

# Temach Tzedek

## Ohr HaTorah

### Parsha's Vayishlach

#### "And a man wrestled with him"

it is known that this battle symbolizes the struggle of the Sitra Achra (the other side, representing impurity) against the side of holiness. This is akin to the concept of "The war of God against Amalek," as is explained in Pardes (Gate 17), which is the "Gate of Jacob's thigh." It cites the Zohar: 'And he was limping on his thigh.' This refers to the Eternal One of Israel, for prophecy did not arise from that place until Samuel the prophet came. And concerning this, it is written: 'The Eternal One of Israel does not lie.' At that time, this level was rectified."

(Question: "But what about Moses' prophecy, which came earlier?" The answer: "Moses' prophecy is unique, as it is written: 'No prophet arose in Israel like Moses,' whose prophecy came from the luminous lens (Aspaklaria Me'ira), which is Tiferet, higher than Netzach and Hod. When it says 'prophecy did not arise from there,' it refers to other prophets who saw through the dim lens (Aspaklaria She'eina Me'ira), which corresponds to Malchut. Pardes explains under the entry for 'prophecy' that prophecy is linked to Malchut due to the influence upon the prophets through it, as they draw from Netzach and Hod. Prophets are represented by Netzach and Hod, and prophecy occurs through them within Malchut.")

There remains a difficulty in understanding the plain meaning of the verse: 'The Eternal One of Israel'—as this concept derives from the notion that God is not human, as explained in the discourse beginning 'For the Conductor, on the Eighth.' How, then, could the angel harm Netzach? Moreover, it is unclear how the Sitra Achra could fight against holiness, given that all the vitality of the kelipot (husks of impurity) derives from holiness. This is akin to the teaching, "Not like Abraham, from whom emerged [Ishmael, etc.]." In the future, when clarity is achieved, it will be written: "I will remove the spirit of impurity from the earth," "He swallows wealth but will vomit it," "Death will be swallowed forever," and "It will be as if it never existed." It also says: "There is a time when one person has dominion over another to his detriment." How, then, could the Sitra Achra have the power to fight?

The explanation is as follows: The Supreme Emanator, blessed be He, is Sovev Kol Almin (encompassing all worlds), and before Him, darkness and light are alike. (As explained elsewhere in the discourse beginning 'This matzah,' where it clarifies: "The precise wording is kechashcha ke'ora ('like darkness as light') with two 'kaf' prefixes. It should have simply said chashecha ke'ora ('darkness as light'), but the additional kaf implies not only that darkness does not obscure light, but even that light is equal to darkness. For before the Supreme Crown, even the most luminous light is as if it were dark.")

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‘A spider grasps with its hands and is in kings’ palaces’ (Proverbs 30). (This is mentioned in Midrash Rabbah, Toldot, end of chapter 6.)

Through the merit of the hands that prepared delicacies, it can be said that this corresponds to the level of “150” (Kof Nun), for in holiness, all ten sefirot are called by the name of the Tetragrammaton (Hashem), and similarly, Malchut is called by this name. In Pardes under the entry for “name,” it is described as a type of garment. In contrast, in the Sitra Achra (the “other side”), it is called “spider” (shamemit), corresponding to “name” but with additional letters. The addition of letters diminishes its value, in accordance with the principle that “adding detracts.” It also relates to the term “aged and foolish” (zaken ashamai), as explained in Pardes, Gate of Permutations, Chapter 1, regarding the aspect of the “white-haired elder” of the Sitra Achra, which opposes the garments of “pure white snow” and “hair as clean wool.”

Through the merit of the hands, it can be said that the vitality of the Sitra Achra comes from two aspects: Chesed (kindness) and Gevurah (severity), whereas the central column does not provide sustenance.

**Summary:** The concept of the spider corresponds to the contrast between the name of holiness and its parallel in the Sitra Achra. The spider exists even in the king’s palace because it takes up no space and can exist even there without interference, as it says: “These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before a king ruled over the children of Israel,” referring to idolaters.

(It is written in Ma’amar Ha’aruch under the letter mem, section 44, that the kings of Edom represent the seven sefirot of the world of Nekudim [the world of points] that broke and emanated from Binah, the “land of Edom,” and were called the “kings of Edom.” Similarly, this is explained in the book Kol Berama in the commentary on the Idra Rabba at its beginning. See also Likutei Torah, parashat Matos, in the discourse beginning “An explanation of Moses speaking to the heads of the tribes,” as well as in parashat Behar in the discourse beginning “An explanation of ‘You shall observe my Sabbaths.’”)

This state existed only “before a king ruled over the children of Israel.” However, after this, it is written: “There is no king in Edom,” because a contraction (tzimtzum) occurred in the Infinite Light (Ohr Ein Sof), such that the innermost light flows only to the side of holiness. “May God shine His face upon us, Selah”—this refers to the arousal from below (it’aruta diletata), where the joy of divine service with gladness of heart arouses a corresponding response from above, as explained in Likutei Torah, in the discourses for Shavuot, page 11.

The kelipot (husks of impurity) receive only from the “backside,” akin to someone who throws something over their shoulder. They are called “other gods” because Israel causes the Infinite Light to rest only upon those who are nullified (bittul).

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**Summary:** This battle represents the struggle between holiness and the Sitra Achra. However, it is difficult to understand how such a battle is possible, as even the verse “The Lord will bring down His enemies” raises the question: Who are the enemies of God?

Before God, however, “darkness and light are alike,” as represented by the spider that is caught with its hands but is found even in the king’s palace. Nevertheless, the contraction ensures that the innermost light flows only to the side of holiness, illuminating those who are nullified.

B) The beginning of bittul (nullification) is in Chochmah, Binah, and Da’at (Chabad), which are in a state of true nullification. From there, it extends to the middot (attributes), which derive from Chabad through contemplation, leading to emotional arousal in the heart with love and awe of God. This arises from meditating on the greatness of the Infinite One. However, this is not absolute nullification like that of Chabad.

(There is a question here: In a person, when emotional arousal in the heart with love and awe occurs, it seems to be more significant than contemplation that remains only in the mind and intellect without touching the heart. This requires clarification, as noted in Tanya, Chapter 16, regarding “a good thought, which God combines with action.”) Afterward, it extends to Netzach and Hod (Nehi), which represent an even greater descent. These are not inner attributes but outward expressions, enabling influence upon others—teaching, giving charity, etc. Nevertheless, nullification extends even to this level and reaches Malchut of Asiyah (the world of action), which is the conclusion of holiness and nullification. From there, it separates to become the “world of separation,” characterized by a sense of independent existence and self-awareness. This level is sustained only through the “backside,” receiving from the rearrangement of letters through gaps and spaces, as is known.

**Summary:** The beginning of bittul (self-nullification) is in Chabad (intellectual faculties) above, and likewise in a person below (though this requires further investigation). From there, it extends to the middot (emotional attributes), and afterward to Netzach and Hod (outward expressions), until it reaches Malchut in the world of Asiyah (action). From there, it separates to form the “world of separation,” characterized by self-perception as an independent entity. Their reception is only from the rearrangement of letters, etc.

It is written: “Though you make your nest high like an eagle...” This refers to those who exalt themselves with arrogance and pride. This arrogance above reflects their desire to draw sustenance from the Infinite Light (Ein Sof) without passing through the channels of holiness. Holiness involves the flow of nullification, which occurs through Israel, and from this, they have no sustenance. Instead, they draw from the “backside” of the nukva (feminine aspect), but they desire to receive the Infinite Light itself, for before it, “darkness and light are alike,” where bittul holds no significance. Even though it is written, “If you are righteous, what do you give Him?” and “The spider is found in the

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king's palace," they seek sustenance directly from this source and wish to bypass the channels of holiness, which come through the "pores of the skin," such as hair and nails.

(A question arises: How can the Sitra Achra ascend and draw sustenance from the Infinite Light itself, which is above contraction, as mentioned earlier? It can be explained based on the discourse in the Siddur regarding Erev Shabbat, beginning with the statement: "Understand the saying..." The essence of the answer is that while the lights are drawn from the "line" (kav), the vessels come from the "residue" (reshimu), whose root is connected to the essence of the Infinite Light, which is beyond contraction. This corresponds to the verse "I fill the heavens and the earth," and from this level, the reshimu is drawn.)

The reshimu is explained at the end of Likutei Torah, parashat Behar, in the commentary on the verse "You shall observe My Sabbaths." It refers to the 231 gates (permutations of letters), front and back. The contraction was such that the light withdrew so that it would not be revealed through the letters, etc. Thus, the letters of the reshimu are imbued with the aspect of Sovev Kol Almin (encompassing light), corresponding to the statement, "I fill the heavens and the earth." However, this aspect remains hidden.

The kelipot (husks of impurity) emerged from the breaking of the vessels, which means the breaking of the letters, as the letters themselves are vessels. This is discussed in Likutei Torah, in the commentary on "The heads of the tribes." It has already been explained that the vessels derive from the reshimu. When the vessels broke, they fell into the realm of the kelipot. Because these letters fell from the vessels, the kelipot desire to draw sustenance from the reshimu, which originates from the level of "I fill the heavens and the earth," which is higher than the "line" (kav).

It can also be said that this sustenance is through the encompassing light (makif) of the levona (frankincense), which likely illuminates the vessels of Tohu (chaos) more intensely than it does in the regular order of the kelipot. However, the verse says: "From there I will bring you down," says God. For Hashem represents the process of chain-like descent, contraction, and expansion, such as the stages of Akudim, Nekudim, etc. From there, God says, "I will bring you down." This means that through the process of contraction and descent, the inner light is drawn only to those who are nullified, while the kelipot are left with only the external aspects.

**Summary:** The kelipot wish to draw sustenance from the Infinite Light (Ein Sof), where "darkness and light are alike." They do so through the reshimu, which originates from Sovev Kol Almin ("I fill the heavens and the earth") but remains concealed. Their audacity lies in their desire to receive directly from the reshimu, bypassing the channels of holiness. However, the verse states: "From there I will bring you down," referring to the contraction that ensures the inner light flows only to the side of holiness.

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C) This flow is drawn through an arousal from below (It'aruta d'Letata), specifically through the aspect of Jacob, who channels the levels of Akudim, Nekudim, etc., ensuring that the contraction of the Infinite Light (Ein Sof) occurs only through holiness. Through the aspect of bittul (self-nullification), the Sitra Achra sought to elevate itself "like an eagle," as it is written: "And a man wrestled with him." Jacob, however, is the choicest of the patriarchs. (As stated in Midrash Rabbah on Vayishlach, chapter 76, deduced from the verse: "For Jacob, God has chosen for Himself" (Psalms 135), because Abraham and Isaac represent Chesed and Gevurah, while Jacob represents Tiferet, the middle column, which ascends to Keter. Similarly, Midrash Rabbah on Bechukotai, chapter 36, explains: "Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachman said, 'Abraham was saved only by the merit of Jacob.' It is likened to a person who is destined to bear a daughter who will marry the king." This reflects the idea that the supreme unity of the Holy One, blessed be He, is drawn specifically through Jacob because his level reaches Keter. See also Zohar, Part 1, Chayei Sarah, 133a, which explains why Jacob is called the choicest of the patriarchs.)

The patriarchs are the Merkavah (Divine chariot). They represent the higher Merkavah, being in a state of nullification to the essence of the Infinite Light (Ein Sof), particularly in Chesed, Gevurah, and Tiferet (Chagat). Their nullification, however, does not extend to the level of Chabad (wisdom, understanding, and knowledge), as it is written: "They die, but not through wisdom" (Job 24:21). Here, it is explained that there was no Shevirat HaKeilim (shattering of the vessels) at the level of Chochmah. Similarly, it is said that Jacob did not die, meaning his level was not associated with the Shevirat HaKeilim, as his root derives from Yesod Abba (the foundation of the father).

Midrash Rabbah on Bereishit, chapter 26, explains "They die, but not through wisdom" as referring to those who do not engage in Torah wisdom. This is also explained in Midrash Rabbah on Noach, chapter 31, where "They die, but not through wisdom" refers to those without Torah wisdom. It can also be explained that Torah is above the realm of the Shevirat HaKeilim.

However, Chagat represents the emotional arousal that stems from bittul (self-nullification), and this is where the Sitra Achra takes hold. It corresponds to the male aspect of the kelipah opposing Zeir Anpin of holiness. In contrast, Chabad repels the external forces (kelipot), as all the surrounding lights (makifim) derive from Binah, and the makif drives away the external forces.

(Thus, the position of the kelipot is such that their backs face the surrounding light, and their faces turn towards the inner light. This is because the makif blinds them.

Elsewhere, this idea is explained differently.)

It is also explained regarding the heichalot (heavenly chambers) that the Sitra Achra has no presence in the inner sanctum (Kodesh HaKodashim), which corresponds to Chabad. It is present only in opposition to the seven lower attributes (Zer Anpin). This

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can also be understood in human terms: after prayer, the love fades and passes because it has become internalized (pnimiyut). In contrast, contemplation represents a surrounding light (makif).

During prayer, when a person closes their eyes and disconnects from this world, the love is awakened. However, after prayer, when they open their eyes to worldly matters and pleasures, the external forces are no longer repelled. Only what is in a state of makif (surrounding light)—which is not confined to a vessel and thus remains eternal—can repel the external forces.