

19 Kislev 5768

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Yud Tet Kislev Farbrengen

Part 2 of 4

from Harav Yitzchak Ginsburgh

Now we need to understand what it means for us to join with our king and rise to a state that is above the first contraction from where we can draw down the new Torah, the Torah of the Mashiach; there we can become one with God in such a way that we come to the experience of the essence of God's sovereignty. It is explained in Chassidut that everything that exists after the first contraction can be likened to a pit, similar to Joseph's pit that we talked about earlier. God contracted, meaning He hid His infinite light, and as a result He created an empty space (חלל הפנוי), like an empty pit. If the pit is not quickly filled up with a ray of infinite light, with Worlds and Worlds of holiness, it immediately draws into it scorpions and snakes. The ray of light entering the pit, the empty space, fills it with water. But in the meantime, since this pit is after the first contraction, all the water that it is filled with, the only water that is available is the water of this world. The water that comes out of this ray represents our current understanding of Torah, because the ray begins after the contraction, as explained in length in Chassidut. It reflects the state of the infinite light only after the contraction. It does not contain the future "word of God from Jerusalem" that will be heard in the times of the Mashiach, words/waters that spring out of the Holy of Holies, which represents God's infinite light as it is before the contraction.

This is also reflected in Joseph's descent to Egypt, which is likened to one great pit in the ground. Joseph represents the entire Jewish people who are now in a pit, the pit of Egypt, which literally means "straits" (like a tight place which pushes against you). This is the reason that all of our exiles are named after Egypt.

A very important cornerstone of the Torah is that anything that in the Torah appears as something profane and unholy has a holy counterpart. This is true of Egypt too. Just as there is the Egypt that is full of idolatry and promiscuity, there is also an Egypt that is full of holiness and Torah. We have just said that this is the pit into which the Torah of our present reality was brought by the ray of infinite light.

Who lives in this pit, in this Egypt of holiness which is just as tight and just as constricting as the other Egypt? In Chassidut it is explained that this is the person who lives only with the revealed aspects of the Torah, who hears only the frequency of the physical performance of the commandments; this person can never break the limiting



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“rules of engagement” that have been imposed upon him and is always constricted within holiness (he develops the false picture of holiness as being something that tightens and constricts you). Such a person cannot leap over; he does not have the power to jump, as we shall explain shortly, over the constricting tightness of the contraction, so he always remains within the confines of the Egypt of holiness. Therefore, Chassidic writings explain, that most of the Jewish people who are orthodox, who are anxious (this is the literal meaning of the word “Chareidi,” a common colloquialism describing orthodox Jews) for the word of God, who are careful with a light commandment as with a heavy one, those who are meticulous in keeping the holy *Shulchan Aruch*, they are all in an Egypt of holiness.

As long as we remain within the straits of this Egypt of holiness, God keeps us going, on and on, but there is no way to get out. There is no way to break the limitations and arrive at the endpoint of the Mashiach. This can never happen without us getting out of Egypt—not only the promiscuous Egypt (the need to be break out of this Egypt is common sense), but even the Egypt of holiness. Because, without being able to leap and jump over the barrier of the contraction and the empty vacuum into the light of the infinite before the contraction, the Torah of Emanation, the Torah of “Adam of Emanation,” we will not be able to be one with the king, in the place where God takes consul from us.



Breaking out of Egypt is referred to in the blessing: “Blessed is He who frees prisoners!”

The word “free” [which, in the language of the sages, also means to make something permissible] appears only once in the entire Bible, in the verse: “God frees prisoners.” This is the essence of *Yud Tet Kislev*, the day of freedom of the Alter Rebbe. On this day the *nasi*, the leader, came out of jail, and because “the *nasi* is everything,” we are with the *nasi* in his bondage and with him when he is freed. Thanks to him, we too can escape from our own bondage, from our own limitations within the Egypt of holiness.

The Alter Rebbe’s son, the Mittler Rebbe exclaimed once that his father gave his life in order to explain to every single one of the people connected to him the meaning of the higher union (יחודא עילאה), the meaning and essence of his own worship of God. This is what we have been talking about. This is the state of being with God before the contraction. And the Alter Rebbe devoted his entire life, all of his power to make sure that anyone that was connected to him could understand it, taste it, and experience it. This is the taste of the “Adam of Emanation.” By explaining this concept of the higher union, the Alter Rebbe, as it were, turned his follower into his spouse. By doing so, it is as if he sanctified his *chassid* with a wedding ring.



Let us repeat that everything that is after the contraction, everything that is in the pit of contraction, is imprisoned—it is “forbidden.” So now, do not read the verse: “God frees

prisoners,” (הוי' מתיר אסורים) but rather read it: “God makes the forbidden, permissible” (הוי' מתיר אסורים).

In our present state of reality in “this World,” we need prohibitions; many things that we encounter in our day to day lives are indeed not permissible. This is because we are still in bondage in the empty vacuum that was created after the initial contraction. The Torah of Creation, while containing 248 positive commandments, is nonetheless in its essence a Torah of prohibitions (of which in particular there are 365, 117 more prohibitions than prescriptions for action; this is not meant to be understood quantitatively but rather qualitatively). The Torah of Creation says: “this is prohibited and that is prohibited.” But the Torah of Mashiach, the new Torah, is a Torah of “Blessed is He who frees prisoners—who makes the prohibited, permissible.” Why is this? Because as long as we are still prisoners ourselves within the contraction, the only way to guard ourselves from the snakes and scorpions that abound here is by creating fence after fence to keep them away—this is the necessity of creating prohibitions in our present reality.

How do we know that the essence of the Torah of Mashiach that leaps over (which in Hebrew stems from the same root that means “to free,” לנתר) the contraction into the state before the contraction is to make prohibitions permissible? This is actually a very simple reading in the *Midrash*.

The sages ask, how do we know that the Mashiach will reveal a new Torah—a new understanding of the Torah? They say that a person, who has not taken enjoyment, has not found entertainment in the theatres of the non-Jews, in the future, such a person will be entertained by the Divine theatre that God will produce for the righteous. This theatre will include the wild ox (שור הבר) and the leviathan (לוייתן). In Hebrew, the numerical value of “leviathan” is the same as the value of “kingdom” (מלכות), specifically the kingdom of the Mashiach. The leviathan, which is an aquatic creature, symbolizes the reality of the ocean, which in Kabbalah represents the reality before the contraction. This reality for us is now concealed, just as everything that lives in the ocean is concealed from our view. Thus, the kingdom of the Mashiach is the kingdom of the reality before the contraction, as explained above.

Now the sages say that if one has not been entertained by the forms of entertainment produced by the non-Jews in this world, he will merit to be entertained by the battle between the wild ox and the leviathan. The wild ox represents those Jewish souls that are masters of the revealed tradition of the Torah, while the leviathan represents the souls that belong to the concealed tradition of the Torah. Each one will try to dismember the other one. But, say the sages, the leviathan uses a fin to slaughter the wild ox. Is it permissible (is it kosher) to slaughter using a fin? The *Midrash* says that at the moment that the leviathan slaughters the wild ox in this fashion, the wise (*chachamim*) say that it is kosher (in another reading of the same *Midrash* it says that the righteous, the *tzadikim* say that this form of slaughter is kosher). After that, the *Midrash* continues: But, this is

not the case! Meaning, in our reality, it is forbidden to slaughter with a fin because the fin has many irregularities and does not slice smoothly through the flesh. This is like slaughtering with a sickle, which is forbidden. The flesh of the slaughtered animal would not be kosher in such a case. So what is going on? Says the *Midrash*: “Torah will come out of Me.” This is a verse in Isaiah, which then the *Midrash* addends and explicates by saying “A new Torah will come out of Me.” In other words, what in our present reality is forbidden will become kosher in the future (indeed, the *tzadikim* will sit down to eat from these two animals after they kill each other). From here we clearly see that “a new Torah” refers to making prohibitions permissible. Not just something that is a custom, a *minhag*, but even something that is *halachah*, a very harsh prohibition. Even something like this the Torah of Mashiach can make permissible.



How can we explain this? So first let us repeat the deep-rooted answer that we have been discussing all along. The Torah of Mashiach leaps over the pit created by the contraction into the primordial sea that lies before the contraction. This sea is the source of the living waters that will sprout out of the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem. These waters are what are referred to in the verse: “And the word of God from Jerusalem.”

But, now let us see a beautiful answer given by one of the greatest masters of the revealed tradition (*nigleh*) of the Torah, the *Torat Chaim*. On this *Midrash* that we have just quoted he writes an astounding commentary. In principle, being that he is a master of the revealed tradition, we would have expected him to write something very different. He asks the same question: How is it possible that something that in our present reality is completely and utterly forbidden will suddenly become permissible in the future? The Torah is eternal. It does not change.

Let us stress that we cannot answer that this *Midrash* is referring to the time after the resurrection of the dead when the commandments will be annulled, as the sages say, because that is a later time. The *Midrash* is referring to a time when there is Torah, the Torah that we know, but somehow it becomes a “new Torah” and according to this new Torah this manner of slaughter is permissible, as stated by the wise/*tzadikim*. Note also that the description given by the *Midrash* for the halachic process is very special. It says that suddenly, the wise or the *tzadikim* appear and they claim that this slaughter is kosher, halachically kosher. This forces the sages to look into the law and say, “it is not so!” They bring an explicit *Mishnah* that states that such a manner of slaughtering is not acceptable. Indeed, we cannot even entertain the possibility that there is a *Mishnah* that the wise/*tzadikim* who claim that it is kosher do not know. So the question just gets stronger. What is going on here? What is this new Torah that suddenly says that the *halachah* is that such slaughter is kosher.

So continues the *Torat Chaim* with his answer. He says that the new Torah is the revelation of the reasoning, the spiritual rationale (*טעמי מצות*) behind the laws of the Torah as we know them. In our present reality we cannot correctly understand these

reasons. We cannot correctly trace the reasoning that leads to the conclusions of the revealed aspect of the Torah. In our world, the rationale of the Torah belongs to what is described as “the secrets belong to God” and to us God only gave the commandments and we are required to perform them out of simple obligation, without the possibility of knowing what the reasons behind them are.

The corollary of this is that someone who in our present reality searches and tries to exactly define the reasoning behind the *mitzvot*, the commandments will end up confused and in error. But, the Torah of Mashiach, says the *Torat Chaim*, the new Torah is based on the correct understanding of the rationale behind the *mitzvot*.

He goes very far in this case. He says that he knows what the rationale behind the need to slaughter in a kosher way is! He writes that kosher slaughter is meant to release the animal’s life-force in a way that the “other side” (the side of reality that cloaks God’s Presence, and as it were fights against holiness) cannot get a grip on it and pull it down into the abyss of the *sitra achra* (“the other side”). Kosher slaughter uplifts and elevates the animal’s life-force into the realm of holiness, making it permissible for a human being to eat from it. But, if the animal chokes during the slaughter, which is what happens when you slaughter with a sickle, or a fin, then the slaughter is faulty and “the other side” indeed captures the animal’s life-force.

For anyone who has any experience and sense in the revealed tradition of the Torah, this is an astounding explanation. But the rest of his commentary is even more surprising. The *Torat Chaim* says that in the future, in the time of the Mashiach, the prophecy: “And I shall extricate the spirit of impurity from the land” will be fulfilled. The moment that this happens then the wise and the *tzadikim* of the generation will feel it to be so—this is something that can be felt in the air—and then the need for kosher slaughter will no longer exist, because “the other side” no longer exists to capture the life-force of the animal!

This is a wonder of wonders that such an explanation can be given by a master of *nigleh* like the *Torat Chaim*.

What he is saying is that the true *tzadik* of the generation, the *nasi*, the one leader of the generation, the Moshe Rabbeinu of the generation, the one who can say prophecy using the words: “This is what God commanded...,” from this person (and only from such a person) we learn how to make the prohibitions permissible.

From this whole issue we see that the goal of the Torah is to make things permissible. A scholar of Torah can disavow a pledge (a *neder*); the sages make interest permissible through *heter iska* (a business contract between the person giving the loan and the one taking it); many great judges went to incredible lengths, to the point of actual self-sacrifice to rule that a woman whose husband has disappeared (an *agunah*) can remarry (*hatart agunot*), and on and on and on. There are so many examples in the Torah that the power to make something permissible is greater than the power to make something prohibited (כה דהתירא עדיף). All this with Rabbis who are 100% God-fearing and will

never permit something that is prohibited. But the overall direction of the Torah is to make things permissible, because the Torah seeks to drive us towards the times of the Mashiach.



There are many meanings to the word “Torah.” One meaning is התרה, which means “freeing.” The three letter root of “freeing” is נתר, which also means to skip, or to jump over. In the language of the Bible, this is also the root of the word *neter*, which means “soap.” It is a special type of soap that can clean even the blemish of the covenant. Why is the cleansing of a blemish caused by a transgression called skipping? Because it takes the blemish and elevates it to a higher level where it is no longer a blemish! Thus, the soap, the נתר that can clean even blemishes of the covenant is the Torah of the Mashiach. According to the *Torat Chaim* that we just reviewed, to really be able to free something, you have to know that the hold that the impure spirit has over it, which is what the blemish is, that this hold has been completely freed. Who can say such a thing?

Literally, what we would have to find is that the hold of impurity over the world has completely been released. But, we are here today, over 200 years from the time of the Ba'al Shem Tov when Torah of the Mashiach began to be revealed. Those opponents of Chassidut, who were responsible for putting the Alter Rebbe in jail, they thought that the Alter Rebbe was bringing lights from before the contraction into a place that is after the contraction. They were afraid that the *tzimtzum* would be destroyed and the rules and regulations of the Torah of this world would become annulled. This was their explicit explanation. They said this very clearly. As explained above, this is the mentality of the Egypt of holiness. God, however, agreed with the Alter Rebbe! The fears of his opponents were not justified. Had they been able to comprehend the essence of the Torah's inner soul, the secret of Jewish soul's ability to carry opposites, and been able to recognize the true *nasi* of the generation, they would never have waged war against the Ba'al Shem Tov or the Alter Rebbe. In any case, returning to what we said before, it is the *tzadik* of the generation who knows to what extent the impurity has freed its hold over reality.

There is a beautiful mathematical allusion to the fact that this is all related to *Yud Tet Kislev* and to the freeing of the Alter Rebbe from prison. The numerical value of the verse “And the spirit of impurity I will extricate from the earth” ואת רוח הטמאה אעביר מן הארץ (1350) is exactly equal to 10 times the value of “*Yud Tet Kislev*,” יט כסלו (135). The factor of 10 corresponds to the 10 stages that are needed in order to construct the spiritual world of the king, the world of *Nukva* (this is the inner meaning of the ten days from *Rosh Hashanah* to *Yom Kipur*).



Now, let us look at the full wording of the verse that we have been discussing: “And it will come to pass on that day, says God, the Lord of Hosts, that I will uproot the names of the idols from the earth and they will not be remembered, and the prophets and the

spirit of impurity I will extricate from the earth.” והיה ביום ההוא נאם הוי' צבאות אכרית את שמות
העצבים מן הארץ ולא יזכרו עוד וגם את הנביאים ואת רוח הטמאה אעביר מן הארץ.

The prophets here are the false prophets of course, for the generation before the revelation of the Mashiach is full of false prophets.

What is the “spirit of impurity?” We will see that there are a number of different opinions. *Rashi* explains that this spirit is the evil inclination, the *yetzer hara*. It is then up to the *tzadik* of the generation to sense where we are, and depending on how much evil inclination there is, he can free us from certain prohibitions. Of course, since no one today thinks that there is less evil inclination, we cannot yet free ourselves of prohibitions. *Nebech, nebech*. As long as we still have an evil inclination, according to *Rashi*, we cannot make the prohibited permissible.

The second explanation is the *Torat Chaim's* which we discussed earlier. He gives the Kabbalistic explanation, that this spirit is the “other side” (סטרא אחרא). So the *tzadik* is sensing how much purity there is in the air and how much impurity.

The third explanation is the *Malbim's*. He explains that this profane spirit is the spirit that inspires the false prophecies of the false prophets. Every false prophet uses some false spirit that comes down over him. Of course this is a spirit that is in the air, like the “other side” that the *Torat Chaim* talked about. What is this in our times? We tend to think that there are no prophets around. But the truth is that anyone who has a political system or political beliefs has false prophecy. He has to say what he thinks in a charismatic and inspiring way. The sign then is that we see that there is less and less of a source for the false prophets of the generation. At that time, we can begin to increase more and more the true prophecy and the freeing of the prohibitions by the Torah of the Mashiach.

These are all very delicate issues. We cannot stress how delicate they are and hope that no one leaves with the wrong impression of what we have been explaining. A person needs to have a lot of sensitivity in both his heart and in his mind not to make a mistake in this area.

Let us in passing mention that these three interpretations of “the spirit of impurity” form a submission-separation-sweetening model. The basic characteristic of “the other side” is the lack of *bitul*, selflessness, the essential characteristic of the holy side, as explained in *Tanya*. Often “the other side” puts on a façade of humility, but it is false humility, the opposite of true submission to God. The evil inclination channels the otherwise neutral energies of the soul in negative directions, in desire and lust of that which is forbidden. This is the opposite of true separation, the state of the soul when all of one's energies and desires are directed to the good. Finally, the spirit that speaks from the mouth of the false prophets is the antithesis of the truly sweet words spoken by a pure soul that are able to sweeten external reality, as taught by the Ba'al Shem Tov.

Now, what does “the names of the idols” in the verse refer to? Let us ask a little differently, why does that verse not refer simply to the idols themselves? It is very

common today for people to import all kinds of practices from the East and to think that by adding the word Jewish to it, they make it kosher. For example, kosher Yoga, or Jewish Yoga. So first of all the name of this idolatrous practice has to be cast away.

If we take the numerical value of these three things: שמות העצבים נביאים רוח הטמאה = ואת רוח הטמאה אעביר מן הארץ.

The whole verse = $7 \cdot 768$ (= $2 \cdot \text{תשסח} = 2 \cdot \text{משיח י׳הוה} = \text{דוד} = \text{משיח י׳הוה} \cdot \text{דוד}$).