

Rabbi's Article II

The Lion of Kindness

Rabbi Sholom DovBer of Lubavitch (-[Link](#)) called Rabbi Levi Yitzchok (-[Link](#)), father of the Rebbe, "My Kabbalist." When Rebbetzin Chana (-[Link](#)), the Rebbe's mother left Russia, she brought Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's writing on the Zohar to her son. The Rebbe, at every Shabbat *farbrenghehn* would expand upon one of these teachings of his father. Here is one such printed *Edited Talk*, based on two *Talks* of the Rebbe, in 1973 and in 1980.

The Talmud (-Yoma 21b) teaches us that the fire upon the altar, "*Pounced like a lion.*" The Zohar (-Vol III, 32b), defines this fire first as, "*It looked as a strong lion pouncing upon its prey,*" and then, "*Looks like a big lion pouncing upon its offering.*" Rabbi Levi Yitzchok expounds (-Likkutei Levi Yitzchok on the Zohar, Page 213) upon the difference between the Zohar's two descriptions, explaining that the *Face of the Lion* upon the *Supernal Chariot* (-[Link](#); Ezekiel, Chapter 1), constitutes of two antithetical concepts: (i) *Kindness (Love)*, for the *Face of the Lion* is on the *Right Side* (-Sotah 47a: "*The Right brings close*"), and (ii) *Strength (Fear)*, for the numerical value of *Aryeh* (אריה - *Lion*) and *Gevurah* (גבורה - *Strength*) are equal (216). With this, the different descriptions of the Zohar are clear: (i) *strong* and *its prey*, speak of the lion's *Strength* dimension. (ii) *big* (the verse refers to the attribute of *Kindness* as *Big*) and *offering* (the Hebrew word for *Offering* is *Korbon*, which is *Korov*, to *bring close*, which is the attribute of *Kindness*), speak of the lion's *Kindness* dimension.

Question: The emphasis of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok is that the *Face of the Lion* encompasses *both* (*Kindness* and *Strictness*), --albeit that they are in nature antithetical--, as *one* (such as the mystical concept of, "*Light of Strength in a Vessel of Kindness*"), hence, why does the Zohar specifically divide the descriptions into two *separate* ones, rather than saying, "*As a big and strong lion pouncing upon its offering and prey*"? Especially, that the entire mystical concept of an offering is the unification of *Kindness* and *Strength*, in which (i) the offering is *Brought Up* (from *Below to Above*; *Elevation through Refinement*): *Strength*, which, (ii) solicits from *Above* a *downward* flow of, "*Satisfaction to Me*": *Kindness*! Even more so, *each* offering contains the inclusivity of *Kindness* and *Strictness*, elevating our possession to G-d (*Strictness*), and our receiving a portion and/or atonement (*Kindness*).

Answer: While both, *Kindness* and *Strictness*, inclusively exist within every offering, nevertheless, in different offerings, different dimensions are in a state of revelation. Therefore, the Zohar is focusing on the different experiences of an offering, in whether the, "*strong* and *its prey*," *Strength* dimension is being revealed, or whether the, "*big* and *offering*," *Kindness* dimension is being revealed. However, what is it that causes which dimension within an offering is to be revealed?

The Zohar prefaces its description of, "*As a big lion pouncing upon its offering,*" with:

- (i) The parable of a king that was sent a gift which found favor in his eyes, and he said to his servant, "*Go and take this gift that they brought to me.*" The Zohar than gives the morale, "*The Holy Blessed One says to (Angel) Uriel* (-[Link](#)), '*Go take the gift that My sons offer to Me.*'"
- (ii) "*Upon this the verse states* (-Leviticus 9:24), '*And fire went forth from before the L-rd and consumed the burnt offering, this is Uriel who descends in the image of a fire... to receive the gift.*'"

Meaning, that there are two fashions in how *Uriel*, the *Lion*, eats an offering:

- (i) When *Uriel*, *of his own*, is upon the altar consuming an offering, it is an experience of *Strength Revelation*, "*As a strong lion pouncing upon its prey.*"
- (ii) When, "*The Holy Blessed One says to (Angel) Uriel* (-[Link](#)), '*Go take the gift that My sons offer to Me,*'" it is an experience of *Kindness Revelation*, "*As a big lion pouncing upon its offering.*" For here, it is the, "*Holy Blessed One*," empowering *Uriel* to, "*take the gift*." And this is why the Zohar connects *this* with the verse, "*And fire went forth from before the L-rd and consumed the burnt offering,*" which is talking about the, "*And it was on the eighth day,*" being that this change (from *Strictness* to *Kindness*) in how *Uriel* eats the offering is in par with the change that takes place on the *Eighth Day*, from the previous *Seven Days*, of the inauguration of the *Tabernacle*.

The First Seven Days: Our sages teach us (-Rashi, *ibid*, verse 23), "*The Shechinah* (Divine Presence) *did not rest in it* (the *Tabernacle*)." However, in these seven days there were the offerings, which brought about the, "*Satisfaction to Me*"?! Only that, on the *Seven Days*, there was only the revelation of the *Shechinah* in response to the *work of mankind*. And the *work of mankind* can only reach the *Shechinah* level found within the *Finite Order of Evolution* to creation.

The Eight Day: There was the, "*And fire went forth from before the L-rd,*" above and beyond the reach of the *service of mankind*!

Nevertheless, In G-d's infinite compassion upon us, that nothing be experienced as, "*Bread of Shame*," meaning unearned through *our* service to G-d, even the *supra-natural* revelation of the *Eighth Day* came about through *mankind's service* of Aharon bringing offerings. Only that for *this* dimension, the service had to be performed on a *superior* level. We find that even though on the *Seven Days*, Aharon had to bring, "*One bull*," to atone for the sin of the *Golden Calf*, nevertheless, on the *Eighth Day*, Aharon *again* had to bring this atonement. Why?! On the *Seven Days*, Aharon brought it to atone for *his soul*. However, on the *Eighth Day*, it was for (-Igeret HaTeshuvah, Chapter 2), "*His restoration before G-d so that he will bring his Creator gratification*"! It is the selflessness of *this* form of service, which is but to, "*bring his Creator gratification*," that allows for a *supra-natural Shechinah Revelation*. Hence, the Zohar separates the two description, in which, (i) the natural revelations of the offerings is that of, "*a strong lion pouncing upon its prey.*" (ii) However, when our service is that of, "*a gift*" ("*bring his Creator gratification*"), then *Strictness* is transformed into *Kindness*, and the offering revelation becomes one of, "*As a big lion pouncing upon its offering.*"