— MAAMAR · SHABBOS VAYEIRA, 20 CHESHVAN 5737 —

וה׳ אמר המכסה אני מאברהם

A road *runs both ways.*

DOWN

"The way of G-d" is a road from the King's city to the remotest corner: Torah and mitzvos, carrying the Name into a world that stays a world — a friend's house.

BACK

A road you cannot return on is no road. Tzedakah, judged honestly, done against resistance, is the lower rising — and deed as compulsion reaches the Essence itself.

HIDE

So the Rebbe Rashab's second discourse opens with "Shall I hide": the deepest concealment cannot be hidden from one who works from below — and it is commanded to Avraham's children forever.

How to read this edition

The Rebbe's Hebrew runs on the right; the English on the left. **Bold is the translation of the Hebrew itself.** *Lighter italic is explanation woven in where it helps.* Read the bold alone and you have the maamar; read both and you have it taught.

This is the Reshimu Edition: the text without the scholarly apparatus, with short Key Point sidebars, a Shabbos-table Dvar Torah, and a one-page summary. A Full Elucidated Edition with line numbers, footnotes and source notes accompanies it.

The maamar in six moves

TWO	The Rebbe Rashab read this verse twice, in 5666 and 5667. The second reads "known" as affection alone and "tzedakah and justice" as a second service that rises, after the way of G-d descends.
ROAD	A road joins two places with no proportion between them. The kav is a road from the Infinite to the worlds; Torah and mitzvos are the roads of the Name, down to a dwelling in the lowest place — a friend's house that stays the friend's.
BACK	A road is also for returning. Torah brings the light down into a mind; mitzvos raise the lower — tzedakah, judged honestly, done against resistance.
WHY	A light that reaches a place that is not a vessel does not take hold; and deed as compulsion reaches the essential concealment, above all light. "Deed is greater."
HIDE	So the 5667 discourse opens with "Shall I hide": "I hide" is the essential concealment, revealed to Avraham by his rising service — and commanded to his children forever.
PSALMS	Psalm 116: two lands, Torah down and mitzvos up. Psalm 117: the nations praising, and kindness overwhelming — given so that they can. Hallelukah is the tenth song.

CHART · THE KING'S ROAD — OIS BEIS TO HEI

The seat of the King — the Infinite Light עיר המלוכה · אוא"ס
The Name Havayah, the hidden tiferes; above it, the essential concealment

Going: light drawn down from here

The road — the kav; Torah and mitzvos דרך הוי' · הקו
An intermediary between two places with no proportion between them

A road only if it can be travelled back

▼ GOING · THE WAY OF G-D — DRAWN DOWN FROM ABOVE · RETURNING · TZEDAKAH AND JUSTICE — THE LOWER MADE A VESSEL ▲

The large towns — the worlds העיירות · העולמות
Where the light arrives and can be received

Torah: the light enters a mind and is called his

The remotest corner — this world, the friend's house פינה הנדחת · בית חבירו
The lowest, with none lower; it stays lower — and rises

Returning: deed as compulsion starts here and reaches the Essence

PART 1

אות א

Two discourses on one verse: the way of G-d, and tzedakah and justice

שני מאמרים על פסוק אחד — דרך הוי׳ וצדקה ומשפט

BEFORE WE READ

The maamar was said on the Rebbe Rashab's birthday, 20 Cheshvan, and it opens with him: in the great series of 5666 he explained this verse twice, on Shabbos Vayeira of 5666 and again a year later. The verse is G-d's reason for telling Avraham about Sodom — "for I have known him, so that he will command his children ... to keep the way of G-d, to do tzedakah and justice." The second discourse asks the obvious question: if "the way of G-d" already means Torah and mitzvos, what does "to do tzedakah and justice" add? Its answer is a direction: the way of G-d flows down from above, and tzedakah and justice is work that rises from below. The Rebbe's first section sets the two discourses side by side and shows that they read even the word "known" differently.

And G-d said: Shall I hide from Avraham, etc.; and Avraham shall surely become a great nation, etc.; for I have known him, so that he will command, etc., and they shall keep the way of G-d, to do tzedakah and justice, etc. — *Bereishis 18:17–19, G-d's own words before revealing the fate of Sodom.* **And the one whose birthday it is** — *the Rebbe Rashab, born 20 Cheshvan 5621* **examines this in his discourse on this verse of the year 5667 (in the series of 5666** — *Hemshech 5666, the great sequence of discourses that ran for over a year*)**: the way of G-d means Torah and mitzvos** — *as the plain sense requires; note 3 shows that Rashi did not even need to say so*; **if so, what does the verse add with "to do tzedakah, etc." (the matter of the mitzvos** — *tzedakah being the mitzvah the Talmud calls simply "the mitzvah"*) **beyond "they shall keep the way of G-d"? And he explains there that the way of G-d is a drawing-down from above to below, while tzedakah and justice is the service of from below to above, the service of returning light** — *ohr chozer, light sent back up from the place it reached*. **[And on this basis the connection there is also explained between "they shall keep the way of G-d, to do tzedakah and justice" and what is written before it, "and G-d said, Shall I hide from Avraham."]**

וה׳ אמר המכסה אני מאברהם גו׳ ואברהם היו יהי׳ לגוי גדול גו׳ כי ידעתיו למען אשר יצוה גו׳ ושמרו דרך ה׳ לעשות צדקה ומשפט גו׳. ומדייק בזה בעל יום ההולדת במאמרו ד״ה זה דשנת תרס״ז (בהמשך תרס״ו), הרי דרך הוי׳ זהו תומ״צ, וא״כ מה מוסיף הכתוב בלעשות צדקה גו׳ (ענין המצוות) על ושמרו דרך הוי׳. ומבאר שם, דדרך הוי׳ היא המשכה מלמעלה למטה, וצדקה ומשפט היא העבודה בבחי׳ מלמטה למעלה, העבודה דאור חוזר. [ועפ״ז מבואר שם גם השייכות דושמרו דרך הוי׳ לעשות צדקה ומשפט למ״ש לפנ״ז והוי׳ אמר המכסה אני מאברהם גו׳].

והנה הפסוק כי ידעתיו גו' ושמרו דרך הוי' לעשות צדקה ומשפט נתבאר בהמשך הנ"ל בד"ה כי ידעתיו דשנת תרס"ו (מאמר דש"פ וירא הראשון שבההמשך), ובמאמר זה (מאמר דש"פ וירא השני שבההמשך) מבאר הפסוק באופן אחר, נוסף על זה שמאמר הראשון מתחיל בפסוק כי ידעתיו ומאמר השני מתחיל בפסוק והוי' אמר המכסה אני גו', הנה גם בפסוק כי ידעתיו גופא, במאמר השני מפרש באופן אחר, דבמאמר הראשון מביא שני פירושים בכי ידעתיו, פירוש התרגום שידעתיו הוא לשון ידיעה, ארי גלי קדמי, ופירוש רש"י שידעתיו הוא לשון חיבה. ומבאר שם דידעתיו לשון ידיעה הו"ע רצון העצמי (דזהו ארי גלי קדמי, כי הרצון הוא בהתגלות), וידעתיו לשון חיבה הו"ע תענוג העצמי, משא"כ

Now, the verse "for I have known him ... and they shall keep the way of G-d, to do tzedakah and justice" was explained in the series above in the discourse "Ki Yedaativ" of 5666 (the first Shabbos Vayeira discourse in the series), and in this discourse (the second Shabbos Vayeira discourse in the series) he explains the verse differently. Besides the fact that the first discourse opens with the verse "for I have known him" and the second opens with "and G-d said, Shall I hide," even within the verse "for I have known him" the second discourse explains differently. For the first discourse brings two readings of "I have known him": the Targum's reading, that "I have known him" is a term of knowing — "for it is revealed before Me" — *Onkelos: ari gali kadamai* — and Rashi's reading, that "I have known him" is a term of affection. And he explains there that "known" as knowing is the matter of the essential will (this is "revealed before Me," because will is in a state of revelation), while "known" as affection is the matter of the essential delight; whereas in the second discourse he explains "I have known him" as affection — *alone*, that He cherished him with the essential delight — *Rashi's reading, which note 10 says he is forced into because "so that" fits no other sense*.

במאמר השני מפרש ידעתיו לשון חיבה, שחיבב אותו בבחי' תענוג העצמי. ועוד חילוק בין שני המאמרים בהפירוש דושמרו דרך הוי' לעשות צדקה ומשפט. דבמאמר הראשון משמע (כפשטות לשון הכתוב, וכמבואר גם בכמה דרושים) דלעשות צדקה ומשפט הוא הפירוש דושמרו דרך הוי', או שצדקה ומשפט הוא פרט בדרך הוי'. ויש לומר שדרך הוי' (לשון יחיד) היא התורה (בחינת כלל שלמעלה מהתחלקות), ומזה נמשך לעשות צדקה, עשיית המצוות (רמ"ח אברין דמלכא, אברים פרטים). ובמאמר זה (מאמר דש"פ וירא השני שבההמשך) מבאר דלעשות צדקה גו' (עם היות שבא בהמשך לושמרו דרך הוי') הוא לא פירוש או פרט בדרך הוי' אלא שהוא ענין נוסף. דלאחרי ושמרו דרך הוי', המשכה מלמעלה למטה, באים אח"כ לעבודה נעלית יותר, לעשות צדקה, עבודה מלמטה למעלה.

And a further difference between the two discourses, in the reading of "they shall keep the way of G-d, to do tzedakah and justice." In the first discourse it appears (as the plain sense of the verse, and as explained in several discourses as well) that "to do tzedakah and justice" is the meaning of "they shall keep the way of G-d," or that tzedakah and justice is a detail within the way of G-d. And one may say that "the way of G-d" (singular) is the Torah (a general whole above division), and from it flows "to do tzedakah," the doing of the mitzvos (the 248 limbs of the King — *the Tikkunei Zohar's phrase for the positive commandments*, particular limbs) — *Torah is one road; the mitzvos are the 613 paths that branch from it, as note 14 cites from the Zohar*. But in this discourse (the second Shabbos Vayeira discourse in the series) he explains that "to do tzedakah, etc." (though it follows "they shall keep the way of G-d") is not a meaning of or a detail within the way of G-d but an additional matter: after "they shall keep the way of G-d," the drawing-down from above to below, one comes afterward to a loftier service, "to do tzedakah," service from below to above.

KEY POINT

One verse, two discourses. The Rebbe Rashab explained this verse in 5666 and again in 5667, and did not repeat himself: the second reads "known" as affection alone and "tzedakah and justice" as a second service.

KEY POINT

Down, then up. The way of G-d flows from above to below; tzedakah and justice is the work of returning light, from below to above.

IN SHORT

The Rebbe Rashab explained this verse in 5666 and again in 5667. The first discourse reads “known” as both knowing and affection and “tzedakah and justice” as a detail of “the way of G-d”; the second reads “known” as affection alone and “tzedakah and justice” as a second, higher service: the way of G-d flows down, tzedakah and justice rises up.

What a road is: a link between two places far apart

ענין דרך — ממוצע המחבר שני מקומות רחוקים

BEFORE WE READ

To explain the "way of G-d," the Rebbe borrows the Mitteler Rebbe's picture of a road. A road is a go-between: it connects two places that, on their own, have nothing to do with each other. The king's highway runs from the capital to every corner of the realm, and from it smaller roads branch to the villages, until the most remote hamlet is tied to the throne. In Chassidus the road is the kav, the line of light drawn from the Infinite after the tzimtzum; the section ends by distinguishing what its outer and inner aspects carry.

(2) All this will be understood from what is explained in the discourse "Zachor" of 5678 by the one whose birthday it is (on the verse "they shall keep the way of G-d"), and at length in Biurei HaZohar of the Mitteler Rebbe (on the verse "for the ways of G-d are straight" *— the last verse of Hoshea***) and elsewhere: the matter of a "way" above is like a road in the plain sense (in the physical world), which is an intermediary that joins two places that of themselves are utterly far from one another. Like the king's highway, which runs and extends from the royal city, the seat of the king, to all the expanses of the realm (by which one reaches all the large towns), and from it branch further roads and paths by which one can reach the small towns and so on, down to the most remote corner — for the distance between the small towns, and all the more the remote corner, and the capital, the seat of the king, is, besides a distance in place, also a distance in rank, even a distance beyond all proportion; and by means of the road a link and connection is made between the remote corner and the seat of the king.**

ב) ויובן כ"ז ע"פ המבואר בד"ה זכור תרע"ח לבעל יום ההולדת (עה"פ ושמרו דרך הוי'), ובארוכה בביאורי הזהר לאדמו"ר האמצעי (עה"פ כי ישרים דרכי הוי') ובכ"מ, דענין דרך למעלה הוא בדוגמת דרך כפשוטו (בגשמיות), שהוא ממוצע שמחבר שני מקומות שמצד עצמם הם רחוקים זמ"ז בתכלית. וכמו דרך המלך הנמשך והולך מעיר המלוכה מקום מושב המלך לכל מרחבי המדינה (שעל ידו מגיעים לכל העיירות הגדולות), וממנו מסתעפים עוד דרכים ונתיבות שעל ידם יכולים להגיע לעיירות הקטנות וכו' עד לפינה הכי נדחת, דהריחוק שבין עיירות הקטנות ומכש"כ פינה הנדחת לעיר הבירה מקום מושב המלך הוא נוסף על הריחוק במקום גם ריחוק במעלה, ועד לריחוק שבאין ערוך, וע"י

And this is why the kav drawn from the Infinite Light is called a "way": because the kav is the intermediary through which there is drawn from the Infinite Light to the worlds *— after the tzimtzum, which withdrew the Infinite Light, a single thin line of light re-enters the void; everything the worlds receive comes through it***. For besides the fact that the coming-into-being of the worlds (the drawing of the Infinite Light to bring the worlds into being) is by means of the kav [this being by the externality of the kav, whose root is in malchus of the Infinite** *— the attribute of kingship as it is in the Infinite, the source of there being anything other***], through the kav there is also drawn the revelations of the Infinite Light into the worlds [this being by the inwardness of the kav, whose root is in the hidden tiferes** *— tiferes hane'elam, the Infinite's own self-revelation, higher than its kingship over others***].**

אמצעות הדרך נעשה קישור וחיבור דפינה הנדחת עם מקום מושב המלך. וזהו מה שהקו הנמשך מאוא"ס נקרא בשם דרך, כי הקו הוא הממוצע שעל ידו נמשך מאוא"ס לעולמות, דנוסף על זה שהתהוות העולמות (המשכת אוא"ס להוות את העולמות) הוא ע"י אמצעות הקו [דענין זה הוא ע"י חיצוניות הקו, דשרשו הוא ממל' דא"ס], הרי ע"י הקו נעשה גם המשכת הגילויים דאוא"ס בעולמות [דענין זה הוא ע"י פנימיות הקו, דשרשו הוא מת"ת הנעלם].

KEY POINT

What a road is. An intermediary between two places with no proportion between them — the King's city and the remotest hamlet. The kav is that road from the Infinite to the worlds.

IN SHORT

A road is an intermediary that joins two places with no proportion between them, as the king's highway joins the capital to the remotest village. So the kav, the line of light from the Infinite, is called a way: its outer aspect brings the worlds into being, its inner aspect brings the Infinite's revelations into them.

Torah and mitzvos as the road of the Name; a dwelling in another's house

תומ"צ — דרך הוי"; דירה בתחתונים — אדם הדר בבית חבירו

BEFORE WE READ

Now the road is named. Torah and mitzvos are "the way of Havayah" because their purpose, in the Zohar's phrase, is to set right the secret of His Name — to draw the Name Havayah, the revelation of the Essence, into the world. That revelation reaching the very lowest place is what the Sages call G-d's desire for a dwelling in the lowest worlds. The Rebbe Rashab explained the dwelling with a homely image, a man living in his friend's house, and the Rebbe draws out its edge: the house stays the friend's. The lower is not abolished by the light; it stays lower and holds the light anyway.

(3) On this basis the one whose birthday it is explains, in the discourse "Zachor" above, why Torah and mitzvos are called "the way of Havayah": because the matter of Torah and mitzvos is "to set right the secret of His Name" — *le'askana raza dishmei, the Zohar's definition of what the mitzvos accomplish*, **the drawing-down of the level of His great Name (the Name Havayah), which is the revelation of the Essence of the Infinite Light (the level of the hidden tiferes, which is above the level of malchus of the Infinite** — *the inner kav of section 2, not the outer*). **Therefore they are called "the way of Havayah," the roads by which the revelation of the Name Havayah, His great Name, is drawn into the world. And through this the intent of a dwelling in the lowest worlds is fulfilled** — *the Midrash: the Holy One desired a dwelling in the lower realms*: **the revelation of the Essence of the Infinite Light (which is above both the encompassing and the filling light** — *sovev and memalei, the two modes in which G-dliness relates to worlds*) **below, in the lowest realms, in the lowest of which "there is no lower"** — *the Alter Rebbe's phrase in Tanya for this physical world*.

ג) ועפ"ז מבאר בעל יום ההולדת בד"ה זכור הנ"ל זה שהתומ"צ נק' דרך הוי', כי ענין תומ"צ הוא לאתקנא רזא דשמי', המשכת בחי' שמו הגדול (שם הוי'), שהוא הגילוי דעצמות אוא"ס (בחי' ת"ת הנעלם שלמעלה מבחי' מל' דא"ס). ולכן נק' דרך הוי', הדרכים שעל ידם נמשך בעולם הגילוי דשם הוי', שמו הגדול. וע"ז נשלמה הכוונה דדירה בתחתונים, הגילוי דעצמות אוא"ס (שלמעלה מבחי' סובב וממלא) למטה בתחתונים, בתחתון שאין תחתון למטה ממנו. ומבאר שם, דענין דירה בתחתונים הוא כמשל אדם

And he explains there that the matter of a dwelling in the lowest worlds is like the analogy of a man living in his friend's house: with his whole self, as he lives in his own house, he lives in his friend's house. And one may say that the intent of the analogy of a man living in his friend's house is to explain that a dwelling in the lowest worlds is not in the manner that, because of the revelation of the Infinite Light in the lower, the lower becomes refined and raised (in a way that the "lower" in it is nullified); rather, that even after the revelation it remains lower, and nonetheless the revelation of the Essence of the Infinite Light is drawn into it. For this is the content of the analogy of a man living in his friend's house: even after he lives there, the house is his friend's house, and nonetheless he lives there with his whole self, as he lives in his own house. *The friend's house is never renovated into the owner's; it keeps its own name. Note 25 adds the Alter Rebbe's phrase for this world, "the world of darkness," and reads it the same way: even afterward it stays the world of darkness, and the Name is revealed in it.*

הדר בבית חבירו, שכל עצמותו כמו שהוא דר בביתו הוא דר בבית חבירו. ויש לומר, שהכוונה בהמשל דאדם הדר בבית חבירו, הוא לבאר, דענין דירה בתחתונים הוא לא באופן שמצד הגילוי דאוא"ס בהתחתון נעשה בו זיכוך ועלי' (באופן שמתבטל ה"תחתון" שבו), כי אם, שגם לאחרי הגילוי הוא נשאר תחתון, ואעפ"כ נמשך בו הגילוי דעצמות אוא"ס. דזהו תוכן המשל דאדם הדר בבית חבירו, שגם לאחרי שהוא דר שם הבית הוא בית חבירו, ואעפ"כ הוא דר שם בכל עצמותו כמו שהוא דר בביתו.

KEY POINT

The road of the Name. Torah and mitzvos set right the secret of His Name, drawing the Essence's revelation into the lowest place, where there is none lower.

KEY POINT

A friend's house. The dwelling G-d desired does not abolish the lower. The house stays the friend's, and He lives in it with His whole self.

IN SHORT

Torah and mitzvos are "the way of Havayah" because they set right the secret of His Name, drawing the Essence's revelation into the world, down to the lowest place where there is no lower: the dwelling G-d desired. The Rebbe Rashab's analogy of a man living in his friend's house teaches that the lower stays lower — the house remains the friend's — and the Essence lives in it with its whole self.

A road is also for coming back: Torah, mitzvos, and “to do tzedakah and justice”

דרך משמשת גם לחזרה — תורה ומצוות, צדקה ומשפט, ולעשות

BEFORE WE READ

A road runs both ways. The Rebbe Rashab’s next step is that the way of G-d too must carry traffic back: not only light coming down but the lower rising to become a vessel for it. Torah does the first — Divine wisdom enters a human mind and unites with it, until the Torah is called the learner’s own. Mitzvos do the second — they refine and raise the lower, especially when done against the grain, as an act of compulsion. The section then reads the verse’s three words in order: tzedakah, which names all the mitzvos; justice, which means judging oneself out of luxuries; and “to do,” which means doing it even when it costs.

(4) After this he continues in the discourse (“Zachor” above): just as a road in the plain sense serves not only for going but also for returning, so it is with the way of Havayah — its true nature is that through it comes not only the drawing-down from above to below (the matter of going) but also the elevation of the lower, so that it becomes a vessel for the drawing-down. And these two matters (the drawing-down from above and the elevation of the lower) are accomplished by the study of Torah and the performance of the mitzvos. Through the study of Torah comes the drawing-down of the Essence of the Infinite Light (for the wisdom of Torah is of the wisdom of the Essence of the Infinite) into the human mind (a human intellect clothed in a physical brain), and especially when he learns well, with the effort of his mind, for then it unites with him in a wondrous union that has no like *— the Tanya’s words, ch. 5*, **until it is called by his name** *— the Gemara: at first it is called G-d’s Torah, in the end it is called his*.

ד) והנה לאחרי זה ממשיך בהמאמר (ד”ה זכור הנ”ל), דכמו שדרך כפשוטו משמש לא רק להליכה אלא גם לחזרה, עד”ז הוא גם בדרך הוי’, דאמיתית ענינו הוא שהוא באופן כזה שעל ידו נעשה לא רק ההמשכה מלמעלה למטה (ענין הליכה), אלא גם העלאת התחתון, שיהי’ כלי להמשכה. ושני ענינים אלו (ההמשכה מלמעלה והעלאת המטה) נעשים על ידי לימוד התורה וקיום המצוות. ע”י לימוד התורה נעשה ההמשכה דעצמות אוא”ס (דהחכמה דתורה היא מבחי’ החכמה דעצמות א”ס) בשכל האדם (שכל אנושי שמלובש במוח גשמי),

And the refinement and elevation of the lower is accomplished through the doing of the mitzvos, and especially when the doing of the mitzvos is in the manner of iskafya, subjugation — “doing” in the sense of compulsion *— ma’aseh from the root of kefiyah: a mitzvah done against one’s own pull*. **And this is “they shall keep the way of Havayah, to do tzedakah, etc.”: the true matter of a road, which serves not only for going (drawing-down from above) but also for returning (refining and raising the lower), is that besides the study of Torah there is also the doing of tzedakah — for all the mitzvos are called tzedakah** *— Torah Ohr: every mitzvah is a charity, drawing life from above to a world that cannot earn it*.

ובפרט כשלומד היטב בעיון שכלו שאז היא מתאחדת עמו ביחוד נפלא שאין יחוד כמוהו, ועד שנקראת על שמו. ובירור והעלאת התחתון נעשה ע”י מעשה המצוות, ובפרט כשמעשה המצוות הוא באופן דאתכפיא, מעשה מלשון כפי’. וזהו ושמרו דרך הוי’ לעשות צדקה גו’, דאמיתית ענין הדרך שמשמש לא רק להליכה (המשכה מלמעלה) אלא גם לחזרה (בירור והעלאת התחתון) הוא שנוסף ללימוד התורה יש גם עשיית צדקה, דכל המצוות נק’ בשם

צדקה. ומוסיף צדקה ומשפט, דעשיית הצדקה (צדקה כפשוטה) צ"ל במשפט, שישפוט את עצמו מהמותרות ויחשוב היטב מה שהוא מוכרח לנפשו וכל השאר יתן לצדקה. ועד"ז הוא בכל המצוות (שנק' בשם צדקה, כנ"ל) שקיומם צ"ל באופן דמשפט. ומוסיף לעשות (צדקה ומשפט), שגם זה (שהצדקה היא באופן דמשפט) אינו מספיק עדיין, וצריך להיות באופן דאתכפיא, מעשה מלשון כפי'. וע"ז נעשה בירור והעלאת התחתון, שנעשה כלי להגילוי שלמעלה.

And it adds "tzedakah and justice": the giving of tzedakah (tzedakah in the plain sense) must be with justice, that he judge himself regarding luxuries and consider well what he truly needs for himself, and give all the rest to tzedakah. And so it is with all the mitzvos (which are called tzedakah, as above), that their performance must be in a manner of justice — *measured against what one actually needs, not what one would like*. **And it adds "to do" (tzedakah and justice): even this (that the tzedakah is with justice) is not yet enough; it must be in the manner of iskafya, "doing" as compulsion. And through this the refinement and elevation of the lower comes about, so that it becomes a vessel for the revelation from above.**

KEY POINT

Also for coming back. Torah brings the light down into a mind until it is called his. Mitzvos raise the lower — above all when done against the grain.

KEY POINT

Tzedakah, justice, to do. Give; first judge yourself out of luxuries; and do it even when it costs. The third word is where the world rises.

IN SHORT

A road is also for returning. Torah draws the Essence down into a human mind until it is called his; the mitzvos raise the lower into a vessel, above all when done as iskafya, "doing" as compulsion. The verse spells it out: tzedakah, all the mitzvos; justice, judging oneself out of luxuries; "to do," doing it against resistance.

Why raising the lower matters: the light takes hold, and deed reaches the Essence

העילוי שבהעלאת התחתון — ההתעצמות עם האור; מעשה גדול

BEFORE WE READ

Why does the return journey matter so much? The Rebbe Rashab gives two reasons, and the Rebbe explains each. First, a road you cannot travel back on is not a road even from where you started: a light that arrives in a place that has not become a vessel for it does not truly arrive. G-d can put light anywhere — "who will say to Him, what are You doing?" — but the Alter Rebbe teaches in Likkutei Torah that a light forced into an unrefined vessel does not unite with it. Second, there is a greatness in the lower's rising itself: deed, in the sense of compulsion, reaches the essential concealment, higher than any light that is ever drawn down. That is what the Talmud's minority opinion, "deed is greater," was pointing at.

(5) Now, the superiority of refining and elevating the lower is understood from the discourse ("Zachor" above) to have two aspects. One: that it bears on the drawing-down from above. As the discourse says, just as with a road in the plain sense, if one cannot go back on it, it is not called a road (not only relative to the place one came to, but) even relative to the place one left — so when there is no elevation (the lower not being a vessel for the drawing-down), the drawing-down is not true. And the explanation may be put thus: the true and complete drawing-down (which has no limit) is not only that it is drawn to every place, even the lowest place, but that it is drawn into and penetrates every part of that place until it becomes one with it. And this (the becoming-one) is only when the lower is a vessel for the revelation. For although from above the drawing-down can occur even in a lower that is not a vessel — for "who will say to Him, what are You doing?" — *Koheles: nothing constrains the King* — still, regarding the lower, since on its side it is not a fitting vessel for the drawing-down, it does not become one with the light — *Likkutei Torah: the light arrives, "for He is all-capable," but does not unite with the vessel*, and consequently the drawing-down too is lacking, as above.

ה) והנה העילוי שבבירור והעלאת התחתון, מובן מהמאמר (ד"ה זכור הנ"ל) שיש בזה ב' ענינים. א' שזה נוגע להההמשכה שלמעלה. וכמ"ש במאמר הנ"ל דכמו שבדרך כפשוטו באם א"א לילך בו בחזרה אזי אינו נקרא דרך (לא רק לגבי המקום שבא לשם, אלא) גם לגבי המקום שהלך משם, דכשלא ישנה העלי' (שהתחתון אינו כלי להההמשכה), אין ההמשכה אמיתית. ויש לומר הביאור בזה, דאמיתית ענין ושלימות ההמשכה (שאין בה הגבלה) היא, דלא רק שהיא נמשכת בכל מקום גם במקום הכי תחתון, אלא שהיא נמשכת וחודרת בכל חלקי המקום עד שמתעצמת עמו. שזה (ההתעצמות) הוא דוקא כשהתחתון הוא כלי להגילוי. דהגם שמצד למעלה אפשר להיות ההמשכה גם בתחתון שאינו כלי, דמי יאמר לו מה תעשה,

And a second aspect in the refinement and elevation of the lower, and especially when the refinement is in the manner of iskafya: that this specifically reaches the Essence. And this is the matter of "deed is greater" — *Kiddushin 40b: Rabbi Tarfon's answer to the question whether study or deed is greater*, for deed in the sense of compulsion (the refinement of the lower) reaches the essential concealment — *he'elem ha'atzmi, the Essence as it is hidden even from itself, before any revelation*, which is above all drawings-down and revelations.

הרי בנוגע להתחתון, מכיון שמצדו אינו כלי ראוי להההמשכה, אינו מתעצם עם האור, ובמילא חסר גם בההמשכה כנ"ל. ועוד ענין בבירור והעלאת התחתון, ובפרט כשהבירור הוא באופן דאתכפיא, שזה דוקא מגיע בהעצמות. וזהו"ע מעשה גדול, כי מעשה מלשון כפי' (בירור התחתון) מגיע בהעלם העצמי שלמעלה מכל ההמשכות והגילויים.

KEY POINT

A light that takes hold. A light sent into an unrefined vessel arrives but does not unite with it. Without the work from below, even the descent is incomplete.

KEY POINT

Deed is greater. Deed as compulsion reaches the essential concealment, above every light that is ever drawn down.

IN SHORT

Elevating the lower matters twice over. A road one cannot return on is no road even from its start: a light that reaches a place that is not a vessel does not unite with it, so the drawing-down itself is incomplete. And the rising of the lower, done as iskafya, reaches the essential concealment above all revelations — the meaning of "deed is greater."

The inner content of the two discourses: “Shall I hide,” and “known” as affection

תוכן הפנימי של שני המאמרים — המכסה אני, וכי ידעתיו לשון חיבה

BEFORE WE READ

Everything now returns to the pair of discourses from section 1, and the differences line up. The first discourse of 5666 praised the mitzvos for what they draw down, so it read “tzedakah and justice” as a detail of the descending way. The second discourse of 5667 praised the deed from below for what it is in itself, foreshadowing the future when “deed is greater” will be revealed — so it read “tzedakah and justice” as a second, higher service, and it opened with “Shall I hide,” because “I hide” names the essential concealment that Avraham’s rising service uncovered. For the same reason it read “known” as affection alone: once the deepest concealment is revealed, even the revelations are of a higher kind. The section ends by handing all of this to every Jew: Avraham’s command to his children is a special gift of strength for both services.

(6) On this basis the inner content of the differences between the Shabbos Vayeira discourses in the series of 5666 may be explained. In the first discourse he explains the matter of the mitzvos — that through the performance of the mitzvos the loftiest matters are drawn down, the essential will and the essential delight. That is, the superiority of the service below is that through it the drawing-down from above comes about; and even the refinement of the lower is that through it the drawing-down is complete. Therefore he explains (as the plain sense of the verse) that “to do tzedakah and justice” is a meaning and detail of “the way of Havayah,” the drawing-down from above. And the following year, in the second discourse, he explains the superiority of the doing of the mitzvos (the service of the lower) as it is in itself — like the revelation of the future, when the greatness of deed will be revealed, “deed is greater”: not only that deed arouses and draws down the unlimited light as it is above enclothement in wisdom (study), but also the superiority of the deed itself, that it reaches the essential concealment (which is above even the unlimited light drawn down through it). Therefore he explains that “to do tzedakah and justice” is (not a detail and explanation of the way of Havayah, but) an additional matter (which comes after and through “they shall keep the way of Havayah”) *— note 43: the lower can rise only after light has come down; as the Talmud says, study leads to deed*.

ו) ועפ״ז יש לבאר תוכן הפנימי של החילוקים דהמאמרים דש״פ וירא בהמשך תרס״ו. דבמאמר הראשון מבאר ענין המצוות, זה שע״י קיום המצוות נמשכים ענינים הכי נעלים, רצון עצמי ותענוג עצמי. היינו שהעילוי דעבודת המטה הוא שע״ז נעשה ההמשכה מלמעלה וגם ענין בירור התחתון הוא שע״ז היא השלימות דההמשכה. ולכן מפרש (כפשטות לשון הכתוב) דלעשות צדקה ומשפט הוא פירוש ופרט בדרך הוי׳, ההמשכה מלמעלה. ולשנה הבאה במאמר השני מבאר העילוי דמעשה המצוות (עבודת המטה) כמו שהוא מצד עצמו, בדוגמת הגילוי דלעתיד שאז תתגלה מעלת המעשה, מעשה גדול, לא רק זה שהמעשה מעורר וממשיך את אור הבל״ג כמו שהוא למעלה מהתלבשות בחכמה (תלמוד), אלא גם העילוי דהמעשה גופא,

שהוא מגיע בהעלם העצמי (שלמעלה גם מאור הבל"ג שנמשך על ידו). ולכן מפרש דלעשות צדקה ומשפט הוא (לא פרט וביאור בדרך הוי', כ"א) ענין נוסף (שבא לאחרי וע"י ושמרו דרך הוי'). וזהו מה שמאמר זה מתחיל בפסוק והוי' אמר המכסה אני, ומבאר דהמכסה אני הוא בחי' העלם העצמי דא"ס, ופירוש המכסה אני מאברהם הוא שלאברהם נתגלה בחי' זו, דע"י עבודתו בבחי' אור חוזר מלמטה למעלה, וגם יצוה את בניו ואת ביתו אחריו גו' לעשות צדקה ומשפט, לכן נתגלה לו בחי' העלם העצמי. [ואומר על זה המכסה בתמי', כי מצד העבודה שלו (בבחינת אור חוזר) אין שייך שלא יתגלה לו בחינה זו]. ומכיון שבמאמר זה מדובר בענין הגילוי דהעלם העצמי (המכסה אני), לכן, גם בפסוק כי ידעתיו גו' מפרש שידעתיו הוא לשון חיבה שחיבב אותו בבחי' תענוג העצמי [דגילוי תענוג העצמי הוא נעלה יותר מגילוי הרצון, שלכן גילוי הרצון יש גם עכשיו משא"כ גילוי התענוג יהי' רק לעתיד], כי ע"י המשכת וגילוי העלם העצמי, גם הגילויים הם באופן נעלה יותר.

And this is why this discourse opens with the verse "and G-d said, Shall I hide" — he explains that "I hide" *— hamechaseh ani, read as a Name: "the One who hides"* **is the level of the essential concealment of the Infinite, and the meaning of "shall I hide from Avraham" is that this level was revealed to Avraham: because through his service in the manner of returning light, from below to above — and also "he will command his children and his household after him ... to do tzedakah and justice" — therefore the level of the essential concealment was revealed to him. [And the verse says "shall I hide" as a question** *— Rashi: in wonder*, **because given his service (in the manner of returning light) it is not possible that this level not be revealed to him.] And since this discourse speaks of the revelation of the essential concealment ("I hide"), therefore in the verse "for I have known him" too he explains "known" as affection, that He cherished him with the essential delight [for the revelation of the essential delight is higher than the revelation of the will; which is why the revelation of the will exists even now, while the revelation of the delight will be only in the future], because through the drawing-down and revelation of the essential concealment, the revelations too are of a higher kind.**

והנה שני ענינים אלו דושמרו דרך הוי' (המשכה מלמעלה למטה) לעשות צדקה ומשפט (עבודה מלמטה למעלה) ישנם בכאו"א מישראל, במשך כל הדורות. דנוסף על זה שכל עניני התורה הם נצחיים, ובפרט הענינים דמעשה אבות סימן ונתינת כח לבנים, הרי בנוגע לענין זה אומר בפירוש אשר יצוה את בניו ואת ביתו אחריו, עד סוף כל הדורות. וציווי זה (שאברהם מצוה את בניו גו') הוא נתינת כח מיוחד (נוסף על הנתינת כח שמצד מעשה אבות) לכל אחד מישראל על שתי עבודות הנ"ל.

Now, these two matters, "they shall keep the way of Havayah" (drawing-down from above to below) and "to do tzedakah and justice" (service from below to above), are present in every Jew, in all generations. For besides the fact that all matters of the Torah are eternal *— Tanya ch. 17*, **and especially the matters of "the deeds of the fathers are a sign and an empowerment for the children"** *— the Midrash and Ramban: what happened to Avraham prefigures and enables what happens to Israel*, **regarding this matter the verse says explicitly, "so that he will command his children and his household after him," to the end of all generations. And this command (that Avraham commands his children, etc.) is a special empowerment (beyond the empowerment that comes from the deeds of the fathers) to every Jew for the two services above.**

KEY POINT

Why "Shall I hide". "I hide" is the essential concealment. It was revealed to Avraham because his service rose from below — and so even "known" means the higher thing, delight.

KEY POINT

Commanded to his children. Both services belong to every Jew: beyond the deeds of the fathers, this verse records an explicit command, and a command carries strength.

CHART · TWO DISCOURSES, TWO DIRECTIONS — OIS ALEF AND VAV

5666 · כי ידעתיו	ONE VERSE · שני מאמרים	5667 · המכסה אני
What the mitzvos draw down	**The road runs both ways**	**What the deed is in itself**
Essential will and essential delight; “known” as knowing and as affection. “Tzedakah and justice” is a detail of the way of G-d. The lower’s rising completes the descent.	The way of G-d goes down; tzedakah and justice comes back. First the light, then the deed — “study that leads to deed.” Both services are commanded to every Jew.	Deed as compulsion reaches the essential concealment — “I hide” — above all light. “Known” as affection alone. “Tzedakah and justice” is a second, higher service.

IN SHORT

The first discourse praises the mitzvos for what they draw down and reads “tzedakah and justice” inside the way of G-d; the second praises the deed in itself, as the future will, and reads it as a higher, second service. Hence it opens with “Shall I hide”: “I hide” is the essential concealment, revealed to Avraham through his rising service, and so “known” is read as affection alone. Both services belong to every Jew, by Avraham’s explicit command to his children.

Two lands of the living; and Psalm 117, where the nations praise

ארצות החיים — ב׳ ארצות; הללו את ה׳ כל גוים — העלאה והמשכה

BEFORE WE READ

The maamar closes with the Rebbe Rashab's two Tehillim chapters: 116, his chapter for the year that had just ended, and 117, his chapter for 5737, the year the maamar was said. In 116 David says, "I will walk before G-d in the lands of the living" — lands, plural, which Torah Ohr reads as the hidden world and the revealed world. The Rebbe maps them onto the two services in two ways and settles on the second: the hidden world is Torah, thought, light coming down; the revealed world is mitzvos, speech and deed, the lower rising. Then 117, the shortest psalm: "Praise G-d, all nations ... for His kindness has overwhelmed us, and the truth of G-d is forever." The nations praising is the world rising; the overwhelming kindness is the light descending; and the verse puts the descent as the reason for the ascent. The last word, Hallelukah, is the tenth song, the one still to be sung.

(7) This may be connected with the verse (in Tehillim chapter 116, the chapter of the one whose birthday it is for the past year *— the custom, from the Frierdiker Rebbe, of saying the psalm that matches one's years; the Rebbe Rashab, born 5621, entered his 116th year in 5736 and his 117th in 5737*) **"I will walk before G-d in the lands of the living" — "lands," in the plural; and it is explained in Torah Ohr that these are (in general) two lands, the hidden world and the revealed world** *— alma de'iskasya and alma de'isgalya, the Zohar's names for binah and malchus*, **and these two lands are drawing-down from above to below and elevation from below to above. And this may be explained in two ways. One: that the hidden world is the matter of elevation from below to above (for rising upward is a matter of becoming hidden), and the revealed world (the matter of revelation and descent) is the matter of drawing-down from above to below. But according to what is explained in Torah Ohr there, that the hidden world is the level of Leah (thought) and the revealed world is the level of Rachel (speech), one may say that the hidden world in a person's service is the study of Torah, whose essence is understanding and comprehension (thought)** *— and the Alter Rebbe rules that learning without understanding is not learning at all*, **and the revealed world is the performance of the mitzvos in speech and deed. On this basis, the hidden world is drawing-down from above to below and the revealed world is elevation from below to above, as explained at length above, that Torah is drawing-down from above to below and mitzvos are elevation from below to above.**

ז) ויש לקשר זה עם הפסוק (בתהלים קאַפיטל קטז, הקאַפיטל דבעל יום ההולדת דשנה שעברה) אתהלך לפני הוי׳ בארצות החיים, ארצות לשון רבים, ומבואר בתו״א שהם (בכלל) ב׳ ארצות, עלמא דאתכסיא ועלמא דאתגליא, דב׳ ארצות אלו הם המשכה מלמעלה למטה והעלאה מלמטה למעלה. ויש לבאר זה בב׳ אופנים. א׳ שעלמא דאתכסיא הו״ע העלאה מלמטה למעלה (דעלי׳ למעלה הו״ע של התעלמות) ועלמא דאתגליא (ענין הגילוי וירידה) הו״ע המשכה מלמעלה למטה. וע״פ המבואר בתו״א שם שעלמא דאתכסיא הוא בחי׳ לאה (מחשבה) ועלמא דאתגליא הוא בחי׳ רחל (דיבור), יש לומר, שעלמא דאתכסיא בעבודת האדם הוא לימוד התורה, שעיקר ענינה הוא הבנה והשגה (מחשבה), ועלמא דאתגליא הוא קיום המצוות בדיבור ומעשה. ועפ״ז, עלמא דאתכסיא הוא המשכה מלמעלה למטה ועלמא דאתגליא הוא העלאה מלמטה למעלה, כנ״ל בארוכה שתורה היא המשכה מלמעלה למטה ומצוות הם העלאה מלמטה למעלה.

ח) וע"י העבודה דאתהלך לפני הוי' בארצות החיים, באים לתוכן הקאַפּיטל דבעל יום ההולדת דשנה זו, הללו את הוי' כל גוים גו' כי גבר עלינו חסדו גו', שגם שני ענינים אלו הו"ע העלאה והמשכה. הללו גו' כל גוים גו' הו"ע בירור זיכוך והעלאת העולם, עד שגם הגוים והאומים מהללים ומשבחים את הוי'. וגבר עלינו חסדו גו' הו"ע המשכה מלמעלה למטה, דנוסף על זה שחסד (בכלל) הוא המשכה מלמעלה למטה, הנה החסד (ההמשכה) הוא בתוקף ובהתגברות, גבר גו' חסדו. והוא, שההמשכה היא מלמעלה מעלה ביותר, קצה הכי עליון, וביחד עם זה באה ההמשכה למטה מטה, עד לתחתון שאין תחתון למטה ממנו, וזהו מה שממשיך בכתוב ואמת הוי' לעולם, דאמת הוי' היא בחינה נעלית ביותר [וי"ל שזהו"ע מ"ש הרמב"ם שכל הנמצאים לא נמצאו אלא מאמיתת המצאו, דאמיתת

(8) And through the service of "I will walk before G-d in the lands of the living" one comes to the content of the chapter of the one whose birthday it is for this year *— 5737: Psalm 117, two verses*, **"Praise G-d, all nations ... for His kindness has overwhelmed us," for these two matters too are elevation and drawing-down. "Praise ... all nations" is the matter of refining, purifying and elevating the world** *— the Tzemach Tzedek reads the verse of the future, when the peoples will be turned to a pure speech*, **until even the nations and peoples praise and laud G-d. And "His kindness has overwhelmed us" is the matter of drawing-down from above to below — for besides the fact that kindness (in general) is a drawing-down from above to below, this kindness (drawing-down) is with force and intensity, "His kindness has overwhelmed." That is, the drawing-down is from the very highest, the uppermost extremity, and together with that the drawing-down comes to the very lowest, to the lowest of which there is no lower. And this is what the verse continues, "and the truth of G-d is forever," for "the truth of G-d" is a most exalted level [and one may say that this is what the Rambam writes, that all that exists exists only from the truth of His existence** *— the first halachah of the Mishneh Torah*, **for "the truth of His existence" belongs to the Name Havayah; which is why the Rambam brings (in the continuation there) the verse "and the L-rd G-d is true"** *— Yirmiyahu; the Rebbe's 5731 maamar, cited in note 58, reads the Rambam's "as the prophet says" as a truth beyond intellect*], **and nonetheless it is drawn "forever," into this physical world, and within that even to the nations and peoples.**

המצאו שייך לשם הוי', שלכן מביא ברמב"ם (בהמשך הענין שם) הפסוק והוי' אלקים אמת], ואעפ"כ הוא נמשך לעולם, לעולם הזה הגשמי, ובזה גופא גם לגוים ואומים. אמנם לאחרי כל העילוי דהמשכה זו, נאמר זה בכתוב (לא בתור ענין בפ"ע, אלא) בתור טעם (כי) על הללו גו' כל גוים. דתכלית הכוונה של ההמשכה היא שע"ז יהי' אח"כ בירור ועליית המטה, שגם הגוים גופא יהללו את הוי'. וע"ד העילוי דלעשות צדקה ומשפט שבא ע"י קדימת דרך הוי'. וסיום וחותם המזמור הוא הללוי', דאמיתית ההילול יהי' בשירה העשירית לע"ל, שאז יתגלה העילוי דהעלאת התחתון, מעשה גדול, בביאת משיח צדקנו במהרה בימינו ממש.

But after all the superiority of this drawing-down, the verse states it (not as a matter on its own, but) as the reason ("for") for "Praise ... all nations." For the ultimate intent of the drawing-down is that through it there should afterward be the refinement and elevation of the lower, that even the nations themselves praise G-d *— the descent is for the sake of the ascent, as in the verse of Vayeira: the way of G-d comes first so that tzedakah and justice can follow*. **This is like the superiority of "to do tzedakah and justice," which comes through the precedence of "the way of G-d." And the conclusion and seal of the psalm is "Hallelukah," for the true praise will be in the tenth song** *— the Mechilta counts nine songs sung in the past and one, the tenth, to be sung at the redemption* **in the future, when the superiority of the elevation of the lower, "deed is greater," will be revealed, with the coming of our righteous Moshiach, speedily in our days, mamash.**

KEY POINT

Two lands of the living. Psalm 116, the Rebbe Rashab's chapter for 5736: the hidden world is Torah, light descending; the revealed world is mitzvos, the lower ascending.

KEY POINT

Where the nations praise. Psalm 117, his chapter for 5737: kindness overwhelms from the very top so that even the nations rise and praise. Hallelukah is the tenth song.

IN SHORT

Psalm 116's "lands of the living," plural, are the hidden and revealed worlds: Torah, thought, the light descending; mitzvos, speech and deed, the lower ascending. Psalm 117, the chapter of 5737, holds the same pair — the nations praising is the world rising, the overwhelming kindness is the descent, and the descent is given as the reason for the ascent. Its last word, Hallelukah, is the tenth song, when "deed is greater" will be revealed with Moshiach.

FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

Shall I hide?

Before G-d tells Avraham what will happen to Sodom, He explains to Himself why He is telling him. “Shall I hide from Avraham what I am doing? … For I have known him, so that he will command his children after him to keep the way of G-d, to do tzedakah and justice.” The Rebbe Rashab, whose birthday is 20 Cheshvan, explained that verse twice in his great series of 5666 — once that year, once the next — and did not say the same thing. The second time he asked a plain question. If “the way of G-d” already means Torah and mitzvos, what does “to do tzedakah and justice” add?

His answer is a direction. The way of G-d is a road, and a road runs from the King’s city out to the furthest village: Torah and mitzvos are the highway along which G-d’s own Name travels down into a world that has nothing in common with Him. That is the descent. But a road you cannot travel back on, he said, is not a road — not even from the city’s point of view. Tzedakah and justice is the return trip: a person, standing in the furthest village, sends something up. He gives. First he sits in honest judgment on his own budget and decides what he actually needs. Then, and this is the third word, “to do,” he gives when it costs him something he wanted. That deed against resistance, the Rebbe says, reaches higher than any light that was ever sent down — it reaches the place in G-d that is hidden even from Himself.

On Shabbos Vayeira 5737, the Rebbe Rashab’s birthday, the Rebbe read the two discourses as a single lesson. The first praises the mitzvos for what they bring down. The second praises them for what they are. And that is why the second one opens with “Shall I hide.” The One who hides — the deepest concealment — cannot be hidden from someone who works from below; the verse says so in the form of a question, because the answer is obvious. And it says one thing more: Avraham will command this to his children. It is not his private achievement. It is an inheritance with a command attached, and a command carries the strength to keep it.

The Rebbe ended with the Rebbe Rashab’s two Tehillim chapters. In Psalm 116, the chapter for the year just past, David walks before G-d “in the lands of the living” — two lands, the inner one of learning where light comes down into the mind, and the outer one of mitzvos where speech and deed lift the world. In Psalm 117, the chapter for the new year, the shortest in the book, “all nations” praise G-d because “His kindness has overwhelmed us.” The kindness comes down from the very top so that even the furthest parts of the world can rise and praise. The last word, Hallelukah, is the song that has not yet been sung.

This Shabbos is 20 Cheshvan again, Shabbos Vayeira, the same calendar as 5737. The practical shape of the maamar is small and exact. Learn something properly this week, so that the light actually comes down. Then give something — and before you give, judge yourself honestly about what you need, and then give the part that hurts. The road, the Rebbe says, is only a road if you travel it back.

AROUND THE TABLE

· Which part of your week is the “friend’s house” — the place that will never look like a shul, and where G-d asked to live anyway?

· What would it mean this month to judge yourself out of one luxury, and give the difference?

· Is there a mitzvah you do only because you must? The maamar says it reaches furthest. Does that change how you do it?

The whole maamar on one page

א · TWO DISCOURSES ON ONE VERSE: THE WAY OF G-D, AND TZEDAKAH AND JUSTICE

The Rebbe Rashab explained this verse in 5666 and again in 5667. The first discourse reads "known" as both knowing and affection and "tzedakah and justice" as a detail of "the way of G-d"; the second reads "known" as affection alone and "tzedakah and justice" as a second, higher service: the way of G-d flows down, tzedakah and justice rises up.

ב · WHAT A ROAD IS: A LINK BETWEEN TWO PLACES FAR APART

A road is an intermediary that joins two places with no proportion between them, as the king's highway joins the capital to the remotest village. So the kav, the line of light from the Infinite, is called a way: its outer aspect brings the worlds into being, its inner aspect brings the Infinite's revelations into them.

ג · TORAH AND MITZVOS AS THE ROAD OF THE NAME; A DWELLING IN ANOTHER'S HOUSE

Torah and mitzvos are "the way of Havayah" because they set right the secret of His Name, drawing the Essence's revelation into the world, down to the lowest place where there is no lower: the dwelling G-d desired. The Rebbe Rashab's analogy of a man living in his friend's house teaches that the lower stays lower — the house remains the friend's — and the Essence lives in it with its whole self.

ד · A ROAD IS ALSO FOR COMING BACK: TORAH, MITZVOS, AND "TO DO TZEDAKAH AND JUSTICE"

A road is also for returning. Torah draws the Essence down into a human mind until it is called his; the mitzvos raise the lower into a vessel, above all when done as iskafya, "doing" as compulsion. The verse spells it out: tzedakah, all the mitzvos; justice, judging oneself out of luxuries; "to do," doing it against resistance.

ה · WHY RAISING THE LOWER MATTERS: THE LIGHT TAKES HOLD, AND DEED REACHES THE ESSENCE

Elevating the lower matters twice over. A road one cannot return on is no road even from its start: a light that reaches a place that is not a vessel does not unite with it, so the drawing-down itself is incomplete. And the rising of the lower, done as iskafya, reaches the essential concealment above all revelations — the meaning of "deed is greater."

ו · THE INNER CONTENT OF THE TWO DISCOURSES: "SHALL I HIDE," AND "KNOWN" AS AFFECTION

The first discourse praises the mitzvos for what they draw down and reads "tzedakah and justice" inside the way of G-d; the second praises the deed in itself, as the future will, and reads it as a higher, second service. Hence it opens with "Shall I hide": "I hide" is the essential concealment, revealed to Avraham through his rising service, and so "known" is read as affection alone. Both services belong to every Jew, by Avraham's explicit command to his children.

ז–ח · TWO LANDS OF THE LIVING; AND PSALM 117, WHERE THE NATIONS PRAISE

Psalm 116's "lands of the living," plural, are the hidden and revealed worlds: Torah, thought, the light descending; mitzvos, speech and deed, the lower ascending. Psalm 117, the chapter of 5737, holds the same pair — the nations praising is the world rising, the overwhelming kindness is the descent, and the descent is given as the reason for the ascent. Its last word, Hallelukah, is the tenth song, when "deed is greater" will be revealed with Moshiach.

Colophon

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