

Torat Hanefesh – Semester Seminar

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(Notes taken during class, not reviewed nor edited by Harav Ginsburgh)

Good evening to everyone. We are in parashat Terumah, ויקחו לי תרומה ועשו לי מקדש, ושכנתי בתוכם. God created the world for a dwelling place below. And this mitzvah is the one in our week's parashah. First we need to donate to God all that we have in order to build the Temple for Him, and once we give all that we can, בכל מאדך, with all the powers of our soul, then God promises that He will dwell amongst us.

After the all inclusive mitzvah of building a Temple so that He dwell among us, the Torah describes the vessels, beginning with the central vessel, the Holy Ark, it shall be of 1.5 cubits length and height, and then there is the covering, the kaporet out of which protrude the two Cherubim. Each of us should build a Temple in ourselves, in our heart. The main thing to build and to rectify in the soul is the Ark and the two Cherubim. That will be our topic this evening, how do we achieve this.

The Ark is called the Ark of the Testimony. The Edut is in it, meaning the Two Tablets of the Covenant, both sets, the first that was broken and the second too. We need to understand what it means that we should be both broken and whole in our hearts. This is also highlighted in the measurements of the Ark, 2.5 and 1.5, the half is a broken measure. In the other vessels there is at least one dimension that is not broken, not a half. But, in the Ark everything has to be broken, all three dimensions.

There is a dispute between Rashi and the Ramban regarding the Ark the covering and the Cherubim, whether they are two separate vessels, or whether they are all just one vessel. There are a number of halachic issues that depend on how we rule in this case. The covering and the Cherubim were one piece of gold. So is the Ark whole even without the covering (just that the covering should be placed on the Ark) or whether the Ark is not an Ark until the covering is upon it. One such halachic issue would be wehtehr it is permissible to make an exact model of one or the other. Today it is impermissible to create an exact one to one model of any of the vessels in the Temple.

According to Rashi, they are two vessels, the ark and its covering. The Ramban though holds that they are all one single vessel. It is clearly that the Ark is connected with Torah—it represents our connection to God through the Torah, ישראל ואורייתא וקוב"ה, חד הוא. Without the Torah we are like a spark of God, but a spark without the light that it came from, without its source, can diminish. The Torah is what connects our spark to its source. According to the Ramban, the covering and the Cherubim which are part of the Ark represent the concealed dimensions of the Torah. The Cherubim represent the unification of the Almighty and the Jewish people. So the Ark itself would be the revealed dimensions of the Torah, the halachah, etc. And the concealed level, which is concealed in everyday life, when one walks into the Holy of Holies becomes very

revealed. One may not make Cherubim at all, outside the Holy of Holies (the Sefer Torah in the Ark we can of course make many copies of).

Rashi's opinion which is that they are two different vessels, the Ark represents the Torah while the covering represents Teshuvah since its name, kaporet means to לכפר. The Cherubim which come out of the covering represent love and thus this is teshuvah done out of love. There are two forms of teshuvah. There can be teshuvah out of fear, when one's transgressions become involuntary, while if teshuvah is done out of love, one's transgression become positive acts, as if the person who did them had performed a mitzvah. This is difficult to understand, how this is possible. The Tanya explains that the power behind the distance created when one performs a transgression becomes the driving force to reconnect us to the Almighty. This power allows the transgression to be transformed into a mitzvah. This is the explanation he gives.

But, if we meditate on this, this is talking about the person, but what about the body of the transgression? That too is transformed into a mitzvah and that is difficult to understand. The sages say that the space occupied by the Ark and the Cherubim, is immeasurable. This requires faith to understand. The sages say that God judges a person measure for measure, but when one acts with love towards God, all the measures are annulled and the whole connection and reckoning is entirely different.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that since there are three knots that tie to one another, תלת קשרין מתקשרין דא ברא, the Jewish people with the Torah and the Torah with God, seemingly there are only two connections. So for there to be 3 knots, there has to be like in a triangle a direct connection between us and the Almighty. This is what the teshuvah out of love represents.

According to the Ramban, there are only two connections, between us and the Torah (the Ark) and between the Torah (the Ark) and God. But, according to Rashi, since the covering represents another vessel, it corresponds to the direct connection between us and God.

The Ark is called ארון העדות, testimony is akin to knowledge (da'at). One of the explanations of what the Cherubim are is that they represent us and the Almighty, and they represent two opinions, like the verse says, אל דעות הוי. The lower consciousness, the lower d'aat is how we see God, and the higher consciousness is how God sees reality. So the Cherubim represents the unification of these two forms of consciousness. The Cherubim show that God carries both points of view, and that they are equal in stature.

The regular explanation in Chassidut is that the higher consciousness is that above it is true being and below everything in our reality is like naught. So above is being and below is nothingness. In higher consciousness, the creation is the creation of nothingness out of being (the opposite from how we see creation as the creation of something from nothing). Only very select individuals like Moshe Rabbeinu, can see reality how God sees it. Most of us, see God from below. So we see reality as real being, and God who created us (and we believe that He is the Creator), but we cannot grasp His being, so we call it nothingness. It's not that it doesn't exist, rather that we cannot grasp it, we cannot fathom what God is. We thus believe in the nothingness. Someone who believes in it

very strongly can almost feel the nothingness, its pulse, its bringing reality into existence at every moment. This is the regular explanation.

A less known explanation is that higher consciousness is God's consciousness, and from His knowledge of Himself, He knows all that exists, so from that aspect it seems that there is little room for free choice. Rabbi Akiva in the Mishnah says, *הכל צפוי והרשות נתונה*. Certainly God knows all that was all that will be, it is all in the hands of Heaven, that is called God's consciousness, but there is the free will, which is actually the lower consciousness. So when the two Cherubim look at one another, it is a carrying of opposites of God's omniscience and our free will and free choice.

We mentioned faith earlier, because in the Holy of Holies there is a phenomenon of *נמנע הנמנעות*, that God can carry paradoxes. We also mentioned knowledge (da'at). Faith is a surrounding power of the soul (in the super-consciousness), while da'at, knowledge is an inner force. Da'at, knowledge in this sense is the main thing that is involved in our rectification. Da'at only exists in the sacred aspect of reality, *אל אחר אסתרים*. The sages say, if you have bought da'at you lack nothing. With da'at all the chambers of the heart are filled, the key to the six chambers, the six character traits of the heart. From where do the sages learn this, that if you've bought da'at you lack nothing and that if you lack da'at you have nothing? They learn this from a verse in Proverbs related to this week's parashah. The verb *ועשו* appears only twice, *ועשו לי מקדש ועשו לי ארון עצי שטים*. The rest of the times it says, *ועשית*. The Ark is the only vessel where the same verb form as that regarding the totality of the Tabernacle.

The verse says, *יש זהב ורב פנינים וכלי יקר שפתי דעת*. How is this verse explained? The commentaries all explain it in a positive way. There is one who donates gold to God, just as in our parashah, gold is the first thing mentioned. As Jews we all give gold. Then *ורב פנינים*, the princes of the Tribes gave a special donation (since they were the only ones who possessed them)—the precious stones that were set in the Choshen, the High Priest's breastplate. These precious stones are alluded to in the word *פנינים*. After Moshe Rabbeinu saw that everyone was donating with a willing heart, he was distressed, *חלשה דעתו*, because he wondered why he was not to take part in this great mitzvah. It doesn't say that Moshe Rabbeinu gave anything. Still, the Almighty consoled him by telling him that even though all these were great donations, the most precious of all the vessels, *וכלי יקר*, is God's speech with him, *שפתי דעת*. The fact that I God am talking to you from between the two Cherubim is more precious than all the other donations given. Of course, without all the other donations the Tabernacle could not be constructed, but the purpose of it all is God talking to Moshe, mouth to mouth, allowing Moshe to look at reality from God's point of view. The midrash ends with the words, *ויקרא אל משה*, meaning that all that happens in these final parashot of Shemot culminates with the first verse of the book of Vayikra—the first verse that a child learn in Cheider. Even before God talks to Moshe Rabbeinu, He calls him, *ויקרא אל משה*. The word *ויקרא* is also cognate with precious, *יקר*, that the most precious thing in the Tabernacle is God's connection with Moshe, His speech with Moshe.

This is also true in between a couple. That even though each is willing to give everything to their spouse, the most precious thing is the connection through speech, through talking together.

The Midrash brings this as a parable to show that the most important thing is da'at, even more than the gold and the precious stones, and therefore if you have da'at you have everything, but if you don't have da'at you don't have anything.

We see that there is a connection between purchasing (קנין) and da'at. When one betrothes a woman there has to be knowledge. There cannot be a kidushin without knowledge, without consciousness. The woman has to know what she is doing, she has to decide to follow through. There are two aspects of knowledge and consciousness. If there is a buyer and seller each one has his own consciousness, just as there are two Cherubim. The consciousness of the buyer has to be that he is willing to buy, but the consciousness of the seller has to be דעת מתנה. Without their unification of דעת מקנה and דעת קונה there is no sale. So the context of da'at being akin to everything is particularly found in selling and buying. קנין is also related to תקון. What then is higher consciousness and lower consciousness in this case?

If we take the example of a bride and groom, who is the buyer and who is the seller. The pshat is that the bride is selling, מקנה עצמה, while the groom is the buyer. If we look at the Almighty and the Jewish people, God is known as קונה הכל, Buys everything. God is above, so buying is higher consciousness. But, for God to be able to buy everything, we have to be willing to sell everything, all of ourselves. The meaning of bride (כלה) is כליין, she doesn't leave herself anything. This is true self-sacrifice. So someone who feels himself to be something, to be being below, he sells himself and at that moment feels like nothing. The being below, the bride, has to be able to decide that she is giving herself entirely to the nothingness above. But, the being above is that which buys everything.

If we take our second example of God's omniscience being higher consciousness and our free will lower consciousness, then the buyer above is how God knows everything from knowledge of Himself. The main example of man's free will is then our willingness to sell all of reality back to God, to bring all of reality to nothingness.

There is one verse that says, השמים שמים לה' והארץ נתן לבני אדם, meaning that God gave us the earth, but another verse says, לה' הארץ ומלאה תבל וישבי בה, meaning that all of the earth is God's. The sages answer that one is before saying a blessing and one is after saying the blessing. This is an important principle in educating, in the chinuch of children. The sages say that if one does not say a blessing before and after eating, one is stealing as it were from the Almighty. Before I say a blessing, all of the earth belong only to God, but after the blessing, as it were, God gives me the earth.

But, there is an explanation that is exactly the opposite: before I say a blessing, it seems to me that the earth belongs to me—it seems that I have free will. But, after I say a blessing, my free will—is to give it all back to God, as King David says, כי מידך הכל ומידך נתנו לך. So here it is not simple to identify the buyer and the seller. It could be that the buyer is God who buys all (קונה הכל) and the seller is us, like the bride. But, let's take for example the Giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai where it is the opposite. There God is the one selling (המקנה). The height of the Giving of the Torah is אנכי, I wrote myself and gave

it to you (אנא נפשי כתבית יהבית). I am giving you myself, says the Almighty. And we are the ones who have to be willing to buy God, as it were. Before the festival of Shavu'ot, the Rebbe used to bless people, קבלת התורה בשמחה ובפנימיות. God is giving us the Torah, he is the one selling, and we need to accept it, we need to be willing to buy the Torah.

So sometimes the seller is above and the buyer below and sometimes the opposite. Relative to my reality, I need to sell myself to God and pray that God be willing to buy me—after all, He buys everything, He will probably be willing to buy even me. But, relative to an object, like the Torah or the Shabbat, we are the buyer and God is the seller.

From this we can better understand the question of whether the Ark's covering represents the teshuvah out of love, or whether it represents the concealed dimensions of the Torah (whether it is a connection between us and God, or whether it is only the connection between the Torah and God). If it is the first, then here we are like the bride who is selling herself to God. But, if it the latter, another aspect of the Torah it is God selling Himself to us (like we said about the Torah). One who lacks da'at lacks the ability to buy and sell altogether.

Let's return to the adjective קונה הכל, which means like "the Creator of all." When we say today in modern Hebrew that "I buy this" it is like whether I can accept what you are telling me or not. But, God buys everything, so whatever you tell him, he's willing to accept—so this must be a good trait. Below this is described by the verse, פתי יאמין לכל דבר. When a person is coming close to God, first of all he has to have a sense about truth, נכרים דברי אמת, he recognizes truth and he decides to follow it. But, after that, one needs to adopt a complementary trait, which is that after one feels that in general the Torah is true, he has to be willing to accept sincerely and earnestly all the particulars, even if he doesn't understand it all. This is a strictly Jewish trait. The first recognition is based on a critical attitude. One is not willing to accept everything as true, but once one has decided that the Torah is true, there is the complementary attitude that from now on it is all based on faith, פתי יאמין לכל דבר.

After all that we've said, let's return to last week's parashah, Mishpatim, which contains many laws and is called פרשת דינים, because most of the דינים are concentrated in it. In the land of Israel, the previous Rebbe said that there are two main occupations, agriculture, farming or education, chinuch. To till the land, one must first plow it. And to plow you need an ox. Therefore, most people in the land of Israel used to own an ox. To own one must have da'at. The owner of the ox (בעל השור) equals 613, meaning that all the commandments are connected to owning an ox—how so? Because we each have an ox, our animal soul, that we need in order to till the land, to work the land of our lives, and we each need to own this animal and control our animal soul. The ox represents our animal soul, the reason for which we came into this world—to rectify our animal souls. The ox appears in many different contexts. There is a שור תם, who doesn't hurt people, who doesn't gore them. But, there is a שור מועד, one who is dangerous. In the Mishnah one of the parts is גזיקין, the main part of the Oral Torah. It begins with the 4 archetypes of גזיקין, and the very first word of these is the ox (השור). The ox can be its horn with which it gores and it can be its feet with which it tramples and it can be its mouth, with

which it eats produce from someone else's field. So again, you have to have an ox and it can be a good ox or it can really damage you. Instead of calling it Torat Hanefesh we could call it the School of Oxen, we have to learn how to buy, how to rectify the ox. If the ox has gored three times with its horn, then it becomes a שור מועד. Just as there are people that one should run away from, just as one would flee from a dangerous animal. Now what if one has become dangerous to himself and others, is there any hope to bring him back to being just an earnest ox, שור תם. The Torah has loving-kindness, it comes from the right side, and certainly the worst ox in the world can do teshuvah. Oxen too can do teshuvah. Our generation is the generation of teshuvah so everyone can do teshuvah, even oxen.

This the purpose of our talk this evening, to learn how to transform an ox into an angel, into a Cherub. The one who successfully did this was Ezekiel. But, the sages say that a maidservant at the Splitting of the Red Sea saw what even Ezekiel didn't see. So one who can experience the Splitting of the Sea can do what Ezekiel could do. We'll explain in a moment.

Returning to the ox. The ox can go back to being not-dangerous if little children can go up to him and play with him and he doesn't gore them. How can that be the case with me. Our role as יועצים is to help a שור מועד do teshuvah in such a way that no one has to run away from him. Everyone, even little children can go up to him and play with him.

A person, even if he has negative traits, can rectify himself can cleanse himself and go back to being earnest. But, there is another way, and that is the novel approach we would like to present tonight: how else a שור מועד can become a שור תם. This is connected to a dispute in the sages. It is related to the word רשות, like in Rabbi Akiva's statement, הכל צפוי והרשות נתונה. The word רשות also means an area, or possession. Who own a particular area or object. The question discussed by the sages is whether the change of ownership on the ox changes its status as dangerous or not. When I sell you my ox, it is now in your possession. Does that affect its status or not? The beginning of Isaiah, the third verse, reads ידע שור קנהו וחמור אבוס בעליו ישראל לא ידע עמי לא התבונן. An ox knows its owner, and the donkey knows the ??? of its owner—but Israel does not know, my people have not looked at this. The ox, as much as it has no da'at, still here it says that it knows its owner. The donkey is even less, it only knows you if you feed it. But, the ox is smarter than the donkey and it knows that you are its owner and that it is obliged to plow your field. He knows that he must serve his owner—since da'at is about connection and unification. Yet, my people are less than an ox, less than a donkey.

Now regarding the change of ownership, the sages have 3 opinions. If Reuben has sold a dangerous ox to Shimon, the question is whether he returns to be an earnest ox just because of the change in ownership. One of the most important questions in Jewish psychology is whether a person can change himself, his animal soul—because that is the "I" in the beinoni. Can I really change myself? The whole point of Chassidut is that it gives the power to change one's essence. But, that is a chiddush, because sometimes it says in Chassidut that one cannot change the essence of one's traits, but one can change the nature of one's traits (מדות הטבעיות אי אפשר לשנות אבל אפשר לשנות טבע המדות). In any

case, it is not so simple at all that a person can change himself. But, our faith is that indeed one can change. One who doesn't think that a person can change gives drugs, and that is a question in itself—how beneficial that is. But, we believe that drugs are not needed. So it is not for nothing that we said that this is a school for oxen (and for שבירים, broken people).

If an ox has suddenly decided to be a ba'al teshuvah, to treat people nicely, that is one thing. But, we are saying that perhaps there is a completely different suggestion, that one can change one's ownership. Until now we thought that the only way to change is to work internally on oneself. But, now we see that we can sell ourselves to someone else. To change ownership is a little like changing one's name or one's location, where one lives. While we usually suggest that a person change their actions, because for everyone change their name is not דרך השם. This is similar, changing one's רשות, one's ownership.

The sages have 3 opinions: Rabbi Yochana, Raba, and Rav Papa. Since Rav Papa is the last chronologically, most of the Rishonim rule according to his opinion. The names of these 3 sages, רבנן רבה רב פפא, exactly equals רשות, possession.

Rabbi Yochanan says that it is actually a dispute between the sages of the Mishnah. Raba says that all the sages of the Mishnah agree that ownership makes no difference. While, Rav Papa says that all the sages agree that ownership does make a difference. And again the ruling is according to Rav Papa. Rav Papa's opinion is interpreted in two entirely different ways. Rashi explains that when ownership changes it is just a change of legal status. Once an ox belonging to Reuben has damaged three times, it has to pay full compensation for any further damage it does (while an earnest ox only has to pay half the damages). But, once the ox has been sold, the damage did not happen in the possession of the new owner, so we can't hold him to full damages. But, nothing in the ox himself has changed. What we are lacking is the reality of והועד בבעליו. It is not an essential change, but a legal change.

But, the Meiri explains differently. He says that once the ox has changed ownership something has happened to its nature and its mazal—making it better. It has to do with the knowledge that the ox has, ידע שור קנהו. The ox feels and connects with its new owner and something happens to the ox himself. When we say that an ox is earnest, does that mean he never causes damage? There is indeed such an ox. But, there is also an earnest ox that has caused damage, but the damages have never been brought before a court. So there is a תם that is not exactly a tzadik and there is one that is not such a tzadik. So there are 3 types of ox: תם תם מועד. According to Rashi the earnest ox is still one who damages, but according to the Meiri he returns to be a tzadik. It might be that if we take away the ox's past goring, it becomes a ba'al teshuvah out of fear, but according to the Meiri this is teshuvah out of love.

Now, what about the Rambam. How does he rule? We know that he rules according to Rav Papa, but does he follow the Meiri or Rashi. The Rebbe talks about this and says that he follows both. How so? Until now we have been talking about selling the ox which changes his ownership—his רשות. But, there can be another type of changing ownership—when I loan you my ox. Then the one who loaned the ox returns it to its

master. What will be the ruling if during the time that the ox was on loan it went out of its mind and gored 3 times. Again, by its owner, it was fine. But, now with the lender, he started damaging people or property. When the lender returns the ox, does this entail a change of ownership or not? The Talmud says that if you hold that change of ownership *רשות*, changes the ox's nature, this too is considered a change of ownership. The Rebbe explains that here the Rambam divides things. When it comes to this latter case of change of ownership, the *mazal* and nature stayed the same all the way through and therefore when he returns to his original owner, he only legally speaking goes back to being earnest (Just like by people, there can be dormant negative traits that come out in a different environment). But, in the case of a sale, when the ox is sold to a new owner, there the Rambam follows the Meiri, that the ox's nature has completely changed.

What can we learn from all of this? First of all we learn that there are many topics that we learn in the revealed dimension of the Torah that can be applied to our understanding of the psyche. So again, either I work on myself, especially if I follow the BST's path which we teach here, or I can change my ownership, I can sell myself to Hashem: in learning Torah, in performing mitzvot. If one decides that he will dedicate his entire life all his time to Torah to do good deeds, I decide to entirely leave where I am now and go to follow God, that is a change of ownership. This doesn't mean working consciously on my problems, but rather changing where I am. A chassid will also explain this as devoting myself, selling myself to a Rebbe. This is what it says in the second chapter of Tanya: until now, I wasn't facing, face-to-face, the head of the Jewish people, but now I decide to turn around 180 degrees and face him (before I also received from him, but couldn't acknowledge it).

The Lubavitcher Rebbe doesn't mention the second explanation we just said.

Now, the change of ownership can be that it entirely changes the person, changing his essence. The Rambam writes that a true *ba'al teshuvah* who changes his name, it is like he is saying, I am no longer the person I was before. It is not some technical change. Rather, it is a very deep change, that simply you can't call the person by the name he was known before. He's entirely different—and he also changes his name. The *beinoni* can change all the garments of his soul, but he can't uproot the natural character traits he has. But, the *tzadik*, can do this fully. Thus, within the Meiri's interpretation there are two options, either a person changes like a *beinoni*, just his garments, or he can change his very essence, like a *tzadik*.

So altogether we have three options for change: either we undergo inner work, which is what we normally talk about. Or we can have two forms of change through change of ownership. These three options correspond to *chash mal mal*, submission, separation and separation. The main option is of course the first, our work in submitting our ego, our feeling of being. That is the main task. To change in our garments alone by changing our ownership (by identifying with the Almighty), that corresponds to separation. It is not a complete transformation. Finally, the essential change corresponds to sweetening.

Now, how does this is all connect back to parashat Terumah. When Ezekiel looked at the Divine Chariot (described in the first chapter of his book)—known as the Working of

the Divine Chariot, one of the two secrets of the Torah. The first is the secrets of the Working of Creation (akin to lower consciousness and free will), while the second is the Working of the Divine Chariot (akin to higher consciousness and Divine omniscience). Sometimes the secrets of creation are corresponded to the הו"א of Havayah and the secrets of the chariot are ה"א. Ezeikiel saw the Working of the Chariot and in it he saw 4 holy animals carrying the throne, upon which there was the figure of a man. The four animals, were a lion to the right, an ox to the left, an eagle, and a man. But in chapter 10, he once again sees the Divine Chariot. When we think of the Divine Chariot in Ezekiel we usually think only of the 1st chapter. But, he sees the Chariot once again in the 10th chapter. But, in chapter 10, there is no longer an ox. The lion and eagle and the man are still there, and instead of the ox there is a Cherub. So what happened was that the ox turned into a Cherub. How so? It's not just a change of ownership like in Mishpatim – there he always remains an ox, be it earnest or dangerous. But, now he's transformed into a cherub. The Talmud asks this question in Chagigah and the Talmud answers that Ezekiel asked for God's mercy. When he saw the ox in the Chariot, he acted like the collective consciousness of the Jewish people and when he saw the ox it connected in his mind with the Sin of the Golden Calf (even though the ox is a kosher animal and the lion and eagle aren't). So this is the updated version of the Divine Chariot. Ezekiel asked for compassion on the ox and it was transformed in the Divine chariot into a cherub so that the collective consciousness of a Jew would not include a memory of the Sin of the Golden Calf. The holiness on the left side of the Chariot, which corresponds with מזוני, all our physical blessings, should not remind us of the Golden Calf. Ezekiel wanted this memory uprooted so that a person would not find it difficult to move forward, to be born-again. Indeed, the Almighty acknowledged his request and transformed it into a cherub. The sages say that the cherub also looks like a man, except that there is already a man in the Chariot. The sages answer that the man already in the chariot is the adult man, while the cherub is the young or even baby man (כּ – like, רביא – a baby). That is exactly the interpretation that Rashi gives in our parashah for the word Cherubim, an image of a baby, meaning someone who was just born.

There is another important phenomenon. In the first chapter of Ezekiel the order is first man, then lion, then ox, then eagle. But, in chapter 10, the cherub comes first, then man, then lion, then eagle. The Sha'agat Aryeh asks (but does not offer an answer), why the cherub now appears first? The Chatam Sofer says that the man represents the consummate human being, the tzadik. But, according to this the cherub represents a ba'al teshuvah. And the ba'al teshuvah precedes even the tzadik, because he is like a newborn babe.

Now all this follows the understanding that the cherub is the face of a human baby. But there are two more understandings. One is that כרוב means to plow, meaning that the cherub is still an ox, but one that is fully dedicated entirely to his mission, to plowing. The song of the ox in Perek Shirah is the first verse of the Song of the Sea, אשירה לה' כי גאה, גאה סוס ורכבו רמה בים. What the maidservant saw was apparently within this song there is already the word ורכבו which is like כרוב, cherub. Indeed, even after Ezekiel's prophecy and the transformation of the ox into a cherub, there are still signs that in the Second

Temple the ox remained in the Divine Chariot. Anyway this would then be this rectified ox that is entirely dedicated to benefiting humanity. To plow also means to meditate on something deeply, while one meditates deeply, one is like making **חריצים** in one's brain.

The cherubim are **מעשה חושב**, works of art in the tapestries of the Tabernacle. There Rashi doesn't say that it is the face of a baby. There he says it is a picture, it is a generic name for any beautiful shape. This fits with the cherub coming before the man in the second chariot. It represents a generic beautiful shape that includes all the forms in the world. And so what God did according to this explanation is that He transformed the ox into nothingness, into a generic form (**איין = היילי**). And now, once it is a generic form of nothingness, you can bring it down as a person, as a human. To transform something you first have to take it back to its nothingness.

So we have altogether 3 explanations: that either the cherub is a baby, or a plowing ox, or a generic form. We can connect all three by making them into a process. First we rectify the ox and make it into a plowing ox, then we can bring it back to its generic nothingness, and then we can bring it back as a newborn person. These we do through submission, separation, and sweetening.

Now, the first time the word cherubim appears is in Genesis, following Adam's sin. God placed the Cherubim and the revolving sword to guard the path of the Tree of Life. Until now, cherubim were all nice, but here Rashi explains that Cherubim means **מלאכי חבלה**, which are angels of destruction. Oh no! Until now it was all very nice, but suddenly.... (There are other explanations: What did God put Adam in the garden of Eve in the first place: to work it, to till it and to protect it. So now that Adam has been banished, God needs someone else to work the Garden and those are the cherubim, the oxen, and the revolving sword protects the Garden). So this was the first time that Cherubim appear. The second time is on the Ark's covering, and the third is on the tapestries of the Tabernacle.

One of the commentaries on Rashi says that the Cherubim that God placed to guard the Garden of Eden are frightening forms. The second type of Cherubim are forms that little children like. From fear it becomes love. First the Cherubim inspire fear in the soul, that's the first movie that the person sees. The great rectification of that first movie of fear is when a person builds a Tabernacle in his heart and there the Cherubim are beautiful forms that children love. The third stage is when the cherubim turn into a coloring book and that corresponds to tiferet, to beauty. So we've gone from fear, to love, to tiferet: from left to right to the center. This is the permutation that corresponds to sefirah of acknowledgment (**הוד**), this awakens the power of acknowledgment in the soul, like the Modeh Ani that we say when we wake up in the morning.

Finally, let's end with a remez. This whole parashah is related to volunteering. The main point of the volunteering and donating is to awaken the spark of Moshe Rabbeinu in each of us, in order that we come to talk to God, like Moshe Rabbeinu. The remez is on the word "generous" **נדיב** which equals "the son of David" (**בן דוד**). A generous person awakens all the parts of the chariot in its rectified form: the nun is the first letter of eagle, the dalet is the second letter of man, the yud is the third letter of lion, and the beit is the fourth letter of Cherub. This is a very special remez, I don't even remember another

example like this. This is related to the verse, **לֹא יָדַעְתִּי נַפְשִׁי שְׂמַתְנִי מִרְכַּבֹּת עַמִּי נְדִיב**. Abraham is called **נְדִיב**, **בַּת נְדִיב**, the daughter of Abraham. In Abraham, apart from the first letter, the alef which represents the Almighty on the Chariot, the rest of his letters are the final letters of the four animals of the Chariot: **beit** is the final letter of Cherub, **reish** is the final letter of the eagle, the **hei** is the final letter of lion, and the **mem** is the final letter of man.

These are two beautiful examples of how the four letters of the rectified form of the Chariot appear in words.

The final point was that everything begins with the generosity of Abraham, a generous heart, being able to give myself to God, to the Jewish people, to volunteer like Abraham. By doing so we can rectify the entire chariot and transform the ox into a cherub.