

מים רבים

Mayim Rabbim

FOREWORD

For almost 28 years, the weekday pattern had been constant. The Rebbe would join the communal prayers for the Torah readings on Monday and Thursday mornings around 10 AM, and every day at 3:15 for the Afternoon Service, and 6:45 for the Evening Service in the winter and 9:30 in the summer.¹ On *Shabbos* and festivals he would come an hour after candle-lighting for the Evening Service, and at 10 AM for the Morning Service. There were no vacations, no sick days; he was always there.

Then in 5738 (1978), on the eve of Shemini Atzeres, in the middle of *Hakkafos*, he felt chest pains. Everyone was asked to leave the *shul* except for a small *minyán*. He completed the *Hakkafos*, went up to his room, and began receiving medical treatment. It was discovered that he had undergone a severe heart attack; he would undergo a second early the following morning.

The chassidim were in utter shock throughout those two nervous days of celebration. On the one hand, Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah are days – indeed, *the* days – of rejoicing. On the other hand, with the Rebbe sick, how could one genuinely rejoice?!

Reassuringly, on the evening following Simchas Torah, the Rebbe spoke from his room. His words were broadcast to the chassidic community who had gathered in “770” to hear and, by telephone hookup, to chassidim worldwide. His words were later transcribed, submitted to the Rebbe who edited them, and then they were published.

Since chassidim were not present in the Rebbe’s room at the time, his words were not preceded by a *niggun*. Nevertheless, from their content and style, the chassidim appreciated that in published form, it was appropriate to separate them into a *maamar*, a formal chassidic discourse, and *sichos*, talks.

The same pattern was repeated on the following Saturday night and indeed, for most of the *Shabbasos* of the following winter.

One of those *maamarim*, entitled *Mayim Rabbim*, delivered on the night

1. Except for the days when he would visit the *Ohel*, the resting place of the Rebbe Rayatz.

following *Shabbos Parshas Noach*, and translated in the pages that follow, resonated deeply among chassidim, because of the universal relevance of its theme – overcoming the challenges that earning a livelihood present to our Divine service.

NEW INSIGHTS ON A FAMILIAR THEME

The fundamental concept of this *maamar* – that a person's involvement in his business affairs is not a necessary evil, but a springboard for spiritual growth – is a cornerstone in the ideology of Chassidism. In this *maamar*, the Rebbe explains that concept on several levels, progressively probing deeper.

The Rebbe describes the ideal approach to balancing one's efforts in Divine service with one's toil in earning a livelihood by citing the phrase from *Tehillim*,² “When you eat of the labor of your hands...” That phrase clearly implies that a person should work with his hands, though not with his mind and heart, for his higher energies should be focused upward, True, from the verse, “And G-d will bless you in all that you *do*,”³ it is clear that man's activity and, at times, his strenuous labor, are necessary. Nevertheless, even when labor is necessary, only one's external energies should be invested in this activity, not the inner efforts of his heart and mind.

Moreover, since it is “the blessings of G-d that bring wealth,”⁴ one's business is no more than a garment, an accessory, for these blessings. Just as in a literal sense, wearing an oversized garment impedes rather than facilitates movement, so too, any excessive entanglement and certainly, *tirdos haparnassah*, the anxiety and preoccupation involved in earning a livelihood, are undesirable.

DRAWN BY POWERFUL FORCES

An obvious question arises: If this course of action is what G-d desires and it will also lead to a life of blessing, why is a person propelled so powerfully by a desire for material wealth?

As the *maamar* explains, the material aspects of our existence derive from the

2. *Tehillim* 128:2.

3. *Devarim* 15:18.

4. *Mishlei* 10:22.

realm of *Tohu*,⁵ which is loftier and more intense than the realm of *Tikkun*,⁶ the immediate source of Jewish souls. And because of that greater power, our souls are motivated to seek out those lofty energies. *Tzaddikim* appreciate the spiritual dimension of this quest from the outset. For most of us, by contrast, this is a subconscious motivation; what we knowingly seek is material wealth in a simple sense. Because of the hidden spiritual power invested in materiality, it is able to dominate our attention and even cause anxiety, preoccupation, and stress.

Although, on an apparent level, the energies of *Tohu* surpass those of *Tikkun*, the ultimate source of a Jew's soul is higher. Indeed, the soul is rooted in the Essence of G-d. As a result the soul possesses an inherent love for G-d and a natural desire to fulfill His will. The desire for materiality which is rooted in *Tohu* cannot overcome these innate spiritual drives.

The awareness of the existence of this inner G-dly potential also points to the dynamic that enables the soul to express its love for G-d – *teshuvah*. *Teshuvah* means far more than repentance. Indeed, the literal meaning of the term, “return,” is closer to its real intent. *Teshuvah* represents the soul's return to its root and source, establishing contact with the inner G-dly potential that lies at the core of our being, and making it the dominant influence in our lives.

SEEING THE LARGER PICTURE

While all the above is true, it represents only a limited conception. It takes for granted that souls exist on the material plane, that there are material entities which evoke desire, and that the inner spiritual forces on either side are in conflict.

Nevertheless, from G-d's perspective, this entire framework of existence did not have to exist, for this world – and indeed, all the spiritual realms above – were created *yesh mei'ayin* (“something from nothing”). And since He brought this world into existence, He obviously did so with an intent.

His motivating intent was His “desire for a dwelling in the lower realms”⁷ – that the physical entities in this world be infused with spiritual purpose. Through their study of the Torah and observance of the *mitzvos*, the Jewish people fash-

5. Literally, “chaos,” explained on page ???.

6. Literally, “correction” or “restitution” or “reformation;” explained on page ???.

7. See *Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Naso*, sec. 16; *Parshas Bechukosai*, sec. 3; *Bereishis Rabbah* 3:9; *Bamidbar Rabbah* 13:6; *Tanya*, ch. 36.

ion this dwelling and illuminate it with spiritual light. Doing so enables their souls to rise to spiritual peaks, indeed, to ascend to higher rungs than those on which they existed before their descent to this lower realm.

An awareness that this is G-d's original intent, and the motivating force for creation, is empowering. This awareness enables a person to step back and appreciate that the challenges material existence poses are not genuine obstacles: they are mere temporary hurdles that will certainly be overcome. Ultimately, after all, nothing can block the fulfillment of G-d's will.

Even though initially it is known Above with absolute certainty that the Jewish people will fulfill His intent, nevertheless, it is the actual fulfillment of this purpose by the labors of the Jewish people that enables this potential to be realized. And in response to their efforts, they are granted blessings for wealth, long life, and children.

מִיָּם רַבִּים לֹא יוּכְלוּ לִכְבוֹת אֶת הָאֱהָבָה וְנִהְרֹת לֹא יִשְׁטְפוּהָ גּוֹיָא, וְאִתָּא בְּדְרוּשֵׁי רְבוּתֵינוּ נְשִׂיאֵינוּ, שְׁמַיִם רַבִּים הֵם כָּל טְרֻדוֹת הַפְּרִנְסָה וְהַמְחֻשְׁבוֹת שֶׁבְּעֵנֵינוּ עוֹלָם הַזֶּה, וְעַכְ"ז לֹא יוּכְלוּ לִכְבוֹת אֶת הָאֱהָבָה הַמְּסוּתֶרֶת שֶׁיֵּשׁ בְּכָל נֶפֶשׁ מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל,

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“Abundant waters cannot extinguish the love,
nor can rivers wash it away.”¹
מִיָּם רַבִּים לֹא יוּכְלוּ
לְכַבּוֹת אֶת הָאֱהָבָה וְנִהְרֹת
לֹא יִשְׁטְפוּהָ גּוֹיָא

This verse appears towards the end of *Shir HaShirim*. As explained by the classic commentaries,² *Shir HaShirim* is an analogy of the love relationship between G-d and the Jewish people and, in a personal sense, between G-d and every individual Jew. Shortly before *Shir HaShirim* concludes, we find this verse, which describes the love for G-d possessed by the Jews as a whole, and by every individual Jew in particular.

וְאִתָּא בְּדְרוּשֵׁי רַבּוֹתֵינוּ The *maamarim* of our Rebbeim³ explain that the
נְשִׂיאֵינוּ, שְׁמַיִם רַבִּים “abundant waters” refer to all the anxiety and
הֵם כָּל טְרֻדוֹת הַפְּרִנְסָה preoccupation involved in earning a livelihood

We have translated the Hebrew טְרֻדוֹת as “the anxiety and preoccupation.” That term implies extensive activity, but even more so, the preoccupation of one’s mind. One feels constant pressure; he is pulled continuously in different directions.

וְהַמְחֻשְׁבוֹת שֶׁבְּעֵנֵינוּ and the thoughts concerning matters of this
עוֹלָם הַזֶּה world.

וְעַם כָּל זֶה Nevertheless, despite the intensity of this preoccupation,

לֹא יוּכְלוּ לְכַבּוֹת אֶת they cannot extinguish the hidden love for G-d
הָאֱהָבָה הַמְּסוּתֶרֶת possessed by every Jew.

As explained in *Tanya*, chs. 18-19, *et al.*, since every Jew’s soul is an actual part of G-d, every Jew has a natural, innate desire to bond with Him. Nevertheless, because the G-dly soul is encloded in the animal soul, this desire often remains hidden, submerged in the subconscious reaches of the person’s heart and mind.

1. *Shir HaShirim* 8:7.

2. *Rashi*, *Ibn Ezra*, *et al.*

3. *Torah Or*, the beginning of *Parshas Noach*, p. 8c; *Toras Chayim, Bereishis*, p. 58d ff.; the series of *maamarim* entitled *Mayim Rabbim*, 5636, at the beginning and in ch. 75.

ונהרות לא ישטפוה, שגם כאשר מחשבות הנ"ל הם מטרידות ביותר, עד שהן משוטטות במרוצה בתמידות בלי הפסק כלל, כמו הנהרותי שנובעים תמיד בלי הפסק וניידי ואזלי בשטף גדולי, מ"מ לא ישטפוה להאבה (ולא יוכלו לכבותה⁶).

שֵׁשׁ בְּכָל נֶפֶשׁ מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל, that exists in the soul of every Jew,
וְנִהְרֹת לֹא יִשְׁטְפוּהָ “nor can rivers wash it away.”

The term “waters” can refer to water that stands still, like the waters of the sea, which are contained and stand in one place.⁴ “Rivers,” by contrast, flow with a current [and indeed, at times,] a powerful current.⁵ Implied is that

שִׁגְמֵי כְּאֲשֶׁר מְחַשְׁבוֹת Even when these thoughts i.e., the preoccupation
הַנְּזַכְרִים לְמַעַלָּה with earning a livelihood and other worldly matters,
הֵם מְטְרִידוֹת בְּיֹתֵר, עַד are so unsettling, to the extent that they well up
שֶׁהֵן מְשׁוֹטְטוֹת בְּמְרוּצָה and flow powerfully and consistently without any
בְּתִמְדוּת בְּלִי הֶפְסֵק כֹּלֵל, interruption at all –
כְּמוֹ הַנְּהָרוֹת שֶׁנּוֹבְעִים like rivers that flow incessantly –
תָּמִיד בְּלִי הֶפְסֵק
וְנִיִּדֵי וְאֲזֵלֵי בְּשֹׁטֵף moving and gushing with a powerful current,
גְּדוּלֵי, מִכָּל מְקוֹם לֹא nevertheless, they cannot wash away a Jew's love
יִשְׁטְפוּהָ לְהִאֲהָבָה (וְלֹא for G-d, (nor can they extinguish it).
יִכְלוּ לְכַבּוֹתָהּ⁶).

In *Torah Or*,⁶ [the Alter Rebbe] explains that [although the simple meaning of the verse is that “rivers” is only the subject of the verb “wash away”; in an extended sense, it can be explained that] it also serves as the subject of [the verb] “extinguish.” Even when a Jew's preoccupation with his livelihood drives him with the incessant power of a river, it will not extinguish his love for G-d.

SUMMARY

In *Shir HaShirim*, the analogy of the love relationship between G-d and the Jewish

4. *Torah Or*, loc. cit.; *Toras Chayim*, Bereishis, p. 62b. Although the waters of the sea flow back and forth because of the tides, they are contained in one place. Therefore, according to *Halachah*, they are considered like a *mikveh* and not a flowing stream.

5. *Toras Chayim*, loc. cit.; *Torah Or*, pp. 9b and 10a.

6. *Torah Or*, p. 10a.

people, it is written, "Abundant waters cannot extinguish the love, nor can rivers wash it away." The "abundant waters" refer to *tirdos haparnassah*, the anxiety and preoccupation involved in earning a livelihood and the thoughts concerning matters of this world. Nevertheless, despite the intensity of this preoccupation, these thoughts cannot extinguish the hidden love for G-d possessed by every Jew.

ב) וביאור דיוק הלשון "טרדות הפרנסה", הנה כתיבו יגיע כפיך כי תאכל גו', וידוע הדיוק בזה, יגיע כפיך דוקא אבל לא יגיעת המוח והלב. והיינו דהגם אשר (מצד זה שהשפע בעוה"ז נמשכת דרך לבוש הטבעי) צריך להיות עשי' שבזה תתלבש

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ויבאור דיוק הלשון To explain the precise choice of the term *tirdos haparnassah*, the anxiety and preoccupation involved in earning a livelihood:

As the *maamar* proceeds to explain, the intent is not that there is anything wrong with working for one's livelihood. On the contrary, such work is desirable. For,

הגה כתיבו "יגיע כפיך behold, it is written,⁷ "When you eat of the labor of your hands..."

From the continuation of the verse, "It will be admirable and pleasant for you," it is obvious that work is a positive virtue. Why, then, is investing oneself in earning one's living seemingly frowned upon in the *maamarim* cited above?

This question can be resolved through analyzing the extent to which one is invested.

ידיע הדיוק בזה, As is well known,⁸ "the labor of your hands" is interpreted to mean that a person should work with his hands

אבל לא יגיעת המוח והלב but not labor with his mind and heart.

This applies even in the present era when, by and large, we work with our minds and not only with our hands. Nevertheless, as the *maamar* proceeds to explain, the emphasis is on the degree of involvement of one's mind and heart, i.e., how much of himself the person invests in his work.

והינו דהגם אשר (מצד זה ששפע בעולם הזה נמשכת דרך לבוש הטבעי) True, (because the Divine blessings granted in this world are drawn down through the garments of the natural order),⁹

7. Tehillim 128:2.

8. See *Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar*, pp. 42b, 66b, et al.

9. *Derech Mitzvosecha*, p. 107a (see also p. 8a); *Kuntres UMa'ayan*, Discourse 25, ch. 1.

השפע שלמעלה, וכמ"ש וברוך הוי' אלקיך בכל אשר תעשה (דוקא), ועד שלפעמים (מצד גודל ההעלם וההסתר) צריכים גם ליגיעה, מ"מ אין צריך להעסיק בעשי' זו כ"א

צָרִיךְ לְהִיּוֹת עֹשֶׂה שְׂפָזָה **there must be activity on man's part in which the**
תְּתַלַּבֵּשׁ הַשֶּׁפַע שֶׁלְמַעְלָה **blessings from Above will be encloded.**

The Rebbe Maharash would say¹⁰ that even today, in the era of exile, our sustenance descends like manna from Heaven. True, unlike the manna gatherers, we must labor for our sustenance. Nevertheless, the need to work comes only from the need for G-d's blessings to descend and reach us on our level. Hence, our work is necessary as a garment, i.e., a medium to enable the descent of those blessings. Nevertheless, the source for our sustenance is not the work, but G-d's blessings.

וּכְמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב וּבְרַךְ אֱשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה (דְּוָקָא) **As it is written,¹¹ "And G-d will bless you in all that you do."** Implied is that man's activity, i.e., "that which you do," is necessary.

Thus, on this verse, the *Sifri* comments, "Is it possible that a person should sit by idly,¹² [expecting his livelihood to be granted to him without effort on his part]? The Torah teaches, 'in all that you do,'" indicating that our work is required.

וְעַד שֶׁלְפָעִמִּים (מִצַּד גְּדֻלַּת הַהַעְלָמָה וְהַהֶסְתֵּר) **Indeed, at times (because of the great concealment and hiddenness that prevails), intensive labor is necessary,** i.e., not mere work, but strenuous activity, pushing a person to his limits.

When is labor necessary? In a situation where G-dliness is concealed. In general, that concealment comes about as a result of man's conduct. Thus, on the verse,¹³ "G-d is your shadow," the Baal Shem Tov explains¹⁴ that just as a shadow follows the movements of one's limbs, so too, every action that we perform spirals upward to the spiritual realms, generating intense light (or, Heaven forbid, the opposite) in those realms. Thus, when a person turns away from G-dliness, He engenders a spiritual climate where G-dliness is hidden, and thus, greater energies – a greater garment, to refer back to the analogy used above – are necessary for G-dliness to be drawn down to this physical plane.

10. Cited in *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5709, p. 21. See also *Derech Mitzvosecha*, p. 107a.

11. *Devarim* 15:18.

12. The *Sifri's* insight is cited as recorded in *Kuntres UMaayan*, *loc. cit.*

13. *Tehillim* 121:5.

14. *Kesser Shem Tov, Hosafos*, p. 78.

רק את כחות החיצונים שלו, יגיע כפיך [כפים ושאר אברים החיצונים¹⁵], אבל לא את כחות הפנימיים והנעלים (שבמוח ולב), כי כחות אלו צריכים להיות מוקדשים לשמש את קונו, שזהו תכלית בריאתו. והגם שמכיון שהשפע מתעלם ומסתתר בלבושי הטבע

[In that vein,] it must be noted that the decree,¹⁵ “By the sweat of your brow” [- i.e., through labor and exertion -] “shall you eat bread,” was first issued after the sin of the Tree of Knowledge.¹⁶

מִכָּל מְקוֹם אֵין צָרִיךְ לְהַעֲסִיק בְּעִשְׂיָה זֶה כִּי אֵם רַק אֶת כַּחוֹת הַחִיצוֹנִים שְׁלוֹ, יִגִּיעַ כְּפִיךָ [כַּפַּיִם] וּשְׂאָרֵי אֲבָרִים הַחִיצוֹנִים¹⁵ Nevertheless, even when labor is necessary, **only one’s external energies should be invested in this activity. It should be, as the verse states, only “the labor of your hands” (and one’s other external limbs),**¹⁷

אָבֵל לֹא אֶת כַּחוֹת הַפְּנִימִיִּים וְהַנְּעָלִים (שְׂבִמֹחַ וְלֵב), but it should not involve the inner and more elevated powers (in his mind and heart).

כִּי כַחוֹת אֵלוֹן צָרִיכִים לְהִיּוֹת מְקוֹדְשִׁים לְשִׁמּוֹשׁ אֶת קוֹנוֹ, שְׂזֵהוּ תְּכֵלִית בְּרִיאָתוֹ. For these powers have to be dedicated to the service of his Creator, for that is the purpose of his creation,

as the *mishnah* states:¹⁸ “I was created solely to serve my Creator.” Since this is the purpose of man’s creation, his higher energies should be directed to this goal. It is unthinkable that he uses his passions and the deeper resources of his mind and heart for anything else.

וְהִגֵּם שְׂמֵכִיּוֹן שֶׁהַשְּׂפַע מְתַעֲלֵם וּמְסַתֵּת בְּלְבוּשֵׁי הַטֵּבַע צָרִיךְ לְהַשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ גַּם בְּשִׁכְלוֹ לְצַרְךָ הָעֵסֶק, True, since there are times when G-d’s blessing is concealed and hidden in the garments of nature, one must use his mind for the sake of his business endeavors,

i.e., as a result of the descent of the life-giving G-dly energy and its enclotement

15. *Bereishis* 3:19.

16. The pattern is reflected in the words of *Rambam* (*Hilchos Teshuvah* 9:1): “If you have abandoned G-d and become obsessed with food, drink, lewdness, and the like, He will... remove all blessing to the point where you will conclude all your days in confusion and fear. You will not have a free heart or a sound body to fulfill the *mitzvos*.” Being overinvolved in worldly matters will initiate a downward spiral in which G-d’s providence will make success harder to achieve. This, however, should not be seen as punishment, but rather as a prod to motivate *teshuvah*.

17. *Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar*, p. 42b.

18. The end of tractate *Kiddushin*.

צריך להשתמש גם בשכלו לצורך העסק, הוא רק מה שמוכרח להעשי, אבל לא באופן דיגיעה בהתחכמות ותחבולות. ובפרט שברכת הוי' היא תעשירי, והעסק אינו אלא לבוש לברכת הוי' (ולא שהעסק הוא מקור פרנסתו ח"ו), הרי מוכיני, שבדוגמת הלבושים בפשטות "המרכה בלבושים לא העדיף מאומה, ואדרבה¹⁹ מקלקל יותר"²⁰. וזהו דיוק

in garments that conceal its source, it is possible that a person will have to invest his heart and mind in his effort to earn a livelihood. However, he should invest

הוא רק מה שצריך
להעשיה **only what is necessary to accomplish the task.**

אבל לא באופן דיגיעה בהתחכמות ובפרט **He need not, however, labor in a manner where he becomes overly invested intellectually and emotionally, seeking involved strategies. In particular,**

there are two difficulties with such an approach: Firstly, as mentioned above, his mind and heart should be focused elsewhere. He should be using his higher potentials to fulfill his purpose in creation – the service of G-d. Moreover, such an approach is self-defeating,

שברכת הוי' היא תעשירי, **since it is “the blessings of G-d that bring wealth.”¹⁹**

והעסק אינו אלא לבוש לברכת הוי' (ולא שהעסק הוא מקור פרנסתו חס ושלום), הרי מוכיני, שבדוגמת הלבושים בפשטות "המרכה בלבושים לא העדיף מאומה, ואדרבה²¹ מקלקל יותר"²² **One's business is no more than a garment for His blessings (not that one's business is the source of his livelihood, Heaven forbid). It is apparent²⁰ that just as when wearing clothes in a literal sense, “One who puts on too many garments does not facilitate anything,²¹ on the contrary, he causes greater harm.”²²**

Like a child who puts on his father's pants and then trips all over them, over-involvement in one's business activities is counterproductive. True, one must invest himself in his financial ventures, but how much? Only as much as the Torah dictates. Anything more will not only fail to improve his earning capacity, it will detract from it.

19. *Mishlei* 10:22.

20. See *Derech Mitzvosecha*, p. 107b; *Kuntres UMa'ayan*, loc. cit., ch. 2.

21. On the contrary, this is a misuse of his potential of thought (*Likkutei Torah*, *Bamidbar*, p. 66c). See also the introduction to *Derech Chayim*, p. 3b.

22. *Derech Mitzvosecha*, loc. cit.

הלשון "טרדות הפרנסה", דהגם שהוא במצב נמוך שיש לו טרדות הפרנסה [שזה מראה אשר אינו מתבונן כדבעי אליבי' דנפשי' שברכת הוי' היא תעשירי], מ"מ, הנה גם הטרדות לא יוכלו לכבות ח"ו את האהבה המסותרת שבכ"א מישראל.

וְזֶהוּ דִּיּוּק הַלְשׁוֹן "טְרָדוֹת הַפְּרִנְסָה", דְּהִגָּם שֶׁהוּא בְּמִצְבַּב נְמוּךְ שֵׁישׁ לוֹ טְרָדוֹת הַפְּרִנְסָה
This is the intent of the expression *tirdos haparnassah*, the anxiety and preoccupation involved in earning a livelihood, used above. Implied is that even a person who is on a low spiritual level and hence, he has *tirdos haparnassah* –

i.e., he is not merely working with his hands – or investing the amount of intellect and emotion that is a contemporary equivalent to working with one's hands – he has overextended his involvement and has anxiety and preoccupation.

[שְׁזֶה מְרָאָה אֲשֶׁר אֵינוֹ מִתְבּוֹנֵן כְּדָבְעֵי אֱלִיבָא דְנַפְשֵׁיהּ שֶׁבְרַכַּת הוִי' הִיא תַעֲשִׂירִי] [This anxiety indicates that he is not meditating on and taking to heart the concept that it is the blessings of G-d that bring wealth,]²³

i.e., were he to look at the world as it really is, he would not be plagued by anxiety and tension. Not necessarily would he reduce his business activities, for it is possible that manifold Divine blessings are intended for him and hence he will need a large garment. However, because he understands that his activity is no more than a medium and that success is granted from Above, he will not worry or suffer anxiety.

מִכָּל מְקוֹם **Nevertheless, even when a person is plagued by tension and worry,**

הֵנָּה גַם הַטְּרָדוֹת לֹא יוּכְלוּ לְכַבּוֹת חֵס וְשִׁלּוֹם אֶת הָאֱהָבָה הַמְּסֻתֶרֶת שֶׁבְּכָל אֶחָד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל. **these *tirdos* will not be able to extinguish the hidden love that he and every Jew has for G-d.**

SUMMARY

It is written, "When you eat of the labor of your hands..." "The labor of your hands" implies that a person should work with his hands, but not labor with his mind and heart. True, from the verse "And G-d will bless you in all that you do," it is clear that

23. *Derech Mitzvosecha*, p. 107a ff.; *Kuntres UMa'ayan*, loc. cit., ch. 3; the *maamar* entitled *VeYadaata*, 5657 (translated as *To Know G-d*).

man's activity and, at times, strenuous labor, is necessary. Nevertheless, even when labor is necessary, only one's external energies should be invested in this activity, not the inner dimensions of his heart and mind.

Since it is "the blessings of G-d that bring wealth," one's business is no more than a garment for these blessings. Just as in a literal sense, wearing an oversized garment impedes rather than facilitates movement, so too, *tirdos haparnassah*, the anxiety and preoccupation involved in earning a livelihood, are undesirable. Nevertheless, even such anxiety and preoccupation cannot extinguish a Jew's love for G-d.

ג) והנה החידוש בזה שמים רבים לא יוכלו לכבות את האהבה, דידוע דשרש המים רבים [שהוא טרדות הפרנסה] הוא בבחי' התהו שקדם לתיקוני'.

— 3 —

When saying, “Abundant waters cannot extinguish the love...,” the verse implies that this is a new concept that we would not have known otherwise. On the surface, a Jew’s love for G-d is natural and inherent to his being. Why would one think that “the abundant waters,” the preoccupation with his business affairs, could extinguish that love? In resolution:

וְהֵנָּה הַחֲדוּשׁ בְּזֶה שְׁמִים רַבִּים לֹא יוּכְלוּ לְכַבּוֹת אֶת הָאֵהָבָה The understanding of the new concept communicated by the verse “abundant waters cannot extinguish the love...” depends on the awareness of the nature of the source of these “abundant waters.”

דִּידוּעַ דְּשָׂרְשׁ הַמַּיִם רַבִּים [שֶׁהוּא טְרָדוֹת הַפְּרִנְסָה] הוּא בְּבַחֲיַנְתָּ As is well known, the source of “the abundant waters,” [i.e., the anxiety and preoccupation in earning a livelihood,] is the level of

הַתְּהוּ *Tohu* –

lit., “chaos.” In *Kabbalah*, and particularly in the writings of the *AriZal*, it is explained that there are several frameworks of spiritual existence above our physical world. All of these frameworks depend on the interplay between *oros*, “lights,” expressions of G-dly vitality, and *keilim*, “vessels,” forms in which that light is manifest.

Our Sages (*Koheles Rabbah* 3:11) relate that G-d “would build worlds and destroy them.” It is explained that this refers to the world of *Tohu*. This was a very elevated framework of existence in which the lights were very powerful while the *keilim* were insubstantial. For this reason, not only were the vessels unable to contain the light, they were shattered by it.²⁴ After they shattered, their sparks fell and were filtered through the lower levels of the Spiritual Cosmos. In this process, they became material in nature, for the higher an entity’s spiritual potential, the lower it falls in its descent. Nevertheless, even as these sparks of G-dliness descended, they retained the power of their elevated spiritual source,

24. Another reason given for the “shattering” of the vessels of *Tohu* is that every attribute (*Sefirah*) emerged in an elemental state, without any relation to the other attributes. This factor contributed to their lack of balance and stability.

דזהו שנקראים מים רבים להיותם "רבים" (גם) מצד שרשם ומקורם²⁵. וזהו הרבותא

שְׁקֵדָם which precedes

Here, "precedes" cannot be understood in a simple chronological sense, because time as we know it also came into being in the realm of *Tikkun*.²⁵ Instead, the intent of "precedes" is "on a higher plane," a loftier spiritual rung than

לְתִקּוּן²⁶ *Tikkun*.

Literally, the term *Tikkun* means "correction," "restitution," or "reformation." It refers to the framework of existence in which the *Sefiros* emerged as interrelated entities, with *keilim* that are substantial, and lights that adapt themselves to them.

דְּזֶהוּ שְׁנִקְרָאִים מֵיִם רְבִיִּים לְהִיּוֹתָם "רְבִיִּים". This is the reason they are called "abundant waters": they are "abundant," i.e., plentiful and ample.

(גַּם) (Also), i.e., not only as they exist on this material plane, but also

מִצֵּד שְׂרָשָׁם וּמְקוּרָם²⁷ from the standpoint of their root and source, i.e., they are rooted in the realm of *Tohu*, which is a realm of abundance.

[It is described as possessing] "abundant lights."²⁷

וְזֶהוּ הַרְבִּיּוֹתָא בְּזָהָה This is the new concept communicated by the verse,
– Indeed, it is a new concept of great scope –²⁸

25. And more particularly, in the lower worlds of the realm of *Tikkun*.

26. *Torah Or*, p. 10a; *Toras Chayim, Bereishis*, p. 61a; *Or HaTorah, Bereishis*, Vol. 3, p. 609b.

27. See also *Or HaTorah, op cit.*, which states that the "abundant waters" whose source is in *Tohu* parallels *reshus harabbim*, "the public domain." The public domain is often used as an analogy for the forces of evil. This reflects the concept, "the higher an entity's source, the lower it falls." Because the lights of *Tohu* are rooted in such a high source – as explained in the above text – they represent "the world of *nekudim*" ("points"), as they descend into this world, they fall to an extremely low level.

28. *Toras Chayim, loc. cit.*

בזה שמים רבים לא יוכלו לכבות את האהבה ונהרות לא ישטפוה, דהגם ששרש המים רבים והנהרות²⁹ הוא בבחי' התהו שקדם לתיקון (שרש נפש האלקית), מ"מ לא יוכלו לכבות ח"ו את האהבה שבנפש האלקית³⁰. והטעם לזה הוא (כמ"ש לפנ"ז³¹) רשפי

שמים רבים לא יוכלו לכבות את האהבה ונהרות לא ישטפוה, דהגם ששרש המים רבים ונהרות²⁹ הוא בבחינת התהו שקדם לתיקון (שרש נפש האלקית), that “abundant waters cannot extinguish the love, nor can rivers wash it away.” True, the source of the “abundant waters” and the “rivers” is the realm of *Tohu*²⁹ which precedes the realm of *Tikkun* (which is the source of the G-dly soul).

Even as the “waters” and the “rivers” that are rooted in the realm of *Tohu* exist on this physical plane, they are connected with their source. For this reason, animals that are rooted in the realm of *Tohu* are stronger than humans who are rooted in the realm of *Tikkun*.

Or to cite another example, man derives his vitality by eating foods from plant and animal life that stem from the realm of *Tohu*. Why can these forms of life nourish man? Because they are rooted in a higher source, the realm of *Tohu*. Hence, because of the power of the source of these “abundant waters” and “rivers,” one might think that they could extinguish the inherent love of the G-dly soul.

מכל מקום לא יוכלו לכבות חס ושלום את האהבה שבנפש האלקית³⁰. Nevertheless, this is not true. Despite the power of “the abundant waters” and “rivers,” they cannot extinguish the love of the G-dly soul.³⁰

והטעם לזה הוא (כמו שנאמר לפני ז"ה³¹) The reason for this is (as stated in the preceding verse in *Shir HaShirim*),³¹

רשפיה רשפי אש שלהבת י-הי, “Its coals are coals of fire; a powerful flame.”

There is a difference of opinion among the commentaries³² whether or not the word שלהבת י-ה should be read as one word or as two. Reading it as two words – as it is

29. *Torah Or*, loc. cit., explained that the “abundant waters” and the “rivers” represent two levels in the realm of *Tohu*.

30. *Toras Chayim*, loc. cit.

31. *Shir HaShirim* 8:6.

32. See *Rashi*, *Ibn Ezra*, and *Minchas Shai* to the verse.

רשפי אש שלהבת י-ה³³, ששרש הנשמה והאהבה מסותרת שבה הוא בעצמות אוא"ס שלמעלה גם מבחי' תהו. ששרש האהבה שבנפש האלקית הוא בבחי' שלהבת י-ה כמו שהיא קשורה וגנוזה בגחלת (רשפי אש³⁴), ולמעלה יותר³⁵ – כמו שהוא בבחי' אור אין סוף שלמעלה גם מבחינת תהו

cited in the *maamar* – allows for the translation “the flame of G-d.”³³

שְׁשָׂרְשׁ הַנְּשָׂמָה וְהָאֱהָבָה **The source for the soul and the hidden love for**
 מְסֻתֶּרֶת שְׂבָה הוּא בְּעֵצְמוֹת **G-d it possesses is rooted in the Essence of G-d**
 אֹר אֵין סוּף שְׁלִמְעָלָה **which transcends even the realm of *Tohu*.**
 גַּם מִבְּחִינַת תְּהוּ

It was stated previously that the source for man’s soul is the realm of *Tikkun* which begins in the realm of *Atzilus*, a level in which the power of the G-dly light has already descended and contracted to such an extent that it can enclathe itself in the *keilim*. This, however, refers only to the immediate source of the soul. In truth, however, the soul is rooted in G-d’s very Essence, the ultimate Source of all being. This level is far above the realm of *Tohu*.

The relationship between the G-dly soul and the realm of *Tohu* can be explained by drawing an analogy to the relationship between Yaakov (who was the source of all G-dly souls)³⁴ and Esav (who derives and is representative of the realm of *Tohu*).³⁵ On a simple level, Esav was the firstborn and Yaakov had to acquire that right through deception. In essence, however, Yaakov was the firstborn, as *Rashi*³⁶ explains through the analogy of two pebbles placed in a tube: the one that comes out last entered first. So too, although Esav (*Tohu*) was the firstborn in actual fact, it is Yaakov (*Tikkun*) who has the higher source.

שְׁשָׂרְשׁ הָאֱהָבָה שְׂבָבָה **The source of the love for G-d in the G-dly soul**
 הָאֱלֹקִית הוּא בְּבָחִינַת **is “the powerful flame” (the “flame of G-d”)**
 שְׁלֵהֶבֶת י-ה כְּמוֹ שְׂהִיא **which is connected and hidden in a coal (“coals**
 קְשׁוּרָה וְגִנוּזָה בְּגִחְלַת **of fire”).**³⁷
 (רְשָׁפֵי אֵשׁ³⁸)

33. See *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* to the verse, which interprets י-ה שלהבת, as referring to “the fire from Above... which water cannot extinguish.” See the interpretation of *Mahariv* to that source.

34. Indeed, in his being were included the souls of all the Jews ever to come into existence, as explained in *Tanya (Iggeres HaKodesh, Epistle 7)* in the interpretation of our Sages’ statement (*Bava Metzia 84a*): “The beauty of Yaakov our Patriarch resembled the beauty of Adam, the first man.”

35. See *Torah Or*, p. 24a ff.

36. In his commentary to *Bereishis 25:26*.

37. See the commentary of Ibn Ezra to the above verse and that of *Metzudos* which renders רשפי as “coals.” That meaning is also reflected in *Targum Yonason*. (See *Or HaTorah, Bereishis*, Vol. 3, p. 621b; the series of *maamarim* entitled *Mayim Rabbim 5636*, ch. 73).

צורכי (שלמעלה מהווי"ה), ששם הוא שרש הנשמה, כמבואר בלקו"ת³⁸ בפירוש

The analogy of “coals of fire” illustrates the concept explained previously: that the soul has a revealed source in the realm of *Tikkun*, but fundamentally, it is rooted in G-d’s Essence. There are flames that burn visibly above the coal, but the coal’s true fire is vested within it. Even when the fire above the coal is temporarily extinguished, the surface flame can be renewed because fire exists within the coal and can be brought to the surface by blowing on it.

וּלְמַעַלָּה יוֹתְרוֹ – כְּמוֹ **On a higher level,**³⁸ the soul’s source can be described
 שֶׁהוּא בְּכַחֲנֵת צוּרֵי with the analogy of a flintstone.³⁹

The fact that sparks can be produced by striking a flint indicates that it contains the potential to create fire. Nevertheless, there is no actual fire within the stone – for that reason it can lie deep in the ocean for hundreds of years and yet still produce sparks when removed. So too, even when the fire within a person’s soul is not openly burning, its potential to produce G-dly fire exists.

(שְׁלִמְעָלָה מְהווי"ה), (This refers to a level above G-d’s name *Havayah*.⁴⁰)

A name refers to a potential that is revealed and can be appreciated by another person. By contrast, a person’s essence – who he is – remains above his name and cannot be perceived by anyone else. Similarly, in spiritual terms, the name *Havayah* refers to a level of G-dliness that is revealed. G-d’s Essence, in which the souls of the Jewish people are rooted, transcends that level.

שֶׁשֵׁם הוּא שְׂרֵשׁ הַנְּשָׁמָה, **On this level,** i.e., G-d’s Essence, the source of the
 כְּמִבְּאֵר בִּלְקו"ת⁴¹ G-dly soul is rooted, as explained in *Likkutei Torah*,⁴¹

38. See the *maamar* entitled *VeAvraham Zakein* in the series of *maamarim* entitled *Yom Tov shel Rosh HaShannah*, 5666, et al.

39. *Or HaTorah, Bereishis, loc. cit.*; the series of *maamarim* entitled *Mayim Rabbim* 5636, *loc. cit.*; see also *Or HaTorah, Shir HaShirim*, Vol. 2, p. 746.

40. See the lengthy explanation in *Likkutei Torah, Vayikra*, p. 26c. The term *Havayah* refers to the four-letter name of G-d, *Yud-Hei-Vav-Hei*, as pronounced in the study of *Chassidus*. In many sources (*Tanya, Iggeres HaTeshuvah*, ch. 4), the four letters of the name are interpreted as referring to the *Sefiros* of *Atzilus*.

41. *Likkutei Torah, Devarim*, pp. 72a, 85b.

הכתובל והרוח תשוב אל האלקים אשר נתנה, שבחי' האלקים (אשר נתנה) הוא בחי' צור הנ"ל.

בְּפְרוֹשׁ הַכְּתוּבִל in the interpretation of the verse,⁴² “The spirit
וְהָרוּחַ תָּשׁוּב אֶל
הָאֱלֹקִים אֲשֶׁר נָתַנָּה will return to G-d Who endowed it.”

שְׂבַחֲיִנַת הָאֱלֹקִים (אֲשֶׁר
נָתַנָּה) הוּא בְּחִינַת
צוֹר הַנִּזְכָּר לְעֵיל. There, it is stated that “G-d (Who endowed it)”
refers to the level of the flintstone described
above, i.e., to the source of the soul in G-d’s Essence.

SUMMARY

Why might one think that preoccupation with his business affairs could extinguish a Jew’s love for G-d? Because the spiritual source of this preoccupation is the realm of *Tohu* which precedes the realm of *Tikkun*, the immediate source of the G-dly soul. True, the realm of *Tohu* is a higher rung and possesses greater energies than the realm of *Tikkun*. Nevertheless, the ultimate source of the Jew’s soul is even higher, for every Jew’s soul is rooted in G-d’s Essence. Hence, its love for G-d cannot be extinguished by the matters of this world that stem from the realm of *Tohu*.

42. *Koheles* 12:7.

ד) והנה לא זו בלבד שאין ביכולת המים רבים הנ"ל לכבות ח"ו את האהבה של הנשמה, אלא יתירה מזו, שעל ידם נעשה יתרון בהאהבה. והוא שע"י ירידת הנשמה למטה בעוה"ז והתלבשותה במים רבים הנ"ל היא מגיעה למדריגה נעלית יותר ממדריגתה קודם ירידתה למטה [וזהו תכלית הכונה של מים רבים הנ"ל. ולכן

— 4 —

In the previous sections of the *maamar*, the Rebbe highlighted the G-dly power of the Jewish soul and explained that the “abundant waters,” the struggles and challenges of earning a livelihood, cannot extinguish a Jew’s natural love for G-d. In this section of the *maamar*, the Rebbe explains that these challenges are not merely a burden that we must bear, but a springboard for our spiritual growth and ascent.

וְהֵנָּה לֹא זֹו בְּלִבְד שְׂאִין
בִּיכְלֹת הַמַּיִם רַבִּים הַנְּזוֹפְרִים
לְעֵיל לְכַבּוֹת חֵס וְשְׁלוֹם
אֶת הָאֱהָבָה שֶׁל הַנְּשָׁמָה

Not only do the “abundant waters” described above *not* have the capacity to extinguish the love of the soul,

אֶלָּא יִתְרָה מְזוֹ, שְׂעַל יָדָם
נַעֲשֶׂה יִתְרוֹן בְּהָאֱהָבָה.

beyond that, they enable the soul to attain a superior level of love.

וְהוּא שְׂעַל יְדֵי יְרִידַת
הַנְּשָׁמָה לְמַטָּה בְּעוֹלָם
הַזֶּה וְהַחֲלִבְשׁוֹתָהּ בְּמַיִם
רַבִּים הַנְּזוֹפְרִים לְעֵיל,
הִיא מְגִיעָה לְמַדְרָגָה
נְעֻלִית יוֹתֵר מִמְּדַרְגָּתָהּ
לְפָנֶיךָ יְרִידָתָהּ לְמַטָּה

Through the descent of the soul below to this physical world, and its investment in these “abundant waters,” it reaches a higher level than the rung it occupied before its descent downward, to this plane.⁴³

]] וְזֶהוּ תְּכִלִּית הַכּוֹנֵנָה שֶׁל
מַיִם רַבִּים הַנְּזוֹפְרִים לְעֵיל.

[This is the ultimate intent of the existence of these abundant waters.

וְלִכֵּן סוֹף סוֹף אֵין בִּיכְלֹתָם
לְכַבּוֹת אֶת הָאֱהָבָה

For this reason, they ultimately do not have the power to extinguish the love for G-d that exists within a person’s soul.

Previously, the Rebbe explained that the “abundant waters” cannot extinguish a Jew’s love for G-d because of the essential power of the Jewish soul. In this section,

43. *Torah Or*, the beginning of *Parshas Noach*, p. 8c; *Toras Chayim, Bereishis*, p. 58d ff.; *Or HaTorah, Bereishis*, Vol. 3, p. 622a; the series of *maamarim* entitled *Mayim Rabbim*, 5636, ch. 75ff.

סו"ס אין ביכולתם לכבות את האהבה, לפיכך שתכלית עומק כוונתם של המים רבים גופא הוא אדרבא בכדי לפעול יתרון בהאבה⁴⁴. ובעבודה העילוי שנעשה בהנשמה ע"י ירידתה למטה והתלבשותה במים רבים הנ"ל הוא שבאה לענין התשובה⁴⁵.

he is introducing a new concept: the “abundant waters” cannot extinguish this love

לפיכך שתכלית עומק פונתם של המים רבים גופא הוא אדרבא בכדי לפעול יתרון בהאבה⁴⁴ **because the deep, inner intent of these “abundant waters” is to bring about an increase in a Jew’s love for G-d.**⁴⁴

I.e., the reason these “abundant waters” do not have the potential to extinguish a Jew’s love for G-d is not only because of the elevated source of the soul’s love (as explained in sec. 3), but because this would run contrary to the ultimate profound intent of the creation of “the abundant waters” themselves.

By and large, we take the world’s existence for granted and think: “How can we respond to the situation that confronts us?” The explanations here invite us to look at the larger picture. The world is after all brought into being by G-d from absolute nothingness. Now, looking from G-d’s perspective, why would He create a world that presents a person with so many challenges? What was His “ultimate profound intent”? The *maamar* explains that the challenges were brought into being to provide the soul with an opportunity to reach a deeper and more comprehensive bond with G-d.

Since this is the purpose of these “abundant waters,” they cannot lead to a purpose that is absolutely negative – the extinguishing of the soul’s love for G-d. On the contrary, since they were brought into being by G-d, ultimately, they must lead to a positive intent.

ובעבודה העלוי שנעשה בהנשמה על ידי ירידתה למטה והתלבשותה במים רבים הנזכרים לעיל הוא שבאה לענין התשובה⁴⁵ **In terms of our Divine service, the ascent that the soul achieves through its descent below to this physical plane, and its enclothment in these “abundant waters,” is that it attains the dynamic of *teshuvah*.**⁴⁵

As explained below, *teshuvah* has to be understood in a larger context. It does not only refer to “repentance for sin,” the common translation, but the soul’s inner desire to return to its source. The purpose of the soul’s confrontation with these

44. See the series of *maamarim* entitled *Mayim Rabbim*, 5636, *loc. cit.*

45. See *Torah Or*, p. 9a; *Toras Chayim*, *loc. cit.*, p. 59d.

וכידוע⁴⁶, שהנשמות קודם ירידתן לגוף הם בבחי' צדיקים גמורים, והיתרון שנעשה בהם ע"י ירידתן בגוף הוא שנעשים בבחי' בעלי תשובה, אשר במקום שבעלי תשובה עומדין צדיקים גמורים אינם עומדין⁴⁷, ויתירה מזו, שאין יכולין לעמוד בו⁴⁸, שאין זה (אפילו)

“abundant waters” is to enable it to become part of the dynamic of *teshuvah*.

וְכִידוּעֵיהֶם, שֶׁהַנְּשָׁמוֹת As is well known,⁴⁶ before the souls descend into
קִדְמָה יְרִידָתָן לַגּוּף the body,

our souls are timeless spiritual entities that exist in the mystical realms above, both before and after their existence on this material plane. Before the souls descend to this plane, the souls

הֵם בְּבַחֲיַנַּת צְדִיקִים are on the level of the perfectly righteous.
גְּמוּרִים,

As we say in the morning blessings, “The soul that You have placed within me is pure,” a pristine spark of G-dliness.

וְהִיתְרוֹן שֶׁנַּעֲשֶׂה בָהֶם The higher quality attained through their descent
עַל יְדֵי יְרִידָתָן בַּגּוּף into the body is that they become *baalei teshuvah*.
הוּא שֶׁנַּעֲשִׂים בְּבַחֲיַנַּת
בְּעֲלֵי תְּשׁוּבָה

For that higher quality, it is worth it for the soul to undergo all the struggles and challenges of this world, since

אֲשֶׁר בְּמִקּוּם שְׂבַעֲלֵי “the completely righteous do not stand in the
תְּשׁוּבָה עוֹמְדִין צְדִיקִים place of *baalei teshuvah*.”⁴⁷
גְּמוּרִים אֵינָם עוֹמְדִין⁴⁸,

וְיִתְרָה מְזוּ, שְׁאִין יְכוּלִין Furthermore, they *cannot* stand there; doing so
לְעַמֵּד בּוֹי, שְׁאִין זֶה is not (even) within their potential.⁴⁸
(אֲפִלוּ) בְּיִכְלֻתָּם שְׁלֵהֶם.

[When] *Rambam*⁴⁹ [quotes this teaching of our Sages, he states: “The completely righ-

46. See *Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar 73a, et al.* That source states, “This is the true resolution” of the question as to why the soul descended to this world.

47. *Berachos 34b.*

48. יכולת, translated as “potential,” reflects an even higher quality than כח, “power” (the series of *maamarim* entitled *Yom Tov shel Rosh HaShanah, 5703, ch. 13, et al.*).

49. *Hilchos Teshuvah 7:4 (Likkutei Torah, loc. cit., also uses this wording when citing this quote.)*

ביכולת^ל שלהם. וזהו הטעם שירדה הנשמה למטה, כי ענין התשובה [נהגם שאינה על עבירות דוקא, כ"א השבת הנפש למקורה ושרשה^{לט}] שייך דוקא כאשר אינו נמצא במקומו האמיתי (מקורו ושרשו), שאז שייך שישוב לשרשו ומקורו, בחי' והרוח תשוב

teous] cannot stand [in the place of *baalei teshuvah*],” indicating that this is entirely above their potential.

וְזֶהוּ הַטֵּעַם שֶׁיֵרֵדָה הַנְּשָׁמָה לְמַטָּה, **This is the reason for the soul’s descent to this earthly plane.**

I.e., in his goodness, G-d would not cause the soul to descend to this plane unless the descent would also enable it to achieve a benefit. The benefit it receives is the ascent to the level of *baalei teshuvah*.

כִּי עֲנִינַן הַתְּשׁוּבָה [הַגֵּם שְׂאֵינָה עַל עֲבֵרוֹת דְּדִקָּא, כִּי אִם הַשְּׁבֵת הַנֶּפֶשׁ לְמִקּוּרָה וְשָׂרְשָׁה^{לט}] **For the concept of *teshuvah*, [even when we are not speaking about repentance for sin, but the return of the soul to its root and source,]⁵⁰**

Although popularly, *teshuvah* is translated as “repentance,” the simple meaning of the term is “return.” Chassidic thought teaches that within each of us resides a Divine soul, a spark of G-d.⁵¹ This infinite G-dly potential represents the core of our being, our genuine “I.”

From this perspective, sin and evil – and even the conception of any existence separate from G-d – are superficial elements that can never affect our fundamental nature. *Teshuvah* means rediscovering our true selves, establishing contact with this G-dly inner potential and making it the dominant influence in our lives.

שִׁיךְ דְּדִקָּא כְּאֲשֶׁר אֵינּוּ נִמְצָא בְּמִקּוּמוֹ הָאֱמִתִּי (מִקּוּרֹוֹ וְשָׂרְשׁוֹ), **is relevant only when the soul is not in its true place (in its source and root).**

As the soul descends into this world and enclothes itself in the body and the animal soul, i.e., our ordinary consciousness, it undergoes a shift of awareness. Rather than seeing everything as an expression of G-dliness, it views the world as a setting of its own, independent of G-d, as it were, and appreciates its own individual identity. *Teshuvah* means returning to the soul’s fundamental awareness,

50. See *Likkutei Torah, Devarim*, p. 24d; *Shir HaShirim*, p. 66c, et al.

51. Cf. *Tanya*, ch. 2.

אל האלקים אשר נתנהם. ומכיון שמעלת הבע"ת היא נעלית יותר ממעלת הצדיקים [ועד שהחילוק שביניהם הוא שלא בערך, שלכן מקום שבעלי תשובה עומדין אין צדיקים גמורים יכולין לעמוד בו, כנ"ל], לכן, ע"י ענין התשובה שמתחדש בהנשמה

that everything – including itself – is nothing but an expression of G-dliness. This does not mean that a person ignores the existence of the world or his own identity, but that he appreciates the different elements of the world and his personality as manifold expressions of Him.

שְׁאֵז **And then,**

i.e., because of the descent into the world and the distance between man and G-d – not distance in a physical sense, but the sense of separation and independent existence – that descent brings about,

שִׁיָּף שְׁיָשׁוּב לְשָׂרְשׁוֹ **it is relevant to speak of the soul returning to its**
וּמְקוֹרֵוֹ, בְּחִינַת וְהָרוּחַ **root and source, a spiritual change reflected by the**
תָּשׁוּב אֶל הָאֱלֹקִים **verse, "The spirit will return to G-d Who endowed**
אֲשֶׁר נָתַנָּהּ **it."**⁵²

The intent of the verse is not that the person will die and his soul will return to its source Above, but that even as a person lives, he will live with the awareness possessed by the soul in its source.

וּמְכִיּוֹן שְׁמַעְלַת הַבְּעַל **Since the positive quality possessed by a *baal***
תְּשׁוּבָה הִיא נְעֻלִית יוֹתֵר ***teshuvah* surpasses the positive quality possessed**
מִמַּעְלַת הַצְּדִיקִים **by the righteous**

[וְעַד שֶׁהַחֲלוּק שְׁבִינֵיהֶם **[to the extent that the difference between them is**
הוּא שְׁלֵא בְּעֵרָךְ, **radical, with no basis for comparison,**

שְׁלֹכֵן מְקוֹם שְׁבַעְלֵי תְּשׁוּבָה **therefore, in the place where *baalei teshuvah***
עוֹמְדִין אֵין צְדִיקִים גְּמוּרִים **stand, the perfectly righteous cannot stand, as**
יְכוּלִין לְעַמֵּד בּוֹ, כְּנ"ל], **explained above.]**

לְכֵן, עַל יְדֵי עֲנִיַן הַתְּשׁוּבָה **As a consequence, through *teshuvah*, which was**
שְׁמַתְחֵדֵשׁ בְּהַנְּשָׁמָה **made possible for the soul through its descent to**
בִּירִידָתָהּ לַמַּטֵּה **this physical plane –**

בירידתה למטה ה"ה מתעלית יותר גם מכפי שהיתה בשרשה, בבחי' האלקים אשר נתנה מא.

For in the spiritual worlds Above, it is not possible to think of the soul's return to G-d because it never felt separate. It is only through its descent to this physical plane, where it feels distant and apart from G-d, that *teshuvah* is possible.

הרי היא מתעלית **it can ascend higher than it existed within its**
 יותר גם מכפי שהיתה **source, i.e., "G-d Who endowed it."**
 בשרשה, בבחינת
 האלקים אשר נתנה מא.

Thus, the descent of the soul to this world is "a descent for the purpose of an ascent,"⁵³ i.e., to attain an even higher and more comprehensive bond with G-d.

[In *Chassidus*,⁵⁴ it is explained that] "*teshuvah* [enables the soul to attain]... the level [of *bittul*] it experienced before its descent, and indeed, an even higher level." The reference to the verse, "The spirit will return to G-d Who endowed it," will be explained below.

The concept of an ascent higher than the source of the soul in "G-d Who endowed it" is difficult to comprehend. After all, how can the soul ascend above its source in G-d? This concept is explained below.

SUMMARY

Not only do the "abundant waters" described above not have the capacity to extinguish the love of the soul, they enable the soul to attain a superior level of love. The descent of the soul to this physical world, where it becomes involved with these "abundant waters," enables the soul to reach a higher spiritual rung than it occupied before its descent.

This is the ultimate intent of the existence of these "abundant waters" and the ultimate reason they do not have the power to extinguish the love for G-d that exists within a person's soul.

The ascent of the soul is made possible through the dynamic of *teshuvah*. Before the souls' descent, they are on the level of the perfectly righteous. The higher quality attained through their descent into the body is that they become *baalei teshuvah*, about which it is said, "the completely righteous cannot stand in the place of *baalei teshuvah*."

53. Cf. *Makkos* 7b.

54. *Likkutei Torah, loc. cit.*, p. 72a.

Teshuvah has a far more encompassing scope than repentance for sin and, in an ultimate sense, refers to the return of the soul to its root and source, as implied by the verse, "The spirit will return to G-d Who endowed it." Indeed, through *teshuvah*, the soul ascends higher than its source.

ה) והגם שרש הנשמות הוא בעצמותו ית' שלמעלה מכל הגילויים, וכדמוכח (גם) ממה שארז"ל⁵⁵ במי נמלך בנשמותיהן של צדיקים, שענין ההמלכה הוא

— 5 —

This section begins with an implied question that evolves from the concepts discussed in Section 4. There it was stated that through its descent into this world and its confrontation with the “abundant waters,” the soul is motivated to *teshuvah*. And through *teshuvah*, the soul is able to ascend to an even higher rung than its source. How is that possible?

וְהִגַּם שְׂרֵשׁ הַנְּשָׁמוֹת Behold, the source of the soul is in G-d's Essence
הוא בְּעֶצְמוֹתוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ which transcends all revealed levels.
שְׁלֹמֶעֱלָה מְכַל הַגְּלוּיִים,

There is an entire *Seder HaHishtalshelus*, Spiritual Cosmos, that contains numerous spiritual worlds, i.e., progressively higher levels of spiritual existence. Above – and the source for – all these worlds is G-d's Essence. Now, the souls of the Jewish people have several intermediate sources. As we say in our Morning Blessings, “The soul that You have given me is pure. You have created it...,” mentioning four levels corresponding to the worlds of *Atzilus* (“is pure”), *Beriah* (“You have created it”), *Yetzirah* (“You have formed it”), and *Asiyah* (“You have breathed it into me”).⁵⁵ However, the ultimate source of every Jew's soul is G-d's Essence. Often, the term “Essence,” *Atzmus*, is used also to refer to the essence of His light. The *maamar* proceeds to explain that this is not the intent here. Instead, in this case, the term “G-d's Essence” refers to His very Essence itself, above any and all revelations or levels of light. This is the source and root of the souls of the Jewish people.

וְכַדְמוּכַח (גם) מֵמָה This is (also) evident from our Sages' statement:⁵⁶
שְׂאֵמְרוּ רַבּוֹתֵנוּ זְכוֹרֵנוּ “With whom did He consult regarding the creation
לְכַרְכָּה⁵⁷ בְּמִי נְמַלֵּךְ of the world? With the souls of the righteous.”
בְּנִשְׁמוֹתֵיהֶן שֶׁל צַדִּיקִים,

The intent of the phrase “the souls of the righteous” is the entire Jewish people, as it is written:⁵⁷ “Your people are all righteous.”⁵⁸

55. *Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim*, p. 30c.

56. See *Rus Rabbah* 2:3.

57. *Yeshayahu* 60:21.

58. *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 5, p. 168, et al.

גם על גילויים הכי נעלים (מכיון שהם ברצון ולא בהכרח ח"ו), הרי מובן שהנשמות שבהן נמלך הן למעלה מכל הגילויים⁵⁹, מ"מ שייך לומר שע"י התשובה (בירידתן

שְׁעֲנִין הַהַמְלָכָה הוּא גַם
עַל גִּלְוִיִּים הַכִּי נְעָלִים

This consultation of G-d with the Jewish people concerned even the highest revelations of G-dliness.

(מִכִּיּוֹן שֶׁהֵם בְּרָצוֹן וְלֹא
בְּהִכָּרַח חֵס וְשָׁלוֹם),

(For even these sublime revelations of light come into being because of G-d's will; He is not, Heaven forbid, compelled to reveal them.)

Even the highest levels of the Spiritual Cosmos come into being because G-d willfully desires their existence. This is one of the differences between the revelation of light Above and the revelation of light from the sun. The sun has no choice whether to reveal its light; it was created in a manner that it emanates light continuously; as if compelled to do so. G-d's revelations, by contrast, are willful. Thus, even the most sublime levels of Divine light – including the essence of His light – are emanated willfully. Since the *Midrash* teaches that He chose to “consult” with the souls of the Jewish people concerning the creation as a whole, that consultation concerns even these sublime levels of light. All existence other than G-d's Essence is dependent on that consultation.

הָרִי מוּבָן שֶׁהַנְּשָׁמוֹת
שֶׁבָּהֶן נִמְלָךְ הֵן לְמַעְלָה
מִכָּל הַגִּלְוִיִּים⁵⁹,

Thus, it can be concluded that the souls with whom G-d consulted are above all levels of revelation.⁵⁹

And thus, the question arises: How can *teshuvah* enable a soul to ascend higher than its source when its source is in G-d's very Essence? Were we to speak about one of the soul's *intermediate* levels, it is understood that through *teshuvah*, the soul could ascend to a higher rung. When, however, the focus is on the soul as it is rooted in G-d's Essence, how is it possible for there to be an ascent to a higher rung? There is nothing higher than G-d's Essence!

59. The *maamar* entitled *HaOseh Sukaso*, 5699, sec. 2. See also the series of *maamarim* entitled *BeShaah Shehikdimu*, 5672, Vol. 2, p. 900.

למטה) נעשית בהן עלי' גם לגבי הדרגא שהי' בשרשן. ויובן זה ע"פ מ"ש הרב המגיד⁶⁰ בפירושו מרז"ל⁶¹ ישראל עלו במחשבה, שהוא כמשל אדם שיש לו בן, דגם כשהבן עבר מכנגד פניו והלך מאתו, עכ"ז נחקה הצורה של הבן במחשבה של האב אלא שבבני

מִכָּל מְקוֹם שֶׁיֵּף לֹמַר שֶׁעַל יְדֵי הַתְּשׁוּבָה (בִּירִידָתָן לְמַטָּה) נַעֲשִׂית בְּהֵן עֲלִיָּה גַם לְגַבֵּי הַדְּרָגָא שֶׁהִיָּתָה בְּשָׂרְשָׁן. Nevertheless, it is possible to say that through *teshuvah* (resulting from their descent to this physical plane), the souls of the Jewish people are able to ascend even higher than the level on which they existed in their source.

וַיֻּבֵן זֶה עַל פִּי מַה שֶּׁכָּתַב הָרַב הַמַּגִּידִי בְּפִירוּשׁ מְרַבּוֹתֵינוּ זְכוֹרָנָם לְבְרָכָה⁶² יִשְׂרָאֵל עָלוּ בְּמַחְשָׁבָה, This concept can be explained on the basis of the interpretation of our Sages' statement,⁶⁰ "Israel arose in G-d's thought," put forward by the Maggid of Mezritch.⁶¹

שֶׁהוּא כְּמִשַּׁל אָדָם שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ בֵּן, דְּגַם כְּשֶׁהֵבֵן עָבַר מִכְּנַגְד פְּנָיו וְהֵלֵךְ מֵאִתּוֹ, עִם כָּל זֶה נִחְקָקָה הַצּוּרָה שֶׁל הֵבֵן בְּמַחְשָׁבָה שֶׁל הָאָב. The Maggid offers an analogy to a person who has a son. Even when the son has departed from his father's presence, his image is still engraved in his father's mind.

[The Maggid offers this analogy to explain the verse,]⁶² "Let us make man in Our image."

The analogy is intended to answer an obvious question. G-d is undefined; there is no image of Him. What then is meant by "Our image"? The Maggid explains that the words "Our image" do not refer to the "image of G-d," but rather to the image of man that "arose in [G-d's] thoughts."

There is, however, a difference between a father's thoughts of his son and G-d's thoughts of man.

אֲלֹא שֶׁבְּבִנֵי אָדָם שֶׁיֵּף זֶה דְּוָקָא בְּמִי שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ בֵּן כּוּי' With regard to a father on the earthly plane, the concept applies only to a father after he actually has a son.

60. *Bereishis Rabbah* 1:4.

61. *Or Torah*, p. 2c; quoted in the series of *maamarim* entitled *BeShaah Shehikdimu*, 5672, Vol. 2, p. 902.

[From the development of the concept there (see p. 903), it is apparent that this also relates to the concepts explained in connection with the teaching, "With whom did He consult...."]

62. *Bereishis* 1:26.

אדם שייך זה דוקא במי שיש לו בן כו'. אבל אצל השי"ת שייך זה לומר אף קודם שנבראו ישראל הי' נחקק צורתם במחשבה, כמ"ש רז"ל ישראל עלו במחשבה, כי אצלו ית' העבר והעתיד אחד. ומובן מזה, דזה מה שהנשמות מושרשות בעצמותו ית' ובהם נמלך כו' – הו"ע הנשמות כמו שהן בבחי' נברא (וכמו שהן יורדות למטה),

אָבֵל אֶצֶל הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרֵךְ
שֵׁיךְ זֶה לֹוֹמֵר אֵף קֹדֶם
שֶׁנִּבְרְאוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל הִיא
נִחְקָק צוּרְתָם בְּמַחְשָׁבָה,

But with regard to G-d, it is possible to say that even before the Jewish people were created, their image was engraved in G-d's thought,

כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמְרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ
זְכוּרֵנוֹם לְבִרְכָה יִשְׂרָאֵל
עָלוּ בְּמַחְשָׁבָה,

as implied by our Sages' statement, "Israel arose in G-d's thought," i.e., He thought of them even before they actually came into being,

כִּי אֶצְלוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ הָעֶבֶר
וְהָעִתִּיד אֶחָד.

because with regard to Him, the past and the future are the same.

A person can only think of his son after the son came into being and they shared a relationship. Since, however, the past and the future are the same for G-d, He can conceive of man even before he came into being.

This is the meaning of the verse, "Let us make man in Our image" – that "Israel arose in [G-d's] thought" and He created man according to the image that He conceived. This is the source of the Jewish people as they exist within G-d's Essence.

וּמוֹבֵן מִזֶּה, דְּזֶה מֵה
שֶׁהַנְּשָׁמוֹת מְשֻׁרְשׁוֹת
בְּעֶצְמוֹתוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ
וּבֵהֶם נִמְלָךְ כו'

From this, it is understood that the statement that the souls of the Jewish people are rooted in G-d's Essence and He "consulted" with them

הוּא עֹנֵן הַנְּשָׁמוֹת כְּמוֹ
שֶׁהֵן בְּבַחֲיַת נִבְרָא (וְכָמוֹ
שֶׁהֵן יוֹרְדוֹת לַמַּטֵּה),

refers to the souls as they exist as created beings (and descend to this realm).

Often, when stated that the souls are rooted in G-d's Essence, the intent is that the spiritual source of the soul exists in G-d's Essence and then, as that spiritual potential descends through the chainlike progression of spiritual worlds (*Seder HaHishtalshelus*), the Jewish people are brought into being on this physical plane.

Here, the emphasis is the opposite: Why does the source of the Jewish souls exist in G-d's Essence? Because He conceives of the souls as they exist on this physical

ורק ש(גם) צורה זו היא חקוקה במחשבתו ית', לפי שאצלו ית' העבר והעתיד אחד. וכידוע⁶³ בפירוש במי נמלך כו', שזהו מה שעלה לפניו ית' התענוג שיתענג כבי' בעבודת הנשמות למטה. ועפ"ז יובן ענין העלי' שנעשה בהנשמות ע"י ירידתן

plane. The cause and effect relationship is reversed. It is not that the Jews exist on this physical plane because their source is in G-d's Essence, but rather the Jewish souls are rooted in G-d's Essence because He desires the existence of a Jew on the physical plane.

יִרְק שְׁ(גַם) צוּרָה זֹו הִיא **It is just that this image was (also) engraved in**
חֻקוּקָה בְּמַחְשַׁבְתּוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ, **His thought, which is possible,**

לְפִי שְׁאֶצְלוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ **because for Him, the past and the future are the**
הָעֶבֶר וְהָעֵתִיד אֶחָד. **same.⁶³**

וְכִידוּעִי בְּפִירוּשׁ **The interpretation of the teaching, “With whom**
בְּמִי נִמְלַךְ כּו', **did He consult?...” is well known.⁶⁴**

I.e., it is obvious that it does not involve consultation as we usually employ that term.

שְׁזָהוּ מַה שְׁעָלָה לְפָנָיו **Instead, the intent is that there arose before Him,**
יִתְבָּרַךְ הַתְּעִנוּג שְׁיִתְעַנֵּג **as it were, the delight that He would receive from**
כְּכִיכּוֹל בְּעִבּוּדַת **the Divine service of the souls as they exist on**
הַנְּשָׁמוֹת לְמִטָּה. **this physical plane.**

The intent of the statement that G-d “consulted” with the Jewish people regarding the creation of the world is that G-d conceived, as it were, of the delight He would receive from the service of the Jewish people on this physical plane, and this motivated Him to bring this world – and the entire Spiritual Cosmos – into being.

63. By stating that past and future are the same for G-d, the *maamar* is not merely speaking in terms of time. It is also indicating the depth of connection He shares with the Jewish people. Whenever a person gains new information, there is always a degree of distance between him and the subject about which he learns. There is his own being and the information he learns. Even when he feels a tremendous bond with the subject about which he learns – for example, in the analogy given above, a father who develops a relationship with his son, in which instance, the relationship touches his very core – there is still an element of the person that exists independent of that knowledge or relationship. The knowledge and the relationship are supplementary aspects to who he is. Saying that G-d is above time, and past and future are the same for Him, implies that His relationship with the subjects He knows is different – to borrow the Alter Rebbe's wording, “He and His wisdom are one.” What He knows – in this instance, the image of man – is not supplementary to His Being. It is totally one with Him.

64. See the series of *maamarim* entitled *Yom Tov shel Rosh HaShanah*, 5703, sec. 3, *et al.*

למטה, הגם שגם לפני ירידתן הן מושרשות בעצמותו ית', כי זה מה שהן מושרשות בעצמותו ית' (ובהם נמלך כו') הוא מצד ידיעתו ית' שתהי' אח"כ ירידתן למטה כו' וישלימו הכוונה⁶⁵. והגם שגם בתחלה יודעים בודאות גמורה שישלימו הכוונה, הרי

וְעַל פִּי זֶה יוֹבֵן עֲנִין הָעֲלִיָּה שְׁנַעֲשָׂה בְּהַנְשׂוּת עַל יְדֵי יְרִידַתָּן לְמַטָּה, **On this basis, the ascent achieved by the souls through their descent to the physical plane can be explained,**

הַגֵּם שֶׁגַם לִפְנֵי יְרִידַתָּן הֵן מְשֻׁרְשׁוֹת בְּעֲצֻמוֹתָו יִתְבָּרַךְ, **even though before their descent, the souls were also rooted in G-d's Essence.**

At the beginning of this section, the question was raised: Since the source of the souls of the Jewish people is in G-d's Essence, how is it possible that their descent to this plane will be a descent for the purpose of an ascent? How is it possible to ascend higher than G-d's Essence?

That question can be resolved based on the understanding of why they are rooted in G-d's Essence:

כִּי זֶה מֵה שֶׁהֵן מְשֻׁרְשׁוֹת בְּעֲצֻמוֹתָו יִתְבָּרַךְ (וּבְהֵם נִמְלָךְ כּו') **The reason they are rooted in His Essence (and why He "consulted with them")**

הוא מצד ידיעתו יתברך שתהי' אחר כך ירידתן למטה כו' וישלימו הכוונה⁶⁵. **is because of His knowledge that ultimately, they would descend to this physical plane and fulfill G-d's intent.⁶⁵**

וְהַגֵּם שֶׁגַם בְּתַחֲלָה יוֹדְעִים בְּוַדָּאוּת גְּמוּרָה שְׁיִשְׁלִימוּ הַכּוּנָה, **Even though initially it is known with absolute certainty that they will fulfill His intent,**

i.e., since G-d conceived of the delight He would receive from the Jews' Divine

65. On this basis, it is possible to understand the meaning of the verse, "The spirit will return to G-d Who endowed it." Previously (in sec. 4), the question was raised: In *Chassidus*, it is explained that "teshuvah enables the soul to attain... the level of *bittul* it experienced before its descent and indeed, an even higher level." How is it possible to reach a level higher than its original source - "G-d Who endowed it"? In resolution: True, through *teshuvah*, the soul attains a higher rung. Nevertheless, even the ascent achieved through *teshuvah* is included in the level of "G-d Who endowed it" (i.e., the source of the souls in G-d's Essence). Even so, the soul's return is still considered an ascent, because, initially, there was only a potential for this service, and through the descent, the potential was realized, as explained in the main text. Further explanation is, however, necessary.

זהו בכח, ותכלית העילוי (והכוונה) הוא⁶⁶ הפועל. נוזהו גם דיוק הלשון במי נמלך
בנשמותיהן של צדיקים, שבהיותן בבחינת ההמלכה [שאז העילוי שלהן הוא בכח,

service and all existence came into being as a result, there is no possibility that His
intent in creation will not come to fruition. Nevertheless,

הָרִי זֶהוּ בְּכַח **this is merely a potential,**

וְתִכְלִית הָעֵלּוּי (וְהַפְּוֹנָה) **and the ultimate peak (and the consummate
intent) is for the potential to become realized.**

True, the potential for the Jews' Divine service existed within G-d's Essence, but
that potential was yet to be actualized. When the Jewish souls actually descend
to this world and carry out their Divine service in their daily lives, G-d's intent
comes to consummate expression. The *maamar* is emphasizing that this – the
actual fulfillment of G-d's intent – possesses a higher quality than the potential.
By descending to this world and being the agents who fulfill that intent, the souls
of the Jewish people share in that higher quality. This is the ascent achieved by the
souls through their descent to this physical plane: That they become the agents
who bring about the actual fulfillment of G-d's intent in creation.

The *sichos* delivered together with this *maamar*⁶⁶ elaborate on this concept, explaining
that even though the potential exists beforehand – and with regard to G-d, it is said:⁶⁷ אין
חסר פועל, “The potential is not lacking [anything that can be contributed] by the actual
expression,”⁶⁸ nevertheless, there is an advantage in the potential's actual expression.

וְזוּהוּ גַם דְּיוּק הַלְשׁוֹן {**This is also the meaning of the precise wording
בְּמִי נִמְלָךְ בְּנִשְׁמוֹתֵיהֶן שֶׁל צְדִיקִים,**
**used in the expression: “With whom did He con-
sult? With the souls of the righteous.”**

שְׁבִהְיוּתָן בְּבְחִינַת הַמְּלָכָה **When G-d “consulted” with the souls –**

שְׁאֵז הָעֵלּוּי שְׁלָהֶן [the higher quality that they could reach through
הוּא בְּכַח, **their Divine service was then merely a potential;**

a potential that would definitely be realized, for

66. *Sichos Parshas Noach, 5738*, sec. 4ff., published in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 20, p. 283ff.

67. See *Pardes, Shaar 11*, ch. 3.

68. This is the interpretation of the above statement as given in fn. 28 of that *sichah*.

שיודעים שישלימו הכוונה] הן בבחינת צדיקים, ולאחרי ירידתן למטה [שאז הם משלימים את הכוונה בפועל] נעשים בבחי' בעלי תשובה].

שְׂיִוְדָּעִים שְׂיִשְׁלִימוּ הַכּוּנָה] it was known that they would fulfill G-d's intent.]

הֵן בְּבַחֲיַנַּת צְדִיקִים, On that rung, the souls were on the level of "the righteous."

וְלֵאחֲרֵי יְרִידַתָּן לְמַטָּה After they descended to this world, [when they fulfill G-d's intent in actual fact],
שְׂאֵז הֵם מְשַׁלְּמִים
אֶת הַכּוּנָה בְּפִעֵל]

נִעְשִׂים בְּבַחֲיַנַּת they attain the rung of *baalei teshuvah*.}
בְּעֲלֵי תְּשׁוּבָה].

It was explained above that the purpose of the descent to this physical plane was to enable the souls to reach the rung of *baalei teshuvah*. The intent is not *teshuvah* for sin, but *teshuvah* sparked by the awareness of one's distance from G-d. The awareness of that distance awakens the power within the soul to bring its essential potential into actual expression.

SUMMARY

The previous section stated that through *teshuvah*, the soul is able to ascend to an even higher rung than its source. Now, the source of the soul is in G-d's Essence, which transcends all revealed levels. How is it possible to ascend to an even higher rung?

In resolution: Our Sages state, "Israel arose in G-d's thought." The Maggid of Mezritch explains that statement by drawing an analogy to a person who has a son. Even when the son has departed from his father's presence, his image is still engraved in his father's mind. With regard to a father on the earthly plane, the concept only applies after he actually has a son. But with regard to G-d, it is possible to say that even before the Jewish people were created, their image was engraved in G-d's thought, i.e., He thought of them even before they actually came into being because with regard to Him, the past and the future are the same.

This enables us to understand another statement of our Sages: that G-d consulted with the souls of the righteous before creating the world. The intent is that there arose before Him, as it were, the delight that He would receive from the Divine service of the souls as they exist on this physical plane.

In other words, the image of the Jews that G-d had in mind, as it were, was the image of the Jews as they exist on this physical plane. It is not that the souls arose in G-d's Essence as a spiritual entity and then they descended to this plane; rather, it was the image of the Jews as they exist *on this plane* that existed in His Essence as a potential. Afterwards, through the creation of the world and man's Divine service, that potential is realized in actual fact. The realization of this potential is the positive quality brought out by *teshuvah*.

(ו) וַיֵּשׁ לְקֶשֶׁר זֶה עִנִּין ד' וַיַּעֲקֹב הַלֵּךְ לְדַרְכוֹ (שְׂבִמְוֹצְאֵי שַׁבַּת פְּרִשְׁתָּ נַחֲמִיט),
 דִּהְגַּם שְׁלֹאֲחָרֵי חוּדֶשׁ תִּשְׁרֵי הוּא הוֹלֵךְ לְדַרְכוֹ (גַּם) בְּעִנְיֵי הַרְשׁוֹת וּבַעֲבוּבֵי דִּינֵי

— 6 —

The *maamar* concludes by connecting the explanations given with the time of year and the specific night when it was delivered.

וַיֵּשׁ לְקֶשֶׁר זֶה עִנִּין ד' וַיַּעֲקֹב הַלֵּךְ לְדַרְכוֹ The above concepts can be connected with the
 concept of “Yaakov set out on his way,”⁶⁹

After Simchas Torah, in Lubavitch communities, it is customary for the *gabbai* to announce “Yaakov set out on his way.” Implied is that it is time to make a transition from the month of Tishrei and its atmosphere of festivity and heightened spirituality to the ordinary details of day-to-day life.

(שְׂבִמְוֹצְאֵי שַׁבַּת) (which begins *Motza'ei Shabbos* (Saturday night)
 אַחֲרֵי שַׁבַּת נַחֲמִיט) after *Shabbos Parshas Noach*).

As explained in the *sichos* delivered together with the *maamar*,⁷⁰ although the Divine service of “Yaakov set out on his way” begins after Simchas Torah, in an extended sense, it can be said to begin only after *Shabbos Bereishis*, because until *Shabbos Bereishis*, one is still absorbed in the holiday spirit. It is only after that *Shabbos* that one begins to confront the mundane realities of everyday life.

More particularly, it can be said that there is a new dimension of the Divine service of “Yaakov set out on his way” that begins on *Motza'ei Shabbos* after *Shabbos Parshas Noach*, because it is only then that one has spent an entire week – a full cycle of time – confronting the actual day-to-day realities.

דִּהְגַּם שְׁלֹאֲחָרֵי חוּדֶשׁ Even though after the month of Tishrei, one “sets
 תִּשְׁרֵי הוּא הוֹלֵךְ לְדַרְכוֹ out on his way” – the term “his way” implying his
 own personal concerns,

(גַּם) בְּעִנְיֵי הַרְשׁוֹת including (also) permitted and mundane matters
 וּבַעֲבוּבֵי דִּינֵי דְּחַל,

69. Cf. *Bereishis* 32:2.

70. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 20, p. 281ff. (sec. 2ff.).

דחול, ועד לבחינת מים רבים הנ"ל, מ"מ עי"ז גופא הוא מתעלה יותר, שנעשה בבחינת מהלך, וכלשון הכתוב⁷¹ ויעקב הלך לדרכו. וידיעה זו [שהירידה (לדרכו

ועד לבחינת מים רבים
הנזכרים לעיל, to the extent that he confronts the “abundant waters” described above –

מפל מקום על ידי זה
גופא הוא מתעלה יותר, nevertheless, through this very descent and challenge, his soul ascends higher.

שנעשה בבחינת מהלך,⁷² It achieves the quality of a *mehaleich*, “one who progresses,”

As is well known,⁷¹ (in general), the ascent achieved through the soul’s descent to this physical plane is that it becomes a *mehaleich*, “one who progresses.”

In one of his visions, the prophet Zechariah is shown Yehoshua the High Priest standing in the Heavenly Court, and G-d tells Yehoshua, “I will make you as one who progresses among these who stand.”⁷² “These who stand” refer to the angels that are described with this term because they remain on virtually the same spiritual level at all times. (True, they are continuously ascending. Nevertheless, since their ascents are all relative to each other, they are considered as standing at the same level at all times.) Similarly, the souls in the spiritual realms are considered as “standing,” as reflected by the verse,⁷³ “As G-d lives, before Whom I stood.” It is only through the descent to this physical realm that the soul reaches the level of “one who progresses,” i.e., it is able to make radical spiritual progress.

The spiritual worlds above are all structured according to the pattern dictated by the G-dly light that is *memale kol almin*. Hence, the ascents of the angels and the souls are limited. In this material world, by contrast, G-d’s infinite light shines (the light that is *sovev kol almin*). As a result, the ascents that come as a result of the soul’s Divine service on this plane are radical in nature. The soul becomes “one who progresses.”

וכלשון הכתוב⁷⁴ ויעקב הלך לדרכו. as indicated by the verse,⁷⁴ “Yaakov set out (*halach*) on his way.”

71. *Torah Or*, p. 30a ff., et al.

72. The verse is translated as it is cited in *Chassidus*. Literally, it would be translated differently.

73. I *Melachim* 17:1.

74. *Bereishis*, loc. cit.; see *Likkutei Sichos*, loc. cit., p. 285.

בעניני הרשות וכו') היא צורך עלי' פועלת שההליכה תהי' בשמחה ובטוב לבב [וע"ד מ"שיי גבי יעקב וישא יעקב רגליו גו' משנתבשר בשורה טובה כו']. וזה פועל שעבודתו תהי' בתכלית השלימות ולמעלה ממדידה והגבלה (בחי' בכל מאדך⁷⁵), כי שמחה פורץ כל הגדרים. וע"י שעובד עבודתו [בכל הג' קוין (ג' בני נח⁷⁶) דתורה

וידיעה זו [שְהִירִידָה (לְדַרְכוֹ בְעֵינֵי הַרְשׁוּת וְכו') היא צָרָךְ עֲלֶיךָ] פּוֹעֵלֶת שְהִלִיכָה תְהִיָּה בְשִמְחָה וּבטוֹב לֵבָב The knowledge {that the descent (on “one’s way,” i.e., into his personal concerns, in permitted matters) is for the sake of an ascent] motivates one to set out with joy and gladness of heart.

When one knows that the challenge he will confront can be overcome – and indeed, that the entire reason it was presented to him was so that he will overcome it – he will proceed with confidence and joy.

[ועל דרך מה שכתוביני גבי יעקב וישא יעקב רגליו גו' – משנתבשר בשורה טובה כו']. [As it was written regarding Yaakov,⁷⁵ “And he lifted up his legs,” encouraged because he was given good news.]

וזה פועל שעבודתו תהי' בתכלית השלמות ולמעלה ממדידה והגבלה (בחינת בכל מאדך⁷⁶), This causes his Divine service to be carried out with consummate perfection, above all boundaries and limitations (as indicated by the phrase “with all your might”)⁷⁶

כי שמחה פורץ כל הגדרים.⁷⁷ because joy breaks through all barriers.⁷⁷

ועל ידי שעובד עבודתו [בכל הג' קוין (ג' בני נח⁷⁶) דתורה עבודה וגמילות חסד] Carrying out one’s Divine service in the three vectors of Torah, prayer, and deeds of kindness (which parallel Noah’s three sons)}

Noach’s three sons reflect the three emotive attributes of *chessed* (“kindness”), *gevurah*

75. Bereishis 29:1; see Rashi to the verse; Likkutei Sichos, loc. cit., p. 287.

76. Devarim 6:5, interpreted by Chassidus as referring to an unbounded level of commitment. Indeed, Divine service “with all your might” is identified as the peak that one reaches through confronting the “abundant waters” mentioned above (Torah Or, p. 9a, et al.).

77. The maamar entitled *Samach Tisamach*, 5657, p. 49ff. (Sefer HaMaamarim 5657, p. 223ff.).

עבודה וגמ"ח] בתכלית השלימות ובשמחה ובטוב לבב, נמשך לו גם ברכת הוי' בכל המצטרך לו [בג' הענינים דבני חיי ומזוניין] בתכלית השלימות ובשמחה ובטוב לבב, הן ברוחניות והן בגשמיות, וברוחניות ובגשמיות גם יחד.

("might"), and *tiferes* ("beauty"),⁷⁸ which correspond to the vectors of Divine service: Torah, prayer, and deeds of kindness.

בְּתַכְלִית הַשְּׁלֵמוֹת with consummate perfection, with joy and glad-
וּבְשִׂמְחָה וּבְטוֹב לֵבָב, ness of heart,

נִמְשָׁךְ לוֹ גַם בְּרִפְתֹּת causes G-d's blessing to be drawn down to him in
הוֹי' כְּכֹל הַמְצַטְרֵךְ לוֹ all that he needs, [in the three general categories
[בְּג' הָעֲנִינִים דְּבָנֵי חַיִּי of children, health, and sustenance,]⁷⁹ with ulti-
וּמְזוֹנֵיין] בְּתַכְלִית הַשְּׁלֵמוֹת mate perfection, with joy and gladness of heart
וּבְשִׂמְחָה וּבְטוֹב לֵבָב, and in spiritual and material matters,

הֵן בְּרוּחָנִיּוֹת וְהֵן בְּגַשְׁמִיּוֹת, in both spiritual and material matters,

וּבְרוּחָנִיּוֹת וּבְגַשְׁמִיּוֹת and in spiritual matters as they are fused with
גַם יַחַד. material matters.

SUMMARY

The above concepts can be connected with the concept of "Yaakov set out on his way," which refers to the Divine service of the Jewish people after the spiritual heights of the month of Tishrei. "Set[ting] out on his way" implies entering the realm of one's own personal concerns to the extent that he confronts the "abundant waters" described above. Nevertheless, through this very descent and challenge, his soul ascends higher. It achieves the quality of a *mehaleich*, "one who progresses." The awareness of the positive nature of this service should lead to joy.

Carrying out Divine service with joy will cause G-d's blessing to be drawn down in all that one needs in the three general categories of children, health, and sustenance.

78. *Torah Or*, p. 26c; *Or HaTorah*, Vol. 1, p. 63a.

79. See *ibid.*, *Bereishis*, Vol. 4, p. 756a ff.

- (* יצא לאור ב קונטרס מוצאי ש"פ נח – ה'תשל"ח, "ז" מ"ח ה'תשל"ח".
- (א) שה"ש ח, ז.
- (ב) תו"א ר"פ נח. תו"ח נח נח, ד ואילך. מים רבים תרל"ו (בתחלתו. פע"ה).
- (ג) משא"כ "מים", מי הים הם מכונסים ועומדים" (תו"א ותו"ח שבהערה הבאה).
- (ד) תו"ח שם סב, ב. וראה גם תו"א ט, ב (ד"ה אם יתן). יו"ד, א (ד"ה וזהו הפי').
- (ה) כ"ה בתו"א שם, ש"לא יוכלו לכבות גוו" קאי גם על "נהרות".
- (ו) תהלים קכח, ב.
- (ז) לקו"ת שלח מב, ד. חוקת סו, ג. ובכ"מ.
- (ח) דרמ"צ קז, א (וראה גם שם ח, א). קונטרס ומעין מכ"ה פ"א.
- (ט) ראה טו, יח. ובספרי שם: יכול יהא יושב ובטל* ת"ל בכל אשר תעשה.
- (י) להעיר, ש" בוצעת אפיך תאכל לחם" (בראשית ג, יט) נתחדש לאחרי חטא עה"ד.
- (יא) לקו"ת שלח שם.
- (יב) קדושין בסופה.
- (יג) משלי י, כב.
- (יד) ראה בכז" דרמ"צ קז, ב. קונטרס ומעין שם פ"ב.
- (טו) ראה גם לקו"ת חוקת שם: ואדרבה מחשבה מועלת. וראה גם דרך חיים בהקדמה (ג, ב).
- (טז) דרמ"צ שם.
- (יז) דרמ"צ שם (קז, א ואילך). קונטרס ומעין שם פ"ג. ד"ה וידעת תרנ"ז.
- (יח) תו"א יו"ד, א. תו"ח שם סא, א. אוה"ת נח (כרך ג') תרט, ב.
- (יט) להעיר, שבתהו היו אורות מרובים. וראה אוה"ת שם, שענין מים רבים הוא דוגמת ענין רשות הרבים שהוא בחי' עולם הנקודים.
- (כ) ועד "שזהו רבנות גדולה" (תו"ח שם).
- (כא) בתו"א שם, ש"מים רבים" ו"נהרות" הם ב' בחי' בתהו.
- (כב) תו"ח שם.
- (כג) שה"ש ח, ו.
- (כד) ראה גם שהש"ר עה"פ (בסופו): שלהבת י-ה.. כאש של מעלה.. ולא המים מכבין לאש. וראה בפירוש מהרז"ו שם.
- (כה) ראה פירוש הרמב"ע לשה"ש שם (וראה גם מצודת שם): רשפי' – גחלי'. ובתיב"ע שם: גומרין דאשא (אוה"ת והמשך מים רבים שבהערה כ"ז).
- (כו) ראה ד"ה ואברהם זקן תרס"ו. ובכ"מ.
- (כז) אוה"ת נח תרכא, ב. מים רבים תרל"ו פע"ג. וראה גם אוה"ת שה"ש עה"פ (ע' תשמו).
- (כח) ראה בארוכה לקו"ת אחרי כו, ג.
- (כט) ר"פ האזינו (עב, א). שמע"צ פה, רע"ב.
- (ל) קהלת יב, ז.
- (לא) תו"א ותו"ח שבהערה 2. אוה"ת נח תרכב, א. מים רבים הנ"ל פע"ה ואילך.
- (לב) והיינו, דזה שאין ביכולתם לכבות את האהבה הוא לא רק מצד שרש האהבה (כנ"ל ס"ג), אלא גם מצד "תכלית עומק כוונתם" של המים רבים גופא.
- (לג) ראה המשך מים רבים שם.
- (לד) ראה תו"א שם ט, א. תו"ח שם נט, סע"ד.
- (לה) לקו"ת בלק עג, סע"א. ובכ"מ. ובלקו"ת שם, שזהו "התירוץ האמיתי" למה ירדה הנשמה לעוה"ז.
- (לו) ברכות לד, ב.
- (לז) רמב"ם הל' תשובה פ"ז ה"ד (וגם בלקו"ת שם מובא הגירסא אינם יכולים).
- (לח) שלמעלה מבחי' כח (המשך ר"ה תש"ג פ"ג. ועוד).
- (לט) לקו"ת ראה כד, ד. ש"ש סו, ג. ובכ"מ.
- (מ) לקו"ת ר"פ האזינו.
- (מא) ראה לקו"ת שם עב, רע"א: והתשובה היא להיות.. כמו קודם ירידתה ויתר על כן. ומ"ש והרוח תשוב אל

האלקים אשר נתנה – ראה לקמן הערה מ"ז.

(מב) רות רבה רפי"ב.

(מג) ד"ה העושה סוכתו תרצ"ט פ"ב. וראה גם המשך תער"ב (ח"ב) ע' תתק.

(מד) או"ת (ב, ג) עה"פ נעשה אדם – הובא גם בהמשך הנ"ל ס"ע תתקב [ומהמשך הענין שם (ראה שם ריש ע' תתקג) משמע שזה שייך גם לענין במי נמלך כו'].

(מה) ב"ר פ"א, ד.

(מו) המשך ר"ה תש"ג פ"ג. ובכ"מ.

(מז) ועפ"ז יובן מ"ש "והרוח תשוב אל האלקים אשר נתנה" – אף שע"י התשובה נעשית בעילוי יותר – כי גם העילויי הנשמה שע"י התשובה הוא בבחינת "האלקים אשר נתנה" (שרש הנשמות בעצמותו ית'). אלא שבתחלה הוא רק בכח, כבפנים. ועצ"ע.

(מח) ראה בארוכה בהשיחה סעיף ד' ואילך (לקו"ש ח"כ ע' 283 ואילך).

(מט) ראה בארוכה בהשיחה (שם ע' 281 ואילך) סעיף ב' ואילך. ושם (ס"ג ואילך), שהחידוש שבמוצאי ש"פ נח על מוצאי שבת בראשית הוא – שאז ישנו כבר הענין ד'ויעקב הלך לדרכו" בפועל.

(נ) וע"ד הידוע (תו"א ל, סע"א ואילך. ובכ"מ) בענין העלי' שע"י (כללות) ירידת הנשמה למטה, שהעלי' היא מה שנעשית בבחי' מהלך.

(נא) ויצא לב, ב. וראה שיחת מוצאי שבת בראשית ס"ו (לקו"ש שם ע' 270-1).

(נב) ויצא כט, א. פירש"י שם. וראה שיחה הנ"ל ס"י (לקו"ש שם ע' 272-3).

(נג) להעיר, שזהו (בחי' בכל מאדך) גם העילוי שנעשה ע"י ה"מים רבים" (תו"א ט, א. ובכ"מ).

(נד) ד"ה שמח תשמח תרנ"ז ע' 49 ואילך.

(נה) ג' בני נח הם בחי' חג"ת (תו"א ר"פ וישב ואוה"ת נח סג, א), ענין הג' קוין דתורה עבודה וגמ"ח.

(נו) ראה אוה"ת וירא תשנו, סע"א ואילך.