

Erev Shabbos Kodesh Parshas Vayeishev 5770

D'ei Chochmah L'nafshechah

“Let your soul know wisdom”

Parshas Vayeishev

From the discourses of Moreinu v'Rabeinu
the Gaon and Tzaddik Shlit'a

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***Shalosh Seudos*¹ of Parshas Vayeishev 5768**

”וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֶהָב אֶת יוֹסֵף מִכָּל-בָּנָיו, כִּי בֶן-זְקִנִים הוּא לוֹ; וַעֲשָׂה לוֹ כְּתוֹנֶת פָּסִים.”

“Now Yisrael loved Yosef more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a coat of many colors [*pasim*].”²

Rashi explains: “*Pasim*’—This is a garment of fine wool,³ woven of *techeiles*-blue and *karpas*-green thread, like that described in the incident of Tamar and Amnon. But the Midrash teaches that the word פסיים alludes to Yosef’s troubles: פ signifies פוטifar / Potifar; ס stands for סוחרים / merchants; י and מ refer to ישמעאל / Yishmael and the מדינים / Midianites [who sold and transferred him down to Egypt].”⁴

The Secret of Yosef’s Coat

Yosef represents the aspect of *Yesod* / Foundation. [We see his strength from the fact that he maintained his purity in Egypt, a place pervaded by depravity, and from his being the source of sustenance for the masses. Both

¹ The lesson was delivered at the third meal of Shabbos.

² *Bereishis* 37:3

³ *Shabbos* 10b

⁴ *Bereishis Rabbah* 84:8

purity and supplying the needs of others express *Yesod*.]⁵ His coat embodies *Malchus* / Kingship, which is called *Ateres HaYesod*, the “crown of *Yesod*.” [The Ramchal explains that when someone is careful with personal purity this draws down a bounty of blessing which is immediately given to *Malchus*; *Malchus* is therefore the crown of *Yesod*. In simple terms this means that when a person perfects the aspect of *Yesod*, he correspondingly reveals Hashem’s Kingship and presence.] The *Ateres HaYesod* is associated with the multicolored rainbow.

This is also the deeper meaning of Yosef’s dream of the sun and moon bowing to him. The sun represents *Tiferes* and the moon alludes to *Malchus*. Yosef [*Yesod*] stands between them [in the vertical plane on the array of the *sefiros*] and draws down spiritual abundance from *Tiferes* to *Malchus*. [They bowed to him because *Yesod* is the culmination and completion of both aspects. Without *Yesod* serving as a downward channel, *Tiferes* cannot affect the world productively and the *Shechinah* / *Malchus* is hidden.]

Moshiach ben Dovid rectifies the attribute of *Netzach* / Victory, as Dovid HaMelech said: “בְּיַמֶּיךָ נִצְחָה”—“Bliss in Your right hand, forever victorious.”⁶ [Regarding Dovid’s future everlasting rule, Shmuel HaNavi said, “And also the *netzach* (Eternal One) of Yisrael will not be false.”⁷ And it is the task of Moshiach ben Yosef, the offspring of Rachel, to repair the damage to *Hod* / Splendor.⁸ [On a simple level this means redirecting the natural tendency

⁵ See *Tomer Devorah* end of chapter 8 and *Adir BaMarom*, p. 372-374

⁶ *Tehillim* 16:11

⁷ *Shmuel* I:15:29

⁸ See *Kehilas Yaakov, Erech Moshiach ben Dovid u'Moshiach ben Yosef*

to strive for victory (*Netzach*) toward attaining spiritual goals, and to praise (*Hod*) only that which is truly worthy.]

When the *Shechinah* is rectified in the way of Yehudah and Moshiach ben Dovid, her stature extends from the “chest of *Ze'ir Anpin*” and higher in an aspect of *Leah*, since the person merits to serve Hashem with great trust that he will be victorious in holy matters. But when the *Shechinah* is in an aspect of *Rachel*, the mother of Moshiach ben Yosef, she is [below “the chest of *Ze'ir Anpin*”] in an aspect of the “crown of *Yesod*” [which is below the area of *Tiferes*] and the *avodah* is *dveikus*. This *dveikus* is achieved by contemplating the [various spiritual meanings of different] colors and spiritual illumination [of light itself]. In this manner, *Hod* is also rectified.

Yosef HaTzaddik, the “crown of *Yesod*,” received the coat of many colors because he revealed the many different shades of *dveikus* through which one can attain unity with Hashem. On Chanukah we reveal the light of Moshiach ben Yosef through the fiery colors generated by the Chanukah candles. This is how we rectify the aspect of *Hod*. [Chanukah was established as “days of *hoda'ah*, thanksgiving and praise.”⁹]

But Dovid stems from Yehudah who reveals *dveikus* in the *Atzmus*, in Hashem's essence itself, through the power of *bitachon* [rather than contemplation]. This is the hidden meaning of the statement of the *Zohar*: “*Ze'ir Anpin* hangs from and is one with *Atikah*.”¹⁰ This is a coded message: that the *Netzach* level within *Ze'ir Anpin* is connected with and ascends all the way to

⁹ *Likutei Moharan* II:2

¹⁰ *Zohar* III:292a

Arich. And this provides a much deeper understanding of the verse, “Bliss in Your right hand, forever victorious.”¹¹ Moshiach ben Dovid’s soul stems from the *No’am HaElyon*, the “supernal bliss” that is related to *Binah* and which is sourced in *Arich Anpin*. It is through this level that *Netzach* is rectified. [This repair extends all the way to the heights of *Atikah* since *Arich Anpin* is the *Malchus* level within *Atik*.]

The Trust and Strength of Yehudah

Yosef HaTzaddik is the conduit of all Divine illumination, since he is the embodiment of the multicolored rainbow that provides the “colors” that shine in *Hod*. The verse states: “בְּזֵאת גְּבֹא אֶהְרֶן אֶל-הַקֹּדֶשׁ” — “With *this* [literally “her”] will Aharon come to the sanctuary.”¹² The word *זאת* alludes to *Malchus* [the feminine].¹³ In this context the verse means that with *Malchus*, which is the *Ateres HaYesod*, Aharon who expresses *Hod* [as we see from his position among the seven shepherds, as well as his function as supervisor over the splendor of the *Beis HaMikdash*] will enter into *kodesh*, which alludes to *Chochmah*. [“Holy” always refers to wisdom.] This alludes to Yosef’s path of achieving *dveikus* through the contemplation of Hashem’s light.

This is why we find that immediately after Yehudah sold Yosef, “Yehudah descended from his brothers.”¹⁴ We see that when he drove Yosef away, he fell from his original level and lost touch with the Infinite Light that could only be accessed through Yosef’s attribute. Nevertheless, he did not lose

¹¹ *Tehillim* 16:11

¹² *Vayikra* 16:3

¹³ *Megaleh Amukos, Parshas Vayeishev*

¹⁴ *Bereishis* 38:1

heart. Instead, he filled himself with *bitachon* and strove for *dveikus* through another path—through connection with Hashem's essence, rather than His light. This is how he drew the light of Moshiach down into the world.

This applies to all Jews at all times. When one's spiritual "coat of many colors" is stripped from him and "dipped in blood," he feels as though he has lost touch with Hashem because of mortal failure. Even though he has lost his contact with the "light," he must nevertheless steel himself with intense *bitachon*. Then he can reach a level that transcends all *Da'as*—that transcends reason itself. In this manner he will have accessed the *sefirah* of *Netzach* and completely rectified the sin [since his inadvertent stumbling caused him to redouble his efforts to connect to Hashem]. Like Yehudah, he will not give a thought to his descent since all of his efforts will be redirected toward strengthening his *bitachon*, until he reaches a level where he will not let go of his trust in Hashem for even a moment. He will understand that everything that happens is really from the Creator, just as Yehudah did when he declared, "She is more righteous than me."¹⁵ [In our context, Yehudah was really saying, "She is righteous; this happened because of me, to rectify me."] Everything that happens is directly sent from the Creator. One will then understand in retrospect that every action was guided from Hashem. Through strengthening his *bitachon* with self-sacrifice despite feeling that he is in the dark, he will ascend to the aspect of *Arich* that is united with *Atik*. This draws down the light of Yosef in an aspect of *yibum*.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 38:26

Spiritual Abundance from the *Ein Sof*

At the root, the soul of Yosef / *Yesod* which draws down the bounty of Hashem, and that of Dovid which is the aspect of *Malchus*, are really one. While the light of *Ein Sof* is symbolized by the *yud* of the name Yosef, the *Malchus* that is contained in the *Ohr Ein Sof* is represented by the *dalet* of the name Dovid. At such a high level, however, the aspect of *Malchus* is “found and not found” [winks in and out of individuated existence] since it is an absolute unity with the light of *Ein Sof*. This state is expressed by the Midrashic statement regarding the earliest phase of creation: “He and His name were One.”¹⁶ This is why every bit of Divine abundance that reaches all the worlds must include both components: both the light of the Primal Cause and the self-sacrifice and self-nullification that is drawn down from the supernal *Malchus* which is subsumed in the *Ohr Ein Sof*.

We can understand this from the Baal Shem Tov as well. He teaches that the name Dovid signifies the path that Hashem’s Divine influence takes to reach His people through the *Kav Ein Sof*. [When Hashem created the universe, He first “cleared a space” for the worlds and then injected a ray of the light of *Ein Sof* into this seemingly empty space. This line is the channel through which spiritual bounty descends.] The first *dalet* alludes to the *Malchus* which is imbedded in the light of *Ein Sof*, the *vav* alludes to the *kav*-channel, and the final *dalet* alludes to the collective soul of the Jewish people [or *Shechinah* / *Knesses Yisrael*] receiving the bounty.

¹⁶ *Pirkei D’Rabbi Eliezer*, Chapter 3. To understand this concept better see *Zohar in Midrash Hanelam, Parshas Bereishis, Ma’amar Beriyas Ha’Olam*.

This is why every true *tzaddik* who ever accessed the light of Hashem acts with great self-sacrifice to serve Him, just like “My servant Moshe.”¹⁷ Since the *tzaddik* draws down the light from the *Ohr Ein Sof* through the *Malchus* that is subsumed within it, the *tzaddik* too must be subsumed in Hashem through self-sacrifice. Although the light of *Ein Sof* is an *Ohr Pashut*, a pure and undivided light that transcends all divisive levels, nevertheless there is an aspect of *Malchus* that is absolutely bound up in the *Ohr Ein Sof*.

“Until Shiloh Arrives”

The *Zohar* writes that the extra *yud* in the verse, “עַד כִּי-גֵבֵא שִׁילֹה” —“until Shiloh [a name of Moshiach] arrives”—alludes to Moshe.¹⁸ Our redemption depends on drawing the light of *Ein Sof*, alluded to by the letter *yud*, into the world of *Asiyah* / Action until we merit to see the redeemer with our own eyes. When that finally happens, everyone will experience the bliss of *dveikus* and love of Hashem. But this is only possible if we all serve Hashem as one unit with great self-sacrifice, working together to draw down the *Malchus* that is one with the *Ohr Ein Sof*.

Like “My servant Moshe,” we must draw down the light of *Chochmah* and unity with Hashem. In this manner, the aspects of Yosef and Yehudah are joined as one. “When the kings join as one we will be redeemed *immediately* [מיד].” The word מיד is an acronym of משה, יוסף, דוד—Moshe, Yosef, and Dovid.

¹⁷ *Bamidbar* 12:4

¹⁸ *Bereishis* 49:10; *Zohar, Parshas Mishpatim*; *Ibid.*, I:25b

Chanukah: Rectifying *Netzach* and *Hod*

Unity among the levels of Yosef and Dovid is also paralleled by unity among *Atik* and *Arich*. *Atik* is the aspect of Yosef since it is the concept of intense spiritual delight in the oneness and pervasive reality of Hashem. *Arich* alludes to the level of Dovid, which is the absolute nullification of self to Hashem. Although they are one at their root, as the light descends it separates into two: the aspect of Yosef is accessed through *Chochmah* and the aspect of Yosef through the level of *Binah*. As it goes lower, Yosef forms *Ze'ir Anpin*, and Dovid forms *Malchus*. But they also break up into *Netzach* and *Hod*, respectively.

Netzach and *Hod* parallel the two legs on which the entire body stands and which both complete each other [since both are necessary for equilibrium]. The light of redemption can only shine when both are joined together as one. We must access the light of Moshiach ben Yosef which shines during Chanukah and feel the bliss of connection to Hashem by seeing the holy glow of the *Shechinah* that inhabits the lights of Chanukah. At the same time, we must also strengthen ourselves like, “Yehudah, the lion’s whelp,” through activating the courageous *bitachon* that is his hallmark. In this way we will be victorious in emulating the self-sacrifice of Yehudah [who admitted publicly that Tamar was more righteous than him].

Since it is impossible for us to really repair one of these aspects without correcting its counterpart, we must always work to rectify both of them. This is why on Chanukah, when we praise and thank Hashem in an aspect of *Hod*, we must also work on healing the flaw within *Netzach*. We must add to our

connection to Hashem each night by learning more, “adding as we go,” in the manner of the development of the candles according to Beis Hillel. Through this dual rectification we will merit to fulfill the verse, “עָרַכְתִּי נֵר לְמִשְׁיַחִי” — “I have set up a light for My anointed one.”¹⁹

Twelve Tribes and Ten Sefiros

The *Zohar* explains that the twelve tribes correspond to the ten *sefiros*. Reuven corresponds to *Chessed*; Shimon to *Gevurah*; Levi to *Tiferes*; Yehudah to *Leah* [a *partzuf* formation that branches off above the level of *Tiferes*]. Both *Netzach* / Victory and *Hod* / Splendor subdivide into three parts. [This is symbolized by the three joints of each leg.²⁰] Yissachar represents the upper aspect of *Netzach*, Gad the middle, and Asher the lowest. Zevulun corresponds to the upper level of *Hod*, Dan corresponds to the middle, and Naftali the lowest.²¹

The tribes which correlate to *Netzach* form the acronym א"ג, while those for *Hod* form ג"ד. This teaches that Moshiach ben Dovid is revealed through the thirteen attributes of mercy within *Arich*. The number thirteen is expressed by the ג"י, and א signifies the *alef* of *Atikah*. The *alef* of Asher alludes to the aspect of *Atikah*, since the Arizal teaches that the verse, “מֶאֱשֶׁר שֶׁמֶנֶה לְחֶמֶוֹ” — “The bread of Asher shall be fat”²² — refers to both aspects. The numerical value of the word לחם [30+8+40=78] is the same as מזלי"א [40+7+30+1=78]. The word

¹⁹ *Tehillim* 132:17

²⁰ *Mishnas Chassidim, Maariv, Atah Kadosh*

²¹ *Zohar, Mishpatim* 104a

²² *Bereishis* 49:20

mazla parallels the thirteen attributes within *Arich*. The sages taught that, “Children, life, and livelihood depend on מזל.”²³ [*Mazla* is the “downward flowing” influence of the thirteen attributes in this world.] The word Mishnah—literally, learning through repetition or “doubling”—also alludes to the doubled aspect of *Atik* that includes *Arich Anpin*.

Now we understand why *Ze'ir Anpin*, which corresponds to *Netzach*, depends on and is united with *Atik*. It is through the line of *Binah* to *Arich Anpin*, its source that is joined with *Atik*.

The mission of Moshiach ben Yosef is to reveal the *yichud* of Hashem in the entire world. This is alluded to by the letters ך׳דג, which form the root of דגון, a sin by design. The moment one truly admits the reality of Hashem into his life he will rectify all sin. We see this more clearly from the Talmudic teaching that at the festival of drawing the water during Sukkos everyone would declare, “Fortunate is he who never sinned...” This was to remind those who had sinned that if they repent out of love for Hashem, it will be as though their sins never were. In this manner, they too can be just like the *tzaddikim* who never sinned in the first place.

Clarifying the *Halachah*

The verse states “וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת-יְהוּדָה שְׁלַח לְפָנָיו אֶת-יְהוּדָה לְפָנָיו” —“And he sent Yehudah before him to Yosef, to show the way...”²⁴ Rashi cites a Midrashic teaching, that Yehudah was sent ahead to establish a yeshiva from which

²³ *Moed Katan* 28a; *Sefer Halikutim, Parshas Toldos*

²⁴ *Bereishis* 46:28

halachic direction would emerge. From here we see that Yehudah's main work was to learn the oral Torah and clarify the *halachah*.

Regarding his descendant Dovid we find that, "Hashem is with him."²⁵ This conveys that the *halachah* always followed his opinion.²⁶ [The aspect of ruling like one's opinion alludes to *Netzach* and *Malchus* since he is victorious in *halachah* and in this manner he can declare Hashem's kingship through his actions.]

We now understand why Yissachar, the first [and most essential element] of *Netzach* and the paradigm of accepting the yoke of Torah like a beast of burden, is rectified by Yehudah, since Yehudah rectifies *Netzach*.²⁷ Yosef, by contrast, represents cleaving to the light of uniting with Hashem which is the task of Zevulun, the first segment of *Hod*. Through accessing these levels, one reveals the laughter of Naftali, the third segment of *Hod*.²⁸ "Naftali is of a contented will."²⁹ This indicates that Naftali embodies a deep-seated satisfaction and joy. Life is a deeply joyous experience for someone who has attained the aspect of Naftali since he perceives that the only reality is the Creator. Although the rectification of *Netzach* and *Hod* are really one, when they descend into this world they are separated. It was this parting of ways that caused the sale of Yosef and the descent of Yehudah, because he was spiritually distanced from the aspect of Yosef.

²⁵ *Shmuel* I:16:18

²⁶ *Sanhedrin* 93b

²⁷ *Bereishis* 49:14-15, and Rashi there

²⁸ Ravad on *Sefer Yetzirah* 5:1

²⁹ *Devarim* 33:23

Since Yehudah only followed the path of *Netzach* he did not grasp the greatness of Yosef. He did not understand that Yosef's multicolored coat alludes to the many hues of the *Shechinah*, and so he took a spiritual fall that culminated in the sale of Yosef. But afterward Yehudah strengthened himself in the aspect of *Netzach* and the *avodah* of *bitachon* to such an extent that he was lifted up to *Atikah*. Once he climbed high enough he was reunited with Yosef, since at their root *Netzach* and *Hod* are one. But this was only a result of his never letting go of Hashem no matter what befell him.

The Royal Butler and the Royal Baker

Yosef, for his part, also failed to grasp the importance of the *avodah* of Yehudah. He thought that the main thing was to follow the path of Zevulun, of *Chochmah*, through which one climbs in *dveikus* from one level to the next. When one only follows the path of *dveikus* to Hashem because everything is *Elokus*, and if he lacks the self-sacrifice and toil of Yehudah, he is in great danger. This is the deeper meaning of the foretold death of Moshach ben Yosef. [The Arizal says that we should pray for his survival every time we say, "וכסא" "מהרה לתוכה תכני" during *Shemonah Esrei*.] This is why his brothers, "plotted against him, to cause his death."³⁰ After miraculously surviving being hurled into a pit of snakes and scorpions, he went on to endure very difficult challenges in his master's house. [He even received a death sentence that was commuted to imprisonment.³¹] It was this danger to which the ominous dreams of the royal butler and the royal baker referred.

³⁰ *Bereishis* 37:18

³¹ *Midrash* brought in the *Shelah Hakadosh*

The Arizal reveals that the butler alludes to *Chochmah d'katnus* while the baker is *Binah d'katnus*.³² [These aspects constrict true *Chochmah* and *Binah*. The baker represents the *Veshet* or esophagus, while the butler represents the trachea.³³ In simple terms this means that overeating and indulging in forbidden speech prevent one from serving Hashem with self-sacrifice and *dveikus*.] This is why the baker dreamed he would be hanged in three days, since *Binah* in holiness means self-sacrifice. The three days symbolize the three “joints” of *Netzach*.

To the butler who symbolizes *Chochmah*, Yosef's own aspect, Yosef foretold that in three days, corresponding to the three “joints” of *Hod*, he will be reinstated in his master's service. The deeper meaning of this is that even if one only goes in the way of *Chochmah* and stumbles and falls, if he strengthens himself and continues to serve the King without diminishing his service, he will be redeemed. But this is the aspect of Yehudah, which is a deep feeling of *bitachon* that whatever happened is from Hashem, since in truth there can never really be a barrier between any Jew and Hashem.

When Yosef heard this dream he began to rectify the separation between *Netzach* and *Hod* and was immediately lifted up to his source in *Atik*. This is the meaning of the verse, “And the butler did not remember Yosef, and he forgot him.”³⁴ This means that Yosef reached not only the lower aspects of *Atik*, but the three upper “heads” of *Atik*. [These are the three “mentalities” of *Atik*.] The highest level of these mentalities is the *Reisha d'lo Isyadah*, the “Head that Is

³² *Sha'ar Hapesukim, Parshas Vayeshev*

³³ *Likutei Torah, Parshas Vayeshev*

³⁴ *Bereishis* 40:23

Not Known,” symbolized by the forgetfulness of the royal butler. [Yosef was able to take even this forgetfulness in stride and accept that it happened to him for reasons that he could not fathom. Instead, he redoubled his efforts to strengthen his *emunah* and *bitachon* and continue to struggle on as if he had not had a disappointment.] At this level, the aspect of Yehudah and Yosef are an absolute unity and Yosef attained his completion: זָבוּלוֹן, זָן, נִפְתָּלִי, which spell *zadon*. This alludes to the level of repentance out of love where even sins by design are transformed into merits. This can be attained through the threefold process alluded to in the names, Zevulun, Dan, Naftali. Zevulun is an aspect of *Chochmah*. Through this *Chochmah* one is able to rectify *mishpat*, holy judgment. [This quality allows a person engaged in business, a Zevulun, to determine exactly how to act in any situation in accordance with Hashem’s will.] Through this judgment, signified by Dan [as in דָּן], one accesses the aspect of Naftali, the laughter which will abound in the ultimate future through which one transforms sins into merits.

When Yosef joined together with Yehudah, he attained the deep trust in Hashem that touches all the way up to the thirteen attributes of mercy. Through this light, one attains the level of Yissachar, who delved into Torah with his entire being. [The thirteen principles of Rabbi Yishmael through the Torah is expounded correspond to the thirteen attributes of mercy.] One then moves on to גָּ, an acronym for *Gomel Dalim*, “He Gives to the Poor,” which drives repentance because it is the extension of Hashem’s kindness to offer succor to the fallen. Subsequently, one accesses the *alef* of Asher which alludes to *Atikah*, as explained earlier.

The Rectification of Yaakov and Yosef

The main task of Chanukah is to rectify the aspects of Yaakov and Yosef. **י-עקב**, *yud* (10) and *ekev*, the heel. The name Yaakov alludes to the ten drops that dripped down Yosef's heel.³⁵ [The Arizal explains that although there was no physical blemish of any kind when Yosef was tempted by the wife of Potifar, spiritually ten "drops" emerged from the ten fingers of Yosef's hands and indicated a subtle degree of defilement.] We fix these "drops" through rectifying *Netzach* and *Hod* [which are the legs where "the heels" begin]. We can do this by contemplating the lights of Chanukah and recognizing that the entire expanse of creation is exclusively a reflection of the light of Hashem. We must also learn the thirty-six tractates of *Shas*, since each one opens the gates to a different spiritual illumination. [There are a total of thirty-six candles lit on Chanukah, exclusive of the eight *shamashim*.] We must also celebrate Chanukah with an abundance of joy and praise and thanksgiving to Hashem. But we must also rectify *Netzach*, since without *Netzach* we cannot completely rectify *Hod*. The *avodah* of *Netzach* on Chanukah is to learn an abundance of Torah, and give as much *tzedakah* as possible, in an aspect of Yissachar [Torah] and Gad [*gomel dalim*]. We must also strengthen our *bitachon* that the thirteen attributes of mercy are drawn down during Chanukah.

Our every action during these days must be performed with joy and good heartedness, as we feel the pleasure of connection with Hashem in an aspect of Asher, [which also means fortunate, and whose portion flows with the olive oil of the menorah]. We must be very wary not to act out of depression or sadness,

³⁵ *Sefer Halikutim, Parshas Vayeishev*

since this flips the letters of הוד to דוה, from splendor to suffering, as we find in the verse, "כָּל-הַיּוֹם דָּוָה"—“All the day is pain.”³⁶ Instead we must strengthen ourselves in the *avodah* of *teshuvah* and *bitachon*. We must draw down the light of the Chashmonaim, whose every victory was due to their inexhaustible *bitachon* in Hashem. It was their trust in Hashem that empowered them to act with courage and self-sacrifice. Regarding their victories, our sages teach that although they were not worthy of such miracles, they won in the merit of their *bitachon* that Hashem would save them from their enemies.

On *Zos Chanukah*, the final day of the holiday, we join the *Mazal* of *Notzer* and the *Mazal* of *Nakeh* [two of the thirteen attributes] which are the sources of *Chochmah* and *Binah*. This is actually the deeper meaning of the teaching from the *Zohar*: “Then the trees of the forest will sing...”³⁷ The word “then” [אז] has a numerical value of eight and refers to the eight days of Chanukah. The *Zohar* explains that, on the eighth day of Chanukah, Yosef and Dovid, both kings in their own right, become “one tree” [as we see in the *haftarah* of Shabbos Chanukah] and the light of redemption is aroused. “Then [אז] our mouths will be filled with laughter.”³⁸

Pharaoh's Birthday

The verse states: וַיַּעַשׂ מִשְׁתֶּה, לְכָל- יוֹם הַלֵּלֶת אֶת-פַּרְעֹה, וַיִּהְיֶה בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי, יוֹם הַלֵּלֶת אֶת-רֹאשׁ שֵׁר הָאֲפִים--בְּתוֹךְ עַבְדָּיו. "And it was עַבְדָּיו; וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת-רֹאשׁ שֵׁר הַמַּשְׂקִים, וַאֲת-רֹאשׁ שֵׁר הָאֲפִים--בְּתוֹךְ עַבְדָּיו." on the third day, on Pharaoh's birthday, and he made a feast for all of his

³⁶ *Eichah* 1:13

³⁷ *Divrei HaYamim* I:16:32

³⁸ *Tehillim* 126:2

servants. And he uplifted the head of the butler and the head of the baker among all his servants.”³⁹ This verse is really speaking of each and every one of us. It is only natural for a person to make a deep *cheshbon hanefesh* on his birthday. He wonders: how is he filling his days? Most often he notices that he is squandering his days chasing after nonsense. He feels like a destitute person who has nothing to his name. One would expect that if this was truly the case, it is only appropriate for him to be saddened and filled with despair.

But the aspect of Pharaoh in holiness, which the Arizal reveals is the world of *Binah*, does no such thing.⁴⁰ Instead he makes a “feast for all of his servants.” This means that even after taking a very disappointing spiritual inventory one must still be joyous because of his great *bitachon* in Hashem. This is alluded to in the elevation of the royal butler whose source is holy *Chochmah*.⁴¹ And the source of *Chochmah* is *Atikah*, which in our context alludes to forgetting what is past. In this manner one can once again reveal the joy and bliss in feeling Hashem’s presence in the here and now and join *Netzach* and *Hod* as one.

Yosef and the Mirror

Yosef’s deliverance began when he saw his father’s reflection. This alludes to the deep *emunah* that Yaakov reveals: “*Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad.*” This means that the self-sacrifice through which Yosef prevailed was in the merit of his father. It was through his father that he

³⁹ *Bereishis* 40:20

⁴⁰ *Sefer Halikutim, Parshas Vayeishev*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

accessed the *Malchus* embedded in the light of *Ein Sof*. To rectify the sin of Yosef we must access this level which is the deep *emunah* that Elisha begged of his master Eliyahu: “And let it be double of your spirit...”⁴² Eliyahu is associated with the 52-Name, since his name אליהו has a numerical value of exactly 52. In addition, he embodied the double *emunah* through which one can tread the path of Yosef and Dovid together. Yosef alludes to unifying the Creator, while Dovid is self-sacrifice. This is alluded to in *Shema* because it is at the moment of its recitation that we accept the oneness of Hashem with absolute self-sacrifice.

May Hashem help us strengthen ourselves with the light of *emunah* and *yichud* during these special days. May we light the menorah and contemplate the absolute oneness of the world with Hashem and be filled with joy and *bitachon* that He will bring us to all the rectifications we require. May we merit to see the redeemer with our own eyes, speedily in our days. Amen!

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⁴² *Melachim* II:2:9