



Likkutei Sichos

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Two Lions

Translated by Mendel Greenbaum and Rabbi Elisha Greenbaum

General Editor: Rabbi Eliezer Robbins | Editor: Rabbi Y. Eliezer Danzinger

Content Editor: Rabbi Zalmy Avtzon

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Considerable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the translation while maintaining readability. As in all translations, however, the possibility of inadvertent errors exists.

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1.

LION IN THE FIRE

The fire on the altar is described as having appeared to be a “crouching lion.”¹ This crouching lion, the *Zohar*² (on this week’s *parshah*) explains, represents the angel Uriel who appears in this form. The *Zohar* uses two distinct expressions. It first describes the fire as “appearing... in the form of one mighty lion crouching over its prey,” and subsequently, the *Zohar* describes the fire as a “large lion crouching over a sacrifice.”

My father³ discussed these variances: [(a) First it says, “**mighty** lion,” and then it says, “**large** lion”; (b) first it says, “crouching over its **prey**,” and then it says, “crouching over a **sacrifice**.”] He explained that the lion on the Supernal Chariot⁴ encapsulates two distinct concepts — *chesed*⁵ and *gevurah*.⁶ “Lion, ארי-ה” has the same numeric value as “*gevurah*” {216}, but on the other hand, it says,⁷ “a lion’s face to the **right**.”⁸ This explains the variant expressions:

The *Zohar* first speaks about the lion’s attribute of *gevurah*, and describes it as a “**mighty** lion crouching over its **prey**,” since “might” (strength and power) represents *gevurah*, and “prey” comes about by {an animal using} strength {*gevurah*}.

Next, the *Zohar* discusses the lion as it incorporates the attribute of *chesed*, and so describes — a “**large** lion crouched over a **sacrifice** — since being large (or “greatness”) is associated with kindness [as in the verse, “to you, Hashem, is the greatness⁹ and the strength...”].¹⁰ Also, the word “sacrifice, קרבנא” is etymologically related to “closeness, קירוב,” which comes from the side of *chesed*, the right side, as our Rabbis say,¹¹ “the right draws close.”

¹ *Yoma* 21b.

² *Zohar* 32b.

³ {Rav Levi Yitzchak, the Rebbe’s father.} *Likkutei Levi Yitzchak* on *Zohar* 32b.

⁴ *Yechezkel* 1:10.

⁵ {The Divine attribute of kindness — giving.}

⁶ {The Divine attribute of severity — withholding.}

⁷ *Yechezkel* 1:10.

⁸ {Kabbalistically, the right side is associated with *chesed*.}

⁹ {The word “greatness, *gedulah*” is used in place of “kindness, *chesed*,” in this list of Divine attributes.}

¹⁰ *Divrei HaYamim I* 29:11.

¹¹ *Sotah* 47a; *Sanhedrin* 107b.

2.

TWO FOR ONE: *CHESED* AND *GEVURAH*

As mentioned several times, my father's glosses were succinct, and my father omitted anything that someone who was studying or analyzing the text could be expected to figure out on his own.

When learning the above gloss, a question arises regarding the precise wording of the *Zohar*: Considering that **both** descriptions of the lion, embodying the respective characteristics of *chesed* and *gevurah*, are of the selfsame lion, why does the *Zohar* use two distinct clauses (“a mighty lion crouching over its prey,” and, “a large lion crouching over a sacrifice”)? Why didn't the *Zohar* incorporate both descriptions in a single clause — “a mighty and large lion crouching over its prey and sacrifice” (or the like)?

{To strengthen the above question:} My father points out that although *chesed* and *gevurah* are two distinct (as well as contrary) attributes, a lion, nevertheless, embodies both *chesed* and *gevurah* not in two **isolated** states but rather in a way that is “similar to the light of *gevurah* invested in the vessel of *chesed*.”¹² Therefore, both attributes are associated with the **general** paradigm of the lion: The *gematria* of “lion, אר-י-ה,” is the same as that of “*gevurah*, גבורה” (besides the obvious association that *might* is a characteristic of a lion, as it says, “be mighty like a lion”).¹³ At the same time, it says, “a lion's face to the **right**” {which is associated with *chesed*}.

[The same point can {also} be said of sacrifices, as alluded to by the *Zohar*'s parallel description of both “prey” (*gevurah*) and “sacrifice” (*chesed*), such that **each** sacrifice embodies both attributes: *gevurah* and *chesed*.

Sacrificing on the altar is an elevation¹⁴ from below to Above — {an act of} *gevurah*. **Afterwards**, it gives Hashem **satisfaction**, as it says,¹⁵ “satisfaction

¹² See also *Or HaTorah*, “*Rosh Hashanah*” (p. 1428): “{The lion is} made of *chesed* and *gevurah*”; also earlier {in *Or HaTorah*} (p. 1426): “The light of *chesed* in the vessels of *gevurah*... so it is regarding the lion...”; see also *Or HaTorah*, “*Vayakhel*,” p. 2147.

¹³ *Avos* ch. 5, mishnah 20.

¹⁴ In the words of the verse (*Yechezkel* 44:15): “And the *kohanim*... let them stand before Me to offer to Me fat” (to be **brought up** in fire) “and blood” (to be sprinkled upon the altar) — in addition to the original ascent from mundane to holy.

¹⁵ Rashi on *Vayikra* 1:9; *Sifri* and Rashi on *Bamidbar* 28:8.

before Me,” which draws down {spiritual} delight from Above to below — {an expression of} *chesed*.

Moreover, both qualities can be said to be demonstrated in the **same** {initial} act of sacrifice: A sacrifice to Hashem (an elevation) is done such that a portion remains (below) for the owners or the *kohanim* (to consume).

(This applies to even an *olah*,¹⁶ which is sacrificed in its entirety to Hashem, yet its hide is given to the *kohen*.¹⁷ And even a *kohen's minchah*,¹⁸ though also “completely burnt,”¹⁹ {still expresses an act of *chesed*, as it} serves to either induct a novice *kohen* into the priestly service or — when brought as a sacrifice for a *kohen's* pauper-offering,²⁰ is offered instead of the animal *olah* of a rich *kohen* — “to atone for him.”)²¹

{Both qualities of *gevurah* and *chesed* are also represented} in the “satisfaction before Me”²² that is evoked by the sacrifice, which itself evokes a sense of closeness (*chesed*) between Hashem and the one who offered the sacrifice, but is really evoked {not because of some intrinsic interest in, or delight from, animal sacrifices, but} because “I spoke and My will was done,”²³ {which is a response to} the obedience and **self-abnegation** demonstrated {by a person} in the fulfillment of Torah and mitzvos, all of which is associated with *gevurah* — a deliberately inhibited behavior, in accordance with the Torah’s laws.]

And on account of all these {simultaneous embodiments of *chesed* and *gevurah*}, the *Zohar* {should have} **needed** to amalgamate the two descriptions, in order to convey the **confluence** of both *chesed* and *gevurah* in the lion. {So why did it render them in two distinct clauses?}

¹⁶ {Commonly translated as “an elevation offering,” it was consumed completely on the altar.}

¹⁷ *Vayikra* 7:8; see *Meilah* 9a.

¹⁸ {Commonly translated as “a meal offering,” its primary ingredient was grain.}

¹⁹ *Vayikra* 6:15-16.

²⁰ Rashi on *Vayikra* 2:1.

²¹ For not fulfilling a positive commandment and violating a prohibition associated with a remedial positive command {and therefore carries no liability for lashes}; (Rashi on *Vayikra* 1:4 — from *Toras Kohanim*, loc. cit.; Rashi does **not** explain the verse based on, **and deviates** from, *pshat*: “To atone — with that which can atone, i.e., the blood” (as recorded in *Toras Kohanim*). Rather, Rashi explains it according to the **literal** meaning, “It will be considered pleasing — to atone”).

²² {Rashi on *Shemos* 1:9.}

²³ {Rashi on *Shemos* 1:9 — a continuation of the previous quote.}

3.

DOMINANCE

The gist of the explanation is as follows:

Despite the lion simultaneously incorporating **both** modes (*chesed* and *gevurah*), they remain distinct in their state of revelation and expression. In some situations, the expression of *gevurah* is predominant, with *chesed* remaining dormant, while on other occasions, the opposite is true.

The *Zohar*, therefore, describes the lion with two distinct clauses: “a **mighty** lion crouching over its **prey**,” which refers to the level of the lion when the mode of *gevurah* is predominant²⁴ (and *chesed* is in a state of concealment); and thereafter, it speaks of “a **large** lion crouching over its **sacrifice**” when discussing the level of the lion when the mode of *chesed* is predominant (and *gevurah* is concealed).

However, the question remains: what is the reason for the distinction between these two depictions (whether the mode of *gevurah* or that of *chesed* is predominant)?

4.

TWO TASKS FOR URIEL

This can be understood based on the following statements that are expounded in the *Zohar* {about the angel Uriel} immediately before the second description (“a **large** lion crouching over a **sacrifice**”):

a) {Sacrifices are described in the *Zohar* as} being analogous to a king to whom a precious gift was being sent. The king instructed his servant to “go receive the gift that is being brought to me.” Similarly “the Holy One said to Uriel: ‘Go receive the gift that My children offer Me.’”

b) This conveys the concept about which the verse says,²⁵ “*a fire went forth from before Hashem, and consumed upon the altar the olah...* — this refers to

²⁴ {In the original, “בגילוי”; lit., “revealed.”}

²⁵ *Vayikra* 9:24.

Uriel who descends in the form of fire to accept the **gift**"; and {only then} the *Zohar* informs us that "he appeared as a **large** lion crouching over a **sacrifice**."

With this in mind, we may say that there are two conceptualizations of "the lion that consumes the sacrifices" (Uriel):²⁶

- a) {Uriel} as it exists in and of **itself**, in which case, its key attribute is *gevurah* ("a **mighty** lion crouching over its **prey**");
- b) {Uriel} when "**the Holy One** says to Uriel, 'Go and accept My gift'" — when Uriel receives a command (and the power and ability) from Above to accept the sacrifices. This {heightened spiritual level of Uriel} is prompted by the underlying aspect of a person's sacrifice being offered in the spirit of a **gift** (the meaning of which will be explained shortly). Then, the *gevuros*²⁷ are transformed to *chassadim*,²⁸ and the attribute of **chesed** becomes dominant.

The *Zohar* accordingly associates specifically **this** {second} aspect {of Uriel} with the fire that "went forth from before Hashem" — this event of "the fire going forth..." having occurred on the eighth day of the inauguration {of the *Mishkan*}. {Consequently,} the **difference** between the fire being in the form of "a **large** lion..." or that of "a **mighty** lion..." (which comes about through what "the Holy One said to Uriel," as mentioned above) **corresponds** to the **difference** and innovation of the eighth day of inauguration over the previous seven days.

²⁶ Note *Ramaz* on the *Zohar*, loc. cit., who says that {the level of} Uriel was actually loftier than the heavenly fire that burned constantly on the altar.

²⁷ {Pl. of "*gevurah*."}

²⁸ {Pl. of "*chesed*."}

5.

AND ON THE EIGHTH DAY...

Previously, we have discussed at length²⁹ the teaching of our Sages³⁰ that “throughout all seven days of inauguration, when Moses erected the *Mishkan*... the *Shechinah*³¹ did not rest in it”

— Seemingly: Since there were sacrifices (also) being offered throughout the first seven days of inauguration, of which it says, “a pleasing fragrance to Hashem,”³² why did these sacrifices not bring the *Shechinah* to dwell in the *Mishkan*? —

There are several levels of the indwelling of the *Shechinah*,³³ subdivided into two general levels:

a) A revelation of the *Shechinah* that is induced by a person’s *avodah*³⁴ (and is therefore directly proportional to the person’s actions). Consequently, it is therefore limited to the framework of *seder hishtalshelus*,³⁵ constrained by those levels accessible through the *avodah* of a created being. (In the Chassidic vernacular:³⁶ an “arousal from Above that is precipitated by an arousal from below” is inherently limited).

b) The indwelling of the *Shechinah* that comes {solely by way of and in response to the revelation} **from Above**, from a level that is completely beyond *hishtalshelus*, and which is higher than any person’s *avodah* {could reach}. {In the Chassidic vernacular:} (an arousal from Above {that comes} on its own).³⁷

Therein lies the distinction between the first seven days of inauguration and the eighth day:

²⁹ See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 7, p. 237; et al.

³⁰ Rashi on *Shemini* 9:23. *Toras Kohanim* at the beginning of *Shemini* (ch. 14).

³¹ {The Divine Presence.}

³² *Vayikra* 1:9 **and numerous other places.**

³³ See *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” ch. 53

³⁴ {Divine service.}

³⁵ {The continuum of Creation; in kabbalistic terminology, Creation is described as unfolding in a chain-like progression.}

³⁶ See *Likkutei Torah*, “*Shir HaShirim*,” 22b ff.

³⁷ Similar to {what Moshe told the Jews}: “This thousandfold blessing is my personal blessing, but He will bless you {as He spoke to you}”. (*Devarim Rabbah*, ch. 1, par. 13, and similarly, *Targum Yonasan ben Uziel* and *Sifri*, *Devarim* 1:11, quoted by Rashi on *Devarim* 1:11).

The erection of the *Mishkan* {daily} during the first seven days of inauguration was done as a preparatory *avodah* “below” in order to bring about a revelation of the *Shechinah*.³⁸ Indeed, it elicited the revelation of the *Shechinah* within the parameters of *hishtalshelus*. (That is why there were {exactly} **seven** preparatory days of inauguration, corresponding to the seven days of **Creation** — {Creation being the overall result and purpose of} *hishtalshelus*).

On the **eighth day** of inauguration, however, there was a revelation of the *Shechinah* that came from **Above** — “The glory of Hashem appeared... and a fire went forth from before Hashem...” — from the level {represented by the number} “eight”³⁹ which is completely higher than *hishtalshelus*.

6.

WHY DID WE NEED AHARON?

Since the level of “eight” is beyond *hishtalshelus* and (thus beyond) a person’s *avodah*, in order to prevent such revelations being received as “the bread of shame”⁴⁰ {granted to a person without his own effort}, it was ordained that **every** type of Divine revelation either be precipitated or preceded by some *avodah*.⁴¹

This was demonstrated by the incident under discussion. Before the *Shechinah* could come to rest in the *Mishkan* on the eighth day of inauguration, Aharon’s sacrifices and his *avodah* were required as the catalyst (on that eighth day)⁴² for “the *Shechinah* coming to dwell among you.”⁴³

However, since we are talking about a level of the *Shechinah* that is completely **beyond** all the parameters of Creation, it is understood that there is

³⁸ See at length *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 11, p. 182; vol. 12, p. 58; et al.

³⁹ {For explanation of eight connoting a level beyond *hishtalshelus*} see *Kli Yakar* on the beginning of *Shemini*; Responsa of *Rashba*, vol. 1 ch. 9; *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 3, p. 973; *ibid.*, vol. 17, p. 93 ff.

⁴⁰ See *Likkutei Torah*, “*Tzav*,” 7d.

⁴¹ See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 4, p. 1132 ff.

⁴² Besides the previous *avodah* of the seven days of inauguration, which was required to make the *Mishkan* into an “ideal place” where the Holy One could rest (see *Likkutei Torah*, “*Shir HaShirim*,” 22b ff.) as explained at length in *Likkutei Sichos* (vol. 3, p. 973; vol. 17, p. 97 fn. 34); a “smidgen” of *avodah* needed to be performed on the eighth day itself.

⁴³ {Moshe’s words to Aharon as justification for his sacrifices, quoted by} Rashi on *Vayikra* 9:23.

a difference between the substance of the *avodah* that acts as a catalyst for **this** indwelling of the *Shechinah* and the *avodah* that does indeed draw down a G-dly light, yet remains within the parameters of *seder hishtalshelus*.

7.

ATONEMENT FOR AHARON

This will all be understood after prefacing {with the explanation of the significance of the sacrifices offered on the eighth day}. Despite Aharon having already brought “*one bull* — to atone for the incident of the Golden Calf, which was a bull,”⁴⁴ on each of the seven days of inauguration, he was, nonetheless, required to once again bring “a calf for a *chatas*”⁴⁵ on the eighth day, in order “to show that the Holy One had granted him atonement, through this calf, for the incident involving the Golden Calf, which he had made.”⁴⁶

But why did he have to bring another sacrifice (to show) that atonement was granted to him “**through this calf**”?

We may answer that the significance of **this** atonement {of the sacrifices of the eighth day} was not for the sake of his “soul’s atonement,” but rather (as in the words of the Alter Rebbe), for “atonement before Hashem, so that his **Creator could derive satisfaction from him.**”⁴⁷

The sacrifices offered during the seven days of inauguration, which drew an efflux of G-dliness that remained within the parameters of *hishtalshelus* and had direct relevance to Hashem’s creations, is associated more with the “soul atonement” of the **person**, for the purpose of ensuring his wholesomeness.

In contrast, the sacrifices {offered on the eighth day and} which were to bring about the revelation from **Above** (of a G-dly light **beyond hishtalshelus** and creations) resembled a “present,” offered to bring “**satisfaction to his Creator.**” (The underlying principle is along the lines of the teaching of our

⁴⁴ *Shemos* 29:1; Rashi, loc. cit.

⁴⁵ *Vayikra* 9:2.

⁴⁶ Rashi on *Vayikra* 9:2 (from *Tanchuma*, loc. cit.).

⁴⁷ *Tanya*, “*Iggeres HaTeshuvah*,” ch. 2.

Sages⁴⁸ that if not for the satisfaction that the recipient conferred to the giver, the giver would not have conferred the **gift**.)

[This also explains the precise wording, “to **show** that the Holy One had granted him atonement...,” unlike the wording used to describe {the sacrifices of} the seven days of inauguration, “**to atone**...” {This focus on “demonstrating” rather than “atonement” aligns} with the sacrifices offered on the eighth day being about expressing their **preciousness** (that {Aharon was now} “acceptable and beloved before Him”),³¹ which demonstrates⁴⁹ and **reveals** that “the Holy One granted him atonement.”]

8.

DIFFERENTIATION

In light of all the above, we can understand why the *Zohar* used two distinct clauses to depict the two qualities of the lion:

The Heavenly fire, in the form of a lion that was a product of the general service of sacrifices, derived from a level within *seder hishtalshelus*, which is a limited “light.” Therefore, it primarily exemplified the trait of *gevurah* and *tzimtzum*⁵⁰ (“a **mighty** lion crouching over its **prey**”).

But insofar as sacrifices were a **gift**⁵¹ to Hashem (to bring “satisfaction to his Creator”), a divine efflux from a level beyond *hishtalshelus* was elicited — “**the Holy One speaks** to Uriel...” (It resembled the fire that “went forth from before Hashem” on the eighth day of inauguration.)

Then, the *gevuros* were transformed into *chassadim* and appeared “as a **large** lion crouching over a **sacrifice**” — a revelation of *chesed* (specifically).

— Based on talks delivered on Shabbos *parshas Tzav*, 5733 (1973) and 5740 (1980)

⁴⁸ Thus quoted extensively (*Hemshech* 5666, p. 131; et al.); examine *Megillah* 26b; *Gittin* 50b; *Bava Metzia* 16a; *Bava Basra* 156a.

⁴⁹ An expression of “love” (cf. Rashi on *Bereishis* 18:19).

⁵⁰ {Lit. “contraction”; the process of self-contraction and self-limitation of the Divine light, which makes possible the concept of limited, worldly existence.}

⁵¹ Although the Gemara (*Zevachim* 7b) only offers the parable of a gift with respect to an *olah*, conceivably, all sacrifices are also compared to a gift, as explained in *Tanya*, “*Iggeres HaTeshuvah*,” ch. 3 (92a, end). However, the primary function of an *olah* is to serve as a gift, whereas the primary function of an *chatas* is to serve as an atonement.