

Discourse 7

“Tanu Rabbanan: Mitzvat Ner Chanukah - The Sages taught: The Mitzvah of kindling the Chanukah lights”

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Miketz,
Chanukah, Shabbat Mevarchim Tevet, 5714
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The Sages taught:⁵⁰⁷ The *mitzvah* of kindling the Chanukah lights...the Academy of Shammai say that on the first day a person kindles eight lights and from then on, he gradually decreases (day by day). The Academy of Hillel say that on the first day a person kindles one light and from then on, he gradually increases and adds (day by day). The reason for the view of the Academy of Shammai is because the lights of Chanukah correspond to the bulls of the festival [of Sukkot],⁵⁰⁸ and the reason for the view of the Academy of Hillel is because of the principle that one ascends in matters of holiness, and does not descend.”

Now, from the above, it appears that the Academy of Hillel agrees with the Academy of Shammai that the Chanukah

⁵⁰⁷ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 21b

⁵⁰⁸ In which the number of bulls sacrificed decreased day by day. See Parashat Pinchas (and Rashi there).

lights are related to the bulls of the festival of Sukkot. That is, they have an unrelated reason for their view that the kindling of the Chanukah lights should gradually increase in number, namely, because of the principle that “we ascend in holiness.”⁵⁰⁹

In other words, it is understood that all the enactments of our sages, of blessed memory, must follow the principles and doctrines of Torah. Thus, since this principle, that “we ascend in holiness,” applies in all matters of Torah, it therefore follows of necessity, that in regard to the kindling of the Chanukah lights, they should be kindled in a manner of gradual increase. Nevertheless, in regard to the essential matter of the lights of Chanukah, the academy of Hillel would agree that they are related to the bulls of the festival of Sukkot.⁵¹⁰

Now, the simple understanding of the relationship between Chanukah and Sukkot, is that there are eight days of Chanukah, just as there are eight days of Sukkot, when Shemini Atzeret is included in the count.⁵¹¹ For, although Shemini Atzeret is counted as a festival unto itself, this is only in regard to the matters of “*PaZeR KaSheiV*” פז״ר קש״ב,⁵¹² whereas in all

⁵⁰⁹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 28a; Menachot 99a

⁵¹⁰ Also see Ohr HaTorah, Chanukah, Vol. 5, p. 942b; Sefer HaMaamarim 5654 p. 97.

⁵¹¹ Sefer HaMaamarim 5654 ibid. Ohr HaTorah Vol. 2, p. 304b; Vol. 7 p. 1,262 a-b; Sefer HaMaamarim 5660 p. 63.

⁵¹² Talmud Bavli, Yoma 2b-3a; Sukkah 48a – This is an acronym for the points of difference between Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret, as follows: The *Peh*-פ stands for the lottery-*Payis*-פייס, in that a new lottery is drawn to determine which priests-*Kohanim* will offer the sacrifices on that day. The *Zayin*-ז stands for the blessing of the time-*Zman*-זמן (the *Shehechyanu*) which is recited anew, as it is at the beginning of all new festivals. The *Reish*-ר stands for the festival-*Regel*-רגל, in that it is considered to be a festival, in and of itself, insofar as there is no longer a *mitzvah* to

other matters, it is considered to be one festival with the Holiday of Sukkot. It is for this reason that the Torah calls it “the eighth day,”⁵¹³ in that it is eighth from the first day of the Holiday of Sukkot.

We likewise find that the three festivals of pilgrimage (*Regalim*) generally correspond to the three patriarchs (Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov).⁵¹⁴ However, when it comes to Sukkot, which corresponds to Yaakov, and Shemini Atzeret, which corresponds to Yosef, we do not count Yosef as a patriarch, since,⁵¹⁵ “One may only call three people patriarchs-*Avot*-אבות,” and Yosef is included in Yaakov, in that the primary aspect of Yaakov is Yosef.⁵¹⁶

There is an additional relationship between Chanukah and the holiday of Sukkot, in that “the *mitzvah* of kindling the

reside in the Sukkah. The *Kof*-ק stands for the sacrificial offering-*Korban*-קרבן, in that the number of sacrifices offered on the eighth day, is not a continuation of the offerings of Sukkot, but is part of a new calculation. The *Shin*-ש stands for song-*Shirah*-שירה, in that the Psalms sung by the Levites were not a continuation of those recited on Sukkot. The *Beit*-ב stands for blessing-*Brachah*-ברכה, in that the blessings of the holiday, recited in the *Amidah* and grace after meals (*Birkhat HaMazon*), are phrased differently than on Sukkot. (See Tosefot *ibid*.) It is in these aspects that Shemini Atzeret differs from Sukkot, and yet, as the Talmud continues and explains, in regard to other matters, they are considered to be one holiday, for example, if a person failed to bring the offerings of Sukkot at their appointed time, that is, on Sukkot, they may be recompensed on Shemini Atzeret. Similarly, as will soon be pointed out, the festival of Shemini Atzeret is called by the Torah “the eighth day,” in that it is eighth from the first day of Sukkot.

⁵¹³ Leviticus 23:36, 23:39; Numbers 29:35; Nehemiah 8:18; Chronicles II 7:9

⁵¹⁴ Zohar III 257b; Tur Orach Chayim 417

⁵¹⁵ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 16b

⁵¹⁶ This is indicated by the verse (Genesis 37:2), “These are the offspring of Yaakov: Yosef.” Additionally, Yosef is the aspect of foundation-*Yesod* of the world of Emanation, which receives directly from beauty-*Tiferet*, which is the quality of Yaakov, and it is thus Yosef who is the primary recipient of Yaakov, and who then bestows beneficence to the other brothers. (See Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 36.)

Chanukah lights is after the sun sets,”⁵¹⁷ which is similar to the *mitzvah* of the Sukkah, “whose shade must exceed its sunlight, and if its sunlight exceeds its shade, it is invalid.”⁵¹⁸ The same is true of the Chanukah lights, that as long as the sun has not yet set, the time for the *mitzvah* has not yet arrived. In other words, it is because of this relationship between Chanukah and Sukkot that Chanukah was established for eight days and the *mitzvah* is specifically after the setting of the sun, and were it not for this relationship, Chanukah would have been established in a different manner.

For, at first glance, the reason that Chanukah was established for eight days is not readily understood. That is, the miracle of Chanukah, is that they found a single cruse of oil that had the seal of the high priest, and only had enough oil to kindle the lights for a single day, and yet, a miracle occurred and they kindled the lights for eight days.⁵¹⁹ This being so, since the miracle only happened on seven of the days, the holiday should only have been established for seven days. That is, there indeed was adequate oil to kindle the lights on the first day. Therefore, the question remains as to why Chanukah was established for eight days.⁵²⁰

What they answered,⁵²¹ is that even on the first night, the miracle was already recognizable, either because they divided the oil in the cruse into eight parts, or because after they

⁵¹⁷ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 21b

⁵¹⁸ Talmud Bavli, Sukkah 2a

⁵¹⁹ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 21a *ibid.*

⁵²⁰ See Beit Yosef to Orach Chayim 670.

⁵²¹ See Beit Yosef *ibid.*

poured the oil from the cruse, they saw that the cruse remained as full as it had been, or alternately, in the morning they found that the Menorah was still full of oil etc.

Nevertheless, none of this adequately answers the question, since ultimately, on the first day there was no need for a miracle to happen, and thus, the miracle only happened on the seven subsequent days. This being so, even if in actuality, the miracle happened in such a manner that it was already recognizable on the first night, nevertheless, since the miracle was only needed on the seven subsequent days, it is not understood why they established the holiday of Chanukah for eight days.

There likewise is a question regarding the matter that, “the *mitzvah* of kindling the Chanukah lights is after the sun sets,” specifically. At first glance, this too is not understood, since the candelabrum of the Holy Temple was kindled while it was still daylight, during the period of time called, *Plag HaMinchah*,⁵²² which is a significant period of time before sunset.⁵²³ Why then is the *mitzvah* of kindling the Chanukah lights specifically after sunset?

This question is further exacerbated by the fact the reason that the kindling of the Chanukah lights was established, is because of the kindling of the lights of the Menorah in the Holy Temple. That is, all the oil was rendered impure, and they were unable to kindle the lights of the Menorah in the Holy

⁵²² 1 and ¼ halachic hours (*Sha'ot Zmaniyot*) before sunset.

⁵²³ See the discourse entitled “*Tanu Rabbanan, Mitzvat Ner Chanukah*” 5738 (Torat Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Kislev p. 162, note 11).

Temple, and because of the miracle of finding the cruse of oil and the miracle of the kindling of the lights of the Menorah in the Holy Temple, they established that we kindle the lights of Chanukah.

Now, since “everything that the Sages instituted, was instituted to be similar to Torah,”⁵²⁴ the matter is understood to an even lesser degree. That is, why did they establish that the *mitzvah* of kindling the Chanukah lights is specifically after sunset, which is different from how it was done with the kindling of the lights of the Holy Temple?

Rather, the explanation of the matter, is that it is because the lights of Chanukah and the Sukkah are one matter. That is, just as the Sukkah requires that its shade be greater than its sunlight, so likewise, the *mitzvah* of kindling the Chanukah lights is specifically after sunset.

2.

To further explain:⁵²⁵ It states in Midrash,⁵²⁶ “Regarding the verse,⁵²⁷ ‘Beautiful as the moon, radiant as the sun,’ the words ‘Beautiful as the moon’ refer to the exile in Media (*Maday*), in which Esther was compared to the moon. That is, just as the birth of the moon takes thirty days, so

⁵²⁴ Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 30b

⁵²⁵ See the discourse entitled “*Mishetishka*” 5654 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5654 p. 98 and on); Discourse entitled “*V’Atah b’Rachamecha*” 5686 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5686 p. 163 and on).

⁵²⁶ Midrash Shemot Rabba 15:6

⁵²⁷ Song of Songs 6:10

likewise, Esther stated,⁵²⁸ ‘Now, I have not been summoned to come to the king for these [past] thirty days.’ Thus, the words ‘Beautiful as the moon’ refer to the exile in Media (*Maday*).

The words ‘Radiant as the sun’ refer to the kingdom of Greece, in that the ‘Sandreas Em Helios’ was named for the sun.⁵²⁹ Just as in the season of Tammuz (*Tekufat Tammuz*),⁵³⁰ no one can stand before the sun and everyone flees from it, so likewise, with the kingdom of Greece, everyone fled from them. However, with faith in the Holy One, blessed is He, Matityahu and his sons stood up to them and the Greek troops fled and were killed.”

Now, based on this, the matter of the sun-*Chamah*-חמה refers to the heated passion-*Chamimut*-חמימות of the opposing side of evil, similar to what is explained⁵³¹ about the verse,⁵³² “*Cham*-חם was the father of Canaan.” Likewise, due to his harsh decrees etc., Antiochus is compared to the sun-*Chamah*-חמה. Thus, it is in this regard that they stated that, “the *mitzvah* of kindling the Chanukah lights is after the sun-*Chamah*-חמה sets,” meaning that it is necessary to cause the sun-*Chamah*-חמה of the opposing side of evil to set.

⁵²⁸ Esther 4:11

⁵²⁹ The commentaries to the Midrash *ibid.* explain that the “Sandreas Em Helios” refers to the outdoor court in Athens, Greece, which “was named for the sun.” Of note is that the supreme court of ancient Athens was called “Heliaia” which relates to “Helios” and refers to the sun.

⁵³⁰ Also see Talmud Bavli, Avoda Zarah 3a-b; Regarding the divisions of the months and seasons see Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as HaShem Is One, Vol. 2, The Letters of Creation, section entitled, “The twelve letters ה"ץ ז"ח correspond to the Twelve Months.”

⁵³¹ See Likkutei Torah, Matot 84a and the citations there.

⁵³² Genesis 9:18

Now, to understand this, we must first explain the verse,⁵³³ “For *HaShem* God יהו"ה אלהי"ם is a sun and a shield.” The meaning of the word “shield-*Magen*-מגן” here, is a protective sheath for the sun that makes it possible for the creatures to withstand its light.⁵³⁴ That is, in reference to the sun-*Shemesh*-שמש, there are two matters; the first is the essential self of the sun-*Shemesh*-שמש, and the second, is the cycle-*Galgal*-גלגל of the sun in its orbit, which acts like a shield and sheath for the sun, and it is this second matter that is called by the term, “sun-*Chamah*-חמה.” This is what is meant when it states that the nations of the world worship the sun (*Chamah*-חמה). It means that they worship the sun (*Chamah*-חמה) in its revolution, which is the cycle-*Galgal*-גלגל of the sun in its orbit, and is its shield and sheath.

This is as elucidated in *Shnei Luchot HaBrit*,⁵³⁵ in explaining the teaching,⁵³⁶ “The Jewish people calculate according to the moon (*Levanah*-לבנה), whereas the idolatrous nations calculate according to the sun (*Chamah*-חמה).” At first glance, is not the sun (*Chamah*-חמה) superior to the moon?

⁵³³ Psalms 84:12

⁵³⁴ See Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah Ch. 4; Also see Talmud Bavli, Nedarim 8b; Zohar III 17a, that “In the future the Holy One, blessed is He, will remove the sun from its sheath, the righteous will be healed by it and the wicked will be punished by it.”

⁵³⁵ See *Shnei Luchot HaBrit* 197b (Torah SheBikhtav, Bo, Torah Ohr and elsewhere.)

⁵³⁶ Talmud Bavli, Sukkah 29b

Rather, what is meant, is not that they calculate according to the sun itself, as it is, but only according to its revolution and orbit.

Through this, he also answers the question about the statement of our sages, of blessed memory,⁵³⁷ “The face of Moshe was like the face of the sun (*Chamah*-חמה).” That is, at first glance, the superiority indicated here, is not understood, since it also states,⁵³⁸ “The heels of Adam, the first man, darkened the cycle of the sun (*Chamah*-חמה).” This being so, how much more was this the case in regard to Adam’s face.

What then is so great in stating that, “The face of Moshe was like the face of the sun (*Chamah*-חמה)?” However, about this, he answers by explaining that there is a difference between the “cycle of the sun-*Galgal Chamah*-חמה גלגל” and the “sun-*Chamah*-חמה” itself. Thus, about Adam, it states that, “his heels darkened the **cycle** of the sun (*Galgal Chamah*-חמה גלגל),” whereas about Moshe it states that “his face was like the face of the sun (*Chamah*-חמה)” **itself**. Similarly, it is in this regard that Yehoshua, the student of Moshe said,⁵³⁹ “Sun, stand still at Gibeon,” and he caused the sun to stand in its orbit.

This then, is the meaning of the verse, “For *HaShem* God-יהוה is a sun and a shield.” That is, just as the sheath shields the sun, so likewise, His title God-*Elohi*”m-אלהים shields His Name *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He.⁵⁴⁰ As known, His Name *HaShem*-יהוה is the source of the lights

⁵³⁷ Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 75a

⁵³⁸ Midrash Vayikra Rabba 2:2; Zohar I 266b; Zohar III 306b; Derech Chayim 25a; Sefer HaMaamarim 5662 p. 299 and elsewhere.

⁵³⁹ Joshua 10:12

⁵⁴⁰ See Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah Ch. 4.

(*Orot*), whereas His title God-*Elohi*”מֵאֱלֹהִים is the source of the vessels (*Keilim*), and as known, the matter of the vessels (*Keilim*) is that they conceal the light (*Ohr*) that is manifest within them.

Now, although it is true that the vessels (*Keilim*) reveal the lights (*Orot*),⁵⁴¹ and this being so, their substance is that of revelation (*Giluy*), nonetheless, from the very fact that they reveal the lights (*Orot*) it is understood that they cover over and conceal the **essential** light. For, if this was not so, there would be no revelation of light through them, since the essential light is not in the category of that which can be revealed (*Giluy*). Thus, the way they reveal the lights (*Orot*) is through concealing the essence of the light (*Etzem HaOhr*).

Moreover, from the aspect of the externality of the vessels (*Chitzoniyut HaKeilim*), veils (*Parsa’ot*) are made, which bring about even greater concealment and hiddenness than the vessels (*Keilim*). For, although the vessels (*Keilim*) also conceal, nevertheless, their reason for being, is to reveal (*Giluy*), only that the revelations are brought about through concealing the essence of the light (*Etzem HaOhr*). However, when it comes to the veils (*Parsa’ot*), whose sole purpose is to hide and conceal, this is not the case.

An example is the veil (*Parsa*) between the world of Emanation-*Atzilut* and the worlds of Creation-*Briyah*, Formation-*Yetzirah*, and Action-*Asiyah*, which brings about the

⁵⁴¹ For example, the letters of thought, speech or the written word are on the one hand constricting vessels, and yet, their purpose is to reveal the light and illumination of the intellect.

concealment of the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*, to the point that there is caused to be a sense of tangible independent existence in the worlds of Creation, Formation and Action (*Briyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Asiyah*).

Nevertheless, just as the intention in the vessels (*Keilim*) is to reveal (*Giluy*), only that the revelation (*Giluy*) is brought about through concealment (*He'elem*), the same is true of the veils (*Parsa'ot*), in that their purpose is to bring about revelation below. For, without the veil (*Parsa*) it would be impossible for the light of the world of Emanation-*Atzilut* to illuminate and be received below, in the worlds of Creation, Formation and Action (*Briyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Asiyah*).

It is only because the light (*Ohr*) that transcends the veil (*Parsa*) manifests within the veil (*Parsa*), that it then illuminates and is received in the worlds of Creation, Formation and Action (*Briyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Asiyah*). Even so, it is understood that the vessels (*Keilim*) and veils (*Parsa'ot*) conceal. This is because they are rooted in the title God-*Elohi*"מ-אלה, which is the matter of concealment (*He'elem*).

Now, although the purpose of the concealment brought about by the vessels (*Keilim*) and veils (*Parsa'ot*) is to reveal (*Giluy*), nonetheless, since it is a matter of concealment, it can come about that, with the chaining down of one thing from another, the concealment can come to be to such a degree, that there are those who prostrate themselves to the sun (*Chamah*-חמה).

As explained before, what is meant here is the cycle of the sun (*Galgal Chamah*-גלגל חמה), which is the shield and

sheath of the sun, the substance of which is the matter of concealment. In other words, they think that the concealment itself is primary. Thus, it is about this that the verse states,⁵⁴² “Lest you raise your eyes to the heavens and you see the sun, the moon and the stars – the entire legion of heaven – and be drawn astray to bow to them and worship them, which *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God, has apportioned to all the peoples under the entire heaven.”

In other words, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, gave them room to err, because they are rooted in His title God-*Elohi*"m-אלהי"ם, as known regarding the difference between the souls of the Jewish people and the souls of the nations of the world. That is, the souls of the Jewish people are rooted in His Essential Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, as it states,⁵⁴³ “You are children of *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God.” In contrast, the nations of the world are rooted in His title God-*Elohi*"m-אלהי"ם,⁵⁴⁴ and in this itself, they are rooted in the forty-eight (*Cham*-ח"ם-48) final permutations (*Tzirufim*) of the title God-*Elohi*"m-אלהי"ם.⁵⁴⁵

That is, they are not rooted in the permutations that begin with the letters “these-*Eileh*-ה"אל,” which at least bring one to the aspect indicated by the verse,⁵⁴⁶ “Raise your eyes on high and see Who created these-*Eileh*-ה"אל.” Rather, they are rooted in the forty-eight (*Cham*-ח"ם-48) final permutations

⁵⁴² Deuteronomy 4:19

⁵⁴³ Deuteronomy 14:1

⁵⁴⁴ See Siddur Im Divrei Elokim Chayim, Shaar HaChanukah 271b and on, and elsewhere.

⁵⁴⁵ See Sefer HaLikkutim of the Arizal, beginning of Parshat Bo.

⁵⁴⁶ Isaiah 40:26; See Likkutei Torah, Pekudei 4c and on, and elsewhere.

(*Tzirufim*) that begin with the letters *Yam*-ים, which conceal and cover over “these-*Eileh*-האל”.⁵⁴⁷ They therefore have no sense that the intention of the concealment is for the purpose of revelation, but rather, they only sense the concealment and hiddenness itself.

As a result, they err and state, “*HaShem*-יהוה has left the earth in the hands of the stars and constellations, and it is they who supervise over the creatures.” That is, this is why the nations of the world state,⁵⁴⁸ “High above all nations is *HaShem*-יהוה, above the heavens is His glory.” In other words, they claim that for *HaShem*’s-יהוה providence to extend to the earth would be very degrading to Him, blessed is He, and they therefore argue that He left the earth in the hands of the stars and constellations. They therefore serve them, in order to receive the bestowal of influence from them.

However, in truth, their error is recognizable by their argument itself, since it is an either-or argument. That is, if on the one hand, His level is comparable to the level to the heavens, then He also is comparable to the level of earth. That is, even

⁵⁴⁷ As is known from Sefer Yetzirah 4:12, two letters of the *Aleph-Beit* form two constructs (such as א"ב and ב"א) and three letters form six constructs, and so on. Thus, five letters form one-hundred and twenty constructs. It is explained that the title God-*Elohi*”מ-אלה consists of five letters, but these letters themselves form two words “*Mi*-מי-who,” which indicates concealment, and “*Eleh*-אלה-these,” which indicates revelation. Thus, the first seventy-two permutations of the title God-*Elohi*”מ-אלה, which begin with one of the three letters of “these-*Eileh*-האל,” indicate revelation. In contrast, the final forty-eight permutations, which begin with the letters, “who-*Mi*-מי” or sea-*Yam*-ים indicate greater concealment. The external husks of evil specifically derive their influence from the final forty-eight (מ"ח) permutations of the title God-*Elohi*”מ-אלה, which are known as “the land of the children of *Cham*-חם-48.” (See Igrot Kodesh of the Rebbe, Vol. 2, p. 177.)

⁵⁴⁸ Psalms 113:4

though the earth is only like a mustard seed in comparison to the heavens,⁵⁴⁹ nevertheless, there is some level of comparison between them, since the heavens bestow influence and beneficence to the earth. This being so, just as it would be degrading for Him to relate to the earth, so likewise, it would be degrading for Him to relate to heavens. For, relative to the Utterly Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, all limitations are equally degrading.⁵⁵⁰

On the other hand, since they admit that, “**above** the heavens is His glory,” meaning that He even must degrade Himself to relate to the heavens, so likewise, His providence also extends to the earth and He supervises over its every detail. This is especially so of,⁵⁵¹ “the children of Israel, His intimate people,” amongst whom His particular providence and supervision is openly and clearly apparent. For, “the Jewish people are like one lamb amongst seventy wolves, and yet they are protected.”⁵⁵²

However, because of the concealment and hiddenness caused by the sheath, the nations err and state,⁵⁵³ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה does not see us; *HaShem*-יהו"ה has forsaken the earth.” They therefore worship the sun (*Chamah*-חמה), and from this, they are roused with heated passions (*Chamimut*-חמימות) of lust

⁵⁴⁹ See Shnei Luchot HaBrit 48a; 52b

⁵⁵⁰ See Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim 36b

⁵⁵¹ Psalms 148:14; Also see Sefer HaMaamarim, Kuntreisim Vol. 2, p. 279a (compiled in HaYom Yom for the 28th of Cheshvan).

⁵⁵² See Pesikta Rabbati 9:2; Midrash Tanchuma Toldot 5; Esther Rabba 10:1

⁵⁵³ Ezekiel 8:12; 9:9

for the extraneous husks of evil (*Kelipah*). This is hinted in the verse,⁵⁵⁴ “*Cham-חם* was the father of Canaan.”⁵⁵⁵

4.

Now, this matter of prostrating to the sun, stars and constellations, can also be found in a person’s spiritual condition, which affects his service of *HaShem-יהו"ה*, blessed is He, in that he invests himself into preoccupation with matters of livelihood. That is, he puts his head into it, which, as explained above, is a spiritual form of prostration. For, just as physical prostration involves bowing and lowering one’s physical head, so too, bowing and lowering one’s spiritual head comes about through occupying one’s mind and intellect in matters of livelihood, which is a form of spiritual prostration.

Thus, investing one’s mind and self into matters of livelihood, is comparable to prostrating to the sun. This is because the nations who prostrate to the sun, do so because they think that beneficence comes to them from the sun, stars and constellations. They therefore believe that it is befitting to relegate honor to them and to serve them.

To clarify, in reality, beneficence actually comes from the Holy One, blessed is He, who bestows His beneficence

⁵⁵⁴ Genesis 9:18

⁵⁵⁵ The land of Canaan, which was populated by the seven nations, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Emorites, the Prizites, the Jebusites, the Hivites, and the Girgashites, refers to the seven negative emotional qualities of the extraneous husks of evil (*Kelipah*). (See Likkutei Torah, Matot.)

through the sun, stars and constellations. However, they are merely His instruments, like an axe in the hand of the woodsman. This being so, in actuality, it is unbefitting to relegate any honor to them at all, (as it states,⁵⁵⁶ “Can an axe glorify over the one who chops with it? Can a saw be greater than the one who wields it?”) Nevertheless, the nations of the world prostrate to the sun because they think that beneficence comes from the sun, stars and constellations.

The same is likewise so of a person who invests himself into preoccupation with matters of livelihood, in that he invests his mind and intellect into it. This is because he thinks that beneficence comes from engaging in matters of livelihood. However, in reality, it is *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, who “sustains the whole world in His goodness, with grace, kindness, and compassion,”⁵⁵⁷ and one’s occupation in earning a livelihood is merely a receptacle for the blessings of *HaShem*-יהו"ה. This being so, it is unnecessary to invest his whole intellect into it and become overly preoccupied by it. Thus, spiritually speaking, being preoccupied with earning a livelihood, is no different than the matter of prostrating to the sun, the ultimate result of which, is that he descends lower and lower, until he is pulled into the physical lusts and pleasures of this world.

The remedy for this, is to come to be “broken-hearted and humbled,”⁵⁵⁸ through making an honest accounting of the

⁵⁵⁶ Isaiah 10:15

⁵⁵⁷ See the liturgy of the first blessing of the Grace after meals (*Birchat HaMazon*).

⁵⁵⁸ See Psalms 51:19

true state and standing of his soul. If he does so, he will come to say to himself, “Who do I think I am? I, who am so distant from *HaShem*-יהו"ה and despicable in His eyes, having invested myself in desires that are foreign to Godliness, thus distancing myself from *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He!”

When he realizes this, he cannot possibly think that he has any virtues that entitle him to everything he wants. For, if he indeed was serving the Holy One, blessed is He, as he was commanded, perhaps he could consider himself worthy of such beneficence. However, since he knows in himself, that he is not as he should be, how then can he possibly consider himself to be worthy and entitled?

To further explain, for a person to truly be a receptacle for the blessings of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, he must be like an empty vessel, as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁵⁵⁹ “An empty vessel holds, but a full vessel does not hold.” In other words, even though it is true that, in and of themselves, the souls of the Jewish people are receptacles for *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה blessings, as it states,⁵⁶⁰ “I will raise the cup of salvations,” – that is, the Ingathering of Israel (*Knesset Yisroel*), which is the source of the souls of the Jewish people,⁵⁶¹ is the “cup” and

⁵⁵⁹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 40a; See Sefer HaMaamarim 5634 p. 302; Discourse entitled “*Atem Nitzavim* - You are standing this day, all of you, before *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” 5711, Ch. 5 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5711, p. 137, translated in English in The Teachings of The Rebbe, 5711, Discourse 16), and elsewhere.

⁵⁶⁰ Psalms 116:13

⁵⁶¹ The term “the Ingathering of Israel (*Knesset Yisroel*)” refers to the aspect of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה *Sefirah* of kingship-*Malchut* and the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, the *Shechinah*. It is the source of the souls of the Jewish people and is the aspect of the receptacle for all of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה blessings. (See

receptacle to receive the salvations of יהו"ה-*HaShem*, blessed is He, which are His Supernal kindnesses etc., – nevertheless, one must toil within himself to affect his soul to be in the aspect of an empty vessel.

That is, even a person who is essentially humble must nevertheless work on himself to be like an empty vessel, which is the matter of the absence of lust (*Ta'avah*) for matters of this world. In other words, though it is true that to maintain his health, so that he can serve יהו"ה-*HaShem*, a person needs certain things, such as food, drink and other needs,⁵⁶² nevertheless, lusting for these things provides no added benefit to the health of his body. One must therefore toil within himself not to lust (*Ta'avah*) for matters of this world. He then will be in the aspect of an empty vessel that is ready to receive the blessings of יהו"ה-*HaShem*, blessed is He.

Additionally, he must strengthen his faith in יהו"ה-*HaShem*, blessed is He, with the realization that it is יהו"ה-*HaShem* who sustains and bestows sustenance to all, and that He is capable of providing for the needs of his livelihood, even if he is not overly worried and preoccupied with his occupation. For, יהו"ה-*HaShem*, blessed is He, is capable of providing his livelihood in a different manner.

In other words, even though, with his own intellect, he cannot see how it can possibly be for his livelihood to be obtained in a different manner, he nevertheless must strengthen

Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, Shaar 1, The Divine quality of Kingship-*Malchut*.)

⁵⁶² See Mishneh Torah, Hilchot De'ot, Ch. 3.

his faith in *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with the realization that this indeed is the reality. The fact that he does not understand this intellectually, should not weaken his faith in *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in any way. Thus, strengthening of one's faith (*Emunah*) in *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is sound advice in combating preoccupation and worry over matters of livelihood, which, on a spiritual level is tantamount to prostrating to the sun.

This then, is the meaning of the statement in Midrash that, "Matityahu and his sons, stood up to them with faith in the Holy One, blessed is He, and the Greek troops fled and were all killed." For, Antiochus was waging a spiritual war against the Jews, in that he wanted "to cause them to forget **Your** Torah and to veer from **Your** commandments."⁵⁶³ In other words, his desire was not to enslave their bodies, but rather, to enslave their souls. (That is, he did not touch the Jewish body, but only the Jewish soul.)

This is why they told the Jewish people,⁵⁶⁴ "Inscribe on the horn of an ox that you have no portion in the God of Israel," may the Merciful One save us. This was the spiritual war of Antiochus, who prostrated to the sun-*Chamah*-חמה, meaning, the enflaming and overpowering heat-*Chom*-חום of the lusts of the natural soul for matters of this physical world.

However, the victory of the war was brought about through Matityahu and his sons, who "stood up to them with

⁵⁶³ See the liturgy of the "*Al HaNissim*" prayer recited on Chanukah.

⁵⁶⁴ See Talmud Yerushalmi, Chagigah 2:2; Megilat Ta'anit Ch. 2; Midrash Bereishit Rabba 2:4, and elsewhere.

their faith in the Holy One, blessed is He.” This is as explained before, that the remedy for keeping oneself from preoccupation with matters of livelihood – which spiritually, is tantamount to prostrating to the sun – is through strengthening one’s faith in *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

5.

About this, the verse states,⁵⁶⁵ “The lips of the wise spread knowledge, but not so the heart of fools.” Regarding this, Midrash states,⁵⁶⁶ “The words, ‘The lips of the wise,’ refer to Israel... the words, ‘but not so the heart of fools,’ refer to those who deny reality and say that, ‘the world is like a *tumtum*.’”⁵⁶⁷ The Holy One, blessed is He, therefore tells the wicked: ‘I created the world with the words ‘And it was so-*Vayehiy Khein*-ויהי כן,’ but you say, ‘it is not so-*Lo Khein*-לא כן,’ etc.” That is, they separate the world from *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

The explanation is that the word, ‘fools-*Kseeleem*-כסילים’ refers to the wisdom-*Chochmah* of the opposing side, in that even the other side (*Sitra Acher*a) possesses wisdom. This is the inner meaning of the matter that the Greeks caused all the

⁵⁶⁵ Proverbs 15:7

⁵⁶⁶ Midrash Tehillim 1:5

⁵⁶⁷ There are various versions of the text of Midrash here, but the commentaries seem to agree that it refers to people who say that, “The world is comparable to a *tumtum*.” *Tumtum*-טומטום is a *halachic* classification of a person whose gender cannot be determined. They thus say that, “just as the gender of a *tumtum* is unknown, so too, who created the world is in doubt.” They thus deny the true reality of *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Singularity and Dominion. (See *Biur Re'em* and other commentaries to Midrash Tehillim 1:5 *ibid*.)

oil to become impure. That is, even in the opposing side there is oil (*Shemen*-שמן), which is the aspect of wisdom-*Chochmah*. However, in the opposing side, this “wisdom” is called “folly-*Sichlut*-סכלות,”⁵⁶⁸ as Zohar states⁵⁶⁹ about the verse,⁵⁷⁰ “I perceived that wisdom excels folly-*Seechlout*-סכלות, as light excels darkness,” that “folly-*Seechlout*-סכלות” refers to wisdom of the opposing side. This is why the evil inclination is called,⁵⁷¹ “An old and foolish (*Kseel*-כסיל) king.” It is the angle of wisdom of the opposing side (*Sitra Achera*) that causes separation from *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

To further explain, the difference between the wisdom-*Chochmah* of holiness and the wisdom of the opposing side, is that wisdom-*Chochmah* of the side of holiness causes sublimation and nullification to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, whereas wisdom of the opposing side causes increased ego and separateness from *HaShem*-יהו"ה. This is because wisdom of the side of holiness explains how *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, brings the worlds into existence out of nothing, and that even after they are brought into existence, *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה intangible Godliness must be manifest within the tangible, created being, in order give it existence and vitality. Thus, since the very existence of tangible, created beings, is the intangible Godliness

⁵⁶⁸ That is, the root word “intellect-*Sechel*-שכל” spelled with a *Sin*-ש, refers to the wisdom and intellect of the side of holiness. On the other hand, the word “fool-*Sechel*-סכל” spelled with a *Samech*-ס, refers to the wisdom of the opposing side of evil.

⁵⁶⁹ Zohar III 47a

⁵⁷⁰ Ecclesiastes 2:13

⁵⁷¹ Ecclesiastes 4:13; Also see Midrash Kohelet Rabba there; Zohar III 179a, and the commentary of Rabbi Moshe Zacuto there.

within them, therefore, the wisdom-*Chochmah* of holiness brings about sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

Moreover, this sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is brought about not only in one's intellect, but even in one's emotions. This is true even though emotions are tangibly felt. For, as known, the difference between intellect and emotions is that the motion of intellect is in a way of sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*), in that, in order to understand, a person must nullify his own understanding and invest himself into understanding the subject. In contrast, the emotions are moved in a way of tangible sensation. Nevertheless, the wisdom-*Chochmah* of holiness even causes one's emotions to be sublimated and nullified (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

In contrast, the wisdom of the opposing side only deals with the existence of tangible creatures once they already exist. That is, it explains the particulars of tangible, existent beings (*Yesh*), as they are. Thus, since it is entirely involved with the tangible (*Yesh*), it therefore causes increased awareness of one's tangible existence (*Yeshut*), not only his emotions, but also his intellect. That is, in addition to the fact that, in and of themselves, the emotions are moved in a way of sensory motion, the wisdom of the opposing side adds to one's sense of self in them, to the extent that his emotional qualities themselves become evil.

This is why we find that many of the great sages of the nations of world were corrupt in their personal lives, in that they

possessed the very worst character traits in great measure.⁵⁷² Thus, their wisdom was of absolutely no assistance to them, because the wisdom of the opposing side causes an increased sense of self. Therefore, since the wisdom of the opposing side causes an increased sense of self, and thereby increases the division between people, the verse therefore states, “but not so the heart of fools (*Kseeleem*-כסילים).” That is, as a result of the wisdom of the opposing side (fools-*Kseeleem*-כסילים) a person can degenerate to such a degree, that he can come to say that, “the world is like a *tumtum*,” Heaven forbid.

However, such is not the case with the wisdom of the side of holiness, which explains how all tangible existence (*Yesh*) comes from the intangible Godliness of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, as mentioned above. This wisdom thus brings one to sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and brings unity between people. About this the verse states,⁵⁷³ “The lips of the wise spread-*Yizaroo*-יזרו knowledge.” Rashi explains that the word “*Yizaroo*-יזרו” is of the root “crown-*Zeir*-זר,”⁵⁷⁴ meaning a “diadem-*Neizer*-נזר” and “tiara-*Atarah*-עטרה,” and that the verse therefore means that they “crown wisdom.” The word crown-*Keter* refers to that which is transcendent (*Makif*).⁵⁷⁵ In the soul, it refers to the power of

⁵⁷² That is, the degree of their wisdom actually increased their arrogance and other negative character traits beyond their natural measure, and beyond that of their lesser peers.

⁵⁷³ Proverbs 15:7

⁵⁷⁴ Exodus 25:11

⁵⁷⁵ That is, the crown is above the head.

faith (*Emunah*), since in the soul, faith is the aspect of the crown-*Keter*.⁵⁷⁶

In other words, even if a person does not intellectually understand something, he nevertheless must have faith (*Emunah*). That is, his lack of intellectual understanding should not cause any weakening of his faith (*Emunah*) whatsoever. This itself can be understood intellectually, since “there is no thought that can grasp Him.”⁵⁷⁷ This fact that, “no thought can grasp Him,” even includes the Supernal thought of Primordial Man (*Adam Kadmon*), as stated in Zohar,⁵⁷⁸ “Thought (*Machshavah*) and the Jubilee (*Yovla*) never separate.” The word, “thought” (*Machshavah*) here, refers to wisdom-*Chochmah*, particularly the Supernal Wisdom (*Chochmah Ila’ah*), which is the Primordial Thought of Adam Kadmon. However, since even the Primordial Thought of Adam Kadmon cannot grasp *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, it then is no wonder to him at all, that he, with his puny human intellect, is incapable of understanding.

This then, is what is meant that Matityahu and his sons stood up to the Greeks with their **faith** in the Holy One, blessed is He. That is, they did so by strengthening their faith in *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and it is specifically through this that they were victorious and vanquished Antiochus, who served the sun-*Chamah*-חמה. This is as explained above about the remedy for spiritual prostration to the sun, which is the

⁵⁷⁶ In other words, faith is higher than intellect.

⁵⁷⁷ Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 17a

⁵⁷⁸ Zohar I 123a

matter of division (*Pirud*), in that, by doing so, they separate the world from *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. The solution for this is specifically through strengthening one's faith in *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

6.

This then, explains why the *mitzvah* of kindling the Chanukah lights is specifically after the sun sets. For, the substance of the Chanukah lights is the matter of strengthening faith (*Emunah*) in *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. It therefore causes the "setting of the sun" of the opposing side of evil, which is the matter of division and separation from *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

For this same reason, it is required that the shade of the Sukkah must exceed its sunlight. This too indicates the matter of the "setting of the sun" of the opposing side. Nevertheless, the shade covering (*Schach*) of the Sukkah must be sparse enough for the stars to be seen through it. This is because the stars are of the eighth firmament,⁵⁷⁹ which indicates the aspect that transcends the chaining down of the worlds.⁵⁸⁰ In one's soul, this corresponds to the matter of faith (*Emunah*), which causes the "setting of the sun" of the opposing side of evil.

⁵⁷⁹ See Zohar II 162b and the commentaries of the Zohar there; Mishneh Torah of the Rambam, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah Ch. 3.

⁵⁸⁰ See the discourse entitled "*Sukkah Shechamata* - A Sukkah whose sunlight is greater than its shade" from earlier this year 5714, Discourse 2.

Because of this, both the holiday of Sukkot and Chanukah are celebrated for eight days, for, as known,⁵⁸¹ the number eight indicates the aspect that transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshehut*). Thus, it is specifically through this aspect that *HaShem* יהו"ה's Supernal Intent in creation, that "the Holy One, blessed is He, desired a dwelling place for Himself in the lower worlds," is fulfilled.⁵⁸² This refers to the revelation of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential Being of *HaShem* יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, who transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshehut*). This is accomplished specifically through our service of *HaShem* יהו"ה during exile.

This is also why the candelabrum of the Holy Temple only had seven lights, whereas the lights of Chanukah have eight lights. That is, the Chanukah lights are akin to the coming future, at which time⁵⁸³ "the harp that will be played in the days of Moshiach will have eight strings." In other words, through our service of *HaShem* יהו"ה, blessed is He, during exile, with the strengthening of our faith (*Emunah*), we will merit the coming of our righteous redeemer Moshiach, who is one and singular amongst, "the seven shepherds and eight princes amongst men."⁵⁸⁴ Then, *HaShem* יהו"ה's Supernal Intent will be fulfilled, and there will be a dwelling place for the Holy One, blessed is He, in the lower worlds, in the most literal sense!

⁵⁸¹ See Shaalot uTeshuvot HaRashba 1:9

⁵⁸² See Midrash Tanchuma, Bechukotai 3; Naso 16; Bereishit Rabba Ch. 3; Bamidbar Rabba 13:6; Tanya Ch. 36; and elsewhere.

⁵⁸³ Talmud Bavli, Arakhin 13b

⁵⁸⁴ Micah 5:4; Talmud Bavli Sukkah 52b