

Discourse 22

“*Acharei HaShem Elo*”*heichem Teileichu -*
After HaShem-יהו"ה your God you shall go”

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Re'eh,
Shabbat Mevarchim and Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul, 5714
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,¹⁶⁵³ “After *HaShem-יהו"ה* your God you shall go and Him shall you fear; keep His commandments and listen to His voice; serve Him and adhere to Him.” Now, this verse includes the entire order of our service of *HaShem-יהו"ה*, blessed is He, beginning with the words, “After *HaShem-יהו"ה* your God you shall go,” until the conclusion of the verse, “and adhere to Him.”¹⁶⁵⁴

However, this must be better understood. For, as well known,¹⁶⁵⁵ the general principle is that the beginning and foundation of service of *HaShem-יהו"ה*, blessed is He, is the matter of fear (*Yirah*) of Him, as in the teaching¹⁶⁵⁶ about fear (*Yirah*) of *HaShem-יהו"ה*, “This is the gate to ascension,”

¹⁶⁵³ Deuteronomy 13:5

¹⁶⁵⁴ See the discourse entitled “*Acharei HaShem Elokeichem*” in Siddur Im Divrei Elokim Chayim 23d and on; and with the glosses in Ohr HaTorah Re'eh p. 686 and on; Shaarei Teshuvah of the Mittler Rebbe, Vol. 1, 25a and on; Ohr HaTorah Vol. 6 p. 2,318 and on; Likkutei Torah Re'eh 19b and on.

¹⁶⁵⁵ See Tanya, Ch. 41; Kuntres HaAvodah Ch. 2 and elsewhere.

¹⁶⁵⁶ Zohar I 8a

indicating that fear (*Yirah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is the gateway and foundation of all service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. This being so, the verse should have begun with the words, "Him shall you fear." Why then does it begin with, "After *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God you shall go"?

We also must better understand the words, "After *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God you shall go." For, in regard to the matter of "going-*Halichah*-הלִיכָה," another verse states,¹⁶⁵⁷ "You shall go in His ways," referring to the way of Torah and *mitzvot*, as it states,¹⁶⁵⁸ "They shall keep the way of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, to do righteousness and justice," referring to Torah and *mitzvot*. However, there is a distinction between the matter of "going in His ways" and the matter of "after *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God you shall go." This being so, we must understand what is meant by, "After *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God you shall go."

Moreover, we must understand the conclusion of the verse, "and adhere to Him (*Tidbakun*-תִּדְבָקוּן)." That is, specifically this matter is the ultimate intent and conclusion of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, (as mentioned above). However, this particular word is stated differently than the other matters mentioned in the verse, in that the long letter *Nun*-ן is the suffix of the word, "adhere-*Tidbakun*-תִּדְבָקוּן," and we must understand the reason for this. For, at first glance, the verse should have either used the long *Nun*-ן as a suffix to all the other matters mentioned in the verse, or should have not used it at all, and simply use the letter *Vav*-ו to conclude the word (stating,

¹⁶⁵⁷ Deuteronomy 28:9

¹⁶⁵⁸ Genesis 18:19

“and adhere to Him-*U’Vo Tidbaku*-(וְבוֹ תִדְבְּקוּ) just like all the other matters mentioned in the verse.

However, what is particularly perplexing about the matter of “and adhere to Him (*Tidbakun*-(וְבוֹ תִדְבְּקוּ),” is the comment in Sifrei on these words, that they mean, “Separate yourselves from the worship of foreign gods (*Avoda Zarah*) and adhere to the All-Present One” (*HaMakom*). However, does not the matter of separating from false gods come before all service of *HaShem*-(יְהוָה), blessed is He? Why then did they explain this as the meaning of the words “and adhere to Him-*U’Vo Tidbakun*-(וְבוֹ תִדְבְּקוּ,” which refer to the conclusion and culmination of service of *HaShem*-(יְהוָה), blessed is He?

2.

The explanation is that the difference between “going in His ways” and “going after *HaShem*-(יְהוָה),” is that “going in His ways” refers to the matter of eliciting drawings forth from Above to below. This is similar to a way or path, the purpose of which is to be tread upon in order to go from one place to another. The same is true of, “the way of *HaShem*-(יְהוָה),” that is, through the study of *HaShem*’s-(יְהוָה) Torah and the fulfillment of His *mitzvot*, we draw *HaShem*’s-(יְהוָה) Godliness into the world, which is a matter of going (*Halichah*) from Above to below.

However, there is an additional form by which we serve *HaShem*-(יְהוָה), blessed is He, which is the matter of ascent from below to Above. This mode of serving *HaShem*-(יְהוָה), blessed

is He, is called “work” (*Avodah*). That is, the “way of *HaShem*-יהו"ה” which is the matter of drawing *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Godliness from Above to below, is the way of Torah. In contrast, serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with work (*Avodah*), is the matter of the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*) and is the matter of ascent from below to above. This likewise applies to serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in our prayers, “which were established to correspond to the daily *Tamid* offerings.”¹⁶⁵⁹ This is because prayer (*Tefillah*) is also a matter of ascent from below to Above.

We clearly recognize this in the order of the prayers. That is, our daily prayers begin with the recitation of, “I submit before You-*Modeh Ani Lefanecha*-לפניך אני מודה,” and then later, with the words, “Submit to *HaShem-Hodu LaHaShem*-ה.הודו ליהו"ה.” That is, the prayers begin with submission (*Hoda'ah*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, even without comprehension or grasp. This is especially so of the submission (*Hoda'ah*) when saying the words, “I submit before You-*Modeh Ani Lefanecha*-לפניך אני מודה” immediately upon waking, even before ritually washing one’s hands (*Netilat Yadayim*) and saying the morning blessings. A Jew thus ascends and goes from below to Above, starting from the beginning of the prayer service (*Avodah*), until he arrives at sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the recital of *Shema* and the *Amidah* prayer, which are the ultimate culmination of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, through prayer (*Avodah*).

¹⁶⁵⁹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 26a-b

Now, the matter of ascension (*Ha'ala'ah*) has a superiority, over and above drawing down (*Hamshachah*) from Above to below.¹⁶⁶⁰

That is, the drawings down of *HaShem's*-יהו"ה Godliness that are elicited from Above to below, are only the aspect of revelations (*Giluyim*) of His Godliness, and nothing more. In contrast, the matter of ascent from below to Above, is in such a manner that it brings about the inclusion of the lower in the upper, and is much loftier. This is explained in Likkutei Torah¹⁶⁶¹ on the verse,¹⁶⁶² “Return, Israel, **until-עד** *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God.” It explains that this refers to becoming nullified and included in the aspect of “*HaShem*-יהו"ה your God,” and that this inclusion (*Hitkallelut*) is much loftier than revelations (*Giluyim*) of *HaShem's*-יהו"ה Godliness. Now, this is also the meaning of, “After *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God you shall go.” That is, it refers travelling from below to Above, until one comes to be included (*Hitkallelut*) in the aspect of “*HaShem*-יהו"ה your God.”

3.

Now, since the matter of “After *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God you shall go,” which is stated at the beginning of the verse, is a matter of ascension, it is therefore understood that all other matters enumerated in the verse are also found in the ascension

¹⁶⁶⁰ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5698 p. 148 and on, and elsewhere.

¹⁶⁶¹ See Likkutei Torah, Drushei Shabbat Shuvah 67c

¹⁶⁶² Hosea 14:2

of prayer. In other words, the very first ascension of prayer is the matter of “After *HaShem*-ה' יהו"ה your God you shall go,” and one then goes and ascends from level to level until he reaches the level indicated by the words, “and adhere to Him.”

To explain further, the beginning of service of *HaShem*-ה' יהו"ה, blessed is He, is indicated by the words, “After (*Acharei*-אחרי) *HaShem*-ה' יהו"ה your God you shall go.” The word “after-*Acharei*” is of the same root as “backside-*Achorayim*-אחוריים,” like something that is cast backward, over one’s shoulders,¹⁶⁶³ indicating matters that either are not of the side of goodness, or even if they are permissible matters, nevertheless, are entirely secondary and inferior to the inner purpose, which is to fulfill *HaShem*’s-ה' יהו"ה Supernal intent in actualizing “a dwelling place for the Holy One, blessed is He, in the lower worlds.”¹⁶⁶⁴ However, one begins his service of *HaShem*-ה' יהו"ה in these matters of the “backside-*Achorayim*-אחוריים.” In other words, when it is “after-*Acharei*-אחרי *HaShem*-ה' יהו"ה your God,” (through this, one comes to) “you shall go.”

To further clarify, the service of the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*) began with the daily service of removing the ashes (*Terumat HaDeshen*), wherein a portion was consumed in its place¹⁶⁶⁵ and the remainder was removed to the outside.¹⁶⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶³ See Tanya, Ch. 22 (27b)

¹⁶⁶⁴ See Midrash Tanchuma, Bechukotai 3; Naso 16; Bereishit Rabba Ch. 3; Bamidbar Rabba 13:6; Tanya Ch. 36; and elsewhere.

¹⁶⁶⁵ Rashi entitled “*Trumat HaDeshen*” to Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 26a; Tosefot entitled “*Nivla'in*” to Talmud Bavli, Yoma 21a.

¹⁶⁶⁶ See Siddur Im Divrei Elokim Chayim 30c and on; Ohr HaTorah Beshalach p. 435 and on, p. 452 and on, p. 463.

Additionally, for this service of removing the ashes (*Terumat HaDeshen*), special garments were worn, whereas different garments were worn for the service of the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*). For, since in this service a portion of the ashes related to the outside, it therefore was necessary for special garments to be worn.

The same is likewise true of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in prayer. That is, prayer begins with the midnight service of *Tikkun Chatzot* when one takes account of all the various matters that are not of the side of goodness and relate to the external. About this our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹⁶⁶⁷ "One may only stand to pray from an approach of gravity," to which Rashi comments, "with submission and humility (*Hachna'ah*)."¹⁶⁶⁸ However, the sages also stated,¹⁶⁶⁹ "One may only stand to pray from a state of joy." About this, *Iggeret HaTeshuvah* explains¹⁶⁶⁹ that whoever is incapable of immediately turning their hearts from one extreme to the other, must start with gravity, submission, and humility in the midnight prayer of *Tikkun Chatzot*, when he takes account of everything that has transpired with him etc. Even though the accounting and self-reflection that takes place during the midnight prayer of *Tikkun Chatzot* is about everything he did the previous day, nevertheless, this is in preparation for prayer and is the beginning of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the current day. This is similar to the removal of the ashes

¹⁶⁶⁷ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 30b

¹⁶⁶⁸ See Talmud Bavli, Brachot 30b

¹⁶⁶⁹ Tanya, *Iggeret HaTeshuva*, Ch. 10 (99b)

(*Terumat HaDeshen*), which was preparatory for serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, on the current day with the sacrifices (*Korbanot*) that were offered on the altar.

Now, just as in the removal of the ashes (*Terumat HaDeshen*) there were two components; the portion that remained consumed in its place and the portion that was removed to the outside, this is likewise so regarding the toil in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, during the midnight prayer of *Tikkun Chatzot*. That is, through one's efforts in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה during *Tikkun Chatzot*, some matters are affected to become included in holiness (*Kedushah*). In other words, even though, at first, these matters could not become included in holiness (*Kedushah*), since they were lacking the requisite matter of sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, nonetheless, through one's efforts in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, during the midnight prayer of *Tikkun Chatzot*, he affects that they become included in holiness (*Kedushah*).

However, there also are matters that he currently cannot include in holiness (*Kedushah*) and he therefore must remove them from the four cubits of his personal space, so that they will not distract and confuse him in his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. This is as explained in *Iggeret HaTeshuvah*¹⁶⁷⁰ on the verse,¹⁶⁷¹ "My sin is opposite me always," wherein the verse specifies "opposite me-*Negdi*-נגדי," meaning,¹⁶⁷² "at a

¹⁶⁷⁰ Tanya, *Iggeret HaTeshuva*, Ch. 11 (100b and on)

¹⁶⁷¹ Psalms 51:5

¹⁶⁷² See Rashi to Numbers 2:2; Tanya, *Iggeret HaTeshuva*, Ch. 11 *ibid*.

distance.” That is, in order that his sins will not distract and confuse him from his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, it is necessary to put them at a distance, until such time when he will be able to include them within holiness too.

Now, just as there is service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the aspect of the “backside-*Achorayim*-אחוריים” regarding matters that actually are not of the side of goodness, so likewise, even in matters of goodness themselves, there also is service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the aspect of the “backside-*Achorayim*-אחוריים.” This is because in everything that exists, there is an inner aspect (*Pnimityut*) and an outer aspect (*Chitzoniyut*), which is the aspect of the “backside-*Achorayim*-אחוריים.”

To further explain, service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the aspect of the “backside” (*Achorayim*) of goodness itself, is when he contemplates that the entire chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*) is all a matter of “backside” (*Achorayim*) and externality (*Chitzoniyut*). For, the totality of it all is only drawn into being from a mere glimmer of *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Godliness, as it states,¹⁶⁷³ “Let them praise The Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, for His Name alone is exalted; His splendor (*Hod*-הוד) is above earth and heaven.” That is, the entire chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*) is just drawn from His Name and is but a mere glimmer of His Godliness. Moreover, even in this itself, it is just the aspect of “His

¹⁶⁷³ Psalms 148:13

splendor,” and nothing more. That is, the entire chaining down of the worlds is merely a glimmer of a glimmer.

About this we recite,¹⁶⁷⁴ “*Baruch SheAmar*-Blessed is He who spoke and the world came into being; blessed is He, blessed is He who says and does, blessed is He who decrees and fulfills, blessed is He who creates the world, blessed is He who has compassion on the earth, blessed is He who has compassion on the creatures, blessed is He who recompenses good reward to those who fear Him, blessed is He who lives forever and exists eternally, blessed is He who redeems and saves, blessed is His Name.”

Now, from the words, “Blessed is He-*Baruch Hoo*- ברוך הוא” until the words, “Blessed is His Name-*Baruch Shemo*- ברוך שמו,” the word “Blessed-*Baruch*- ברוך” is mentioned ten times, corresponding to the Ten *Sefirot*,¹⁶⁷⁵ which include the entire chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*). However, about all this we conclude, “Blessed is His Name-*Baruch Shemo*- ברוך שמו,” meaning that it all is just the aspect of a name and is merely a glimmer of illumination.

This is similarly so of the blessing, “*Yishtabach Shimcha*-May Your Name be praised”¹⁶⁷⁶ which comes at the end of the verses of praise (*Psukei d’Zimrah*) and concludes the blessing, “*Baruch SheAmar*-Blessed is He who spoke and the world came into being.” That is, after contemplating

¹⁶⁷⁴ See the liturgy of the morning prayers, the beginning of the verses of song (*Psukei d’Zimrah*).

¹⁶⁷⁵ See Seder HaYom to *Baruch She’amar*.

¹⁶⁷⁶ See the liturgy of the morning prayers, the conclusion of the verses of song (*Psukei d’Zimrah*).

(*Hitbonenut*) the verses of song (*Psukei d'Zimrah*) and praising *HaShem's* יהו"ה greatness in the heavens and the earth, we conclude by saying “*Yishtabach Shimcha*-May Your Name be praised!” In other words, (the entire chaining down of the worlds) is only from His Name, and is just the aspect of the externality (*Chitzoniyut*) and backside (*Achorayim*) alone, as indicated by the words, “After (*Acharei*-אחרי) *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God you shall go.”

However, it is after the service indicated by the words, “After (*Acharei*-אחרי) *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God you shall go,” meaning, the beginning of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה in the midnight prayer of *Tikkun Chatzot*, which involves the toil of self-reflection about matters that are entirely external and extraneous, and is then followed by serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in contemplating (*Hitbonenut*) how the entire the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*) is merely the aspect of the “backside” (*Achorayim*) and externality (*Chitzoniyut*), through which one comes to the aspect of “You shall go,” referring to the “running” (*Ratzo*) desire and love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that results from this.

In other words, since he comes to sense that the entire chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*) is nothing but a mere glimmer of *HaShem's* יהו"ה Godliness, he is thereby aroused with a great and inner love for the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential Being of *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, who utterly transcends all worlds.

This then, is the love (*Ahavah*) that one must come to in the recital of *Shema*, when he says, “You shall love *HaShem*-

יהו"ה your God etc.” This follows the first blessing that precedes the *Shema* recital, which discusses the love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the angelic beings, and it also follows the second blessing that precedes the *Shema* recital, which relates to the love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the souls. It also follows the first verse of the *Shema*,¹⁶⁷⁷ “Listen Israel, *HaShem*-יהו"ה our God, *HaShem* is One-*HaShem Echad*-יהו"ה אחד,” in which one gives up his soul to the Oneness of *HaShem*-יהו"ה אחד with utter self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*).¹⁶⁷⁸ Through this, he then comes to the state indicated by the continuation,¹⁶⁷⁹ “You shall love *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your being,” in a unlimited way (*Bli Gvul*). This is the meaning of “You shall go (*Teileichu*-תלכו),” which is the matter of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with love, as indicated by the verse,¹⁶⁸⁰ “He went (*Haloch*-הלך) and traveled to the south.”¹⁶⁸¹

4.

However, when one’s service is with love (*Ahavah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, there still is “the one who loves,”¹⁶⁸² and it thus

¹⁶⁷⁷ Deuteronomy 6:4

¹⁶⁷⁸ See Zohar II 119a; Zohar III 33a; Shaalot uTeshuvot HaRashba Vol. 5, section 55; Pri Etz Chayim Shaar HaKriyat Shma Ch. 12; Bayit Chadash to Tur, Orach Chayim 61; Ohr HaTorah VaEtchanan Vol. 6 p. 2,244 and elsewhere.

¹⁶⁷⁹ Deuteronomy 6:5

¹⁶⁸⁰ Genesis 12:9; See Likkutei Torah Acharei 19d; Siddur Im Divrei Elokim Chayim ibid. 25a; Ohr HaTorah Acharei p. 691; Shaarei Teshuvah ibid. p. 32d; Ohr HaTorah ibid. Vol. 6 p. 2,320.

¹⁶⁸¹ South refers to the quality of kindness and love.

¹⁶⁸² See Torah Ohr, Hosafot 114d and elsewhere.

is imperative for there to also be the matter of fear (*Yirah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. The verse therefore continues, "Him shall you fear." This refers to the upper fear (*Yirah Ila'ah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that comes after love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה as a result of the innermost aspect of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness which transcends all worlds. In other words, because he knows and senses that the entire chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*) is only a mere glimmer of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness, he therefore is roused with an awakening of love of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness that utterly transcends the worlds.

However, because of the sense of the exalted wondrousness of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness, he comes to a state of great fear (*Yirah*-יראה), as it states,¹⁶⁸³ "O' *HaShem*-יהו"ה, I have heard of Your renown; I was fearful (*Yareiti*-יראתי)." That is, because "I have heard of Your renown (*Shama'ati Shima'cha*-שמעתי שמעך)," which is the sense of the exalted wondrousness of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, therefore, "I was fearful (*Yareiti*-יראתי)."

This then, is the subject matter of the second portion of the *Shema* recital, which begins,¹⁶⁸⁴ "It shall be that if you diligently listen (*Shamo'a Tishme'u*-שמעו תשמעו) to My commandments... Guard yourselves, lest your heart be lured away etc." In other words, the fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, ("Guard yourselves etc.") results from the matter of listening ("It shall be that if you diligently listen-*Shamo'a*

¹⁶⁸³ Habakkuk 3:2

¹⁶⁸⁴ Deuteronomy 11:13

Tishme'u-שמעו תשמעו),¹⁶⁸⁵ which is the matter of sensing the exalted wondrousness of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. This is the upper fear (*Yirah Ila'ah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, meaning that it is fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that comes from *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness that utterly transcends all worlds.

About this the verse states, "Him shall you fear," specifying "Him-*Oto*-אותו."¹⁶⁸⁶ This shows that this is not the fear indicated by the verse,¹⁶⁸⁷ "Fear **from** *HaShem*-יהו"ה all the earth, be in dread of Him all inhabitants of the world." Rather, this is higher fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, about which it states,¹⁶⁸⁸ "Fear *HaShem*-יהו"ה, O' [you] His Holy Ones, for there is no lacking for those who fear Him."¹⁶⁸⁹

5.

Now, even when service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is with love and fear of Him, this is still not adequate. For, since in his heart, man is in a state of emotional movement and the feelings of his heart have two modes of motion; love (*Ahavah*) and fear (*Yirah*), which are two opposites – meaning, that when he is in a state of love (*Ahavah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה,

¹⁶⁸⁵ See Torah Ohr Vayechi 45b, 46a.

¹⁶⁸⁶ That is, in the third person, which is concealing, and thus indicative of the awesome wondrousness and exaltedness of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential Being of *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He.

¹⁶⁸⁷ Psalms 33:8

¹⁶⁸⁸ Psalms 34:10

¹⁶⁸⁹ See Likkutei Torah Acharei 21c; Bamidbar 13b; Kuntres HaAvodah Ch. 3, and elsewhere.

blessed is He, he is not in a state of fear (*Yirah*) of Him, and when He is in a state of fear (*Yirah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, he is not in a state of love (*Ahavah*) of Him – it thus is understood that, ultimately, this is not true love and fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.¹⁶⁹⁰

Rather, for his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, to be in truth, a third aspect, which transcends both these modes and includes both, must be present. This is explained in Torah Ohr on the Torah Portion of Vayechi,¹⁶⁹¹ that the love (*Ahavah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, like that of Reuven-רְאוּבֵן, and the fear (*Yirah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, like that of Shimon-שִׁמְעוֹן, which are the aspects of “running” (*Ratzo*) and “returning” (*Shov*), are insufficient in and of themselves. Rather, there also must specifically be the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of Levi-לֵוִי, who includes them both.

This then, is the meaning of the continuation of the verse, “listen to His voice,” referring to the voice (*Kol*-קוֹל) of Torah, which includes both lines and modes. It is about this that (immediately after the *Shema* recital) we recite, “True and certain, established and enduring, right and faithful, beloved and cherished, delightful and sweet, awesome and mighty, correct and acceptable, good and beautiful is **this word** (*HaDavar HaZeh*) that is upon us, for all eternity.” That is, “this word-*HaDavar HaZeh* הַזֶּה” refers to speaking the words of Torah, in that specifically the speech of the words of

¹⁶⁹⁰ See at length in Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 6.

¹⁶⁹¹ See Torah Ohr, Vayechi 45a and on.

Torah are, “True and certain, established and enduring, right and faithful, beloved and cherished, delightful and sweet, awesome and mighty, correct and acceptable, good and beautiful.”

The explanation is that one’s study of Torah must specifically be in a way of sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. For, just as in prayer, we recite,¹⁶⁹² “Lord-*Adona*” יְיָ אֲדֹנָי, open my lips and my mouth will declare Your praise,” so likewise, about the study of Torah it states,¹⁶⁹³ “Whoever reads and studies Torah, the Holy One, blessed is He, reads and studies opposite him.” It similarly states,¹⁶⁹⁴ “Make your ears hear what You (*Atah*-אתה) bring out of your mouth.” The word “You-*Atah*-אתה” here, refers to the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, the *Shechinah*.¹⁶⁹⁵ In other words, one’s study of Torah must be in a manner in which you “Make your ears hear what You (the Holy One, blessed is He), brings out of your mouth.” This is because the Torah is the speech of the Holy One, blessed is He, and the person studying it merely repeats the words of the Holy One, blessed is He. Therefore, when a person’s approach to the Torah study is in this manner, it is indeed, “True and certain, established and enduring, right and faithful, beloved and

¹⁶⁹² Psalms 51:17

¹⁶⁹³ Tanna d’Bei Eliyahu Rabba Ch. 18

¹⁶⁹⁴ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 13a

¹⁶⁹⁵ See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 4 (Section 3), *The Vowels of Creation, The Gate of The Foundation*; Also see *Tanya Shaar HaYichud veHaEmunah*, Ch. 2.

cherished, delightful and sweet, awesome and mighty, correct and acceptable, good and beautiful.”

This then, is the meaning of the words, “listen to His voice.” That is, the voice is the voice of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, who sits and studies opposite you. Thus, the study of Torah should be in such a manner that you cause your ears to listen to the words of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that are coming out of your mouth.

However, to come to this manner of Torah study, it must be prefaced by service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, indicated by the words, “After *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God you shall go,” which is the matter of preparing for prayer. That is, it must be preceded by contemplating (*Hitbonenut*) that the entire chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshehut*) is but a mere glimmer of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה reality, as well as the preparation that precedes this, in the midnight prayer of *Tikkun Chatzot*.

Through these preparations in the aspect of “After *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God,” one then comes to the matter of “You shall go,” which is the matter of love (*Ahavah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the first paragraph of the *Shema* recital. Subsequent to this he will come to the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, indicated by the words, “Him shall you fear,” in the second paragraph of the *Shema* recital.

This love (*Ahavah*) and fear (*Yirah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, will then bring him to the continuation of the verse, “Keep His commandments.” This refers to the fulfillment of the *mitzvot*, which is the subject of the third paragraph of the *Shema* recital, that is, the paragraph about the

Tzitzit-fringes. For, the word *Tzitzit*-צִיצִית-600, with the eight strands and the five knots of the *Tzitzit*-fringes, equals the תרי"ג-613 *mitzvot*-commandments. He then will arrive at the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, indicated by the continuing words, "listen to His voice," referring to studying Torah study in a manner that you, "Make your ears hear what You (*Atah*-אתה) bring out of your mouth," about which the continuation after the recitation of the *Shema* states, "True and certain, established and enduring, right and faithful, beloved and cherished, delightful and sweet, awesome and mighty, correct and acceptable, good and beautiful is **this word** (*HaDavar HaZeh*) that is upon us, for all eternity."

The verse then continues and states, "serve Him." What is meant here is not the service of a simple servant (*Eved Pashut*), since, after ascending to the above-mentioned levels, it is inapplicable that his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, would only be the service of a simple servant. Rather, what is meant is the service of a faithful servant (*Eved Ne'eman*), which means total and complete sublimation and nullification of his very being to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. This is the level of the *Amidah* prayer, at which point he is "like a servant standing before his Master,"¹⁶⁹⁶ with complete nullification of his being (*Bittul b'Metziyut*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

This is to say that all the levels that preceded this are only the aspect of the sublimation of his tangible being (*Bittul HaYesh*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה and nothing more. They therefore do

¹⁶⁹⁶ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 10a

not reach the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*, but are only in the worlds of Creation, Formation and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*) wherein “He and His vitality and organs are *not* one.”¹⁶⁹⁷ It is specifically in the sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) of the *Amidah* prayer, that one comes to a state of utter nullification of sense of independent existence entirely.

In other words, he is entirely and completely nullified of any independent being and has no existence whatsoever, except as a receptacle for *HaShem*’s יהו"ה Godliness, blessed is He. It is specifically through this kind of sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that he reaches the aspect of the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*. About this the verse states, “serve Him (*Oto*-אותו),” specifically Him-*Oto*-אותו.¹⁶⁹⁸

6.

However, as of yet the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the *Amidah* prayer is still not sufficient. This is because after the sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the *Amidah* prayer, when one finishes his prayers and becomes involved in matters of physicality, meaning that he will have to be involved even in coarse matters, it is possible that he may fall from his level of sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed

¹⁶⁹⁷ See Torah Ohr, beginning of Vayera, and elsewhere.

¹⁶⁹⁸ As mentioned before, the word “Him-*Oto*-אותו” is in the third person, refers to the concealed Essence of The Singular Preexistent Intrinsic Being of *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He.

is He. This is as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹⁶⁹⁹ “One who prays must direct his eyes downward and his heart upward.”

Now, the reason he must direct his eyes downward is because he must be wary of the lower. For it is quite possible that during prayer he is in the proper state of sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, but that afterwards, when he becomes engaged in matters of physicality, he may fall from his level of sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

Therefore, the matter of, “adhere to Him-*U’Vo Tidbakun*-וְיִבְרֻךְ תִּדְבָּקוּן” is necessary. This refers to adhesion (*Dveikut*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a manner that they literally become one thing, similar to the verse,¹⁷⁰⁰ “Therefore a man shall... adhere (*Davak*-דָּבַק) to his wife and they shall become one flesh.” In such a case, there is no concern that he may fall from his level.

Now, the reason a fall is possible after prayer is because even during prayer, he was a being unto himself, only that he was a receptacle for *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה light and illumination. However, if his sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is in such a manner that he is not just a receptacle to receive light and illumination, nor is he even like a limb or organ receiving vitality from the soul, but instead literally becomes one with *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in such

¹⁶⁹⁹ Talmud Bavli, Yevamot 105b; See Likkutei Torah Acharei 24a; Sefer HaMitzvot of the Tzemach Tzedek 24a, and elsewhere.

¹⁷⁰⁰ Genesis 2:24

a case, it is entirely inapplicable for him to fall from his state of adhesion (*Dveikut*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

In prayer, this is the service of the *Nefilat Apayim* prayer, which immediately follows the sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה of the *Amidah* prayer itself. This may be understood from the explanation of the verse,¹⁷⁰¹ “The man was astonished at her, reflecting silently to know whether *HaShem*-יהו"ה had made his journey successful or not.” It is explained that two manners of sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) are reflected in this verse.

The first is in the word, “astonished-*Mishta'eh*-משתאה,” which is a term of “amazement-*Shimamon*-שממון.”¹⁷⁰² The second is in the word “silently-*Macharish*-מחריש,” which is higher than the matter of astonishment. For, the sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) indicated by the word, “astonishment-*Shimamon*-שממון,” only indicates the loss of self-awareness, but not that he becomes included in the object of his contemplation. In contrast, the sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) indicated by the word, “silently-*Macharish*-מחריש,” is that he becomes included in it.

Now, there are various analogies that further explain this. The first is that it is like a person who hears a very deep intellectual matter that is beyond his capability to grasp. The effect is that he becomes totally confused and cannot understand what is happening with him, and in this manner he

¹⁷⁰¹ Genesis 24:21; Also see the discourse entitled “*V’HaIsh Mishta’eh*” in Siddur Im Divrei Elokim Chayim 91c and on.

¹⁷⁰² See Rashi to Genesis 24:21 *ibid.* at length.

loses of his sense of self-existence. Nevertheless, he does not become included in the object of his contemplation. However, afterwards, he comes to a state of sublimation and nullification in which he becomes included in the intellectual matter, such that he becomes completely taken by it. This second matter is indicated by the words, “reflecting silently to know (*Macharish LaDa'at* לחריש לדעת-*at*).”

There is yet another, more appropriate analogy. This is analogous to planting a seed in the earth, from which growth takes place. However, for growth to come about, the seed must first go through a process of decomposition, by which the seed undergoes a loss of its existence. Subsequently, it becomes absorbed and included in the power of growth of the earth, and it is specifically then, that the plant grows from a seedling to full maturity.

The same is likewise true in our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. That is, there first must be a loss and nullification of one's self-existence, until he has nothing in himself at all and is merely a receptacle for the bestowal he desires. Nonetheless, he has yet to be included and absorbed in the object of his desire. This aspect is the sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the *Amidah* prayer.

However, the nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה of the *Nefilat Apayim* prayer is loftier than this. This is because the manner of adhesion (*Dveikut*), inclusion and absorption to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the *Nefilat Apayim* prayer is to the point that he becomes one with *HaShem's*-יהו"ה existence.

There therefore is no concern that he may fall from his level, since it is entirely inapplicable for him to separate from *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, since he has become included and absorbed in Him to the point that this is his very existence.

Because of this, the Zohar¹⁷⁰³ states that the *Nefilat Apayim* prayer is very lofty and that through it, influence is drawn down below. Now, at first glance, this is not understood. Is it not so that even in the *Amidah* prayer one reaches a state of sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) of his very existence to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, "like a servant before his Master?"¹⁷⁰⁴ Moreover, even in the *Amidah* prayer there are drawings forth to below, which is the matter of the eighteen blessings of the *Amidah* prayer that are likened to the eighteen vertebrae of spinal column¹⁷⁰⁵ through which vitality is drawn to the entire body, and in the same way, the eighteen blessings of the *Amidah* prayer draw vitality to the world. This being so, what exactly is the novelty of the nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, attained in the *Nefilat Apayim* prayer?

The explanation is that the nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה of the *Amidah* prayer is in such a way that he merely becomes like receptacle, whereas the nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה of the *Nefilat Apayim* prayer, is in a way of adhesion (*Dveikut*), absorption and inclusion

¹⁷⁰³ Zohar III 120b and on; 260a.

¹⁷⁰⁴ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 10a

¹⁷⁰⁵ See Talmud Bavli, Brachot 26b; Zohar III 255b; Likkutei Torah Balak 70c and on; Maamarei Admor HaEmtza'ee Balak p. 1,525 and on; Maamarei Admor HaEmtza'ee Kuntreisim, Kuntres Inyan Tefilah, translated as Praying with Passion.

(*Hitkallelut*), as explained above. This is because the sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the *Shema* and the *Amidah*, are aspects of the potential to sacrifice of one's soul (*Mesirat Nefesh*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, which is natural to the Godly soul, in and of itself. However, this is unrelated to the body. In contrast, the nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the *Nefilat Apayim* prayer, is the actual self-sacrifice of one's very being (*Mesirat Nefesh*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and with the body itself.

This is similar to what is said about some *Tzaddikim* who were wondrously righteous, such as the Baal Shem Tov, about whom it was related¹⁷⁰⁶ that when he had an ascent of the soul, his soul became entirely divested of all physical life and bodily coarseness, like a person who has fainted. This is actual self-sacrifice of the soul (*Mesirat Nefesh*) that includes the body, in that the body becomes like an inanimate stone. The same is likewise so of the self-sacrifice of one's very being (*Mesirat Nefesh*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the *Nefilat Apayim* prayer.

Thus, it is specifically during the *Nefilat Apayim* prayer that *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness is drawn down even further, in a completely incomparable manner that is not in a way of gradation. In other words, even though in the *Amidah* prayer there also is the matter of drawing forth *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness, nevertheless, it is specifically in a way of gradation.

¹⁷⁰⁶ Shaarei Teshuvah of the Mittler Rebbe 46d

For, it is the self-sacrifice of the soul (*Mesirat Nefesh*) and not of the body, and therefore, because of concern that he will fall from his level afterwards, it is not possible to draw this into physicality. Only in the *Nefilat Apayim* prayer does the self-sacrifice of his being (*Mesirat Nefesh*) also include his body. Thus, the drawing down of *HaShem's* יהו"ה Godliness comes all the way down, and not at all in a way of gradations.

About this the verse states, “adhere to Him-*U’Vo Tidbakun* ובו תדבקון,” specifically with the inclusion of the long *Nun*-ן as a suffix. This is because the suffix *Nun*-ן descends below the line, indicating that *HaShem's* יהו"ה Godliness descends all the way down. In other words, this is because of his adhesion (*Dveikut*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, (in that he cleaves to Him) high Above, (in that the *Nefilat Apayim* even transcends the *Amidah* prayer, which is in the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*. This means that the aspect of “adhere to Him” is higher than the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*). Therefore, *HaShem's* יהו"ה Godliness is drawn all the way down.

This also explains Sifrei's comments that the words, “adhere to Him,” mean, “Separate yourselves from the worship of foreign gods (*Avoda Zarah*) and adhere to the All-Present One” (*HaMakom*). This refers to the refinement of the three entirely impure husks of evil (*Shalosh Kelipot HaTmei'ot*). For, in all of the previously discussed states of sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that precede the nullification (*Bittul*) indicated by the words, “adhere to Him,” the refinement and clarification of the three impure husks of evil (*Shalosh Kelipot HaTmei'ot*) is not

possible. It is specifically in the aspect indicated by the words, “adhere to Him,” – the ultimate culmination of *HaShem*’s יהו"ה Supernal intent in the service of Him – that there is a state of nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem* יהו"ה such as this, that *HaShem*’s יהו"ה Godliness descends all the way down.

7.

This then, is the meaning of the verse,¹⁷⁰⁷ “After *HaShem* יהו"ה your God you shall go,” which is the matter of serving *HaShem* יהו"ה, blessed is He, with love (*Ahavah*) of Him. For although service of *HaShem* יהו"ה, blessed is He, begins with fear (*Yirah*) of Him, and fear of *HaShem* יהו"ה is the foundation of serving Him, nonetheless, this is only so when considering the order of our service of *HaShem* יהו"ה, blessed is He, throughout the day in general, in that it must begin with fear (*Yirah*) of *HaShem* יהו"ה, blessed is He. However, this verse conveys the order of serving *HaShem* יהו"ה, blessed is He, within prayer itself, and the primary matter of prayer itself, is specifically the matter of love (*Ahavah*) of *HaShem* יהו"ה, blessed is He.

In contrast, fear (*Yirah*) of *HaShem* יהו"ה, blessed is He, does not relate specifically to prayer alone. For, although prayer is also an appropriate time to fear *HaShem* יהו"ה, nevertheless, fear (*Yirah*) of Him can also be present at other times, so much so, that it even is possible for a person to be in

¹⁷⁰⁷ Deuteronomy 13:5

a natural state of fear (*Yirah Teeveet*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. To clarify, even though it is imperative that prayer should also include fear (*Yirah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and this is why the matter of fear (*Yirah*) is hinted at in this verse. "After *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God you shall go," and also is indicated in the verse,¹⁷⁰⁸ "His left hand is under my head," nevertheless, it only hints to this. For, although fear (*Yirah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is imperative to prayer, nonetheless, it is not the primary matter of prayer at all.

Rather, the primary matter of prayer is love (*Ahavah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. His honorable holiness, the Rebbe Rashab, whose soul is in Eden, explains this at great length in *Kuntres HaAvodah*.¹⁷⁰⁹ He explains there that prayer (*Tefillah*-תפלה) is the bonding of the soul to *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness, and that the word prayer-*Tefillah*-תפלה is related to the Mishnaic term,¹⁷¹⁰ "One who **bonds** an earthenware vessel-*HaTofel Kli Cheres*-התופל כלי חרס," and that through prayer, the sparks of holiness are elevated. These two matters (the bonding of the soul to *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness and the elevation of the

¹⁷⁰⁸ Song of Songs 2:6; See Siddur Im Divrei Elokim Chayim ibid. 23c and on; Ohr HaTorah ibid. p. 686 and on; Shaarei Teshuvah ibid. p. 22c and on.

¹⁷⁰⁹ *Kuntres HaAvodah* Ch. 1 and Ch. 3 and on.

¹⁷¹⁰ Mishnah Kelim 3:5; See Torah Ohr Terumah 79d; Sefer HaMaamarim 5709 p. 79 and the notes of the Rebbe there (regarding the distinction between prayer-*Tefilah*-תפלה spelled with the letter *Tav*-ת as opposed to the word bonds-*Tofel*-תופל of this Mishnah which is normally spelled with the letter *Tet*-ט. The Rebbe notes that there are alternate versions of the text of the Mishnah (that are indeed with the letter *Tav*-ת), and also cites to Torah Ohr ibid. and to Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 47, as well as to Rashi to Genesis 30:8 (regarding the name Naftali-נפתלי which is related to both prayer-*Tefilah*-תפלה and the term fastened-*Pateel*-פתיל (Numbers 19:15) which is likewise a term that indicates bonding.)

sparks of holiness) are specifically accomplished through love (*Ahavah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

This is why the verse begins with the words, "After *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God you shall go," referring to the matter of love (*Ahavah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, as previously explained. This is followed by the words, "Him shall you fear," referring to the upper fear (*Yirah Ila'ah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. The verse continues, "Listen to His voice," referring to the matter of Torah study, and continues, "serve Him" referring to the sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the *Amidah* prayer. Finally, it concludes with, "adhere to Him (*Tidbakun*-תדבקון)," referring to the ultimate culmination of *HaShem* 's-יהו"ה Supernal intent in the service of Him, blessed is He, through which he becomes entirely one with *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

8.

Now, just as the general service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is divided into the three modes; Torah study, fulfilling the *mitzvot* and prayer, so likewise, the various times in the year also have these three divisions. The time for serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in prayer, is during the ten days of repentance, as stated,¹⁷¹¹ "Seek *HaShem*-יהו"ה when He can be found, call upon Him when He is near," referring to the ten days of repentance, including Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur.

¹⁷¹¹ Isaiah 55:6

This is because, during the ten days of repentance “He can be found” by a person who prays individually (with the same efficacy as congregational prayer during the rest of the year).¹⁷¹²

Now, the preparation for the ten days of repentance takes place during the month of Elul. That is, just as the daily prayers must be preceded by the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the midnight prayer of *Tikkun Chatzot*, the approach of which is lowliness and humility, as indicated by verse “After *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God you shall go,” after which one comes to the matter of love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה; so it is with the ten days of repentance, when we pray for the entire coming year.

This too must be prefaced with the preparatory service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the month of Elul. That is, Elul is set aside as a time to take stock of one’s soul. It is a time for self-reflection and taking account of the entire preceding year, similar to the reckoning done during the midnight prayer of *Tikkun Chatzot* of everything that transpired during the preceding day. This is the meaning of the verse,¹⁷¹³ “His left arm is under my head,” through which one comes to the continuation of the verse, “and His right arm embraces me,” which is the matter of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with love (*Ahavah*).

¹⁷¹² Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 18a; Yevamot 49b, 105a.

¹⁷¹³ Song of Songs 2:6; See Siddur Im Divrei Elokim Chayim ibid. 23c and on; Ohr HaTorah ibid. p. 686 and on; Shaarei Teshuvah ibid. p. 22c and on.

This likewise relates to the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, during the month of Elul. For, the word Elul-אלול is an acrostic of the verse,¹⁷¹⁴ "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine-*Ani LeDodi v'Dodi Li* לי-אני לדודי ודודי לי," referring to the matter of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with love (*Ahavah*) in a way of ascent from below to Above.¹⁷¹⁵ We thus find¹⁷¹⁶ that during the month of Elul, one's service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is in a way of "After *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God you shall go."

Now, on the days that the *Selichot* (penitential) prayers are said, particularly on Rosh HaShanah itself, the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is as indicated by the words, "Him shall you fear." For, it then is a time of fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He,¹⁷¹⁷ "for it (Rosh HaShanah) is awesome and terrifying," as described in the Rosh HaShanah prayers.

The continuation of the verse, "keep His commandments," refers to the *mitzvah* of sounding the *Shofar*, and the verse therefore continues, "and listen to His voice," referring to the voice of the *Shofar*. That is, just as it was explained before that the words, "listen to His voice" refer to the study of Torah and that it must be in a manner that he hears the voice of the Holy One, blessed is He, this is likewise so of

¹⁷¹⁴ Song of Songs 6:3; See Avudraham Seder Tefilat Rosh HaShanah; Pri Etz Chayim, Shaar Rosh HaShanah Ch. 1; Bayit Chadash (Ba"ch) to Tur, Orach Chayim 581.

¹⁷¹⁵ In contradistinction to the verse (Song of Songs 2:16), "My Beloved is mine, and I am His-*Dodi Li v'Ani Lo* לו-אני לי דודי," which is from Above to below.

¹⁷¹⁶ See Ohr HaTorah ibid. p. 696.

¹⁷¹⁷ Found in the Netaneh Tokef section of the Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur Musaf prayers.

the sounding of the *Shofar*, that is, one must listen to the voice of the Upper *Shofar*.

With this explanation his honorable holiness, the Tzemach Tzedek,¹⁷¹⁸ answers a question that was posed by Rabbeinu Nissim¹⁷¹⁹ about the difference between the blessing made over the *Shofar* and the blessing made over the *Megillah*. That is, when we read the *Megillah*, we recite, “Blessed are You *HaShem*-יהו"ה... Who commanded us concerning the reading of the *Megillah*.” The blessing we recite on the *Shofar* is, “Blessed are You *HaShem*-יהו"ה... who commanded us to hear the voice of the *Shofar*.” Now, at first glance, the form of the blessing should be the same for both, and thus the distinction between them is not understood.

His honorable holiness, the Tzemach Tzedek, answers this question according to the teachings of Chassidut, that in regard to the sounding of the *Shofar*, we must cause ourselves to hear the sound of the *Shofar* of the Holy One, blessed is He, about which it states,¹⁷²⁰ “The Lord *HaShem/Elohi*”מ- אדני יהו"ה will blow the *Shofar*,” and by doing so, the fulfillment of,¹⁷²¹ “It shall be on that day that a great *Shofar* will be blown” comes to be, which also refers to the Supernal sounding of the *Shofar*.

The continuation of the verse, “serve Him” refers to our general service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, during the ten days of repentance, including Rosh HaShanah and Yom

¹⁷¹⁸ See Ohr HaTorah ibid.

¹⁷¹⁹ See Rabbeinu Nissim (Ra"n) to Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 7b

¹⁷²⁰ Zachariah 9:14

¹⁷²¹ Isaiah 27:13

Kippur, and the words, “adhere to Him you,” refer to the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of Yom Kippur in particular. For, as is stated,¹⁷²² the closing prayer (*Ne'ilah*) of Yom Kippur is like the *Nefilat Apayim* prayer.

This is why at the conclusion of the *Ne'ilah* service we recite, “Listen Israel, *HaShem*-יהו"ה our God, *HaShem* is One-*HaShem Echad*-אהד יהו"ה,” in which one must have in mind to sacrifice his very being (*Mesirat Nefesh*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in actuality.¹⁷²³ This refers to the matter of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way of adhesion (*Dveikut*), to the point that they become one. Through this, a drawing forth of *HaShem's*-יהו"ה Godliness is affected throughout the entire year, as indicated by the words, “adhere to Him (*Tidbakun*-תדבקון)” with the long *Nun*-ן as a suffix, indicating that this is drawn forth in all ones matters throughout the entire year.

¹⁷²² Likkutei Torah, Teitzei 37d

¹⁷²³ See *Shnei Luchot HaBrit* (ShaLa”H) cited in the Machzor at the conclusion of the *Ne'ilah* prayer (prior to the recitation of the verse “*Shema Yisroel* – Listen Israel”).