

Erev Shabbos Kodesh Parshas Bo 5770

# D'ei Chochmah L'nafshechah

“Let your soul know wisdom”

Parshas Bo

From the discourses of Moreinu v'Rabeinu  
the Gaon and Tzaddik Shlit'a

- not for general circulation -



Published by the Yam Hachochmah Institute

Under the auspices of "Yeshivas Toras Chochom"

for the study of the  
revealed and hidden Torah

**"YAM HACHOCHMAH"**  
PUBLISHING INSTITUTE  
P.O BOX 5245 JERUSALEM  
TEL: 057-3153884 FAX: 15325388242  
E-MAIL: [tc7@neto.bezeqint.net](mailto:tc7@neto.bezeqint.net)

### Shalosh Seudos<sup>1</sup> of Parshas Bo 5768

”וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל-מֹשֶׁה: בֹּא אֶל-פַּרְעֹה, כִּי-אֲנִי הִכְבַּדְתִּי אֶת-לְבָבוֹ וְאֶת-לֵב עַבְדָּיו  
 לְמַעַן שְׁתִּי אֶתְתִּי אֵלָה בְּקִרְבּוֹ. וְלִמְעַן תִּסְפָּר בְּאָזְנֵי בְנֶךָ וּבֶן-בְּנֶךָ, אֵת אֲשֶׁר  
 הִתְעַלַּלְתִּי בְּמִצְרַיִם, וְאֶת-אֶתְתִּי אֲשֶׁר-שָׂמְתִי בָם; וַיִּדְעֶתְם, כִּי-אֲנִי ה'.”

“And Hashem said to Moshe: ‘Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I might show these My signs in the midst of them. And that you may tell in the ears of your son, and of your son’s son, what I have wrought upon Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them; that you may know that I am Hashem.’”<sup>2</sup>

#### Locusts, Darkness, and the Plague of the Firstborn

There is a well-known teaching of the Arizal, that the seven plagues described in *Parshas Va'eira* parallel the seven lower *sefiros*, and the three that are described in our *parshah*—locusts, darkness, and the plague of the firstborn—parallel the upper three *sefiros* of *Binah-Chochmah-Kesser*.<sup>3</sup> There is a hint to this in the name of the *parshah* itself: *Bo* / ב"א has a numerical value of three, and these plagues constituted both a destructive force unleashed upon

<sup>1</sup> The lesson was delivered at the third meal of Shabbos.

<sup>2</sup> *Shemos* 10:1-2

<sup>3</sup> *Sefer Halikutim, Va'eira*

Egypt even as they served as a healing power for the Jewish people through which we attained greater closeness to Hashem.

The plague of ארבה—locusts—indicates the expansion [ריבוי] and broadening that characterizes *Binah*. During the plague of darkness, the Jewish people merited to experience the light of *Chochmah*, since there was “light in all their dwelling places.”<sup>4</sup> The word for light—אור—has a numerical value of 207, the same as that of ריז which is “secret,” or the inner dimension or of the Torah’s wisdom. The plague of the firstborn parallels *Kesser*, because the firstborn status is called *reishis*—it is the capacity for self-sacrifice in Hashem’s service that has the power to subdue all negative forces. This level of *Kesser* is the aspect of *Arich Anpin*, while the level of *Kesser* to which the Jewish people merited at the splitting of the sea is the higher aspect of *Atik*. We see this from the declaration at the *Yam Suf*: “This is my G-d [אלי] and I will exalt Him,” with which Egypt was utterly vanquished.

In addition, Hashem commanded that we smear the blood of the *korban Pesach* on the doorposts and the lintel as another expression of the levels of *Binah-Chochmah-Kesser* embodied in the final three plagues. Each of the doorposts represents two times the Name *EHYH*, while the lintel represents the *Shem HaVaYaH*.<sup>5</sup> The first *EHYH*-doorpost parallels *Binah*, the lintel-*Shem HaVaYaH* parallels *Chochmah*, and the second *EHYH*-doorpost parallels *Kesser*. When the three *sheimos* are unified, they form the *mochin* of the head-*tefillin* which constitutes חיים, true holy vitality stemming from an elevated

---

<sup>4</sup> *Shemos* 10:23

<sup>5</sup> *Zohar* II:35b

awareness of the Divine. “He asked life of You, You gave it to him.”<sup>6</sup> The numerical value of all three *sheimos* combined is 68, the same as that of םיח or “life,” because really living means being in a state of *dveikus* with the Creator: *EHYH-HaVaYaH-EHYH*, “I will be, Hashem’s ultimate existence, I will be.”

### ***Dveikus at the Level of the Mochin***

The human form is an exact parallel of all of the levels of the *Partzufim* that exist in the spiritual world. The analogue of the *Partzuf* of *Arich Anpin* within the human form is inside the skull, the “hidden mind” or *Mocha Sesima’ah*. Surrounding this “hidden mind” is the *Kruma d’Avira* or the “membrane of the airspace” which is itself surrounded by the “airspace” in which the *Da’as* of *Atik* is hidden. We find in the *Sefer Yetzirah* that the soul-level of *neshamah* reposes in the mind, within the “airspace,” and the membrane of the airspace is like a throne upon which it sits.

When a Jew spends time in *hisbodedus* before his Creator, he closes his eyes so as not to be enticed by the illusory pleasures of this world because he doesn’t want to be connected to them. He knows that, for him, the “sweetness and light” of the Egyptians is absolute darkness, and the “darkness” of his avoidance of the temptations of this world is, for him, “light in his dwelling places.” When he closes his eyes in this way, he is able to see the brilliant hues that are rooted in the “hidden mind” of *Mocha Sesima’ah*, and he begins to derive pleasure from spiritual reality, from the fact that Hashem is revealed through a myriad of shades and hues of *dveikus*. He starts to feel Hashem’s

---

<sup>6</sup> *Tehillim* 21:5

light and glory within himself, and how all of the pleasures of this world are null and void, are like a mere sliver of light, compared with the delight of *dveikus* that is a composite of all possible forms of bliss.

“The Torah was only given to those who ate of the manna.”<sup>7</sup> The manna itself was rooted in the level called the “holy flame” or *Mocha Sesima'ah* as well, because it too was white which is a composite of all shades. This was expressed in the fact that those who ate of it could taste in it any flavor that they desired, just as Hashem’s light comprises all of the pleasures that are possible. So when a person seals his vision against the illusory nature of this world, he rises to the place of the “airspace” and its “membrane,” which is really the source of the human soul and its throne of glory. In that place it can be said, “From my flesh, I see G-d.” One begins to enjoy a vision of the ultimate *Kisei HaKavod* upon which the “form of a person sat.”<sup>8</sup> [Although he does not share the lofty vision of Hashem seen by Yechezkel HaNavi, nevertheless] he begins to get a sense of the presence of Hashem before whom he serves, just as the *tzaddikim* were able to “see” themselves serving before Hashem’s *Kisei HaKavod* as they prayed.

The final three plagues parallel these three states of *dveikus*: first, a person must meditate and be *misboded* on the expansive *Binah* light of Hashem. Then he must ascend to the place of the “hidden mind” which is the counterpart of the holy darkness of turning aside from this-worldly concerns to receive “light in all his dwellings.” With this, he destroys the *klippah* of the impure

---

<sup>7</sup> *Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas B'shalach* #1

<sup>8</sup> *Yechezkel* 1:26

firstborn and rises further to the place of the “membrane of the airspace” and the “airspace” itself which correlates to the level of the *Da'as* of *Atik* and which reveals to him the source of his *neshamah* that “sits upon the throne.” The entire process is embodied within the blessing *Asher Yatzar* which is known to subdue all of the *klippas*. “It is revealed and known before Your *Kisei HaKavod...*” Meaning, through coming to the level of the *Kisei HaKavod*, we are able to subdue all of the *klippas* and utterly “smite Egypt through their firstborns.”<sup>9</sup>

### **The Holy Breath of the *Shem HaVaYaH***

The primary root of the *Binah-Chochmah-Kesser* within a person is in the level of *Arich Anpin*. *Binah* is sourced in the “mouth/throat” of *Arich Anpin*, and at the highest levels of the *Olam Ha'Akudim* which is known as the “mouth of *Adam Kadmon*,” the form that *avodah* assumes is that of *mati v'lo mati* or “touching and not touching.” Although this seems to be very esoteric, it has a profound practical application. The process of the unfolding of the *Shem HaVaYaH* is fourfold: the “first diffusion” and “first withdrawal,” and the “second diffusion” and “second withdrawal.” First, there is a revelation of the letters *yud* and *hei*, and then a revelation of the letters *vav* and *hei*. The Baal HaTanya explains that a Jew must feel that every life-giving breath of air that he receives fills him with grateful connection to Hashem. *כִּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תִּתְהַלֵּל ק*.

---

<sup>9</sup> *Tehillim* 136:10

”ה—“Every soul should praise G-d [ייה]”<sup>10</sup>—for each and every breath [ / נשמה] one should praise Hashem.<sup>11</sup>

It is written that the forehead of Moshiach will be inscribed with the Divine Name תכיה, which are the initials of the phrase כל הנשמה תהלל—“every soul shall praise.” If a Jew wants to be worthy of the spiritual remedy of the final three plagues, he must subdue the *klippah* that affects the level of *Binah* at the level of the world of *Akudim*—“touching and not touching”—and that of the “mouth of *Arich Anpin*.” He does this by meditating on the letter *yud* of the *Shem HaVaYaH* while drawing in a breath. This is the “first diffusion,” which is “touching” [because the breath of life enters into him and diffuses within him]. He follows this by meditating on the first *hei* of the *Shem HaVaYaH* as he exhales. This is the “first withdrawal” which is “not touching” [because the breath is removed from him]. With his second cycle of breathing, he follows the process of “diffusion” and “withdrawal” by meditating on the *vav* and final *hei* of the *Shem HaVaYaH*.

This is what is meant in the verse: ”כִּי בָּנְיָהּ יְהוֹיָה צוּר עוֹלָמִים” —“For with *YaH – HaVaYaH*, the worlds were formed.”<sup>12</sup> A person’s entire existence—his *havayah*—must be sourced in the *yud* and *hei* of the first cycle of the breath, and from the second cycle which is an extension of the first. He must visualize [לצייר - צור] this as he stands ready to begin his *Shemonah Esrei* and as he says, “Hashem, open my lips and my mouth will speak Your praise.” He must know that his power of speech is solely from Hashem, and it is impossible to stand

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 150:6

<sup>11</sup> *Bereishis Rabbah* 14:9

<sup>12</sup> *Yeshayah* 26:4



before His *Kisei HaKavod* without Divine assistance. It is from this that the *tzaddikim* derive their power. As the Baal HaTanya taught, this was why Rabbi Chiya and his sons were able to effect changes with their prayers to a greater extent than other sages and why their prayers were immediately answered. They were immersed in the *avodah* of, “Hashem, open my lips...” and of, “Every soul / breath shall praise Hashem.’ They knew that Hashem placed the power of speech within us so that it should be used for Torah study and prayer, and that every single breath is directly from Him.

### **The Ascent and Descent of the Breath**

These concepts are all embodied by the dual nature of the plague of locusts, because it was an expression of the “expansion” and magnification that is characteristic of *Binah* and the “mouth” of *Akudim*. All of the expanded and multitudinous aspects of the universe are all rooted in this level, which is associated with the twenty-two letters of the *Alef-Beis* [which are themselves the building-blocks of the multi-hued universe]. Every action that a person can accomplish in the world is rooted in the world of *Binah*, and when a person is connected with the true *tzaddikim* [whose every breath is filled with *dveikus*], then his own breath is also a means through which the lower feminine waters [of longing] are uplifted, and the upper masculine waters [of Divine *shefa*] are drawn down. The deeper *seforim* explain that with every word, “one should uplift the *mayin nukvin* up to the level of *A”B* and *S”G* within *Adam Kadmon*,” because every single word and breath is a revelation of G-dliness.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> *Toras Chochom*

When a person focuses on his breath in this way, that it is a living expression of the *Shem HaVaYaH*, it fills him with a powerful longing to return to his Creator in *teshuvah*, and this feeling is associated with the Name *EHYH*. [The Name literally means, “I will be,” which indicates that the person is aware that until he fully returns to Hashem he has no existence. When he does do *teshuvah*, he will “come to be.”<sup>14</sup>] This yearning makes him want to abandon all of the nonsense of this world and rise to the place of *Mocha Sesima'ah* where he can be in the holy “darkness” which is really brilliantly illuminated by the glorious hues of *dveikus*. Then he tastes from the sweetness of Hashem’s light, he “eats of the manna,” and realizes just how fleeting and insignificant this-worldly pleasures are.

This process of rising finally to the place of the *Kisei HaKavod* and the source of one’s own soul is accomplished through focus on one’s speech and one’s breath, and this is what is meant by the phrase, “The *Shechinah* speak from within his throat.”<sup>15</sup> In this way, *Matan Torah* happens anew every single day when one learns, because every single Torah scholar has a spark of the soul of Moshe Rabbeinu through whom the *Shechinah* communicated. When a person is aware of this and engaged in it, he really feels that his soul is a *chelek Eloka mima'al* and that he is truly offering his service before Hashem, and this gives him the power to smite the impure forces of Egypt.

### **The Firstborns of the Maidservant and of the Prisoner**

---

<sup>14</sup> *Likutei Moharan* I:6

<sup>15</sup> This is what the Beis Yosef experienced when the *Maggid* of the Mishnah spoke through him.

The impure forces of Egypt have two main subdivisions: that of the “three husks that are totally impure” and that of the level of *klippas nogah* [which is a “borderline” *klippah* that sometimes is impure and sometimes is pure]. In order for Hashem’s Kingship to be completely revealed, all of them must be subdued. When that happens, it is called, “The *Kisei HaKavod* descending and being revealed in the marketplace.” [The word for marketplace is *shuk*, which also can be read as *shok*, the leg. This means Hashem’s presence descending to the absolute lowest places and being revealed even there.] Then, all of the firstborn of Egypt are destroyed: both the “firstborn of the maidservant” as well as the “firstborn of the Prisoner.”

In this week’s *parshah*, we find the Moshe Rabbeinu first warned Pharaoh: “Thus says Hashem: About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt; and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sits upon his throne, even to the firstborn of the maidservant that sits behind the mill; and all the firstborn of cattle.”<sup>16</sup> However, when the plague actually descended in Egypt, the Torah records a significant change: “And it came to pass at midnight, that Hashem smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle.”<sup>17</sup> In the former verse, the maidservant is mentioned but the prisoner is not, but in the latter the prisoner is mentioned while the maidservant is not. Rashi explains this after his

---

<sup>16</sup> *Shemos* 11:4-5

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 12:29

own fashion, but based on what we have learned there is a deep secret encoded in the verses.

The “maidservant” who sits represents *Malchus* which is rooted in *Chochmah* and which parallels the lintel which “sits” upon the two doorposts, while the “prisoner” represents *Ze'ir Anpin* which is rooted in *Binah* and *Kesser* and which “stands” like the doorposts themselves. In addition, “All of the actions of *Malchus* are undertaken when seated.”<sup>18</sup> The process of turning away from the illusory “light” of this worldly pleasure in order to grasp the holy “darkness” of *dveikus* that is really brilliant illumination results in the destruction of both the maidservant’s firstborn—the analogue of *klippas nogah*—as well as that of the prisoner, the analogue of the three completely impure *klippas*. This means that even if a person is their prisoner by being a habitual sinner,<sup>19</sup> nevertheless if he studies Torah in the way we have described—while seeking *dveikus* and focusing on the gift of breath and speech—he can escape from their clutches and come to experience a great light. He will receive supernatural Divine assistance and subdue even the “firstborn of the prisoner.”

### **The Splitting of the Sea**

The three final plagues and the exalted spiritual levels that they represent are only a prelude to the revelation of G-dliness that took place at the *Yam Suf*. The ascending levels of the three final plagues correspond to the lower worlds of *Beriyah-Yetzirah-Asiyah*, but the splitting of the sea

---

<sup>18</sup> *Zohar* III:258a

<sup>19</sup> The Ramah MiPano

corresponds to the higher world of *Atzilus*. Each of the three lower worlds and the three final plagues are associated with a different permutation of the Divine Name: *ביין מ"ה ס"יג*. The higher world of *Atzilus* and *kriyas Yam Suf*, however, is associated with the Name *ע"ב*. Once a person has performed the *avodah* associated with the final three plagues which we have described, he must reach the next level: "וְנָתַתִּי עֵשֶׂב בְּשָׂדֶךָ לְבְהֵמָתֶךָ, וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ"—“And I have given grass [עשב] in your fields for your beasts, and you shall eat and be satisfied.”<sup>20</sup> The word עשב is a conjunction of the Name *ע"ב* and the letter *shin*. The three-headed *shin* is the “beastly” or lower level of the worlds of *Beriyah-Yetzirah-Asiyah*.<sup>21</sup> But once a person has done the *avodah* of those three levels, he must break through the barriers that separate the lower three from the world of *Atzilus* and “split the sea of *Chochmah*” so that he can attain the highest level of *dveikus*. At the higher level, the person is truly bound together with Hashem and now can “eat and be satisfied” from Hashem’s gift of grain like a true human being who “sits upon the *Kisei HaKavod*” and realizes that he is absolutely in Hashem’s presence. Then he will be of, “a holy people to Me,”<sup>22</sup> and even his physical body will be subsumed in holy service of Hashem.<sup>23</sup> And this is also accomplished when a person dons the *tefillin* that embody the *yichud* of the Names *EHYH-HaVaYaH-EHYH*. But placing upon himself and assuming the *mochin* of *Binah-Chochmah-Kesser*, he merits to transform his physical “body of *עור* / skin” into a holy “vessel of *אור* / light.”

---

<sup>20</sup> *Devarim* 11:15

<sup>21</sup> *Sha'ar Hakavanos*

<sup>22</sup> *Shemos* 22:30

<sup>23</sup> *Zohar* I:217b

May Hashem help us during this time, when the Jewish people long so strongly to return to Hashem, to do *teshuvah* through our Torah study, because it is impossible be free of the lusts of this world without the merit of *Torah lishmah*. The most essential means of studying Torah for its own sake is by focusing on Hashem “speaking through one’s mouth” as one studies, for as we see the opening word of *Matan Torah*—“I [אנכי] am Hashem, your G-d”—is an acronym of the phrase: אָנָּא נַפְשִׁי כְּתִבִּית יְהִיבִית—“I give my soul to you through this writing.”<sup>24</sup> The Torah is part and parcel of Hashem’s essence, so to speak, and through it will we come to be released from all negative influences and merit to see Hashem’s Kingship, with the arrival of our righteous redeemer.

#### “Let Your Soul Know Wisdom”

This is the meaning of: “דעה חכמה לנפשך והיא כתר לראשך”—“Let your soul (*nefesh*) know (*d’ei*) wisdom (*Chochmah*) and it will be a crown (*Kesser*) for your head.”<sup>25</sup> We must “go to Pharaoh” by ensuring that our speech is not in the aspect of the “evil mouth.” [פרעה = פייה רייע] We must “go to Pharaoh” and transform speech into the aspect of the *avodah* of *Binah*, which is expressed by the ארבה. The *alef* and *beis* of *arbeh* substitute the *pei* and *ayin* of פרעה [since *pei* and *beis* are interchangeable labial sounds, and *ayin* and *alef* are interchangeable guttural sounds]. This is the ב״א that must “come” to Pharaoh. Then the level of *nefesh* which is associated with speech will be illuminated by the light of *Chochmah*, as we have described. And it will be “a crown to your head”—and you will then reach the level of *Kesser* and the splitting of the sea,

<sup>24</sup> *Shabbos* 105a

<sup>25</sup> From the *Shabbos zemer* “*D’ror Yikrah*,” based on *Mishlei* 24:14.

when Hashem's presence is fully revealed in all its glory. Then we will merit to, "see the One who spoke the teaching as we learn it,"<sup>26</sup> in a state of *dveikus*, and this will in turn break down all the barriers between all of the lower and upper worlds and bring the righteous redeemer in mercy. Amen.

**Translated and Adapted by Rav Micha Golshevsky.**

**For those who are interested in dedicating a *shiur* in the *zechus* of a loved one, who would like to make a donation, or who would prefer to subscribe by e-mail to receive the *shiur* as a PDF file, please contact us at: [tc7@neto.bezeqint.net](mailto:tc7@neto.bezeqint.net). We require your support to continue our work publishing the translations on a weekly basis.**

**Please feel free to send comments, questions, and any feedback to:**  
[tc7@neto.bezeqint.net](mailto:tc7@neto.bezeqint.net) .

---

<sup>26</sup> *Shabbos* 6b; *Sefer Halikutim* of the Tzemach Tzedek, letters *Pei* and *Tzaddik*