

חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

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CHABAD · TORAH OHR, BERESHIT

Elevation from one level of being to a higher one—whether of souls, angels, or the sacrificial offerings rising as a pleasing aroma—can only occur through the bittul (self-nullification) of yesh (existence), an inner nullification that is expressed as "song"; the varying depths of song (simple, double, triple, fourfold) correspond to how much this bittul is interwoven with middos (attributes) such as ahavah (love) and yirah (fear). Yuval, father of harp-players, embodies this bittul that draws the soul upward, while Yaval, father of tent-dwellers and livestock-keepers, embodies the makif (encompassing, transcendent) illumination from above that has no fixed "above" or "below" and so can descend to infuse even lowly, physical pursuits like shepherding with this same quality of bittul. AI SUMMARY

Yaval, he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. And his brother's name was Yuval; he was the father of all who play the harp and the organ. Behold, our Rabbis, of blessed memory, said: "All masters of song go forth with song, etc." The meaning is that every aspect of elevation from one state of being to another state of being — such as from the lower Garden of Eden to the higher Garden of Eden, and the like — comes about through song, which is an aspect of the nullification of yesh (existence/somethingness). For, as is known, a yesh cannot come into being from a yesh unless the yesh first becomes an aspect of ayin (nothingness); only then can another yesh come into being from it, with an increase of blessing. This is like the parable of a seed planted in the earth, which must first rot in the earth, and afterward many seeds can sprout from it.

Similarly, above, with souls and angels — in order for there to be an ascent for them through an increase of comprehension, they must first be in a state of self-nullification of yesh (selfhood/existence) regarding the first comprehension that they had, and only afterward can they ascend to a greater comprehension. This is the aspect of the pillar that stands between the lower Gan Eden and the upper Gan Eden — it is the aspect of bittul (self-nullification), as mentioned above. And this is [the meaning of] "all the masters of song go forth" in

their comprehension, and are drawn to ascend upward through song. Therefore, at the time of the offering of the sacrifice, there also had to be song, because the matter of the sacrifices is an elevation from below to above — isheh reiach nicho'ach (a fire-offering, a pleasing aroma) — and this too requires the aspect of song, the aspect of bittul, as mentioned above, so that it can be elevated.

Now behold, there is a simple song and a doubled song, as is known, that in the pillar there are three colors – white and red, which are the aspect of chessed and gevurah (lovingkindness and severity), and green, the aspect of hiskallelus (intermingling), etc.

For behold, in the aspect of bittul (self-nullification) there are many levels. There is the aspect of simple bittul, a single point, the aspect of the letter yud, and there is an aspect of bittul in which there is also included a middah (attribute) such as ahavah (love) or yirah (fear), etc.

And likewise in the outer garments of the middos, which are chessed and gevurah, there is also hiskallelus – chessed within gevurah – as in the case of one who strikes his son, which is the aspect of gevurah, and included within this is the aspect of chessed and ahavah, since out of love he wishes to

guide him in the straight path; and therefore he strikes specifically his own son and not another, for "whom he loves, he reproves."

And when the bittul is simple bittul, it is called a simple song; and when there is in it also another middah – ahavah or yirah (see what is written in the commentary on the Zohar, parshas Korach, on the verse "the invited of the assembly") – it is called a doubled song; and when there is hiskallelus of the middos (ahavah and yirah, both together within the bittul), it is called a tripled song.

And in like manner there is also a quadrupled song (see what is written regarding techeiles, argaman, tola'as shani, and shesh mashzar, which are the hiskallelus of four aspects together – ahavah, yirah, rachmanus [mercy], and the aspect of shesh, which is hidden love, etc.)

– for "as the four winds of the heavens have I scattered you," which is the hiskallelus from north to south through the wind blowing from north to south, and likewise from east to west, etc. (and sometimes there is a hiskallelus of all four aspects – east, west, north, and south – through the wind blowing in that manner, etc.)

And this is also the matter of the sun's journey from east to west – this too is a matter of bittul, and it is the aspect of the nefesh (soul) within the sun, which is the aspect of its hasagah (apprehension); and because of this, the body of the sun itself travels always, in its physicality, in an aspect of bittul (as is explained regarding the matter of "sun, be still in Gibeon," etc., in the discourse "Charvos Tzurim").

And there are two opinions regarding its journey – whether it is on account of love and longing, or on account of simple bittul. And in truth, there is sometimes simple bittul, and sometimes there is in it also an aspect of ahavah, as above.

(And this is what is meant by "the sun rises... it goes to the south and turns about to the north," etc., as is explained on this in the Zohar, beginning of parshas Vayetzei, that this is to bring about a hiskallelus of the four aspects – east and west, south and north, etc. "Rises and sets" are east and west.)

This is the meaning of "Yuval, the father of all who play the harp, etc." The explanation: Yuval is a term of הולכה (conveyance), that he conveys and draws upward by means of the harp and the organ, [which are] the aspect of song, as mentioned above, that through song comes the elevation; "they go out with song, etc."

Yuval, he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have mikneh (livestock) — as it is written, "The sun was placed there, a tent for them." The meaning is: in order that the sun should have this quality, that it should have a quality of bittul (self-nullification) and yearning, this is accomplished through "a tent for them." A tent is a bechinah (aspect) of makif (encompassing, transcendent influence) from above, from which this illumination is drawn, that it should always be in a state of bittul.

This is the bechinah of Yuval, as in the language of "vayaval lachamorim" (and he brought/mixed [straw] to the donkeys), which is a matter of bilbul (mingling) and intermixture. The meaning is that this is an illumination from the bechinah of makif, where there is no division, and so everything can be mixed together, so that the illumination may also be drawn down below, so that afterward there can be the bechinah of Yuval, "the father of all who handle the kinor (lyre)," which is the bechinah of bittul as above. This is the meaning of "the father of those who dwell in tents and have mikneh" — for the bechinah of tent is the bechinah of makif as above, and therefore it can also apply to mikneh, to draw [the illumination] down below (for the makif has no above or below, as it is written, "and from beneath are the arms of the world").

This is like Yaakov, who shepherded the flocks "with a rod of poplar, fresh," etc. (the inclusion of Chesed, Gevurah, Tiferet; see Zohar, Vayetzei), for while another person who shepherds flocks shepherds in a physical way, Yaakov, who was a dweller in tents, drew down from the bechinah of makifim to be a shepherd of flocks. This is the meaning of "dweller of tents and mikneh," as above.

(And see what is written concerning the matter of Yuval in Parashat Shelach, on the verse of the mekoshesh [wood-gatherer]; and see further concerning the matter of mikneh in Parashat

Vayetze, on the verse "and these six years with your flock," etc., and on the verse "And these are the mishpatim [judgments]," etc.)

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