

לקוטי
שיחות

VAYEITZEI III ויצא ג

SELECTIONS FROM

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SICHOS

INSIGHTS INTO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

VAYEITZEI III | וַיֵּצֵא

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Introduction

The *sichah* to follow continues the themes mentioned in the previous two *sichos*: a) the importance of serving G-d with *bittul*, and b) how involving oneself with the lowest dimensions of this material world and refining them fulfills G-d's purpose for creation, establishing a dwelling for Him in our material world.

The two themes are intertwined and each one complements the other. For G-d's dwelling in this world to be complete, it must be brought about not by Divine revelation, but by the service of man. Moreover, that service must extend beyond the study of the Torah and the observance of *mitzvos*, encompassing also a person's ordinary worldly activities (performing "all your deeds for the sake of Heaven,"¹ and "knowing [G-d] in all your ways").²

Now, the manifestation of G-d's Essence in this material world brings out the deepest level of *bittul*, the realization that *ein od*, "there is nothing else" but Him. In order for man's Divine service to transform the world into a place where G-d's Essence is manifest, it must reflect a *bittul* of this nature.

* * *

The Rebbe originally communicated these concepts in a *maamar*. Only later were they adapted and published in the form below, as a *sichah*. For the Rebbeim, delivering a *maamar* was a spiritual experience, current and intense.³ This is clear to anyone who, either at the time or on a screen, ever observed the changed facial expression of the Rebbe whenever he was delivering a *maamar*. By contrast, a *sichah* was, as the name implies, a "talk." Not only was it less formal and intense – but in content, structure, and delivery – and used less mystical terminology than a *maamar*, in a *sichah*, the Rebbe spoke to his listeners, adapting his words to them. When delivering a *maamar*, by contrast, he was revealing the Torah as he lived it – as spiritual truth that he was experiencing and conveying from its source Above.

Since the source of this *sichah* was a *maamar*, even after being adapted to its present form, its conceptual development remains complex. Therefore, to facilitate a reader's understanding, we have added summaries at the end of each section.

1. Avos 2:12.

2. Mishlei 3:6.

3. See the talk by the Rebbe Rayatz, Simchas Torah, 5681 (*Sefer Hasichos* 5681, p. 9).

The Purpose of the Soul's Descent to This World

Was Yaakov Driving a Bargain?

Our Torah reading states:¹

Yaakov took a vow, saying: ‘If G-d will be with me and protect me on this way... and give me bread to eat and garments to wear, and if I return to my father’s house, [then] G-d will be my L-rd and this stone I have erected as a monument will be the House of G-d, and everything You will give me, I will certainly tithe.’

The commentaries question:² How is it possible that Yaakov made his performance of good deeds – “This stone... will be the House of G-d and everything You will give me, I will certainly tithe” – dependent on G-d’s fulfillment of a condition – “If G-d will be with me and protect me”?

The implication appears, Heaven forbid, as if Yaakov served G-d solely for the sake of receiving a reward.

That is implausible; after all, we are speaking about Yaakov our Patriarch. Hence, it can be derived from the narrative³ that, by connecting his vow and good

א. אויף די פסוקים “וַיִּדָּר יַעֲקֹב נָדָר לֵאמֹר אִם יְהִיָּה אֵלָיִם עִמָּדִי גו’ וְהָיָה ה’ לִי לְאֱלֹהִים וְהָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר שָׂמַתִּי מִצְבֵּה יְהִיָּה בַּיִת אֱלֹהִים גו’” - פֶּרְעֵגֶן מִפְּרָשִׁים: וְוִי קוּמַט עָס אַז יַעֲקֹב הָאֵט תּוֹלָה גְעוּוֹעֵן דַּעַם קִיּוּם פּוֹן זַיִינַע מַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים (וְהָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת גו’ עִשָׂר אַעֲשָׂרְנוּ לָךְ) אִין אַ תְּנַאי “אִם יְהִיָּה אֵלָיִם עִמָּדִי גו’?” צִי הָאֵט דַּעַן יַעֲקֹב גְּעֵדִינַט דַּעַם אויבערשטן נַאר, חַס וְשְׁלוֹם, צוֹלִיבֵן שְׂכַר וְתוֹעֵלֶת - עַל מְנַת לְקַבֵּל פְּרִים!?

איז דערפון גופאי געדרונגען, אז מיט זיין פארבינדן דעם נדר (מעשים טובים) מיט א תנאי האט יעקב ניט געמיינט אז זיין

1. *Bereishis* 28:20-22.

2. *Paneach Raza and Rivo, Bereishis* 28:22; the fifth of the questions raised by Abarbanel at the beginning of *Parshas Vayei-tzei*; the second of the questions raised by *Akeidas Yitzchak, shaar* 25; the sixth of the questions raised by Alshech, *Bereishis* 28:20. See also Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrachi to *Rashi, Bereishis* 28:21; *Divrei David* to *Rashi,*

Bereishis 28:22; *et al.*

3. See *Divrei David* and *Maskil LeDavid* to *Rashi, Bereishis* 28:22, *et al.* who explain *Rashi’s* words according to their simple meaning – that his vow obligated him to perform acts of service beyond his obligations. This, however, is not a sufficient explanation. Yaakov was one of the Patriarchs, whom the *Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah* 47:6, 82:6)

describes as G-d’s chariot, which *Tanya*, ch. 23, interprets as referring to a person who follows G-d’s will without any thought like a chariot is steered by its driver. It is understandable that, for Yaakov, even such service – i.e., going beyond the measure of the law, serving with a generous spirit, and the like – would be performed without the expectation of a reward. Hence, his commitment would not have been made conditionally.

deeds with a condition, Yaakov was not “making a deal,” i.e., vowing to perform these good deeds so that his stipulations be met. Rather, he had the opposite intent. His objective was to fulfill his vow.⁴ He made his vow dependent on the conditions, “If G-d will be with me...,” because this was the only way he would be able⁵ to fulfill it.⁶

מִטְוָה אִיזוּ צוּ הָאָבֶן דִּי עֲנִינִי הַתְּנַאי, אֲוֹן בְּכַדִּי זִי צוּ בְּאִקְוִמְעֵן הָאֵט עַר גְּעִגְעָבֶן אַ נְדָר צוּ טָאָן מַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים, נָאֵר לְהִיפָּד: דִּי מִטְוָה זִינְע אִיז גְּעוּוֹעֵן דְּעַר קִיּוֹם הַנְּדָר, אֲוֹן זִיין תּוֹלָה זִיין דְּעַם נְדָר אִינְעַם תְּנַאי “אִם יְהִיֶּה אֱלֹקִים עִמָּדִי גוּ” אִיז וּוְיִלְעַ דָּאָס אִיז דְּעַר וְעַג דְּוֹרָךְ וּוְעִלְכֵן* דְּעַר נְדָר קַעֵן זִיךְ אֲוִיסְפִירֵן.”

Summary

The *sichah* quotes the passage: Yaakov took a vow, saying: ‘If G-d will be with me and protect me on this way... and give me bread to eat and garments to wear, and if I return to my father’s house, [then] G-d will be my L-rd and this stone... will be the House of G-d, and everything You will give me, I will certainly tithe.’

The Rebbe cites the question raised by the commentaries: How is it possible that Yaakov made his performance of good deeds – “This stone... will be the House of G-d and everything that You give me, I will certainly tithe” – dependent on G-d’s fulfillment of a condition, “If G-d will be with me and protect me”?

The Rebbe resolves the question by stating that Yaakov’s objective was to fulfill his vow. He made his vow dependent on the conditions, “If G-d will be with me...,” because this was the only way he would be able to fulfill it.

Rashi or Ramban

A deeper understanding can be reached by prefacing two interpretations of the vow taken by Yaakov:

*Rashi*⁷ explains that the condition Yaakov made includes, and ends with, “and G-d will be my L-rd,” (which he interprets to mean, “there will be no imperfection in my seed”). Yaakov’s

ב. וועט מען דאס פארשטיין בְּהִקְדִּים וְוֹאָס בְּנִגְעַע דְּעַם תְּנַאי אֲוֹן דְּעַם נְדָר זִינְעֵן דָּא צוּוִי פִּירוּשִׁים: רַשִׁי לְעִרְנָט' אַז דְּעַר תְּנַאי אִיז כּוֹלֵל (אֲוֹן עֲנִדִיקַט זִיךְ מִיט) 'וְהִיָּה ה' לִי לְאֱלֹקִים' ("שְׁלֵא יִמְצָא פְּסוּל בְּוִרְעִי"), אֲוֹן דְּעַר נְדָר הוּיבֵט זִיךְ

4. See *Ramban, Bereishis* 28:20, who states, “Furthermore, according to the simple meaning of the verse...,” explaining that Yaakov was not stipulating a condition, but rather stating the future sequence of events. See also the commentary of *Baalei Tosafos, Bereishis, loc. cit., et al.*

5. To cite a similar – but not exactly parallel – explanation:

Ramban (Hilchos Teshivah 9:1; *Commentary on the Mishnah, Sanhedrin*, ch. 10) explains that the Torah promises the Jews material benefits for their observance of the *mitzvos* not as a reward, but rather as a means to facilitate their observance.

6. See also *Kli Yakar, Bereishis* 28:21, who states that when Yaakov asked for G-d to protect him, he was

requesting Divine protection from the four primary sins: idolatry, murder, adultery, and *lashon hara* (malicious gossip), for were He not to protect him from these sins, there would be no House of G-d, for it would be destroyed because of these sins.

7. *Bereishis Rabbah* 70:4 and *Rashbam* also interpret the verses in a similar manner.

vow begins with the following verse: “This stone that I have erected as a monument...”

Ramban,⁸ however, differs with *Rashi* and interprets “and G-d will be my L-rd,” not as the continuation of the condition stipulated by Yaakov, but rather as the beginning of his vow. The condition ends with the words, “if I return in peace to my father’s home.”

Ramban’s interpretation requires explanation: Since “and G-d will be my L-rd,” is the beginning of Yaakov’s vow, it would seem the division of the verses should be different. “And G-d will be my L-rd” should not have been the end of the verse beginning with “if I return in peace...,” which is part of the condition, but rather the beginning of the verse, “This stone...,” which is part of Yaakov’s vow.

{In particular, this division appears preferable because, according to his interpretation, the phrase “and G-d will be my L-rd,” is connected to the phrase “this stone... will be the House of G-d,” not only because they are both parts of Yaakov’s vow, but because they are thematically interrelated, as *Ramban* explains: Yaakov was saying, “I will serve the unique G-d... in the place of this stone; it will be a House of G-d for me.”

Thus, it must be said that even according to *Ramban*, even though “and G-d will be my L-rd” is part of Yaakov’s vow, in one aspect it has a greater connection with the condition “if I return in peace” than with the continuation of the vow, “this stone...” For that reason, “and G-d will be my L-rd” and “if I return” are included in the same verse.

אָן מיטן צווייטן פסוק - "וְהָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר שָׂמַתִּי מִצְבָּה גו'"; און דער רמב"ן לערנט, אז "וְהָיָה ה' לִי לְאֱלֹהִים" איז דער המושך התנאי "כְּדַבְּרֵי רַש"י", נאר דער אנהויב פון וְיָדָה, און דער תנאי ענדיקט זיך מיט די ווערטער "וְשָׁבְתִי בְּשָׁלוֹם אֶל בַּיִת אָבִי".

דארף מען פארשטיין לשיטת הרמב"ן: וויבאלד "וְהָיָה ה' לִי לְאֱלֹהִים" איז די התחלה פון דעם נדר, האט די חלוקת הפסוקים געדארפט זיין אין אן אופן אז "וְהָיָה ה' לִי לְאֱלֹהִים" זאל זיין (ניט דער סיום פון פסוק "וְשָׁבְתִי בְּשָׁלוֹם גו'") וואס רעדט וועגן תנאי, נאר די התחלה פון פסוק "וְהָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת גו'" וואס רעדט וועגן נדר?

[ובפרט אז "וְהָיָה ה' לִי לְאֱלֹהִים" האט (לשיטתו) ניט בלויז א שייכות צו "וְהָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת גו' יְהִיָה בַיִת אֱלֹהִים" מצד דעם וואס זיי זיינען טיילן פון נדר, נאר נאכמער - זיי זיינען איין תוכו והמשך, ובלשון הרמב"ן: אַעבוד השם המיוחד . . במקום האבן הזאת שתהיה לי לבית אֱלֹהִים].

מזו מען זאגן אויך לדעת הרמב"ן, אז "וְהָיָה ה' לִי לְאֱלֹהִים" (הגם אז דאס איז א חלק פון נדר) האט אין א פרט מער שייכות מיטן תנאי "וְשָׁבְתִי בְּשָׁלוֹם" ווי מיטן המושך הנדר "וְהָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת גו'", וואס דעריבער שטייען זיי ("וְהָיָה גו'" און "וְשָׁבְתִי גו'") אין איין פסוק.

8. Radak, Seforno, and Kli Yakar manner. also interpret the verses in this

Summary

The Rebbe mentions a difference of opinion between *Rashi* and *Ramban* regarding the interpretation of this passage. *Rashi* explains that the condition Yaakov made ends with “and G-d will be my L-rd” and his vow begins with the following verse, “This stone that I have erected...” *Ramban* interprets “and G-d will be my L-rd” not as the continuation of the condition stipulated by Yaakov, but rather as the beginning of his vow.

Ramban's interpretation requires explanation: Since he considers “and G-d will be my L-rd” as the beginning of Yaakov's vow, it would seem that “And G-d will be my L-rd” should not have been the end of the verse beginning with “if I return in peace...,” which is part of the condition, but rather the beginning of the verse, “This stone...,” which is part of Yaakov's vow. Therefore, it must be said that even according to *Ramban*, “and G-d will be my L-rd” shares a connection with the condition “if I return in peace.”

Two and Two

Yaakov's vow is divided into two verses – “and G-d will be my L-rd” and “this stone...” – because they represent two facets of the vow, as explained above. Similarly, the conditions Yaakov stipulated are divided into two verses: a) “If G-d will be with me..., protect me..., and give..., and garments to wear,” and b) “if I return in peace to my father's home” (and according to *Rashi*, also the conclusion of that verse, “and G-d will be my L-rd,”) because they are of two different natures.

The difference between the two is reflected in their wording. The first verse speaks about conditions G-d was asked to fulfill: “If G-d will be with me..., protect me..., and give me...” In contrast, the second verse states, “if I return” (not “if You return me”),⁹ as if Yaakov would be returning on his own initiative.¹⁰

ג. כְּשֵׁם וּוִי דְעַר נָדָר וּוְעָרַט אֵינְיָנְעֵטִי יִלְט
אֵין צְוִי פְסוּקִים (‘וְהָיָה ה’ לִי לְאֱלֹקִים’
און ‘וְהָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת וגו’”) דְּעָרְפָּאָר וּוְאָס
דָּאָס זַיִנְעֵן צְוִי סוּגִים אֵין נְדָה כְּנִל -
עַל דְּרָךְ זֶה אִזוּ אוּיָךְ בְּנוֹגַע דִּי תַנְאִים וּוְאָס
יַעֲקֹב הָאָט אוּיִסְגְּעֵנוּמְעֵן, אַז דָּאָס וּוְאָס
זַיִ טִיילֵן זִיךְ אֵין צְוִי פְסוּקִים - (א) “אִם
יְהִיָּה אֱלֹקִים עִמָּדִי גו’ וְשָׁמְרָנִי גו’ וְנָתַן גו’
וּבְגָד לְלְבוּשׁ”, און (ב) “וְשָׁבְתִי בְּשְׁלוֹם אֶל
בֵּית אָבִי” (און לויט רִשִׁי - אוּיָךְ דְּעַם
סִיּוּם הַפְּסוּק (‘וְהָיָה ה’ לִי לְאֱלֹקִים’) - אִזוּ
עַס צוּלִיב דְּעַם וּוְאָס זַיִ זַיִנְעֵן צְוִי סוּגִים.

און ווי דאָס אִזוּ אוּיָךְ מוּדָגָשׁ אֵין לְשׁוֹן
הַפְּסוּק: אֵין עָרְשָׁטֵן פְּסוּק רְעֵדֵט זִיךְ וּוְעָגֵן
זָאָךְ וּוְאָס דְּעַר אוּיִבְעַרְשָׁטֵטֵר וּוְעֵט טָאָן
- “יְהִיָּה אֱלֹקִים עִמָּדִי וְשָׁמְרָנִי גו’ וְנָתַן לִי
גו’”; מַה שָּׂאֵין כֵּן אֵין צְוִיִּיטֵן פְּסוּק אִזוּ
דְּעַר לְשׁוֹן “וְשָׁבְתִי גו’” (ניט - “וְהָשִׁיבֵנִי
גו’” וְכִיּוּצָא בְּזָה), כָּאָלוּ וּוִי דִּי הַשְּׁבָה
וּוְעֵט זִיךְ אוּיִפְטָאָן פּוֹן זִיךְ אֵלֵינִי.

9. Alshech, *loc. cit.* (the fifth question); *Gur Aryeh* and *Divrei David*, commenting on *Rashi* (*Bereishis* 28:21); *Levush*,

Bereishis 28:20; *et al.*

10. True, Yaakov's return to his father's home would also be dependent on G-d, as *Rashi* (*Bereishis* 28:21)

states, “As (G-d) promised me, ‘I will return you to the land.’” However, the wording Yaakov chose emphasizes his own activity.

Summary

Yaakov’s vow is divided into two verses – “and G-d will be my L-rd” and “this stone...” – because they represent two facets of the vow. Similarly, the conditions Yaakov stipulated are divided into two verses: a) “If G-d will be with me..., protect me..., and give..., and garments to wear,” and b) “if I return in peace to my father’s home...”

The difference between the latter two verses is reflected in their wording. The first verse speaks about conditions G-d was asked to fulfill: “If G-d will be with me..., protect me..., and give me...” In contrast, the second verse states, “if I return” (not “if You return me”), as if Yaakov was returning on his own initiative.

Investing for Profits

To offer a resolution: Yaakov’s descent – leaving Beersheba and *Eretz Yisrael* and going to the Diaspora and, particularly, to Charan, a place whose name is associated with arousing “G-d’s anger in the world”¹¹ – was a “descent for the purpose of an ascent.”¹²

The ascent comprises three dimensions:

a) Though he endured living in Charan, and specifically in Lavan’s home, he nevertheless emerged “unmarred by sin,”¹³ without being affected by his surrounding environment. This enabled Yaakov to ascend to a higher level than his rung before this descent.

{The difference in the levels of Yaakov’s Divine service resembles – though not entirely¹⁴ – the advantage a *baal teshuvah* (one who turns to G-d in *teshuvah*) has over a *tzaddik* (righteous man), as reflected in the teaching that even “a perfect *tzaddik* cannot stand in the presence of a *baal teshuvah*.”¹⁵ The *baal teshuvah* achieved this rung because “he tasted sin,” and nevertheless “distanced himself from it and overcame his natural inclination.”¹⁵

ד. די נקודת הביאור בכלל זה:

די “ירידה” פון יַעֲקֹב אָבינו - זײַן אַרויסגיין פֿון באַר שִׁבְעֵה (אַרץ ישׂראל) קײן חוץ לַאַרץ ובפֿרט חרן (חרון אַף שֶׁל מְקוֹם (בְּעוֹלָם) אַיז גְּעוֹוַען לְצוֹרֵךְ עֲלֶיהָ. און אין דער עֲלִיָּה זײַנען דאָ דריי ענגנים:

א) דורך דעם וואס זײַענדיק דארט, אין חרן און בית לָבָן, איז ער נישט מושפֿע געוואָרן פון זײ און איז ארויס פון דארט “שֶׁלֵם מִן הַחַטָּא” - איז יַעֲקֹב נִתְעַלָּה געוואָרן צו אַ העכערער דָּרָגָא ווי ער איז געווען פֿריער קודם הִירִידָה.

[ועל דרך (ולא ממש¹⁶) המעלה פון א בעל תשובה אויף א צדיק - “מְקוֹם שְׁבַעֲלֵי תְּשׁוּבָה עוֹמְדִין אֵין צְדִיקִים גְּמוּרִים יְכוּלִין לְעַמּוֹד בּוֹ” - וואס דאס איז דערפאר וואס דער בעל תשובה האט “טועם” געווען “טעם החטא” און פונדעסטוועגן “פֿרשׁ מִמֶּנּוּ וְכִבֵּשׁ יִצְרוֹ”].¹⁷

11. See *Rashi’s* commentary at the conclusion of *Parshas Noach*.

12. Cf. commentaries to *Makkos* 7b.

13. *Rashi, Bereishis* 28:21. See

also *Rashi, Bereishis* 32:5.

14. A closer similitude is found in *Rambam’s Shemoneh Perakim*, ch. 6, which speaks of the contrast

between a perfectly pious man and one who conquers his desires.

15. *Rambam, Hilchos Teshuvah* 7:4.

b) In Charan, Yaakov carried out the command,¹⁶ “Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth..., and conquer it,” as well as his father’s instructions,¹⁷ “Take a wife from there... and may the Almighty... make you fruitful” in a consummate manner, to the extent that “his bed (progeny) was perfect.”¹⁸

c) To use the terminology of *Chassidus*, through his labor with Lavan’s sheep over the course of 20 years,¹⁹ he refined and elevated²⁰ the sparks of holiness that were invested in Lavan’s sheep.²¹ This service generated a spiritual echo, elevating Yaakov to greater heights, to the extent that “The man became prodigiously successful.”²²

Summary

Rather than provide an immediate explanation of the above, the Rebbe introduces a chassidic interpretation of Yaakov’s journey to Charan as the foundation on which he will clarify the problematic points he raised beforehand.

Yaakov’s descent from *Eretz Yisrael* to the Diaspora was a “descent for the purpose of an ascent.” The ascent comprises three dimensions:

a) Through living in an undesirable environment without being affected, Yaakov ascended to a higher spiritual level. His ascent resembles the advantage a *baal teshuvah* has over a *tzaddik*. *Rambam* explains that a *baal teshuvah* achieves this rung because “he tasted sin,” and nevertheless, “distanced himself from it and overcame his natural inclination.” Similarly, Yaakov attained a higher rung by leaving *Eretz Yisrael* and living in a challenging environment.

(ב) דָּאָרְט דִּוְקָא הָאֵט עַר
דוּרְכְּגַעפִירְט דְּעַם צְווי “פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ
גו’ וּכְשׁוּהָ, דְּעַם “קַח לָךְ מִשָּׁם
אִשָּׁה גו’ וַיִּפְרֶךְ גו’” וּבְאוּפֵן
דְּמִטְתּוֹ שְׁלֵמָה.¹⁶

ג) בְּלִשׁוֹן הַחֲסִידוּת - דוּרְךְ וַיִּין
עֲבוּדָה מִיֵּט דִּי צֵאן לָבֵן, בְּמִשְׁךְ
עֲשָׂרִים שָׁנָה,¹⁷ הָאֵט עַר מְבָרַר
וּמַעֲלָה “גְּעוּוּעַן דִּי נִיצוּצוֹת קְדוּשָׁה
וּוָאס הָאָבֵן זִיךְ גַּעפּוֹנֶען אִין צֵאן
לָבֵן - אוּן דָּאָס הָאֵט אוּיפֶגַעטָאן
אִין אִים אָן עִילוּי בִּיז אִינַעַם אוּפֵן
פּוֹן “וַיִּפְרֶךְ הָאִישׁ מֵאֵד מֵאֵד.”¹⁸

16. *Bereishis* 1:28.

17. *Ibid.*, 28:2-3.

18. *Vayikra Rabbah* 36:5. See *Pesachim* 56a; *Sifri to Devarim* 6:4; *et al.*

19. Moreover, this process continued even after Yaakov left Charan and journeyed to *Eretz Yisrael*. As the Maggid of Mezritch relates (quoted in *Or HaMe’ir*, explained in *Or HaTorah, Bereishis*, Vol. 5, p. 869a ff.), the inner reason Lavan pursued Yaakov after Yaakov left his

household was because Lavan brought with him sparks of G-dliness from Charan that Yaakov had yet to elevate.

20. This concept – that a Jew’s responsibility is to elevate his portion of the world – is also alluded to in the revealed dimension of Torah Law and, indeed, even in the written Torah itself. Thus, the literal meaning of *Bereishis* 23:17 is “The field of Efron ascended.” As *Rashi* and our Sages interpret the verse, “the field was elevated”: instead of remaining the property of an ordinary

person, it became Avraham’s. According to *Chassidus*, the intent is that through Avraham’s purchasing it and using it for a holy purpose, it was elevated and its spiritual potential revealed.

21. Embedded in every element of existence are sparks of G-dliness that seek to ascend and unite with their Divine source. Man’s involvement with the material dimensions of existence is intended to facilitate this process.

22. *Bereishis* 30:43. See *Torah Or*, p. 23c, *et al.*

b) In Charan, Yaakov carried out the command, “Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth..., and conquer it.”

c) To use the terminology of *Chassidus*, through his labor with Lavan’s sheep over the course of 20 years, he refined and elevated the sparks of holiness that were invested in Lavan’s sheep.

Not Merely One Man’s Journey

“The actions of the Patriarchs are a sign for their descendants.”²³ As such, Yaakov’s departure from Beersheba and journey to Charan are reflected in the Divine service of every person. As *Or HaChayim* explains,²⁴ this journey alludes to the descent of the soul to this material plane (as well as the descent of the Jews into exile).²⁵ These, too, are descents for the sake of ascents and contain parallels to the three aspects of the ascent experienced by Yaakov:²⁶

a) As the soul existed in the spiritual realms before its descent to the material plane, its rung was comparable to that of a *tzaddik*.

ה. “מעשה אבות - סימן לבנים”.
 איז מובן, אז דער ענין פון “ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע וילך חרנה” איז פאראן אויך אין עבודת כל אחד ואחד; און ווי דער אור החיים²³ איז מבאה אז דער פסוק איז מרמז אויף כללות ירידת הנשמה למטה (און אויך אויף דער ירידה פון אידן אין גלות);²⁴ וואס דאס איז א ירידה צורך עליה - און אין דעם זייען דא די ענינים הנ”ל (על דרך ווי די ענינים אין דער עליה פון יעקב):²⁵

א) די נשמה זייענדיק למעלה פאר דער ירידה איז זי בבחינת צדיק;

23. See *Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Lech Lecha*, sec. 9; *Bereishis Rabbah* 40:6. See *Ramban, Bereishis* 12:6, 10, 14:1, 26:1, and 32:4.

24. *Or HaChayim, Bereishis* 28:14, quoted and explained in *Kitzurim VeHaaros LeTanya*, p. 57, and the *maamar* entitled *Vayeitzei*, 5630 [*Toras Shmuel*, 5730, p. 29ff.].

25. See *Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 147a, which states that this verse refers to the exile. See also *Zohar*, Vol. 1, p. 23b (cited in *Or HaTorah, Bereishis*, Vol. 5, p. 854a); *Bereishis Rabbah* 68:13. See *Shelah*, p. 292b, which states that Yaakov’s departure to Charan also alludes to the exile of the Jewish people. Consult that text.

26. See the *maamar* entitled

Vayeitzei, *loc. cit.*, which also explains that there are two dimensions to the concept of a descent for the sake of an ascent. Nevertheless, the two concepts are explained in that *maamar* slightly differently than here:

a) the ascent of the G-dly soul to a level above its source that is brought about through the refinement of the body and the animal soul* – which relates to the second concept mentioned in the main text; and

b) “to draw down G-d’s dwelling into the lower realms... because the Holy One, blessed be He, desired a dwelling in the lower realms.”

The intent when describing this second aspect as an *aliyah*, “ascent,”

is not a reference to the ascent experienced by the soul but rather the loftiness that will be manifest in G-d’s dwelling in the lower realms, or alternatively to the elevation of the elements of the lowly realms themselves, as stated in *Tanya*, at the end of ch. 31, (p. 40b): “This descent is for the purpose of an ascent, to elevate the animal soul as a whole and connect it to G-d.”

* As explained in many sources in *Chassidus*, the body and the animal soul are rooted in the realm of *Tohu*, which is a higher spiritual rung than *Tikkun*, the immediate source of the G-dly soul, and through refining the body and the animal soul, the G-dly soul taps into that higher source and elevates itself.

Through carrying out its Divine service with the Torah and its *mitzvos*, after its descent to this plane and its enclothement in the body and the animal soul that conceal G-dliness, the soul reaches a rung comparable to that of a *baal teshuvah*,²⁷ as reflected by the verse,²⁸ “The spirit will return to G-d Who endowed it.”

b) Through its descent to the material plane, the soul fulfills G-d's command, “Be fruitful and multiply,” and also the Torah and its *mitzvos* as a whole.

c) Through its Divine service with physical entities on the material plane, the soul makes the world into a dwelling for G-d, “a dwelling in the lower realms.”²⁹ This accomplishment elevates the soul to a much higher rung than the one on which it previously existed.³⁰

A comparison between these developments – that this world (in its lowly state) becomes a dwelling for G-d and the ascent the soul achieves through bringing about this transformation – points to an advantage (from one standpoint), of the Divine service of carrying out “all your actions for the sake of Heaven”³¹ and “knowing G-d in all your ways”³² over the Divine service of studying the Torah and observing the *mitzvos*.

27. *Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar*, p. 73a; *Sefer HaMaamarim 5706*, pp. 65, 66; *et al.* Those sources explain the connection between the verse and the Divine service of *teshuvah*.

28. *Koheles 12:7*. See *Likkutei Torah, Devarim*, p. 71c, which explains the connection between this verse and the Divine service of *teshuvah*.

Before its descent to the material plane, the soul existed in the spiritual realms above and experienced the love

and fear of G-d. On that level, it can be compared to a *tzaddik*. After its descent to this physical world, it feels distance and must strive to establish a connection with Him. These efforts resemble the Divine service of a *baal teshuvah*.

29. See *Tanya*, ch. 36.

30. The lofty state to which the soul is elevated has two dimensions: one resulting from the refinement of the world itself, as will be explained in the section entitled

און דורך דעם וואס זי איז יורד לְמַטָּה און ווערט נתלַבֵּש אין א גוף וּפֶשׁ הַבְּהִמִּית וועלכע זיינען מעלים ומסִתִּיר אויף אַלקוּת און פונדעסִטוועגן טוט זי איר עבודה בתורה ומצוות - קומט אין איר צו די מעלה (פון והרוע תשוב אל האלקים^{כא}), פון בעל תשובה^{כב}.

ב) בירידתה לְמַטָּה איז זי מקיים דעם צווי פרו ורבו גו' (און תורה ומצוות בכלל).

ג) דורך איר עבודה לְמַטָּה אין דברים גשמיים טוט זי אויף אז די וועלט זאל ווערן א דירה לו יתברך - "דירה בתחתונים", און דורך דעם ווערט זי נתעלה א סאך העכער ווי זי איז געווען פריער^{כג}.

און אין דעם ענין וואס די וועלט ("תחתונים") ווערט א דירה לו יתברך (און אין די עלית הנשמה וואס ווערט דורך דעם), איז דא א יתרון (בפרט אַחַד) אין דער עבודה פון "וכל מעשיך יהיו לשם שמיים"^{כד} און "בכל דרכיך דעהו"^{כה} אויף דער עבודה פון לימוד התורה און קיום המצוות;

“Beyond One’s Own Desire for G-dliness” and one resulting from the fact that through that refinement, G-d’s intent for a dwelling in the lower realms is brought to consummation, as will be explained in the section entitled “Not for Its Own Sake.” See also footnote 60 below.

31. *Avos 2:12*.

32. *Mishlei 3:6*; cited and explained by the *Tur* and the *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim*, sec. 231.

To explain that advantage: When a person's Divine service encompasses even his **personal matters**³³ and he carries out such activities ("your actions" and "your ways") "for the sake of Heaven," and in a manner through which he knows G-d, he enables G-d's dwelling to encompass even the lowest dimensions of worldly existence.³⁴

וְנֹארוֹם דְּנֶרְךָ דְעָם וְנֹאס אוּיָךְ
 דִּי עֲנִינֵי הָרְשׁוֹת פּוֹן מְעַנְטִשָׁן
 ("מְעַשֵׂיךָ" אֹן "דְרָכֶיךָ") וְיִינְעֵן
 "לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם" אֹן אֵינְ אֵן אֹפֶן
 פּוֹן "דְעֵהוּ", וְנֶעֱרַט דִּי דִירָה לֹ
 תִבְרָךְ אוּיָךְ אֵינְ "תַּחְתּוֹנִים"
 מְמַשֵּׁי.

Summary

Yaakov's journey alludes to the descent of the soul to this material plane. That also is a descent for the sake of an ascent and parallels the three aspects of the ascent experienced by Yaakov:

- a) As the soul existed in the spiritual realms before its descent to the material plane, its rung was comparable to that of a *tzaddik*. Through carrying out its Divine service after its descent to this material plane where G-dliness is concealed, the soul reaches a rung comparable to that of a *baal teshuvah*.
- b) On this material plane, the soul fulfills G-d's command, "Be fruitful and multiply," and also the Torah and its *mitzvos* as a whole.
- c) Through its Divine service with physical entities on the material plane, the soul makes the world into a dwelling for G-d. This accomplishment elevates the soul to a much higher rung than the one on which it previously existed.

A comparison between these developments – that this world (in its lowly state) becomes a dwelling for G-d and the ascent the soul achieves through bringing about this transformation – points to an advantage of the Divine service of refining one's material environment over the study of the Torah and the observance of the *mitzvos*. By refining material entities, the person enables G-d's dwelling to encompass even the lowest dimensions of worldly existence. By contrast, the study of the Torah and the observance of *mitzvos* are by definition categorized as "holy." As such, they do not relate entirely to the material dimensions of our world.

Shifting Directions

It is possible to explain that the advantage in serving G-d in one's personal matters over serving

ו. וַיֵּשׁ לֹמְדָה, אֵז דְעֵר יִתְרוֹן פּוֹן
 דְעֵר עֲבוּדָה אֵינְ עֲנִינֵי הָרְשׁוֹת

33. "Personal matters" is used as a translation for *divrei reshus*, which literally means "permitted matters" or "matters left to one's own discretion."

34. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 8, p. 108, and the sources mentioned

there. In that source, the Rebbe explains that even though the Torah is studied by people on this physical plane and the *mitzvos* are performed with material entities, these activities are nevertheless by definition catego-

rized as "holy." As such, they do not relate entirely to the material dimensions of our world. By contrast, when one serves G-d by carrying out his personal affairs for the sake of Heaven, he brings G-dliness into the lowest dimensions of material existence.

Him through the study of Torah and the observance of *mitzvos* also relates to the first point mentioned previously (that through its descent to this physical plane and involvement with material matters, the soul attains the rung of a *baal teshuvah*).³⁵

Whenever a Jew performs a *mitzvah*, he is expressing his inner will, for, from the standpoint of his innermost self, every Jew “desires to fulfill all the *mitzvos*.”³⁶ This is true even when he must overcome his *yetzer hara*, which tries to hinder his observance to perform the *mitzvah*, for when he compels himself to observe the *mitzvah*, “his *yetzer hara* is weakened”³⁷ and his true desire – the desire to perform the *mitzvah* – is revealed. Thus, the *yetzer hara* has no connection to the actual performance of the *mitzvah*. Developing this line of thinking, when a person performs a *mitzvah*, he is not acting as a *baal teshuvah*, but rather as a *tzaddik*.³⁸

By contrast, when performing the Divine service of “all your actions shall be for the sake of Heaven” and “know G-d in all your ways,” a person is involved in his everyday individual affairs. These include matters that his body inherently desires for its existence and life,³⁹ as a result of his animal soul.⁴⁰

לגבי דער עבודה פון תורה ומצוות
איז אויך בנוגע דעם ערשטן עילוי
(וואס די נשמה קומט צו צו דער
מעלה פון בעל תשובה):³⁵

בשעת א איד טוט א מצוה, אפילו
ווען דער קיום המצוה איז אין אן
אופן וואס ער דארף זיך מתגבר זיין
אויפן יצר הרע וואס שטערט עם פון
מקיים זיין די מצוה,

פונדעסטוועגן, וויבאלד אז
נאכדעם ווי ער איז זיך כופה צו מקיים
זיין די מצוה איז “תשש יצרו”³⁶ און
עס ווערט נתגלה זיין אמת'ער רצון -
וואס יעדער איד (בפנימיותו) “רוצה
הוא לעשות כל המצוות”³⁷ - קומט
אויס, אז אין דעם קיום המצוה גופא
האט דער יצר הרע קיין שייכות ניט;
ובמילא איז דער קיום המצוה ניט אין
דער בחינה פון א בעל תשובה נאר
אין דער בחינה פון א צדיק;

מה שאין פון דיעבודה פון “כל מעשיך
יהיו לשם שמים” און “בכל דרכיך
דעהו”, וויבאלד אז זיין טאן די עניני
הרשות קומט מצד דעם וואס בטבעו
איז ער מתאנה צו זיי מצד דעם גוף
וקיומו וחיותו,³⁹ מצד נפשו הבהמית⁴⁰

35. See the end of the *maamar* entitled *Malka U'Malchosa*, 5697, and *Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim*, p. 44d, which explain that the comparison between the Divine service of Torah scholars and businessmen correlates to that between the Divine service of *tzaddikim* and *baalei teshuvah*.

36. *Rambam, Hilchos Geirushin* 2:20.

37. *Rambam, loc. cit.* *Rambam* is speaking about an instance in which

others are compelling a person to perform a *mitzvah*. How much more so does the concept apply to the situation described in the main text in which a person is compelling himself.

38. A *tzaddik's* Divine service does not focus on the transformation of his animal soul. Instead, it reveals the potentials within his G-dly soul. Similarly, when a person is observing a *mitzvah*, he is giving expression to his G-dly soul without focusing on his animal soul. Even though he may have had to overcome the challenges posed by the

animal soul to perform the *mitzvah*, the animal soul does not participate in the performance of the *mitzvah* itself.

39. See *Tanya*, the beginning of ch. 7.

40. See *Kuntreis Motzei Shabbos Kodesh, Parshas Chayei Sarah*, 5738, sec. 26, and footnotes (*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 20, pp. 334-335). In that source, the Rebbe explains how using the objects of one's material desires “for the sake of Heaven” causes his Divine service to encompass even those matters which his animal soul desires.

{Therefore, even when the person carries out these activities “for the sake of heaven” and in a manner that enables him to “know” G-d, they remain “his actions” and “his ways.”} Accordingly, such involvement in these activities follows a *baal teshuvah’s* mode of Divine service.⁴¹

וְאֵס דְּעִרְפָּא, אִיז אױךְ ווען ער טוט זײ “לְשֵׁם שְׁמַיִם” און אָפּילוּ אײַן אַן אױפֿן פּוֹן “דְּעָהוּ” - פּאַרְבֿלײַבן זײ “מַעֲשֵׂיךְ” און “דְּרָכֶיךָ” - אִיז בְּשַׁעַת אֲז עַר טוט די ענײַג הַרְשׁוּת לְשֵׁם שְׁמַיִם אָדער אײַן אַן אױפֿן פּוֹן “דְּעָהוּ”, דאַן אִיז די עֲשִׂיָה עֲצֻמָּה אײַן אַן אױפֿן פּוֹן אַ “בַּעַל תְּשׁוּבָה”.

Summary

The advantage in serving G-d within the context of his everyday affairs by refining material existence over serving Him through the study of Torah and the observance of *mitzvos* also relates to the first point mentioned previously (that through its descent to this physical plane and involvement with material matters, the soul attains the rung of a *baal teshuvah*).

When a Jew performs a *mitzvah*, he is expressing his inner will, for every Jew possesses an inherent desire to fulfill the *mitzvos*. Even if he has to overcome his *yetzer hara* to fulfill the *mitzvah*, the *yetzer hara* has no connection to the actual performance of the *mitzvah*. Developing this line of thinking, when a person performs a *mitzvah*, he is not acting as a *baal teshuvah*, but rather as a *tzaddik*, because like a *tzaddik*, he is following his natural desire to do G-d’s will.

By contrast, serving G-d within the context of his everyday affairs, in matters that his body and animal soul inherently desire, the person is following a *baal teshuvah’s* mode of Divine service, for he is going against his natural tendency.

How Deep Is the Bond?

To provide a more detailed explanation of the advantage of the *teshuvah* achieved through the Divine service of carrying out “all your actions for the sake of Heaven” and “knowing G-d in all your ways,” over the *teshuvah* involved in conquering one’s *yetzer hara* so it will not impede the person’s Divine service of Torah and its *mitzvos*:

One of the advantages of *teshuvah* in a simple sense, i.e., *teshuvah* in repentance for sin,

ז. דער בײַאור בְּפִרְטוּיּוֹת יוֹתֵר אײַן דַּעַם עִילוּי הַ“תְּשׁוּבָה” וואָס ווערט דערגרייכט דורך דער עבודת פּוֹן “וְכָל מַעֲשֵׂיךְ כּוֹ” “בְּכָל דְּרָכֶיךָ כּוֹ” אױף דער “תְּשׁוּבָה” פּוֹן “כְּבִישַׁת הַיָּצֵר” וואָס אִיז דאָ אױף אײַן דער עבודת פּוֹן תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת:

אײַנע פּוֹן די מעלות אײַן עבודת הַתְּשׁוּבָה (כְּפִשׁוּטָה) אִיז, וואָס תְּשׁוּבָה

41. A *baal teshuvah* transforms his nature, redirecting the thrust of his energy from seeking the satisfaction of his material desires to a commitment

to fulfilling G-d’s will. Similarly, a person’s animal soul wants to perform physical activities for his own satisfaction. Through his Divine service,

the person redirects the focus of his actions and carries them out “for the sake of Heaven.”

is that it brings out the strength of a Jew's connection with G-d. Even though the person, Heaven forbid, committed a sin,⁴² the connection between him and G-d is not lost. Indeed, it is because of the strength of this ongoing connection that, after the sin, the person can repent.⁴³

Similar concepts apply regarding the *teshuvah* which is the goal of the soul's Divine service when it descends to this material plane. Carrying out its Divine service expresses and reveals the power of the soul's bond to G-dliness – that even when enclined in a body, an animal soul, and a *yetzer hara*, it remains connected to G-d through that service.

Based on the above, it is possible to appreciate the advantage of the *teshuvah* achieved through carrying out “all your actions for the sake of Heaven” over the *teshuvah* involved in the Divine service of Torah and *mitzvos*.

The Divine service of Torah and *mitzvos* expresses the strength of the soul's bond with G-d – that even when enclined in a body and an animal soul, the soul has the potential to overcome them and break out of their constraints, weakening the *yetzer hara*. Nevertheless, the *teshuvah* involved in carrying out one's personal matters³³ “for the sake of Heaven” reflects a deeper bond. The soul demonstrates that its connection to G-d encompasses even those matters in which the will of the animal soul holds sway.

Summary

Expanding the concepts developed in the previous section, the Rebbe explains the advantage the *teshuvah* achieved by serving G-d within the context of one's everyday

ברענגט ארויס דעם תוקף פון דער התקשרות פון א אידן מיטן אויבערשטן, אז די התקשרות פארלירט זיך ניט חס ושלום אפילו דורך א חטא און וואס דערפאר קען ער⁴² אפילו לאחרי החטא נאך אלץ תשובה טאן.⁴³

ועל דרך זה איז אויך בנוגע דעם ענין ה"תשובה" וואס איז דא אין דער עבודת הנשמה בירידתה למטה אז אין דעם זאגט זיך ארויס בגילוי דער תוקף ההתקשרות פון דער נשמה מיטן אויבערשטן, אז אויך ווען זי איז אנגעטאן אין גוף ונפש הבהמית (און יצר הרע) איז זי פארבונדן מיטן אויבערשטן דורך עבודת ה'.

ועל פי זה איז פארשטאנדיק דער עילוי פון דער "תשובה" וואס ווערט דערגרייכט דורך טאן עניני הרשות לשם שמים, לגבי דער "תשובה" וואס איז דא אין דער עבודה פון תורה ומצוות:

אין דער עבודה פון תורה ומצוות זאגט זיך ארויס דער תוקף ההתקשרות פון דער נשמה אין דעם, וואס אויך זייענדיק אין גוף ונפש הבהמית האט זי בכח צו שטארקן זיך איבער זיי און "ארויסגיין" פון זיי, "תשש יצרו"; דורך דעם אבער, וואס אויך די עניני הרשות טוט זי "לשם שמים" וכו' ברענגט זיך ארויס, אז איר התקשרות איז אפילו אין די ענינים וואו ס'איז נרגש דער רצון פון נפש הבהמית.

42. See the explanations of “the first quality” in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 5, p. 249, footnote 59, which relates to

the point mentioned in the main text.

43. Not only “can” the person repent,

ultimately, “he will certainly repent” (*Tanya*, the end of ch. 39; the Alter Rebbe's *Hilchos Talmud Torah*, 4:3.)

affairs has over the *teshuvah* involved in conquering one's *yetzer hara* so it will not impede his Divine service of Torah and its *mitzvos*. One of the advantages of *teshuvah* in a simple sense, i.e., *teshuvah* in repentance for sin, is that it brings out the strength of a Jew's connection with G-d. Even though the person, Heaven forbid, committed a sin, the connection between him and G-d is not lost.

The Divine service of Torah and *mitzvos* expresses the strength of the soul's bond with G-d – that even when encloded in a body and an animal soul, the soul has the potential to overcome them and break out of their constraints, weakening the *yetzer hara*.

Nevertheless, the *teshuvah* by serving G-d within the context of his everyday affairs reflects a deeper bond. The soul demonstrates that its connection to G-d encompasses even those matters in which the will of the animal soul holds sway.

Beyond One's Own Desire for G-dliness

Nevertheless, even this spiritual peak achieved by the soul – i.e., the elevated level of *teshuvah* that is achieved through carrying out one's personal matters “for the sake of Heaven” – is not comparable to the spiritual peak achieved through the third quality mentioned above⁴⁴ – making the world a dwelling for G-d.⁴⁵

To focus on one of the explanations of the virtues achieved through such Divine service: The bond the soul shares with G-d is connected with its being and nature. The soul is fundamentally “an actual part of G-d”⁴⁶ and is therefore

ח. אַבְעָר אָף עַל פִּי כֵן, אִיזו אױף
דָּעַר עײלױ פֿון דָּעַר נִשְׁמָה - דָּעַר
עײלױ פֿון תְּשׁוּבָה וְוַאס ווערט דורך
עֲשׂוּת עֲנִינֵי הַרְשׁוּת לְשֵׁם שְׁמַיִם וְכוּ'
- קוּמֵט נִיט צו דָּעַם עײלױ (עֲנִין הַג'
דְּלַעִיל סְעִיף ה') וְוַאס טוט זײַך אױף
אִין אײַר דורך דָּעַם וְוַאס זײ מַאכְט דײ
וועלט פֿאַר אַ דײַרָה לױ יתְבַרְךָ.⁴⁷

אײנעַר פֿון דײַ בײַאורײַם בְּזֵה:

דײַ הַתְּקַשְׁרוּת פֿון דָּעַר נִשְׁמָה
מײַטן אױבְּעֶרשְׁטֵן אִיז פֿאַרבױנְדֵן
מײַט אײַר "מְצִיאױת" און "טְבַע".
און דְּעִרְבֵעַר, הַגֵּם אַז דײַ טְבַע

44. In the section entitled “Not Merely One Man’s Journey.”

45. This virtue is also realized by a person who is a *baal teshuvah* in a simple sense, i.e., one who repents after sinning. His personal ascent reflects a unique positive quality – that even after he sinned, he returns to G-d, as explained above in the section entitled “How Deep the Bond.”

In addition, since “his intentional sins are transformed into merits” (*Yoma* 86b), these “merits” elevate him to a higher rung

(*Likkutei Torah, Vayikra*, p. 26c; *Derech Mitzvosecha*, p. 191a).

The transformation of the *baal teshuva’s* sins an effect that extends beyond his own self. As explained in the *maamar* entitled *Padeh BeShalom*, 5709, sec. 1, the Divine service of the righteous is focused on their own spiritual advances. *Teshuvah* “has an effect on an entity outside the persons’ selves.” This reflects the ascent achieved by the soul through its descent to the physical plane. “It achieves the level of a *baal*

teshuvah... and illuminates the world.”

Nevertheless, the wording in that *maamar* appears to imply that the ascent through *teshuvah* which the soul achieves is not the ascent achieved because of its illuminating the world, but rather the very achievement of illuminating the world itself. See the section entitled “Not For Its Own Sake” below and footnote 60.

46. *Tanya*, ch. 2.

so strongly bonded with Him that the bond remains intact despite the soul being encloded in the animal soul. Nevertheless, since this bond is a result of its nature and its being, it has a limit.⁴⁷

In contrast,⁴⁸ by transforming elements of material existence into mediums for G-dliness, the soul attains an even higher rung.⁴⁹ The very existence of material entities conceals G-dliness, for they are part of this world, and this world – as its Hebrew name *olam*, עולם, implies – brings about the concealment (העלם) of G-dliness.⁵⁰ Accordingly, the transformation of such entities into mediums for G-dliness does not stem from their nature and being. It is possible only because of G-d. Since His oneness is utterly unlimited, even this world – despite the concealment of G-dliness it inherently causes – can

ההתקשרות איז מיט אַ תּוֹקֶף (וואָס בְּלִיבֵט בְּשִׁלְמוֹתוֹ אָפִילוֹ ווען זי איז מְלֻבָּשׁ אין נֶפֶשׁ הַבְּהֵמִית), וויבאלד אָבָעֵר אַז דָּאס איז די "טָבַע" פֿון איר "מְצִיאֹת", איז דָּא אין דָּעם אַ הֶגְבְּלָה ל"ד.

מַה שְּׂאִין כֹּה דוֹרֵךְ דָּעם וואָס די נִשְׁמָה פּוֹעֵלֵט אַז די עֲגִינֵי הָעוֹלָם זאַלן ווערן פֿלִים לֵאלֻקוֹת - וויבאלד אַז דָּאס (וואָס זײ ווערן פֿלִים צו אַלְקוֹת) קוֹמט נִיט מִצֵּד זײַער "טָבַע" און "מְצִיאֹת" [וואָרום אַדְרָבָה: די "מְצִיאֹת" פֿון "עוֹלָם" (מִלְשׁוֹן הָעֵלִים)] איז מְעֵלִים וּמִסְתִּיר אויף אַלְקוֹת], נָאר מִצֵּד דָּעם אויבְּעֵן שְׁטוֹ, וואָס הֵיִת אַז זײַן "אַחֲדוּת" האָט נִיט קײן הֶגְבְּלוֹת קען דַּעְרִיבְּעֵר אויף דַּעַר

47. See the *maamar* entitled *Tanya Shiva Devarim (Sefer HaMaamarim Kuntreisim, Vol. 2, p. 394a)*, which refers to *Tanya*, ch. 19, which states: "A person's soul... naturally desires and yearns... to cling to its root and source."

That *maamar* explains that this desire is not self-oriented, for when the soul clings to its source, it will – as *Tanya, loc. cit.* states – "become absolutely nullified and be subsumed entirely, with no existence of its own. Nevertheless, since this is the soul's natural desire, this desire "does not cause the soul to nullify its nature. How much more so does it not lose its essential form." By bonding with G-d in such a manner, the soul fulfills its natural desire and tendency; it does not transcend its inherent nature.

That *maamar* and (similarly, the *maamarim* entitled *Vechol HaAmRo'im*, 5678, and *Lerei'ach*

Shemanecha, 5706, sec. 6.) explain that, by refining the animal soul and motivating it to also be aroused with a desire for G-dliness, the G-dly soul reaches an even higher rung. Since the animal soul's desire for G-dliness runs contrary to its nature, when the G-dly soul brings about such a change within the animal soul, it has a reciprocal "effect on the G-dly soul, which also nullifies its nature."

In the above source (*op. cit.*, 394b), the Rebbe Rayatz proceeds to explain that, as a result, the G-dly soul "goes beyond the bounds of its vessels and transcends all limits entirely."

48. The concepts explained resemble the explanation given in the *maamar* entitled *Lerei'ach Shemanecha, loc. cit.*, regarding the advantage of the ascent achieved by the G-dly soul through refining the animal soul, motivating it to also be aroused with a desire

for G-dliness over the advantage of the ascent the G-dly soul achieves by overcoming the challenges with which the animal soul confronts it.

Overcoming those challenges requires the G-dly soul to tap its inner resources of strength and realize its own potential. However, as explained in the previous footnote, by motivating the animal soul to a desire for G-dliness, the G-dly soul receives the capacity to transcend itself and draw on loftier, transcendent energies.

49. Previously, in the section titled "How Deep the Bond" the Rebbe had focused on the heights achieved by the soul when it serves G-d with material things, i.e., the emphasis was on the strength of the soul's connection to G-d expressed through such service. Here, the emphasis is on the soul's power of achievement – that it can transform a material entity to a medium for the expression of G-dliness.

50. *Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar*, p. 37d.

become a dwelling for Him.⁵¹

”עולם” זיין א דירה לו יתברך⁵²;

By transforming the world into a dwelling for G-d and bringing out G-d’s absolute and unlimited oneness, the soul elevates its bond with G-d to a loftier level. That bond stems not only from the soul’s being and nature,⁵² but also from G-d’s unlimited unity.⁵³

איז דורך דעם וואס די נשמה מאכט פון וועלט א דירה צום אויבערשטן און ברענגט דערמיט ארויס דעם בלי גבול פון אהדותו של הקדוש ברוך הוא - ווערט אויך איר התקשרות מיטן אויבערשטן (ניט נאר ווי ס’איז מצד איר ”מציאות”, נאר) ווי דאס איז מצד אהדותו של הקדוש ברוך הוא הבילתי מוגבל⁵⁴.

Summary

Even the elevated level of *teshuvah* the soul achieves by serving G-d within the context of everyday affairs is not comparable to the spiritual peak achieved through making the world a dwelling for G-d.

The bond the soul shares with G-d is connected with its being and nature, because the soul is fundamentally “an actual part of G-d.” Since this bond is a result of the soul’s nature and its being, it has a limit.

Through the service of transforming elements of material existence into mediums for G-dliness, the soul attains an even higher rung. The transformation of material entities into mediums for G-dliness does not stem from their nature and being, for by nature, they conceal G-dliness. This transformation is possible only because of G-d’s unlimited oneness. As a result of that infinite oneness, even this world – despite the concealment of G-dliness it inherently causes – can become a dwelling for Him

By bringing about this transformation, the soul bonds with G-d, not only within the limits of its being and nature, but it also connects to His unlimited oneness.

Not For Its Own Sake

All the lofty levels that the soul reaches through its descent to the material plane are not the ultimate objective of that descent, for the soul does not exist for its own sake. Instead, as our Sages taught:⁵⁴ “Everything that the Holy

ט. אט די עליות, צו וועלכע די נשמה קומט צו דורך איר ירידה למטה, זיינען נאך ניט דער תכלית המכון פון איר ירידה. ווארום וויבאלד אז ”כל מה שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא (בעולמו) לא בראו אלא

51. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 12, p. 75, and footnotes, which focus on similar concepts.

52. As explained above, the soul’s being and nature are fundamentally limited. By serving as a medium to express G-d’s transcendent oneness, the soul rises above its own limits and becomes subsumed in that unity.

53. This resembles the ascent achieved by the G-dly soul through its refinement of the animal soul (see footnote 46, above.)

However, even the ascent that is achieved through refining the animal soul is relatively limited. Since the animal soul is interrelated to the G-dly soul (see *Sefer*

HaMaamarim Kuntreisim, Vol. 1, p. 266b ff.), the new development, and, therefore, the ascent achieved through its refinement is not comparable to the new development and the ascent achieved through refining the world at large.

54. *Avos*, the end of ch. 6.

One, blessed be He, created (in His world), He created solely for His glory” and “I was created to serve my Creator.”⁵⁵ Accordingly, it is understood that the ultimate purpose of man’s creation and the descent of the soul to this material plane is not for the sake of the soul’s ascent but rather to carry out G-d’s purpose.⁵⁶

In a similar vein, the Alter Rebbe states in *Tanya*⁵⁷ that the soul did not descend to this material plane for its own sake, but rather to transform the body, the animal soul, and its portion in the world,⁵⁸ “to connect and unite them with G-d’s infinite light.” Through these efforts, the soul carries out G-d’s intent in creation, fulfilling His desire for a dwelling in the lower realms.⁵⁹

The soul will benefit from carrying out the service described above. Since this service brings about the fulfillment of G-d’s ultimate intent, the soul therefore⁶⁰ receives “an immeasurably good reward”⁶¹ and is enabled to experience an “infinitely great and wondrous ascent.”⁶¹ However, this reward is peripheral to the fundamental purpose of its existence – to fulfill G-d’s intent in creation.

55. *Kiddushin* 82a.

56. *Likkutei Torah, Devarim*, p. 28d.

57. *Tanya*, ch. 37. The Alter Rebbe’s statements in that source continue and develop the concepts he stated in ch. 36, that the purpose of creation is to make a dwelling for G-d in the lower realms.

58. The Rebbe speaks of “his portion in the world,” for every soul was allotted certain sparks of G-dliness to elevate and, indeed, the fulfillment of the soul’s life mission is dependent on the accomplishment of this task (*Kesser Shem Tov*, sec. 194).

59. *Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Naso*, sec. 16, *Tanya*, ch. 36.

60. G-d’s Essence is *ein sof* in the ultimate sense; thus, describing it as “unlimited” is also inappropriate (the series of *maamarim* entitled *Yom Tov shel Rosh HaShanah*, 5666, p. 167, *et al.*).

G-d’s desire for a dwelling in the lower realms stems from His Essence. Accordingly, it is possible to say that the ascent achieved by the soul and the reward granted it due to its fulfillment of G-d’s desire for a dwelling in the lower realms is loftier than the ascent achieved by the soul because of the revelation of G-d’s unlimited oneness, as explained in the section entitled “Beyond One’s Own Desire for G-dliness.” G-d’s unlimited oneness

לְכַבֹּדוֹ^{ל”ט} - אֲוֹן “אֲנִי נִבְרָאתִי לְשִׂמְשׁ אֶת קוֹנֵי”^כ - אִיזו פֶּאֶרְשֻׁט־אֲנִידִיקָ, אֲזו דְּעַר תִּקְלִית הַמְּכַנֵּן פּוֹן (בְּרִיאַת הָאָדָם אִוֹן) יִרִידַת הַנְּשֻׁמָּה לְמַטָּה אִיזו (נִיט צוֹלִיב דְּעַר עֲלֵיהּ פּוֹן דְּעַר נְשֻׁמָּה, נֶאֱרָא) בְּכַדֵּי דוֹרְכְּצוּפִירִין דְּעַם אוֹיְבַעֲרֻשְׁטֵנִס כְּנֻנָה^{כ”א}.

אֲוֹן עַל דְּרָךְ וּוִי דְּעַר אֲלֻטְעַר רַבֵּי זֶאָגֵט אִין תְּנִיאַ^{כ”ב}, אֲזו יִרִידַת הַנְּשֻׁמָּה לְמַטָּה אִיזו נִיט לְצוּרְךָ הַנְּשֻׁמָּה, נֶאֱרָא בְּכַדֵּי צוֹ אִיְבַעֲרֻמֶאֱכָן דְּעַם גּוֹף וְנַפְשׁ הַחַיּוּנִית אֲוִן חֲלָקוֹ בְּעוֹלָם - “לְקִשְׁרָם וְלִיחָדָם בְּאֹרֶךְ אִין סוּף בְּרוּךְ הוּא”, וְזֶאָס דוֹרְךָ דְּעַם וְעַט זֶיך אוֹיסְפִירִין דִּי כְּנֻנָה פּוֹן “נִתְאַנָּה”^{כ”ג} הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְהִיּוֹת לוֹ דִּירָה בַּתְּחַתּוֹנִים”.

עַס אִיזו נֶאֱרָא וְזֶאָס הִיּוֹת אֲזו דִּי נְשֻׁמָּה אִיזו דִּי וְזֶאָס פִּירְט אוֹיס דִּי כְּנֻנָה הַנְּ”ל, קוֹמֵט אִיר פֶּאֶר דְּעַם אֲ”שְׁכַר טוֹב לֵאִין קִי”^{כ”ד}, דְּעַרְפֶּאֶר”^{כ”ה} הָאֵט אוֹיךְ זִי אֲן “עֲלֵיהּ גְּדוּלָה וְנִפְלְאָה לֵאִין קִי”^{כ”ו}.

is one of His revealed qualities. Thus, it and the ascent the soul achieves by revealing it are lower than His Essence and the ascent achieved by the soul because of its fulfillment of His essential desire.

It is possible to say that, with regard to the soul’s Divine service, the ascent it achieves as a result of fulfilling G-d’s intent for a dwelling is that it will become conscious that its entire existence is, to borrow the wording of Avos and *Kiddushin*, *loc. cit.*, “for the sake of His glory” and “to serve its Creator,” i.e., it will lose all sense of self, rising above even its desire for spiritual perfection.

61. *Likkutei Torah, Devarim* 29a.

Explanation is necessary: How can the above concepts be reconciled with the statements in many sources⁶² that the soul descends to the material plane for the sake of an ascent? From these sources, it appears that the ascent the soul will experience is not a peripheral matter, but the rationale for and purpose of its descent.

דאַרף מען פאַרשטיין: ווי איז דאס מתאים דערמיט וואס עס שטייט בכמה מקומות⁶², אז די ירידת הנשמה למטה איז בנשגביל העלילה, וואס דאס מיינט לכאורה אז די עלית הנשמה איז ניט קיין ענין צדדי, נאר דער טעם ותכלית פון איר ירידה?

Summary

The ultimate purpose of man’s creation and the descent of the soul to this material plane is not for the sake of the soul’s ascent but, as our Sages state, “I was created to serve my Creator.” In a similar vein, the Alter Rebbe states in *Tanya* that the soul did not descend to this material plane for its own sake, but rather to transform the body, the animal soul, and its portion in the world, “to connect and unite them with G-d’s infinite light.” Through these efforts, the soul carries out G-d’s intent in creation, fulfilling His desire for a dwelling in the lower realms.

True, the soul benefits from this service. As mentioned above, through carrying out this service, the soul ascends to a higher level. Nevertheless, this reward is peripheral to the fundamental purpose of its existence – to fulfill G-d’s intent in creation.

This leads to a question, for in many sources, it is stated that the soul descends to the material plane so that it can ascend to a higher rung, and that ascent is the purpose of its descent.

Identifying with Utter Self-Transcendence

To offer a resolution to the above – at least in brief:

יוד. איז דער ביאור אין דעם (בקצרה על כל פנים):

As is well-known,⁶³ the concept of “a dwelling for G-d in the lower realms” unites two extremes. Specifically, the lower realms in which concealment prevails become a dwelling for G-d’s Essence, G-d’s Being, as He transcends all rungs. In the higher, spiritual realms, merely the revealed levels of G-dly light shine forth. This lowly realm, by contrast, becomes a dwelling for G-d’s very Essence.

ס’איז ידוע⁶³ אין דעם ענין פון “דירה לו יתברך בתחתונים”, אז דוקא “תחתונים” ווערן א דירה לו יתברך - לו לעצמותו. אין “עליונים” זיינען מאיר “גילויים”, מה שאין כן “תחתונים” ווערן א דירה לעצמותו יתברך.

62. See *Likkutei Torah, Bamid-bar*, p. 73a; *Sefer HaMaamarim 5706*, pp. 65, 66; *et al.*

It must be noted that *Likkutei Torah, Devarim, loc. cit.*, which places the emphasis on the souls’ mission

of creating a dwelling for G-d, also states that the souls “descend... for the sake of an ascent.” However, that *maamar* concludes: “Nevertheless, this ascent alone is not the ultimate purpose.”

63. See the series of *maamarim* entitled *Yom Tov shel Rosh HaShanah*, 5666, pp. 3, 8 and the *maamar* entitled *Mitzvasa Mishedtishka HaChamah*, 5678, which are both based on *Tanya*, ch. 36.

The concept that G-d's Essence is manifest in this lowly, material plane is connected to the concept that it is specifically in this world that the *bittul* of *ein od* ("there is nothing else"⁶⁴) is expressed. By contrast, the higher, spiritual realms express only the *bittul*, that they are *kilo*, "as nothing," in relation to G-d.⁶⁵

G-d's intent is that His dwelling in the lower realms be brought about specifically through man's Divine service.⁶⁶ Therefore, the Divine service that brings about that dwelling must be carried out with utter *bittul*, including *bittul* so encompassing that it is comparable to the *bittul* of *ein od*. In chassidic terminology, this is explained as the *bittul* of a "simple servant,"⁶⁷ which does not come because he appreciates the lofty qualities of the master or the like and therefore devotes himself to the master, but stems from the master himself.⁶⁸

64. The oneness of G-d encompasses all existence. Even entities that see themselves as distinct and separate are truly nothing more than expressions of Him.

This conception, however, leaves room for an entity to see itself as an expression of G-d. On the other hand, *ein od*, "there is nothing else," implies simply that He is the only existence.

The entities in the higher, spiritual realms appreciate G-dliness and see themselves as expressions of Him. Therefore, they express His oneness and that endows their existence with a certain degree of validity. By contrast, material existence is obviously transitory and not genuine. It cannot see itself as true existence. What is true and genuine? Only G-d. There is nothing else, and all existence reflects Him.

To highlight the difference between these two levels: On the first level, all existence sees itself as an expression of G-dliness and its existence is "as nothing" in comparison to the G-dly light

that brings it into being. Nevertheless, it has a certain validity, for G-d brought it into being and maintains its existence.

On the second level, all that exists is Him. Existence doesn't see itself at all, for He is the totality of all being.

65. See the extensive explanation in the *maamar* entitled *Vela-kachtem Lechem*, 5661. See also the series of *maamarim* entitled *Yom Tov shel Rosh HaShanah*, 5666, p. 438. As explained in these sources: Since the entities of the higher realms see themselves as expressions of G-d, they ascribe a certain degree of self-importance to themselves.

66. As explained at length in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 12, p. 73ff.; Vol. 14, p. 123, the concept of a dwelling in the lower realms implies that it will be brought about by the people living in that realm, for in that way it will encompass that realm as it exists within its own context. If, by contrast, the dwelling would be established through

און דער ענין, וואס עצמות "געפינט" זיך דוקא למטה, איז פארבונדן דערמיט וואס דוקא אין עולם הזה איז דא דער ביטול פון "אין עוד", גיט ווי אין עולמות עליונים וואס אין זיי איז דער ביטול פון "כלא"מח.

און היות אז די כונה איז אז די דירה זאל זיך אויפטאן דורך עבודת האדם דוקאמט - דאך דעריבער אויך די עבודה (דורך וועלכער עס טוט זיך אויך די "דירה") זיין בבחינת ביטול לגמרי [ביז צו א ביטול וואס איז "מעין" פונעם ביטול פון "אין עוד", אזוי ווי דער ביטול פון אן עבד פשוט וואס קומט (גיט מצד דעם וואס נר איז מרגיש הפלאת האדון וכיוצא בזה, נאר) מצד דעם אדון אליין].

the revelation of G-dly light, it would not be complete, since it will not relate to the lower realms as they exist within their own context.

To explain by analogy, the difference would be comparable to two students: One understands a concept thoroughly based on his teacher's explanations. However, he sees the concept only in terms of those explanations. He cannot explain it in his own words. A second has internalized the idea to the point at which it is no longer only the teacher's idea; the student has made it his own. He can explain it with his own examples and terms.

67. See the series of *maamarim* entitled *Yom Tov shel Rosh HaShanah*, 5666, loc. cit., "The reflection of the concept of *ein od* (see note 63) in actual Divine service is the acceptance of the yoke of Heaven manifest through one who serves G-d as a servant." See the following footnote.

68. This reflects the loftier rung

On this basis, it is possible to reconcile the statements in many sources that the soul descends to this material plane in order to ascend to a higher plane⁶⁹ and the statement in *Tanya* that the soul descends to carry out G-d's intent for a dwelling in the lower realms.

ועל פי זה יש לומר אז דאס וואס שטייט בכמה מקומות אז ירידת הנשמה למטה איז "בשביל העליה"^{**} איז פארבונדן דערמיט וואס שטייט אין תנאי אז ירידת הנשמה למטה איז בכדי צו דורכפירן די כונה פון "דירה בתחתונים":

achieved by a "simple servant" over that achieved by a "faithful servant" (the series of *maamarim* entitled *Yom Tov shel Rosh HaShanah*, 5666, p. 326ff.).

As explained in that source, a faithful servant recognizes the virtues of his master and therefore, commits himself full-heartedly to serving him. Nevertheless, his commitment does not involve utter self-transcendence because his service is motivated by his understanding. On the contrary, his self-fulfillment comes through this service.

A "simple servant," by contrast, has no appreciation of the virtues of his master. He serves him solely because he is compelled to. He doesn't see himself as having any importance whatsoever. His service is thus motivated by his master rather than his own self.

To extend this concept: According to Jewish Law (*Rashba*, *Bava Metzia* 96a), a servant is considered nothing more than an extension of his master. He has no identity of his own. Thus, as stated in the previous footnote, it is through the Jews' acceptance of the yoke of G-d's service that they manifest the concept of *ein od*, that there is nothing else but G-d.

69. In a simple sense, it is possible to explain that the rationale that the descent of the soul is "for the sake of an ascent" reflects the perspective of the revealed levels of G-dliness,^{*} while the explanation that the soul's descent is solely to bring about a dwelling for G-d reflects the perspective of G-d's Essence.

To cite a parallel: As explained in the series of *maamarim* entitled *Yom Tov shel Rosh HaShanah*,

5666, p. 4ff., p. 446, see also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 6, p. 19ff. and footnotes there, there are two rationales given for creation as a whole: a) so that G-d make Himself known (*Zohar*, Vol. II, p. 42b) and b) that His powers be revealed in their fullness (the beginning of *Eitz Chayim*; *Shaar HaHakdamos*, *hakdamah* 3). These rationales reflect the revealed levels of G-dliness. However, the ultimate purpose for creation, G-d's desire for a dwelling in the lower realms, transcends reason and relates to His Essence.

Nevertheless, as will be explained in the main text, the rationale that the soul's descent is for the sake of an ascent** also relates to the ultimate intent of establishing a dwelling for G-d in the lower realms that is rooted in His Essence.

* In the body of the footnote, it was explained that the rationale that the soul's descent was for the purpose of an ascent relates only to the revealed levels of G-dliness, but that the ultimate purpose of that descent is rooted in His Essential desire for a dwelling in the lower realms.

That explanation is not a contradiction to the statement in *Likkutei Torah*, *Bamidbar*, p. 73a, "the ultimate resolution of the question why the souls' descent to this physical plane is that... through their descent into the body, they attain the virtue of becoming *baalei teshuvah*."

True, that virtue only reflects a revealed level of G-dliness.

Nevertheless, there is no contradiction because G-d's desire for a dwelling in the lower realms cannot be termed "a resolution to a question," because it transcends all logic and reason. As the Rebbe Rashab states in the series of *maamarim* entitled *Yom Tov shel Rosh HaShanah*, 5666, p. 7ff., "With regard to a desire, no questions are asked."

As explained in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 6, p. 21, G-d's desire for a dwelling in the lower realms stems from His Essence, and His Essence – and thus, also His essential desires – transcends all logic and definition.

However, G-d's essential desire for creation and the souls' descent also filters through the revealed levels of G-dliness and on that level, there are reasons for the souls' descent and a resolution can be given to the question why the souls descended – namely, that they will ascend to a higher rung. In that context, *Likkutei Torah*, *loc. cit.*, states: "There are many resolutions given to this question, but the ultimate resolution is that... they attain the virtue of becoming *baalei teshuvah*."

** Similar concepts also apply regarding the reasons for creation given by the *Zohar* and *Eitz Chayim*. These reasons also relate to the ultimate intent of establishing a dwelling for G-d in the lower realms that is rooted in His Essence, as explained in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 6, p. 21, footnote 69.

The soul's ascent is that it attains a level of utter *bittul* and serves G-d not as an expression of its own being – i.e., as a result of its own understanding or feeling – but as an expression of His oneness.⁷⁰ And to carry out the intent of establishing a dwelling for G-d in the lower realms, it is necessary that the soul carry out the service that brings about that dwelling with such utter *bittul*.⁷¹

ווארום די עלית הנשמה איז דאך וואס זי קומט צו צו בְּחִינַת בֵּיטוּל [אז איר עבודה איז נישט מצד איר "מציאות" נאר מצד אהדותו של הקדוש ברוך הוא⁷⁰ (כַּנֶּ"ל סְעִיף ח)] - און אין דער כּוֹנֵה פון "דירה בתחתונים" איז דאך נוגע אז די עבודת הנשמה וואס טוט אויף די "דירה" זאל זיין בבחינת ביטול.⁷¹

Summary

The Rebbe answers the question raised at the end of the previous section by explaining the concept of a dwelling in this lowly realm, that it becomes a place where G-d's very Essence is manifest. The manifestation of G-d's Essence on this lowly, material plane brings out the deepest level of *bittul*, the realization that *ein od*, "there is nothing else" but Him.

For G-d's dwelling in the lower realms to be complete, it must be brought about specifically through man's Divine service. Therefore, the Divine service must be characterized by that same utter *bittul*. In chassidic terminology, this is explained as the *bittul* of a "simple servant," whose submission to his master does not come about because he appreciates the master's lofty qualities, but stems from the master himself.

This is the ascent the soul achieves by descending to this material plane and carrying out G-d's intent for a dwelling in the lower realms. It attains a level of utter *bittul* and serves G-d not as an expression of its own being, but as an expression of His oneness.

70. See the section entitled, "Beyond One's Own Desire for G-dliness."

The *bittul* that stems from G-d's oneness enables a person to manifest in his daily activities a *bittul* that resembles the *bittul* of a simple servant, one who actualizes the awareness of *ein od*, that there is nothing else but G-d. Nevertheless, the resemblance is not complete, the *bittul* that stems from G-d's oneness is on a lesser level. See footnote 60, above.

71. As mentioned in several sources (see footnote 27), the soul's descent to this physical plane is for the sake of the ascent. In the main text here, it is explained that the soul's ascent is that it reaches a state of *bittul*. Seemingly, carrying out Divine service with *bittul* is seemingly merely a preparatory step for

fulfilling G-d's intent of establishing a dwelling in the lower realms. Thus, explanation is necessary. How can it be postulated that the purpose of the soul's descent is to reach this level of *bittul*, when the *bittul* is merely a preparatory step to achieve G-d's purpose?

In resolution, it is possible to say: The potential for the soul's Divine service to establish a dwelling for G-d exists only when characterized by *bittul*. Accordingly, were its Divine service not to be characterized by *bittul*, G-d's dwelling would be established by Him, as it were, and not through and as a result of man's Divine service.

As such, just as man's Divine service – i.e., that G-d's dwelling be established through man's Divine service – is a fundamental element of G-d's dwelling in the

lower realms and not merely a preparation for it,* so too, the necessity for man's Divine service to be characterized by *bittul* is also an integral element of the dwelling. Thus, the ascent achieved by the soul – that it reaches a state of *bittul* – is not merely a preparatory step, but part of G-d's ultimate purpose.

* Were the dwelling not to be established by man's Divine service, that dwelling would not be an integral part of this world, as man perceives it. Instead, it would be an extrinsic element that is not part of the natural definition of worldly existence. In such a conception, although the dwelling would be in this material world, man would feel as a guest in G-d's home.

By contrast, when man performs Divine service that creates the

What Yaakov Was Saying

Based on all the above concepts, it is possible to understand the four points mentioned originally in the verses describing Yaakov's vow. There are two facets of the condition Yaakov postulated: a) "If G-d will be with me..., protect me..., and give me food to eat and garments to wear," and b) "if I return in peace to my father's home." As explained above, the fact that they are divided into two verses indicates that they are of a different nature.

Similarly, there are two aspects of Yaakov's vow (as understood by *Ramban*): a) "G-d will be my L-rd," and b) "This stone that I have erected as a monument will be the House of G-d." These, too, are divided into two verses.

As mentioned above,⁷² Yaakov's ultimate intent was to fulfill his vow. The conditions he postulated were merely means that would enable him to carry out his vow.

As explained above, the ultimate purpose of the descent of the soul to this material plane is two-dimensional: a) to enable the soul to ascend, and b) to bring about a dwelling for G-d in the lower realms. Similarly, the Divine service that leads to the accomplishment of these purposes is twofold: serving G-d through carrying out the Torah and its *mitzvos*, and serving Him by carrying out all one's actions for the sake of Heaven. A parallel exists between the two conditions Yaakov established and the two general categories of Divine service performed by the Jewish people.

יא. על פי כל הנ"ל וועלן פארשטאנדיק ווערן די פיר ענינים הנ"ל וואס אין המשך הכתובים פון "וידר יעקב נדר" -

סיי די צוויי ענינים פונעם תנאי - (א) "יהיה אלקים עמדי ושמרני גו' ונתן לי לחם לאכול ובגד ללבוש", און (ב) "ושבתי בשלום אל בית אבי" [וואס פון זייער פאנאנדערטיילונג אין צוויי פסוקים איז מובן אז זיי זיינען צוויי סוגים, פנ"ל] און סיי די צוויי ענינים פון דעם "נדר" (לפירוש הרמב"ן) - (א) "והיה ה' לי לאלקים", און (ב) "והאבן הזאת אשר שמת מצבה יהיה בית אלקים" [וואס אויך זיי טיילן זיך אין צוויי פסוקים]:

דער תכלית המכון איז (כאמור לעיל סעיף א') דער נדר, און דער תנאי איז נאר די וועג ווי צו קענען דורכפירן דעם נדר. ועל פי הנ"ל אז דער תכלית פון ירידת הנשמה באשטייט פון צוויי פרטים [א) בשביל עלית הנשמה, (ב) בכדי צו אויפטאן די "דירה בתחתונים"] און אזוי אויך אין איר עבודה וואס ברענגט צו דעם זיינען דא צוויי ענינים [די עבודה פון תורה ומצוות און די עבודה פון כל מעשיך לשם שמים] - דארף אויסקומען, אז די צוויי ענינים פון דעם תנאי זיינען די צוויי סוגי עבודה הנ"ל:

dwelling, he enables the conception of the world as G-d's dwelling to be perceived as an inherent characteristic of this realm itself - this is the way the world should truly be.

72. In the section entitled "Was Yaakov Driving a Bargain?"

73. See *Tanya*, ch. 5, which explains that *mitzvos* serve as

"garments" for the soul, while the Torah serves not only as a garment, but also as food. See *Tana D'bei Eliyahu Rabbah* 27:9.

“If G-d will be with me..., protect me..., and give me food to eat and garments to wear” conveys the potential from Above for man to serve G-d through the observance of the Torah and its *mitzvos*, which are alluded to by the terms “food” and “garments” respectively⁷³ – “turning away from evil,”⁷⁴ guarding himself from sin (alluded to by Yaakov’s words “protect me”⁷⁵), and “doing good.”⁷⁴

The condition “if I return in peace to my father’s home” relates to serving G-d in one’s personal matters, which, as explained above, is comparable to *teshuvah*. {Indeed, *vishavti* (ושבתי), “if I return,”⁷⁶ shares the same root letters as *teshuvah* (תשובה).}

True, a person involves himself in these matters because his animal soul desires them. Nevertheless,⁷⁷ this involvement does not draw him into the realm of evil, (to refer to *Rashi’s* interpretation of Yaakov’s words,⁷⁸ “If I return in peace:” “unmarred by sin, without having learned from Lavan’s ways,”) because he did not involve himself in these matters to fulfill his desires, but for the sake of Heaven.

Carrying out the two categories of Divine service alluded to in the conditions Yaakov stipulated leads to

“יְהִיָּה אִלְקִים עִמָּדִי וְשָׁמְרֵנִי גו' וְנָתַן לִי לֶחֶם לְאֹכֹל וּבִגְד לְלַבּוֹשׁ” - דָּאס איז דער נְתִינָת כַּח מְלַמְעָלָה אויף סוּר מֵרַע, אויסצוהיטן זיך פון עֲבִירוֹת (ושמְרֵנִי גו'“⁷³) און אויף עֲשֵׂה טוֹב, לִימוּד התורה וְקִיּוּם המצוות (“לֶחֶם” וְ“בִגְד”⁷⁴); און “וְשָׁבְתִי בְשָׁלוֹם גו'” - דִּי עֲבוּדָה אין דְּבָרֵי הָרְשׁוּת [וְנָאס איז דוּגְמַת עֲנִין הַתְּשׁוּבָה (“וְשָׁבְתִי”)]⁷⁵, טְרָאץ דעם וְנָאס זײַן הַתְּעַסְקוֹת אין דְּבָרֵי הָרְשׁוּת איז דְּעֵרְפָּאָר וְנָאס דער נֶפֶשׁ הַבְּהֵמִית איז רוּצָה בָּהֶם פּוֹנְדְעִס טוֹעֵגֶן⁷⁶ זײַנען אויך דִּי עֲנִינִים אִים נִיט מוֹרִיד אִין רַע (“שָׁלֹם מִן הַחֵטָא שְׁלֵא אֶלְמוּד מִדְּרַכֵּי לְבָן”⁷⁷), וְנָארוּם עַר טוֹט זײַ נִיט לְמֵלֵאוֹת תְּאֻנָּתוֹ נָאָר “לִשְׁם שָׁמַיִם”;

און דִּי צוֹנִי סוּגֵי עֲבוּדָה

74. Cf. *Tehillim* 34:15.

75. See also *Kli Yakar, Bereishis* 28:20 that Yaakov’s request, “protect me,” was that “his soul be guarded from sin.”

76. See *Toras Chayim (Bereishis, p. 26a-b)*, which states that the words “food and clothing” in Yaakov’s request are analogies for the Torah and its *mitzvos* and “returning in peace,” is an analogy to *teshuvah*.

77. Based on the statements in the main text and the explanation that Yaakov’s return refers to *teshuvah*, it is possible to explain why Yaakov phrased his request “if I return,” and not “if You cause me to return”

(see the section entitled “Two and Two” and notes 9-10). Since G-d’s influence descends and is enclothed in matters of this world, the motif of Divine empowerment is hidden and it appears that *teshuvah* comes from man’s own initiative, without being motivated from Above. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 9, p. 64, footnote 26.

On this basis, it is possible to understand the added dimension that the request “if I return” contributes beyond that implied by “If G-d... will protect me,” even according to the interpretation that “If G-d... will protect me” means protect me from sin (see footnote 72): Being

protected from sin resembles the weakening of the *yetzer hara* (see the section entitled “Shifting Directions” above). In such an instance, one perceives that he is being protected from Above.

The new dimension implied by the request “if I return,” is that even when a person is involved in worldly matters because of the desire of the animal soul (his personal Lavan), and he does not feel the motif of Divine empowerment, he nevertheless “will return in peace,” “unmarred by sin, without having learned from Lavan’s ways.”

78. *Rashi, Bereishis* 28:21.

the realization of the **two points** alluded to in Yaakov's vow, which reflect the intent and purpose of the descent of the soul to this material plane: a) "G-d will be my L-rd"; this refers to the ascent the person, i.e., his soul, will experience, and then b) "This stone... will be the House of G-d"; the establishment of a dwelling in the lower realms.

As explained above,⁷⁹ the primary ascent of the soul is the transcendence of its individual existence and identity, serving G-d not because its own nature dictates so, but because He is G-d, Who is found everywhere, even in worldly matters that are not outwardly G-dly.

Therefore, the verse mentions "G-d will be my L-rd" in connection with "This stone... will be the House of G-d," which *Ramban* interprets as meaning "I will serve the unique G-d... in the place of this stone which will be a House of G-d for me." The implication is that Yaakov's Divine service will not be carried out because it is motivated by his own nature, but with the awareness that it should resemble "This stone..." becoming "the House of G-d." The stone does not become the House of G-d because of any input of its own, but solely as an expression of G-d's oneness that has absolutely no limits. Similarly, a person should carry out his Divine service with no consciousness of self, but solely as a medium to express G-d's oneness.

Even so, "G-d will be my L-rd" is included in the same verse as "if I return in peace," and not in the verse beginning "This stone." This placement highlights that the ultimate intent in the soul's descent to this material plane is not the ascent the soul will experience, but the fulfillment of G-d's desire for a dwelling in the lower realms.⁸⁰

ברענגען צו צו די צוויי ענינים פון "נדר" - די כונה און תכלית פון ירידת הנשמה למטה: פריער "והיה ה' לי לאלקים" - די עלייה פון (מענטשן -) דער נשמה; און דערנאך "והאבן הואת גו' יהיה בית אלקים" - די "ירדה לו יתברך בתחתונים".

[און היות אז עיקר עליית הנשמה איז (כנ"ל סעיף ה') וואס זי "גייט ארויס" פון איר "מציאות" און זי איז עובד את ה' (ניט מצד איר "טבע" נאר) מצד דעם אויבערשטן וואס ער איז נמצא בכל מקום אויך אין עניני העולם (וואס זיינען ניט אלקות) -

דעריבער איז דער סדר הכתוב אז "והיה ה' לי לאלקים" קומט אין איין המושג מיט "והאבן הואת גו' יהיה בית אלקים", ובגלשון הרמב"ן: אעבוד השם המיוחד . . . במקום האבן הואת שתהיה לי לבית אלקים - אז זיין עבודה וועט זיך אנהערן ווי זי איז (ניט מצד זיין טבע נאר) בדוגמת "האבן הואת שתהיה לי לבית אלקים", וואס דאס וואס "אבן הואת" וועט זיין "בית אלקים" איז דאך נאר מצד דעם וואס אחדותו של הקדוש ברוך הוא איז בלי גבול].

79. In the section entitled "Beyond One's Own Desire for G-dliness."

80. See the section entitled "Not for Its Own Sake."

For this reason, even though the reward, “G-d will be my L-rd,” comes as a result of the person’s Divine service, however, in one way, it bears a similarity to the condition – i.e., the Divine service expected of man – namely, “I will return in peace,” for they both do not constitute the ultimate purpose. Hence, they are included in the same verse. By contrast, “This stone... will be the House of G-d” is a verse of its own, because it – i.e., the establishment of a dwelling for G-d in the lower realms – reflects the ultimate purpose of all existence.

אָבער אַף על פּי כּן אִיז ״וְהָיָה ה' לִי לְאֱלֹקִים״ אִין אִיין פּסוק מִיט ״וְשָׁבְתִי בְשָׁלוֹם גּו״ און נִיט מִיט ״וְהָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת גּו״ - וּוְיִלֵּל הַיּוֹת אִז דְּעַר תְּכַלִּית הַמְּכֹנֵן אִין יְרִידַת הַנְּשָׁמָה לְמַטָּה אִיז נִיט דִּי עֲלִית הַנְּשָׁמָה, נָאֵר צו דוּרְכַפִּירֵן דִּי כּוֹנֵה פּוֹן דִּירָה בְּתַחְתּוֹנִים, (כּנ״ל סְעִיף ט), דְּעַרִיבְעָה, אִיז דְּעַר עֲנִין פּוֹן ״וְהָיָה ה' לִי לְאֱלֹקִים״ (אַף עַל פּי אִז דָּאס אִיז אַ תּוֹצְאָה פּוֹן דְּעַר עֲבוּדָה) שְׁיִיךְ מְעַר (בְּפֶרֶט אֶחָד - הֵינּוּ מִצַּד דְּעַרוּיף וּוּאָס ס'אִיז נָאֵךְ נִיט דְּעַר אָמַת'עַר תְּכַלִּית) צוּם ״תְּנַאִי״ (עֲבוּדָה) ״וְשָׁבְתִי בְשָׁלוֹם״ וּוִי צוּם תְּכַלִּית הַמְּכֹנֵן פּוֹן ״וְהָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת גּו״ יְהִיָּה בֵּית אֱלֹקִים״ (דִּירָה בְּתַחְתּוֹנִים).

Summary

Based on all the above concepts, it is possible to understand the four points mentioned originally in the verses describing Yaakov’s vow. There are two facets of the condition Yaakov postulated: a) “If G-d will be with me..., protect me..., and give me food to eat and garments to wear,” and b) “if I return in peace to my father’s home.” As explained above, the fact that they are divided into two verses indicates that they are of a different nature.

A parallel exists between the two conditions Yaakov stipulated and the two general categories of Divine service performed by the Jewish people. “If G-d will be with me..., protect me..., and give me food to eat and garments to wear” conveys the potential from Above for man to serve G-d through the observance of the Torah and its *mitzvos*, which are alluded to by the terms “food” and “garments.” The condition “if I return in peace to my father’s home” relates to serving G-d in one’s personal matters, which, as explained above, is comparable to *teshuvah*.

As mentioned above, Yaakov’s ultimate intent in stipulating these conditions was to fulfill his vow. The conditions were merely means that would enable him to carry out his vow.

The two aspects of Yaakov’s vow (as understood by Ramban): a) “G-d will be my L-rd,” and b) “This stone... will be the House of G-d,” are divided into two verses. These two aspects parallel and allude to the two dimensions that reflect the ultimate purpose of the descent of the soul to this material plane. “G-d will be my L-rd” refers to the ascent the person’s soul will experience. “This stone... will be the House of G-d” refers to the establishment of a dwelling in the lower realms.

Carrying out the two categories of Divine service alluded to in the conditions Yaakov stipulated leads to the realization of the two purposes for the descent of the soul alluded to in Yaakov’s vow.

The verse mentions “G-d will be my L-rd” in connection with “This stone... will be the House of G-d.” *Ramban* understands the linkage of the two as implying that just as the stone’s place in the House of G-d comes – not because of any input of its own, but – solely as an expression of G-d’s oneness, so too, Yaakov’s Divine service will not be carried out because it is motivated by his own nature, but as an expression of His oneness. This type of bond with G-d is the ultimate ascent the soul can experience.

Even so, “G-d will be my L-rd” is included in the same verse as “if I return in peace,” and not in the verse beginning “This stone,” because the ultimate intent in the soul’s descent to this material plane is not the ascent the soul will experience, but the fulfillment of G-d’s desire for a dwelling in the lower realms.

“G-d will be my L-rd,” man’s reward, bears a similarity to the condition – i.e., the Divine service expected of man, “I will return in peace” – for they both do not constitute the ultimate purpose. Hence, they are included in the same verse. By contrast, “This stone... will be the House of G-d” is a verse of its own, because it – i.e., the establishment of a dwelling for G-d in the lower realms – reflects the ultimate purpose of all existence.

Part of the Ultimate Purpose

Even according to *Rashi*, who interprets “G-d will be my L-rd,” not as part of Yaakov’s vow, i.e., the realization of the purpose, **but** as part of the conditions Yaakov was asking G-d to fulfill, “G-d will be my L-rd”⁸¹ can be understood in a manner resembling the explanation given above according to *Ramban’s* interpretation. The intent is that “G-d will be my L-rd” is **not** an aspect of the soul’s Divine service to be carried out when descending to this physical plane, but rather an element of the ascent that comes as a result of that Divine service.

*Rashi*⁷⁸ interprets that phrase as meaning “that G-d’s name should rest upon me from the beginning to the end and that no blemish be found among my descendants.” Such a result is only possible when one’s bond with G-d is utterly without limits.

According to *Rashi’s* interpretation, “G-d

יב. וַיֵּשׁ לְוָמֶר: אוֹיֵךְ לֹוִיט פִּירוּשׁ רש"י - אַז "וְהָיָה ה' לִי לְאֱלֹהִים" אִיז (נִיט דְּעַר נִדָּר, נָאֵר) דְּעַר תְּנָאִי - אִיז "וְהָיָה ה' לִי לְאֱלֹהִים" אַ פֶּרֶט (נִיט אִין עֲבוּדַת הַנְּשֻׁמָּה בִּירִידָתָהּ לְמַטָּה, נָאֵר) אִין דְּעַר עֲלִיָּה וְוָאס וְוַעֲרַט דּוֹרָךְ דְּעַר עֲבוּדָהּ, עַל דְּרָךְ וְוִי לְפִירוּשׁ הַרְמַב"ן

[וְוָאֵרוּם דְּעַר עֲנִין פּוֹן "שְׂחִיבִיל שְׁמוֹ עָלֵי מִתְחַלָּה וְעַד סוֹף שְׁלֵא יִמְצָא פְּסוּל בְּזַרְעֵי"ט (אַז שְׁמוֹ שֶׁל הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא זָאל חַל זַיִן נִיט נָאֵר אִין זַיִן "תְּחִלָּה", נָאֵר אוֹיֵךְ אִין זַיִן "סוֹף", בִּיז אֶפִּילוֹ אִין "זַרְעוֹ" וְוָאס קוֹמְעַן אַרוּיס פּוֹן אִים), קַעַן זַיִן נָאֵר דּוֹרָךְ דְּעַם וְוָאס אִין זַיִן הַתְּקַשְׁרוּת מִיטָן אוֹיבְעַרְשְׁטֵן אִיז נִיטָא קִינַע הַגְּבֻלוֹת];

און דאס וואס לפי פירושו רש"י

81. See the section entitled “*Rashi* or *Ramban*.”

will be my L-rd” is part of the conditions Yaakov asked G-d to fulfill and not part of Yaakov’s vow, as *Ramban* understood. The rationale for that distinction is that the ascent the soul will experience is merely a preparation for the ultimate purpose, “This stone... will be the House of G-d,” the establishment of a dwelling for G-d in the lower realms. Thus, the soul’s ascent parallels one of the conditions stipulated by Yaakov, i.e., it is merely a means for the ultimate purpose to be realized.

Summary

Even according to *Rashi*, “G-d will be my L-rd” can be understood in a manner resembling the explanation given above according to *Ramban’s* interpretation. The intent is that “G-d will be my L-rd” is not an aspect of the Divine service carried out by the soul in its descent to this physical plane, but rather an element of the ascent that comes as a result of that Divine service.

Therefore, *Rashi* considers “G-d will be my L-rd” as part of the conditions Yaakov was asking G-d to fulfill. The rationale is that the ascent of the soul to which it alludes is merely a preparation for the ultimate purpose, “This stone... will be the House of G-d,” the establishment of a dwelling for G-d in the lower realms. Thus, the soul’s ascent parallels one of the conditions stipulated by Yaakov, i.e., it is merely a means for the ultimate purpose to be realized.

Towards a Simple Understanding

It is possible to say that the difference of opinion between *Rashi* and *Ramban* – whether “G-d will be my L-rd” is part of the conditions Yaakov asked G-d to fulfill or part of Yaakov’s vow, i.e., the realization of the purpose – revolves around the following:

Ramban’s commentary on the Torah does not only focus on the simple meaning of the text, but also includes “delightful matters... for those who know favor.”⁸² Thus, it relates to the revealed dimension of G-dliness.⁸³ And from the perspective of the

גייט דער ענין (“וְהָיָה ה' לִי גֹיִט אֲרִיִן אֵין “תְּנַאי” אֹן נִיט אֵין נָדָר (וּוִי לְפִירוּשׁ הָרַמְבַּן) אִיז - וַוִיִּלְעַ דִּי עֲלֵיָהּ פּוֹן דְּעַר נְשָׁמָה אִיז נָאֵר אַ הַכְּנָה צוּם (תְּכַלִּית הַ) מְכֻנֶּן פּוֹן “וְהָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת גֹּיִתָּהּ בֵּית אֱלֹקִים”, דִּירָה בְּתַחְתּוֹנִים.

יג. וַיֵּשׁ לֹמֶר, אִז דְּעַר טַעַם פֶּאֲרוּוֹאס לְפִירוּשׁ רִשׁ” אִיז “וְהָיָה ה' לִי לְאֱלֹקִים” אַ פֶּרֶט אֵין “תְּנַאי” אֹן לְפִירוּשׁ הָרַמְבַּן אִיז עַס אַ פֶּרֶט אֵין “נָדָר”:

אֵין פִּירוּשׁ הָרַמְבַּן זַיִנְעֵן דָּא נִיט נָאֵר “פֶּשְׁטִים” נָאֵר אֹיךְ “דְּבָרִים נְעִימִים . . . לְיֹדְעִים חֵן”⁸², וַוֹאס דָּאס אִיז פֶּאֲרֹבֹנְדֵן מִיט בְּחִינַת “גִּילּוּיִם”⁸³ -

82. The quote is taken from the end of *Ramban’s* introduction to his commentary on the Torah.

Yodéi chen, translated as “those who know favor” is often used as a

reference to the students of Kabbalah, for *chen*, חן, is understood as an acronym for *chochmah nistarah*, “hidden wisdom.”

83. See the note in *Tanya*, ch. 40

and also *Tanya*, *Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 26, and *Torah Or*, p. 17a, which cite the writings of the *Arizal*, which states that the study of Kabbalah relates to the realm of *Atzilus*.

revealed levels of G-dliness, the ascent to be experienced by the soul is also a significant purpose.⁸⁴ Hence, he considers “G-d will be my L-rd” as part of the vow, together with “This stone... will be the House of G-d.”

Rashi’s commentary, by contrast, focuses on the straightforward meaning of the text. The parallel to that in man’s Divine service is the Divine service of “a simple servant,”⁸⁵ who does not seek out his own benefit⁸⁶ and desires solely to carry out the will of his Master.⁸⁷ As a result, according to his conception, the vow focuses solely on G-d’s ultimate purpose: “This stone... will be the House of G-d.”

Summary

The difference between *Rashi’s* approach and *Ramban* can be explained as follows: *Ramban’s* commentary also includes “delightful matters... for those who know favor.” Thus, it relates to the revealed dimension of G-dliness. And from the perspective of the revealed levels of G-dliness, the ascent to be experienced by the soul is also a significant purpose. Hence, *Ramban* considers “G-d will be my L-rd” as part of the vow, i.e., the realization of the purpose, together with “This stone... will be the House of G-d.”

Rashi’s commentary, by contrast, focuses on the straightforward meaning of the text. This parallels the Divine service of “a simple servant,” who seeks solely to carry out the will of his Master and focuses on His desire for a dwelling on this material plane. As a result, according to his conception, the vow focuses solely on G-d’s ultimate purpose: “This stone... will be the House of G-d.”

און מצד הגילויים איז אויך די
עליה פון דער נשמה א תכלית;⁸⁴

מה שאין בן פירוש רש"י איז
פשוטו של מקרא, וואס אין
עבודת האדם איז עס די עבודה
פון אן עבד פשוט וואס זוכט
ניט קיין תועלת לעצמו⁸⁵ און
ויל נאר דורכפירן דעם רצון
האדון.

(ממאמר ד"ה
ושבתי בשלום תשל"ח,
ומשיחות חורף תשכ"ד)

84. True, the consummate level of the soul’s ascent is that it reaches utter *bittul*, to the extent that it is conscious that its entire existence is for the sake of its Creator (see footnote 60 above). Nevertheless, the soul is conscious of the loftiness of its state of *bittul*.

This parallels the service of a “faithful servant” who performs his Divine service because he “is

conscious of the loftiness and wondrous level of G-d’s infinite light” (the series of *maamarim* entitled *Yom Tov shel Rosh Ha-Shanah*, 5666, p. 323). He carries out his Divine service as a servant “solely to fulfill G-d’s will... and his intent is not focused on his own self at all” (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, because he appreciates the lofty value of consummating his Master’s desire, he wants to accomplish that mission and for

that accomplishment to be identified with him (*ibid.*, p. 321).

85. See the section entitled “Identifying with Utter Self-Transcendence.”

86. Indeed, the “simple servant” does not even seek to attain the lofty level of *bittul*. See footnote 84.

87. G-d’s desire is, as reflected by the phrase, “this stone... will be the House of G-d,” that a dwelling for Him be established in this material world.”

- (א) פרשתנו כח, כ ואילך.
 (ב) פענח רזא וריב"א פרשתנו שם, כב. אברבנאל ריש פרשתנו (קושיא הה'). עקידיה שער כה (קושיא הב'). אלשיך פרשתנו כח, כ (קושיא הו'). וראה רא"ם לפירוש רש"י שם, כא. דברי דוד שם כב. ועוד.
 (ג) על דרך הפשט בפירוש רש"י - ראה דברי דוד ומשכיל לדוד שם כב (ועוד), שהגדר היה לעשות מה שאינו מחוייב. אבל ביאור זה אינו מספיק כי מובן שאצל יעקב אבינו - שהאבות הן הן המרכבה (בראשית רבה פמ"ו, ו. פפ"ב, ו. וראה תניא פפ"ג) - גם העבודה דענינים אלו (לפנים משורת הדין "פולחן דנבחה" וכיוצא בזה) הייתה שלא על מנת לקבל פרס, ובמילא - בלי שום תנאי.
 (ד) להעיר מרמב"ן שם, כ: ויתכן עוד על דרך הפשט כו'. רבותינו בעלי התוספות שם. ועוד.
 (ד*) על דרך (ולא ממש) ביאור הרמב"ם הלכות תשובה פ"ט (הקדמתו לפרק חלקי).
 (ה) ראה כלי יקר (שם, כא בסופו): כי אם לא ישמרו מן ד' ראשי עבירות אלו אז לא יהיה בית אלקים כי יחרב בעבורם.
 (ו) וכן הוא לפירוש המדרש (בראשית רבה פ"ע, ד) ורשב"ם.
 (ז) ועל דרך זה ברד"ק, ספורנו. כלי יקר.
 (ח) אלשיך שם (קושיא הה'). גור אריה דברי דוד לפירוש רש"י שם, כא, לבוש שם, כ. ועוד.
 (ט) אף שגם "ושבתי גו'" הוא "כמו (שהקב"ה) אמר לי והשיבותיך אל האדמה" (רש"י שם, כא).
 (י) פירוש רש"י סוף פרשת נח.
 (יא) לשון רש"י בפסוק זה. וראה רש"י וישלח לב, ה.
 (יב) בדומה יותר - ראה פ"ו משמונה פרקים להרמב"ם.
 (יג) רמב"ם הלכות תשובה פ"ז ה"ד.
 (יד) תולדות כח, ב"ג.
 (טו) ויקרא רבה פל"ו, ה. וראה פסחים נ, א. ספרי דברים ו, ד. ועוד.
 (טז) וגם לאחר זה בדרכו מחרן לארץ ישראל - ראה תורת הרב המגיד
- (הובא באור המאיר) במה שרדף לבן אחר יעקב (נתבאר באור התורה פרשתנו תתסט, א ואילך).
 (ז) כמרומו גם בנגלה (בתורה שבכתב): ויקם שדה עפרון (חיי שרה כג, יז ובדרשת חז"ל על הפסוק. פירוש רש"י שם).
 (יח) פרשתנו ל, מג. וראה תורה אור כג, ג. ועוד.
 (יט) פרשתנו כח, יד. הובא ונתבאר בקיצורים והערות לתניא ע' נז. ד"ח ויצא תר"ל.
 (כ) ראה זהר ריש פרשתנו קמז, א: אוקי האי קרא בגלותא. שם כג, ב (הובא באור התורה פרשתנו תתנד, א). בראשית רבה פס"ח, יג. ובשל"ה פרשתנו (רצב, ב): ענין ויצא יעקב רומז גם כן לגלות. עיין שם.
 (כא) ראה גם ד"ה ויצא שם, שמבאר ב' ענינים בירידה צורך עליה. אלא שב' הענינים שבד"ה ויצא שם, הם: העליה דנפש האלקית למעלה משרשה על ידי בירור הגוף ונפש הבהמית - שהוא (בכללות) ענין הב' שבפנים; ו"להמשיך דירה בתחתונים כו' כי נתאוה הקב"ה להיות לו דירה בתחתונים" - שהכוונה בפשטות ב"עליה" זו היא (לא להעליה שנעשית בהנשמה, כי אם) לזמנלת הענין ד"דירה בתחתונים" גופא, או: להעלות התחתונים על דרך הלשון בתניא ספל"א (מ, ב) "ירידה זו היא צורך עליה להעלות לה' כל נפש החיונית כו'".
 (כא*) ראה לקוטי תורה ריש פרשת האזינו.
 (כב) לקוטי תורה בלק עג, סע"א. ד"ה ומעין תש"ו (וראה שם ספ"ג). ועוד.
 (כג) ובה גופא יש שני ענינים: מצד הענין דבירור העולם גופא (כדלקמן ס"ח), ומצד השלמת הכוונה דנתאוה הקב"ה (כדלקמן ס"ט). וראה לקמן הערה מד.
 (כד) אבות פ"ב מי"ב.
 (כה) משלי ג, ו. טור ושלחן ערוך או"ח סרל"א.
 (כו) ראה לקו"ש ח"ח ע' 108 ואילך. ושם נסמן.
- (כ*) להעיר מהמבואר בכמה מקומות (ד"ה מלכא ומלכתא תרצ"ז בסופו. וראה גם לקוטי תורה שיר השירים מד, סוף ע"ד) שישבי אהל ובעלי עסקים הם דוגמת צדיקים ובעלי תשובה.
 (כו) במכל שכן ממה שכתב הרמב"ם (הלכות גירושין ספ"ב) ענין זה אפילו כשאחרים כופין אותו.
 (כז) רמב"ם שם.
 (כח) ראה תניא רפ"ו.
 (ל) ראה לקו"ש ח"כ ע' 334 ובהערות שם.
 (לא) ויתירה מזו, "שבדאי סופו לעשות תשובה" (תניא ספל"ט. הלכות תלמוד תורה לאדמו"ר הזקן פ"ד סוף ס"ג).
 (לב) ראה לקו"ש ח"ה ע' 249 הערה 59 (עיני הא').
 (לג) וענין זה יש גם בבעל תשובה בתשובה כפשוטה, אשר [נוסף על העילוי שמצד האדם, זה שגם לאחר החטא הוא שב לה' (כנ"ל סעיף ז), הנה] על ידי שמהפך הזדונות לזכויות (יזמא פו, ב) מתוסף בו גם עילוי הבא מצד "זכויות" אלו (לקוטי תורה אחרי כו, ג. דרך מצותיך קצא, סוף ע"א). ולהעיר מד"ה פדה בשלום תש"ט פ"א, שהצדיקים עבודתם היא לעצמם וענין התשובה הוא "לפעול גם בדבר שחוץ להם". וזהו ענין העליה דהנשמה על ידי ירידתה למטה, שהיא "נעשית בבחינת בעל תשובה . . להאיר את העולם". אלא שמלשון זה משמע שהעילוי בתשובה שנעשה בהנשמה על ידי ירידתה למטה הוא (לא העליה של הנשמה הבאה על ידי שמאירה את העולם, כי אם) הענין ד"להאיר את העולם" גופא. וראה לקמן ס"ט ובהערה מד.
 (לד) ראה ד"ה תניא ז' דברים תרצ"ז (סה"מ קונטרסים ח"ב שצד, א), דזה ש"נשמת האדם . . חפצה וחשקה בטבעה . . ולדבקה בשרשה ומקורה" (תניא פ"ט) - אף שרצון זה אינו שבביל עצמה, שהרי כשתדבק בשרשה "תהיה אין ואפס ותבטל שם במציאות

הוא . . . היתרון שלהם בירידתן בגוף שנעשים בחינת בעלי תשובה – כי הענין ד'נתאווה כו' דירה בתחתונים" אינו בגדר "תירוץ", מכיון שהענין ד'נתאווה" הוא למעלה מטעם ודעת "אויף אַ תאווה איז קיין קשיא" (המשך תרס"ו ס"ע ז' ואילך); וה"תירוץ" (הטעם) על הירידה הוא – מה שנעשה "יתרון" על ידי הירידה, ובנוגע לזה אומר בלקוטי תורה שם "יש על זה כמה תירוצים אך התירוץ האמיתי הוא . . . שנעשים בחינת בעלי תשובה".

(**) ועל דרך זה הוא גם בנוגע להטעמים דסיבת הבריאה שבוהר ועין חיים – ראה לקו"ש ח"ו ע' 21 הערה 69.

(ג) שביטול זה הוא דוגמת הביטול דעבד פשוט, העבודה בפועל ד"אין עוד". אבל למטה ממנו – ראה לעיל הערה מד.

(נד) ומה שכתוב בכמה מקומות שכוונת ירידת הנשמה היא בשביל העליה – אף שענין זה מה שעבודתה היא בבחינת ביטול (שזהו עלייתה) היא (לכאורה) רק הכנה להשלמת הכוונה – יש לומר:

מכיון דזה מה שבכח העבודה לעשות דירה לו יתברך הוא על ידי זה שהיא בבחינת ביטול, הרי נמצא, שבאם העבודה היתה שלא בביטול – היתה ה"דירה" נעשית מצד הקב"ה ולא מצד (ובכח) עבודת האדם. ולכן: כמו שהעבודה (שהדירה תיעשה על ידי עבודת האדם) הוא ענין בהכוונה ד"דירה בתחתונים" גופא (ולא רק הכנה אליה) – על דרך זה הוא גם ענין הביטול שבהעבודה.

(נה) ראה גם כלי יקר פרשתנו כח, כ שבקשת יעקב "ושמרני גו"ל" היא "על שמירת הנפש מן החטא".

(נו) ראה תניא ספ"ה (ובכמה מקומות) שהמצות הן לבושים והתורה היא (גם) מזון. אלי' רבה פכ"ז.

(נד) ראה גם תורת חיים פרשתנו (כו, א"ב) ש"לחם ובגד" הוא ענין תורה ומצוות, "ושבתי בשלום" הוא ענין התשובה.

מכיון שעצמותו יתברך אין שייך לתארו גם בענין הבלי גבול (ראה המשך תרס"ו ס"ע קסו. ובכמה מקומות), לכן גם השכר והעליה שמצד השלמת כוונה זו הוא נעלה יותר מהעליה שהנשמה שמצד גילוי אחדותו יתברך הבלתי מוגבל דלעיל ס"ח.

ואפשר לומר, שענינה של עליה זו (שמצד הכוונה) בעבודת האדם הוא שיורגש בו ענין זה שכל מציאותו היא רק לכבודו יתברך, לשמש את קונו.

(מה) לקוטי תורה שם כט, א.

(מו) ראה בהמצויין בהערה כב. ולהעיר שגם בלקוטי תורה שם איתא "הירידה . . . היא בשביל עליה כו'" (אלא שמסיים שם "שעם כל זה לא זה לבד הוא תכלית המכוון כו").

(מז) ראה המשך תרס"ו ע' ג' (ושם ע' ח'). ד"ה מצותה משתקע תרע"ח – על פי תניא פל"ו.

(מח) ראה בארוכה ד"ה ולקחתם לכם תרס"א. וראה גם המשך תרס"ו ע' תלח.

(מט) ראה בארוכה לקו"ש ח"ב ע' 73 ואילך. ח"ד ע' 123.

(ג) ראה המשך תרס"ו שם: דענין העבודה בפועל דבחינת אין עוד הוא ענין קבלת עול מלכות שמים בחינת עבודת עבד.

(נא) שזהו העילוי שב"עבד פשוט" על "עבד נאמן" (המשך תרס"ו ע' שכו ואילך).

(גב) בפשטות אפשר לומר, שהטעם "בשביל העליה" הוא בבחינת הגילויים* [ועל דרך ב' הטעמים בסיבת הבריאה "בגין דישתמודעון ליה" (זח"ב מב, ב) ו"יתגלו שלימות כוחותיו כו" (עין חיים בתחלתו. שער ההקדמות הקדמה ג') – ראה המשך תרס"ו ע' ד' ואילך. שם ע' תמו].

אבל יש לומר, שהטעם "בשביל העליה"*** שייך גם להכוונה האמיתית ד"דירה בתחתונים"

שבעצמותו יתברך, כדלקמן בפנים. (* יוש לומר דאין סתירה לזה ממה שכתוב בלקוטי תורה בלק (עג, א) "התירוץ האמיתי

לגמרי" (תניא שם), מכל מקום – מכיון שרצון זה הוא מצד טבעה, לכן על ידי רצון זה "אינו מתבטל מטבעו וכל שכן שאינו נאבד צורתו העצמי".

ושם (וראה על דרך זה ד"ה וכל העם תרע"ח. ד"ה לריח שמניך תש"ו פ"ו), שעל ידי שנפש האלקית פועלת הברור דנפש הבהמית עד שגם הנפש הבהמית מתעוררת ברצוא לאלקות, מכיון שבנפש הבהמית הרצוא לאלקות הוא היפך טבעה, הנה "זה פועל בהנפש האלקית דגם הוא מתבטל מטבעו". ושם (ע"ב) שעל ידי זה נעשה בה ה"ציאה מגדר הכלים והגבלה לגמרי".

(לה) ובדוגמת המבואר בד"ה לריח שמניך שם מעלת העליה דנפש האלקית שנעשה בה על ידי שפועלת בירור דנפש הבהמית (שגם הנפש הבהמית תתעורר ברצוא לאלקות) על העליה שנעשה בה על ידי שמתגברת על נפש הבהמית.

(לו) לקוטי תורה שלח לו, ד.

(לז) ראה לקו"ש ח"ב ע' 75 ובהערות שם.

(לח) ובדוגמת העליה בנפש האלקית שנעשה על ידי בירור נפש הבהמית (ראה לעיל הערה לד).

אלא שגם העילוי שנעשה על ידי בירור נפש הבהמית – מכיון שנפש הבהמית יש לה שייכות לנפש האלקית (ראה סה"מ קונטרסים ח"א רסו, סע"ב ואילך) – לכן, החידוש ובמילא גם העילוי שנעשה על ידי זה אינו כהחידוש והעילוי שעל ידי בירור עניני העולם.

(לט) אבות ספ"ו.

(מ) משנה סוף קידושין.

(מא) לקוטי תורה ראה כח, ד.

(מב) פל"ז (מח, ב). וזה בא בהמשך להמבואר שם פל"ז שתכלית הבריאה הוא שיהיה לו (יתברך) דירה בתחתונים.

(מג) תנחומא נשא טז. תניא פל"ו.

(מד) ויש לומר, שעליה זו שהנשמה מצד זה שמשלמת הכוונה ד"דירה בתחתונים" שבעצמותו יתברך –

את קונו (ראה לעיל הערה מד) - מכל מקום הוא מרגיש עילוי בזה גופא שהוא בטל כו'.
 ובדוגמת ה"עבד נאמן" שעבודתו היא "מצד הרגש העילוי וההפלאה שבאור אין סוף" (המשך תרס"ו ע' שכג), אשר עם היותו עבד "רק בשביל להשלים רצונו יתברך . . . ואין כוונתו לעצמו כלל" (המשך שם), מכל מקום הוא חפץ שהשלמת רצון האדון תהיה על ידו (המשך הנ"ל ריש ע' שכא).
 (ג) גם לא העילוי דביטול (ראה הערה הקודמת).

והחידוש ב"ושבתי" הוא שגם כשעוסק בעניני הרשות מצד רצון נפשו הבהמית ("לבן") ואינו מרגיש את הנתינת כח שמלמעלה, מכל מקום "ושבתי בשלום - שלם מן החטא שלא אלמד מדרכי לבן".
 (נט) רש"י פרשתנו כח, כא.
 (ס) לשון הרמב"ן בה"פתיחה" לפירושו על התורה בסופה.
 (סא) ראה תניא (פ"מ בהגה"ה. אגרת הקדש סכ"ו. תורה אור יז, רע"א) מכתבי האריז"ל דקבלה היא באצילות.
 (סב) והגם ששלימות העליה דנשמה הוא שהיא בבחינת ביטול בתכלית ועד שכל מציאותו הוא רק לשמש

(נח) ויש לומר, שלכן נאמר "ושבתי" ולא "והשבני" (ראה לעיל בפנים ס"ג ובהערות שם) - כי מצד הירידה וההתלבשות בעניני העולם כו', הנתינת כח שמלמעלה היא בהעלם, וכאילו שההשבה היא מעצמו (וראה לקו"ש ח"ט ע' 64 הערה 26).
 ועל פי זה יובן החידוש שב"ושבתי בשלום" על "ושמרני" - גם להפירוש (ראה לעיל הערה נה) ש"ושמרני" קאי על שמירה מן החטא - כי ענין "ושמרני" מן החטא הוא באופן ד"תשש יצרו" (ראה לעיל בפנים ס"ו), שאז נרגש בו ששומרים אותו מלמעלה;



SICHOS IN ENGLISH