaning of “and through the hand of the prophets I was compared.” “Yad” (hand) means “power,” for thought receives from the intellect.

And this is “yad,” that the yud is wisdom that comes from a lower level, which is drawn from the aspect of dalet.

In that power, He, blessed be He, was compared to him.

And this is “Avraham, Avraham”—there is a pause within it: the upper Avraham is the thought, and the lower Avraham is the speech.

בזהר הקדוש: אברהם אברהם – אית פסיק טעמא בגוהי; משה משה – לית פסיק טעמא בגוהי.

כי הקדוש ברוך הוא ברא בדבור את כל העולמות,

והדבור מקבל מן המחשבה, נמצא שהיו במחשבה כל העולמות.

וכשדבר הקדוש ברוך הוא עם הנביא, פירוש שהביא עצמו אל המחשבה שהוא נקלל שם, וחקקו כביכול דבר עמו.

לפיכך ראה הנביא בדמות אדם, כי היה משרש אדם, ונתמצצם כביכול הקדוש ברוך הוא באותו דמות.

וזהו “ובינד הנביאים אדמה.” יד הוא כח, כי המחשבה מקבלת מן המשפיל.

וזהו י"ד – יו"ד היא חכמה שבאה ממדרגה תחתונה, שנומשך מבחינת דל"ת.

באותו כח נדמה אליו יתברך.

וזהו “אברהם אברהם” – אית פסיק טעמא בגוהי; אברהם שלמעלה הוא המחשבה, ואברהם שלמטה הוא הדבור.

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And there is a separation of “ta’am” (musical accent) within it, meaning that the ta’am surrounds and fills every thing; thus, between two entities there is the pause of the ta’am.

But Moshe Rabbeinu, peace be upon him, was separated from woman—meaning from any feminine aspect—and was always cleaving in thought to the Holy One, blessed be He.

And he was always attached to the thought, and there was no separation between the higher Moshe and the lower Moshe.

And everything he saw, he saw the Divine Presence itself, and he never had any foreign thought; therefore, there was no pause-mark within him.

ואית פסיקי טעמין בגוהי פירוש פי הטעם הוא מסבב וממלא כל דבר, נמצא שפיו שני דברים הוי הפסק הטעם.

אבל משה רבינו עליו השלום היה פרוש מן האשה, פירוש מפל דבר נוקבא, והיה תמיד דבוק במחשבה לה' ברוך הוא.

והיה תמיד דבוק למחשבה ולא היה הפסק בין משה לשלמעלה למטה ששלמטה.

וכל מה שראה ראה את השם יתברך, ולא היתה לו בשום פעם מחשבה זרה, לכן לא פסיק טעמא.

[NOTE Summary

The Maggid of Mezritch explains that every word spoken by Hashem reflects a chain of Divine revelation from thought into speech. Thought is the inner world—concealed, infinite, and undivided—while speech is the outward expression that gives form and boundaries to creation. All worlds were created by Divine speech, yet that speech itself is continually sustained by the higher source of thought.

When Hashem spoke to prophets, He “brought Himself” into that level of thought where the prophet’s soul was rooted, and there, a portion of Divinity “spoke with him.” Hence, prophets perceived visions in the likeness of man, for their roots lay in Adam—the archetype of humanity—and Hashem, as it were, contracted His infinite light into that image to make communication possible.

This is the meaning of the verse “and through the hand (yad) of the prophets I was compared.” The word *yad* (“hand”) denotes *koach*, strength or channel, indicating that Divine thought receives from an even higher source of intellect. The letter *yud* of *yad* symbolizes wisdom descending from the upper to the lower level, drawn from *dalet* (poverty or humility), expressing the contraction necessary for revelation.

Thus, “Avraham, Avraham” has a pause between the two names—one Avraham representing Divine thought, the other representing Divine speech. Between them lies the *ta’am* (the musical accent), signifying the spiritual pause or transition that surrounds and fills every utterance. In Avraham, there remained this pause, for his spiritual service moved between inner contemplation and outward expression.

By contrast, “Moshe, Moshe” has no pause. Moshe was wholly united with Hashem, separated from all worldly attachment (“from woman,” meaning from all receptive or external states). His thought was continually cleaving to the Divine thought, without interruption. Therefore, there was no division between the higher and lower Moshe—everything he saw was only the revelation of Hashem Himself, without any foreign thought or concealment.

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Practical Takeaway

The Maggid teaches that our spiritual goal is to narrow the gap between our “thought” and our “speech.” In most people, there is a pause—a distance between inner intention and outer expression. True avodah (Divine service) means aligning the inner and the outer so that every word and action perfectly reflects the soul’s inner awareness of G-d. When one’s speech flows directly from Divine thought—when one’s inner life and outer life are one—he becomes like Moshe, transparent to the Divine, without interruption or disguise.

Chassidic Story

It is told that one of the Maggid’s disciples once asked, “Rebbe, how can I know if my thoughts are truly united with my words?” The Maggid replied, “When you speak of Hashem, and your speech itself burns with the same warmth as your heart, then there is no pause between you and Him.” The disciple later said that after that moment, he began to weep each time he recited *Shema Yisrael*, feeling his words draw directly from the depth of his thought.

END NOTE]

Siman #24

In the Midrash: “And Sarai, the wife of Avram.” This is what is meant by the verse, “A woman of valor is the crown of her husband.” One opinion says, “the crown of her husband”—her husband was crowned through her, but she was not crowned through her husband.

ובמדבר: ושרי אשת אברם – ה' הוא דכתיב
“אשת חיל עטרת בעלה.” רצון לומר: חד אמר
עטרת בעלה – בעלה אתעטר בה והיא לא
אתעטרת בבעלה.

The “Gifts of the Kohanim” explains that her letter yud was divided, becoming a hei for Sarah and a hei for Avraham.

פירוש, במתנות כהנה, שהיו"ד שלה נחלקה ונעשה
ה"א לשרה וה"א לאברהם.

Another opinion says, “She ruled over her husband,” as it is written, “Whatever Sarah says to you—listen to her voice,” meaning to the voice of the Holy Spirit within her.

וחד אמר מרתה לבעלה, שנאמר “כל אשר תאמר
אליה שרה שמע בקולה,” לקול רוח הקדש שבה.

It may be explained according to what our Sages said about the verse, “and the souls which they made in Charan”—that Avraham and Sarah brought forth the souls of converts.

ויש לומר על פי שאמרו רז"ל “ואת הנפש אשר עשו
בחרן” – אמרו בזהר שהולידו נשמות הגרים.

It is also stated: “Avram does not beget; Avraham begets. Sarai has no child; Sarah has a child.” And this requires explanation.

וגם איתא: אברם אינו מוליד, אברהם מוליד; שרי
אין לה ולד, שרה יש לה ולד. ויש לתת טעם לזה.

This may be understood according to the verse, “For with Y-H Hashem formed the worlds,” and our Sages said: the World to Come was created with yud, and this world with hei.

ויובן על פי שנאמר “כי ביה"ה צור עולמים,”
ואמרו רז"ל עולם הבא נברא ביו"ד, ועולם הזה
נברא בה"א.

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Therefore it seems simple that the begetting of physical bodies was not possible until now, since their names lacked the letter hei through which this world was created.

נמצא לפי זה נראה בפשוטו שהולדת גופים גשמיים לא היו יכולים להוליד עד עתה, מפני שלא הייתה בשמותם אות ה"א שממנה נברא העולם הזה.

And this is the main existence of this world, as it is written, “behibaram—behei bara’am,” meaning, “with the hei He created them,” which are the letters of Avraham.

והוא עקר קיום העולם הזה, כמו שנאמר “בהבראם” — בה"א בראם, שהן אותיות אברהם.

And the sign is: “Hei—lakhem zera,” for the letter hei causes the generation of seed, as mentioned in the Zohar and in the Kavanot of Pesach.

והסימן הוא “הא לכם זרע,” שאות ה"א גורמת להולדת הזרע, כמו שנאמר בזהר ובכונת פסח.

But the generation of souls, which are the spirits related to the World to Come created with yud, was possible for them, for Sarai possessed the letter yud.

אבל הולדת הנשמות — שהן נפשות המתחסות לעולם הבא הנברא ביו"ד — ואות יו"ד הייתה בשרי, לכן היו יכולים להוליד נשמות גרים.

However, one may question: is it not written, “All of them You made with wisdom”? And in the Zohar it says, “All of them were clarified with wisdom,” referring to the letter yud, called wisdom and thought.

אבל יש לדקדק כי הלא נאמר “כלם בחכמה עשיתם,” ואמרו בזהר “כלם בחכמה אתברירו,” שהוא אות יו"ד הנקראת חכמה ומחשבה.

Therefore it must be that even the creation of this world involved the letter yud.

אבל בהכרח גם בריאת העולם הזה היא באות יו"ד.

To understand this: indeed, all was created by yud—the ten utterances. Yet, because yud, representing thought, is contemplative, it resembles a craftsman making a vessel.

וכדי להבין כל זה נאמר: הגם שבאמת נברא הכל ביו"ד — שהן יו"ד מאמרות — אבל מפני שהיו"ד, שהיא המחשבה, נקראת עיונית, היא דוגמת האומן העושה כלי.

He concentrates all his thought and contemplation upon the form and shape of that vessel—the potential of the maker within the made.

הנה הוא שם כל מחשבתו ועיונו בציור ובתמנונת הכלי שהוא — כח הפועל בנפעל.

Thus the power of thought must be within its form and image. Before the making of the vessel, the thought was hidden—envisioning the vessel but still sealed.

נמצא בהכרח שיהיה כח המחשבה העיונית שם בציורו ובתמנונתו. ומקודם עשית הכלי הייתה המחשבה סתומה ונעלמת.

Afterward, when the vessel was made in action, the thought was revealed, and even then the thought remains mixed within it.

רצון לומר שהיה העיון במחשבתו לעשות הכלי, אבל בסתום גדול; ואחר כך בשעשה הכלי במעשה נתגלתה המחשבה שלו, ועל כל זאת כח המחשבה מעורב בתוכו.

Thus, at first the vessel existed in thought, and afterward the thought exists within the vessel.

נמצא כי בתחלה היה הכלי במחשבה, ואחר כך המחשבה בתוך הכלי.

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This is hinted in the name Sarai, related to the root *shar*—"to gaze," as in "ashurenu velo karov," referring to the letter yud, the contemplative intellect.

That is the wisdom and thought through which all beings were made.

Our Sages said, "Whatever exists below exists above." Just as below there are children, so above there are children; below servants, above servants; below seraphim, and so forth.

One might ask: how can the upper and lower be equal, when the higher worlds are givers and the lower worlds receivers—like a wealthy man giving to a pauper?

But according to the above, this is understood: the upper worlds are the masculine givers, where lies the main wisdom and thought—the yud, the ten utterances.

Later the letter yud divided, becoming two hei's—one above and one below.

The yud was not uprooted, for creation was through it, but the lower hei—representing speech—was at first hidden within the yud.

Just as the vessel existed first in the craftsman's thought, so too the hei of speech (the five outlets of the mouth) was hidden within the yud.

Later, in the act of creation—"behibaram"—the lower hei was revealed, and within it remained the power of the yud, as indicated by the yud in the spelling of the hei's milui.

The upper hei also remains filled with yud above. And this is the meaning of the name Sarah—hei, meaning "the power of the maker within the made": the contemplative power (*shar*) enclosed within the hei, the recipient.

Nevertheless, it remains difficult to understand how the maker and the made can be equal.

וזהו הרמז שם שר"י – לשון שר"ר, לשון הבטטה, כמו שנאמר "אשורנו ולא קרוב" – לרמז על אות יו"ד שהיא עיונית.

היא התקמה והמחשבה אשר נעשו כל הנבראים על גדה.

והנה אמרו רז"ל "כל מה שיש למטה יש למעלה". מה למטה בנים, אף למעלה בנים; למטה עבדים, למעלה עבדים; למטה שרפים וכו'.

ויש לדקדק, איך יהיה זה שיהיו שוים עליונים לתחתונים, והלא העולמות העליונים הם המשפיעים והתחתונים הם המקבלים, והם דוגמת העושר המשפיע לעני המקבל.

אבל לפי הנזכר יבין, כי באמת העולמות העליונים הם הנזכרים המשפיעים, לפי ששם עיקר התקמה והמחשבה הנקראים יו"ד – הם יו"ד מאמרות.

אבל אחר כך נחלקה אות היו"ד ונעשו שתי הי"ן – ה"א למעלה וה"א למטה.

ולא שנעקרה אות היו"ד לגמרי, כי הלא ביו"ד מאמרות נבראו, אבל מפני שהעולם הזה הנברא – בה"א הנה בתחלה בהעלם סתום בתוך המחשבה.

כמו הפלי שהיה בתחלה סתום במחשבת האומן, כן הייתה האות ה', שהיא הדבור הנקרא ה' מוצאות הפה, סתומה בתוך היו"ד.

ואחר כך, בעשות הכלי – שהוא העולם הזה – "בהפראם", באברהם, נתגלתה ה"א תתאה, שהיא הדבור כנודע; ועל כל זאת כח היו"ד בתוכה, שהוא יו"ד של מלוי ה"א מורה על זה.

והה"א עילאה גם כן במלוי יו"ד נשארת למעלה. וזהו שם שר"ה – בה"א – רצון לומר כח הפועל בנפעל, דהינו הפועל שהוא עיוני לשון שר"ה הנזכר, הוא בנפעל שהוא בתוך ה"א המקבלת.

אבל עם כל זאת קשה, איך יכולים להיות שוים הפועל והנפעל.

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Moreover, even the World to Come, which is the giver—symbolized by the name Sarah—why is it now referred to in the feminine, with a hei?

But it is known what our Sages said: “More than the calf desires to nurse, the cow desires to give milk.”

This is like a father teaching his beloved son—every time the son grows in wisdom, the father experiences even greater joy and delight.

Although the father is the principal giver, having taught him the essence of wisdom, yet in regard to the pleasure he receives from his son, the father becomes the receiver.

The parallel is clear: as the Zohar says, “Israel sustains the Above,” meaning that through their Torah and mitzvos they add strength to the heavenly hosts.

Therefore, this is also the meaning of the name Sarah: although she is essentially the yud, the source of influence, she now takes the feminine form, for she receives joy from the deeds of those below.

Even though the world of joy and delight is incomparably higher than the world of wisdom, nevertheless the joy the father receives from his son’s learning comes from the son’s lower wisdom.

Therefore, one opinion hints: “Her husband was crowned through her, but she was not crowned through her husband”—the husband, like the father, is adorned through her, for his higher wisdom becomes a crown.

But she, though she also receives joy from her husband, is not called “crown,” for her joy stems from the lower wisdom.

ומה גם שגם עולם הבא, שהוא המשפיע, שהוא מרומז בשם שר"ה, למה נקרא עתה בלשון נקבה – ב"ה"א.

אבל הנה ידוע מה שאמרו רז"ל: “יותר משהעגל רוצה לינק, פרה רוצה להניק”

והוא דמיון העב המלמד את בנו חביבו: כל מה שהבן מצליח ומתחכם בלמודו, יש לאב שמחה ותענוג גדול ביותר.

והנה אף שהאב הוא המשפיע העיקרי שלמדו עיקר החכמה, עם כל זאת בערך התענוג המגיע לאב מבנו – האב הוא המקבל בערך זה

והנמשל מבין מאליו; וזהו שאמרו בזהר: “ישראל מפרנסין לעילא,” רצון לומר, בקיומם התורה והמצוות מוסיפים כח בפמליא של מעלה

נמצא, כי כך שם שר"ה – אף על פי שהיא עיקרית יו"ד המשפיע, עם כל זאת היא עתה לישון נקבה בערך התענוג והשמחה המקבלת ממעשי התחתונים.

והגם שעולם השמחה והתענוג הוא רוחני מאד ועליון ביותר מעולם המחשבה והחכמה, עם כל זאת – התענוג והשמחה המגיע לאב מחכמת בנו הוא הקטן מהחכמה, כיון שהוא מסתעף מחכמת בנו שהיא חכמה תתאה

לכן אפשר שלזה רמזו: חד אמר “בעלה אתעטר בה והיא לא אתעטרת בבעלה” – רצון לומר, בעלה שהוא דמיון האב שעיקר חכמתו ממנה – אתעטר בה, רצון לומר, שנעשית ממנה החכמה עטרה לראשו

אבל היא, אף שהיא מקבלת גם כן מבעלה שמחה ותענוג, עם כל זאת, בהיותה מסתעפת מחכמה תתאה – אינה נקראת עטרה

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For the essential yud of wisdom is higher; yet in a certain sense it is called feminine, since everything that receives from a higher source is termed “female,” and when influencing lower levels is termed “male.”

The other opinion—“She ruled over her husband”—is understood through the Arizal’s teaching that each lower level in the higher world becomes Chabad (chochmah, binah, daas) of the lower world.

To illustrate: a teacher instructing his student—his wisdom is infinite and hidden, yet the student can only grasp the words he hears.

Yet if the student does not focus his thought upon the teacher’s words, he receives nothing at all.

Thus the words from the teacher’s mouth—being the lower level—enter the student’s thought and become his intellect.

At first, the student perceives only the literal words, but as he grows wiser, he grasps their structure and meaning.

Yet the innermost wisdom—the hidden understanding—neither student nor teacher can articulate.

Still, the teacher leaves an impression of that hidden wisdom within the student; this latent imprint expands and grows in his mind.

Thus, the student’s comprehension has three levels: first, the words themselves; second, their simple meaning; third, the inner understanding.

כי עיקר הי"ד שהיא החכמה היא למעלה, רק שפועל נקראת נוקבא כנזכר; כמו כל עלות ועלות – בערך שהיא מקבל מעלת העליון נקרא נוקבא, ובערך שהוא מפעיל לתחתון נקרא דכר.

ומה שאמר חז"ל אמר “איהי מרתא דבעלה” – יובן על פי מה שנאמר בכתבי האריז"ל שכל מדרגה תחתונה שפועל העליון נעשית חב"ד בעולם התחתון ממנו.

וכדי לקרב הדבר אל השכל, נמשל משל לרב המלמד לתלמידו: הנה חכמת הרב גדולה היא מאד עד אין קץ, ומה גם שהיא סתומה ונעלמת במחשבתו, ובנדאי בלתי יכולת התלמיד להשיגה, אלא מה היא השגת התלמיד – הדבור שהוא שומע מפי הרב.

ועם כל זאת, אם לא ישים עיניו ומחשבתו לדברי הרב – לא יקבל אפלו הדברים כהיותם.

נמצא כי הדברים היוצאים מפי הרב – הם המדרגה התחתונה פנוע – נכנסים בתוך מחשבת התלמיד ושהיא המוחין שלו.

וזהו בתחלת הלמוד של התלמיד – אינו מקבל אלא דברים כהיותם; אבל כאשר מתחכם התלמיד יותר, יכול הרב להבינו התפת הדברים והמשך הדברים ופשט הבנתם.

אבל הפנימיות שהיא החכמה הנעלמה – אין כח לא בתלמיד להשיגה ולא ברב לבארה.

אבל זאת פעולת הרב בתלמידו – שמניח בו רושם חכמתו הסתומה, ומפני שפח הפועל בנפעל – הרושם ההוא מתרחב ומתפשט מעט מעט ונגדלת מדעתו.

נמצא שיש ג' מדרגות בהבנת התלמיד – האחת היא הדברים כהיותם, הבית היא הבנת הדברים כפשוטן, והשלישית היא הפנימיות.

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These three levels may correspond to nefesh, ruach, and neshamah.

ואפֿשר שְׁשָׁלַשׁ הַמַּדְרָגוֹת הַנִּזְכָּרוֹת נִקְרָאִים נֶפֶשׁ, רוּחַ, וְנִשְׁמָה.

Wisdom is called “holy.” The words are the nefesh of wisdom, their understanding is its ruach, and the inner essence is the neshamah.

וְזֶהוּ יָדוּעַ כִּי הַחֲכָמָה נִקְרָאת קֹדֶשׁ; וְאֶפְשָׁר לוֹמַר שֶׁהַדְּבוּרִים נִקְרָאִים נֶפֶשׁ הַחֲכָמָה, וְהַבִּנְיָנִם נִקְרָאת רוּחַ הָחֵם... כִּכָּה חֲכָמָתָם הַפְּנִימִית נִקְרָאת נִשְׁמַת הַחֲכָמָה. וְאֶפְשָׁר לוֹמַר שֶׁהַמַּדְרָגָה הָאֲמִצְעִית נִקְרָאת רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ, שֶׁהוּא דָּבָר מְמוּצָע בֵּין נֶפֶשׁ לְנִשְׁמָה.

And this is what is meant by “All that Sarah tells you—listen to her voice.”

וְזֶהוּ מָה שְׁאָמַר: “כָּל אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר אֵלַיִךְ שָׂרָה שְׁמַע בְּקוֹלָהּ.”

It does not say “listen to her saying” (*le'omrah*) as it began with “that she says.”

וְלֹא אָמַר “שְׁמַע לְאִמְרָהּ” כְּמוֹ שֶׁהִתְחִיל “אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר.”

Therefore, our Sages interpreted: “to the voice of the Divine Spirit”—hinting to the intermediate level, which is *ruach*, also called *kol* (voice) within *dibur* (speech).

לְכֵן דְּרָשׁוּ: “לְקוֹל רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ” – לְרִמּוֹז עַל הַנִּזְכָּר, עַל הַדָּבָר הַמְּמוּצָע, שֶׁהוּא רוּחַ, וְהוּא גַם כֵּן נִקְרָא קוֹל שֶׁבְּתוֹךְ הַדְּבוּר.

For the *kol* (voice) itself is merely a raw sound, while the *dibur* (speech) reveals and explains it, being the particular that expresses the general.

פִּירוּשׁ, כִּי הַלּוֹא הַקוֹל הוּא גּוֹלָמִי – קָלָא בְּעֵלְמָא, וְהַדְּבוּר הוּא הַמְּגִלָּה, כִּי הַדְּבוּר הוּא הַפֶּרֶט הַנִּצְעָשָׁה פִּירוּשׁ שֶׁל הַכָּלֵל.

This is like a parable: if the voice were not joined with speech, the speech could not be heard; but if there were only voice without speech, it would be unformed and unintelligible.

וְנִדְּמָה זֶה לְמִשְׁל – אִם לֹא הָיָה הַקוֹל מְצֻטָּרֵף עִם הַדְּבוּר, לֹא הָיָה הַדְּבוּר נִשְׁמָע; וְגַם אִם לֹא הָיָה הַדְּבוּר – הוּא גּוֹלָמִי בְּלִתִּי מוֹשָׁג.

Thus, the general needs the particular, and the particular the general, for only together do they become intelligible.

וְזֶהוּ הַכָּלֵל שֶׁצָּרִיךְ לִפְרֹט, וְהַפֶּרֶט צָרִיךְ לְכָלֵל – שֶׁבְּלִי זֶה לֹא יִהְיֶה הַדְּבוּר מוֹכֵן.

As Scripture says, “for Joseph heard,” meaning he understood; so too here, without the *kol* joined to the *dibur*, it could not be grasped, for the *kol* is the life of speech, the *ruach hakodesh*.

לְשׁוֹן “כִּי שׁוֹמַע יוֹסֵף,” פִּירוּשׁוֹ מִבֵּין; כִּד גַּם כָּאן – אִם לֹא הַקוֹל מְצֻטָּרֵף עִם הַדְּבוּר, לֹא הָיָה מוֹכֵן וּמוֹשָׁג, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהַקוֹל הוּא חַיּוּת הַדְּבוּר, וְהוּא רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ.

Therefore, “listen to her voice” means: receive from her the understanding of the words—the *kol* united with the *dibur*, called *ruach hakodesh*.

וְזֶהוּ “שְׁמַע בְּקוֹלָהּ,” כְּלוֹמַר: הָיָה מְקַבֵּל מִמֶּנָּה הַבִּנְיָנִת הַדְּבָרִים, שֶׁהוּא הַקוֹל הַמְצֻטָּרֵף עִם הַדְּבוּר, הַנִּקְרָא רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ כַּנִּזְכָּר.

This also explains the difference between the two interpretations: the first compares it to full intellect—*chochmah*—which is the crown on the husband’s head.

וְזֶהוּ הַחֲלּוּק שֶׁבֵּין הַמַּדְרָגוֹת, דְּהִנּוּ הַמַּדְרָגָה הַרְּאשׁוֹן – הַמַּדְרָגָה הַשְּׂבִיבָה לְמוֹחִין גְּמוּרִים, שֶׁהִיא חֲכָמָה כַּנִּזְכָּר, שֶׁהִיא עֲטָרָה בְּרֹאשׁוֹ כַּנִּזְכָּר.

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The second sees it as an intermediate level; therefore, she is not called “the crown of her husband” but “the mistress of her husband,” for though not full intellect, she still receives—like a student from his teacher, the middle level mentioned above.

והמ"ד הבית – מדמה הקבלה רק למדרגה אמצעית
כנזכר; לכן אינה נקראת “עטרת בעלה” בעצם, רק
“מרתה דבעלה,” כי אף על פי שאינה מוחין גמורים
– עם כל זאת מקבלת, דוגמת התלמיד המקבל מהרב
מדרגה אמצעית כנזכר; ולכן אמר “מרתה דבעלה,”
שהוא לשון כמו הרב בערך התלמיד כנזכר.

[NOTE Summary

The Maggid of Mezritch teaches that the transformation of *Sarai* to *Sarah* and *Avram* to *Avraham* reflects a profound cosmic process: the expansion of Divine creation from hidden thought to revealed expression.

Originally, both Avram and Sarai embodied primarily the inner, contemplative aspect of the Divine—symbolized by the letter *yud*, representing *chochmah*, wisdom, and the concealed world of thought. This level could produce spiritual offspring—“souls of converts”—but not physical ones, because physical creation, *olam hazeh*, is rooted in the letter *hei*, the Divine speech through which this lower world was formed (“with the *hei* He created them”).

When Hashem added the *hei* to Avram and Sarai’s names, He extended their inner wisdom into outward revelation, uniting the power of hidden thought (*yud*) with the power of expression (*hei*). This union enabled the birth of physical life—Yitzchak—and symbolized the merging of inner Divine intention with its external form in the world. “In the *hei* shall your seed be,” says the verse—meaning that revelation, not concealment, now became the channel of blessing.

Yet, the Maggid explains, even this outward world retains within it the concealed spark of its inner source. Just as a craftsman’s design first exists in his mind before emerging as a vessel, so too the *hei* of Divine speech once lay hidden within the *yud* of thought. The *hei* remains filled with the *yud*—revealing that every spoken word, every act of creation, still carries within it the imprint of the inner Divine mind. This is the meaning of *Sarah* with a *hei*: the power of the maker (*shar*) is embedded within the made.

But a question arises: how can the maker and the made be equal? How can the receiver—symbolized by the feminine *hei*—share parity with the giver, the masculine *yud*? The Maggid answers through a parable: a father who teaches his son finds greater joy in the son’s success than in his own wisdom. Though the father gives, he becomes the receiver of delight. Similarly, the higher worlds, which are the sources of wisdom, receive pleasure from the mitzvos and devotion of souls below. Thus, the “feminine” lower realm is not passive—it elicits joy and fulfillment from above. “Israel sustains the Above,” says the Zohar: the deeds of humankind give vitality to Heaven itself.

This dynamic explains the two views of Sarah in the Midrash. One opinion calls her “a crown to her husband”—representing the complete intellectual union where the receiver becomes one with the giver. The

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other calls her “mistress of her husband”—representing an intermediate state, like a student who receives from his teacher: not the teacher’s full wisdom, but enough to internalize and expand. Both reflect the same truth: every level in creation both receives from above and gives to that which is below, mirroring the continuous Divine flow of influence and return.

Finally, the Maggid explains the verse “Whatever Sarah tells you—listen to her voice.” The Torah does not say “listen to her words,” but “to her *voice*,” for the *kol* (voice) is the inner breath, the spiritual life within speech—the *ruach hakodesh*. Just as the voice gives life to words and words give shape to the voice, so must one unite inner inspiration with outer expression. The *kol* without *dibur* is formless; *dibur* without *kol* is lifeless. True communication of holiness requires both—the inner intention fused with outer articulation.

Practical Takeaway

The Maggid’s teaching calls each of us to bring inner consciousness into outward life. Like Avraham and Sarah, we are meant to unify our inner *yud* (thought, wisdom, hidden holiness) with our outer *hei* (speech, action, revealed world). Every mitzvah, every word of Torah, every act of kindness should express both the Divine intention within and its manifestation without.

When we perform a mitzvah without thought, it is like speech without voice—hollow and cold. When we contemplate truth without acting, it is like voice without speech—unformed and ineffectual. But when inner awareness and outer expression join, Heaven itself receives joy. In this way, even the smallest deed performed with conscious heart becomes a crown upon the Divine.

Chassidic Story

A disciple once asked the Maggid of Mezritch, “Rebbe, what does it mean that the deeds of Israel sustain the heavens?” The Maggid answered with a parable. “A teacher,” he said, “may speak to his student for years, pouring wisdom into him. But only when the student begins to live and act from that wisdom does the teacher truly feel joy. His teachings are no longer confined within himself—they breathe in another.”

The Maggid paused and continued, “So it is with Hashem. Each time you take a word of Torah or a spark of His wisdom and live it in your actions, He, too, rejoices as a father rejoices in his son’s growth. This is the meaning of *Sarah’s voice*—the life within the word, the spirit within the act. That is how the lower world becomes the delight of the Upper.”

(Source: *Otzar HaChassidim – Mezritch*, section *Avraham veSarah*, based on oral teachings recorded by R. Avraham Kalisker and R. Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk.)

END NOTE]

Siman #25

“And he saw the place from afar.” The Zohar teaches that Avraham saw Yaakov.

וַיֵּרָא אֶת הַמָּקוֹם מֵרְחוֹק – אֵיתָא בְּזוֹהַר שְׂרָאָה אֶת יַעֲקֹב.

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The meaning is that Avraham's command to sacrifice his son seemed an act of great cruelty, so he beheld from afar the quality of Yaakov—mercy—distancing himself from harshness.

פירוש, כי זהו אכזריות גדולה שישחט את בנו, ונתרחק ממנו מידת יעקב – שהיא רחמנות.

Yitzchak, meanwhile, was seized by a fiery passion, stretching out his neck in love and readiness to give his life for the Blessed One.

ויצחק בא להתלהבות גדולה עד שיפשט צוארו בשביל אהבת ה' יתברך.

This is the meaning of the *Akeidah*: Avraham became included within Yitzchak—the quality of awe—and Yitzchak within Avraham—the quality of love, as previously explained.

וזהו הענינה – אברהם נתפלל ביצחק, פירוש במדת יראה, ויצחק באהבה [מידת אברהם], כנזכר.

[NOTE Summary

The Maggid of Mezritch interprets the verse “And he saw the place from afar” (*Vayar es hamakom merachok*) through the Zohar's teaching that Avraham saw Yaakov from a distance. When Avraham approached the Akeidah, he was commanded to perform what appeared to be an act of unimaginable cruelty — to sacrifice his own son. In that moment, he “saw from afar” the attribute of Yaakov, which is *rachamim* (compassion). Avraham's own essence was *chesed* (kindness), yet this test required the opposite — a stern act of awe and restraint. To balance the extremes, Avraham beheld from afar the compassionate harmony that would one day be embodied by Yaakov, merging love and fear, kindness and discipline.

Yitzchak, on the other hand, rose to a state of fiery *ahavah* (love), stretching out his neck in readiness to fulfill the Divine will with joy and surrender. Thus, at the Akeidah, Avraham became included within Yitzchak (love within fear), and Yitzchak within Avraham (fear within love). This moment of ultimate union between *chesed* and *gevurah* brought about the synthesis of the future — the middle path of *rachamim* that would be revealed through Yaakov.

Practical Takeaway

True spiritual service requires the balance of both awe and love. Avraham teaches us to act with unshakable faith even when the Divine command seems incomprehensible, while Yitzchak teaches us to serve with fiery devotion and self-sacrifice. Yet the perfection of both lies in Yaakov's path — compassion that harmonizes the heart's love and the soul's reverence. In daily life, this means that our discipline must come from love, and our love must remain anchored in reverence. Through that harmony, we too can bring Divine joy into the world.

END NOTE]

Siman #26

“And Yitzchak said to Avraham his father, and said: ‘My father’; and he said: ‘Here I am, my son.’”

ויאמר יצחק אל אברהם אביו, ויאמר: אבי; ויאמר: הניני בני.

For Avraham represents *chesed* (kindness), and Yitzchak represents *gevurah* (severity).

כי אברהם הוא חסד, ויצחק הוא גבורה.

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Therefore Yitzchak said to Avraham: “Are you not my father—embodiment of kindness? Where is your compassion now?”

ולכן אמר יצחק לאברהם: הלא אבי אתה – והינני
מדת החסד – והיכן היא הרחמנות שלך?

Avraham answered him, “Here I am, my son”—meaning, “Now I am in the state of my son,” that is, I have taken on the attribute of harshness.

והשיבו אברהם: “הנני בןי,” פירוש – עתה הנני
במדת בןי, פירוש באכזריות.

[NOTE Summary

The Maggid of Mezritch explains this exchange between Avraham and Yitzchak as a dialogue between *chesed* (kindness) and *gevurah* (discipline). When Yitzchak—embodying *gevurah*—said, “My father,” he was appealing to Avraham’s essence of *chesed*: “Are you not the one whose entire being is mercy and love? How can you now act with such cruelty toward me, your son?”

Avraham’s response, “Here I am, my son,” revealed the depth of his surrender to the Divine will. He was saying, “At this moment, I have clothed myself in your attribute, the quality of *gevurah*—severity and restraint. My love for G-d has taken the form of obedience, even when it demands hardness.” Avraham’s kindness was not extinguished; rather, it was refined into a disciplined love, capable of transcending personal emotion to fulfill the Divine purpose.

This moment represented not a contradiction between father and son, but a merging of attributes: *chesed* entering into *gevurah*, and *gevurah* being sweetened within *chesed*. Their union at the Akeidah achieved the harmony that would later be revealed in Yaakov’s quality of *rachamim* (compassion), which balances both.

Practical Takeaway

Sometimes Divine service requires that love express itself through firmness and restraint. True kindness is not indulgence, and true discipline is not cruelty—it is love shaped by purpose. Avraham teaches us that the highest compassion is to act from truth, even when it demands inner strength and seeming harshness. In life, this means doing what is right even when it conflicts with our emotions, trusting that in that obedience lies the purest love of Hashem.

END NOTE]

Siman #27

It is taught in the Zohar regarding the verse “And he saw, and behold, a ram after...” that this ram was created at twilight on the eve of Shabbos and was one year old.

איתא בזוהר על פי “וירא, והנה איל אחר וגו’”,
שאיתו האיל נברא בין השמשות בערב שבת, וכן
שנתו היה.

This can be understood according to what our Sages taught: during *bein hashmashos* (twilight), the Sages could not determine whether it belonged to the day, to the night, or half to each.

ויש לומר על פי מה שאמרו רז"ל: בין השמשות לא
הקריעו בו חכמים אם כולו מן היום או כולו מן
הלילה, או חציו מן היום וחציו מן הלילה.

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This may be explained through an analogy: in all things exist four elements—fire, air, water, and earth. Fire and water are opposites; how can they coexist?

There must be something that unites them, preventing the fire from being extinguished by water or the water from being consumed by fire.

That unifying power is called *Ayin* (Nothingness).

The reason is that “the power of the maker is found in the made.” The Divine energy in every creation is not a tangible vessel; therefore, its nature is *Ayin*.

The same is true in Divine service: love (*ahavah*) and awe (*yirah*) are opposites—how can one feel both at once?

For example, when a person fears a snake, that fear has no love in it; and when he loves something good, there is no fear in that love.

But love or awe of the Creator can coexist, for in relation to Him, both arise from the same *Ayin*.

Love is called “day,” awe is called “night,” and the power that unites them is “twilight,” or *bein hashmashos*—the realm of *Ayin*.

Ayin is wisdom (*chochmah*), for “Wisdom is found from nothingness.”

Chochmah is called “beginning,” as it is said, “The beginning of wisdom,” and “G-d with wisdom founded the earth.”

Thus, what we call *Ayin* has no image or form, yet it is not the Essence of Divinity itself—it is the beginning of thought.

Relative to Hashem, this *Ayin* is the primordial beginning of thought.

פירוש על דרך משל, יש בכל דבר ארבעה יסודות – אש, רוח, מים, עפר. והנה אש ומים הם נגדיים זה לזה, ואיך יכולים להתכלל זה בזה?

רק צריך לדעת שבודאי מרחש שיש דבר המסבירם, שלא יבטל ויכבה האש ממים או להיפך.

לכן צריך להיות דבר המסבירם שלא יתבטל ממצאות ההנהגה ההיא, והדבר הזה המסבירם נקרא “אין”.

וטעמו של דבר – כי כח הפועל בנפעל, והפועל – הוא כח אלהות שבדבר הזה – ואינו כלי; לכן ודאי “יש כאן” אין.

וכן יש בעבודת אלהות – יש אהבה ויש יראה, והם נגדיים זה עם זה; כיצד יכולים להיות אהבה ויראה כאחת?

למשל, יראת האדם מהנחש – אין בזאת היראה שום אהבה; וכן בדבר טוב – אין בו אלא אהבה.

אבל אם היא אהבת הבורא או יראת הבורא – יכולים שניהם להיות כאחת.

ואהבה נקראת “יום,” ויראה נקראת “לילה,” והדבר המסבירם נקרא “בין השמשות” – שלא הכריעו בו תכמים מה הוא – ונקרא “אין”.

”אין” הוא התכמה, כי “התכמה מאין תמצא”.

והתכמה נקראת “ראשית,” כמו שנאמר: “ראשית תכמה,” ו”ה’ בתכמה יסד ארץ”.

נמצא מוכח מזה שמה שאנו קורין כאן “אין,” אין בזה שום תמונה, ואף על פי כן – אין לו קריאת עצם אלהות, כי “אין” נקרא ראשית והוא במספר, והוא יתברך נקרא אחד.

אבל לגבי השדוש ברוך הוא – נקרא זה האין ההיולי, דהיינו תחלת המחשבה.

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Day signifies love, night signifies awe, and the force uniting them—*bein hashmashos*—is the quality of *Ayin*.

וְיוֹם נִקְרָא אֱהָבָה, וְלַיְלָה נִקְרָא יִרְאָה כִּידּוּעַ, וְהַמְחַבְרָם – שֶׁהִיא “בֵּין הַשְּׁמָשׁוֹת” – נִקְרָא מִדַּת “אֵין”.

The Akeidah was thus when “G-d tested Avraham”—meaning that the attribute of awe was joined upon him with the attribute of love.

וְהַעֲקִידָה הָיְתָה שֶׁ“הָאֱלֹקִים נִסָּה אֶת אַבְרָהָם,” פִּירוּשׁ שֶׁמִּדַּת הַיִּרְאָה הָיְתָה עָלָיו מִתְחַבְרָת עִם מִדַּת הָאֱהָבָה.

“And it was one year old”—this hints to *seven years*, meaning seven transformations of the emotional attributes, and *Ayin* is called the first year.

וְכֵן שְׁנָתוֹ הָיְתָה – פִּירוּשׁ “שֶׁבַע שָׁנִים,” שֶׁהֵן שֶׁבַע הַשְּׁתַּנּוּיּוֹת בְּמִדּוֹת הַנִּקְרָאוֹת “שָׁנִים,” וְ“אֵין” נִקְרָא “שָׁנָה רִאשׁוֹנָה”.

Thus, at the moment of the Akeidah, when love and awe rose together, Avraham entered the quality of *Ayin*. This is the meaning of “the ram was one year old.”

נִמְצָא שֶׁבִּשְׁעַת הַעֲקִידָה – שֶׁהָיְתָה עָלָיו עֲלִיַּת אֱהָבָה וַיִּרְאָה – הֶעָרַד לְבּוֹא בְּמִדַּת “אֵין.” וְזֶהוּ מֵה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר “אֵיל בֶּן שְׁנָתוֹ הָיָה”.

[NOTE Summary

The Maggid of Mezritch reveals that the ram of the Akeidah—created at twilight (*bein hashmashos*)—symbolizes the meeting point between opposites: love and awe, day and night, heaven and earth. The Zohar teaches that this ram was formed “between the suns,” a time which the Sages could not define as day or night. This moment of indeterminacy reflects a spiritual principle: every force of creation contains elements that oppose one another—fire and water, kindness and restraint, love and fear—and yet they coexist because a higher unity binds them.

That unifying power, says the Maggid, is called *Ayin*, “Nothingness.” It is not absence, but rather the infinite Divine source that transcends all opposites. Just as fire and water can only exist together through an invisible essence that sustains them, so too, love (*ahavah*) and awe (*yirah*)—which seem to contradict one another—can exist simultaneously only when one is rooted in *Ayin*, the Divine mind beyond definition.

In our spiritual service, *ahavah* is compared to day—radiant and expansive—while *yirah* is compared to night—restrained and concealed. The “twilight” that connects them represents *Ayin*, the still point where opposites merge into oneness. This is the secret of the Akeidah: “And G-d tested Avraham”—that the attribute of awe (Yitzchak) was joined to love (Avraham), uniting the two in perfect harmony.

The Maggid explains that the ram was “one year old,” symbolizing the first of the seven emotional states (*middos*). The “first year” corresponds to *Ayin*, the root of all emotional transformation, where every *middah* (attribute) finds its balance in the Divine source. At that moment, Avraham entered the realm of *Ayin*—the selfless merging of love and awe—and through that state, he fulfilled the highest purpose of creation: to reveal unity within multiplicity, oneness within tension.

Practical Takeaway

Life constantly presents us with opposites—love and fear, joy and responsibility, giving and restraint. The

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Maggid teaches that true holiness is not in choosing one over the other, but in discovering the *Ayin* that unites them. When we act from the awareness that both love and awe stem from the same Divine source, they cease to conflict. Love gains depth from awe, and awe gains warmth from love.

In our personal service, this means cultivating both heartfelt passion and disciplined reverence—knowing when to burn and when to bow. When these forces meet within us, we stand at our own *bein hashmashos*, the sacred twilight of balance, and there we touch the infinite.

Chassidic Story

A disciple once asked the Maggid of Mezritch, “Rebbe, how can I love G-d with all my heart and yet fear Him at the same time? Are they not opposites?”

The Maggid replied, “When a father teaches his child to walk, he holds the child close in love but also lets go in awe—so that the child may stand on his own. Love and fear are not enemies; they are the two hands of G-d that raise you higher. When you feel both at once, you stand where heaven and earth meet.”

The student later said that at that moment, he understood the Akeidah—not as a story of sacrifice, but of union, where Avraham and Yitzchak became one through *Ayin*.

END NOTE]

Siman #28

“And behold, a ram after.” It is taught in the Zohar that this is the ram that was created at twilight (*bein hashmashos*) and was one year old.

וְהָיָה אֵיל אַחֵר. אֵיתָא בְּזֵהָר, הוּא הָאֵיל שְׁנֹבְרָא בֵּין הַשְּׁמָשׁוֹת וּבֵין שְׁנֵה הַיָּמִים.

Bein hashmashos is called the intermediary between day and night.

פִּירוּשׁ, בֵּין הַשְּׁמָשׁוֹת נִקְרָא דְבָר הַמְּמַצֵּעַ בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה.

For in everything there are four elements—fire, air, water, and earth—and these are opposing forces: water extinguishes fire, air scatters earth.

כִּי כָּל דְּבָר יֵשׁ אַרְבָּעָה יְסוּדוֹת – אֵשׁ, רוּחַ, מַיִם, עָפָר – וְהֵם דְּבָרִים נִגְדִּים: מַיִם מְכַבֵּה אֵשׁ, רוּחַ מְפַזֵּר עָפָר.

Therefore, there must be another force that unites them, and this is the quality of *Ayin*.

רַק צָרִיךְ לִהְיוֹת עוֹד דְּבָר אֶחָד הַמַּחֲבִיב, וְהוּא מַדַּת “אֵין.”

When the element of water reaches the point of negating the element of fire, the water itself is nullified in existence—having reached the level of *Ayin*.

כִּי כְּשֶׁמַּגִּיעַ יְסוֹד הַמַּיִם לְבִטּוֹל יְסוֹד אֵשׁ – נִתְבַּטֵּל הַמַּיִם מִמְּצִיאוֹתוֹ, שֶׁהֵגִיעַ לְמַדַּת “אֵין.”

The same applies to love and awe. In worldly matters, when one loves something, he does not fear it at that moment; and when he fears something, he does not love it.

וּבְאַהֲבָה וְיִרְאָה גַם כֵּן כָּךְ – כִּי בְּדָבָר גִּשְׁמִיּוֹת, כְּשֶׁאוֹהֵב דְּבָר – אֵז אֵינוֹ יֵרָא מִמֶּנּוּ בְּשַׁעַת מַעֲשֵׂהוּ, וּכְשֶׁהוּא יֵרָא מִמֶּנּוּ – אֵז אֵינוֹ אוֹהֵב אוֹתוֹ.

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But with the Holy One, blessed be He, love and awe can exist simultaneously, for He unites them both—"the power of the maker is found in the made."

אָבֿל בִּהְקִדּוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא – יֵשׁ אֶהְבָּה וְיִרְאָה בְּאַחַת, כִּי הוּא הַמַּחְבֵּר. וְכֵן הַפּוֹעֵל בְּנִפְעָל.

For example, when an artisan makes a vessel, his creative force exists within the vessel, yet that force itself is not a vessel.

לְמַשָּׁל, אוּמָן עוֹשֶׂה כְּלִי – יֵשׁ כּחוֹ בְּכָלִי, וְהֵכֵן אֵינוֹ כְּלִי.

The *Ayin* is called *Chochmah* (wisdom), as in the verse: "Wisdom is found from nothingness."

וְהָאֵין נִקְרָא "חֻכְמָה", עַל דָּרָךְ: "וְהִחֲכַמָּה מֵאֵין תִּמְצָא."

Chochmah is called *Reishis* (beginning), as it is said, "The beginning of wisdom." When something is called "beginning," it already has a number, whereas "One" signifies true unity.

וְהִחֲכַמָּה נִקְרָאת "רֵאשִׁית", כְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "רֵאשִׁית חֻכְמָה." וְכִשְׁנִקְרָאת "רֵאשִׁית" – אַזּ יֵשׁ לָהּ מִסְפָּר, כִּי "אַחַד" מְשַׁמְעוֹתוֹ אַחַדוּת, אָבֿל "רֵאשׁוֹן" הוּא הַתְחַלַּת הַמִּסְפָּר.

It follows that there must exist a level higher than *Chochmah*.

וּמִסְתַּמָּא יֵשׁ מַדְרִיגָה שֶׁהִיא לְמַעְלָה מִן הַחֻכְמָה.

"Day" represents illumination—when a person perceives the Divine brightness—and "night" represents darkness—when he cannot see that radiance. The uniting force between them is *Ayin*.

וְ"יוֹם" נִקְרָא בְּהִירוּת, שֶׁאָדָם רוֹאֶה אֶת בְּהִירוּתוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ; וְ"לַיְלָה" נִקְרָא חֹשֶׁךְ, שֶׁאֵינוֹ רוֹאֶה חֵס וְשָׁלוֹם אֶת בְּהִירוּתוֹ, וְהַמַּחְבֵּר הוּא הָאֵין.

This is *bein hashmashos*, the state that connects day and night.

וְזֶהוּ "בֵּין הַשְּׁמָשׁוֹת" – דְּבָר הַמַּחְבֵּר יוֹם וְלַיְלָה.

This was the inner meaning of the Akeidah—that Avraham elevated Yitzchak to be included within the attribute of love.

וְזֶהוּ הַיְתָה עֲנֵן הַעֲקִידָה, שֶׁהֶעֱלָה אֶת יִצְחָק לְכַלְלוֹ בְּמִדַּת הָאֶהְבָּה.

"And G-d tested Avraham"—meaning that the powers of *gevurah* were elevated through the strength of *chesed*, the attribute of love.

וְ"הָאֱלֹקִים נִסָּה אֶת אַבְרָהָם" – הַגְּבוּרוֹת יֵשׁ לָהֶן עֲלֶיהָ מִכַּחַם מִדַּת הָאֶהְבָּה.

Certainly, this required Avraham to ascend to the level of *Ayin*.

"וּבְיֹדָאֵי הַצָּרָה לְהַעֲלוֹתָהּ לְמִדַּת "אֵין

"And it was one year old" means that *shanah* (year) comes from *shinui* (change)—implying that through *Ayin* one can transform from limitation to unity.

וְ"כֵן שָׁנָה הָיָה" – פִּירוּשׁ "שָׁנָה" לְשׁוֹן "שְׁנוּי", וְרִצּוֹן לֹאֹמַר: עַל יְדֵי זֶה יוּכַל לְהַשְׁתַּנּוּת.

As it is written, "G-d, through wisdom, founded the earth"—meaning that He, blessed be He, dwells within *Chochmah*, which is but a small reflection of Him and the first stirring of Divine thought.

דָּהָא פְּתִיב: "ה' בְּחֻכְמָה יָסַד אֶרֶץ." הוּא יִתְבָּרֵךְ שׁוֹרָה בְּחֻכְמָה, וְהִחֲכַמָּה מַדְרִיגָה קְטַנָּה מִמֶּנּוּ יִתְבָּרֵךְ, וְהִיא אֶצְלוֹ רַק הַיּוֹלֵד, תְּחִלַּת הַמַּחְשָׁבָה.

[NOTE Summary

The Maggid of Mezritch teaches that the "ram" seen by Avraham at the Akeidah represents the secret of *Ayin*—the Divine Nothingness that harmonizes all opposites. The Zohar tells us that this ram was created at twilight (*bein hashmashos*), the time that lies between day and night. Day signifies love (*ahavah*), light, and

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expansion; night represents awe (*yirah*), concealment, and contraction. The space between them—the twilight—is the mysterious realm of *Ayin*, where opposites coexist without conflict.

In every aspect of existence there are four elements: fire, air, water, and earth. These forces oppose each other—fire consumes, water extinguishes, air disperses, and earth grounds. Yet creation endures because a higher, unifying force binds them. That force, says the Maggid, is *Ayin*, the Divine essence that transcends all opposites. Likewise, in the soul, love and fear seem mutually exclusive—when we love, we do not fear; when we fear, we do not love. But in relation to G-d, both can exist simultaneously, for He Himself unites them, as “the power of the maker is found in the made.”

This is the inner meaning of the Akeidah: “*And G-d tested Avraham.*” Avraham (love) was tested by *Elohim* (a name signifying awe and judgment), teaching that true spiritual perfection arises when love elevates awe and awe refines love. This union can only occur through *Ayin*, the state of selflessness beyond comprehension. “And the ram was one year old”—the Maggid explains that *shanah* (year) also means *shinui* (change), symbolizing the soul’s capacity for transformation through *Ayin*. Just as “G-d with wisdom founded the earth,” so too, the foundation of all service is wisdom born of *Ayin*—the first flash of Divine thought before all distinction.

Practical Takeaway

Holiness is not about eliminating contradiction—it is about transcending it. Love and fear, joy and trembling, light and darkness—all find peace when rooted in the awareness of *Ayin*, the Divine source that holds them both. When a person serves G-d from both awe and love, he stands in the twilight, the bridge between heaven and earth, where opposites dissolve into oneness.

In life, this means learning to embrace paradox: to act boldly yet humbly, to feel love without losing reverence, and to find calm in struggle. Whenever you feel torn between extremes, remember that *Ayin*—the Divine stillness beyond thought—connects them all.

Chassidic Story

A disciple once asked the Maggid of Mezritch, “Rebbe, how can one love and fear G-d at the same time? When I feel love, awe disappears; when I feel awe, love fades.”

The Maggid pointed to the flickering flame of a candle and said, “See how the fire rises upward yet clings to the wick below? The fire’s yearning to rise is love; its clinging to the wick is awe. Were either one missing, the light would go out. The secret is not to choose one over the other, but to find the *Ayin* that binds them—then your soul will burn eternally.”

END NOTE]