

B"H

Motza'ei Shabbat 10 First Adar 5768

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Ve'atah Tetzaveh: The Rebbe's Message for the Generation of Mashiach

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Living with the times: The month of Adar

A *gut voch*. We are now in the midst of 60 days of the month of Adar, which are 60 days of *simchah* (joy). These 60 days have the power to be *mevatel* (nullify) anything that is the opposite of *simchah*. Everything should become *freilich* (joyful). The true essence of *freilichkeit* (joy) is to be found in the Mashiach. The letters of Mashiach in Hebrew permute to spell the word *שמח*, which means both "he is happy" (*שמח*) and "he makes others happy" (*שמח*). Mashiach is both happy and he makes everyone else happy. That is the definition of Mashiach, the happiest soul that makes everyone else happy. So this is the ideal time to express this, because we are now in two months of *simchah*, which we may understand to correspond to the two readings of *שמח*, and everything else is *batel besheesheem* (nullified one part in sixty).

Today (Shabbat), we read *parshat Ve'atah Tetzaveh*. Today is also the 10th of First Adar—a very important date. Exactly on this very day, 27 years ago, the Rebbe delivered the discourse that he would personally hand out 11 years later on Purim Katan (the 14th day of *Adar Rishon*) of 5752.¹ This would be the last edited *ma'amar* (Chassidic discourse) because only a few days later the unfortunate event of the 27th (ךז) day of First Adar occurred.

This *ma'amar* is known for its first two words "*Ve'atah tetzaveh*." Since, this is for now the last *ma'amar* we received from the Rebbe, it must contain a very special message to us, a message that covers the span of time from the distribution of that *ma'amar* until the revelation of the Mashiach *techef umiyad mamash* (immediately!). So, today is the best possible time to contemplate (*lehitbonein*) in this *ma'amar* and its contents in order to hear the message that the Rebbe is giving to our generation.

We have already seen two instances of the number 27. It is both the number of years since the *ma'amar* was originally delivered and the date of the Rebbe's first stroke.² In addition, 27 is the *gematria* of the word "pure," *טו*, in Hebrew, one of the first words of today's *parshah*, *parshat Tetzaveh*.³ So there is a special connection between the number of years that have passed since the *ma'amar* was originally said and the description of the



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olive oil that is to be brought to Moshe Rabbeinu in the very first verse of our *parshah*: “pure olive oil!” As we shall see, the Rebbe’s last *ma’amar* revolves around the theme of pure olive oil. In fact, 27 was the Rebbe’s favorite number, because as he explained, 27 is 3 to 3rd power. Since a *chazakah* (a presumed judicial state) is established after three times, this implies a *chazakah* of a *chazakah* of a *chazakah*!

But, not only is this year (5768-2008) the 27th year since the *ma’amar* itself was said by the Rebbe. The Rebbe’s discourse is based on a discourse with the same title given by the Friedeger Rebbe in 5687, which was 81 years ago. But, 81 is simply the next power of 3: $81 = 3$ to the 4th power. So there cannot be a more ideal day to try to delve into the content of this *ma’amar*. 81 is also the value of the word **אנוכי** (*Anochi*), which means “I,” as in the first word of the Ten Commandments. *Anochi* is also used in the description of God’s essence (*atzmut*): “I am that I am” (**אנוכי מי שאנוכי**). As we will see, this word is one of the essential points made in this *ma’amar* and appears in a verse that the Rebbe quotes: “Six hundred thousand feet are the nation that I [*Anochi*] am in its midst.”

All of this was just to get some sense of the auspicious opportunity that we have this year to delve into the content of this *ma’amar*.

Using the sefirot as a study tool

To deepen our understanding of the discourse *Ve’atah Tetzaveh* in order to hear the Rebbe’s message to us, we are going to take the 10 essential points made in the *ma’amar* and see how they correspond to the ten *sefirot*.

One of the benefits of using this method is that first of all it will assist us in memorizing the essential points of the *ma’amar*. Whenever you give a number of points or ideas an order it is easier to remember them. The memorization technique par excellence in the study of Torah is drawing parallels and correspondences with various Kabbalistic and Chassidic models like the ten *sefirot*, or as we see many times in the Torah, with the four letters of *Hashem*’s essential Name, *Havayah*, etc. Doing so drops an anchor in your mind that can hold down what are seemingly unrelated points.

Moreover, whenever we analyze a new topic based on an already established model in Kabbalah and Chassidut, the structure inherent in the Kabbalistic model when applied to our new topic will reveal new relationships between the points, thereby embellishing and deepening our original understanding of each essential point. Correct analysis according to a Kabbalistic model reveals structure, and structure adds to comprehension.

Even a Chassidic discourse stands to gain a Chassidic soul structure when analyzed according to Kabbalistic models. Ultimately, this new insight helps us relate these points to our tasks and *avodah* (service of *Hashem*) in our own life. Since “*hamaiseh hu ha’ikar*” (the final end is action), we should always be searching for how every point in Chassidus relates to our own efforts to bring and reveal the Mashiach immediately. In what follows, we include the Rebbe’s original language in translation in a distinctive

font, in order to focus the reader on contemplating the Rebbe's words more deeply.⁴ In addition, we have added in an endnote, the parallel passage as it was translated in *Nurturing Faith* (see note 1).

Crown: the existential disease called exile

We begin with the *sefirah* of crown (*keter*). Let us say a few words about the crown that will help aid us in understanding the essential point of the discourse that corresponds to it. The crown is where the super-conscious powers of the soul reside. The *sefirah* of crown is also where *atzmut* (essence) resides. Chassidut explains that the essence of the *Aibeshter* (God) is present (and although initially concealed may be revealed) in only one place, in the highest part of the crown called "the unknowable head" (*reisha delo ityada*). In his Kabbalistic terminology, the Arizal describes this part of the crown using a phrase from Habbakuk.⁵ He calls it, "the place where the might of *atzmut* is concealed" (הבין עזי (העצמות)).

The first verse of *parshat Ve'atah Tetzaveh* reads: "And you shall command the children of Israel, and they shall take to you pure olive oil, crushed for lighting, to kindle the lamps continually."⁶ God tells Moshe to command the Jewish people to bring him the purest olive oil for lighting the Menorah. Yet, as noted by many commentaries, God does not address Moshe Rabbeinu by his name.

[This is the only *parshah* from the beginning of the Book of *Shemot* (Exodus) until the end of the Book of *Bamidbar* (Numbers) in which Moshe's name is not mentioned explicitly. In the Book of *Devarim* (Deuteronomy), there are a few other *parshahs* in which Moshe's name does not appear, but *Devarim* is different from the other books of the Pentateuch. The entire book of *Devarim* documents what Moshe said to the Jewish people, with the Divine Presence, the *Shechinah*, speaking out of his throat. Therefore, it is less noteworthy that Moshe does not refer to himself by name in parts of *Devarim*.⁷]

Many different reasons are offered by the various commentaries to explain the absence of Moshe's name. But, the deepest explanation given is that this is the one time that Moshe Rabbeinu himself reaches his most essential soul root. In our *ma'amar* the Rebbe does not explicitly address the absence of Moshe Rabbeinu's name (though he does so in many other discourses on this *parshah*). But, the notion that Moshe here reaches his essential soul root serves as a backdrop for much of the *ma'amar*.

The soul root itself has three parts to it. This is one of the few *ma'marim* (in Chassidut in general and in the Rebbe's teachings specifically) that describes all three parts of the soul root. Most often, the soul is described as comprising two levels:

- The level that is manifest in the body and whose powers are conscious in one's physical experience, and
- The root of the soul which is super-conscious and cannot be experienced directly by our physical being.

In this discourse, the Rebbe describes three separate levels that make up the super-conscious soul root. In the Arizal's writings these are identified with the three heads of the crown, the highest of which we have already mentioned—the unknowable head (*radla*) where *atzmut* resides.

Let us return to the first verse in our *parshah*. God speaks to Moshe, without mentioning his name, and says: “And you shall command the children of Israel, and they shall take to you pure olive oil, crushed for lighting.” The phrase ends with the two words *katit lama'or* (כתיית למאור), meaning “crushed for lighting.” The interpretation that the Rebbe gives for these two words is the highest point made in the *ma'amar* and from it all the other topics discussed derive.

First let us explain the literal meaning of these words. There are many grades of olive oil. The highest grade is called *alpha lashemen* (אלפא לשמן). How is the highest grade of oil produced? By crushing the olives! The word *katit*, means “crushed.” The olive oil produced by crushing the olives (according to the sages, when the olives are still on the tree) is then to be used for lighting the *menorah* in the Temple.

Now, the Rebbe focuses on the second word *lama'or*, which literally means “for a *ma'or*,” but which is translated as “for lighting.” He notes that *ma'or* actually means a luminary—a source of light—like the sun and the moon, which were described as luminaries in the account of creation (שני המאורות).⁸ What this implies is that the highest grade of olive oil is actually a source of light in itself. As the Rebbe explains, this is higher than if the oil would only have been used in order to produce light.

Now, when interpreting the special use of the word “*lama'or*” here according to Chassidut, the Rebbe explains that oil that serves as a source of light is a reference to the *atzmut* (the essence) of *Hashem*. The crushing of the olives in order to produce the highest grade of oil, not only produces light, but it reveals the source of light in the olives—in other words, it reveals *atzmut*. As we added earlier, the only place that the *atzmut* of *Hashem* resides in the soul is in the highest part of the crown. Thus, the crushing reveals the *radla* (the unknowable head, experienced as pure faith) in the Jewish soul. The Rebbe explains that in order to reveal the *radla* in our souls, in order for us to become luminaries of the essence of God, we have to be crushed. It is impossible to reveal this highest source of light in us without being broken, without having a broken heart.

We are in the month of Adar—the month of consummate joy. As mentioned, with 60 days of joy, we can nullify anything and everything that is the opposite of joy. So, how does this tremendous joy go together with the knowledge that the only way to reveal *atzmut* is by being broken and crushed?

The answer is that whenever we discuss the *sefirah* of crown, we should expect to find examples of states that are paradoxical. Let us take for example the *Tanya's* description of the ideal state of a Jew while we are still in exile, a description that the Alter Rebbe quotes in the language of the *Zohar*: “*Bechiyah* [meaning “crying” or

“sorrow”] is wedged in the heart from this side [the left side of the heart] and *Chedvah* [meaning “joy”] is wedged in the heart from this side [the right side of the heart].” Indeed, the ideal state, the state expressed in our soul root, expresses the paradox of crying and being jovial at the same time. When the Mashiach comes, he will reveal the totality of joy and we will no longer need to remain in this paradoxical state because the Mashiach as we explained is spelled with the same letters that mean: “he will bring joy” (ישמח).

Now, the two words *bechayah*, “crying” (בכיה), whose *gematria* is 37, and *chedvah*, “joy” (חדוה), whose *gematria* is 23, form a numerical pair in Kabbalah (called a *michlol*). The other most important pair of words whose values are 37 and 23 are *chayah* (חיה = 23) and *yechidah* (יחידה = 37), the two highest levels of the soul. They are also called the two *makefeem* (surrounding aspects) of the soul. The two *makefeem* are situated in the super-conscious arena of the soul and are also referred to as the inner and outer aspects of the crown.⁹ We mentioned that in this *ma’amar* the Rebbe describes all three levels of the soul root. So there is a progression here in the understanding of the complexity of the super-conscious:

- First, like the Arizal who in certain places only speaks of the soul root, you understand that the soul comprises conscious and super-conscious elements and that the super-conscious, the soul-root is a simple unity.
- Then you can come to the understanding that the super-conscious can be divided into two aspects, *chayah* and *yechidah* (which the Rebbe mentions explicitly in this *ma’amar*).
- Finally, you become aware of the tripartite complexity of the crown, because in the *yechidah* itself there are two levels (which in Kabbalah are the three supernal *sefirot* of *atik*—the *radla*—and the seven lower *sefirot* of *atik*—sometimes referred to as the “head of nothingness,” *reisha d’ayin*), to which, as we will see the Rebbe dedicates quite a bit of the *ma’amar*.

So what we have seen is that crying and being joyful are the two states that should ideally coexist simultaneously in each of our hearts. Indeed, attaining such an ideal state of paradox is the objective of the entire *Tanya*. How so? The *Tanya* begins with a question in the first chapter: How can a person possibly be both joyful in his service of *Hashem* and not joyful about his own state of being at the same time? Only after 34 chapters, does the Alter Rebbe give an answer to this question in the form of the quote from the *Zohar* we have been discussing: “Crying is wedged in the heart from this side and joy is wedged into the heart from this side.” The heart of a Jew is ideally in a paradoxical state of being.

Now, given the numerical relationship we have just seen, it is clear that joy (*chedvah*) corresponds to the lower part of the super-consciousness, the *chayah*, whereas it is crying (*bechayah*) that corresponds to the higher part of the super-consciousness, the *yechidah*. So it turns out that crying is higher than being joyful. This is exactly the essential point that

the Rebbe is explaining in the *ma'amar*. You always have joy and broken-heartedness residing together in the heart, but it is specifically the higher state of being crushed, of the crying of the *yechidah* that leads to the revelation of the *atzmut* of *Hashem* in our soul root. It is only when the Mashiach will come that everything will be transformed into pure joy. But in the meantime, crying and being crushed by the weight of the exile takes you higher than joy. Still, in this *ma'amar* the Rebbe does not mention the other side of joy being wedged in the right side of the heart, which is of course the essence of the month of *Adar*, so this is not yet the full explanation of how this point relates to the *sefirah* of crown.

So let us recap. The first point, which is the peak of the Rebbe's *ma'amar* is a very simple *vort*. It is a Chassidic translation and interpretation of the two words "*katit lama'or*": a person's soul has to be crushed in order to become a source of infinite light, in order to reveal the *atzmut* of *Hashem*.

Let us look at these two words from a numerical perspective. The words *כתית למאור* (*katit lama'or*) have nine letters. Their combined numerical value is 1107, which divides by 9, meaning that the nine letters have an average value, which is 123. The number 123 today is well known as the *gematria* of *יהי המלך* (*yechi hamelech*, "may the king live"). In Kabbalah, the word most commonly associated with 123 is *ענג*, which literally means "serenity" (or "pleasure"). But, changing the order of the letters gives us the word *נגע*, which means "affliction." Indeed, in *Sefer Yetzirah* we find that: "There is no good higher than serenity [ענג] and no evil worse than affliction [נגע]." ¹⁰ Pleasure is life, while disease (affliction) is the threat of the opposite of life. But, *נגע* also means to touch.

What is the relationship between affliction and touching? If you are touched by something negative, like bacteria, it is clear that that can lead to disease. But, what if you are touched by a good thing? Something touches your heart. The reason we are bringing this up is because *נגע* is also a description of the Mashiach. The Mashiach is described as *נגיע*, "a leper," which means that he is afflicted. What is the source of the Mashiach's affliction? It is his super sensitivity to whatever touches him! Both good and bad things that happen have a profound impact on him. The Mashiach is the person most touched by exile, to the extent that exile afflicts him as an existential malady. He is the person most sensitive to the exile of the Jewish people and it makes him even physically sick. Nonetheless, 123 is also equal to serenity and to *yechi hamelech* ("may the king live"), meaning that the person who experiences the affliction is also the person who has the most potential for experiencing the highest pleasure and serenity. It is the person who experiences both who has the most potential for being the Mashiach.

The *gematria* of the first word, *katit* (*כתית*), which is 830, is well known. It is brought by the commentaries¹¹ that 830 is the number of combined years that the two Temples stood in Jerusalem. The first *Beit Hamikdash* stood for 410 years—the value of the last two letters of *katit*: *ית*. The second *Beit Hamikdash* stood for 420 years—the value of the first two letters of *katit*: *כת*. So this word represents the years that the *Beit Hamikdash* stood in

Jerusalem. Why would this word, which means “crushed” allude to the years that the Temple stood? You would think that it should be the opposite. You would think that *katit* should allude to the years that the Temple was destroyed (or crushed).

The answer to this question also becomes clear in the Rebbe's *ma'amar*.

[Chapter 9] ...Through the experience of being crushed [*katit*] during the time of the exile, we attain the status of being a luminary. But, there are two concepts included in this [notion of being crushed]:

First, there is a state of being crushed because the Jewish people are faced with various harsh decrees that prevent our observance of the Torah and the commandments....In this state, we become luminaries through self-sacrifice.

A second state related to being crushed to a luminary occurs when the Jewish people are enjoying an affluent state, both physically and spiritually, but they are [still] in exile....they continue to be crushed [*katit*] because they are still in exile. And through this experience of the Jewish people being crushed, they attain the level of being luminaries.

The reason for this [second] experience of being crushed because of the exile (even though there is an abundance of plenty, both physically and spiritually) is that the true desire of every Jew is that God be revealed, and this desire is an existential one. And because in the state of exile, God is not revealed as He was in the time of the Holy Temple,... this itself shakes him up completely, makes him feel crushed [*katit*].¹²

The Rebbe explains that the ultimate state of being crushed is not when the exile is difficult and hard, but rather when it becomes good and enjoyable. With this distinction the Rebbe is alluding to our generation, the generation after the holocaust as opposed to the generation of the previous Rebbe, the generation of the holocaust. There is an exile that is physically bad and destructive to the Jewish people and the exemplary leader of such a generation is Mordechai, says the Rebbe. But, we see that after the danger has passed and the suffering is over, Mordechai continues to lead the Jewish people into a time that is described as good.

A second state related to being crushed to a luminary occurs when the Jewish people are enjoying an affluent state, both physically and spiritually, but they are [still] in exile –

This is similar to the state [of the Jewish people] after the miracle of Purim. [The megilah relates that] “the Jews enjoyed light and joy and happiness and honor,” both literally [i.e., in a physical sense] and spiritually. Not only that, but the house of Haman was handed over to Esther, so there was also the propitious state of *ithapcha* [full transformation]. And yet, [as the sages say]: “We are still subservient to Achashveirosh.”¹³

Even though there was a degree of *ithapcha* (transformation) after the miracle of Purim and the house of Haman was given to Esther and Mordechai, as the Rebbe explains, the state of exile of the Jewish people continued. The Mashiach did not yet come and the *Beit Hamikdash* was not yet built. In the language of the sages: “*Akatei aodei deAchasverosh anan,*” meaning: “We are still subservient to Achashverosh.”¹⁴ Says the Rebbe that when things are good but you are still in exile, that results in a deeper existential angst than when things are bad.

This is perhaps the deepest point that the Rebbe makes in this *ma’amar* that he is now handing out, the last *ma’amar* for now that we have been privileged to receive. He says explicitly that the pain of our generation is greater than the pain of the generation that was in the camps. This is an astounding thing to say. The Rebbe continues and says:

Even if a particular individual is at a very high [spiritual] level and that individual does experience God’s revelation in a manner similar to the way that God could be experienced in the Holy Temple, nonetheless, because the revelation is not universal, it proves that even the revelation that he is experiencing is a limited one. Because, when the boundless light of the Almighty is revealed, it is revealed everywhere. If there remains but a single place (even a remote corner of reality) where this revelation is not evident, it is because the revelation (even in those places where it is experienced) are [actually] limited....

And because of this, that he too cannot experience the full revelation of the *atzmut* (essence) of the infinite light of the Almighty, he too is broken and downtrodden—he is crushed [*katit*].¹⁵

The individual who feels the lack of universal revelation of God the most is the Mashiach. And if you want to be connected to Mashiach, you too have to be sensitive to this.

What does being in exile mean? It means that *Hashem* is not revealing Himself to everyone. There is no consummate revelation of Divinity in the world. This is existentially worse than experiencing the hardship and pain of the exile. However, even though this explains why *katit* would be a good time for us yet still result in our feeling crushed because we are still in exile, it does not fully answer the question in relation to

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the 830 years that the Temple stood. During those years, there was no exile. It was a state of constant Divine revelation. So how do we explain that this word means to be crushed in relation to the years that the Temple stood, years in which there was no exile?

Based on what the Rebbe quoted many times in the name of the Rogochover (who gave him his *smichah* [Rabbinic ordination]), from the moment that the *Beit Hamikdash* was built, it was known that it would be destroyed. The Rogochover says that because the temporality of the two Temples, the *mitzvah* to build God a place to dwell was never performed. [He also says the same thing about the *mitzvah* to appoint a king, even though we had king David and other kings. These two commandments relate to the creation of the public of the Jewish people in *Eretz Yisrael*.] Since the Temple was destined to be destroyed, this was not the full manifestation of Divine revelation that *Hashem* had intended that the Temple serve. Thus, even though the Temple stood, the revelation of Divinity was not complete, Mashiach had not come. If projected into that time when the Temple was standing, the Rebbe would continue to cry and to feel the existential angst that is a result of the state of exile.

There is another example of this concept in regard to Moshe Rabbeinu. It is known that Moshe is both the first redeemer [from Egypt] and the final redeemer [from our current exile]. When God entrusted him with the mission of taking the Jewish people out of Egypt, Moshe refused because he knew that this was not going to be the final redemption. This was not yet to be his role as Mashiach. That is why he said to the *Aibeshter*: "Send he who is Your messenger," meaning send the Mashiach. Do not send me on a mission of only partial redemption.

So what the Rogochover's teaching gives us is an understanding that even during the 830 years that there was a *Beit Hamikdash* the world was not yet perfected. The point of what the Rebbe is teaching us is that as good as it gets, if the revelation of God is not complete and universal, not only does the goodness not make up for it, it just makes it all the more difficult to bear the good. Living in times of plenty and seeing that we are still in exile from the *Aibeshter*, just makes us feel even more crushed.

There is a beautiful *gematria* that the Rebbe quotes that reflects this idea.

The *gematria* of the word חולה [someone who is ill] is 49, [implying] that even when he succeeds in attaining 49 gates of understanding, but he lacks the 50th gate, he is still ill.¹⁶

The numerical value of the word חולה, meaning a person who is ill, is 49, just one short of 50, which is the number associated with the 50 gates of understanding. This means that even if you possess 49 gates of understanding, the highest level that any person can attain in this world, if you are still lacking just one, you feel sick.

We would expect that the person who has attained no gates, or one gate, that person should feel sick. But, the truth is that the more revelation of God you have experienced through the gates of understanding, the more existentially ill you become if something is

still missing. The closer you are to the objective but are still prevented from taking the final step to attain it, the more painful it is. Nachmanides, the Ramban, writes that in reference to the Land of Israel, the holier something is, the more overbearing is its state of destruction. In other words, as you walk closer to the site of the destroyed Temple, the more you feel the lack of God's universal revelation.

Now, why do the 420 years of the second *Beit Hamikdash* appear before the 410 years of the first *Beit Hamikdash*? We can answer this question too by applying the same principle. Even though the second Temple stood for 10 more years than the first, there were 5 key objects that were missing from the second Temple. As a result, the level of Divine revelation that was experienced in the time of the First Temple was not repeated in the second. So, even though the second Temple was bigger and more beautiful than the first, it was lacking in Godliness (and universality) relative to the first.

To summarize: the highest and most inclusive point of the *ma'amar* comes out of the words *katit lama'or*. The Rebbe explains that these words indicate that the existential pain and suffering experienced in our generation is greater even than the pain and suffering experienced by the previous generation of the holocaust. And it is this existential feeling of being crushed that brings out the ability to be a source of infinite light and reveal the *atzmut* of *Hashem*. As we shall see, most of the other essential points in the *ma'amar* come out of the recognition of this one. As in many models of the *sefirot*, the super-conscious idea that corresponds to the *sefirah* of crown continuously hovers over all other parts of the model and continually inspires them.

Wisdom: Moshe Rabbeinu's ascent to his soul root

Now, let us move on to the second point of the *ma'amar*, which as we will see corresponds to the *sefirah* of wisdom (חכמה). Wisdom is particularly connected to Moshe Rabbeinu, as wisdom is considered to be Moshe Rabbeinu's origin. When Pharaoh's daughter brought Moshe out of the Nile she named him Moshe, saying: "I drew him [Moshe] out of the waters."¹⁷ It is explained that the waters she mentions in this verse allude to the waters of higher wisdom. So the essential point in the discourse corresponding to wisdom will be specifically about Moshe Rabbeinu and the descent of his soul from its root (in higher wisdom) into his body.

[Chapter 2] Moshe and the Jewish people are compared to a head and a foot, as the verse says: "Six hundred thousand footmen are the nation that I am in their midst." All of Israel are like the feet of Moshe Rabbeinu and Moshe is their head. Just as in the human being, it is the feet that carry the head to places that the head by itself cannot reach, so it is in regard to Moshe and the Jewish people. Thanks to the people of Israel (Moshe Rabbeinu's feet), Moshe is elevated further. Because, as the verse means to say with the words: "Six hundred thousand footmen that I am in their

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midst,” through the people being footmen, the revelation of *Anochi* [“I”] is drawn into Moshe Rabbeinu.¹⁸

The descent of the soul from its origin above to the body is a traumatic experience. It is one of the most ubiquitous themes, appearing in almost every one of the Alter Rebbe’s discourses in *Torah Or* and *Likutei Torah*. Obviously, if the descent is so traumatic for the soul, there must be a good reason for it in the first place. In Chassidut the reason is described as “descent for the sake of ascent.” There is some great benefit to the soul from descending into the body for a hundred and twenty years. Even Moshe Rabbeinu’s soul is meant to gain something from its descent into a physical body. He is meant to ascend to an even higher level. This is the reason that Moshe’s name is not mentioned in this *parshah*, because he has succeeded in ascending to his soul-root and revealing it in a manner in which it was not revealed even before his soul descended into his physical body.

What was the special act that resulted in such a tremendous ascent for Moshe and a consummate revelation of his soul root? Based upon the Friedeger Rebbe’s *ma’amar* the Rebbe explains that this was not the result of an act performed by Moshe Rabbeinu, but rather by the children of Israel.

And this is what the words: “And you shall command the Children of Israel, and they shall take to you pure olive oil....” By Moshe commanding the people and thereby connecting them with the infinite light of the Almighty, the Children of Israel will bring him olive oil, which will increase the light shining in Moshe.¹⁹

The opening verse of the *parshah* says: “And they will take to you pure olive oil....” By bringing Moshe the pure olive oil, the Jewish people elevate Moshe himself to a level higher than the one he was at before. Even though Moshe is commanding them to bring the oil, by bringing it they are elevating him to a higher state than the one he was at when he commanded them to bring the oil in the first place. This highest level is described as the revelation of the aspect of אָנוּכִי (*anochi*), the *atzmut* that is within Moshe, as we explained earlier.

This elevation is alluded to in Moshe Rabbeinu’s words: “Six hundred thousand footmen are the nation that I (*anochi*) am in their midst.”²⁰ The way that this verse is explained in Chassidut is that we the Jewish people are considered the feet (the footmen) attached to the head representing Moshe Rabbeinu. Though the head is obviously more important than the feet, it is the feet that carry the head to places that it cannot go by itself. Similarly, though of lower stature relative to Moshe Rabbeinu, it is the Children of Israel who are able to reveal Moshe’s highest soul root. This is a tremendous *chidush*: Moshe Rabbeinu needs the Children of Israel in order to contemplate and justify the descent of his great and holy soul to earth. In other words, it is the acts of the Jewish people that justify for Moshe his very existence in a physical body. By bringing to Moshe

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the *atzmut* revealed in them due to the crushing weight of the exile, the Jewish people are able to reveal in the Moshe the *anochi*, the *atzmut* of *Hashem*.

Of course, what is true of Moshe Rabbeinu is true of the *nasi* (the leader) of every generation because the *nasi* is the extension of Moshe Rabbeinu into each generation. The *nasi* of each generation is the head of the generation.

Now let us see the beautiful numerical relationships that are related to the point of wisdom in the *ma'amar*. The very word "Israel" (ישראל) permutes to spell the words "*li rosh*" (לי ראש), meaning "I have a head" and indicating that the essence of Israel is the leader. The Moshe Rabbeinu of the generation, the Rebbe, serves as our collective head and we act as his collective feet. One of the indications that two words or concepts complete one another and form a perfect whole is that their combined *gematria* equals a square number. The word for "footmen" in the verse quoted above, which indicates that we are Moshe Rabbeinu's feet is רגלי. If we add this word to the permutation of "Israel" that means "I have a head," we get $\text{רגלי} \pm \text{לי ראש} = 243 \pm 541 = 784 = 28^2$, or $\text{יהי} \cdot \text{יהי} = \text{יהי}$ squared. Notice also that both words have the word לי in them, which the sages tell us is a sign of eternity ("Every place that says לי, is immutable"²¹)—it is also a word that implies *atzmut*.

This relationship between the Moshe Rabbeinu of the generation and the Jewish people of the generation is expressed in the life that is given back and forth. This deep inter-dependence between Moshe Rabbeinu and the Jewish people is thus the second essential point of the Rebbe's discourse.

A final point to make is that Moshe himself is not going to be using the pure olive oil because it is intended for Aharon who will light the *menorah* with it. But, the purpose of bringing it to him is to create this special bond between the people and between Moshe. Each of us has to take his own personal sense of being-in-exile in its crushed and broken state and bring it to the Moshe of the generation. This is what happens when a person enters *yechidut* with the Rebbe. Not only does doing so bring help to you, but will also reveal the *atzmut* of *Hashem* in the Rebbe.

The two words ויקחו אליך, "And they shall take to you" in the first verse of *parshat Tetzaveh* thus reveal an essential spiritual construct: in every generation there is a soul who can not only help each of us with his existential angst and pain, but by doing so the *atzmut* of *Hashem* is revealed in that soul. Let us now analyze these two words numerically. The numerical value of ויקחו is 130, which is also the *gematria* of the word עין, meaning "eye" or "measure." The numerical value of אליך is 61, which is the *gematria* of אין, meaning "nothingness." Of course the only difference between עין and אין is the substitution of an א for an ע. As explained in Chassidut, in such a case, the word that has the *alef* reveals an inner aspect while the word that has an *ayin* reveals an external aspect.²² Now, wisdom is specifically related to both the eyes—as in the sages' adage: "Who is wise? He who sees what is coming to pass"²³—and to nothingness—as in the Biblical verse: "And wisdom appears out of nothingness."²⁴

This is another reason that Moshe's name does not appear in the *parshah*, because by bringing the olive oil to Moshe, the Children of Israel elevated him to his soul root back to its source in higher wisdom. But because wisdom is likened to nothingness, Moshe himself seems to have disappeared.²⁵

Understanding:

The third essential point of the *ma'amar* is an amazing statement about *teshuvah*, one of the essential aspects of the *sefirah* of understanding (*binah*).

[Chapter 9] In a discourse by the Alter Rebbe, it is noted that according to the *Tikunei Zohar*, if there were one *tzadik* who would perform complete *teshuvah*, the Mashiach would arrive in his generation. Because, complete *teshuvah* draws the infinite, boundless light of the Almighty to revelation in a universal manner.²⁶

The Rebbe says that if there were just one *tzadik* in the generation who would do complete *teshuvah* that would be sufficient for the Mashiach to come. It appears implicitly that that one *tzadik* is the Mashiach himself.

The closest source to this statement that can be found (and which is cited in a footnote on this statement in the original *ma'amar*) is in the *Zohar Chadash*, which says that if the heads of a congregation or a quorum of Jews (ten Jews, *chada knishta*, in the *Zohar's* terminology) would do *teshuvah* and become consummate *tzadikim*, i.e., *tzadikim gmureem*, that would be enough for the Mashiach to come. But, the Rebbe here is clearly going another step further by saying that only one such *ba'al teshuvah* is needed.

Teshuvah is motivated by understanding (*binah*) as stated to in the verse: "And his heart will understand, he will return, and he will be healed."²⁷ When the heart understands, a person returns to God's will and then he and the entire world are healed. Throughout the *Zohar*, whenever the word *teshuvah* appears it is referring to the *sefirah* of understanding.

What does the link between *teshuvah* and understanding reveal? First it teaches us that in order to do *teshuvah*, one has to understand the consequences of doing something against God's will. The sages tell us that a Jew cannot do something wrong, unless a spirit of folly has entered his heart and has convinced him that it's not really against God's will,²⁸ or as the Tanya explains, that everything will be ok in the sense that he can sin and yet still remain a good Jew with God in his heart and that is all that really matters. So the first requirement for *teshuvah* is that we understand the consequences of our actions. What we say and what we do has an effect on ourselves and on our surroundings. To use a modern idiom, understanding that our actions have consequences spiritually and physically is "an inconvenient truth."

But there is another, deeper level of understanding that goes beyond the taking responsibility for the consequences of our actions. If all you understand are the consequences of your actions, that is still only *misnagdishe teshuvah*. *Chassidische teshuvah* requires a whole different level of understanding, which involves understanding who *Hashem* is. *Chassidische teshuvah* requires that you understand before Whom exactly you committed a sin.

The Ba'al Shem Tov taught this idea of understanding and *teshuvah* in the form of a story from Rav Sa'adyah Ga'on.²⁹ This was the greatest teaching that that Ba'al Shem Tov taught in the name of Rav Sa'adyah Ga'on. The point of the story was that every day I have to strive to increase my understanding and appreciation of how great *Hashem* really is. Every day I need to spend time increasing my awareness of the Infinite nature of the Almighty, and how He and His will are far removed from everything that I can fathom. Every time that my understanding in this respect increases and I achieve a new level, I have to do *teshuvah* over everything, including all the *mitzvot* that I performed yesterday, because yesterday I did not yet understand at whose command I was performing the *mitzvot*! This is called *teshuvah ila'ah*, higher *teshuvah*, and requires me to come everyday to a new understanding of God. Higher *teshuvah* is a state of "all his days in *teshuvah*," described in the *Tanya*; constant and continual *teshuvah* for all my actions whether good or bad.

Let us see how this point of understanding is illuminated by the existential pain of exile discussed in relation to the *sefirah* of crown. The point there was that when things seem to be going good, but we are still in exile, that is when the existential pain that the redemption is not here increases and become crushing. The same reasoning applies to doing higher *teshuvah* for good actions vs. bad actions. In regard to the imperfect state of my consciousness yesterday relative to today, the *mitzvot* that I did yesterday without properly appreciating *Hashem* requires much deeper *teshuvah* than that required in order to atone for the sins. The sins are relatively easier to fix: if I did something bad, I need to stop it and do good instead. But, if I need to fix the way in which I put *tefilin* on, the way in which I gave *tzedakah*, that requires a change in my entire understanding. It requires a Messianic understanding, which is what the *Zohar* means when it says that the Mashiach comes in order to bring the *tzadikim* to do *teshuvah*. *Tzadikim* are doing *mitzvot* all day long, and Mashiach has to teach them how to do *teshuvah* for these *mitzvot*—that requires that the Mashiach offer a really deep understanding of God.

Obviously, the Rebbe's statement that it is enough that one *tzadik* do complete *teshuvah* implies the performance of *Chassidische teshuvah*, higher *teshuvah*. It also implies that to date there has not been a single *tzadik* who has done this; not even Moshe Rabbeinu and not any of the extensions of Moshe into each generation. For, if there had been such a person, Mashiach would have already come. By corollary, in order to perform higher *teshuvah*, this *tzadik* has to feel the existential pain of the entire world over the absence of the revelation of the *atzmut* of *Hashem*. Indeed, because the *tzadik* is

sensitive to this absence, it causes him affliction and sickness. By seeking a deeper understanding of God, this *tzadik* of the generation is able to perform higher *teshuva*. And then, as the verse says, "...His heart will understand, he will return and be healed." This is all an amazing *chidush* that appears only in this *ma'amar*.

Knowledge: experiencing the crown

In our analysis so far we have actually already addressed an essential point of the *ma'amar* that corresponds to the *sefirah* of knowledge. When we described the essential point corresponding to the crown, we already implicitly included knowledge. The existential crush experienced as a result of the exile is a conscious experience associated with knowledge. So in this case, the *sefirot* of crown and knowledge appear as one, as they do many times in Kabbalah.

Loving-kindness and Might: The Year of Living Dangerously

Now, let us see the essential points that correspond to the *sefirot* of loving-kindness (*chesed*) and might (*gevurah*). Kabbalah describes that knowledge (*da'at*) is the origin of the emotions of the heart. Loving-kindness and might—the first two emotional *sefirot*—are described as extending directly out of the two inner aspects of the *sefirah* of knowledge known as the five aspects of kindness and the five aspects of judgment within knowledge (*hei chasadim shebada'at* and *hei gevurot shebada'at*). As we will now see, the essential points of the discourse that correspond to loving-kindness and might have to do with the figure of Mordechai. Who is the one *tzadik* that the Rebbe identifies himself with more than any other? You might think that it is Moshe Rabbeinu. But if you look in the Rebbe's *sichot* and *ma'amarim*, you will see that it is actually Mordechai.

Mordechai is the hero of the month of Adar,³⁰ and the Rebbe quotes the saying from the sages that: "Mordechai in his generation is like Moshe Rabbeinu in his generation."³¹ The Rebbe notes that even though there were many extensions of Moshe Rabbeinu over the generations, this is the only time that the sages compare any of them to Moshe Rabbeinu in such a way. Amazingly, the Rebbe says that not only is Mordechai special in that he is the only *tzadik* compared directly to Moshe Rabbeinu in this manner, but that Mordechai is in a certain sense even greater than Moshe Rabbeinu.

[Chapter 7] ...Mordechai in his generation is equal in stature to Moshe Rabbeinu in his generation, for even though the extension of Moshe is into every generation, nonetheless the *midrash* states that Mordechai specifically is comparable to Moshe in his generation.

We have to say that among Mordechai's exalted qualities, he was (clearly) the *raya mehemna* of all of the Jewish people in his generation. Like Moshe Rabbeinu, *raya mehemna*, who drew conscious knowledge [*da'at*, of God] into all the Jews of his

generation, as can be understood from the fact that Moshe's (entire) generation is denoted as a generation of knowledge.

Still, by Moshe Rabbeinu his leadership as the *raya mehemna* of all of Israel, can be seen through his drawing of conscious knowledge to all the people of his generation. But, by Mordechai [his being the *raya mehemna* of his generation], it can be seen through his revelation of self-sacrifice in all the people of his generation.

In the *ma'amar* the Rebbe addresses these two points: 1) what makes Mordechai especially similar to Moshe Rabbeinu? And, 2) how is Mordechai even greater than Moshe Rabbeinu?

[Chapter 3] Moshe Rabbeinu is called the *raya mehemna*. This has two meanings. First that he is the faithful shepherd of the Jewish people, and second, that he feeds and nurtures the faith of the Jewish people. For, the faith that Jews have inherently—all Jews are “believers, children of believers”—can be hovering externally [above their consciousness]. And Moshe Rabbeinu guides and nurtures the Jewish people in regards to faith by ensuring that their faith be integrated internally [into their consciousness]....

That Moshe Rabbeinu is the *raya mehemna* also pertains to the extension of Moshe into every generation, for the leaders of the Jewish people in every generation, they are those who strengthen the faith of the Jews in their generation by integrating into their consciousness.

Such was Mordechai, the extension of Moshe into his generation, as the sages say: “Mordechai in his generation is like Moshe in his generation.” Even during the time of Haman's decree, when studying Torah and performing the commandments required self-sacrifice, he congregated the people in public in order to strengthen their faith in *Havayah*, and to stand fast in the study of Torah and the keeping of the commandments.³²

To answer these two questions the Rebbe explains that to be similar to Moshe Rabbeinu—“Mordechai in his generation is like Moshe Rabbeinu in his generation”—means to be like Moshe, the *raya mehemna* of the generation, which literally means the faithful shepherd. As explained in Kabbalah and Chassidut, being a faithful shepherd requires that the leader nurture his flock—the Jewish people—by integrating our inherent power of faith that is initially super-conscious and hovering over consciousness into the conscious powers of the soul. This is a very general explanation of the role of a

leader considered an extension of Moshe. Each leader focuses on a different aspect of our powers of faith.

[Chapter 5] ...The Jewish people have [inherent] indelible faith in God that requires no rational proof, for two explanations. First, because: "Their *mazal* sees," meaning, that the supernal soul *sees* Divinity (with super-rational insight) and this causes the part of the soul in the body to have faith in God. Also, there is a second reason: the soul's essence is united in the Divine in what is an essential bond (this bond has no cause, it is not even a result of super-rational insight).³³

The integration of faith into the part of the soul within the body [the conscious part of the soul] requires the revelation of the essential bond of the soul's essence [with the essence of the Almighty].³⁴

In what is probably the deepest part of the *ma'amar*, the Rebbe explains that Moshe Rabbeinu nurtures our faith by bringing our *mazal*, the *chayah* level of our soul, into the conscious part of our mind. Elsewhere, the Rebbe Rashab explains that when this occurs a person can see the recreation of reality at every moment in time. Incidentally, Moshe Rabbeinu continues even now to nurture all of our souls in this way; it is not for select individuals only. None of us should feel that we are incapable of experiencing this.³⁵ One's *mazal* sees continual recreation all the time, but the conscious mind is normally blind to it.

[Note 56] ... We have to say that the drawing of faith into consciousness, what is drawn openly is faith as it is in the context of the "*mazal* that sees" (the external super-conscious aspect of *chayah*). But, the unification of faith which is super-conscious with consciousness occurs through the drawing of the *etzem* [essence] of the soul. (In other words, the revelation of the *etzem* [essence] of the soul only serves as a catalyst for uniting the super-conscious faith of the *chayah* with consciousness. But, [this does not mean that] the *etzem* [essence] of the soul itself is revealed.)

However, when [the anticipation of] the revelation of God touches one existentially, and because of this one is broken and crushed that during the exile there is no such revelation... in such a case, the revelation of the essential unity [of the soul with the essence of God] of the *etzem* [essence] of the soul that is revealed, since the revelation of God touches one's very being, this acts (not only as a catalyst, but also) as a open revelation of this essential unity in and

of itself (similar to the manner in which it is revealed during times of self-sacrifice)....³⁶

The Rebbe explains that in order to integrate the *mazal* into our conscious mind, Moshe Rabbeinu has to reveal an even higher part of the soul—the *etzem* (essence) of the soul. This is a general rule. In order for something to occur there must be a higher source that affects it. Yet, the Rebbe notes that there is an important difference between what Moshe Rabbeinu does as *raya mehemna*, and what Mordechai did. The Rebbe explains that to bring a Jew to a state of *mesirut nefesh*, being able to sacrifice himself physically in order to retain his Jewish identity, which is what Mordechai did, requires the revelation of an even higher level of the soul.

This is so because as great a spiritual level as seeing continual recreation with the conscious mind is, it still includes an experience of self. There is no need for me to nullify myself plain and simple by sacrificing my life. Because of this, seeing recreation at every moment it is still a rationally confined experience.

But, for a Jew to give up his life is never going to be entirely rational; as the Tanya says: A Jew cannot bear to be separate from God for one moment and will therefore spontaneously prefer to be killed rather than worship a false god, or perform some other terrible sin, even if he knows that later he can do *teshuvah* for such an action. The spontaneous nature of self-sacrifice lies beyond all rational explanation.

Self sacrifice is not the result of the revelation of one's *chayah* (the *mazal*), but is a product of direct revelation of the *yechidah*, the highest part of the soul. What the Rebbe is saying is that Moshe Rabbeinu also revealed the *yechidah* (described in the quoted note as the essential unity with the essence of God that is part of the essence of the soul), but that was not for the purpose of inducing a state of self-sacrifice, but this was in order to integrate the *chayah* (*mazal*) into the conscious mind. But, Mordechai affected a direct revelation of the *yechidah* inducing a state of self-sacrifice, not just once, for one person, but for a whole year for the entire Jewish people.

[Chapter 4] ...It is explained in *Torah Or* that if they would have renounced their religion, they would have not been harmed, because the decree was only against Jews [not other religions], and yet such a forbidden thought did not even cross their minds...³⁷

As we know, during that traumatic year of Haman's decree, not a single Jew renounced his Judaism in order to save his life. The entire people were in a state of constant self-sacrifice, which means that for an entire year the entire Jewish people were in a state in which the *etzem* (the essence) of their soul was revealed.

With this analysis the Rebbe provides us with an answer to both questions. First, Mordechai is the most like Moshe Rabbeinu because as a leader, he led all of the Jewish people. There was not a single individual who was not moved to self-sacrifice. And, at

the same time, Mordechai revealed a higher aspect of the soul in each individual then did Moshe Rabbeinu.

Now, where do we see both loving-kindness and might in the Rebbe's analysis? First of all, since Mordechai is the leader of the entire people down to the last individual, we know that he was a tremendous *ohav Yisra'el* (lover of Israel). Moshe Rabbeinu was the greatest *ohav Yisra'el* (lover of the Jewish people). Indeed, every *tzadik* that is an extension of Moshe Rabbeinu is a lover of the entire Jewish people. Still, the Rebbe stresses that the reason that Mordechai is the only *tzadik* to be cast as absolutely the same as Moshe Rabbeinu has to do with his existential love for every single Jew in his generation. This we see from the fact that in the *megilah*, the Jewish people are called *am Mordechai*, meaning "the people of Mordechai." Because of Mordechai's tremendous love for every single Jew, the entire Jewish people were named after him.³⁸ This existential love for every single Jew reveals the point of loving-kindness in the *ma'amar*.

Indeed, in the writings of the Arizal, we see that Mordechai has a special affinity to loving-kindness (*chesed*). The Arizal says that with every mention of Mordechai's name in the *megilah* we should have in mind the words *rav chesed* meaning "great kindness" since the *gematria* of both מרדכי ("Mordechai") and רב חסד ("great kindness") is 274.

Rav chesed is one of the 13 Divine qualities, or principles of mercy enumerated in *parshat Ki Tisa*,³⁹ which bring us to the point of might in the *ma'amar* and in Mordechai's character. At the very same time that Mordechai loved every single Jew, he also endangered the entire people by not bowing down to Haman. It is non-obvious that there is a halachic problem with Mordechai's bowing down to Haman if doing so would endanger him or others (as it did). If he would have asked a local halachic authority, he may have been told him that not only is it permissible, but it is required in order to save lives. So he is both the soul that is connected to every single Jew and every single Jew is connected and bound to him and he is the one who puts them into terrible danger for a whole year, putting the existence of the entire nation in doubt.

It is noteworthy that this *gematria* of Mordechai is found in *parshat Ki Tisa*. The sages ask: "Where is Mordechai mentioned in the Torah?"⁴⁰ *Rashi* explains that the question asked by the sages is "Where do we find Mordechai's rise to greatness hinted to in the Torah?" The answer given by the sages is the verse: "And you shall take the following fine spices, natural myrrh..."⁴¹ This verse is also in *parshat Ki Tisa*. It describes the preparation of the oil used to anoint the vessels of the Tabernacle [and later the Cohanim (priests) and which will be used to anoint the Mashiach]. The first spice, liquid myrrh, is translated by *Onkelos* as "*meira dachya*" (מִירָא דְכִיָּא) which has almost the exact same letters as Mordechai. But, in the original Hebrew, the word translated as "myrrh" is related to the word for bitterness. Indeed, Nachmanides⁴² quotes a *midrash* that builds on this relationship. Moreover, the second word, דָּרוֹר, which means "natural," can be understood to be the source of Mordechai's dangerous actions.

If we want to explain why Mordechai put everyone in such grave danger, the answer is that acts like this originate in the individual's very soul root. As the Rebbe explains in regard to the act of Shimon and Levi who killed all the male inhabitants of *Shechem*, though Jacob, their father, did not support this act, they felt that it was an existential necessity for them to avenge their sister. Ultimately, even Jacob understood that they had no choice, for this was the essence of their nature—their deepest and truest definition of self. Ultimately, we see that by acting according to his own holy nature, Mordechai revealed in the Jewish people a higher level of might and self sacrifice than even Moshe Rabbeinu revealed in the people. In other words, Mordechai revealed a higher Jewish nature than had been known until that time.⁴³

Now let us see how the Rebbe reveals loving-kindness and might in Mordechai's character in a second way. The Rebbe analyzes Mordechai's character with great attention. One of the points that he is making throughout the entire *ma'amar* is that the story of the Megilah describes two completely opposite situations in which Mordechai was the leader of the Jewish people. Mordechai led the Jewish people during the traumatic year when Haman decreed that the Jewish people were to be annihilated. The Mordechai of that year carried the people through tremendous trauma. As such, Mordechai was the leader of the people in a time that demanded tremendous physical self-sacrifice. As we noted earlier, thanks to Mordechai's leadership, not a single Jew denounced his Judaism, even externally, in order to save his life from the impending holocaust.

[Chapter 7] We have to say that by bringing the midrash's statement that Mordechai in his generation is like Moshe Rabbeinu in his generation, by doing so the previous Rebbe ruled about himself that he is the *raya mehemna* of all of the people of the generation.⁴⁴

The Rebbe also notes that since it was the previous Rebbe who analyzed Mordechai's leadership in this way, following the logic of a particular *mishnah*, the previous Rebbe ruled that he is essentially the same type of leader as Mordechai. Historically, the similarity between the previous Rebbe and Mordechai is clear, as the previous Rebbe was the leader of the generation during the darkness of the Soviet takeover of Russia and the holocaust.

But, Mordechai continued as the leader of the people after Haman was defeated and the Jewish people enjoyed unprecedented freedom in the Persian Empire; the Jews had "...Light, and joy, and happiness, and splendor." This was a completely different time and if ever we witnessed a perfect example of *ithapcha*, of things turning around 180 degrees, it is in the story of the *Megilah*. Following this *ithapcha*, Mordechai exhibited leadership of a different nature—not based on self-sacrifice, but on the retention of Jewish identity through the sacrifices involved in *shleechoot*—becoming an educational emissary of the Rebbe entrusted with that task of educating Jews about their *Yidishkeit*.

Though the Rebbe does not say this explicitly, it is clear that just as he draws the parallel between the previous Rebbe and the Mordechai who led the people through a time demanding self-sacrifice, so he draws a parallel between himself and the Mordechai that continued to lead the people in a time of prosperity. The historical context is also very clear. The Rebbe assumed leadership almost immediately after the end of the holocaust (1951) and in the United States, the most prosperous and affluent place of exile of the Jewish people. And the Rebbe's leadership is not focused on the literal sacrifice of one's life in order to retain one's Jewish identity, as was the leadership of his father-in-law, the previous Rebbe.

Building upon the previous explanation of loving-kindness as love for every single Jew, we see that in our generation, the Rebbe was the greatest lover of the Jewish people. We ourselves saw the Rebbe's love for every single Jew, something that we find no similar example of in recent generations. Another parallel between the two is that in the year of terrible uncertainty, Mordechai gathered all the children together to say *psukim*. This idea was adopted by the Rebbe when he instituted the recital of the 12 *psukim* by children who constitute the armies of God (*tziivos Hashem*).

Beauty and Foundation:

Now for the essential point of the *ma'amar* that corresponds to the *sefirah* of beauty (*tiferet*). In Kabbalah, beauty corresponds to the *vav* of God's essential Name, *Havayah*. The literally meaning of the letter *vav* is a hook, or link that connects two things together.

[Chapter 2] My holy teacher and father-in-law, the [previous] Rebbe... explains that the commandment "You shall command" is an example of togetherness [*tzavta*] and connection.⁴⁵

The idea of linking or connecting is the very first idea that the Rebbe explains in the *ma'amar*, based on the famous teaching that the Hebrew word *mitzvah* (מצוה) also means "together" (צוותא), meaning that every *mitzvah* is like a hook that is meant to connect us, or bring us together with God, who commanded us to perform the *mitzvah*.⁴⁶ The previous Rebbe explained that the word *tetzaveh* (תצוה), which comes from the same root as the word *mitzvah*, is too cognate to the word for "together" (צוותא), meaning "together" or "togetherness." God said to Moshe Rabbeinu: you and only you have the power to connect; to consciously bring together into one unified whole the Jewish people and Me. As a result of connecting the people to God, they will bring you something that you, Moshe Rabbeinu do not inherently possess, which is the pure crushed olive oil, whose meaning we explained above.

Now, this immediately leads us to the essential point that corresponds to the *sefirah* of foundation in the *ma'amar*. First a few words about the link between beauty and foundation. In the *Zohar*, foundation is considered to be an extension of beauty as they

lie upon the central axis of the *sefirot*. All of the *sefirot* on the central axis⁴⁷ are considered part of one expanse,⁴⁸ which is not entirely the case with regard to the right⁴⁹ and left⁵⁰ axes of the *sefirot*. The *sefirot* divide into three axes, which are compared to the three crossbars that connected the panels of the walls of the *mishkan* (the desert Tabernacle) together. The top and bottom crossbars were divided into two separate sections, but the middle crossbar (הבריח התיכון) was made of one long piece of wood.⁵¹ The top and bottom crossbars correspond to the right and left axes of the *sefirot*, while the middle crossbar corresponds to the middle axis. So, both beauty and foundation are referred to by the letter *vav* of *Havayah*, except that there are two levels of *vav*.

[Chapter 11] After Moshe Rabbeinu will command and connect with the Jewish people they will bring him olive oil.... (And we have to say that the words "And you shall command the Children of Israel," the [choice of] language... implies that Moshe will also command (connects and unites) the Children of Israel themselves, because in relation to the essence of the soul, all of Israel are one.)⁵²

The Rebbe builds on the connection between beauty and foundation and explains that Moshe Rabbeinu's ability to connect souls to God by revealing in them the *etzem* (essence) of their soul also gives him the power to connect all the Jewish souls together to one another. The unity achieved within the Jewish people is one of the central tasks of the leader of the generation, the Moshe Rabbeinu in every generation. The power that the Rebbe has to connect us with God, that is the beauty principle and the power that the Rebbe has to connect us with one another, even different factions of the Jewish people, which do not see eye to eye, that is the foundation principle in this *ma'amar*. Unifying the Jewish people in this manner allows each individual to find his unique voice, but at the same time sing in harmony with all the other voices.

Eternity and Acknowledgment:

The essential points of the *ma'amar* corresponding to the *sefirot* of eternity (*netzach*) and acknowledgment (*hod*) appear in regard to the words "*leha'alot ner tamid*," lighting an eternal light," which is the purpose of bringing the pure crushed olive oil to Moshe Rabbeinu. That this light is meant to be lit always, reveals that it is an eternal light. But, this seems to contradict the second verse of the *parshah* which stipulates that the *menorah* should be lit (only) from dusk till dawn and not all the time.

[Chapter 11] By the Jewish people adding (through their own toil) in Moshe Rabbeinu's stature, through this the light shall be an eternal light. Apparently, the light [lit. "candle"] of the soul (as in the verse: "The candle of God is the soul of man") [shines] eternally (meaning constantly and without change) when there is a revelation of the soul's *etzem* [essence] by Moshe Rabbeinu ([through God's

command:] “And you shall command”). This is because in the soul’s essence there can be no changes....

We have to say that when the soul’s essence is revealed through an awakening from above, which is the manner of “You shall command...,” there is a difference [in the way that the essence affects the soul’s conscious elements] between evening and day. The soul-essence’s primary revelation [and affect] occurs when there is a state of “evening,” situations that conceal and cover [i.e., inhibit the Jew from freely exercising his commitment to God]. During these times one’s strength of self-sacrifice is aroused. Indeed, as explained earlier, when those same people who during times of persecution stood up willing to sacrifice themselves [in order to retain their Jewish identity] ([metaphoric] evening) were able to move to places that afforded the freedom to practice Torah and *mitzvot* ([metaphoric] day) the effect of their earlier self-sacrifice was no longer apparent.

The true state of an eternal flame (which cannot go through changes) comes through the toil of Jews in a way that their revealed [conscious] powers become one with the *etzem* [essence] of their souls [the state described in the verse with the words]: “And they shall take to you....”

Following this point, we can clarify that the reason that the words “*katit lama’or*” [crushed for light] appear after the words “And they shall take to you” is because the words *katit lama’or* also refers to the state in which the Jewish people are broken and crushed because they are [still] in exile. For then [when they experience this state of being broken and crushed], the toil of the Jewish people causes their revealed [conscious] powers to reflect their soul’s essence....

To explain this apparent contradiction the Rebbe explains that the light that will be lit from the pure olive oil brought to Moshe Rabbeinu symbolizes the *etzem* (the essence) of the soul of each Jew that will be revealed as a result. But, explains the Rebbe, the *etzem* of the soul has two levels, just as we explained before regarding Mordechai: Mordechai is revealed as two personalities; the first personality is the one we meet during the traumatic year of Haman’s decree and the second personality is the Mordechai after the trauma, the one that goes on to lead the Jewish people after the victory over Haman.

As the Rebbe explained, it is the second post-traumatic personality of Mordechai that corresponds to the Mashiach. In our generation, as we said, the self-sacrificing Mordechai is the personality that gets us through the holocaust; that gets us through the

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evil of all evils. But, the second personality is a second level of self-sacrifice which appears once the danger is passed, things seem to have worked out and are good now, but they are not perfect.

Like we stated earlier when explaining the essential point of the crown, one would think to brush off and ignore the imperfection of reality once things are good, but for the personality of the Mashiach this is even more difficult than surviving the evil of evils because it means that the world is not fulfilling the reason for which God created it. The trauma⁵³ of the imperfection of the world is much deeper actually than any other trauma we can experience because it has been around since the first moment of creation. In modern scientific language, from the moment of the Big Bang the world has not lived up to God's expectation from it. Neither of the two Temples in Jerusalem was perfect, nothing is as it should be, and even worse, it seems that nothing can change this. It seems that nothing can help put the world on the right track. We believe that this deepest of existential traumas will indeed be healed (even immediately), but it has not yet happened. Regardless of what kind of times we have gone through, we never saw this trauma healed. We have yet to see the purpose of all of creation realized. The pain that results from this trauma is a constant one that cannot be healed until the Mashiach comes—nothing else can change that.

A person that only experiences the need for self-sacrifice when times are bad, that experience is not eternal. It cannot and does not last forever. Because, the moment things get better, one no longer requires a self-sacrificing stance in order to keep one's *Yiddishkeit*.

This is a very important point that the Rebbe talked about in relation to the Lubavitchers who got out of the Soviet Union in the 50s and 60s and then came to *Eretz Yisrael* or to the United States. While in the Soviet Union they had practically lived for years upon years on self-sacrifice, literally to the point of having to sacrifice their lives to keep their Jewish identity (as many Jews did). They were at their spiritual height when they were in Russia and needed self-sacrifice. Then they were role models for all of us. But, once they got out and were once again free to be Jews, they experienced a spiritual decline.

But, speaking about himself, the Rebbe says that he did not lose this level, because his self-sacrifice is no longer the type that awakens in the face of adversity, but self-sacrifice caused by the burden of the most existential trauma in life—that the Mashiach has not yet come and that the world is still, at its core, broken and shattered.

Once the imminent danger of Haman's plan had passed and "the Jews had light, etc." then the level of self-sacrifice declined and people lost the spiritual height they had attained in what is known in the sage's idiom as "the generation of annihilation" (דור של שמו). But, the second personality in Mordechai—the one that we said the Rebbe identifies with—that Mordechai does not lose his sense of self-sacrifice, i.e., the revelation of the *etzem* of his soul. Instead, as things seem to get better, his existential

pain only increases, because the universal revelation of the *atzmut* (the essence) of God is lacking. And this is the true reason for which God created the world. These two levels of revelation of self-sacrifice arise out of the two levels of the highest aspect of the soul, the *yechidah*.

The unwavering, constant state comes from the constant aspect of the *yechidah* that never changes and never weakens is what is described as the eternal light that will be lit from the pure olive oil. But the lower, mutable state of self-sacrifice is like the light that shines only during the night, only during the difficult times; it comes from the lower level of the *yechidah* that is extinguished once the danger has passed and things are good again. In fact, even if this second light would continue to shine during the daylight, during the better times, you would not see it, because as the sages say: “What benefit does one get from a candle burning in midday!”⁵⁴ The only light that can be seen during midday is the constant light emanating from the higher level of the *yechidah*, which in Chassidut is likened to the light of the moon which can be seen even when the sun is shining.

Now, the Rebbe’s explanation of the eternal and unchanging aspect of self-sacrifice that comes from an experience of the most fundamental and existential pain that Mashiach has not yet come and that God has not been universally revealed, that corresponds to the *sefirah* of eternity (*netzach*). Implicit within this statement is that between good times and bad times, the existential pain in the good times is worse than the hardship of the bad times. To admit that this point that the Rebbe is implicitly making is true is not something that every individual can do. In the idiom of Kabbalah: *leit kol mocha savil da*—not every mind can tolerate this thought. Most people think that once everything is ok, I have a family and I am making enough money and I am marrying off my children to good spouses—then everything is good and fine. The fact that in spite of my freedom, affluence, and success Mashiach has not yet come seems to carry little weight and cause very little frustration or existential pain. This is the essential point of the *ma’amar* that corresponds to the *sefirah* of acknowledgment (*hod*), because it requires us to simply and earnestly admit that this is true, even if we do not feel it enough. The essence of the *sefirah* of acknowledgment is to be able to admit to something that is entirely counter-intuitive and seems to be downright wrong! And yet, this is what the Rebbe is explaining. This is the most counter-intuitive part of the entire discourse.

Kingdom:

Finally we come to the *sefirah* of kingdom (*malchut*). This point can be found in the following passage from the discourse:

[Chapter 10] The revelation of the *etzem* [essence] of the soul through self-sacrifice, we have to say that in respect to the revealed [conscious] powers [of the soul] it is like an addition. We ourselves

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see that in practice that certain people, when they were in a place where their observance of Torah and *mitzvot* was outlawed they stood with self-sacrifice for many years. But, afterwards, when they came to countries where they could practice Torah and *mitzvot* freely, the effects of their earlier self-sacrifice were no longer apparent. Because their ability to stand in a state of self-sacrifice for many years was motivated by the revelation of the essence of their soul that is above and beyond the revealed [conscious] powers [of the soul]. Therefore, it did not affect any change in the revealed [conscious] powers.⁵⁵

Here, the Rebbe explains that when the super-conscious *etzem* (essence) of the soul reveals itself in times of danger through the psychological stance of self-sacrifice then it does not unite with the conscious parts of the soul. It does not unite with the conscious parts because it outshines them. Going back to the previous point: the elder Chassidim in Russia, when they were experiencing their willingness to sacrifice everything to keep their *Yiddishkeit*, that willingness outshone any other smaller aspect of their soul, like wisdom, or understanding, or loving-kindness, because the *etzem* of the soul is so much brighter. But, because of this lack of integration, when the danger was gone, the fact that the essence of the soul had been revealed for so long left very little impression on the other conscious parts of the soul.

We have to say that the fact that the soul's essence and the details of the powers [of the soul] are (examples) of two different types is because the soul's essence itself is defined, and its definition lies beyond the details of the powers. But, in respect to the soul's essence as it is rooted in *Atzmut* [God's essence] the simplified essence and the details are one type.⁵⁶

The Rebbe uses graphic imagery to illustrate this point. He says that whereas the essence of the soul unto itself does not change the details (ציריך) of the conscious part of the soul (and therefore does not leave an impression on them), the essence of the soul as it is one with the *atzmut*, the essence of the Almighty, that does change the picture of the conscious powers of the soul! Then, even when the times of danger have passed, not only does the *etzem* of the soul not diminish in brightness, but we see that it has changed and made an impression upon the revealed, conscious powers of the soul. That the *etzem* of the soul as it is one with the *atzmut* of God is eternal was the point that we identified with the *sefirah* of eternity (*netzach*). Here, the Rebbe is adding that the eternal state has a lasting effect upon the rest of the soul's powers—every one of the ten powers of the soul has a revelation of the *etzem* of the soul.

The Rebbe describes this impression with the sentence: “the simplified essence (פשיטות) of the soul and the details (ציריך) of its powers are one.” This is a paradoxical

statement because obviously the essence is by definition always void of form and once there is form, image, or details it precludes the revelation of the essence. Yet, this paradox is at the heart of the highest aspect of the essence of the soul as it is one with the essence of God.⁵⁷ Every single detail in the picture of the soul as it embodies in reality is now engraved and impressed with the simple essence of the soul as it is one with the essence of God.

If we go back, we will see that we described altogether three levels of the root of the soul, or the super-conscious aspects of the soul. The lowest level is called the *mazla*, or the *chayah*. Above that is the essence of the soul unto itself (which is also called the *yechidah*). And above that is the essence of the soul as it is one with the essence of God (the *etzem* of the soul, or the *etzem* of the *yechidah*, which is itself the soul of the Mashiach). It is for the revelation of the highest of these levels that God created the world and man in the first place.

Now, let us look at these two Hebrew words ציור (detail) and פשיטות (simplified essence). The *gematria* of the word ציור is 306, which is also the numerical value of the Hebrew word for “woman,” אשה! Of course, this fits exactly with what we are discussing—the essential point of the *ma’amar* that corresponds to the *sefirah* of kingdom, the feminine principle. The halachic parallel to this point is that only women are permitted to look in a mirror to see their form, to see the details of their form. From this we learn that “woman” is the essence of “details,” or “form.”

Now, let us look at these two words in the numerical reckoning called *meespar keedmee*, which means “primordial value.” To compute the *meespar keedmee* of a letter you take the sum of the values of the letters from *alef* to that letter. The *meespar keedmee* of a letter can be understood as representing everything that happened in the alphabet from its beginning with *alef* until that letter.

The *meespar keedmee* of the letters of אשה are:

א = א = 1;

ש = אבגדהוזחטיכלמנסעפצקרש = 1095;

ה = אבגדה = 15.

So the value of אשה in *meespar keedmee* is 1111. Since the normative value of אשה is 306, taking its *meespar keedmee* adds 805 to it. What is the significance of this number 805 in the *ma’amar*? 805 is the *gematria* of פשיטות. So we have here a beautiful mathematical restatement of the final point of the *ma’amar*: when the ציור (the details) of the soul’s powers reveals the פשיטות (the simplified essence) of the soul that is when the Mashiach comes, that is when the full and complete revelation of the feminine principle and God’s kingdom will be revealed. The goal of our lives is to unify these two aspects of the soul together. That in our personal lives is the coming of Mashiach and causes the coming of the Mashiach on the universal level as well. When this happens, every single detail (ציור) of created reality reflects the essential essence (פשיטות) of the Creator.

1. The *ma'amar* can be found in its Hebrew original in *Sefer Hama'amarim Melukat*, vol. 6, pp. 129ff. It has also been published with a linear English translation with annotations as part of the Chassidic Heritage Series under the title *Nurturing Faith* (New York: Kehot, 2005).

2. In fact, the Rebbe's second stroke was also on the 27th day of Adar two years later (5754).

3. The Hebrew word for "pure" (טָהוֹר) is cognate with the word meaning "merit" (זְכוּת). We should merit immediately the revelation of the Mashiach.

4. The original Hebrew discourse contains text in both rounded parentheses and square brackets. Because of stylistic constraints, in our translations of the original Hebrew *ma'amar* (as it appears in *Sefer Hama'amarim Melukat*; see note 1), we have substituted all square brackets for rounded parentheses. Our translation includes a few additional insertions added for clarity and these appear in square brackets.

5. Habbakuk 3:4.

6. Exodus 27:20.

7. In the first four books of the Torah, the narrator is called "*shleeshee hamedaber*" (meaning third-person narration), which is the *atzmut* speaking. How do we know this? Because the *shleeshee hamedaber* says "And Hashem spoke to Moshe." It does not say "And I spoke to Moshe." So clearly the *shleeshee hamedaber* is higher than even the revelation of *Hashem* in His holy Names.

8. Genesis 1:16.

9. Which in Kabbalah are called the *partzuf* of *atik* and the *partzuf* of *arich*, respectively.

10. *Sefer Yetzirah* 2:7.

11. See the *Ba'al Haturim* on this word.

12. See *Nurturing Faith*, pp. 60-5.

13. See *Ibid*, pp. 62-3.

14. *Megilah* 14a.

15. See *Nurturing Faith*, pp. 64-7.

16. See *Ibid*, pp. 66-7.

17. Exodus 2:10.

18. See *Nurturing Faith*, pp. 30-3.

19. See *Ibid*, pp. 32-3.

20. Numbers 11:21.

21. *Vayikra Rabbah* 2:2.

22. For example the two words אור, which means "light" and עור, which means "skin." Before God vanquished Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden the Torah says that He made them "tunics of skin." The Talmud notes that in the Mishnaic sage Rabbi Meir's Torah scroll it read "tunics of light."

23. *Tamid* 32a.

24. Job 28:12.

25. This is also the deeper explanation of why Moshe Rabbeinu was thought to have disappeared during his forty days and forty nights spent on Mt. Sinai receiving the Torah. *Parshat Tetzaveh* was taught by God to Moshe during that time, thus his absence from the *parshah* can also be attributed to his ascent into his soul root in wisdom in order to receive the written Torah. The written Torah corresponds to the *sefirah* of wisdom, while the oral Torah corresponds to the *sefirah* of understanding.

26. See *Nurturing Faith*, pp. 64-7.

27. Isaiah 6:10.

²⁸. Many excuses are possible: “God doesn’t really care if you do it this way or that,” or “Do you really think God has nothing better to do than...,” etc.

²⁹. It is well known that the Ba’al Shem Tov said that he is a *gilgul* (reincarnation) of *Rav Sa’adyah Ga’on*.

³⁰. When the Rebbe originally said this *ma’amar* it was the 10th day of First Adar, so there were still over 30 days to go until Purim. Nonetheless, First Adar is also related to Purim, as there is Purim Katan in it. As noted by the Rebbe, even according to *nigleh* we should be joyful and based on the verse: “Good is the heart that is always merry [like] in a feast of wine drinking,” we should also drink something on Purim Katan and Shushan Purim Katan. This verse teaches us that a person should take every opportunity to engage in a Chassidishe farbrengen.

Incidentally, this is the final verse that the *Ramah* ends his addenda to the *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* with. The verse that he begins the addenda on *Orach Chaim* is “I place Hashem before me always.” These are called the two *tmidim* (constants) of the *Shulchan Aruch*. They teach us that a Jew should always be looking to see the *Aibeshter* and should always be looking for an opportunity to sit down with other Jews and to farbreng and say *lecha’im* with them.

³¹. *Esther Rabbah* 6:2.

³². See *Nurturing Faith*, pp. 34-7.

³³. See *Ibid*, pp. 46-7.

³⁴. See *Nurturing Faith*, pp. 48-9.

³⁵. Moshe says: “For what does God ask of you, but that you fear God” (Deut. 10:12). The sages ask, “Is fear of God a small thing that it can be described in this way? They explain that “When in the presence of Moshe, it is indeed a small thing.” In the Tanya (ch. 42), the Alter Rebbe explains that Moshe Rabbeinu is always the faithful shepherd, and that he is continually present in part of our soul (specifically, the *chayah*, as explained in the Rebbe’s *ma’amar*). Indeed, the fear of God alluded to in this verse is the higher fear referred to in the verse: “The secret of God is for those who fear Him” (סוד ה' ליראיו, Psalms 25:14). As explained elsewhere, this verse means that God’s secret, i.e., God’s continual recreation of reality, is given to those who fear Him. Since in Hebrew, the words “fear” (יראה) and “sight” (ראיה) are permutations of one another, so the meaning of “is given” here is “can be seen.” Thus, those who are aware of Moshe Rabbeinu’s nurturing of their soul have higher fear of God and see reality coming into existence continually. More in depth, just as Moshe gave us higher fear by giving us the Torah, so one sees continual recreation when one hears Moshe teaching new Torah at every moment. [The *gematria* of the three words סוד יי-הוה ליראיו is the same as that of שמחה, or joy, the inner experience of hearing].

³⁶. See *Nurturing Faith*, note 138.

³⁷. See *Ibid*, pp. 42-3.

³⁸. This also implies that in other generations, the *raya mehemna* of the generation, the *tzadik* of the generation was not for the entire people without any exceptions.

³⁹. Exodus 34:6-7.

⁴⁰. *Chulin* 139b.

⁴¹. Exodus 30:23.

⁴². *Ibid*.

⁴³. This also explains why when Moshe Rabbeinu brought the Torah to the people, God had to threaten them with death should they refuse to accept it, but in Mordechai’s generation, as the sages, note, they received the Torah anew out of choice. The explanation is that Mordechai

revealed the Jewish people's highest nature, which is essentially one with the Torah, a point that the Rebbe also makes in the *ma'amar*.

⁴⁴. See *Nurturing Faith*, pp. 54-57.

⁴⁵. See *Ibid*, pp. 30-1.

⁴⁶. Alter Rebbe's *Likutei Torah* 45c and elsewhere.

⁴⁷. The central axis includes: crown, knowledge, beauty, foundation, and kingdom.

⁴⁸. *Zohar* III, 236a, גופא ובריתא חשבינן חד, "the body and the organ of the covenant are considered one." We can see this connection between the beauty and foundation clearly in respect to their archetypal souls, Jacob and Joseph, who are described as one extension: "These are the chronicles of Jacob, Joseph..." (Genesis 37:2).

⁴⁹. The right axis includes: wisdom, loving-kindness, and victory (eternity).

⁵⁰. The left axis includes: understanding, might, and acknowledgment.

⁵¹. See *Rashi* to Exodus 26:26.

⁵². See *Nurturing Faith*, pp. 78-9.

⁵³. In fact, the word "trauma" originates in the ancient Greek word meaning "crack" or "fracture." At the very beginning of creation, the world went through a cracking or fracture both according to science and according to Kabbalah. Science calls it the Big Bang, which was caused by a shattering of symmetry. In Kabbalah it is called the shattering of the vessels, caused by each *sefirah* feeling that it alone should control reality.

⁵⁴. *Chulin* 60b.

⁵⁵. See *Nurturing Faith*, pp. 70-3.

⁵⁶. See *Ibid*, pp. 72-3.

⁵⁷. This is exactly the same paradox as is revealed when contemplating how all the myriad embodiments and phenomena in reality are engraved with the simple essence of the Almighty!