

The Hidden Gold of the Coming Year: The Story of Yosi ben Pazi

A Closing Reflection and an Opening Prayer

Be'ezrat Hashem, as we arrive at the final *shiur* of *shnat Tav Shin Peh Vav*, we stand at a threshold. This is a moment to gather together the ideas that have accompanied us through the year, but it is also a moment of *tefillah*: a prayer that the Torah we have learned should become the vessel through which we enter the year ahead. A year does not merely end and another begin. One spiritual configuration yields to another, one form of *avodah* ripens into the next, and everything we have struggled to understand becomes the soil from which a new revelation may emerge.

Ordinarily, the Tzaddik R' Yitzchak Meir *shlita* publishes an introduction to the new volume of *Yam HaChochmah* in which he describes the particular *avodah* of the incoming year. These introductions contain some of the deepest dimensions of his Torah. They are filled with the secrets of redemption, yet they are never merely abstract descriptions of cosmic processes. They ask what this year demands from each of us and what movement must take place within the individual soul. At the time of this writing, the new *Yam HaChochmah* and its introduction have

not yet appeared. What follows, therefore, is offered only *bederech efshar*, as a possible way of listening for the spiritual invitation of *Tav Shin Peh Zayin* while we await the Ayin's full teaching.

The point of departure is the *avodah* that the Tzaddik R' Yitzchak Meir *shlit"a* identified for *Tav Shin Peh Vav*: a return to the light of the holy Baal Shem Tov. The Baal Shem Tov revealed that the vessels are not abandoned places from which the Divine light has withdrawn. Within the *kelim* themselves lives a light of *Elokut*. The world may appear dulled by habit, concealment, and spiritual sleep, but it is not empty. The Baal Shem Tov came to awaken us from that stupor and to awaken within us an irreducible flame, the radiant and life-giving light through which a person discovers that Godliness is present within reality itself.

This was the labor of the outgoing year: to recognize the light hidden within the vessels and, through that recognition, to sweeten the judgments at their root. Yet an awakening is never meant to remain isolated. The light that has been uncovered must now be joined to another light, and the coming year appears to call us toward that union.

The Two Great Lights

In recent teachings, the Ayin once again emphasized the necessity of being *meyached* the *trei hame'orot*, unifying the two great luminaries: the light of the Baal Shem Tov and the light of Ayin Nachman. These are not competing paths. They are two dimensions of a single revelation, and each remains incomplete in our experience until it is joined with the other.

The light of the Baal Shem Tov is the light of the worlds. It reveals the *Ohr Ein Sof* shining everywhere and awakens consciousness to *ein od milvado*. It teaches the mind to contemplate *memaleh kol almin*, *sovev kol almin*, and *kula kamei kelo chashiv*. The light of Ayin Nachman is the light of the soul and the light of the *tzaddik*. It reveals the singular holiness of *nishmat Yisrael* and brings the infinite truth of Divine unity into the lived territory of the person: the body, the emotions, the voice, the struggle, and the yearning of the individual soul.

These two territories are sometimes described as *mechoz hasefirot*, the realm of the worlds and the forms through which HaKadosh Baruch Hu reveals Himself, and *mechoz haneshamot*, the realm of souls and the way Divine life is experienced from within. In an unredeemed consciousness, the worlds and the souls seem separate. The metaphysical truth of God's unity may remain high above the emotional life of the person, while the person's fears, desires, wounds, and prayers may feel cut off from the structures of Divine revelation. The unification of the Baal Shem Tov and Ayin Nachman reveals that the worlds and the souls are bound together. The actions of the souls touch the roots of the worlds, and the soul itself can ascend until it grasps *yichud Hashem*.

This union must become an actual *avodah*. The contemplative light of the Baal Shem Tov, carried through the intellectual language of Chabad and the disciplines of *hitbonenut*, must descend into the body and find speech through the *hitbodedut bepeh* of Ayin Nachman. An hour spent contemplating the all-encompassing presence of HaKadosh Baruch Hu must be joined to an hour in which the person brings the

unedited self before Him. Mind and body, unity and longing, silence and speech must illuminate one another. If either Torah is separated from the other, a person can become trapped in one side. When they are joined, contemplation becomes intimate and intimacy becomes transparent to the Infinite.

The numerical identity of the coming year deepens this call. *Peh ZAyin*, eighty-seven, spells *paz*, refined gold, and *paz* shares the numerical value of *levanah*, the moon. The moon is *Malchut*, the realm of this-worldliness, receptivity, limitation, and lived experience. Its *avodah* is to rise into union with the sun, the light of *Ze'ir Anpin*. This is the union of *Kudsha Berich Hu u'Shechinteih*, of *memaleh kol almin* and *sovev kol almin*, of Mashiach ben David and Mashiach ben Yosef. It is also the union of the Baal Shem Tov and Ayin Nachman: the light of the sun revealed within the moon, the light of the worlds entering the vessels of the soul.

The work of *Tav Shin Peh ZAyin* may therefore be understood as the revelation of "*echad shehu shtayim*", the one that appears as two. It is the joining of Eretz Yisrael and *Chutz LaAretz*, above and below, mind and body, Divine unity and human experience. The light is not meant to destroy the vessel, and the vessel is not meant to imprison the light. Redemption is the discovery that the two were waiting to become one.

From Ani to Ayin and Beyond

To understand this movement more deeply, we must return to the three levels that have

accompanied us throughout the year: *Binah*, *Chochmah*, and *Keter*. In the descending order of creation, the movement begins with *Chochmah*, the simple flash of unity, the place of *Ayin*. It then descends into *Binah*, the realm of differentiation, analysis, and the emergence of *Ani*, the self. Yet the purpose of this descent is not simply to return to the unity from which we came. We descend from *Chochmah* into *Binah* so that we may rise through *Chochmah* into a higher revelation, the light of *Keter*.

At the level of *Chochmah*, all is light. At the level of *Binah*, light and darkness appear opposed. The soul encounters multiplicity, conflict, resistance, and the heavy fact of its own selfhood. Yet the darkness of *Binah* is not an accident that interrupts the Divine plan. We enter that darkness so that it, too, may be revealed as light. When the apparent opposition between light and darkness is gathered into a more encompassing unity, the result is no longer the simple *Ayin* with which we began. It is the revelation of *Keter*, which contains *Ani ve'Ayin bevat achat*, self and no-self present at once.

Most of us do not begin our conscious spiritual lives in the pristine unity of *Chochmah*. By the time we open our eyes in the morning and experience ourselves as awake, we have already been cast into the realm of separation. We inhabit the worlds of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*, the worlds of *Binah*, where there is a “me” and there is a Hashem whom I seek, love, fear, or resist. This is the realm of *memaleh kol almin*, where Divine vitality fills each distinct thing, yet the distinctness of each thing remains powerfully felt.

Within that world, our task is to meet the darkness, the distance, and the resistance without

concluding that they are empty. The processing, the struggle, and the endless work of clarification are preparing a revelation that we cannot yet taste. We trust that the light of *Keter* will eventually emerge from the burdensome labor of *Binah*. This is the inner meaning of *vene'eman atah lebachayot meitim*. We turn to HaKadosh Baruch Hu and say: You are faithful to revive the dead. You will breathe life even into the worlds of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*, though we do not yet see that resurrection.

We therefore live with anticipation. We carry a *cheshek*, a *ga'agu'a*, and a *tzima'on* for the time when we will understand why we had to pass through so many gates of concealment, through the *mem tet sha'arei Binah* and all their chambers of change. For now, faith means trusting that the darkness is not the conclusion of the story. The concealed light has not yet entered experience, but it is already drawing us toward itself.

The Hunger to Feel

Because the light of *Keter* remains hidden within *Binah*, the person living in *Binah* needs encouragement. The self experiences *avodat Hashem* through the language of selfhood: I love Hashem, I fear Hashem, I am trying to negate myself, I am succeeding, or I am failing. Even the desire to transcend the self is still experienced by a self. This structure creates heaviness, but it also creates the expectation that the struggle will produce something and that the person will eventually be rewarded with a powerful experience of closeness.

The body speaks the language of feeling. Within constriction, a person searches for some emotional sign that the *avodah* is real. We want to

feel moved by prayer, illuminated by Torah, and transformed by spiritual practice. We want the experience to confirm that we are involved and that our involvement matters. This may contain an element of *lo lishmah*. The mind can produce an image of spiritual intensity and then place the self upon that stage, where it can watch itself feeling inspired. Yet even this imagined participation can have a necessary role. It gives the embodied person an initial taste of *ta'anug* and allows desire to awaken.

The danger begins when this preliminary form of spiritual pleasure becomes the standard by which all truth is measured. Because *Binah* secretly points toward the infinite delight of *Keter*, the person senses that pleasure must exist somewhere. When the actual light of *Keter* has not yet appeared within the vessels, the self tries to imitate it. It manufactures forms of stimulation that can carry it through the struggle. A substance, an activity, a mindset, or even a spiritual identity may become the thing I believe I need in order to feel real, alive, or connected to Hashem.

This is the addictive dimension of *Binah*: the demand for *ta'anug hamurgash*, a pleasure that can be felt, measured, remembered, and possessed. We do not trust what has not become congealed into a *mugasham* form. We repeatedly check the spiritual pulse of the self and ask whether we feel enough. Hunger produces a momentary satisfaction, and satisfaction soon gives way to hunger again. The self becomes trapped in monitoring its condition, forever asking what it has received from the *avodah*.

Yet this beginning must not be despised. *Lo lishmah* can awaken the desire that eventually

becomes *lishmah*. The mistake is not that we began with the need to feel. The mistake would be refusing to move when that need has completed its task. *Binah* is a passageway. It becomes a prison only when the self insists that the first form of pleasure must remain forever.

The Akeidah of Spiritual Experience

To move beyond *Binah*, the person must enter *Chochmah*. This is the place of *bittul*, where I no longer demand a particular sensation as proof that I am connected. *Chochmah* lies beyond the limited opposition of feeling and not feeling. It is compared to water because, in its depths, the familiar boundaries of above and below, right and left, self and other lose their rigidity. *Roka ha'aretz al hamayim* and *toleh eretz al belimah* reveal that the apparently solid earth rests upon the fluidity of a reality that cannot be grasped or possessed.

To enter that sea is to release the need to posture before ourselves. We stop measuring our spiritual connection by the intensity of a felt experience and allow ourselves simply to be present in the *avodah*. The waters of *Chochmah* wash away the obsessive attention paid to the *Ani* and return us to the pure simplicity of the *neshamah*, a *chelek Eloka mima'al mamash*. We enter *Ayin*, not as an act of self-hatred, but as a release from the exhausting requirement to keep producing and observing ourselves.

This surrender can feel terrifying. The self fears that if it releases its attachments, its emotional drama, and the pleasure it has learned to extract from spiritual striving, nothing will

remain. The engravings formed in the worlds of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah* allow the self to experience itself. Even pain can become intoxicating when it intensifies the sense that I am here. To relinquish that structure can therefore feel like an ego death.

This is the inner *Akeidah*. Yitzchak Avinu corresponds to *Binah* and to *bargashah*, the world of felt experience. He is placed upon the altar because feeling must cease to serve as the condition of our relationship with Hashem. The words “*yerei Elokim atah*” reveal a *yirat Shamayim* that survives both the presence and the absence of spiritual emotion. A person discovers that the reality of God does not depend upon the state of his nervous system and that Divine presence remains whole even when the heart feels silent.

The silence, however, is not the final destination. If a person remains patient within *Chochmah*, something hidden begins to open. I may not feel what I once felt, but I am present. *Im Ani kan hakol kan*. In that simple presence, the interiority of *Chochmah* is revealed as *Keter: pnimiyut Chochmah pnimiyut Atik*. The person digs deeply enough into *bittul* to uncover the true source of selfhood, the *Ani HaElyon*. The self does not vanish. It is refined until it becomes a chariot for the Divine.

Everything the person feared losing returns in a higher form. Pleasure returns without possessiveness. Selfhood returns without self-obsession. The memories, engravings, and efforts of *Binah* are not erased; they are gathered into a consciousness in which *Ani* and *Ayin* can exist together. This is the wealth of *Keter*. What had been *lo lishmah* rises into *lishmah*, and then

that *lishmah* becomes the starting point for a still higher ascent.

From Peh Vav to Peh Zayin

The transition from the outgoing year to the coming year gives this movement a numerical form. *Peh Vav*, eighty-six, is the numerical value of *Elokim*. The name *Elokim* is associated with *Gevurot* and *Binah*, with the power that creates boundaries and vessels. This is not evil. It is the severity through which selfhood comes into focus and the person becomes capable of experiencing a distinct relationship with the Divine. Yet it also carries the hunger for *ta'anug hamurgash*, the felt pleasure that validates reality for the embodied self.

Tav Shin Peh Zayin moves beyond eighty-six into eighty-seven, from *Elokim* into *paz*. The phrase *ketem paz al roshe* points toward a refined gold that descends from the head, from *Keter*, into the lower structures of life. The movement from *Peh Vav* to *Peh Zayin* is therefore the movement from the constricted, self-conscious experience of *Binah* into the surrender of *Chochmah*, through which the hidden delight of *Keter* can enter.

At first, this can appear to be a renunciation of pleasure. The person imagines that releasing the need to feel will flatten *avodat Hashem* and deprive life of its intensity. There may indeed be a moment of *kol demamah dakah*, an almost unbearable quiet in which the old pleasure is gone and the new pleasure has not yet been revealed. The person passes through boredom, anhedonia, and the withdrawal symptoms of *yeshus*. Yet if one can remain there with *mesirus nefesh*, the quiet becomes the vessel for *paz rav*, an abundant

and refined delight that does not need to be manufactured.

The deepest *simchah* arises when the self is no longer continually checking its own condition. Pleasure does not disappear through *bittul*; it is freed. The person becomes submerged within the wholeness of *nishmat Yisrael* and discovers the *temimut* hidden within the *yam*. The Baal HaSulam reads *tamim* as *tam yam*, a wholeness within the sea, where differentiated things are no longer experienced as warring fragments. Even within *Chochmah*, some subtle memory of hunger may remain. In *Keter*, the very structure of hunger is quieted, and a person begins to live from enoughness and fundamental all-rightness.

Rebbe Yosi and the Promise of Wealth

The Zohar gives this entire process a human face in *Sitrei Torah* (סְתְרֵי תוֹרָה) on Parashat Lech Lecha. Rebbe Abba, the scribe of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai, would return from his place of learning and proclaim, *man ba'i utra* (מָאן בָּעִי עוֹתָרָא), who desires wealth? Who wants to be rich? *U'man ba'i orcha de-chayyei be'alma de'atei* (וּמָאן בָּעִי אוֹרְכָא דְחַיֵּי בִּעְלָמָא דְעָתִי), who desires long life in the world to come? Let him come and labor in Torah.

The world gathered around him. The very word *alma* (עֲלָמָא) suggests concealment, as though every hidden and constricted part of existence were searching for the clarifying wealth of *Chochmah* (חֻכְמָה). Among those who came was an unmarried man, a *ravak* (רַבּוּקָא), whose lack of union reflected a deeper experience of deficiency and disconnection. One day he approached Rebbe Abba and said plainly, *be'eina lemeilei be'Oraita kedai sheyehei li*

utra (בְּעֵינָא לְמַלְעִי בְּאוֹרֵייתָא כְּדִי שְׂיִהְיֶה לִּי עוֹתָרָא): I want to learn Torah so that I will become wealthy.

Rebbe Abba did not drive him away. He asked the man's name, and the man answered, Yosi. Rebbe Abba then instructed his students to call him Rebbe Yosi, master of wealth and honor— *Rebbe Yosi marei de-utra vi-kara* (רַבִּי יוֹסִי מָאֲרִי דְעוֹתָרָא וּיְקָרָא). The name Yosi has the numerical value of eighty-six, the value of *Elokim* (אֱלֹהִים) and the signature of *Peh Vav* (פ"ו). Yosi entered Torah through the world of *Binah* (בִּינָה). He wanted the delight that lies beyond the body, but the body still required a promise it could understand. He came to Torah in order to receive wealth.

This was clearly *lo lishmah* (לֹא לְשִׁמָּה), yet Rebbe Abba answered, *vadai* (וַדָּאִי), certainly. The path had to begin where Yosi actually stood. One cannot demand that *Binah* (בִּינָה) leap immediately into the absolute *Ayin* (אֵין) of *Chochmah* (חֻכְמָה). The initial desire may still be mixed with self-interest, but it contains the seed of something beyond itself.

Rebbe Abba therefore sweetened the judgment at its root. The Baal Shem Tov taught that when a *din* (דִּין) appears, the first movement is to attach oneself to its root and behold it as already sweetened. One can say *mazal tov* (מַזָּל טוֹב) even while the woman remains in the pain of labor, because the birth hidden within the contraction is already real. Rebbe Abba looked at the deficient desire of Yosi and called him wealthy before the wealth had appeared. He beheld the *lishmah* (לְשִׁמָּה) concealed within the *lo lishmah* (לֹא לְשִׁמָּה) and gave the man a name drawn from his future.

After some time, Yosi returned and asked, *an hu utra* (אֵן הוּא עוֹתָרָא), where is the wealth? Where is the *shefa* (שְׂפָעָה), the pleasure, and the promised

feeling? Rebbe Abba responded that the question itself proved that Yosi's service was not yet for the sake of Heaven. Yosi was still searching for the light of the body and the confirmation of selfhood. From the vantage point of *Chochmah* (חֶכְמָה), his *Binah* (בִּינָה) appeared unworthy.

Rebbe Abba then entered his chamber, the hidden interiority of *Chochmah* (חֶכְמָה), to discover how such a plainly self-interested desire should be met. There he heard a voice: *lo ta'ansheih* (לֹא תַעֲנִשֶׁיהָ), do not punish him. Do not judge the body's need to feel or its use of imagination as though these were the final truth of the person. *De-gavra rabba libevei* (דִּגְבְּרָא רַבָּא לִיהוּי), this man will become great. The smallness of his present motive already contains the greatness of his future. Every *lo lishmah* (לֹא לִשְׂמָה), every *Binah* (בִּינָה) can give birth to a higher *Chochmah* (חֶכְמָה), and every *Peh Vav* (פִּי"ו) can become *Peh Zayin* (פִּי"ז).

Rebbe Abba emerged and told Yosi to sit. He promised that the wealth would come. Afterwards, a wealthy man arrived holding a vessel of brilliant gold, a *mana de-paz* (מָנָא דְּפָז). When he opened it, light filled the entire house—*u-nefal nebora beveita* (וְנִפְלָ נְהוּרָא בְּבֵיתָא). The man possessed material wealth but yearned for Torah, while Yosi possessed the capacity to labor in Torah but yearned for wealth. Rebbe Abba joined them. The wealthy man would support Yosi's learning, and Yosi received the golden cup, the *kasa de-paz* (כֶּסֶּא דְּפָז).

The arrangement met Yosi where he was. He could not yet release the promise of felt reward, so Heaven gave him a refined version of that reward. This is *Chochmah within Binah* (חֶכְמָה שְׁבִינָה): physicality beginning to be clarified while still

carrying the engraving of the need to feel. HaKadosh Baruch Hu is *makdim refuah la-makkah* (מַקְדִּים רְפוּאָה לַמָּכָה). He prepares the healing before the wound and allows us to ascend slowly enough that the transition does not shatter the vessel.

When the Golden Cup Is Returned

Yosi continued to learn, and eventually the love of Torah began to burn within him—*aal chamidu de'Oraita bime'oi* (עָאֵל חָמִידוּ דְּאוֹרַיִיתָא בְּמַעוּי). One day Rebbe Abba found him crying and asked why. Yosi answered that he now feared losing his share in the life of the world to come because he had accepted the golden vessel. The wealth he had once desired had become an obstruction. He had tasted enough Torah to know that what he truly wanted could not be held in his hand.

Rebbe Abba now declared that Yosi's learning was *lishmah deShmaya* (לִשְׂמָה דְּשָׁמַיָא). The heavenly voice had been fulfilled. Yosi was ready to release the felt assurance that had enabled him to begin. Rebbe Abba summoned the wealthy benefactor and told him: *tol utrach ve-hav le-yatmei u-le-miskenei* (טוֹל עוֹתֵרְדָּ וְהָב לִיתְמֵי וְלַמְסְכֵּנֵי), take your wealth and distribute it to orphans and the poor. The benefactor would still share in the Torah learned by Rebbe Abba and Yosi, but the external arrangement had completed its purpose.

Yosi returned the *kasa de-paz* (כֶּסֶּא דְּפָז). He surrendered the golden cup and the spiritual structure it represented: the belief that pleasure must be externalized, possessed, and continually felt in order to be real. This was his entrance into *Chochmah deChochmah* (חֶכְמָה דְּחֶכְמָה), where the old wealth seemed to disappear. He entered the

silence in which he no longer knew whether he had gained anything at all.

The Zohar then reveals the wonder. Yosi did not lose the *paz* (פֶּז). From that day onward, he and his descendants were known as *ben Pazi* (בֶּן פָּזִי). The gold that had once existed outside him as a cup became part of his name. He no longer needed a vessel of *paz* (פֶּז), because the light of *paz* (פֶּז) had entered his identity. He moved from Yosi, eighty-six, into Pazi, eighty-seven. What he relinquished as a possession returned as being.

This is the secret of the coming year. The *kos* (כוס), whose numerical value is eighty-six, still belongs to the world of *Peh Vav* (פ"ו). A *kos paz* (כו"ס פ"ז) joins eighty-six to eighty-seven, but it leaves the person dependent upon a vessel that he can see and hold. The true *paz* (פֶּז) appears when the cup is returned. The pleasure that had been projected outward descends into the soul, and the person discovers that surrender did not annihilate the *Ani* (אני). It uncovered a deeper *Ani* (אני), one born from *Ayin* (אין).

The path cannot be rushed. Within *Binah* (בינה) there is a *Binah* (בינה) and a *Chochmah* (חכמה), and within *Chochmah* (חכמה) there is also a *Binah* (בינה) and a *Chochmah*. We move from the physicality of physicality into its refinement, and then from the lowest edge of *Chochmah*, where we still imagine that we possess some familiar pleasure, into *Chochmah deChochmah* (חכמה דחכמה), where nothing remains to be grasped. Only then can the light of *Keter* (כתר) descend into the empty vessel.

The withdrawal from *yeshut* (ישות) is real, but so is the wealth waiting on its other side.

The Pleasure That Arrives as a Gift

The Rebbe Rashab explains the secret of *paz* (פֶּז) in *Besha'ah Shehikdimu* (בשעה שהקדימו), the continuation of *Ayin Beit* (תרע"ב). *Paz* (פֶּז) corresponds to the eighty-seven words of *Baruch She'amar* (ברוך שאמר). The world of *Baruch She'amar* (ברוך שאמר) is the world of *Chochmah* (חכמה), where one begins to perceive the equanimity of HaKadosh Baruch Hu's (הקדוש ברוך הוא) presence everywhere. Yet even this lofty *paz* (פֶּז) can become a garment for a light beyond itself.

There is the *kos paz* (כוס פֶּז), where refined pleasure remains attached to a felt vessel. There is the inward *paz* (פֶּז) of Yosi ben Pazi (יוסי בן פָּזִי), where pleasure has entered the soul. Beyond both is a dimension of Torah that does not emerge from the labor of clarification at all. It is not a reward manufactured through the self's effort or an experience achieved through refinement. It arrives *derech matanah milema'alab* (דרך מתנה מלמעלה), as a gift from above.

This is the inner Torah that will be revealed in the future, the secret of *oneg habilti murgash* (עונג הבלתי מורגש), pleasure that is not felt as an object distinct from the one who receives it. Ordinary pleasure depends upon contrast. First there is hunger, then satisfaction; first absence, then presence. The pleasure of *Keter* (כתר) precedes that division. It is not something

added to the self. It is the unforced radiance of existence resting in its source.

The person who touches this level already tastes the future world within the days of this life. He can release the need for constant spiritual sensation because his relationship with Hashem no longer rises and falls with the weather of feeling. He throws himself into *Ayin* (אין) without fearing that the self will be lost, because every true surrender reveals another, deeper level of *Ani* (אני). Each ascent is complete, yet each completion opens onto a further ascent. This endless renewal is the secret of *paz* (פז).

The Hidden Mathematics of Paz

The verse *bakeseh leyom chageinu* (בכס"ה ליום) joins Rosh Hashanah (ראש השנה) to the hiddenness of *paz* (פז), for *keseb* (כסה) also has the numerical value of eighty-seven. The moon is concealed on Rosh Hashanah (ראש השנה), and the pleasure of *paz* (פז) is likewise hidden. It cannot be displayed to the self as proof, because its very nature is to rest beneath the division between the one who feels and the feeling that is felt.

The Arizal explains eighty-seven as the union of *Ma"b* (מ"ב), forty-five, and the forty-two-letter name, *Ma"b* (מ"ב). Forty-five is the name Havayah (הוי"ה) expanded with *alefin* (אלפין), while forty-two expresses the progressive unfolding of the name through its four simple letters, the ten letters of its *milui* (מילוי), and the twenty-eight letters of its *milui*

demilui (מילוי דמילוי). In this formulation, forty-five and forty-two unite the essential Divine name with the process through which it unfolds into multiplicity. Simplicity enters the vessels of separation without erasing them.

This is again the union of the sun and the moon, *Chochmah* (חכמה) and *Binah* (בינה), *pekidah* (פקידה) and *zechirah* (זכירה). It is the consciousness of *shiviti Hashem lenegdi tamid* (שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד) descending into ordinary life, until the most exalted awareness can inhabit a person without the person requiring an exalted feeling. The hidden head of *reisha delo ityada* (רישא דלא אתידע) enters the vessels of experience as a quiet conviction of all-rightness and pleasantness.

Another configuration joins the thirteen *tikunei dikna* (י"ג תיקוני דיקנא) associated with *Chochmah* (חכמה) to the nine *tikunei dikna* (תיקוני דיקנא) of *Ze'ir Anpin* (זעיר אנפין), producing twenty-two. When those twenty-two channels are joined with sixty-five, the numerical value of *Adnut* (אדנות) and the name of *Malchut* (מלכות), the result is again eighty-seven. The mercies of the highest realms enter *Malchut* (מלכות), the place of limitation and this-worldliness. The purpose of the number is therefore not numerical cleverness. Every configuration points toward the same redemptive movement: the highest light entering the lowest vessel and revealing that the vessel was always capable of gold.

The Eighty-Seventh Teachings of Rabbeinu Nachman

The number eighty-seven also appears with striking precision across the teachings of Rabbeinu Nachman (רבינו נחמן). In Torah 87 of the first part of *Likutey Moharan* (ליקוטי מוהר"ן), Rabbeinu describes the movement toward true *yirat Shamayim* (יראת שמים). A person begins with an external fear, a *lo lishmah* (לא לשמה) associated with *tzedek* (צדק). From there he ascends into *emunah* (אמונה). What first appeared harsh and constricted becomes the gate to the pleasure of faith. *Betzedek uve'emunah* (בצדק ובאמונה): the severity of *Peh Vav* (פ"ו) opens into the *paz rav* (פז רב) of *Chochmah* (חכמה) descending into consciousness.

In Torah 87 of the second part of *Likutey Moharan* (ליקוטי מוהר"ן), the *kavanot* (כוונות) of Elul (אלול) are expressed through *hanoten bayam derech* (הנותן בים דרך) and the necessity of being *baki beratzo vashov* (בקי ברצוא ושוב). The person learns to travel both upward and downward, through advance and retreat, self and no-self, felt experience and unfelt experience. This is the joining of Leah (לאה) and Rachel (רחל), *pekidah* (פקידה) and *zechirah* (זכירה). Spiritual maturity is not the ability to remain fixed in one pole. It is the capacity to move faithfully between them without imagining that Hashem (השם) is present in one and absent from the other.

In teaching 87 of *Sichot HaRan* (שיחות הר"ן), Rabbeinu Nachman (רבינו נחמן) speaks of praying at the beginning of Rosh Hashanah (ראש השנה) for an *etrog* (אתרוג). Rosh

Hashanah (ראש השנה) belongs to *Chochmah* (חכמה), yet the purpose of its exalted consciousness is the fruit that will appear in this world. The *etrog* (אתרוג) signifies *Malchut* (מלכות), beauty and pleasure made tangible below. The prayer draws from *kadmut basechel* (קדמות השכל), the loftiest root of mind, into the lowest territories of experience. The sun must be revealed within the moon.

Finally, teaching 87 of *Chayei Moharan* (חיי רבינו) recounts Rabbeinu Nachman's (מוהר"ן) dream of an immense *tzaddik* (צדיק) who entered a town and received no greeting. Rabbeinu Nachman (רבינו נחמן) wondered how everyone could ignore such a *tzaddik* (צדיק), until he drew close and saw that the *tzaddik* (צדיק) was composed of *mekomot hametunafot* (מקומות המטונפות), places in which one may not utter the Divine name. This *tzaddik* (צדיק) is the terrible and holy paradox of our generation. Greatness is hidden within places that appear spiritually unmentionable. The descent is so deep that the light cannot yet be named, but the unnamed light remains the substance of the *tzaddik* (צדיק).

This dream contains the passage from *Peh Vav* (פ"ו) to *Peh Zayin* (פ"ז). It is the movement from Yosi (יוסי), who requires the visible cup, into *roshe ketem paz* (ראשו כתם פז) and *paz rav* (פז רב). It joins *Baruch She'amar vebayab ha'olam* (ברוך שאמר והיה העולם), above and below, and the two forms of relationship expressed by *ben* (בן) and *eved* (עבד). The degraded places are not romanticized, and

concealment is not denied. The revelation is that even there, beneath the inability to pronounce the name, the *tzaddik* (צדיק) remains present.

A Prayer for the Year of Paz

As we enter *Tav Shin Peh Zayin* (תשפ"ז), our prayer is not merely that we should feel more. We pray that our relationship with Hashem (השם) should become true enough to hold both feeling and its absence. We ask for the courage to release every external *kos paz* (כוס פז) when its work is complete, and for the patience to remain within the *kol demamah dakah* (קול דממה דקה) until the gold moves inward. May the *Ani* (אני) that has been formed through the labor of *Binah* (בינה) surrender into *Ayin* (אין), and may that *Ayin* (אין) reveal the deeper *Ani* (אני) rooted in *Keter* (כתר).

May we be *zocheh* (זוכה) to unify the two great lights, drawing the holy illumination of the Baal Shem Tov (הבעל שם טוב) into the living vessels of Rabbeinu Nachman (רבינו נחמן). May the light of the worlds enter the language of the soul, and may the cries of the soul open into the unity of the worlds. May the sun be revealed within the moon, *Chochmah* (חכמה) within *Malchut* (מלכות), until Divine simplicity shines through the full complexity of our lives.

May this be a year of *rachamim rabim* (רחמים רבים), *geulah sbeleimah* (גאולה שלמה), *pekidah* (פקידה), and *zechirah* (זכירה). May the highest lights descend as *tov hanireh vebanigleh*

lematah me'asarah tefachim (טוב הנראה והנגלה), goodness that can be seen and received within the actual conditions of this world. May we be written and sealed in the books of the true *tzaddikim* (צדיקים), *le'alter lechayim* (לאלתר לחיים), and may our attachment to the *tzaddikim* (צדיקים) reveal the hidden *tzidkut* (צדקות) within our own souls.

We are nothing without the *tzaddikim* (צדיקים), *asher ba'aretz heimah ve'adirei kol cheftzi vam* (אשר בארץ המה ואדירי כל חפצי במ). Through their light, may the constricted moon rise again toward wholeness. May the thirteen rivers of balsam and all the channels of mercy flow into *Malchut* (מלכות), until the places of diminishment themselves become vessels for *sbleimut* (שלמות), *simchah* (שמחה), *oneg* (עונג), and redemption.

May the year ahead be a true *shnat paz* (שנת פז): a year in which we no longer clutch the golden cup because the gold has entered us; a year in which pleasure is purified of desperation, selfhood is purified of obsession, and surrender is revealed as the doorway to a more essential life. May we discover, slowly and faithfully, that nothing holy was lost. Everything was waiting to return from a higher place.