

בְּסִ"ד, שַׁבָּת בָּרְשַׁת וָאֶתְחַנֵּן, ש"ת With G-d's help, Shabbos Parshas Va'eschanan, 1940

Introduction

This discourse by the Frierdiker Rebbe (Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, 1880–1950), sixth Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch, explores the deeper Chassidic meaning of the verse "אַלְּהַים, אֵילְיָם, לְּדַעַת, כָּי ה' הוא הָאֶלֹקִים, אֵין" (Devarim 4:35). Delivered in the context of the month of Av and Tisha B'Av, it presents a powerful meditation on the unity of Hashem in all dimensions—especially within the concealments of this world. The Rebbe examines the soul's descent, the purpose of divine concealment, the role of Torah and mitzvos in spiritual transformation, and the significance of prayer—particularly Mincha, the afternoon prayer—as the pinnacle of self-nullification. His message is deeply personal and transformative, offering a roadmap for the modern Jew to reveal G-dliness in the most mundane aspects of life, and to turn struggle into divine delight.

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בִּיאוּר הַפָּסוּק "אַתָּה הָרְאֵתָ לָדַעַת". מִצְוַת עֲשֵׂה לָדַעַת וּלְהַשִּׂיג אֶת הָאֱמוּנָה שֶׁקְבַּלְנוּ מֵאֲבוֹתֵינוּ, כָּל אֶחָד כְּפִי יְכָלְתּוֹ, כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתַב הָרְמְבַּ"ם: "לֵידַע" שֶׁנֵשׁ שֶׁם מָצוּי רְאשׁוֹן. הָאָמוֹת מַאֲמִינִים רַק בְּשֵׁם אֱלֹקִים – טֶבַע, אֲבָל נִשָּׁמוֹת יִשִּׂרָאֵל – בָּשֵׁם הוי'ה שֵׁלְמֵעְלָה מֵהָטֵבַע.

Explanation of the verse "You have been shown to know." This is a positive commandment to know and comprehend the faith we received from our forefathers, each person according to his ability, as the Rambam wrote: "To know" that there exists a First Existent. The nations believe only in the name Elokim—meaning nature—but the souls of Israel believe in the name Havayah, which is beyond nature.

"You have been shown to know that Havayah is Elokim, there is nothing else besides Him," and the Targum translates: "You were shown in order to know that Havayah is Elokim."	אַתָּה הָרְאֵתָ לָדַעַת כִּי הוי'ה הוּא הָאֱלֹקִים אֵין עוֹד" מִלְבַדּוֹ", וְתִרְגַּם: "אַתָּ אִתְחָזֵיתָא לְמִדַּע אֲרֵי הוי'ה הוּא אֱלֹקִים,
That is, "Du host zikh bavizn az men zol dir visen" (Yiddish: You revealed Yourself so that one should know You), and this is as Rabbeinu explained, may his soul rest in Eden:	דּוּ האָסְט זִידְּ בָּאַוויזָן אַז מֶען זוֹל דִּיר וִויסְן"י, וְהוּא כְּמוֹ שֶׁפֵּרֵשׁ רַבֵּנוּ נִשְׁמָתוֹ עֵדֶן:
"You have been shown to know"—"Atoh" means "You" (in direct address), that is, the Essence of the Infinite. The souls of Israel speak directly to the Essence of the Infinite: "Atoh" (You), in second person, just as a son says to his only father: "Atoh."	אַתָּה הָרְאֵתָ לָדַעַת", "אַתָּה – דּוּ", הַיְנוּ עַצְמוּת" אֵין סוֹף, נְשָׁמוֹת יִשְּׂרָאֵל זוֹגְן צוּ עַצְמוּת אֵין סוֹף: "אַתָּה", "דּוּ" לְנוֹכַח, כְּמוֹ שֶׁהַבֵּן אוֹמֵר לְאָבִיו "אַתָּה" לְנוֹכַחַ, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא אָבִיו הַיְחִידִי;
"Hareisa"—You revealed Yourself, "Lada'as"—so that one should know You.	"הָרְאֵתָ – האָסָט זִיךְ בָּאֲוויזְן, לָדַעַת – אַז מֶען זוֹל דִּיךְ וִויסָן"י.
And this knowledge is: that Havayah is Elokim and there is nothing else besides Him.	וְהַיְדִיעָה הִיא: כִּי הוי'ה הוּא הָאֱלֹקִים, וְאֵין עוֹד מָלְבַדּוֹ.

וְאַמַרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ זַ"ל (חוּלִין ז, ב): "אַמַר רַבִּי

Frierdiker Rebbe

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sorcery," for there they said: "Why is it called 'kishufim' חַנִינַא, וַאַפַלּוּ כִּשַׁפִים", דָהַנָּה אַמְרוּ שַׁם: "לַמַּה (sorcery)? Because it weakens the heavenly host." נָקָרָאוּ שָׁמָן כָּשָׁפִים? שֶׁמַּכְחִישִׁין פַּמַלִיָא שֵׁל מַעְלָה", But this very fact—that they weaken the heavenly host—is הַנָּה זָה עַצָּמוֹ מַה שֶׁמַּכְחִישִׁין פַּמַלְיַא שֶׁל מַעְלַה – itself "there is nothing else besides Him, may He be blessed." ַתְבַּרֵדְ יִתְבַּרֵדְ עוֹד מָלְבַדּוֹ יִתְבַּרֶדְ, וְאֵין זֶה אֶלָּא מַה שֶׁבָּא עַל יְדֵי רִבּוּי הִשְׁתַּלְשְׁלוּת This only comes about through the immense chain of descent that stems from the name Elokim, which is the first tzimtzum משם אַלקים שהוא צַמְצוּם הַרְאשׁוֹן. (constriction). אַבָל בָּאֱמֶת: הִנָּה הוי'ה הוּא הָאֵלֹקִים, כִּמַאַמַר: But in truth, Havayah is Elokim, as the saying goes: "Havayah and Elokim are all one." "הוי'ה ואלקים כּלא חד". And this knowledge—that Havayah is Elokim—is a positive ָוִידִיעַה זוֹ שֶׁהוי'ה הוּא אֱלֹקִים – הִיא מִצְוַת עֲשֶׂה, commandment, as the Rambam wrote: "The foundation of all כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתַב הַרַמְבַּ"ם: "יְסוֹד הַיְסוֹדוֹת וְעַמוּד הַחַכִמוֹת – לֵידַע שֶׁיֵשׁ שֵׁם מֲצוּי רָאשׁוֹן מַמְצֵיא כֵּל foundations and the pillar of all wisdom is to know that there exists a First Existent who brings all into being, and all that נִמְצֵא, וְכַל הַנָּמְצֵאים מִשְׁמֵים וַאָרֵץ וּמָה שַׁבִּינִיהֶם exists—from heaven to earth and everything in between—exists לא נָמָצָאוּ אֶלַא מַאֲמָתַת הָמַצָאוֹ כו', וִידִיעַת דַּבַר זָה only from the truth of His existence," and "Knowledge of this is קצוַת עַשָּה, שַנַּאַמַר: "אַנֹכִי הוי'ה אַלֹקִיך -". a positive commandment, as it says, 'I am Havayah your G-d." And the intention in this is: the true faith is when it comes וָהַכַּוּנָה בָּזֶה, הָאֱמוּנָה הָאֲמִתִּית הִיא כְּשֶׁבַּאַה עַל פִּי through knowledge—whatever is possible to know. As it is הַיִדִיעַה מַה שֶׁאֶפִשַׁר לֵידַע, כָּמוֹ שֶׁכַּתוּב "דַע אֵת written: "Know the G-d of your father,"—for with "the G-d of אַלֹקֵי אַבִידְ", דְּבָאֵלֹקֵי אַבִידְ שָׁהוּא עָנָיַן אַמוּנַה your father," which refers to the faith that comes through הַבַּאָה בָּקַבַּלָה, צַרִיך לְהִיוֹת דַּעַת וְהַשַּׂגַה כַּמַה tradition, there must also be knowledge and comprehension, as שֵׁאֶפִשַׁר לְהִיוֹת, much as possible.

As is written in Bechorei on the verse "And you shall return to your heart," that this is a positive commandment from the Torah regarding knowledge of Hashem, blessed be He: that we are commanded to know Him and to investigate His unity, and not to rely only on tradition.

And our Sages said (Chullin 7b): "Rabbi Chanina said—even

That is: although every single Jew has within him the faith and recognition of Havayah, and a natural draw toward Havayah by the essence of his birth and nature—just like the recognition and pull of a small child toward his father and mother—by nature of his birth

ּכְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתַב בְּבַחָרֵי עַל פָּסוּק "וַהַשֵּׁבֹתָ אֶל לְבָבֶךּ", שָׁיָּה מִצְוַת עֲשֵׂה מִן הַתּוֹרָה בִּידִיעַת הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרִדְּ שֶׁנִּצְטַוּינוּ לָדַעַת אוֹתוֹ וְלַחֲקָר עַל אַחְדוֹ וְלֹא לִסְמֹךְ עֵל הַקַּבָּלָה לְבַד,

וְהַיְנוּ דַּהַגֵּם שֶׁכֶּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ בּוֹ הָאֱמוּנָה וְהַהַכָּרָה בַּהְוָיָ' וְהַהַמְשָׁכָה לַהְוָיָ' מִצַּד עֶצֶם תּוֹלַדְתּוֹ בְּטִבְעוֹ, כְּמוֹ הַכָּרַת וְהַמְשָׁכַת תִּינוֹק קָטָן אֶל אָבִיו וְאָמוֹ מִצַּד עֶצֶם תּוֹלַדְתוֹ בְּטִבְעוֹ,

קּסִ"ד, שַׁבָּת פָּרְשַׁת וָאֶתְחַנֵּן, ש"ת With G-d's help, Shabbos Parshas Va'eschanan, 1940

This is the distinction between the faith of the souls of Israel and the faith of the nations of the world. The nations believe in the name Elokim—as seen with Avimelech and Pharaoh, where the name Elokim is mentioned. But in the name Havayah they did not believe.	שֶׁזָּהוּ הַהֶּפְרֵשׁ בֵּין הָאֱמוּנָה דְּנִשְׁמוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהָאֱמוּנָה דְאֵמוֹת הָעוֹלָם, דְּאֲמוֹת הָעוֹלָם מַאֲמִינִים בְּשֵׁם אֱלֹקִים, וּכְמוֹ אֲבִימֶלֶךְ וּפַרְעֹה שֶׁנִּזְכֶּר בָּהֶם שֵׁם אֱלֹקִים, אֲבָל בְּשֵׁם הָוָיָ' לֹא הָאֱמִינוּ
That is, all their belief is only in matters that are under the governance of nature. But the faith of the souls of Israel is in the name Havayah—that which is above nature.	ְהַיְנוּ שֶׁכֶּל אֱמוּנָתָם הִיא רַק בְּעִנְיָנִים שֶׁעַל כִּי הַטֶּבַע, וְהָאֱמוּנָה דְּנִשְׁמוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל הִיא בְּשֵׁם הָוָיָ', הַיְנוּ בְּלְמַעְלָה מֵהַטֶּבַע,
And it is through this faith, which is implanted and rooted in the heart of every individual Jew, that he stands in trial against all obstacles and preventions from Torah and mitzvos and matters of G-dliness, and he literally gives his life to fulfill Torah and mitzvos.	אֲשֶׁר מִצַּד אֱמוּנָה זוֹ הַנְטוּעָה וּמַשְׁרֶשֶׁת בְּלֵב כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד הוּא עוֹמֵד בְּנִסִּיוֹן נָגָד כָּל מוֹנֵעַ וּמְעַכֵּב מִתּוֹרָה וּמִצְ <i>וֹת</i> וְעִנְיְנֵי אֱלֹקוּת וּמוֹסֵר נַפְשׁוֹ מַמָּשׁ לְקַיֵּם הַתּוֹרָה וְהַמִּצְ <i>וֹת</i> ,
For every Jew does not want, and cannot, G-d forbid, be separated from G-dliness. "A Yid, nit er ken un nit er vil zayn a nifrad fun Elokus"—A Jew cannot and does not want to be separate from G-dliness.	כִּי כָּל אֶחָד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֵינוֹ רוֹצֶה וְאֵינוֹ יָכוֹל לִהְיוֹת חַס וְשָׁלוֹם נִפְרָד מֵאֱלֹקוּת, אַ אִיד נִיט עֶר קעֶן אוּן נִיט עֶר וִויל זַיין אַ נִפְּרָד פוּן אֱלֹקוּת,
And as the saying goes: "Embraced and cleaving to You, carrying upon You, a yechidah to unify with You"—every Jew is embraced and bound to Him, may He be blessed.	וּכְמַאֲמַר "חֲבוּקָה וּדְבוּקָה בָּךְ, טוֹעֶנֶת עֶלֶיךּ, יְחִידָה לְיַחַדָךִ", דְּכָל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל הוּא חָבוּק וְדָבוּק בּוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ
And with this strength he accepts upon himself the yoke of Torah and mitzvos with love, and fulfills them with self-sacrifice.	אֲשֶׁר בְּכֹחַ זֶה הוּא מְקַבֵּל עַל עַצְמוֹ עֹל הַתּוֹרָה וּמִצְ <i>וֹת</i> בָּאַהַבָה וּמְקַיִּיְמָן בִּמְסִירוּת נֶפֶשׁ,
Yet in all this, there must still be knowledge and comprehension of G-dliness, each one according to his strength and capability.	בְּכָל זָה הִנֵּה צָרִידְּ לִהְיוֹת הַיְדִיעָה וְהַהַשָּׁגָה בֶּאֱלֹקוּת בָּלָ אֶחָד וְאֶחָד לְפִי כֹּחוֹ וִיכָלְתּוֹ,
And this is what [the Rambam] says: "To know that there is a First Being, who brings into existence all existence," which alludes to the name Havayah when he says "the foundation of foundations"—regarding the aspect of existence-creation.	וְזֶהוּ אָמְרוֹ "לֵידַע שֶׁיֵשׁ שֶׁם מָצוּי רָאשׁוֹן מַמְצִיא כָּל נִמְצָא", וּמְרַמֵז בְּשֵׁם הַוָיָ' בְּאָמְרוֹ "יְסוֹד הַיְסוֹדוֹת" שְבְּעִנְיַן הַהִתְהַוּוּת,
For the act of creation is from the name Havayah; "and the pillar of wisdoms"—that is Torah, which is also from the name Havayah.	דְהַהִתְהַוּוּת הִיא מִשֵׁם הָוָיָ', "וְעַמּוּד הַחָּכְמוֹת" בְּעִנְיַן הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁהִיא מִשֵּׁם הָוָיָ,
But this is hinted at, because the actual manifestation of creation comes through the name Elokim, and likewise the Torah comes in the form of human intellect.	וּבָא בָּרֶמֶז לְפִי שֶׁהַהִּתְהַוּוּת בְּפֹעַל הוּא עַל יְדֵי שֵׁם אֱלֹקִים, וְכֵן הַתּוֹרָה בָּאָה בְּשֵׂכֶל אֱנוֹשִׁי,

בְּסִ"ד, שַׁבָּת בָּרְשַׁת וָאֶתְחַנֵּן, ש"ת With G-d's help, Shabbos Parshas Va'eschanan, 1940

And [the Rambam] says: "To know that there is a First Being," and he does not say "to believe"—because in truth, this is faith, but it comes through knowledge.	וְאוֹמֵר "לֵידַע שֶׁיֵשׁ שֶׁם מָצוּי רָאשׁוֹן", וְאֵינוֹ אוֹמֵר "לְהַאֲמִין", שֶׁבֶּאֲמֶת זֶהוּ אֱמוּנָה אֶלָּא שֶׁבָּאָה עַל יְדֵי הַיְדִיעָה,
And this knowledge is a positive commandment that is an obligation upon each individual.	וִידִיעָה זוֹ הִיא מִצְוַת עֲשֵׂה בְּחוֹבַת גַּבְרָאִי,
But in order that a person should be able to reach this—that is, to attain divine comprehension—on this it says: "You have been shown to know." That is, that He, blessed be He, emanated the concept of knowledge within Himself.	אֲבָל בִּכְדֵי שֶׁיִּהְיֶה בִּיכֹלֶת הָאָדָם לָבוֹא לָזָה, הַיְנוּ לְהַשִּׁיג הַשָּׂגָה אֱלֹקִית, הִנֵּה עַל זָה הוּא אוֹמֵר "אַתָּה הָרְאֵתָ לָדַעַת", הַיְנוּ מַה שֶׁהוּא יִתְבָּרֵךְ הָאֱצִיל עִנְיַן הַיְדִיעָה בְּעַצְמוֹ
And as it is said: "Through knowledge of Himself He knows the created beings." That through the emanation of this knowledge there was brought about the possibility of knowledge within the created beings—that they should be able to attain divine comprehension.	וּכְמַאֲמֵר "בִּידִיעַת עַצְמוֹ יוֹדֵעַ אֶת הַנִּבְרָאִים", שֶׁעַל יְדֵי אֲצִילוּת יְדִיעָה זוֹ נַעֲשֶׂה עִנְיַן הַיְדִיעָה בַּנִּבְרָאִים שֶׁיוּכְלוּ לְהַשִּׁיג הַשָּׂגָה אֱלֹקִית,
For were it not for the emanation of knowledge within Himself, there would be no concept of wisdom and knowledge in created beings in spiritual comprehension.	דְּלוּלֵי אֲצִילוּת הַיְדִיעָה בְּעַצְמוֹ לֹא הָיָה עִנְיַן הַחָּכְמָה וְהַיְדִיעָה בַּנִּבְרָאִים בְּמֵשֶּׁגִים רוּחָנִיִּים,
And through the fact that knowledge was emanated within Himself, therefore there exists the ability in created beings to attain Elokus (G-dliness) in tangible comprehension, even in all matters of this physical world—through Divine Providence.	ְוְעַל יְדֵי שֶׁנָּאֱצְלָה הַיְדִיעָה בְּעַצְמוֹ, הִנֵּה מִפְּנֵי זָה יֶשְׁנוֹ הַיְכֹלֶת בַּנִּבְרָאִים לְהַשִּׁיג אֱלֹקוּת בְּהַשָּׁגָה מוּחָשִׁית בְּכָל עִנְיָנֵי עוֹלֶם הַזֶּה הַגַּשְׁמִיִּים בְּהַשְׁגָחָה פְּרָטִית,
Whether in man himself, or in all aspects of the inanimate, vegetative, and animal realms.	ָהֵן בָּאָדָם בְּעַצְמוֹ וְהֵן בְּכָל עִנְיָנֵי הַדּוֹמֵם צוֹמֵחַ חַי,
For through this, one fulfills the Supernal intention—to illuminate the world with the light of Torah and mitzvos, and to make it a vessel for G-dliness.	דְעַל יְדֵי זֶה מַשְׁלִּים הַכַּוּנָה הָעֶלְיוֹנָה לְהָאִיר אָת הָעוֹלָם בָּאוֹר תּוֹרָה וּמִצְווֹת וְלַעֲשׁוֹתוֹ כְּלִי לֶאֱלֹקוּת

(2)

ירידת הנשמה למטה - כדי שמוח גשמי ישיג אלקות, בהתבוננות בהשגחה פרטית, האדם מכיר שהקב"ה הוא נמנע הנמנעות The descent of the soul below — in order that a physical brain should comprehend G-dliness; through contemplation on Divine Providence, a person recognizes that the Holy One, blessed be He, is the "Impossible of impossibilities" (i.e., that even the absolutely impossible is within His capacity).

בְּסִ"ד, שַׁבָּת פָּרְשַׁת וָאֶתְחַנֵּן, ש"ת With G-d's help, Shabbos Parshas Va'eschanan, 1940

And behold, for the sake of this service—that a physical brain should be able to grasp and comprehend divine understanding in tangible perception—this comes in real, experiential terms through contemplation on Divine Providence, both in one's own life and in all matters of the world.	וְהַנֵּה בִּשְׁבִיל עֲבוֹדָה זוֹ שֶׁמוֹחַ בַּשֵּׁכֶל יוּכַל לְהַשִּׁיג וְלִהְּפֹס הַשָּׁגָה אֱלֹקִית וּלְהָבִינָה בְּהַשָּׂגָה מוּחָשִׁית, דְּזָה בָּא בְּמוּחָשׁ עַל יְדֵי הַהִּתְבּוֹנְנוּת בְּהַשְׁגָחָה פְּרָטִית, הֵן בָּאָדָם בְּעַצְמוֹ וְהֵן בְּכָל עִנְיְנֵי הָעוֹלָם,
As the Bechaye writes regarding the mitzvah of knowing Hashem, blessed be He: although knowledge of His Essence is withheld from man, since it is impossible to grasp—for He is everything and the "Impossible of impossibilities."	כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתַב הַבְּחַיֵּי בְּעִנְיַן הַמִּצְ וֹת עֲשֵׂה בִּידִיעַת הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַהְ, דְּעִם הֶיוֹת אֲשֶׁר הַיְדִיעָה בְּעַצְמוֹ יִתְבָּרַהְ נִמְנַעַת לְהָאָדָם, שֶׁאִי אֶפְשָׁר לוֹ לַעֲמֹד עָלֶיהָ לִהְיוֹתוֹ הַכֹּלֹ וְנִמְנַע הַנִּמְנָעוֹת,
And this is the meaning of the verse: "Not in the wind is Hashem, and after the wind, an earthquake—not in the earthquake is Hashem; and after the earthquake, fire—not in the fire is Hashem; and after the fire—a still, small voice."	וְזֶהוּ דִּכְתִּיב "לֹא בָרוּחַ הוי'ה, וְאַחַר הָרוּחַ רַעַשׁ לֹא בָרַעַשׁ ה', וְאַחַר הָרַעַשׁ אֵשׁ לֹא בָאֵשׁ ה', וְאַחַר הָאֵשׁ "קוֹל דְּמָמֶה דַקָּה,
That when a person contemplates G-dliness, he comes to a tangible recognition that He, blessed be He, is everything—"Er iz alts"—and the "Impossible of impossibilities."	שֶׁכַּאֲשֶׁר הָאָדָם מִתְבּוֹנֵן בֶּאֱלֹקוּת, הוּא בָּא לִידֵי הַכָּרָה מוּחָשִׁית שֶׁהוּא יִתְבָּרַךְּ הוּא הַכֹּל, עֶר אִיז אַלְץ, וְנִמְנַע הַנִּמְנָעוֹת.
However, the general scope of this knowledge is knowledge of His existence—for His Essence, blessed be He, is not comprehensible, not even in the slightest conceptual estimation.	אָמְנָם כְּלֶלוּת יְדִיעָה זוֹ – הִיא יְדִיעַת מְצִיאוּתוֹ, כִּי מַהוּתוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ הוּא בִּלְתִּי מֵשֶּׂג, גַּם בְּהַשְׁעָרָה דְּהַשְׁעָרָה
And for this reason, the wording of the blessings includes both direct and hidden language: "Blessed are You, Hashem"—direct; "our G-d, King of the world, Who brings forth," "Who creates," "that everything"—hidden.	וּמֵהַאי טַעֲמָא, הִנֵּה נוּסַח הַבְּּרָכוֹת כְּלוּלִים מִלְשׁוֹן נוֹכֵחַ וְנִסְתָּר: "בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'" – נוֹכֵחַ, "אֱלֹקֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם", "הַמוֹצִיא", "בּוֹרֵא", "שֶׁהַכּּלֹ" – נִסְתָּר
As the Rashba writes: His Essence is hidden, but His existence is revealed. In that, tangible comprehension and knowledge are applicable.	ּכְמוֹ שֶׁכָּתַב הָרַשְׁבָּ"א: דְעַצְמוּתוֹ נֶעָלֶם וּמְצִיאוּתוֹ גָּלוּי, דְּבָזֶה שַׁיָּיךְ עִנְיֵן הַיְדִיעָה וְהַהַשָּׂגָה מוּחָשִׁית.
And for the sake of this service, this is the general idea of the soul's descent below, which is a very great and awesome descent.	וּבִשְׁבִיל עֲבוֹדָה זוֹ – הוּא כְּלָלוּת עִנְיַן יְרִידַת הַנְּשָׁמָה לְמַטָּה, שֶׁהִיא יְרִידָה גְּדוֹלָה וַעֲצוּמָה בִּמְאֹד.

בְּסִ"ד, שַׁבָּת בָּרְשַׁת וָאֶתְחַנֵּן, ש"ת With G-d's help, Shabbos Parshas Va'eschanan, 1940

For the soul—as it is in Atzilus—is in a state of utmost refinement. And behold, every single Jew says: "The soul that You have placed within me is pure," referring to the soul as it is in Atzilus, where it is in a state of ultimate purity and brightness, in which the essential light of the soul shines.

And therefore all the supernal lights and revelations shine within it. For the soul's comprehension is in the essence of G-dliness.

And just as the essential revelations are in the seffros of Atzilus, so too are the revelations in the soul as it is in Atzilus.

That is: the essential lights that shine in the seffros of Atzilus also shine in the soul.

But in the descent of the soul below, its light becomes dimmed and darkened, and the essential light of the soul no longer shines. Consequently, the supernal lights and revelations no longer shine within it.

Just as in the physical analogy: the light of the sun shines everywhere equally—whether in a filthy place or on pure water. However, pure water, polished copper, and clean, thick glass receive the sun's light much more and sparkle. A precious stone sparkles even more.

The reason is that the more something is pure and clear, the more it receives and reflects the sun's light.

And so it is in the spiritual sense with the soul: the more refined and clear it is, the more it receives bright divine light.

And in its descent below, where its essential light becomes darkened and dimmed, the lights and revelations from above no longer shine within it.

דְהַנְשָׁמָה כְּמוֹ שֶׁהִיא בַּאֲצִילוּת הִיא בְּתַכְלִית הַזַּכּוּת, וְהַנֵּה כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד מִיִשְׂרָאֵל אוֹמֵר "נְשָׁמָה שֶׁנָּתַתָּ בִּי טְהוֹרָה הִיא", שֶׁקָאֵיט עַל הַנְשָׁמָה כְּמוֹ שֶׁהִיא בַּאֲצִילוּת שֶׁהִיא בְּתַכְלִית הַטְּהַרָה וְהַבְּהִירוּת דְּמֵאִיר אוֹר הַעַצִּמִי שֵׁל הַנְשַׁמָה,

ְעַל כֵּן מְאִירִים בָּה כָּל הָאוֹרוֹת וְגִלּוּיִים הָעֶלְיוֹנִים, דְּהַשָּׁגַת הַנְשָׁמָה הִיא בְּמַהוּת אֱלֹקוּת,

וְלָזֹאת הָנֵה כְּמוֹ שֶׁהַגִּלּוּיִים הָעַצְמִיִּים הֵם בִּסְפִירוֹת דַּאֲצִילוּת, הָנֵה כֵּן הֶם הַגִּלּוּיִים גַּם בְּהַנְשָׁמְה כְּמוֹ שֶׁהִיא בַּאֲצִילוּת,

וְהַיְנוּ שֶׁהָאוֹרוֹת הָעַצְמְיִים הַמְּאִירִים בִּסְפִּירוֹת דָּאֱצילוּת מָאירים בַּנִשְׁמֵה.

וּבִירִידַת הַנְּשָׁמָה לְמַטָּה הָבֵי נִתְעַמֵּם וְנֶחֱשַׁךּ אוֹרָה, שָׁאֵינוֹ מֵאִיר אוֹר הָעַצְמִי שֶׁל הַנְשָׁמָה, בְּמֵילָא אֵינָם מָאִירִים בָּה הָאוֹרוֹת וְהַגִּלוּיִים שֶׁל מַעְלָה,

דָּכְמוֹ בְּגַשְׁמִיוּת עַל דֶּרֶךְ מְשֶׁל, הָנֵּה אוֹר הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ מֵאִיר בְּכָל מָקוֹם בְּלִי הָבְדֵל בֵּין מָקוֹם לְמָקוֹם, שֶׁמֵאִיר בִּמְקוֹם הָאַשְׁפָּה כְּמוֹ בְּמֵיִם זַכִּים, מִכָּל מָקוֹם הַנֵּה מֵיִם זַכִּים, נְחוֹשֶׁת קֻלָל, וּזְכוּכִית עָבָה וּנְקיָּה מְקַבְּלִים אוֹר הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בְּיוֹתֵר, שֶׁמְתְנוֹצְצִים, וְאֶבֶן טוֹב מָתְנוֹצֵץ עוֹד יוֹתֵר,

וְטַעַם הַדָּבָר – הוּא שֶׁכָּל מֵה שֶׁהוּא טָהוֹר וּבָהִיר יוֹתֵר, מָקַבֵּל אוֹר הַשֵּׁמֵשׁ יוֹתֵר,

וְכֵן הוּא בְּרוּחָנִיוּת בַּנְשָׁמָה, דְּכָל מַה שֶׁהִיא בִּבְהִירוּת ,וְזַכּוּת יוֹתֵר – מָקבֵּלֵת אוֹר בַּהִיר יוֹתֵר

וּבִירִידָתָה לְמַטָּה שֶׁנֶּחָשַׁךְּ וּמִתְעַמֵּם אוֹרָה הָעַצְמִי, מָמֵילָא אֵינָם מְאִירִים בָּה הָאוֹרוֹת וְגַלּוּיִים שֶׁלְמַעְלָה,

קּסִ"ד, שַׁבָּת פָּרְשַׁת וָאֶתְחַנֵּן, ש"ת With G-d's help, Shabbos Parshas Va'eschanan, 1940

Even in the highest souls that have vision in G-dliness, this vision is only "the sight of the eye of the intellect." As it is said: "In the eye of the intellect, everything is perceived in the heart."	שֶׁגַּם בִּנְשָׁמוֹת גְבוֹהוֹת שֶׁיֵשׁ בָּהֶם רְאִיָּה בֶּאֱלֹקוּת, הִנֵּה רְאִיָּה זוֹ הִיא רַק רְאִיַּת עֵין הַשֵּׁכֶל, וּכְמַאֲמַר: ,'''בְּעֵין הַשֵּׂכֶל דִּבְּלָבָּא אָתְחַזַּי כֹּלֶא
But this is not vision of the Essence. And likewise, the comprehension of the soul below is incomparable to its comprehension as it is above.	שָׁאֵין זֶה רְאִיַּת הַמָּהוּת, וְכֵן הַהַשָּׁגָה שֶׁל הַנְּשָׁמָה לְמַטָּה אֵינָהּ בְּעֵרָךְ לְהַשָּׁגָתָהּ כְּמוֹ שֶׁהִיא לְמַעְלָה.
And this means that in addition to the aspect of vision, there must also be comprehension. Just like in the physical world—when a person sees something, he must know what he is seeing.	וְהַיְנוּ שֶׁלְבַד עִנְיַן הָרְאִיָּה צָרִיךְּ לְהְיוֹת הַהַשֶּׁנָה, וּכְמוֹ בְּגַשְׁמִיוּת שָׁכַּאֲשֶׁר הָאָדָם רוֹאֶה אֵיזֶה דְּבָר, הַרֵי צָרִיךְ לָדַעַת מַה שֶׁהוּא רוֹאֶה,
For the sight itself—even though he sees the actual essence of the thing—is still not sufficient unless there is comprehension of what he sees.	דְּרְאִיָּה עַצְמָה, הָגַם שֶׁהוּא רוֹאֶה עֶצֶם מַהוּת הַדְּבָר, מִכָּל מָקוֹם אֵינוֹ מַסְפִּיק, כִּי אָם צָרִידְּ לְהִיוֹת הַהַשְּׁנָה בְּמַה שֶׁהוּא רוֹאֶה.
So too in spiritual service: the sight of the "eye of the intellect" is not yet sufficient; there must also be comprehension.	הָנֵּה כֵּן הוּא בָּעֲבוֹדָה הָרוּחָנִית, דְּרְאִיַּת עֵין הַשֵּׂכֶל אֵינוֹ מַסְפִּיק עֲדַיָן, וְצָרִיךְ לִהְיוֹת גַּם עִנְיַן הַהַשָּׂנָה.
This is the concept of chochmah and binah in the soul: chochmah is the spark of conceptual insight, while binah is tangible comprehension through explanations, reasonings, and analogies—until the concept is fully understood and accepted by human intellect.	שֶׁדֶּהוּ עִנְיַן חָכְמָה וּבִינָה שֶׁבַּנֶּפֶשׁ, דְּחָכְמָה הִיא נְקַדַּת הַהַשְׂכָּלָה, וּבִינָה הִיא הַהַשָּׁגָה מוּחָשִׁית בְּבֵיאוּרִים וְהֶסְבֵּרִים, בְּהַשְׁעָלוֹת וּמְשָׁלִים, עַד אֲשֶׁר הַהַשְּׁכָּלָה מוּבֶנֶת בְּהַשָּׁנָה גְּמוּרָה וּמִתְקַבֶּלֶת בְּשֵׁכֶל אֲנוֹשִׁי
And since when divine comprehension is understood and grasped in human intellect, this constitutes a great clarification and elevation in the mind and intellect of the one who comprehends.	ְוְעָם הֶיוֹת דְּכַאֲשֶׁר הַשָּׁנָה אֱלֹקִית מוּבָנֶת וּמַשֶּּנֶת בְּשֵׁכֶל אֱנוֹשִׁי, הָרֵי הוּא בֵּרוּר וַעֲלִיָּה גְּדוֹלָה בְּמוֹחַ וְשֵׁכֶל הַמַּשִּׂיג
But in such comprehension, the soul's senses become like bodily senses. For the soul and the body are essentially different in their faculties of sensation: the soul's senses are spiritual, because the soul's experience of reality is one of constant renewal; whereas the body's senses are rooted in self-existence.	אֲבָל בְּהַשָּׂגָה זוֹ נַעֲשִׂים חוּשֵׁי הַנְּשָׁמָה כְּחוּשֵׁי הַגּוּף, דְהַנְּשָׁמָה וְגוּף חֲלוּקִים בָּעֶצֶם הַחוּשִׁים שֶׁלָּהֶם, שֶׁחוּשֵׁי הַנְּשָׁמָה הֵם בְּרוּחָנִיּוּת, כִּי כְּלֶלוּת עִנְיַן הַמְצִיאוּת – הוּא הִתְחַדְּשׁוּת אֲצֶל הַנְּשָׁמָה, וְחוּשֵׁי הַגוּף הֵם בְּיֵשׁוּת
And the general idea of spirituality is novelty for the body. But when the soul's senses become like bodily ones, the light of the soul becomes dimmed—and this is a great descent for the soul.	וּכְלָלוּת עִנְיַן הָרוּחָנִיּוּת – הוּא הִתְחַדְּשׁוּת אֵצֶל הַגּוּף. וְכַאֲשֶׁר חוּשֵׁי הַנְּשָׁמָה נַצֲשִׂים כְּחוּשֵׁי הַגּוּף, מִתְעַמֵּם אוֹר הַנְּשָׁמָה, וַהָרֵי זוֹ יְרִידָה גְּדוֹלָה לְהַנְּשָׁמָה.

בְּסִ"ד, שַׁבָּת בָּרְשַׁת וָאֶתְחַנֵּן, ש"ת With G-d's help, Shabbos Parshas Va'eschanan, 1940

And so, the service of the soul as it is below is absolutely incomparable to its service above, prior to its descent.

וְכֵן עֲבוֹדַת הַנְּשָׁמָה כְּמוֹ שֶׁהִיא לְמַטָּה אֵינָה בְּעֵרֶךְ כְּלֶל לְגַבֵּי עֲבוֹדָתָה לְמַעְלָה, כְּמוֹ שֶׁהִיא לְדֶם יְרִידָתָה לָמַטַּה.

And this is even regarding the highest souls, as our Rebbe (may his soul be in Eden) writes in chapter 37 of Tanya: even when a person is a perfect tzaddik, who serves Hashem with awe and abundant love in delight, he will not reach the levels of cleaving to G-d with love and awe that he had before descending into this material world—not even a fraction of it.

וְזֶה אֲפָלוּ בִּנְשָׁמוֹת הַגְּבוֹהוֹת, כְּמוֹ שֶׁכּוֹתֵב רַבֵּנוּ נִשְׁמָתוֹ עֵדֶן בְּפֶּרֶק ל״ז [מִסֵּפֶר הַתַּנְיָא], דְגַם כְּשֶׁהוּא צַדִּיק גָּמוּר, עוֹבֵד ה׳ בְּיִרְאָה וְאַהֲבָה רַבָּה בְּתַעֲנוּגִים – לֹא יַגִּיעַ לְמַעֲלוֹת דְּבֵקוּתוֹ בַּה׳ בְּדְחִילוּ וּרְחִימוּיָא בְּטֶרֶם יְרִידָתוֹ לָעוֹלֶם הַזֶּה הַחָמְרִי – לֹא מִנֵּה וְלֹא מִקְצָתֵיה

There is no comparison or resemblance between them at all. All the more so regarding the souls of beinonim (average people), whose love and fear below are not at all comparable to their service above, and they require great effort to reach love and fear.

וְאֵין עֵרֶךְ וְדְמְיוֹן בֵּינֵיהֶם כְּלֶל. וְכָל שֶׁכֵּן בְּנִשְׁמוֹת הַבֵּינוֹנִים, שֶׁהָאַהָּבָה וְהַיְרְאָה שֶׁלָּהָם שֶׁלְמַטָּה אֵינָה בְּעֵרֶךְ עֲבוֹדָתָם לְמַעְלָה, וּצְרִיכִין יְגִיעָה רַבָּה לָבוֹא לָאַהַבָּה וְיִרְאָה.

Thus, this constitutes an extremely great and immense descent.

הַרי שׁנַהוּ יִרידַה גִּדוֹלָה וַעֲצוּמַה בַּמָאֹד.

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מקור חיות העולמות - מהארה דאצילות, שזו ירידה לגבי אצילות. תכלית הירידה - בשביל העליה: ביטול היש דנה"ב וקירובו לאלקות, והתכללות הגשמיות בקדושת התורה והתפלה.

The source of vitality for the worlds is from a radiance of Atzilus, which itself is a descent relative to Atzilus. The ultimate purpose of this descent is for the sake of ascent: the nullification of the ego of the animal soul and its drawing close to G-dliness, and the integration of physicality into the holiness of Torah and prayer.

And behold, just as it is with the soul that becomes enclothed in the body—that this comes through a great descent from its prior state before enclothement in the body—so too is it with the Divine radiance that becomes the source for the worlds: it too is a descent.

וְהָנֵה כְּמוֹ שֶׁהוּא בְּהַנְשֶׁמֶה הַמִּתְלַבֶּשֶׁת בַּגוּף, שֶׁהוּא עַל יְדֵי יְרִידָה גְּדוֹלָה מִמֵּה שֶׁהוּא קֹדֶם הִתְלַבְּשׁוּתָה בַּגוּף, הִנֵּה כֵּן הוּא בְּהָאָרָה הָאֱלֹקִית שֶׁנַּעֲשִׂית מָקוֹר לַעוֹלָמוֹת, שֲׁהִיא גַּם כֵּן בִּבְחָינַת יִרִידָה.

For all of existence comes from the light of Atzilus. And as our Rebbe writes in Iggeres HaKodesh, section 20: the becoming of something is specifically from light—because it is of the nature of the luminary.

דְהָנֵּה כָּל הַהִּתְהַוּוּת הוּא מֵהָאוֹר דַּאֲצִילוּת, וּכְמוֹ שֶׁכּוֹתֵב רַבֵּינוּ בְּאָנֶֶרֶת הַקֹּדֶשׁ סִימָן כ', שֶׁהַהְתְהַוּוּת הִיא מֵהָאוֹר דַּוְקָא, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא מֵעֵין הַמָּאוֹר,

בְּסִ"ד, שַׁבָּת בָּרְשַׁת וְאֶתְחַגֵּן, ש"ת With G-d's help, Shabbos Parshas Va'eschanan, 1940

But this becoming is not from the essential lights of Atzilus. וָהַהַתְהַוּוּת הַיא לֹא מֵאוֹרוֹת עַצְמַיִּים דַּאָצִילוּת, כַּי rather from a radiance of Atzilus. And this radiance, as it אָם מֶהֶאָרַת אַצִילוּת, וְהָאָרָה זוֹ כִּמוֹ שֶׁנַּצֵשִׂית מַקוֹר becomes a source for the worlds of Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah, לעוֹלַמוֹת בָּרִיאָה יִצִירָה עַשְׂיַה – הַרֵי זוֹ יִרִידָה לְגַבֵּי is a descent compared to its state in Atzilus. כָמוֹ שָׁהוּא בּאֲצילוּת. And as our Rebbe says: the ray and radiance that shines from וּכְמַאַמַר רַבֵּינוּ: דְהַזִּיו וְהָאַרָה הַמֵּאִיר מֵאָתוֹ יִתְבַּרֶךְ Him, blessed be He, to bring into being and give life to the world לָהִיוֹת וּלְהַחֵיוֹת אֵת הַעוֹלָם וְהַנְּבְרַאִים שֶׁהֶם בַּעַלֵי and its created beings—which are finite and limited גָבוּל וּבַעַלִי תַּכְלִית – הָנָה בָּהָאַרַה זוֹ וּבְזִיו זֵה שַׁיַּיך beings—within this radiance and this ray, number applies. מָסְפַּר. But the infinite light of the Ein Sof, which is above the radiance וּבָאוֹר אֵין־סוֹף שֶׁלְּמַעְלָה מֵהָאַרָה הַמַּתְצַמְצֵמֶת that contracts and expands to give life to the worlds of Beriah, וּמְתַפַּשֵּׁטֶת לָהִיוֹת וּלְהַחֵיוֹת עוֹלְמוֹת בָּרִיאָה יִצִירָה Yetzirah, and Asiyah—is without number. עַשִּיָה – הוּא בִּלִי מִסְפַּר. And number compared to the infinite is utterly incomparable. וּמָסְפַּר לְגַבֵּי בָּלִי מָסְפַּר – הוּא בָּאֵין עַרוֹךְ. And the general idea of creation is in a mode of וּכְלַלוּת הַבָּרִיאַה הִיא בָּדֶרֶךְ הָתְחַדְּשׁוּת – בִּרִיאַה יֵשׁ renewal—creation of something from nothing. For something מָאַיַן, כִּי יֵשׁ מִיֵּשׁ אִי אָפִשַּׁר לְהִיוֹת, כִּי אָם מֵאַיַן from something is impossible unless it comes specifically from דַּוַקַא. nothing. And as the philosophers say: the creation of the physical from וּכְמַאֲמַר הַחוֹקָרִים: דָהַתְהַוּוּת הַגַּשְׁמִי מִן הַרוּחַנִי – the spiritual—there is no greater creation ex nihilo than this. אֵין לְדָּ בָּרִיאַה יֵשׁ מֵאַיָן גַּדוֹל מְזַה. And the Divine power that becomes enclothed in the created וָהַכֹּחַ הַאֱלֹקִי שֶׁבַּא בָּהָתְלַבָּשׁוּת בַּנָבָרַאִים – הַנָּה לְבַד beings—not only is it in a state of concealment and hiddenness זאת שהוא בַּדֶרֶךְ הַעַלָם וָהֶסְתֵּר הַבּוֹרֵא מַן הַנְּבָרֵא, of the Creator from the created but furthermore, the Divine light is relative and proportionate to הָנֵה לְבַד זֹאת – הַרֵי הַאוֹר הַאֱלֹקִי הוּא בִּעֲרַךְ the created beings. וּבְמַהוּת הַנָּבְרַאִים. And just as we observe tangibly with the soul's faculties: every וּכְמוֹ שֵׁאֲנוּ רוֹאִים בִּמוּחָשׁ בִּכֹחוֹת הַנֵּפֵשׁ: שֶׁכֵּל כֹּחַ spiritual faculty that becomes enclothed in the active entity רוּחָנִי הַמְּתְלַבֵּשׁ בְּהַפּוֹעַל הַנִּפְעָל מִמֶּנוּ – הָרֵי הוּא affected by it, becomes comparable to the nature and essence of בְּעָרֶךְ וּמַהוּת הַנִּפְעַל . that recipient. Just as with the faculty of intellect that is enclothed in the וּכְמוֹ בָּכֹחַ הַשַּׂכֵל הַמְּתַלְבֵּשׁ בְּחֹמֶר הַמֹּחַ – הָרִי material substance of the brain—its revelation is according to the הָתְגַּלוּת הַכֹּחַ הוּא כָּפִי אֹפֵן מִזִיגַת חֹמֵר הַמֹחַ, composition of that brain: in a cold and moist brain, the faculty דָבָמָזִיגַת הַמֹּחַ הַקַּר וְלַח מִתְגַּלֵּה כֹּחַ הַחַכְמַה שֶׁבָּכֹחַ of wisdom is revealed; in one that is hot and dry, the faculty of הַשֶּׁכֵל, וּבָהַמְזִיגַה שֶׁהוּא חַם וְיַבֵשׁ – מִתְגַלֵּה כֹּחַ understanding is revealed. הַבִּינַה שֲבִּכֹחַ הַשֵּׂכֵל.

ּבְּסִ"ד, שַׁבָּת בְּרָשַׁת וָאֶתְחַגּן, ש"ת With G-d's help, Shabbos Parshas Va'eschanan, 1940

And so it is with every spiritual faculty—its revelation is according to the nature and essence of the recipient.	וְכֵן הוּא בְּכָל כֹּחַ וְכֹחַ רוּחָנִי – שֶׁהִתְגַּלּוּתוֹ הוּא לְפִי אֹפֶן עֵרֶדְ וּמַהוּת הַנִּפְעָל.
If so, then this is a very great and awesome descent in the Divine radiance that became the source for the worlds.	אָם כֵּן – הֲבֵי זוֹ יְרִידָה גְּדוֹלָה וַעֲצוּמָה בְּהֶאָרָה הָאֱלֹקִית הַנַּעֲשֵׂית מָקוֹר לָעוֹלָמוֹת.
However, it is known that all descents—whether in the soul or in the Divine light—are for the sake of ascent.	אָמְנָם יָדוּעַ: דְּכָל הַיְרִידוֹת – הֵן בְּהַנְשָׁמָה וְהֵן בָּאוֹר הָאֱלֹקִי – הַכֹּל הוּא בִּשְׁבִיל הָעֲלִיָּה.
The ultimate purpose is that there be nullification of ego through the soul's service in Torah and mitzvos, which are enclothed in physical objects and matters.	שֶׁתַּכְלִית הַכַּוָנָה הוּא – שֶׁיִּהְיֶה בִּטוּל הַיֵּשׁ עַל יְדֵי עֲבוֹדַת הַנְּשָׁמָה בְּתוֹרָה וּמִצְווֹת שֶׁנִּתְלַבְּשׁוּ בִּדְבָרִים וְעָנְיָנִים גַּשְׁמִיִּים
This is the soul's service below: to weaken and nullify the animal soul until it departs from its self-centeredness and materiality, and draws near to G-dly matters, being drawn after the G-dly soul.	וְזֹאת הִיא עֲבוֹדָתָהּ שֶׁל הַנְּשָׁמָה לְמַטָּה – לַעֲשׁוֹת הַחֲלִישׁוּת וְהַבִּטוּל בַּנֶּפֶשׁ הַבַּהְמִית, עַד אֲשֶׁר יוֹצֵא מִיֵּשׁוּתוֹ וְחָמְרִיּוּתוֹ, וּמִתְקָרֵב לְעִנְיְנֵי אֱלֹקוּת, וְנִמְשָׁךְּ אַחֲרֵי הַנָּפֶשׁ הָאֱלֹקִית.
Gradually, it receives divine comprehension and awakens with love toward Hashem.	אֲשֶׁר לְאַט לְאַט מְקַבֵּל הַשָּׂגָה אֱלֹקִית וּמָתְעוֹרֵר בְּאַהַבָּה לַה.
This service is through Torah and mitzvos. Torah comes enclothed in human intellect, such that even the natural soul can understand it.	דַּעֲבוֹדָה זוֹ – הִיא עַל יְדֵי הַתּוֹרָה וּמִצְווֹת: שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה בָּאָה וְנִתְלַבְּשָׁה בְּשֵׂכֶל אֱנוֹשִׁי, שֶׁגַּם נֶפֶשׁ הַשִּּבְעִי יָכוֹל לָהָבִין זֹאת.
And each mitzvah has a specific spiritual property to refine the animal soul and weaken it, until it is transformed and included in the G-dly soul.	ְוָהַמִּצְוֹוֹת – הָבָּה כָּל מִצְוָה וּמִצְוָה יֵשׁ בָּהּ סְגֵּלָה פְּרָטִית לְזַכֵּךְ אֶת הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַבַּהָמִית וּלְהַחַלִישׁוֹ, עַד אֲשֶׁר נִתְהַפֵּךְ וְנִכְלָל בַּנֶּפֶשׁ הָאֱלֹקִית.
So too with the physical things from which the soul derives vitality: through that food, one learns and prays.	ןכֵן הַדְּבָרִים הַגַּשְׁמִיִּים שֶׁהוּא מְקַבֵּל חַיּוּתוֹ עַל יָדָם − וּבְכֹחַ הָאֲכִילָה הַהִּיא, הוּא לוֹמֵד וּמִתְפַּלֵּל.
And when the prayer is as it should be, and the Torah study is done with bittul (self-nullification),	הָנֵה כַּאֲשֶׁר הַתְּפִלָּה הִיא כִּדְבָעֵי, וּלְמוּד הַתּוֹרָה הוּא בְּבִטוּל,
then the physical matters become included in the holiness of prayer and in the holiness of Torah.	הָרֵי נִכְלָלִים הַדְּבָרִים הַגַּשְׁמִיִּים בִּקְדָּשֵׁת הַתְּפִּלֶּה וּבִקְדֵּשַׁת הַתּוֹרָה.
(7)	

בְּסִ"ד, שַׁבָּת בָּרְשַׁת וְאָתְחַנֵּן, ש״ת With G-d's help, Shabbos Parshas Va'eschanan, 1940

ע"י ביטול היש לאין, נעשה צחוק ותענוג למעלה, כמו בתפלת מנחה שמפסיק באמצע עסקיו ומתפלל בכוונה, וכן בחיי האדם, כשטרוד בפרנסה בשנותיו האמצעיות, קובע עתים לתורה ומתפלל בציבור.

Through the nullification of the "somethingness" into "nothingness" (i.e., self-nullification), there is laughter and delight Above—like in the Minchah prayer, when a person interrupts his business affairs and prays with concentration. So too in the life of a person: when he is preoccupied with livelihood during his middle years, yet he sets fixed times for Torah study and prays with a minyan.

And this is the primary ascent, about which it is said, "This Leviathan You created to play with it"—"Leviathan" represents the union of the "yesh" (somethingness) with the "ayin" (nothingness), where the "yesh" is nullified into the Divine "ayin" through man's service in Torah and mitzvos. Then, laughter and delight are aroused Above.

And this is what our Sages said (Avodah Zarah 3b): "In the fourth [hour] He sits and laughs with Leviathan." The "fourth" refers to the time of Minchah prayer, for at the time of Minchah there is the greatest nullification of "yesh," since it occurs in the middle of business hours.

For the Shacharis prayer is before business begins, and Ma'ariv is after business is over. But Minchah is during the middle of business. And when one stops in the midst of business and prays with intention—this is the ultimate bitul of "yesh."

For in truth, a person does not know from where his income truly comes, and it is only "the blessing of Hashem that makes rich." And although Torah mandates making a vessel (natural means), the main thing is the spiritual—that through this, the "yesh" is nullified.

And just as in the course of a day there are three times—Shacharis, Minchah, and Ma'ariv—so too in the course of a person's life, there are three periods: the days of childhood, the middle years of maturity, and old age.

ְןזֹאת הִיא הָעֲלִיָּה הָעִקּרִית, שֶׁעַל זֶה נָאֲמַר "לִּוְיָתָן זֶה יָצַרְתָּ לְשַׁחֵק בּוֹ", לִוְיָתָן הוּא הִתְחַבְּרוּת הַיֵּשׁ עִם הָאַיִן, שֶׁהַיֵּשׁ נִכְלָל בְּהָאַיִן הָאֱלֹקִי עַל יְדֵי עֲבוֹדַת הָאָדָם בְּתוֹרָה וּמִצְווֹת, וַאֲזַי נַעֲשֶׂה צְחוֹק וְתַעֲנוּג לִמַעְלָה.

וְזֶהוּ שֶׁאָמְרוּ רַבּּוֹתֵינוּ זַ"ל (עֲבוֹדָה זֶרָה ג, ב) "רְבִיעִית – יוֹשֵב וְשֹוֹחֵק עִם לְוֹיָתָן", דְּרְבִיעִית הוּא זְמֵן תְּפָלֵת הַמִּנְחָה, דְּבִזְמֵן תְּפַלַת מִנְחָה אֲזַי עִקַּר בִּטוּל הַיֵּשׁ מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא בְּאֶמְצַע זְמֵן הָעֵסֶק.

דְּתָפַלֵּת שַׁחֲרִית הוּא קֹדֶם הַתְּחָלֵת הָעֵסֶק, וּתְפַלַת עַרְבִית הִיא אַחַר שֻׁנָּמֵר עֲסָקִיו, אֲבָל תְּפַלֵת מִנְחָה הִיא בְּאֶמְצַע זְמֵן הָעֵסֶק, וְכַאֲשֶׁר מַפְסִיק בְּאֶמְצַע הָעֵסֶק וּמִתְפַּלֵל בְּכַוּנָה הֲרֵי זֶה בִּטוּל הַיֵּשׁ בְּיוֹתֵר.

דְּבֶאֱמֶת אֵין אָדָם יוֹדֵעַ בַּמָּה הוּא מִשְׂתַּכֵּר וְרַק בִּרְכַּת ה' הִיא תַּעֲשִׁיר, וְעַל פִּי הַתּוֹרָה צְרִיכִים לַעֲשׁוֹת כְּלִי, אֲבָל הָעִקָּר הוּא הָרוּחָנִיּוּת, דְּעַל יְדֵי זֶה בִּטוּל הַיֵּשׁ.

וְהָנֵּה כְּשֵׁם שֶׁבְּמֶשֶׁךְ הַיּוֹם יֵשׁ שְׁלוֹשָׁה זְמַנִּים: שַׁחַרִית, מִנְחָה, וְעַרְבִית—כֵּן גַּם בְּמֶשֶׁךְ חַיֵּי הָאָדְם יֵשׁ שְׁלוֹשָׁה זְמַנִּים: יְמֵי הַיַלְדוּת, שְׁנוֹת הַבֵּינוֹנִיִּים, וִימֵי הַזָּקְנָה.

בְּסִ"ד, שַׁבָּת בָּרְשַׁת וָאֶתְחַנֵּן, ש"ת With G-d's help, Shabbos Parshas Va'eschanan, 1940

When a person learns Torah and serves Hashem in his youth or old age, this is not true avodah—for this is the natural tendency of man. True avodah is during the middle years, when he is burdened with the responsibility of supporting his family.

וְכַאֲשֶׁר הָאָדָם לוֹמֵד תּוֹרָה וְעוֹסֵק בַּעֲבוֹדָה בִּימֵי יַלְדוּתוֹ אוֹ בִּימֵי זִקְנוּתוֹ—אֵין זוֹ עֲבוֹדָה אֲמִתִּית, שֶׁכָּךְ הִיא מִדַּת כָּל אָדָם; וְהָעֲבוֹדָה הָאֲמִתִּית הִיא בִּשְׁנוֹתָיו הַבֵּינוֹנִיִּים, כְּשֶׁהוּא טָרוּד וּמְטֹרָד לְפַרְנֵס בְּנֵי בִּיתוֹ

Then he must establish fixed times for Torah study and pray with a minyan—through this, delight is generated Above, and the supernal intent is fulfilled: the nullification of the "yesh" through avodah.

הָנֵּה אָז צָרִידְּ לְקְבּוֹעַ עִתִּים לַתּוֹרָה וּלְהִתְפַּלֵל בְּצִבּוּר, וּמָזֶה נַעֲשֶׂה תַּעֲנוּג לְמַעְלָה, שֶׁנִּשְׁלֶמֶת הַכַּוּנָה הָעֶלְיוֹנָה בְּבִטוּל הַיֵּשׁ עַל יְדֵי הָעֲבוֹרָה.

This is the unification of Havayah and Elokim, and this is "You have been shown to know"—that the Essence granted permission, so to speak, to be recognized through knowledge and comprehension. Thus is fulfilled the purpose of unifying Havayah and Elokim—that there is nothing besides Him, may He be blessed.

דְּזֶהוּ יִחוּד הוי׳ וֵאלֹקִים, וְזֶהוּ "אַתָּה הָרְאֵיתָ לָדַעַת", שָׁהָעַצְמוּת נָתַן רְשׁוּת לְהַפִּיר כִּבְיָכוֹל אֶת הָעַצְמוּת עַל יְדֵי יְדִיעָה וְהַשָּׂגָה, וְנִשְׁלֶמֶת הַפַּוָּנָה בְּיִחוּד הוי׳ וֵאלֹקִים שָׁאֵין עוֹד מִלְבַדּוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ.

בְּסִ"ד, שַׁבָּת בָּרְשַׁת וְאָתְחַנֵּן, ש"ת With G-d's help, Shabbos Parshas Va'eschanan, 1940

[NOTE Summary

The discourse opens with a meditation on the verse "אַקָּה הָרֶאֵה," emphasizing the extraordinary gift that human beings can attain daas (intimate knowledge) of G-d. The Frierdiker Rebbe explains that this awareness is achieved through the descent of the soul into a physical body specifically so that a **material brain** can grasp **G-dliness** through contemplation—particularly on **Hashgacha Pratis** (Divine Providence). This leads to the profound realization that G-d is the "Nimna HaNimna'os"—the One for whom even impossibility is possible (as per the Rambam and Chassidus).

To facilitate divine awareness in this world, the worlds themselves were created via an "ha'arah" (a contracted glimmer) from the world of Atzilus. This represents a **tremendous descent** for the divine light, and yet—this descent exists for the sake of a greater ascent. The core purpose is to refine the **animal soul (nefesh habehamis)**, and to elevate the **physical world** through Torah and mitzvos. This transformation of yesh (ego, selfhood) into ayin (nullification, divine oneness) brings about the union of the finite and infinite.

Through the soul's labor in Torah, which enclothes itself in human intellect, and mitzvos, each of which refines a specific dimension of the animal soul, a person gradually transforms their inner being. Even the physical matter that supports life (eating, sleeping, etc.) becomes elevated when it fuels Torah study and sincere prayer. This process culminates when these physical elements are subsumed into the **sanctity of Torah and tefillah**, reflecting a full integration of G-dliness into the material.

This journey of inner transformation produces **divine delight and laughter Above**, symbolized by the **Leviathan**, which the verse describes as created "to play with." The Leviathan metaphorically represents the union of yesh and ayin—the physical being nullified into its source. This is most powerfully experienced during **Mincha**, the afternoon prayer, which is recited **in the middle of one's workday**, when one interrupts material pursuits to connect with G-d. Similarly, the most potent spiritual work occurs **in the middle years** of life—when one is burdened with responsibilities and distractions—and still makes time for Torah and tefillah.

It is this **bitul hayesh**—the self-nullification born not of detachment, but of profound spiritual commitment amidst distraction—that fulfills the ultimate divine intention. Through such work, the **unity of Havayah and Elokim** is revealed in the world. This is the full realization of the verse: "אַהָּה הָרְאֵהָ לָדְעַת"—you have been shown, through your life experience and inner work, to truly *know* G-d.

Practical Takeaway

Your ordinary life—especially during your busiest, most distracted years—is the most precious opportunity to bring joy to G-d. When you pause in the middle of your day to daven Mincha with intention, or carve out time for Torah learning amidst pressure and deadlines, you're not just fulfilling an obligation. You're transforming the very fabric of your world. You are taking your yesh—the sense of selfhood—and fusing it with ayin—divine truth. That moment is not Provident Barbara Chairs is the New your pose of creation.

בְּסִ"ד, שַׁבָּת בָּרְשַׁת וְאָתְחַנֵּן, ש"ת With G-d's help, Shabbos Parshas Va'eschanan, 1940

Chassidic Story

In the early 1930s, when the Frierdiker Rebbe was already living in Poland, a young businessman from Warsaw once came to him during the month of Elul. The man was deeply troubled. He confessed: "Rebbe, I feel so distant. My days are filled with meetings and commerce. My Torah learning is minimal, my davening rushed. I fear I'm wasting my soul."

The Rebbe looked at him with warmth and said:

"You know, in Gan Eden they study Torah all day, and the angels sing praises without pause. But they cannot bring G-d delight the way you can. When a Jew stops in the middle of a trade deal, or in the stress of raising a family, and says 'Shema Yisrael' with focus, or learns a few lines of Torah—it causes G-d to smile in a way no angel ever could."

Then the Rebbe added: "Even Leviathan, that majestic creature the Midrash says G-d plays with in the future—that joy is nothing compared to the joy Hashem feels when **you**, right here in this world of concealment, bring Him close with one act of bitul."

(Source: Sefer HaSichos 5703, based on firsthand recollections from Chassidim who were present.)

END NOTE