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LIKKUTEI SICHOS

INSIGHTS INTO THE WEEKLY PARSHA
BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



Dedicated to

Emmanuel (Mendel) Karp

1905 - 1989

son of Bernard (Berl) and Rose (Rezele)



Manny Karp was born in the United States, in 1905. His first language was Yiddish.

Losing his mother to the Spanish Flu shaped his resilience and commitment to helping others, ultimately leading to a career as a guidance counselor in Philadelphia public schools. He also served many years as the director of Camp Akiba in the Poconos.

Karp's legacy is characterized by his optimism and unwavering dedication to learning and mentorship. Emmanuel Karp died in 1989.

VAYISHLACH I | וַיִּשְׁלַח אָ

Adapted from *sichos* delivered on *Shabbos Parshas Vayishlach*, 5716 and 5718 [1955 and 1957]

Introduction

Rav Avraham Ibn Ezra coined a memorable phrase, “הַעֲבָר אֵין, הַעֲתִיד עָדִין, וְהַהּוּנָה כְּהַרְף עַזָּן,” “The past is no longer; the future is yet to come, and the present is but a fleeting moment.” The paradox of living in the moment, making every moment truly count, is a challenge that each one of us faces.

In his brief message to his brother Esav,¹ “I sojourned with Lavan,” Yaakov intimated how he confronted this paradox. True, he had spent 20 years in Lavan’s household. He had married, fathered a large family, and amassed wealth. Nevertheless, he saw all of this as a temporary sojourn.

Seeing the temporary nature of his life in this world did not prevent him from living fully, filling his days with joy, meaning, and purpose. Our Sages² decode Yaakov’s message, explaining that the word *גרה*, “sojourned,” contains the same root letters as *תְּנִינָה*, the number of *mitzvos*. Yaakov was implying that his life was a synthesis of the material and the spiritual. Viewing his material possessions and concerns as temporary – like a traveler passing through – freed him to engage with them more fully and transform them. Freeing himself from the treadmill of seeking material wealth and pleasure empowered him to work with the world’s physical substance without being trapped by it. He was able to refine materiality precisely because he was not enslaved to it.

Precisely such an outlook enabled Yaakov to receive a promise of the Ultimate Future, *Mashiach’s* coming, the era when the physical and the spiritual will flourish in symbiosis. Thus, our Sages³ comment on the phrase,⁴ “I acquired... donkeys. ‘Donkeys’ – this refers to the King *Mashiach*.” The word *chamor* (חָמָר), “donkey,” contains the same root letters as *chomer* (חוֹמֵר), meaning “material substance.” Yaakov was able to achieve a foretaste of *Mashiach* because he viewed the world’s material substance solely as a means to bring the world to its ultimate fulfillment.

1. *Bereishis* 32:5.

3. *Bereishis Rabbah* 75:6.

2. *Rashi* on the verse, based on *Midrash Lekach Tov; Midrash HaGadol*.

4. *Bereishis* 32:6.



From a Foreign Place to a Redeemed World

An Interpretation that Requires Explanation

1. Commenting on the verse,¹ “I sojourned (*garti*, גַּרְתִּי) with Lavan,” *Rashi* states that Yaakov was implying, “I observed the 613 (*mitzvos*).”²

This commentary on the verse raises several questions: a) What is the connection between the interpretation, “I observed the 613 *mitzvos*,” to the simple, straightforward meaning of the word, *garti*, “sojourned”? b) Why was it relevant to inform Esav that “I observed the 613 *mitzvos*”? After all, Esav was not very concerned about the observance of *mitzvos*. c) What Torah teaching³ can we derive from this interpretation?

א. אוֹיְפֵן פָּסָוק עַם לְבָנָ גַּרְתִּי,
וְאָנָּט רְשִׁי, וְתְּרִי”ג מִצּוֹת
שְׁמְרָתִי. אֵין נִיט פָּאָרְשְׁטָאָנְדִּיק
אַיִן דָּעַם: א) דִּי שִׁיכּוֹת פָּוּנִ
דָּעַם דָּרְשָׁ אֹיְפֵן פָּסָוק - וְתְּרִי”ג
(אֹוֹתִיּוֹת גַּרְתִּי) מִצּוֹת שְׁמְרָתִי
- צּוּם פְּשָׁוֹטֵץ פְּשָׁטֵ פָּוּנִ פָּסָוק,
גַּרְתִּי מִלְשֹׁן גִּירּוֹת? ב) וְאָס אַיִן
גַּעֲוֹעַן נָגַע מַזְדִּיעַ זַיִן עַשְׂוֵן אַזְזִין
וְתְּרִי”ג מִצּוֹת שְׁמְרָתִי? ג) וְאָס
אַיִן דִּי תּוֹרָה - הַוְרָאָה - פָּוּנִ דָּעַם
פָּאָר אָנוּן?

On a Journey and at Home

2. The implication of the interpretation “I sojourned (*garti*) with Lavan” is that all the matters of Lavan, the Aramean – all the physical things Yaakov mentions in his message to Esav: the oxen and donkeys, sheep, servants, and maidservants – constituted, for Yaakov, nothing more than a temporary dwelling, something foreign to him that was not a genuine concern.

Yaakov’s home is the soul, the Torah, and its *mitzvos*. All physical things are nothing more than settings in which he temporarily sojourns.

ב. דָּעַר פִּירּוֹשׁ פָּוּנִ עַם לְבָנָ
גַּרְתִּי אַיִן, אָז אָלָע עֲנֵנִים פָּוּנִ
לְבָנָ הַאֲרָמִי - אָלָע גְּשָׁמִיּוֹת/דִּיקָע
זַאֲכָנִ, שָׂוָר וְחַמְוָר צַאֲנִ וְעַבְדִּ
וְשְׁפָחָה, זַיִנְעָן בַּיִ אִם גַּעֲוֹעַן
מַעַר נִיט וּזְיִי - גַּרְתִּי - גִּירּוֹת. אַ
פְּרֻעְמְדָע זַאֲכָ. סְאַיִן נִיט זַיִן עֲנֵנִ.
זַיִן הַיִם אַיִן דִּי נְשָׁמָה אָנוּ דִּי
עֲנֵנִים פָּוּנִ תּוֹרָה וּמִצּוֹת, אָנוּ דִּי
אָלָע גְּשָׁמִיּוֹת/דִּיקָע זַאֲכָן זַיִנְעָן
מַעַר נִיט וּזְיִי גִּירּוֹת.

1. *Bereishis* 32:5.

2. See *Midrash Lekach Tov; Midrash HaGadol*.

The Hebrew letters of the word *garti* (גַּרְתִּי, “I sojourned”) have a numer-

ical value of 613, corresponding to the 613 *mitzvos*.

3. The Hebrew word *דָּרְשָׁ*, meaning “teaching,” or “instruction” contains the same root letters as the

word, “Torah.” Based on this connection, the Rebbe understands that every concept in the Torah provides a teaching and instruction for Jews in every generation.

This is also reflected in the interpretation of a later statement in this Torah reading,⁴ “He built himself a house, but for his cattle he made booths”.⁵ “For himself” – that is, for his essence, his soul with its concerns – he built a “house,” a permanent dwelling. “But for his cattle” – for the physical things which he acquired⁶ – “he made booths,” temporary dwellings. Making a temporary dwelling for material possessions implies that the soul, in and of itself, and especially the soul in the spiritual realms, does not need them. Indeed, it has no connection to them whatsoever. It is only that, when descending below, into this material realm, it needs – and, therefore, acquires – physical matters.

In one of his talks,⁷ my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz, related a saying from the Maggid of Mezritch, “At home, things are quite different. At home, a person needs to have everything. But on a journey, it doesn’t matter that the dwelling is not so nice and the furnishings are not so fine. After all, he is traveling.”⁸

On this basis, we can understand the connection between the simple meaning of the verse and the interpretation given above: Because “I sojourned with Lavan” – because Yaakov considered his involvement with physical things as mere sojourning, something temporary – his involvement with physicality did not unsettle or disturb his spiritual efforts. He was able to declare, “I observed the 613 *mitzvos*.”

און דאס איז אויך וואס ער זאגט
וינויטער אין זער סדרה, ויבן לו בית
ולמִקְנָהו עֲשָׂה סְפּוּתִים: “לו”, צו אים,
דאָס הַיִסְט צו זַיִן עַצְם - נְשָׁמָה מִט
אִירָע עֲנֵנִים - הָאָט עַר גַּעֲבוֹתִים א
“בַּיִת”, דִּירָת קְבֻּעַ. “וּלְמִקְנָהו”, צו דִ
גְּשָׁמִיּוֹת/דִּיקָע זַאֲכָן ווּאָס זַי זַיְעַן
“צַוְּגַעַקְוִיְפְּטָע” (וּוְאַרְוּם דִי נְשָׁמָה מִצְדָ
עַצְמָה - וּבְפִרְטָה הַנְּשָׁמָה לְמַעַלָּה דָּאָרָך
עַס נִיטָהָבָן אָנוּ נַאֲכְמָעַר, זַי הָאָט נִיט
קִיּוֹן שִׁיכּוֹת צו דָעַם, מַעַר נִיט ווּאָס
קוּמְעַנְדִּיק לְמַטָּה קוֹיְפְּט זַי אַיִן דָּבָרִים
גְּשָׁמִים), “עֲשָׂה סְפּוּת” - דִּירָת עַרְאיָה.

- בכבוד קדשת מורי וחמי אדרמו'ד
האט דערצ'ילט און א שיחוה א זוארט
פּוֹן דָעַם מַעַזְרִיטְשָׁעַר מַגִּיד ווּאָס ער
האט גַּעַזְאָגַט או אַיִן דָעַר הַיִם אַיִן
אנְזַעַרְשָׁ, אַיִן דָעַר הַיִם דָאָרָךְ מַעַן
טאָקָע אַלְזָהָבָן, אַבְעָר אַיִן ווּעַגְמָאָכָת
נִיט אָוִס אַזְסַיְהָ נִיט אֹזָא שִׁינְעַן דִּירָה
אָנוּ עַס זַיְעַן נִיט אֹזְנַעַן שִׁינְעַן מַעַבָּל,
ער אַיִן דָאָק אַיִן ווּעַג. -

לוֹיט דָעַם ווּעַט מַעַן פָּרָשְׁתֵיָין דִי
שִׁיכּוֹת פּוֹן דָעַם פְּשַׁט הַפְּסּוֹק מִיטָן
דָרְשָׁ הַפְּסּוֹק: מִצְדָ דָעַם ווּאָס עַם לְבָנָן
פְּרָתִי, ווּאָס דִי גְּשָׁמִיּוֹת/דִּיקָע זַאֲכָן
זַיְעַן בַּיִ אִים גַּעַזְעַן בְּבִחִינָת גִּירּוֹת,
דָוְרָךְ דָעַם הָאָט דִי גְּשָׁמִיּוֹת נִיט מַבְלָבָל
גַּעַזְעַן (גַּעַשְׁטָעַטָּה) צו דִי רַוְחַנִּיות,
אָנוּ ערָהָאָט גַּעַקְעַנְטָ דָוְרַכְפִּירָן דָעַם
וְתִרְיָגְ מִצּוֹת שְׁמָרָתִי.

4. *Bereishis* 33:17.

contains the same root letters as the word *kinyan*, “acquisition”).

5. See also *Maamarei Admur HaZakein HaKetzarim*, p. 17, which offers a similar interpretation.

6. The Rebbe’s addition, set off by the dashes, reflects the connection stemming from the fact that the word *מִקְנָה* (*mikneihu*, “his cattle”),

7. *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 2, pamphlet 11, p. 214ff.

8. The Maggid of Mezritch made this statement to a man of average means, who visited him at the request of the Baal Shem Tov. The

Maggid’s visitor was appalled at the abject poverty in which the Maggid lived. In response to the visitor’s questions about how he could live in such a state, the Maggid answered as stated in the main text. The intent is that our lives in this world are merely a sojourn and our true home is in the spiritual realms.

Expanding the Realm of Holiness

3. The lesson from Yaakov's conduct is even more inclusive: **When** a person treats his involvement with physical matters as a sojourn, not only does their physicality not disturb his spiritual concerns, but he is able to draw down spirituality even into the physical realm. Ultimately, he can transform the physical into spirituality and holiness.

This concept is expressed in the verse relating Yaakov's message to Esav, "I have acquired oxen and donkeys, sheep, servants, and maidservants."⁹ All these material possessions were acquired by Yaakov, i.e., were included within his essence and core.

ג. נאך מערער: דורך דעם וואס די דברים הghostim זיינען איןן אופן פון גירות, או ניט נאר וואס די גשמיות שטערט ניט צו רוחניות נאר די רוחניות ווערט נמיש אוק אין גשמיות, בי די גשמיות ווערט רוחניות אונן קדושה.

ווע ער פירט אונס אין פסוק ויהי לי שור וחמור צאן ועבד ושפחה - דאס אלץ או געונאן - לי, צום עיקר ועכט פון יעקב'.

Pointed towards the Ultimate Goal

4. In its interpretation of the verse cited previously, "I have acquired oxen and donkeys, sheep, servants and maidservants," the Midrash¹⁰ states: "Donkeys' – this refers to the King *Mashiach* [who is described] as 'a poor man, riding on a donkey'"¹¹

The word *chamor* (חמור), "donkey," contains the same root letters as *chomer* (חומר), meaning "material substance." The Midrash implies that *Mashiach's* arrival depends on the Jews refining the sparks of G-dliness enclothed in the world's material substance.¹² When every Jew works to refine his body, his animal soul, and his portion in this world, and uses them for a holy purpose, he draws down – and creates the setting for – the revelations to be manifest in the Ultimate Future.

On this basis, it is possible to understand the sequence of "I sojourned with Lavan... and I have acquired oxen and donkeys." Yaakov regarded the physical setting in which he found himself as foreign, as reflected in the meaning of the word *garti*, "sojourned," which shares the root letters of *ger* (גר, "stranger"). He worked to transform this setting into

ד. אין מדרש אונפּן פּסוק ויהי לי שור וחמור צאן ועבד ושפחה, זאנט ער, חמור זה מלך המשיח שנאמר עני ורוכב על חמור וג'.

ביאת המשיח או אפהעניג פון עבונת הבירורים. דאס הייסט או דורך דעם וואס יעדר איד וועט מברר זיין זיין גוף אונ נפש, הבהמית אונ זיין חלק און עולם, אונ אויסנאנ זיין און קדושה, דורך דעם וועט מען ממשיך זיין די גילויים פון לעתיד.

אונ דאס אויז דער המשך פון די פסוקים, עט לבן גראטי גוי ויהי לי שור וחמור – דורך דעם וואס בי יעקב' זיין געונען די גשמיות דיקע זאכן בבחינת גירות אונ ער האט זיין געמאכט

9. Bereishis 32:6.

11. Zechariah 9:9.

10. Bereishis Rabbah 75:6.

12. Tanya, ch. 37.

conduits for G-dliness by living – investing himself – in them. As a result, he was prepared to greet *Mashiach*, as he stated, “I have acquired... donkeys’ – this is King *Mashiach*.¹⁰

For this reason, Yaakov sent messengers to Esav to inform him that he had already completed the entire task of refinement allotted to him and was ready to greet *Mashiach*.

He assumed that the task of refinement allotted to Esav had also already been completed¹³ and that, from Esav’s side as well, the redemption could already come.

To this, the messengers answered him, “We came to your brother, to Esav”¹⁴ – meaning: From your perspective, you regard him as “your brother;” you are ready for the redemption. But from his perspective, he is still “Esav” before refinement and, therefore, the redemption cannot yet come.

כלים צו אלקות – גראתי כפשותו,
וואוֹנָנוּ אֵין זַי – דורך דעם איז עַד
שׁוֹן גָּעוֹזָן גָּרִיט צוֹ מַשְׁיחָן – וַיְהִי
לִי גֹּוֹ וְחַמּוֹר זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַמָּשִׁיחָן.

און צוֹלֵב דַעַם הָאָט עַד גַעֲשִׁיקַט
מְלָאכִים צוֹ עַשּׂוֹן, דָעֲצִיַּלְן אִים,
אוֹ עַד הָאָט שׁוֹן דָרְכָגָעַטָּן אַלְעַ
בִּירּוּרִים, אָנוֹ אֵי גָרִיט צוֹ מַשְׁיחָן,
רַעֲכַעַנְעַדְיק, אָנוֹ אַוִיךְ עַשְׂוֹ אֵי שׁוֹן
לְאַחֲר הַבִּירּוֹר, אָנוֹ אַוִיךְ מִצְדָ עַשְׂוֹן
קָעַן שׁוֹן קַוְמָעָן דִי גָאָלה.

אוֹרֵךְ דַעַם הָאָבָן אִים דִי מְלָאכִים
גַעֲנַטְפָעַטְרַט, בָאָנוֹ אַל אָחִיךְ אַל
עַשְׂוֹן. פָוּן דִיְין זַיִיט אֵיז עַד שׁוֹן
”אָחִיךְ” – בִּיסְטַ שׁוֹן גָרִיט צוֹ דָעַר
גָאָלה, אַבְעָר עַד פָוּן זַיִיט אֵיז
נָאָךְ עַשְׂוֹן, קַוְדָם הַבִּירּוֹר וּבִמְלָא
קָעַן נָאָךְ נִיטְ קַוְמָעָן דִי גָאָלה.

From the Microcosm to the Macrocosm

5. The Torah and its lessons are eternal, applicable for all Jews, at all times, and in all places. The lesson we can derive from the above is: Every Jew must know that even if, from the perspective of his surroundings, that of the world at large, mankind is not yet worthy of the redemption coming, he should not abandon hope for *Mashiach*’s coming. Nevertheless, although the setting is lacking and the world has not yet been entirely refined, from his perspective, he must emulate Yaakov. He must prepare himself and all his possessions – his sheep, servants, and maidservants – for the Ultimate Redemption.

The way to prepare for this is to follow the example of Yaakov – who said, “I sojourned with Lavan” – i.e., to realize that this material world is no more

ה. תּוֹרָה אָנוֹ אִירָעַ הַוּרָאות זַיִינָעַן
אַיִבְקַר, פָאָר יַעֲזַן אִידַן, אֵין יַעֲדַעַר
צִיִיט אָנוֹ אֵין יַעֲזַן אַרְטַן.

די הַזְרָה פָוּן דַעַם אַלְעַם אִיז:

יעַדְעַר אִיז דָאָרָף וּוַיְסַן, אָנוֹ אַפְּיַלוֹ
אוֹבֵךְ מִצְדָ דַעַם אַרְוּם, מִצְדָ דָעַר
וּוֹעַלְתַ, אֵיז נָאָךְ נִיטְ רָאוּי עַס זַאָל
שׁוֹן קַוְמָעָן דִי גָאָלה, וּוֹאָרוּם דִי
וּוֹעַלְתַ אֵיז נָאָךְ נִיטְ מַבּוֹרָךְ (נָאָךְ נִיטְ
אַוְסְגַעַאַיְדַלְתַ), אַבְעָר עַד פָוּן זַיִוְן
זַיִיט – דָאָרָף צַוְגַרְיִיטַן זַיְהַ מִיטְ אַלְעַ
זַיִינָעַ עַנְגִינִים, צַאָן וּשְׁבָדַד וּשְׁפַחַה, צוֹ
דָעַר גָאָלה שְׁלִימַה.

אָנוֹ דִי הַכְנָה צוֹ דַעַם אִיז – עַם לְבַנְן
גְראָתִי. עַד דָאָרָף וּוַיְסַן אָז גָאָז עַולְם

13. See *Torah Or*, p. 24b.

14. *Bereishis* 32:7.

than a temporary sojourn. We are “stranger[s] in the land;”¹⁵ this is not our natural setting.

“The days of our lives number seventy years; if with vigor, eighty years,”¹⁶ or, if someone is blessed with an extremely long life, “His lifespan will be 120 years.”¹⁷ Throughout this entire time, a person should feel that he is merely sojourning. With this approach, material existence will not conflict with the spiritual, and he will be able to also enjoy material success and, like Yaakov, acquire “oxen and donkeys, sheep, servants, and maidservants,” and other manifestations of material prosperity.

By preparing himself, his household, and his possessions for the Ultimate Redemption, a person also has an effect on the world at large. Our Sages teach,¹⁸ “The world is equally balanced.” Consequently, with but one good deed, a person can tip the scales of the entire world and bring redemption to it.

Rambam rules:¹⁹ “[When] the Jewish people [turn to G-d in] *teshuvah*, they will be redeemed immediately” – and, indeed, even more rapidly, to borrow the wording of the Alter Rebbe,²⁰ “immediately, at once.” As such, regardless of the situation of the world at large, a person should realize that, with *teshuvah*, he can bring about his own personal redemption and also redemption for the world at large.

הזה איז מער ניט ווי גראטי. גר אגבי באָרְצַן.

די גאנצַע ימי שנותינו בהם שבעים
שנה ואמ' בגבורות שמונים שנָה,
ויהיו ימי מאה ועשרים שנָה, זייןען
מער ניט ווי גראטי, און דעםאלט
אייז די גשמיינט ניט קיין סטירה צו
רוחניות, און דורך דעם האט ער שור
וחטמור צאן ועכד ושפחה אויך אין
גשמיינט.

און דורך דעם וואס ער גרייט צו
זיך מיט זייןען ענינים צו דער גאולה,
פועלט ער עס אויך אין וועלט,
ווארום דער עולם אייז אַ שוקוליג
(גָּלִילִי אָוִיךְ גָּלִילִי), בָּמִילָא אַיִן מיט
איין גוטער פֿעָולָה ווועט ער מקריע
זיין די גאנצַע וועלט, און ברענגן דִי
גאולה אין דער גאנצַע וועלט.

און ווי דער רמב"ם פסק' גט:
ישראל שעושים תשובה מיד נגאלים
(ווען אידן טווען תשובה ווערין זוי
גָּלִילִי אָוִיסְגָּעַלִּיּוֹת). און דער
אלטער רב"י אייז מוסיפה: תיְקֵף ומייד.
בָּמִילָא אַיִן ניט קוּקְנְדִּיק אַוְפָּנִים מִצְבָּה
פֿון וועלט, קען ער דורך תשובה
פועלן די גאולה הפרטית בי זיך,
און אויך די גאולה הפללית אין דער
גאנצַע וועלט.

The Potential *Chassidus* Generates

6. Everything that takes place is controlled by *Hashgachah Protis*, “Divine Providence.” As such,

ו. אלע ענינים זייןען דאך בהשגהה

15. *Tehillim* 119:19.

It is possible to appreciate what “*teikf*,” “at once,” adds to “*מייד*,” “immediately,” based on our Sages’ question (*Taanis* 19b): “What is meant by *miyad*, “immediately”? Our Sages’ response, which speaks of a hiatus of several days, implies that “immediately” does not necessarily imply without any delay. Similarly, *Rashi*,

Shabbos 89a, s.v. *miyad*, interprets “immediately” as referring to an event that occurred at a later time.

16. *Ibid.* 90:10.

By contrast, *teikef*, “at once,” implies direct immanence. See *Zevachim* 33a; *Tosafos. Sotah* 39a, s.v. *kol*; *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 166:1.

17. Cf. *Bereishis* 6:3.

18. See *Rashi, Kiddushin* 40b; *Rambam, Hilchos Teshuvah* 3:4.

19. *Ibid.*, 7:5.

20. *Tanya, Iggeres HaTeshuvah*, ch. 11.

there is additional relevance to the above verse. The Alter Rebbe's redemption and that of the chassidic movement as a whole that took place on *Yud-Tes Kislev*, 5559 (1798), occurred in the week following *Shabbos Parshas Vayishlach*, when the Torah reading enumerates the above-mentioned directives.

Chassidus endows every Jew with the potential not to reckon with the circumstances of the world around him and carry out his Divine service of "sojourn[ing] with Lavan," i.e., treating physical concerns as transitory. As a result, he can reach the state of "I have acquired... donkeys," – [which] refers to the King *Mashiach*.¹⁰

Chassidus is a preparation and a channel leading to the revelations of *Mashiach*. As *Mashiach* answered the Baal Shem Tov in response to the question when he would come, "When your wellsprings spread outward..."²¹ May this occur speedily, in our days.

21. *Mishlei* 5:16. See the renowned letter of the Baal Shem Tov printed

at the conclusion of the text *Ben Pores Yosef*, and in other sources.

פרטיה. די גאולה פון אלטען רבין מיט חסידות – י"ט כסלו תקנ"ט – איז געונען אין זער וואך וואס נאך שבת פרשת וישלח, אין וועלכעד עס זייןען די אויבנצער מאנטע הוראות.

חסידות גיט יעדן איזון דעם פה אויך ניט רעלכענען זיך מיט דעם מאכט פון ווועלט, דורךטן בי זיך די עבורה פון עם לבן גראטי, ובמילא צוקומען צום ויהי לי גו' וחתמור זה מלך המשיח.

חסידות איז א הכהנה און א קלוי צום גילוי המשיח, או דורך יפונצ'ו מעינטיך חוצה איז קא אתי מר, במהרה בימינו.

מלוקט משיחות ש"פ וישלח, תשע"ז (ז)

(ד) אגרת התשובה פ"א; תוספת תיכף על מיד – עין תענית (יט, ב) איזהו מיד שלחן כו'. רשות"ז ד"ה מיד שבת פט, א. מה שאין כן תיכף על פי מה שכתוב בבחים לג, א. תוספות ד"ה כל (סוטה לט, א). שולחן ערוך אורח חיים סימן קס"ז.

(ז) ע אויבן העורה ד. (א) ע מדרש לך טוב. מדרש הגודל. (ב) ע אויך מאמרי אדמור"ז הוקן הקצרים (ח) ראה תורה אוור כד, ב (ט) תהילים קיט, יט. (ג) תלמים צ, ז. (ד) תלמידי דברי ר' חי ליקוט יא, ע' ריד. (ה) בראשית ר' בה עה, א. (ו) בראשית ו, ג. (ו) ע קדושין מ, ב. (ז) הלכות תשובה פ"ז, ה"ה. (ז) תניא פל"ז.

VAYISHLACH II | וַיִּשְׁלַח בָּ

Adapted from a *sichah* delivered on *Yud-Tes Kislev*, 5718 (1957)

Introduction

When we imagine the arrival of *Mashiach*, we tend to envision grandeur – miraculous events, clouds of glory, a revelation so overwhelming that all doubt vanishes. The Talmud¹ itself offers this vision, citing Daniel's² prophecy of *Mashiach* coming “with the clouds of heaven.”

Yet the same Talmudic passage presents an entirely different image – Zechariah's³ prophecy of “a poor man, riding on a donkey.” Our Sages explain that the mode of arrival depends on the Jewish people's merit – clouds if we are worthy, a donkey if we fall short.

This resolution creates a deeper question: Yaakov's spiritual accomplishments consummately prepared him for *Mashiach*'s coming.⁴ Since the Midrash explicitly connects his acquisition of donkeys to the Messianic Era, why did his preparations lead to what appears to be the lower mode of arrival?

In the *sichah* that follows, the Rebbe explores why the donkey (*רֵינָה*) – a symbol of material substance (*חַמְרָה*) – represents not a concession to unworthiness but the ultimate path to redemption. By tracing the same donkey through Avraham, Moshe, and *Mashiach*,⁵ the Rebbe reveals a progression in which refining physicality becomes the path that leads to the ultimate fusion of the material and the spiritual that will characterize the era of *Mashiach*.

1. *Sanhedrin* 98a.

4. See *Torah Or*, p. 24c.

2. *Daniel* 7:13.

5. See *Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer*, ch. 31.

3. *Zechariah* 9:9.



How Will Mashiach Come? Riding on a Donkey or a Cloud?

An Unflattering Analogy

1. The Midrash¹ associates “donkeys” with “the King *Mashiach*.” Explanation is required: Why did Yaakov allude to the Future Redemption specifically with the analogy of a donkey?

The Talmud² answers this question by contrasting two verses that mention *Mashiach*’s coming. One verse states,³ “Behold with the clouds of heaven, one like a man was coming,” i.e., that *Mashiach* will come on a cloud, but another describes him as “a poor man riding on a donkey.”⁴ Our Sages reconcile the contradiction, explaining: “If [the Jews] merit, [*Mashiach* will come] ‘with the clouds of heaven.’ If they do not merit, [he will come as] ‘a poor man riding on a donkey.’”

This raises a further difficulty: Yaakov saw himself as ready for the Ultimate Redemption because he had completed his Divine service and had fully accomplished his personal mission of refinement.⁵ Thus, he had “merited” that *Mashiach* arrive “with the clouds of heaven.” Why then did he allude to his coming with the analogy of a poor man riding on a donkey?

Three Stages in an Ongoing Motif

2. *Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer*⁶ states that the donkey on which *Mashiach* will ride is the same donkey that Moshe used when bringing his wife and children to Egypt, as the verse states,⁷ “He mounted them on

א. אין דעם דערמאגנטן מדרש שטיטיט: וְחִמּוֹר זוּ מֶלֶךְ הַמֶּשֶׁיחַ. אִיז נִיט פָּאַרְשְׁטָאַנְדִּיק פָּאַרְוּוֹאַס הַאַט עַלְקָב מְרָמָז גַּעֲוָעָן דִּי גַּאֲוָה הַעֲתִידָה אִין דַעַם עַנְנִין פָּוּן חִמּוֹר דַּקְאָ? עַס שְׁטִיטִיט דָאַך אִין גַּמְרָאַטְשִׁפְטִיב וְאַרוּ עַם עַנְנִין שְׁמַיָּא גּוֹשֵׁי (אוֹ מַשִּׁיחַ וְוַעַט קַוְמָעָן דַוְרָך אַוְאַלְקָנוּ) וְכִתְבֵּעַ עַנְיִ וּרְוָכְבֵּעַ עַל חִמּוֹר (אוֹ מַשִּׁיחַ וְוַעַט קַוְמָעָן אַוְרִיךְ אַחֲמָוֹר?)? זָכוּ עַם עַנְנִין שְׁמַיָּא לְאַזְכּוּ עַנְיִ וּרְוָכְבֵּעַ עַל חִמּוֹר (אוֹ אִיזְנָן זַיְגָעָן זַוְחָה וְוַעַט מַשִּׁיחַ קַוְמָעָן דַוְרָך אַוְאַלְקָנוּ), אַוְבִּיט - אַוְרִיךְ אַן אַיְזָלָן. אַז לְוִיט דַעַם נַאֲך מַעַר שׁוֹנוֹעַ, אַז דָאַס וְוַאֲס עַלְקָב אִיז גַּעֲוָעָן גְּרִיטִיט צֹו דַעַר גַּאֲוָה הַעֲתִידָה אִיז דָאַך דָאַס גַּעֲוָעָן מַצְדֵּד דַעַר שְׁלִימָות פָּוּן זַיְן עַבְוֹהָה - “זָכוּ”, - אִיז פָּאַרְוּוֹאַס הַאַט עַד מְרָמָז גַּעֲוָעָן מַשִּׁיחַ? נִיט אִין עַנְנִין פָּוּן עַנְנִין נְאָר אִין דַעַם עַנְנִין פָּוּן רְוָכְבֵּעַ עַל חִמּוֹר דַּקְאָ?

ב. אין פָּרָקִי דָרְבִי אַלְיעָזֶר שְׁטִיטִיט אוֹ דַעַר חִמּוֹר וְוַאֲס עַס שְׁטִיטִיט בֵּי מַשִּׁיחַ? “עַנְיִ וּרְוָכְבֵּעַ

1. *Bereishis Rabbah* 75:6.

4. *Zechariah* 9:9.

6. Ch. 31.

2. *Sanhedrin* 98a.

5. See *Torah Or*, p. 24c. See also the first *sichah* in this collection, p. 8.

7. *Shmos* 4:20.

3. *Daniel* 7:13.

the donkey.” This same donkey was used by Avraham to carry the wood and other materials for the *Akeidah*, as it is written,⁸ “He loaded his donkey.”

Our Sages are implying that Avraham, Moshe, and *Mashiach* all continued one unfolding endeavor, each one contributing a different dimension. Avraham initiated the two millennia of Torah.⁹ Moshe received the Torah at Sinai and conveyed it to the entire Jewish people.¹⁰ (True, the verse, “He mounted them on the donkey” describes events that occurred before the Giving of the Torah. However, Moshe’s return to Egypt led to the Exodus from Egypt, which prepared the Jews for the Giving of the Torah, as indicated by the verse,¹¹ “When you take the people out of Egypt, they will serve G-d on this mountain.”) And the ultimate purpose of the Giving of the Torah will be revealed by *Mashiach*.

What is the Donkey Used For?

3. There is a difference between the manner in which the donkey was used by Avraham and Moshe and the manner it will be used by *Mashiach*. Avraham used the donkey to carry the wood and the knife for the *Akeidah*. He and the youths accompanying him proceeded on foot; only the accessories – articles that assist humans – were placed on the donkey.

Moshe “took his wife and his sons and he mounted them on the donkey.” A person’s wife and children are obviously much closer

על חמור”, איז דאס דער זעלבער חמור וואס עס שטיטיט בי משה רבינו, וירכיבם על חמור”, און דער זעלבער חמור וואס עס שטיטיט בי אברהם אבינו, ויחבוש את חמורו.

דאס הייסט איז אברהם, משה מיט משה זיינען א המשך פון דעם זעלבן עניין, אברהם האט אנגעהויבן שני אלפים תורה, משה רבינו האט מקבל געווען די תורה מסיני און איבערגעגעבן צו כל ישראלי (ה גם דער פסוק וירכיבם על חמור איז געזאגט געווען פאר מтан תורה, אבער דאס שטיט דאך בי דעם עניין פון יציאת מצרים וואס ס’אייז א הכהנה צו מatan תורה, ווי עס שטיט בהוציאק את העם ממצרים תעבדון את האלקים על ההר הזה), און דער תכילת פון מatan תורה ווועט נתגלה וווען דורך מלך המשיח.

ג. פונדעסטוועגן איז דא א חילוק צוישן דעם שימוש (באנזין זיך) פון אברהם מיטן חמור און דעם שימוש פון משה, בי דעם שימוש פון משה.

בי אברהם שטיטיט און דעם חמור האט ער געניצט אויף די עצים ומאלת (די האלץ און מעסער), ער אלין מיט זיינע גערום זיינען גענאנגען צו פום, נאר די עצים ומאלת – עניינים וואס העלפֿן צו צום מענטשן – האט ער אונעגןעליגט אויפֿן חמור.

בי משה רבינו שטיטיט, ויקח את אשתו ואת בניו וירכיבם על חמור – אשתו ובניו

8. *Bereishis* 33:3.

9. *Avodah Zarah* 9a. In that source, our Sages state that the world’s spiritual history can be divided into three epochs: two thousand years of chaos, two thousand years of Torah, and two

thousand years (of preparing for and experiencing the days) of *Mashiach*.

See the Arizal’s *Likkutei Torah*, the beginning of *Parshas Lech Lecha*, and the *maamar* entitled *VeHavayah Beirach es Avraham* (published

in the *Tzemach Tzedek’s Chiddusim on Bava Basra* and in *Or HaTorah, Bereishis*, Vol. 1, p. 126a ff.).

10. *Avos* 1:1.

11. *Shmos* 3:12.

to him than mere wood and knives. A person's wife is "a helper corresponding to him,"¹² and "like his own self,"¹³ and "a son is like his father's thigh,"¹⁴ an extension and a lower part of his body.

Mashiach, however, is described as "a poor man riding on a donkey" – not only his possessions and or his family will be on the donkey; he will ride on it himself.

ז"נ"ען א סך גענטער צום מענטשן ווי' עצים ומאלת, ווארום אשתו אייז נאך עזער כנגדוּ, גגופו דמיאַ, און ברא פרעה דאַבונַ, וואס ייך איז נער נידעריקער טיל פון דעם מענטשן אלין.

בֵּי מָשִׁיחַ שְׂטִיטִיט עַנִּי וַיַּכְבֶּן עַל חָמָר, מָשִׁיחַ אַלְיָוּן וַיַּעֲטֵז וַיַּכְבֶּן עַל חָמָר.

What to Gain by Using a Donkey

4. A person uses and/or rides on a donkey to reach a destination that – because of its altitude or distance – he and his possessions would otherwise be unable to approach. The same applies to the spiritual parallel of riding on a donkey.

Chamor,¹⁵ "donkey," shares the root letters of the word *chomer*, "material substance." In that vein, the Baal Shem Tov¹⁶ gave a renowned interpretation of the verse,¹⁷ "When you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden...":

When you see the donkey (chamor) – that is, when you carefully inspect your chomer, your body, you will see...

*one who hates you*¹⁸ – for the body hates the soul that longs for G-dliness and spirituality. Furthermore, you will see that it is...

lying under its burden – the donkey's burden

ד. דער ענין פון שעמוש ורכיבה (רייטן) אויפֿן איזיל אויס וואס דורך דעם קען קומען דער מענטש מיט זיינע עניניכ איז אן ארט, וואס מצד זיין הוייכייט אַדער ווַיְתַקְיִיט, קען מען אן דעם חָמָר נִט צוֹקְמָעַן אֲהֵי.

אוו איז אויך בענין רכיבה על החמור אין רוחניות.

וְאֵס חָמָר ווַיִּזְט אַזְיך "חָמָר", ווי' עס איז באווארט דער טיטיש פון בעל שם טובּי אויפֿן פְּסֻוק בַּי תְּרַא חָמָר גוּס –

12. *Bereishis* 2:18.

13. *Berachos* 24a. Even though a man's wife is "corresponding to him" and "like his own self," she is not him. As the Rebbe will proceed to explain, the implication is that, in Moshe's time, man's refinement was not complete. The elevation of the material dimensions of existence had not yet brought about a elevation within the loftier dimensions of the soul.

14. See *Eruvin* 70b. Just as a leg is an extension of a person's body, a son is

an extension of his father. However, a leg is a lower part of the body. In other words, as will be explained, this era reflects a stage when man's personal refinement has not encompassed him entirely. As such, the refinement of the body did not affect the loftiest dimensions of the soul.

15. See the first *sichah* in this publication, p. 7ff.

16. Retold in *Hayom Yom*, Entry 28 Shvat, and in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, p. 32; originally related in *Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe Rayatz – Letter

no. 750, Heb. Vol. 3, p. 174, and in Letter no. 751, p. 281, which appear in translation under the title, *The Making of Chassidim*. See also: *Sefer HaSichos* 5701, pp. 65-66.

17. *Shmos* 23:5.

18. In the original, *sonaacha* – commonly understood to mean "someone you hate." On the alternative meaning ("one who hates you") that underlies the present *derush* of the Baal Shem Tov, see the commentary of *Torah Temimah* on *Shmos* 23:5.

is the mission G-d destined for the body, that it be refined by studying Torah and observing its *mitzvos*, but it is lax in fulfilling its task...

you shall certainly help him – by refining and purifying your body.

The intent is that by refining and elevating the material and physical¹⁹ dimensions of existence, we elevate ourselves and reach a level that the soul could never attain on its own. In a similar vein, *Chassidus*²⁰ interprets the verse,²¹ “Many harvests come through the strength of an ox,” to mean that by refining our animal souls, the G-dly soul attains a greater love for G-d. Moreover, even the loftier levels of the G-dly soul are elevated.

Progressive Stages of Elevation

5. In the era of Avraham – the beginning of the two millennia of Torah,⁹ when the Divine service that would bring the world to its consummate fulfillment had just begun – the *chomer*, the material dimension of existence, was not refined to the extent that it could have a reciprocal effect on the spiritual and elevate a person’s soul. That was not possible because the physical substance of the world had yet to be transformed into holiness. As explained in many sources,²² at that time, there was a Divine decree separating the physical and the spiritual, as the *Midrash* states:²³ “The inhabitants of Rome shall not descend to Syria....” Accordingly, Avraham was only able to affect the accessories he brought to the *Akeidah* – the wood and the knife. Through his Divine service in refining the world’s material substance, these accessories would be able to provide assistance to holiness at that time.

In Moshe’s time, through the donkey, i.e., physicality, the lower material dimensions within the human

דָּס הַיִסְט אֶז דָּרְך
אָסְאִידְלָעַן אָן אָוִיסְלִיטָעַרְן
דֵי חַוְמָרִיּוֹת אָן גְּשָׁמִיּוֹת קָעַן
מַעַן צִוּקָמָעַן אָן אַיְפָהִיבָנְיָה
יַיְך צַו אֶזְאָ מַדְרִיגָה וּוֹאָס דֵי
נְשָׁמָה מִצְד עַצְמָה קָעַן אַהֲנִינְיָת
צִוּקָמָעַן, אָזְזִי וּוֹי עַס שְׁטִיעִית
וּרְבָ תְּבוֹאוֹת בְּכָח שָׂוֹרִיךְ.

ה. אַיְן דִי צִיְינָן פָּוָן אַבְרָהָם
אָבָנָה, - דָעַר אַנְפָאָגָן פָּוָן דֵי שְׁנִי
אַלְפִים תּוֹרָה, דָאָס הַיִסְט אַיְן
אַנְפָאָגָן פָּוָן דָעַר עַבּוֹדָה, - הָאָת
דָעַר גְּשָׁמָן אָן חַוְמָר נָאָק נִינְיָת
גַּעֲקָעָנְטָן מַעַלָּה זְיַין דָעַם אָדָם
אַלְיָין, וּוֹאָרוּם דָעַר גְּשָׁמָן אַלְיָין
אַיְן נָאָק נִינְיָת גַּעַוּוֹאָרָן קְדוֹשָׁה, וּוּ
עַס וּוֹעַרְטָן דָעַרְקָלָעָרְטָן פִּילָעָן
עַרְטָעָר אָז עַס אַיְן נָאָק גַּעַוּוֹעָן דֵי
גַּוְיִרָה פָּוָן בְּנֵי רֹומי לֹא יַרְדוּ כּוֹיְטָן
עַס הָאָת גַּעֲקָעָנְטָן פּוֹעָל זְיַין
מַעַר נִינְיָת וּיְיָ אַיְן דֵי זְאָכָן וּוּעַלְבָעָן
הַעֲלֵפָן צַו - עַצְים וּמַאֲכָלָת - אַז
דָוָרָק דָעַר עַבּוֹדָה פָּוָן מַבְרָר זְיַין
דָעַם גְּשָׁמָן, זְאָלָן זְיִי אַיְן יַעֲנָדָר
צִיְינָת צְוָה עַלְפָן צַו קְדוֹשָׁה.

בַּיְ מֹשֶׁה רְבִינוּ אִיז דָוָרָקָן
חַמּוֹר גַּעַוּוֹאָרָן אָן עַלְיהָ אַיְן

19. As explained in *Chassidus*, the words “the material and physical dimensions” are not redundant. Instead, materiality refers to those dimensions of existence associated with a sense of *yeshus* (self), and

physicality, to the earthly existence per se.

20. *Likkutei Torah, Devarim*, 75b, the *maamar* entitled *Basi Legani*, 5710, sec. 2, *et al.*

21. *Mishlei* 14:4.

22. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, p. 41, Vol. 8, p. 23ff., *et al.*

23. *Shmos Rabbah* 12:3; *Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Va'eira*, sec. 15, *et al.*

sphere could also be elevated. After the Egyptian exile and the Giving of the Torah, the material substance of the world was refined to the extent that it also could become holy through a *mitzvah*.

As is well-known, there is a fundamental difference between the spiritual potential man possessed in the era before the Giving of the Torah and that which he possessed in the era that followed it. Before the Giving of the Torah, the world's physical substance was not a conduit that could become one with the spiritual. Man's Divine service involved toiling to ensure that the world would not oppose G-dliness and could even facilitate G-dliness being drawn down. However, it was only after the Torah was given that it became possible for the world's physical substance itself, even its inner dimension, to become holy.

A classic example of this concept is Yaakov's placing the rods from the poplar, chestnut, and hazelnut trees into the gutters leading to the watering troughs of Lavan's flocks.²⁴ The spiritual service Yaakov performed with these rods and gutters drew down a G-dly light comparable to that drawn down through the *mitzvah* of *tefillin*.²⁵ Nevertheless, this light was not internalized or absorbed within these physical objects. After Yaakov completed his spiritual service, no Divine light remained within them, because even beforehand – while he was carrying out his service – the light had not been internalized or absorbed to the extent that it became one with the rods and gutters.

By contrast, since the Giving of the Torah, when one performs a *mitzvah* with a material entity, its material substance itself becomes holy. The very physicality of the world becomes a conduit for holiness.

Nevertheless, in Moshe's time, the reciprocal effects of the elevation of the material dimensions of existence did not encompass a person entirely; it did not affect the loftiest dimensions of his soul, his true "I".

24. See *Bereishis* 30:37-40.

25. *Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 161b ff.; *Or HaTorah*, *Bereishis*, Vol. 1, p. 223b.

די עניינים התחזנים פון דעם מעונטשן אלין, ווארום נאך גליות מצרים און מתן תורה איז געווואָרָן א זיכוך אויך אין חומר פון וועלט, ביז אָז דער גשם אלין ווערט קדושה דורך דער מצוה.

און ווי עס איז באווארט דער אונטערשיד צוישן פאר מתן תורה און נאך מתן תורה. פאר מתן תורה איז קער גשם ניט געוווען קיין פלי וועלכע פאראייניקט זיך מיט רוחניות, און די עבזה איז באשטיינען נאר אין דעם אָז די וועלט זאל ניט מנגד זיין, און אָפַילוּ מסיע זיין צו די המשכות שעיל זיך העבזה, אָבער אוּ דער גשם אלין, באָפַילוּ זאל ווערן קדושה, דאס איז געווואָרָן על די מתן תורה.

אוז ווי בי די מקלות ורheetים פון יעקב, הגמ אָז דורך דער עבזה פון מקלות און רheetים איז נטש געווואָרָן אָז אָזוי ווי דורך דער מצוה פון תפילין, אָבער ס'אי ניט געוווען איז אָפַילוּ פנימיות ובקלייטה, והראיה, אָז נאך דער עבזה איז ניט געבלין קיין אָז אָז די מקלות, וויל אָזיך פָּרִיעָר איז דאס ניט געוווען בדורך קליטה והתאחות.

אָבער נאך מתן תורה, אָז מען טוט אָ מצוה מיטן גשם, ווערט דער גשם אלין קדושה, דאס היסט גשמיות העולם ווערט אָכלי צו אלקות. אָבער פונדרעסטווועגן איז אויך דאן די עלייה געוווען מעד ניט ווי איז די חלקיים התחזנים של האָדָם -

True, it included his wife (who is like his own person)¹³ and his sons (who are extensions of him),¹⁴ and it involved the revealed powers of the soul which descended to this physical plane and enclothed themselves in the body. However, the higher levels of the soul had yet to be elevated.

The coming of *Mashiach* will bring about a loftier elevation of existence – “A poor man will [himself] ride on a donkey.” The advantage that the body possesses over the soul will be manifest.²⁶ As alluded to by the verse,²⁷ “A woman of valor is the crown of her husband,” even the higher levels of the soul, the *chayah* and *yechidah*,²⁸ will be elevated to an even loftier level through the refinement of materiality.

With the coming of *Mashiach*, the true source of the *yesh*, material existence, will be revealed. It will be manifest that the truth of the *yesh* of material existence is G-d’s Essence, the true *Yesh*.²⁹

Therefore, refining the *yeshus* that permeates material existence will tap into that essential energy and bring about an ascent for the essence of the soul.

Why Ride a Donkey Instead of Clouds?

6. On this basis, it is also possible to understand the allusion in our Sages’ statement:² “If [the Jews] are worthy, [*Mashiach* will come] ‘with the clouds of heaven.’ If they are not worthy, [he will come as] ‘a poor man riding on a donkey.’”

26. See the series of *maamarim* entitled *Vekachah*, 5637, sec. 88ff., and *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5659, p. 97, which explain that, in the Ultimate Future, the soul will derive its nurture from the body.

27. *Mishlei* 12:4. The relationship between the body and the soul is compared to that between a woman and her husband. In the Ultimate Future, the body (the woman) will serve as a crown, a source of influence that adds prestige and prominence to the soul (the husband).

28. These terms reflect the deepest, innermost dimensions of the soul that are too powerful to be internalized within the body and, instead, shine as “encompassing lights.” See *Likkutei Torah*, *Devarim* 27d, *et al.*

29. *Yesh* means “it is,” in this context referring to “being” or “existence.” G-d is the *Yesh HaAmoti*, the only True Being, the only entity that can truly be said to exist, as *Rambam* writes (*Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah* 1:4): “He alone is true and no other entity possesses truth that compares

אֲשֶׁתּוֹ (כְּגֹופוֹ) וּבָנָיו (כְּרָא כְּרָעָא דְּאַבּוֹה), בַּיּוֹ אֵין דַי פְּחוֹת הַגְּלוּוּם פָּוֹן דָעַר נְשָׁמָה שִׁירְדוֹ לְמַטָּה גַּנְתְּלַבְּשָׁו בְּגֹנָף (וּוְעַלְכָעַ טְוַעַן זַיְדָה אֵין אָגָּוָף). -

אֲפָעַר אֵין בִּיאַת הַמָּשִׁיחַ וּוּעַט זַיְדָה אַוְיְפְטָאָן אֲטִיפְעַרְעָד עֲנֵנָה: עַנִּי וּרְוַכְבָּעַל חַמּוֹר, עַס וּוּעַט זַיְדָה אַנְטְּפָלְעָקָן דִי מַעַלָּה פָוֹן גּוֹף אַיְבָר דָעַר נְשָׁמָה - אֲשֶׁת חִיל עַטְרָת בָּעַלְהָלֵל, אַפְּיָלוֹ אֵין חִיה יְחִידָה שְׁבָנְפֶשׁ וּוּעַט זַיְדָה אַוְיְדָה אַוְיְפְטָאָן אֵין עַלְיהָ דָוְרָקָן בִּירּוֹר פָוֹן דָעַם חַמּוֹר.

אֵין בִּיאַת הַמָּשִׁיחַ וּוּעַט נְתַגְּלָה וּוּעַרְוָן דָעַר אַמְתָעָר שְׁוֹשָׁן פָוֹן יְשָׁה הַגְּבָרָא, וּוּאַס דַי אַמְתִּית פָוֹן יְשָׁה הַגְּבָרָא אֵין דָעַר יְשָׁה הַאַמְתִּי, דָעַרְפָּאָר אֵין דָוְרָק בִּירּוֹר הַחַוֹמָר, בִּירּוֹר יְשָׁה הַגְּבָרָא - וּוּעַט זַיְדָה אַוְיְפְטָאָן אֵין עַלְיהָ אַוְיְדָה אֵין דָעַם עַצְם הַנְּשָׁמָה.

ו. דָאָס אֵין אַוְיְדָה דָעַר רְמֹן אֵין דָעַם מַאֲמָר רְזַ"ל: זָכוּ עַם עֲנֵנָה שְׁמִיאָא לֹא זָכוּ עַנִּי וּרְוַכְבָּעַל חַמּוֹר

to His truth. This is what is meant by the Torah’s statement (*Devarim* 4:35), ‘There is nothing else aside from Him’ – i.e., aside from Him, there is no true existence like His. (See also *Biurei HaZohar*, p. 43c ff., *et al.*, where the term *Yesh Amoti* is explained.)

However, as *Rambam* writes (loc. cit. 1:1), “All existence came into being from the truth of His Being”; He imparted a certain dimension of “the truth of His Being” to all existence.

Beyond their literal meaning, there is a deeper allusion in our Sages' words: *Zachu*, translated as "worthy," shares the Hebrew root of the word *zach*, "pure." Divine service with pure and spiritual entities will lead to a manifestation of the clouds of heaven, a revelation of *or yashar*, "direct light,"³⁰ light that shines from Above to this physical plane.

Through *lo zachu*,³¹ Divine service with entities that are not yet pure and elevated – i.e., through refining physical and material entities – will come the revelation of "a poor man riding on a donkey." This revelation follows the dynamic of *or chozair*, "reflected light,"³² when man's work of refinement generates a loftier and more powerful light from below that radiates upward. Through the *chamor*, the donkey – symbolizing the *chomer*, the material substance that has been refined – the Jewish people will reach spiritual heights that their souls could never have attained on their own.

This explains Yaakov's message: "I have acquired oxen and donkeys." Specifically, through his Divine service in Lavan's home that involved refining physical and material entities, he prepared himself to receive the loftiest revelation, "a poor man riding on a donkey."

30. The term or *yashar*, "direct light," refers to Divine light drawn down from its source above to those elements of existence that are conduits for that light. As such, the emphasis is on the revelation of G-dliness and not on the refinement of material existence. See *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 1, p. 147ff., where this concept is

discussed at length.

31. In the quote from *Sanhedrin*, loc. cit., *lo zachu*, means, "if they are not worthy." Here, the Rebbe is focusing on an alternate meaning of the words: "not refined or purified."

32. The term *or chozair*, literally, "reflected light," refers to light

- "זכו", דורך דער עבודה אין דברים זכרים ורוחניים (כלארע און רוחניות/דיקע זאכן), וועט זיין עם ענני שמייא, א גילוי בדרכ אור ישר מלמעלה למטה; "לא זכו", אויב די עבודה אין אין עננים וועלכע זייןען נאך ניט אויסגעלייטערט, זאס היסט עננים גשמיים וחומרים, און מען וועט זי מברר ומזקע זיין, דעמאלאט וועט זיין דער גילוי פון עני ורוכב על חמור, דער גילוי בדרכ אור חזר מלמעלה, או דורך חמור וועט מען זוקומען אין אין ארט וואס די נשמה מצד עצמה קען אהין ניט זוקומען.

און זאס איז וואס יעקב האט געזאגט ויה לי שור וחמור, מצד זיין עבודה, דוקא מיט לבען צו מברר צו זיין די דברים הגשמיים והחומריים – איז ער געזונג גרייט צום העכסטן גילוי פון עני ורוכב על חמור.

generated by the refinement of the lower realms. This light is called forth from a level of G-dliness that transcends the *Seder HaHishtalshelus* and is, therefore, of an overpowering and encompassing nature. See *Torah Or*, p. 5a; *Likkutei Dibburim*, op. cit., et al.

(כח) משלו יד, ד. וע'לקוטי תורה האזינו עה, ב.

(כט) וע'לקוט"ש ח"א עמוד .41
(ל) וע' והר ח"א קסא, ב, וαιלן. סוף ד"ה
- וצג את המקלות - לחצמה צדק -
באוור התורה ויצא (רכג, ב).

(לא) משלו יב, ד.

התורה חי שרה קכו, ואילך).

(כא) אבות דיש פ"ג.

(כב) שמות ג, יב.

(כג) בראשית ב, ית.

(כד) ברכות כד, א.

(כה) וע' ערובין ע, ב.

(כו) גבראכט אין היום יומ – כ"ח שבת

און לקו"ש ח"א עמוד .32

(כז) שמות כד, ה.

(ט) סנהדרין צח, א.

(טו) דניאל ז, יג.

(יז) פיל"א.

(יח) שמות ד, ב.

(יט) בראשית כד, ג.

(כ) עבודה רוה ט, א. וראה ללקוטי תורה

להאריזיל ריש פרשת לך. ד"ה וה'

ברך את אברהם - להצמה צדק - נדפס

בחזיוושו על מסכת Baba Batra (או)

VAYISHLACH III | וַיִּשְׁלַח ג

Adapted from a *sichah* delivered on *Yud-Tes Kislev*, 5718 (1957)

Introduction

Stories from chassidic lore often feel like they belong to another world – tales of spiritual giants whose experiences seem far removed from our daily lives. We appreciate them as inspiring narratives, perhaps even as windows into higher consciousness, but we don’t always see ourselves in them.

The Rebbe approached such stories differently. Rather than simply transmitting them as historical accounts or even as spiritual inspiration, he extracted from them questions that pierce to the core of each of our lives. Take, for example, the well-known account of the Alter Rebbe’s imprisonment and his exchange with the minister about the question G-d posed to Adam after the sin, *Ayeka*? “Where are you?”

The Rebbe understands the question “Where are you?” as being asked of each of us – not once, but continually; not in a uniform way, but calibrated precisely to who we are and what we were sent into this world to accomplish at any given moment. The very asking of the question, the Rebbe explains, empowers us to answer it.

Ayeka: A Question for All Time

A Story with an All-Encompassing Message

1. My revered father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz, once¹ related that during the Alter Rebbe's imprisonment, he was questioned by an assistant minister, who was well-versed in Tanach and knowledgeable regarding Jewish matters. One of the questions that he asked the Alter Rebbe concerned the meaning of the verse,² "G-d, the L-rd, called to Adam and asked him, 'Where are you? (Ayeka?)'" The minister asked, "Did G-d not know where Adam was? Why did He ask him, 'Where are you?'"

The Alter Rebbe responded by quoting *Rashi's* interpretation, that G-d wanted to begin a conversation with Adam rather than confront him immediately with an accusatory question. The minister answered that he was already familiar with *Rashi's* commentary but wanted to hear something original from the Alter Rebbe.

The Alter Rebbe replied, "When a person reaches a certain age" – and here he mentioned the minister's exact age – "G-d asks him, 'Where are you?' Do you know why you were created and brought into this world? Are you aware of what you must accomplish and what you have already done?"

My revered father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz, concluded: The Alter Rebbe's answer to the minister saved his own life. He was at the point

א. כבود קדשות מורי וחייב אדקמו"ר
האט דערצילט: בשעת דער אלטער
רבי אין געזעסן אין תפיסה האט אים
אויסגעפערשט דער טאונואיישטער
מייניסטער, דאס הייסט דער פארטערטער
פונ מייניסטער, וועלכער אין געזען בקי
איין גאנך און א געלערנטער אין איזישע
ענינימ. איזנעם פון דע שאלות וויאס ער
האט געשטעלט דעם אלטן רבי אין
געווען וועגן דעם פשט פון פסוק: "זיךרא
ה' אלקים אל האדם ויאמר לו איכה",
צי דען האט דער אויבערשטער ניט
געוואויסט וואו אדים זראשן געפינט זיך
ויאס ער האט אים געפרעיגט איכה? האט
אים דער אלטער רבי גענטפערט, לוייט
פירוש ריש". אגט אים דער מייניסטער:
ויאס רשי זאגט וויאס איך אליין, איך
ויל איבער הערן א פשט פון דעם רביין.
האט אים דער אלטער רבי גענטפערט:
בשעת א מענטש איז אלט איז פיל איז
למשל, זאגנדיך דערביי די גענזע צאל
יאון פון דעם מייניסטער – פרעגט אים
דער אויבערשטער: "איכה", וואו ביסטו?
צי וויאס איזיף ויאס דו בייט באשא芬
געווען איזיף דער וועלט, ויאס דו
דארכט טאן און ויאס דו האסט געטיאן?
און כבוד קדשות מורי וחייב אדקמו"ר
האט אויסגעפערט: דעם אלטן רביינס
ענטפער צום מייניסטער האט אים -

1. See *Sefer HaSichos* 5698, p. 249ff.; 2. *Bereishis* 3:9.
See also *Beis Rebbe*, ch. 15, where the story is told at length.

of *kalos hanefesh*, his soul expiring because of the great joy he felt at having merited to be imprisoned and to sacrifice his life for spreading the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid of Mezritch. This brought him such profound pleasure that his soul was on the verge of departing.

However, when he contemplated that G-d is posing the question, *Ayeka?* “Where are you?” to every person – in other words, that every person is being asked: Have you completed the lifework expected of you? – the realization caused his soul to change course. Instead of expiring in spiritual ecstasy, it remained in this physical plane, a soul within a body, dedicated to carrying out the purposes for which a soul descends to this physical plane.

דעם אלטן רביביז – אַפְגַּעַרְאַטְעָוָעַט פָּוָן
כלות הנפש (נשמה אויסנאג), ווארום
דער אלטער רבבי איז געווונע בשמחה
גולדה וואס ער האט זוכה געווונע זיכן
אין תפיסה און זיך מוסר נפש זיין פאר
תורת הבעל שם טוב וחרב המגיד, ער
האט דערפונ געהאט א גרויסן פָּעָנָג
ביז פָּלָות הנפש. נאר בשעת ער האט
זיך באטראקט או זער אויבערשטער
פרעגט בי עדרער מענטשן: “אייכה?”
צי האט ער אויפגעטאן וואס ער דארך
אויפטאן, האט דאס איזיף אים פועל
געווונע ער זאל בליבין למטה – א נשמה
איינ גוף, און דורך פירן די עניינים צוליב
וועלכע זיין נשמה איז אַרְאָפְגַּעַקְוּמָעַן
למטה.

One Question, Different Callings

2. An event that occurred to one of our holy Rebbeim – and particularly one that another Rebbe chose to share and convey to us – is a lesson for his flock, the chassidic community, and through them, for all Jews.

Every Jew must realize that G-d is continually posing the question, *Ayeka?* “Where are you?” to every person, whether of great or minimal stature. To each person, the question is asked according to who he is.

For one person, the question *Ayeka?* demands for him to hold his soul back from expiring in rapturous love for G-d, like Aaron’s sons who died when drawing close to G-d.³ Instead, he should invest himself in his mission and his service on this physical plane to carry out G-d’s intent for a dwelling in this lower world.

ב. אן עניין וואס האט פאסייט בי
נשאיינו רבותינו הקדושים, וואס א
נשיא ורעה ישראאל האט אונן דערציזילט
און איבערגעגעבן – איז און הוּא ל'צאנ
מרעיתו פאר עדת החסידים, און דורך
זיז – פאר אלע איזן.

יעדר איז דארך וויסן או די שאלת
אייכה – פרעגט מען בי יען איזנעם
שטענידיק, פון דעם גדול שבעגולים ביז
דעם קפזן שבקטנים (דעם גראוסטן ביז
דעם קלעננטן). נאר די שאלת קומט
זו יעדר איזנעם לoit זיין מהות.

בי איזנעם מאנט מען מיט דער
שאלת “אייכה” – אַפְהַאַלְצֵן זיך פָּוָן
כלות הנפש, (loit ווי עס שטיטיט בי
בנֵי אהרן בקרבתם לפָנֵי ה', זימותו) זיך
נאר ער זאל טאן זיין שליחות ועבודה
דא למטה אויף אויספירן די כוננה פון
דירה בתהנתונם.

3. *Vayikra* 16:1. See the commentary of *Or HaChayim* on that verse.

For another, the question *Ayeka?* is a demand to restrain himself from immersion in physical desires and their like, lest he stumble spiritually and fall entirely. Instead, he should strengthen his study of the Torah and observance of the *mitzvos*.

This very demand empowers every person to carry out the unique Divine service for which he was created – and to do so with happiness and gladness of heart.

און בַּי אַיִינָעַם מְאַנְטַע מְעַן מִיטַּעַר
שָׁאַלַּה "אִיכָּה", עַר זָאַל זִיךְ וַיַּט אַרְיִינְלָאַזְן
אַיְן תַּאֲוֹת וְהַדּוֹמָה וְוַאֲס דַּוְרַע דַּעַם וּוֹעַט
עַר אַרְאַפְּפָאַלְן אַיְן נַאֲגַזְן, נַאֲר עַר זָאַל זִיךְ
שְׁטַאַרְקָן אַיְן לַעֲגַעַן תּוֹרָה אַוְן מַקְיִים זַיְן
מְצֹוֹת.

אַוְן אַטְּדַעַר מְאַגְּעַן – אַיְן אַנְתִּינְתַּכְתָּה,
אוּ יַעֲדַעַר אַיִינָעַר זָאַל דַּוְרְכִּין זַיְן עַבְדָּה
אַוְן אַיְסְפִּין דַּי כּוֹנָה צַוְּלַב וְוַאֲס עַר אַיְן
בָּאַשְׁאָפְּן גַּעֲוָוָאָרְן, בָּשְׁמָחָה וּבְטוּב לְבָב.

What One Person Can Achieve

3. The connection between the question *Ayeka* and the Alter Rebbe's imprisonment can possibly be explained as follows: The Alter Rebbe's imprisonment resulted from a *kitrug*, an accusatory spiritual force, generated at that time against the revelation of the secrets of the Torah, i.e., the teachings of *Chassidus*.

The Alter Rebbe revealed and publicized the deepest secrets of the Torah to every Jew by conveying them in an intellectual format that could be grasped by the mind and the powers of *chochmah*, *binah*, and *daas* (wisdom, understanding, and knowledge) of the G-dly soul. This made it possible for this mystic knowledge to be drawn down to the powers of *chochmah*, *binah*, and *daas* of the intellectual soul and even the corresponding powers of the animal soul.⁴ Indeed, the revelation of this wisdom was so profound that it could engage and permeate even a physical person. This disruption of the ordinary limits of spiritual revelation aroused a *kitrug* in the spiritual realms, which led to an accusatory force and imprisonment on this physical plane as well.

ג. וּוְעַגְן דַעַר שִׁיכּוֹת פּוֹן דַעַר שָׁאַלַּה
"אִיכָּה" צָוָם מְאַסְרָר פּוֹן אַלְטַן רְבִיְּן קָעַן מְעַן
אָפְּשָׁר זָאַגְן:

דַעַם אַלְטַן רְבִיְּנָס מְאַסְרָר אַיְז גַּעֲקּוּמָעַן
מִצְדָּקָד דַעַם קְטַרְוָג וְוַאֲס סְאַיְז גַּעֲוָוָעַן
דַעַמְאַלְט אַוְיָפְּ דַעַם גַּילְוִי רְזִין דָאַוְרִתָּא
(סּוֹדוֹת הַתּוֹרָה) – תּוֹרָת הַחַסִידּוֹת.

בָּשְׁעַת דַעַר אַלְטַעַר רְבִי הָאַט מְגַלָּה
גַּעֲוָוָעַן אַוְן מְפָרָסָם גַּעֲוָוָעַן רְזִין דָרְזִין
דָאַוְרִתָּא צַוְּאַלְעַ אַיְזָן, דַוְרַע דַעַם וְוַאֲס עַר
הָאַט זַיְן אַרְאַפְּגַעַטְרָאָגָן אַיְן שְׁכַל וְחַבְּדַע
פּוֹן נְפָשָׁה הַאֲלִקִיתָה, אַוְן דַוְרַע דַעַם קְוּמָט
עַס אַרְאָפְּ אַוְיָפְּ אַיְן תְּבַדְּלַנְפָשָׁה הַשְׁכָלִית
וְנְפָשָׁה הַבְּהָמִית, בֵּין עַס זָאַל דַעַר גַּעֲנָעָמָעַן
אַוְיָפְּ דַעַם גַּוְפָּה הַגְּשָׁמִי, אַיְן
גַּעֲוָוָאָרְן אַוְיָפְּ דַעַם אַקְטַרְוָג לְמַעַלָּה, אַוְן
מִצְדָּקָד דַעַם אַיְז אַרְאַפְּגַעַטְרָאָגָן אַוְיָפְּ דַעַר
קְטַרְוָג אַיְז מְאַסְרָר לְמַטָּה.

4. The animal soul is that dimension of our personalities that governs our ordinary day-to-day behavior and is influenced by our natural drives

and desires. The intellectual soul is a loftier dimension of our being that appreciates the world objectively and makes decisions accordingly.

Similarly, the victory and the redemption on this physical plane came about because, in the spiritual realms, permission – together with the empowerment and the command – was granted to reveal the Torah's secrets of secrets, its deepest truths, in a manner that they could be comprehended by mortal intellect. Consequently, the Alter Rebbe and the teachings of *Chassidus* were redeemed on this material plane.

However, this very phenomenon requires explanation: How is it possible to take the Torah's secrets of secrets, its innermost mystic truths, and bring them into mortal comprehension – and for that to be done in a settled and stable manner? By nature, the Torah's secrets of secrets motivate the soul to seek to leave the body, the very opposite of stability.

The Alter Rebbe brought about this fusion of opposites as well. At the time when his soul was on the verge of expiring, he grasped the meaning of the question *Ayeka*? – the challenge posed to every person from Above: Are you carrying out the intent of creation, to make a dwelling for G-d in this lowly realm? G-d's posing this question empowers mankind and the creation as a whole to bring about a dwelling for G-d's Essence within the context of their natural framework.

This Divine call removes all limitations. For when responding to it, a person does not act on his own power alone, but as an agent of He who called out *Ayeka*, G-d's very Essence, which is *nimna hanimnaos*, utterly omnipotent, and capable of fusing opposites.⁵ Thus, it is within His power to draw down the hidden, mystic secrets of the Torah into revelation.

5. To explain the meaning of the Hebrew term *nimna hanimnaos*: *Nimnaos* means "things that are impossible," i.e., things that cannot occur according to the implicit laws of nature and logic. There is a difference of opinion among the sages of *Chakirah*, Jewish philosophy, if there

are *nimnaos* for G-d, i.e., things that G-d cannot do (see the responsa of *Rashba*, Vol. 1, responsum 418), for example, for opposites to be fused as one. In other words, they believe that G-d is capable of changing the laws of nature. However, even He cannot supersede logical imperatives. The

אווי אויך דער נצחון אוון גאולה
וועאס ס'אייז געווונען דא למיטה – אייז
דאס געווונען מײַד דעם וועאס ל'מעלה
האט מען געגעבען רשות – אַפְּחַת אָוֹן
אַצְּיוֹן – אויף צו אַונְטְּפָלְעָקָן רְזִין
דְּרוֹזִין בַּיּוֹן אִין מְעַנְטְּשָׁלְעָקָן שְׁכָל,
אוון מײַד דַּעַם אִין גַּעֲקָוּמָעַן אויך
דאַקְּמַתָּה דַּי גָּאוֹלָה פָּוֹן אַלְטָן רְבִּין
אוון תורה הַקָּסִידּוֹת.

ווי קען דאס אַפְּבָר זִין אָז
מען זַאל נַעֲמָעַן רְזִין דְּרוֹזִין אוון
אַרְאָפְּטָרָאָגָן זַיִן אִין מְעַנְטְּשָׁלְעָקָן
שְׁכָל בְּהַתְּשִׁבּוֹת? רְזִין דְּרוֹזִין דְּאָרְפָּן
דאַקְּפָּעֵל זִין אָז עֲנֵנִין פָּוֹן כְּלֹת
הַנְּפָשָׁה אוון הַיְּפָךְ פָּוֹן הַתִּשְׁבּוֹת?

נַאֲרָב בְּשָׁעַת דַּעַר אַלְטָעָר רְבִּין –
אִין זִין מְעַמְּדָן פָּוֹן כְּלֹת הַנְּפָשָׁה –
הַאֲטָה דַּעֲרָה עַרְתָּה דַּעַם "אַיְכָה," דַּי
שָׁאַלָּה וְוַאֲסָם מַעַן פְּרַעֲגַת מְלַמְּדָעָה
צַּי הַאֲטָה מַעַן דּוֹרְכָּגָעָפִירָת דַּי כְּבָנָת
הַבְּרִיאָה צַו מַאֲכָן לוֹ יַתְּבִּרְכָּה דִּירָה
בְּתַחְתּוֹנִים, – גִּיטָּעָס אַפְּחַת אָז דַּי
תַּחְתּוֹנִים וּזְיִינְעָן בְּמַצְיאָוֹת
זָאָלָן זַיִן אַדְרָה צַו עַצְמוֹת.

דאַס הַאֲט אַרְאָפְּגָעָנוֹמָעַן אַלְעָ
הַגְּבָלָה, וְאַרְוָם וּוֹעֵן בְּעֵן טוֹטָ
עַס נַיְטָ אַלְיַיְן נַאֲר מַעַן טַיְטָ עַס
בְּשַׁלְיָהוֹתָו (שֶׁל מִקְוָם) אוון מִיטַּעַן
פָּחָ פָּוֹן דַּעַם וְוַאֲסָרָפְּטָ "אַיְכָה,"
וְוַאֲסָ דַּאֲס אִין עַצְמוֹת – נַמְנוֹעָ
הַגְּמַנְעָותִי וְנוֹשָׁא הַפְּכִים, טְרָאָגָט
מַעַן אַרְאָפְּ אַוְיךְ סְתִּים דָאָרְיַתָּא
אוּעָס זַאל קַוְמָעַן בְּגִילָּי, וְוַאֲסָ

Tzemach Tzedek (*Sefer HaChakirah* p. 68), uses the expression *nimna hanimnaos*, meaning to say that G-d is not bound by any limitations whatsoever; nothing, even the seemingly impossible, is impossible for Him.

These teachings awaken and reveal the hidden depths of the soul, which are connected with the hidden dimensions of G-d,⁶ those aspects of G-dliness that are so lofty that they are not revealed in the ordinary framework of existence.

דאָס אַיז מַעֲזָרָד וּמַגְלָה דַעַם סְתִים
שְׁבָנְשָׁמָה וּוַיְ אַיז פָּאָרְבָּגָן מִיטָן
סְתִים דַקְוָדָשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הָוָאָה.

(משיחת י"ט בסלון, תשח"י)

6. See *Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 73a.

החקירה להצמה צדק ע' 68 ובכמה

לָבָן בְּרָאשִׁית ג, ט.

לָג) וַיָּקָרָא תֹז, א. זֶע אָוֹר הַחַיִים דָאָרָט.

מְקוּמוֹת.

לָג) זֶע שָׁוֹת הַרְשָׁבָ"א סִימָן תִי"ח. סְפָר

לָה) זֶע זָהָר ח"ג עג, א.

VAYISHLACH IV | וַיִּשְׁלַח־ד

Adapted from a *sichah* delivered on *Shabbos Parshas Toldos*, 5717 (1956)

Introduction

Our Sages¹ teach that “the Holy One, blessed be He, looked into the Torah and created the world.” This principle establishes a cause-and-effect relationship: What transpires in the Torah determines what happens in the world. The spiritual realm not only parallels the physical; it is primary, and the material realm merely reflects it.

Kislev is the month of the revelation of *pnimiyus haTorah* – the dimension of Torah where G-dliness is overtly manifest rather than concealed within layers of law and narrative.² It follows that since new revelations in Torah shape reality, then a month characterized by the revelation of the Torah’s innermost dimension should manifest extraordinary effects in the physical world.

And it does. Kislev is a month of miracles – both the miracle of Chanukah in a previous era and the miracle of *Yud-Tes* Kislev closer to our time. In this month, the ordinary rules of nature give way to transcendent G-dliness that breaks through the veils of nature into visible manifestation.

1. *Zohar*, Vol. II, 161b.

2. See *Inyan shel Toras HaChassidus*, sec. 3.



A New Revelation in Torah, Miracles in the World

Kislev and Sivan: Parallels and Distinctions

1. It is explained that the month of Kislev is comparable to the month of Sivan. The first day of Nissan is also called Rosh HaShanah, as stated in the Mishnah,¹ and Sivan is the third month from Nissan. Similarly, Kislev is the third month from Rosh HaShanah, which falls in Tishrei.

The difference between Nissan and Tishrei is that Nissan features the Divine service of *tzadikim* (the “righteous”). The reason for that distinction is that the Exodus from Egypt, which occurred in Nissan, is comparable to conversion, and a convert who converts is considered like an infant who was just born.² Like a *tzadik*, he has no sins nor any other spiritual deficiencies because it is as if he were just born. And Sivan, the third month from Nissan, marks the time of the Giving of the Torah.

Tishrei is identified with the Divine service of *baalei teshuvah* (“penitents”). Kislev, the third month from Tishrei, is also the month of the Giving of the Torah, the revelation of *pnimiyus haTorah*, the Torah’s inner, mystical dimension.

Teshuvah transcends the Torah.³ For that reason, *teshuvah* can correct and compensate for shortcomings and blemishes in a person’s Torah observance. Nevertheless, the concept of *teshuvah* itself derives from the Torah.

א. וועגן חֶדֶש כֶּסֶלּו שְׁטִיטִיט, או עַר אַיְזָן חֶדֶש סִינְן. סִינְן אַיְזָן דָעֵר דָרִיטָעֵר חֶדֶש פָּנוּ נִיסְן, וְוַאֲסָ נִיסְן אַיְזָן אַוְיךְ דָאַשְׁהַנְּהָנָה, וְוַיְ עַס שְׁטִיטִיט בְּמִשְׁנָה^{לִי}, אַזְוִי אַיְזָן אַוְיךְ חֶדֶש כֶּסֶלּו דָעֵר דָרִיטָעֵר חֶדֶש פָּנוּ דָעֵם רָאַשְׁהַנְּהָנָה - וְוַאֲסָ אַיְן תְּשֵׁרֵי.

דָעֵר חִילּוֹק פָּנוּ נִיסְן אַוְן תְּשֵׁרֵי אַיְזָן נִיסְן אַיְזָן עַבְדָּת הַצְדִּיקִים. וְוַאֲרֹם יִצְאַת מִצְרָיִם אַיְזָן עַנְנִין פָּנוּ גִּירָוֹת, וְגַר שְׁנַתְגִּיר כְּקַטְן שְׁנוּלָד דִּמְיָה, עַר הָאַט נִיט קִינְנָע חֲטָאִים אַוְן קִינְנָע עֲנִינִים וְוַאֲסָ זִינְעָן נִיט וְוַיְ עַס דָאַרְף צָו זִין, וְוַאֲרֹם עַר אַיְזָן כְּקַטְן שְׁנוּלָד.

אַוְן חֶדֶש סִינְן וְוַאֲסָ עַר אַיְזָן דָעֵר דָרִיטָעֵר חֶדֶש פָּנוּ נִיסְן, אַיְזָן דָעֵר זָמָן פָּנוּ מְתָן תּוֹרָה.

תְּשֵׁרֵי אַיְזָן עַבְדָּת בָּעֵלִי תְּשׁוּבָה. כֶּסֶלּו, וְוַאֲסָ עַר אַיְזָן דָעֵר חֶדֶש הַשְּׁלִישִׁי פָּנוּ תְּשֵׁרֵי, אַיְזָן מְתָן תּוֹרָה - דָעֵר גִּילּוֹי פָּנוּ פְּנִימִיּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה.

אַזְוִי וְוַיְ דָעֵר עַנְנִין פָּנוּ תְּשׁוּבָה, הָגָם אַזְוִי תְּשׁוּבָה אַיְזָן הַעֲכָר פָּנוּ תּוֹרָה^{לִי}, וְוַאֲסָ דָעֵר פָּאַר הַעֲלֵפֶת תְּשׁוּבָה אַוְיךְ אַזְוִי אַזְוִי עַנְנִין וְוַאֲסָ עַר הָאַט פָּגָם גַּעֲוֹעַן אַיְן תּוֹרָה, פָּנוּנְדָעַסְטָוּנְעָגָן אַיְזָן דָעֵם עַנְנִין הַתְּשׁוּבָה גַּוְפָּא גַּעֲמַט מַעַן אַרְוֹסָ פָּנוּ תּוֹרָה,

1. *Rosh HaShanah* 2a.

Kedimot, maareches gimel, os gimel.

entitled *Ki Bayom Hazeh; Likkutei Torah, Devarim*, the *maamarim* of Yom Kippur.

2. *Yevamos* 22a. With regard to the redundancy in the expression “a convert who converts,” see *Midbar*

3. *Likkutei Torah, Vayikra*, the *maamarim* of *Parshas Acharei*,

A similar concept applies regarding the revelation of *pnimiyus haTorah*, which is in the month of Kislev. That revelation itself derives from the Giving of the Torah in Sivan, for then the Torah was given in its entirety, including even the Torah teachings that *Mashiach* will reveal. These will be the deepest dimensions of the Torah, as stated in the Midrash,⁴ “The Torah of the present age is like nothing compared to the Torah of *Mashiach*.” And that also was conveyed at the Giving of the Torah in Sivan.

Nevertheless, *pnimiyus haTorah* was concealed at the time of the Giving of the Torah in the month of Sivan, and the revelation of *pnimiyus haTorah* comes in the month of Kislev, the third month from Tishrei, which is characterized by the Divine service of *teshuvah*. Thus, the month of Kislev is the time of the revelation of *pnimiyus haTorah* and the spreading of the wellsprings outward. This prepares for the revelation of *Mashiach*.⁵

אווי אויך אין דעם ענין פון גילוי פנימיות התורה, וואס דאס איז אין חדש כסלו, איז דאס גוּפָא נעמַט זיך אויך פון מטען תורה בסין - האט מען געגעבן מטען תורה בסין - האט מען געגעבן אלע ענינים פון תורה, אַפְּלִי דִי תורה וואס קישיח וועט לערנען און מגלה זיין, וואס דאס איז דער טיפסטער ענין איז תורה, ווי ער זאגט איזן מזרשטי⁶, איז תורה דעכשוי (פון איצט) איז קבל לגבי תורה של משה, איז אויך דאס האט מען געגעבן בשעת מטען תורה פון סיון.

אַפְּרֵד פונדעסטעונגן, איז פנימיות התורה געונען בהעלם (פארבראגן) איז מטען תורה שבסין און דער גילוי פון חדש השלישי פון חדש תשרי, עבוקת התשובה, וואס דעמאלאט בחדש כסלו איז דער גילוי פון פנימיות התורה און הפקת מעינות חוצה, וואס דאס איז אן הכהנה צום גילוי המישת.

A Month of Miracles

2. Since the month of Kislev is a time of new revelations within the Torah, *pnimiyus haTorah* was revealed in that month. Consequently, this revelation is manifest in the worldly sphere as well. Thus, in Kislev, there is a new revelation, the phenomenon of miracles.

*Chassidus*⁶ thoroughly explains the concept that, in truth, the natural order is also miraculous. However, there is a difference between nature and miracles: Nature is an ongoing, constant revelation. As such, because of its constancy, its miraculous quality is not obvious. This lack of awareness can be so severe that one might think that “there is no master over this

ב. מצד דעם וואס חדש כסלו איז א זמן פון גילוי תורה, א ניעיר גילוי איז תורה, עס איז נתגלה געווואן פנימיות התורה, מצד דעם קומט אויך אראפ איז וועלט, איז חדש כסלו איז מאיר איז וועלט א ניעיר גילוי, - דער עונין הנשים.

חסידות איז גוט מבראך דעם עונין איז באמת איז הנגנת הטבע אויך נסים, נאר דער חילוק איז: טבע איז א גילוי וואס איז פאראן שטענדייך, איז מצד דעם הריגל זעט זיך ניט אן דער נס, ביז וואנען איז מען קען מיינען, איז עס איז א בירה بلا מנהיג חס ושלום, אַפְּרֵד

4. *Koheles Rabbah* on *Koheles* 11:8.

of Ben Poras Yosef, et al.

5. See the renowned letter of the Baal Shem Tov printed at the beginning

6. See *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5711, p. 293.

palace,”⁷ i.e., the world functions on its own, as if there were no Creator.

However, when we witness a miracle, something out of the ordinary, G-d's presence is revealed. This is the concept of miracles, new revelations.

For this reason, Kislev is a month of miracles. Since it is a time for a new revelation in the Torah, following the principle,⁸ “The Holy One, blessed be He, looked into the Torah and created the world,” this revelation is also drawn down into the world. As a result, the pattern of the world in this month is that it is a time of miracles, new revelations.

Accordingly, the Chanukah miracle also occurred in this month. This miracle involved oil, which symbolizes the “secrets of secrets” of the Torah,⁹ i.e., its innermost truths, an extremely lofty revelation. As *Ramban*¹⁰ writes, citing the Midrash, G-d told Aharon, “[The dedication] you achieve is greater than theirs,”¹¹ meaning that the Chanukah lights kindled due to Aharon's descendants are greater than the lights of the *Beis HaMikdash*. The lights of the *Beis HaMikdash* did not exist for all time, while the Chanukah lights will exist eternally.

Similarly, in a later era, Kislev was distinguished by the miracle of *Yud-Tes Kislev*, which will also endure for all time since spreading the wellsprings of *Chassidus* serves as a conduit and prepares for the revelation of *Mashiach*.

7. See *Bereishis Rabbah* 39:1.

8. *Zohar*, Vol. II, 161b.

9. *Imrei Binah, Shaar HaKerias Shema*, ch. 54ff.

10. *Ramban* on *Bamidbar* 8:2.

בשבועת עס קומט א נס, ווֹאָס מַעַן אֵי נִיט אַיְנְגָעָוָוָאַיְנָט אֵין דַעַם, דַעַמְאַלְטָר אֵי דָאָס בְּגִילּוּי, ווֹאָס דָאָס אֵי דַעַר עֲנֵן הַנְּסִים, אוּ עָס אֵי אַגְּלּוּי חַדְשָׁ.

אָוָן דַעַרְפָּאָר אֵי כְּסָלוּ אַחֲדָשׁ פָּוּנָסִים. ווֹיְלָעַס אֵי דַעַק אַזְמָן פָּוּנָא אַגְּלּוּי חַדְשָׁ אֵין תּוֹרָה, אָוָן אַסְטְּפָלְבָּאָנוֹיְתָא וּבְרָא עַלְמָא, ווֹעֲרָטָר דָאָס גַּמְשָׁק אַוְיךְ אֵין וּוּעַלְתָּ, אוּ אַוְיךְ אֵין דַעַר הַנְּהָגָה פָּוּנָעָוָלָם אֵי דָאָס אַזְמָן פָּוּנָסִים, אַגְּלּוּי חַדְשָׁ.

דַעַרְפָּאָר אֵי גַעֲוֹעַן בְּחַדְשׁ כְּסָלוּ דַעַר נְסָס פָּוּנָחָנָה, ווֹאָס דַעַר נְסָס אֵי בְּשָׁמָן - רְזִין דְּרוֹזִין - אָוָן אַגְּלּוּי נְעַלָּה בְּיוֹתָר (גָּאָר אַהֲרֹן הַוִּיכָּעֵד גִּילִּי). ווֹיְלָעַר רְמַבְּצָ' שְׁרִיְבְּטָמָא אֵין נְאַמְעָן פָּוּנָא מְדִרְשָׁ, אוּ דַעַר אַוְיבְּעַר שְׁטָעָר הַאֲטָגְעָאָגָט צָו אַהֲרֹן, שְׁלָק גְּדוֹלָה מְשָׁלָהָם. דַי נְרוֹת חֲנוֹכָה זַיְנְעַן הַעֲכָר פָּוּנָרָוֹת הַמְּקָדְשָׁ, ווֹאָרוֹם נְרוֹת הַמְּקָדְשָׁ זַיְנְעַן נִיט קְיִמִים אַוְיךְ אַיְבִּיק אָוָן נְרוֹת חֲנוֹכָה זַיְנְעַן קְיִמִים לְעוֹלָם אַיְבִּיק).

אָוָן אַוְיךְ שְׁפַעַטְעָר אֵי גַעֲוֹעַן דַעַר נְסָס פָּוּנָי טְכְסָלוּ, פָּוּנָהָפְצָת תּוֹרָת הַחֲסִידָוֹת ווֹאָס דָאָס אַוְיךְ אַנְעַנְיָן ווֹאָס אֵי קִים לְעֵד וּלְעוֹלָמִי עַוְלָמִים, ווֹיְלָעַר הַפְּצָת מְעִינּוֹת הַחֲסִידָוֹת אֵי אַנְעַנְיָן כָּלִי אָוָן אַהֲרֹן צָו גִּילִּי הַמְּשִׁיחָה.

(משיחות ש"פ תולזות, תש"ג)

11. I.e., Aharon's dedication of the *Menorah* surpassed the princes' dedication of the Altar.

מן) רמב"ן על התורה במדבר ח, ב.

ביום הוה), ובדרושי יהכ"פ.

לו) ראש השנה ב, א.

לו) יבמות כב, א.

לו) קהילת רבבה פ, יא.

לו) ע"ה תוש"א ע' 293.

מו) ע"ה תוש"א ע' 293.

לו) לקוטי תורה בדרושי פרשת אהרי (כ)



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Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky OBM,
whose commitment has brought this sacred initiative to fruition

