

Toldot Shimshon

by Rabbi Shimshon Chaim Nachmani zt"l

Published Livorno 1776*

Chapter VI – Mishnah 7

גְּדוּלָהּ תורה וְהיא נותנת חיים לעושיהָ, בעולם הזה ובעולם הבא, שנאמר "כִּי־חַיִּים הֵם לַמַּצְאִיָּהֶם וְלִכְל־בְּשָׂרוֹ מֵרֶפָא".
ואומר "רפאות תהי לשרה ושקוי לעצמותיה". ואומר "עץ־חיים היא למחזיקים בה ותמכיה מאשר". ואומר "כי לנות חן
הם לראשה וענקים לגררתה". ואומר "תמן לראשה לנות־חן עטרת תפארת תמגנה". ואומר "ארה ימים בימינה בשמאולה
עשר וכבוד". ואומר "כי ארה ימים ושנות חיים ושלום יוסיפו לה".

Great is Torah for it gives life to those that practice it, in this world, and in the World-to-Come, as it is said: “For they are life unto those that find them, and health to the entire body.”¹ And it says: “It will be a cure for your navel and elixer for your bones.”² And it says: “She is a tree of life to those that grasp her, and whoever holds onto her is happy.”³ And it says: “For they are a graceful wreath upon your head, a necklace about your throat.”⁴ And it says: “She will adorn your head with a graceful wreath; shield you with a glorious crown.”^{5,6} And it says: “Length of days is in her right hand, in her left hand are riches and honor.”⁷ And it says: “For length of days, and years of life, and peace, they will add for you.”^{8,9}

* English translation: Copyright © 2026 by Charles S. Stein. Additional essays available at <http://zstorah.com>

¹ Prov. 4:22.

² Prov. 3:8.

³ Prov. 3:18.

⁴ Prov. 1:9.

⁵ Prov. 4:9.

⁶ Some editions add an additional prooftext here from Prov. 9:11: “כִּי־יָרְבוּ יָמֶיךָ וְיוֹסִיפוּ לָךְ שָׁנוֹת חַיִּים” [“For through me your days will increase, and years be added to your life”].

⁷ Prov. 3:16.

⁸ Prov. 3:2.

⁹ Some editions add an additional prooftext here from Prov. 3:17: “דְּרָכֶיהָ דְרָכֵי־נֹעַם וְכָל־נְתִיבוֹתֶיהָ שְׁלוֹם” [“Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace”].

מְרַגְלָא בְּפּוּמְיָהוּ דְרַבְּנָן, גְּדוּל תַּלְמוּד, וְלִמְה נֶקֶט הַתַּנָּא "לְעוֹשֵׂיהָ" דְּנִקְא, וְלֹא ל"לֹמְדֵיהָ" נְמִי, וְהָא תַנּוּן, וְתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה כְּנֶגְדַּ כּוּלָּם. וְעוֹד, מַה בָּא לְהַשְׁמִיעֵנוּ דְיֵישׁ לוֹ חַיִּים בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וּבְעוֹלָם הַבָּא, דְּמִילְתָּא דְּפִשְׁטָא הִיא שְׂיֵישׁ לוֹ חַיִּים בְּעוֹלָם הַבָּא, דְּכַתִּיב "כִּי הוּא חַיִּיהָ וְאַרְךָ יָמֶיהָ", וְדִרְשִׁינוּ לְעוֹלָם שְׂכָלוֹ טוֹב וְכָלוֹ אַרְוָה. וְהַסְפֵּק הוּא בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה לְבַד, מִשּׁוּם דְּשִׁכַּר מִצְוֹת בְּהַאי עֲלָמָא, לִיכָא, וְעוֹד אִיךְ מוּכַח מִקְרָא, דְּ"כִי־חַיִּים הֵם לְמַצְאֵיהֶם", שְׁהַתּוֹרָה נּוֹתֶנֶת חַיִּים לְעוֹשֵׂיהָ דְּנִקְא, וְהִיכָא רַמְיזוּ בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וּבְעוֹלָם הַבָּא.

“A saying common in the mouths of the Rabbis”¹⁰ is [that] “great is Torah study.”¹¹

Why did the Tanna take specifically the term, “Great is Torah for it gives life to those that practice it,” and not “for those who learn it,” for we learned, “and the study of Torah is equivalent to all of them.”¹²

Furthermore, what does it come to inform us that one has life in this world and in the World-to-Come? For it is a self-evident matter that one has life in the World-to-Come, as it is written, “for it is your life and the length of your days,”¹³ and we expound “a world that is entirely good and entirely long.”¹⁴ The doubt is only regarding this world, because “there is no reward for [performance of] mitzvot in this world.”¹⁵

Furthermore, how is it proven from the verse “For they are life unto those that find them],” that the Torah gives life specifically “to those who practice it,” and where is it alluded that it refers to this world and the World-to-Come?

וְיֵישׁ לֹזְמֵר, דְּבַפְרָק קָמָא דְּבַרְכּוֹת מְצִינּוּ שְׁתֵּי מִימְרוֹת סוּתְרוֹת זֹאת זֹאת, דְּמִתְחַלְקָה אָמַר רִישׁ לְקִישׁ, כָּל הָעוֹסֵק בְּתוֹרָה, יִסּוּרִין בְּדַלִּין מִמֶּנּוּ. וְאַחַר כֵּן שָׁם בְּסוּמָא, אָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן יוֹחָאי, שְׁלוֹשׁ מִתְּנֻנּוֹת טוֹבוֹת נִתְּנוּ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, וְלֹא נִתְּנוּ אֶלָּא עַל יְדֵי יִסּוּרִין. תּוֹרָה מִנֵּינָא, דְּכַתִּיב "אֲשֶׁר־יִהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר־תִּסְרְנוּ יָהּ וּמִתּוֹרַתְךָ" וְכוּ', וְעֵינֵינוּ שָׁם. וְאִיךְ אֶפְשָׁר שְׁהַעוֹסֵק בְּתוֹרָה יִסּוּרִין בְּדַלִּין מִמֶּנּוּ, אִם הַתּוֹרָה עֲצָמָה לֹא נִתְּנָה אֶלָּא עַל יְדֵי יִסּוּרִין.

One may say, that in the first chapter of Berachot (5a) we find two statements that contradict one another, for initially Resh Lakish said: whoever engages in Torah, sufferings withdraw from him. Afterward, nearby there, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai said: three good gifts did the Holy One, Blessed be He give to Israel, and He gave them only through sufferings. Torah — from where [is this derived]? As it is written, “happy are those whom You discipline, O L-rd, whom you instruct in Your Torah,”¹⁶ see there.

How is it possible that one who engages in Torah has sufferings withdraw from him, if the Torah itself was given only through sufferings?

¹⁰ Berachot 17a.

¹¹ Eruvin 63b; Megillah 3b, 16b; Bava Kamma 17a; Sanhedrin 44b.

¹² Peah 1:1.

¹³ Deut. 30:20.

¹⁴ Tanchuma, parashat Tzav, §14 interprets “your life” as “for the World-to-Come” and “the length of your days” as “for the world that is long.” Closer terminology to “a world that is entirely good and entirely long” is found in the Gemara (Yerushalmi Chagigah 2:1; Kiddushin 39b; Chullin 142a), but is cited not with regard to Deut. 30:20, but with regard to the phrase “That it may go well with you” found in Ex. 20:12, Deut. 5:16, and Deut. 6:2.

¹⁵ Kiddushin 39b; Chullin 142a, 142b.

¹⁶ Ps. 94:12.

ומלבד מה שתירצו המפרשים, יש לומר, דאיתא במדרש פְּרַשְׁת נִצְבִים "כִּי־חַיִּים הֵם לְמַצְאֵיהֶם", יש אומרים, למוציא לאחרים. יש אומרים, לַמְּצִיא אוֹתָם. עכ"ל. משמע מזה שהחיים של התורה אינם באים אלא או בשעה שהגיע למעלה זו ללמד לאחרים. אי נמי, למעלה אחרת לסדש חידושים בתורה, שאז נקראת התורה שלו, כדאמרינו בפרק קמא דעבודתה וְרַחֵם כְּתִיב "כִּי אִם־בְּתוֹרַת ה' ", וְכִתִּיב "בְּתוֹרָתוֹ", מעיקרא התורה אינה שלו, לכה נקראת "תורת ה' ", ולבסוף היא שלו ונקראת "תורתו".

Undertake to teach students, or to innovate novel interpretations

Beyond what the commentators have answered, one may say, that it is found in the Midrash on parashat Nitzavim:

“For they are life unto those who find them [לְמַצְאֵיהֶם] [*le’motze’eihem*].”
 [One interpretation is this means] **for one who imparts it [שְׁמוֹצִיאָן] [*she’motzian*]**
to others. . . . [Another interpretation is this means] for one who completes
[שְׁמַמְצִיא] [*she’mamtzi*] all the mitzvot.

- Deut. Rabbah 8:4

We asked why the Tanna used the term, “to those that practice it,” and not “for those who learn it.” The answer is that **it is implied from this that the life of the Torah comes only either at the moment when one has reached this level of teaching others, or alternatively, at another level of innovating novel interpretations [*chiddushim*] in Torah. Then the Torah is called his, as we say in the first chapter of Avodah Zarah (19a): It is written, “Rather, this one delights in the L-rd’s Torah,”¹⁷ and it is written afterward “and studies his Torah day and night.” Initially the Torah is not his, therefore it is called “the L-rd’s Torah,” but ultimately it is his and is called “his Torah.”¹⁸**

ולכו, מתחלה שעדיין לא ניתנה לו במתנה, ונקראת "תורת ה' ", אז לא ניתנה אלא על ידי יסורין כי לצרפו ולטהרו, כמו שהיו ישראל בכור הברזל במצרים קודם קבלת התורה. אבל אחר כך כשקלמו התורה, ניתנה לו במתנה, אז יסורין גדלין ממנו. וזהו דקאמר שהיא נותנת חיים לעושיה, דוקא "לעושיה", דהיינו שמלמד לאחרים, שנקרא עושה זה התלמיד, או זו התורה שסדש זה התלמיד, או שמיצא דברי תורה, שסדש חידושים בתורה. ושפיר מיייתי ראיה מקרא ד"כִּי־חַיִּים הֵם לְמַצְאֵיהֶם", דהיינו לעושיה, שהרי מציא אותה התורה הסדשה, או אותו תלמיד חכם חדש.

Therefore, initially, when it has not yet been given to him as a gift, and it is still called “the Torah of the L-rd,” then it was given only through sufferings, in order to refine him and purify him. This is just as Israel were placed in “the iron furnace in Egypt”¹⁹ prior to the receiving of the Torah. But afterward, when they studied the Torah and it was given to him

¹⁷ Ps. 1:2.

¹⁸ The suffixed *vav* in “*Torahto*” in Ps. 1:2 is interpreted by some as “His,” referring to G-d, but Avodah Zarah 19a interprets it as “his,” referring to a human who has acquired Torah by learning it.

¹⁹ Cf. I Kings 8:51. There is a Kabbalistic concept that intellectual or spiritual mastery is often preceded by a period of “refining” hardship.

as a gift, then sufferings withdraw from him. This answers how one who engages in Torah has sufferings withdraw from him, if the Torah itself was given only through sufferings.

This is what the Tanna is saying, that it gives life to those who practice it, “le’oseiha, specifically “to those who do it,” that is, one who teaches others, who is called the maker [oseh] of this student.²⁰

Alternatively, he is the maker of this Torah that this student will innovate, or one who brings forth words of Torah, who innovates novel interpretations in the Torah. It properly brings proof from the verse “for they are life unto those who find them,” that is, “to those who do it,” for he is indeed bringing forth that new Torah, or that new Torah scholar.

ואלו חיים הם בנדאי לעולם הבא, שהוא עולם שכלו חיים. ואף בעולם הזה יהיו לו חיים טובים, מסיפיה דקרא "ולכל-בשרו מרפא", שכל העוסק בתורה יסורין בדליו ממנו, שהסורין שהיו לו קודם שתנתן לו במתנה, דהיינו קודם שיגיע להמציא אותן או להמציא לאחרים, עתה יתרפא מהן.

This life is certainly for the World-to-Come, which is the world that is entirely life.

We said that it was self-evident that one who obeys the mitzvot will have life in the World-to-Come, but asked about this world, because of the teaching that “there is no reward for [performance of] mitzvot in this world.” The answer is that **even in this world, he will have good life**, as we learn from the end of that verse, Prov. 4:22—“**and health to the entire body**”—**for whoever engages in Torah, sufferings withdraw from him**. As explained in the previous paragraph, this refers to **the sufferings that were upon him prior to [the Torah] being given to him as a gift, that is, prior to reaching the level of bringing them forth or teaching them to others. From these sufferings, he will now be healed.**

ועוד יש לומר, שהתנא הוצרך לומר בעולם הזה ובעולם הבא, דבמסקת ערכין אמרינו, כיון שעברו על האדם ארבעים יום בלא יסורין, קבל עולמו בחייו. ואם מי שזכה בתורה יהיו לו חיים בעולם הזה, בנדאי שלא יהיו לו עוד יסורין וצער, שאז לא יהיו נקראים חיים. וסלקא דעתך אמינא, הואיל שישורין בדליו הימנו, מעתה לא יהיו לו חיים לעולם הבא.

One may further say, that the Tanna needed to state “in this world and in the World-to-Come,” because in tractate Arakhin (15b) we say: once forty days have passed over a person without sufferings, he has received his world in his lifetime. If one who has merited the Torah will have life in this world, certainly he will no longer have sufferings and pain, for then it would not be called life. One might have thought: since sufferings withdraw from him, from now on he will have no life in the World-to-Come.

²⁰ Sanhedrin 99b.

לְכָךְ קָא מְשַׁמֵּעַ לוֹ שְׂיִהְיוּ לוֹ חַיִּים בְּעוֹלָם הַנְּהַן וּבְעוֹלָם הַבָּא, שֶׁהַטּוֹרַח שְׁעוֹשֵׂה לְלַמֵּד לְתַלְמִידָיו אוֹ לְחֹדֵשׁ הַחִידוּשִׁים, נִחְשָׁבִים לוֹ לְצַעַר שְׂלֵא יִקְבַּל עוֹלָמוֹ בְּחַיָּיו. וְכֵן הַפְּתוּב עוֹשֵׂה עֲקָר מֵהַחַיִּים שֶׁל עוֹלָם הַבָּא, דְּקָתִיב "כִּי־חַיִּים הֵם" וְכוּ'. וְאַגַּב יִהְיֶה לוֹ מְדִין תּוֹסֶפֶת, אֲף "וּלְכָל־בְּשָׂרוֹ מֵרַפָּא", דְּהֵינּוּ חַיִּים שֶׁל הָעוֹלָם הַנְּהַן.

We asked how the verse “For they are life unto those that find them” proves that “those who practice it” will have life in this world and in the World-to-Come. The answer is that it **teaches us that he will have life in this world and in the World-to-Come, for the toil he undertakes to teach his students, or to innovate novel interpretations, counts for him as suffering, such that he does not receive his world in his lifetime. Likewise, the verse makes the principal matter the life of the World-to-Come, as it is written “for they are life unto those that find them.” Incidentally, as an additional benefit from the law, he will also have “and health to the entire body,” that is, the life of this world.**

וְאַחַר כֵּךְ אָמַר הַתַּנָּא "וְאָמַר" וְכוּ'. וְכַנְּתוּ לְהַבִּיא שְׂשָׁה פְּסוּקִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם, לְלַמֵּד שְׂשָׁה שָׁבַע מִצְוֹת, שֶׁהִזְהִיר בָּהֶם יִזְכֶּה לְאַרְיכוּת יָמִים, כְּמוֹ מִי שְׁעוֹסֵק בְּתוֹרַת תְּמִיד. שְׂמִי שְׂאִינוֹ בְּכָלֵל "לְעוֹשֵׂיהָ", שְׂאִינוֹ יָכוֹל לְעִסוֹק בְּתוֹרַת תְּמִיד, וְלֹא לְהוֹצִיא לְאַחֲרֵיהֶם וְלֹא לְחֹדֵשׁ בַּה חִידוּשִׁים, אֲפִלּוּ הֵכִי, אִם יִקְנִים אֵלּוֹ הַמִּצְוֹת אֶל אֵלּוֹ דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָה בְּשַׁעֲמֵנוּ, יִהְיֶה לוֹ אַרְיכוּת יָמִים. שְׁגַם מִצְוֹת אֵלּוֹ נוֹתְנוֹת חַיִּים לְעוֹשֵׂיהֶן בְּעוֹלָם הַנְּהַן וּבְעוֹלָם הַבָּא.

Afterward the Tanna said “and it says” etc. His intent is to bring six other verses, to teach that there are seven commandments, in which one who takes heed of them will merit length of days, like one who engages in Torah always. For one who is not included in “those who practice it”—who cannot engage in Torah always, and cannot teach others nor innovate novel interpretations in it — even so, if he fulfills these other commandments pertaining to these words of Torah at their proper times, he will have length of days. For these commandments too give life to those who do them in this world and in the World-to-Come.

וְהָרֵאשׁוֹנָה הִיא קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע, דְּאֲמַרְיֵנוּ בְּפֶרֶק ב' דְּבִרְכוֹת דִּף י"ג, כָּל הַמְּאָרִיד בְּ"אֶחָד", מְאַרְיֵכֵן לוֹ יָמָיו וְשָׁנוֹתָיו, אָמַר ר' חֲמָא בְּרַ עֲקָב, וּבְדִל"ת. וְעַל זֶה הַבִּיא הַפְּסוּק "רַפְּאוֹת תִּהְיֶה לְשִׁרְךָ" וְכוּ', שֶׁ"שִׁרְךָ" הוּא לְשׁוֹן חוֹזֵק, כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתַב ר[ד] "ק בְּסֶפֶר הַשְּׂרָשִׁים, מִלְּשׁוֹן "הַפֶּל שְׂרִיר וְקִיָּם". וְכַשֵּׁם שֶׁהַגּוֹף צָרִיד רַפּוּאָה, גַּם הַנֶּפֶשׁ צָרִיכָה רַפּוּאָה, כְּדִאֲמַרְיֵנוּ בְּפֶרֶק ב' דְּמַגְלָה, וּמֵמַאי דְּרַפּוּאָה דְּתַתְּלוּאִים וְכוּ', וְכַתִּיב "הַסֵּלַח לְכָל־עֲוֹנוֹכִי הֲרַפָּא" וְכוּ'.

Take care to properly read the Shema

The first of these commandments is the reading of the *Shema*, for we say in the second chapter of Berachot, page 13b: “Whoever prolongs [the utterance of] *echad* [אֶחָד] [“one”], they prolong his days and years. Rabbi Chama bar Ya’akov said: and [this prolonged life is achieved] with the *dalet* [the last letter of *echad*].”

Regarding this, [the Tanna] brought the verse, “It will be a cure for your navel and elixer for your bones,” for *sharekha* [שִׁרְךָ] [“your navel”] is an expression of strength, as Radak wrote in *Sefer ha’Shorashim*,²¹ from the expression “all is firm [שְׂרִיר] [*sharir*] and

²¹ The first edition erroneously referenced “Ramak,” Moses ben Jacob Cordovero (1522–70), but the author of *Sefer ha’Shorashim* was “Radak”, David Kimchi (1160-1235).

established.”²² **Just as the body requires healing, so too the soul requires healing, as we say in the second chapter of Megillah on the verse:**

“He forgives all your sins, He heals all your diseases.”²³ [Regarding the second part of the verse, “He heals all your diseases,”] **what [is the reason] that “healing” [comes before] “diseases”?** Also, [for the first part of the verse,] **it is written, “He forgives all your sins.”** [Does forgiveness come before the sin?] That [verse is referring] not to the [literal] healing from illness, but rather to the [figurative] healing of forgiveness.

- Megillah 17b

וְכַתּוּב בְּעַל סֵדֶר הַיּוֹם דָּף י"ד, שְׁבַקְרִיאַת שְׁמַע וּבִיחֻדּוֹ, מִגְבִּיר פֶּחַ הַנְּשָׁמָה וּמְחַלֵּישׁ פֶּחַ הַיֶּצֶר הָרַע, וּמְחַזֵּק רַמ"ח אַיְבָרָיו בְּרַמ"ח תֵּיבִין שְׁבַקְרִיאַת שְׁמַע, וְעַי"ש. וְזֶהוּ "רַפְאוֹת תִּהְיֶה לְשָׂרְךָ", שֶׁתִּתְרַפָּא מִכָּל תַּחֲלוּאִים, וְאַדְרָבָּא, תַּקְנָה אוֹמְצִין וְחֻזְקִין יוֹתֵר לְעוֹלָם הַזֶּה.

The author of *Seder ha'Yom*, page 14, wrote that through the reading of *Shema* and its unification, one strengthens the power of the soul and weakens the power of the evil inclination, and fortifies the 248 limbs with the 248 words in the reading of *Shema*, see there.^{24,25}

This is the meaning of “It will be a cure for your navel,” that you will be healed from all illnesses, and on the contrary, you will acquire even more strength and fortitude for this world.

וְאַחֵר כִּף "וְנִשְׁקוּי לְעַצְמוֹתֶיךָ", לְרַמּוֹז לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא, וְשִׁיחֵיהָ לֹא שִׁיקוּי הַרְבֵּה, שְׁבַמְהֵרָה יָקוּם וַיִּחְיֶה. וְשִׁהְרֵי עַל הַצְּדִיקִים נֶאֱמַר "וְעַצְמוֹתֶיךָ יִחְלִיזוּ", דְּהֵיִינוּ יִשְׁקָה וַיַּעֲדוּ, הַפֶּה הַרְשָׁעִים דְּכַתִּיב בְּהוּ "אֶף סוֹרְרִים שְׁכֵנוֹ צָחִיקָה". וְזֶהוּ הַסּוּד שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בְּמַתִּי יִחְזַקְאֵל "הַעֲצָמוֹת הַיְבֵשׁוֹת", וְכִמוֹ שֶׁאֶמְרוּ חַז"ל אֵלֹהֵי בְּנֵי אָדָם וְשִׁאִין בָּהֶם לְחַלּוּחֵי שָׁל מִצְנָה וְכוּ', שֶׁהֵיוּ אוֹמְרִים, "יִבְשׁוּ עַצְמוֹתֵינוּ וְאַבְדָּה תִקְנַתְנוּ" וְכוּ'.

Afterward we read “and elixer for your bones,” to allude to the life of the World-to-Come, that he will have abundant elixer, that he will quickly arise and live. For regarding the righteous, it is said “and giving strength to your bones,”²⁶ that is, will be saturated and refreshed. This is the opposite the wicked of whom it is written, “but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.”²⁷ This is the esoteric secret spoken of regarding the corpses of Ezekiel, “Dry bones, hear the word of the L-rd.”²⁸ As the Sages said in Sanhedrin 92b: these are people in

²² Bava Batra 160b. Legal documents include this text at the bottom to reduce forgery, as any writing after tis formula would be disregarded.

²³ Ps. 103:3.

²⁴ Moshe ben Machir, 16th Century rabbi and Kabbalist in Tzafat, *Seder ha'Yom* (Venice 1599), Intention of the Reading of *Shema* and the Unification.

²⁵ The *Shema* has 245 words, but the reader adds “Hashem Elokeichem Emet,” which brings the total to 248 words.

²⁶ Isaiah 58:11.

²⁷ Ps. 68:7.

²⁸ Ezek. 37:4.

whom there is no moisture [residue] of a commandment, who were saying “our bones are dry, our hope is gone; we are doomed.”²⁹ In Kabbalah, the mitzvot draw down “dew” or “divine flow” (*shefa*). Without this “moisture,” the bones (that is, the “structure” of the soul) become dry and cannot participate in the Resurrection.

ועוד, שמי שזוכה ל"נעצמתיך יתליץ", יזכה נמי ל"והשביע בצחצחות נפשך", ולכל מאי דכתיבי בהנהו קראי "ויבנו ממהך חרבות עולם" וכו', והוא האריכות ימים של העולם הבא. ועוד, שהנעצמות הם העיקר באיבריו של אדם, שהרי כל הרמ"ח איברים יש בהם בשר גידים נעצמות, ואם חסר מעט מהבשר, עדנין שם אבר עליו. אבל אם חסר משהו מן הנעצם, אין לו עוד שם אבר, כמו שכתב הרמב"ם בפ"ק ב' מהלכות טומאת מת.

Furthermore, one who merits “elixir for your bones” will also merit “Slaking your thirst in parched places,”³⁰ and all that is written in those verses, i.e., “you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring whose waters do not fail. Some from your midst shall rebuild ancient ruins, you shall restore foundations laid long ago. You shall be called ‘Repairer of fallen walls, Restorer of lanes for habitation.’”³¹ This is the length of days of the World-to-Come.

Furthermore, the bones are the essential part of a person’s limbs, for all 248 limbs have in them flesh, sinews, and bones. If a little of the flesh is missing, the name of limb still applies to it. But if anything is missing from the bone, it no longer bears the name of limb, as the Rambam wrote in chapter 2 of the Laws of Corpse-Impurity, halakhah 3.

ואומר "עץ-חיים היא למחזיקים בה" וכו', וזה רומז לטבילת בעל קרי, דגמרינו מסיני, מה להלן בעלי קריין אסורין, הכי נמי אסורין. ואמרינו בברכות פ"ק ג' דף כ"ב, שמעתי שמחמירין בה, ושמעתי שמקילין בה. וכל המחמיר בה לעצמו, מאריכין לו ימיו ושנותיו. וטעם של המקילין בה, אמרינו התם, שהוא משום ביטול תורה. ומי שמחמיר בה לעצמו, בנדאי שהוא זהיר נמי שלא לבטל התורה, ולטבול מיד ששימש מטתו, ושלא לשמש מטתו אלא אם כן יש לו מים לטבול בהם. דאי לאו הכי, לא היתה חומרא אלא קולא.

Take care to immerse in a mikvah following a seminal emission

[The Tanna] says: “She is a tree of life to those that grasp her, and whoever holds onto her is happy.” This alludes to the required immersion of one who experienced a seminal emission, which we derive from Sinai. The question is whether one who experienced a seminal emission is permitted to engage in matters of Torah.

Didn’t Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi say: From where do we know that one who experiences a seminal emission is prohibited from [learning] matters of Torah? As it is stated: “[Just take heed and guard your soul diligently lest you forget the things your eyes have seen . . .] and you shall impart them to your children and your children’s children”³² [from which we derive the obligation to study Torah]. And, juxtaposed to it: “The day that you stood [before the L-rd your G-d at Horeb].”³³

²⁹ Ezek. 37:11.

³⁰ Isaiah 58:11.

³¹ Isaiah 58:12.

³² Deut. 4:9.

³³ Deut. 4:10.

From this juxtaposition we learn that **just as there** [at Sinai], **those who experienced a seminal emission were prohibited** [from relations with their wives and commanded to immerse themselves], **so too here, those who experience a seminal emission are prohibited** [from engaging in Torah study].

- Berachot 21b

We say in Berachot, chapter 3, page 22a:

[With regard to the need for ritual immersion after a seminal emission,] Rabbi Yannai said: **I heard that there are those who are lenient with regard to it and I have heard that there are those who are stringent with regard to it.** The *halakha* in this matter was never conclusively established **Whoever is stringent regarding it for himself, they prolong for him his days and years.**

- Berachot 22a

The reasoning of those who are lenient regarding it, we say there, was due to concern that requiring ritual immersion would promote dereliction in the study of Torah.³⁴ **However, one who is stringent regarding it for himself is certainly also careful not to annul the study of Torah.** Rather, he would **immerse immediately upon having conjugal relations, and not to have conjugal relations unless he has water in which to immerse. For if that were not so, it would not be a stringency but rather a leniency.** I.e., if a man has relations and is stringent to immerse, but cannot do so because he has no water to immerse in, and he consequently spends the whole day avoiding Torah study, then he is “lenient” about his obligation to learn.

ועל זה אמר הכתוב "עץ חיים היא למחזיקים בה", דמדקאמר "למחזיקים", נראה שיהוא במקום הצריך חיזוק, שאם לא היתה מחזיק בטבילה זו, היתה בטלה מטעם ביטול תורה. אבל מי שזהיר בה וזהיר נמי בביטול תורה, אז היא לו "עץ חיים". ולמה קראה "עץ", אלא נדאי משום דסתם עץ עושה פירות, והם החיים שיש לו בעולם הזה. ובעולם הבא יהיה לו הקרן.

Regarding this, the verse said, “She is a tree of life to those that grasp her,” for from the fact that it says “those that grasp her” instead of saying “those who study her” or “those who keep her,” it appears that this is in a situation requiring *chizuk* [חיזוק], grasping something with strength. That is only needed for something that is in danger of falling or being abandoned. I.e., immersion after a seminal emission is a “weak” commandment because it has a built-in “escape hatch,” namely, the risk of avoiding learning Torah if immersion is difficult. Thus, **if he had not held fast to this immersion, it would have been annulled on account of the risk of annulment of learning Torah.**

But one who is careful regarding it and is also careful regarding the annulment of Torah, then it is for him “a tree of life.” Why did [the verse] call it “tree”? It must be because an ordinary tree produces fruit, the interest of which is the life he has in this world, and in the World-to-Come, he will have the principal.³⁵

³⁴ Berachot 22a.

³⁵ Peah 1:1.

וסגים הכתוב "ותמכינה מאשר", שצאף אותם שמקילים בה, הואיל וכוננתם שלא לגרום ביטול תורה אלא לתמוך התורה, אף על פי שאין להם כל כך זכות כמו המתמירים, עם כל זה, יש להם אושר, וכל מי שנגמר בו "אשרי", הוא מאושר בעולם הזה ובעולם הבא.

The verse concludes “and whoever holds onto her is happy [me'ushar] [מאשר].” Even for those who are lenient regarding [the requirement to immerse], since their intention is not to cause the annulment of Torah but rather to support the Torah—even though they do not have as much merit as those who are strict—nevertheless they have happiness [osher] [אושר]. Regarding anyone who is called “happy” [ashrei] [אשרי] is said, he is praiseworthy in this world and in the World-to-Come.³⁶

אחר כך אמר, ואומר "כי לנית חן הם לראשך". דאמרינו בפרק ט' דברכות שלשה דברים מאריכין ימיו של אדם, המאריך בתפלתו, והמאריך בשלחנו, והמאריך בבית הפסא. ונדוע, שהתפלה היא מצנה חשובה עד מאד, ובשעת תפלה מפסיקין אפילו מדברי תורה. ועוד, שהדברי תורה עצמם צריכים לתפלה, כמו שאמרו על פסוק "יהי לבי תמים בתקוה למען לא אבוש", שהנה מתפלל דוד שבועדו לומד, לא יסתנו הנצר הרע להסיס דעתו וכו', כדאיתא במדרשים. ועוד, דזמן תורה לחוד, וזמן תפלה לחוד. ועוד, שמי שיש לו חולה בתוך ביתו, צריך שילך לחכם ויבקש עליו רחמים וכו'.

The importance of prayer, discussing Torah at meals, and maintaining a clean body

Afterward [the Tanna] said, and it says: “For they are a graceful wreath upon your head, a necklace about your throat.” For we say in the ninth chapter of Berachot (54b), “Three things prolong a person’s days: One who prolongs his prayer, one who prolongs his [time at the] table, and one who prolongs [his time] in the lavatory.” It is well known that prayer is an exceedingly important commandment, and at the time of prayer one interrupts even from learning the words of Torah.³⁷ Furthermore, the words of Torah themselves require prayer, as was said regarding the verse, “may my heart be wholehearted in Your statutes, so that I not be ashamed,”³⁸ that David was praying that while he was studying, the evil inclination not entice him to divert his mind etc., as is found in the Midrashim.³⁹ Furthermore, the time of Torah is separate, and the time of prayer is separate.⁴⁰ Furthermore, one who has a sick person within his house must go to a sage and pray for mercy for him, etc.⁴¹

³⁶ The Talmudic enactment known as *Tevilat Ezra* required immersion in a mikvah after a seminal emission as a precondition for engaging in Torah study or prayer. This enactment was abolished by the Geonim on the grounds that it caused dereliction in Torah study (Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Torah Study 4:4), the same concern cited by those who were lenient in the Talmudic-era debate, as will be discussed. Accordingly, the specific obligation discussed here is not practiced today. Obviously, voluntary immersion in a mikvah remains widespread among observant men, but is distinct from the specific *Tevilat Ezra* enactment and rests on independent grounds.

³⁷ Shabbat 10a.

³⁸ Ps. 119:80.

³⁹ Ex. Rabbah 19:2.

⁴⁰ Shabbat 10a.

⁴¹ Bava Batra 116a.

והטעם הוא, שהתפלה במקום קרבן, נאפילו כשהיו לומדים פלם, היו חייבים להקריב הקרבנות, שגם הם רגל אחד של העולם, על שלושה דברים העולם עומד, על התורה ועל העבודה, ולא ראי זה פראי זה, כנודע לחכמי האמת. ועוד, שהתורה היא קיום העולם, אבל התפלה מבטלת הגזירות אפילו על יחיד החוטא. וכן מצינו במלשה רבנו עליו השלום, בעת הגזרה התפלל אל ה'. נמצא שמי שעוסק בתורה, מחוייב נמי להתפלל על דורו, וזהו הקיום של התורה שלו.

The reason is that prayer is in place of the sacrifice,⁴² and even when they were all learning, they were obligated to offer the sacrifices, which are also one pillar of the world, as it is said, “upon three things the world stands: upon Torah, and upon the [Temple] service, and upon acts of kindness.⁴³ These two, Torah and the Temple service, are not like one another, as is known to the Kabbalists.

Furthermore, the Torah is the sustenance of the world, but prayer nullifies the decrees even regarding the individual who has sinned. So we find with Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, that at the time of the decree he prayed to the L-rd. It follows that one who engages in Torah is also obligated to pray for his generation, and this is the sustenance of his Torah.

המאריך בשלחנו, שצריך להאריך בדברי תורה על שלחנו, כנודע, וכמו שכתבנו לעיל פרק ג' על מתניתין דשלושה שאכלו על שלחן אחד ולא אמרו עליו דברי תורה וכו', שמחמת אכילת הלחם, מתגבר פת היצר הרע על האדם, ובדברי תורה מתישין פחו, ועי"ש באורך.

Regarding one who prolongs his time at his table, one must prolong the discussion of words of Torah at one's table, as is well known. We wrote above in Chapter 3, Mishnah 4— regarding the Mishnah of three who ate at one table and said no words of Torah over it etc.— that on account of the eating of bread, the power of the evil inclination strengthens over a person, and through words of Torah one weakens its power. See there at length.

וכשצאין גופו נקי, יש האידים העולים מהאיצטומכא לראש, ומערבבין המוח ואינו יכול ללמוד, כמן שכתבו המפרשים על פסוק "ניאמר אל-אביו ראשי ראשי".

When one's body is not clean, the vapors that rise from the stomach to the head are present, and the brain becomes confused and one is unable to study. This is as the commentators wrote regarding the verse “and he said to his father: my head, my head,”⁴⁴ for which Abarbanel wrote “the headache sometimes comes from the inflammation of the stomach.”⁴⁵

⁴² Berachot 26b.

⁴³ Pirkei Avot 1:2.

⁴⁴ II Kings 4:19.

⁴⁵ Abarbanel on II Kings 4:18.

ואם כן, אלו השלשה דברים צריכים זה לזה, כדי לקיים מצות הבורא פתיקונה, ועל זה אמר הכתוב "כי לנית חן הם לראשך". וקשה מהו הלשון של "לנית" בכאן. ועוד, היכי מוכח מפסוק זה אריכות ימים בעולם הזה ובעולם הבא.

If so, these three things, prolonging one's prayer, time at his table, and his time in the lavatory, require one another in order to fulfill the commandment of the Creator properly. Regarding this, the verse said, "For they are a graceful wreath upon your head." A difficulty is: What is the meaning of the expression "wreath" here? Furthermore, how is length of days in this world and in the World-to-Come proven from this verse?

ויש לומר, שכתב בעל עולת אהרן, שהתשובות שעשה יצחק, דל תרתי סרי דמיכל ודצלוגי ודבית הפסא, זהו לפי התשובון ששנותיו של אדם שבעים שנה, אבל אם יאריך באלו השלשה דברים, צריך שיתרבו ימיו ושנותיו לפי הערך, ועי"ש. ואם כן, מי שמאריך באלה השלשה דברים, לא די שיתנו לו זמן חיו יותר משבעים שנה מכל אלו השעות שהאריך בהם, אלא אף הכפל של זה הזמן כמו שהוא לשאר בני אדם. וזהו "כי לנית חן הם לראשך", ויהיה "לראשך" לשון סכום ותשובון, שאלו השלשה דברים הגורמים קיום התורה והמצוה והקדושה, יהיו "לנית חן" של אורך ימים, שימשכו עמקם זמן נוסף יותר משבעים שנה, מלבד הזמן שנתעכב באריכות שלשה דברים אלו לחיי העולם הזה.

The Gemara presents a discussion between Isaac and G-d:

[The Holy One, Blessed be He] said to Isaac: Your children have sinned against Me. . . . [Isaac answered:] How much did they sin? How long is a person's life? Seventy years. Subtract [the first] twenty [years of his life, as one] is not punished for [sins committed below the age of twenty]. Fifty [years] remain for them. Subtract twenty-five [years] of nights, [and] twenty-five [years] remain for them. Subtract twelve and a half [years during which] one prays and eats and [uses] the bathroom, [and] twelve and a half [years] remain for them. If You [can] endure them all [and forgive the sins committed during those years], excellent.

- Shabbat 89b

One may say, that the author of *Olat Aharon* wrote that the calculations made by Isaac, subtracting twelve [and a half years] for eating, and praying, and the lavatory, is according to the calculation that a person's years are seventy. But if he prolongs [his time in] these three things, his days and years must correspondingly increase. See there.⁴⁶

If so, one who prolongs his time in these three things—not only do they give him additional time of life beyond seventy years from all those hours in which he prolonged them, but also the double of that time, as the time spent by other people in those activities counts toward their allotted years.⁴⁷ This is the meaning of "For they are a graceful wreath upon your head." "For your head" will be an expression of summation and calculation, that these three things, which cause the sustenance of Torah and commandment and holiness, will be "a graceful wreath" of length of days, that an additional period of time beyond seventy years will accompany them, besides the time spent in the prolonging of these three things, for the life of this world.

⁴⁶ Rabbi Aharon Selig ben Yoel Feivush of Ostraha (died 1754), *Olat Aharon* (Offenbach 1733), Berachot 8a.

⁴⁷ That is, if someone spends an hour in prayer, he is given that hour back in extended life, plus another hour.

ואחר כך "וענקים לגרגרתך". נגד חיי העולם הבא, שכתבו המקובלים כי הנשט מתפשט עד בני מעים, ומשם יוצא המאכל והשתיה ובו נכנס. והוא כנגד העולם הזה שיש בו אכילה ושתיה, אך הקנה אינו מתפשט אלא עד הריאה, שמשם מוציא שבעה קולות, והוא סוד הבינה שנקראת שופר, הממציא שבעה קולות, שהם "קול ה' על המים". והוא סוד העולם הבא שאין בו לא אכילה ולא שתיה, רק סוד שבעה קולות, וזהו "וענקים לגרגרתך" שהוא סוד הקנה.

Afterward, he said, “a necklace about your throat.” Against the life of the World-to-Come, for the Kabbalists wrote that the esophagus extends to the intestines, and from [the esophagus] the food and drink exit and into [the intestines] they enter. This corresponds to this world, in which there is eating and drinking. But the windpipe only extends to the lung, from which it brings forth seven voices, and this is the esoteric secret of *Binah* which is called *shofar*, which brings forth seven voices, these being “the voice of the L-rd upon the waters.”⁴⁸ This is the esoteric secret of the World-to-Come, in which there is neither eating nor drinking, but only the esoteric secret of the seven voices, and this is the meaning of “and a necklace [*ananim*] [ענקים] about your throat,” which is the esoteric secret of the windpipe.

ולשון "ענקים" יובן, במה שכתב בכסף צרוף שההולך בצדק ומפחד, לוקח עמו פת של ענקים גבורי פת לשומרו בצדק מגנבים ושודדים. וזה שעוסק בדברי תורה, כל אותם דברי תורה שמוציא מפיו דרך טבעות הקנה, בעד כל טבעת מהם נעשה מלאך גבור בענק, לשומרו מן המזיקין לאחר מיתו, כדכתיב "כי מלאכיו יצנה-לך" וכו'.

The expression “*ananim*” will be understood through what the *Kesef Tzaruf* wrote, that one who walks on the road and is afraid takes with him a band of *ananim* [“giants”],⁴⁹ powerful warriors, to guard him on the road from thieves and robbers. This one who engages in words of Torah—all those words of Torah that he brings forth from his mouth through the rings of the windpipe—through each one of those rings an angel is made, strong as an *ananim* [“giant”], to guard him from the harmful forces after his death. This is as it is written, “for He will command His angels regarding you, to guard you wherever you go.”^{50,51}

⁴⁸ Ps. 29:3.

⁴⁹ *Ananim* means “neck,” and Num. 13:33 mentions the tribe of “*Ananim*, [descended] from the giants.” The relationship between *Ananim* meaning both “neck” and “giants” is that the people were very tall, with long necks.

⁵⁰ Ps. 91:11.

⁵¹ Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto (1565–1648), *Kesef Tzaruf* (Amsterdam 1729).

אשר כד אמר "תתן לראשך לניתחן" וכו'. ובפרק ד' דמנחות, אמר ריש לקיש, כל המניח תפילין, מאריך ימים, שנאמר "ה' עליהם יחיו". כלומר, אותם שנושאים שם ה' בתפילין, יחיו. וכתב הכבוד חכמים בפירוש הירושלמי בפרק ה' דמסכת ברכות, דאיתא בזהר על פסוק "נעשה אדם בצלמנו", שצ'לם אלהים הוא סוד התפילין, כלומר שכל הברואים חתומים בחותמו, והוא חותם של עבדות לבד, ולנו חכה זו נודעת, שהתפילין הן לנו חותם ודמות של בני אדם לאבינו שבשמים. ועל כן במצות תפילין קתיב "וראו כל-עמי" וכו' "וראו" וכו', כמורא שיש לעבד מלה, מפני כן מלה. ועוד איתא חתם דרבי אבין בעו למקטליה, וסמוך זקוקין דגור נפקין מן קדליה, לקיים מה שנאמר "וראו כל-עמי הארץ". ומעשה הזה ניכר המעלה של התפילין, שהם פתגות אור לצדיקים, והם דומים לבוראם, אש אוכלת בראש הצדיקים.

The importance of wearing tefillin

Afterward [the Tanna] said: “She will adorn your head with a graceful wreath; shield you with a glorious crown.” In the fourth chapter of Menachot (44a–b), “Resh Lakish said: Whoever places tefillin, prolongs days, as it is said, ‘The L-rd is upon them, they will live.’⁵²” This is as if to say, those who carry the name of the L-rd in tefillin, they will live.

The honorable *Kevod Chakhamim*⁵³ wrote in his commentary on the Jerusalem Talmud in the fifth chapter of tractate Berachot (note 6), that it is found in the Zohar on the verse, “let us make man in our image,”⁵⁴ that the image of G-d is the esoteric secret of the tefillin.⁵⁵

Kevod Chakhamim elaborates: **This is to say that all creatures are sealed with His seal, which is a seal of servitude only.** [That is, the Kabbalistic view is that not only man but even animals and spiritual forces have a form of “seal” that marks them as subjects of the King, and they must follow the King’s decree out of necessity or instinct.] **But for us, [G-d’s] affection is well known:**⁵⁶ **that the tefillin are for us a seal and likeness of children before our Father in Heaven. Therefore, regarding the commandment of tefillin it is written, “And all the peoples of the earth shall see that the L-rd’s name is proclaimed over you, and they will fear you,”⁵⁷ like the fear that a servant of the king has before the son of the king.**

Kevod Chakhamim continues: **It is further found there [In the Jerusalem Talmud] that when “Rabbi Avin appeared before the king, and when he left he turned his neck [i.e., violating protocol by turning his back to the king]. They sought to kill him [for violating that protocol], but they saw two sparks of fire going out from his neck, so they let him go, to affirm what is said, ‘And all the peoples of the earth shall see that the L-rd’s name is proclaimed over you, and they will fear you.’”⁵⁸ From this incident, the greatness of the tefillin is evident, for they are garments of light for the righteous, and they resemble their Creator: a consuming fire upon the heads of the righteous.**

⁵² Isaiah 38:16.

⁵³ Rabbi Shimon Wolf ben Yaakov, *Kevod Chakhamim* (Hamburg 1703).

⁵⁴ Gen. 1:26.

⁵⁵ Tikkunei Zohar, Introduction.

⁵⁶ Cf. Pirkei Avot 3:15, “Beloved is man for he was created in the image [of G-d]. Especially beloved is he for it was made known to him [חכה נתרנה נודעת לו] that he had been created in the image [of G-d], as it is said: ‘for in the image of G-d He made man’ (Gen. 9:6). Beloved are Israel in that they were called children to the Omnipresent.”

⁵⁷ Deut. 28:10. Berachot 6a connects the verse to tefillin.

⁵⁸ Yerushalmi Berachot 5:1.

ועוד כתב הרב הגנזר לאיל בפרק ז' דברכות הגנזר לאיל, ששני שיניו של התפילין, הם רמז על "שני רשעים שברת", ועל שזכר הצדיקים. ועוד השי"ן של ארבע יודי"ן רומז פשהשם כלו מיוחד, דהיינו בזמן בית המקדש. והשי"ן של שלוש יודי"ן הוא כמו שהוא עכשו בגלותנו, שנה נקרא גלות השכינה, שנפרדה אותה אחרונה. ואנשי פנסת הגדולה שהקזירו העטרה ליושנה באמנם, הן הן גבורותיו הן הן נוראותיו, כנגתם היתה לרמוז על העטרה של פאר התפילין על ראשינו, שבהם השכינה שורה עלינו כמקדם. עכ"ל.

The aforementioned rabbi further wrote in chapter 7 of Berachot (note 2), that the two *shins* of the head tefillin allude to “the teeth [שיני] [*shinei*] of the wicked You have broken,”⁵⁹ and to the reward of the righteous. [The right side of the head tefillin has a standard three-branched *shin*, while the left side of the head tefillin has a unique, four-branched *shin*.] Furthermore, the *shin* of four *yuds* [i.e., the four-branched *shin*] alludes to when the four-lettered Name of G-d was completely unified, that is, in the time of the Temple. The *shin* of three *yuds* is as it is now in our exile, which is called the exile of the *Shekhinah*, that the final letter *heh* has been separated from the Tetragrammaton.⁶⁰

Regarding the Men of the Great Assembly who restored the crown to its former state by saying “they are His might, they are His awesome acts,”⁶¹ their intention was to allude to the crown of the splendor of the tefillin upon our heads, in which the *Shekhinah* rests upon us as before.

ולרמוז על מצנה זו, אמר הכתוב "תתן לראשה לניתחן", שכל מי שיש בו חן, בנדוע שהוא ירא שמים, וזה יהיה בתפילין שבראשו, שהם ילווהו ויתנו לו חיים, שיצילוהו מן האויבים הרוצים להורגו, פרבי אביו. ועוד, אין הכי נמי שיצילוהו מן המקטרגים שרוצים להמיתו, ויהיה לו בזה אריכות ימים, לפי שאין לו מקטרגים לא למעלה ולא למטה.

To allude to this commandment, the verse said, “She will adorn your head with a graceful wreath [לניית] [*livyat*],” for anyone who has grace is known to have a fear of Heaven.⁶² This will be demonstrated through the tefillin upon his head, which will accompany him [*yelavuhu*] and give him life, that they will save him from the enemies who seek to kill him, like Rabbi Avin. Furthermore, the same holds, they will save him from the accusers who seek to put him to death, and he will have through this length of days, for he has no accusers, neither above nor below.

⁵⁹ Ps. 3:8.

⁶⁰ In Kabbalistic thought, each letter of the Name corresponds to a different spiritual realm or Sefirah. The Yud corresponds to *Chochmah* (Wisdom), the first Heh corresponds to *Binah* (Understanding), the Vav corresponds to *Tiferet* (the “Small Face” or the six emotive attributes), and the final Heh corresponds to *Malchut* (Kingship/Sovereignty), also known as the *Shekhinah* (the Divine Presence). Without the Temple, the final Heh, the *Shekhinah*, is said to have “separated” from the first three letters to descend and dwell among the Jewish people, joining us in *Galut* (Exile).

⁶¹ Yoma 69b.

⁶² Sukkah 49b, citing Rabbi Chama bar Pappa.

ועוד "עֲטֹרַת תְּפָאֲרֹת", שִׁיְהִיָּה לָהֶם הַעֲטֹרָה שֶׁל ה' בְּרֵאשִׁים לְעֵתִיד לְבָא, פְּתוּגוֹת אֹר בְּעוֹלָם שְׁפוּלוֹ חַיִּים, לְהִגֵּן עֲלֵיהֶם מִכָּל מִשְׁטֵיִן.

Furthermore, “she will . . . shield you with a glorious crown,” that they will have the crown of the L-rd upon their heads in the future-to-come, garments of light in the world that is entirely everlasting life, to protect them from every adversary.

וּבְנֵה יוֹבָן, מֵאֵי דְאִיתָא בְּיַלְקוּט רַאובְנֵי בְּשֵׁם גְּלִי רְזִינָא, "וְאַרְבַּע־מֵאוֹת אִישׁ עִמּוֹ", וְשְׁלוֹשׁ אוֹתוֹת שֶׁל תִּיבַת "עֲשׂוֹ, עוֹלָה ת"ג, וְלָכֵן הִלְךְ יַעֲקֹב לְנִגְדּוֹ עִם הַתְּפִילִין, שִׁישׁ בָּהֶם ת"ג תִּיבוֹת. עכ"ל. וְקוֹשָׁה, מָה הִנְתָּה פּוֹנֵת יַעֲקֹב שֶׁהִלְךְ לְנִגְדּוֹ עִם הַתְּפִילִין, מָה יָתֵן וּמָה יוֹסִיף בְּנֵה. וּבְמָה שֶׁפְּתַבְּנוּ נִיחָא שְׁפִיר, שְׂאָם נִחְשׁוּב עֲשׂוֹ לְהִזְקוֹ, יִאָּרַע לוֹ כְּמוֹ ר' אֲבִין, דְּנִפְקוּן זְקוּקִין דְּגוּר מִן קְדְלִיָּה. וְעוֹד, מִשׁוּם "וְרָאוּ כָּל־עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ" וְכוּ' "וְיָרְאוּ מִמֶּךָ".

In this way we can understand what is found in *Yalkut Re’uveni* (parashat Vayishlach) in the name of *Galei Razaya*, that regarding the verse, “The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, ‘We came to your brother Esau; he himself is coming to meet you, and there are four hundred men with him,’”⁶³ that the number four hundred and the three letters of the word *Esav* [עֲשׂוֹ] total 403, and therefore Jacob went toward him with the tefillin, which contain 403 words.

This is difficult to understand: What was Jacob’s intention in going toward him with the tefillin; what would this add or contribute? But through what we have written, it is well understood: for if Esau should plan to harm him, what happened to Rabbi Avin would occur to him, that sparks of fire went out from his neck. Furthermore, he would be protected because of the verse, “And all the peoples of the earth shall see that the L-rd’s name is proclaimed over you, and they will fear you.”

וְנֵה יְהִיָּה טַעַם הַפְּתוּב "וְהָיָה בֵּית־יַעֲקֹב אֵשׁ" וְכוּ', דְּקוֹשָׁה, דְּלָמָּה יְהִיָּה אֵשׁ, וּמָה רּוֹמֵז זֶה הָאֵשׁ. דְּאֵי מִשׁוּם שֶׁיַּעֲקֹב יִכְלֶה אֶת עֲשׂוֹ, וְהִלָּא כְּמָה דְּרַכִּים אַחֲרֵיהֶם יֵשׁ בְּלֵא הָאֵשׁ. אֲלֵא שְׁבִשְׁבִיל שֶׁיַּעֲקֹב מְקַנְיִים מִצְּנוֹת תְּפִילִין, וְתְּפִילִין סוֹדֵם לְהוֹצִיא הָאֵשׁ לְאוֹיְבִים, מִשׁוּם הִכִּי אָמַר, "וְהָיָה בֵּית־יַעֲקֹב אֵשׁ".

This will be the reason for the verse “and the house of Jacob will be fire, and the House of Joseph flame, and the House of Esau shall be straw; they shall burn it and devour it, and no survivor shall be left of the House of Esau—for the L-rd has spoken.”⁶⁴ This is difficult: Why will it be fire, and what does this fire allude to? For if it is because Jacob will destroy Esau, there are many other ways to accomplish this without fire. Rather, because Jacob fulfills the commandment of tefillin, and the esoteric secret of tefillin is to bring out fire against enemies — because of this, [the verse] said: “and the house of Jacob will be fire.”

⁶³ Gen. 32:7.

⁶⁴ Obad. 1:18.

והטעם, ש'יזיצא אש מתפילין. ואפ"ש משום דאמרין על פסוק "למען תהיה תורת ה' בפיך", איתקש כל התורה כלה לתפילין. ועוד, איתא בילקוט על פסוק זה, מי שמקנים מצות תפילין, כאילו הוא יגע בתורה יומם ולילה. עכ"ל. והואיל והתפילין הם כמו התורה, והתורה היא אש, פדקתיב "מימינו אש דת למו", ו"הלוא כה דברי פאש" משום הכי, גם מהתפילין יוצא האש.

The reason that fire comes forth from the tefillin, is perhaps because we say regarding the verse, “so that the Torah of the L-rd will be in your mouth,”⁶⁵ that all of the Torah in its entirety is equated to tefillin.⁶⁶ Furthermore, it is found in the *Yalkut Shimoni* on this verse: regarding one who fulfills the commandment of tefillin, it is as if he toils in Torah day and night.⁶⁷

Since the tefillin are like the Torah, and the Torah is fire, as it is written, “from His right hand a fiery law for them,”⁶⁸ and “is not My word like fire”⁶⁹ — because of this, fire also goes out from the tefillin.

אחר זה אמר "ארך ימים בימינה" וכו'. וירמוז למאי דאמרין בפירק קמא דברכות דף ח' אמר ר' אמי, לעולם ישלים אדם פ'רשיותיו עם הצבור שנים מקרא ואחד תרגום, שכל המשלים פ'רשיותיו עם הצבור, מאריכין לו ימיו ושנותיו. וסוד התרגום ידוע כי הוא בגימטריא "תרדמה", ונסירת האחרים דאדם, היתה על ידי תרדמה. וכן הוא הסוד, שהמקרא הוא סוד הפנים של הקדושה, והתרגום סוד אחרים, והכתוב אומר "והיא כתובה פנים ואחור". והנה "פנים" לשון רבים, ו"אחור" לשון יחיד. וכתוב "באור-פני-מלך חיים", שמסוד הפנים באים חיים לאדם. ועוד, שהתרדמה באה על ידי שנה, והשנה אחד מששים במיתה, כמו שאמרו ז"ל. ואנו קוראים שתי פעמים המקרא, שהוא סוד הפנים, שמשם באים החיים, כדי לרמוז שיהיה לנו חיים בעולם הזה ובעולם הבא.

The importance of reading each Torah portion twice in Scripture and once in Targum

After this [the Tanna] said: “Length of days is in her right hand, in her left hand are riches and honor.” This alludes to what we say in the first chapter of Berachot, page 8a: “Rabbi Ami said a person should always complete his Torah portions along with the congregation, twice in Scripture and once in Targum, the Aramaic translation, for whoever completes his portions along with the congregation, they prolong his days and years.”

The esoteric secret of the Targum is known, for in Gematria, it is 649, the value of *tardemah* [תרדמה] [“deep sleep”],⁷⁰ and the “sawing” [*nesirah*] of the back [*achorayim*] from Adam to form Eve was effected through *tardemah*.⁷¹ Thus is the esoteric secret: the Scripture

⁶⁵ Ex. 13:9.

⁶⁶ Kiddushin 35a.

⁶⁷ *Yalkut Shimoni*, parashat Bo, remez 222:2.

⁶⁸ Deut. 33:2.

⁶⁹ Jer. 23:29.

⁷⁰ תרגום = 400 + 200 + 3 + 6 + 40 = 649, and תרדמה = 400 + 200 + 4 + 40 + 5 = 649.

⁷¹ Gen. 2:21. The Biblical text states that G-d took one of Adam’s “sides” (or “ribs”) to create Eve, but *Toldot Shimshon* utilizes the Kabbalistic term “back” (*achorayim*) and the process of “sawing” (*nesirah*). This terminology is rooted in the Midrashic tradition (Berachot 61a; Eruvin 18a) that Adam and Eve were originally created as a single, dual-faced being attached "back-to-back" (*achor b'achor*). In the writings of the Arizal, the “deep sleep” (*tardemah*) cast upon Adam represents a state of diminished consciousness necessary for the *nesirah*, the spiritual “sawing” or separation of this dual being into two independent entities. This separation allows the male and female aspects to turn

is the secret of the face [*panim*] of holiness, and the Targum is the esoteric secret of the back [*achor*], and the verse says, “and it was written on the front [*panim*] and the back [*achor*].”⁷² Behold, *panim* is in the plural form and *achor* is in the singular form. It is written “in the light of a king’s face [*penei melekh*] is life,”⁷³ for from the esoteric secret of the face [*panim*], life comes to a person. Furthermore, the *tardemah* comes through sleep, and sleep is one-sixtieth of death, as the Sages said.⁷⁴ We read the Scripture twice, which is the esoteric secret of the face [*panim*], from which life comes, in order to allude that we will have life in this world and in the World-to-Come.

וְזֶה שֶׁאָמַר הַפְּתוּב "אֲרֵךְ יָמִים בְּיַמֶּינָהּ", דְּהֵינּוּ הַמִּקְרָא שֶׁהוּא סוּד הַפָּנִים וְסוּד "הַיְמִינִין", כְּדִכְתִּיב "שְׁוִיטֵי ה' לְנִגְדֵי תְּמִיד כִּי מִיַּמִּינִי" וְכוּ'. וְזֶה ה' אֲרֵךְ יָמִים" יִהְיֶה כְּפוּל, כְּמוֹ שֶׁאֲנִי אֹמְרִים שְׁתֵּי פְעָמִים מִקְרָא, בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וּבְעוֹלָם הַבָּא. וְ"בִשְׂמֵאלָהּ" דְּהֵינּוּ תַרְגוּם, בְּזִכּוּת זֶה יִהְיֶה לָנוּ גַם "עֲשֵׂר וְכָבוֹד".

This is the intent of what the verse said, “Length of days is in her right hand,” that is, the Scripture, which is the esoteric secret of the face [*panim*] and the esoteric secret of the “right hand,” as it is written, “I have set the L-rd before me always, for He is at my right hand.”⁷⁵ This “length of days” will be doubled, just as we recite the Scripture two times, in this world and in the World-to-Come. “In her left hand,” that is, the Targum, through its merit we will also have “riches and honor.”

וְסִיּוּם וְאָמַר "כִּי אֲרֵךְ יָמִים וְשָׁנוֹת חַיִּים וְשָׁלוֹם יוֹסִיפוּ לָךְ". דְּאָמְרִינוּ בְּפֶרֶק קַמָּא דְּקִידוּשִׁין, אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר, כָּל תַּלְמִיד חֹכֵם שֶׁאֵינוֹ עוֹמֵד לְפָנֵי רַבּוֹ, נִקְרָא רָשָׁע, וְאֵינוֹ מֵאֲרִיךְ יָמִים, וְתַלְמוּדוֹ מִשְׁתַּפֵּחַ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "וְטוֹב לֹא-יִהְיֶה לְרָשָׁע וְלֹא-יִאֲרִיךְ יָמִים כְּצֵל" וְכוּ'. עַכ"ל. וּמִכְּלָל לֹא אֵתָּה שׁוֹמֵעַ הַיּוֹ, שֶׁאֵם יָקוּם לְפָנֵי רַבּוֹ יִאֲרִיךְ יָמִים, וְלֹא יִהְיֶה תַלְמוּדוֹ מִשְׁתַּפֵּחַ. וְהַפְּסוּק הַקּוֹדֵם לְזֶה אָמַר "בְּגִי תוֹרַתִי אֶל-תִּשְׁפַח" וְכוּ'. "כִּי אֲרֵךְ יָמִים" וְכוּ'. כְּלוּמַר, כְּשֶׁתִּקְוֶה לְפָנֵי רַבּוֹ, אֲזַי לֹא תִשְׁפַח, וְתִאֲרִיךְ יָמִים לְעוֹלָם שְׁכָלוֹ אַרְוֶה, וְעוֹד בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה. "וְשָׁנוֹת חַיִּים" שֶׁיִּהְיוּ שָׁנִים שֶׁל חַיִּים בְּלֹא צַעַר וְיִסּוּרִין, הַפֶּה מֵהָ שֶׁאָמַר "וְטוֹב לֹא-יִהְיֶה לְרָשָׁע".

The importance of showing respect to one’s Torah teacher

[The Tanna] concludes: “and it says: “For length of days, and years of life, and peace, they will add for you.” For we say in the first chapter of Kiddushin (33b): Rabbi Elazar said any Torah scholar who does not rise before his master is called wicked, and does not have length of days, and his learning is forgotten, as it is said, “but it will not be well for the wicked, and he will not lengthen his days, for they do not revere G-d.”⁷⁶

and face one another “face-to-face” (*panim b’panim*), enabling a true relationship. The connection between *Targum* and *Tardemah* via Gematria emphasizes that just as the “deep sleep” allowed the “back” to be processed and transformed into a “face” (a partner), the Aramaic Targum (viewed as the “back” or external shell of the Holy Tongue) serves as a medium to process and elevate the lower realms during the period of “deep sleep” (Exile).

⁷² Ezek. 2:10.

⁷³ Prov. 16:15.

⁷⁴ Berachot 57b.

⁷⁵ Ps. 16:8.

⁷⁶ Eccl. 8:13.

From the negative formulation you infer the affirmative: that if he does rise before his master, he will have length of days, and his learning will not be forgotten. The verse preceding this prooftext of Prov. 3:2 said, “My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your mind retain my commandments,”⁷⁷ “For length of days, years of life, and peace, they will add for you.” This means: When you will rise before your master, then you will not forget, and you will have length of days in the world that is entirely long, and furthermore in this world. “And years of life” means that there will be years of life without pain and sufferings, the opposite of what was said regarding one who does not rise before his master, that “it will not be well for the wicked.”

אי נמי, "כי ארך ימים ושנות חיים", הפל מדבר בעולם הזה. "ושלום יוסיפו לך" הוא לעולם הבא, דכתיב שם "יבוא שלום ונחור על־משכבותם" וכו'.

Alternatively, “for length of days and years of life,” all of it speaks of this world. “And peace they will add to you,” this refers to the World-to-Come, as it is written there (Isa. 57:2), “He will enter into peace, they will rest in their beds, each one that walks in his uprightness.”

* * *

⁷⁷ Prov. 3:1.