

RE'EH



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לזכות ואריכות ימים

For the merit and long life

*Baruch Mordechai ben Avraham &
Chene bat Shlomo*



RE'EH



As it is written: ערלת לבבכם ומלתם את ערלת לבבכם *U'maltem et orlat levavchem*, "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart"¹. The *sofei tavot* of ערלת לבבכם is תם *tam* ("pure/simple"). Becoming a *tam* results from removing this *orlah*/spiritual blockage or *klipah* that keeps the person distant from *Hashem* and His *Torah* at some level. Now, this *milah* of the heart is a disposition and duty of each Jew. Perhaps, some think that the subject of this *orlah* is relevant only to those who are not *Torah* observant. A grave mistake, for even a person who tries to be *shomer mitzvot* is certainly subject to this *klipah* if he or she is not *shomer nefesh* ("one guards his soul"²). And even then, there are great difficulties, as it is known. It is no wonder that here, *Moshe rabbeinu a"h* is speaking to the entire nation, all who were redeemed from *Mitzrayim* and received the Holy *Torah* at *Sinai*. Truly, the old problem being addressed here is the אני "I/ego", with an *alef*, when in fact, what designate us best is being עני "poor", with an *ayin*. This needs to be further explained, with the help of Heaven.

¹ *Devarim* 10:16.

² A truly pious individual.

Now, see how the *reshei tevot* of על נטילת ידים *Al netilat yadayim* is עני and the *sofei tavot* is לתם *l'tam* (“for the pure”). That is, the person begins all of his days like a poor man who has fallen and then through purifying his hands – “sweetening the accumulated severities” – he raises himself, becoming (initially) pure again. So much so, that the *gematria* absolute of *Al netilat yadayim* is 663, the same as the *pasuk* ויאמר יהוה אלהים הן האדם היה כאחד ממנו “And the L-rd G-d said, Behold, the man has become like one of us”³. The path for *tikkun*/rectification means the constant and arduous search for the *mituk hadinim* (“sweetening of severities”). Mystically, the *ayin* is the *alef* who has fallen and that needs to be raised again. This is done through the *tikkun* of the mentality that originates the person’s harsh judgments on life and people. Moreover, when on the path to raise himself spiritually, man is called by the appellation איש *ish* (“man”) which can be read as *alef-yeish* (“something”). This *yeish* is a human form created and invested with a holy *ruach*/spirit, the *alef* – a *chelek Elokah* (“part of Hashem”). When completed (married) and rectified he is then called אדם *adam* (“man”) – which can be read as *alef-dam* – the consecrated blood

³ *Bereshit* 3:22. Ritually washing the hands makes a Jew like an angel, that is “He is unique among the earthly beings, just as I am unique among the heavenly beings, and what is his uniqueness? To know good and evil, unlike the cattle and the beasts” (*Targum Yonatan, Bereshit Rabbah* 21:5). So powerfully holy is this act, that the ordinal *gematria* (132) is the same as for ה' אלקיכם *Hashem Elokeihem*, “L-rd your G-d”, which also hints at the Jew’s *nefesh elokit*/holy soul, as can be seen by the *milui* of ה' אלקיכם being 435, the same as *gematria* absolute of הנפש *ha-nefesh*, “the soul”.

for the world's altar. Behold, אֲשֶׁר יָצַר אֶת הָאָדָם *Asher yatsar et adam* ("That formed man") has the letters *yud-alef-shin* in it (forming thus *alef-yeish*), and the *sofei tevot* (*tav-mem*) is *tam* – Hashem created man to be pure and holy. The *gematria atbash* of *Asher Yatzar* (453) is the same as *להחיות* *le-hachayot*, ("to keep them alive"⁴), to wit, Hashem gives life to the multiple aspects that make up man and that reflect the *olamot*/upper worlds in him. This is the reason man is called *olam katan* ("microcosm"). And the subject of "formed man" intrinsically connects Hashem and man. The actual essence of forming resulted in him, for הַיּוֹצֵר *ha-Yotzer* ("the Maker") has *gematria* 311, the same as *ish*. However, this *alef-yeish* does not begin in man's *guf*/body of flesh and blood, but it is rather something anterior – a *tzelem Elokim* ("image of G-d") bound to the soul. It is a "spiritual mold" of man that enters him during conception⁵. In fact, there are two *tzelamim*/images – one being a "great" image of *Yesod* and the other, "small" (the *tzeil*/shadow) from *Malchut*. In addition, if the parents had *z'chut*/merit, the image of the child – the "small" at least – could be seen hovering above them in the exact moment of conception⁶. Behold, the *gematria atbash* of *ha-Yotzer* is 218, the same as *בצלמנו* *be'tselmenu* ("in our image"⁷). The creation of man begins in his *neshama* and *tzelem*, finishing

⁴ *Bereshit* 6:19.

⁵ See *Zohar* 43a, *Ki Tazria*.

⁶ *The Ari"zal, Sefer HaLikutim, Bo*.

⁷ *Bereshit* 1:26, where the word "image" appears for the first time in the *Torah*.

in his *yeish* that joins them. And this *alef-yeish* that needs to be pure and keep himself elevated has wondrous and complex attributes, for it is thanks to this form of divine origin he thinks – חקקי *chikei* (“thoughts”); see – וראהו *ve’raa* (“and he will look”); smell – וירח *va’yarach* (“and smelled”); speak – ואדברה *va’adaberah* (“I will speak”); has pleasures – חפצם *cheftzam* (“desires”); and fears G-d – ביראה *b’yiraa* (“with fear”) and וחרד *v’chared* (“and trembles”), all expressions with the same *gematria* 218.

Nowadays, only rare individuals have the *kedusha* of the *tzelem Elokim*. There is a *kedusha* of the *guf* bestowed by a full life of *Torah*, but the *tzelamim/tzelem*’s own nature is “delicate” so to speak, and can be “driven away” and “exchanged” for other strange spiritual influences, *chaz v’shalom*. See, צולמין *tzelamim* has *gematria* 226, the same for ויברח *Vayibarach* (“And he ran away”) and ורוחו *Ve’rucho* (“His spirit”). And I understand the “exchange” of the soul’s aspects as something that can occur *b’sod ha-ibur* (“mystical impregnation”) elucidated by the *Ari’zal* in the *Sha’ar HaGuilgulim*⁸. The holy *Zohar* reveals how the loss of the *tzelem* can happen: it is through the “Desirous binding with *tumah*”⁹ – by the shedding of man’s blood [and in another level, shamming someone, thus bringing blood to his face; and also the *zera l’vatalah*, for the seeds that would give life are lost, dead. And the *Talmud*¹⁰ says it

⁸ See also *Etz Chayim* 42:1.

⁹ 55a, *Bereshit*.

¹⁰ *Yevamot* 63b.

this is also applicable to the unmarried, because he does not fulfill the *mitzva* of procreation]”¹¹. The *tzelem* is also removed by the consumption of *basar v’chalav*¹² (and *chelev*), other grave transgressions¹³ which are the pernicious actions nominated by the *Torah*. Yet, the constant severe judgments a person makes on other people and in the circumstances of his life duly removes the *tzelem* as well. In all truth, any personal judgment divorced from *kedusha* – that does not see seek the good directly – is an “opening” for the *sitra achra* that in this manner, binds to man, be he religious or not. Moreover, this connection occurs quite easily, because this ensures the *bechirah chofshit* (“free will”) to remain immaculate.

As it is written, ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם היום ברכה וקללה *Re’eh anochi noten lifneichem ha-yom beracha ukelala*, “Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse”¹⁴. How can we see if our eyes have been blocked by our sins? This must be done through the “mind's eyes” and some refinement of the *guf*. As such, being *shomer einayim* (“guarding the eyes”) is a holy practice that brings about, as it were, a new delicate and translucent skin like a placenta, thus covering the entire body and working as a “spiritual organ” of contact with the extra-sensorial realities. Through it, one becomes very sensitive to people, places, emotions,

¹¹ *Zohar* 90a, *Yitro*.

¹² *Ibid.* 125a, *Mishpatim*.

¹³ *Ibid.* 125b

¹⁴ *Devarim* 11:26.

character attributes and the intentions of others, and all that is antagonistic to *Torah*, especially pride and the lack of righteousness. Yet, as said, this organ of light is exceedingly subtle, and should not be deliberately tested, for it could easily “tear”, *chaz v'shalom*. To be *shomer einayim* means to raise a strong barrier against sin – against the damage to the soul. If properly done, to wit when the *yetser hara* greatly desires to look at the inappropriate things of the world, the eyes are closed; this then can help the individual attain greater levels of *kedusha*. Now, with the help of G-d, I will explain further, how guarding the eyes is a powerful spiritual tool.

In our times, for the most part, “spiritually seeing” – to see beyond the senses – can be done only with the eyes closed¹⁵, rejecting the external universe. The eyes are a “door” (the *gematria atbash* of *re'eh* plus the *kolel* is 494, the same as *ופתח ufetach*, “and the door”), that once closed can reveal a *אור ohr*, “light” (*gematria* 207, the same as the *gematria ordinal/mispar siduri* of *re'eh* plus the *kolel*). This light allows one to penetrate the inner worlds, in the aspect of *ידעתי yadati*, “I know” (*gematria absolute/mispar hechrachi* 494, the same as the *atbash* of *re'eh* plus the *kolel*). Furthermore, the closing of the eyes is an act of *mituk hadinim* (“sweetening of judgments”) – a form of *shechitah* (“ritual slaughter”). The *pasuk* says: **רָאָה**

¹⁵ In the Messianic age, “The glory of the L-rd shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together” (*Isaiah* 40:5). The “eyes of flesh” shall see the *kedusha/spirituality* in the world.

אָנְכִי נִתֵּן לְפָנֶיכֶם הַיּוֹם בְּרָכָה וּקְלָלָה, and its *gematria* absolute is 315. Now, “The *gematria* of the word for ‘esophagus’ [*veshet, vav-shin-tet, 315*] is seven times the numerical value of the word for ‘man’ [*adam, alef-dalet-mem, 45*]. This number [315] is also related to the 320 states of severity associated with the blood of the throat, which is also a manifestation of severity. Through ritual slaughter, the dross in these states of severity is sweetened and refined”¹⁶. On a different level, when one closes the eyes in the sight of evil, the invasive external *orlah/klipah* reality that nourishes the *yetser hara* is temporarily blocked and the inner reality preserved, protecting the *tzelem* from being torn away. In fact, the expression וַיַּעֲצֵם אֶת-עֵינֵיכֶם *Va-yeatsem et-eineichem*, “And have closed your eyes”¹⁷ has *gematria* ordinal of 160, the same as *tzelem*. Truly, the *yetser hara* is crushed as it bangs on the inner lids for them to open so its nourishment can return. The point being that the closing of eyes as described accomplishes a degree of spiritual elevation and refines this part of the *guf* as well¹⁸.

¹⁶ The Ari”zal, *Ta’amei HaMitzvot, Re’eh*.

¹⁷ *Isaiah 29:10*.

¹⁸ There is a *remez* that *shmirat einayim* also greatly helps memory. The *reshei tevot* of the *pasuk* we have examined (*Devarim 11:26*) is the *Shem Kodesh* רָאֵנוּהֶבְנוּ, which has *gematria albam* of 233, the *gematria* of *zechor* (“remember”, *zayin-kaf-vav-reish* = 7 + 20 + 6 + 200 = 233). This is a special word, since 233 is the numerical value of the *Shem Havayah* spelled with the letter *yud*: *yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-yud-vav hei-yud* = (10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 10) + (6 + 10 + 6) + (5 + 10) = 72, plus the *Shem Ekyeh* spelled with the letter *yud*: *alef-lamed-pei hei-yud yud-vav-dalet hei-yud* = (1 + 30 + 80) + (5 + 10) + (10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 10) = 161. Finally, 72 + 161 = 233. Hence, memory is

The previously mentioned translucent skin is a much lower grade vestige of *Adam's levushei tufrah* ("garments of nails"¹⁹). Now, it is written: אור זרע לצדיק ולישרי לב שמחה *Ohr zarua la-tzadik ul'yishrei lev simcha*, "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart"²⁰. This is the messianic promise of divine benevolence for the righteous, also manifested to an infinitesimal degree in the fallen reality of our today and now. If the word for light (*Or* with *alef*) is written with an *ayin* (*ayin-vav-reish*, "skin") – a fall from the *alef* – we thus have a different meaning: "[The] 'skin' is sown for the righteous...", to wit, in the future, this spiritual skin of today will be sublimated and the righteous' light of *kedusha* – the *alef* – will be revealed. Come and see: the *gematria* absolute (plus the two *kolelim* for each word) of אור זרע *Ohr zarua* is 486, the same for the word כסות *kesut*, "covering" (like the 'skin'²¹) as in the *pasuk* עינים הוא הנה הוּא-לך כסות עינים *Hine hulach kesut einayim*, "Behold, it is for thee a 'covering of the eyes'"²². Moreover,

connected with *kedusha* (See *Ari"zal, Sha'ar HaMitzvot, Vaet'chanan; Talmud, Berachot* 32b). When one meditates upon the sounds of the letters of this holy Name of the *reshei tevot* and its significance derived from the *gematria*, these contemplations can unleash within oneself powerful spiritual energies, opening the inner doors to the intuitive connection to the עץ החיים *Etz HaChayim*, also *gematria* 233.

¹⁹ בסוד לבושים של אדם הראשון בגן עדן. See *Zohar* 36b, *Bereshit; Pecude* 229b.

²⁰ *Tehilim* 97:11.

²¹ We see how *Ohr* with *ayin/skin* "derives" from the *Ohr* with *alef/light*.

²² *Bereshit* 20:16. The *reshei tevot* of this *pasuk* is ההלכע, and it has *gematria* 130. This is a *remez* for the "coverings" of *Adam*, as this is the number of years he abstained from marital relations with *Chava*. On another level, the *atbash* for this *reshei tevot* is 237 – the *gematria* for *Zichri*, "My

the *atbash* of עינים כסות *kesut einayim* is 225, plus the two *kolelim*, we have the same *gematria* as ברכה *beracha*, “blessing” (227). In addition, the *sofei tevot* is תם *tam*. Through sincere *teshuva* and constant correct efforts to learn how to expand the consciousness, a person may merit this spiritual energy – a greater level of access to his own *neshama*. This is even beyond the moral concept of developing a “new skin” through *teshuva*, for here it is meant an actual energy projection from the skin of flesh, the greatest organ of contact with the physical reality. Since this refined skin has its roots in the *levushei tufrah*, it can also help “push away” the *sitra achra* to a degree, as it was a complete protection for *Adam*²³. Through knowledge of meditation, one who live a full *Torah* life can visualize the energy of any part or organ from the body, or anything in nature²⁴, for *Elokim Hu HaTevah*²⁵.

Now, physical transformation is a messianic promise: “In the future *Hashem* will make wings for the righteous, and they will fly above the waters, as it is written: ‘Therefore we will not fear when the earth be removed and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea’²⁶”²⁷.

remembrance” (*zayin-chaf-reish-yud* = 7 + 20 + 200 + 10 = 237). This shows a connection between guarding the eyes and memory.

²³ See the *Ari”zal*, *Etz Chayim*, *Sha’ar HaChashmal* regarding how *Adam* protected himself from the *chitzonim* with his “skin of light”.

²⁴ For example, the *Ari”zal* could see in the flame of a candle, or from a lamp using olive oil much about a person. However, this is not something that only he could do. (See also *Tikkunei ha-Zohar* 21:50a).

²⁵ As *gematria Elokim* (86) is the same as the *HaTevah* (“The Nature”).

²⁶ *Tehillim* 46:3.

Regarding the original light it is said: “*Ohr zarua la-tzadik* – Thus that light functioned in the world only on the first day of Creation; after that it was hidden away and no longer seen’. Said *Rabi Yehudah*: ‘Had it been hidden away altogether the world would not have been able to exist for one moment. However, it was only hidden like a seed, which generates others, seeds and fruits, and the world is sustained by it. There is not a day that something does not emanate from that light to sustain all things, for it is with this that the Holy One nourishes the world’²⁸. If a person merits it, a reflection of that holy light is “sown” in her, causing, as it were, a “spiritual flourishing” – she is transformed. It all depends on merit. Behold, the *gematria atbash* of אור זרע לצדיק *Or zarua la-tzadik* is 732, the same as כמים הפנים לפנים כן לב האדם לאדם *Kamayim ha-panim la-panim ken lev ha-adam la-adam*, “As waters reflect one’s face, so too does the heart of one man reflect the heart of another”²⁹. It is necessary to explain this, with the help of Heaven.

See, the “water” referred is called *MahD* or *mayin durchin* (“masculine waters”): the Divine answer to *MahN* or *mayin nukvin* (“feminine waters”) – the spiritual initiatives of the *mitzvot*, *kavanot*, emotions e acts that mystically make the *Aliyat*/ascent of *MahN*. This is the ascension of the spiritual energy that causes a desire for the *yichud*/unification

²⁷ *Talmud, Sanhedrin* 92b.

²⁸ *Zohar* 148b-149a.

²⁹ *Mishlei* 27:19.

between the *olamot*/worlds. This is a most profound subject, connected to the actual human evolutionary path that necessitates these ascensions from below. This is universal law: if the desire for change and growth does not ascend high to “supplicate” celestial answers, no change or growth can occur. As such, what we wish for is what we receive, be it for good or not. Hence, one must be careful with what we wish for.

Continuing, the word *panim* (“face”) represents man, as it is related to the word *penimo* (“interior”). The face expresses his mental essence, as it is written: “A man’s wisdom makes his face shine”³⁰. Now, the heart is the essence of man in the emotional and physical level. And when both mind and heart/physical are rectified by a sanctified life, they reflect/receive more sublime aspects of the *Adam Eliyon* (“Superior Man”) – in the illumination (i.e., gaining access to) from the upper levels of the *neshama*, as well as in the illumination of his body that becomes more refined and sensitive. This is the “man” that the heart reflects. We thus read this *Mishlei*: “As waters reflect [that is, as the ‘masculine waters’ come with an answer...] one’s face [to the ‘feminine waters’ raised by the righteous acts of man], so too does the heart of one man reflect [and even his body is invested by the reflection of above. The sublime spiritual level called] the heart of another [i.e., ‘Man’, the *Adam Eliyon*]”. Moreover, the *gematria* for *mayin* (*mem-*

³⁰ *Kohelet* 8:1.

yud-mem = 40 + 10 + 40) is 90, the same as the letter *tzaddi* (a cognate of righteous). This indicates how the superior reflection comes to the just – “As waters reflect...” – and its greater revelation shall come in the future time. Hence, it is said: *Or zarua la-tzaddik*. Now, when this *Mishlei* ends with the term for (superior) “man”, we see that the *gematria* of the *milui* for the word *adam* is 628 (*alef-lamed-pei*, 1 + 30 + 80 = 114; *dalet-lamed-tav*, 4 + 30 + 400 = 434; *mem-mem*, 40 + 40 = 80; 114 + 434 + 80 = 628). This *gematria* equals 7 times *Elokim* (86) plus the *gematria* for *YKVK* (26). Hence, we have: 7 x 86 = 602 + 26 = 628. Man’s *tzelamim* are the spiritual garments necessary for the soul to be “born”, as through them it is invested in the atmosphere of each world below, until our own level of physicality. The number seven alludes to the seven basic emotions of man and to the natural law of the universe (*Elokim/HaTevah/seven days of Creation*). This includes the formation of man’s body, imbued by the transcendental element of the soul, the *chelek Elokah* (*YKVK*). Moreover, the *gematria* of the *milui* for the final expression of this *Mishlei*, *la-adam*, is 702. The *milui* of *adam* was already calculated (628), and with the addition of the *milui* for the letter *lamed* that precedes the word *adam*, we have *gematria* 74 (*lamed-mem-dalet*, 30 + 40 + 4 = 74). Now, 74 + 628 = 702 (the *gematria* of the *milui* of *la’adam*). This is the same numeric value as *Tzelem Israel/Image of Israel* (plus the *kolel* for the word *tzelem*). As such, *tzelem* (160 + *kolel*) + *Israel* (541) = 702 (*la’adam*).

Now, it is written: “Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse’. Why was the word ‘behold’ used? The reality of the blessings and curses is felt by the eternal soul. However, the secret of this subject is that as the physical body has organs, the eternal soul has organs. Notwithstanding these are spiritual, a person can see the spiritual organs as she can see the physical ones, through its garments – the external coverings. The blessings and curses that descend from above to work in this world are real, and the individual of pure soul can see them. *Moshe Rabbeinu a’h*, in fact, saw the blessings and curses descending from above to reality”³¹. The *Maguid Mesharim* insists that it is possible to see the spiritual organs in its external covering. So, on 26 of Av 5773, during the *seudat shlishi*, I visualized the *Shem Havaya* (with vowels for *yirah*) over my hands³², and soon after, I saw the letters in fire that spelled³³ פלצנטה. After the deep meditation on these letters as well, I went to check this word and found it to be ‘placenta’ in modern Hebrew, truly a fragile and sweet skin. The *gematria* absolute of פלצנטה is 264, the same as ואראנו

³¹ *Maguid Meisharim, Re’eh, Erev Shabat – 27 Menachem Av 5300 [1540]*, the period of the plague.

³² Truly, any part of the body would have worked to identify the sins of such limb, as instructed by the *Ari”zal (Sha’ar Ruach HaKodesh 4a-b)*.

³³ At first, the letter ט in this word seemed to be a נ, or better yet, an upside down ט indicating a necessary *tikkun*, as explained by the *Ari”zal*.

v'erenu, "and see him"³⁴; the *atbash* is 180, the same as *מעיני m'einai*, "my eyes".

Now, let us to elaborate further on the judgments of man and their effects on the *tzelem*. The holy *Zohar* brings that *Hashem* answered to the complaints e perplexity of *Iyov* when faced with the Divine justice: "Am I the one that kills the sons of men? Have the gates of death been revealed to you? And see you the gates of the shadows of death? There are ever so many gates open on that side, over which death rules, hidden away from the sons of men, who know them not'. There are here mentioned both 'death' and 'the shadow of death'. These are a pair [masculine and feminine], the grades of *Gevurah*, the one being the angel of death, the other his rider, who also is his protecting shadow and strength, the two being linked together, and forming but one being. All the grades that issue from them and are attached to them form their 'gates'. Corresponding to the gates on high, of which it is written: 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates, etc.'³⁵ hence, in answer to *Iyov's* complaints, *Hashem* said: 'As the cloud is consumed and vanish away, so he that goes down to the grave shall come up no more'³⁶³⁷. While it is not simple to understand this *Zohar*, it is important in order to elucidate the *orlah* mentioned before.

³⁴ This is a particularly significant *gematria* result, for the two words have the same number of letters.

³⁵ *Tehillim* 24:7.

³⁶ *Iyov* 7:8.

³⁷ 160b, *Vayetze*.

Beyond the references to “shadow”, a subject treated earlier and that shall be later more explored, with the help of Heaven, the *Zohar* brings the concept that up on high, *Gevurah* is holy, and is a “protecting shadow and strength”. However, the severe judgments and the “shadow of death” – Evil properly speaking – is *Gevurah* degraded down in the material reality by the actions of man, while having its roots in the same divine power³⁸. Moreover, *Hashem* asks *Iyov*: “Do you truly comprehend all of these realities – that of *Gevurah* on high and down below – as being only Me?” If man could understand this, he would not judge anything with severity, and would accept things with love, for all is for the good. Now, the *Ba'al Shem Tov* says that: “No animal would dare disturbing a man, save if he has abandoned the path of *Hashem*”³⁹. He continues explaining that, “The greater part of man is his *tzelem Elokim*. The man who loses his *tzelem* loses his being. He becomes no more than an animal”. The *tzelem Elokim* and the *tzeil* (“shadow”) are two very subtle spiritual aspects that make up man. The first, from the upper levels of *Gevurah*, the other, from its lower levels. Behold, the *gematria* of *tzeil* is 120, the same as *yipol* (“fallen”). Until his fall in *Gan Eden*, *Adam* did not have a shadow, because a shadow is a dark region formed by the partial absence of light, caused by the existence of an obstacle. *Adam*’s illumination was pure and

³⁸ See aspects of these ideas in the discussion of the sages (*Pesachim* 50a).

³⁹ On the *Zohar* 191a, *Vayeshev*.

his body was not of matter⁴⁰, as we know it today. The *tzeil* is a characteristic of the fallen material world. And when man is dignified and straight in his actions, heart and mind, his *tzelem* is immaculate and intense, and the *tzeil* then subjugated to it as a mere natural reflection of the *nefesh*⁴¹.

Mystically, the shadow is a force of great contraction. As it is known, “The five letters of the *Shem Elokim* [*alef-lamed-hei-yud-mem*] signify the five states of *gevurah* and produce the 120 permutations in *Z’eir Anpin*”⁴². In order to explain this, the five letters of the *Shem Elokim* permute in 120 ways: $5! = 5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 = 120$. The *tzeil* is written *tzadi-lamed* = $90 + 30 = 120$. Now, *tzelem* and *tzeil* are related, being that the first term has the additional letter *mem* (*tzadi-lamed-mem*) that indicates a “closing” (for the \square – *mem sofit* – is a closed off letter in all sides), to wit, an aspect of the “protecting shadow and strength” that prevents and closes off the connection to Evil. In other words, the permutations of the *Shem Elokim* are “sealed off” in *Nukva* (i.e., our physical reality) by the *tzelem* in a way that the *sitra achra* does not derive any sustenance from the degradation of this *Shem Kodesh*. Hence, the great importance of being *shomer tzelem*, for the loss of this protection implicates in the direct nurturing of the *sitra achra*. See, the *tzelem Elokim* is connected to man through his mind – the superior “seat” of the *neschama*. All

⁴⁰ The *Ari’zal*, *Likutei Torah*, *Noach*; *Sha’ar HaGilgulim* 31:6 *et. al.*

⁴¹ See *Zohar* 227a, *Vayechi*.

⁴² The *Ari’zal*, *Likutei Torah*, *Bo*.

judgments are restrictions the mind, potentially descending and expressing themselves at an emotional level with severity (*gevurah*). To be *shomer tzelem* means to avoid all judgments, and if it is the case that they may come about, knowing how to “sweeten” them at their origin (in the mind), thus sealing off their possible degradation from *gevurah* – the various possible expressions of rigor. Once at the emotional level of *gevurah*, it is very difficult to mitigate these severities, as they rapidly degrade and attract the external forces, which further “sour” them into evil actions. Hence, these restrictive thoughts may ultimately “cut off” the *tzelem, chaz v’shalom*. This is the reason our Sages told us that anger is like idolatry⁴³, because through the intense judgment (of not accepting reality) that leads to anger – an intense force of contraction – the *tzelem* loses its bond to the soul and is thus removed. This means that the person may uproot this lofty spiritual aspect and connects her soul to another “strange image”. That is, she binds herself to the *elohim acheirim* (“other gods”) that come to occupy the “vacant space” left by the *tzelem*. This connection with these strange gods is likened to *avodah zarah*. Know that it is very difficult to recuperate the spiritual aspects that were lost, demanding great *teshuvah* and prayer, as explained⁴⁴ by the *Ari”zal*. Moreover, when the *tzeil* has no more *tzelem* that balances

⁴³ *Zohar* 182b, *Tetsave*.

⁴⁴ See *Talmud, Pesachim* 66b; *Sha’ar HaGilgulim, hakdamah* 38 (on *Tosefet Shabbat* and later, when passing the grave of the gentile in 5332); *Sha’ar Ruach HaKodesh, drush* 3, *Kavanot HaEfer*.

it, so to speak, then it (the *tzeil*) is now dominant, because the force of contraction from the judgment nourishes it, as it does the *nefesh*, as it is known. This shadow now becomes a portal *בבעליו be-Ba'alav* (“with the owner”, that is, to the “strange god”), with *gematria* 120 like *tzeil*. And as it is written: *וגם בעליו יומת Ve'gam ba'alav yumat*, “And your master shall die”⁴⁵. The domain of the *ba'al* is death, and it wants exactly that for whoever joins with it. See, the *gematria* absolute of this *pasuk* in *Shemot* is 623, the same as *וגבורתו u'Guevurato* (“his Strength”). And the *ba'alei kishufim* (“magicians/wizards”) knowing these secrets well, also know how to deliver the person’s shadow – a portal of death – to the *sitra achra*, thus bringing evil spirits there in the same human form as the shadow. If this happens to the person, the *tzelem* is then lost forever⁴⁶, *chaz v'shalom*.

Regarding the *tzelem* and the shadow, thus says the *Ari'zal*: “This explains the statement in the *Zohar* that “The more the Name *Havayah* extends the better,”⁴⁷ for it always remains holy. However, this is not the case with the states of *gevurah* [of the Name *Elokim*], for the limit of holiness is the final of these 120 [permutations] of the Name *Elokim*. [Note that at a certain level, *gevurah* protects and guards, and on another, related to the negative shadow etc., it is the actual origin of the degraded judgments – of Evil in general]. From that point on is the realm of Evil, called

⁴⁵ *Shemot* 21:29.

⁴⁶ See *Zohar* 43a, *Ki Tazria*.

⁴⁷ *Zohar* 96a, *Mishpatim*.

'other gods' [*elohim acheirim*]. They are called 'other' [*acheirim*] because they derive their sustenance from the back [*achoraiyim*]"⁴⁸. Hence, the explanation of the *Zohar* that brought the conversation between *Hashem* and *Iyov*, where it was said that all realities are He Himself, even if this is very difficult for man to comprehend.

Finally, we can better explain why the severe judgments and the anger that follows it, are like acts of idolatry, affecting the *tzelem* and even uprooting it, *chaz v'shalom*. The *Ari'zal* explains: "This is the mystical meaning of the commandment, 'Do not make for yourselves molten gods [*maseichah*]'"⁴⁹. Do not allow the *Shem Elokim* to expand to its 120 permutations – 120 being the *gematria* of the word for 'molten' [the word *maseichah* actually divides into two parts, *mem-samech-chaf*, *gematria* 120, and *hei*, *gematria* 5] – so that these can serve as a source for the forces of evil, known as 'other gods'"⁵⁰. As it was explained, the *Shem Elokim* expands beyond its 120 permutations caused by the thoughts, emotions and acts without *kedusha*. This spiritual force becomes (and further nurtures) the "other gods", which originate in these permutations of the *Shem Elokim*.

All is *Hashem*, and He is the same power in all realities. And when the judgments of the *Shem Elokim* are allowed to

⁴⁸ *Sefer HaLikutim*, Bo.

⁴⁹ *Shemot* 34:17.

⁵⁰ *Likutei Torah*, *Pinchas*

extend beyond its “natural boundaries” – for a measure of severity/*Elokim/gevurah* is natural and necessary in reality to “cloak” *Hashem* and allow all creatures to exist – that is, when a person judges with excess rigor, this power breaks the chains that hold back *avodah zarah*. This means the contracting of the mind, and the heart is left rigid and insensitive, cold as a stone⁵¹. This is the *orlat levavchem*. In this manner of being, the person now comes to deny the unity of *Hashem*, for he fails to understand that all is He and that He causes all directly. This subtle form of idolatry leads to further contraction of the mind and more anger. Hence, the prophet spoke: “And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the לב האבן *lev ha-even* [‘stony heart’] out of their flesh, and will give them a [sensitive] heart of flesh”⁵². Behold, the *gematria* of *lev ha-even* is 90, the same as the letter *tzaddi*, meaning, every degree that the *orlah* is removed, the person reveals an equal degree of *temimut*. In order to help accomplish this removal, the eyes must be guarded, as shown in this *pasuk*’s ordinal *gematria* with the value of 657, the same as תראנו *tirenu*, “see”. The opening of the eyes can block one to become a *tzadik*, for true seeing is done in the heart.

Baruch Adonai leolam amen ve’amen



⁵¹ Alternatively, like גפרית *gafrit*, “brimstone”, with *gematria* 693, the same as the *atbash* of *orlat levavchem* plus two for the *kolel* of each word.

⁵² *Ezekiel* 11:19.

About the Rabbi Avraham Chachamovits



Rabbi *Chachamovits* is perhaps the foremost disseminator of *Torah* mysticism in South America, with hundreds of works in (books, audio and video *shiurim*, classes etc.). He idealized and directed the *Beit Ari"zal*, the first and only authentic kosher Jewish Mystical School (*kollel*) in South America. His path is of righteousness and *kosher* spiritual experiences and not merely "speaking from books read". His style is always deep and intense, and it is based on the *Tanach* prophets' schools and the teachings of the *Ari"zal* in particular.