

Discourse 17

*“B’Sha’ah SheHeekdeemoo Yisroel Na’aseh L’Nishma -
When Israel gave precedence to ‘We will do’ over
‘We will hear’”*

Delivered on the first night of Shavuot, 5714

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

1.

Talmud states,¹²⁵⁵ “When Israel gave precedence to, ‘We will do,’ over, ‘We will hear,’¹²⁵⁶ six-hundred-thousand ministering angels came and tied two crowns for each member of the Jewish people, one corresponding to, ‘We will do,’ and one corresponding to, ‘We will hear.’” Midrash Tehillim adds that,¹²⁵⁷ “there were three times that the angels contested the decision of the Holy One, blessed is He.” The first, was His decision to create man, the second was His decision to give us His Torah (which relates to our subject here), and the third was His decision to command us to construct the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) for Him.

That is, when the Holy One, blessed is He, decided to give the Torah to the Jewish people, the angels protested and

¹²⁵⁵ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 88a

¹²⁵⁶ Exodus 24:7

¹²⁵⁷ Midrash Tehillim 8:2

argued,¹²⁵⁸ “Place Your majesty upon the heavens.” However, because the Jewish people said “We will do and we will hear,” thus giving precedence to “We will do” (*Na’aseh*) over “we will hear” (*Nishma*), they removed the argument of the angels, so much so, that it was the angels themselves who tied the two crowns upon them and acknowledged that the Torah should be given below on earth, as it states,¹²⁵⁹ “*HaShem*-יהוה, our Lord, how mighty is Your Name throughout the earth!”

We therefore must understand the matter of giving precedence to “We will do” (*Na’aseh*) over “we will hear” (*Nishma*), and why specifically through this, the argument of the angels, “Place Your majesty upon the heavens,” was removed. An additional matter to understand about the precedence of “We will do” (*Na’aseh*) over “we will hear” (*Nishma*), is that only one of the crowns that were tied to them corresponded to “We will do” (*Na’aseh*), whereas the other one corresponded to “We will hear” (*Nishma*). This seems to indicate that the precedence that they accorded to “We will do” (*Na’aseh*) also affected additional drawing forth to the matter of “we will hear” (*Nishma*). We must therefore understand how it is, that their giving precedence to “We will do” (*Na’aseh*) caused an elevation to their “we will hear” (*Nishma*).

¹²⁵⁸ Psalms 8:2

¹²⁵⁹ Psalms 8:10; Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 89a

2.

This may be better understood by prefacing¹²⁶⁰ with an explanation of the argument of the angels in stating,¹²⁶¹ “Put Your majesty upon the heavens.” At first glance, this is not understood. Being that souls are higher than angels, what does their argument, “Place Your majesty upon the heavens” mean?

Now,¹²⁶² we find that the prophets could hear the song of the angels, as it states,¹²⁶³ “When I saw, I fell on my face and I heard a voice speaking.” It is similarly written,¹²⁶⁴ “And the *Ophanim* and the holy *Chayot*, with a mighty commotion, rise to face the *Seraphim*, and offer praise saying:¹²⁶⁵ ‘Blessed is the glory of *HaShem*-יהוה from His place,’” - this is the song of the angels.

Now, it is true that the matter of song is found amongst souls as well, as it states,¹²⁶⁶ “They advance from strength to strength,” in that they ascend constantly. This is particularly so on Shabbat and the New Moon (Rosh Chodesh), as it states,¹²⁶⁷ “It shall be, that on every New Moon and every Shabbat, all

¹²⁶⁰ See the discourse entitled “*Kol SheMa’asav Merubin*” 5654 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5654 p. 253 and on), which is based upon the discourse by the same title, Sefer HaMaamarim 5633 Vol. 1, p. 269 and on, and with glosses 5653 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5653 p. 218 and on); Also see the discourse entitled “*B’Sha’ah SheAlah Moshe LaMarom*” 5721 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5721 p. 186 and on).

¹²⁶¹ Psalms 8:2

¹²⁶² See Likkutei Torah, Zot HaBrachah 98a; Siddur Im Divrei Elokim Chayim 275d.

¹²⁶³ Ezekiel 1:28

¹²⁶⁴ In the liturgy of the blessings of the *Shema* recital

¹²⁶⁵ Ezekiel 3:12

¹²⁶⁶ Psalms 84:8

¹²⁶⁷ Isaiah 66:23

mankind will come to prostrate before Me, says *HaShem*-יהו"ה.” On these days, the souls ascend from the lower Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden HaTachton*) to the upper Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden HaElyon*), and afterwards, on the mundane days of the week, they descend from the upper Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden HaElyon*) to the lower Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden HaTachton*). Moreover, all ascent is specifically through song, as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹²⁶⁸ “All masters of song go out with song and are pulled with song.” We thus find that souls also possess the matter of song (*Shir*-שיר).

Nevertheless, in the books of the prophets, we only find the song of the angels mentioned, and not the song of the souls. The reason is because the ears of the prophets could only hear the song of the angels, but not the song of the souls, which are higher and more lofty and therefore cannot be grasped by the sense of hearing of the prophets.

The reason is because the bodies of the angels are a composite of the two ethereal foundational elements; fire (*Aish*-אש) and wind (*Ru'ach*-רוח), as it states,¹²⁶⁹ “He makes the winds (*Ruchot*-רוחות) His messengers, the flaming fire (*Aish*-אש) His attendants.” Thus Ramban writes that the bodies of the angels come from the ethereal, spiritual foundational elements (*Yesodot*). We therefore find angels of the quality of kindness-*Chessed*, such as the camp of Michael, whose bodies are of the

¹²⁶⁸ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 51b – The text literally reads “All [animals] that have a chain (*Sheir*-שיר) may go out with a chain [on Shabbat], and may be pulled by the chain (*Sheir*-שיר).” The word “chain-*Sheir*-שיר” can also be read “song-*Shir*-שיר” and thus also bears the additional meaning explained above.

¹²⁶⁹ Psalms 104:4

spiritual and ethereal element of wind (*Ru'ach*-רוח). We similarly find angels of the quality of might-*Gevurah*, such as the camp of Gavriel, whose bodies are of the spiritual and ethereal element of fire (*Aish*-אש).

Now, since they have bodies that, at the very least, are composed of these two ethereal elements, they therefore are within the limitations of space. We thus find that there is an angel whose position takes up one third of the world,¹²⁷⁰ and there similarly¹²⁷¹ is a great angel whose span is a walking distance of five hundred years. Likewise, since space and time were created as one,¹²⁷² therefore, just as they are within the limitations of space, they also are within the limitations of time. This is why the angels only recite the word, “Holy-*Kadosh* קדוש” three times each day, each time lasting for a third of the day,¹²⁷³ after which it ceases and is subsumed.¹²⁷⁴ Thus, since the angels are within the limitations of space and time, their song can be grasped by the sense of hearing of the prophets.

We also find that angels are grasped with the sense of vision. This is as stated in Zohar¹²⁷⁵ on the verse,¹²⁷⁶ “He lifted his eyes and saw: And behold, three men¹²⁷⁷ were standing over

¹²⁷⁰ See Midrash Bereishit Rabba 68:12; Talmud Bavli, Chullin 91b

¹²⁷¹ Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 13a

¹²⁷² See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as HaShem Is One, Vol. 3.

¹²⁷³ See Tanna d’Bei Eliyahu Rabba, Ch. 6, Ch. 17, Ch. 31; Tanna d’Bei Eliyahu Zuta, Ch. 12.

¹²⁷⁴ See Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim 29b

¹²⁷⁵ Zohar I 98b and on.

¹²⁷⁶ Genesis 18:2

¹²⁷⁷ The three men referred to in this verse are the three angels sent to Avraham, one to announce the birth of Yitzchak, one to overthrow Sodom, and one to cure Avraham.

him.” For, since the angels have bodies composed of two foundational elements (*Yesodot*), it therefore is applicable for them to be grasped in the vision of those who have a refined power of vision.

However, this is not so of souls (*Neshamot*) as they are divested of bodies, even bodies composed of the two spiritual and ethereal elements. Therefore souls are not within the limitations of space, and it follows automatically that they are not within the limitations of time. About this the verse states,¹²⁷⁸ “And holy ones (*Kedoshim*) praise You daily for all eternity (*Selah*-סלה).” That is,¹²⁷⁹ “Wherever it states the words, ‘*Netzach*-נצח,’ ‘*Selah*-סלה’ or ‘*Va’ed*-ועד,’ it always indicates that it is eternal and unceasing.” That is, the song recited by the souls every day is with constancy. Therefore, since the song of the souls transcends the song of the angels, it cannot be grasped by the sense of hearing of the prophets.

We likewise find this in the order of the prayers, which are in ascent from below to Above. That is, in the blessing of “*Yotzer*,” preceding the recital of *Shema*, we say, “And the *Ophanim* and the holy *Chayot*, with a mighty commotion, rise to face the *Seraphim*, and offer praise etc.,” referring to the song of the angels. Only afterwards, during the *Amidah* prayer, do we recite, “And holy ones (*Kedoshim*) praise You daily for all eternity (*Selah*-סלה),” referring to the song of the souls (*Neshamot*).

¹²⁷⁸ In the *Amidah* liturgy

¹²⁷⁹ Talmud Bavli, Eruvin 54a

Now, since souls are higher and loftier than angels, and certainly, the angels must know that souls are superior to them, it therefore is not understood what exactly their argument was, in stating,¹²⁸⁰ “Put Your majesty upon the heavens.”

3.

Now, the question in regard to the argument of the angels is further compounded by the difference between angels and souls, as they are in their root. The root of the angels is in *HaShem*’s יהו"ה title God-*Elohi*”m-אלהי"ם.¹²⁸¹ Because of this, angels are also called by the shared term, God-*Elohi*”m-אלהי"ם, as in the verse,¹²⁸² “The sons of God-*Bnei Elohi*”m-בני אלהי"ם came to stand before *HaShem*-יהו"ה.” Similarly, the verse states,¹²⁸³ “Praise the God of the gods (*Elohei HaElohi*”m-אלהי האלהי"ם).”¹²⁸⁴ In contrast, the root of Jewish souls is His proper Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה,¹²⁸⁵ as it states,¹²⁸⁶ “For *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה portion is His people.”

¹²⁸⁰ Psalms 8:2

¹²⁸¹ See Tanya, Iggeret HaTeshuvah Ch. 4 (94a); Also see Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of Intrinsic Being (*Shaar HaHavayah*), The Gate of His Title (*Shaar HaKinuy*), and The Gate of The Sanctuary (*Shaar HaHeichal*).

¹²⁸² Job 1:6; See Metzudat David and Metzudat Tziyon there.

¹²⁸³ Psalms 136:2; See Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra and Metzudat David there.

¹²⁸⁴ See at length in Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of Intrinsic Being (*Shaar HaHavayah*), The Gate of His Title (*Shaar HaKinuy*), and The Gate of The Sanctuary (*Shaar HaHeichal*).

¹²⁸⁵ See Tanya, Iggeret HaTeshuvah Ch. 4 *ibid*.

¹²⁸⁶ Deuteronomy 32:9

Now, it is known that *HaShem*'s יהו"ה title God-*Elohi*"מ-אלהי"ם is His quality of judgment (*Din*),¹²⁸⁷ restraint (*Tzimtzum*), and limitation (*Hagbalah*). In contrast, His Name *HaShem* יהו"ה, blessed is He, indicates that He is and He was and He will be as One (*Hoveh* ו'Hayah ו'Yihyeh-והי"ה ויהי"ה)¹²⁸⁸ and that He utterly transcends all limitation. Moreover, as known, His Name *HaShem* יהו"ה is the source of the lights (*Orot*), which transcend limitation, whereas His title God-*Elohi*"מ-אלהי"ם is the source of the vessels (*Keilim*), which are within limitation (*Hagbalah*).

Thus, because of the different roots of souls and angels, in that His proper Name *HaShem* יהו"ה is the root of the souls and His title God-*Elohi*"מ-אלהי"ם is the root of the angels, they therefore differ in how they are drawn forth below. That is, the angels are limited to time and space, whereas souls are not, as explained before.

Now, based upon what is stated elsewhere,¹²⁸⁹ that the souls are also rooted in the vessels (*Keilim*), it is known¹²⁹⁰ that in the vessels (*Keilim*) themselves, there is a difference between the inner aspect of the vessels (*Pnimityut HaKeilim*) and the

¹²⁸⁷ See Midrash Bereishit Rabba 33:3; Zohar III 39b, 65a; Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of His Title (*Shaar HaKimuy*).

¹²⁸⁸ Zohar III 257b (Ra'aya Mehemna); Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of Intrinsic Being (*Shaar HaHavayah*); Pardes Rimonim, Shaar 1 (Shaar Eser v'Lo Teisha), Ch. 9; Tanya, Shaar HaYichud v'HaEmunah Ch. 7 (82a).

¹²⁸⁹ See Torah Ohr Yitro 69d; Likkutei Torah Balak 73b, and elsewhere.

¹²⁹⁰ See Etz Chayim, Shaar 28 (Shaar Halbburim), Ch. 1; Shaar 40 (Shaar Pnimityut v'Chitzoniyyut) Drush 10; Pri Etz Chayim, Introduction to Shaar HaShabbat, Ch. 5; Shaar HaShabbat Ch 10; Likkutei Torah Re'eh 26c and on; Drushim L'Yom HaKippurim 70c and elsewhere.

outer aspect of the vessels (*Chitzoniyut HaKeilim*). By way of analogy, this may be understood by what we find in the physical world, that there is a difference between vessels that are simple tools (*Keilim Peshutim*), and vessels that are receptacles (*Keilim Mekablim*).

When it comes to vessels that are simple tools (*Keilim Peshutim*), in and of themselves they are neither receptacles nor are they for themselves. Rather, it is only that through them, the acts of the hand are drawn forth to a secondary thing. An example is a knife, the sole purpose of which is to cut and partition things. In other words, it exists entirely for the purpose of something else. For example, if there is something that cannot be received or used as is, except if it is specifically cut up into smaller components, then the use of a knife becomes necessary, since it cuts and partitions things.

Now, there also are vessels that are receptacles (*Keilim Mekablim*), in that they *themselves* receive whatever is placed within them. An example is a cup, which itself receives the fluid placed within it.

Now, in vessels that are receptacles (*Keilim Mekablim*), there also is a difference between the inner part of the vessel (*Pnimiyut HaKeli*) and the outer part of the vessel (*Chitzoniyut HaKeli*). The inner part of the vessel (*Pnimiyut HaKeli*) receives what is placed within it, as is. Moreover, it is in immediate spatial proximity to whatever is placed within it and connects with it. However, the outer part of the vessel (*Chitzoniyut HaKeli*), is for the purpose of the person who drinks from it, so that he can take hold of it with his hand. That

is, the outer part of the vessel is also for the purpose of *something else*.

This may be better understood from the matter of intellect (*Sechel*). That is, the vessel (*Keli*) of the intellect (*Sechel*) is the brain (*Mo'ach*), which has an inner aspect (*Pnimiyut*) and outer aspect (*Chitzoniyut*). An example of the outer aspect of the vessel of the brain, is when a teacher conceptualizes an intellectual concept, and through this there is a bestowal of intellect to his student. However, the order is that when the teacher receives intellect in the vessel of his brain, from this intellect he bestows to the student, but even then, he only bestows the externality of the intellect.

In other words, in addition to the fact that he does not bestow the very essence of the intellect, which entirely transcends the ability to bestow, but beyond this, even what is applicable to being bestowed, is only bestowed externally. That is, the bestowal is only a glimmer of what is revealed through the externality of the vessel of his brain. Therefore, only if the student is himself of similar intellectual level to the teacher, will the teacher be able to bestow his intellect to him. However, if the student is not of similar intellectual level, whatever is bestowed will be of no use to him, as in the common Yiddish saying,¹²⁹¹ “A head, you cannot give to someone.” This is because what is bestowed is only the external glimmer alone.

¹²⁹¹ See Sefer HaMitzvot of the Tzemach Tzedek 3a; Biurei HaZohar of the Tzemach Tzedek Vol. 2, p. 613 and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5657 p. 267 and on; 5659 p. 3, and elsewhere.

However, this is not the case with the inner vessel of the brain, from which the seminal drop is bestowed. This bestowal comes from the spiritual moisture (*Lachluchit*) of the brain.¹²⁹² This is an essential bestowal, through which (the bestower of the influence) gives birth to someone similar to himself. That is, not only does he bestow the radiance of illumination in its totality to the recipient, (rather than an external glimmer), but beyond this, he even bestows the essence to him.¹²⁹³ It therefore is possible for¹²⁹⁴ “the power of the son to be greater than the power of the father.”

The simple explanation is that, even that which did not come forth into the revealed powers of the father, is nevertheless drawn forth and revealed in the son. Nevertheless, this too was bestowed from father to son, as in the precise wording of the teaching,¹²⁹⁵ which may also be read as, “The greatness of the power of the son, is from the power of the father.” That is, the very reason for “the greatness of the power of the son” is specifically because it “is from the power of the father.” In other words, even though in the father, this matter was not drawn forth in his revealed powers, but remained concealed, nevertheless, it indeed exists in the essence of the father. Thus, since the bestowal of the seminal drop is a

¹²⁹² See at length (and the citations) in Listen Israel, a guide to Hitbonenut contemplation, a translation of Rabbi Hillel of Partich’s second explanation to Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, Ch. 1 (commonly known as the Key to Chassidus or Kuntres HaHitbonenut – a Tract on Contemplative Meditation) translated as The Gate of Unity.

¹²⁹³ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5657 p. 269 and on.

¹²⁹⁴ See Talmud Bavli, Shevuot 48a – “יפה כח הבן מכה האב”; Also see Likkutei Sichot Vol. 23 p. 222, and elsewhere.

¹²⁹⁵ The words, “*Yafeh Koach HaBen MiKo’ach Ha’Av*” – “יפה כח הבן מכה האב.”

bestowal of the essence, therefore everything that is found in the essence is bestowed.

All this refers to the bestowal of the seminal drop, which is specifically from the inner aspect of the vessel of the brain. That is, this bestowal is from the spiritual moisture (*Lachluchit*) in the brain. In other words, this is because it is spiritual and is the inner aspect of the vessel (*Pnimiyut HaKeli*), and in regard to the inner aspect of the vessel (*Pnimiyut HaKeli*), not only is the externality and glimmer present, but the essence of the intellect is also present, and even more, the essence of the soul is present.

We may understand the difference between angels and souls in the same manner. That is, angels are rooted in the externality of the vessels (*Chitzoniyut HaKeilim*) which are entirely for the purpose of something else. This is why an angel is called an “emissary-*Shaliach*-שליח,” because the purpose of an “emissary-*Shaliach*-שליח” is for another, other than himself, and the matter of “another” is the matter of limitation. Therefore, the way they are drawn forth, is also in a limited way, in that they are limited to space and time, as explained before.

In contrast, the souls are rooted in the innerness of the vessels (*Pnimiyut HaKeilim*), and the innerness of the vessels are unified with the essence of the light and illumination (*Etzem HaOhr*), and even higher, with the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential Being of *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He. Therefore, the way they are drawn forth, is not limited to space and time.

Thus, based on this difference between angels and souls as they are in their root, the argument of the angels in stating,¹²⁹⁶ “Place Your majesty upon the heavens,” is even less understood, since even the angels are aware of the superiority of souls over angels.¹²⁹⁷ This being so, how does their argument, “Place Your majesty upon the heavens” have any bearing?

4.

However, the explanation is that everything stated above about the soul, is specifically about the essence of the soul. Now, in regard to the essence of the soul, the angels would never have argued that the Torah should be given to them instead, since they knew that the souls of the Jewish people are loftier than them. However, they argued that the Torah should be given to them because they knew that Torah will be given to the soul as it is connected the body. They therefore argued that they too have a soul and body, and in regard to the body, their body is higher (and more ethereal). It is about this that the Holy One, blessed is He, answered them, that even in regard to the body, the body of man is superior to the bodies of angels.

This may be better understood based on the third argument of the angels, which was against the construction of the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*). The verse states about the sojourn

¹²⁹⁶ Psalms 8:2

¹²⁹⁷ For whom they are emissaries.

of the children of Israel in the desert,¹²⁹⁸ “For until now, you have not come to the resting place (*Menuchah*) or the inheritance (*Nachalah*) that *HaShem*-יהוה your God is giving you.” The term “resting place-*Menuchah*-מנוחה” is a reference to the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) of Shiloh.¹²⁹⁹ Thus, this verse indicates the superiority of the Tabernacle of Shiloh, over and above the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) in the desert.

Now, the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) of Shiloh had the same measurements and dimensions as the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) in the desert. The only difference was that the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) in the desert was constructed of vegetative substances (*Tzome'ach*), whereas the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) of Shiloh was constructed of inanimate substances (*Domem*). That is, even the walls of the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) of Shiloh were constructed of stones. This being so, it would seem that the opposite should be true, that the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) of the desert has a superiority, over and above the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) of Shiloh. Yet, we find that it is specifically about the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) of Shiloh, that was built of stone, that it states, “to the resting place-*El HaMenuchah*-אל המנוחה,” and finally, “to the inheritance-*El HaNachalah*-אל הנחלה” as well, that is, to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

The same principle may be applied to the matter of angels and souls, since both possess the matter of the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) and the Holy Temple (*Mikdash*), as the

¹²⁹⁸ Deuteronomy 12:9

¹²⁹⁹ See Sifri and Rashi to Deuteronomy 12:9. (The term “resting place-*Menuchah*-מנוחה” refers to the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) at Shiloh, whereas the term “inheritance-*Nachalah*-נחלה” refers to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.)

verse states,¹³⁰⁰ “They shall make a sanctuary for Me and I will dwell within them,” about which our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹³⁰¹ “The verse does not say ‘within it-*B’Tocho*-בתוכו’ but rather, ‘within them-*B’Tocham*-בתוכם,’ meaning, within each and every Jew.” That is, every single Jew is a Sanctuary for *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. Similarly, about the angels, our sages of blessed memory, said,¹³⁰² “In regard to the Tabernacle below, the verse states,¹³⁰³ ‘Standing acacia wood,’ and in regard to the *Seraphim* angels Above, the verse states,¹³⁰⁴ ‘The *Seraphim* were standing above, at His service.’”

Now, the difference between angels and souls is that the angels are in the category of the vegetative (*Tzome'ach*), as stated,¹³⁰⁵ “Then all the trees of the forest will sing with joy before *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” which is a reference to angelic beings. Similarly, we find that angels are called, “animals-*Chayot*-חיות” and “beasts-*Behemot*-בהמות,” as written in Ezekiel’s prophetic vision of the Chariot (*Merkavah*),¹³⁰⁶ “A lion’s face to the right... an ox’s face to the left...” In contrast, souls are from “the face of the man.”

For, as known¹³⁰⁷ the formation of man’s body was different than the formation of the bodies of all other creatures, in that the souls and bodies of all other creatures were created

¹³⁰⁰ Exodus 25:8

¹³⁰¹ See Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, Shaar 1; Shnei Luchot HaBrit (Shalah) 69a, 201a, 325b, 326b.

¹³⁰² Midrash Shemot Rabba 33:4; 35:6

¹³⁰³ Exodus 26:15

¹³⁰⁴ Isaiah 6:2

¹³⁰⁵ Psalms 96:12

¹³⁰⁶ Ezekiel 1:10

¹³⁰⁷ See Torah Ohr Bereishit 3d and on.

simultaneously, as the verse states,¹³⁰⁸ “God-*Elohi*” *m-אלהי*” said, ‘Let the earth sprout vegetation,’” and,¹³⁰⁹ “God-*Elohi*” *m-אלהי*” said, ‘Let the earth bring forth living creatures.’” In contrast, about the formation of man, the Torah states,¹³¹⁰ “And *HaShem*-יהוה God formed the man of the dust from the ground,” about which the verse in Psalms states,¹³¹¹ “Your eyes saw my unformed mass (*Galmi*-גלמי).” Only afterwards does the verse continue,¹³¹² “and He blew into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul.”

This being so, it appears as if the body of man is below the level of all other bodies. For, all other bodies were created together with their souls, and immediately upon their creation they began growing from immaturity (*Katnut*) to maturity (*Gadlut*). That is, they are in the category of the vegetative (*Tzome'ach*). The body of man, on the other hand, was created on the level of the inanimate (*Domem*) [as an unformed mass]. Thus, at first glance, it appears to be an inferior body.

However, all this is only as it is revealed and according to intellect (*Sechel*). However, in truth, specifically the body of man is superior. This is similar to the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) of Shiloh, which was made of inanimate stones but was nonetheless specifically called, “the resting place-*HaMenuchah*-המנוחה.”

¹³⁰⁸ Genesis 1:11

¹³⁰⁹ Genesis 1:24

¹³¹⁰ Genesis 2:7

¹³¹¹ Psalms 139:16

¹³¹² Genesis 2:7 *ibid*.

The reason for this difference, that the body of man was not formed together with the soul, like all other bodies, is as follows: It is explained about the four categories; the inanimate (*Domem*), the vegetative (*Tzome'ach*), the animal (*Chai*) and the speaker (*Medaber*), that they correspond to the four letters of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה in ascending order.¹³¹³ Now, since the two levels; the vegetative (*Tzome'ach*) and the animated (*Chai*) are juxtaposed to each other – like the letters *Vav*-ו and *Hey*-ה of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה which are juxtaposed to each other – therefore, in regard to all creatures other than man, their body, which is in the category of the vegetative (*Tzome'ach*), could be created simultaneously with their soul, which is the aspect of the animate (*Chai*) in them.

However, this is not so of human souls, which are the aspect of the speaker (*Medaber*), and in their root Above in *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness correspond to the *Yod*-י, including the thorn of the letter *Yod*-י of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה. Thus, even if man's body would have been created together with his soul, and would therefore be in the category of the vegetative (*Tzome'ach*), nonetheless his body would still be distant from his soul, since his soul is in the category of the speaker (*Medaber*). As this corresponds to the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, this is the fact that the first letter *Hey*-ה of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה separates between the letter *Vav*-ו and the letter *Yod*-י. Because of this, the body of man was not created together with the soul.

¹³¹³ See Etz Chayim, Shaar 42 (Shaar Drushei ABY" A) Ch. 1.

However, in truth, this only explains why man's body is not in the category of the vegetative (*Tzome'ach*), like other creatures. However, the reason man's body is specifically in the category of the inanimate (*Domem*) is simply because man is the central creature through whom the entire chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*) must be affected. This being so, he must be of the lowest level. This is analogous to lifting up a building. If it is lifted from its middle, its lower half remains below. It therefore is necessary to lift it specifically from its base, and then the building and everything within it is uplifted, including its base.

The same is likewise true of the creation of man. Being that man is the central creature through whom the entire chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*) must be affected, therefore his body must specifically be of the lowest level, which is the category of the inanimate (*Domem*). Through man's toil in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with his body, he affects the entire chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*).

Now, the reason man's body, which is of the inanimate level (*Domem*), has the power to affect the entire chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), all of which are above it, is because its root is actually higher than the vegetative (*Tzome'ach*) and animate (*Chai*). This accords to the teaching,¹³¹⁴ "Their end is implanted in their beginning, and their beginning in their end."

¹³¹⁴ Sefer Yetzirah 1:7

This may be understood from the four categories; inanimate, vegetative, animate, speaker (*Domem, Tzome'ach, Chai, Medaber*), as they are in man himself. The letters (*Otiyot*) of man, are the aspect of inanimate (*Domem*), his emotions (*Midot*) are the aspect of vegetative (*Tzome'ach*), and his intellect is the aspect of animate (*Chai*). Now, the relationship between the emotions (*Midot*) and the intellect (*Sechel*) is in a manner of cause and effect. That is, when he contemplates something in his intellect (*Sechel*), the automatic result is that emotions (*Midot*) are born.

However, as the letters (*Otiyot*) are when they become garments (*Levushim*) and vessels (*Keilim*) for the emotions, and as they are when they become garments (*Levushim*) and vessels (*Keilim*) for the intellect (*Sechel*), they do not come from the emotions (*Midot*) or the intellect (*Sechel*) in a way of cause and effect.

For, in regard to the relationship between the emotions (*Midot*) and the intellect (*Sechel*), which is in a way of cause and effect, we observe that the emotions (*Midot*) align with and are commensurate to the intellect (*Sechel*). For example, if a person contemplates something that relates to love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, the emotion of love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, will be born in him. On the other hand, if he wants to awaken the emotion of fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, he must contemplate something different that relates to

fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. We thus find that the emotions (*Midot*) are aligned with and commensurate to their cause, which is the intellect (*Sechel*).

However, this is not so of the letters (*Otiyot*) as they are when they become garments (*Levushim*) or vessels (*Keilim*) for the emotions (*Midot*) or the intellect (*Sechel*). In other words, the very same letters (*Otiyot*) that became the garments and vessels for this particular emotion or intellect, can become garments and vessels for different emotions or intellects. And although it states in *Zohar*¹³¹⁵ that there are letters (*Otiyot*) of kindness-*Chessed* and letters (*Otiyot*) of judgment-*Din*, nevertheless, the very same letters (*Otiyot*) can bear various emotional qualities.

That is, changes only take place in the combinations and permutations (*Tzirufim*) of the letters, but not in the letters (*Otiyot*) themselves. We thus see that the letters (*Otiyot*) of the emotions (*Midot*) and even the letters (*Otiyot*) of the intellect (*Sechel*), do not come from them in a way of cause and effect. That is, the letters (*Otiyot*) do not actually come from the intellect (*Sechel*), but are rather from a much loftier root. For, as known,¹³¹⁶ the letters are rooted in that which precedes intellect (*Kadmoot HaSechel*), and even higher than this, they are rooted in the very essence of the human soul, which is called the speaker (*Medaber*).¹³¹⁷

¹³¹⁵ See *Zohar* I 16b and the *Mikdash Melech* there.

¹³¹⁶ See Tanya, *Iggeret HaKodesh*, Epistle 5; See *Shaar HaYichud* of the *Mittler Rebbe*, translated as *The Gate of Unity*, Ch. 38 and on.

¹³¹⁷ See *Etz Chayim*, *Shaar 5* (*Shaar TaNT"i*), Ch. 3; See *Shaar HaYichud* translated as *The Gate of Unity* *ibid.*; See *Maamarei Admor HaZaken*, *Parshiyot*

Now, just as this is so of the four categories; inanimate, vegetative, animal and speaker (*Domem*, *Tzome'ach*, *Chai*, *Medaber*), as they are in man himself, that the letters (*Otiyot*) – which are the aspect of inanimate (*Domem*) – have a higher root than the emotions and intellect (*Midot* v' *Sechel*) – which are the aspects of vegetative and animate (*Tzome'ach* v' *Chai*) – it likewise is so in regard to these four categories in general. That is, in general, the root of the inanimate (*Domem*) is higher than the root of the vegetative (*Tzome'ach*) and the animal (*Chai*).

This then, explains the difference between the body of man and the bodies of all other creatures. For, the bodies of all other creatures are related to their soul. Therefore, the contemplation (*Hitbonenut*) of soul has an automatic effect on the body (similar to how the emotions (*Midot*) come from the intellect (*Sechel*) in an automatic way of cause and effect.) About this the verse states,¹³¹⁸ “and the hosts of the heavens prostrate to You,” in that they revolve toward the west, since,¹³¹⁹ “the *Shechinah*, the Divine Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, is in the west.” That is, they prostrate with their bodies because of the song their souls recite.

This is what Yehoshua meant when he said,¹³²⁰ “Sun, be still (*Dom*-דום) at Gibeon,” about which Midrash Tanchuma states,¹³²¹ “The word ‘be still’ (*Dom*-דום) means that he told it

HaTorah, Vol. 2, p. 639 & p. 730; Also see Maamarei Admor HaEmtza'ee, Bamidbar Vol. 1, p. 309.

¹³¹⁸ Nehemia 9:6

¹³¹⁹ Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 25a

¹³²⁰ Joshua 10:12

¹³²¹ Midrash Tanchuma Acharei 9

to be ‘silent’ (*Dom*-דום) from reciting its song.” The teachings of Chassidus further explain¹³²² that he did not need to tell it to “stand” with the word “*Amod*-עמוד” which, at first glance, seems more appropriate, because by telling it to be silent (*Dom*-דום) from reciting its song, the movement of the sun (in its orbit) automatically stopped. This is because its body is related to its soul, and the song of its soul causes the body of the sun to revolve (in its orbit). Thus, when he told it to be silent (*Dom*-דום) and the song of its soul ceased, the movement of its body (in its orbit) automatically ceased.

However, in man, even when he contemplates with his soul, it does not affect his body, since the connection of his body to his soul is not in a way of cause and effect. Nevertheless, in his root, man is higher than all other creatures, since it states about him, “their end is implanted in their beginning, and their beginning in their end.” Therefore, it is specifically through man’s service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with his body, in “working it and guarding it,”¹³²³ that he has an effect on the entire chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*).

6.

Now, that which must be affected in the entire chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), is as stated,¹³²⁴ “that God

¹³²² See Siddur Im Divrei Elokim Chayim, 142a and on; Sefer HaMitzvot of the Tzemach Tzedek 5a; Ohr HaTorah Bamidbar (Shavuot) p. 109 and on; Na”Ch Vol. 2, p. 738 and on, and elsewhere.

¹³²³ Genesis 2:15

¹³²⁴ Genesis 2:3

created to do (*La'asot*-לעשות),” meaning,¹³²⁵ “to repair (*Letaken*-לתקן).” This refers to the sublimation and nullification of the tangible created something (*Yesh*) to the intangible Godliness (*Ayin*), which is the matter of the inclusion of the vessels (*Keilim*) in the lights (*Orot*). For, the vessels are the aspect of a tangible something (*Yesh*). This is true even of the vessels (*Keilim*) of the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*, about which it states,¹³²⁶ “He and His organs are one,” in that, they too, are an aspect of tangible somethingness (*Yesh*).

This is why this teaching is divided into two distinct statements, “He and His life force are one,” and “He and His organs are one,” rather than stating, “He and His life force and organs are one.” This is because the unity of the vessels (*Keilim*) with *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is different than the unity of the lights (*Orot*) with *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.¹³²⁷ For, the vessels (*Keilim*) are the aspect of a tangible something (*Yesh*), whereas the lights (*Orot*) are the aspect of an intangible nothing (*Ayin*).

That is, even as the light (*Ohr*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, comes into the worlds of Creation, Formation and Action (*Briyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Asiyah*) (about which Iggeret HaKodesh¹³²⁸ states that “the light of the line (*Kav*) pierces the veil (*Parsa*) together with them,¹³²⁹ and radiates within them” in the worlds

¹³²⁵ See Midrash Bereishit Rabba 11:6 and Rashi there.

¹³²⁶ Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 3b

¹³²⁷ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5629 p. 204, p. 378, and elsewhere.

¹³²⁸ Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 20

¹³²⁹ With the thirty vessels of the ten *Sefirot* of the *Sefirah* of kingship-*Malchut* of the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*.

of Creation, Formation and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*), it nevertheless continues to be intangible (*Ayin*) and the matter of sublimating and nullifying the tangible something (*Yesh*) to the intangible Godliness (*Ayin*), is in order to unite the lights (*Orot*) to vessels (*Keilim*).

Now, it is possible to unify the lights (*Orot*) to the vessels (*Keilim*) specifically when the lights (*Orot*) and vessels (*Keilim*) are relative to each other. However, since in the world of chaos-*Tohu*, the lights (*Orot*) are beyond relation and comparison to the vessels (*Keilim*), this comes to be expressed in one of two possible ways. Either the vessel remains as it is, or the light (*Ohr*) causes the shattering (*Shevirah*) of the vessel (*Keli*). However, as the verse states,¹³³⁰ “He did not create [the world] for chaos (*Tohu*),” but rather, *HaShem* יהו"ה's Supernal Intent is indicated in the continuation of the verse, “He fashioned it to be settled,” meaning that the lights (*Orot*) should be settled in the vessels (*Keilim*).

This specifically takes place in the world of repair-*Tikkun*, which is the meaning of “to repair (*Letaken*-לְתַקֵּן).” For, in the world of repair-*Tikkun*, the lights (*Orot*) are of relative comparison to the vessels (*Keilim*). It therefore is in the world of repair-*Tikkun*, that the union of the lights (*Orot*) within their vessels (*Keilim*) can be, which is the matter of sublimating and nullifying the tangible something (*Yesh*) to the intangible Godliness (*Ayin*).

¹³³⁰ Isaiah 45:18

Now, all this is accomplished through man's service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in "working it and guarding it,"¹³³¹ that is, by serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, specifically with his body, which has a much higher root, as explained above. In other words, it is through man's service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with his body, in refining and clarifying its concealment and hiddenness, that he has an effect on the entire chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*).

This then, is the meaning of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה response to the angels, that man's superiority is not just because of his soul, but also because of his body. For since, unlike all other creatures, man's body is of the inanimate level (*Domem*), there are two elements of superiority in this. Firstly, that the entire chaining down of the worlds can only be uplifted through this lowest level and secondly, that even in its root it is loftier, and therefore, the entire chaining down of the worlds is brought about specifically through refining and clarifying the concealment of the body.

This also explains the verse,¹³³² "And Sarah said, 'God has made laughter for me,'" about which our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹³³³ "Sarah made an increase to the light of the Luminaries (*Me'orot*)."¹³³⁴ Shnei Luchot HaBrit states that these "Luminaries" (*Me'orot*) refer to the "two great

¹³³¹ Genesis 2:15

¹³³² Genesis 21:6

¹³³³ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 53:8; See Ohr HaTorah, Bereishit 36a and on.

¹³³⁴ Shnei Luchot HaBrit 375a-b; Also see Ohr HaTorah ibid. p. 37a; Ohr HaTorah, VaEtchanan p. 279 and on.

luminaries,”¹³³⁵ which are the matters of¹³³⁶ “study is greater” and “action is greater.” In the coming future, it will be realized that “action is greater,” and even as it is now, although the Talmud concludes that “study is greater,” they specifically came to this conclusion,¹³³⁷ “because study [of the Torah] leads to action [of the mitzvot].” In other words, the primary superiority is specifically in the action.

Moreover, the action even affects the study, as we clearly observe, that when a question relating to the practical application of Torah law (*Halachah*) arises, it is specifically then that one’s intellect is awakened to delve into the matter to its depth, and to the depth of its depth. Whereas, if the question is not a matter of practical Torah law (*Halachah*) as it relates to action, his intellect would not be roused to such a degree.¹³³⁸ Thus, since it even affects the level of study, we see that “action is greater.”

This then, is the meaning of the verse, “God-*Elohi*”מֵאלֹהֵי has made laughter for me,” in which the Torah specifically uses *HaShem*’s יהוה title God-*Elohi*”מֵאלֹהֵי, which is the matter of concealment and hiddenness. That is, the refinement of the concealment and hiddenness, causes “laughter” and delight Above. Moreover, it also has an effect on the study of Torah, which is what our sages, of blessed memory, meant when they said that “Sarah made an increase in the light of the Luminaries (*Me’orot*-מְאוֹרוֹת),” in which the

¹³³⁵ Genesis 1:16

¹³³⁶ Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 40b

¹³³⁷ See Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 40b *ibid*.

¹³³⁸ See *Hemshech* 5666 p. 390 and on, p. 420.

word Luminaries (*Me'orot*) is in the plural form. This is to say that she caused the matter of laughter and delight to be present in the aspect of “study is greater” too.

This also is so in regard to the superiority of the body. That is, it is specifically through the refinement and clarification of the concealment of the human body, which is on the inanimate level (*Domem*), that additional illuminations are caused Above.

7.

This then, is the meaning of the teaching,¹³³⁹ “When Israel accorded precedence to the declaration, ‘We will do,’ over the declaration, ‘We will hear’ etc.” That is, this took place before the Torah was given. It was specifically then that they revealed the superiority of action, and that action (“We will do”) even effects study (“We will hear”). Through this they countered and removed the argument of the angels, who said,¹³⁴⁰ “Place Your majesty upon the heavens.” Moreover, not only did they remove their argument, but through this, the angels themselves descended and tied two crowns for them, including one crown corresponding to “We will hear” (*Nishma*), and through this, they specifically received the Torah below, even though it contains all Supernal matters within it.

¹³³⁹ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 88a

¹³⁴⁰ Psalms 8:2

However, the primary revelation will happen with the coming of Moshiach. Nevertheless, as it states in Tanya,¹³⁴¹ a glimmer of this has already been experienced before, at the giving of the Torah, even though the primary revelation will be in the era of Moshiach, and afterwards, in the seventh millennium. In other words, the revelation of this will be in the coming future, however even now - from the time that the Torah was given and even during exile, we affect very Supernal matters through fulfilling Torah and *mitzvot*, only that it presently is concealed. However, it will be revealed with the coming of our righteous Moshiach, may this be speedily in our days. For, in that time, that which is “far below” will be elevated “High Above!”

¹³⁴¹ Tanya, Ch. 36