

Ohr Torah- Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Parashat Mikeitz

Siman #53

(On the verse "And he made him ride in his second chariot...")

Every person must ensure they do not become a "female" (*nukva*) toward any desire, meaning they should not chase after pleasures or derive gratification from them. To do so would place them in a state of *nukva* toward desires. Instead, one should strive to be in a state of *nukva* solely for the service of God (*Hashem Yitbarach*).

It is taught that Joseph was given his greatness because of his own merits: "His mouth, which did not sin in speech, led to 'At your word shall all my people be ruled' (Genesis 41:40)." This teaches that Joseph was not a *nukva* toward desire, and therefore he merited wisdom and became the firstborn, as it is written, "The birthright was given to Joseph" (1 Chronicles 5:1).

The term *firstborn* (*bechor*) represents wisdom. This is why the letters of *bechor* are sequential in the units, tens, and hundreds (*bet, kaf, resh*), representing his role as the "second to the king," connecting the king and the people. Before the letter *bet* is *aleph*, which represents the King without limits or definition ("before Aleph, what can you count?"). After the letters of *bechor* come *gimmel, lamed, shin*, which spell *shagal* (*female consort* or *desire*), signifying the aspect of *nukva*.

However, one who is bound to wisdom (*chochmah*) is automatically detached from all desires because desire exists only for one who is bound by time. Desires arise when a person lacks something at one moment and fulfills that desire at another moment. But one who is attached to wisdom, which is above time, exists in a state where lack and fulfillment are simultaneous and inseparable. This is a deep concept.

Although it is stated that Joseph merited the attribute of *connection* (*hitkashrut*), and the tribes are considered the limbs of the Shechinah (Divine Presence), one who understands will realize that the essence of *connection* is indeed wisdom, as it flows from the intellect. This is why the Zohar states, "Under His feet was something like sapphire brickwork," which is not typically revealed because it belongs to the hidden world (*alma d'itkasya*). Joseph merited this because he was bound to wisdom, as mentioned.

Thus, Pharaoh said to Joseph: **"Only the throne shall I make greater than you" (Genesis 41:40).**

The throne represents concealment, as Joseph belonged to the hidden world, but Pharaoh could not reach this level because he was attached to desires. Pharaoh, whose name implies *revelation*, was incapable of accessing the hidden world. In

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contrast, Joseph, whose name means *Tzafnat Paneach* ("revealer of hidden things"), was granted the ability to reveal what is concealed.

This is the meaning of **"He made him ride in his second chariot"** (*merkavat ha-mishneh*). The term *mishneh* (second) relates to the concept of the firstborn, as previously explained (the letters of *merkavat* are also the letters of *mevukeret*—"firstborn"). Wisdom (*chochmah*) is referred to as "second to the king," as mentioned.

Avrech (*Genesis 41:43*): The letters *Av* ("father") refer to wisdom, while *rech* refers to a soft king (*melech richa*), meaning one who connects the king and the people. This refers to the crown (*keter*), which bridges the upper world and the attribute of kingship (*malchut*).

Siman #54

Genesis 41:36:

"The food shall be as a reserve for the land..."

The seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine in Egypt correspond to the mystical concept of *"an inheritance hastily seized at the beginning"* (Proverbs 20:21), related to the idea of *"he reigned and he died"* (Genesis 36:31-39). If not for this order, it would have been fitting for the seven years of famine to come first, reflecting the principle of darkness preceding light. However, the years of plenty came first, corresponding to the concept of the "seven kings who died" (the sefirot of *Tohu*, the chaotic world), where greatness (*gadlut*) initially manifests but leads to downfall, as each one declares, *"I will reign."*

Now, the attribute of *malchut* (sovereignty) derives from the lower levels. A person appointed as king is originally just like any other person, except that the desire of the people elevates them to kingship. Since *malchut* is fundamentally a very low level—dependent on receiving from its subjects—its "feet descend into death" (Proverbs 5:5).

This serves as an open rebuke to anyone who exalts themselves above others, claiming to be wiser or more pious. Such a person is, in essence, embodying the thought of *"I will reign,"* deriving pleasure from a level lower than themselves. This stems from the "breaking" (*shevirah*), as they mistakenly believe they are elevating themselves to a higher level. In truth, they are lowering themselves, for true completion lies in elevating oneself to a level higher than one's current standing. This is expressed in the teaching, *"Be the tail of lions..."* (Avot 4:15), and this is sufficient for understanding.

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In truth, nothing exists in the world that does not begin as a primordial thought. Even greatness originates in this thought. This is why the Sages taught, "*Cursed is one who possesses [pride], and cursed is one who lacks it.*" This reflects the reality that pride descends into the world because it was present in that primordial thought. However, one who possesses it must elevate it to its source, which is that original thought containing two aspects:

1. "*I will reign*" and
2. "*There is no king without a nation.*"

The notion of "*I will reign*" in its original thought represents the ultimate humility, as the Sages taught: "*Wherever you find His greatness, there you also find His humility*" (Megillah 31a). For kingship, when it pertains to God, is the ultimate form of humility, as explained elsewhere.

Zohar commentary:

Jacob knew that his descendants would be exiled in Egypt. This is the meaning of "*Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt*" (Genesis 42:1)—he saw that sparks of holiness had fallen into Egypt due to the *shattering* (*shevirah*). This is the significance of "*there was grain*" (*shever*)—it indicates brokenness, which needed to be elevated through exile.

This is what Joseph meant when he said, "*God sent me ahead of you to preserve life*" (Genesis 45:5)—to revive these sparks of holiness within Egypt. Similarly, "*Joseph gathered all the money*" (Genesis 47:14) reflects the process of collecting and elevating these sparks.

The Sages taught that because God promised Abraham, "*Afterwards, they will leave with great wealth*" (Genesis 15:14), He brought famine to all the lands to concentrate wealth in Egypt. The deeper intent was that the sparks of holiness dispersed across the lands would be brought to Egypt, so that the Children of Israel could elevate them from there.

The term "*reserve*" (*pikadon*) implies unification, as in the expression "*to remember his wife*" (Genesis 21:1, implying intimacy). Thus, "*The food shall be as a reserve for the land*" indicates unification, where "*the land*"—representing the lower level—becomes unified with the higher level through the elevation of the sparks from the *shattering* (*shevirah*). This corresponds to the raising of *mayin nukvin* (feminine waters), and this is sufficient for understanding. (*ve-dai le-mevin*).

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Siman #55

"Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him" (Genesis 42:8).

This teaches that he left without a beard and returned with a beard.

Explanation:

Hiskashrut (connection) is referred to as Joseph. Joseph is counted among his brothers, the twelve tribes, which correspond to the twelve boundaries of diagonal space and the twelve constellations. Without Joseph, they are only eleven, as Joseph represents the point that receives vitality and gives life to all living things.

It is known from the Talmud that sometimes God appears to people as an elder, and at other times, He appears as a young man. The concept is that a wealthy person will only have compassion for a poor person by imagining themselves in the state of the poor person and descending to their level.

It is also known that God exists beyond time. When Israel behaves righteously, they too exist beyond time. However, if, God forbid, they fall into a state bound by time, God "imagines" in His thought the children who are in that state of being bound by time and descends to their level.

If so, how does God, who is beyond time, have compassion on us, who are within time? The analogy explains this: God, in His thought, envisions the children who are bound by time and descends to their level. Thus, He appears to them as an elder. This is the secret of the "Thirteen Attributes of the Beard" (*yud gimel tikunei dikna*).

A eunuch (*saris*) has no beard. This is the meaning of "he left without a beard and returned with a beard," as one who is a eunuch cannot grow a beard. However, when he does have a beard, this reflects the attribute of **"The Lord is gracious and righteous, our God is compassionate" (Psalms 116:5).**

Compassion comes from God descending to their level, which is an aspect of contraction (*tzimtzum*), and this is represented by the term **"our God" (Elokeinu)**. However, **"gracious" (chanun)** refers to an unearned gift, without descending to this level. This reflects the name **YHVH (Hashem)**.

This concept is the opposite of *tzimtzum* (contraction).