

Discourse 22

*“Re’eih Anochi Notein Lifneichem Hayom Brachah
uKlalla -
See, I present before you today a blessing and a
curse”*

Delivered on the Shabbat Parshat Re’eih,
Shabbat Mevarchim Elul, 5713
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verses states,¹⁶⁴⁰ “See, I present before you today a blessing and a curse. The blessing: that you listen to the commandments of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, your God, that I command you today. And the curse: If you do not listen to the commandments of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, your God and you stray from the path that I command you today, to follow gods of others, that you did not know. It shall be that when *HaShem*-יהו"ה, your God, brings you to the Land you are coming to possess, then you shall give the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Eival.” Now, we must understand why the verse states, “I present before you **today** a blessing and curse,” because the blessing and curse that are referred to here, were only given later on Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival, (as Rashi states) which are situated in the west, across

¹⁶⁴⁰ Deuteronomy 11:26-29

the Jordan River (as specified in the verses that follow).¹⁶⁴¹ This being so, why then does the verse state, “I present before you today,” while Moshe was on the eastern side of the Jordan River? Moreover, blessings and curses are not something that is transmitted from one person to another, so we cannot say that Moshe needed to give them now (“today”) so that they could be transmitted later at Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival.

Additionally, we must understand the continuation of the verse, in which after stating, “That you listen to the commandments of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, your God,” the verse then continues and specifies the commandments-*mitzvot* stating, “that I command you **today**.” However, the Jewish people already heard and received many commandments. Why then must the Torah point out and specify “the commandments-*mitzvot*” and then continue, “that I command you today”?

That is, we must understand why the verse specifies, “today.” For, Moshe said this in the fortieth year, after the children of Israel had already heard the Ten Commandments directly from the mouth of the Almighty, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, and after having received all the commandments-*mitzvot* through Moshe during the course of forty years. Why then does it specify, “today-*Hayom*-היום”?

In addition, we must understand¹⁶⁴² why the verse states, “The blessing: **that**-*Asher*-אשר you listen.” That is, the simple meaning of the words, is that the blessing is on

¹⁶⁴¹ Deuteronomy 11:29

¹⁶⁴² See Ohr HaTorah, Re'eh p. 668 (citing ShaLa”H 374b); Discourse entitled “*Re'eh Anochi*” 5627, 5633, 5678, 5679 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5629, p. 394; 5633 Vol. 2, p. 441 and on; 5678 p. 396; 5679 p. 609).

condition that you listen and obey,” (as Rashi states). This being so, the verse should have said, “The blessing: *if-Eem-אם* you listen,” just as it states in the continuation of the verse, “And the curse: *if-Eem-אם* you do not listen.” Why then does it state “that-*Asher-אשר* you listen” about the blessing?

Now, we cannot say that the reason it states “that-*Asher-אשר* you listen,” and not the conditional, “*if-Eem-אם* you listen,” is because it is clear that, ultimately, the Jewish people will listen to all the commandments. We cannot say this because we find other verses that indeed use the conditional word, “*if-Eem-אם*,” such as the verse,¹⁶⁴³ “*If-Eem-אם* you will follow My decrees and observe My commandments,” and similarly,¹⁶⁴⁴ “Today, *if-Eem-אם* you will listen to His voice.” In other words, though it is clear that they “will follow My decrees and observe My commandments,” because ultimately,¹⁶⁴⁵ “no one will remain banished from Him,” nevertheless, since the words “you will follow My decrees and observe My commandments” are the condition upon which the matter depends, the verse there therefore states, “*If-Eem-אם* you will follow My decrees,” with the conditional word, “*If-Eem-אם*.”

The same should therefore apply to the verse under discussion here. That is, even though it is certain that ultimately, they “will listen to the commandments-*mitzvot* of *HaShem-יהוה*,” nevertheless, since this is conditional, the

¹⁶⁴³ Leviticus 26:3

¹⁶⁴⁴ Psalms 95:7

¹⁶⁴⁵ Samuel II 14:14

“blessing” in the verse should have said, “If-*Eem*-אם you listen.” Why then does it say, “that-*Asher*-אשר you listen”?

2.

Now, to understand this, we must begin by explaining the difference between a blessing (*Brachah*-ברכה) and a prayer (*Tefillah*-תפלה), on the one hand, and the difference between a blessing (*Brachah*-ברכה) and an acknowledgement (*Hoda'ah*-הודאה), on the other hand.¹⁶⁴⁶

To explain, the purpose of prayer (*Tefillah*-תפלה) is to affect the drawing forth of a completely new will from *HaShem*-הו"ה, blessed is He, as we recite, “May it be Your will etc.” In other words, the purpose of prayer is to draw forth of a new will from *HaShem*-הו"ה, even if there is no root for its existence. In contrast, the word blessing (*Brachah*-ברכה) is of the same root as, “one who draws down-*Hamavreech*-המבריך,”¹⁶⁴⁷ indicating the drawing down of something from one place to another. That is, it is the drawing down of something from its root source, to draw it out from concealment to revelation. The matter of acknowledgement (*Hoda'ah*-הודאה), on the other hand, applies even if something is not revealed at all. For example, we observe this in the matter of acknowledgement (*Hoda'ah*-הודאה) below in man, in that even though he may not grasp a certain matter,

¹⁶⁴⁶ See the discourse entitled “*Re'eh Anochi*” 5627 & 5678 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5627 p. 394 and on; 5678 p. 399 and on); Sefer HaMaamarim 5677 p. 172 and on; Likkutei Torah Re'eh 19a.

¹⁶⁴⁷ Mishnah Kilayim 7:1

nevertheless, since he recognizes the greatness of the one who said it, he is forced to acknowledge it (*Modeh*-מודה). The same applies to the spiritual matter of acknowledgement (*Hoda'ah*-הודאה), when the matter is not drawn into revelation, but remains as it is in its source. This is different than the matter of a blessing (*Brachah*-ברכה), which draws it from concealment in its root source into revelation.

Now, just as in all of the creation and chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), there are matters that are within the chaining down (*Hishtalshelut*) and matters that transcend the chaining down (*Hishtalshelut*), so likewise, this is so in man, who is called, “a small world” or microcosm.¹⁶⁴⁸ Therefore man also possesses these two matters.

To further explain, it states in Midrash¹⁶⁴⁹ and Zohar,¹⁶⁵⁰ that when the Holy One, blessed is He, created the world, all the letters by which He created the world, came before Him. When the letter *Aleph*-א came before Him, the Holy One, blessed is He, did not wish to create the world with it, because the word “curse-*Arur*-ארור” begins with the letter *Aleph*-א. He therefore created the world with the letter *Beit*-ב (and thus, the first word of Torah is, “In the beginning-*Bereishit*-בראשית”), since the word “bless-*Baruch*-ברוך” begins with the letter *Beit*-ב. He appeased the letter *Aleph*-א by beginning the Ten Commandments at the giving of the Torah

¹⁶⁴⁸ Midrash Tanchuma, Pekudei 3; Avot d'Rabbi Nathan, Ch. 31.

¹⁶⁴⁹ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 1:10

¹⁶⁵⁰ Zohar I 205b

with the letter *Aleph*-א, in the verse,¹⁶⁵¹ “I am-*Anochi*-אנכי-*HaShem*-יהו"ה, your God.”

The question about this teaching is well known.¹⁶⁵² Namely, if it was not possible to create the world with the letter *Aleph*-א, since the word “curse-*Arur*-ארור” begins with the letter *Aleph*-א, then how was it possible for the Torah to be given beginning with the letter *Aleph*-א?

The explanation is that the letter *Aleph*-אֵל shares the same letters as “wondrous-*Pele*-אֵל.”¹⁶⁵³ Similarly, our sages, of blessed memory, stated, that the letter *Aleph*-אֵל hints at *HaShem*-יהו"ה, the Master of the World-*Alupho Shel Olam*-אלופו של עולם. That is, the letter *Aleph*-א indicates the matter of the transcendent and encompassing lights (*Makifim*) that transcend the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*). Thus, since the transcendent, encompassing lights (*Makifim*) are completely beyond taking vessels (*Keilim*) into consideration and from their vantage point it is irrelevant whether the vessel is fitting and pure, or not, therefore, so that the external forces should not derive sustenance, the worlds could not be brought into existence with the letter *Aleph*-א. For, as known, it is possible for the external forces to derive sustenance from the aspect of the transcendent encompassing lights (*Makifim*). This accords

¹⁶⁵¹ Exodus 20:2

¹⁶⁵² See Ohr HaTorah, Emor p. 857 and on; Re'eh p. 641 and on, 674 and on; and see the end of the discourse entitled “*Re'eh Anochi*” 5626 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5626 p. 214); Likkutei Torah Re'eh 19b, and elsewhere.

¹⁶⁵³ See Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 70 (135a)

with the explanation¹⁶⁵⁴ of the verse,¹⁶⁵⁵ “The spider seizes [its prey] with its handiwork, though it dwells in the king’s palace.” Moreover, this was so in actuality, in that the first twenty-six generations of mankind were unworthy and thus were sustained solely by the kindness of the Holy One, blessed is He,¹⁶⁵⁶ “to make known how merciful and patient He is.”¹⁶⁵⁷

This also is similar to the verse that comes after the sin of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in which it states,¹⁶⁵⁸ “Lest he put forth his hand and also take of the tree of Life, and eat and live forever.” This is to say that from the perspective of this aspect, it is possible to, “live forever,” in a way that even the evil within him is sustained eternally.¹⁶⁵⁹

Because of this, it was not possible for the worlds to be brought into existence from the encompassing lights (*Makifim*) that transcend the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), which is the matter of the letter *Aleph-א*.¹⁶⁶⁰ Rather, the world was specifically brought into existence with the letter *Beit-ב*, which indicates the inner lights (*Pnimiym*) within the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*).

¹⁶⁵⁴ See the prior discourse of this year 5713 entitled “*Al Kein* – Therefore, they called these days Purim,” Discourse 12 (Ch. 7).

¹⁶⁵⁵ Proverbs 30:28

¹⁶⁵⁶ Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 118a – “The twenty-six generations that the Holy One, blessed is He, created in His world, and to whom He did not give the Torah, were sustained by His kindness.”; Also see Torah Ohr Beshalach 61a and on; Kuntres U’Maayon, Discourse 8 and on.

¹⁶⁵⁷ Mishnah Avot 5:2; See Torah Ohr and Kuntres U’Maayon ibid.

¹⁶⁵⁸ Genesis 3:22

¹⁶⁵⁹ See Torah Ohr, Bereishit 5d

¹⁶⁶⁰ The form of the letter *Aleph-א* is a *Yod-י*-10 above, a *Yod-י*-10 below, and a *Vav-ו*-6 in the middle, the total of which is י"ו-26 which is equal to the Name *HaShem-יהוה*, blessed is He, about which it states (Pirke d’Rabbi Eliezer, Ch. 3), “Before the creation of the world there was Him and His Name alone.”

Nevertheless, *HaShem* 's-יהו"ה ultimate intention is that even the light that transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), should be drawn into the worlds. This is the matter of the giving of the Torah, at which point this intent was fulfilled. This is why the giving of the Torah specifically begins with the letter *Aleph*-א, which is the aspect of the transcendent, encompassing lights (*Makifim*). However, the drawing forth at the giving of the Torah, occurred in such a way that the external forces could not possibly derive any vitality.

This is because any derivation of vitality by the external forces, is just from the external aspect of the transcendent light (*Chitzoniyut HaMakif*). However, it is impossible for them to derive vitality from the inner aspect of the transcendent light (*Pnimityut HaMakif*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. This is because the inner aspect of the transcend light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה is the matter of His inner intent and pleasure, to which the external forces are entirely unrelated. Rather, their entire existence and vitality is drawn to them solely,¹⁶⁶¹ “like a person who throws something over his shoulder to his enemy.” This being so, in general, *HaShem*-יהו"ה has no Supernal pleasure in them, and more particularly, they certainly are unrelated to the **inner** aspect of His Supernal pleasure. Rather, their entire existence is solely brought about from the aspect of the desire (*Ratzon*) that is external to the pleasure (*Ta'anug*).

¹⁶⁶¹ See Tanya Ch. 22 (27b); Kuntres U'Maayon, Maamar 2, Ch. 2 and on; Maamar 7 and on.

Thus, since the giving of the Torah was *HaShem's*-יהו"ה inner intention, it therefore could begin with the letter *Aleph*-א, which is the transcendent and encompassing aspect (*Makif*), in a way that the external forces cannot derive any vitality from it. For, although the verse states in regard to the transcendent encompassing light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He,¹⁶⁶² “darkness and light are the same,” and similarly,¹⁶⁶³ “Was not Esav the brother of Yaakov?” Nevertheless, as the verse continues, “But I loved Yaakov,” specifically, due to the inner aspect of the transcendent, encompassing light (*Makif*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.¹⁶⁶⁴

This then, was the novelty introduced at the giving of the Torah, which is the matter of the fulfillment and completion of *HaShem's*-יהו"ה Supernal intent, in that,¹⁶⁶⁵ “the Holy One, blessed is He, desired a dwelling place for Himself in the lower worlds.” Just as the matter of a dwelling place of a human being here below, is that his essential self dwells in the dwelling,¹⁶⁶⁶ so likewise, regarding *HaShem's*-יהו"ה Supernal intent, in that “the Holy One, blessed is He, desired a dwelling place for Himself in the lower worlds,” His intention is that there also should be a drawing forth of the light and

¹⁶⁶² Psalms 139:12

¹⁶⁶³ Malachi 1:2

¹⁶⁶⁴ See *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 3, p. 1,415; Also see the prior discourse of this year 5713 entitled “*Al Kein* – Therefore, they called these days Purim,” Discourse 12 (Ch. 7).

¹⁶⁶⁵ Midrash Tanchuma Bechukotai 3; Naso 16; Bereishit Rabba 3; Bamidbar Rabba 13:6; Tanya Ch. 36 and elsewhere.

¹⁶⁶⁶ See Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5565 Vol. 1 p. 489 (and with the glosses in Ohr HaTorah, Shir HaShirim Vol. 2, p. 679 and on); Ohr HaTorah Balak, p. 997; Sefer HaMaamarim 5635 Vol. 2, p. 353; *Hemshech* 5666 p. 3, and elsewhere.

illumination that transcends all worlds, in a manner of being drawn to the worlds internally, specifically in fitting vessels. This matter was specifically introduced upon the giving of the Torah.

Now, just as upon the giving of the Torah, a novelty was introduced to the worlds, in that even the light that transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*) was drawn to them, so likewise, at the giving of the Torah, a novelty was also introduced in the souls of the Jewish people, namely, that the aspect of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, which transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*) was drawn forth. This is explained in Likkutei Torah of the Alter Rebbe and in the copious teachings of our Rebbes and leaders who succeeded him.¹⁶⁶⁷ That is, they explained that the verse,¹⁶⁶⁸ “See, I (*Anochi*-אנכי) present before you today,” refers to the matter of accepting the utterance of the Ten Commandments,¹⁶⁶⁹ “I am-*Anochi*-אנכי *HaShem*-יהו"ה, your God.” Moreover, they explained this to mean that the aspect of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה should illuminate and be revealed in an inner way, in the inner aspect (*Pnimityut*) of the soul. That is, this is the meaning of the words, “See, I (*Anochi*-אנכי) present before you-*Lifneichem*-לפניכם,” meaning, “in your inner aspect (*Pnimityut*-פנימיות).” In other words, at the giving of the Torah, there was a drawing

¹⁶⁶⁷ See Likkutei Torah, Re’eh 18a; Ohr HaTorah Re’eh p. 635; Discourse entitled “*Re’eh Anochi*” 5626, 5633, 5679, 5682 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5626 p. 207; 5633 Vol. 2, p. 443; 5679 p. 610 and on; 5682 p. 397).

¹⁶⁶⁸ Deuteronomy 11:26-27

¹⁶⁶⁹ Exodus 20:2

forth of the aspect of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the inner aspect (*Pnimityut*) of each and every Jew. This is as stated,¹⁶⁷⁰ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה spoke with you face to face-*b'Panim* - פנים בפנים.” Now, since “the speech (*Dibur*) of the Holy One, blessed is He, is like an action (*Ma'aseh*),”¹⁶⁷¹ therefore, through the speech of *HaShem*-יהו"ה to the Jewish people in a manner of “face to face-*b'Panim* בפנים בפנים,” there was a drawing forth from the innermost aspect of *HaShem*-יהו"ה Above, into the innermost aspect of the Jewish people. This refers to the drawing forth of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה (that is, the light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that transcends the chaining down of the worlds) into the soul of each and every Jew.

3.

We therefore must explain the matter of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה within the soul of every Jew.¹⁶⁷² To explain, just as the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה Above, has five levels – these being the four letters of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, including the upper thorn of the letter *Yod*-י – so also, the soul of every Jew

¹⁶⁷⁰ Deuteronomy 5:4

¹⁶⁷¹ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 44:22; Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 119b; Also see Ecclesiastes 8:4

¹⁶⁷² See Likkutei Torah, Re'eh 18a; Ohr HaTorah Re'eh p. 635; Discourse entitled “*Re'eh Anochi*” 5626, 5633, 5679, 5682 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5626 p. 207; 5633 Vol. 2, p. 443; 5679 p. 610 and on; 5682 p. 397). Also see the discourse entitled “*Ki Karov Eilecha*” 5681 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5681 p. 330 and on; 5711 p. 326 and on); Also see the discourse of Elul 2 of this year 5713, Ch. 4 (Torat Menachem, Vol. 9 p. 151), where it states that a portion of this discourse is founded upon the aforementioned discourse entitled “*Ki Karov Eilecha*.”

has these five aspects. This is as stated,¹⁶⁷³ “My God, the soul that You placed within me, she is pure (*Tehorah Hee*-טהורה היא). You created her (*Barata*-בראת), You formed her (*Yatzarta*-יצרת) and You blew her (*Nafachtah*-נפחתה) into me.” That is, although we only see four levels here, corresponding to the four letters of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, nonetheless, the aspect of “she is pure (*Tehorah Hee*-טהורה היא),” which corresponds to the letter *Yod*-י, also includes the aspect that corresponds to the upper thorn of the *Yod*-י.

This is similar to what it states in Midrash,¹⁶⁷⁴ “The soul is called by five names: *Nefesh*, *Ru'ach*, *Neshamah*, *Chayah* and *Yechidah*,” whereas the Zohar¹⁶⁷⁵ includes them all within four levels, “*Nefesh*, *Ru'ach*, *Neshamah*, and the *Neshamah* of the *Neshamah*.” In other words, the *Chayah* and *Yechidah* aspects of the soul are included as one, in the aspect called “the *Neshamah* of the *Neshamah*.” In the same manner, the inner strength (*Eitan*-איתן) of the soul, which is the matter of the upper thorn of the letter *Yod*-י, is included in the aspect indicated by the words “she is pure (*Tehorah Hee*-טהורה היא).”

Now, although the aspect of the upper thorn of the letter *Yod*-י is of the encompassing and transcendent lights (*Makifim*) of the soul, nevertheless, it also illuminates in an inner manner (*b'Pnimiyut*). For, just as Above, there is an illumination from crown-*Keter* within wisdom-*Chochmah* –

¹⁶⁷³ Liturgy of “*Eloh"ai Neshamah*” in the morning blessings.

¹⁶⁷⁴ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 14:9; Dvarim Rabba 2:37, and elsewhere (and some prints) it is in a different order. Nevertheless, the order (as it is above, *Nefesh*, *Ru'ach*, *Neshamah*, *Chayah* and *Yechidah*) is the order in Etz Chayim ibid., and elsewhere.

¹⁶⁷⁵ Zohar I 79b

which is the matter of the letter *Beit* ב - the first letter of the word “blessing-*Brachah* ברכה,”¹⁶⁷⁶ in fulfillment of the verse,¹⁶⁷⁷ “Blessed-*Baruch* ברוך is *HaShem* יהוה, the God of Israel, from the world to the world,” meaning, that He is drawn forth (*Baruch*) from the concealed world (*Alma d’Itkasia*) to the revealed world (*Alma d’Itgaliya*) – so likewise, this is so of the soul as well, that the aspect of the upper thorn of the letter *Yod* י also illuminates inwardly, in an inner manner (*b’Pnimityut*).

This is similar to what is known about the matter of the Supernal heavenly proclamations (*Khruzim*),¹⁶⁷⁸ that although only the essential self of the soul hears the Supernal Proclamations, nevertheless, this also effects the inner ray of the soul as it is in the body, the result of which is that it brings us to have thoughts of repentance.¹⁶⁷⁹ This is because the aspect of the upper thorn of the letter *Yod* י even illuminates internally (*b’Pnimityut*). This aspect is called, “mighty-*Eitan* איתן,” as known from the teaching of the Alter Rebbe¹⁶⁸⁰ on the verse,¹⁶⁸¹ “A *maskil* of Eitan the Ezrahite.”¹⁶⁸² The Alter

¹⁶⁷⁶ See Ohr HaTorah, Emor p. 857 and on; Re’eh p. 641 and on, 674 and on; and see the end of the discourse entitled “*Re’eh Anochi*” 5626 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5626 p. 214); Likkutei Torah Re’eh 19b, and elsewhere.

¹⁶⁷⁷ Psalms 106:48; Chronicles I 16:36; Likkutei Torah Re’eh 19b *ibid*.

¹⁶⁷⁸ See Likkutei Torah, Teitzei 36d; HaAzinu 71d; Shir HaShirim 16d; Maamarei Admor HaEmtza’ee Vayikra Vol. 1, p. 9, and elsewhere.

¹⁶⁷⁹ Mishnah Avot 6:2; Zohar II 5a;

¹⁶⁸⁰ See Kuntres Limud HaChassidus p. 5 and on (also printed in Igrot Kodesh of the Rebbe RaYaTz, Vol. 3, p. 335), and the notes of the Rebbe there; Also see the letter of 10 Elul of this year 5713 (Igrot Kodesh Vol. 21, p. 225 and on).

¹⁶⁸¹ Psalms 89:1

Rebbe explains that the name, “Mighty-*Eitan*-אֵיתָן,” refers to the essential self of the soul, which adheres to the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential Self of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, since it is a “part of God from on high.”¹⁶⁸³ This aspect is the strength of the soul that comes into revelation through the power of self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*).

To further explain, the word “*Eitan*-אֵיתָן” is a term that means antiquity-*Yoshen*-יֹשֶׁן.¹⁶⁸⁴ This is as stated,¹⁶⁸⁵ “In the month of the Eitanim-אֵיתָנִים,” which Targum translates as, “In the month of the ancient ones-*Atikaya*-עֲתִיקָיָא.”¹⁶⁸⁶ Now, antiquity refers to something that is not novel in its existence, and thus refers to *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Name of *A"V*-ע"ב-72,¹⁶⁸⁷

¹⁶⁸² Also see Chronicles I 2:6. The Talmud (Bava Batra 14b-15a) identifies this person as a reference to our forefather Avraham, (See Rashi to Psalms 89:1), although the inner depth of this verse will soon be explained.

¹⁶⁸³ Job 31:2; Tanya Ch. 2

¹⁶⁸⁴ Talmud Bavli, Sotah 46b

¹⁶⁸⁵ Kings I 8:2

¹⁶⁸⁶ See Rashi and Targum Yonatan to Kings I 8:2

¹⁶⁸⁷ This is a reference to the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, spelled out with the letter *Yod*-י, as follows: יי"ד היי וי"ו היי and has the numerical value of *A"V*-ע"ב-72. This Name of *A"V*-ע"ב-72 is rooted in the higher Name of *A"V*-ע"ב-72. For, as stated in Pirke d’Rabbi Eliezer Ch. 3, “Before the creation of the worlds there was Him and His Name alone.” This is a reference to the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential Name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, that is preexistent just as He is preexistent. The Essential Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה bears the following names that arise from it, יי"ה יי"ה which altogether have a numerical value of *A"V*-ע"ב-72, corresponding to the four levels that precede the restraint of the *Tzimtzum* (*Yachid*-יהי"ה, *Echad*-יהי"ה, *Kadmon*-יהי"ה, and the point of the *Yod*-י which accompanies them all). For the full explanation of this, see Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1 (The Gate of Intrinsic Being), and Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, Ch. 10-11, and the citations in the next note.

which is not novel in its existence.¹⁶⁸⁸ That is, the Name of *Ma''H-ה"מ-45* is novel,¹⁶⁸⁹ and is therefore called “the new name of *Ma''H-ה"מ-45*,” (*Shem Ma''H HaChadash*).¹⁶⁹⁰ Likewise, the Name of *Sa''G-ג"ס-63* is also novel,¹⁶⁹¹ for as known, the shattering (*Shevirah*) [of the vessels of *Tohu*] took place in the Name of *Sa''G-ג"ס-63*.¹⁶⁹² Thus, since the construction of the world of Chaos-*Tohu* was for it to be demolished and the world of Chaos-*Tohu* was demolished for the construction of the world of Rectification-*Tikkun*, (which is the matter of “constructing for the purpose of demolishing and demolishing for the purpose of building”),¹⁶⁹³ and the world of Rectification-*Tikkun* is itself novel, we must therefore state that the Name of *Sa''G-ג"ס-63* is novel in its existence.

However, the Name of *A''V-ב"ו-72* is not novel in its existence and transcends both the world of Chaos-*Tohu* and the world of Rectification-*Tikkun*. Now, as known, the Name

¹⁶⁸⁸ See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of Intrinsic Being (*Shaar HaHavayah*); Discourse entitled “*Shiviti*” of Shabbat Parshat Naso 9 Sivan, 5720; Also see *Shnei Luchot HaBrit* 5a; *Ohr HaTorah Yitro* p. 836-839; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5656 p. 381 and on; *Hemshech* 5666 p. 431; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5677 p. 72 and on; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5696 p. 73 and on, and elsewhere.

¹⁶⁸⁹ The Name of *Ma''H-ה"מ-45* is the Name *HaShem-יהו"ה*, blessed is He, spelled out with the letter *Aleph-א*, as follows: יו"ד ה"א וא"ו ה"א.

¹⁶⁹⁰ See *Etz Chayim*, Shaar 10 (*Shaar HaTikkun*) Ch. 2 and elsewhere.

¹⁶⁹¹ The Name of *Sa''G-ג"ס-63* is the Name *HaShem-יהו"ה*, blessed is He, spelled out with *Yod's-י* and an *Aleph-א* in the *Vav-ו*, as follows: יו"ד ה"י וא"ו ה"י.

¹⁶⁹² See *Etz Chayim*, Shaar 8 (*Shaar Drushei Nekudot*), Ch. 1.

¹⁶⁹³ See *Talmud Bavli*, Shabbat 31b and elsewhere. This is considered one of the thirty-nine forms of labor prohibited on the Shabbat. In other words, this matter indicates and relates to the actions of *HaShem-יהו"ה*, blessed is He, in creating the world, rather than to His Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential Being, as He is alone.

of *A"V*-ע"ב-72 is in wisdom-*Chochmah*,¹⁶⁹⁴ meaning, the inner aspect of wisdom-*Chochmah*, as it states,¹⁶⁹⁵ "The inner aspect of the Father-*Abba* (*Chochmah*-Wisdom) is the inner aspect of the Ancient One-*Atik*." The word, "Ancient-*Atik*-עתיק," is a term of antiquity, and thus refers to a drawing forth from the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential Being of *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He.

This then, is the meaning of, "My God, the soul that You placed within me, she is pure (*Tehorah Hee*-טהורה היא)." That is, this refers to the root source of the soul as she is in the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*, and the world of Emanation-*Atzilut* itself is an emanation and illumination of the light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, which is not in a state of novel existence, but is solely the aspect of the revelation of that which is concealed. This also explains the use of the term "*Maskil*-משכיל" in the aforementioned verse,¹⁶⁹⁶ "A *Maskil*-משכיל of Eitan the Ezrahite." That is, the term "*Maskil*-משכיל" refers to the source of intellect,¹⁶⁹⁷ which is the source that brings forth and reveals the intellect. The verse may thus be read, "A *Maskil*-משכיל of Eitan-איתן," meaning that the essential aspect indicated by *Eitan*-איתן,

¹⁶⁹⁴ See Etz Chayim, Shaar 5 (Shaar TaNT"A) Ch. 1, and the commentaries there.

¹⁶⁹⁵ Pri Etz Chayim, Shaar HaKriyat Shma, Ch. 15 and Ramaz there; Likkutei Torah Nitzavim 49d and elsewhere.

¹⁶⁹⁶ Psalms 89:1

¹⁶⁹⁷ That is, the term "*Maskil*-משכיל" is of the root "intellect-*Sechel*-שכל" but with the prefix *Mem*-מ is an active term, and thus refers to the power to conceptualize of the One who thinks the intellect. (Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, Ch. 1-3, 13, 24-25, and Likkutei Biurim of Rabbi Hillel Paritcher there.)

possesses the power of the root of the intellect-*Maskil*-משכיל, and it is through this power and root source of the intellect-*Koach HaMaskil*-כח המשכיל, that there is the aspect of “Ezrahite-*HaEzrachee*”-האזרחי.” That is, the term “*Ezrachite*”-אזרחי is of the root “luminous-*Zore’ach*”-זורח,” referring to the illumination of all the other powers and abilities of the soul.

4.

Now, the explanation of the matter is that the aspect of the might-*Eitan*-איתן of the soul illuminates and shines in all four letters of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה of the soul.¹⁶⁹⁸ That is, the letter *Yod*-י is the aspect of wisdom-*Chochmah*, since wisdom-*Chochmah* is the aspect of a point, due to the nullification and sublimation (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה that is brought about through the revelation of light and illumination in wisdom-*Chochmah*. However, wisdom-*Chochmah* alone is insufficient and there must also be the aspect of understanding-*Binah*. This refers to the understanding and comprehension of Godliness, as it states,¹⁶⁹⁹ “You shall know this day and set it upon your heart that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, He is The God-*Elohim*”-אלהי"ם – in heaven above and on the earth below – there is nothing else.” It similarly states,¹⁷⁰⁰ “Know the God of your father (through which you then will be able to) “serve Him with a whole heart.” The matter of grasp and

¹⁶⁹⁸ See the discourse entitled “*Re’eh Anochi*” 5679 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5679 p. 611 and on).

¹⁶⁹⁹ Deuteronomy 4:39

¹⁷⁰⁰ Chronicles I 28:9

comprehension, which is the aspect of understanding-*Binah*, does not automatically come from wisdom-*Chochmah*. Rather, toil through specific contemplations (*Hitbonenut*) is necessary.¹⁷⁰¹

To further explain,¹⁷⁰² wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah* do not operate in a way of cause and effect, in which the cause necessitates the effect. For example, when it comes to the relationship between the intellect (*Sechel*) and the emotions (*Midot*), they indeed are in a way of cause and effect. Thus, when the cause, which is the intellect (*Sechel*), is present, there is an automatic arousal of the emotions (*Midot*).¹⁷⁰³ In contrast, since wisdom-*Chochmah* does not necessitate understanding-*Binah*, understanding-*Binah* does not arise from wisdom-*Chochmah* in a way of cause and effect. For example, it is observable that a person can have many ideas and insights without comprehension and understanding. That is, he has it within himself to come up with novel ideas and insights, but does not understand or comprehend the insights that he himself draws out from his intellect. This being so, wisdom-*Chochmah* does not necessitate understanding-*Binah* in the same way that intellect (*Sechel*) necessitates emotions (*Midot*). This is because the emotions (*Midot*) arise from the intellect (*Sechel*) in a way of

¹⁷⁰¹ See Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 1 and on.

¹⁷⁰² See Imrei Binah, Shaar HaKriyat Shma Ch. 59; Sefer HaMaamarim 5654 p. 287 and on; 5659 p. 74 and on, and elsewhere.

¹⁷⁰³ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 2:2

cause and effect, whereas understanding-*Binah* comes from the soul itself, rather than wisdom-*Chochmah*.

Now, although we do find that there is a matter of inclusion of understanding-*Binah* within wisdom-*Chochmah*, as in the teaching,¹⁷⁰⁴ “Be understanding in wisdom,” nonetheless, in truth, this is not an inclusion of understanding-*Binah* in wisdom-*Chochmah* in a manner that we would say that understanding-*Binah* arises from wisdom-*Chochmah*. Rather, what is meant is that wisdom-*Chochmah* is a complete stature (*Partzuf*) and therefore also possesses the *Sefirah* of understanding-*Binah* in it. In other words, the understanding-*Binah* referred to in this teaching, is part and parcel of the complete stature of wisdom-*Chochmah* itself.

To clarify, in regard to intellect (*Sechel*) and emotions (*Midot*), which indeed are in a manner of cause and effect, the fact that the emotions (*Midot*) are included in the intellect (*Sechel*) is not just that they complete the stature (*Partzuf*) of the intellect (*Sechel*). Rather, included in the intellect itself are the emotions that subsequently arise from the intellect. In other words, there are two matters in the relationship between the emotions (*Midot*) and the intellect (*Sechel*). There are the leanings of the intellect and the arousal of the intellect. The leanings of the intellect are indeed part of the whole stature (*Partzuf*) of the intellect. That is, though the intellect, as it is unto itself, transcends emotions (*Midot*), Nonetheless, part of the whole stature (*Partzuf*) of intellect (*Sechel*), is the power to lean to a particular emotional attribute. This refers to intellect

¹⁷⁰⁴ Sefer Yetzirah 1:4

that leans toward kindness (*Chessed*) and intellect that leans toward judgment (*Gevurah*). In other words, the essential intellect itself can lean toward either emotion.

However, the **arousal** of the intellect is not part and parcel of the stature (*Partzuf*) of intellect (*Sechel*). This is because, by definition, intellect (*Sechel*) is cool and settled, whereas arousal is the very opposite. Thus, since arousal is its opposite, it therefore is not there to complete the stature (*Partzuf*) of the intellect, but rather, that included in the intellect (*Sechel*) are the emotions (*Midot*) that are born of it. For, since the relationship between the intellect (*Sechel*) and the emotions (*Midot*) is indeed a matter of cause and effect, therefore, when there is intellect (*Sechel*), which is the cause, the effect, which is the emotions (*Midot*), is automatically brought about.

However, this is not the case in the relationship between wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah*. The understanding-*Binah* within wisdom-*Chochmah* is just part and parcel of the whole stature of wisdom-*Chochmah*. That is, it is there so that wisdom-*Chochmah* can be drawn forth to descend, since in and of itself, wisdom-*Chochmah*, is the aspect of a point, in which being drawn forth to descend below is not applicable. Thus, the aspect of understanding-*Binah* within wisdom-*Chochmah*, (“be understanding in wisdom”) is part of the whole stature (*Partzuf*) of wisdom-*Chochmah*, so that it can come to be drawn forth and descend. However, the power of understanding-*Binah* itself, (that is, as its own stature (*Partzuf*), in and of itself, separate from the stature

(*Partzuf*) of wisdom-*Chochmah*) - which is the matter of the breadth and spreading forth of the idea - is not included in wisdom-*Chochmah*. This is because the power of understanding-*Binah* comes from the soul, rather than from wisdom-*Chochmah*.

This is also why there is a difference to the novelty we see in understanding-*Binah*, over and above wisdom-*Chochmah*. That is, with understanding, the intellect expands to a far greater degree than how it was in the point of wisdom-*Chochmah*. In contrast, the emotions (*Midot*) which are born of the intellect (*Sechel*), never develop and grow bigger than the intellect from which they were born. The reason is because the emotions (*Midot*) are the effects of the intellect and their entire existence depends on the intellect (*Sechel*). Therefore, they cannot develop and become greater than the intellect from which they were born. However, this is not so of understanding-*Binah*, which has its own unique root in the soul and is not rooted in wisdom-*Chochmah*. Because of this it can have an aspect of novelty that even wisdom-*Chochmah* does not have.

Now, elsewhere it is explained¹⁷⁰⁵ that even the emotions (*Midot*) can have an aspect of growth and development greater than the intellect that birthed them. This is like the teaching,¹⁷⁰⁶ “The power of the son is greater than the power of the father.” This is because, in actuality, the root

¹⁷⁰⁵ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5655 p. 182 and on.

¹⁷⁰⁶ Talmud Bavli, Shevuot 48a; Chullin 49b, 63a; Sefer HaMaamarim 5657 p. 269.

of the emotions (*Midot*) is not from the intellect (*Sechel*), but from the soul itself. This accords with the teaching,¹⁷⁰⁷ “*Zeir Anpin* is bound to and one with the Ancient One-*Atika*.” However, this does not contradict what we are explaining here. For, the emotions (*Midot*) that develop and grow beyond the intellect (*Sechel*), does not refer to the emotions that are born of intellect, but rather, to the emotions that come from the essence of the soul. The emotions that are born of the intellect, on the other hand, will never grow beyond the intellect that birthed them. Nevertheless, they are vessels (*Keilim*) through which it is possible that, with the passage of time, there also can come about a revelation of the emotions (*Midot*) due to the soul itself.

This is not the case, however, with wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah*. That is, when the faculty of understanding-*Binah* receives from wisdom-*Chochmah*, it immediately has a novel aspect to it, relative to wisdom-*Chochmah*. This is the matter of broadening that occurs in understanding-*Binah*, which the point of wisdom-*Chochmah* does not have. This is because understanding-*Binah* does not come from wisdom-*Chochmah* in a manner of cause and effect. It rather has its own unique root in the soul from which the power to broaden and develop the intellect comes to understanding-*Binah*, which wisdom-*Chochmah* does not have.

Now, just as there is a superiority and advantage to understanding-*Binah*, over and above wisdom-*Chochmah*,

¹⁷⁰⁷ Zohar III 292a; Torah Ohr Yitro 72c and elsewhere.

which is the matter of broadening the intellect, so likewise, wisdom-*Chochmah* has a superiority and advantage over and above understanding-*Binah*. This is the matter of the sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) that wisdom-*Chochmah* has, and understanding-*Binah* does not.

There therefore must be a bonding between the two levels of wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah*. This is called the union (*Yichud*) of wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah*, which is the union of the letters *Ya”H-ה”ה* of the Name *HaShem-יהוה*. This is because the comprehension of understanding-*Binah* is in a way of tangible existence, and it therefore is necessary for the sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) of wisdom-*Chochmah* to be within it. This is called,¹⁷⁰⁸ “the point within the chamber (*Nekudah b’Heichalah*).” This is similar to what is observable in intellectual comprehension. That is, in regard to comprehension itself, it is possible to stray from the straight path and go in a crooked manner, so that one’s comprehension is not according to the truth. It is specifically through the point of wisdom-*Chochmah* that the comprehension of understanding-*Binah* will go according to truth, since the insight of wisdom-*Chochmah* is what protects and guards the comprehension.

The same is true when it comes to serving *HaShem-יהוה*, blessed is He. That is, comprehension (*Hasagah*) alone is not enough. Rather, the sublimation and nullification

¹⁷⁰⁸ Zohar I 6a; Zohar II 180a; Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 5 (19a), Tikkun 28 (72b).

(*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, brought about through wisdom-*Chochmah* is also necessary.

However, for there to be a union (*Yichud*) of wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah*, though in and of themselves, they are two distinct and unrelated powers (since they do not arise from each other in a way of cause and effect), this is brought about specifically through an illumination of the aspect of the might-*Eitan*-איתן of the soul. This is because,¹⁷⁰⁹ “The inner aspect of the Father-*Abba* (wisdom-*Chochmah*) is the inner aspect of the Ancient One-*Atik*,” and likewise, the expanse of understanding-*Binah* is rooted in the expanse of the pleasure (*Taanug*). That is, pleasure (*Taanug*) is in a state of expansiveness and thus affects expansiveness in all things, as it states,¹⁷¹⁰ “Good tidings make the bone (*Etzem*-עצם) fat,” indicating that it even causes expansion in the bone or essence-*Etzem*-עצם. Thus, it is from the expanse of the pleasure (*Taanug*) that the expanse of understanding-*Binah* is brought about. Now, since

¹⁷⁰⁹ Pri Etz Chayim, Shaar HaKriyat Shma, Ch. 15 and Ramaz there; Likkutei Torah Nitzavim 49d and elsewhere.

¹⁷¹⁰ Proverbs 15:30; Also see Talmud Bavli, Gittin 56b – When Rabbi Yochanan met with the general Vespasian, he addressed him as king. Vespasian advised him that he was thus punishable by the death. While they were talking, a messenger arrived from Rome and said to him: Rise, for the emperor died, and the noblemen of Rome intend to appoint you as the new emperor. At the time, Vespasian was wearing only one boot, and when he tried to put the other one on, it would not go on. When he tried to remove the boot he was wearing, it would not come off. He asked Rabbi Yochanan what the reason for this was, to which Rabbi Yochanan responded: Do not be distressed, for good tidings have reached you, as it is written, “Good tidings make the bone fat.” Vaspasian asked, “What is the remedy?” Rabbi Yochanan responded, “Have someone with whom you are displeased be brought before you, as it states (Proverbs 17:22), ‘A broken spirit dries the bones.’” He did this, and he was able to don his boots.

wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah* are rooted in the pleasure (*Taanug*), therefore, when their source radiates and illuminates within them – meaning, the aspect of the essential might-*Eitan*-אֵיתָן of the soul – through this, the union (*Yichud*) of wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah* becomes possible. This is the matter of the union (*Yichud*) of the *Yod*-י and the *Hey*-ה, which is the union of *Ya"=H*-י"ה in the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה of the soul.

Now, there likewise is an illumination of the essential aspect of the might-*Eitan*-אֵיתָן of the soul in the letters *Vav*-ו and *Hey*-ה of the soul. This refers the six emotions of love and fear etc., (which are the *Vav*-ו-6) and thought (*Machshavah*), speech (*Dibur*) and action (*Ma'aseh*) (which correspond to the three lines that form the letter *Hey*-ה).

The explanation is as follows: The emotions that are born of the intellect are brought forth in a manner of cause and effect. Thus, since they exist separate from the mind and intellect, in that the mind and intellect is settled and calm, whereas the emotions have the opposite motion (as explained above), therefore, the revelation of the emotions (*Midot*) occurs specifically after the concealment of the intellect. For, as known, as long as the intellect is in a state of revelation, it is impossible for the emotions (*Midot*) to be revealed. Only once the intellect is concealed are the emotions born.

However, in this matter, there is a difference between the externality of the heart (*Chitzoniyut HaLev*) and the innerness of the heart (*Pnimiyyut HaLev*). In the externality of the heart (*Chitzoniyut HaLev*) the emotions are felt and only

come from the conclusion (*b'Chein*) of the intellect. Even when they do come from the intellect itself, it is only from the externality of the intellect (*Chitzoniyut HaSechel*) as it relates to emotions. Moreover, since the emotions are tangibly felt when aroused, they only become revealed upon the withdrawal and concealment of the intellect (*Sechel*).

However, this is not the case with the innerness of the heart (*Pnimiyyut HaLev*). In this case, the entire light and illumination in the mind is also drawn into the heart, and the emotions are aroused, but in a manner that they are not tangibly felt. Even higher is when there is a revelation and illumination of the essential aspect of the might-*Eitan*-אֵיתָן of the soul itself within the emotions (*Midot*). This is much loftier than the aspect of the arousal of the emotions in a manner that is not tangibly felt, that is of the innerness of the heart (*Pnimiyyut HaLev*). This then, is the matter of the illumination of the essential might-*Eitan*-אֵיתָן of the soul within the letter *Vav*-ו of the soul, which affects the emotions (*Midot*) to be in a state of sublimation and utter nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

The same is likewise true of the illumination of the essential might-*Eitan*-אֵיתָן of the soul within the aspect of the final *Hey*-ה of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, which is the aspect of kingship-*Malchut*. For, as it states,¹⁷¹¹ “kingship-*Malchut* is the mouth-*Peh*-פה and is called the Oral Torah (*Torah SheBa'al Peh*-תורה שבעל פה).” That is, because of the manifestation of Torah in physical matters, such as, “one who

¹⁷¹¹ Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 17a

exchanges a cow with a donkey etc.,” it is possible for a person to study Torah and entirely forget about the Giver of the Torah, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. Therefore, it is necessary for there be a drawing forth of the essential might-*Eitan*-איתן of the soul, so that one's study of Torah study will be in a manner of sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

This then, is the general novelty that was introduced to the souls of the children of Israel upon the giving of the Torah. For, at that time, the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה was drawn forth and revealed to them, including the four letters of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, as well as the essential aspect of the might-*Eitan*-איתן of the soul, which is the upper thorn of the letter *Yod*-י.

5.

Now, we still must understand why this matter was newly introduced specifically upon the giving of the Torah. For at first glance, even before the giving of the Torah, there was the aspect of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה of the soul. For, as stated,¹⁷¹² “They resided there in the service of The King,” and our sages, of blessed memory stated,¹⁷¹³ “The Holy One, blessed is He, consulted with the souls of the righteous to create the world.” In other words, this was so (not only before the giving of the Torah, but even) before the creation of the

¹⁷¹² Chronicles I 4:23

¹⁷¹³ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 8:7; Ruth Rabba 2:3

worlds. It similarly states,¹⁷¹⁴ “Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.” That is, man below possesses the form and likeness of the Supernal man. It is for this reason that man’s body was made in such a manner that it has the form of the four letters of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה. That is, his head is in the form of the letter *Yod*-י, his body is in the form of the letter *Vav*-ו, and the five fingers and toes of the hands and feet correspond to the two letters *Hey*-ה-5.¹⁷¹⁵ In other words, the body of man was made in this form so that it could receive the form of the soul, which has the four letters of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה. This being so, even before the Torah was given, the Name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה was present in the souls of the Jewish people, including the aspect of the essential might-*Eitan*-איתן of the soul. This is as stated,¹⁷¹⁶ “In the month of the Eitanim-איתנים,” about which our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹⁷¹⁷ “The month in which the mighty ones (*Eitanim*-איתנים) of the world were born,” referring to our forefathers. This is the matter of the revelation of the aspect of the essential might-*Eitan*-איתן of the soul. This being the case, what exactly was newly introduced upon the giving of the Torah, that it was specifically then that the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה was given to the souls of the Jewish people?

¹⁷¹⁴ Genesis 1:26

¹⁷¹⁵ See at length in Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 2, *The Letters of Creation*.

¹⁷¹⁶ Kings I 8:2

¹⁷¹⁷ Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 11a

This may be understood based on the explanation¹⁷¹⁸ of the verse,¹⁷¹⁹ “He gives wisdom to the wise,” meaning, that whoever has wisdom, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, gives him wisdom. However, at first glance, this verse is not understood, since, the very fact that he is wise in the first place, comes from the Holy One, blessed is He. This being so, what is newly introduced by the fact that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, gives him wisdom?

The explanation of the matter, however, is that the wisdom-*Chochmah* he previously had, was the wisdom-*Chochmah* he attained through his own toil and effort in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way of ascent (from below to Above), which is the matter of the ascent of the feminine waters (*Ha'ala'at Mayim Nukvin*). Then, after he has reached the height of the level of wisdom-*Chochmah* to the maximum extent that he is capable of through his own toil and effort, he is given wisdom-*Chochmah* from above, in a way of receiving a gift that he otherwise is incapable of achieving on his own.

The same is true of the novelty introduced with the giving of the Torah, in relation to what preceded it. That is, before the Torah was given, there was the ascent and arousal of the feminine waters (*Ha'ala'at Mayim Nukvin*) as the result of the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the creatures to the maximum extent that they could attain through their own strengths and capabilities. In other words, this only is the

¹⁷¹⁸ See Maamarei Admor HaZaken, Ketuvim Vol. 2, p. 196 and on.

¹⁷¹⁹ Daniel 2:21

illumination and revelation of a level of light (*Ohr*) that relates to the creatures. This is because the existence of the worlds is brought about through the medium of the vessels. That is, the thirty vessels of the world of Emanation-*Atzilut* descended to creation, and became the aspect of the lights and soul of the worlds of Creation-*Briyah*, Formation-*Yetzirah*, and Action-*Asiyah*.¹⁷²⁰ Now, although it states about the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*, “He and His life force and organs are one,” nevertheless, the vessels (*Keilim*) are in a state of limitation. The same is true of the manner in which existence is brought forth from the lights (*Orot*) that are manifest within the vessels (*Keilim*), since the lights that are manifest within them also are bound to measure and limitation.

The same is also true of the general light of the line-*Kav* that penetrated the partition-*Parsa*, since the general purpose of light of the line-*Kav* is to illuminate within the worlds. For, as known, there are two types of revelation of light and illumination. There is light and illumination to Himself, blessed is He, and there is a light for the illumination of the worlds. The light of the line-*Kav* is for the illumination of the worlds, and from this very fact (that it is for the illumination of the worlds), it is understood that it is not a revelation of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential Being of *HaShem*-יהוה Himself, blessed is He.

¹⁷²⁰ This refers to the inner, middle, and outer (*Rosh, Toch, Sof*) levels of the vessels of the ten *Sefirot* of kingship-*Malchut* of the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*, which respectively become the *Neshamah* of the world of Creation-*Briyah*, the *Ruach* of the world of Formation-*Yetzirah*, and the *Nefesh* of the world of Action-*Asiyah*. See Etz Chayim Shaar 44 (Shaar HaShemot), Ch. 1 & 2; Tanya, Kuntres Acharon 156b;

However, all the above, is from the perspective of the novel creatures, whose existence is non-intrinsic. Moreover, before the giving of the Torah, even the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of our forefathers was only in the manner of the ascent of the feminine waters (*Ha'ala'at Mayim Nukvin*). That is, it was in a manner of toil in the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, to the furthest extent that they could achieve of their own accord, all of which is an illumination of light (*Ohr*) that relates to the creatures.

The novelty introduced with the giving of the Torah, was that light and illumination that utterly transcends any relation to created beings was drawn forth. This was solely in the form of a gift from *HaShem*-יהו"ה Above, as known that it is specifically called, “the **giving** of the Torah-*Matan* Torah-מתן תורה,” which is of the same root as, “gift-*Matanah*-מתנה.” In other words, when the Torah was given, the light and illumination that reveals the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, was revealed.

This then, was also the novelty introduced into the souls of the Jewish people when the Torah was given. For there are four general levels of how souls come close to Godliness by the ascent of the feminine waters (*Ha'ala'at Mayim Nukvin*). The first level, is that one contemplates how far he is from *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness. This causes him to become embittered over it, and through this bitterness, he comes closer to the Godliness of *HaShem*-יהו"ה. The second level, is that He contemplates the goodness of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה

Godliness, which relates to the aspect of His Godliness that manifests in the worlds. As a result of his grasp of the goodness of *HaShem's*-ה"ה Godliness, he is caused to draw close and adhere to Him. The third level, is that he contemplates the verse,¹⁷²¹ “Yours, *HaShem*-ה"ה, is the greatness etc.” That is, he contemplates that *HaShem's*-ה"ה attribute of greatness (*Gedulah*) etc., is utterly nullified and secondary to *HaShem*-ה"ה Himself, blessed is He. That is, the greatness of the created realm in its entirety, is utterly lowly relative to *HaShem*-ה"ה, Himself, blessed is He. This kind of contemplation (*Hitbonenut*) causes a sense of nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-ה"ה, blessed is He, and he is brought close to *HaShem's*-ה"ה Godliness due to the sense of *HaShem's*-ה"ה wondrousness, in that He utterly transcends all worlds. The fourth level, is when this sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-ה"ה, blessed is He, is not merely comprehended intellectually, in which case the quality of the sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) remains distant from him. Rather, in this level, the matter of the sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) of the worlds to *HaShem*-ה"ה, blessed is He, has become so evident and true for him, as if he sees it with his own eyes.

Nevertheless, all the above levels are according to the limitations of the created beings and conform to their level of attainment. However, the novelty introduced with the giving of the Torah, is a gift from Above, and is therefore not limited to the attainment of the created being whatsoever. Through

¹⁷²¹ Chronicles I 29:11

this level, true nullification to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is brought about. This then, is the novelty of the giving of the Torah, in that the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה was given to each and every Jew. This refers to the aspect of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה light that utterly transcends the vessels (*Keilim*). This, specifically, is the aspect of the might-*Eitan*-איתן of the soul, which is the innermost aspect of wisdom-*Chochmah* (as previously explained).

6.

Now, the difference between the novelty introduced with the giving of the Torah, relative to before it was given, is like the superiority of the month of Tishrei over the month of Elul. That is, the month of Elul is comparable to the state that preceded the giving of the Torah. In contrast, the month of Tishrei is comparable to the novelty that occurred once the Torah was given. The month of Tishrei is called “the seventh month-*Chodesh HaShevi'i*-חודש השביעי-י”¹⁷²² which our sages, of blessed memory, explained to mean that,¹⁷²³ “It is sated-*Mesuba*-משובע in everything.” That is, it refers to the revelations that transcend the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the creatures, which includes the revelations of Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, as well as the revelations of Sukkot and Simchat Torah. This is as stated,¹⁷²⁴ “Blow the

¹⁷²² Leviticus 23:23 and elsewhere.

¹⁷²³ Midrash Vayikra Rabba 29:8

¹⁷²⁴ Psalms 81:4; Likkutei Torah, Drushei Rosh HaShanah 54c and elsewhere.

Shofar at the renewal of the moon, at the covering-*Keseh*-כסה, for our festive day,” as explained in accordance to the verse,¹⁷²⁵ “A wise son gladdens his father.” Namely, it is compared to a father who conceals himself from his son, so that his son seeks him out until he finds him, at which point the joy and gladness of the father is magnified.¹⁷²⁶ Similarly, the concealment of Rosh HaShanah is so that the joy of the festival of Sukkot will be magnified. The “father-*Av*-אב” refers to wisdom-*Chochmah* and the inner aspect of wisdom (*Pnimiyyut HaChochmah*), which transcends revelation.¹⁷²⁷ However, on the festival of Sukkot, “A wise son gladdens his father,” meaning that the inner aspect of wisdom-*Chochmah* is drawn forth into revelation, which is revelation that transcends the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the creatures.

However, the month of Elul is the preparation for this. This is because the name Elul-אלול is an acrostic of the first letters of the words in the verse,¹⁷²⁸ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה, your God, will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring-*Et Levavecha* ו'Et Levav לבב ואת לבבך ואת לבבך.” This is because the toil in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the month of Elul-אלול, is the matter indicated by the verse,¹⁷²⁹ “You shall circumcise the foreskin of your heart.” This refers to the

¹⁷²⁵ Proverbs 10:1; Likkutei Torah Drushim L'Sukkot 82a

¹⁷²⁶ See the introduction to Shaar HaEmunah of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as Essential Faith.

¹⁷²⁷ See Likkutei Torah, Drushei Shmini Atzeret 85b and on.

¹⁷²⁸ Deuteronomy 30:6; Baal HaTurim there; Avudraham Sefer Tefilat Rosh HaShanah; Bayit Chadash (Ba"Ch) to Orach Chayim 581, section entitled, “*V'He'everoo.*”

¹⁷²⁹ Deuteronomy 10:16

matter of the circumcision (*Milah*) and the uncovering of the flesh (*Priyah*) [through the removal of the thin membrane beneath the foreskin].¹⁷³⁰ For, as known,¹⁷³¹ “If one performed the circumcision (*Milah*) but did not uncover (*Priyah*) it, it is as if he did not perform the circumcision.” In other words, one must remove the coarse foreskin (*Orlah*), which refers to coarse lusts, but must also remove the thin membrane (*Priyah*), referring to more refined lusts. The toil in this service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, through one's own strength and ability, is preparatory to, “*HaShem*-יהו"ה, your God, will circumcise your heart,” which comes from *HaShem*-יהו"ה Above. This second aspect is revealed in the month of Tishrei.

This is the reason that in the verse, “*HaShem*-יהו"ה, your God, will circumcise your heart,” there is no mention of the “foreskin (*Orlah*) of the heart,” which refers to the removal of coarse lusts and refined lusts. Rather, the revelations of Tishrei come about after the foreskin (*Orlah*) was already been removed through one's toil in his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. Thus, it is this toil that subsequently allows for the drawing forth of revelation from *HaShem*-יהו"ה Above, so that, “*HaShem*-יהו"ה, your God, will circumcise your heart.” This refers to the drawing forth of the essential aspect of might-*Eitan*-אֵיתָן, through which one is brought to a true state of nullification and sublimation (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a manner that is utterly

¹⁷³⁰ See Tanya Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 4

¹⁷³¹ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 137b

beyond the limitations of the creatures on their own. This matter of drawing forth the essential aspect of might-*Eitan-*אֵיתָן, is in the month of Tishrei, which is “the month of the mighty ones-*Eitanim*,” (as explained in chapter five).

7.

This then, is the meaning of the verse,¹⁷³² “See, I present before you today a blessing and a curse. The blessing: that you listen to the commandments of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, your God, that I command you today etc.” That is, the word “I-*Anochi*-אֲנֹכִי” refers to the utterance,¹⁷³³ “I am-*Anochi*-אֲנֹכִי *HaShem*-יהו"ה, your God,” which He said at the giving of the Torah. From this aspect of, “I am who I am-*Anochi Mi SheAnochi*-אֲנֹכִי מִי שֶׁאֲנֹכִי,”¹⁷³⁴ there is a drawing forth from *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, to be “your God-*Elohecha*-אֱלֹהֶיךָ,” in the innerness of each and every Jew. This is the meaning of, “I present before you-*Lifneichem*-לִפְנֵיכֶם,” which also means “to your innerness.” This is accomplished through the granting of strength from *HaShem*-יהו"ה Above to serve Him by fulfilling His commandments-*mitzvot*. This is why the verse specifies, “today-*Hayom*-הַיּוֹם,” indicating the general service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, as conveyed by the verse,¹⁷³⁵ “Which I-*Anochi*-אֲנֹכִי command you today-*Hayom*-הַיּוֹם to do them.”

¹⁷³² Deuteronomy 11:26-27

¹⁷³³ Exodus 20:2

¹⁷³⁴ See Likkutei Torah Pinchas 80b; Re'eh 31d

¹⁷³⁵ Deuteronomy 7:11; Also see Talmud Bavli Eruvin 22a

Now, there are two manners in this - a blessing (*Brachah*) and a curse (*Klallah*). The blessing (*Brachah*) refers to serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, by fulfilling His commandments-*mitzvot* in a straightforward manner. The curse (*Klallah*) refers to the matter of transforming the curse into a blessing, and refers to the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the truly penitent (*Baalei Teshuvah*), about whom it says that his,¹⁷³⁶ "intentional sins are [now] counted as merits."

The verse thus continues, "The blessing: that you listen," which includes both aspects of blessing (*Brachah*). That is, it includes both the blessing (*Brachah*) in a straightforward manner (through the fulfillment of the commandments-*mitzvot*), as well as the blessing (*Brachah*) brought about through the curse being transformed into a blessing (which is the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of repentance-*Teshuvah*). This is why the verse specifies "that-*Asher*-אשר you listen," rather than, "if-*Eem*-אם you listen." For, it is certain, that the Jewish people will come to serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in one of these two ways. That is, either they will fulfill *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה's commandments-*mitzvot* directly, or they will repent,¹⁷³⁷ since ultimately,¹⁷³⁸ "no one will be banished from Him."

To clarify, although the other verse states,¹⁷³⁹ "If-*Eem*-אם you will follow My decrees and observe My

¹⁷³⁶ Talmud Bavli Yoma 86b

¹⁷³⁷ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah 7:5

¹⁷³⁸ Samuel II 14:14

¹⁷³⁹ Leviticus 26:3

commandments,” specifically using the conditional term, “If-*Eem*-אם,” rather than, “That-*Asher*-אשר,” even though it is certain that ultimately, “no one will be banished from Him,” this is because the verse there specifically discusses the fulfillment of *HaShem*’s-ה' commandments-*mitzvot* in a direct and straightforward manner. It therefore states, “If-*Eem*-אם you will follow My decrees and observe My commandments,” since it is not, in fact, clear whether or not the commandments-*mitzvot* will be fulfilled. That is, it is possible for a person to sin, cause blemish and leave the right path. Thus, afterwards, there is the service of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, of repentance-*Teshuvah*.

Similarly, when the verse states,¹⁷⁴⁰ “Today, if-*Eem*-אם you listen to His voice,” this is because this verse is discussing service of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, with the repentance-*Teshuvah* that will precede the coming of Moshiach. Regarding this, our sages, of blessed memory, stated that,¹⁷⁴¹ “Moshiach will come today-*Hayom*-היום, if we listen to His voice,” meaning, if we return in repentance-*Teshuvah* to *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He. This is as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹⁷⁴² “If-*Eem*-אם the Jewish people repent, they will be redeemed.” This is why the verse uses the term, “If-*Eem*-אם,” since it is possible that they will come to serve *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, in a direct manner, by fulfilling

¹⁷⁴⁰ Psalms 95:7

¹⁷⁴¹ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 98a

¹⁷⁴² Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 97b; Talmud Yerushalmi Taanit 1:1; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah 7

the commandments-*mitzvot*, and therefore not require the matter of repentance-*Teshuvah*.

However, in the verse under our discussion, when it states, “The blessing,” it includes both manners of blessing (*Brachah*), that is, the fulfillment of the commandments-*mitzvot*, as well as the matter of repentance-*Teshuvah*. It therefore states, “That-*Asher* אשר you listen,” since it is certain that one of these two ways will indeed come about. That is, either the Jewish people will fulfill the commandments-*mitzvot*, or they will ultimately return in repentance (*Teshuvah*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

The verse then continues, “the commandments of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, your God, that I-*Anochi* אנכי command you today.” In other words, the commandments-*mitzvot* are from the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential Being of *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, who is referred to as “I am who I am-*Anochi Mi SheAnochi* אנכי מי שאנכי.” The verse concludes, “Today-*Hayom* היום,” since the intention of the commandments-*mitzvot* is that they should be done today, as in the aforementioned verse,¹⁷⁴³ “Which I-*Anochi* אנכי command you today-*Hayom* היום to **do** them.”

It is because of all the above reasons that the Torah portion of Re'eh is read before the month of Elul, either on the Shabbat before the new moon (Rosh Chodesh) of Elul, or on Shabbat of the new moon of Elul itself. For, the month of Elul is a preparation for the revelations of the month of Tishrei,

¹⁷⁴³ Deuteronomy 7:11; Also see Talmud Bavli Eruvin 22a

through serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the toil of,¹⁷⁴⁴ “You shall circumcise the foreskin of your heart.” By reading the Torah portion of Re’eh, we are given the power to serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה in this way throughout the month of Elul. This is the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the creatures from below to Above and includes both repentance-*Teshuvah* over one’s sins and transgressions, as well as the service of repentance-*Teshuvah* of the righteous *Tzaddikim*, which is the matter conveyed by the verse,¹⁷⁴⁵ “The spirit returns to God who gave it.” However, all this is the aspect of the lower repentance (*Teshuvah Tata’ah*), which is only preparatory to the revelations of the month of Tishrei. In contrast, the month of Tishrei is the aspect of drawing forth the essential aspect of might-*Eitan*-איתן in all one’s faculties and senses. This is as stated,¹⁷⁴⁶ “you mighty ones-*Eitanim*-איתנים, the foundations of the earth,” in that the forefathers even drew the aspect of might-*Eitan*-איתן into the world. This is the aspect of the upper repentance (*Teshuvah Ila’ah*), that occurs in the form of the Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur service, as well as in the form of the Sukkot and Simchat Torah service, during which time the verse,¹⁷⁴⁷ “A wise son gladdens his father,” is fulfilled, in that the Jewish people rejoice in the Holy One, blessed is He, and the Holy One, blessed is He, rejoices in the Jewish people.¹⁷⁴⁸

¹⁷⁴⁴ Deuteronomy 10:16

¹⁷⁴⁵ Ecclesiastes 12:7; See Likkutei Torah HaAzinu 71c and on.

¹⁷⁴⁶ Micah 6:2; Zohar II 110b; Torah Ohr Toldot 19a

¹⁷⁴⁷ Proverbs 10:1; Likkutei Torah Drushim L’Sukkot 82a

¹⁷⁴⁸ See Likkutei Torah, Drushei Shmini Atzeret 88d and on.