

## *Parashat VeZot HaBerachah*

Moses' farewell blessing to the Jewish people begins:

*"G-d came from Sinai, and shone forth from Se'ir to them,  
He appeared from Mt. Paran, and came from amongst the holy ten-thousands,  
He gave them a fiery law from His right hand."*<sup>1</sup>

The second word "came" in this verse [*atah*] is in Aramaic.

The first "came" is in the usual Hebrew (*ba*).

It is explained in the *Zohar*<sup>2</sup> on the verse "After these things, the word of G-d came to Abram in a vision..."<sup>3</sup> that the word used for "vision" here [*machazeh*] is in Aramaic since Abraham was still uncircumcised at this point. G-d therefore revealed Himself to him in Aramaic, so the ministering angels would not be jealous.

Aramaic is considered an intermediary language, not possessing the absolute holiness of Hebrew but holier than the other languages of the world. Its occasional use in the Bible testifies to its secondary holiness. The angels, who are absolute pure beings, know only Hebrew, and so when G-d does not want them to "eavesdrop" on what He is saying, He uses Aramaic.<sup>4</sup> Once Abraham was circumcised, he was holy enough that the angels would not be jealous when G-d revealed Himself to him in Hebrew.

The same idea applies here. The verse is informing us that when the Holy One, blessed be He, came to give the Torah to Israel, His coming was camouflaged in Aramaic. The word "came" is therefore in Aramaic.

The reason He had to do this was, as the verse continues, "the holy ten-thousands," i.e., the angels, that they not make accusations against them and prevent the giving of the Torah.

We are taught that when Moses ascended to heaven to receive the Torah from G-d and bring it to Israel, the angels argued that mortal man was not holy enough to receive the holy Torah. Moses therefore had to plead the case of humanity in order that the angels "allow" G-d to give the Torah to the Jewish people. The argument Moses used was that the Torah speaks of refining the animal nature of man, etc., and therefore rightfully belongs to beings that possess an animal nature and evil inclination, i.e., humans, and not angels.

Of course, angels, being created by G-d, cannot "prevent" G-d from doing anything He wishes. This account simply means that indeed, from one perspective, the holiness of the Torah and the mundane nature of man are incompatible. This perspective was personified as the angels that argued against the giving of the Torah to man. Although correct, this perspective is overridden by Moses' argument that it is precisely the mundane nature of man that renders him most in need of the sanctifying influence of the Torah.

Since the Torah was in fact given to the Jewish people in Hebrew—not in Aramaic—it is evidently to this idea that the Arizal is referring to in this passage. The Torah as we read, know, and experience it is merely a "translation" of the pristine, holy, spiritual Torah known in heaven. "Up there," the Torah discusses the dynamics

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 33:2.

<sup>2</sup> *Zohar* 1:88b.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 15:1.

<sup>4</sup> *Shabbat* 12b; *Sotah* 33a.

and topology of holiness and the holy realms, and speaks nothing of sin, non-kosher animals, murder, and the like. It is only when the Torah descends earthward that the Torah speaks of these things.

More precisely: the Torah is the same both “up there” and “down here,” but “up there,” the words we identify as referring to all these mundane concepts are naturally read and interpreted to refer to sublime, spiritual concepts. Only in the context of this world do the words of the Torah take on their familiar, mundane meanings.

In this fashion we can also understand the verse: “[One calls to me out of Se’ir: ‘Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?’ The watchman said: ‘The morning comes, and also the night.] If you will inquire, inquire, return, *come*.’”<sup>5</sup> The word “*come*” is in Aramaic.

In fact, a number of words in this verse are in Aramaic.

The reason for this is that “a tunnel is carved out under the throne of glory for the penitent,” in order that the ministering angels not voice accusations against him.

This was done specifically in the case of Menasheh, the evil king.<sup>6</sup> The ministering angels protested, saying “How can you accept the penitence of someone who served idols and set up a graven image in the Temple?” G-d replied, “if I do not accept his penitence, I am closing the door to all penitents.” He then carved out the tunnel, etc. In any case, we have here the same idea of G-d using tricks to bypass the angelic order. This is because the angels are the “cogs” and “gears” in the orderly functioning of creation, each angel signifying a different aspect of the created order G-d set up as the way the world should run. *Teshuvah*, or repentance, is in essence an overriding of this order, since in the natural order, crime results in punishment. As the saying goes, “nature is unforgiving.” In order for G-d to forgive, He must act “supernaturally,” i.e., circumvent His own created order.

Therefore, the prophet said “*come*” [*eitayu*] in Aramaic.

“Come” here means “come back to Me.” Since *teshuvah* overrides the created order, the word referring to it is here said in Aramaic, using the same root as the word *atah*, above.

The fact that the giving of the Torah, as mentioned above, was also couched in Aramaic, therefore indicates as well that although the Torah appears to be a strict compendium of laws and punishments, its inner dimension is the mechanism of *teshuvah*, which overrides the strict laws of nature and enables man to return to G-d despite everything.

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Two verses later, Moses says that the Jewish people are worthy of being blessed because they say:

*The Torah that Moses commanded us is an inheritance for the community of Jacob.*<sup>7</sup>

Our sages have said that “the imperfect version of the supernal wisdom is the Torah.”<sup>8</sup>

The full quote reads: “Rabbi Chaninah bar Yitzchak said: There are three unripe fruits: the unripe fruit of death is sleep; the unripe fruit of prophecy is the dream; the unripe fruit of the world to come is the Sabbath. Rabbi Avin added two more: the unripe fruit of the supernal light is the orb of the sun; the unripe fruit of the supernal

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 21:11-12.

<sup>6</sup> *Y. Sanhedrin* 10:2

<sup>7</sup> Deuteronomy 33:4.

<sup>8</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 17:5.

wisdom is the Torah.” The idiom of “unripe fruits” obviously means “imperfect versions,” not “something that will develop into its full version.”

Know that the Torah is the *yesod* of *Abba* present inside *Z'eir Anpin*, and is derived from it's [i.e., *yesod* of *Abba*'s] power.

*Abba*, the *partzuf* of *chochmah*, is the “supernal wisdom” referred to in the above statement of our sages. It is the seminal insight of creation, the distilled essence of G-d's creation and its purpose. *Yesod* of *Abba* is the drive within *Abba* for self-actualization, i.e., the drive the point of creation possesses to actualize itself, to make itself known and manifest in creation itself. Obviously, this is the essence and purpose of the Torah, which is both the blueprint and user's manual for creation. *Z'eir Anpin* is the spiritual precursor of man, and as we saw above, the Torah can be truly fulfilled only when given to mankind.

From that which falls out of it [i.e., of *Abba*] and goes outside of it, to *Z'eir Anpin*, issues [the *partzuf* of] Jacob, who is synonymous with the Torah.

The *partzuf* of *Yaakov* (“Jacob”) is one of the ten secondary *partzufim* that develop out of the primary array of six *partzufim*.<sup>9</sup>

We are taught that “the world stands on three things: on the Torah, on the [sacrificial or prayer] service, and on deeds of loving-kindness.”<sup>10</sup> The three pillars of the world are personified by the three patriarchs: Abraham was famous for his deeds of loving-kindness, as evidenced by his hospitality and pleas to save the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Isaac was known for his fervent prayer. Jacob was characterized as “a sincere man, sitting in tents,”<sup>11</sup> which, we are taught, refers to the tents of Torah study.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse: “The Torah the Moses commanded us,” for Moses is an appellate for *yesod* of *Abba*.

Moses was the individual through whom the Torah was given to the Jewish people, and as we saw above, is even described as being the one who successfully rebutted the arguments of the angels against it being given to mankind altogether. He thus personifies the drive within *Abba* for actualization, or *yesod* of *Abba*.

It is he who brought forth the Torah, which is “the community of Jacob,” i.e., the lights collected in [the *partzuf* of] Jacob.

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In the course of his blessing, Moses blesses each tribe individually. Part of his blessing to his own tribe, that of Levi, reads:

*They will teach Your judgements to Jacob,  
and Your Torah to Israel.  
They will place incense in Your nostril,  
and the burnt offering on Your altar.  
Bless, O G-d, his legions....*<sup>12</sup>

The initials of the words for “They will place incense in Your nostril” [*yasimu ketorah b'apecha*] spell *Yabok*.

<sup>9</sup> See, *inter alia*, *The Mystery of Marriage*, p. 436.

<sup>10</sup> *Avot* 1:2.

<sup>11</sup> Genesis 25:27.

<sup>12</sup> Deuteronomy 33:10-11.

As we have mentioned previously, the *Yabok* (or “Jabbok”) river was where Jacob wrested with the angel of Esau, and thus represents the struggle between good and evil.

Also, the sum of the numerical values of the initials of the words for “On Your altar; bless...” [*al mizbechecha bareich*] is the same as the numerical value of *Yabok*.

The numerical value of *Yabok* (*yud-beit-kuf*, 10+2+100) is 112; the numerical value of these initials (*ayin-mem-beit*, 70+40+2) is also 112.

Furthermore, the numerical value of the word for incense [*ketorah*] with the *kolel* is the same as that of the Name *Ekyeh* plus that of the word for “in mercy.”

*Ketorah* (*kuf-tet-vav-reish-hei*, 100+9+6+200+5) = 320, adding one for the word as a whole (the *kolel*) gives 321. The numerical value of the Name *Ekyeh* (*alef-hei-yud-hei*, 1+5+10+5) is 21; that of “in mercy” (*berachamim*, *beit-reish-chet-mem-yud-mem*, 2+200+8+40+10+40) is 300; together, 21 + 300 = 321.

To explain: The Name *Havayah* signifies G-d’s attribute of mercy. This Name in *atbash* is *mem-tzadik-pei-tzadik*, the numerical value of which is 300, which is the numerical value of the word for “in mercy.” The Name *Ekyeh* signifies G-d’s attribute of strict judgement, since it is associated with the *partzuf* of *Ima*, the source of judgement.

The Name *Havayah*, being G-d’s “proper” Name, is in many cases devoid of any association with any of G-d’s attributes. When it is associated with G-d’s attributes, it signifies the attribute of mercy, the inner dimension of the *sefirah* of *tiferet*.

*Atbash* is the letter-substitution system in which the first letter of the alphabet is substituted for the last, the second for the second-to-last, and so on. (*Alef* thus is replaced by *tav* and *beit* by *shin*, hence the abbreviation *atbash*.) Thus, the fact that the *atbash* of the Name *Havayah* is numerically equivalent to the words for “in mercy” indicates that this Name signifies complete mercy, “inside and out.”

We have explained previously that the Name *Ekyeh* is associated with *binah*. In its role as the analyzer of the insight of *chochmah*, *binah* must make use of the attribute of judgement in order to weigh the validity of the various associations between the new insight and the existing mental structure that suggest themselves.

Burning the incense caused the Name *Havayah* to combine with the attribute of judgement. This is alluded to in the word for “incense,” as mentioned.

The word for “incense” used in this verse (*ketorah*) is numerically the sum of the Name *Ekyeh* (21) plus “in mercy” (300), i.e., the union of the Names *Ekyeh* and *Havayah* (the latter being numerically included in this equation by virtue of its numerical value in *atbash*).

At any nexus point in the struggle between good and evil (signified by the confrontation between Jacob and the angel of Esau at the Jabbok river), the goal is to “sweeten” the severe judgements, in order that evil (or negativity) be subdued and subsumed within holiness.

The above exposition explains, as Rabbi Shmuel Vital (son of Rabbi Chaim Vital) notes, why the word *ketorah* is used in this verse rather than the more usual *ketoret*. Obviously, the numerical equivalencies would not work if the usual form of the word were used.

[Burning the incense] also caused the Name *Havayah*, which signifies G-d’s attribute of mercy, to combine with another [Name that indicates G-d’s] attribute of judgement, *Elokim*, in order to mitigate its power. This combination is alluded to in the word *Yabok*, whose numerical value [112] is the same as the combined numerical values of the Names *Havayah* [26] and *Elokim* [86].

Thus, we have here another indication of the power of the incense to sweeten the attribute of judgment. We are told that, in at least one instance, when G-d got angry at the Jewish people, the incense stayed His wrath (Numbers 17:6-15).

This is the mystical meaning of the word “in Your nostril,” for as we have noted, the incense sweetened the power of strict judgement.

The Hebrew word for “nostril” (*af*) also means “anger.”

—translated from *Likutei Torah*, *Sha’ar HaPesukim*, and *Sefer HaLikutim*



## *Parashat VeZot HaBerachah* [second installment]

In Moses' blessing to the tribe of Joseph, he says that Joseph's portion of the Land of Israel is blessed "with choice fruits that are produce of [the light of] the sun, and with choice fruits brought forth by the [light of the] moon."<sup>1</sup> There are two synonyms for "moon" in Hebrew, *levanah* (literally, "white") and *yareiach*. Here, the latter synonym is used, and it is in the plural, so the literal translation of the second half of the verse would be, "...and with choice fruits brought forth by the moons."

The difference between [the terms] *yareiach* and *levanah* is that *yareiach* signifies the moon in its blemished state, while *levanah* signifies the full moon. This is why term *yareiach* appears in the plural, while the term *levanah* never does.

Since there are many forms of the "incomplete" moon but only one form of the full moon, *yareiach* can appear in the plural form, whereas it would be inappropriate for *levanah* to take the plural. The meaning of the verse now can be understood to be: "...and with choice fruits that are brought forth by the various phases and appearances of the moon."

This is also the meaning of the verse: "A righteous person will blossom in his days, and abundant peace until there be no *yareiach*."<sup>2</sup> This verse is cast in the future, when the moon will no longer be called *yareiach*, but only *levanah*.

As we have seen, the moon is a manifestation of the *sefirah* of *malchut*, the source of the souls of the Jewish people. As such, the waxing and waning of the moon is understood to reflect the spiritual rise and fall of the fortunes of the Jews. Moreover, the moon was originally intended to be equal to the sun (which is a manifestation of *Z'vir Anpin*), but in order to precipitate history and the odyssey of exile and redemption, the moon was diminished, i.e., sent to retrieve the sparks of holiness from the exile. The messianic redemption, the return of the Jewish people to their homeland, and the fulfillment of history, are thus conceived of as the return of the moon to its original full-time full state, and even its eventual restoration to the brightness of the sun. The verse quoted, speaking of the messianic era, thus refers to the future as the time when the term *yareiach*—referring to the unending waxing and waning of the moon—will not longer be relevant.

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Moses' blessing to the tribe of Gad was: "Blessed be He who expands Gad; He dwells like a young lion, and rips off the arm [of his prey] together with the skull."<sup>3</sup> In discussing this verse, the Arizal will refer also to Jacob's blessing to his son Gad: "Troops will sally forth from Gad, and they will come back on their own heels."<sup>4</sup>

What is stated in the *Zohar* is well-known, namely, that [the name *Gad*] alludes to "the white *coriander* seed."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 33:14.

<sup>2</sup> Psalms 72:7.

<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy 33:20.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 49:19.

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 16:31.

The name *Gad* is also the word in Hebrew for “coriander.” In the verse quoted, the manna is described as being similar in appearance to this seed.

[Concerning this,] it is stated in the *Zohar*,<sup>6</sup> “do not read [only] ‘coriander’ but [also] ‘[male reproductive] organ.’”

By adding a *yud* to the word *gad* (which is spelled *gimel-dalet*), the word for “nerve,” “sinew,” “male reproductive organ” (*gid*, spelled *gimel-yud-dalet*) is produced. Since the *yud* in *gid* serves no consonantal purpose, it can be viewed as a vowel-letter. In this way, a simple vowel change transforms *gad* into *gid*. Thus, the word *gad* can justifiably be considered to phonetically allude to the word *gid*.

What we gain from this is that the verse describing the manna can now be read: “...it was like the white seed of the male reproductive organ” and Moses’ blessing to Gad as: “Blessed be He who expands the male reproductive organ.” The Arizal will now go on to explain the mystical significance of this.

This provides the mystical meaning of the verse: “And G-d said to the fish, and it vomited out Jonah onto the dry land.”<sup>7</sup> [This refers to] the emission of the drop [of male seed] into the place referred to as “the dry land,” as it is written, “and the dry land appeared.”<sup>8</sup>

The “dry land” is an appellation of *malchut*, the feminine archetype. In this imagery, *malchut* is the dry land waiting to be fertilized by the introduction of potent, fruit-producing seed, and/or by the drop of rain that promote growth. Similarly, *malchut*, the avenue of expression for Divine consciousness, possesses no intrinsic content but rather awaits the “rain” of the *sefirot* above it (channeled through *yesod*, the male archetype, or specifically, the male reproductive organ) to “fertilize” it with Divine content it will then express in the world.

In the *Zohar*, Jonah is taken as a representation of this Divine seed of consciousness because his name alludes to the process of its transmission through the *sefirot*. Jonah (*Yonah*) is spelled *yud-vav-nun-hei*. The *yud* signifies the initial flash of Divine insight, *chochmah*, as we have seen many times before. The *vav* signifies the descent of this “seed” down the spinal column (alluded to by the straight form of the *vav*) as it is processed through the subsequent *sefirot*, all the while gaining more and more substantiation, until it reaches *netzach* and *hod*, indicated in Jonah’s name by their initials, *nun* and *hei*. This pair completes the processing of the Divine insight, transforming it into a communicable idea, and passes it on to *yesod* either as a spiritual seed of consciousness and/or the impulse to produce physical reproductive seed. In this context, the “fish” is the male reproductive organ, which “vomits out” the seed into the world, just as Jonah, once he accepted his prophetic mission, could no longer remain in the fish, but had to emerge in order to transmit his Divine insight to reality. The “dry land,” again, is *malchut*, the female, the means of expression, the only way the whole process can come to fruition and the Divine insight can be brought productively into reality. As we have seen previously, without proper mating with the female, the spiritual or physical seed is “wasted,” i.e., produces negative (“evil”) energy, detracting from the collective Divine consciousness of reality rather than enhancing it.

All this will be better understood by prefacing it with understanding the verse: “Gad, troops will sally forth from him, and he will return on his heel.”

This verse is actually a play on words. The name *Gad* produces the word for “troop” (*gedud*) by repeating its second letter and adding the vowel-letter *vav* in between them: *Gad* (*gimel-dalet*) becomes *gedud* (*gimel-dalet-vav-dalet*). The word for “will sally forth from him” is this same word from “troop” made into a verb, as if to say, “troops will troop out of him.” Finally, the word for “will return” (*yagud*) is another form of the word *gad/gedud*.

Here is alluded that which we said above concerning how “coriander” [*gad*] becomes “male reproductive organ” [*gid*].

<sup>6</sup> *Tikunei Zohar* 21 (54a).

<sup>7</sup> Jonah 2:11.

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 1:9.

That is, the word for “troop” [*gedud*] can be seen as a combination of the word *gad* plus the letters *vav-dalet*. [Inasmuch as the numerical value of the two letters *vav-dalet* is 10,] this refers to the *yud* [whose numerical value is 10] inserted into *gad* [to form the word *gid*].

*Vav* = 6; *dalet* = 4; 6 + 4 = 10.

And this is [also alluded to in the word for] “will sally forth from him” [*yegudenu*], and in fact even more so, for here we have the letter *yud* and its spelling-out [inserted] into the word *gad*.

The word *yegudenu* is spelled *yud-gimel-vav-dalet-nun-vav*. The main consonantal letters are the *gimel* and *dalet*, giving its derivation from *gad*. In addition, we have the *yud* at the beginning of the word, and the *vav* in the middle together with the *dalet* (doing double duty) are the spelling-out of the *yud*, as we have seen.

This for the purpose of *Nukva* [of *Z'eir Anpin*, so that there can be a coupling of] male and female.

The purpose of the seminal insight of *chochmah* traversing and being processed by the ensuing *sefirot* is for its ultimate expression via the feminine principle.

Possibly, the Arizal is here indicating that the last two letters of *yegudenu*, the *nun-vav*, allude to *Nukva*, the first two letters of which are *nun-vav*.

We can now understand why [reciting] this verse [before going to sleep at night] is beneficial, in that its recital possesses the property of helping a person not to experience a wasteful emission of semen in bed.

This verse is part of the prayers recited together with the *Shema* before going to sleep at night.

For [in this verse,] the *yud* is joined with the heel, which is the place where the forces of evil can suck [their sustenance].

The heel, being a relatively bony, insensitive part of the foot, is seen as the body's weak point. (Allied to this imagery is the imagery of Jacob being injured in his hip or sciatic nerve area, which is also seen as a weak point.) It is a place where, for example, a leech could suck blood without being “noticed” as much as it would be were it to attach itself to a more sensitive part of the body. True, because it is so insensitive, the life-force present in the heel is low-grade, but this is enough to satisfy the “nutritional” needs of evil. Psychologically, all of this means that insensitivity (being a “heel”) promotes the growth of evil.

In this verse, as we have seen, the *yud* inserted into *gad* to form *gid* is alluded to twice. The final word of the verse is the word for “heel.”

[When they join], it produces the word “Jacob,” rendering him complete.

The word for “heel” is *akeiv*: *ayin-kuf-beit*.

Jacob (*Yaakov*) is spelled *yud-ayin-kuf-beit*.

The imagery of Jacob being “complete” is taken from the verse, “And Jacob came *complete* to the city of Shechem...,”<sup>9</sup> which follows the story of his hip being injured by the angel with whom he wrestled.<sup>10</sup> Rashi states that the word *complete* here indicates that he recovered from this injury. The idea is that Jacob overcame the power of evil that tried to incapacitate him by sucking the life-force out of him at his heel/hip.

<sup>9</sup> Genesis 33:18.

<sup>10</sup> Genesis 32:24-31.

This was done, in the context of our present discussion, by binding the force of the *yud* to the heel. The *yud*, again, is *chochmah*, the initial flash of insight. This flash, this pristine moment of enlightenment and expansion of the horizon of Divine consciousness, often gets obscured as it is processed by the subsequent *sefirot*. Although this processing is necessary in order to bring the implications of the insight into practical reality, the dimming of its intensity in the process can leave the person or the process open to the attack of evil. In other words, the person can lose sight of the original thrust of the insight and allow the intellectual or emotional development it spawns to be sidetracked into selfish or worldly directions.

It is therefore necessary to periodically renew the freshness of the insight by recalling the initial moment of insight, the epiphany. Doing this helps to keep the development of the insight on track. The intellectual and emotional development is infused with the original, transcendent holiness of the experience; we remember that, yes, G-d was at the center of this insight, and this renders us immune to the machinations of evil.

Jacob's blessing to Gad can thus be read as "Gad [*yesod*] will be infused with the *yud* [*chochmah*, rendering it *gedud*] once and again [rendering it *yegudenu*], for the purpose of coupling with *Nukva*, and thus it will overcome the power of evil [that can enter via the heel]."

And thus the power of evil is left with no entry into the realm of holiness, G-d forbid.

This verse thus describes how evil is not allowed entry into holiness, preventing evil thoughts from intruding on a person's holiness while he sleeps. Interestingly, part of the blessing recited before going to sleep is the phrase, "and may my bed be complete before You." The Rabbinic imagery of "the bed being complete" refers to how Jacob's progeny (the result of his marital relations, euphemistically referred to in Rabbinic literature as *tashmish hamitah*, "the use of the bed") were completely holy. Unlike Abraham who fathered Ishmael and Isaac who fathered Esau, all of Jacob's offspring remained true to his Jewish ideals. Here is another example of the concept of evil not being allowed entry into the realm of holiness being associated with Jacob.

We can now understand why Jacob gave this blessing to Gad, for Gad [personified *yesod*, which] is situated in the area of the legs, which include the heel.

Since the heel is the point of vulnerability to evil, Gad, who personified *yesod*, needed the blessing of "military strength"—here described as the ability to bind the *yud* to the heel—to resist evil's power.

Moses had the same intention in *his* blessing [to Gad], when he said, "Blessed be He who expands Gad," for the word for "He who expands" can be read as "He who joins the *yud*," [and the phrase can thus be read, "Blessed be He who joins the *yud*] to Gad, rendering it *gid*, capable of transmitting [the male seed] into *Nukva*."

The word for "He who expands" is *marchiv*, spelled *mem-reish-chet-yud-beit*. The word for "He who joins" is *mechaber*, spelled *mem-chet-beit-reish*. Thus *marchiv* can be reread as *mechaber yud*, "He who joins the *yud*."

For the word for "He who expands" can also be read as "*yud* in the womb," referring to the drop [of male seed].

The word for "womb" is *rechem*, spelled *reish-chet-mem*; "in the womb" is *be-rechem* (*beit-reish-chet-mem*). *Marchiv* can thus be read as *yud be-rechem*, "*yud* in the womb."

Using these two readings of *marchiv*, the phrase thus reads: "Blessed be He who joins the *yud* to Gad [rendering it *gid*—*yesod* fortified by the insight of *chochmah*—capable of safely positing] the *yud* [the initial insight of *chochmah*] into the womb [of the female]."

This expansion [of *yesod*] occurs also via the womb—

The word "into the womb" (*be-rechem*) can also be read as "by means of the womb."

—this being the mystical significance of the fact that the numerical value of the name *Abraham* is the same as that of the word for “womb,” indicating that the drop [of male seed] is produced by *chesed*, personified by Abraham.

*Abraham* (Avraham): *alef-beit-reish-hei-mem* = 1 + 2 + 200 + 5 + 40 = 248.

“Womb” (*rechem*): *reish-cheit-mem* = 200 + 8 + 40 = 248.

Abraham personified *chesed*, loving-kindness, or love in general. This equivalence thus reflects the fact that the husband’s love for his wife (i.e., her feminine capacity to express what he, being male, cannot—this being the essence of her womb) is what renders his reproductive organ capable of transmitting his seed into her womb. We have seen previously how the attraction between male and female is in essence the sense of mutual completion each grant each other in the their intrinsic desire to make this world a home for G-d. The husband is attracted to the wife’s drive to bring this idea to fruition; the wife is attracted to the husband’s drive to renew the inspiration.

The full understanding of the phrase “Blessed be He who expands Gad” is now: “Blessed be He who joins the *yud* to Gad [rendering it *gid*—*yesod* fortified by the insight of *chochmah*—capable of safely positing] the *yud* [the initial insight of *chochmah*] into the womb [of the female], all this by means of the love and attraction the male [the insight and its development] feels for the female [the power expression and concretization concentrated in the womb].

—translated from *Likutei Torah*



## *Parashat VeZot HaBerachah* [third installment]

Moses' blessing to the tribe of Gad was: "Blessed be He who expands Gad; He dwells like a young lion, and rips off the arm [of his prey] together with the skull. And he saw the beginning for himself, for there the portion of the lawgiver is hidden; he went out as the heads of the people; he performed the charity of G-d, and His judgments with Israel."<sup>1</sup>

In the previous installment, we saw how the Arizal explained the phrase "Blessed be He who expands Gad" as follows: "Blessed be He who joins the *yud* to Gad [rendering it *gid*—*yesod* fortified by the insight of *chochmah*—capable of safely positing] the *yud* [the initial insight of *chochmah*] into the womb [of the female], all this by means of the love and attraction the male [the insight and its development] feels for the female [the power expression and concretization concentrated in the womb]."

The verse continues: "...He dwells as a young lion..." The word for "as a young lion" [*kelavi*] can be read as if to spell the words for "all in the eleven" [*kol be-yud-alef*].

*Kelavi*: kaf-lamed-beit-yud-alef

*Kol* ("all"): kaf-lamed

The letter *beit* as a prefix means "in" and the numerical value of the letters *yud-alef* (10 + 1) is 11.

Meaning to say, that "all," which is the righteous one, *yesod*, combines that which equals 11, namely, the *vav-hei* [of the Name *Havayah*], which indicates *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*.

The verse "For unto You, O G-d, is the greatness, and the might, and the beauty, and the victory, and the majesty, for all that is in heaven and earth; unto You, O G-d, is the kingdom..."<sup>2</sup> is the Biblical source for the seven lower *sefirot*:

"For unto You, O G-d, is the greatness [*chesed*], and the might [*gevurah*], and the beauty [*tiferet*], and the victory [*netzach*], and the majesty [*hod*], for all that is in heaven and earth [*yesod*]; unto You, O G-d, is the kingdom [*malchut*]..."

As is evident, the *sefirah* of *yesod* is not mentioned by its conventional name, but is rather alluded to as being the principle that joins heaven and earth (which are in turn appellations for *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, as we have seen previously). The main word that indicates *yesod* in this context is *kol*, "all."

The phrase "the righteous one, *yesod*," is a fragment of the phrase, "and the righteous one [*tzadik*] is the foundation [*yesod*] of the earth,"<sup>3</sup> the Biblical verse that establishes the thematic connection between *yesod* and "righteousness," or sexual fidelity and purity.

The word "like a young lion" is thus interpreted to mean, "*yesod* combines *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*" and the phrase "He dwells like a young lion" is interpreted to mean "*yesod* dwells with and combines *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*."

This is the epitome of coupling, for thus "all" [*yesod*] dwells with *vav-hei* [*Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*]. Understand this, for coupling is actualized through "all," i.e., the "white coriander seed."

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 33:20.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Chronicles 29:11.

<sup>3</sup> Proverbs 10:25.