

"Open my eyes so that I may see the **wonders** of Your Torah"



# Wonders

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שבת ראה כד-כה אב תשפ"ו 🌸



“ As they were walking together, a young man on a motorcycle passed by and grazed the officer. The officer's fury ignited and he ran after him, but the man fled. Seeing this, my father slipped away and made his way back to the train ”

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*"...It would be proper  
to publish your classes  
in book form.  
With blessings for success..."*

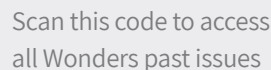
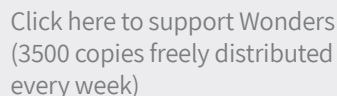
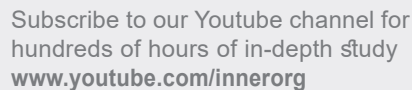
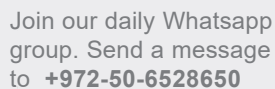
נברכה רחמי ורחמי

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בא האלף ארץ  
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An anthology from the shiurim and farbrengens  
of Harav **Yitzchak Ginsburgh**

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## STORY

# RABBI YOEL OF SATMAR: WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY

*Rebbe Yoel Teitelbaum of Satmar was born in the year 5648 (1888) to Rebbe Chananyah Yom Tov Lipa, the Rebbe of Siget. He was known as "the Prodigy of Siget" and studied in his father's yeshivah there. His father passed away on the 29th of Shevat, 5664 (1904), and just days before his passing, Rebbe Yoel married Chavah, daughter of Rabbi Avraham Chaim of Plantshe. The couple had three daughters, all of whom predeceased their father and left no descendants. After the Rebbetzin's passing, Rebbe Yoel married Alta Faiga, daughter of Rebbe Avigdor of Tchenstochov, and subsequently moved to the city of Satmar, where he began to serve as Rebbe. When thousands of refugees fled to Hungary from the terror of the Nazis, may their name be blotted out, the Rebbe absorbed many of them into his community and helped them obtain documents and funds. As the flow of refugees swelled at the beginning of 5703 (1943), he established an organized a rescue committee to aid the war refugees. After the Nazi army invaded Hungary, Rebbe Yoelish attempted to flee to Romania, but was captured and sent to the ghetto in Kolozsvár. From there he was taken on the so-called Kasztner train and reached Switzerland. After the Holocaust he emigrated to the United States and reestablished the Satmar Chasidic dynasty, today one of the largest and most prominent communities in America. Rebbe Yoelish was known as an uncompromising zealot who demanded complete separation from secularism, Haskalah (secular enlightenment), and political Zionism. Yet when a Jew in need turned to him for help, he assisted him with an open hand, without distinction between Chasidim, Zionists, or the non-observant. He departed this world on the 26th of Av, 5739 (1979), and after his passing his nephew Rebbe Moshe served in his stead.*

Rabbi Shmuel Brach, *shlita*, the head of the rabbinical court of *Kehillat Afsei Aretz* who was a close attendant of the

holy Rebbe of Satmar, of blessed memory related the following:

In the year 5704 (1944), the holy Rebbe of Satmar was in the city of Pesht. My father, of blessed memory, who lived in Halas, greatly wished to come to the holy Rebbe, but had no military discharge papers. My mother, of blessed memory, who was also in Pesht at the time, went in to the Rebbe and told him that her husband wished to come but lacked the necessary papers. The Rebbe said to her: "Well, then he should not come." My mother told him that he very much wished to come, and the Rebbe said: "Then let him come." My father did so, and arrived for the Torah portion of Mikeitz together with another man who did possess discharge papers. My father spent the weekdays with the Rebbe, though for the holy Shabbat the Rebbe traveled to Újpesht. My father was afraid to travel to Újpesht, and so before Shabbat he went in to the Rebbe with a note. The Rebbe asked him why he had come now with a note. Had he not intended to stay longer? My father told him he wished to travel to Újpesht but was afraid to do so. The Rebbe took the note in his holy hand, looked at it, and said to my father: "Perhaps you should not go?" — and then immediately gave him his holy hand and said: "Go in peace!" My father followed the Rebbe's words and set off with his companion to the railway station to travel to Újpesht.

As the two waited there, an officer approached and asked for their papers. My father's companion, who had discharge papers, presented them at once, and my father likewise showed his documents though of course the officer was not satisfied with them. He returned the papers and told my father to accompany him to the police station. As they were walking together, a young man on a motorcycle passed by and grazed the officer. The officer called out for him to stop, but the cyclist paid no heed and rode on his way. The officer's fury ignited and he ran after him, but the man fled. Seeing this, my father slipped away and made his way back to the train, which arrived at precisely that moment. He traveled to Újpest as though nothing had occurred and only then did my father understand what the Rebbe had first said to him: "Perhaps you should not go," and then afterward: "Go in peace."

This story, and others like it, reveal that the essential force in the soul is will, as the Sages teach (*Makkot* 10b): "On the path a person wishes to walk, he is led." If a person harbors a true and powerful desire for something, even when there

are reasonable grounds to reject what he wants, the *tzaddik* offers a blessing that the person's will be fulfilled. Will is the most powerful force in the soul as reflected in the expressions, "nothing is as strong as will" and "nothing stands

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in the way of will" (see in length in our volume, *The Art of Education*). Will is also the force that connects our conscious faculties to what lies above them: the soul's super-conscious dimension.

Giving precedence to will over intellect may seem surprising. After all, we are accustomed to consider intellect the final arbiter, at least ideally, when it is free of coarse cravings and base emotions. Yet this is true only within the domain of the soul's revealed powers, those that are within the boundaries of consciousness. Among our conscious faculties, the intellect appears as a measured, logical, and objective judge and therefore as a fair arbiter. But the human soul possesses dimensions that reach higher than the intellect, and it is precisely those dimensions that the will expresses.

For example, why do we choose to marry one particular person and not another? What motivates us to pursue a certain vocation, or to live in a particular place? What is our mission in the world? In general, these questions

may seem to have a clear answer, but in fact, the complete answer is not entirely intellectual. The intellect may assist, but it cannot decide. These life-forming decisions seem to illustrate the sentiment that, "this is what I want, and that is all." We should note that more often than not, it is precisely these questions of will that are the most important ones, governing the deepest aspects of our lives. Why is this so?

This question has two answers which, on the one hand, are diametrically opposed, but on the other, are one and the same. The first is that the very essence of our soul expresses itself through will. We want something because that is who we are, not for any external reason. The second is that within human will, the Divine will is revealed. Divine will transcends all human calculation and desire. As King David declares in Psalms: "From God are a man's footsteps established, and He desires his way." The Rebbe Rayatz explains this in his discourse "*VeHinei Sulam*" (5708):

At first glance, there is room to reason that when a person desires to go to the place he is going, it is because his own intrinsic will drew him there. But in truth, the reason for the will to go is in order to fulfill an inner and essential intention decreed by Divine Providence. For in most cases, the higher intention is fulfilled not through his journey alone, but also through others traveling there as well.

Human will, he explains, serves only as an instrument, for who was it that arranged for two people to come to the

same place, each from his own will, and thereby fulfill the will of God? Concerning this the prophet declares:

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"Can two walk together without having been appointed"—appointed from Above? The fitting instrument for this is precisely the will because will is not fully conscious, and is not garbed in the vessels of our awareness, a will transcending the reach of our intellect can illuminate within

it. Thus it becomes clear that the very essence of the Jewish soul is in no way separate from Divinity — and when the concealing garments of consciousness fall away, the Divine will is revealed in all its force.

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# PARASHAT RE'EH

## RE'EH AND THE MONTH OF ELUL

**P**arashat Re'eh customarily falls near Rosh Chodesh Elul, about one month before Rosh HaShanah. This entire period is dedicated to spiritual preparation for the Days of Awe. In accordance with Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi's dictum that we should "live with the times" (i.e., connect with, learn from, and apply the weekly Torah reading to our lives), we would expect the weekly Torah portions read immediately preceding and throughout the month of Elul, beginning with *Re'eh*, to contain explicit or implicit allusions to the approaching Days of Awe and the process of spiritual introspection undertaken at this time. It is no surprise to learn that this is indeed the case, as the first verse in *parshat Re'eh* makes clear: "See, I put before you this day a blessing and a curse. A blessing, if you listen to the commandments of *Havayah* your God, which I command you this day; and a curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of *Havayah* your God."<sup>1</sup> In this passage, the Torah instructs us to keep our eyes wide open, to clearly examine the choices life presents and to accept responsibility for the consequences of our chosen paths. As we begin the

month of Elul and start preparing for the Days of Awe, we must be fully aware of what is at stake, especially how our own actions and behaviors play a major role in the Divine judgement that occurs Between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur.

### CHODESH HARACHAMIM—THE MONTH OF COMPASSION

**T**he month of Elul is referred to as *Chodesh HaRachamim*, the month of compassion.<sup>2</sup> It was on the first day of Elul, Rosh Chodesh Elul, that Moses ascended Mt. Sinai for the third time and spent the entire month of Elul there with God, pleading with God to forgive the Israelites for their grievous and idolatrous Sin of the Golden Calf. God revealed His compassion and forgiveness and at the end of these third set of forty days, Moses received the second pair of tablets.

That very energy of Divine forgiveness is encapsulated in the Thirteen Attributes of Compassion that God taught Moses at that time.<sup>3</sup> These Thirteen Attributes (or Principles) of Compassion are one of the most important prayers in Judaism, recited in many congregations most days

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1. Deuteronomy 11:26.

2. *Mivchar Shiurei Hitbonenut*, vol. 9, p.191.

3. Exodus 34:6-7.

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of the year (as part of the repentant, *Tachanun* segment of prayer), and during the months of *Elul* and *Tishrei*—the season of repentance when Jews beseech God for forgiveness and atonement, on both the individual and communal level. In fact, the Thirteen Attributes of Compassion form the very basis of the special prayers recited during *Elul* called *Selichot*.

## CHODESH HATESHUVAH

**T**he month of *Elul* is also referred to as *Chodesh HaTeshuvah*, the Month of Repentance.<sup>4</sup> There is a tradition that *teshuvah*—repentance, return, or realignment—was created in the spiritual worlds even before the creation of the physical world.<sup>5</sup> This statement parallels another teaching that God initially wanted to create the world with the attribute of *din*, strict judgment, alone, but then realized that the world would not be able to exist without an equal measure of compassion. So He crafted Creation out of a mixture of both energies.<sup>6</sup> According to this, God's original thought for Creation was that all would work according to a strict paradigm of "measure for measure," the basis upon which the laws of nature operate. This unwavering cause and effect principle is reflected in the Name of God, *Elokim*, which is associated with strict judgment, and is used exclusively in the initial Torah account of Creation.<sup>7</sup>

It is only in the second account of Creation<sup>8</sup> that the four-letter Name of God, *Havayah*, which is associated with mercy and compassion is introduced.<sup>9</sup> From this, the Sages deduced the above teaching regarding God's creative process, resulting in the addition of mercy into the cauldron of creation, in order to temper and balance strict judgment.

Ultimately, *teshuvah* reflects God's compassion for mankind, as it gives a person the opportunity to make amends and change their ways through the compassionate gift of a second chance. We are therefore each able to break through the strict laws of cause and effect and "measure for measure" through sincere acts of repentance, forgiveness, and introspection. In this way, *teshuvah* is the ultimate expression of our freewill, as our past does not necessarily lead to a fixed and inescapable future. It is through *teshuvah* that we can transform ourselves in the present, inevitably impacting our future and even, mysteriously, reconstructing our past. In fact, when discussing the power of repentance, the Sages state that one who repents out of fear has his or her intentional sins transformed into inadvertent mistakes, while one who repents out of love, has his or her (even) intentional sins transformed into merits.<sup>10</sup> By performing a rectification in the present, the future is drawn into the past, and, in effect,

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4. *Mivchar Shiurei Hitbonenut*, vol. 9, p.192.

5. *Pesachim* 54a.

6. See *Rashi* on Genesis 1:1, s.v. "*bara Elokim*."

7. Genesis 1:1 through 2:3.

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8. Genesis 2:4 through 2:25.

9. *Ibid.* 2:4.

10. *Yoma* 86b.

changes its valence; a transformative leap takes place, transcending time altogether.

Since Rosh HaShanah corresponds to the sixth day of creation, the day that humanity was created, the first day of Creation corresponds to the 25<sup>th</sup> day of Elul, five days earlier.<sup>11</sup> Thus, Elul is not merely a preparation for the New Year, but rather the renewal of Creation is already manifest in this very month. Therefore, the essential soul work of renewal, improvement, healing, and rectification should not be put off to Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. Instead, we should focus on it from the first day of Elul, when the gates of compassion and *teshuvah* are open.

## SEARCHING FOR THE “I”

**A**n essential part of the process of *teshuvah* is making an accounting of “Who am I? where am I coming from and where am I going?” It could be thought of as searching for the “I,” the real, essential me, which I have lost track of during the preceding year.<sup>12</sup> In order to accomplish that goal, a paradoxical dynamic is called for. The same Hebrew letters that form the word “I” (אני), when permuted, spell the word for “nothingness,” (אין), in this context meaning existential humbleness, selflessness, and minimization of the ego. These two seemingly opposite states of consciousness are not only, in truth, complementary, but in fact, they are

essential ingredients in any balanced and holistic attitude toward life. Paradoxically, the more one experiences his or her own existential state of nothingness in relationship to the overwhelmingly awesome reality of an infinite Creator, the more their unique soul powers will be enlivened and activated. Additionally, entering into a state of self-nullification is similar to experiencing an ego death, which, by its very nature, instantaneously revives and resurrects one’s essential self.<sup>13</sup>

In fact, in Aramaic the root of the word Elul means “to seek.”<sup>14</sup> The entire month is dedicated to seeking self-realization, improvement, and ways to come closer to God.

## “I AM TO MY BELOVED”

**T**he word “I” plays a very important part of an important acronym of the word Elul from the Song of Songs. The Hebrew name for the month of Elul (אֱלּוּל) has four letters found in order in the initials of the phrase, “I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine”<sup>15</sup> (אני לדודי ודודי לי). Yet, not only are the *roshei teivot*, the initial letters, significant in this phrase, the final letter of all four words is the letter *yud*, whose value is 10 (אני לדודי ודודי לי). The sum of the four *yuds* is thus 40, the exact number of days between the first day of Elul and Yom Kippur.<sup>16</sup>

These were the 40 days that Moses

11. *Vayikra Rabbah* 29:1. Also, *Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer* 8:1.

12. *Hazman Hapnimi, Chodesh Elul*.

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*

15. Song of Songs 6:3.

16. *Mivchar Shiurei Hitbonenut*, vol. 9, p.193.

spent on Mount Sinai praying for forgiveness for the Israelites for the Sin of the Golden Calf at the conclusion of which, he received the second set of Tablets of the Law as a sign of God's forgiveness. He ascended the Mt. Sinai on the first day of *Elul* and descended with the second tablets on Yom Kippur.

The last word in this phrase, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine,"<sup>17</sup> "mine" (מי) itself equals 40 and is divided into 30, the equivalent of the letter *lamed* and 10, the value of the letter *yud*. Likewise, on the calendar, these forty days are divided naturally into the 30 days of *Elul* and the ten days between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, known as the Ten Days of Teshuvah.<sup>18</sup>

## WORD SOUL MATES

**T**here are many verses that have a deep connection due to the wording of the verses being very similar. These verses are in a sense "soul mates," as they complement and complete each other. The first verse is the one we discussed above from the Song of Songs, "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine, he shepherds among the lilies" (אני לדודי ודודי לי (לי הרעה בשושנים). The second verse is also from the Song of Songs, "My beloved is mine and I am his, he shepherds among the lilies"<sup>19</sup> (דודי לי ואני לו הרעה בשושנים).

These almost identical verses express the archetypal love between God and

Israel. In both these verses it is Israel speaking yet there is a mirror image in the order of how this love is manifest and experienced. The first verse expresses an "arousal from below," from Israel first reaching out to God—"I am my beloved's"—whereas the second verse expresses first the experience of feeling an "arousal from above"—"My beloved is mine"—when first God's love is felt and then responded to. When both of these experiences are nurtured and deeply felt, the human "I" becomes one with the Divine "I," creating a unity that allows a proper orientation towards oneself, others and God.<sup>20</sup>

As with all unification with the Divine, this is not a static state, rather it is achieved through the dynamic of "run and return," by experiencing a faster and faster transition from feeling that "I am my beloved's" to feeling that "My beloved is mine." The unification can last only as long as the "run and return," the pulse of these two complementary experiences continues to beat.

## THE LETTER YUD AND ACTION

**A**ccording to *Sefer Yetzirah* each month is created by means of a Hebrew letter. The letter creating the month of *Elul* is a *yud*.<sup>21</sup> Each month also has a *chush*, a "sense." The sense of this month is *assiyah*, action.<sup>22</sup> The letter *yud* is cognate to *yad*, "hand," a symbol of

17. Song of Songs 6:3.

18. *Ibid*.

19. Song of Songs 2:16.

20. Hazman Hapnimi, Chodesh Elul.

21. *Sefer Yetzirah* 5:8.

22. *Ibid*.

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taking action.<sup>23</sup> Thus, both the letter and sense of Elul allude to the importance, as stated above, of not waiting to do *teshuvah* until Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, but taking advantage of the month of Elul to do the essential work preparing one for the Days of Awe.

The Torah concludes the story of Creation with the following verse: “God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, for on it He rested from His work which God created to make.”<sup>24</sup> The Rabbis have noted that the infinitive “to make” appears to be redundant and

somewhat contradictory: if the verse has just signified the end of creation with the words “God created,” what can it possibly mean by adding “to make”?

In this context, the word “to make” means “to do” or “to rectify.” God has therefore made humanity and especially the Jewish people His partner in the ongoing rectification of the world. The words “to make” thus imply an ongoing creative process, not one definitively finished at a single, isolated point in time. God in fact purposefully left the work of finishing the process of creation in the hands of humanity, who is meant, through free choice, to become partners with God in the rectification of the world.

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23. *The Hebrew Letters*, pp. 159-161.

24. Genesis 2:3.

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# FROM THE CHASIDIC MASTERS

## SEFAT EMET ON DIVERTING CONSCIOUSNESS FROM DEATH

*Note that this was originally a tweet written by Rav Ginsburgh. We have brought it here in its original form, with very light editing, while retaining the Rav's wording. We have added headings and source references.*

**O**n the verse, "You are children of Havayah your God; You shall not cut yourselves, nor make a bald spot between your eyes for the dead,"\* the *Sefat Emet*, Rebbe Yehudah Aryeh Leib Alter of Gur (1847-1905), writes the following:

...In the holy *Zohar* (on *Vayechi* and *Shelach*) it is taught that a soul is sent into this world like a king's son sent to a village to learn the ways of the king's palace; once he has grown, he is sent for, to come to the king's palace. The village children weep. One clever child among them said, "Why do you weep? Is he not the king's son?" etc. So too Moses, who was clever, said "You are children," etc.

Every Jew must know and always remember that he was sent to this world only to learn the way of royalty. For, in truth, souls are children; but in this world, having become clothed in a body, the soul is in the status of a servant. Still, all that a Jew wants in this world and all that he should think of must be related to his inevitable return to his true place. As is written in the holy *Zohar*, on the verse "A wise man's eyes are in his head," for this is why the Holy Blessed One, in His wisdom, placed the eyes in the head: so that one should always look toward the origin. The opposite of this is "the fool who walks in darkness," all of his wants and all of his thoughts are focused on the passing world of darkness.

Of this it is written, "and they shall be for phylacteries between your eyes." And this is the allusion found in the words, "you shall not make a bald spot between your eyes for the dead," meaning that you shall not be blind and instead focus on all the affairs of the body, which are already "dead," in that the body stands

\* Deuteronomy 14:1.

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to die. These affairs of the body should not confuse a person from the essential purpose for which he was sent from the World Above.

Indeed, if death itself does not grieve a person, since he knows that this entire world exists only so that he may attain the perfection of returning, rectified, to the World Above, then all the worries and sufferings of this world will not confuse him, and will not interrupt or create a “bald spot between your eyes,” which refers to the contemplation of the mind in the head. In any case, a person must see to it that when he truly dons tefillin, which are a remembrance and an illumination of the soul, he should not let his mind be diverted toward the body.

Likewise on the holy Shabbat, when tefillin are not required, since Shabbat is itself a sign, and the illumination of the soul shines within it, he should not let his mind be diverted. This is the meaning behind [the two words appearing in the Ten Commandments in the commandment regarding Shabbat] “Remember” and “Keep”: to remember the root described above, and to keep himself from thinking about the labor of this world. As is written in *Sefer HaBahir*, “Guard [yourself] from [wandering] thought.” Similarly, when one stands in prayer, as the Sages of blessed memory stated, “even if a snake is wound around his heel,” which is an allusion to death, “he should not stop praying.”

The *Sefat Emet* connects the words of the Zohar<sup>1</sup>—that a Jew is a king's son who was sent to the world in order to learn there the ways of royalty and to return, wiser and more experienced, to the king's palace; and therefore, others should not mourn excessively over his passing, i.e., his return to his father's palace—with the requirement that every individual must always look back to remind himself of his root, meaning the origin of his soul. This is particularly true when donning *tefillin* “between your eyes,”<sup>2</sup> because the tefillin are regarded as a sign—a sign that reminds us according to the *Sefat Emet* of

our true origin. And on Shabbat, when we do not don tefillin,<sup>3</sup> the Shabbat itself is a sign.<sup>4</sup> By remembering our true origin and the reason for which our soul entered this world, we prevent the affairs of the body and the physical world, which are called “dead,” even now, because they stand to die, and all the worries and troubles they carry with them, from distracting us from serving God.

In fact, when one constantly remembers one's origin and allow his focus to be diverted from the true purpose of life—serving God—then the body and the physical world become a source of

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1. Zohar 1:245b and 3:159b.

2. Exodus 13:9; 13:16; and Deuteronomy 6:8.

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3. Eiruvin 96a (and elsewhere).

4. Exodus 31:13 and 17.

abundant blessing and assistance to one's Divine service. This is alluded to in a special Kabbalistic intent. One of the 72 Names of God (למנוח)<sup>5</sup> is understood as an acronym for Rabbi Yochanan's phrase "the purpose of man is to die"<sup>6</sup> (סוף אדם למות). This holy Name is thus a source of contemplation not of death, but of the true purpose of life. However, the value of this Name is 91, also the value of another holy Name (פניא) emerging from the verse, "You open Your hand [and you provide all life with their will]"<sup>7</sup> (פנתח אֶת יָדְךָ וּמְשַׁבֵּיעַ). The numerical equivalence indicates that there is a spiritual parallel between the two Names, which as we said, means that when one remembers that the end of life is death and uses that to focus on the true meaning of life, then one is also blessed with abundant physical blessings that not only will not divert the mind from the main task of life, but will also assist in fulfilling that task.

The opposite of looking to our origin—where all the souls of Israel are in a state of true unity<sup>8</sup>—is each individual's preoccupation with himself alone (in Yiddish this is known as "*far zich*," meaning, "for himself"). Self-involvement and self-centredness ultimately also cause the forbidden acts related to the Torah's

term "*hitgodedut*" (התגודדות), which refers both to self-laceration—when the individual hurts their own body in various ways—and to factionalism—when an individual or a group of individuals breaks off from the rest of the Jewish people, feeling that they do not fit in for whatever reason. Both these types of forbidden acts are the psychological (and even physical) equivalents of producing a bald spot, meaning a divisive void separating the individual or group from the people of Israel.

In this manner, the *Sefat Emet* also explains the Talmudic dictum, "Even if a snake is wound around one's heel, he should not stop praying."<sup>9</sup> One must not let matters of death, which the snake brought into the world when he enticed Eve to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, interrupt a one's prayer and attachment to God. When one can focus properly in this way, then he will merit the fulfillment of the verse, "and you who cling to *Havayah* your God are all alive this day." Not only will you be alive this day, you will be together: you will experience the true meaning of life and you will feel the deeply rooted unity of all Jewish souls. This verse begins with the same pronoun "And you" (אתם) found in the verse, "You are children of *Havayah* your God," upon which this entire contemplation is based. Additionally, the notion of being alive "today," sends us to

5. These 72 Names are formed by taking the letters of three consecutive verses in Exodus (14:19-21) that each has 72 letters. For more on this Name, see our volumes: *What You Need to Know About Kabbalah* and *Body, Mind, and Soul*.

6. *Berachot* 17a.

7. Psalms 145:16.

8. See *Tanya*, ch. 32.

9. *Berachot* 33a.

contemplate the interchange<sup>10</sup> between Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi and the soul of Mashiach about when the Mashiach will come. The Mashiach replied, “today,” which Elijah the Prophet explained was a reference to the verse, “today, if you will heed His voice.”<sup>11</sup>

Let us see some of the mathematical phenomena in this teaching from the *Sefat Emet*. The value of the entire phrase, “Even if a snake is wound around his heel, he should not stop” (אֲפִילוּ נָחָשׁ כָּרוּךְ עַל (עֲקֹבוֹ לֹא יִפְסִיק) is 1300, or 50 times God’s essential Name, Havayah (י-הוה). Since the entire phrase has 25 letters, the average value of each letter is “son” (בֵּן), once again pointing to the verse with which we began, “You are children of Havayah your God.”

Amazingly, 1300 is also the value of the last word in this phrase, “stop” (יִפְסִיק) when written in the form of “run and return” (יָרַח וְשָׁב) meaning that one should stop all extraneous thought, and then he will not stop or divert his consciousness from the true meaning of life and its goal.

It thus emerges that this lower world, the reality we currently inhabit, is the place where we perform the mission of learning the wisdom of royalty. Royalty here is the name of the lowest *sefirah*, which we usually translate as “kingdom” (*malchut*). There is higher wisdom and lower wisdom,<sup>12</sup> referring to mundane

wisdom and supernal, Divine wisdom. Even though it would seem that because mundane wisdom does not come from a Divine source (it comes from spending a lifetime in our world), in truth, we know that the deepest revealed reason for Creation is that “the Holy Blessed One desired to have a dwelling place for Himself specifically in the lower realms.”<sup>13</sup> God’s desire to dwell in the lower realms will be fulfilled in the World of the Resurrection. Thus, the complete picture of life is that our soul descends into the physical world in order to ascend again to the palace of royalty, and to then descend once again into the physical world. But the second descent is into the World of Resurrection, where God will have “swallow[ed] up death forever”<sup>14</sup> then there will no longer be a possibility of making “a bald spot between your eyes for the dead.”

There is also a numerical phenomenon here since the value of “You are children”<sup>15</sup> (בְּנִים אַתֶּם) is the same as “I will be that which I will be”<sup>16</sup> (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה), which

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13. *Tanchuma, Naso* 16.

14. Isaiah 25:8.

15. The value of “children” (בְּנִים) is 102, the same as “faith” (אֱמוּנָה). The letters of “you” (אַתֶּם) permute to spell “truth” (אֱמֶת). The value of “You are children” (בְּנִים אַתֶּם) together with “You are children” written out in full (בֵּית יוֹד תוּ נוֹן וּ נון יוֹד מֶם אֵלֶּף תוּ מֶם) and in the filling of the filling (בֵּית יוֹד תוּ נוֹן וּ נון יוֹד וּ דלת מֶם אֵלֶּף) is 4290, or 3 times 1430, a special number that among other things equals “God is all” and “all is God,” the cognitive pulse of the Jewish soul. Thus, 1430 is the average value of these three methods of calculating “You are children.”

16. Exodus 3:14.

10. *Sanhedrin* 98a.

11. Psalms 95:7.

12. See in length in our volume, *Wisdom: Integrating*



Rashi explains as meaning, “I will be with you in this descent, just as I will be with you in the future descent to come,” but here the word “descent” is interpreted quite literally as the descent of the soul into the physical world (normally, it is understood to mean a descent into exile). [259].

This conceptual scheme for life, this true outlook on life is the essence of the Book of Deuteronomy’s two essential verses that call upon us to “see”: “See, I set before you today a blessing...,”<sup>17</sup> and “See, I have set before you today life and good....”<sup>18</sup> These two verses are

the secret of, “Israel shall then dwell in safety, alone, with the eye of Jacob.”<sup>19</sup> The eye of Jacob alludes to the perspective needed to dwell in safety in this world, isolated from the confusing reality of the physical world, seeing only that which is a blessing, is good, and is life. In fact the word “safety” (בטח) is an acronym for these three concepts “blessing, good, life” (בְּרָכָה טוֹב חַיִּים).<sup>20</sup>

17. Deuteronomy 11:26.

18. Ibid. 30:15.

19. Ibid., 33:28. Note that the word translated here as “eye” (עין) is more commonly rendered “fountain” or “spring.” the derash here deliberately reads it as “eye” for the gematria wordplay with “blessing-good-life.”

20. See our Hebrew volume *Sod HaShem LiYerei'av*, addendum to Gate 1, and elsewhere.



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