

Discourse 24

“Atem Nitzavim Hayom Kulchem, Lifnei HaShem -
You are standing this day, all of you, before *HaShem*-יהוה”

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Nitzavim-Vayeilech, 23 Elul, 5712

By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,¹⁷⁵⁸ “You are standing this day, all of you, before *HaShem*-יהוה your God; your heads, your tribes, your elders, your officers – all the men of Israel. Your young children, your wives and your proselyte who is in your camp, from your wood-cutter to your water-drawer.” (The Torah then continues to state that the ultimate intent in why “You are standing this day etc.,” is) “for you to pass into the covenant of *HaShem*-יהוה your God etc., that *HaShem*-יהוה your God, seals with you today,”¹⁷⁵⁹ (and then adds), “in order to establish you today as a people unto Him and that He is a God unto you.”¹⁷⁶⁰

Now, in Likkutei Torah¹⁷⁶¹ it is explained that the word, “**this** day-*Hayom*-היום,” specifically refers to Rosh

¹⁷⁵⁸ Deuteronomy 29:9-10

¹⁷⁵⁹ Deuteronomy 29:11

¹⁷⁶⁰ Deuteronomy 29:12

¹⁷⁶¹ Likkutei Torah, Nitzavim 44a

HaShanah,¹⁷⁶² as we recite on Rosh HaShanah,¹⁷⁶³ “**This** day-*HaYom*-היום is the beginning of Your works.” That is, on Rosh HaShanah, all the sparks of the souls stand and are elevated to their Original Source “before *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God,” in order “for you to pass into the covenant of *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God,” to “establish you today as a people unto Him and that He is a God unto you.”

Now, we need to understand. What is the novelty of the day of Rosh HaShanah, that the matter of “establishing you today as a people unto Him and that He is a God unto you,” is specifically on this day? Does not this matter exist throughout the year, for after all, the obligation to fulfill Torah and *mitzvot*, through which the Jewish people become a people unto Him and He becomes a God unto them, is throughout the year?

In addition, we must understand the theme of this covenant (*Brit*) of Rosh HaShanah, about which it states, “for you to pass into the covenant of *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God.” Similarly, in the prayers of Rosh HaShanah, we recite, “He remembers the covenant (*Brit*).”¹⁷⁶⁴ After all, the matter of the covenant (*Brit*) is not exclusive specifically to Rosh HaShanah, as we recite in the prayers of Rosh HaShanah themselves (wherein we cite verses in Torah as proof that remembrance of the covenant is necessary). We thus state,

¹⁷⁶² Pa'ane'ach Raza, end of Nitzavim; Megaleh Amukot, Nitzavim, section entitled “*Asiri*” 60d; Zohar II 32b and Rimzei Zohar there; Zohar III 231a.

¹⁷⁶³ Musaf prayer of Rosh HaShanah (Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 27a)

¹⁷⁶⁴ See the liturgy of the *Zichronot* blessing of Musaf of Rosh HaShanah.

“You also remembered Noah with love, as it states,¹⁷⁶⁵ “and God remembered Noah,” referring to the covenant formed with Noah. There likewise was a covenant formed with Avraham, as it states,¹⁷⁶⁶ “On that day *HaShem*-יהו"ה formed a covenant (*Brit*) with Avraham etc.” Likewise, a covenant was formed with Moshe, as it states,¹⁷⁶⁷ “Behold! I form a covenant (*Brit*) etc.”

Now, the substance of the three above mentioned covenants is as follows:¹⁷⁶⁸ The covenant with Noah is for the endurance of the world, as evident in the verses themselves. This is as stated,¹⁷⁶⁹ “All the days of the earth, day and night shall not cease.”

The formation of the covenant with Avraham, was in regard to giving him the land. Spiritually, it refers to the giving of the Torah. This is understood from the words of our sages, of blessed memory,¹⁷⁷⁰ “Why is it called, ‘land-*Aretz*-ארץ’? Because it desired (*רצתה*) to fulfill the will of its Owner.” That is, Torah is the revelation of *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה's Supernal will. Additionally, the word, “land-*Aretz*-ארץ” indicates sublimation of self (*Bittul*), through which a person comes to Torah, as we recite,¹⁷⁷¹ “May my soul be like dust to

¹⁷⁶⁵ Genesis 8:1

¹⁷⁶⁶ Genesis 15:18

¹⁷⁶⁷ Exodus 34:10

¹⁷⁶⁸ See the discourse entitled “*Hineh Anochi Koret Brit*” Sefer HaMaamarim 5630 p. 102 and on; 5654 p. 174 and on; *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 1, Ch. 201, p. 407 and on.

¹⁷⁶⁹ Genesis 8:22

¹⁷⁷⁰ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 5:8

¹⁷⁷¹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 17a; Liturgy of the “*Eloh"ai Netzor*” at the conclusion of the *Amidah* prayer; Also see Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar 15c.

all; open my heart to Your Torah and my soul will pursue Your commandments.”

The formation of the covenant (*Brit*) with Moshe was regarding the matter of repentance (*Teshuvah*). That is, even if one has sinned, caused blemish and left the path, nonetheless, repentance (*Teshuvah*) benefits him. This is as stated,¹⁷⁷² “God, Compassionate and Gracious, Slow to Anger,” about which it is taught¹⁷⁷³ that He is slow to anger not only with the righteous-*Tzaddikim*, but also with the wicked-*Resha'im*. The verse then continues, “Abundant in Kindness and Truth; Preserver of Kindness for thousands of generations, Forgiver of iniquity, willful sin and error, and Who cleanses etc.” It is about this that the Torah continues and states,¹⁷⁷⁴ “Behold! I form a covenant (*Brit*) etc.”

This being the case, since these three covenants have already been formed, we need to understand what the theme of the covenant (*Brit*) of Rosh HaShanah is.

2.

This may be better understood by thoroughly explaining the three above-mentioned covenants first. For, the covenants formed with Noach and Avraham, were different from the covenant of Moshe, in that they were connected to physical signs. That is, about the covenant of Noach it

¹⁷⁷² Exodus 34:6-7

¹⁷⁷³ Pesikta d'Rav Kahana Ch. 21; Yalkut Shimoni Exodus 34:6-7

¹⁷⁷⁴ Exodus 34:10

states,¹⁷⁷⁵ “I have set My rainbow in the cloud and it shall be a sign of the covenant etc.” Similarly, about Avraham it states,¹⁷⁷⁶ “And He said to him, ‘Take for Me three heifers...’ and he split them in the middle... there was a smoky furnace and a torch of fire (referring to the *Shechinah* - the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He)¹⁷⁷⁷ that passed between the pieces... (It then concludes). On that day *HaShem*-יהו"ה made a covenant with Avram etc.”

However, the covenant formed with Moshe was not connected to anything physical. The reason is because the covenants of Noach and Avraham are connected to the existence of the world, whereas the covenant of Moshe transcends the existence of the world.

The explanation is that the covenant of Noach was connected to the general refinement of the world that took place through the flood, in that, before the flood, the world was not as it should be and the flood purified it. This is understood from the comment of our sages, of blessed memory,¹⁷⁷⁸ on the verse,¹⁷⁷⁹ “You are a land that has not been purified, that has not been rained upon.”¹⁷⁸⁰ Moreover, this is why the flood happened in a period of forty-days,

¹⁷⁷⁵ Genesis 9:13

¹⁷⁷⁶ Genesis 15:9-18

¹⁷⁷⁷ Ramban to Genesis 15:17

¹⁷⁷⁸ Talmud Bavli, Zevachim 113a

¹⁷⁷⁹ Ezekiel 22:24

¹⁷⁸⁰ That is, it is the rain that purifies the land. From this we see that the flood in the days of Noach purified the earth.

corresponding to the forty *se'ah* of water required for a Mikvah, since its purpose was to purify the world.¹⁷⁸¹

This is likewise why the sign of this covenant is the rainbow.¹⁷⁸² At first glance, this is not understood. That is, rainbows are a natural occurrence, brought about when the rays of sun pass through the clouds. Since it is a natural occurrence, how then is it a sign of a covenant (*Brit*)?

However, the explanation is that before the flood, the clouds were much thicker, and therefore, even though sunlight hit the clouds, it did not bring about radiance and illumination. However, after the flood, the clouds became thinner and more refined, so that a rainbow can be seen through them. In other words, because the world was not as it should be, as a result, the clouds were thick and absorbed all the sunlight, not letting it pass through to produce reflective light (*Ohr Chozer*). However, because the flood caused refinement in the world, the clouds were affected with refinement as well, causing them to be thinner and more refined. The sunlight could then pass through them and come out as reflective light (*Ohr Chozer*), that is, as a rainbow.

It is for this reason that the covenant of Noach has a physical sign. For, since the covenant with Noach is that the world will continue to endure, in that, “day and night, shall not cease,” due to the general refinement and purification that the world underwent during the flood, it therefore follows that the

¹⁷⁸¹ See Torah Ohr, Noach 8c and on.

¹⁷⁸² See Maamarei Admor HaZaken, Al Parshiyot HaTorah Vol. 1, p. 57 and on; 5564 p. 164; Ohr HaTorah Noach Vol. 3, p. 648a; Sefer HaMaamarim 5654 p. 47 and on; Discourse entitled “*Zot Ot HaBrit*” of Shabbat Parshat Noach 5743.

sign of this covenant is from the physicality of the world. In other words, the rainbow is a reminder of the general purification that the world underwent during the flood, to the point that even in a generation that is not fitting, nevertheless, due to its general refinement, the world continues to endure, so that “day and night shall not cease.”

This is also the case regarding the covenant formed with Avraham. It too relates to an act of refining the world, for the covenant with Avraham relates to giving him the land, which corresponds spiritually to the matter of Torah and *mitzvot*. For, in general, the fulfillment of the commandments relates to the land (of Israel), as it states,¹⁷⁸³ “This is the commandment and the decrees and ordinances that *HaShem*-יהוה your God, commanded to teach you to do in the land that you are crossing over to possess. The “commandment and the decrees and ordinances” refer to all the commandments, even those that are not dependent upon the land (of Israel). This is as stated by Ramban,¹⁷⁸⁴ that the essential aspect of all *mitzvot* is that they be performed in the land (of Israel) specifically.

Moreover, the matter of Torah and *mitzvot* themselves is to affect a bond between the created being and the Creator, blessed is He.¹⁷⁸⁵ For, on his own, a created being can have no relation to the Creator, blessed is He. This is as stated,¹⁷⁸⁶ “The heavens are *HaShem*’s-יהוה, but the earth He has given to man.” However, by *HaShem*-יהוה giving us His Torah and

¹⁷⁸³ Deuteronomy 6:1

¹⁷⁸⁴ Ramban to Leviticus 18:25 and Deuteronomy 4:5

¹⁷⁸⁵ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5698 p. 52

¹⁷⁸⁶ Psalms 115:16; Midrash Shmot Rabba 12:3

commandments, a bond was made between the creatures and the Creator, blessed is He. It is in this regard that we recite,¹⁷⁸⁷ “May my soul be like dust to all; Open my heart to Your Torah (the Torah of *HaShem*-יהו"ה), and let my soul pursue Your commandments (the commandments of *HaShem*-יהו"ה).” For, through the fulfillment of His commandments, the physical heart of flesh,¹⁷⁸⁸ as well as the physical objects through which the commandments are performed, become Holy, and become receptacles for Godliness.

This matter was brought about at the giving of the Torah, when there was the revelation of,¹⁷⁸⁹ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה” descended upon Mount Sinai,” and,¹⁷⁹⁰ “To Moshe He said, ‘Go up to *HaShem*-יהו"ה.’” However, the inception of this bond happened by the hand of our forefathers, as in the teaching,¹⁷⁹¹ “The deeds of the forefathers are a sign for their children.” That is, it is through the actions of our forefathers (and what they did), that a sign was given and strength was given to their children, to enable them to also fulfill it. It is because of this that the two thousand years of Torah (in which there can be a bond between the creatures and the Creator, blessed is He), began with our forefather Avraham,¹⁷⁹² about whom it states,¹⁷⁹³ “Avraham was one-*Echad*-אחד.” That is,

¹⁷⁸⁷ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 17a; Liturgy of the “*Elohai Netzor*” at the conclusion of the *Amidah* prayer; Also see Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar 15c.

¹⁷⁸⁸ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5697 p. 215 & p. 282, and elsewhere.

¹⁷⁸⁹ Exodus 19:20

¹⁷⁹⁰ Exodus 24:1

¹⁷⁹¹ Midrash Tanchuma Lech Lecha 9; Ramban to Genesis 12:6, and elsewhere; Also see Ohr HaTorah Lech Lecha.

¹⁷⁹² Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 97a; Avodah Zarah 9a

¹⁷⁹³ Ezekiel 33:24

through his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, he brought about that the physicality and coarseness of the world itself should cry out and declare, "God world-*E'l Olam*-אל עולם" (not "God of the world-*El HaOlam*-אל העולם," but, "God world-*El Olam*-אל עולם").¹⁷⁹⁴ Thus, since the covenant with Avraham was regarding Torah, the purpose of which is to purify and refine the world, therefore, the covenant with Avraham was also in a manner in which it had some relation and hold on the physicality of the world.

Now, in contrast, the covenant with Moshe is in regard to the matter of returning to *HaShem*-יהו"ה with repentance (*Teshuvah*), which is something that transcends the world. For, the drawing down of influence brought about through repentance (*Teshuvah*) is from the thirteen attributes of mercy, that transcend the world. Moreover, in general, the matter of repentance (*Teshuvah*) transcends time and space.¹⁷⁹⁵ For, about *Teshuvah* it states,¹⁷⁹⁶ "Happy are the penitent, who in one hour, one day, or in even a single moment, come as close to the Holy One, blessed is He, as even the most righteous come to Him, blessed is He, over several years." It thus transcends time and space, meaning that it transcends the vessels (*Keilim*). This is like the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,¹⁷⁹⁷ "There is a person who acquires his world (*Olam*-עולם) in a single moment." That is, even the

¹⁷⁹⁴ See Likkutei Torah, Tavo 42d; 43c; *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 1, p. 257; Also see "*Bati LeGani*" 5711, translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe 5711 – Discourse 1.

¹⁷⁹⁵ See Likkutei Torah, Acharei 26c and elsewhere.

¹⁷⁹⁶ *Zohar* I 129a-b

¹⁷⁹⁷ Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zarah 10b

matter indicated by the word, “his world-*Olamo*-עולמו,” which normally requires the work of creating vessels (*Keilim*), is accomplished in a single moment, since repentance (*Teshuvah*) transcends the vessels (*Keilim*). Thus, since the covenant formed with Moshe is in regard to repentance (*Teshuvah*), which transcends the world, it therefore is not accompanied by any physical manifestation in the world.

3.

In man’s service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, this matter can be explained as follows: The service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, that is akin to the covenant of Noach, is the service of “*Modeh Ani* – I am thankful.”¹⁷⁹⁸ That is, immediately upon awakening, one recites,¹⁷⁹⁹ “I am thankful before You, Living and Eternal King, for returning my soul within me with mercy. Great is Your faithfulness.” For, during sleep, the soul ascends above and draws vitality unto itself.¹⁸⁰⁰ However, because of the withdrawal of the soul during sleep, all that remains below in the body and animalistic soul is the “impression of life (*Kista D'Chayuta*).”¹⁸⁰¹ Due to this withdrawal during sleep, upon waking, a remnant of impurity

¹⁷⁹⁸ See *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 1, p. 619; Discourse entitled “*Ani L'Dodi* – I am my Beloved’s” of this year 5712 – Discourse 23.

¹⁷⁹⁹ See *Shulchan Aruch* of the Alter Rebbe, *Mahadura Kamma* 1:8; *Mahadura Tinyana* 1:6; *Siddur* of the Alter Rebbe, section preceding the *Modeh Ani* recitation.

¹⁸⁰⁰ *Midrash Bereishit Rabba* 14:9

¹⁸⁰¹ *Zohar* I 83a; Also see *Shaar HaYichud* of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as *The Gate of Unity*, Ch. 41 and the notes there.

remains upon one's fingertips, through which it is possible for the external husks (*Kelipah*) to take hold and derive vitality etc.

Nevertheless, immediately upon waking from sleep, when one is still in a state in which the, "breath of his soul is in his nostrils,"¹⁸⁰² even before washing his hands and reciting the morning blessings, he says, "I am thankful before You, Living and Eternal King." This is because, not only his soul, but even his body, is the body of a Jew, the offspring of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, which differs from the body of a non-Jew.¹⁸⁰³ This is as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹⁸⁰⁴ "From the moment the Jewish people received the Torah at Mount Sinai, their impurity ceased."¹⁸⁰⁵ Therefore, even before washing his hands and reciting the morning blessings, he can say, "I am thankful before You, Living and Eternal King." Although this is just general thankfulness, nevertheless, it is general thankfulness that completely penetrates his entire being.¹⁸⁰⁶ Thus, through the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the thankfulness of "Modeh Ani," one comes to affect, "Great is Your faithfulness," thus drawing forth and effecting the world with abundant faith. We

¹⁸⁰² Isaiah 2:22; Talmud Bavli, Brachot 14a; Likkutei Torah Pinchas 79d; Ohr HaTorah Bereishit Vol. 6, p. 1,020a and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5689 p. 126 and on.

¹⁸⁰³ See Tanya Ch. 6 and the notes of the Rebbe Rashab to Tanya there (Kitzurim v'Ha'arot l'Tanya p. 115); Also see Tanya Ch. 49 (70a); Sefer HaSichot, Torat Shalom p. 120 & p. 127 and elsewhere.

¹⁸⁰⁴ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 146a

¹⁸⁰⁵ The continuation of the teaching (Shabbat 146a *ibid.*) is, "whereas, gentiles did not stand at Mount Sinai, and their contamination never ceased."

¹⁸⁰⁶ See *Hemshech* 5672 *ibid.*; Kuntres Inyana Shel Torat HaChassidus, Ch. 9 and on, and elsewhere.

thus find that the sublimation (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the “*Modeh Ani*,” which only is the aspect of a general thankfulness, is similar to the covenant of Noach, which affected a refinement of the world in general.

However, the sublimation to *HaShem*-יהו"ה blessed is He, of “*Modeh Ani*,” (like the covenant of Noach),¹⁸⁰⁷ is not the result of toil and labor on the part of the Jew below, but is rather the result of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה choice in choosing the Jewish people as His own. For, this choosing did not depend on our study of Torah or our fulfillment of His commandments, but rather, immediately upon the giving of the Torah, the Holy One, blessed is He, chose the Jewish people.¹⁸⁰⁸ This is as stated,¹⁸⁰⁹ “For *Ya*’h-יה"ה selected Yaakov for Himself,” and,¹⁸¹⁰ “For *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה portion is His people.” Thus, because of this choice, every single Jew regardless of who he is, is capable of reciting “*Modeh Ani*” with thanks to *HaShem*-יהו"ה.

Now, after the general sublimation to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, brought about by the acknowledgment of thanks in “*Modeh Ani*,” one comes to the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in prayer. This is like the statement of Abba

¹⁸⁰⁷ The covenant of Noach, in which *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, promised Noach that He never again will destroy the world, is absolute and does not depend on the service of the creatures. In other words, even though mankind at large, do not recognize the truth of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He and blessed is His name, and do not follow in His ways, nevertheless, He does not destroy the world, as He did in the days of Noach.

¹⁸⁰⁸ See Magen Avraham to Orach Chayim 60, Se’if Katan 2; Shulchan Aruch of the Alter Rebbe, Orach Chayim 60:4.

¹⁸⁰⁹ Psalms 135:4

¹⁸¹⁰ Deuteronomy 32:9

Binyamin, who would say: “All of my life I have taken great care... that my prayer should be before my bed.”¹⁸¹¹ The matter of prayer is that it is a ladder, as expressed in the verse,¹⁸¹² “A ladder was set on the earth and its head reached the heavens.” That is, to ascend in prayer specifically requires work and toil. For, just as in climbing a physical ladder, one must exert himself to climb from rung to rung, likewise spiritually, a person must toil within himself until he reaches the aspect of, “its head reached to the heavens.”

This service of prayer is comparable to the covenant formed with Avraham, which is the matter of Torah. For, Torah too is specifically attained through work and toil. (That is, although Torah comes from Above, it nevertheless is attained specifically through work and toil.) As known, Torah is analogous to bread.¹⁸¹³ Bread is the product of toil and labor, as it states,¹⁸¹⁴ “By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread,” indicating that one must toil until they come to the aspect of,¹⁸¹⁵ “bread sustains the heart of man.” The same is true of Torah, in that Torah is attained specifically through toil, through which it comes into the aspect of giving wise counsel to the animalistic soul.¹⁸¹⁶ The same is true of the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in prayer, that one

¹⁸¹¹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 5b

¹⁸¹² Genesis 28:12; Zohar I 266b, Zohar III 306b; Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 45 (83a); Likkutei Torah Beshalach 2b and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5655 p. 222 and on; 5708 p. 80 and on.

¹⁸¹³ Proverbs 25:21 and Rashi there; Tanya Ch. 5 (9b)

¹⁸¹⁴ Genesis 3:19

¹⁸¹⁵ Psalms 104:15

¹⁸¹⁶ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 26b; Torah Ohr Yitro 67b

must exert himself in ascending the ladder of prayer, until he comes to the aspect of, “its head reached to the heavens,” even elevating the aspect of “the earth” to “the heavens.” We should also add that the bond between the earth and the heavens accomplished through prayer, is similar to the bond between the created and the Creator, blessed is He, accomplished through study of His Torah.

Now, even when one ascends through the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in prayer, until he comes to the aspect of “to the heavens-*Shamaymah*-שמימה” (that is, the “heavens-*Shamayim*-שמים” with the addition of a *Hey*-ה),¹⁸¹⁷ nevertheless, since his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה is according to reason and intellect, he only reaches to the root of the creatures alone. (In other words, even though a person is capable of attaining the loftiest of levels of this matter, nevertheless, it only is the root of the creatures alone.) This is because, of his own accord, a creature is incapable of reaching beyond his root.

However, there also is service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that transcends intellect and reason. This is the matter of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, by turning to Him in repentance (*Teshuvah*). This is because repentance (*Teshuvah*) involves transforming one's very being. For example, repenting from sin involves changing one's very being (to the opposite of how he was).¹⁸¹⁸ This is as stated by

¹⁸¹⁷ See the discourse entitled “*Zeh HaYom*” *Nitzavim* 5694 Ch. 2 (Sefer HaMaamarim, Kuntreisim Vol. 2, p. 319a).

¹⁸¹⁸ See Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah 2:4

his honorable holiness, my father-in-law the Rebbe, in his discourse,¹⁸¹⁹ in clarification and explanation of the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,¹⁸²⁰ “One moment of repentance and good deeds in this world is more precious than all the life of the coming world.” He explains that the term “moment-*Sha’ah*-שעה” also means “to turn towards-*She’eh*-שעה.” Therefore, “One moment-*Sha’ah achat*-שעה אחת” also means, “one turn-*Sha’ah Achat*-שעה אחת.” That is, the words, “One moment of (turning to *HaShem*-יהו"ה) with repentance and good deeds in this world,” mean that it is within the ability of every single Jew to awaken to *HaShem*-יהו"ה and turn from one extreme to the other extreme.

The same is true of the matter of repentance (*Teshuvah*) in the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that it is the matter of turning oneself from one state of being to another state of being entirely. In other words, he leaves the level of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way of reason and intellect, to instead serve Him in a way that transcends reason and intellect. It is through this kind of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that he comes to reach higher than the root of the creatures themselves.

It is in this regard that the verse states,¹⁸²¹ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה; *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” with a separation in the cantillation

¹⁸¹⁹ The discourse entitled “*Ani l’Dodi* – I am my Beloved’s” 5693 Ch. 3; Also see Kuntres Chai Elul of this year 5712, subsequently printed in Sefer HaMaamarim Kuntreisim Vol. 3, p. 104; 5693 p. 541 and on.

¹⁸²⁰ Mishnah Avot 4:17

¹⁸²¹ Exodus 34:6; Also see Torah Ohr Beshalach 61d and on, and elsewhere.

between them.¹⁸²² For, they correspond to two levels in the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה. That is, there is the regular Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה (the lower name *HaShem*-יהו"ה), and there is the Upper Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה. Through turning to *HaShem*-יהו"ה in repentance, one draws forth the Upper Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, which even transcends the revelation of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, at the giving of the Torah. For, when it states,¹⁸²³ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה descended upon Mount Sinai,” this refers to the regular, lower Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, which is drawn forth through serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, by studying His Torah, and corresponds to the covenant with Avraham.

In contrast, in regard the covenant with Moshe it states,¹⁸²⁴ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה passed before him and proclaimed: *HaShem*-יהו"ה; *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” which is the Upper Name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.¹⁸²⁵ It is about this Upper Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה that it states,¹⁸²⁶ “But with My Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, I did not make Myself known through them.” This Name is revealed specifically through serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a manner of turning to Him in repentance

¹⁸²² Zohar III 138a (Idra Rabba)

¹⁸²³ Exodus 19:20

¹⁸²⁴ Exodus 34:6

¹⁸²⁵ That is, the name *HaShem*-יהו"ה is written twice here. The first is the upper Name that transcends all worlds (as explained in Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, *The Gate of Intrinsic Being*), and the second is the lower name that is relates to the worlds.

¹⁸²⁶ Exodus 6:3

(*Teshuvah*),¹⁸²⁷ and it is regarding this that the covenant was formed with Moshe.

4.

However, we still must understand why forming a covenant (*Brit*) is specifically necessary? For, the matter of a covenant is that it transcends reason and intellect. This is as explained in Likkutei Torah,¹⁸²⁸ that it is analogous to two beloved friends who make an oath and form a covenant that their love for each other will never be severed. That is, even in a circumstance that reason and intellect would dictate that the love should be severed, or beyond this, that there should be the opposite of love between them, nevertheless, by force of the covenant their love endures always, in a way that transcends reason and intellect. This must be better understood. For, since the general refinement of the world was already accomplished through the flood and the giving of the Torah was already drawn forth, as well as the drawing forth of the thirteen attributes of mercy, why then, is a covenant that transcends reason necessary?

The explanation is that the creation of the worlds transcends reason and intellect. This is because, according to intellectual reasoning, there is no necessity for the existence of the world and it only exists because,¹⁸²⁹ “He desires (to do an

¹⁸²⁷ See Ohr HaTorah, Va’era p. 126; Also see Discourse 7 of this year 5712 entitled “*Vayedaber* – God spoke to Moshe.”

¹⁸²⁸ Likkutei Torah, Nitzvaim 44b

¹⁸²⁹ Michah 7:18; Likkutei Torah Nitzavim 47b; Shir HaShirim 11d and on.

altruistic act of) kindness,” as written,¹⁸³⁰ “For I said, the world will be built on kindness,” and His attribute of kindness is not out of nature or necessity, but only because He desires kindness, it therefore is necessary for there to specifically be the formation of a covenant. For, even after the refinement of the world through the flood, this still does not necessitate the continued existence of the worlds. In other words, if it was so, that the creation was according to intellectual necessity, then once the world was refined by the flood, it should have automatically continued to endure in its existence. However, since the existence of the worlds is brought about solely because “He desires (to do an altruistic act of) kindness,” and this desire for kindness occurred only once, then even after the world is refined, there still is no necessity whatsoever to sustain its existence. It therefore was necessary for a covenant to be formed with Noach, since it is specifically because of the covenant that the world came to be sustained in a manner of, “day and night, shall not cease.”

This is similarly understood regarding the service of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, by thanking Him with the recital of “*Modeh Ani*,” which is like the covenant of Noach. That is, in order for the thankfulness of “*Modeh Ani*,” (which is just a general thankfulness and precedes washing one’s hands and the morning blessings), to bring about that the “abundance of Your faithfulness,” will be drawn into the world, the thankfulness of the, “*Modeh Ani*,” recital is not sufficient on

¹⁸³⁰ Psalms 89:3

its own, but there must specifically be the forming a covenant (*Kritat Brit*).

This is similarly the case in the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, through prayer and the study of Torah. That is, in order for a bond and union to be affected between the Creator, blessed is He, and the created, there must specifically be the formation of a covenant (*Kritat Brit*). This is because the creatures can never attain this through their service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה alone. Therefore, in order to bring about that, "The Jewish people, the Torah and The Holy One, blessed is He, are all one," in the most literal sense, the formation of a covenant (*Kritat Brit*) was necessary.

The same matter applies to serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with repentance (*Teshuvah*). That is, although *Teshuvah* constitutes service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a manner that transcends reason and intellect, nevertheless, it is brought about through reason and intellect. This is because when a person contemplates with reason and intellect, through the reason and intellect itself, he comes to understand that service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, through reason and intellect, has its limitations. Therefore, he concludes intellectually that he must serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way that transcends reason and intellect.

Moreover, this manner of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way that transcends reason and intellect, is not truly limitless. That is, though it transcends reason and intellect, it nonetheless is still in the general category of

limitation. This is similar to what is explained elsewhere¹⁸³¹ regarding the words,¹⁸³² “And you shall love *HaShem*-יהו"ה... with all your might-*Bechol Me'odecha*-בְּכָל מְאֹדְךָ,” that the suffix “ך” of the word “*Me'odecha*-מְאֹדְךָ,” means “with all **your** might-*Me'od Shelcha*-מְאֹד שֶׁלְּךָ,” meaning, with what is an aspect of limitlessness for **you**. Thus, relative to someone who is higher than him, this still is considered to be an aspect of limitation. In other words, his leap (*Dilug*) to leave his previous state of being is according to his own intellect and reasoning. Thus, relative to someone of greater knowledge, who has greater understanding and who is wiser than him, this still a state of limitation.

We thus find that the contemplation that led to the inspiration, and even the inspiration itself, is limited. Moreover, it certainly is limited relative to *HaShem*-יהו"ה Above, blessed is He. Thus, when it comes to the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה itself, it is impossible that what is limitless for him should rouse and draw forth the limitlessness of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He. Rather, this drawing forth is solely because a covenant (*Kritat Brit*) was formed.

¹⁸³¹ See Torah Ohr, Mikeitz 39c and on; Sefer HaMitzvot of the Tzemach Tzeddek 160b.

¹⁸³² Deuteronomy 6:5

Now, all this applies all year-round. However, on Rosh HaShanah, all things return to their original state.¹⁸³³ Thus, Godly influence withdraws from the world to higher than the world of Emanation-*Atzilut* and even higher than the restraint of the *Tzimtzum*. It is about this that we recite,¹⁸³⁴ “You recall the act of creating the world and You consider the most primal forms.” That is, “the act of creating the world-*Ma’aseh Olam* מַעֲשֵׂה עוֹלָם” includes all the worlds, including the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*, and “the most primal forms-*Yetzarei Kedem* יְצוּרֵי קֶדֶם,” refers to the worlds that transcend the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*. That is, the withdrawal that occurs on Rosh HaShanah is not just from the particular desire (to create this world), but even from the general desire for all of creation.

Thus, even after the three aforementioned covenants, and the matters that each convey, were formed, the withdrawal of Rosh HaShanah is to such an extent, that even the matter of forming a covenant is withdrawn. It therefore is necessary to make a covenant (*Kritat Brit*) anew, this being the renewal of the covenant (*Kritat Brit*) on Rosh HaShanah.

This then is the meaning of,¹⁸³⁵ “On Rosh HaShanah recite before Me the verses of Kingship (*Malchiyot*),

¹⁸³³ See Pri Etz Chayim and Shaar HaKavanot, Shaar Rosh HaShanah; Siddur of the Arizal, Rosh HaShanah, and elsewhere.; Also see Likkutei Torah, Nitzavim 51b, and elsewhere.

¹⁸³⁴ In the liturgy of the *Zichronot* blessing in Musaf of Rosh HaShanah.

¹⁸³⁵ Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 16a; 34b

Remembrances (*Zichronot*), and *Shofarot*. Kingship, so that you crown Me as King over you; Remembrances, so that the remembrance of you should rise before Me for good; and with what? With the Shofar.” In other words, in reality, in and of itself, there is utterly no existence of a nation. However, since on Rosh HaShanah we must crown *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, as our King, and¹⁸³⁶ “there is no king without a nation,” through this, the nation automatically comes into being. Now, this crowning is done by the souls of the Jewish people. This is as our sages, of blessed memory, stated about the verse,¹⁸³⁷ “They resided there in the service of the king,” that,¹⁸³⁸ “By whom was He crowned? By the souls of the righteous-*Tzaddikim*,” and as stated,¹⁸³⁹ “Your nation are all righteous-*Tzaddikim*.” In other words, it is specifically the souls of the Jewish people who draw forth the aspect of *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Kingship, blessed is He, from the aspect of the decision of the desire to create (*Ratzon Muchlat*), to the desire for creation in general, to the particular desire (for a nation).¹⁸⁴⁰ Through this they actualize the matter of, “so that you be established today as a people unto Him and that He is a God unto you.”

Now, even after He already has a desire for Kingship, it still is necessary to rouse the remembrance before Him, blessed is He, which is the theme of the verses of

¹⁸³⁶ Rabbeinu Bachaye to Genesis 38:30, and the beginning of Parshat Balak; Tanya Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah Ch. 7; Likkutei Torah Nitzavim 44d, and elsewhere.

¹⁸³⁷ Chronicles I 4:23

¹⁸³⁸ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 8:7; Ruth Rabba 2:3

¹⁸³⁹ Isaiah 60:21; Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1

¹⁸⁴⁰ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5703 p. 6 and on.

remembrance (*Zichronot*). That is, remembrance (*Zicharon*) is necessary in relation to something so small and insignificant that it must be recalled and remembered. This is because the entire chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshehut*) is as nothing and takes up no space before Him, blessed is He. It therefore is necessary that we rouse His remembrance of it, for otherwise, it could possibly be concealed.

This is like how it is below. Although every Jew has an essential love for the Holy One, blessed is He, nevertheless, it is a concealed love (*Ahavah Mesuteret*). It therefore requires being revealed from a state of concealment to a state of revelation. The same is true Above, that the verses of remembrances (*Zichronot*) are necessary to draw forth revelation.

The teaching of the sages continues, “With what? With the Shofar.” For, all of the drawing forth of influence on Rosh HaShanah is by means of the Shofar. This is because the voice of the Shofar is a simple voice. That is, there is an inner voice which is audible and an inner voice which is not audible.¹⁸⁴¹ The voice of the Shofar is the inner voice which is not audible.¹⁸⁴² Moreover, the Shofar itself is the horn of an animal, indicating complete and utter sublimation and nullification of self to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in that he and an animal are literally equal, as stated,¹⁸⁴³ “You save both man and beast.” In other words, since on Rosh HaShanah all

¹⁸⁴¹ Zohar I 50b

¹⁸⁴² Likkutei Torah, Nitzavim 44b and on.

¹⁸⁴³ Psalms 36:7

things revert to their original state,¹⁸⁴⁴ therefore nothing at all exists (there is nothing at all). Thus, one is automatically in a state of complete and total nullification before *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, so much so, that he and an animal are literally equivalent to each other.

This utter nullification of self (*Bittul*) before *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, even transcends service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way repentance that transcends reason and intellect. For, service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with repentance that transcends reason and intellect, is that he feels the limitations of reason and intellect, and because of this, he comes to serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a manner that transcends reason and intellect. However, the nullification of self (*Bittul*) before *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the Shofar, is in a manner that he literally has nothing whatsoever. For, since all things revert to their original state, he is like a pauper who is completely impoverished and has nothing at all. Thus, it is nullification of self (*Bittul*) before *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, through the blowing of Shofar, which is the ultimate and complete nullification of self to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that an awakening Above and a drawing down of the matter of His Kingship is brought about.

¹⁸⁴⁴ See Pri Etz Chayim and Shaar HaKavanot, Shaar Rosh HaShanah; Siddur of the Arizal, Rosh HaShanah, and elsewhere.; Also see Likkutei Torah, Nitzavim 51b, and elsewhere.

This then, is the meaning of the verse,¹⁸⁴⁵ “You are standing this day, all of you, before *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God; your heads, your tribes, your elders, your officers – all the men of Israel. Your young children, your wives and your proselyte who is in your camp, from your wood-cutter to your water-drawer.” The word “**this** day-*Hayom*-היום” refers to Rosh HaShanah, the day when all things revert to their original state. It is on this day that, “You are standing this day, all of you, before *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God.” In this respect, those who are called, “your heads,” are equal to, “your wood-cutter to your water-drawer,” which refers to the *Netinim* (“the designated ones”)¹⁸⁴⁶ who were unfit to join the congregation of Israel.¹⁸⁴⁷

Thus, since all things revert to their original state, wherein everything is literally equal before *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, it is necessary to draw forth the aspect of His Kingship, which is accomplished through, “You are standing this day, all of you, before *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God,” equally.

The explanation is as follows: Just as the Jewish people are generally divided into ten categories, from “your heads,” to “your water-drawers,” so likewise the soul of every

¹⁸⁴⁵ Deuteronomy 29:9-10

¹⁸⁴⁶ See Rashi to Deuteronomy 29:10; Ezra 2, Nehemiah 11 – This refers to the Canaanites who attempted to deceive Moshe and convert, and the Gibeonites who attempted to deceive Joshua and convert, and who were made into the wood-cutters and water-drawers of the Jewish people. (For further elucidation, also see the citation to Rambam in the next note.)

¹⁸⁴⁷ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Isurei Bi'ah 12:22-23

Jew also has ten levels.¹⁸⁴⁸ Service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, requires that it be in a way of, "You are standing this day, all of you, before *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God." That is, "your heads" refers to the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, according to the dictates of reason and intellect, as well as the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה that transcends reason and intellect, since the skull (*Gulgolet*) is also part of the head. This service must literally be equal to service of the "wood-cutter" and the "water-drawer," referring to the simple service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in reciting the letters of the Torah.

It is for this reason that¹⁸⁴⁹ his honorable holiness, the Rebbe Rashab, emphasized the preciousness and importance of every moment of Rosh HaShanah, and the importance of filling our time on Rosh HaShanah by reciting the letters¹⁸⁵⁰ of Torah, the letters of prayer, and particularly the recitation of Psalms. Moreover, there also should be an element of this during the days of preparation leading up to Rosh HaShanah.

¹⁸⁴⁸ Likkutei Torah, beginning of Nitzavim.

¹⁸⁴⁹ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5688 p. 6; 5697 p. 310; Sefer HaSichot 5696 p. 144; Igrot Kodesh of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 4, p. 132 & p. 416; Also see the discourse entitled "*Atem Nitzavim*" 5712; Igrot Kodesh, Vol. 3, p. 468.

¹⁸⁵⁰ See the discourse entitled "*Atem Nitzavim*" 5711 translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe 5711, Discourse 16. That is, the 27-ז"ך letters of the *Aleph-Beit* themselves, are the containers through which the entirety of creation was brought forth into existence on all levels equally. As mentioned before, this superiority is hinted at in the highest level of Torah indicated by the verse, "And I was with Him as His nursing-*VaEheveh Etzlo Amon*-ואהי"ה אצלו אמן," wherein the word "*VaEheveh*-27-ואהי"ה-27" refers to the 27-ז"ך letters of the *Aleph-Beit*. (Also see *Ginat Egoz* of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem is One* Vol. 1, section entitled "The Name *Eheve*"-אהי"ה which is drawn from the reality of the name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה," and Volumes 2 & 3 at length. Also see Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah, Ch. 1, Ch. 5, and elsewhere. Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 43-44.)

Moreover, in order to affect in oneself that all matters of his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, be equal in Him (the aspect of "all of you"), one must contemplate that on Rosh HaShanah, he stands ("You are standing this day") before *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, meaning even higher than the Upper Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. (For, even regarding the Upper Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, it states, "*HaShem*-יהו"ה passed before him and proclaimed-*Vayikra*-ויקרא," wherein the word, "proclaimed-*Vayikra*-ויקרא," indicates a drawing down to below. However, on Rosh HaShanah, a Jew stands "before" the aspect of the Upper Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה) and in the presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, all are equal. This is as stated,¹⁸⁵¹ "You have made them all with wisdom-*Kulam b'Chochmah Asitah*-עשית בחכמה." That is, in the presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, the wisdom-*Chochmah*-חכמה of the Primordial Man-*Adam Kadmon* and a physical action-*Asiyah*-עשייה, are literally equal.¹⁸⁵² Thus, since before *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, they all are equal, one comes to the realization that he is utterly impoverished, like a pauper who has nothing at all.

This then, is the substance of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, on Rosh HaShanah. As we recite in the *Selichot* supplications, "We have not come before You with virtue nor with good deeds, but like the poor and needy... Charity and righteousness is Yours *HaShem*-יהו"ה, whereas shame is

¹⁸⁵¹ Psalms 104:24

¹⁸⁵² See Etz Chayim, Shaar 3 (Shaar Seder HaAtzilut) Ch 1; Sefer HaMaamarim 5678 p. 97, and elsewhere.

ours...”¹⁸⁵³ That is, because our approach is that “shame is ours,” we therefore can plead for the “Charity and righteousness (that is) is Yours, *HaShem*-יהו”ה.” All this is brought about through remembering that all things revert to their original state, and that he is like an utterly impoverished pauper. This does not require any contemplation (*Hitbonenut*) whatsoever, but solely by way of recollecting the truth. It is through remembering this reality that we affect the matter of the remembrances Above and draw down *HaShem*’s-יהו”ה Kingship below.

We thus arrive at, “You are standing.” That is, even though it is a time when the entire world is toppled,¹⁸⁵⁴ nevertheless, “You are standing.” On Rosh HaShanah the entire world is toppled, since all things revert to their original state. Nevertheless, “You are standing,” since the souls of the Jewish people are rooted in the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential Being of *HaShem*-יהו”ה Himself, blessed is He, they therefore stand confident in drawing down His Kingship.

These are the two aspects of Rosh HaShanah. That is, on the one hand we recite,¹⁸⁵⁵ “Today the world was born-*HaYom Harat Olam* היום הרת עולם,” wherein the word “*Harat*-הרת” is also a term of trembling (רתת), meaning, “Today the world trembles.”¹⁸⁵⁶ Nonetheless, the Jewish people conduct

¹⁸⁵³ Daniel 9:7 – The verse utilizes *HaShem*’s-יהו”ה title My Lord-*Adona*”י-אדוני, however, the Rebbe mentioned the intention which is the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic Being of *HaShem*-יהו”ה Himself, blessed is He.

¹⁸⁵⁴ Midrash Tanchuma to Deuteronomy 29:9

¹⁸⁵⁵ Liturgy of Rosh HaShanah prayers.

¹⁸⁵⁶ Sefer HaMaamarim 5702 p. 10 and elsewhere. – That is, the term “*Harat*-הרת” is of the same root as “trembling-*Retet*-רתת.”

themselves in such a way that they garb themselves in white... and eat, drink and rejoice, for they know with confidence that they will be judged meritoriously.¹⁸⁵⁷ In other words, “You are standing today,” and we must ensure that on the day of Rosh HaShanah we are “before *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” and “even the Satan is among them,”¹⁸⁵⁸ demanding his portion etc., and although “the decree is in favor of Israel,”¹⁸⁵⁹ for this very reason he comes to the Jewish people and demands the continuation of the verse, “a judgment day for the God of Yaakov,” and asks, “What will be with the Godliness of Yaakov?”¹⁸⁶⁰ Nonetheless, the Jewish people don white garments and rejoice. For, since they are rooted in the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential Being of *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, and through their service of Him they draw forth the aspect of His Kingship, they therefore are confident that they will be inscribed and sealed for good, with goodness that is apparent and openly revealed!

¹⁸⁵⁷ See Tur, Orach Chayim 581

¹⁸⁵⁸ Zohar II 32b

¹⁸⁵⁹ Psalms 81:5; Also see Sefer HaSichot 5703 p. 185

¹⁸⁶⁰ See Likkutei Torah, Drushim l'Rosh HaShanah 54d