



LESSONS IN TORAH OR



PRECIOUS TEACHINGS THAT AWAKEN THE HEART
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❧ **RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN OF LIADI** ❧
TRANSLATED AND EXPLAINED

תּוֹרָה אֹר

פְּרֶשֶׁת וַיַּחֲדִי

דְּבוּר הַמִּתְחִיל

יְהוּדָה אֶתָּה יוֹדוּךָ אַחִיךָ

“Revealing our Selfless Devotion to
Hashem”

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ב"ה

Torah Or

תורה אור

דבור המתחיל

יְהוּדָה אֶתָּה יוֹדוּךָ אַחִיךָ¹

פְּרִשֵּׁת וַיְחִי דָף מַה, א - מַה, ד

“Revealing our Selfless Devotion to Hashem”

In Pashas Vayeichi, Yaakov our forefather blesses his children before he passes away. He blesses his son Yehuda that his brothers will be submissive to him, and make him their leader, and that his descendants will be the leaders of the Jewish people for all time. As the leader, Yehuda and his descendants will lead the Jewish army into battle against their enemies. The enemies will turn back and flee in retreat, so that the Jewish army's "hands" will pursue their enemies facing the back of their necks.

In this maamar, the Alter Rebbe will explain the mystical meaning of the verse.

¹ (דבור המתחיל יְהוּדָה אֶתָּה וַיְחִי דָף מַה, א. אור התורה [בראשית כרך א] רטז, ב. - ציון כבוד קדושת אדמו"ר.

נאמר שבת פְּרִשֵּׁת וַיְחִי, יד טבת תקס"ו בליאדי. לפנינו הנחת המהרי"ל. הגהות וקיצורים - אור התורה בראשית כרך ה תתקצז, א. תתרח, ב. כרך ו תתשלח, ב. נוסח ב' - הנחת אדמו"ר האמצעי - נדפס בספר המאמרים תקס"ו חלק א עמוד רמח ובמאמרי אדמו"ר האמצעי בראשית עמוד תצז (ונאמר גם כן בשנת תקע"ז). נוסח ג' - הנחת רבי משה בן אדמו"ר הזקן - נדפס שם עמוד רעח.

מאמרים דבור המתחיל "יְהוּדָה אֶתָּה" המיוסדים על מאמר זה: - מאמרי אדמו"ר האמצעי בראשית עמוד תקל. תרפ"ח - ספר המאמרים תרפ"ח עמוד מה. תשל"ח - תורת מנחם ספר המאמרים מלוקט חלק ב כסלו - שְׁבֵט עמוד רכ. תשמ"ו.

הטעם שהתחלת הסדרה בתורה אור היא בפסוק "יְהוּדָה אֶתָּה" נתבאר על דרך הרמז בדבור המתחיל זה (תשל"ח).

(א) Chapter 1

"יְהוּדָה אֶתָּה יוֹדוּךָ אֶחִיךָ יָדְךָ בְּעֶרְףְּ אִיבֶיךָ.
יִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לָךְ בְּנֵי אָבִיךָ: וְגו'?"²

"Yehuda, your brothers will be submissive to you, your hand will be at the back of the neck of your enemies; the children of your father will bow to you." (Bereishis 49:8)

הִנֵּה יְהוּדָה נִקְרָא עַל שֵׁם "הַפַּעַם אוֹדָה"
(וַיֵּצֵא כַּט, לֵה),

Now, the name 'יהודה-Yehuda,' comes the phrase said by his mother Leah when naming him "הַפַּעַם-this time אוֹדָה-I will humbly give thanks to Hashem."

Leah humbly gave thanks and praise to Hashem for giving her a fourth son, more than her equal share of three sons per wife of the four wives of Yaakov, who was destined to have only 12 sons.

We see that the name 'יהודה-Yehuda' is connected to humbling oneself to Hashem, which is expressed in giving thanks and praise to Hashem.

וְהוּא בְּחִינַת הוֹדִיָּה³ שֶׁבְּכָללוֹת נִשְׁמוֹת
יִשְׂרָאֵל:

This corresponds to the aspect of 'הוֹדִיָּה-humble submission and gratitude' to Hashem that is found in the souls of the entire Jewish People.

The word 'הוֹדִיָּה' (in the context of our soul's relationship with Hashem) is difficult to translate into English. It means a combination of three things: 1- submission 2- gratitude 2- devotion. It represents how our Divine soul perceives Hashem as its true source of Life, Father, and King, all at once. This is expressed in a feeling of submission to Hashem as our King, gratitude to Hashem as our Father and Source of life and all good things, and devotion to Hashem as our Father and King.

Throughout the maamar terms will be used connected to the phrase 'הוֹדִיָּה,' such as אוֹדָה and מוֹדִים, which are all connected to the name 'יהודה-Yehuda.'

² ("יָדְךָ בְּעֶרְףְּ אִיבֶיךָ יִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לָךְ בְּנֵי אָבִיךָ". פֶּרֶשְׁתֵּנוּ מַט, ח).

³ (רָאָה יְהִל אֹר – מְלוֹאִים עֲמוּד תְּרִלָּד. מִעֲנִין הוֹדָאָה רָאָה בְּסִידוֹר עִם דָּא"ח דְּבוֹר הַמִּתְחִיל "מִזְמוֹר לְתוֹדָה" וּבִשְׁעַר הַל"ג בְּעוֹמֶר. וְרָאָה לְקוּיֵי תוֹרָה עֶקֶב יד, א וְאֵילֶךְ בְּעִנִּין "נֹדָה לָךְ" בְּבִרְכַּת הַמִּזוֹן. וְרָאָה לְקוּיֵי שִׁיחוֹת חֶלֶק ו עֲמוּד 195 הָעֶרָה 77).

Whenever a word connected to this phrase is used keep in mind the three ideas of this phrase as submission, gratitude, and devotion to Hashem.

"מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ";⁴ "וְאֲנַחְנוּ כּוֹרְעִים
וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וּמוֹדִים".⁵

This is expressed in our daily prayers when we say in the Shemona Esrai prayer: **"we 'modim-humbly give thanks' to You [Hashem, that You are Hashem our G-d and the G-d of our fathers],"** and in the Aleinu prayer: **"we bend our knees, bow down, and 'modim-humbly give thanks' [to the Supreme King of kings, the Holy One, Blessed be He]."**

אֵלֶּא שְׁלֵמָטָה, לְפִי שֶׁהוּא תַּחַת הַזְּמַן,
נִקְרָא "הַפֶּעַם אֹדָה",

However, down here, in the physical world, which is under the limitations of time [and space], this submission/gratitude is called "This time I will humbly thank Hashem."

שֶׁלֹּא כָּל הָעֵתִים שׁוֹת.

Since, as we experience it in the physical world, not all times are the same.

Since our Divine soul is clothed in a physical body, which dampens our perception of the soul, we do not always feel our submission and gratitude to Hashem the same.

אֲבָל לְמַעַלָּה בְּמִקּוֹר חוּצָב נִשְׁמוֹתֵיהֶם
הוּא לְמַעַלָּה מִן הַזְּמַן,

However, Above, in the Source from which the soul is derived, it exists beyond the limitations of time.

In the source of the soul Above, it always has complete submission, gratitude, and devotion to Hashem.

וְשֵׁם נִקְרָא יְהוּדָה, כִּי הִיוּ"ד מוֹרָה עַל
הַהוּדָה, כְּמוֹ "כָּכָה יַעֲשֶׂה אֵיזֵב" (אִיזֵב א, ה).

There, at that level, it is called **"he יהוּדָה-he will always humbly thank [Hashem],"** since the letter 'י at the beginning of the word shows

⁴ (נוסח תפלת העמידה).

⁵ (נוסח תפלת "עלינו לשבח").

that it is in the present tense, something this always happening, as in the phrase “this is what Iyov **‘יַעֲשֶׂה**’ (Iyov 1:5)

The verse discusses how Iyov had a custom to offer sacrifices to Hashem as an atonement for possible sinful behavior of his children. This was something he would always do. Because it was something constantly happening on a regular basis, it is written in the present tense with the letter 'י' at the beginning of the word **‘יַעֲשֶׂה**’.” Thus, the letter 'י' at the beginning of the word signifies both present tense as well as something that is constantly happening on a continual basis. In that sense, the word **‘יְהוֹדָה**’ means both present tense and something that is always constant. This is the level of submission-gratitude to Hashem in the soul as it exists Above, beyond the limitations of time.

וְיִהְיֶה פִּירוּשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ כְּמוֹ יוֹדָה בְּתוֹסַפֶּת ה' - יְהוֹדָה.

Based on this, **the explanation of the word ‘יְהוֹדָה’ would be the same meaning as the word ‘יְיָדָה-he will always humbly thank [Hashem]’ with an added letter ה' (after the 'י'), as if it was pronounced “יְהוֹדָה” (i.e., with the ה' spelled הו instead of הו and the ד' spelled ד instead of ד).**

(וּבִנְחֻמָּיהָ י"א, יז) נִכְתַּב "יְהוֹדָה" - בְּסִגּוּל תַּחַת הַדָּל"ת).

(In fact, **in** the Book of **Nechemya** (11:17) the word **יְיָדָה-he will humbly thank [Hashem]’ is written “יְהוֹדָה” with an added ה' after the י' and a segol under the ד'.**)

The verse reads: **“וּמַתַּנְיָה בֶּן מִיכָה בֶּן זַבְדִּי בֶּן אָסָף רִאשׁ הַתְּחִלָּה יְהוֹדָה לַתְּפִלָּה”** - Mattaniah the son of Micha, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, was the head to begin the thanksgiving in prayer.”

Rashi explains that Mattaniah was appointed in charge of the Leviim (Levites) in the Beis Hamikdash to begin the singing praises and thanks to Hashem. The word **“יְהוֹדָה”** in the verse refers to giving thanks to Hashem. It is written with a י' at the beginning since this is something he would constantly do every day. (Rashi also notes that it is the same meaning as the word **‘יְיָדָה**’ but with an extra letter ה'.)

וְעֵנִין "הַפַּעַם אוֹדָה",

The idea of Leah saying that “This time I will humbly thank Hashem,”

הָיִינוּ אַחֵר לֵידָה וְהַתְגַּלּוּת בְּחִינַת רְאוּבֵן
שְׁמַעוֹן וְלֵוִי,

means that after she gave birth to Reuven, Shimon, and Levi, and these levels are now revealed, only at that time is it possible for “Yehuda-submission/gratitude to Hashem” to be revealed,

שֶׁהֵם הֵם הַגּוֹרָמִים לְבְּחִינַת הוֹדָיָה זוֹ,

since they are the ones that cause this level of “הוֹדָיָה-submission/gratitude” to be expressed.

וְזֶהוּ “יִדְוֹךְ אֶחֱיךָ”.

This is the inner meaning of “יִדְוֹךְ your brothers will cause your level of הוֹדָיָה to be expressed.”

The simple meaning of “יִדְוֹךְ אֶחֱיךָ” is “your brothers will be submissive to you,” i.e., Yehuda’s brothers will accept his leadership. The mystical meaning of “יִדְוֹךְ” is “they will cause you to have הוֹדָיָה,” i.e., they will cause the person to have submission/gratitude to Hashem.

This refers to the idea Yehuda’s brothers Reuven, Shimon, and Levi, represent spiritual levels of Divine service. When these three aspects are in found in a person, he will be able to reach the spiritual level represented by Yehuda, the level of ‘הוֹדָיָה-submission/gratitude to Hashem.’ This is what the Alter Rebbe will continue to explain:

וּבִאֵינִי עֲנִין זֶה:

The explanation of this idea is as follows:

הִנֵּה רְאוּבֵן הוּא עַל שֵׁם רְאוּבֵן⁶ - בְּחִינַת
רְאִיָּה,

Now, the name “רְאוּבֵן-Reuven” comes from the phrase said by his mother Leah when naming him “רְאוּבֵן-See my son [how special he is],” which is the aspect of seeing things.

Rashi (on Bereishis 29:32) explains that Leah meant that people should see how special her firstborn son is compared to other firstborn children. Eisav was the firstborn and hated his competing younger brother Yaakov, whereas Reuven was

⁶ (בְּרֵאשִׁית רַבָּה פָּרָשָׁה ע"א, ג' וְעוֹד).

the firstborn and saved his competing younger brother Yosef when his brothers wanted to kill him.

Leah used the term “seeing” and vision in connection to the special quality of Reuven.

ובחינת ראייה זו היא הגורמת המִשְׁכַּת
בחינת האֶהְבָּה,

This aspect of “seeing” is what causes a person to be drawn to love something.

כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב (יְחִזְקָאל א. י) "פְּנֵי אַרְיֵה אֶל
הַיְמִין" – אַרְיֵה אוֹתִיּוֹת רְאִיָּה.⁷

As it is written regarding the angels of the Merkavah-Chariot (Yechezkal 1:10): “the face of the ‘אַרְיֵה-lion’ was on the right side,” and the letters of the word ‘אַרְיֵה-lion’ are the same as the letters of the word ‘רְאִיָּה-seeing.’

Since the “right side” represents kindness and love, and the face of the “אַרְיֵה-lion/רְאִיָּה-seeing” is on the right side, this shows that the concept of “seeing” is connected to kindness and love, the “right side.” (The connection between the “lion” and the “right side” is explained elsewhere in Chassidus, see Likutei Torah beginning of Parshas Eikev.)

וְכֵן הָיָה "דָּגֵל מַחֲנֵה רְאוּבֵן תִּימָנָה" (בְּמִדְבָּר
ב. י).

Similarly, the “Tribe of ‘רְאוּבֵן-Reuven’ encamped on the south side” of the Mishkan,” (Bamidbar 2:10).

The south side corresponds to the right, since when a person is facing east, the south will be on his right. Since the entrance of the Mishkan was on the east, from the perspective of the Mishkan, south is on the right. Thus, Reuven’s encampment on the south corresponds to the “right side” of kindness of love. Since Reuven is the idea of “seeing,” love is connected to “seeing.”

כִּי עֵינֵן רְאִיָּה הוּא עֵינֵן הַתְּקַרְבוֹת דֶּרֶךְ
חִיבָה,

Because the idea of “seeing” something is that it brings about affectionately drawing close to it,

⁷ (אַרְיֵה אוֹתִיּוֹת רְאִיָּה: רְאִיָּה תְּקוּנֵי זֶהר תְּקוּן ע קכב, א. זֶהר (רַעְיָא מִהֵימָנָא) פִּינְחָס רלד, א. תְּקוּנֵי זֶהר חֲדָשׁ
צט סוף עמוד א וְרִישׁ עמוד ב).

כִּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב (הוֹשֵׁעַ ט, י): "כְּבִכּוּרָה בְּתֵאֵנָה
בְּרֹאשִׁיתָהּ רָאִיתִי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם⁸ כו".

as it is written (Hoshea 9:10): **"like a ripe fig on a fig tree, in its beginning, I saw your forefathers;"**

Rashi explains: The forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov, were precious to Hashem like when a person finds the first ripe fruit of his fig tree. After many years of hard work, the person can finally enjoy something from his labor; similarly, after close to two thousand years since Hashem made the world, He finally is enjoying the fruit of His labor in the forefather's devotion to Him.

The verse uses the phrase "I 'saw' your forefathers," since Hashem's "seeing" the forefathers represents His love and connection with them.

וְזָהוּ "וַתֵּהָרָא לֵאָה וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ רְאוּבֵן כִּי
אָמְרָה כִּי רָאָה ה' בְּעֵינֵי וְגו', כִּי עָתָה יֵאָהֱבֵנִי
אִישִׁי וְגו'" (וַיֵּצֵא כֵט, לֵב).

This is also the idea of the verse (Bereishis 29:32): "Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son and she called him 'רְאוּבֵן'-Reuven,' for she said **'for Hashem has 'רָאָה'-seen' my affliction, and now my husband will love me.**"

Leah was worried that Yaakov would not love her fully since he originally only wanted to marry Rachel. When she gave birth to a son, Reuven, she felt that now her husband, Yaakov, would fully love her. The verse connects Yaakov's love for Leah with Hashem "seeing" Leah's suffering, implying that Hashem's "seeing" Leah caused love from Yaakov to her, showing again how "seeing" brings about love.

וְעִנִּין הַמִּשְׁכָּה זֶה בְּנִסְתֵּי־יִשְׂרָאֵל הוּא
בְּחֵינִת "לֹא־תִכְלָא בִּיקְרָא דְּמִלְכָּא"⁹,

This idea of how "seeing" causes one **to draw close in** the context of **the Jewish People's** service of Hashem **is the aspect of** "gazing at the Glory of the King,"

Hashem is the King, and "gazing at His glory" refers to thinking deeply into the true greatness of Hashem.

⁸ (וּבְפִירוּשׁ רִשִּׁי: "כֵּן נִרְאוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם בְּעֵינֵי לַחֲבִיבִים").

⁹ (לְהִתְבּוֹנֵן בְּכְבוֹד הַמֶּלֶךְ. רָאָה זֶה־ר חֵלֶק אֶל־הַ, אֶל־הַ. חֵלֶק בְּרִמּוֹ, ב.).

לְעוֹרֵר אֶת הָאֱהָבָה עַד שֶׁתַּחֲפֹץ¹⁰ לְדַבֵּק
בּוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ.

Meaning, to awaken the love for Hashem until it brings the person to a true inner desire to connect to Him.

וְעַל דָּבָר זֶה¹¹ נִתְקְנוּ פְסוּקֵי דְזִמְרָה וְ"יוֹצֵר
אוֹר" קוֹדֵם קְרִיאַת-שְׁמַע, כְּדִי שֶׁיָּבוֹא
לְקִיּוֹם "וְאֶהְבֶּתָּ" בְּקִרְיַת-שְׁמַע.

It is regarding this matter that they (the Sages) established to recite the 'Pesukei Dezimra' and 'Yotzer Or' before reciting Shema, in order to that one should come to fulfill the command "you should love Hashem" which is stated in the Shema.

The Pesukei Dezimra are verses mainly from Tehillim that describe how Hashem takes care of everyone and runs the world, and makes miracles for us. Yotzer Or describes how the sun and moon and other heavenly bodies and all the angels praise Hashem. When we contemplate on the above themes this brings us to love Hashem.

כִּי עֵיקַר הַכּוּוֹנֶה בְּסִפּוּר שְׂבָחוֹ שֶׁל מְקוֹם,
הוּא כִּי לֹא יֵי בִידִיעָה לְבָדָה,

For the main purpose of recounting the praises of Hashem, is that it is not enough to only have a knowledge of Hashem in the 'back of the mind,'

לְפִי שֶׁהִיא בְּחִינַת הָעֵלִם, וְאֶפִּילוּ "גִּנְבָא,
אִפּוּם מִחֲתָרְתָּא רַחֲמָא קִרְיָא וְכוּ"¹²;

since then, it is hidden, and our Sages say (Brachos 63a) "a thief when he is about to tunnel into someone's house to rob him, will pray to Hashem to succeed in his robbery,"

A thief's knowledge of Hashem is only in the "back of his mind" and does not affect his actual conduct to prevent him from stealing. Similarly, a person's subconscious knowledge of Hashem does not affect his daily life.

וְלֹא יָבוֹא לְקִיּוֹם "וְאֶהְבֶּתָּ" כִּי אִם כְּשִׁינָא
מִהֶהָעֵלִם אֶל הַגְּלוּי,

and he will not come to fulfill the command of "you should love

¹⁰ (עַל פִּי שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים ב, ז: "אִם תַּעֲרִירוּ וְאִם תַּעֲזִירוּ אֶת הָאֱהָבָה עַד שֶׁתַּחֲפֹץ").

¹¹ [אוֹלִי צ"ל: "וְעַל דָּרָךְ זֶה"]

¹² ("רַחֲמָא קִרְיָא". גִּנְבָּא בְּפִתַּח הַמַּחְתָּרֶת קוֹרָא לֵה'. בְּרִכּוֹת סג, א בְּגִירְסַת הָעֵין יַעֲקֹב. "הָרִי שְׂמַאמִּין בְּהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וְעַם כָּל זֶה עוֹבֵר עַל רְצוֹנוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ לְפִי שְׂאֲמוּנָה זֹה הִיא רַק בְּחִינַת מְקִיף וְעֲטָרָה". לְקוּטֵי תוֹרָה צו יא, ב. וּבְכֻמָּה מְקוּמוֹת).

Hashem” unless his knowledge of Hashem comes from the hidden subconscious, to revelation in his conscious mind,

וּמִבְּחִינַת יְדִיעָה לְבַחֲבִינַת רְאִיָּה מִמָּשׁ
שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת גִּילּוּי - "לְאַסְתַּכְלָא" דְּרִיקָא.

and from consciously knowing it to actually “seeing” it, which is the full revelation in the person, that is referred to as specifically “gazing” at the Glory of the King.

In short, a person’s knowledge of something can exist in three levels: 1- subconsciously, like a thief’s knowledge of Hashem that motivates him to pray for success in robbing, 2- conscious effort to understand an idea, like one who understands a teaching of Chassidus well enough to repeat to someone else who is unfamiliar with the concept, 3- “gazing” at the idea until the person loses himself in the concept and it “takes him over” as it were.

In order to bring out a true love for Hashem it is not enough that we briefly remind ourself that we a subconscious knowledge of Hashem. It is also not enough to think through an idea of Hashem’s greatness in way of comprehension, even though this is an important and necessary step to achieve. In addition to comprehension there needs to be “gazing” at the concept, to focus on the knowledge of Hashem so powerfully that we lose ourself in that concept.

The Previous Rebbe explains¹³: When one is looking at painting from a true artist, there are different kinds of looking. There is a brief glance where one sees the general picture and that it is a nice piece of art. Then there is looking at to study all the different scenes in the painting, to comprehend what the artist was conveying. But then there is “gazing” at the painting to see how every detail is expressing something unique, and to feel the life and energy of the artist in the painting, until one loses oneself in “experiencing” the vitality and beauty of the art.

The same idea is when we look at a teaching of Chassidus, such as the concept of creation of the world something from nothing. We can know about this in a general manner, or in a detailed manner, or we can “experience” the concept. This is called “gazing at the Glory of the King.”

¹³ [ראה ד"ה יהודה אתה תרפ"ח]

וְהִינֵנוּ עַל יְדֵי שִׁירָבָה לְסַפֵּר בְּשִׁבְחֵי
יְתָבָרָהּ.

This is accomplished through recounting at length the praises of Hashem,

וְלִהְעֲמִיק דַּעְתּוֹ אֵיךְ שׁ"מִלְכוּתְךָ מְלָכוּת
כָּל עוֹלָמִים" (תְּהִלִּים קמ"ה, יג);

and to think deeply into the idea that, for example, "Your Kingship is a Kingship over all worlds," (Tehillim 145:13)

"אֶלֶף אֲלָפִים יִשְׁמְשׁוּנָה וְרַבּוֹ רַבְּבֵן קְדָמוּהִי
יְקוּמוֹן כו" ¹⁴,

and "millions of angels serve Him, and hundreds of millions of angels stand in awe before Him," (Daniel 7:10)

וְהוּא לְבִדּוֹ יְתָבָרָהּ הוּא יְחִיד וּמְיֻחָד כְּמוֹ
קוֹדֶם שֶׁנִּבְרָא הָעוֹלָם,

and only He is One and alone (the only real existence) just as before the world was created,

כְּמֵאמַר ¹⁵: "יְחִיד חַי הָעוֹלָמִים מֶלֶךְ כו",

as we say (in Shachris): "You who are the Only One, are the King who is the life of all the worlds,"

וְאִמְתוּת שֵׁם יְחִיד הוּא שׁ"הוּא לְבִדּוֹ
הוּא" ¹⁶.

and the true idea of being the Only One is that "There is only Him, and there is no other existence."

וְעִנִּין "אֶחָד" הוּא שְׁנִמְשָׁךְ בְּחִינַת א'
בְּחִי'ת וד', שֶׁהֵם ז' רְקִיעִים וְהָאָרֶץ ¹⁷ כו',
שִׁיהִיו בְּטָלִים לִיְחֻדוֹ יְתָבָרָהּ;

The idea of the word "אֶחָד-One" is that the א' (which stands for 'אחדות'-Oneness') comes into the ח' and ד', which are the 7 heavens and the earth (which together are ח'-8) and the four (ד') directions, causing them to become bateil-subservient/transparent-to Hashem's 'אחדות-Oneness', represented by the letter א'.

¹⁴ (דְּנִיאל ז', י): "אֶלֶף אֲלָפִין יִשְׁמְשׁוּנָה וְרַבּוֹ רַבְּבֵן קְדָמוּהִי יְקוּמוֹן".

¹⁵ (בְּרַכַּת "בְּרוּךְ שְׁאֵמַר").

¹⁶ (פִּיּוּט "כָּל מַאֲמִינִים" לְרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה וְיוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים. וְרֹאה לְקַמֵּן נח, ב. תְּנִיא פֶּרֶק לֵה בִּהְגָּה).

¹⁷ (רֹאה בְּרַכּוֹת יג א. סֵפֶר מִצּוֹת קָטָן הוּבָא בְּבֵית יוֹסֵף אוֹרַח חַיִּים סִימָן סא).

שֶׁהַחַיּוֹת שֶׁל שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ עוֹלָה וְנִכְלָל
בְּמִקְוֵרוֹ,

This further causes **that the life-force of the heavens and earth ascends to become included in its Source** in Hashem, i.e., they reconnect to their source in Holiness.

וְכֵן עוֹלָה אֶפִּילוּ הַחַיּוֹת שֶׁל הָרוּחָנִיּוֹת,
כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב (דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים א' כט, יא): "לֵךְ ה'
הַגְּדוֹלָה וְכוּ"¹⁸;

In fact, even the life-force of the spiritual levels needs to ascend and reconnect to its Source, as it is written (Divrei Hayamim I, 29:11): "To You Hashem is the attribute of Greatness (Kindness), Gevura (Severity) etc."

The simple meaning of the verse is praising Hashem for His greatness and power etc.

¹⁸ (וַעֲיִין מִזֶּה עַל פֶּסוּק "וְאַתָּה אֵל אַבְרָהָם" (לִקְמֹן וְאַרְאָה נה, ג)).

[העתקה ממאמר שם (נה, ב-ג): וזהו "שִׁמְעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד - וְאַהֲבַת וְגו'" (וְאַתְחַנֵּן ו, ד-ה):
כִּי הִנֵּה צָרִיךְ לְהִבִּין מֵלֵת "אֶחָד" - שְׁאִינוּ מוֹרָה לְכַאוֹרָה עַל אֲמִתִּית יַחֲדוֹ וְיִתְבַּרֵּךְ, שֶׁהוּא לְבָדּוֹ הוּא, וְאַפִּס
זוּלָתוֹ, וְאִין מֵלֵת "אֶחָד" מוֹרָה עַל זֶה, שֶׁהֵרִי יֵשׁ "אֶחָד הַמְּנוּי" גַּם כֵּן. עַל דֶּרֶךְ מִשְׁל, יַעֲקֹב הִיָּה לוֹ י"ב שְׁבָטִים, וְאַף
עַל פִּי כֵן נִקְרָא רֵאוּבֵן "אֶחָד". אֵךְ יִצְחָק נִקְרָא "בֶּנֶךְ יַחֲדִיד" וְגַם כָּאֵן הוּי לִיָּה לְמִימֵר: "ה' יַחֲדִיד".
אֵךְ הַעֲנִין, שֶׁבְּאִמַּת לִגְבִי קוֹדֶשׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא מִצֵּד עֲצָמוֹתוֹ וּמַהוּתוֹ יִתְבַּרֵּךְ לֹא שִׁיךְ עָלָיו מֵלֵת "אֶחָד" כָּלֵל. שֶׁהֵרִי
הוּא יַחֲדִיד וּמִיּוֹחַד, וְ"הוּא לְבָדּוֹ הוּא". אֵלָּא כְּמֵאֲמַר רַ"ז ל: "שֶׁהוּא אֶחָד - בְּשִׁבְעָה רִקִּיעִים, וּבְאָרֶץ, וּבְד' רוּחֹת
הָעוֹלָם".

רוֹעָה לּוֹמֵר, שֶׁגַם בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ וּבְד' רוּחֹת הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֵם בְּחִינַת ו' קְצוֹת הָעוֹלָם, בְּחִינַת הַתְּחַלְקוֹת וּפִירוּד,
אֵף עַל פִּי כֵן שׁוֹרָה וּמִתְגַּלֶּה יַחֲדוֹ וְאַחֲדוּתוֹ יִתְבַּרֵּךְ, וְ"אִינוֹן מִתְיַחֲדִין בְּאֶחָד" - שְׁכּוֹלֵם בְּטָלִים לִגְבִי אֹרֶךְ ה'
הַשׁוֹרָה וּמִתְגַּלֶּה בָּהֶם, וְכִמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב (נְחֻמָּה ט, ו): "וַיֵּצֵא הַשָּׁמַיִם לֵךְ מִשְׁתַּחֲוִים".

וְהֵם ו' קְצוֹת גְּשָׁמִיִּים וְשִׁשָּׁה קְצוֹת רוּחָנִיִּים. דִּהֲיִינוּ בְּחִינַת מַעֲלָה וּמִטָּה שִׁישׁ בְּכָל הָעוֹלָמוֹת - לְמַעֲלָה עַד
אֵין קֶץ וּלְמִטָּה עַד אֵין תְּכֵלִית, כִּי "גְּבוּהָ מֵעַל גְּבוּהָ וְגו'" (קֹהֶלֶת ה, ז). דִּהֲיִינוּ, מֵה שֶׁהוּא נִתְפָּס וּמוֹשָׁג בְּשִׁכָּל
וְהַשְׁגַּת הַנִּבְרָאִים שְׁבָכָל הָעוֹלָמוֹת - נִקְרָא 'מִטָּה' לִגְבִי הָעֲלִיוֹן, שְׁאִינוּ נִתְפָּס וּמוֹשָׁג בְּשִׁכָּל וְהַשְׁגַּת הַנִּבְרָאִים
שֶׁלְמִטָּה מִמֶּנּוּ, וְ"לִית מַחֲשָׁבָה דְּלֵהוֹן תְּפִיסָא בֵּיה", וְכֵן ד' רוּחֹת הָעוֹלָם: כִּי "חֶסֶד - דְּרוּעָא יְמִינָא" שֶׁהוּא דְרוֹם,
ו"גְּבוּרָה - דְּרוּעָא שְׂמָאלָא" שֶׁהוּא צָפוֹן כו'. וְכּוֹלֵם מִתְיַחֲדִים וְנַעֲשִׂים אֶחָד לִיַּחֲדוֹ יִתְבַּרֵּךְ הַשׁוֹכֵן בְּתוֹכָם.

מֵה שְׁאִין כֵּן לִגְבִי קוֹדֶשׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא בְּכַבּוּדוֹ וּבְעֲצָמוֹ, שֶׁהוּא יַחֲדִיד וּמִיּוֹחַד, הֵרִי הוּא רָם וְנִשְׂא רַבּוּת מְדֻרְגֹת
עַד אֵין קֶץ וְסוֹף, מְגִדֵּר הַקְּצוֹת גְּשָׁמִיּוֹת וְרוּחָנִיּוֹת.

וְכִמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב (דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים א' כט, יא): "לֵךְ ה' - הַגְּדוֹלָה וְהַגְּבוּרָה וְכוּ", פִּירוּשׁ: שֶׁבְּחִינַת 'גְּדוּלָה וְגְבוּרָה וְכוּ'
בְּטָלִים לוֹ יִתְבַּרֵּךְ, שְׁאִינוֹם נִקְרָאִים בְּשֵׁם גְּדוּלָה וְגְבוּרָה כָּלֵל, "כִּי כָל בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ" (שָׁם) פִּירוּשׁ: שֶׁהַכָּל בְּטָלִים
אֵלָיו יִתְבַּרֵּךְ, וּלְפָנָיו "כַּחֲשִׁיכָה כְּאוֹרָה" (תְּהִלִּים קלט, יב), וּמַעֲלָה מִטָּה שְׁוִין.

כִּי מַהוּתוֹ וְעֲצָמוֹתוֹ נִמְצָא לְמִטָּה כְּמוֹ שֶׁנִּמְצָא לְמַעֲלָה מִמֶּשׁ בְּלִי שׁוּם חִילּוּק וְשִׁנּוּי כָּלֵל, וְלֹא שִׁיךְ לְפָנָיו יִתְבַּרֵּךְ
בְּחִינַת מַעֲלָה וּמִטָּה כָּלֵל, וּבְחִינַת שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ כָּלֵל, לֹא בְּבְחִינַת "מִמְלָא כָּל עֲלָמִין" וְלֹא בְּבְחִינַת "סוֹבֵב כָּל
עֲלָמִין", כִּי אִינוֹ בְּבְחִינַת וְגֵדֵר "עֲלָמִין" כָּלֵל.

The Kabbalistic explanation is that the attributes of Atzilus which are Greatness-Kindness, Gevura-Severity, and other attributes “belong to You Hashem,” in the sense that they are bateil- transparent to Hashem and are nothing other than Hashem’s expressions, thus not separate from Him. In addition, they are bateil in the sense of being considered insignificant compared to Hashem, since they have some type of limitation and are the source of the limitations of the creations.

The Tzemach Tzedek notes that this concept is explained in Parshas Vaeira. (The Hebrew quote from that maamar was brought in the footnotes here.) There, the Alter Rebbe explains:

The six attributes of Hashem in Atzilus, Chesed, Gevura etc., are the source of the six directions that define three-dimensional space, which are up, down, right, left, forwards, backwards. Just as these directions exist in physical space, there is “spiritual space” in the spiritual worlds of Beriah, Yetzira, and Asiya.

Both physical and spiritual space (and time) are derived from the attributes of Hashem in Atzilus (Ze’eir Anpin- the source of the six directions; Malchus- the source of time: past, present, and future).

Not only physical space and time needs to reconnect to its source in Atzilus in order to experience Hashem’s Oneness, but also the spiritual space and time needs to reconnect to its source in the attributes of Atzilus to experience Hashem’s Oneness.

This is the idea of reciting Shema and saying that Hashem is “אֶחָד-One”: Through this statement and accompanying contemplation we reconnect everything in our life, our physical matters and our Torah and Mitzvah performance, and everything in the entire physical and spiritual worlds, with their source in Hashem’s attributes in Atzilus.

We thereby reveal Hashem’s true Oneness in ourselves and the entire created existence.

וְרַק "בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלָכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם
וְעַד", שְׁלֵהֲיוֹת עוֹלָמוֹת נִפְרָדִים - הֵם רַק
מִבְּחִינַת מְלָכוּתוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ.

What is ‘בְּרוּךְ-blessed/drawn down’
into the world of time and space (עוֹלָם)
(וְעַד) is only **“the Name of His
Glorious Kingdom,”** since, for
worlds to come into existence that
feel separate from Hashem, it is only
possible from the attribute of
Hashem’s Kingship.

In other words: A person contemplates on the greatness of Hashem, how He has millions of worlds and levels that are all bateil to Him. Then, he contrasts that with the fact that our entire seemingly independent existence is only from Hashem's attribute of Kingship, through which He hides His Light and the revelation of His Oneness. This contrast will bring a person to an even greater yearning for Hashem than just thinking about Hashem's greatness. Hashem is so great and I don't see Hashem at all.

וּבְשִׂיָּאֲרִיךְ בְּעִנְיָן זֶה בְּעוֹמֶק בִּינְתוֹ,
בְּבַחֲיַנֵּת גִּילּוּי בְּמוֹחוֹ וְלֹא בִידִיעָה לְבִדְהָ,

When a person will think deeply into these ideas with the depth of his understanding, so that it should be fully revealed in his mind, and not just knowledge that is “in the back of the mind,”

אֲזִי מוֹלִיד מִזֶּה אֶהְבֶּה בְּהַתְגַּלוּת לְבוֹ,
לְהִיּוֹת "נִכְסְפָה וְגַם כָּלְתָה נַפְשִׁי וְגו'"
(תהלים פד, ג),

this will produce a revealed love for Hashem in his heart, so that “my soul yearns and longs for Hashem.” (Tehillim 84:3)

וַיָּבֹא לְקִיּוֹם "וְאֶהְבֶּתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ"
(וְאֶתְחַנֵּן ו, ה) מִמֶּשׁ, דִּהְיִינוּ לְדַבְּקָה בּוֹ
בְּאֵין-סוֹף בְּרוּךְ-הוּא מִמֶּשׁ, וְכִמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב
(תהלים עג, כה): "מִי לִי בִשְׁמַיִם כו". :

With this he will come to actually fulfill the command “you should love Hashem your G-d,” meaning, to actually connect to the Infinite One blessed be He, as it is written “what do I want in heaven or earth besides for Hashem Himself?” (Tehillim 73:25)

(ב) Chapter 2

וְהִנֵּה כְּתִיב (וְאֶתְחַנֵּן שָׁם): "בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ",
וְאָמְרוּ רַז"ל¹⁹: "בְּשְׁנֵי יִצְרִיךְ",

Now, it is written: “you should love Hashem with all לִבְבְּךָ-parts of your heart,” and the Sages explained this (Brachos 9:5) to mean “with both inclinations,” i.e., with the emotions of the Divine soul and the animal soul.

¹⁹ (בְּרַכּוֹת פָּרָק ט מִשְׁנָה ה).

But how do we serve Hashem with the emotions of the animal soul? The Alter Rebbe will address this question through the following explanation:

דְּהֵיינו שְׁתֵּהא האֶהֱבָה בְּבַחֲיִנַת בְּעַל-
תְּשׁוּבָה.

Meaning, that our love of Hashem should be in the manner of a Baal Teshuva, one who does Teshuva.

כִּי הַתְּשׁוּבָה²⁰ אֵינוֹ דּוֹקָא בְּמִי שֵׁישׁ בִּידּוֹ
עֲבִירוֹת חֹס' וְשָׁלוֹם, אֶלָּא אֶפִּילוּ בְּכָל
אָדָם,

Since Teshuva is not limited specifically to those who have committed sins G-d forbid, rather it applies to every person.

כִּי עֲנֵן תְּשׁוּבָה הוּא לְהָשִׁיב אֶת הַנֶּשְׁמָה
לְמִקּוּרָה וְשָׂרְשָׁה:

Since the idea of Teshuva is to return the soul to its source and root,

שְׁהֵיְתָה כְּלוּלָה בְּמֵאֲצִילָה בְּרוּךְ-הוּא
וְ"צְרוּרָה בְּצִרּוֹר הַחַיִּים אֶת ה'" (שְׁמוּאֵל
א' כה, כט) מִמֶּשׁ,

to the level when it was included in its source in Hashem who brought it into being, and it was literally "bound up in the bond of Life with Hashem,"

וַיֵּרְדָה מִמָּקוֹם כְּבוֹדָה וְנִתְלַבֶּשֶׂה בָּעוֹלָם-
הַזֶּה הַגִּשְׁמִי;

and only afterward it descended from its place of honor and became clothed in this physical world,

שְׁאֶפִּילוּ כָּל הַשְּׂגוֹת הָרוּחָנִיִּים שֶׁמִּשְׁגָּת
בְּהִתְלַבְּשׁוּתָהּ בְּתוֹךְ הַגּוּף, הֵם נוֹפְלִים
תַּחַת בְּחִינַת זְמַן וּמָקוֹם;

that even the most spiritual level of understanding that it can perceive while in the physical body is all under the constraints of time and space,

וְצָרִיךְ לְהָשִׁיבָה עַל יְדֵי "וַיִּצְעֲקוּ אֶל ה'
בְּצַר לָהֶם" (תְּהִלִּים קז, ו. כח), כִּי צָר לוֹ
הַמָּקוֹם, שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת מִצָּר וּגְבוּל.

And we need to return it to its source through "crying out to Hashem from their restraints," (see Tehillim 107), since their current place, i.e., situation, is too great of a restraint for him, since it is a spiritual restraint and limitation that does not allow the soul to be free to connect to Hashem as before.

²⁰ (רִאָּה לְקוּטֵי תוֹרָה בְּלֶקַע עה, ב. שְׁבַת שׁוּבָה סו, ג. לְקוּטֵי שִׁיחוֹת חֶלֶק יט עמוד 401 הַעֲרָה 13).

וְעַל זֶה נֶאֱמַר (בְּהָר כה, לח וְעוֹד): "אֲשֶׁר
הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם" - מִבְּחִינַת
מִצָּר כו',

שְׁעַל יְדֵי הַמְרִירוֹת אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה לוֹ עַל
הַהִיפּוּךְ, תִּגְדֹּל הָאֲהָבָה לַה' בִּיְתֵר שְׂאֵת
לְהַתְכַּלל בְּאוֹר אֵין-סוֹף בְּרוּךְ-הוּא,
בִּיְתֵרוֹן הָאוֹר הַבָּא מִן הַחֹשֶׁךְ.²¹

וְעַל זֶה אָמְרוּ רַז"ל: "בְּמָקוֹם שֶׁבַעֲלִי
תְּשׁוּבָה עוֹמְדִים - צְדִיקִים גְּמוּרִים אֵין יְכוּלִים
לַעֲמוֹד כו'".²²

וְכֵדֵאִיתָא בְּזוּהַר: "דְּמִשְׁכִּין לִיה בְּחִילָא
יְתִיר"²³ לְהוֹיֹת גִּילּוֹי אוֹר אֵין-סוֹף בְּרוּךְ-
הוּא מִמֶּשׁ עַל נַפְשׁוֹ,

עַד שְׁגֵם חַיּוֹת הַגּוֹף, וְנַפְשֵׁי הַבְּהֵמָה,
וְכַחוֹתֵיהֶם יִתְהַפְּכוּ וְיָשׁוּבוּ אֶל ה',
וְ"אֶתְהַפֵּא חֲשׂוֹכָא לְנִהוּרָא".²⁴

Regarding this is says (Vayikra 25:38): "I am Hashem who took you out from the land of 'מִצְרַיִם-Mitzrayim,'" meaning, from the aspect of 'מִצָּר-restraint' and limitations on the soul.

That through the bitterness that one feels from the opposite of Hashem's revelation, i.e., His concealment and the restraints on the soul from perceiving Him, the love and yearning for Hashem to become included in His Infinite Light will be that much greater, like the advantage of Light that comes from a place of darkness.

Regarding this our Sages said (Brachos 34b): "In the place that a Baal Teshuva stands, even a completely perfect Tzadik cannot stand."

And, as it is stated in the Zohar (I, 129b): "For they draw close to Him with greater intensity," which causes that Hashem's Infinite Light should be actually revealed in his soul,

until even the life-force of the body, and the animal soul, and all their soul powers, will be transformed to return to reconnect to Hashem, so that "darkness will be transformed into Light."

²¹ (קֶהֱלֵת ב, יג: "בִּיְתֵרוֹן הָאוֹר מִן הַחֹשֶׁךְ").

²² ("עוֹמְדִים - צְדִיקִים גְּמוּרִים אֵין יְכוּלִים לַעֲמוֹד". בְּרֻכּוֹת לד, ב. סְנֵהֲדִין עט, א).

²³ (מִמְּשִׁיכִים עֲלֵיהֶם כֶּכֶח חִזְק יוֹתֵר. זֶהר חֶלֶק א עֲמוּד קַבֵּט, ב. קַצֵּט, ב. רָאָה לְעֵיל כו, ד. וְעוֹד).

²⁴ (רָאָה זֶהר בְּהַקְדָּמָה ד, א).

Earlier, the Alter Rebbe asked: How do we do serve Hashem “with both inclinations,” meaning also with the desires of the animal soul?

Seemingly, there are two parts of the answer to this question:

- 1- The feelings of the animal soul cover over the Divine soul, restraining and limiting it. Because of this, the Divine soul cries out bitterly to Hashem. When that happens, it receives a much deeper revelation of Hashem than it would have had if it had never been restrained by the animal soul. In this context, the idea of using our animal soul to love Hashem is something that happens indirectly. We use out the fact that we have the desires of the animal to push ourselves to an even deeper connection to Hashem. In that sense the desires of the animal soul are being used to help us love Hashem.
- 2- In addition, after we come to that deeper connection to Hashem, the revelation that accompanies it is so powerful that it does make some transformation in the animal soul. This enables us to actually love Hashem even with the animal soul himself, that the animal soul should want to connect to Hashem.

וְהוּא "כִּי רָאָה ה' בְּעֲנִי" ²⁵ –

This is the meaning of Leah's statement “for Hashem has seen my affliction,”

פִּירוּשׁ: שְׁעַל יְדֵי עֲנִי וּמְרוּדִי ²⁶, הוּא מְרִירוֹת הַנֶּפֶשׁ שֶׁבְּאַתְעָרוּתָא דִּלְתַּתָּא –

meaning, that through our spiritual suffering and pain, which is the bitterness of the soul in a manner of an “awakening from below,”

נִמְשָׁךְ לְהִיּוֹת אֶתְעָרוּתָא דִּלְעֵילָא וְ"כַמִּים הַפְּנִים לַפְּנִים כֵּן לֵב הָאָדָם לָאָדָם כו" ²⁷ –

this brings down an “awakening from Above,” and as “water reflects the face shown to it, so too the heart of man will reflect what is the heart of his friend towards him.”

יִתְרוֹן הָאוֹר בְּבַחֲנִית רְאִיָּה מִלְּמַעְלָה לְמַטָּה.

which is the greater Light that is perceived in a way of “seeing” it, that is granted from Above to below.

²⁵ (וַיֵּצֵא כו, לב: "וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ רְאוּבֵן כִּי אָמְרָהּ כִּי רָאָה ה' בְּעֲנִי כִּי עָתָה יֵאָהֲבֵנִי אִישִׁי").

²⁶ (עַל פִּי אִיכָּה ג, יט: "עֲנִי וּמְרוּדִי לְעֵנָה וְרָאָה" וּבִפִּירוּשׁ רַשִׁ"י שָׁם א, ז: "וּמְרוּדִיָּהּ – הוּא לְשׁוֹן צַעַר").

²⁷ ("כַּמִּים הַפְּנִים לַפְּנִים כֵּן לֵב הָאָדָם לָאָדָם" מִשְׁלִי כו, יט).

This “Light” is a perception of Hashem, and can be experienced intellectually, as an idea, or experienced as “seeing” it. For example, a person understands the concept of Individual Divine Providence-Hashgacha Pratis. But when something happens in life that a lot of different things come together in the most unexpected way so that you end up with what you need, then you “see” Hashgacha Pratis, in addition to understanding it as a concept. Similarly, the truth of Hashem’s existence is something we understand intellectually, but yearn to “see” and experience. Through our bitterness and pain over the concealment on Hashem, He gives us some degree of “seeing” His Presence and experiencing it.²⁸

"כִּי [. . .] יֵאָהֲבֵנִי בְּחֵינֵת "אִשִּׁי". דְּהֵיִנוּ
בְּמוֹ שְׁכָתוֹב: "בְּיוֹם הַהוּא תִקְרָאִי לִי
אִשִּׁי"²⁹,

This causes that Hashem will give the person love of Him in a manner of “אִשִּׁי-my Husband.” Meaning, like it is written (Hoshea 2:18): “On that day you (the Jewish People) will call Me ‘My Husband.’”

The Alter Rebbe takes the verse of Leah’s statement about her relationship with her husband and applies it to our relationship with Hashem. Leah said that because she gave birth to Reuven, Yaakov will fully love her as her husband. The Alter Rebbe takes the word “יֵאָהֲבֵנִי-he will love me” and interprets it as “will cause me to love,” meaning in our context, causing the person to love Hashem.

Then the Alter Rebbe takes the word “אִשִּׁי-my Husband” and give it a new reference. The simple meaning is that Leah is saying that now her husband will love her. The Alter Rebbe is interpreting it to mean that Hashem will cause the person to love Him as if He were our “Husband.” The Alter Rebbe continues to explain the word “אִשִּׁי” on a deeper level:

וּפִירוּשׁ "אִשִּׁי" - אֵשׁ-שְׁלִי מְמֹשׁ. **The deeper meaning of the word “אִשִּׁי” is “אֵשׁ-שְׁלִי-my very fire.”**

The simple meaning of “אִשִּׁי” is “אִשִּׁי-my husband,” here the Alter Rebbe is interpreting it as “אֵשׁ-שְׁלִי-my fire.”

²⁸ See the Rebbe's maamar which is based on the current maamar, ד"ה יהודה, footnote number 7.

²⁹ (הושע ב, יח: "בְּיוֹם הַהוּא נֶאֱמַר ה' תִּקְרָאִי אִשִּׁי").

וְהֵינּוּ, הַתְּשׁוּקָה שֶׁמִּמָּטָה לְמַעְלָה,
בְּחִינַת "וְאֵל אִישׁךָ תְּשׁוּקָתְךָ" (בְּרֵאשִׁית ג,
טז), שֶׁהוּא הוּא הָאֵשׁ שְׁלִי,

Meaning, the yearning from below to Above, in a manner of “your yearning will be for your husband” (Bereishis 3:16), since He is my very fire,

תִּהְיֶה בְּבִחִינַת הַתְּכַלְלוֹת בְּאוֹר אֵין־סוֹף
בְּרוּךְ־הוּא מִמֶּשׁ,

which is the yearning to actually become enveloped in Hashem’s Infinite Light,

עַד שֶׁהוּא הוּא יִהְיֶה אִישִׁי - אֵשׁ שְׁלִי
מִמֶּשׁ,

until He will be “אִישִׁי,” my real fire,

כִּי 'וְיָמִינוּ תְּחַבֵּקֵנִי' (שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים ב, ו),
בְּבִחִינַת חֲבֹק וְהַתְּכַלְלוֹת,

since, “His right hand will hug me” (Shir HaShirim 2:6), meaning His Light will encompass me like a hug so that I will become enveloped in His Light,

לִהְיוֹת גִּילּוֹי אוֹר אֵין־סוֹף בְּרוּךְ־הוּא
מִמֶּשׁ עַל נַפְשִׁי בַּתְּשׁוּקָה זֹאת :

so that Hashem’s Infinite Light will be actually revealed in my soul through this yearning.

The idea of loving Hashem as our “husband” is that we experience a fiery love for Hashem. Just as a wife has a fiery love and desire for her husband, so too our soul has a fiery love and yearning for Hashem’s Infinite Light to shine into us. Through this fiery yearning for Hashem, He does shine His Light into us, so that we can be enveloped in experiencing His Light.

Seemingly, the Alter Rebbe is using the idea of calling Hashem “my fire” in two different meanings: 1- I have a fiery yearning for Him, 2- When He shines His Light upon me it is a truly fiery experience.

In other words, there are two “fires”: There is the fire inside of our soul yearning for Hashem, and there is the fire of G-dliness that comes down into us when we truly yearn for it. (For more about these two “fires” see Likutei Torah Parshas Shlach page 44c.)

So far, the Alter Rebbe explained the idea of ‘רְאוּבֵן-Reuven,’ which is the idea of “seeing” Hashem in prayer. This is done by “gazing at the Glory of the King” through deep contemplation on His greatness and the contrast between that our current state of restraint and concealment on the Divine soul. This “seeing”

Hashem in prayer produces a fiery love for Hashem and a yearning to actually experience and be enveloped by His Light.

(ג) Chapter 3

וְהִנֵּה זֶהוּ עֵינֵי רְאוּבֵן, שֶׁהוּא עֵינֵי בְּחִינַת
פָּרָשָׁה ראשונה שֶׁבְּקִרְיַאת-שְׁמַע'³⁰,
שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת רְצוּא.

Now, this is all the idea of 'רְאוּבֵן-Reuven,' seeing, which corresponds to the first paragraph of the Shema, which is the aspect of "yearning" for Hashem.

The first paragraph of the Shema focuses on the love of Hashem, how it should be with all our heart, soul, and might, without any limitation.

וּפָרָשָׁה שְׁנִיָּה שֶׁבְּקִרְיַאת-שְׁמַע'³¹ הִיא
בְּחִינַת שְׁמִיעוֹן - "וְהָיָה אִם שָׁמוֹעַ
תִּשְׁמָעוּ" (עֶקֶב יֵא, יג), שֶׁהִיא בְּחִינַת שׁוּב.

However, the second paragraph of the Shema corresponds to the idea of 'Shimon-Shimon,' who represents 'שמיעה-hearing,' as it says in the second paragraph of Shema "and it will be if you will listen carefully to My mitzvos..." which is the aspect of "returning" to reveal Hashem in ourselves and in the world.

כִּי רֵאִיָּה הִיא מִקְרֹב, וְהֵינּוּ בְּחִינַת
אַהֲבָה שֶׁמִּחֲמַת הַקִּירוּב.

Because "seeing" something is only possible when it is nearby, which represents how "seeing" something brings one emotionally close to it and causes love for it.

אַבֵּל שְׁמִיעָה הִיא מִרְחוֹק, וְהִיא הַגּוֹרֶמֶת
בְּחִינַת יִרְאָה,

However, "hearing" is possible even from far away, and this distancing causes fear.

To see something there cannot be anything obstructing the person from what he is seeing. However, one can hear someone talking even when he is blocked from his view. This ability to hear someone without seeing them implies a certain separation, that he is receiving the message of the person without seeing the person.

³⁰ (רֵאִיָּה אֹר הַתּוֹרָה תִּשָּׂא (שְׁמוֹת כָּרָו) עֲמוּד א'תתפּו. תִּצָּא (דְּבָרִים כָּרָו ה') עֲמוּד ב'נג).

³¹ (רֵאִיָּה סֵפֶר הַמֵּאֲמָרִים תרל"ג חֶלֶק א עֲמוּד קמג).

In a more general sense, one can hear the message of a person without the person being there at all, like when one sends a letter or gives over a message through a messenger. Thus, one can hear a message from someone from a great distance, without ever coming close to the originator of the message.

For example, a king is usually hidden in his palace, and only his decrees are heard throughout the country. Until recent times, most people in a country never saw what their king looked like at all, and only “heard” his decrees. This adds to the sense of mystery and awe from the people to the king.

We see that the idea of “hearing” in contrast to “seeing” implies distance, and distance can create awe, in the case of a king or important person.

– וְכִמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב³² "ה' שָׁמַעְתִּי שְׁמֶעְךָ –
יִרְאתִי." As it is written (Chavakuk 3:2):
“Hashem, I heard a report of You,
and I became afraid.”

Rashi explains that the report Chavakuk the prophet “heard” was that Hashem punishes the wicked, like He punished Pharaoh. He was afraid that Hashem would allow the wicked Nevuchadnetzar to rule the world because of the people’s sins.

The Alter Rebbe is interpreting the verse to mean that because he “heard” about Hashem from afar, this caused him to fear Hashem.

כִּי הִירָאָה הִיא בָּאָה מִחֶמֶת בְּחִינַת
הִרְיוּק הַנִּמְשָׁךְ מִבְּחִינַת "שְׂמַאל"
דְּוִחָה³³. Since fear is a result of distancing,
which comes from “the left hand
that pushes away,” i.e., the attribute
of Gevurah-Severity.

כִּי לִפִּי שֶׁהוּא דְּוִחָה וּמִשְׁפִּיל עַצְמוֹ לִוְמֵר
לְנַפְשׁוֹ: מִי הוּא אֲשֶׁר עָרַב לְבֹו לְגִשְׁת׃ כִּי³⁴,
אֲזִי תִפּוּל עָלָיו יִרְאָה וּפְחָד בְּלְבֹו. Because the person puts himself
down and tells himself: “For who is
it who pledged his heart to approach
Hashem?” (see Yirmiya 30:21). This
causes that there should come in his
heart fear and awe of Hashem.

The person feels that he is not worthy to approach Hashem in prayer and experience His Light. He thinks about the distance between him, a finite and imperfect creation, and Hashem, the Infinite and perfect Creator of all existence.

³² (חֲבַקּוּק ג, ב. רֵאָה פִּירוּשׁ הַפֶּסוּק בְּמַאֲמְרֵי אֲדָמוֹ"ר הָאֲמִצְעִי בְּרֵאשִׁית עֲמוּד תְּקֵמָה).

³³ (סוּטָה מו, א: "שְׂמַאל דְּוִחָה וְיִמִּין מִקְרֵבֵת").

³⁴ (עַל פִּי יִרְמְיָהּ ל, כֵּא: "מִי הוּא זֶה עָרַב אֶת לְבֹו לְגִשְׁת׃ אֵלַי נָאֵם ה'").

When he realizes the distance between creation and Creator, and especially if one does not feel that he is yet serving Hashem properly, this brings about a feeling of awe and trepidation to approach Hashem in prayer and want to become enveloped in His Infinite Light.

ובָּמֹו שִׁכְתוּב (וַיִּתְּרוּ כ, טו): "וַיֵּרָא הָעָם וַיִּנָּעוּ וַיַּעֲמֵדוּ מֵרָחוֹק",
 As it is written (Shemos 20:15): **"and the people saw and trembled; so, they stood from afar."**

This verse is said regarding the Jewish People after hearing Hashem's voice at the Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai.

שִׁבְשָׁבִיל "וַיִּנָּעוּ" - שֶׁנִּפְלַע עֲלֵיהֶם אִימָה וּפְחָד³⁵, וּלְפִיכָךְ "וַיַּעֲמֵדוּ מֵרָחוֹק" - בְּבַחֲיִנַת שְׁמִיעָה.
Because they trembled, meaning that they became filled with fear and awe of Hashem, therefore they stood from afar, which is the aspect of "hearing."

In other words, hearing is a result of distance, which can either cause fear, or can be the result of fear. Because someone is afraid of something, therefore he moves away from it so that he only hears it, and cannot see it. Conversely, something that you feel distant from because you can only hear it and not see it, will cause a sense of fear towards that thing.

Because the Jewish People were afraid of Hashem, they moved away to only hear His message from afar, through Moshe Rabeinu, instead of directly from Hashem. Because a person realizes how distant he is from Hashem, and he only hears Hashem's message but cannot see Him, this causes the person to fear Hashem.

וּבְעֵינַיִן "אִם" ³⁶רָץ לְבָבְךָ - שׁוּב לְאַחֶךָ³⁷.
This is connected to the idea (Sefer Yetzirah 1:8, Tikunei Zohar 7a) "if your heart runs in yearning for Hashem, then afterwards return to

³⁵ (רָאָה רָשִׁי: "וַיִּנָּעוּ" - אֵין נֹעֵ אֱלָא זִיע).

³⁶ (סֵפֶר יִצְיָרָה פָּרָק א מִשְׁנָה ח. וּשֵׁם "שׁוּב לְמִקּוֹם", וּרְאָה הָעֵרֶת כ"ק אֲדָמוֹ"ר עַל מֵאֵמֶר כ"ק אֲדָמוֹ"ר מוֹהֲרֵי־י"ץ ד"ה אֵינָא בּוֹח"ג וְכו' פֶּתַח רַב מִתִּיבָתָא (מִשְׁבַּת פֶּרֶשֶׁת מִקֶּץ-חֲנוּכָה תִּרְצ"ד) נִדְפַס בְּסֵה"מ תִּרְנ"ט ע' רִיג' ע' רַעָא בַּהֲמִדּוּרָה חֲדָשָׁה) בְּשׁוּלֵי הַגְלִיּוֹן שְׁמַעִיר שְׁלִכְאוּרָה נֹוסַח "אִם רָץ לְבָבְךָ שׁוּב לְאַחֶךָ" הוּא מֵהִקְדַּמַּת הַתִּיקוּנִי זוֹהַר ז, א, לִפִּי גִירְסָא אַחַד שֶׁם, הוּבָא ב"כִּסָּא מֶלֶךְ" כְּגִירְסָא הַנִּכּוּנָה).

³⁷ ("וַהֲעֵינִי שֶׁל בְּחִינַת הַשׁוּב הִזָּה הוּא בְּחִינַת הַרְיָחוֹק שֶׁמִּתְרַחֵק וּמִשְׁפִּיל אֶת עַצְמוֹ מְאֹד, וְהוּא בְּחִינַת "שְׁמָאֵל דּוֹחָה", דְּהֵינּוּ שֶׁמִּדְּחָה אֶת עַצְמוֹ בְּיוֹתֵר לְהִיּוֹת עוֹמֵד בְּרִיחוֹק מִקּוֹם דּוֹקָא" - מֵאַמְרֵי אֲדָמוֹ"ר הָאֲמָצְעִי בְּרֵאשִׁית עֲמוּד תִּקְדָּה. וְרָאָה שֶׁם עֲמוּד תִּקְמֵד. וְכֵן הוּא בְּאוּר הַתּוֹרָה וַיְחִי תַּתְּשִׁלְט, א).

reveal Hashem's **Oneness** in this world through Torah and Mitzvos."

The Mittler Rebbe explains (Maamarei Admur HaEmtzai, Bereishis, page 504 and 544): This idea of "returning" means to feel embarrassed of Hashem's greatness to stand before Him and want His closeness. This comes from contemplation of Hashem's greatness and contrasting that with his own relative lowliness.

This feeling of embarrassment before Hashem will motivate the person to simply fulfill Hashem's commands out of respect for Hashem's greatness and majesty, without expecting anything in return, like experiencing a feeling of closeness. This is like when a regular person hears about the greatness of the king but never sees him. He is filled with awe for the king and fulfills his command without expecting the king to repay him with a private invitation to his palace.

וְזֶהוּ עֵינֵי פֶרֶשֶׁה שְׁנִיָּה שֶׁבְּקִרְיַת־שֹׁמֶעַ,
שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת יִרְאָה כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב (עֲקֹב יֵא,
טז): "הִשְׁמְרוּ לָכֶם פֶּן יִפְתָּה כו'".

This is the idea of the second paragraph of the Shema, which corresponds to fear of Hashem, as it is written in that passage (Devarim 11:16): **"guard yourself, in case your heart becomes tempted to rebel against Hashem..."**

The second paragraph of the Shema is when we accept the principle of reward and punishment for our actions, and we commit to guard ourselves against sin. This ability to guard ourselves from sin comes from fear and awe of Hashem as our King.

וְזֶה שֶׁכָּתוּב (וַיֵּצֵא כט, לג): "כִּי שָׁמַע ה' כִּי
שָׁנוֹאָה אֲנֹכִי",

This is the meaning of what is written (Bereishis 29:33): **"For Hashem has heard that I was disliked,"**

The simple meaning, as explained earlier in the maamar, is that Leah was thanking Hashem for giving her a son, because now her husband will love her more. In the literal meaning, "כִּי שָׁמַע ה'" means "for Hashem has heard," and "כִּי שָׁנוֹאָה אֲנֹכִי" means "that I was disliked."

The Alter Rebbe is interpreting the phrase "כִּי שָׁמַע ה'" to mean "for Hashem has caused me to hear," and "כִּי שָׁנוֹאָה אֲנֹכִי" to mean "because I despise myself." I.e., because I humble myself towards Hashem, Hashem causes me to "hear" Him and come to truly fear Him, as the Alter Rebbe will continue to explain.

וּבְעֵינָיו נִבְזָה בְּעֵינָיו נִמְאָס (תהילים טו, ד).

This is like the idea of (Tehillim 15:4): “one who is embarrassed and despised in his own eyes.”

דְּהֵיִינוּ, שֶׁעַל יְדֵי אֲתַעְרוּתָא-דְּלִתָּתָא, מַה שֶּׁנֶּחֱשֵׁב בְּעֵינָיו לְשִׁנוּאָה עַל יְדֵי "שְׂמַאל דְּוַחָה",

Meaning, that through the “awakening from below,” that he considers himself despised through the attribute of “the left hand that pushes away,”

נִמְשָׁךְ לְהִיּוֹת אֲתַעְרוּתָא-דְּלֵעִילָא - כִּי שָׁמַע ה'", בְּחִינַת שְׂמִיעָה מֵרַחוּק, כְּדֵי לְהַמְשִׁיךְ בְּחִינַת יִרְאָה מִלְּמַעְלָה.³⁸

through this there is drawn down an “awakening from Above,” that “Hashem will cause me to hear,” in a manner of hearing from afar, which produces fear, in order to bring into the person a higher level of fear of Hashem that is granted as a gift from Above.

In other words, the service of Hashem in a manner of 'Shimon-שמעון,' who represents 'שמיעה-hearing,' (connected to the second paragraph of Shema), is for the person to awaken a feeling of awe and fear of Hashem. When a person contemplates on Hashem's greatness and contrasts that with his own relative lowliness, he will feel embarrassed of Hashem's greatness that he is in the presence of. Through a person's effort to awaken the fear of Hashem, Hashem will grant the person a truer and higher level of fear of Him as a gift from Above. (This is similar to what was explained above regarding awakening the love of Hashem: When a person works hard to awaken a fiery love for Hashem, then Hashem will help the person through a revelation from Above.)

וְהִנֵּה אַחֵר קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע אוֹמְרִים: Now, after reciting Shema we say:

³⁸ (וּבְזָה יוֹבֵן עֵינָיו "שְׂמַע" - "וְהִיא אִם שְׂמוּעַ", שֶׁהֵן חֶסֶד וּגְבוּרָה וְהַשְׁמוּת מ"ב וְע"ב (פְּרִי עֵץ חַיִּים שֶׁעַר הַקְּרִיאַת שְׁמַע פָּרָק יח - פָּרָשָׁה רֵאשׁוֹנָה דְּקְרִיאַת שְׁמַע יֵשׁ בָּהּ שֵׁם מ"ב כְּנֶגֶד מ"ב תִּיבִין שֶׁמִּן "וְאֶהְבֶּת" עַד "וּבְשַׁעֲרֶיהָ", וּפָרָשָׁה "וְהִיא אִם שְׂמוּעַ" יֵשׁ בָּהּ שֵׁם ע"ב כְּנֶגֶד ע"ב תִּיבִין שֶׁמִּן "וְהִיא" עַד "וְשִׁמְתֶּם כו'") אֲלֵא שֶׁהוּא הִתְכַּלְלֹת. כִּי "שְׂמַע" - חֶסֶד, אֶהְבָּה, רְאוּבֵן; וְכָלֹל גַּם כֵּן מִגְבוּרָה, בְּחִינַת "רְאָה בְּעֵינָי" הַנ"ל. וְכֵן "וְהִיא אִם שְׂמוּעַ" - יִרְאָה כָּלֹל מֵאֶהְבָּה. (עֵינֵי בִּיאֹר זֶה עַל פְּסוּק "אֵלֶּה מִסְעֵי" (לְקוּטֵי תוֹרָה מִסְעֵי צ.א). וְעַל פְּסוּק "וַיַּחֲ" (צִרְיָה עֵינֵי לְאִיזָה מֵאֶמֶר הַכּוֹנֵנָה).)

"אִמֶּת, וְיִצִיב וְנִבֹן, וְקָם, וְיָשָׁר, וְנֶאֱמַן, וְאֶהוּב, וְהִבִּיב, וְכו', וְנִחְמָד, וְנָעִים, וְנוֹרָא וְאֲדִיר, וּמְתוּקָן, וּמְקַבֵּל, וְטוֹב, וְיָפֶה, וְכו', הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד."

"this matter [that we have just said in the Shema] **is true, certain, established, everlasting, right, trustworthy, beloved, dear, pleasant, sweet, awesome, powerful, correct, accepted, good and beautiful to us, and it will be so forever and ever."**

וְהֵינּוּ בְּחִינַת לֵוִי - "יִלְוֶה אִישִׁי אֵלַי" (וַיֵּצֵא כֵט, לֵד).

This is the aspect of "Levi-Levi," which comes from the phrase that Leah said when naming him **"now, my husband 'יִלְוֶה-will join' with me"** (Bereishis 29:34).

The word "לֵוִי" means to accompany or to connect to someone. Leah said that because she gave birth to a third son, Levi, now her husband to connect to her even more than before. (This was connected to the fact she gave birth to her full quota of children, since Yaakov had four wives and was destined to have twelve children, so each wife's share was (theoretically) three children each.)

This represents a special connection to Hashem that comes after we have the first two spiritual "children" of love of Hashem (Reuven) and fear of Hashem (Shimon). Once we attain these two aspects, we can properly "connect" to Hashem in Torah study.

וְהוּא עֲנִין "יְמִינָא וּשְׂמָאלָא וּבִינְיָהוּ כֻּלָּה"³⁹.

This is like the idea that we say in the Shabbos night meal song: **"Shabbos is surrounded by weekdays on both sides, like a bride standing between people on her right and left."**

Shabbos is compared to a bride. Just as a bride is accompanied by two people, one on her right and one on her left, escorting her to the Chuppa (usually her mother and future mother-in-law, or her mother and father), so too, Shabbos is surrounded by weekdays before and after it, preparing for Shabbos and extending the influence of Shabbos.

Similarly, in order to become a "bride" to Hashem, we need to be accompanied by two aspects of love of Hashem (Reuven) and fear of Hashem (Shimon). The

³⁹ (פיוט "אֲזַמְר בְּשַׁבָּחֵיךְ" - זְמִירוֹת לְלֵיל שַׁבָּת).

actually “marriage” that happens will be with Torah study, as will be further explained.

כִּי "שְׂמָאלוֹ תַּחַת לְרֹאשִׁי" (שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים ב, ו) - בְּחִינַת "שְׂמָאל דּוֹחָה" הוּא שְׂגוּרָמַת לְהִיּוֹת נְשִׂאוֹת רֹאשׁ וְכוּ';

For it is written (Shir HaShirim 2:6): **“His (Hashem’s) left hand is under my head** [and picks it up to connect to Him],” meaning that the aspect of the “left hand that pushes away,” i.e., Gevura-Severity, **is what causes “picking up my head.”**

Meaning, because Hashem gives us the ability to fear Him, which is from the “left hand,” this enables us pick ourselves up to connect to Him in love.

- "יְמִין מְקַרֶּבֶת" - "וְיָמִינוֹ תִּחְבְּקֵנִי" לְהִתְכַּלֵּל כּוּ';

And (as the above verse continues) **“His (Hashem’s) right hand embraces me,”** in a manner of **“the right hand that draws close,”** i.e., Chesed-Kindness, **which causes us to become enveloped** in His Light, like a hug.

Through attaining the fear of Hashem, we become receptive to experience His Light when we awaken our love for Him in prayer. (This concept is mentioned in Tanya chapter 43, that the more fear of Hashem one has, the more love of Hashem he can experience.)

וּבְחִינַת "יִלְוֶה אִישִׁי" הֵינּוּ מֵהַ **מַה**, **שְׂאוּמְרִים בְּ"אַמֶּת וְיִצִּיב": "הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה"** - הִיא הַתּוֹרָה, שֶׁשְּׂרָשָׁהּ מְאֹד נִעְלָה, אֲלָא שְׁנֵתִלְבֹּשָׁה בְּדָבָרִים גְּשָׁמִיִּים;

The aspect of “my Husband ‘יִלְוֶה’ will join’ with me” is what we say in Emes Vayatziv (the blessing after Shema): “this matter [that we have just said in the Shema] **is true and certain etc.” which is referring to the Torah** (which we accept to fulfill in the Shema prayer), **since its source is exceedingly exalted, but it descended and became invested in physical matters** (of mitzvah performance).

שְׁלֹכֵן נִמְשָׁלָה הַתּוֹרָה לְמִים שְׂיוֹרְדִים

Therefore, “the Torah is compared to water that descends from a high place to a low place” (Taanis 7a).

ממקום גבוה וכו'⁴⁰.

Water flows down and is the same substance at the lowest point of its descend as at the highest point of its origin. So too, the Torah descends from Hashem's Wisdom in Atzilus and becomes invested in teaching us how to fulfill mitzvos physically, and is the same essential Wisdom of Hashem.

וזאת ישיב אל לבו: **This is what a person should take to heart:**

אֶמֶת הוּא שְׁאִין אֲנִי רְאוּי מִצַּד עֲצָמִי
לַעֲלוֹת וּלְהִתְכַּלֵּל בְּאוֹר ה' וּלְהִשָּׁיב אֶת
הַנֶּפֶשׁ מִמָּטָה לְמַעְלָה, לְיִיחּוּדָהּ
בְּמַאֲצִילָה בְּרוּךְ הוּא,

Even though it's true that I am not deserving by myself to spiritually ascend and become enveloped in the Light of Hashem, and to return my Divine soul to Hashem from below to Above, to reunite it with its source in Hashem who brought it into being,

כִּי "מִי יַעֲלֶה בְּהַר ה' כו'" (תהלים כד, ג).

for (Tehillim 24:3) "who can ascend the mountain of Hsahem?"

אֲבָל מִכָּל מְקוֹם, הָרִי אֹר אֵין-סוֹף בְּרוּךְ-
הוּא מִצַּד עֲצָמוֹ מִמִּילָא וּמֵאִילָיו נִמְשָׁךְ גַּם
לְמָטָה - שְׁשׁוּרָה וּמִתְגַּלָּה בַּתּוֹרָה, וְהָרִי
מִתְגַּלָּה יְחוּד זֶה הָעֲלִיּוֹן לְמָטָה כְּמוֹ
לְמַעְלָה,

nonetheless, Hashem's Infinite Light is by itself automatically everywhere, including extending down to the lowest levels, and dwells and is revealed in the Torah, so that Hashem's Oneness as it is experience Above (in Atzilus) is revealed (through the Torah) below in this world just as it is revealed Above.

Because Hashem's Light is "Infinite" it is automatically everywhere all the time. The only problem is that we do not see this Light in the physical world as much as it is perceived in the Higher Worlds. His Light becomes concealed through the order of Hishtalshelus of Worlds, until it comes into this world very concealed. However, it is most definitely present and exists here in the physical world just as it exists in the World of Atzilus.

Now, through the study of Torah in the world we can bypass the concealment on the Infinite Light and reveal it. By revealing the hidden Infinite Light, we also reveal Hashem's Oneness, which is experienced in His Infinite Light.

⁴⁰ (תענית ז א).

וְאִי לְזוּתָּהּ, עַל יְדֵי עֵסֶק הַתּוֹרָה יָכוֹל
לְהַמְשִׁיךְ אֹר אֵין־סוֹף בְּרוּךְ־הוּא מִמֶּשׁ
לְמִטָּה עַל נַפְשׁוֹ.

Therefore, through the occupation of Torah study one can actually draw down the revelation of Hashem's Infinite Light upon his Divine soul, reuniting it with Hashem's Oneness as it was in its original source.

In other words, even though we may not be on the level to ascend to the higher spiritual worlds to access the revelation of Hashem's Infinite Light, but we can access His Light in Torah study. This is because His Light that is hidden in this world is revealed through Torah study, which is Hashem's Will and Wisdom just as it was in Atzilus.

וְזֶהוּ "אִם רָץ לְבָבְךָ שׁוֹב לְאַחֶר" ⁴¹, שְׁגִם
לְמִטָּה בְּבַחֲיִנַת "שׁוֹב" נִמְשָׁךְ בְּחִינַת
"אַחֶר".

This is the meaning of "if your heart runs in yearning for Hashem, return to reveal His Oneness in this world," meaning, that even below, when he is "returning" to this world, he brings down and reveals Hashem's Oneness through Torah study.

In other words, during prayer a person becomes excited about Hashem's greatness and awakens a love for Him. Then he realizes that relative to Hashem's greatness he should feel awe and shame in His presence. But then he realizes that he can connect to Hashem and experience His Light in Torah study after prayer. With this, he brings his yearning for connection to Hashem to fruition.

וְזֶהוּ "יָלֹהּ אִישִׁי אֵלַי", שְׁיִוֵּרְד וְנִמְשָׁךְ אֹר
אֵין־סוֹף בְּרוּךְ־הוּא מִלְּמַעְלָה לְמִטָּה.

This is the meaning of "my Husband 'I'll join' with me," meaning that Hashem's Infinite Light will come down from Above to below and be revealed in me through Torah study.

וְזֶהוּ פִּירוּשׁ "אֶמֶת, וְיִצִּיב כו'":

This is the meaning of the passage Emes Veyatziv (the blessing after Shema):

⁴¹ (סִפָּר וְיִצִּירָה פָּרָק א מִשְׁנָה ח).

שְׁמַאֲרִיכִין לְאֲשֶׁר וּלְקִיָּים אֶת "הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה
עָלֵינוּ", וְ"עַל אֲבוֹתֵינוּ כו', עַל הָרָאוּשִׁים
כו',"

We describe at length how we affirm and establish "this matter" of committing to Torah study "upon us and our ancestors and our descendants etc. from the first generations until the last generations (i.e., until forever),"

וּמִמְשִׁיכִים מִלְּמַעְלָה "אֶמֶת, וְיָצִיב, וְנִכּוֹן
וְכו', וְנֶחֱמָד, וְנֶעִים כו'" לְהִיּוֹת הַמְּשָׁכָה
אוֹר אֵין-סוֹף בְּרוּךְ-הוּא שׁוֹרָה וּמִתְגַּלָּה
בְּאוֹר תּוֹרָה. :

we draw down from Above the ability to experience that the Torah is "true, certain, established, etc. pleasant and sweet etc.," we do so in order to draw down Hashem's Infinite Light to dwell and be revealed in the "light" (i.e., experience) of our Torah study.

A person can study Torah as a mere intellectual pursuit, without experiencing the Divine aspect in it, how it connects him with Hashem.

In order to experience Hashem's Light in the Torah study, we first need to awaken a love and fear of Hashem in prayer. In addition, by reciting the passage of Emes Veyatziv we bring down and connect our connection to Hashem in prayer with our subsequent Torah study. This enables us to experience how the Torah is "true and certain... pleasant and sweet..." with all the 15 descriptions mentioned in the passage.

(ד) Chapter 4

אָף הִנֵּה כָּל ג' בְּחִינּוֹת⁴² הַנ"ל עֲדִינִן הֵם
בְּבִחִינַת 'מְמַלֵּא כָּל עֲלָמִין',

However, all three aspects explained above are still in the category of how Hashem's Light "Permeates all Worlds,"

שֶׁהֵם בְּחִינַת הַמְּשָׁכוֹת מֵאוֹר אֵין-סוֹף
בְּרוּךְ-הוּא לְבִחִינַת 'מְמַלֵּא כָּל עֲלָמִין':

since they are aspects of Divine service that cause Hashem's Infinite Light to come down into the level of Malchus, which is the source of how Hashem's Light "Permeates all

⁴² (רִאָּה אוֹר הַתּוֹרָה יִתְרוֹ (שְׁמוֹת כָּרָךְ ג) עֲמוּד תַּתְּקַצָּא).

Worlds,” in the created worlds of Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiayah,

שְׁבַחֲנִית רְאוּבֵן הִיא לְעוֹרֵר אֶת הָאֱהָבָה
לְהִיּוֹת "נִבְסָפָה וְגַם כָּלְתָה כּו", וְלִהְיוֹת
מִשְׁתַּקְקֶת לְהִתְכַּלֵּל וְלִהְיוֹת יַיִחָד
בְּמַאֲצִילָה בְּרוּךְ־הוּא,

Since the aspect of Reuven is to awaken the love for Hashem so that “my soul yearns and longs for Hashem,” and he desires to become enveloped in and reunited with his source in Hashem who brought the soul into being,

מִכָּלל שֶׁהִיא עֲדִיין אֵינָה כְּלוּלָה
וּמְיוֹחֶדֶת⁴³ בְּאוֹר אֵין־סוֹף בְּרוּךְ־הוּא
ה' סוֹבֵב כָּל עֲלָמִין

from this we see that he is still not fully enveloped in and reunited with Hashem's Infinite Light that “Encompasses all Worlds,”

"(בְּשָׂמִים מִמַּעַל וְעַל הָאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת)
(וְאֶתְחַנֵּן ד, לט) - הַכֹּל בְּשׁוּה, וְרוּחָנִיּוֹת
וְגִשְׁמִיּוֹת - "כּוֹלֵא קִמְיָה כָּלֵא - מִמֶּשׁ -
חֲשִׁיבִי"⁴⁴);

(which is equally found “in heaven Above and on earth below” (see Devarim 4:39), and all physical and spiritual levels are all equally insignificant before Him.)

Since the person is yearning to experience Hashem's Infinite Light, it means that he does not actually perceive it directly. Rather, what he actually perceives is Hashem's Light as it comes into Malchus of Atzilus, the level of Hashem's Light that creates the worlds and permeates them in a revealed manner. From the level of Malchus, this Light then descends to the person in this world.

וְעַל דֶּרֶךְ זֶה שָׁאֵר הִבְחִינּוֹת, אֲלֵא שֶׁהֵן
בְּחִינַת הַמְּשֻׁכּוֹת לְהִיּוֹת 'מִמְלָא כָּל עֲלָמִין'
כו.

Similarly, the other two aspects (of Shimon and Levi), they do not elevate the person to the level of Hashem's Light that “Encompasses all Worlds,” rather, they are aspects of Divine service that draw down Hashem's Light into Malchus, whose light “Permeates all worlds,” and through that level it comes down to the person in the physical world.

⁴³ (רְאֵה אוֹר הַתּוֹרָה וְיִקְרָא כֶּרֶךְ אַ עֲמוּד רַכָּג).

⁴⁴ (זֶהֱרַח חֶלֶק אַ יֵא, ב - עַל פִּי דְנִיָּאֵל ד, לֵב).

In other words, Shimon, fear of Hashem, and Levi, Torah study, result in drawing down Hashem's Light into the created worlds, and into the person. But they do not enable the person to be elevated to the point of experiencing Hashem's Light that "Encompasses all Worlds."

אָבֵל בְּחִינַת יְהוּדָה שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת
הוֹדָאָה⁴⁵, הוּא בְּחִינַת בְּטוּל וְהִתְכַּלְלֻת
בְּאוֹר אֵין-סוֹף בְּרוּךְ-הוּא מִמֶּשׁ ה' סוֹבֵב
כָּל עֲלָמִין.

However, the aspect of 'יהודה-Yehuda,' which is the idea of 'הודאה-humble submission and gratitude,' this aspect enables the person to actually "lose himself" and become part of the Infinite Light of Hashem that "Encompasses all Worlds."

When a private person works hard to become a soldier in an army, he "loses" his previous identity as a private individual, and now becomes part of something much greater than himself. Similarly, when a Jew works hard to dedicate himself to Hashem with humility, submission, and total devotion, he "loses" his previous identity as being "just a person" and now is part of Hashem's "army" and a vital part of how Hashem's bigger picture is coming to fruition. He represents not just a limited Light that is revealed in the created worlds. He now represents Hashem Himself as He encompasses and transcends all worlds. In that sense, it elevates the person to a much deeper connection to Hashem than through love, fear, or even Torah study.

וְהֵן הֵן בְּחִינֹת הַשְׁתַּחֲוּאוֹת שֶׁבְּתַפִּלַּת
שְׁמוֹנֶה-עָשָׂר.

This aspect is expressed in the Shemona Esrai prayer, when we bow down to Hashem.

Bowing down shows complete submission and negation of all ego. This shows on a level of total selfless devotion to Hashem Himself, who Encompasses and Transcends all worlds.

The culmination of the prayer service is to reach Shemona Esrai. After the service of Reuven, Shimon, and Levi in the Shema and its blessings before and after, we can reach the level of 'יהודה-Yehuda,' which is 'הודאה-humble submission and gratitude,' to Hashem in Shemona Esrai.

⁴⁵ (ראה לקוטי שיחות חלק לה עמוד 196 הערה 36).

וְלָכֵן תְּפִילָּהּ הִיא בְּלֶחֶשׁ וּבְחֹשֶׁאִי⁴⁶,

This is why “the Prayer” of Shemona Esrai is recited quietly in a whisper,

בְּבְחִינַת 'סוּבֵב כָּל עֲלָמִין', לְמַעַל מַעַל
מִבְּחִינַת הַשְׁתַּלְשָׁלוֹת,

since it is a connection to Hashem as He “Encompasses all Worlds,” above and beyond the limitations of Hishtalshelus (the spiritual hierarchy of the worlds of Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah),

שְׂאִינָהּ בְּגֵדֶר הַמְשָׁכָה וְהַשְׁפָּעָה כָּלל כּו',

And it is not at all in the category of a Light that can be drawn down and given over below into revelation in the created worlds,

וְאִינָהּ עוֹלָה בְּשֵׁם אֱהָבָה כָּלל,

and one cannot connect to Hashem on that level in any manner of love,

רַק בְּחִינַת בִּיטוּל בְּמַצִּיאוֹת מִמֶּשׁ לְגִמְרִי.

one can only connect to Hashem on that level with absolute submission and negation of ego.

וְהֵינּוּ בְּחִינַת הַשְׁתַּפְּכוּת אֶל חֵיק אָבִיהָ⁴⁷
מִמֶּשׁ, לִהְיוֹת כְּאִין וְאֶפֶס מִמֶּשׁ; שְׁעַל זֶה
מְרִמּוֹ עֲנִין הַהִשְׁתַּחֲוָּאָה כְּמוֹ שֶׁמִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה
לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ - שֶׁמִּבְטֵל אֶת עַצְמוֹ כּו'.

This is the idea of a person actually giving over himself over to his Father in Heaven, so that he literally feels like absolutely nothing (having his own independent significance before Hashem), and this is what the idea of bowing in Shemona Esrai expresses, it is like one who bows before their king, that he completely humbles himself before his king.

רַק שְׂכָדִי לִהְיוֹת בְּחִינָה זוֹ שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת
יְהוּדָה - בְּבְחִינַת "אַתָּה",

However, for this level of ‘יהודה-Yehuda,’ which is ‘הודא-humble submission and gratitude,’ to be directly experienced in a manner of “אָתָּה-you,”

⁴⁶ (מַעֲנִין בְּחֹשֶׁאִי רֵאָה לְקוּטֵי תוֹרָה דְּבוּר הַמִּתְחִיל הָאֲזִינוּ הָרִאשׁוֹן סוֹף פֶּרֶק ד - עב, ד).

⁴⁷ (עַל פִּי אִיכָּה ב, יב: "בְּהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת נַפְשָׁם אֶל חֵיק אֲמַתָּם").

דְּהֵיִינוּ לִהְיוֹת בְּגִלּוּי בְּאֵילוּ הוּא לְנוֹכַח⁴⁸, meaning, that he should experience it in a fully revealed manner, as if he can see it directly in front of himself,

When saying “you” to someone, that person must directly in front of him and visible to him. When the verse says “יְהוּדָה אַתָּה-You, Yehudah” it means Yehudah as he is standing in front of the person saying that, in this case, in front of Yaakov our forefather, who was talking directly to him. In the context of Yehudah as representing total submission/devotion to Hashem, the idea of “You, Yehudah” means that the person sees and directly experiences this total submission/devotion to Hashem in a revealed and conscious manner.

צָרִיךְ לִהְיוֹת "יִדּוּךְ אַחִיק"⁴⁹ For that to happen, there needs to be “your brothers will bring out your ‘humble submission and devotion,’”

שְׂצָרִיךְ לְהַקְדִּים תְּחִלָּה בְּחִינַת רְאוּבֵן וְשִׁמְעוֹן וְלֵוִי, שְׁבָהֶם וְעַל יָדָם יוֹמֶשֶׁךְ גִּלּוּי בְּחִינַת הוֹדָאָה זֶה. meaning, that there first needs to be the aspects of Divine service represented by Reuven, Shimon, and Levi, that through their help this aspect of ‘humble submission and devotion’ will be brought out and revealed.

כִּי בְּלִי קְדִימַת בְּחִינַת רְאוּבֵן שִׁמְעוֹן וְלֵוִי לֹא נִמְשָׁךְ בְּחִינַת יְהוּדָה - שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת בִּיטוּל וְהִתְפַּלְלוּת כּו' - בְּבְחִינַת גִּלּוּי, אֲלֵא בְּבְחִינַת הָעֵלֶם וּמִקִּיף. For, without the first having the aspects of Reuven, Shimon, and Levi, one cannot bring out this aspect of Yehuda, which is the ability to “lose oneself” and become part of the Truth of Hashem in a revealed manner, only in a hidden and subconscious manner.

On a subconscious level, every Jew has a hidden capacity of total devotion to Hashem to the point of self-sacrifice. This is expressed in the first prayer of the day “Modeh Ani.” As soon as Jew wakes up, he declares his humble gratitude and

⁴⁸ ("רוּצָה לִמּוֹר, שִׁיְהִיָּה הַבִּיטוּל בְּמוֹחוֹ אֲמַת כְּאֵלוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמַּלְכִּים הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ-הוּא - הוּא לְנוֹכַח מִמֶּשׁ" - אִוֵּר הַתּוֹרָה שְׁמוֹת בְּרָךְ ח עמוד ג'נה).

⁴⁹ (בְּבוֹר 633 נוֹסֶף: דְּהֵיִינוּ).

devotion to Hashem before he can think about anything in depth, as if instinctively. However, he is not fully conscious of the true intensity of this devotion to Hashem until Shemona Esai.

ולכן אי אפשר להתחיל תפילת שמונה-
עשרה בלי קדימת פסוקי דזמרה ו"יוצר
אור" וקריאת שמע כו'.

Therefore, it is impossible to start Shemona Esrai without first reciting Pesukei Dezimra and Shema with its blessings etc.

(ובמנחה - שמתפללין רק תפילת
שמונה-עשרה, היינו מפני שכבר
הקדימו בשחרית קריאת שמע
וברכותיה. ובערבית צריך לחזור
להתחיל קריאת שמע וברכותיה קודם
התפלה).

(Regarding Mincha, when we only pray Shemona Esrai (without Pesukei Dezrimra etc.), this is only possible because we already recited in Shachris (Pesukei Dezimra and) Shema with its blessings (and Mincha always follows Shachris). However, in Mariv, (which is somewhat removed from Shachris) we need to recite Shema and its blessings once again before Shemona Esrai.)

וזהו ענין "נערץ תחלתן בסופן"⁵⁰, והמבין
יבין.⁵¹ : <מח, ד>

This is the idea that "the beginning is expressed in the end" (Sefer

⁵⁰ (ספר וצירה פרק א משנה ז).

⁵¹ (ועיין במקום אחר, על פסוק "ולשדקה בני אתוננו" (לקמן מז, א), דמשמע דשור"ק, שהוא הודאה, הוא למטה מסגול"ל שהוא בחינת אהבה ויראה כו'. וזהו לכאורה הפך ממה שנתבאר כאן דיהודה שהוא הודאה הוא למעלה מראובן שמעון ולוי שהם סגול"ל. ובאמת לא קשה מידי. דהודאה היא למטה מאהבה ויראה, אבל הודאה דיהודה - זהו בחינת בטול שלמעלה מאהבה ויראה.

וזה בחינת דוד (תהלים קלא, ב): "אם לא שויתי ודוממתי". וכמו שכתוב (מלכים א' יט, יב): "ואחר האש קול דממה דקה", הרי שהדממה והביטול הוא למעלה מהאש שהיא אהבה, כי "תמן קאתי מלכא" (תקוני זוהר תקון ה). אבל גבי אש כתיב (שם): "לא באש הוי"ה", אלא שהאש הוא להוי"ה, כמו שנתבאר במקום אחר.

ועוד, דזהו שאמר כאן "יהודה אתה", שיהיה יהודה בבחינת אתה, דהיינו בבחינת גילוי כו'. ולפעמים אינו בגלוי כי אם רק בהעלם, ואז היא הודאה שלמטה מאהבה ויראה. אבל כשהודאה בבחינת גילוי זהו בחינת ביטול ממש).

Yetzira 1:7), and one who is wise will understand.

The idea of the “beginning” being expressed in the “end” in this context refer to how Yehuda, who represents ‘הוֹדָאָה-humble submission and devotion’ is both the first and most basic level, as well as the highest and most advanced level.

We mentioned before that the first prayer of the day is “מִוֹדָה אָנִי-I thankfully and humbly acknowledge and devote myself to Hashem.” This is the first, and seemingly lowest level of connection to Hashem. We say this prayer while our hands are impure, before washing “negel vasser,” and before we are fully conscious of the meaning of what we are saying.

This represents our most basic level of humble devotion to Hashem, as a simple servant who obeys his master without understanding the reason for his tasks and what they accomplish.

The highest level of prayer is the Shemona Esrai, when we experience our devotion to Hashem so completely that we stand in attention without moving around and whisper our prayers and bow down to Hashem, showing our absolute negation of ego in the very presence of the King Himself.

This negation of ego and feeling that we have no existence other than being Hashem’s agent in this world only comes after all the previous levels of prayer. These include the Morning Blessings, studying Chassidus, Pesukei Dezimra, reciting Shema and its blessings, with the accompanying mental focus on their meaning etc.

The idea that “beginning is expressed in the end” in this context means that the real power and intensity of our humble devotion to Hashem, of Modeh Ani, is only fully experienced at the end, in Shemona Esrai.

Alternatively, it could mean that in the lowest level, basic humble devotion to Hashem, is found (in essence) the highest level, the absolute selfless devotion of Shemona Esrai.

In the Hebrew footnote, the Tzemach Tzedek elaborates on the above concept of the two levels of ‘הוֹדָאָה-humble submission and devotion,’ one (Modeh Ani) being lower than love and fear of Hashem, and one (Shemona Esrai) being higher than love and fear of Hashem.

(ה) Chapter 5

וְהָיָה עַל יְדֵי זֶה: "יָדְךָ בְּעוֹרְףְּ אוֹיְבֶיךָ":

Now, through fulfilling this idea (of going through four aspects of prayer corresponding to Reuven, Shimon, Levi, and Yehuda) expressed in the beginning of the verse, we will come to fulfill what it says in the next part of the verse: **"your hand will be at the back of neck of your enemies."**

"אוֹיְבֶיךָ" הֵם עֲנִינֵי הָעוֹלָם וְצָרָכֵי הַגּוּף הַגִּשְׁמִי.

"Your enemies" refer to the physical matters of this world, and the needs of the physical body.

הַגִּם שְׂאֲדָם צָרִיךְ לָהֶם, מִכָּל מָקוֹם צָרִיכִין לִהְיוֹת בְּבַחֲיִנַת עוֹרְף וְלֹא פָנִים.

Even though a person needs them, nonetheless, they need to be treated like "the back of the neck" and not like the "face."

(בַּחֲיִנַת פָּנִים הֵינּוּ שְׂעוֹשֶׂה הַדָּבָר בְּלֵב וְנֶפֶשׁ, וּבַחֲיִנַת עוֹרְף הֵינּוּ בַּחֲיִנַת אַחוּרִיִּים, "כִּמְאֵן דְּשָׂדֵי בִּתְרַ כְּתִפִּיה" ⁵², בְּעַל כָּרְחוּ וּכְאֵלוּ כְּפָאוּ ⁵³ וְכו');

(The idea of treating physical needs like his "face" is that the person pursues them with emotion and desire, and treating them like "the back of his neck" means that he pursues them without an inner desire, only out of necessity, like "one who gives something to his enemy by throws it to him over the back of his shoulder, without looking at him," against his (inner) will, and as though he was forced to do so.)

וְ"יָדְךָ" הוּא "בְּעוֹרְףְּ אוֹיְבֶיךָ" - "אֵל תִּקְרִי יָדְךָ אֶלֶא יוֹדִי" ⁵⁴.

And it is "יָדְךָ-your hand" that is "at the back of the neck of your

⁵² (כְּמִי שֶׁזוֹרֵק מֵאַחוּרֵי כְּתֵפוֹ. רֹאה תְּנִיף פָּרָק כב).

⁵³ (עַל פִּי לְשׁוֹן הַגִּמְרָא נִדְרִים כ, ב. וְשֵׁם: "כְּמִי שֶׁכְּפָאוּ שֵׁד").

⁵⁴ (תְּקוּנֵי זֶהר בְּהַקְדָּמָה ז, ב). [קִטְעַת מִתְקוּנֵי זֶהר הַשֵּׁייר לַעֲנִין זֶה: "וְעוֹד רָזָא נִקּוּדֵי צָרִיךְ לְאַחֲזָרָא עֲלֵיהֶו, פִּתְחָ בְּחוּשְׁבָן אוֹתִיוֹתָיו אִיהוּ יוֹד, וּכְתִיב (תְּהִלִּים קמ"ט) פוֹתַח אֶת יָדְךָ וּמִשְׁבִּיעַ לְכָל חַי רְצוֹן, וְאוֹקְמוֹהוּ אֵל תִּקְרִי יָדְךָ אֶלֶא יוֹדִי"ה, וְאֵינוֹן י"י מִן יֵאֱהוּדוֹנָה", וּבִאֵן אֶתֶר מִתְּפִתְחִין בְּרִקִּיעָא

enemies,” do not only read “יָדְךָ-your hand” but also read it as “יִי-your (double) letter י” (two Yuds)” (see Tikunei Zohar 7b).

The verse says (Tehillim 145:16) “פִּתְחָם אֶת יָדְךָ וּמִשְׁבִּיעַ לְכָל חַי רָצוֹן-You (Hashem) open ‘יָדְךָ-Your hand’ and satisfy the desire of every living thing.”

The Zohar (Tikunei Zohar 7b, quoted in the Hebrew footnotes) explains that the word ‘יָדְךָ-Your hand’ in a deeper sense refers to “יִי-your (double) letter י” (two Yuds),” i.e., the letter י which, when spelled out in full is יו"ד, and if the numerical value of those letters is added up it equals 20 (י=10, ו=6, ד=4, total=20).

Since 20 is double the numerical value of י=10, so a fully spelled י is like a double י.

This “double י” represents two types of י: One represents Chochma-Wisdom, the highest of the Sefiros, and one represents Malchus-Kingship, the lowest of the Sefiros. These are both like a י since they both represent bittul⁵⁵, selflessness, like a י that is the smallest, and “humblest” of letters.

The difference between these two types of bittul-selflessness is that Malchus is the basic level of selfless devotion not based on deep understanding. This is like the level represented in Modeh Ani as explained above.

The bittul of Chochma is total negation of self, due to seeing the King Himself to the point that there is no room for ego at all, like the Shemona Esrai, as explained above.

דָּאִיהוּ פִּתַּח, וְאִיהוּ מִפְּתַח כָּלִיל אֶהְדוּנָה שִׁית אֶתְוֹן בְּאֻמְצַע יִי, וְתֵרִין יוּדִין עִם רִקְיעַ דָּאִיהוּ ו' סְלִיק לְחוּשְׁבֹן יִי-ו-ה.

ותרגום: "ועוד, הסוד של הנקודות צריך לחזור עליהם, פתח, בחשבון אותיותיו הוא יו"ד, וכתוב פותח את ידך ומשביע לכל חי רצון, ופרשוהו, אל תקרי ידך אלא יודי"ה, והם י' מן יאהדונה"י, ובאיזה מקום נפתחים ברקיע שהוא פתח, והוא מפתח הכולל אהדונה"ה. שש אותיות באמצע י' י, ושני יודי"ם עם רקיע שהוא ו', עולה לחשבון יי-ו-ה." [

⁵⁵ The word “bittul-ביטול” is difficult to translate, but can mean submission, selflessness, humility, transparency, or becoming part of something greater than itself, or a mixture of all the above. Its meaning is similar to “הודאה-gratitude/submission/devotion,” perhaps with less emphasis on the gratitude aspect and more emphasis on the negation of ego aspect. For more on the meaning of “bittul” see Rabbi Tzvi Freeman’s article on the topic on Chabad.org: https://www.chabad.org/library/tanya/tanya_cdo/aid/5400232/jewish/What-Is-Bittul.htm (or search “bittul” on Chabad.org and it should come up as the first result)

The idea of “opening” this “יודי-י” (double) letter י (two Yuds),” is to connect these two levels together, so that from the lower level of bittul one reaches the higher level of bittul. Through this “He satisfies the desire of every living thing,” i.e., there is proper flow of Life-force to the person.

The Alter Rebbe applies this concept to our verse. Through connecting these two levels of bittul, so that we have a “double י,” as it were, we will then be able to succeed in overcoming our spiritual enemy. This means that we will be able to look at our physical needs as the “back of the neck,” meaning, not to get caught up passionately about them, so that they will not distract us from being passionate about Hashem.

(The Zohar explains that the connection between these two yuds is the letter ו, which represents Ze’eir Anpin.⁵⁶ In our maamar this is understood, since Ze’eir Anpin is the emotional attributes, which are essentially love, fear, and mercy. Meaning, the love and fear of Hashem, Reuven and Shimon, and the merciful revelation of Hashem in Torah study, Levi, is what connects the lower level of Yehuda, the lower yud, with the higher level of Yehuda, the higher letter yud, and enable the person to reach the level of “יודי-י” (double) letter י.”

וְהוּא בְּחִינַת "יָדְךָ" מִמֶּשׁ, כִּי "יְמִינְךָ"
פְּשׁוּטָה לְקַבֵּל שְׂבִים⁵⁷, הוּא בְּחִינַת יָמִין
וְחֶסֶד שֶׁנִּתְפָּשֵׁט לְמַטָּה מִטָּה.

This (attainment of the higher level of bittul) **is also actually** “יָדְךָ-Your (Hashem’s) hand,” i.e., a kind gift from Above, **since** (like we say in the Ne’ila prayer of Yom Kippur) “**Your right hand is extended to bring in people to return to You,**” which is Hashem’s “right hand” and kindness that extends all the downward until it reaches us and enables us to achieve the higher level of bittul.

⁵⁶ In the Zohar and its commentaries, they explain how the two yuds are the first letter yud of Hashem’s Name Havaya (corresponding to Chochma), and the second yud is the last letter yud of Hashem’s Name Adnai (corresponding to Malchus), and the vav connecting them are the 6 letters between the first yud and second yud when the name Havaya and Adani are written together as one 8 letter word. Those 6 letters correspond to the 6 attributes of Ze’eir Anpin. See Masuk MeDvash on this passage from the Zohar.

⁵⁷ (נוסח הוידוי בתפילת נעילה).

וּבְעֵינַי "וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַיָּד הַגְּדוֹלָה
אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה ה' בְּמִצְרַיִם" (בְּשֵׁלַח יד, לא).

This is like what is written regarding how Hashem destroyed the Egyptian army by drowning them in the Yam Suf (Shemos 14:31) **“and the Jewish People saw “the Great Hand” that Hashem used against the Egyptians.”**

The phrase “the Great Hand” refers to Hashem’s right hand, since “Greatness” is a term connected to Kindness, since any perception of His Greatness is due to the extension of His Kindness in the creation of all the worlds and the great things that He does. It is this “right hand” of Kindness of Hashem that enables the person to reach the higher level of bittul and defeat his spiritual enemies, just as it was Hashem’s Kindness that saved the Jewish people from their physical enemies of the Egyptian army.

כִּי הִנֵּה הִירִידָה הַגְּדוֹלָה הַזֹּאת שֶׁהוּא
בְּבַחֲנֵינָת אַחֲוֵיִים וּבְאֵלוֹ כְּפָאוֹ, מִי גֵרֵם
לְהַמְשִׁיךְ אֶת הָאָדָם לְהִיטוֹת מוֹכָרָח לָזֶה?

For, who caused the person to need to descend into dealing with physical things that he does not have a true desire for, and he is “forced” to be involved in them,

וַדַּאי מֵאֵת ה' וּמִיָּדוֹ הָיְתָה זֹאת⁵⁸ כְּדִי
לְ"אַתְהֶפְכָּא חֲשׂוֹכָא לְנֹהוּרָא", שְׁתִּתְּפַלֵּל
בְּכַח הָאֲכִילָה וְכוּ' וּכְיוֹצֵא בְּזֶה.

it is certainly from Hashem, and it is from His hand that this came about, in order to transform the darkness of physicality into the **Light** of Hashem, for example, **when a person uses the energy derived from eating to pray, or similar** instances.

Since it is Hashem who caused the person to need to be involved in taking care of his physical needs, it is certain that Hashem also gives the person the power to elevate and transform those physical matters into holiness. Since this transformation is the person’s true bittul to Hashem, his “double yud,” it is certain that Hashem gives the person the ability to reach that level of bittul, so that he can fulfill his mission in this world of making the physical holy. This is the idea of “Hashem’s right hand” extending to us, giving us the power to reach the higher level of bittul, so that we can spiritually transform our physical life. Thus, the two explanations of “יָדְךָ-Your (Hashem’s) hand” and “יְדֵי־יְדֵי־your (the person’s)

⁵⁸ (מֵאֵת ה' הָיְתָה זֹאת: לְשׁוֹן הַכְּתוּב תְּהִלִּים קיח, כג).

double letter "י" are connected, since Hashem is the One reaches His hand down to us to empower us to reach the higher level of bittul (double yud) so we can fulfill our mission in this world.

רק שְׁצָרֶיךָ שְׁלֹא יוֹמָשֶׁךְ בְּבַחֲנִית פְּנִימִיּוֹת
אֶלָּא בְּבַחֲנִית "עוֹרֶךְ", וּבַחֲנִית עוֹרֶךְ זֶה
יוֹכֵלֵל בְּבַחֲנִית יָדְךָ – יוֹדִי"ךָ.

However, for this transformation to occur, the person needs to make sure that he is not drawn into these physical needs with an inner desire, but only like “the back of the neck,” it is only when the physical matters are in a manner of “the back of the neck” that they can become included in the holiness of “Your-Your (Hashem’s) hand,” which is expressed in the person as “your double letter י.”

If a person pursues his physical needs with an inner desire and passion, this will coarsen him and those things, and not allow them to become elevated into the holiness of this bittul. This concept is explained in Tanya chapter 7 at length.

וְהוּא בַּחֲנִית יָדְךָ שֶׁל יְהוּדָה כו',

This “hand” that overcomes one’s spiritual enemy of the unholy desires of the animal soul, belongs to ‘יהודה-Yehuda,’

לְפִי שֶׁהוּא בַּחֲנִית הוֹדָאָה וּבִיטוּל בְּבַחֲנִית
'סוֹבֵב כָּל עֲלָמִין' "הַשְׁוֶה וּמַשְׁוֶה כו" ⁵⁹,
"גַּם חֹשֶׁךְ לֹא יַחְשִׁיךְ" וְ"כַחֲשִׁיכָה כְּאוֹרָה"
(תהלים קלט, יב) -

who represents ‘humble-humble submission and devotion,’ in way of total bittul to Hashem as He “Encompasses all worlds,” and “He is equally found everyone, and compared to Him everything else is equally insignificant,” and “darkness does not conceal anything from Him,” since “before Him, darkness and light are equal,”

גִּשְׁמִיּוֹת וְרוּחָנִיּוֹת שְׁוִין;

meaning, that before Hashem (as He encompasses all worlds) physical and spiritual are equal.

⁵⁹ ("קטן וגדול". פיוט לזמרים נוראים "וכל מאמינים").

שֶׁהָרִי "כּוֹלֵם בְּחָכְמָה עֲשִׂיתָ" (תהלים קד,
(כ), שֶׁהָחֶכְמָה הִיא עֲשִׂיָּה גִשְׁמִיּוֹת.

Since, "You (Hashem) have made all the levels of wisdom" (Tehillim 104:24) meaning, He made Wisdom like a person makes a physical object.

When a person makes a physical object, it is far removed from his level as a person. Similarly, Hashem "made" all levels of wisdom that are infinitely far removed from His True Existence, farther than a person is removed from an inanimate object. (See Tanya Shaar Hayichud Vехаemuna chapter 9 where this is explained at length.)

The verse reads in full: "How great are your works Hashem, Hashem, have made all things with Wisdom," i.e., all the creations in the physical and spiritual world were made with His wisdom. The Alter Rebbe is interpreting the verse to mean that wisdom itself is his creation, that is far removed from His True Existence.

וְאִם כֵּן, גַּם הָאֲכִילָה וְשֶׁאֵרֵי עֲנִינִים
הַגִּשְׁמִיִּים הֵם לְפָנָיו יִתְבָּרֵךְ כְּמוֹ רוּחָנִיּוֹת
שֶׁל חֶכְמָה, מֵאַחֵר שֶׁגַּם הָחֶכְמָה הִיא
גִּשְׁמִיּוֹת וְכו'.

If so, then even eating and all other physical matters are considered before Hashem as equally important as the spirituality of Wisdom, since before Him wisdom is just like a physical object.

In other words, since Hashem as He "Encompasses all worlds" is found in the physical just as much as in the spiritual, so a person can connect to Hashem in his physical matters just as much as by studying His Divine Wisdom. This is because Hashem is equally removed from Divine Wisdom just as much as He is from physicality. It follows that just as one can connect to Hashem through the Wisdom of the Torah, one can connect to Hashem by eating or other physical matters that are performed for the sake of being able to serve Hashem, since to Hashem there is no difference between them. The same Hashem who said to study Torah is the same Hashem who put you in the physical world where you need to eat physical food for the sake of being able to service Him, with a proper blessing before and after etc.

(In the level of Hashem's Light that "Permeates all worlds" on a revealed level, one feels Hashem's Light more in Torah study than in eating kosher food for the sake of serving Hashem. However, as Hashem "Encompasses all worlds" equally, the essential capacity to connect to Hashem is the same whether one is studying Torah or eating kosher food for the sake of serving Hashem.)

זֹאת הִיא מַעֲלַת "יְהוּדָה אֲתָה", הֵינּוּ

This is the advantage of the level called "יְהוּדָה אֲתָה"-Yehuda

בְּחִינַת הוֹדָאָה בְּגִילוי שְׁבִתְפִלָּה,

revealed,” meaning the level of ‘הוֹדָאָה-humble submission and devotion’ that becomes fully revealed in “the Prayer” of Shemona Esrai,

שְׁתַּהֲיָה "יָדָךְ בְּעוֹרְף אוֹיְבֶיךָ" -

so that “his hand overtakes the back of the neck of his (spiritual) enemies,”

בְּשָׁעָה שְׁעוֹסֵק בְּ"עוֹרְף אוֹיְבֶיךָ" וְאִזִּי
חוֹלְפֶת וְעוֹבֶרֶת מִמֶּנּוּ הָאֱהָבָה, מִכָּל
מָקוֹם נִשְׁאָר רְשִׁימוֹ וְכוּ',

meaning, at the time that he deals with physical matters, which are like “the back of the neck of his enemies,” when the love (and fear) of Hashem he experienced in prayer **dims and fades away, nonetheless, the “imprint,”** i.e., effect, of the love and fear **remains** with him, enabling him to overtake and transform his physical matters into holiness.

The power to connect the love of Hashem during prayer with the transformation of his physicality into Holiness is from the higher level of Yehuda, bittul, submission-devotion to Hashem, experienced in Shemona Esrai.

Without the higher level of bittul, the love of Hashem would fade away after prayer and he would get caught up again in the desires for physicality.

The ability to retain the connection to Hashem from prayer afterwards (at least to some extent) comes from the higher level of bittul of “Yehuda revealed,” which is in Shemona Esrai.

This is because it is a bittul to Hashem as He “Encompasses all worlds,” and therefore is found in the physical world as well. Therefore, one is able continue that connection to Hashem that he had in prayer even in his physical matters.

אַךְ הֵיינוּ דוֹקָא בְּבְחִינַת עוֹרְף וְלֹא פָנִים. :

However, this is only true when his physical needs are treated as “the back of the neck,” and not as “the face,” as explained above.

Even if someone reaches all the levels of prayer explained in the maamar, including the higher bittul of Shemona Esrai, nonetheless, if he willingly puts himself passionately into his physical desires, he will not be able to (fully)

transform them into holiness. The person still needs to work on himself to not put his passions into his physical needs and desires.

(ו) Chapter 6

אָדער עיקר הגורם לכל מעלת בחינה זו להיות "יהודה אָתָה", והגורם להיות "יורוך אחיך", על זה נאמר "ישתחוּ לך בני אביך".

However, the main factor that causes this level of "Yehuda revealed," and causes that "your brothers (Reuven, Shimon, Levi) will bring out your 'הורֶאֱהוּ-humble submission and devotion,'" regarding this it is says at the end of the same verse "the sons of your father will bow to you."

The simple meaning of this is that Yehuda's brothers will accept him as their leader and their descendants (all the Jewish people) will bow down to the kings of the house of David, who are descended from Yehuda. They are called "the sons of your father" since they came from different mothers, Rachel, Leah, Bilha, and Zilpa, but they all came from the same father, Yaakov.

The Alter Rebbe will explain the deeper meaning of this section of the verse, and how it brings about the level of "יהודה אָתָה-Yehuda revealed."

כִּי הִנֵּה הַהִשְתַּחֲוָאָה הוּא בְּחִינַת הַמִּשְׁכָּה, Since, the idea of "bowing" is to bring down.

The idea of "bowing" is to bend down the head and body from an upright position to a bend over position, thus "bringing down" the head and heat to a "lower level." This corresponds to spiritually bending down, and bringing down, Hashem's Light from Atzilus, which "Encompasses" all the created worlds of Beriah, Yetzira, and Asiya, into our world and into us.

וְזֶהוּ עֲנִין הַהִשְתַּחֲוָאוֹת שֶׁבְּשִׁמּוֹנָה-עֶשְׂרֵה, שֶׁהֵן הֵן הַמִּשְׁכּוֹת.⁶⁰ This is the idea of all the times we bow in Shemona Esrai, which represent repeatedly drawing down Hashem's Encompassing Light into us.

⁶⁰ (עֵינֵינוּ רִישׁ פָּרָשַׁת וַיִּשְׁבּ: "וְהִנֵּה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְכו' מִשְׁתַּחֲוִים לִי" (לעיל כה, ב-ג)).

וּבְחִינַת "אָבִיךָ" הֵינּוּ בְחִינַת "כְּרַחֵם אָב
עַל בָּנָיו" (תְּהִלִּים קג, יג), "אָבִינוּ אָב
הַרְחֵמֵנוּ"⁶¹; שֶׁהַרְחֵמָנוּת הוּא בְחִינַת אָב,
וְתוֹלְדוֹת הַרְחֵמָנוּת הוּא בְחִינַת צְדָקָה
וְחֶסֶד "לְהַחְיֹת רוּחַ שְׁפָלִים" (תְּשַׁעֲיָה נו, טו);
שֶׁכָּל הָעוֹשֶׂה חֶסֶד בְּמִדַּת הַרְחֵמָיִם לְרַחֵם
עַל עֲנִיִּים וְיְתוֹמִים, הָרִי זֶה בְּבְחִינַת "בְּנֵי
אָבִיךָ".

The idea of "your father" represents "like a father has mercy on his children" (Tehillim 103:13), and "our Father, merciful Father" (blessing before Shema), since mercy is the idea of a "father," and the result of mercy is charity and kindness, "to give life to the spirit of the lowly" (Yeshaya 57:15), since those who act kindly, using their attribute of mercy to have mercy on the poor an orphans etc., are called "the sons of 'your father' (i.e., mercy)."

In other words, in order to have "they will bow," which is drawing down Hashem's Light from Atzilus in Shemona Esrai, a person needs to be in the category of "the sons of your father," meaning a merciful person who acts with kindness to those that need it.

Only when a person goes out of his comfort to give life to others, then Hashem takes His Life "out of its comfort zone" in Atzilus and give you spiritual Life by revealing this Light to you. (This concept is explained in Tanya Igeres Hakodesh chapter 5, chapter 8, and several other places in Igeres Hakodesh.)

Thus, the meaning of the "they will bow to you the sons of your father" according to this would be "the Lights of Hashem will come down to you, if you will act like a merciful person, by giving kindness to those that need."

גַּם בְּחִינַת "אָבִיךָ" הִיא הַתּוֹרָה,
דְּ"אֹרִיזִיתָא מִחֻכְמָה נִפְקֵת"⁶², שֶׁהוּא
בְחִינַת אָב, וְכֵמוּ שֶׁאָמְרוּ: "שְׁמַע בְּנֵי מוֹסֵר
אָבִיךָ" (מִשְׁלֵי א, ח) - "זוֹ תּוֹרָה־שֶׁבְּכָתֵב
וְכוֹ"⁶³; וְ"בְנֵי אָבִיךָ" הֵם הָעוֹסְקִים בְּתוֹרָה.

Also, an additional explanation, "your father" represents the Torah, since "the Torah comes from Hashem's Wisdom" (Zohar II, 121a), which is called "a father," as they (the Sages (see Zohar II, 176b)) explained the verse (Mishlei 1:8): "'hear, my son, to the discipline of your father' – this refers to the Written Torah,"

⁶¹ (נוסח בְּרַכַּת קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע שֶׁל שְׁחֵרִית).

⁶² (זֶהר חֵלֶק ב קבא, א).

⁶³ (תְּנִיָא, אֲגַרַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ סִימָן כט עַל פִּי זֶהר חֵלֶק ב רעו, ב).

and, based on this, “the sons of ‘your father’” refer to those occupied in Torah study.

Chochma-Wisdom is called “a father” and Bina-Understanding is called “a mother,” since they are the source of the emotions and actions of a person, just as the father and mother are the parents of the entire family. The Wisdom of the Torah is thus referred to as “a father,” and in Mishlei the Torah is called “your father.” It follows that the “sons of ‘your father’” refer to those involved in Torah study.

The Mittler Rebbe (Maamarei Admur HaEmtzai, Bereishis, pp. 523-525) asks: The maamar said earlier that the three brothers of Yehuda, which are Reuven, Shimon, and Levi, are all needed to bring out the true revelation of Yehuda. Reuven is love, which is the same idea as kindness and mercy, Shimon is fear, and Levi is Torah study. These three aspects are the three main “channels” of Atzilus, Chesed-Kindness, Gevura-Severity (fear), and Tiferes-Combination of opposites, which is Torah study that connects physical and Divine. Why here in the maamar does the Alter Rebbe say that all we need is merciful kindness, the aspect of Reuven (love), and Torah study, the aspect of Levi, what happened to Shimon (fear)?

He explains that only in the order of prayer leading up to Shemona Esrai is Shimon -fear of Hashem- needed to reach the higher level of Yehuda-bittul. After prayer, the higher level of bittul of Yehuda is drawn down and revealed in the physical world through the action of the mitzvos, which is the idea of kindness (Reuven) and the study of Torah (Levi). However, Shimon, fear of Hashem, is only a prerequisite to drawing down the bittul to Hashem in the world, it itself does not directly reveal Hashem in the world as do mitzvos/kindness and Torah study.

The maamar here which focuses specifically on Reuven and Levi is discussing bring down and revealing Yehuda -the higher bittul to Hashem- in the physical world that takes place after prayer.

וְהוּא "וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוּ לְךָ בְּנֵי אָבִיךָ",

This is the idea of “they will bow to you, the sons of ‘your father,’”

שׁ"בְּנֵי אָבִיךָ" הֵם הָעוֹסִקִים בַּתּוֹרָה
וּבְגִמְלוֹת־חֻסְדִּים,

meaning, that “the sons of your father,” who are those that are occupied in both Torah study and in acts of kindness, according to both interpretations of what “your father” represents,

הֵם הֵם "יִשְׁתַּחֲוּ לְךָ" וְיִמְשִׁיכוּ אוֹתְךָ

it is they that will “bow to you,” meaning they will draw you down

להיות "נעוץ תחילתן בסופן",

and reveal you, Yehuda, the higher level of bittul, so that “the beginning, the highest l

evel of bittul, **should be expressed in the end**, in the person here in the physical world.”

שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה וְהַגְּמִילוֹת חֲסִידִים הֵם הַנּוֹתְנִים
כֹּחַ בְּנַפֶּשׁ לַעֲזֹר אֶת הָאֲהָבָה וְיִרְאַה עַד
שֶׁתִּהְיֶה בַּחֲנִינַת הוֹדָאָה וּבִיטּוֹל,

Since, it is the Torah study and acts of kindness that give the power in the person's soul to awaken the love and fear of Hashem in prayer, until he reaches the highest level of 'הַוָּדָא' - humble submission and devotion' and bittul,

וְעַל יְדֵי כֵן "יִדְּוּךָ אֲחִיךָ" לַהֲיוֹת "יְהוּדָה"
אֶתָּה "כֵּן" ל. :

and it is through this (power from Torah and kindness) that **“יודוּךְ אֶחָיִךְ – your brothers will bring out your אֶהוּדָה-humble submission and devotion”** so that **“יִהְיֶה אֶתָּה – Yehuda should be revealed”** in experiencing the higher level of bittul in Shemona Esrai.

Based on all of the above, we can interpret the verse as follows:

“יְהוּדָה אֲתָהּ-Yehuda, your level is fully revealed,

אָידין-when your brothers – Reuven-love of Hashem, Shimon-fear of Hashem, and Levi-connecting those feeling to Torah study – will bring out and reveal your selfless devotion to Hashem,

וְיִדְּךָ בְּעֶרְךָ אִיבֶיךָ-and this will enable you to overcome your spiritual enemies, the desires of the animal soul, and transform your physicality into Holiness, if you treat your physical needs like “the back of the neck” without inner passion,

but you will also need “the sons of your father” – which refers to both acts of merciful kindness and Torah study, since “fathers” refers to both mercy and Torah – to bend down and drawn down your level of selflessness to Hashem to become fully revealed and felt not only in Shemona Esrai but also afterwards throughout the entire day.”



Hosafa-Addendum

Article on Bittul from Rabbi Tzvi Freeman for Chabad.org

Because our maamar discusses selflessness and bittul, I thought it would be helpful to bring this article that explains the meaning of bittul.

The following article was written by Rabbi Tzvi Freeman for Chabad.org, and is copyright property of them. It can be seen at Chabad.org here:

https://www.chabad.org/library/tanya/tanya_cdo/aid/5400232/jewish/What-Is-Bittul.htm

The New Nothing

New ways of thinking require new sets of words.

For most thinkers. Here's an exception: Every chapter of R. Schneur Zalman's classic work known as *Tanya* provides a distinctly new way of thinking about life, purpose, and the world about us. Yet R. Schneur Zalman chose to retain the old words, just revealing in them a deeper meaning.

The word *bittul* is a case in point.

Bittul plays a central role in R. Schneur Zalman's writings. It's a crucial concept in explaining how existence as we know it is always relative and never absolute, and why a good life depends on seeing and truly feeling how that applies to you. *Bittul* makes the difference between choosing to dwell in a fractured universe where each fragment makes a whole lot of noise, or choosing true life in a harmonious universe, where the parts find their greatness within a wondrously greater whole.

But to do that, bittul required a whole new depth of understanding.

Existential Bittul

So what is *bittul*? Or, using its adjective form, what do we mean when we say something is *bittel*?

In common use, *bittul* means something's not there. Cancelled, negated, wiped out. Gone.

"What happened to our study group today?"

"Buttel."

Simple, easy, no explanation needed.

Not so the *bittul* of Tanya. Here, there's not just one, but two layers of complexity and depth.

First, R. Schneur Zalman, the eminent halachist he was, borrowed a concept of *bittul* as it appears in halachah (Talmudic law). There, *bittul* is often what you might call situational. Or contextual.

For example, a Jew is forbidden to eat a mixture of meat and milk. A cheeseburger is out of the question. But what if one teensy drop of milk finds its way into a monstrous vat of beef broth?

There's no way anyone would be able to taste the taste of milk in that mixture. It's so diluted, it's insignificant. So we apply the rule of *bittul*—if there's so little no one could taste it, it's like it's not there.

Which doesn't mean it's not there. And that's the important point. Milk is milk, even a drop of it. And indeed, if drop after drop falls in, each drop accumulates until all those drops cry out in unison, "We are here! We are here! Taste and see!"

But right now, that lonely drop is ineffective, insignificant, and experiencing the tragic drama of *bittul* within its exile to a foreign land of beef broth, like an immigrant who threw his weight around back home and now finds himself completely disregarded upon landing on new shores. As though he doesn't exist—even though he does.

There's a popular art-book called *Zoom* by the Hungarian artist, Istvan Banyai that vividly and literally illustrates *bittul*. An initial lively scene of children playing ball looks very real and inviting—until we zoom out to discover it's only a postage stamp being pasted on a letter by a young man in a very different scene—which then turns out to be painted on a billboard on the highway—which then turns out to be nothing more than some kid's toy cars—which then is lost in yet a wider context.

Each context is not simply larger. That would only render the previous scene insignificantly small. Rather, each scene provides a whole new frame of reference in which the reality in which we were immersed just one page earlier suddenly and almost mystically is exposed as an irrelevant fiction, soon to vanish altogether within the even greater context of the coming page.

There were never any kids playing ball. Banyai played a joke on you. It was a postage stamp, not a reality. Which means that, once you've arrived at this new frame of reference, what you thought you saw never was.

That's not just a quantitative *bittul*, like one piece of non-kosher beef among many kosher ones. Neither is it just a qualitative *bittul*, like the quality of the taste of milk within the broth. It's an existential *bittul*. Something like revoking a birth certificate.

That's what we mean by "existence is relative." Existence depends on meaning. Meaning depends on context. Change the context, you change the meaning, and that which was a reality a moment ago suddenly goes poof.

Original bittul

That's one layer of meaning and depth to work with: Situational, or contextual bittul. In one context, you can be rich with meaning. In another, all that meaning suddenly vanishes and nobody knows you even exist. And maybe you don't. But how does that apply to my life, its purpose and meaning?

Hang in there. Here's the next layer:

What if this new context is not a foreign environment such as beef broth to dairy, Ellis Island to Anatevka, or the frame of a postage stamp to any particular scene?

What if the new context is your origin?

By origin I don't mean like a cow is the origin of its milk. No, more like the two rich and juicy examples R. Schneur Zalman himself provides: What if the reality of our world is like light inside a luminary? What if we are all like words before they have emerged from the soul?

Best way to explain those two examples is to first tell a story.

Richard Feynman was a great American physicist and a brilliant teacher. He wrote that he got that way because he had a father who prodded him to ask questions. But there was one question his father asked him that he was never able to answer. Here's how Feynman described their conversation:

"I understand that when an atom makes a transition from one state to another, it emits a particle of light called a photon."

"That's right," I said.

He says, "Is the photon in the atom ahead of time?"

"No, there's no photon beforehand."

"Well," he says, "where does it come from, then? How does it come out?"

I tried to explain to him—that photon numbers aren't conserved; they're just created by the motion of the electron—but I couldn't explain it very well. I said, "It's like the sound that I'm making now: it wasn't in me before." (It's not like my little boy, who suddenly announced one day, when he was very young, that he could no longer say a certain word—the word turned out to be "cat"—because his "word bag" had run out of the word. There's no word bag that makes you use up words as they come out; in the same sense, there's no "photon bag" in an atom.)

Solid evidence that Prof. Feynman studied Tanya. Almost.

R. Schneur Zalman was writing long before we spoke in terms of photons and electrons. Instead, when he wanted to describe the relationship of light with a light-source, he talked about the light of the sun within the sun. Same thing. The sun, you see, is not light. Light is something that emerges from the sun. But the sun itself is its own entity.

So is there light within the sun, the source of light? Yes and no.

Yes, because, as R. Schneur Zalman writes, if it shines down here on earth outside of the sun, how could it not exist within the orb of the sun? On the contrary, he writes, certainly it must exist in a far more intense state *within* its source than *outside* its source.

Yet, on the other hand, no.

Because within its source, the light is in a state of thorough bittul. It is not an entity of its own that we could call light. It is nothing more than a certain capacity the sun has, that it can generate light.

Just like something much closer to human experience: words within the soul.

You begin speaking a sentence, not even knowing how it's going to end. Where did those words come from? From your "word bag" inside you? Or did they just appear out of nowhere, unprecedented?

No, there's always a precedent: Not scrabble words in a bag, but a reaction to something someone said, an emotion, a flash of insight.

It's just that we're not aware of what's going on inside us—until those inner chunnings emerge in some articulate form. Such as words, imagery, perhaps even drama in our minds. Or just words that suddenly jump out of our mouths like aliens making a blitzkrieg on Planet Earth.

So words emerge out of emotions and insights.

But if I could travel in my magical school bus deep into your emotions, would I find words there?

No and yes.

No. Just think of the last time you saw someone in an intense emotional state, and you asked them to please explain what on earth is going on. No words jump out. Not until the hysterics burn out and the tears cease to flow. Then maybe you'll get a few words. Until the flames of emotion rise again. Inside emotions, there's simply no place for words.

But definitely yes. Because you don't grasp in the air for words to express your emotions. The words fling open the doors and jump out. So they must have been inside there somewhere before they jumped out. Somewhere in your emotions.

What do they look like inside their spaceship of emotions? They don't. They're in a state of extreme, existential bittul. They are too powerful to exist.

Now this is neat: When we spoke about milk-taste bittul or zoom bittul—bittul within a foreign context—their right to existence was revoked because they had become so weak and impotent.

But here, when things are bittul within their origin, they lose all sense of existence because they are at the ultimate extreme of being. They're chillin' deep within their own homes, being who they truly are: A possibility of their origin.

So, on the one hand, their existence is annihilated to the absolute extreme, incomparably beyond any of our other examples. And on the other hand, this is where they experience true existence.

To Be and Not To Be

Now, you might feel frustrated at this point (even if the words to say so have yet to emerge). How do we answer both yes and no, exist and don't exist, to the same question?

Because it depends on what you mean by *exist*.

Light exists within the sun. Photons exist within electrons. But not as a discrete entity. They exist as a feature of their source, not a thing of their own.

The words exist within your emotions. But not as discrete words. An emotion has expression, definition, direction, intensity, a beginning and an end, and a need to be shared. The words are all already there within all those qualities of this emotion. They are intensely there, shining bright.

So bright, they don't exist yet as words. All that exists is an emotion burning. In fact, in philosophical Hebrew (as in philosophical Arabic and Persian) we use two different words to describe these two different concepts of existence:

מציאות-*metziut* and *מהות*-*mahut*. English has some catching up to do.

Metziut is your identifiable presentation as a something all its own. Like the word "is" in "That is a horse." Or just "That horse is."

Mahut is the fundamental concept of what you are, sometimes called "essence." The "that" of "That horse is." Even if this horse never came into existence, even if it presented itself as something other than a horse, its *mahut* still is.

What is it in essence? We can dance around that question—which is precisely what classical philosophers do—but in essence it can't be said. You would have to be that to know.

To bring it home: We all have some messy cobweb idea of our *metziut*. How we think others see us. How we see ourselves. How we think others think we see ourselves. How we think others think we see them seeing us. It gets very complex.

Your *mahut* is simple: You are an agent of the divine creative will. You are you because the Creator—who regenerates the *metziut* of this universe out of nowhere at every moment—wants someone to go in there and fix His world. Put yourself into that context and all that *metziut* mess dissipates like pixie dust.

Practical Bittul

So do we exist? I mean, as a *metziut*. An identifiable something.

Yes and no.

Yes, because G-d spoke and a world came to be. All the universe is an artifact of divine speech, ten utterances of speech to be specific, as recorded in Genesis, packets of creative articulation that contain all the information for all that will ever be, themselves beyond the spacetime continuum that they generate, and so, ever-present, continually sustaining our reality.

If G-d Himself says so, we must exist.

And for precisely the same reason, no, we do not exist. Because, unlike our words, those words never left their origin. Because there's no place for them to go. G-d is one, so there's nothing outside G-d.

So all those cosmic words that call us into being are like the rays of the sun's light within the sun, like your words of speech and thought before they have emerged from their chrysalis of emotion and insight.

But does that make this reality of ours any weaker? No, quite the contrary. Within your source, you shine infinitely brighter. All you're missing is the delusion of otherness. Because now you're one with your origin. It comes out that, in a certain, crucial way, this deeper understanding of *bittul* expresses quite the opposite of its simple understanding. Something or someone who has true *bittul* has certainly not auto-cancelled, self-abnegated, or self-annihilated. Rather, quite the contrary, in *bittul*, each thing finds its true place and power.

Everything receives life, R. Schneur Zalman wrote, by virtue of its *bittul*, and commensurate to its degree of *bittul*. A creature entirely locked inside its own shell cannot survive. Life is a function of self-transcendence—perhaps a close-enough translation of *bittul*.

Plenty of good evidence-based research has demonstrated this for human beings, as well. "Personal spirituality"—defined for research purposes as "a strong personal relationship with the transcendent" (if that's not *bittul*, what is?)—has been shown to be key to human survival, especially at the most crucial times in life. For just one example, a teen who has been nurtured with such spirituality/*bittul* is 80% less likely to suffer ongoing and recurrent depressions and 60% less likely to become a heavy substance user.

Which makes it all a matter of choice. What will be my frame of reference? I can choose to remain blind to all that is beyond my bubble, deaf to the grand symphony, oblivious to my Creator, clinging to the delusion of autonomous power as though my ego is the vortex of all existence—in which case I end up as nothing more than a blip flashing for its grand moment on the screen of space-time.

Or I can find my glorious place within the Infinite Light, my true context where I as a discrete, autonomous entity cease to exist. And there find eternal meaning and true greatness.

Where is the place of union with your origin in this life on Earth? It is in your *bittul* to your Creator as you carry out the mission He has assigned to you. As Hillel said in the Mishnah, “Make your will *buttel* before His will.” Transcend yourself by connecting to the Transcendent.

For a Jew, that transcendence is the study of Torah and the performance of all G-d’s mitzvahs out of love and joy.

לעילוי נשמת אבי מורי

ר' חיים משה בן ר' אהרן לייב הכהן הכ"מ

לזכות חיזוק ההתקשרות

לכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו

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