



“Whatever You will give me, I will surely separate ma’aser for You”

Yaakov Avinu Swore to Serve Hashem with Two Yuds— the Yetzer Tov in Matters of Torah and the Yetzer Ra in Worldly Matters

This week’s parsha is parshas Vayeitzei. The highlight of the parsha is the famous dream Yaakov Avinu dreamt on the site of the future Mikdash, Har HaMoriah. This occurred after he received the Berachos intended for the wicked Eisav by deceptive means and was forced to flee for his life. In the interim, he spent fourteen sleepless years studying Torah in the Beis Midrash of Eiver.

In this historic dream, HKB”H revealed to Yaakov Avinu incredible, future events both positive and negative, joyous and tragic. He foresaw events that Bnei Yisrael were destined to experience throughout all future generations. In the Midrash, Gemara, and Zohar hakadosh, our blessed sages provide us with multiple interpretations of each and every detail of Yaakov’s nocturnal vision. They encompass the revelation of Matan Torah, the entry into Eretz Yisrael, the building of the Beis HaMikdash, all of the galuyos Yisrael would endure—in short, everything that the people of Yisrael would experience until the coming of the Mashiach and the complete, final geulah, swiftly in our times.

An Intriguing Remez from the Megaleh Amukos

We will begin our sacred journey by exploring the significance of some of the details HKB”H revealed to Yaakov Avinu on that momentous night. Yaakov saw a ladder standing on earth and extending up to the heavens; HKB”H promised him that Eretz Yisrael would be given to him and his offspring. In addition, HKB”H performed a miracle on his behalf; He compacted and folded up all of Eretz Yisrael beneath Yaakov. Here are the pertinent pesukim (Bereishis 28, 12):

”ויחלום והנה סולם מוצב ארצה וראשו מגיע השמימה והנה מלאכי אלקים עולים ויורדים בו, והנה ה' נצב עליו ויאמר אני ה' אלקי אברהם אביך ואלקי יצחק, הארץ אשר אתה שוכב עליה לך אתננה ולזרעך.”

And he dreamt and behold! A ladder was set earthward, and its top reached heavenward; and behold—G-d’s malachim ascending and descending on it. And behold! Hashem was standing over him, and He said, “I am Hashem, G-d of Avraham your father and G-d of Yitzchak; the ground upon which you are lying, to you will I give it and to your descendants.” Citing the Gemara (Chullin 91b), Rashi comments: **“Upon which you are lying”—HKB”H folded up the entirety of Eretz Yisrael beneath him; He alluded to him that it would be easy to be conquered by his children.**

We will endeavor to explain why HKB”H made this surreal, divine ladder the central focus of Yaakov’s dream. Furthermore, why did HKB”H choose this precise moment, when Yaakov was fleeing from Eisav, to promise Yaakov Avinu that the land upon which he was lying would be given to him and his descendants? Lastly, what is the significance of the miraculous folding up of Eretz Yisrael beneath him?

Additionally, it behooves us to examine closely the tefilah uttered by Yaakov Avinu before continuing on his journey to Charan (ibid. 20): **”וידר יעקב גדר לאמר אם יהיה אלקים עמדי ושמרני בדרך הזה אשר אנכי הולך ונתן לי לחם לאכול ובגד ללבוש, ושבתני בשלום אל בית אבי והיה ה' לי לאלקים, והאבן הזאת אשר שמתני מצבה יהיה ביתי. Then Yaakov took a vow saying, “If G-d will be with me, and He will guard me on this way that I am going; and He will give me bread to eat and clothes to wear; and I will return in peace to my father’s house, and Hashem will be a G-d to me — then this stone which I have set as a monument shall become a house of G-d, and whatever You will give me, I will surely give a tenth to You.”** What was the profound intent of

this vow? Why did Yaakov Avinu obligate himself at that precise moment to give ma'aser—one tenth of everything he owned to G-d: "וּכְלֵי אֲשֶׁר תָּתַן לִי עֶשֶׂר אֲעִשְׂרֶנּוּ לְךָ"?

It is fitting at this time to interject a delightful, fascinating remez presented by the Imrei No'am (13) in the name of the Megaleh Amukos in relation to the first passuk of this week's parsha: "וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּאֵר שֶׁבַע וַיֵּלֶךְ חֲרִנָּה". He interprets the word וַיֵּצֵא as an acronym for וַיֵּרֵא יַעֲקֹב צִוְרַת אֱלֹהִים—**Yaakov saw the shape of an "aleph."** What does this signify? The Imrei No'am suggests several interpretations exposing the mind-boggling wisdom and relevance of the Torah.

Yaakov Determined that the Halachah Accords with Avraham It Is Imperative to Enjoin the Yetzer Hara in the Service of Hashem

We will begin to shed some light on all of these issues by considering how Yaakov received the Berachos from his father Yitzchak. Why did HKB"H, the Grand Orchestrator, arrange for Yaakov Avinu to receive the Berachos by means of a ruse? HKB"H most certainly could have revealed to Yitzchak beforehand that Eisav was truly wicked and not deserving of the Berachos. In fact, Eisav's evil nature became apparent to Yitzchak only after the Berachos had already been bestowed upon Yaakov. For, when Eisav returns from hunting to indulge his father with his prey, it says (ibid. 27, 33): "וַיַּחֲרֵד יִצְחָק" **Yitzchak was seized with a powerful trembling.** Rashi comments in the name of the Midrash: **He saw that Gehinnom was open beneath him.**

To explain the matter, let us consider the dilemma faced by the commentaries. Why, indeed, did Yitzchak Avinu intend to bestow the Berachos upon Eisav HaRasha and not upon the wholesome, righteous Yaakov? Yitzchak was undoubtedly aware of Yaakov's virtue, as attested to by the passuk (ibid. 25, 27): "אִישׁ תָּם" **יושב אהלים**—implying that Yaakov studied Torah diligently in the tents of Shem and Eiver. In spite of this, Yitzchak planned to impart the Berachos specifically to Eisav rather than to Yaakov.

We find a wonderful explanation in the Tiferes Shlomo (Toldos). He asserts that it was specifically because Yaakov Avinu was so dedicated to Torah-study and the service of Hashem that Yitzchak Avinu feared that being occupied with worldly Berachos would corrupt him. Here are his sacred words of insight:

"צָרִיךְ לְהִתְבּוֹנֵן בְּכוּזַגְתּוֹ יִצְחָק אֲבִינוֹ, שֶׁלֹּא הָיָה רְצוֹנוֹ תִּיכֵף לְבָרֵךְ אֶת יַעֲקֹב רַק אֶת עֵשָׂו. הֶעֱנִין שִׁיזְחָק הָיָה מִפְּחָד לְבָרֵךְ אֶת יַעֲקֹב בְּבִרְכַת עוֹלָם הַזֶּה, כִּי הָיָה יָרָא לְבַל יִזְחַח דַּעְתּוֹ וַיִּשְׁמַן יִשׁוּרוֹן וַיִּבְעֵט עַל יְדֵי תְאוּזַת הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה, לֹולִי רִבְקָה אֲמַנּוּ שֶׁהִשְׁכִּילָה בְּחִכְמָה וּבְדַעַת לְהַבִּין, כִּי גַם טוֹבֵת עוֹלָם הַזֶּה מְסִייעַ לְאָדָם לְעִבּוּד הַבּוֹרָא בְּהִרְחַבַת הַדַּעַת".

It is crucial that we examine Yitzchak Avinu's concerns for not wanting initially to bless Yaakov. Yitzchak feared that the blessings of Olam HaZeh would distract Yaakov and have a negative effect upon him, in keeping with the words of the passuk (Devarim 32, 15): "וַיִּשְׁמַן יִשׁוּרוֹן וַיִּבְעֵט" **–Yeshurun became fat and kicked,** i.e., affluence causes people to become lax and even rebellious regarding their service of Hashem. It was only due to Rivka Imeinu's wisdom and foresight that Yaakov received the Berachos. She understood that the riches of this world can assist one in serving Hashem more completely and intelligently.

As a loyal servant in the presence of his master, I would like to expand on this incredible insight. Consider Avraham Avinu's preoccupation with "hachnasas orchim." He welcomed people into his abode to introduce them to the service of Hashem through food and drink, as it states (Bereishis 21, 33): "וַיֵּטַע אֵשֶׁל בְּבֵאֵר שֶׁבַע וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם בְּשֵׁם ה'" **he planted an "eshel" in Be'er Sheva and there he proclaimed the name of Hashem, G-d of the Universe.** Rashi comments: **By means of that "eshel," the name of HKB"H was proclaimed as G-d of the entire universe. After they would eat and drink, he (Avraham) would say to them, "Recite a blessing to the One of Whose you have eaten. Do you think that you have eaten of mine? Of that which belongs to Him Who spoke and brought the universe into being you have eaten."**

Thus, we find that Avraham Avinu drew people nearer to the Almighty by utilizing the delicacies of Olam HaZeh. He served Hashem in this manner, because he epitomized the midah of "chesed"—kindness. Yitzchak, however, epitomized the midah of "din"—strict judgment. As such, he was concerned about the grave danger of indulgence and abundance in matters of Olam HaZeh and their negative influence on a Jew's devotion to Torah-study and the service of Hashem. Therefore, vis-à-vis Yaakov, Yitzchak believed that he should minimize his involvement with worldly, mundane matters as much as possible.

Man Was Formed with Two Yuds —a Yetzer Tov and a Yetzer Ra

Let us continue to elaborate on this notion by referring to the creation of man (ibid. 2, 7): **”וַיִּצַר ה' אֱלֹקִים אֶת הָאָדָם אֶת הָאָדָם עֹפָר”**—**and Havaya Elokim formed the man from the dust of the earth.** They expounded on this passuk in the Gemara (Berachos 61a): **”דרש רב נחמן בר רב חסדא, מאי דכתיב וַיִּצַר ה' אֱלֹקִים אֶת הָאָדָם בְּשֵׁנֵי יוּדִין, שְׁנֵי יִצְרִים בְּרָא הַקֹּב”ה אֶחָד יִצַר טוֹב וְאֶחָד יִצַר רָע.”** In the Torah’s description of the creation of man, the word **”וַיִּצַר”**—**and He formed**—is spelled with two “yud”s, indicating that HKB”H created man with two yetzers. In other words, the two “yud”s allude to the yetzer tov and the yetzer hara.

Viewed in this light, we can begin to comprehend the philosophical, ideologic dispute between Avraham Avinu and Yitzchak Avinu. Avraham Avinu, the epitome of “chesed,” adopted the practice of serving Hashem with both the yetzer tov and the yetzer hara. He used every aspect of Olam HaZeh strictly in the service of Hashem. In keeping with this ideology, he welcomed guests into his abode and provided them with the delicacies of Olam HaZeh to draw them nearer to the Creator. Yitzchak Avinu, on the other hand, was of the opinion that we must be vigilant in our battle with the yetzer hara; we must thwart it, drive it away, and subdue it by minimizing all worldly and mundane matters.

This explains Yitzchak’s initial reluctance to bestow the Berachos of Olam HaZeh upon Yaakov, the devoted Torah-scholar. He believed that the Berachos would spoil Yaakov, in keeping with the notion of: **”וַיִּשְׁמַן יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּבְעֹט”**. He wanted Yaakov to remain pure and spiritual and not be corrupted by the materialism of Olam HaZeh. Hence, he preferred to bestow the Berachos upon Eisav, the hunter, whose entire life and occupation was related to Olam HaZeh. As such, the Berachos would not have a negative impact on him. On the contrary, if he would choose to support Yaakov, the Torah-scholar, he would have a share of Yaakov’s Torah, akin to the relationship of Yissachar and Zevulun.

With this understanding, we can shed some light on a teaching in the Yerushalmi (Sotah 5, 5): **”אברהם עשה יצר רע טוב, ומאי טעמא ומצאת את לבו נאמן לפניך... אבל דוד לא היה”** **Avraham made the yetzer hara good. What is the reason for this conclusion?** It says (Nehemiah 9, 8): **”And You found his heart (completely) loyal to You”**

... David, however, could not overcome it, and resorted to exterminating it from his heart. What is the reason for this conclusion? It says (Tehillim 109, 22): **”And my heart has died within me.”**

We find the following interpretation in the commentary of the Korban HaEidah: **Even activities involving physical needs and desire—such as eating and drinking and the like—Avraham performed them solely for the sake of his love of G-d, and not for his own personal pleasure, as it says: “And You found his heart (completely) loyal to You.” For, he had a single, unified heart; even the evil side of his heart was totally devoted to Hashem. David, however, was not able to control his heart to that degree. Therefore, he killed it with one decisive blow. In other words, he distanced himself from physical desire by means of fasts and self-afflictions.**

Yaakov Avinu Determined the Halachic Ruling in the Dispute between Avraham and Yitzchak

We will continue to develop this line of thought. We learn from our sacred sefarim that the midah of Yaakov Avinu was “Tiferes.” It was the proper balance and combination of Avraham’s “chesed” and Yitzchak’s “din.” Therefore, he was able to resolve the philosophical dispute between their two points of view. This is consistent with the principle (Berachos 43b): **”הלכה כדברי”**—**the halachah accords with the viewpoint of the determiner**—since he is familiar with both points of view, their rationales, and justifications.

This is alluded to magnificently in the Baraisa of Rabbi Yishmael that we recite every morning prior to Pesukei D’Zimra. The last principle of the Thirteen Hermeneutic Principles (devices employed to clarify the meaning of Torah precepts) is: **”וכאן שני כתובים המכחישים—”and here two passages that contradict each other until a third passage appears and reconciles them.** The Sefer HaPliah explains this principle as follows: **The two passages that contradict each other are “chesed” and “pachad.” “Until a third passage appears” is “Tiferes Yisrael.” It encompasses them both, determines between them, and reconciles them (makes peace). Therefore, the halachah always accords with the viewpoint of the determiner.**

At this point, it is fitting to include the words instituted by the divine poet in the Pesach Haggadah (Adir Hu): "רחום כהלכה"—**rightly merciful**. The holy master, Rabbi Yehoshua of Belz, zy" a, explains that the Heavenly Court incorporates the viewpoints of the three Avos—Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. As we know, each of them served Hashem with his own respective midah. Avraham Avinu served Hashem with the midah of "chesed"—kindness; Yitzchak Avinu served Hashem with the midah of "din"—judgment; Yaakov Avinu served Hashem with the midah of "rachamim"—an amalgamation of "chesed" and "din" tending more towards "chesed."

Thus, when Yisrael are judged in the Heavenly Court, they are judged based on these three midos. The Degel Machaneh Ephraim (Vayeira) presents this fact in the name of his grandfather, Ba'al Shem Tov hakadosh, zy" a, as follows: "שמעתי בפירוש מן אדוני אבי זקני נשמתו עדן זללה"ה, כי אברהם יצחק ויעקב הם תלת דיינים... כי אי אפשר להיות דין אמת, כי אם שיהיו ג' דיינים בחינת אברהם יצחק ויעקב." **I heard explicitly from my master, my father, my elder, his neshamah in Eden, zllh" h . . . that Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov are three judges (making up the Holy Tribunal) . . . for, it is impossible to arrive at a correct judgment without three judges having the attributes of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov.**

Undoubtedly, Yisrael are judged by the Heavenly Tribunal in accord with the precepts of the Torah, and we have a fundamental principle appearing in several places in the Talmud: "יחיד ורבים הלכה כרבים"—**in a dispute between an individual and a group, the halachah accords with the many**. As it is written (Shemos 23, 2): "אחרי רבים להטות"—favor the majority in a dispute. Now, since Avraham espouses "chesed," and Yaakov espouses "rachamim," they both support a favorable judgment. That leaves Yitzchak who espouses "din" in the minority. Hence, according to Torah-law, HKB"H must render a merciful judgment on behalf of Yisrael. This then is the implication of the words: "רחום כהלכה"—it is halachically correct and justified for HKB"H to treat Yisrael with "rachamim," in accord with the principle of "אחרי רבים להטות". This is not biased or lenient but is halachically correct.

Now, it seems as if the matter of the Berachos of Olam HaZeh was also a matter of dispute between Avraham and Yitzchak. Avraham, the representative of "chesed," advocated that the Berachos of Olam HaZeh should rightfully be bestowed upon all human beings; because

he believed that this extension of "chesed" would draw them nearer and endear them to the service of Hashem. Yitzchak, the representative of "din," advocated that a Jew who studies Torah and observes Hashem's mitzvos should separate himself from all matters of Olam HaZeh. For this reason, he wanted to grant the Berachos to Eisav HaRasha rather than to Yaakov, the wholesome man, who dwelled in the tents of Torah.

Ultimately, the dispute was resolved by Yaakov Avinu, who determined the halachah in accord with Avraham Avinu. He ruled that it is appropriate for the abundant good associated with Berachos of Olam HaZeh to be bestowed upon those who study Torah and serve Hashem. This would enable them to serve Hashem with greater ease. Therefore, HKB"H, the Grand Orchestrator, arranged for Yaakov Avinu to be the beneficiary of the Berachos of Olam HaZeh. Thus, he determined the halachah in accord with Avraham Avinu—that it is necessary to serve Hashem with both the yetzer tov and the yetzer hara, as the Torah states with regards to Avraham: **"And You found his heart (completely) loyal to You."**

Accordingly, when Yaakov Avinu instituted the mitzvah of Krias Shema, this halachic determination is mentioned. As they expounded in the Mishnah (Berachos 54a) on the passuk (Devarim 6, 4): "ואהבת את ה' אלקיך בכל לבבך וגו', בכל לבבך"—**and you shall love Hashem, your G-d, with all your heart, etc.** "With all your heart" means with both of your yetzers—with the yetzer tov and the yetzer hara.

The Meraglim Did Not Want to Enter the Land so that They Could Serve Hashem without Material Pursuits

Let us now interpret the vision HKB"H revealed to Yaakov Avinu from this perspective. Throughout the sixty-three years that Yaakov lived in his father's house, he followed Yitzchak's example; he only studied Torah and served Hashem; he abstained from worldly, mundane activities and interests. Hence, he sufficed with basic staples, such as bread and lentil stew, as mentioned at the beginning of parshas Toldos. This was basic nutrition sufficient to maintain the body for the sake of studying Torah and serving Hashem.

The situation changed, however, after it was orchestrated from above that he be the recipient of the

Berachos from Yitzchak. He realized that it was ordained from above that he resolve the ideological dispute between his grandfather Avraham and his father Yitzchak. Hence, it was his decision that the halachah should accord with Avraham. In matters of Olam HaZeh, it is imperative to also serve Hashem with the yetzer hara.

In other words, after receiving the Berachos, he had to forge a new way to serve Hashem. This was a path that was unfamiliar to him. Yet, as is the nature of tzaddikim, he considered that perhaps he had erred and needed to adapt. Therefore, in the momentous dream on Har HaMoriah, HKB"H confirmed that he had decided correctly. The halachah should accord with the viewpoint and approach of Avraham also in matters of Olam HaZeh.

This can be implied from the passuk: **"And he dreamt and behold! A ladder was set earthward, and its top reached heavenward."** Thus, HKB"H taught him a vital lesson concerning the mundane activities of Olam HaZeh, which are alluded to by the words **"set earthward."** If a Jew serves Hashem with worldly matters, he will merit **"and its top reached heavenward"**—his exalted service will ascend heavenward and reach Hashem.

Therefore, HKB"H showed him in the dream מלאכי—אלקים—heavenly malachim—namely, the yetzer tov and yetzer hara—**"ascending and descending"** on the ladder. This indicated that their ascent and descent depend on man's behavior in mundane, earthly matters. If he engages in them for the sake of Heaven, he elevates even the yetzer hara and transforms it into a yetzer tov. Conversely, if he is dragged down, chas v'shalom, by earthly concerns and the temptations of Olam HaZeh, he drags the yetzer tov down, as well.

HKB"H Promised Yaakov Eretz Yisrael which Is Rich in Worldly Delicacies

It gives me immense pleasure to interpret the second part of Yaakov's dream along these lines. The Torah informs us that HKB"H promised Yaakov the land at that time: **He said, "I am Hashem, G-d of Avraham your father and G-d of Yitzchak; the ground upon which you are lying, to you will I give it and to your descendants."** To explain this, we will refer to the episode of the meraglim. They were princes of Yisrael; nevertheless, they were reluctant to enter Eretz Yisrael. According to our early sources, they were of the opinion

that it is only possible to serve Hashem properly and dedicate themselves to the study of Torah in the midbar. After all, all worldly needs were provided for them in the midbar, such as the "mahn" that descended from the heavens. That was destined to change when they entered Eretz Yisrael. The "mahn" would no longer be provided, and they would have to work and cultivate fields and vineyards. In other words, due to their preoccupation with mundane, worldly matters, they would no longer be free to study Torah and serve Hashem properly and optimally. Therefore, they opposed entering Eretz Yisrael.

They were obviously mistaken. It was precisely for this reason that HKB"H created man with two "yud"s—**"וייצר"**. He wanted to teach us that it is imperative to serve Hashem with the **yetzer** tov and the **yetzer** ra. This was the determination made by Yaakov Avinu when he received the Berachos from Yitzchak in place of Eisav. He determined that the halachah accords with Avraham—a Jew must engage even in matters pertaining to Olam HaZeh l'shem Shamayim.

HKB"H conveyed this message to Yaakov in the nighttime dream as follows: **He said, "I am Hashem, G-d of Avraham your father and G-d of Yitzchak."** They disagreed as to whether or not it is necessary to serve Hashem in matters of Olam HaZeh. Now, that it has been arranged for you to receive the Berachos, you have resolved this dispute; you have ruled in favor of the approach of Avraham. Therefore, in this merit: **"The ground upon which you are lying, to you will I give it and to your descendants."** This explains the miracle of folding up all of Eretz Yisrael under Yaakov to facilitate the conquest of the land by his descendants. For, Yisrael would only deserve Eretz Yisrael, if they chose to follow in Yaakov's footsteps and his halachic decision that it is necessary to serve Hashem even in mundane, worldly matters.

This also explains very nicely the vow Yaakov made: **"If G-d will be with me, and He will guard me on this way that I am going"**—referring to the new way he chose to follow after receiving the Berachos from Yitzchak; **"and He will give me bread to eat and clothes to wear"**—to also serve Hashem in matters related to Olam HaZeh; **"and I will return in peace to my father's house"**—to Yitzchak, to show him that despite my new path and ideology, I have remained loyal and devoted to the G-d of Yisrael—**"and Hashem will be a G-d to me."** Then, he concludes the vow:

“And whatever You will give me, I will surely give a tenth to You”—עשר אשרנו לך—“the word for **“ten,”** the gematria of the letter **“yud”** is repeated. Thus, Yaakov is vowing to Hashem that in all worldly matters, he will heed to include both **“yud”s** of **“וייצר”**. In other words, he will strive to serve Hashem with both yetzers, the yetzer tov and the yetzer hara, since that is the purpose of creation, as it is written: **“וייצר ה' אלקים את האדם”**.

Yaakov Saw the Shape of an Aleph

With much satisfaction, we can now explain the intriguing allusion presented by the Megaleh Amukos. Regarding the words: **“ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע”**—he interpreted the word **ויצא** as an acronym for **ויצא יעקב צורת א' לף**—**Yaakov saw the shape of an “aleph.”** We will refer to a teaching in the Zohar hakadosh (Bereishis 26a) regarding the passuk: **“וייצר ה' אלקים את האדם”**—**Hashem Elokim formed the man.** The Zohar breaks down the word **וייצר** into the two components **צר** and **וי**. This suggests that HKB”H drew or inscribed the letters **“yud, vav, yud”** on man’s countenance; man’s two eyes resemble **“yud”s**, and the nose in between them resembles the letter **“vav.”**

In the Megaleh Amukos on Va’etchanan (162), he writes that these three letters on man’s countenance represent the letter **“aleph.”** The Tikunei Zohar (Intro. 15b) explains this phenomenon as follows: The letter **“aleph”**—א—is formed by the three letters **ויי**. It has a **“yud”** at its top right and another **“yud”** at its bottom left. A diagonal **“vav”** in the middle of the **“aleph”** connects the two **“yud”s**. Additionally, the gematria of these three letters (10+6+10) equals the gematria of the name **Havaya** (26).

We can now embellish this thought based on our current discussion. HKB”H drew the equivalent of the name **Havaya** on man’s countenance with the component parts of the letter **“aleph,”** to allude to the two yetzers. The top **“yud”** on the right side of the

“aleph,” alludes to the yetzer tov residing in the right cavity of the heart. As such, its tip points upwards, because the yetzer tov influences a person to direct all of his actions and thoughts heavenwards, solely for the sake of Hashem. In contrast, the bottom **“yud”** on the left side of the **“aleph,”** alludes to the yetzer hara residing in the left cavity of the heart. As such, its tip points downwards, because the yetzer hara is a negative influence that drags a person down; it entices a person to satisfy his meaningless, earthly desires.

As for the letter **“vav”** in the middle of the **“aleph”** that connects the two **“yud”s**, it alludes to the avodah that is expected of a Jew. It is his job to unite the two yetzers by transforming the yetzer hara into a positive influence, a yetzer tov. Now, with regards to the letter **“vav,”** the Gemara teaches us (Pesachim 5a): **“וי' מוסיף על ענין ראשון”**—**the letter “vav” adds to the previous subject.** In other words, the letter **“vav”** connects something that follows later with something that preceded it. In our case, it connects the two yetzers as forces for good assisting a person to better serve Hashem, in keeping with the teaching: **“With all your heart” means with both of your yetzers—with the yetzer tov and the yetzer hara.**

We can now truly appreciate the remez presented by the Megaleh Amukos: **The word ויצא is an acronym for ויצא יעקב צורת א' לף—Yaakov saw the shape of an “aleph.”** As explained, the letter **“aleph”** is formed by the three letters **“yud, vav, yud.”** Thus, it symbolizes the fact that Yaakov Avinu determined that the halachah accords with Avraham Avinu—that a Jew should serve Hashem with both yetzers. Therefore, after he received the Berachos from Yitzchak, he was compelled to go to Charan. There, he worked for Lavan as a shepherd, engaging in the work of Olam HaZeh. As we know, we was extremely successful, became a wealthy man, and used his material wealth to serve Hashem.

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