

חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

Ohev Yisrael

APTA · OHEV YISRAEL, BERESHIT

Chavah's name is spelled with a vav rather than a yud to teach that after sinning and doing teshuvah (repentance), she and Adam became attached not merely to the Torah's central life-force (the level of tzaddikim, symbolized by the dot in the middle of the letter) but to the supernal world of primordial Divine will itself — the root of all chiyus (vitality) — a level higher than that of the tzaddik, since "the place where ba'alei teshuvah (those who have repented) stand, complete tzaddikim cannot stand." Thus "Chavah, mother of all life" means that through sin and subsequent teshuvah, she became bound to the very source and root of all life, drawing that supernal vitality down into the world through the letters yud and vav. AI SUMMARY

And the man called his wife's name Chavah (Eve), etc., "for she was the mother of all life." Rashi, of blessed memory, explains that it is a lashon nofel al lashon (a wordplay, language echoing language). At first glance it is very puzzling: why did he call her name "Chavah" with a vav, and not "Chayah" with a yud, seeing that she is "the mother of all life (chai)"? But by setting one's heart and examining carefully, this will be well explained.

For behold, there are several kinds of "chiyus" (life-force/vitality) in the world. There is a good chiyus, such as the level of the tzaddikim (righteous ones) who always walk in the Torah of Hashem. For the Torah HaKedoshah (the Holy Torah) is the root and the chiyus of all the worlds, for through the Torah the existence of all the worlds was created. If so, the tzaddikim do not go outside the boundary of the Torah and the mitzvot (commandments), and the Torah HaKedoshah is for them the central point around which all their actions revolve — speech, hearing, sight, and walking — all is through the ways of the Torah, and then they are attached to the Life of the Worlds (Chei HaOlamim). This corresponds to the vowel-point melafum, the "u" (shuruk/cholam-vav), whose dot is in the middle of the letter — meaning that they are attached to the central middle point, which is the Torah, which is an inner point and chiyus for all the worlds.

But there are to be found several people who lower this chiyus from the worlds downward, and, Heaven forbid, "bring it down to the dust," because they go outside the boundary of the Torah and the mitzvot. If so, how is it possible for them to be attached to the Life of the Worlds, since all the chiyus of the worlds comes through Torah and mitzvot, and they have been cut off from the realm of Torah and the root of the mitzvot? From where, then, will their help and their chiyus come, since they have lowered the chiyus beneath the worlds? This corresponds to the vowel-point chirik, the "i," whose dot is beneath the letter, with the letter riding atop the dot — for in truth the dot is the chiyus of the letter and directs the letter. And when a person lowers the chiyus of all the holy attributes (middot), he thereby lowers the dot beneath the letter.

If so, there would be no remedy for such people, Heaven forbid, to return to their root — except when he truly and wholeheartedly takes to heart how he has been cut off from the root of the chiyus of all the worlds, and how he is beneath all the beings that exist in the world, and he has no one to rely upon except the mercy and kindness of Hashem, blessed be He, out of the will of His primordial thought that preceded the creation of the world.

As our Sages of blessed memory said: when the Holy One, blessed be He, wished to create the world, the Torah said before Him, "Will he not in the future

sin before You?" And Hashem answered her: "Have I then been called 'Erech Apayim' (Slow to Anger) for nothing?" If so, teshuvah (repentance) preceded the world, for He, may He be blessed, was watching and gazing, from the moment it arose in His will to create the worlds, until the end of all the generations, and from the foundation of His dwelling He foresaw how there would come to be in the world several people who would be cut off from the chiyus of the worlds and would go outside the boundary of the Torah. And Hashem prepared the cure before the wound — that when they return in complete teshuvah before Him and return to their root, then Hashem will receive them. If so, in this very thought of the world of teshuvah, there is existence for him.

Therefore, when a person wishes to set right and repair what he has distorted, he needs to contemplate with his intellect how far he is removed from all the chiyus of the worlds, and that he has no remedy in actuality except through the primordial thought which preceded all the worlds, and which is the root and the chiyus of all the worlds and all the letters — and there he has existence. If so, he becomes attached to an elevated level, which is the mother and root of the chiyus of all the worlds, which is teshuvah ila'ah (higher/supernal repentance).

This corresponds to the vowel-point cholam, whose dot is above the letter, as in "ח" — and so it turns out that what was previously in a lower level, beneath the worlds and the letters — which is the aspect of chirik — is now elevated upward, so that the dot rises and sits atop the letter. This is the aspect of cholam (ח-ל-ו-ח), and from this it is transformed and becomes "mochel" (ל-ח-ו-ח, "forgiving") — and from there He draws forth forgiveness (mechilah) for all his sins.

This is the intent of our Sages of blessed memory who said: the place where ba'alei teshuvah (those who have returned in repentance) stand, complete tzaddikim (righteous ones) cannot stand. For the level of one who returns in teshuvah (repentance) is higher and more exalted than the level of the tzaddik, for how could the tzaddik stand at this level, since he never tasted the taste of transgression

and never went outside the boundary of the Torah and the mitzvot (commandments), but is always attached and bound to the vitality of the worlds and the middot (divine attributes), where the vitality of the worlds is found — unlike the one who returns from his sins, who has no place within the vitality of the worlds, and must strengthen himself and attach his soul through thought and primordial will, which is the world of teshuvah.

Nevertheless, even though he is attached there in the world of thought, since he is below, in the world of actual existence, he must draw down for himself life from the source of vitality and the root of roots into the worlds. And this is the aspect of the "line," which is the letter vav, indicating the drawing-forth from the point of the yud, the supernal will, which is drawn through the line of the vav — vitality — into the worlds. Understand this.

And according to this, one can direct the explanation of the dispute among the Amoraim in the Gemara Rosh Hashanah (8a): one says "nosei" (he bears/lifts up), and one says "koveish" (he subdues). And it is one matter, for these words and those words are not in dispute.

For one speaks of the aspect of the return — how it comes to attach to the supreme Thought above; this is the aspect of "nosei," that the Holy One, blessed be He, gazes upon the power of the act of teshuvah (repentance) that is born from this matter — namely, that through sinning and then returning, one thereby comes to a lofty elevation and becomes attached to the upper world, the root of teshuvah, which is above the vitality of the worlds. And this is the meaning of "nosei avon" (He bears/lifts up sin) — that through the sin comes an elevation (hitnasut) for the person, who becomes attached to the supreme Name, this being the aspect of "teshuvah tashuv Hei" (return, you shall return to the letter Heh).

And the one who says "koveish" speaks of the aspect of drawing it down afterward — from the supreme attachment into the actuality of the worlds, the bringing down of the flow (shefa) below. And this is the supreme delight that the blessed Hashem bestows. And this is "koveish," in the manner of "He will subdue our sins" (yichbosh avonoteinu) —

meaning that through the transgression comes the subduing of the flow downward. And understand this well.

Now, before Chavah sinned and caused Adam to sin, they were attached to the "Life of the Worlds" at the central point, through the letters of the Torah. This was not so after they sinned and did teshuvah (repentance) — for then they became attached to the supernal world, to the primordial will, which is the root of the life-force of all worlds. This is why Adam

called his wife's name Chavah (Eve) — meaning that she became [attached] through the letters yud and vav, by drawing down life-force from the world of primordial thought into the lower world; therefore she was called Chavah. For she was "the mother of all life" — meaning that through the sin she committed and her consequent need to return [in teshuvah], she thereby became attached to the mother and root of all life. And the wise person will understand all this.

Translation: translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)