

## Parashat Tzav

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר. יְעוֹ אֶת אֶהֱרֹן וְאֶת בְּנָיו לֵאמֹר זֹאת תּוֹרַת הָעֹלָה הוּא הָעֹלָה עַל מִזְבֵּחַ עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כָּל הַלֵּילָה עַד הַבֹּקֶר וְאִשׁ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ תּוֹקֵד בּוֹ. וְלֶבֶשׁ הַכֹּהֵן מִדֹּד בַּד וּמִכְנָסֵי בַד יִלְבַּשׁ עַל בְּשָׂרוֹ וְהָרִים אֶת הַדֶּשֶׁן אֲשֶׁר תֹּאכַל הָאִשׁ אֶת הָעֹלָה עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְשָׂמוּ אֵצֶל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ. וּפָשַׁט אֶת בְּגָדָיו וְלֶבַשׁ בְּגָדִים אֲחֵרִים וְהוֹצִיא אֶת הַדֶּשֶׁן אֶל מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה אֶל מְקוֹם טָהוֹר.

*G-d spoke to Moses, saying: "Command Aaron and his sons, saying: This is the law of the burnt offering. The burnt offering itself shall remain where it is burned upon the altar all night until morning, while the fire on the altar is kept going on it. The priest shall put on his linen garment, and shall put his linen breeches on his flesh, and he collect the ashes to which the fire has reduced the burnt offering on the altar, and place them beside the altar. He shall then take off his garments and put on other garments, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place."*<sup>1</sup>

In this passage, the Torah describes the commandment known as "lifting up the ashes."<sup>2</sup> This was one of the first things done in the daily Temple service, after the fire on the altar had been burning the sacrifices all night. In this ritual, the priest (*kohen*) would collect a certain amount of the ashes on the top of the altar and place them on the ground next to the altar; these ashes would be absorbed into the ground on the spot. This was done every morning. In addition, whenever the ashes on the altar accumulated such that there was no more room on the wood, the priest would collect these ashes and take them outside the camp (or, when the Temple was built in Jerusalem, outside the city walls) and deposit them there.

When he did this, the priest had to wear his regular linen garment. The Arizal discusses the significance of this.

טעמי המצוות, פרשת צו  
הנה כבר בארנו באדרת נשא, סוד תי אלף עלמין  
דכסופין דנהרין מההוא חיוורתא שהם תי שקל כסף,  
והנה הכהן נהיר מהאי חיוורתא כי הוא בסוד הכסף

שער המצוות, פרשת צו  
הנה הכהן הוא בחינת כסף הלבן שבחסד,

*Sha'ar HaMitzvot and Ta'amei HaMitzvot, parashat Tzav*

### **The priest personifies the attributes of silver, the whiteness of *chesed*.**

The Temple service was divided between two classes of the tribe of Levi, the priests (*kohanim*), which were those members of the tribe of Levi who descended directly from Aaron, and the Levites, which were all other members of the tribe. The priests officiated at the offering of the sacrifices while the Levites fulfilled other functions pertinent to the maintenance of the Temple. The Levites also formed a choir and an orchestra that accompanied the offering of certain sacrifices.

Spiritually, a sacrifice consists of both an "upward" and "downward" spiritual movement. The

1. Leviticus 6:1-4.

2. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Tamidim uMusafim* 2:10-15.

animal ascended in flames on the altar, signifying and effecting the elevation of man's animal nature into holiness. This elicited a downward flow of Divine beneficence in response. The priests represented the downward response of the offering, since as a result of the rituals they performed (slaughtering and burning the animal) Divine fire descended from heaven onto the altar to consume the sacrifice. The Levites, in contrast, represented the upward soaring of man's heart – as expressed in the consumption of the sacrifice in the flames – in their music and song.

These two movements reflect the natures of the first and principle two *sefirot* of the emotions: *chesed* ("loving-kindness") and *gevurah* ("strength," "power"). The downward flow of G-d's beneficence into the world expresses His *chesed*, while the ecstatic, upward soaring of the soul expresses the ardent power (*gevurah*) of human love and yearning for G-d expressed in the song accompanying the sacrifice. In terms of color-imagery, the sweet, downward flow of *chesed* is reflected in the pure transparency of water or the purity of the colors white or silver, while the fiery flames of *gevurah* are reflected in the brilliance of red or gold. Accordingly, the two metals silver and gold are associated with the *sefirot* of *chesed* and *gevurah*, respectively.

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ונהיר מהנהו חוורתני דרישא דא"א.

### Shining forth from him is the whiteness of the head of *Arich Anpin*.

Although the emotions are *inspired* by the intellect, they do not originate in the intellect. The intellect is a detached, cold, objective faculty, and therefore cannot produce an emotion, which is an excited, subjective response. All the intellect provides the emotions is their inspiration, that is, the subject material to which the emotion responds. In fact, the greater the intellectual understanding of a given concept, the greater and more intense the emotional response to it. But although the intellect can stimulate, fire, and feed the emotions, it cannot *produce* them, since they are not intellectual by nature.

Therefore, the emotions must have their own independent source in the soul apart from the intellect. This source is in the *partzuf* of *Arich Anpin*, which is higher (and precedes) both the *partzufim* of the intellect (*Abba* and *Ima*) and that of the emotions (*Z'eir Anpin*). And here we see an interesting thing: while in the conscious part of the soul, the intellect is higher and precedes the emotions, in the super-conscious will (*Arich Anpin*), the situation is reversed; the source of the emotions is higher and precedes that of the intellect. In other words, up there in the super-conscious parts of the soul, the emotions are superior to and more "real" than the intellect. It is only in our conscious lives that the intellect is superior to the emotions, because in the process of becoming conscious the emotions suffer a fall in that they become tainted by the ego. But "up there," in our purer selves, our emotions are more the "real thing" than our intellect.

This is reflected in our conscious lives as well, in the fact that the emotions are the true test of a person's personality. It is easy to spout allegiances and philosophies of life on an intellectual level, but the extent to which these have been truly integrated into a person's life becomes evident only when we see how he reacts emotionally to things.

In any case, the root of *chesed* in the super-conscious is the whiteness of *Arich Anpin*.

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וגם החכמה נקרא כהן גדול.

### The *sefirah* of *chochmah* as well is a referent for the high priest.

The high priest was distinguished in a number of ways from the rest of the priests, most markedly by the four extra garments he wore (the breastplate, the *ephod*, the headband, and the robe) and the fact that only he was allowed inside the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctum of the Temple, and only once a year, on Yom Kippur. His relationship to the rest of the priests was analogous to that between the priests and the laity, in that he wore special garments and had both special privileges and special

duties. He was thus the most special of the special, a sort of super-priest, who embodied all the aspects of the priesthood but in a much more absolute way.

Therefore, if a priest in general may be said to be a manifestation of the *sefirah* of *chesed*, the high priest would be the manifestation of the *sefirah* directly above *chesed* on the *sefirah*-tree, and this is *chochmah*.

<p>ולכן לבוש בגדי בד כי ש"ק משקל כסף הם סוד תי עלמין הנז' כמ"ש שם וש"ק בא"ת ב"ש ב"ד וזהו הב"ד שהוא סוד תי עלמין והם כסף שהם סוד החכמה הנקי כהן גדול</p>	<p>ולכן היה לובש בגדי הבר, כמ"ש כתונת בד ילבש כו, כי שק הוא בחינת אותן ארבע מאה עלימין, וב"ד בא"ת ב"ש, הם ש"ק. וזהו סוד לבישת כהן גדול ביום הכפורים בגדי הבר לבנים והבן זה.</p>
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**This is why the high priest had to wear linen clothes on Yom Kippur, as it is written, "he shall wear a holy linen robe..."<sup>3</sup> This is because sackcloth which is linen manifests the 400 worlds. The word for "linen" (*bad*) transforms into the word for "sackcloth" (*sak*) in the system of *atbash*. This is the esoteric meaning of the fact that the high priest dons linen garments on Yom Kippur. Understand this.**

This reference to the 400 worlds, etc., is explained in greater detail in another text, which we will now quote.

The dominant symbolic imagery in this passage is that of hair. Hair is considered to be alive, since it is constantly growing, but the life force it possesses is very limited, since it can be cut without causing any pain to the person. It therefore signifies the transference of a highly limited and diluted level of life force from the area of the body from which it issues.

שער רוח הקודש, כוננת השק

...בענין רישא דא"א שיש שם י"ג נימין דשערי וי"ג חיוורת'... והנה הארבעה חיוורת' עם ד' נימין דשערי הם נמשכים אחורי רישא דא"א ומטו עד רישא דז"א, ונמצא כי אלו השערות הם מכסים על או"א כנז' במקומו,

*Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh, Regarding the Sackloth*

**On the head of *Arich Anpin* there are 13 strands of hair and 13 white, i.e., bald areas.... Four of the white areas together with four strands of hair extend behind and below the head of *Arich Anpin* and reach down to the head of *Z'eir Anpin*. These hairs thus cover *Abba* and *Ima*.**

Thus, *Arich Anpin* – the will – produces hairs, through which its intense spiritual energy is transmitted in a highly diluted form to the lower levels of creation. They bypass the intellect (*Abba* and *Ima*) altogether; the intellect plays no role in the creation of the emotions (*Z'eir Anpin*).

ושם ביארנו, כי ד' נימין וד' חיוורת' אלו, הם בחי' ד' יודיין שיש בהו"ה אחת של ע"ב דמלוי יודיין,

**These four hairs and four white areas are manifestations of the four *yuds* in the *milui* of the Name *Havayah* whose numerical value is 72.**

The Name *Havayah* can be spelled out four different ways, as we mentioned previously (in our discussion of *parashat Terumah*). When is spelled out such that its numerical value is 72, four *yuds* are used. This spelling out of the Name is associated with the *sefirah* of *chochmah*.

וכל אחת כלולה מעשר פעמים עשר, הרי הם תי שהם בגי' ש"ק.

3. Leviticus 16:4. This chapter describes the rites the high priest performs on Yom Kippur.

The numerical value of **each of these four *yud*'s** is 10, and they **each inter-include another 10. This yields 400, which is the numerical value of the word for "sackcloth" (*sak*).**

As we mentioned on a previous occasion, inter-inclusion is the hallmark of holiness.

והנה הנימין הם השערות עצמם של ד' הנימין והחלל שבין נקבי השק הוא בחי ד' חוורתי והם כדמיון נייר חלק לבן. ועליו כתובים האותיות שחורות שהם השערות, ואמנם שם ברישא דאריך הם לבנים כתלג חיזור,

**Now, the strands, i.e., the threads of the sackcloth, manifest the hairs themselves of the above-mentioned four strands of the hair of *Arich Anpin*, while the holes in between the threads of the sackcloth manifest the four white spaces. The latter look like white paper on which is written black letters, i.e., the dark hairs. And in fact, on the head of *Arich Anpin* they are as white as white snow.**

ויש כנגדם בקליפות של עולם האצ"י ת' אחרים והם סומקים, ונקרא אדרת שער של עשו אדמוני,

**Corresponding to these, in the realm of evil opposite the world of *Atzilut*, there are 400 red hairs. These are called the "garment of hair"<sup>4</sup> of the red-haired Esau.**

Almost all aspects of the created order have corresponding entities in the realm of evil, as it is written, "You have made one opposite the other."<sup>5</sup> This is in order to afford man the possibility of free choice. Nonetheless, the choice is weighted in favor of good and holiness, as the ensuing discussion will demonstrate.

Whereas Abraham personified the Divine attribute of *chesed*, Isaac personified *gevurah*. Esau, the son of Isaac, personified the fallen, evil aspect of *gevurah*. He is therefore associated with the color red.

כמו שהודעתך, כי בקליפות של עולם האצ"י, לא נתקנו רק הקליפות שהם כנגד ז'ו"ן, שהם בחי עשו הרשע ואשתו, אבל באו"א דקליפות דאצ"י. לא היה בחי תיקון פרצוף, רק בחי נקודות, ע"ד מה שהיה באותם מלכין קדמאין קודם שנתקנו,

**This accords with what I have taught you, that in the evil realm opposite the world of *Atzilut*, the only evil that has been rectified is that opposite *Z'eir Anpin* and its *Nukva*, which are the archetypes of the wicked Esau and his wife. But the evil that is opposite *Abba* and *Ima* of the world of *Atzilut* did not undergo the rectification process of becoming a *partzuf*, but rather remained simple points, similar to how the primordial kings i.e., the *sefirot* of *Tohu*, were before they were rectified.**

Herein lies the essential superiority of intellect over emotion. Whereas the evil emotions (evil love, hatred, etc.) can function harmoniously (i.e., behave as a *partzuf*), the evil intellect cannot. On the side of evil, then, intellect is always subservient to emotions, that is, it serves simply as a way to justify and rationalize the emotions (and devise plans to satisfy them) rather than as a way to direct or influence them. In contrast, since the holy intellect can behave as *partzufim*, it has the power of its combined elements working together and can therefore influence the emotions.

וכבר ידעת, כי בקדושה הוצרכו ענין השערות, כי כל זה הוא לצורך תקון להמעיש האור שימשך דרך צנורות

4. Genesis 25:25.

5. Ecclesiastes 7:14.

השערות בדקות גדול, ויוכלו התחתונים לקבל האור, ולא יתבטלו וימותו כבתחלה.

**Now, you already know that in the holy side of creation there must be hairs in order to achieve proper rectification, that is, in order to diminish the light such that it can be channeled through the tubes of the hairs in a highly filtered way. This is necessary in order that the lower realms be able to bear the light without being nullified and dying, as happened originally.**

ואמנם ענין אלו השערות שהם מכלל ענין התקון לא נמצא בקליפות דאצ"י שכנגד או"א רק במה שהוא כנגד זו"ן, והם עשו ואשתו,

**The concept of these hairs, which form part of the rectification process, are not to be found in the evil that is opposite *Abba* and *Ima* of the world of *Atzilut*, only in the evil opposite *Z'eir Anpin* and its *Nukva*, which are the archetypes of Esau and his wife.**

Hair, as an element of rectification, appears only in the context of a *partzuf*.

ומה שהיו השערות בקדושה באו"א, היו בקליפי דזו"ן, ולכן יצא עשו כלו כאדרת שער אדמוני, אבל יעקב שהוא ז"א שבקדושה, היה איש חלק, כי כבר נתקן כל האצ"י ולכן בחי השערות אינם אלא באו"א, ויעקב נשאר איש חלק,

**The phenomenon of hair which occurs in the realm of holiness at the level of *Abba* and *Ima* occurs in the realm of evil at the level opposite *Z'eir Anpin* and its *Nukva*. This is why Esau was born entirely covered with red hair, while Jacob—who was the archetype of *Z'eir Anpin* of holiness—was not hairy.<sup>6</sup> This is because the entirety of *Atzilut* is completely rectified, and therefore hair is necessary only at the level of *Abba* and *Ima*, leaving Jacob, i.e., *Z'eir Anpin*, without hair.**

The intensity of light at the level of *Z'eir Anpin*—the emotions—is dim enough that there is no “danger” of it producing hair. The evil life force that will be channeled into the world as a result of this hair (i.e., that of Esau, the evil *Z'eir Anpin*) will be enough to sustain the realm of evil, but not enough to empower it to perpetrate its designs on creation. As we said above, the existence of a minimal amount of evil in the world is necessary in order to afford man free choice.

ואלו הם סוד וארבע מאות איש עמו, שהם תמורת תי הנז' אשר נקראים תי שקל כסף,

**This is the mystical meaning of the 400 men who accompanied Esau.<sup>7</sup> They correspond to the 400 levels mentioned above, which in turn are referred to as the 400 silver shekels with which Abraham paid for the Machpelah cave.<sup>8</sup>**

והנה הקליפי רצתה להתגבר ולהתקן ג"כ עד למעלה בקליפה שכנגד א"א ואו"א דאצ"י, ולהמשיך משם בחי שערות כמו שהם בקדושה. וזשי"ה אם תגביה כנשר ואם בין כוכבים שים קנך משם אורידיך נאם ה', כי אם ח"ו יהיה תקון זה גם בקליפה שכנגד א"א ואו"א יחרב העולם,

**Now, the forces of evil seek to overcome this situation and undergo the rectification process of becoming a *partzuf* as well all the way up to the levels that are opposite**

6. Genesis 27:11.

7. Ibid. 32:7.

8. Ibid. 23:16.

**Arich Anpin, Abba, and Ima of Atzilut, and thus be able to channel their light through hairs the same way as is done in the side of holiness. Referring to this, Scripture states: "If you will ascend like an eagle, and put your nest amongst the stars, I will pull you down from there, says G-d."<sup>9</sup> For if—G-d forbid—evil would be allowed to undergo this rectification process at the levels of *Arich Anpin, Abba and Ima*, the world would be destroyed!**

That is, a contraction of the life force of holiness through the channel of hair to the realm of evil would be disastrous at these levels, since the intensity of their light is much greater than that of *Z'eir Anpin*. Transmission of life force this way from them to the realm of evil would grant evil much too much power.

והנה כשמששים האדם שק על מתניו, גורם תשות כח באותם ת' שערות שהם כמנין ש"ק, וגם הם דומים לש"ק, כי הש"ק מן שערות הוא נעשה, ואז גורם שאותן השערות העליונות יתלבנו כתלג חיוור, ואז אותם ת' חוורת' שהם בתוכן, הנק' ארבע מאות שקל כסף שהם בחי' הלבנונית, והמקום החלק שבין נקבי השק, יאירו דרך נקבי השק,

**Now, when a person puts sackcloth on his loins, he weakens the power of those 400 hairs whose numerical value is that of the word for "sackcloth." This is so also because these hairs are similar to sackcloth, which is made out of strands of hair-like material. He causes these supernal hairs to be whitened like white snow, and then the 400 white areas between them, called the 400 silver shekels, together with the energy in the empty holes between the strands of the sackcloth will shine forth through the holes in the sackcloth.**

ויחזור השק לבן ככסף, וחוזרים להיות בחי' כתונת בד קדש ילבש. כי ב"ד בא"ת ב"ש הוא ש"ק.

**The sackcloth will then become white like silver, and become like the holy linen tunic worn by the High Priest on Yom Kippur. For the word for "linen" (*bad*) transforms into the word for "sackcloth" (*sak*) in the system of *atbash*.**

Thus ends our citation from elsewhere in the writings of the Arizal. We now return to the original texts we began with.

והנה עתה בתרומת הדשן, ג"כ היה לובש בגדי הבר, לפי שגם בקליפה יש אלו הבחינות הארבע מאות הנזכר, בסוד עשו, שנאמר בו וארבע מאות איש עמו. כמבואר אצלנו בשער רוה"ק, בענין תיקון לבישת השק ואותם נקרא שק.

**Now, when an ordinary priest performed the duty of "lifting up the ashes" of the altar, he also had to wear a linen garment.**

The truth is that the priestly garments (other than those of the high priest) were all of linen, and all the priests wore these linen garments whenever they performed any of the rites in the Temple. However, it is interesting to note that the fact that they were made of linen is not specifically mentioned when the commandment to prepare these garments is given (Exodus 28), but it *is* mentioned here, with regard to the commandment of "lifting up the ashes." This would seem to indicate that the fact that

9. Obadiah 1:4.

the priestly garments were made of linen is somehow intrinsically connected to this *mitzvah*.

והנה הדשן, הוא האפר הנעשה משיורי קדושת המזבח  
וסיגיה, ולא נשאר בו רק אפר כעין עפר,

**The ashes are produced by the residual holiness of the altar and its inassimilable elements, such that what is left is only ash, similar to dust.**

The fact that in the process of burning the sacrifice there is a part of the animal that cannot ascend on high, i.e., the ash, indicates that this element of the animal cannot be assimilated into holiness.

ובהוצאתו חוץ למחנה היה לובש בגדי בד, כדי לכיין  
אל השק הנזכר.

**When he removed this element, the priest had to wear linen garments in order to accomplish that which was described above in reference to the sackcloth.**

In other words, removing the residue of the sacrifice that could not be assimilated into Divinity is analogous to neutralizing the 400 evil hairs of Esau, which provide sustenance for the forces of evil.

In Chassidut, the Kabbalistic dynamic just described is translated into psychological terms reflected and relevant to daily life, as follows: The sacrificial service is paralleled by the process of prayer. In both cases, the animal elements of man are elevated and refined by the fiery passion of the heart aroused by singing G-d's praises and contemplating His infinity. However, also in both cases, there is an element of residual animal life force that cannot be elevated. In man, this is "ash" is the depression he feels over his own animal nature after having experienced the transcendence of Divine reality in prayer. Feeling the closeness of G-d and the ecstasy of ascent *should* grant a person enough frustration with his material nature to inspire him to work on it, but not throw him into depression over it. Depression, though not an explicit sin, is the gateway to all other sins, since it engenders despair and hopelessness. How tragic it would be for the holy experience of prayer and Divine closeness to leave a person with the dejected feeling of his own worthlessness that would in turn make him give up!

Thus, before he even begins to pray, he should separate himself from this negativity, this leftover ash that will result from his ardent, fiery service of G-d. Therefore we read this passage of the Bible before morning prayers, in order that it be as if we performed this rite in the Temple. We are thus protected, with G-d's help, from any negative side effects of ecstatic meditation and prayer.