

דרעיניכון בחודתא אשתחלפו “Be Changed by the Renewal of Your Minds”

For, when a person actively fulfils all the precepts which require physical action, and with his power of speech he occupies himself in expounding all the 613 commandments and their practical application, and with his power of thought he comprehends all that is comprehensible to him in the Pardes of the Torah— then the totality of the 613 “organs” of his soul are clothed in the 613 Commandments of the Torah.

Specifically: the faculties of ChaBaD (Wisdom, Understanding and Knowledge) in his soul are clothed in the comprehension of the Torah, which he comprehends in Pardes, to the extent of his mental capacity and the supernal root of his soul. And the middot, namely fear and love, together with their offshoots and ramifications, are clothed in the fulfilment of the commandments in deed and in word, namely, in the study of Torah which is “The equivalent of all the commandments.” For love is the root of all the 248 positive commands, all originating in it and having no true foundation without it, inasmuch as he who fulfils them in truth, truly loves the name of G-d and desires to cleave to Him in truth; for one cannot truly cleave to Him except through the fulfilment of the 248 commandments which are the 248 “Organs of the King,” as it were, as is explained elsewhere; whilst fear is the root of the 365 prohibitive commands, fearing to rebel against the Supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He; or a still deeper fear than this— when he feels ashamed in the presence of the Divine greatness to rebel against His glory and do what is evil in His eyes, namely, any of the abominable things hated by G-d, which are the kelipot and sitra achra, which draw their nurture from man below and have their hold in him through the 365 prohibitive commands [that he violates].

(Tanya Likutei Amarim Chapter 4)

Now, when an intellect conceives and comprehends a concept with its intellectual faculties, this intellect grasps the concept and encompasses it. This concept is [in turn] grasped, enveloped and enclothed within that intellect which conceived and comprehended it.

The mind, for its part, is also clothed in the concept at the time it comprehends and grasps it with the intellect. For example, when a person understands and comprehends, fully and clearly, any halachah (law)... , his intellect grasps and encompasses it and, at the same time, is clothed in it. Consequently, as the particular halachah is the wisdom and will of G-d, ... when a person knows and comprehends with his intellect such a verdict in accordance with the law ... he has thus comprehended, grasped and encompassed with his intellect the will and wisdom of the Holy One, blessed be He, Whom no thought can grasp, nor His will and wisdom, except when they are clothed in the laws that have been set out for us. [Simultaneously] the intellect is also clothed in them [the Divine will and wisdom].

This is a wonderful union, like which there is none other, and which has no parallel anywhere in the material world, whereby complete oneness and unity, from every side and angle, could be attained.

Hence the special superiority, infinitely great and wonderful, that is in the commandment of knowing the Torah and comprehending it, over all the commandments involving action, and even those relating to speech, and even the commandment to study the Torah, which is fulfilled through speech. For, through all the commandments involving speech or action, the Holy One, blessed be He, clothes the soul and envelops it from head to foot with the Divine light. However, with regard to knowledge of the Torah, apart from the fact that the intellect is clothed in Divine wisdom, this Divine wisdom is also contained in it, to the extent that his intellect comprehends, grasps and encompasses, as much as it is able so to do, of the knowledge of the Torah, every man according to his intellect, his knowledgeable capacity, and his comprehension in Pardes.

Since, in the case of knowledge of the Torah, the Torah is clothed in the soul and intellect of a person, and is absorbed in them, it is called “bread” and “food” of the soul. For just as physical bread nourishes the body as it is absorbed internally, in his very inner self, where it is transformed into blood and flesh of his flesh, whereby he lives and exists—so, too, it is with the knowledge of the Torah and its comprehension by the soul of the person who studies it well, with a concentration of his intellect, until the Torah is absorbed by his intellect and is united with it and they become one. This becomes nourishment for the soul, and its inner life from the Giver of life, the blessed En Sof, Who is clothed in His wisdom and in His Torah that are [absorbed] in it [the soul].

This is the meaning of the verse, “Yea, Thy Torah is within my inward parts.”
(Tanya Likutei Amarim Chapter 5)

Weep with Those Weeping (Rom. 12:15)

Our Rabbis have taught: When Israel is in trouble and one of them separates himself from them, then the two ministering angels who accompany every man come and place their hands upon his head and say, ‘So-and-so who separated himself from the community shall not behold the consolation of the community’. Another [Baraita] taught: When the community is in trouble let not a man say, ‘I will go to my house and I will eat and drink and all will be well with me’. For of him who does so Scripture says, And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine — ‘Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die’. (Is. 22:13) What follows after this [verse]? — And the Lord of Hosts revealed Himself in mine ears; surely this iniquity shall not be expiated by you till ye die. This is the conduct of the ordinary man, but what does Scripture say of the conduct of the wicked? Come ye, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to-morrow shall be as this day. (Is. 56:12) What follows after this [verse]? The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart . . . that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. (Is. 57:1) ***But rather a man should share in the distress of the community***, for so we find that Moses, our teacher, shared in the distress of the community, as it is said, But Moses’ hands were heavy; and they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat thereon. (Ex. 17:12) Did not then Moses have a bolster or a cushion to sit on? This is then what Moses meant [to convey], ‘As Israel are in distress I too will share with them. He who shares in the distress of the community will merit to behold its consolation’. Perhaps a man will say, ‘Who is there to testify against me?’ The very stones of his house and its beams testify against him, as it is written, For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it. (Hab. 2:11) In the school of R. Shila it was taught: The two ministering angels who accompany every man testify against him, as it is said, For He will give His angels charge over thee. (Ps. 91:11) R. Hidka says: A man's own soul testifies against him, as it is said, Keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. (Micah 7:5) And some say: A man's own limbs testify against him, as it is said, Ye are my witnesses saith the Lord. (Is. 43:10) (b.Ta'anit 11a)

It is written in a certain Gospel, which is called according to the Hebrews (if at least anyone care to accept it, not as authoritative, but to throw light on the question before us): The other of the two rich men said to him: Master, what good thing must I do that I may live? He said to him, “Man fulfill the Torah and the Prophets. He answered him, “That I have done.” He said to him, “Go and sell all you possess and distribute among the poor, and then come and follow me.” But the rich man began to scratch his head and it pleased him not. And the Lord said to him, “How can you say, ‘I have fulfilled the Torah and the Prophets?’ For it stands written in the Torah “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev. 19:18) and behold many of your brothers, sons of Abraham, are begrimed with dirt and die of hunger—and your house is full of many good things and nothing at all comes forth from it to them. And he turned and said to Simon his disciple, who was sitting by him, “Simon, son of Jona, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.” (Origin; On Mt. 15:14 on 19:16ff in the Latin Version)

Do Not Recompense Anyone Evil for Evil (Rom. 12:17)

Answer insult with silence. When someone hurts you, do not answer in kind. You will then be worthy of genuine honor— honor that is inner honor, honor from Above. (Rebbe Nachman of Breslov; L.M. I:6)

Be Diligent to Do Good Before All Men (Rom. 12:17)

One should be guiltless before other people as well as before God, for it says, ‘You shall be guiltless before God and before Israel,’ (Bamidbar/Numbers 32:22) (m.Shekalim 3:2)

Be at Peace With Every Man (Rom. 12:18)

Be disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving people and drawing them near to the Torah. (m.Avot 1:12)

Rom. 12:19-20

19 And do not avenge your nefeshot, my beloved, but give no place to anger: for it is written, **If you will not seek judgment for your nefesh, I will perform your judgment**, says Eloah.

20 And: **If your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him drink. And if you do these to him, you will heap coals of fire upon his head.**

(Rom. 12:19-20)

You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am YHWH.

(Lev. 19:18)

Say not you, I will requite evil: wait for YHWH, and He will save you.

(Prov. 20:22)

Say not, I will do so to him as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to his work.

(Prov. 24:29)

Vengeance is Mine, and recompense, against the time when their foot shall slip. For the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that are to come upon them, shall make haste.

(Deut. 32:35)

O YHWH, You El, to whom vengeance belongs: You El to whom vengeance belongs, shine forth!

(Ps. 94:1)

21 If your enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:

22 For you will heap coals of fire upon his head, and YHWH will reward you.

(Prov. 25:21-22)

It must not be supposed that Joseph acted in the spirit of the verse, "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink, for thou wilt heap coals of fire upon his head" (Prov. xxv, 21). Joseph was too righteous a man for this. Far be it, then, from Joseph to have acted in that spirit. Indeed, he acted as a man to his brother, in true brotherly love without any other motive. And not only towards Simeon, but towards all his brethren he acted so, as it is written: **THEN JOSEPH COMMANDED TO FILL THEIR VESSELS WITH CORN, AND TO GIVE THEM PROVISION FOR THE WAY; AND THUS IT WAS DONE UNTO THEM . All this he did in a spirit of brotherhood.**?

(Zohar 1:200b)

Solomon called it [the Evil Inclination] the Enemy, as it is said, If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat and if he be thirsty give him water to drink. For thou wilt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord will reward thee; read not, 'will reward thee' but 'will cause it to be at peace with thee.'

(b.Sukkot 52a)

If your enemy is hungry: [to be explained] according to its apparent meaning. Our Rabbis, however, explained it as referring to the evil inclination. If he is hungry and tells you to sate him with sins, draw yourself into the study hall and feed him the bread of Torah, and likewise, give him the water of Torah to drink.

(Rashi On Prov. 25:21)

will reward you: Heb. לך ישלם, will cause him to make peace with you, that he should not overpower you.

(Rashi On. Prov. 25:22)

The Armor of Light (Rom. 13:12)

7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves garments.

8 And they heard the voice of YHWH Elohim, walking in the garden toward the cool of the day. And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of YHWH Elohim, among the trees of the garden.

9 And YHWH Elohim called unto the man, and said unto him: Where are you?

10 And he said, I heard Your voice in the garden. And I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.

11 And He said: Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree whereof I commanded you that you should not eat?

(Gen. 3:7-11)

What does it mean "they knew they were naked"? Did they not know they were naked before the fall? The Zohar sheds some light on this event:

...when Adam sinned, Elohim took from him the armour of the bright and holy letters with which he had been encompassed, and then he and his wife were afraid, perceiving that they had been stripped; so it says AND THEY KNEW THAT THEY WERE NAKED. At first they had been invested with those glorious crowns which gave them protection and exemption from death. When they sinned, they were stripped of them, and then they knew that death was calling them, that they had been deprived of their exemption, and that they had brought death on themselves and on all the world.'
(Zohar 1:53a)

Before they were naked but not ashamed because they were clothed with the Armour of Elohim. But after the fall they knew that they were naked because they had been stripped of this armour. Later this armor was restored to mankind with the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai, but it was lost again when the people of Israel sinned:

1 And YHWH spoke unto Moshe: Depart; go up hence. You and the people that you have brought up out of the land of Egypt--unto the land of which I swore unto Avraham, to Yitz'chak, and to Ya'akov, saying: Unto your seed will I give it.

2 And I will send an angel before you: and I will drive out the Kena'anite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the P'izzite, the Hivite, and the Y'vusite;

3 Unto a land flowing with milk and honey. For I will not go up in the midst of you, for you are a stiff-necked people, lest I consume you in the way.

4 And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned, and no man did put on him his ornaments.

5 And YHWH said unto Moshe: Say unto the children of Yisra'el, You are a stiff-necked people; if I go up into the midst of you for one moment, I shall consume you. Therefore now, put off your ornaments from you, that I may know what to do unto you.

6 And the children of Yisra'el stripped themselves of their ornaments, from mount Horev onward.

(Ex. 33:1-6 HRV)

The Talmud explains of these verses as follows:

R. Simla lectured: When the Israelites gave precedence to 'we will do' over 'we will hearken,' (Ex. 24:7) six hundred thousand ministering angels came and set two crowns upon each man of Israel, one as a reward corresponding to 'we will do,' and the other as a reward for 'we will hearken'. But as soon as Israel sinned, one million two hundred thousand destroying angels descended and removed them, as it is said, And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments from mount Horeb. (In Ex. 33:6) R. Hama son of R. Hanina said: At Horeb they put them on and at Horeb they put them off. At Horeb they put them on, as we have stated. At Horeb they put them off, for it is written, And [the children of Israel] stripped themselves, etc. R. Johanan observed: And Moses was privileged and received them all, for in proximity thereto it is stated, And Moses took the tent. (Ex. 33:7) Resh Lakish said: [Yet] the Holy One, blessed be He, will return them to us in the future, for it is said, and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; (IS. 35:10) the joy from of old shall be upon their heads.
(b.Shab. 88a)

The Zohar elaborates on these crowns saying:

R. Hiya said: 'The world was in a state of poverty and misery from the time Adam transgressed the command of the Almighty until Noah came and offered up a sacrifice, when its prosperity returned.' R. Jose said: 'The world was not properly settled, nor was the earth purged from the defilement of the serpent, until Israel stood before Mount Sinai, where they laid fast hold of the Tree of Life, and so established the world firmly. Had not Israel backslided and sinned before the Holy One, blessed be He, they would never have died, since the scum of the serpent had been purged out of them. But as soon as they sinned, the first tablets of the Torah were broken-those tablets which spelt complete freedom, freedom from the serpent who is the "end of all flesh". When the Levites rose up to slay the guilty, the evil serpent went in front of them, but he had no power over Israel, because they were girt with a certain armour which protected them against his attacks. When, however, Elohim said to Moses, "Therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee" (Ex. 33:5), this was the signal that they were placed in the power of the serpent (this is indicated by the form vayithnaselu, which shows that they were stripped by the hand of another). The ornaments referred to are those which they received at Mount Horeb at the time when the Torah was given to Israel.'
(Zohar 1:63b)

But after they sinned, they were not able to look even on the face of the deputy (Moses). How was this? Because 'the children of Israel were deprived of their ornament from Mount Sinai', to wit, of the armour with which they were girt on Mount Sinai in order that the evil serpent should not have power over them.
(Zohar 1:52b)