

## Parashat VaEtchanan

וְאֶתְחַנֵּן אֵלֹהִים בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר....

"I supplicated to G-d at that time, saying...."

*Parashat VaEtchanan* begins with Moses' description of how he pleaded with G-d to let him enter the land of Israel.

ספר הלקוטים, פרשת ואתחנן דע, כי מן הארץ לרקיע יש ת"ק שנים,		לקוטי תורה, פרשת ואתחנן דע, כי יש מלאך ממונה על התפלות, ומעלה אותן מן הארץ עד לרקיע שהוא מהלך ת"ק שנה
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*Likutei Torah and Sefer HaLikutim, parashat VaEtchanan*

**Know, that there is an angel appointed over prayers, who elevates them from earth to heaven, this being a journey of five hundred years.**

"From earth to heaven is a journey of five hundred years; from one heaven to the next is a journey of five hundred years; and the width of each heaven is a journey of five hundred years." "The height of the hooves of the heavenly beasts is also a journey of five hundred years."<sup>2</sup> The significance of the five hundred years is understood to be the five principle *sefirot* of the *midot* (*chesed, gevurah, tiferet, netzach, and hod*) as they each inter-include ten sub-*sefirot* and each of these ten sub-*sefirot* inter-include ten sub-sub-*sefirot* ( $5 \times 10 \times 10 = 500$ ).

והם בסוד י"ה.		והוא מעלה אותן בכח שם י"ה שעמו צייר הש"י עולמים
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**He elevates them with the power of the Divine Name *Kah*, which G-d used to form the worlds.**

Isaiah 26:4 is usually translated: "Trust in G-d forever, for in *Kah*, [who is] G-d, is the everlasting rock." However, the prefix translated here as "in" can also mean "through" or "by," the Divine Name *Kah* is spelled *yud-hei*, the word for "rock" (*tzur*) can also be taken as a verb meaning "to form," and the word for "everlasting" (*olamim*) can be taken to mean "worlds." Thus, the verse can be mystically translated as: "Trust in G-d forever, for with the letters *yud* and *hei* G-d formed the worlds." Based on this (and other verses), the sages say that G-d created this world with the letter *hei* and the world to come with the letter *yud*.<sup>3</sup> Thus, it follows that G-d "used" the Divine Name *Kah*, i.e., the two letters *yud-hei*, to create the two worlds: this world and the next.

ועל אותן המלאכים המעלים התפלות נאמר ורגליהם רגל ישר"ה		והנה היו מלאכים, שהם ממונים להעלות התפלה, שעליהם נאמר ורגליהם רגל ישר"ה,
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**Concerning these angels that elevate prayers, it is written, "their legs are a straight leg."<sup>4</sup>**

1. Deuteronomy 3:23.

2. *Chagigah* 13a; *Pesachim* 94b.

3. *Menachot* 29b.

4. *Ezekiel* 1:7.

Angels in general are depicted as having one, straight leg. Since angels are personified Divine attributes or facets of consciousness, they are static; they do not grow, develop, or progress in any way. (If they would, they would cease to be what they are and turn into a different angel.) So, they therefore have no need for any means of walking, and their “leg” serves only as a pedestal to stand on. Thus, one leg is enough, and they have no knee to bend it since they do not need to move it.

שעולה ת"ק י"ה שעולה ת"ק שנה בחיי י"ה | שעולה ת"ק י"ה.

**The numerical value of the word for “straight” (*yesharah*, 515) is equal to 500 plus the numerical value of the Name *Kah* (15), corresponding to the 500-year journey from earth to heaven and the Name *Kah* used to take the prayers on this journey.**

*Yesharah*: *yud-shin-reish-hei* = 10 + 300 + 200 + 5 = 515.

*Kah*: *yud-hei* = 10 + 5 = 15.

לז"א ואתחנן שעולה תקי"ה | ולכן אמר ואתחנן, שעולה ת"ק י"ה,

**This is why Moses chose to describe his prayers with the word *va-etchanan*, meaning “and I supplicated,” for its numerical value is the same as that of the word “straight.”**

*VaEtchanan*: *vav-alef-tav-chet-nun-nun* = 6 + 1 + 400 + 8 + 50 + 50 = 515.

Elsewhere, Moses describes his prayers using the usual verb for prayer, *l'hitpalel*. The exceptional use of the verb “to supplicate” (*l'hitchanen*) thus invites homiletical interpretation.

שחליתי פני מלאכים שיעלו תפלתי העולה כמנין | שחליתי פני המלאכים שיעלו תפלתי, העולה גימטריא ואתחנן ותפלה עולה תקי"ה | ואתחנן.

**Meaning to say, “I entreated the angels to elevate my prayer through the process alluded to by the number 515, the value of the word *va-etchanan*.” The numerical value of the word for “prayer” (*tefilah*) is also 515.**

*Tefilah*: *tav-pei-lamed-hei* = 400 + 80 + 30 + 5 = 515.

וזהו בעת ההיא היינו בעת שהתפללות עולין ע"י | המלאכים המעלין התפלה ע"י שם י"ה.

**The next words in the verse, “at that time,” thus refer to the time when the angels elevate the prayers via the Name *Kah*.**



וַיִּתְעַבֵּר ה' בִּי לְמַעַנְכֶם וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֵלַי וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֵלַי רַב לָךְ אֵל תּוֹסֵף דַּבֵּר אֵלַי עוֹד בְּדַבַּר הַזֶּה.

“G-d became angry with me on your account and did not listen to me. G-d said to me: ‘Enough! Speak to Me no more about this.’”<sup>5</sup>

5. Deuteronomy 3:26.

This was G-d's response to Moses' plea.

As we have explained elsewhere, **the mixed multitude derive from the evil aspect of Moses. They issued prematurely and were not properly rectified first, so they sinned.**

When the Jews, led by Moses, left Egypt, Moses acceded to take along a "mixed multitude" of non-Jews with them. Although his intentions were good, these people had not been fully educated about the ways of Judaism and the path of the Torah, and so they made numerous errors in judgment throughout Israel's trek in the desert, often drawing the Jewish people into their errors as well.

We have defined evil as consciousness not sufficiently oriented toward and focused on G-d, or worse, oriented away from or against G-d. Just as with people, who must undergo a selfish period of childhood in order to develop their sense of self before emerging into the mature, adult world, so must any revelation of Divinity, or any soul, undergo a maturation process before it can descend into the world. Although the soul will mature again during its lifetime as it goes through childhood, etc., this is a second stage of development. Thus, to a certain extent, the character of the individual is already developed during its fetal life.

The mixed multitude thus reflected this idea of premature introduction into holiness. Insecure in their sense of self, they were not ready to abandon it in favor of the truth to which they were being elevated.

Moses, as a leader, should have known that this was the case. But his acceptance of the mixed multitude reflected a weakness on his part, an unwarranted tolerance and acceptance of that which is imperfect and unripe, erroneously allowing it to take part in mature, adult life before its time.

(Perhaps this over-fascination with the raw, the untamed, and the immature echoes Isaac's fascination with and preference of Esau over Jacob, as well as modern society's worship and indulgence of youth at the expense of its reverence and appreciation of the wisdom of age.)

**G-d did not want to accept these unfit converts.** Had they not joined the Jewish people, **there would have been no death or exile, as it is written, "The tablets were the work of G-d, and the writing was the writing of G-d, chiseled on the tablets."**<sup>6</sup>

When the Torah was first given, the spiritual impurity caused by the sin of the tree of knowledge was removed from the world. Thus, the word for "chiseled" (*charut*) can be interpreted to mean "freedom" (*cheirut*); the tablets freed the world from the sentence of death and its spiritual analog, exile.<sup>7</sup> The mixed multitude, however, perpetrated the sin of the Golden Calf, which reintroduced this impurity or self-orientation into the world.

**But Moses accepted them, thinking that it would be good to absorb them into holiness.**

This way, Moses reasoned, their unrefined power could be harnessed for holy purposes. Their desire to join the Jewish people seemed to indicate their readiness for this.

**He especially wanted to accept them because they were somewhat important to him, as it is written "the people in whose midst I am,"<sup>8</sup> and "the people at your**

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6. Exodus 32:16.

7. *Avot* 6:2; *Eiruvin* 54a; *Shemot Rabbah* 32:1.

8. Numbers 11:21.

feet.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, he sought to rectify them. But on the contrary, they ruined Israel, as it written, “Go, descend, for your people who you brought up out of Egypt have corrupted....”<sup>10</sup> It does not say “have been corrupted” but “have corrupted,” meaning, “have corrupted others,” i.e., Israel.

In this verse, the verb “corrupt” is transitive. Furthermore, G-d tells Moses about *his* people, that *he*, not G-d, brought up out of Egypt, referring to the mixed multitude.

**Moses therefore had to die, in order to ascend on high and receive G-d’s beneficence. There is therefore no generation without a leader like Moses.**

In order to right the wrong he caused, Moses’ trans-generational job is to rectify the ongoing impurity of the mixed multitude, until it is fully matured. He therefore belongs spiritually to the pre-redemptive generation of the desert and could not pass over the Jordan river to lead the next generation in the conquest of the land of Israel. Aspects of his soul return as the leader of each generation in order to rectify the spiritual heirs of the mixed multitude. In order to do this, his soul, each time, has to accrue extra spiritual power, and this it does by staying in the womb of *Ima* for a longer than usual period, as the Arizal now explains:

**When he emerges the union of *Abba* and *Ima*, he remains impregnated in the womb of *Ima* for twelve months. This is alluded to by (1) in the phrase “And G-d became angry *at me* on your account,” the word “became angry” can be read “made me re-enter the state of pregnancy,” (2) that the fact that the numerical value of the word for “at me” in this phrase is 12, and (3) that the initials of this phrase spell the word for “jubilee,” which is an appellation of *binah*, as is known.**

“At me”: *bi*: *beit-yud* = 2 + 10 = 12.

“And G-d became angry at me on your account”: *Vayitaber YKVK bi le-ma’anchem*: *vav-yud-beit-lamed*.

“Jubilee” [*yovel*]: *yud-vav-beit-lamed*.

The jubilee is the fiftieth year, and there are fifty “gates” of *binah*.

**When Moses was born the first time, however, he required a pregnancy of only seven months, because his soul did not require so much maturation.**

When Moses was born, his mother Yocheved hid him for three months, after which she put him in a basket in the river. If she hid him from the Egyptian authorities successfully for three months, why did she not continue to hide him? Our sages answer that Moses was born in the seventh month, and the Egyptian authorities came to inspect her home only nine months after her remarriage to Amram, Moses’ father.<sup>11</sup>

The fact that he was born early means, according to our above discussion, that Moses’ soul did not require the full gestation period of nine months in order to reach the level of maturity necessary for birth into this world, since it was *a priori* a superior soul.

9. Exodus 11:8.

10. Ibid. 32:7.

11. See Rashi on Exodus 2:3.

**Understand this, for *binah* includes the twelve signs of the zodiac. These are alluded to in the word *binah* itself, the first two letters of which (*beit-yud*) have the numerical value of 12. The numerical value of the third letter of *binah*, *nun*, is fifty, alluding to the fifty gates of *binah*, and the last letter of *binah*, *hei*, alludes to the five states of *chesed* or *gevurah* that exist within *binah*.**

*Binah*, the central *sefirah* of the intellect, is the “mother” of the emotions, which emerge from its “womb.” The six emotions from *chesed* to *yesod* define a three-dimensional space (two directions for each dimension), since emotion implies relationship with an other, and this requires a “space” in which to occur. The three-dimensional cube is formed with 12 lines. These twelve lines are seen as the spiritual source of the twelve months of the year and their associated zodiacal signs.

The five states of *chesed* or *gevurah* within *binah* are the precursors of the five principle *sefirot* of the emotions, *chesed*, *gevurah*, *tiferet*, *netzach*, and *hod*. They are the latent propensities of intellectual analysis to produce emotional response to the subject being studied.

**This the meaning of the words “G-d became angry with me on your account.” Moses was speaking to the mixed multitude present at the assembly.**

The verse thus reads mystically: “G-d made me return to the fetal state because I decided to accept you.”

**Alternatively, we can say that he was speaking to the Jewish people, and the words “on your account” mean “in order to rectify you.”**

In this case, the verse reads: G-d made me return to the fetal state and be reborn in order to rectify you.”

## 2

וַיִּתְעַבֵּר ה' בִּי לְמַעַנְכֶם וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֵלַי....

“G-d became angry with me because of you, and did not listen to me...”<sup>12</sup>

The word used here for “became angry” (*yitaber*) is unusual, and is etymologically derived from the word for “pregnancy” (*ibur*). This is the basis for the Arizal’s mystical interpretation of this verse.

<p style="text-align: center;">לקוטי תורה, פרשת ואתחנן</p> <p>כבר ידעת כי משה יש לו בחי' קטנות וגדלות וכן כל הנשמות כולם הם דוגמת ז"א שי שלו עיבור וקטנות וגדלות,</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">שער הפסוקים, פרשת ואתחנן</p> <p>כבר הודעתך, כי בדוגמא שיש בז"א, בחי', עיבור, ויניקה, ומוחין דגדלות. כן לכל הנשמות יש גי' בחי' אלו.</p>
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*Sha'ar HaPesukim and Likutei Torah, parashat VaEtchanan*

**As you know, *Z'eir Anpin* develops through three states of consciousness: fetal (*ibur*), suckling (*yenikah*), and mature (*gadlut*). Similarly, every soul develops through these states of consciousness.**

Physically, a person develops through three stages of deriving nourishment: When he exists as an embryo inside his mother’s womb, he is nourished directly through her. When he is a suckling infant,

12. Deuteronomy 3:26.

he still receives his nourishment from his mother but does so through his own active involvement. After he is weaned, he eats on his own. Similarly, the mentality of the soul undergoes the same three-stage development process. This process initially occurs in tandem with the physical development, that is, in the embryonic stage, the soul functions at the level of fetal consciousness; in the nursing stage, the soul functions at the level of suckling consciousness; and after weaning, the soul achieves mature consciousness. But relatively, an individual can experience and pass through these three stages on different levels during the course of his life.

Both the physical phenomenon of these three stages and the mental/spiritual phenomenon experienced by the soul derive from the parallel process that occurs in the development of the *partzuf* of *Z'eir Anpin*. Let us remember that *Z'eir Anpin* is the *partzuf* of the *midot*, the emotions. Thus, the mental development of the individual is measured by the nature of the relationship between his intellect and his emotions.

In other words, when an idea is first conceived in the mind (as an insight of *chochmah*) and then developed (in *binah*), the emotional reaction that will result from this idea is not yet evident; it is only there *in potentia* within the idea. We may therefore consider the idea to be “pregnant” with the emotion it will give rise to. The fetal position of the child in the womb is such that the lower limbs are crouched under the rest of the body, indicating that his potential, full stature cannot yet manifest itself. “Fetal consciousness” is thus purely intellectual – emotions exist only in potential.

Once an idea is fully developed, it can give birth to its inherent emotional reaction. When a child is still young, his understanding of life is immature and the emotions produced by his intellect are directly tied to their source. As long as he is aware that something is desirable, he wants it, and nothing can mitigate the intensity of his desire. As long as he is aware that something else is harmful, he is afraid of it, and nothing can mitigate his fear or loathing of that thing. “Suckling consciousness” is thus a more mature stage than “fetal consciousness” in that the intellect is expressing itself through the emotions, but this occurs still in a relatively immature way.

As he matures, the child’s intellect expands and he can view the desirability or undesirability of a thing in a much broader context, e.g., long-term consequences, immediate effects on those around him, and so on. Thus, at this stage, his emotional response reflects a much deeper and broader understanding of the issues at hand. This is full, “mature consciousness.”

והנה כפי זכיות הדור, כן הקב"ה נותן חכמה בפרנס  
של הדור. ולכן כאשר חטאו ישראל, גרמו שהפרנס  
שלהם, שהוא משה יחזור לבחי' עיבור, ויאבד שאר  
ההארות שהיו לו בתחלה, של בחי' יניקה וגדלות, ולא  
היתה בו רק הארת בחי' העיבור בלבד. ואז שכח כל  
אותם ההלכות, שהיה יודע כנודע

וסוד הענין כי הלא הש"י נותן חכמה בפרנס  
הדור וכאשר חטאו ישראל בעגל גרמו שיחזור  
משה בסוד העיבור והפסיד שאר הארות שהיו לו ולא  
היה לו רק בחי' הארת עיבור לבד וחזר לקטנותו,

**Now, G-d blesses the leader of every generation with wisdom concomitant with the collective refinement of the generation.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, when Israel sinned in the incident of the Golden Calf, they caused their leader, Moses, to regress to fetal consciousness and lose whatever “lights” he had achieved until then. He was thus bereft of his suckling and mature consciousness, and was left only with fetal consciousness.**

When Israel sinned, they revealed a deep-seated fault in the way they conceived of reality. Their consciousness had to therefore regress back to its “prenatal” stage in order to be refreshed from the source. In their wake, Moses also suffered a similar regression.

13. *Arachin* 17a.

The Torah alludes to this when G-d tells Moses after the sin of the Golden Calf, “Go down, for your people, who you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted [themselves].”<sup>14</sup> Our sages say this means: “Descend from your greatness, for I have given you greatness only on their account.”<sup>15</sup> “At that moment, Moses was expelled from the heavenly court.”<sup>16</sup>

At this point in the version of the text as it appears in *Sha'ar HaPesukim*, the following sentence appears: “He [i.e., Moses] then forgot all those laws that he had previously known, as is known.” On this, Rabbi Wolf Ashkenazi<sup>17</sup> notes that there is no tradition of our sages that has reached us to the effect that Moses forgot any laws as a result of the sin of the Golden Calf. (There are a few incidents recorded in the Torah in which Moses forgot certain laws, but, as Rashi points out, this always was a result of his becoming angry, not because of the sin of the Golden Calf.) However, it is recorded in the *Zohar*<sup>18</sup> that as a result of this sin G-d denuded Moses of a thousand “lights.” The Arizal himself makes reference to this passage in other places.<sup>19</sup>

<p>וידעת, כי בחיי עיבורו של ז"א, היא בתוך אימא עילאה, הנקראת יובל, ולכן ר"ת, ויתעבר יהוה יבי למענכם, ר"ת יוב"ל.</p>	<p>והנה העיבור של ז"א הוא תוך אמא עילאה בבטנה וזהו ויתעבר י"י ב"י למענכם</p>
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**Now, *Z'eir Anpin* spends its fetal period in the womb of *Ima*, which is also known as the “jubilee.” Therefore, the initials of the four Hebrew words that make up the verse, “And G-d became angry with me because of you”—*va-yitaber y-k-v-k bi lema' anchem*—may be permuted to spell the word for “jubilee” (*yovel, y-v-b-l*).**

*Ima* is, of course, the *partzuf* of *binah*, and we are taught that there are fifty “gates” of *binah* (“understanding”). These fifty gates are seen to comprise the seven emotions inter-included of each other ( $7 \times 7 = 49$ ) plus one additional, transcendent level. This division into  $49 + 1$  is reflected in the fifty-year agricultural cycle, which is composed of seven 7-year sabbatical cycles ( $7 \times 7 = 49$ ) followed by a fiftieth super-sabbatical, the jubilee year. Thus, just as the fiftieth level of understanding, that of pure *binah* is above and transcends the other 49, so is the jubilee year—the transcendent year that stands apart from the seven sabbatical cycles—an appellate for the level of pure *binah*.

As we said, the verse “And G-d became angry with me because of you” may be understood to mean “and G-d made me regress into the fetal state because of you.” If onto this meaning we superimpose the allusion hidden in the initials of the four words that compose this verse, we have: “And G-d made me regress into the fetal state, i.e., return into the womb of *Ima*, which is called ‘jubilee,’ because of you.”

<p>כי חזר משה, להכנס בסוד העיבור, תוך אימא עילאה, הנקראת יובל. ושם ההוייה הכתובה בפסוק הזה, הוא בסוד אימא, וזהו ויתעבר הי ב"י.</p>	<p>כי חזר משה לכנס תוך שם הוייה שהוא אמא עילאה ונתעברה ממנו פעם אחרת לכן הוא ר"ת יוב"ל כי אמא עילאה נקרא יובל היא שנת הגי שנה</p>
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**Thus, Moses regressed and re-entered, i.e., re-impregnated, *Ima*, which is termed “jubilee.” The Name *Havayah* in this verse signifies the *partzuf* of *Ima*. This is the mystical meaning of the phrase, “And G-d became angry with me.”**

This phrase may thus be read, “The *partzuf* of *Ima*—signified by the Name *Havayah*, G-d—became

14. Exodus 32:7.

15. *Berachot* 32a.

16. *Midrash Tanchuma*, *ad loc.* This and the previous comment are quoted by Rashi *ad loc.*

17. *Haga'ot veChidushim ad loc.*

18. 2:58a

19. *Sha'ar HaPesukim* on Leviticus 1:1 and Exodus 34:33

pregnant [again] with me.”

וזהו למענכם, כי עונות הדור, גורמים כך אל הפרנס | כי כמו שהעונות גורמים לחהזיר ז"א לסוד העיבור כן  
שלחם. | ג"כ לפרנסי הדור.

**This happened “because of you,” for, as we said, just as the sins of the generation cause the *partzuf* of *Z'eir Anpin* to return to the womb of *Ima*, so do they cause this to happen to the leaders of the generation.**



שער הפסוקים, פרשת ואתחנן

עוד נוכל לפרש, במה שנתבאר אצלינו, בפסוק דודי ירד לגנו, כי כשהשי"ת לוקח הצדיקים מן העה"ז, הם נעשים לו מלבוש אחד, והוא מתעבר ומתלבש בתוכם,

*Sha'ar HaPesukim, parashat VaEtchanan*

**We may also explain this passage based how we have explained the verse “My beloved went down to his garden, to the bed of spices, to browse in the gardens and pick lilies.”<sup>20</sup> The initials of the words for “to browse in the gardens and pick lilies” (*lir'ot baganim velilkot shoshanim, lamed-beit-vav-shin*) spell the word for “garment” (*levush*). When G-d becomes angry with Israel and takes the righteous from this world, the latter are transformed into a garment for Him, and He becomes, so to speak, impregnated within them and encloded within them.**

When the righteous pass away, they serve as channels of Divine influence and beneficence to the followers they had when they were alive. In the case of a leader of the generation, his afterlife influence extends to the whole generation. In this sense, G-d acts through (i.e., is garbed in) these righteous individuals, and His Divine beneficence is channeled through their souls. This allows the Divinity to flow into the world in a matter tailored to the needs of the generation.

וזהו ויתעבר ה' בי למענכם, כי בחטאתיכם נאספתי מן העולם קודם זמני.

**The mystical meaning of the verse “And G-d became angry with me because of you” is now, in this context: “And G-d became impregnated within me on your account—for on account of your sins I was gathered up from this world before my time.”**

Rabbi Shalom Sharabi notes: Even though Moses was still alive when he said this, he was referring to what would happen when he would die. (The whole book of Deuteronomy is Moses' farewell address to the Jewish people, and was said during the 37 days before he passed away.) Alternatively, it may refer to the expanded consciousness (the “thousand lights” mentioned above) that he lost on account of the sin of the Golden Calf. This loss of consciousness was a sort of “death.”

הנה יב"ח הם בשנה, כמנין ו"ו במילואה. וכשהשנה מעוברת, היא מן י"ג חדשים, והוא בסוד וא"ו,

**Now, there are twelve months in a year; this number is the numerical value of the letter *vav* when it is spelled out with another *vav*. In a leap year, there are thirteen months, this number being the numerical value of the letter *vav* when it**

20. Song of Songs 6:2.

### is spelled out *vav-alef-vav*.

The *vav* is spelled *vav-vav* in the spelling of the Name *Havayah* whose numerical values is 52, while it is spelled *vav-alef-vav* in the spelling of the Name *Havayah* whose numerical value is 45. As we have mentioned previously, the 52-value Name is associated with the *sefirah* of *malchut* (or the *partzuf* of *Nukva*), while the 45-value Name is associated with the *midot* (or the *partzuf* of *Z'eir Anpin*).

והנה משה הוא בסוד וא"ו, שהוא בת"ת,

### Moses is associated with the letter *vav* spelled *vav-alef-vav*, which indicates the *sefirah* of *tiferet*.

Moses, as we saw above, is in the present context the earthly personification of *Z'eir Anpin*, the pivot *sefirah* of which is *tiferet*.

וכבר ידעת, כי אין מעברין אלא חדש אדר, ולהורות זה העיבור, מת משה בחדש אדר.

### The month added in a leap year is always *Adar*. This explains why Moses passed away in the month of *Adar*: his death alluded to this phenomenon.

Moses passed away specifically in the month associated with the leap year, to indicate that he is associated with the spelling of the letter *vav* whose numerical value is 13, the number of months in such years. Furthermore, the Hebrew term for “leap year” (*shannah me'uberet*) literally means “impregnated year,” i.e., the year is “impregnated” with an additional month. Thus, Moses’ passing away in the “impregnated” month alludes to the fact that when the righteous die, G-d becomes “impregnated” within them in order to channel His Divinity into the world most effectively, as we said.

It is perhaps significant that the Arizal himself passed away on the 5<sup>th</sup> of the Hebrew month *Av*, during the week when this portion of the Torah is read.

## 3

וַיִּתְעַבֵּר ה' בִּי לְמַעַנְכֶם וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֵלַי וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֵלַי רַב לָךְ אֵל תּוֹסֵף דְבַר אֵלַי עוֹד בְּדַבֵּר הַזֶּה.

“G-d grew angry with me because of you, and did not listen to me. G-d said to me, ‘It is enough for you; do not continue to speak to Me anymore about this.’”<sup>21</sup>

The Arizal discusses the meaning of the words, “it is enough for you” (*rav lach*), which can also mean “you have a teacher.”

לקוטי תורה, פרשת ואתחנן  
כי בתחלה היה רבן של כל נביאים

ספר הלקוטים, פרשת ואתחנן  
כי בתחלה היה רבן של נביאים,

*Sefer HaLikutim and Likutei Torah, parashat VaEtchanan*

### This means that Moses was originally the teacher of all other prophets.

Moses, being the first prophet to communicate G-d’s words to the people, was the prototype for all

21. Deuteronomy 3:26.

following prophets and leaders of the Jewish people. They would all learn from him and aspire to his level.

But when he pleaded to enter the promised land with the rest of the Jewish people in order to continue to shepherd them, G-d, in a way, did answer his prayer, by assuring him that his soul would return and be vested in the soul of each generation's leader. In these cases, however, he would not initially be the teacher, but the student:

אח"כ בכל דור יצטרך לרב, שיבא אליהו ז"ל וילמדנו. | אח"כ בכל דור ודור יצטרך לרב שילמדו שיבא אליהו וגם יתנוצץ בו הדור, וילמדנו ומתנוצץ בו הדור

**But afterwards, i.e., when Moses' soul would return in every generation, he in the form that generation's next leader would need a teacher to teach him. In particular, the prophet Elijah would come and teach him, and the generation will then begin to shine within him.**

Moses' soul, impregnated in each new generation's up-and-coming leader, must begin from scratch and learn the Torah from others. One of the missions of the prophet Elijah, who ascended alive into heaven and became a type of angel, is to teach the secrets of the Torah to those scholars in every generation who are worthy of this. Once an individual begins to learn the inner dimension of the Torah, he begins to identify with the unique psychosocial context of his generation and thus develops his innate leadership qualities.

ובתחלה יהיה כאלם לא יפתח פיו. | ואלם יהיה בתחלה לא יפתח פיו

**At first, he will be "dumb, not knowing how to open his mouth."<sup>22</sup>**

He will not have learned the art of articulation and inspiring speech.

ומצינו, שגם באותו זמן נתקיים בו קצת מזה, כמ"ש | ומצינו שאף באותו זמן נתקיים בו קצת מזה כמארז"ל רז"ל לא אוכל עוד לצאת ולבא וכו', בד"ת. פירוש, | לא אוכל עוד לאת ולבא בד"ת שנסתמו ממנו מעינות שנסתמו ממנו מעינות התורה, והיה צריך ליהושע | החכמה והיה צריך ליהושע ללמוד ממנו ללמוד ממנו,

**In fact, we see that even then i.e., in Moses' own lifetime something of this promise was fulfilled. Our sages state<sup>23</sup> in reference to the verse, "I can no longer go and come," that it refers to Torah study, meaning that the fountains of wisdom had closed up for him, and he needed to learn Torah from Joshua.**

On the day of his death, Moses told the people, "I am 120 years old today; I can no longer go and come. G-d told me, 'You shall not cross this Jordan river.' [Instead,] G-d will go before you [i.e., the Jewish people]; He will annihilate these nations before you and drive them out. Joshua will lead you, as G-d has said."<sup>24</sup>

וזהו ג"כ רב לך, שכבר יש לך רב, והוא יהושע. | וזהו ג"כ רב לך שכבר יש לך רב ומנו יהושע

**This is an additional meaning of the words "You have a teacher," i.e., that you already have a teacher, namely, Joshua.**

Thus, these words, spoken on the first of Shevat in the last years of Moses' life, look ahead 37 days to

22. Psalms 38:14.

23. *Sotah* 13b; Rashi on Deuteronomy 31:2.

24. Deuteronomy 31:2-3.

the 7<sup>th</sup> of Adar, the last day of his life, when the Divine inspiration necessary to teach the Torah to the Jewish people would be transferred from him to Joshua. This, of course, in addition to their promise that Moses' soul would return to lead the Jewish people in each generation and in so doing would need to be taught first by another teacher.

וז"ס משה נביא "אקים" להם "מקרב אחיהם, ר"ת | וזה רמוז בפי נביא "אקים" לך "מקרב אחיך ר"ת  
אלם. | אלם

**This is alluded to in the verse, "I will raise a prophet like you for them from amongst their brethren."<sup>25</sup> The initials of the words for "I will raise for them from amongst" spell the word for "dumb."**

"I will raise for them from amongst": *akim lahem mikerev*. The three initial letters are *alef-lamed-mem*, which spell *ileim*, the word for "dumb."

The passage from which this verse is taken states that the Jewish people will never have to guess what G-d's will is for them; unlike other nations that need to resort to divination and soothsayers, there will always be prophetic leaders—who are mystically understood to be impregnated with Moses' soul—who will convey G-d's will to the Jewish people. The full verse quoted here reads: "I will raise a prophet like you for them from amongst their brethren, and I will place My words in his mouth, and he will tell them all that I command him."

ונתתי דברי בפיו, שיהיו נובעין ממנו דברי מקרבו, | ואח"כ ישמתי דברי בפיו שיהיו נובעין דברי מקרבו  
ואח"כ יעלה יותר, שיצונו וידבר עמו בגלוי. | ואח"כ יעלה יותר וידבר עמו בגלוי

**After the new leader has passed through the learning stage, "I will place My words in his mouth," meaning that G-d's words will flow from within him. After this, he will ascend to the next, higher level: "and he will tell them all that I command him," meaning that G-d will speak to him openly.**

The Arizal now finds allusion to this process in the verse, "I became dumb, silent; I was quiet of good; and my hurt intensified."<sup>26</sup>

וז"ש נאלמתי דומיה, פירוש דו"ם י"ה, פי' גזר עלי | וז"ש נאלמתי דומיה דום י"ה פי' שהיה גזור עלי  
להיות אלם. | להיות אלם

**This is the mystical meaning of the verse "I became dumb, silent..." The word for "silent" (*domiah*) can be read as if to mean "silenced by G-d" (*dom Kah*), meaning, "He decreed that I should be dumb."**

*Domiah*: *dalet-vav-mem-yud-hei*, can be split into two words, "silent" (*dom*, *dalet-vav-mem*) and the Divine Name *Kah* (*yud-hei*).

החשתי מטוב, ואין טוב אלא תורה. | החשתי מטוב ואין טוב אלא תורה

**"I was quiet of good" means "I did not teach Torah," for "there is no 'good' but Torah."<sup>27</sup>**

The sages state that the word "good," wherever it appears in the Bible, refers to the Torah, the ultimate good.

25. Ibid. 18:18.

26. Psalms 39:3.

27. *Avodah Zarah* 19b.

וכאבי נעכר, הם היסורין שבאים עליו, | וכאבי נעכר הם היסורים שבאו עליו

**“My hurt intensified” refers to the suffering that he will endure.**

To explain this, the Arizal turns to the sages’ explanation of the verse, “Behold, My servant will prosper; he will ascend, be lifted up, and be very high. Just as many were astonished over you, [saying,] ‘He looks too disfigured to be human...so will the many nations exclaim about him....”<sup>28</sup> This implies that the redeemer’s (or Israel’s, or Moses’ as we will see) exalted state after the Redemption will be commensurate with their dejection during the exile.

כמ״ש רז״ל, כי בתחלה יהיה משה שמ״ה ושממה, | כמ״ש בגמרא כי בתחלה יהי משי״ה שמ״ה שממה

**As it is stated in the Talmud,<sup>29</sup> Moses will first be “desolate.”**

The name *Moses* (*Mosheh*, *mem-shin-hei*) may be permuted to spell the word for “desolate” (*shamah*, *shin-mem-hei*). In Hebrew, the words for “desolation” and “astonishment” are related, since desolation astonishes the beholder and astonishment puts the person undergoing it in a state of temporary “desolation,” i.e., incapacitation. Thus, the phrase “Just as many *were astonished* [*shamemu*] over you” in the verse quoted above describes Moses’ initial, pre-grandeur state.

וז״ס מה שאמר הכתוב והנה ישכיל עבדי וכו׳, והוא | ואח״כ ישכיל עבדי והוא משרע״ה מרע״ה,

**Only afterwards, “My servant will prosper.” This refers to Moses.**

Since G-d elsewhere calls Moses “My servant.”<sup>30</sup>

והוא משי״ה, כי שיל״ה בגימטריא משה. | והוא משי״ה כי שיל״ה גי׳ משה

**This prophecy also refers to the Messiah.** This is not a contradiction, since **the numerical value of *Shilo* is the same as that as Moses’ name (*Mosheh*).**

*Shilo*: *shin-yud-lamed-hei* = 300 + 10 + 30 + 5 = 345.

*Mosheh*: *mem-shin-hei* = 40 + 300 + 5 = 345.

Shilo was the town where Joshua put the Tabernacle, i.e., its first location in the promised land. (Later, in the days of Samuel, it moved to Nov and later Givon, and remained there until King Solomon built the first Temple.) Being the first resting place of the house of G-d when the Jews entered the promised land, it represents the idea of the return of the people to their land with the messianic Redemption.

ודרז״ל כגואל א׳ כן גואל אחרון, וז״ס הדור שהולך | ואמרו רז״ל כגואל הראשון כן גואל האחרון וכן הדור הוא הדור שבא, שהולך הוא הדור שבא

**Furthermore, our sages stated that whatever pertains to the first redeemer i.e., Moses pertains to the final redeemer, i.e., the Messiah,<sup>31</sup> and that the generation that passes away is the same as the generation that is to come, i.e., be resurrected.<sup>32</sup>**

The second statement means that “If a person dies lame, he will be resurrected lame; if he dies blind, he will be resurrected blind. This is so people won’t say that those that G-d let die are different from

28. Isaiah 52:13-15.

29. *Berachot* 5a.

30. Numbers 12:7; Joshua 1:2, 1:7; 2 Kings 21:8; Malachi 3:22.

31. *Bemidbar Rabbah* 11:3; *Kohelet Rabbah* 1:9.

32. *Kohelet Rabbah* 1:4.

those He resurrected.... 'I will raise them with their defects...and then I will heal them.'<sup>33</sup>

These two statements of our sages indicate that the verse quoted ("Behold, My servant will prosper...") can apply equally to Moses and to the final redeemer.

וז"ס מש"יה כימי צאתך מארץ מצרים אראנו וכו', | וז"ש כימי צאתך ממצרים אראנו נפלאות וקשה דהוה  
הל"ל אראך, מהו אראנו, ומה צאתך, צאתו הל"ל, | ליה למימר אראך נפלאות או כימי צאתי

**This is also the meaning of the verse, "As in the days when you went out of Egypt, I will show him wonders."<sup>34</sup> We would have expected this verse to read, "...I will show *you* wonders" and "As in the days when *he* went out of Egypt...."**

In this case, the verse would read, "As in the days when *he* [i.e., Moses, or the generation of the exodus] went out of Egypt, I will show *you* [the Messiah, or the generation of the final redemption] wonders."

אלא רמז לאמור שאתה עצמך יצאת ממצרים. ואמר | אלא רמז שאתה יצאת ממצרים ואמר אראנו שאתה  
אראנו, שאתה עצמך אותו הדור, | עצמך אותו הדור

The verse is instead written the way it is **to indicate that *you*, i.e., the final generation, yourself went out of Egypt, and that you yourself are that generation** which G-d will now show new wonders.

Thus, the verse "Behold, My servant will prosper..." can again apply equally to Moses and to the final redeemer.

ואמר הננה ישכיל עבדי, כי המעלות יהיו בהדרגה, | ואמר הננה ישכיל עבדי כי המעלות יהיו בהדרגה,  
בתחלה ישכיל ואח"כ ירום, ואח"כ תשא ואח"כ וגבה, | בתחלה ישכיל ואח"כ ירום ואח"כ ונשא ואח"כ ונבה  
ואח"כ מא"ד | ואח"כ מאד

**The verse "Behold, My servant will prosper..." describes the ascent the redeemer will undergo. At first, "he will prosper." Then, "he will ascend." Then, "he will be lifted up." Then, "he will be high." Then, "very much so."**

The two words for "and be very high" (*vegavah me'od*) are taken to refer to two separate stages.

אותיות אדם, כי יהיה כמו אדה"ר קודם חטאו, | אותיות אדם כי יהי כמו אדם קודם החטא

**The word for "very much so" (*me'od*) is a permutation of the name *Adam*, indicating that the Messiah will be on the spiritual level that Adam was before the primordial sin.**

*Me'od: mem-alef-dalet; Adam: alef-dalet-mem.*

ואז יתוקן הכל, וסוף מעשה תחלת מחשבה, | ואז יתקן הכל וסוף מעשה תחלת מחשבה

**He will then rectify everything that was flawed by the primordial sin, and thus "the final action will restore reality to the way it was first intended."**

This phrase comes from the *Lecha Dodi* poem and describes the Sabbath, the last day created but the first thought of, since it embodies the perfection of reality the preceding days lead up to. On

33. Ibid.

34. Micah 7:15.

the cosmic scale, the phrase means that the final action, the redemption, will bring the world to its originally intended state.

<p>וזהו המדרגה עליונה והולך הפי ומגלה מה שיעבור עליו באלו הדורות עד שבשביל כך ראוי לעלות לכל אותן המעלות</p>	<p>מה שיעבור עליו באותו הדור, עד שבביל כך ראוי לעלות לאלו המעלות.</p>
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**This is the highest level;** the following verses **inform us what will happen in the intervening generations, in order that** we realize that it is worth ascending all those levels.

<p>ואמר כאשר שממו עליך רבים, כן משחת מאיש מראהו פירוש, מאיש זה משה,</p>	<p>ואמר כאשר שממו עליך רבים כן משחת מאיש מראהו מאיש זה משה</p>
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It therefore states in the following verse, **“Just as many were astonished over you, saying, ‘His appearance is too disfigured to be that of a man.’”** The words **“a man”** refer to Moses.

For Moses is on occasion referred to as “this man, Moses” or “the man, Moses,”<sup>35</sup> which is an unusual idiom in the Bible.

<p>מראהו ותוארו, זה קירון פניו, שקרן אז.</p>	<p>מראהו תארו זה קירון פניו שקרן אז</p>
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**“His appearance”** refers to Moses’ unique appearance, namely, the fact that his face shone.<sup>36</sup>

<p>אך באלו הדורות בא כאחד העם, ועליו כל הפרשה מדברת,</p>	<p>אבל באלו הדורות בא כאחד העם ועליו מדברת כל הפרשה</p>
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**But in subsequent generations, when Moses reappears initially as a regular person, his condition is described by the following verses.**

Following is the complete passage. We have printed in bold the verses the Arizal addresses specifically.

***Behold, My servant shall prosper, ascend and be lifted and be very high.***

***Just as the many were appalled at him—so marred was his appearance, unlike that of man, his form, beyond human semblance—just so he shall startle many nations.***

*Kings shall be silenced because of him, for they shall see what has not been told them,*

*Shall behold what they never have heard.*

***Who would believe what we have heard? Upon whom has the arm of G-d been revealed?***

*For he has grown, by His favor, like a tree crown, like a tree trunk out of arid ground.*

*He had no form or beauty, that we should look at him: No charm, that we should find him pleasing.*

*He was despised, shunned by men, a man of suffering, familiar with disease.*

*As one who hid his face from us, he was despised, we held him of no account.*

*Yet it was our sickness that he was bearing, our suffering that he endured.*

*We accounted him plagued, smitten and afflicted by G-d.*

*But he was wounded because of our sins, crushed because of our iniquities.*

*He bore the chastisement that made us whole, and by his bruises we were healed.*

*We all went astray like sheep, each going his own way, and G-d visited upon him the guilt of us all.*

35. Exodus 11:3, 32:1,23; Numbers 12:3.

36. Exodus 34:29.

He was maltreated, yet he was submissive, he did not open his mouth.  
 Like a sheep being led to slaughter, like an ewe, dumb before those who shear her, he did not open his mouth.  
 By oppressive judgment he was taken away. Who could describe his abode?  
 For he was cut off from the land of the living through the sin of my people, who deserved the punishment.  
**And his grave was set among the wicked, and with the rich, in his death –**  
 Though he had done no injustice and had spoken no falsehood.  
 But G-d chose to crush him by disease, so that, if he made himself an offering for guilt,  
 he might see offspring and have long life, and that through him G-d's purpose might prosper.  
 Out of his anguish he shall see it; he shall enjoy it to the full through his devotion.  
 My righteous servant makes the many righteous; it is their punishment that he bears.  
 Assuredly, I will give him the many as his portion; he shall receive the multitude as his spoil.  
 For he exposed himself to death and was numbered among the sinners,  
 Whereas he bore the guilt of the many and made intercession for sinners.<sup>37</sup>

ואמר |

ואמר

Thus:

מי האמין וכו', וזרוע ה' על מי נגלתה, פירוש, אפשר | מי האמין וכו' וזרוע ה' על מי נגלתה כו' ואפשר  
 שזהו נגלה עליו זרוע ה', כמ"ש ולכל היד החזקה. | שוסהו שנגלה עליו זרוע ה' כמ"ש ולכל היד החזקה,

**“Who would believe what we have heard? Upon whom has the arm of G-d been revealed?”** This evidently refers to the revelation of G-d's arm upon Moses, as it is written, **“...and for all the strong arm and awesome power that Moses demonstrated before all Israel.”**<sup>38</sup>

ואמר ויתן את רשעים קברו, פירוש, שנכנס וגם | ואמר ויתן את רשעים קברו פ"י שנכנסה בתוך הקבר  
 נתקברה נפשו בסוד עיבור, בגופן של דורות הללו, | נפשו בסוד העיבור בגופן של דורות הללו לכן קראן  
 וקראום רשעים לגבי דידיה, לכן | רשעים לגבי דידי, לכן

**“And his grave was set among the wicked.”** Allegorically, this means that Moses' soul descended to be impregnated into the bodies of individuals in these later generations, who, no matter how righteous, are considered wicked relative to him. Therefore—

אחלק לו ברבים, פירוש שיטול שכר כנגד כולם, | אחלק לו ברבים שיטול שכר נגד כולם כיון שזיכה לכל  
 כיון שזוכה לכל הדורות. ובודאי שקול משה כנגד | הדורות ובודאי שקול משה נגד כל ישראל וכמשארז"ל  
 כל ישראל, וכמו שדרז"ל משה זכה וזיכה את הרבים | משה זכה וזיכה את הרבים זכות הרבים תלוי בו,  
 וכו'.

**“I will give him the many as his portion,”** meaning that he will receive the reward for leading all these generations, since he brought all these generations to merit. We know that Moses' merits **“weigh”** as much as those of the rest of Israel,<sup>39</sup> and as our sages said, **“Moses attained merit and brought all Israel to merit; therefore the merits of the many are accounted as his.”**<sup>40</sup>

37. Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Translation adapted from *Tanakh, The Holy Scriptures* (Philadelphia, Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society 1985).

38. Deuteronomy 34:12.

39. *Midrash Tanchuma, Beshalach* 10.

40. *Avot* 5:18.

ואת עצומים יחלק שלל, יקבל חלק מהקב"ה ממש, | ואת עצומים יחלק כי קיבל חלקו מהקב"ה ממש ושאר  
ושאר צדיקים יקבלו על ידו, תחת אשר הערה למות | הצדיקים יקבלו ע"י, תחת אשר הערה למות נפשו  
נפשו בכל דור. | בכל דור

**"He shall receive the multitude as his spoil" means that he received his portion directly from G-d, while the other righteous people will receive theirs indirectly, through him. This is "because he exposed himself to death" in each generation.**

וז"ס משה בלי הפסק, שבבל דור הוא בא. | וז"ס משה בלי הפסק רמז שבכל דור ודור הוא  
בא, |

**This is the mystical meaning of why, in the repetition of his name, it is written "Moses Moses,"<sup>41</sup> without a dividing punctuation mark, indicated that in each generation, he himself appears.**

When G-d called to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, He also repeated his name,<sup>42</sup> but there is a cantillation mark telling the reader to pause between the two times his name is mentioned. The same is true when G-d called Jacob before he went to Egypt.<sup>43</sup> The fact that Moses' name is repeated without any intervening punctuation indicates that the two appearances of Moses (as himself and impregnated into the leader of each generation) are the same.

ואת פושעים נמנה, והוא חטא רבים נשא, כי על | ועם פושעים הוא נמנה והוא חטא רבים נשא כי ע"י  
ידו נגמר לימחל חטא הדורות, וחטא אדם וחיה, שהן | נגמר למחול חטא הדורות וחטא אדם וחיה שהם רבים  
רבים, פי גדולים. | והם גדולים.

**"And he was numbered among the sinners and he bore the guilt of the many" means that through his final reappearance, as the Messiah, he will achieve complete forgiveness for the sins of the generations, including the sin of Adam and Eve, who were "many" and great.**

#### 4

וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֶנִּי מִצְוֶה הַיּוֹם עָלֶיךָ לְבַנְיָךְ. וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבְנֶיךָ וּדְבַרְתָּ  
בָּם....

*"And these words, which I command you this day, will be upon your heart. You shall teach them to your children, and discuss them...."*<sup>44</sup>

This is the commandment to study the Torah.

שער המצות, פרשת ואתחנן

בתחילה אכתוב בענין השכחה אשר באנשים, כי היא נותנת עצלות ותרדמה, לימנע מעסק התורה, באמרם כי  
הנה ח"ו נמצאים יגיעים לריק ולבטלה, כיון שהכל נשכח מהם. ולכך נודיעך ענין השכחה מה עניינה.

*Sha'ar HaMitzvot, parashat VaEtchanan*

**I am going to write first about the concept of forgetfulness that people suffer**

41. Exodus 3:4. See *Zohar* 3:138a.

42. Genesis 22:11.

43. Ibid. 46:2.

44. Deuteronomy 6:6-7.

from, because they use it to justify the laziness and sleepiness that prevents them from studying the Torah, saying that (G-d forbid) it's all just wasted effort since they forget everything anyway. We will therefore discuss forgetfulness and what it is all about mystically.

הנה נודע מאמרי הזוהר פרשת משפטים, בתחלת הפרשה, באומרו כי האדם תחלה נותנים לו נפש, ואי זכי יתיר, יהבין ליה רוחא כו'.<sup>45</sup>

**It is known that it says in the *Zohar*<sup>45</sup> that a person is first given a *nefesh*, and “if he merits more, he is given a *ruach*, etc.”**

The soul comprises five levels, but only one is actively conscious in the person from birth: the *nefesh*, which governs the vital life processes and provides the person with the will to live and the urge to fulfill physical needs. Psychologically, *nefesh* is the actualization of the self, or the need and ability of self-expression. It therefore originates in the feminine principle, *Nukva*, which is synonymous with self-awareness and ego, as we have discussed previously. As a person matures, higher levels of the soul become active in his or her consciousness.

הנה הנפש היא מן הנקבה, ובה ענין השכחה. וכל זמן שלא השיג האדם חלק רוח, הבא מן הזכר, ובו סוד הזכירה, הוא שוכח והולך,<sup>46</sup>

**The *nefesh* comes from the feminine principle, and forgetfulness occurs in it. As long as a person has not achieved the revelation of the level of *ruach*, which comes from the masculine principle and embodies the principle of memory, he keeps forgetting things.**

*Ruach* is the emotional aspect of the soul, and thus originates in the *midot*, or *Z'eir Anpin*, the male principle. The word for “male” (*zachar*) is related to the verb “to remember” (*zachor*).

Forgetfulness (at least with regard to Torah study) is thus attributable to unchecked ego – the person being more interested in himself than in G-d and His wisdom, and the antidote is a selfless, emotional attachment/commitment to what one is learning.

והנה טורח ומתקן הנפש ע"י טרחו ועמלו בתורה. ואעפ"י ששוכח מה שלומד, אינו יגד לריק ח"ו, יען כי בעוה"ב ולעתיד לבא, יזכירו לו כל מה ששכח, כמ"ש רז"ל

**Now, a person is working on a rectifying his *nefesh* through the efforts he expends in learning the Torah. And even if he forgets what he learns, it is not wasted effort (G-d forbid), for in the World to Come and the messianic future, he will be reminded of all the Torah learning that he forgot, as the sages state.<sup>46</sup>**

The “World to Come” is synonymous with “the Garden of Eden” or “Paradise,” the above of the soul after death. “The messianic future” is the rectified, physical world that will exist after the Messiah comes and (at some point after that) the dead are resurrected.

ואם עתה בחיים הוא שוכח, הטעם הוא כי המקום גורם לכך, כי הוא מתקן הנפש הנקרא עלמא דנוקבא, ואינו ח"ו יגיעו לריק, ומחוייב הוא לתקן בראשונה הנפש, ואח"כ יתנו לו הרוח,

**If now, during his lifetime, he forgets things, it is because G-d makes him forget,**

45. 2:94b.

46. *Zohar* 1:185.

due to his lack of *ruach*. **But in the meantime he is rectifying his *nefesh*, known as the feminine principle, and it is not (G-d forbid) wasted effort. He is obligated to first rectify his *nefesh*, and only after that is he given the *ruach*.**

Rabbi Shalom Sharabi points out that it is also necessary to avoid things that the sages say impede memory,<sup>47</sup> and that if a person tries to learn something but fails to understand it, it will be explained to him in the World to Come.<sup>48</sup>

הרי הקדמה א'.

**This is the first principle you must know.**

הקדמה ב', בענין השכחה מה ענינה.

**The second principle is understanding what forgetfulness is.**

דע, כי השכחה נמשכת מן האחוריים דא"א, כי הנה נודע שהפנים שלהם, הם הוי"ה ואהי"ה במילוי יודי"ן, ושניהם גי' זכור,

**Know that forgetfulness originates in the back of *Abba* and *Ima*, for it is known that their fronts are manifest respectively as the Names *Havayah* and *Ekyeh* spelled out with the letter *yud*. The numerical value of both of them is the same as that of the word for the imperative “remember” (*zechor*, 233).**

*Havayah* spelled with the letter *yud*: *yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-yud-vav hei-yud* = (10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 10) + (6 + 10 + 6) + (5 + 10) = 72.

*Ekyeh* spelled with the letter *yud*: *alef-lamed-pei hei-yud yud-vav-dalet hei-yud* = (1 + 30 + 80) + (5 + 10) + (10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 10) = 161.

72 + 161 = 233.

*Zachor*: *zayin-kaf-vav-reish* = 7 + 20 + 6 + 200 = 233.

כי מהם נמשכת הזכירה, וזה הוא ענין זכירה: זכ"ר י"ה. כי הזכירה היא בא"א הנקראים י"ה, בבחינת הפנים שלהם, שהם ע"ב קס"א.

**This is because remembering comes from them, as indicated by the fact that the word for “remembering” (*zechirah*) can be seen as compounded of the words “remember” (*zecher*) and the Name *Kah*. For remembering is from the front of *Abba* and *Ima*—who are called *Kah*—whose numerical values are 72 and 161.**

*Zechirah*: *zayin-kaf-yud-reish-hei*

*Zecher Kah*: *zayin-kaf-reish yud-hei*.

The Divine Name *Kah* is also the first half of the Name *Havayah*, and thus its two letters signify *chochmah* and *binah*.

Remembering is thus rooted in taking a “frontal” attitude to *chochmah* and *binah*, i.e., by paying attention to what is being learned.

47. See *Horiot* 13b.

48. *Sha'ar Ma'amarei Razal*, on chapter 6 of *Avot* (p. 22d).

אבל האחוריים שלהם, הם הריבוע והאחוריים של שני שמות הנזכרים שהם הוי"ה ואהי"ה דמילוי יודין ושניהם גימטריא תשכח.

In contrast, the back of these *partzufim* are manifest as the regressive iterations of these two Names—*Havayah* and *Ekyeh*—the numerical value of the spelling out of which, using the letter *yud*, is the same as that of the word for “you will forget” (*tishkach*).

The regressive iteration of the Name *Havayah* is *yud yud-hei yud-hei-vav yud-hei-vav-hei*.

The spelling out of this iteration, using the letter *yud*, is:

step				
1	<i>yud</i> :	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	$10 + 6 + 4 =$	20
2	<i>yud</i> :	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	$10 + 6 + 4 =$	20
	<i>hei</i> :	<i>hei-yud</i>	$5 + 10 =$	15
3	<i>yud</i> :	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	$10 + 6 + 4 =$	20
	<i>hei</i> :	<i>hei-yud</i>	$5 + 10 =$	15
	<i>vav</i> :	<i>vav-yud-vav</i>	$6 + 10 + 6 =$	22
4	<i>yud</i> :	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	$10 + 6 + 4 =$	20
	<i>hei</i> :	<i>hei-yud</i>	$5 + 10 =$	15
	<i>vav</i> :	<i>vav-yud-vav</i>	$6 + 10 + 6 =$	22
	<i>hei</i> :	<i>hei-yud</i>	$5 + 10 =$	15
total				184

The regressive iteration of the Name *Ekyeh* is *alef alef-hei alef-hei-yud alef-hei-yud-hei*.

The spelling out of this iteration, using the letter *yud*, is:

step				
1	<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>	$1 + 30 + 80 =$	111
2	<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>	$1 + 30 + 80 =$	111
	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	$5 + 10 =$	15
3	<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>	$1 + 30 + 80 =$	111
	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	$5 + 10 =$	15
	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	$10 + 6 + 4 =$	20
4	<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>	$1 + 30 + 80 =$	111
	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	$5 + 10 =$	15
	<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	$10 + 6 + 4 =$	20
	<i>hei</i>	<i>hei-yud</i>	$5 + 10 =$	15
total				544

$184 + 544 = 728$ .

*Tishkach*: *tav-shin-kaf-chet* =  $400 + 300 + 20 + 8 = 728$ .

ומאלו השני אחוריים, נמשכת השכחה, לפי שאין אחיזת החיצונים, אלא באחוריים, שאין השכחה מצויה, אלה ע"י אחיזת החיצונים.

**Forgetfulness originates in these two backs, because the forces of evil can only latch on to the back of a *partzuf*, and forgetfulness comes only when evil latches on.**

ועל שני בחינות אלו, כתוב בתורה, זכור אל תשכח.

**Regarding these two principles, it is written in the Torah: "Remember, do not forget."<sup>49</sup>**

The word for "you shall forget" [*tishkach*] serves also as the imperative when phrased in the negative.

וכבר הודעתך, כי אימא נחלקת לשני בחינות, הנקראים בינה ותבונה, והם שני אותיות ס"מ, כמבואר אצלנו. ולכן שר הממונה על השכחה, נקרא מ"ס. והטעם הוא, לפי שהוא נמשך משני אחוריים אלו, של בינה ותבונה, הנקראים מ"ס כנוכר. לכן גם הקליפות שכנגדם, נקרא מ"ס.

**I have already told you that *Ima* comprises two aspects, known as *binah* and *tevunah*. They are indicated by the two letters *samech* and *mem*, as we have explained elsewhere.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, the angel of forgetfulness is called *Mas*, the reason being that he is derived from the two backs of *binah* and *tevunah*, indicated by the letters *samech* and *mem*, as stated. Therefore, the evil opposite them is called *Mas*.**

*Binah* is abstract understanding, while *tevunah* is applied understanding.

*Mas* is spelled *mem-samech*, indicating the back, or reverse, of *binah* and *tevunah*.

ולפי שהאחוריים ההם עולין תשכח כנוכר, לכן קליפה זו ממונית על השכחה.

**Since the numerical value of the spelling out of the regressive iterations of *Abba* and *Ima*, indicating their backs equals that of the word for "you will forget," as mentioned, this evil angel is given charge over forgetfulness.**

וז"ס מ"ש רו"ל אינו דומה שונה פרקו מאה פעמים, לשונה פרקו מאה ואחד פעמים. ואין דברים אלו מכלל הדברים שהם דרך גוזמא, אלה הדברים הם כפשטן, כי השר הזה הנקרא שמו מ"ס שהוא גימטריא ק'. והשונה פרקו מאה פעמים יש בידו יכולת לשכחו. ומשם ואילך, אין בו יכולת לשכחו.

**This is alluded to by our sages' words, "Someone who reviews his lessons only a hundred times cannot be compared to someone who reviews his lessons a hundred and one times."<sup>51</sup> This saying is not an exaggeration, but is meant to be taken literally, since the numerical value of the name of this angel *Mas* is 100. Thus, the angel *Mas* has the power to make someone who reviews his lesson up to 100 times forget it, while if he reviews it more than this, this angel cannot make him forget it.**

49. Deuteronomy 9:7.

50. *Eitz Chaim* 14:6.

51. *Chagigah* 9b.

Mas: *mem-samech* = 40 + 60 = 100.

גם ע"ד הפשט, כמ"ש רז"ל כי יש דברים גורמים שכחה באדם כשיאכלם, כמו הזיתים, וכיוצא בהם. ודע, כי אין זה אלה במי שאוכלה בלא כונה, כעם הארץ. אך כל מי שמכוין באכילתו אל הכוונות שיתבארו בפ' עקב, לקמן בפסוק ואכלת ושבעת כו', אדרבא נותנים בו זכירה, כיון שאוכלם בכונה, ומברר ומתקן אותם ע"י הכונה ההיא כנזכר שם.

**Also, our sages state that there are foods that promote forgetfulness when eaten, such as olives, etc.<sup>52</sup> But know that this is true only if someone eats them without proper mystical intentions, like an ignoramus. In contrast, whoever eats olives with the mystical intentions we will explain in our comments to *parashat Eikev*, on the verse "you shall eat and be satisfied,"<sup>53</sup> improves his memory, since he is eating them with proper mystical intentions that help him purify and rectify them, as will be explained.**

ובענין מ"ש רז"ל, הקורא כתב שע"ג הקבר משכה, אין זה אלה בכתיבה בולטת לא בשוקעת,

**Regarding our sages' statement<sup>54</sup> that someone who reads what is written on a tombstone forgets his learning, this applies only to writing that protrudes from the stone, not to writing that is etched into the stone.**

ובענין תיקון השכחה, נתבאר כונה אחרת בברכת שים שלום דתפלת שחרית וע"ש ובשער רוח הקודש כתבתי יחוד אחד המועיל לזכירה.

**There is also another mystical meditation that rectifies forgetfulness that is elucidated in our explanations of the final blessing of the morning *Amidah*.<sup>55</sup> Examine this. I also wrote another meditation in *Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh* that helps memory.<sup>56</sup>**

גם נתבאר בענין בית המדרש. כבר נתבאר הכונה, שיכון האדם בכניסתו לבה"כ, כנזכר במקומו, הוא בסוד המלכות. ואמנם בית נמדרש, קדושתו חמורה מבית הכנסת. והכונה הוא בשם אהי"ה דמילוי יודי"ן, שהם באחוריים, והריבוע שלו העולה גימטריא (קדמת כמנין) מדרש.

**It has also been explained, regarding the House of Study, that there is a meditation a person should perform when entering a synagogue, as we have explained, and it concerns the *sefirah* of *malchut*.<sup>57</sup> But the holiness of a House of Study exceeds that of a synagogue, and the meditation performed when entering it is that the numerical value of the back of the Name *Ekyeh*, indicated by its regressive iteration spelled out with the letter *yud* is the same as the numerical value of "Study."**

The idiom for "House of Study" is *beit midrash*.

52. See *Horiot* 13b.

53. Deuteronomy 8:10.

54. *Horiot*, loc. cit.

55. *Sha'ar HaKavanot*, *Amidah* 6.

56. *Pri Eitz Chaim*, *Hanhagot HaLimud*. This involves rolling in the snow and meditating on certain numerical equivalents.

57. See *Sha'ar HaKavanot* 3d.

*Midrash* = *mem-dalet-reish-shin* =  $40 + 4 + 200 + 300 = 544$ .

We have seen above that the numerical value of the regressive iteration of the Name *Ekyeh* spelled out with the letter *yud* is also 544.