

Discourse 3

“*VaYikach HaShem Elokim et HaAdam*
VaYanicheihu b’Gan Eden -
HaShem God, took the man and placed him in the
Garden of Eden”

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Bereishit,
Shabbat Mevarchim Marcheshvan, 5712
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The¹⁴² verse states,¹⁴³ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה God, took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden, to work it and to guard it.” We must understand the matters indicated by the words “to work it-*L’Avdah*-לעבדה” and “to guard it-*L’Shamrah*-לשמרה” in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*).

Now, we can say that the word “to work it-*L’Avdah*-לעבדה,” makes sense. For, although the Garden of Eden is the spiritual of the physical, nevertheless, it is necessary that there be drawings forth of additional illuminations of light into the Garden of Eden. Thus, we may understand that this is what is meant by the word “to work it-*L’Avdah*-לעבדה,” meaning that

¹⁴² In the notes of the Rebbe regarding this discourse, he refers to the discourse entitled “*V’Ruach Elokim Merachefer*” 5680 (printed in Sefer HaMaamarim 5680 p. 54 and on).

¹⁴³ Genesis 2:15

it refers to the drawing forth of additional illuminations of light in the Garden of Eden.

However, when it comes to the word, “to guard it-*L'Shamrah*-לשמרה,” guarding indicates that there is something that is damaging, something destructive, or something that is otherwise unfitting. Seemingly, this is not applicable in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*). For, the Garden of Eden is entirely good and utterly cannot bear the existence of evil.¹⁴⁴ It is for this reason that after the sin of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,¹⁴⁵ “Adam was judged to be punished by banishment.” This is because in the Garden of Eden, the existence of evil does not apply. This being the case, when Adam, the first man, was indeed present in the Garden of Eden, what necessity was there for this matter of guarding?

2.

This may be understood¹⁴⁶ through prefacing with a known matter, namely, that the entirety of the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshehut*) is divided into three matters:

¹⁴⁴ See Maamarei Admor HaEmtza'ee Vayikra Vol. 2, p. 703; Sefer HaMaamarim 5662 p. 299; Discourse entitled “*Tzav et Bnei Yisroel*” of Shabbat Parshat Pinchas 5711 (translated in The Teachings of the Rebbe, 5711).

¹⁴⁵ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 19:9; Petichta to Eicha Rabbati 4

¹⁴⁶ See the discourse entitled “*V'Ruach Elokim Merachefet*” 5680 (printed in Sefer HaMaamarim 5680 p. 54 and on); Maamarei Admor HaEmtza'ee Bereishit p. 56 and on; 5686 p. 66 and on; Discourse entitled “*Bereishit Bara*” 5713 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5713 p. 21 and on).

World-*Olam*, Year-*Shanah*, and Soul-*Nefesh*.¹⁴⁷ The totality of the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*) is founded upon these three matters. It is for this reason that these three matters are explained in Sefer Yetzirah,¹⁴⁸ since they are the foundation of the whole chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*).¹⁴⁹

A short explanation of them is as follows: World-*Olam*-עולם refers to the aspect of space (*Makom*-מקום), meaning six directions, which are the four horizontal directions east, west, south, north, and the two vertical directions up and down. Now, just as there are six physical directions of space, there likewise is an aspect of spiritual space that is connected to the physical. That is, since this is spirituality that is grasped within the physical, it refers to an aspect of spirituality that is physically graspable and comprehensible. It is thus understood that in this spiritual aspect, there likewise is a matter of six directions.

This may be better understood from the powers of the soul, since even as the soul is above, it possesses different powers, such as the power of sight, the power of hearing, the power of movement and mobility etc. For example, the power of sight of the soul, as it is above, is similar to what our sages,

¹⁴⁷ See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as HaShem Is One, Volume 2, Section entitled “The Three aspects of *Olam*-World, *Shanah*-Year, and *Nefesh*-Soul.”

¹⁴⁸ See Sefer Yetzirah Ch. 3; Also see at great length in Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as HaShem is One, Vol. 2.

¹⁴⁹ See Ohr HaTorah Yitro, p. 816; Sefer HaMaamarim 5628 p. 144, and elsewhere.

of blessed memory, stated,¹⁵⁰ “Even though he does not physically see, the upper aspect of his soul (*Mazal*) sees.” In contrast, as the soul descends below, its power of sight is restricted to only seeing physical things. The same applies to the power of hearing. That is, the spiritual power of hearing of the soul, as it is above, is that it hears the Supernal heralds (*Khruzim*).¹⁵¹ In contrast, as the soul descends below, the power of hearing is restricted to only hearing physical matters, and the physical power of hearing cannot hear the spiritual matters. Therefore, the aspect of the radiance of the soul that manifests within the body is inadequate to be able to hear the Supernal heralds (*Khruzim*), but rather, the essential self of the soul is necessary for that.¹⁵²

We thus find that as the soul descends below, its powers undergo change, in that they have a relation to physical matters. However, it is also understood from this, that the aspect of the spiritual that manifests within the physical also possesses the aspect of six directions.

Now, in truth, even the aspect of the spiritual that does not manifest within the physical, possesses the aspect of six directions. For example, this may be understood through the matter of intellect. For, although the intellect itself transcends the aspect of the six directions of space, since the primary light of the intellect is the intellectual point that does not possess spatial directionality, nevertheless, as the point is

¹⁵⁰ Talmud Bavli, Megilla 3a

¹⁵¹ See Likkutei Torah, Ha’azinu 71d and elsewhere.

¹⁵² See Likkutei Torah ibid.

drawn forth into comprehension, we see that it does possess directions. That is, the particular details of the comprehension are its directions, and there are six particular directions, which are the emotive leanings of the intellect, and the emotive attributes are six- $\aleph$ in number.¹⁵³

However, because the comprehension conceals the central point, great toil is necessary to bring out the essential point of the intellect (which is the point of illumination and the point of vitality) from the comprehension, as it comes forth in its length and width. This is because the comprehension conceals the central point. Thus, the six-directions of space are called by the name, “World-*Olam*-עולם,” which is of the same root as “concealment-*He’elem*-העלם,” indicating hiddenness. For, the six directions cover and conceal the essential point of vitality.

Now, the matter of Soul-*Nefesh* refers to the aspect of the central point of the light and vitality that transcends the particulars, and even transcends being a generalization (*Klall*) to particular details (*Pratim*). This is to say that although all the particulars are indeed drawn forth and come from the central point, nevertheless, the point is not an aspect of a generalization (*Klall*) to particulars (*Pratim*). For, the matter of a generalization (*Klall*) is that it is a generalization that consists of particulars (*Pratim*), wherein, “the generalization (*Klall*) contains only that which is specified in the particulars

¹⁵³ See at length in the Petach HaShaar – Opening Gateway to Imrei Binah of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gateway to Understanding.

(*Prat*).”¹⁵⁴ In other words, without the particular details, the generalization is entirely inapplicable, since the entire matter of the generalization is that it is a generalization of particulars, in which case “the generalization (*Klall*) contains only that which is specified in the particulars (*Prat*).” This is not the case with the central point of the light and vitality, which is something separate, in and of itself, and is not merely a general principal. Nevertheless, there is a drawing forth from the central point in an automatic manner, first in a manner of a generalization to particulars, and then subsequently, even the particulars are drawn forth. However, it itself is something unto itself, and it is only that, from it, there is a drawing forth of the aspect of the general vitality, and the particular vitality, and the particular powers of the soul.

Now, since the aspect of Soul-*Nefesh* transcends the matter of particulars, nor is it even the aspect of a general principal in relation to them, and on the other hand, the aspect of World-*Olam* is the matter of concealment and hiddenness, to the point that there can come to be an aspect of six directions, this being the case, how is it possible for there to be any bond between the aspects of Soul-*Nefesh* and World-*Olam*? In other words, how is it possible for there to be a bond between the soul and the body?

The explanation of the matter is that this bond between them, is in a manner of “running” (*Ratzo*) and “returning” (*Shov*). In other words, when the soul manifests within the body, it immediately comes to be in a state of “running”

¹⁵⁴ Talmud Bavli, Bekhorot 6a

(*Ratzo*), desiring to withdraw from the body. However, due to the fact that it senses that the Supernal will of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is that it indeed should be in the body, it thus comes to be in a state of "returning" (*Shov*).

We thus find that the bond between the soul and the body is not something constant or intrinsic, but that it is in a way of "running" (*Ratzo*) and "returning" (*Shov*), withdrawal (*Histalkut*) and spreading forth (*Hitpashtut*). This then, is the matter of Year-*Shanah*, which refers to the matter of the divisions of time.

Now, this matter, that the bond between the soul and the body must specifically be in a way of "running" (*Ratzo*) and "returning" (*Shov*), is not just due to the bond between the soul and the body, but it is also due to the light and vitality of the soul itself. To further explain, the vitality of the soul that enlivens the body, is in such a way, that the body itself becomes a living thing. In other words, it is not in a way that the body remains as something that is dead that the life of the soul resides in (and enlivens from outside of it), but rather, the body itself becomes a living thing. It is understood, however, that this vitality is not essential or intrinsic to the body. For, it is not possible for that which is essential and intrinsic to be in this state of manifestation, to the point that they are literally unified, so that the body itself is alive. Rather, it is only an illumination and glimmer of vitality that is drawn to it from its source. It is thus necessary to state that it is in a state of separation and distance from its source. For, if there was a revelation of the essential source itself, it would not be

possible for there to be this union of soul and body, as stated above. Rather, it is due to the fact that it is separate from its source that it is able to become unified with the body.

On the other hand, it is also necessary to state that it is in a state of adhesion (*Dveikut*) to its source. For, if this was not so, then there would be no aspect of vitality whatsoever. (That is, the power of the soul to enliven a body, so that the body itself comes to be alive, is due to the fact that the soul itself is essentially alive. Thus, it is due to the fact that it is alive that it enlivens, causing even the body to live. It is thus understood that the vitality that spreads forth to enliven the body must be in a manner that it has an adhesion (*Dveikut*) to the essential life of the soul. For, the life of the body, which is enlivened in an inner manner, is only by virtue of the power of the essential life of the soul.) Nevertheless, its adhesion is not truly an aspect of total adhesion (*Dveikut*), but rather, is in a way of constant renewal (*Hitchadshut*), which is the aspect of “running” (*Ratzo*) and “returning” (*Shov*).

3.

Now, these three levels of World-*Olam*, Year-*Shanah*, and Soul-*Nefesh*, also exist in man’s service of his Maker, blessed is He, the ultimate purpose of which is to come to love *HaShem*-יהו"ה and to fear Him, blessed is He. The explanation of this, is that when a person contemplates matters that bring

him to love *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He,¹⁵⁵ in a way that is appropriate to the strengths and capacities of his soul, he will come to sense and feel that Godliness is something that is very good for him. This is as stated,¹⁵⁶ "Closeness to God is good for me." He will thus be roused with love towards Godliness. However, it is said that this aspect of love is something that is motivated by the self-interests of the one who loves. For, his love is due to the fact that this is something that is good for **him**, as indicated by the words, "good for **me**," in the above verse. This being the case, this love is an existence of sensory love, and thus relates to the aspect of *World-Olam*.

However, there is a higher level of love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה that is loftier than this type of love, up to the highest level of love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. That is, his love for Godliness is not because of his sense that, "closeness to God is good for me," but rather, he is essentially drawn toward Godliness. In other words, his love is not in a manner that he knows the details of that which he loves, due to which he loves, but rather, he is essentially drawn toward that which he loves to such an extent that not only does he not have a sense of his own existence (as is the case with the love reflected in the verse, "nearness to God is good for me," wherein he senses his own existence, and it is due to his self-love that he loves), but beyond this, that he does not even sense or feel the love.

¹⁵⁵ Rambam Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 2:2

¹⁵⁶ Psalms 73:28

In other words, he does not sense and is not even aware of the fact that he loves.¹⁵⁷

This is similar to what we find with Rabbi Yochanan ben Zachai who said,¹⁵⁸ “I do not know on which path they are leading me.” At first glance, this is not understood, since Rabbi Yochanan ben Zachai spent his entire life involved in the study of Torah¹⁵⁹ with love and fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. How then could he have stated, “I do not know on which path they are leading me”? The explanation, however, is that Rabbi Yochanan ben Zachai was in a state of complete nullification of his sense of existence (*Bittul B'Metziyut*), that is, not only did he not have a sense of self, like the aforementioned love of “closeness to God is good for me,” but moreover, he did not even have a sense of the fact that he loves *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. For, since he was in such a state of complete nullification of his sense of self and existence (*Bittul B'Metziyut*), he did not even know whether he loves or not. This type of love, is the love from the aspect of the Soul-*Nefesh*.

Now, in order for the love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה that is of the aspect of complete nullification of sense of existence (*Bittul B'Metziyut*) to come forth into revelation as tangibly felt love, this is caused through the medium of the aspect of an arousal that takes place in the intellect. For, the motion of the intellect is a motion that is settled and tranquil, and therefore,

¹⁵⁷ Also see Ohr HaTorah VeEtchanan p. 330; Sefer HaMaamarim 5627 p. 98.

¹⁵⁸ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 28b; Also see Likkutei Torah Masei 90b

¹⁵⁹ Talmud Bavli, Sukkah 28a

an emotional arousal that takes place in the intellect is already something that relates to the emotions themselves. Nevertheless, in the arousal that takes place in the intellect, one feels and senses the essential goodness of the thing itself, rather than the sense that it is good *for him*. Thus, the intellect is the intermediary that draws forth the love that is of the aspect of complete nullification of sense of existence (*Bittul B'Metziyut*) to come forth into revelation as tangibly felt love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. This then, is the aspect of Year-*Shanah* in the love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, which is the intermediary that draws forth the aspect of Soul-*Nefesh* (that is, the love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה that is of the aspect of complete nullification of sense of existence) into the aspect of World-*Olam* (that is, the aspect of tangibly felt love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה).

4.

Now, the difference between these two aspects of love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה as they are in man's service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, is as follows: The love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that is in a way of nullification of sense of self (*Bittul B'Metziyut*) will never branch out or give rise to the existence of evil. In contrast, the tangibly felt love, in which there is an aspect of the sense that, "there is one who loves,"¹⁶⁰ since there is an aspect of a tangibly felt sense of self (*Yeshut*), it is possible

¹⁶⁰ See Torah Ohr 114d; Biurei HaZohar Admor HaEmtza'ee 81a-b and elsewhere.

that in the abundant chaining down of levels, this can give rise and branch out into the existence of actual evil.

For example, this is similar to what we find with the hosts of heaven. That is, on the one hand it states that,¹⁶¹ “The hosts of the heavens bow to You,” meaning that they are sublimated to Godliness, for which reason they are in their state of constant revolution from east to west, which is the matter of their prostration toward “the Divine Presence, which is in the west.”¹⁶² Nevertheless, there are people who err and prostrate themselves to the sun.¹⁶³ Now, at first glance, this is an extremely wondrous matter. For, if it is the case that the celestial beings are sublimated to Godliness, how is it possible for any matter of idolatry to arise from them?

However, the explanation of the matter¹⁶⁴ is that their sublimation is due to their comprehension and grasp. This is as stated by the Rambam,¹⁶⁵ that “all the stars and celestial spheres (*Galgali*) possess a soul, knowledge, and intellect. They are alive and stand in recognition of the One who spoke and brought the world into being,” and they are sublimated to Godliness due to their grasp and comprehension. Thus, since their sublimation is due to their grasp and comprehension, and due to the fact that comprehension is grasped in a tangible manner (*Yesh*), therefore, even though they are sublimated, they nevertheless retain a small measure of sense of self

¹⁶¹ Nehemia 9:6

¹⁶² Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 25a

¹⁶³ See Rambam Hilchot Avoda Zara 1:5 and on

¹⁶⁴ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5798 p. 32 and on.

¹⁶⁵ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah, 3:9; Rashi and Tosefot to Talmud Bavli, Chullin 40a

(*Yeshut*) at the very least. Therefore, because they still possess a small measure of sense of self (*Yeshut*), even though they are sublimated to Godliness, nevertheless, this can chain down through many levels until it is possible for it to give rise to a matter of actual idolatry. In other words, not only is it possible for this to chain down to the extent that they hide and conceal the Godliness, but beyond that, it even gives rise to a matter that stands in opposition to Godliness. All this is due to the minor amount of sense of self (*Yeshut*) that they possess.

The same is true of the tangibly felt love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. That is, since it is in a state of tangibly felt sense of self (*Yesh*), meaning that "there is one who loves," it is possible that this can chain down through many levels to the point that it can give rise to the existence of actual evil.

This is analogous to a servant who stands sublimated and subjugated to the king. If he is truly in a state of complete sublimation to the king, then he will utterly be incapable of tolerating it, if others give him honor in the presence of the king. If, however, he is in a state of sense of self (*Yeshut*), in even a minor way, then even though he is sublimated to the king and does everything that the king commands him to do, he will nevertheless be capable of tolerating being honored by others in the presence of the king. We thus find that it is the servant's lack of total and complete sublimation, that is itself the cause that others can honor him in the presence of the king.

The same is true of the love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that is in a state of sense of self (*Yeshut*). That is, it is possible for this to branch out and give rise to the existence of actual evil. It is only when the love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is in a way of absolute nullification of one's sense of self and separate existence (*Bittul B'Metziyut*), that there can be no branching out to give existence to evil whatsoever.

5.

It is with the above in mind that we can now understand the verse that states,¹⁶⁶ "*HaShem*-יהו"ה God, took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden, to work it and to guard it." That is, although the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) is the spiritual aspect of the four physical foundations, there must nevertheless be these aspects of, "to work it-*L'Avdah*-לעבדה" and "to guard it-*L'Shamrah*-לשמרה," even in the Garden of Eden.

The word "to work it-*L'Avdah*-לעבדה" refers to the service of drawing forth additional illuminations of the light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, into the Garden of Eden. For, the ultimate intention in creation is that *HaShem*,¹⁶⁷ "desired a dwelling place for Himself, blessed is He, in the lower worlds." The word "for Himself" means for His Essential Self, specifically. Thus, the matter of, "to work it-*L'Avdah*-

¹⁶⁶ Genesis 2:15

¹⁶⁷ Midrash Tanchuma Bechukotai 3; Naso 16; Bereishit Rabba 3; Bamidbar Rabba 13:6; Tanya Ch. 36 and elsewhere.

לעבדה,” refers to the service of drawing forth additional illuminations of the light of יהו"ה-*HaShem*, blessed is He, in the Garden of Eden, to the point that the,¹⁶⁸ “essential root of the Indwelling Presence of יהו"ה-*HaShem*, is in the lower worlds,” and not just lesser revelations (*Giluyim*).

Similarly, it is necessary for there to be the aspect of “to guard it-*L'Shamrah*” לשמרה. For, it is quite possible that even in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) there can be a love of יהו"ה-*HaShem*, blessed is He, that is not in a manner of complete nullification of sense of self, but rather, a love that is tangibly felt with a sense of self, that “there is one who loves.” Thus, since it is possible that from the aspect of the love of יהו"ה-*HaShem* that is tangibly felt with a sense of self, there can be a chaining down, to the point that it can give rise to the possibility of the existence of actual evil, it is thus necessary for there to be a matter of guarding against possible damage and destruction etc., so that there should not come to be any existence of evil whatsoever from this. This is accomplished through the love of יהו"ה-*HaShem*, blessed is He, in a manner of complete nullification of one's sense of self and separate existence (*Bittul B'Metziyut*), from which the existence of evil cannot arise.

Now, these matters of “to work it-*L'Avdah*” לעבדה and “to guard it-*L'Shamrah*” לשמרה, apply not only in the Garden of Eden, but even after Adam, the first man, was judged to be

¹⁶⁸ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 19:7; Also see *Hemshech “Bati Legani”* 5710 (p. 111 and on), and “*Bati Legani*” 5711 translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe 5711.

banished, and even during the time of exile, when “because of our sins we have been exiled from our land,”¹⁶⁹ in banishment after banishment. Here too, there must be the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way of “to work it-*L'Avdah*-לעבדה” and “to guard it-*L'Shamrah*-לשמרה.” The service of “to work it-*L'Avdah*-לעבדה,” refers to the drawing forth of additional illuminations of light in “the Torah is light.”¹⁷⁰ This is accomplished through the fulfillment of the Torah and the commandments-*mitzvot* of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, which draw forth the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic Essential Being of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, through which a “dwelling place” is made for (the essential root of the Indwelling Presence) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the lower worlds.

However, in order for the dwelling to be fitting for Him to dwell in, the dwelling must be a clean dwelling.¹⁷¹ It thus is necessary for there to also be the matter of guarding, so that there should be no branching out of this, to give any existence to evil whatsoever. This requires that there be the aspect of sublimation and subjugation (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, for then there can be no branching out to give rise to any existence of evil whatsoever. This then, is the service of, “to guard it-*L'Shamrah*-לשמרה.”

Moreover, we may state that, quite to the contrary, the primary aspect of the service of “to work it-*L'Avdah*-לעבדה,”

¹⁶⁹ Holiday *Musaf* liturgy

¹⁷⁰ Proverbs 6:23

¹⁷¹ See Likkutei Torah, Balak 70c and elsewhere.

refers to the service of refinement (*Avodat HaBirurim*), which specifically takes place during the time of exile. This is similar to Adam, the first man, whose primary service of refinement (*Avodat HaBirurim*) took place after he was judged to be banished from the Garden of Eden, and not while he was still in the Garden of Eden.¹⁷² For, although in the Garden of Eden there was a matter of refinement (*Birurim*), this took place in an automatic way, similar to the refinements (*Birurim*) that took place in the times of King Solomon, which were in a manner of tranquility.¹⁷³ Thus, the primary matter of refinement (*Birurim*) was specifically outside the Garden of Eden. The same applies now, that the primary refinement (*Birurim*) is specifically during the time of exile, and it is specifically through this that we draw forth the essential root of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, into the lower worlds. This matter will come to be revealed in the coming future, when the essential root of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, will be openly revealed in the lower worlds.

¹⁷² See Sefer HaMaamarim 5670 p. 215 and on; Discourse entitled “*Tzav et Bnei Yisroel*” of Shabbat Parshat Pinchas 5711 (translated in The Teachings of the Rebbe, 5711).

¹⁷³ See Torah Ohr, Bereishit 6a; Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar 4a; This will be further explained in the discourses entitled “*Padah b'Shalom* - He redeemed my soul in peace” (Discourse 5), and “*VaYeishev Yaakov* – Yaakov settled” (Discourse 6), of this year 5712.

Through all the above, we may understand the meaning of the verse,¹⁷⁴ “The spirit of God hovered upon the surface of the waters,” to which there are two explanations.¹⁷⁵ The first explanation is that the word, “hovered-*Merachefet* מרחפת,” shares the same letters as, “the 288 that died-*RaPa”ch Meit* מפ”ח מ”ת.”¹⁷⁶ This refers to the two-hundred and eighty-eight sparks of holiness that are called, “dead-*Meit* מ”ת,” since,¹⁷⁷ “one who falls from his level is called dead.” The second explanation is that, “the spirit of God-*Ru’ach Elohi* מ”מ” refers to the spirit of Moshiach.¹⁷⁸

The connection between these two explanations is that it is through our work of refinement (*Avodat HaBirurim*) which refines the two-hundred and eighty-eight (*RaPa”Ch* מפ”ח) sparks (the first explanation), that there will be a revelation of the spirit of Moshiach (the second explanation), may this occur speedily in our days!

¹⁷⁴ Genesis 1:2

¹⁷⁵ See the discourse entitled “*V’Ruach Elokim Merachefet*” 5680.

¹⁷⁶ Shaar HaPesukim of the Arizal to Genesis 1:2; Etz Chaim Shaar 18 (Shaar RaPa”Ch Nitzotzin) Ch. 1; Likkutei Torah Matot 82d.

¹⁷⁷ Zohar III 135b; Etz Chaim Shaar 9 (Shaar Shvirat HaKeilim) Ch. 2; Likkutei Torah, Chukat 56d and on.

¹⁷⁸ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 2:4, 8:1; Baal HaTurim to Genesis 1:2