

Erev Shabbos Kodesh Parshas Shemos 5771

D'ei Chochmah L'nafshechah

“Let your soul know wisdom”

Parshas Shemos

From the discourses of Moreinu v'Rabeinu
the Gaon and Tzaddik Shlit'a

- not for general circulation -



Published by the Yam Hachochmah Institute

Under the auspices of "Yeshivas Toras Chochom"

for the study of the
revealed and hidden Torah

"YAM HACHOCHMAH"
PUBLISHING INSTITUTE
P.O BOX 5245 JERUSALEM
TEL: 057-3153884 FAX: 15325388242
E-MAIL: tc7@neto.bezeqint.net

Shalosh Seudos of Parshas Shemos 5769

”וַיֵּלֶךְ אִישׁ מִבֵּית לֵוִי וַיִּקַּח אֶת בֵּת לֵוִי. וַתֵּהָר האִשָּׁה וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן, וַתֵּרָא אֹתוֹ כִּי טוֹב הוּא,
וַתַּצְפְּנֵהוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה יָרְחִים. וְלֹא יָבֵלָה עוֹד הַצְּפִינוּ, וַתִּקַּח לוֹ תִּבְתָּ גִמָּא וַתַּחְמְרָה בַּחֲמֹר וּבַזָּפֹת,
וַתִּשֶׂם בָּהּ אֶת הַיָּלֶד, וַתִּשֶׂם בְּסוּף עַל שְׁפַת הַיָּאָר.”

“And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi.
And the woman conceived, and bore a son; and when she saw him that he was a
goodly child, she hid him three months. And when she could no longer hide him,
she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with clay and with pitch; and
she put the child in it, and laid it in the reeds by the river’s edge.”¹

The Soul of Moshe Rabbeinu

The Baal HaTurim writes on the verse, “It is written, ‘And there went a man of the house of Levi,’ and it is also written, ‘And there went a man of Beis Lechem in Yehudah.’ The former ‘going’ was for the sake of the first redeemer, and the latter ‘going’ was for the sake of the final redeemer. That which was, will be.” [The sages taught that ...*מה שהיה הוא*... refers to Moshe, who is both the first and final redeemer.]

The sages taught that Moshe Rabbeinu died on the same day that he was born. His birth was a manifestation of the revelation of Hashem’s thirteen attributes of mercy, which are the “thirteen rectifications of the beard” [or distinct points along the *Partzuf* of *Arich Anpin*]. This is what is meant by the light having been filled with light at his birth, as we find in Rashi on the phrase, “that he was good”—this is the drawing down of the thirteen attributes of mercy. We find another allusion to the lofty state of his soul at the Torah’s narrative of Moshe Rabbeinu’s death: “And he buried him in the crevice

¹ *Shemos* 2:1-3

[ג].”² The word ג refers to the thirteen [ג”ג] attributes of mercy. This is the broader meaning of the sages’ teaching that he died on the same day that he was born; both his beginning and his end are all tied up together as one in the aspect of the thirteen attributes of mercy.

Moshe Rabbeinu revealed to the world the pathway for rectifying sin—by drawing down the thirteen attributes of mercy. We find in the *Idra* that the *Dikna* [“beard” with its thirteen points] “covers over” *Abba* and *Imma*, and there is an illusion to this in the verse. “And she took for him an ark of bulrushes...” The word for bulrushes, גמא, can be broken down into two parts: ג which is the total *gematria* of the word אבא; and מ”א which indicates the אבא or *Imma*. Similarly, the materials with which it was sealed—clay and pitch—also represent *Chochmah* and *Binah*. [Clay is a brighter substance and indicates *Chochmah*; pitch is black and represents *Binah*.] “And she laid it in the reeds...” The reeds represent the higher aspect of *Da’as* which unites *Chochmah* and *Binah*. [The reed is a line that joins one thing to another, and also the verse goes on to tell us that Miriam stood at a distance in the reeds “to attain *Da’as*” of what would become her brother.] Moshe Rabbeinu himself is the embodiment of the *Dikna* that covers over *Abba* and *Imma*, the *Da’as* that unites *Chochmah* and *Binah*.

This is why we say צדקתך three times during *Minchah* of Shabbos—because that was the time when Moshe, Yosef, and Dovid all left the world. Moshe Rabbeinu encompasses both Yosef and Dovid and he binds them into a single entity. This parallels the fact that Moshe Rabbeinu also had the soul of Shes, who bound Kayin and Hevel together and rectified them.

The Very First Yud

Rav Yisrael Sarug, a disciple of the Arizal, recorded very deep teachings about the beginnings of creation. When Hashem created the universe, He first constricted and withdrew His light, leaving the form of a letter *yud* in the “middle” [of the vacated

² *Devarim* 34:6

space]. This is the light of the original and highest *Kesser* that can be described by us at all. This *yud* could not be revealed, however, and Hashem wanted that the ten [*yud*] *sefiros* should be revealed, and so He removed the light from this *yud* as well so that a vessel remained that was essentially connected with the light that had temporarily been removed from it. Afterward, Hashem draw this light back down into the *yud*, into this vessel, but the light had been altered slightly and tempered to a very tiny degree. When it was returned to the *yud* it reached all the way down to the lowermost extension of the *yud* and even collided with it. It collided and bounced back, and this is the spiritual root of what we call the returned light that is a “surrounding light” [*ohr makif*]. The light that was within the structure of the *yud* is the light of *Kesser*, the light that was slightly tempered and more limited when it was replaced is the light of *Chochmah*, but it has a rebounding and surrounding light which is its soul-aspect of *Chayah*.

In other terms, this first light was the aspect of *Akudim* [“bound”], and the light that emerged from it “touched and did not touch” [it hovered but did not settle, because the vessels were not fully prepared]. Afterward, when the light returned it was in the aspect of *Atzilus*, which is of *Nekudim* and *Berudim* [“spotted and banded” where the vessels are sufficiently individuated to contain the light]. In this framework, the original *yud* is connected with all three aspects of *Akudim*, *Nekudim*, and *Berudim*.

Even though these concepts are all very lofty and we cannot grasp them, nevertheless they all have some practical relevance to the personal *avodas Hashem* of every single Jew. And this is all the more true of the soul of the true *tzaddik*, Moshe Rabbeinu, which is rooted in the highest worlds. The *Sefer Tzemach* explains that the Arizal had the soul of Moshe Rabbeinu that this is why he taught about the downward evolution of all of the worlds, from their very beginnings until their lowermost extents. Because his soul was rooted in the original spiraling outward of lights and vessels he was able to grasp the structure and relationships of all of worlds, from above to below. This is not the case with other *tzaddikim* who must ascend from level to level, from below to above.

In the Torah's description of the very beginning of creation, we find, "And Hashem said: Let there be light. And there was light." The Rama MiPano explains that this first calling into existence of light was the creation of the primal light within the *yud*. "And there was light"—this is the smaller light that came back into the emptied *yud*.

Although all that we have mentioned until now is not clearly described in Rav Chaim Vital's recordings of the Arizal's teachings, nevertheless he did allude to the concepts in a number of places in his writings. This light is the illumination of the soul of Moshe Rabbeinu, which is the main means through which Hashem's glory is revealed in the world. "And she saw him, that he was a goodly child." He was like the first light that Hashem, "saw that it was good," the light of the first *yud*.

Divine Knowledge and Free Will

The entire subject of the confluence of Divine knowledge and our own free will touches upon the deepest secrets of creation which are completely beyond our grasp. As the Rambam taught, the way in which Hashem can know all that will be and orchestrate all events without inhibiting our ability to choose is beyond human comprehension—"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not My ways."³ It is neither necessary nor possible for human beings to fully comprehend Hashem's ways in this. All that we know is that Hashem wants both Divine foreknowledge and free will to coexist, and we must believe that in truth they do not contradict one another even though how this is possible is beyond our comprehension.

Although the Rambam's approach of simply clarifying the limits of human comprehension is certainly true and irrefutable, nevertheless we find in a number of works like the teachings of Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk, the Baal HaSulam and others rooted in the concepts discussed by the Rama MiPano, that there are many

³ *Yeshayah* 55:8

levels within the world of Divine knowledge and free will, and at each level there is a revelation of Hashem's knowledge that has relevance to our personal *avodas Hashem*.

The matter of Hashem's knowledge is a very distant *ohr makif*, and we must know that there is no reality other than Him. He is the only reality and every single action that takes place in this world is only through Him. However, it is only after a person has repented that he can begin to come into contact with this extremely lofty *makif* that transcends all human comprehension. [Note: When a person is focused too much on the providential nature of everything that occurs, it becomes too easy for him to "hang" all of his poor choices and negative behaviors on Hashem's intervention. All the while that he has not yet repented, he must focus on the decisive nature of his own actions so that he will repair them.] Afterward, he can begin to know of this *makif* because it is really the rectification of all sins. One must repent completely over every single sin and do whatever he can, he must seek through all of the holy works and consult with true *tzaddikim* in order to fully repent in every way possible.

Yet even while he is doing all that he can to repent, he must hold fast to the true belief which transcends all human reason, the belief in Hashem's great and profound mercy which are themselves beyond all comprehension. "I abandoned you for a small moment, and I will gather you in with great mercies." At the loftiest levels of the light of Divine knowledge, there are "great mercies" that transcend not only all human action, but all human comprehension. [This is the level of the thirteen rectifications of the *Dikna*, of *Arich Anpin*, of the thirteen attributes of mercy, which is associated with the initial *yud* of creation and the light of Moshe Rabbeinu's soul.]

While one is activating his free will in *teshuvah* and "doing," he may begin to look higher to the source, to the faith in Hashem's absolute reality and total control and knowledge, to His "great mercies" that rectify everything and transform all sins into merits. Once a person has done all he can, he must immerse himself in *emunah* and uplift it because it is this turning of one's focus toward Hashem's absolute control and power that really rectifies everything. He achieves his final purification through seeing

from afar that absolutely everything is only a reflection of Hashem's light which is beyond his human comprehension. Ultimately, "ממני יצאו כבודים"—everything has already been determined on high.⁴

This is the way in which Dovid HaMelech “showed the way of *teshuvah* for the individual.” He taught us that after one has done all he can to repent, he must focus his mind on the heights of *emunah*—on the “310 worlds of *Reish d'lo Isyadah*” which is a *makif* that is very, very distant. To “make use” of this *makif* [so that its distant light will illuminate the mind and shine the way to true *teshuvah*] one must first have merited a *makif* that is closer to one's comprehension. Even though this closer *makif* is still very lofty, nevertheless it is of the kind that is called the “rebounded surrounding light”—it is a reflection of the light that entered into the vessel and then bounced out again. This is analogous to the hairs. [Note: In Kabbalistic terms, there are different types of concepts or “lights” that are *makif*—those that are like “crowns” that are completely detached from the head and above it—and those that are like “hairs” which radiate outward but are connected with the head/mind and which are of a baser substance. The “crown-type” *makif* is very far off, but there are other “hair-type” *makifim* that are “closer to home” which we can grasp more easily and which pave the way for us to appreciate the higher type of *makif* at some point later on. An example of the distinction between the two can be seen in different types of questions. Some answers are too much for a person to absorb because he has not developed his mind sufficiently to grasp them yet. To understand them, he needs to invest energy into prayer and longing so that these *makifim* will “come in” and he will be able to grasp them. However, there are questions that a person doesn't understand not because his personal grasp is too limited but because the human mind in general is insufficient for them altogether. That is a form of *makif* that is absolute, not relative; it is “far” rather than “near.” To merit to even feel some illumination of the higher *makif*, one must first invest in drawing in the “closer” *makifim*.]

⁴ *Sotah* 10b; *Makkos* 23b

The Thirty-Two Paths of the Mind

The underlying reason for the light having to first enter the vessel and afterward rebound from it is connected with a fundamental principle. Before the mind can reach toward the higher *makifim*, the mind “checks into” the heart to verify that it is sufficiently pure. The mind has thirty-two pathways [like the thirty-two spinal nerves and the thirty-two teeth which symbolize ways to process wisdom] and these paths have the ability to inspect the depths of the heart, if it is truly sincerely focused on Hashem. Once the heart proves itself true, the light of the *makif* shines into it. The number thirty-two is written as ל"ב, which is the “heart.” The mind knows the nature of the heart intimately.

In order to understand the interplay between Hashem’s knowledge and free will somewhat better, an explanation is required. Sometimes a person acts from his own will, but sometimes a person does or has done through him any number of things that he did not want to do at all. This is a very fearsome thing, when the *makif* that surrounds the person causes him to carry out certain actions “against his will,” as it were. If a person becomes habituated to sinning, G-d forbid, then even if he begins to repent and tries to change his actions, speech, and thoughts, nevertheless the *makif* remains and it pushes him to do things that his better self wants to avoid. How, then, can this person change himself? He must truly cleanse his heart. When he fully and truly “chooses life,” and completely strips himself of self-interest and nullifies his heart to Hashem—when he truly wants to do Hashem’s will—then he will merit to alter his *makifim*. Then, on the contrary, the *makif* will push him to do holy things.

The mind is itself a kind of *makif*, and it enters into and scrutinizes the heart’s intentions—it “strikes” there and then retreats. The *makif* that takes the form outside that the heart assumes inside, and a person’s conduct and actions follow the same pattern. When a person purifies and changes his heart and what he really wants, the *makif* enters and takes stock of it, and when it rebounds to shine again “outside” it sheds a great light that turns the person toward the good.

All unthinking actions, whether for the good or its opposite, are reflections of a person's *makifim*. And there can also be very hidden reasons why a person feels compelled or has the habit to do one thing or another. But, in general, we would say that if a person has a bit of resentment or ill-will in some corner of his heart, his *makif* will find it out and afterward he will find himself acting in a manner that is against his more obvious will. And the inverse is also true; a person can be drawn to follow the path of Torah and prayer as if by habit, without thinking, but this is also due to the fact that his heart is "molded" on the pattern of goodness, and so the *makif* reflects this back in action after taking its measure. The origin of everything, for good or ill, is in one's innermost heart. Because the *makifim* are more powerful than conscious and integrated knowledge—the *pnimi'im*—it really does feel like compulsion from some external source. But the *makif* only reflects that which it detected in the innermost heart.

The Choices of the *Tzaddik*

This action of the *makifim* also works in another way; in its influence on the actions of the *tzaddik*. What makes the *tzaddik* truly righteous is that he has devoted all of his heart, soul, and means to fulfilling Hashem's will in every respect. When he is completely submitted to Hashem in this way, he can be influenced by his *makifim* to do things that he would normally not do, and when he feels "compelled" in this way, he knows that it is coming from the highest *makif*, which is the direct influence of Hashem's will. This is how great *tzaddikim* were able to do things which we would normally consider to be negative choices—for them, it was not a choice at all. They did not have any internal desire to do negative, but were only dedicated to Hashem's will. Because their hearts were "hollowed out" of all personal considerations, Hashem could influence them through their *makifim* to do things that were necessary but out of the ordinary, or which appeared not to be in alignment with the way of the Torah. For example, Yehudah felt driven to take Tamar. Why? "ממני יצאו כבושים" —"The decree was determined by Me." This is a revelation of the *ruach hakodesh* of the *tzaddikim*,

when they are driven to act in extraordinary ways in order to carry out Hashem's necessary plan.

Of course, no person can claim this order of heavenly influence, because ordinary people must be constantly vigilant for the influence of their negative drives, no matter how hidden they may be in the inner recesses of the heart. To correct for this, they must always do *teshuvah* and purify their hearts so that the *makifim* will only influence them for the good. Once even ordinary people have cleansed themselves to the degree that they can and purified their hearts to every extent possible for them on their level, they can begin to have contact with the "higher" *makif* and gain a sensitivity for the ways in which the higher and more true *hashgachah* works through them even when they do not intend to act in a particular manner. They can begin to develop deeper *emunah* in Hashem's overarching providence and absolute orchestration of everything that occurs, and this is the final level of his repentance which transforms all of his former sins into merits.

This light of *yichud*, of awareness that Hashem is one, single, and unique, repairs all of a person's sins the more that a person immerses himself in it. The entire redemption depends on the Jewish people uplifting *emunah* which is *Malchus* to the higher place of Hashem's absolute oneness. What is required is to do *teshuvah* to the best of our ability and have complete faith in Hashem's oneness and absolute providence. Even though *teshuvah* necessitates actions, choices, and not "knowledge," nevertheless the roots of *teshuvah* are in the aspect of Yitzchak—*קץ חיייה ייחידה*—passing the boundary of one's lower effort-levels of *Nefesh-Ruach-Neshamah* and rising into the higher *makifim* of *Chayah* and *Yechidah* which are the aspects of Divine knowledge that transcends human grasp. It is only by rising to this higher level that the *makifim* can actually be altered so that Hashem's will and providence will be manifest through all of one's actions and the final rectification of one's former sins can be effected. To achieve these higher states, one requires a great deal of *teshuvah* in the

heart and a readiness to receive the light of the true *tzaddikim* who carry a spark of Moshe Rabbeinu's great soul.

Acquiring the *Shechinah*

The real meaning of *teshuvah* is תשובה ה', to restore oneself to being a vehicle for a revelation of the *Shechinah*. This was the level of all of the *tzaddikim* who merited to be a *merkavah* for the *Shechinah*, who never lost contact with the *Shechinah* and *emunah* for an instant. It is not that these *tzaddikim* only learned Torah and prayed constantly; they did so in a state of *dveikus* and bonding through faith with the *Shechinah*.

Just as a woman can be acquired as a wife through three means, so too can one cement his bond with the *Shechinah* through three parallel means. The first *kinyan* is through the exchange of money or כסף—this means through כּיּסוּפּיּן or longing, crying out one's yearning while in a state of *mochin d'katnus*. This was the first stage of the Jewish people's release from Egypt—"And their cries ascended to Hashem from the labor." When a person is in spiritual exile and his *Da'as* is degraded, the main way in which he can bond with the *Shechinah* is through crying out, and this releases him from the state of *mochin d'katnus*. [Rebbe Nachman of Breslov taught that new levels of Divine awareness are only "born" through crying out, just as a woman cries out in labor before the child emerges into the world.] The power of speech is connected with the world of *Akudim*; the more one speaks out his heart before Hashem, the more he merits to bond with Hashem while he is in a state of *mochin d'katnus*. This is the beginning of his making a *kinyan* and connecting with the *Shechinah*. This is the light of *Binah*.

Afterward, he rises to the level of the second *kinyan*: a promissory note. This is the generation of the bond with the *Shechinah* through the study of Torah, which is the "contract" that we received from Hashem; the light of *Chochmah*. This begins to bring the seeker into a state of greater spiritual maturity; his *Da'as* expands and rises to the level of the *mochin* and the contemplation of the Divine Names.

The third form of *kinyan* is through the light of *yichud* [intimate contact], which in *avodas Hashem* indicates the actual making of *yichudim*. This is the light of *Kesser*. The second and third forms embody the light of *Nekudim* and *Berudim*. Although the worlds of *Nekudim* and *Berudim* are lower along the array of the worlds and *sefiros* than that of *Akudim*, nevertheless their root is higher. They are rooted in *Kesser* and *Chochmah*, while the expression of *Akudim* is in speech, which is associated with *Binah*. *Chochmah* is associated with vision, and *Kesser* is that which joins them together. In our *parshah* we find that Moshe Rabbeinu looked כה וכה—“this way and that way”—and this refers to the two sets of twenty-five letters that form the upper *yichud* of *Shema* and the lower *yichud* of *Boruch Shem*. In our time, the lower *yichud* actually only has twenty-four letters, but in the ultimate future it will be read ...וברוך שם, the added *vav* embodying the link of *Kesser* that connects the upper and lower *yichudim*.

Although our entrance into building a bond with the *Shechinah* is through the lowermost pathway of yearning and speech, for the most part, nevertheless we must be aware that the *tzaddikim* attain *dveikus* at the higher levels. They are like Moshe Rabbeinu who embodies the light of the *Dikna* which includes that of both *Abba* and *Imma*—the joining of the upper and lower *yichudim*. Moshe Rabbeinu is surrounded by a vessel of reeds that is sealed with both clay and pitch, which is a product of the joining of the light of *Chochmah* and *Binah*, the upper and lower *yichudim*. He teaches the Jewish people the way out of Egypt, out of the exile of the spirit, so that their cries can rise and be heard on high.

The deeper the Jewish people went into exile, the deeper did their *mochin* descend to the level of the mouth. For this reason, their first *kinyan* was through speech, “and their cries ascended.” The *mochin* then rose back up again to *Da'as*, which represents attained afterward a more clear understanding of how to properly join *Chochmah* and *Binah* and reveal the upper *yichud* through the lower *yichud*. [Note: The upper *yichud* is like the higher *makifim* awareness of Hashem's absolute oneness. The lower *yichud* is *emunah* and action that expresses this awareness in a universe of

apparent plurality.] When a person is properly connected to Hashem through the revelation of *Akudim* in the mouth, then he can rebound afterward to the higher place of the source of *Nekudim* and *Berudim* which are in the *Galgalta* of עייב [the uppermost aspect of *Atzilus*] and remain in total connection with the *Shechinah*. [This parallels the process of the mind descending to scrutinize the true motives of the heart and then rebounding out to the level of the higher *makifim* which then exert their own influence.]

Moshe Rabbeinu's soul was the first to descend to the world as a full composite of all of the souls of the Jewish people. He is the aspect of *Bereishis*, the רא"ש ב"יית, for whose sake all of the worlds were created. He is the root of all pathways of *avodah*. The essence of all *avodah* is to make a dwelling place for Hashem in the lower worlds, and for this purpose Hashem created *tzaddikim* who would repent to such an extent that they would uplift the *Shechinah* to its source. When a person follows the pathways of *teshuvah* of Moshe Rabbeinu, he is also a partner in the purpose of creation.

Guarding the Covenant

When a person is truly bonded to the *Shechinah*, he can uplift it from level to level. And the *Shechinah* likewise helps him do true *teshuvah* and sanctify his thoughts, speech, and actions so that he can truly guard the covenant. There can be no genuine connection with Hashem without *shemiras habris*—the main definition of a *tzaddik* is one who guards the holy covenant. And if a person is not careful in this area, then he is extremely far from the *Shechinah* and he has to speak endless words of longing just to get the *Shechinah* to attend to him. Whenever a person is connected in some way to these kinds of sins, G-d forbid, he has a very hard time speaking to Hashem at all and feels that his prayers are ignored. He damaged the essence of prayer and now it is hard for him to cry out, and as a matter of course his cries don't rise. In such a case, he must force himself with self-sacrifice to do a great deal of *hisbodedus* so that the *Shechinah* will be willing to have a relationship with him at all. After he achieves this, he can focus on higher things and begin to contemplate the Divine Names and *yichudim*. He can then look deeply into Torah works to discover how he can attain higher and higher states of

dveikus. *Eemunah* has worlds upon worlds and endless levels to it, and when one is already connected to *emunah* he can begin to rise from level to level guided by the *Shechinah* to the highest *makif*. This process and the study of the Divine Names purifies a person's heart; the ל"ב pathways of wisdom search out his heart in order to purify it. This is the highest way in which he can utilize the *shtar* or contract of the Torah's wisdom: the contemplation of the Divine Names in a state of *dveikus*.

“And these are the names of the children of Yisrael who came to Egypt; Yaakov, each man and his house, they came.” וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל אֶלְיָשָׁר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבְּאִיִּים ׀ מִצְרַיִם—The final letters of the phrase spell the word מילה. The descent to Egypt is due to defiling of the covenant. How is it to be corrected? Through reconnecting with, “Yaakov, each man and his house.” One must reconnect with the true *tzaddik* who is completely pure like Yaakov, who has the ability to repair every blemish.

Ultimately, the goal is to experience that which the true *tzaddikim* do every moment of their lives: to live with such connection to Hashem that every nudge by their *makifim* is an expression of Hashem's will alone. As the Baal HaTanya said of the Maggid of Mezeritch: he never made so much as the slightest move without it being part of his role as serving as a vehicle for the *Shechinah*. This is what it means to really express one's *tzelem Elokim*. The word צלם has three components: the *tzaddik* is the *pnimi* light which is grasped and integrated; the *lamed* is the first *makif* that descends to examine the inner state of the heart and its purity; the *mem* is the second *makif* that has rebounded and exerts influence based on the inner state and its reaction to it. The true *tzaddikim* are pure on all levels, and so they express the fullness of their *tzelem Elokim*.

The Days of *Shovevim*

It is during this period of *Shovevim* that we relive the descent of the Jewish people into the Egyptian exile and our coming out of it. Every year, we pass through this process, but at ever-higher levels. Repentance isn't necessarily about actual sins—the *tzaddikim* do *teshuvah* even though they are far from sinning. The main aspect of *teshuvah* is to attain a more genuine state of *dveikus* and to be more fully prepared this

year to receive the Torah. "ויאמר יהו"ה סלחתי כדברידך"—The initials of the phrase form the word כוסים, the “cups” of Purim which are the culmination of the days of *Shovevim*. Our purpose is to rise higher, from *makif* to *makif*, and purify our hearts completely so that everything we do—our Torah study, our prayer, our eating and even our drinking—all serve as vehicles for the revelation of the *Shechinah*. We have to do our best and work our way up through rectifying our actions, speech, and thoughts, and then even the higher work of cleansing our innermost hearts and developing greater *emunah* until even we will reach the final *mem* of the *tzelem* like the *tzaddikim*.

“I am Hashem who takes you out from under the burdens of Egypt.” Only Hashem can take us out. The pathway is revealed to us now by Moshe Rabbeinu just as he led us out then—the pathway of joining *Chochmah* and *Binah*. He was the first redeemer; he will be the final redeemer. “That which was, will be.”

The Arizal explains that the final statement, “Praises to G-d on high, their Redeemer,” which is the link between *geulah* and *tefillah* [*Shema* and *Shemonah Esrei*] expresses the ascent from the lower three worlds of *Beriyah-Yetzirah-Asiyah* to the higher world of *Atzilus* [and *dveikus*]. It represents leaving the state of division to enter the state of unity.⁵ We find there that at first the *gevuros* descend to the *Partzufim* of *Leah* and *Rachel*, which represents the Jew who is just beginning to serve Hashem. The beginning is *Shema*, and when we start we are still in a state of *mochin d'katnus*. “The redeemed ones sang a new song”—this indicates the primary stage of speaking endless words of longing before Hashem. The power of speech descends from *Leah-Binah* which is associated with Ammon. Then we enter into *Shemonah Esrei* which is the *mochin* of *Chochmah-Atzilus* where speech no longer applies because we have entered into *mochin d'gadlus*. Then one is in the aspect of *Rachel* and thought, because the time has come to contemplate the Divine Names and make *yichudim*. Yet there is something even higher: the joining of both together, so that the mind resounds with the thought of *Rachel* vitalized by the energy of speech of *Leah*. Such thoughts are not just thoughts;

⁵ *Sha'ar Hakavanos*

they are like speech itself. It is at the point of *קונה הכל* in *Shemonah Esrei* that the light of Moshe Rabbeinu shines; it is the place of “everything”—of the joining of the light of *Chochmah* and *Binah* in the state of *dveikus*.

Rabbi Yaakov Abuchatzera explains that this is the inner meaning of the verse, “And He made for them houses.” Yocheved and Miriam merited the two “houses” of the aspects of *Rachel* and *Leah* by virtue of their fear of Hashem, faith, and self-sacrifice to do His will. Shifra has the same numerical value as Yerushalayim [*Leah-Dovid*], and Puah has the same *gematria* as Tzion [*Rachel-Yosef*].

“Let Your Soul Know Wisdom”

This is the meaning of: “דעה חכמה לנפשך והיא כתר לראשך”—“Let your soul (*nefesh*) know (*d'ei*) wisdom (*Chochmah*) and it will be a crown (*Kesser*) for your head.”⁶ Join the aspects of *nefesh* (speech and yearning of *Binah*) and *Chochmah* (the contemplation of Hashem), and it will be a *Kesser* for your head—you will merit the higher *makif* associated with *Kesser*.

May Hashem release us from Egypt in the merit of true *teshuvah* and help us to become a vehicle for the revelation of His *Shechinah*. May we enter into the protective ark of Noach [which is the ark of Moshe Rabbeinu], which is formed of the ך of the *nefesh* of speech and longing, and the ך of the *Chochmah* of thought and *yichudim*. Through this ark, we will be saved from the surging waters of the flood and not be stranded outside.

The sages taught that Og survived the flood by clinging to the outside of the ark, and this represents a superficial bond to the aspect of the *tzaddik* and his ways of *teshuvah*. Even though this is better than nothing, it is not a true rectification. Og was spared so that he could be fully rectified by Moshe Rabbeinu (although there are those who say that Og the king of Bashan was a different individual). In any case, the real repair is only to be achieved through the *nun* and the *ches*, through prayer and

⁶ From the *Shabbos zemer* “*D'ror Yikrah*,” based on *Mishlei* 24:14.

contemplation, as Rebbe Nachman of Breslov explains in *Likutei Moharan* I:1. Once a person is bound internally to these two aspects, he can draw along the *tav*, which represents the prayer and Torah study of the Jewish people being inscribed on high and having the necessary effect. Then נ"ח becomes נח"ת, and Hashem hearkens to our prayers and will bring the redeemer immediately. The Yesod Ha'Avodah explains that even if a person was distanced from the *tzaddik* for twenty years, he can return back to where he came from just as Yaakov returned to the inheritance of his fathers.

May Hashem have mercy that we bind ourselves to Dovid HaMelech, especially during these days of *Shovevim*, and follow his pathway of *teshuvah* by reciting a great deal of *Tehillim*, each of us in accordance with his abilities.⁷ May we utterly destroy the influence of Amalek, which is as the Tzemach Tzedek taught the cooling-off of the hearts of the Jewish people. As a result, we will merit to see, eye to eye, Hashem's return to Tzion. May we merit the aspects of Shifra and Puah, of *Leah* and *Rachel*, so that we can see with both the left and right eyes, Hashem's return to Tzion.

The verse says, "מי שמך לאישׁ"—"Who made you a man (authority) over us?" The final letters of the phrase form the Name יכ"ש, which emerges from the third line of *Ana B'Koach*, נא גבור דרשי יחודך כבבת שמרם—"Please, Mighty One, guard those who seek **Your unity like the apple of Your eye.**" During the exile, this Name is only illuminated halfway; instead of the full Name יכ"ש, we have only the second triad. During the first redemption from Egypt, Moshe killed the Egyptian with the spiritual power embodied by end of this Name: יחודך כבבת שמרם—יכ"ש. In the ultimate future we will be redeemed with the power embodied by the first segment of this Name, נא גבור דרשי, as alluded to in the verse, "יגיד כל-עמך אַעֲשֶׂה נִפְלְאוֹת"—"Before all your people, I will do marvels..."⁸ Yet, even now, by being bound to those who truly see His unity, we merit to be guarded like the apple of His eye. The fact that we want to be connected to the true *tzaddik* and seek him is sufficient. May Hashem help us to bind

⁷ *Likutei Moharan* II:73

⁸ *Shemos* 34:10

ourselves fully to him, and then we will see the Name in full, with the arrival of our righteous redeemer immediately.

Translated and Adapted by Rav Micha Golshevsky.