

Discourse 19

“VaYihyu B’nei Yisroel BaMidbar - The Children of Israel were in the Desert”

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Shlach,
Shabbat Mevarchim Tammuz, 5713
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,¹³⁶⁰ “The children of Israel were in the Desert and they found a man gathering wood on the day of Shabbat.” The Zohar gives two explanations about this.¹³⁶¹ The first explanation is that the wood (*Eitzeem*-עצים), which translates literally as “trees,” refers to the Tree of Life (*Etz HaChayim*-עץ החיים) and the Tree of Knowledge (*Etz HaDa’at*-עץ הדעת). The Zohar explains that the gatherer made a comparison between these trees to see which is greater than the other. In other words, the term “gatherer-*Mekoshesh*-מקושש” is of the same root as “compare-*Heikesh*-היקש,” and thus means that he “compared-*Heikesh*-היקש” between the two trees (*Eitzeem*-עצים), to know which is greater. The second explanation is that, “these were different trees that he gathered on the day of Shabbat and he was therefore punished at the time, through which his sin was atoned.” (In other words, this

¹³⁶⁰ Numbers 15:32

¹³⁶¹ Zohar Shlach 157a; Also see Likkutei Torah Shlach 42b and on; Ohr HaTorah Shlach, Hosafot, p. 92 and on.

is like the simple understanding of the verse, that he was gathering wood on the day of Shabbat and was therefore punished with death.)

We therefore must understand this. That is, we must understand the matter of his comparison-*Heikesh*-הִיקֵשׁ between the trees to know which is greater and its relationship to the simple explanation of the verse. We also must understand why the order the verse is specifically that, “they found a man gathering wood on the day of Shabbat.” That is, at first glance, since the primary issue was that this happened on the day Shabbat, the verse should have started with the fact that it was Shabbat and only afterwards state that he was gathering wood. However, the verse does the opposite, in that it first states that he was gathering wood and only afterwards specifies that it took place on Shabbat, which seems to indicate that the primary focus is on the matter of his gathering of the wood itself.

2.

To understand this, we must preface with an explanation of the matter of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Targum Yerushalmi¹³⁶² states,¹³⁶³ “And the tree of knowledge, from which anyone who ate would distinguish between good and evil.” Based on this, it is not understood

¹³⁶² Genesis 2:9

¹³⁶³ Also see Ohr HaTorah Bereishit Vol. 3, p. 531a; Sefer HaMaamarim 5670 p. 152 and on; 5677 p. 91 and on.

why eating from the tree of knowledge was such a great sin, so much so, that because of it, Adam was punished with death, both for himself and all his offspring after him, until the time that the prophecy,¹³⁶⁴ “I will remove the spirit of impurity from the land,” will be fulfilled. At first glance, since “anyone who ate of it would distinguish between good and evil,” it seems that not only is it not a sin, but on the contrary, the entire substance and ultimate intent in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is to distinguish between good and evil.

It therefore is understood that, in and of itself, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, refers to a level in holiness (*Kedushah*), in that “anyone who ate of it would distinguish between good and evil,” which is the general substance of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. It is only that due to a multitude of chaining down of things, there is the possibility for the matter of evil to arise from it.

With this in mind, it is understood why the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*). For, the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) is entirely holy and cannot countenance anything that is in opposition to *HaShem's*-יהו"ה Supernal will, blessed is He. This is why after Adam sinned, it states,¹³⁶⁵ “So *HaShem*-יהו"ה God banished him from the Garden of Eden... and He drove the man out etc.”¹³⁶⁶ From this it is also understood that the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) is the reward for fulfilling Torah and *mitzvot*

¹³⁶⁴ Zachariah 13:2

¹³⁶⁵ Genesis 3:23-24

¹³⁶⁶ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5662 p. 299, and elsewhere.

in this world, in that the reward is the radiance of one's Torah study and service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, while in this world.¹³⁶⁷

It therefore is clearly understood that the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) is entirely holy (*Kedushah*). This being so, how was it possible that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was planted in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) and that Adam, the first man, should eat of its fruits?

However, the explanation is that, in and of itself, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is a level in holiness (*Kedushah*) and it is only because of an abundance of chaining down of things (*Hishtalshelut*), that the matter of evil could arise from it (as mentioned above).

3.

This may be better understood by first explaining the general matter of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in which there are two approaches. There is serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a measured and limited way and serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way that transcends measure and limitation. Now, these two approaches in the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, also exist in the contemplation (*Hitbonenut*) that brings a person to serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, as well as in the order of the chaining down (*Hishtalshelut*) of the *Sefirot* from Above.

¹³⁶⁷ See Tanya, Ch. 39 (52b).

The explanation is that the primary matter in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is as stated,¹³⁶⁸ "To do them today," and,¹³⁶⁹ "Not study, but practice is the essential thing." Thus, service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is divided into three categories, these being the,¹³⁷⁰ "three things upon which the world stands: Torah, Service (*Avodah*)¹³⁷¹ and Acts of lovingkindness (*Gemilut Chassadim*)."

Now, in this itself, it can be that a person's service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in action, is measured and limited. For example, in regard to acts of lovingkindness (*Gmilut Chassadim*), even though the very essence of it is the matter of abundant mercies, nevertheless, it is possible for a person to approach it in a measured and limited way, and he can even do so according to Torah. As our sages, of blessed memory taught,¹³⁷² "The verse states,¹³⁷³ 'However, may there be no destitute among you,' from which it is derived that the prosperity of one's own property takes precedence over that of another person," (including one's own father or teacher).¹³⁷⁴ Nevertheless, they also stated¹³⁷⁵ that whosoever conducts himself in a certain manner, will himself end up being the

¹³⁶⁸ Deuteronomy 7:11

¹³⁶⁹ Mishnah Avot 1:17

¹³⁷⁰ Mishnah Avot 1:2

¹³⁷¹ The service of the Holy Temple, or correspondingly, the Service of the Heart, which is prayer, as will be stated shortly.

¹³⁷² Talmud Bavli, Bava Metziyah 33a

¹³⁷³ Deuteronomy 15:4

¹³⁷⁴ As stated in the Mishnah in Bava Metziyah 33a *ibid*.

¹³⁷⁵ See Mishnah Peah 8:9 – "Anyone who does not need to take charity and yet takes, will not depart from this world before he actually needs charity from others. And anyone who needs and does not take, will not die of old age until he supports others with his own money etc."

recipient of the manner in which he conducted himself. In other words, a person who conducts himself in acts of lovingkindness (*Gmilut Chassadim*) in a measured and limited way – taking the approach that, “my own prosperity comes first,” – will in the end come to poverty, and “poverty means lack of knowledge-*Da’at* (of *HaShem*-יהו"ה)”¹³⁷⁶ from which he will subsequently come to actual physical poverty. That is, poverty is the antithesis of holiness (*Kedushah*).

The same applies when it comes to the matter of service (*Avodah*), about which our sages, of blessed memory taught,¹³⁷⁷ “The verse states,¹³⁷⁸ ‘To love *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God and to serve Him with all your heart.’ What service is the service of the heart? We must say that this is the service of prayer (*Tefillah*).” About this, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹³⁷⁹ “When you pray, let not your prayer be routine, but a plea for compassion before the Ever-Present One, blessed is He.” For, since there are set times that a person is obligated to pray, it is possible for his prayer to become a matter of¹³⁸⁰ “paying his debt,” which is the very opposite of what prayer is about.¹³⁸¹ In such a case, his prayers are received on High, but in such a way that his needs remain unfulfilled etc.

This is likewise the case in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the way of Torah study. For, although the *mitzvah* of Torah study is a positive commandment that has no

¹³⁷⁶ See Talmud Bavli, Ketuvot 68a; Nedarim 41a and elsewhere.

¹³⁷⁷ Talmud Bavli, Taanit 2a

¹³⁷⁸ Deuteronomy 11:13

¹³⁷⁹ Mishnah Avot 2:13

¹³⁸⁰ See the commentary of Rabbi Ovadia Bartenura to Avot 2:13 *ibid*.

¹³⁸¹ See Kuntres Eitz HaChayim, Ch. 26.

set time and one's obligation is to study Torah day and night, nevertheless, it is possible for a person's Torah study to be in a measured and limited way, that is, that he "only studies Torah intermittently."¹³⁸² He does so, by finding leniencies in Shulchan Aruch (the code of Torah law) and only studies one chapter in the morning and one chapter in the evening, just to fulfill his obligation, until ultimately, even this is reduced and he only fulfills the most minimum obligation, by merely reciting the verse, "Listen Israel, יהו"ה-*HaShem*, our God, יהו"ה-*HaShem* is One."¹³⁸³ Nevertheless, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹³⁸⁴ "Anyone who can study Torah but does not do so, is included in the category of,¹³⁸⁵ 'He has scorned the word of יהו"ה-*HaShem*,'" and is punished for it. This then, explains the matter of serving יהו"ה-*HaShem*, blessed is He, in a measured and limited way, in action (*Ma'aseh*), speech (*Dibur*), and thought (*Machshavah*).

The same likewise applies to the matter of emotions (*Midot*), which refers to one's natural love and fear of יהו"ה-*HaShem*, blessed is He. That is, it is possible for a person's emotions to be in a state of measure and limitation. In other words, his sense of love is not because of the essential goodness of something, but rather, because it is good **for him**.

¹³⁸² Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 99b – "The verse (Prov. 6:32) states, 'He who commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding.' Reish Lakish says: This refers to one who studies Torah intermittently." (One who does not study Torah constantly and with consistency, is like one who has no wife and sometimes has relations with one woman and sometimes with another – see Rashi there.)

¹³⁸³ Talmud Bavli, Menachot 99b

¹³⁸⁴ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 99a

¹³⁸⁵ Numbers 15:31

That is, he thinks about his own self-existence and what is worthwhile for him, (what is good for him, what he wants and what he needs). In such a case, his love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה is according to the limitations of his own self-existence. This matter can devolve to such a degree that he can come to have alien love for matters that are of the opposing side of evil, that is, love for extraneous matters that are alien to Godliness etc. In other words, since it is **he** who has love for holiness, he remains entirely within the constraints of his own existence, and entirely retains his ego, since his love is all about what he feels is good **for him**. It therefore is quite possible for him to eventually come to love matters of the opposing side of evil.

The same applies to this kind of fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. For, although the matter of fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, comes out in a way that there is greater sublimation to *HaShem*-יהו"ה than from love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה,¹³⁸⁶ it nevertheless is possible that his fear is entirely due to his own sense of self. In other words, he does not fear the sin itself, but rather, his fear is the fear of punishment, which entirely relates to his own self-existence. It therefore is possible for alien fear, which is the matter of evil, to devolve from this.¹³⁸⁷ In other words, even though while he is engaged in prayer, he properly contemplates the true state of his soul and thereby awakens true love and fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, nevertheless, since he remains entirely within the constraints of his own ego and self-existence, it is quite possible that after

¹³⁸⁶ See Torah Ohr 114d

¹³⁸⁷ See *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 2, p. 1,057.

finishing his prayers, his love and fear become redirected to matters of the opposing side of evil. This then, explains the matter of measure and limitation in the approach to serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with the emotions (*Midot*).

The same applies to service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with the intellect (*Mochin*), which refers to the contemplation (*Hitbonenut*) that brings a person to love and fear *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.¹³⁸⁸ (For, intellectual love and fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, are brought about through contemplative meditation-*Hitbonenut*). That is, when his contemplation (*Hitbonenut*) is in a measured and limited way – meaning that he contemplates the Godliness that is manifest within the worlds, which is limited, and particularly when his contemplation (*Hitbonenut*) is only through the garments of comprehension, which are limited, and matters that transcend intellect, measure and limitation, are not included in his contemplation – then it is possible that the intellect of the side of evil will bring proofs that oppose his contemplations and will overturn all his previous contemplations. This is to say that since his contemplation (*Hitbonenut*) is in a manner of measure and limitation, it therefore is possible for the intellect of the opposing side to be in greater measure, thus overturning the Godly intellect. It therefore is imperative that his contemplation (*Hitbonenut*) should be in such a way that he comes to have a feel for it, in a way that transcends measure and limitation, as will soon be explained.

¹³⁸⁸ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 2:2

The same is so regarding service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with the desires of the heart (*Re'uta d'Leeba*). For, although the desires of the heart are due to the transcendent and encompassing aspects of the soul (*Makifim*), nevertheless, even in these aspects of the soul there are two levels. That is, there is the encompassing light of the soul that relates to the vessels, only that it hovers over them, and there is the transcendent light of the soul that is altogether beyond relation to the matter of vessels.

The same is so regarding the desires of the heart (*Re'uta d'Leeba*).¹³⁸⁹ That is, there is a manner of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with the desires of the heart (*Re'uta d'Leeba*) that is analogous to two lovers whose love for each other is very strong and transcends intellect and reason and is a love that is entirely unconditional, but nevertheless, is only on the level of revelation (*Giluy*). It therefore is possible for it to become concealed. The same is the case when the love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with the desires of the heart (*Re'uta d'Leeba*) is only on the level of revelation (*Giluy*). That is, even though it transcends reason and intellect, nevertheless, it is solely on the level of revelation (*Giluy*), and it therefore is possible for it to become concealed. Thus, the awakening of this love from concealment to revelation is dependent on contemplation (*Hitbonenut*). This is similar to the analogy of the two lovers, mentioned above, that when their love is in a state of concealment, awakening it requires that they be reminded of

¹³⁸⁹ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5710 p. 54, and 5711 p. 186.

their love for each other. Thus, this kind of love is limited, since it depends on that which awakens it. For, although it is true that once the love is awakened, it does not depend on anything, nevertheless, the very fact that the awakening and revelation of this love is dependent on something else to awaken it, is because this love is generally on the level of revelation (*Gilyu*), wherein it is possible and applicable for there to be a matter of concealment (*He'elem*).

Higher than this is the level of the desires of the heart (*Re'uta d'Leeba*) that is due to the essence. This is analogous to the love between a father and his child, which is an essential love. Because it is an essential love, the matter of concealment (*He'elem*) is not applicable to it, and it therefore is always revealed.

For, when it comes to the level of the desire of the heart (*Re'uta d'Leeba*) that is due to the revelation, it is possible for it to be followed by matters of the opposing side of evil. This is because it is only a matter of revelation (*Gilyu*) and is not of the essence (*Etzem*). Therefore, he still retains his sense of self-existence, in which there is an object of his desire. Although, in this case, the object of his desire is to become entirely nullified of his sense of self-existence and be utterly included and unified with the Essential Self of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, nevertheless, since he still retains his sense of independent existence, it is possible for it to be followed by matters that relate to the opposing side of evil.

However, this is not so when it comes to essential love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, which is the matter of the encompassing light of the singular-*Yechidah* essence of the soul. In such a case, it is not applicable for the external forces to have any hold on him, since "he does not possess a shadow of a shadow."¹³⁹⁰

4.

Now, these two above-mentioned general approaches to the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, come out of their root in the Supernal *Sefirot*. For, regarding the *Sefirah* of kingship-*Malchut*, since her nine *Sefirot* descend and manifest within the worlds of Creation-*Briyah*, Formation-*Yetzirah*, and Action-*Asiyah*, it cannot be said that the verse,¹³⁹¹ "I shall not give My glory to another," applies to her. Rather, the opposite is true, that is,¹³⁹² "Her feet descend to death." In other words, the *Sefirah* of kingship-*Malchut* herself is related to the worlds of Creation-*Briyah*, Formation-*Yetzirah*, and Action-*Asiyah*, which is why she is called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Therefore, her nine *Sefirot* descent and manifest within the worlds of Creation-*Briyah*, Formation-*Yetzirah*, Action-*Asiyah*, to the point that, "Her feet descend to death," referring to the matter of evil.

¹³⁹⁰ See Talmud Bavli, Yevamot 122a

¹³⁹¹ Isaiah 42:8; See Ohr HaTorah, Drushim L'Shmini Atzeret p. 1,828.

¹³⁹² Proverbs 5:5; See Ohr HaTorah, Na"Ch to Proverbs 5:5 (Vol. 1, p. 564 and on).

The same is likewise true of *Zeir Anpin*. For, although *Zeir Anpin* is mostly the aspect of kindnesses (*Chassadim*), as it states,¹³⁹³ “He remembered His kindness,”¹³⁹⁴ nevertheless, as known,¹³⁹⁵ there are revealed kindnesses and concealed kindnesses, and it is only when the kindnesses are concealed that it is impossible for the external forces to derive vitality from there. However, when it comes to the revealed kindnesses, this is not the case, and the external forces can possibly derive vitality from there. This is as stated,¹³⁹⁶ “A fool does not desire understanding, but only to expose his heart.” That is, when it comes to understanding-*Tevunah*-תבונה, which bears the letters ובן-son and daughter,¹³⁹⁷ referring to the aspects of love and fear as they are concealed in the intellect, it is not possible for there to be any derivation of vitality to the external forces. For, although they are not intellect (*Mochin*), but emotions (*Midot*), for which reason they are not called, *Binah*-בינה, but are rather called *Tevunah*-תבונה, they nevertheless are included in the intellect. This

¹³⁹³ Psalms 98:3; See the citations added to Maamarei Admor HaEmtza'ee, Bamidbar Vol. 1, p. 303.

¹³⁹⁴ While kingship-*Malchut* is the feminine aspect (*Nukvah*), *Zeir Anpin* is the masculine aspect (*Zachar*-זכר) as indicated by this verse, “He recalled-*Zachar*-זכר His kindness,” indicating the aspect of the kindnesses of the masculine aspect which is *Zeir Anpin*.

¹³⁹⁵ See Maamarei Admor HaZaken, Et'halech Liozhna p. 56; Sefer HaMaamarim 5677 *ibid.* p. 89 and on.

¹³⁹⁶ Proverbs 18:2; Also see Likkutei Torah Masei 90a, and elsewhere.

¹³⁹⁷ Zohar III 290b and on; Etz Chayim, Shaar 15 (Shaar HaZivugim); Tanya Ch. 16 in the note; Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 2-3.

accords with the explanation in the writings of the Arizal¹³⁹⁸ regarding the verse,¹³⁹⁹ “Council is like deep waters in the heart of man; and a man of understanding-*Tevunah*-תבונה will draw them forth.” That is, the term *Tevunah*-תבונה refers to the aspects of love and fear as they are included in the intellect. Thus, while they are included in the understanding mind of *Binah*-בינה, the light of understanding-*Binah* is strongly felt in them, and it therefore is impossible for any derivation of vitality to come from them to the external forces.

This is not the case, however, when it comes to the revealed emotions, which lack the aspect of understanding-*Binah* within them. Thus, it is possible for the external forces of evil to derive vitality from them, which is the meaning of the continuation of the verse, that a fool “only desires to expose his heart.” In other words, he desires this because vitality is derived from there etc.

The same likewise applies to the intellect itself (*Mochin*). That is, in the *Sefirah* of understanding-*Binah* it is possible for there to be the matter of a shattering (*Shevirah*). For, as known, the Name of *Sa”G*-ס”ג-63 (which is the Name *HaShem*-יהו”ה spelled with *Yod*’s-י and an *Aleph*-א and has a numerical value of 63-*Sa”G*-ס”ג as such: יו”ד ה”י וא”ו ה”י) is in the *Sefirah* of understanding-*Binah* and the shattering

¹³⁹⁸ See Emek HaMelech, Shaar 14 (Shaar Kiryat Arba); Ch. 141 (119a), cited in *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 3, p. 1,242; Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 2-3 *ibid*.

¹³⁹⁹ Proverbs 20:5

(*Shevirah*) took place in the Name of *Sa''G-ל"ו-63*.¹⁴⁰⁰ Such is not the case, however with the *Sefirah* of wisdom-*Chochmah*, about which it states,¹⁴⁰¹ "They die, but not in wisdom-*Chochmah*."¹⁴⁰²

This is similarly the case when it comes to the *Sefirah* of the crown-*Keter*. That is, it is possible for the external forces to derive vitality from the externality of the crown-*Keter*. This is as explained regarding the verse,¹⁴⁰³ "The spider seizes [its prey] with its handiwork, though it dwells in the king's palace." For, as known, the derivation of vitality from the aspect of the encompassing light (*Makif*) is specifically only from the externality of the encompassing light (*Makif*). However, this is not the case when it comes to the inner aspect of the crown-*Keter*, from which there is no derivation of vitality whatsoever to the external forces, as explained about the verse,¹⁴⁰⁴ "I loved Yaakov and I hated Esav."

The explanation is that, although it states about the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*,¹⁴⁰⁵ "No evil dwells with You," which also applies to the *Sefirah* of kingship-*Malchut*, and especially to *Zeir Anpin*, which is the essence of the world of

¹⁴⁰⁰ See Etz Chayim, Shaar 8 (Drushei HaNekudot) Ch. 1; Shaar 10 (Shaar HaTikkun) Ch. 2; Mevo She'arim, Shaar 2, Section 1, Ch. 1; Maamarei Admor HaZaken, Inyanim p. 417; Torat Chayim, Bereishit 9a, and elsewhere.

¹⁴⁰¹ Job 4:21

¹⁴⁰² See Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 46.

¹⁴⁰³ Proverbs 30:28; See Torah Ohr, Beshalach 63b; Sefer HaMaamarim 5704 p. 85, and elsewhere.

¹⁴⁰⁴ Malachi 1:2-3

¹⁴⁰⁵ Psalms 5:5; See Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar 3a and on; See Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 54.

Emanation-*Atzilut*, and particularly to the *Sefirah* of understanding-*Binah* and the *Sefirah* of wisdom-*Chochmah*, and most certainly to the *Sefirah* of the crown-*Keter*, which transcends the world of Emanation, that certainly, “no evil dwells with You,” nevertheless, the externality of the crown-*Keter* is an encompassing light (*Makif*) that relates to worlds.

[The same is likewise so when discussing even loftier levels in the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, that precede the restraint of the *Tzimtzum*, and about which it states,¹⁴⁰⁶ “Before the creation of the world there was Him and His Name alone.” That is, in this itself there are two levels. There is the expression of the light and the light as it is included in His Essential Self, blessed is He. Or to state it in a different way, there is the light that relates to revelation (*Giluy*) and the light that utterly transcends revelation and does not relate to it at all.]¹⁴⁰⁷

Thus, since the externality of the crown-*Keter* is an encompassing light (*Makif*) that relates to worlds, it therefore also has some relation to the external forces, to the point that it states, “The spider seizes [its prey] with its handiwork, though it dwells in the king’s palace.” However, this is only so when it comes to the externality of the crown-*Keter*, and with a thousand degrees of separation, when it comes to man, in which this corresponds to the externality of his desire.

¹⁴⁰⁶ Pirke d’Rabbi Eliezer Ch. 3

¹⁴⁰⁷ See *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 2 p. 1,022 and on; Vol. 3 p. 1,282; *Sefer HaArachim Chabad*, Vol. 4, p. 460 and on; See *Shaar HaYichud* of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as *The Gate of Unity*, Ch. 10-11; Also see *Ginat Egoz* of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, *The Gate of Intrinsic Being (Shaar HaHavayah)*.

However, this is not so regarding the inner aspect of the crown-*Keter* that entirely transcends the worlds, in which the external forces have utterly no hold, since it utterly transcends the limitations of worlds.

5.

With the above in mind, it is understood that the general matter of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, must be in a manner that transcends measure and limitation. In other words, even when it comes to serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way of measure and limit, still and all, one must have a palpable sense of that which transcends limitation.

This is similar to the matter of¹⁴⁰⁸ the leniencies of the academy of Shammai. That is, it is possible that according to the root of one's soul, his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, may be like the approach of the academy of Shammai, whose service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה was in a way of restraint and stricture and in a manner indicated by the verse,¹⁴⁰⁹ "Walk humbly with your God." Nevertheless, there must be a palpable sense of that which transcends limitation. This is accomplished in a way that even when serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the manner of the academy of Shammai, there is a palpable sense and feeling of the manner of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the academy of Hillel.

¹⁴⁰⁸ See Mishnah Eduyot, beginning of Ch. 4 & 5.

¹⁴⁰⁹ Micah 6:8

The same is true of the general matter of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in actuality, through action (*Ma'aseh*), speech (*Dibur*), and thought (*Machshavah*), in acts of lovingkindness (*Gmilut Chassadim*), prayer (*Avodah*) and Torah study. That is, one's approach must be in a manner that transcends measure and limitation. For example, although it is true that in acts of lovingkindness (*Gmilut Chassadim*) there indeed is an aspect of measure and limitation, in that¹⁴¹⁰ "the prosperity of one's own property takes precedence," (as explained before), nonetheless, as the Alter Rebbe wrote in Tanya,¹⁴¹¹ the giving of charity must be in a limitless manner, since it affects the very life of his soul and through it, he brings salvation to his soul, as it states,¹⁴¹² "Whatever a man has, he will give on behalf of his soul." The same applies to serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה in prayer. He must realize that he is praying on behalf of his soul. Thus, since it relates to the very life of his soul, he does not make measured calculations, but rather,¹⁴¹³ "He redeemed my soul in peace."

Similarly, when studying Torah, one must contemplate and realize that Torah is the remedy and elixir of life.¹⁴¹⁴ More particularly, Torah saves him from a place of death, as in the teaching,¹⁴¹⁵ "I created an evil inclination (which is the place of death), and I created Torah as its antidote." Thus,

¹⁴¹⁰ Talmud Bavli, Bava Metziyah 33a

¹⁴¹¹ Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 10

¹⁴¹² Psalms 55:19

¹⁴¹³ Job 2:4

¹⁴¹⁴ See Talmud Bavli, Eruvin 54a

¹⁴¹⁵ Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 30b

when a person contemplates and realizes this, his study of Torah will come to be in a manner that is without limitations.

The same applies to the natural love and fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. That is, one's feeling of love for *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, should not be because it is good for **him**, but rather, because it is essentially good. Even if a person finds himself in a state that he only feels that it is good for **him**, nonetheless, internally, he must know that primarily, it is essentially good. Thus, when he at the very least has an inner knowledge that this is essentially good, no alien love will result from it. For, when his love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is just because it is good **for him**, the possibility is open for him to also love matters of the opposing side of evil. However, if he, at the very least, has an inner knowledge that this it is essentially good, there is no room for any alien love to have a hold on him, even in matters of the world. For, such a thing – meaning, something that is essentially good – only exists in Godliness.

The same is true of the intellect (*Mochin*), that in one's contemplation (*Hitbonenut*), he must come to have a sense of that which transcends intellect, this being the aspect of wisdom-*Chochmah*. For, in the aspect of wisdom-*Chochmah*, it is impossible for the external forces of the opposing side to derive any vitality. This is because wisdom-*Chochmah* is the matter of sight (*Re'iyah*), as it states,¹⁴¹⁶ "My heart has seen much wisdom-*Chochmah*." Thus, in seeing, it is impossible for any opposition or contradiction to take hold, as is well

¹⁴¹⁶ Ecclesiastes 1:16

known regarding the difference between seeing (*Re'iyah*) and hearing (*Shmiyah*).

That is,¹⁴¹⁷ “Hearing cannot compare to seeing.” For, when one hears about something, though he may have a very good intellectual grasp of it, nevertheless, if he is presented with arguments that stand in opposition to what he heard, this causes a weakening of what he heard. Moreover, if these arguments are very strong, they can completely uproot what he heard. However, this is not so if he actually saw it himself. In such a case, even if he is presented with many difficult questions that contradict what he saw, it will not affect or move him at all. For, in answer to all of the questions and refutations that he is confronted with, he answers that he saw this clearly with his own eyes. The same is true of the sight of wisdom-*Chochmah*, as it states,¹⁴¹⁸ “Who is wise? One who sees the consequences.” That is, through intellectual sight, not only does he intellectually understand what the consequence will ultimately be, but through intellectual sight, he even perceives the reward of the *Mitzvah* and the loss of the transgression, right now.¹⁴¹⁹ Therefore, it is not applicable for any arguments to refute it whatsoever.¹⁴²⁰

This is likewise so in serving *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, with the desires of the heart (*Re'uta d'Leeba*). That is, the desires of his heart should not be because of what is revealed

¹⁴¹⁷ Mechilta Yitro 19:9

¹⁴¹⁸ Talmud Bavli, Tamid 32a; Also see Tanya, Ch. 43.

¹⁴¹⁹ See Mishnah Avot 2:1; Also see at length in the previous discourse entitled “*Ki Tisa* – When you take a census of the Children of Israel” of this year 5713, Discourse 10.

¹⁴²⁰ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5679 p. 383

(*Giluy*), but should rather be because of the essence, which is the matter of the adhesion (*Dveikut*) of his essential self to the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, in which case, there is absolutely no room for the external forces to have any hold. This is because even light (*Ohr*) pushes away darkness. How much more is this so of the Luminary Himself, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

6.

Based on all the above, the matter of the sin of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is now understood. For, although “anyone who ate of it would distinguish between good and evil,” which is a matter of holiness (*Kedushah*), nevertheless, it is in a way of measure and limitation. That is, the distinction between good and evil is only because of – and commensurate to – the manner of the consumption of the fruits, and nothing more. (That is, he does not go beyond that.) It therefore is possible for evil to branch out from this.

The solution is that one’s service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, must also be from the aspect of the Tree of Life, which is a matter that transcends measure and limitation. He will then also be able serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the aspect of the Tree of Knowledge. This is because it was *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Supernal intent that man first eat of the Tree of Life and only afterwards eat of the Tree of Knowledge.

That is, the matter of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with the Tree of Knowledge, is the service of refinement and clarification (*Avodat HaBirurim*). However, from the Tree of Knowledge as it is alone, it is possible for the external forces of the opposing side to derive vitality. Therefore, it is necessary for the aspect of the Tree of Life to come first, since it transcends limitation. Afterwards, serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, through the service of refinement and clarification (*Birurim*) becomes possible.

The same applies to our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, on a daily basis. The beginning of our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה every day is with the recitation of “*Modeh Ani lefaneicha*- I acknowledge before You,” and, “*Hodu LaHaShem* – Acknowledge *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” both of which are matters of submission and nullification to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way that transcends reason and intellect, which is beyond measure and limitation. Only afterwards do we come to the contemplation (*Hitbonenut*) of prayer, particularly in the verses of praise (*Psukei d’Zimrah*) and the blessings of the *Shema*, which only follow after being preceded by the sublimation and nullification to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in *Modeh Ani* and *Hodu LaHaShem*.¹⁴²¹

¹⁴²¹ This was discussed at greater length in the previous discourse of this year 5713, entitled “*B’Sha’ah SheHeekdeemoo* – At the time when Israel gave precedence to ‘We will do’ over ‘We will hear.’”

This then, explains the meaning of the verse,¹⁴²² “The children of Israel were in the Desert and they found a man gathering wood on the day of Shabbat,” according to both explanations presented in Zohar. That is, the simple explanation is that “These were different trees.” Rabbi Chaim Vital explains¹⁴²³ that this refers to the seventy angels who govern the external nations. Similarly, as explained in Likkutei Torah,¹⁴²⁴ in the teaching about the gatherer of the wood (*Mekosheh Eitzeem*), his sin was that he uprooted that which was growing from its source. In other words, he separated the created being (*Yesh*) as something separate unto itself, so that it no longer was in a state of nullification and sublimation to the Source who constantly enlivens it and brings it into existence, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

An additional explanation is that “he compared-*Heikesh*-היקש between the two trees – the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge – to know which is greater.” The Zoharei Chamah explains that in his judgment, he concluded that the Tree of Knowledge is greater, since there is greater toil in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with the Tree of Knowledge (that is, the toil of clarifying the bad from the good and thus refining the good).

¹⁴²² Numbers 15:32

¹⁴²³ In the notes to Zohar Shelach 157a

¹⁴²⁴ Likkutei Torah, Shlach 43a

Now, these two explanations are related to each other. For, by comparing-*Heikesh* הִיקֶשׁ the Tree of Life to the Tree of Knowledge, he separated between the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life. In the service of *HaShem* יהו"ה, blessed is He, this refers to serving Him in a way of measure and limitation. In the *Sefirot*, this refers to the separation of the *Sefirah* of kingship-*Malchut* from *Zeir Anpin*. This is similar to the explanation of Rabbeinu Bachaye,¹⁴²⁵ that the word “gatherer-*Mekoshesh* מְקוֹשֵׁשׁ,” is a composite of two words “*MiKav Shesh* מִקָּו שֶׁשׁ,” indicating that he denied and caused a separation in the matter of the six Supernal directions (which is the aspect of *Zeir Anpin*). That is, he caused a separation, so that there should not be a drawing forth into kingship-*Malchut* from the aspect of beauty-*Tiferet*,¹⁴²⁶ (which includes all six directions, and also includes the drawing forth from the aspect of the crown-*Keter*, which is drawn forth in beauty-*Tiferet* and is the central column).

¹⁴²⁵ See Rabbeinu Bachaye to Numbers 15:33, cited in Likkutei Torah Shlach 43b and Ohr HaTorah, Bereishit 48b and on – That is, the world possesses six directions, which were brought into existence by the power of the Name of *HaShem* יהו"ה that is concealed in His signet of the six directions (יו"ה, וי"ה, , יה"ו, יה"י – See Sefer Yetzirah 1:13). (That is, the three letters *Yod-Hey-Vav* יה"ו have six possible permutations, all of which, when expanded, equal יו"ד ה"א 39 which is the same as “*HaShem* is One-יהו"ה אה"ד-1.”) The day of Shabbat is called a sign-*Or* אות, in that it attests to the novelty of creation in the six days of creation. Thus, the “gatherer-*Mekoshesh* מְקוֹשֵׁשׁ” is appropriately called “*M'Kav Shesh* מִקָּו שֶׁשׁ” which means that he departed from “the central line of the six directions,” denying the novelty of creation in six days, and equating the holy with the mundane. (Also see Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of Intrinsic Being, and the section on the Name *Eheyeh* אהייה"ה, and Vol. 2 regarding Shabbat and the seven days of the week at great length.)

¹⁴²⁶ Which is the central aspect of *Zeir Anpin*, and corresponds to the Name *HaShem* יהו"ה, blessed is He.

Through this, he also caused the second aspect, which is like the second explanation, namely, that he separated the novel created being from the Source of its existence, *HaShem*-יהו"ה blessed is He, until he finally put this into deed, by actually gathering wood on Shabbat - according to the simple understanding of the verse.

This also explains why the verse specifies, that he was “gathering wood on the day of Shabbat.” For, on Shabbat there is an ascent of the *Sefirah* of kingship-*Malchut*,¹⁴²⁷ which even is felt by the creatures, in that they are nullified to Godliness. This aspect must also be drawn into the mundane days of the week. This then, is why the verse specifies that he was “gathering wood (specifically) on the day of Shabbat.” The emphasis here is that even on the day of Shabbat he gathered wood. Likewise, this is why the verse specifies that, “The children of Israel were in the Desert.” Now, there is an opinion¹⁴²⁸ that the sin of the gatherer of the wood (*Mekoshesh*) took place before the Torah was given and there is an opinion¹⁴²⁹ that it took place after the Torah was given. However, both opinions agree that the Torah was given in the desert (*Midbar*-מדבר), but even so, “they found a man gathering wood on the day of Shabbat” while they were in the desert.

¹⁴²⁷ See Likkutei Torah, Behar 44a, and elsewhere.

¹⁴²⁸ See Sifri and Rashi to Numbers 15:32; (Also see Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 8 p. 179.)

¹⁴²⁹ See Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 119b, Tosefot entitled “*Afilu*-אפילו,” and Ramban to Numbers *ibid.*, and elsewhere.

The root of the matter, is that he compared-*Heikesh-*היקש the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge, and therefore his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה was in a way of measure and limitation. Therefore, our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, must be in a way that transcends measure and limitation. It must be from the essential self of the soul that “cleaves and adheres to You.”¹⁴³⁰ This matter comes about by accepting the yoke of *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Kingdom, blessed is He, as we continue to recite,¹⁴³¹ “bearing Your yoke,” through which we come to the aspect of “the singular one-*Yechidah* that unifies You!”¹⁴³²

¹⁴³⁰ See *Hosha'anut* liturgy for the third day.

¹⁴³¹ This is the continuation of the passage of the *Hosha'anut* liturgy there.

¹⁴³² This is the continuation of the *Hosha'anut* liturgy there.