*Or HaMeir*/R. Ze’ev Wolf of Zhitomir on *parshat* *Va’yigash*

We have taught frequently that the essence of God’s service and the purpose of both study and prayer is that they be for the sake of *shechinah*… In last week’s Torah portion we saw that Jacob told his sons to “do this [*zot*, lit. “this” but also a code word for *shechinah*]” (Gen. 43:11) do all that you do only…for the sake of *shechinah*, who is God’s name… The verse goes on: “take of the land’s produce [*zimrat ha’aretz*] in your vessels.” This refers to those songs (*zemirot*) and praises that *shechinah* is forever singing… Take this along in the “vessels” of your speech-letters, recombining those letters by which you sought to ask for your own needs into names by which to address God…

So Jacob told his sons: “do this.” *Shechinah* is called *zot* (“this”). Be constantly constructing and shaping Her into a complete (*shleymah*) form. Do so by your good deeds, especially by the words of study and prayer. “Take of the *zemirot* (the songs/produce) of the land in your vessels,” your entire selves placed into the letters of speech…

Thus [our opening verse]: **Judah approached him**. The tzadik [or maybe for our purposes, tzadik-in-training] draws everything near to our blessed Creator, raising up all division to its root in the One. This is the sacred service (*avodah*) of Judah, the righteous one in each generation. He says: “**please, my Lord, may your servant speak a word**… The whole intent of the true tzadik in prayer is not for themselves, but for *shechinah*, to provide words for Her, coming from below. Without them She would be mute, lacking the words to come before God. This is the tzadik’s worry, and thus true prayer begins by casting light upon *shechinah’s* needs…

Comment from Rabbi Art Green:

True prayer takes place within God, *shechinah*, or the immanent presence, the God within this world, seeking to unite with the One. But the only language She has to call out for this union is that which we humans provide for Her. This is our role: giving the gift of language to the silent inner longing of being, longing to become One.

-*Or HaMeir,* Ze’ev Wolf of Zhitomir, from *Speaking Torah: Spiritual Teachings from around the Magid’s Table*, Volume 1, Arthur Green, et al.