

Discourse 21

*“Ani LeDodi v’Dodi Li -
I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Re’eh,
Shabbat Mevarchim Elul, 5715
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,¹²³³ “I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine,” (*Ani LeDodi v’Dodi Li*-אני לדודי ודודי לי). An earlier verse states,¹²³⁴ “My Beloved is mine and I am His.” Now, as known, when it states, “My Beloved is mine and I am His,” the order is from Above to below, and refers to the time of the month of Nissan, which is the preparation for the giving of the Torah. This is as stated,¹²³⁵ “When you take the people out of Egypt, you will serve God on this mountain.” That is, the giving of the Torah is from Above to below.

In contrast, when it states, “I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine” this refers to the month of Elul, which is a preparation for the month of Tishrei. This is the reason the final letters of the words, “I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine,” (*Ani LeDodi v’Dodi Li*-אני לדודי ודודי לי), have four

¹²³³ Song of Songs 6:3

¹²³⁴ Song of Songs 2:16

¹²³⁵ Exodus 3:12 and Rashi there.

letters *Yod*-י,¹²³⁶ which have the numerical value of forty and refer to the forty days that our teacher Moshe was on the Mountain, beginning with the new moon (Rosh Chodesh) of Elul. This is why the first letters of the words of this verse, “I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine,” (*Ani LeDodi v’Dodi Li* אני לדודי ודודי לי) form the name of the month Elul-אלול.¹²³⁷ That is, in the month of Elul, the order of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is from below to Above.

Now, we must better understand¹²³⁸ the matter of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, from Above to below, indicated by the verse, “My Beloved is mine and I am His,” and the matter of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, from below to Above, indicated by the verse, “I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine.” Additionally, both these verses conclude with the words, “He grazes [His sheep] amongst the roses.” In other words, even though they are different and distinct from each other, it nevertheless, states about both, “He grazes [His sheep] amongst the roses.”

2.

Now, to understand this, we must first explain the two modes of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, from Above to

¹²³⁶ Reishit Chochmah, Shaar HaTeshuvah Ch. 4 (section entitled “*Od Yesh*” – 115a); Bayit Chadash (Ba”Ch) to Tur Orach Chayim, Siman 581; Ohr HaTorah Shir HaShirim Vol. 2 p. 546.

¹²³⁷ Pri Etz Chayim, Shaar Rosh HaShanah Ch. 1; Shaar HaPesukim, Shir HaShirim 6:3; Reishit Chochmah and Bayit Chadash (Ba”Ch) *ibid.*, and elsewhere.

¹²³⁸ See the discourse entitled “*Ani LeDodi*” 5674 (*Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 1, p. 617).

below and from below to Above. That is, though they generally are divided into two distinct time periods - Elul which is preparatory to Tishrei, and Nissan which is preparatory to the giving of the Torah - nonetheless, both modes of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, are present throughout the year. That is, they correspond to serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, through the study of Torah, and serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, through prayer.

The explanation¹²³⁹ is that the difference between Torah study and prayer is like the difference between *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Name of *Ma''H*-מ"ה-45 (א"י ו"א ו"א ו"א) and *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Name of *Ba''N*-ב"ן-52 (ה"ה ו"ו ה"ה). Torah is the aspect of *Ma''H*-מ"ה-45 as it states,¹²⁴⁰ "This is the Torah of man (*Adam*)," wherein the word "אדם-Adam-45" has the same numerical value as *Ma''H*-מ"ה-45 (א"י ו"א ו"א ו"א).¹²⁴¹

Now, serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, through the study His Torah is the aspect of drawing down from Above to below. On the other hand, serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה through prayer, is the aspect of the Name of *Ba''N*-ב"ן-52, as it states,¹²⁴² "I am prayer (*Va'Ani Tefilah*-ואני תפלה)," which refers to the *Sefirah* of kingship-*Malchut*, that corresponds to the Name of *Ba''N*-ב"ן-

¹²³⁹ See *Hemshech* 5672 *ibid.* p. 618 and on; Also see the discourse entitled "*Ani LeDodi* – I am my Beloved's" 5712, translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe, 5712 – Discourse 23.

¹²⁴⁰ Numbers 19:14

¹²⁴¹ *Pardes Rimmonim*, Shaar 23 (Shaar Erchei HaKinuyim), section on "*Adam*-אדם"; *Etz Chayim*, Shaar 10 (Shaar HaTikkun) Ch. 3; Shaar 38 (Shaar Leah v'Rachel), Ch. 2, and elsewhere.

¹²⁴² Psalms 109:4; See *Zohar* III 49b

52 (יִוֵּד הָיָה וְיָוִי הָיָה).¹²⁴³ This is as stated,¹²⁴⁴ “So that my soul might sing to You and not be silent,” about which Zohar states,¹²⁴⁵ “The lower flame is constantly yearning to ascend, but does not find the upper flame.” This is the matter of ascent from below to Above.

Now, this does not conflict with the explanation elsewhere¹²⁴⁶ that the names of *Ma”H*-מ”ה-45 and *Ba”N*-ב”ן-52 correspond to the lights (*Orot*) and vessels (*Keilim*). That is, the lights (*Orot*), which are the aspect of *Ma”H*-מ”ה-45, are in a state of ascent and inclusion in their Source, whereas the vessels (*Keilim*), which are the aspect of *Ba”N*-ב”ן-52, are in a state of descent and drawing down to below.

For, this matter, that the lights (*Orot*) are in a state of ascent and the vessels (*Keilim*) are below, explains how they are according to the essential nature of their being. That is, because of the essential nature and manner that they are brought into being, the lights (*Orot*) are in a state of recognizable adhesion to their Source and therefore have a sense of it. They therefore are in a state of running (*Ratzo*) and yearning to become included in their Source.

In contrast, the manner in which the vessels (*Keilim*) are brought into being is that their adhesion to their Source is unrecognizable. They therefore do not sense their source, but

¹²⁴³ Which shares the same numerical value as “animal-*Behemah*-בְּהֵמָה-52” and is also indicative of the sacrificial offerings (from below to Above) and the ascent of the animalistic soul from below to Above, in prayer, which corresponds to the sacrificial offerings. (See Imrei Binah, Shaar HaKriyat Shma 57b and elsewhere.)

¹²⁴⁴ Psalms 30:13

¹²⁴⁵ See Zohar II 140a; Zohar I 77b, 86b, 178b

¹²⁴⁶ See *Hemshech* 5672 *ibid.* p. 574 and p. 618.

rather sense their own existence. Therefore, they remain below in their place. All this is from the perspective of the essential manner that their existence is brought into being.

However, as they are drawn down according to *HaShem's* יהו"ה Supernal intent in the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*) this matter is reversed. For, *HaShem's* יהו"ה Supernal intent in the light (*Ohr*) that is drawn forth in the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*), is to affect the refinement, purification and ascent of the entire chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*). Thus, because of His Supernal intent, the light is caused to come forth in a way of descent to be drawn down below (to affect refinement below).

In contrast, His Supernal intent in the vessels (*Keilim*) is that they be made fitting to receive the light within them. Thus, because to this Supernal intent they are caused to be in a state of ascent from below to Above, to receive the light within them. This is the matter of the lights (*Orot*) and vessels (*Keilim*) as they come forth in the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*).

Now, it certainly is this way in regard to our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. For, since service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, entails setting oneself aside, therefore it causes the nullification of the tangible somethingness (*Yeshut*) of both the lights (*Orot*) and vessels (*Keilim*), as well as the nullification of their nature, in that they are transformed to behave in a way that is the opposite of their essential nature.

In other words, the essential nature of the lights (*Orot*) is to be in a state of ascent. However, as a result of our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, their essential nature is nullified and their tangible "self" (*Yeshut*) is set aside, so that they instead are drawn down below. Similarly, the essential nature of the vessels (*Keilim*) is that they are below. However, as a result of our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, their essential nature is nullified and their tangible "self" (*Yeshut*) is set aside, causing them to ascend Above.

3.

The explanation is that prayer is an ascent from below to Above. That is, the order of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in prayer, is that it starts at the lowest level and gradually ascends from level to level, until one reaches the highest level. This is as stated that prayer is called,¹²⁴⁷ "A ladder (*Sulam*-סלם) set upon the earth and its top reaches heavenward." That is, prayer begins with lowlier matters that, "are set upon the earth," and then one ascends in a way of gradation, with ascent after ascent, coming to much loftier matters, until he "reaches the heavens."

To further explain, the prayer service begins with the matter of submission (*Hoda'ah*), with the words, "Submit to *HaShem*-*Hodu LaHaShem*-להודו ליהו"ה," and even before this, with the recitation of, "I submit before You-*Modeh Ani*

¹²⁴⁷ Genesis 28:12; Zohar I 266b; Zohar III 306b, and elsewhere.

Lefanecha,” upon waking up in the morning. One then ascends in prayer until he arrives at the culmination of nullification and submission to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, during the *Amidah* prayer, which is the ultimate state of elevation.

To clarify, the beginning of our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in prayer, is the recitation of, “I submit before You-*Modeh Ani Lefanecha*.” This is submission (*Hoda'ah*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, before any contemplation through one's reason and intellect. Thus, the moment a Jew wakes up from his sleep, he is like a newborn infant and recites “I submit before You-*Modeh Ani Lefanecha*.”

Now, what we understand from this, is that the words “I submit before You-*Modeh Ani Lefanecha*” contain two opposites. That is, the words “I submit-*Modeh Ani*-מודה אני” are solely a matter of submission (*Hoda'ah*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, like a newborn infant, which is the lowest level. However, the word “before **You**-*Lefanecha*-לפניך,” is higher than the aspect of a name, and refers to the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential **Self** of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, who is “not hinted at by any letters or even by a thorn of a letter.”¹²⁴⁸ We therefore must understand how these two opposites could possibly be found together.

The explanation is that it is specifically because this prayer is just the matter of submission (*Hoda'ah*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. In other words, it is not submission

¹²⁴⁸ See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, *The Gate of Intrinsic Being (Shaar HaHavayah)*; Also see *Likkutei Torah*, Pinchas 80b; Re'eh 31d, and elsewhere; See the discourse entitled “*Shiviti*” 5720.

(*Hoda'ah*) based on intellectual grasp and comprehension. For, when it comes to grasp and comprehension, a person understands that he can only grasp up to a point, and that beyond that, he must simply submit to the truth of it. However, because his submission (*Hoda'ah*) stems from his grasp and comprehension, it is not submission (*Hoda'ah*) with all his being.

In contrast, the submission (*Hoda'ah*) of, “I submit before You-*Modeh Ani Lefanecha*,” is devoid of any grasp at all, like a newborn infant, and thus transcends reason and intellect. Therefore, this kind of submission (*Hoda'ah*) is with the whole essence of one’s being and with all the faculties of his soul. Thus, this submission (*Hoda'ah*) reaches higher than everything, to the matter indicated by the word, “before **You-***Lefanecha*-לפניך,” meaning, before the inner Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, as He includes the entire chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*), from the depth of the heights (*Omek Rom*) to the depths below (*Omek Tachat*).¹²⁴⁹

This is because the same is true in the manner that this is expressed by his soul, in that it is expressed by the totality and essence of his soul, as we observe with those who serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in truth, that when they recite “*Modeh Ani Lefanecha* – I submit before You,” they do so with total commitment and dedication to *HaShem*-יהו"ה from the

¹²⁴⁹ See Sefer Yetzirah 1:5; Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 1.

very essence of their being and with all the faculties of their soul.

Then, from the submission (*Hoda'ah*) of “*Modeh Ani Lefanecha* – I submit before You,” he ascends from level to level, until he reaches the aspect of “Submit to *HaShem-Hodu LaHaShem*-יהו”ה.” Now, the submission of “Submit to *HaShem-Hodu LaHaShem*-יהו”ה,” already has some grasp and comprehension and a division of levels to it. For example, in the submission (*Hoda'ah*) of “Submit to *HaShem*-יהו”ה,” one already can know and differentiate between, “Submit to *HaShem*-יהו”ה,” which is submission to *HaShem*-יהו”ה Himself, blessed is He, and the continuing words, “Call out in His Name.”

In other words, the submission (*Hoda'ah*) is specifically to *HaShem*-יהו”ה, blessed is He, who Is and Was and Will Be as One (*Hoveh v'Hayah v'Yihyeh*-והי”ה ויהי”ה-יה) and transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*).¹²⁵⁰ Thus, in regard to *HaShem*-יהו”ה Himself, blessed is He, only submission (*Hoda'ah*) is applicable. In contrast, “Calling out in His Name-*Kiroo b'Shmo*-קראו בשמו,” refers to pronouncing His title Lord-*Adona*’י-אדני or His title God-*Elohi*’m-אלהי”m,¹²⁵¹ which are

¹²⁵⁰ See Zohar III 257b (Ra’ayah 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 VeHaEmunah, Ch. 7 (82a).

¹²⁵¹ That is, since it is forbidden to pronounce His proper Name *HaShem*-יהו”ה, therefore, in prayer or when the Torah scroll is read with the congregation, on Mondays, Thursdays, Shabbat and Biblical Holy days, depending on the configuration of the words, either His title Lord (*Adonai*-אדני) or His title God (*Elohim*-אלהי”m) is pronounced (called out) instead of His proper Name *HaShem*-יהו”ה. See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol.

His titles as He is drawn forth into the world. In other words, these are the aspects of the power of the Actor as He is drawn to manifest within the acted upon, in which it therefore is applicable for there to be a “calling out” and a drawing forth.

The reason that in this submission (*Hoda'ah*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, there already is a certain degree of grasp and a differentiation of levels, is because it was preceded by the eighteen blessings that were said previously in the morning; “He grants understanding to the rooster,” “He opens the eyes of the blind,” etc.

The matter of these blessings is the construction of the vessels (*Keilim*). Thus, after beginning with these blessings, a person already has an element of grasp and comprehension and a differentiation of levels. That is, he already knows to differentiate that his submission (*Hoda'ah*) is to *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, and that his “calling out” is in His Name. Nevertheless, all this is still the service of submission (*Hoda'ah*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

After the service of “Submit to *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” he then ascends level after level until he reaches the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the verses of song (*Psukei d'Zimrah*), which is service in a way of grasp and comprehension. However, because the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of prayer, is from below to Above, in a way of order and gradation, it therefore is not possible for him to go immediately

1, The Gate of Intrinsic Being (*Shaar HaHavayah*), The Gate of His Title (*Shaar HaKinuy*), and The Gate of His Sanctuary (*Shaar HaHeichal*).

from the submission (*Hoda'ah*) to the grasp and comprehension (*Hasagah*).

Thus, even his grasp during the verses of song (*Psukei d'Zimrah*) is not the true and ultimate matter of grasping *HaShem's*-יהו"ה Godliness. This is because one's contemplations (*Hitbonenut*) during the verses of song (*Psukei d'Zimra*) are about how *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, brings everything into being from nothing, which cannot come into actual grasp and comprehension.

For, although there are analogies to this, as understood by the fact that trees and other vegetation grow without having been sown, nonetheless, this is merely an analogy that points to the matter of creation of something from nothing. However, the true manner of how creation is brought into being from nothing, is utterly beyond our comprehension. Thus, even the contemplations (*Hitbonenut*) of the verses of song (*Psukei d'Zimrah*) are not actual comprehension of Godliness at all, but only awaken the arousal of our emotions from the wondrousness of it all (*Hafla'ah*).

Therefore, the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, during the verses of song (*Psukei d'Zimrah*), is not yet actual service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה with the mind and intellect (*Avodat HaMochin*), but rather is only service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with one's emotions (*Avodat HaMidot*).

After the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה of the verses of song (*Psukei d'Zimrah*), a person ascends still higher, until he reaches the service of the blessings of the *Shema* and the recital of *Shema* itself. These aspects of prayer are the true and

ultimate intent of the matter of grasping and comprehending (*Hasagah*). However, because service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in prayer, is in a manner of order and gradation, therefore a person must prepare himself to arrive at this by the time he reaches the blessings of the *Shema*.

This is accomplished through first serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה in the verses of song (*Psukei d'Zimrah*). In other words, the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה of the verses of song (*Psukei d'Zimrah*), is to prepare and remove any matters from himself that may restrain, obstruct or distract him from his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה during the blessings of the *Shema*.

This itself is the very theme of the verses of song (*Psukei d'Zimrah*-פסוקי דזמרה) in that the word song (*Zimrah*-זמרה) is of the same root as in the verse,¹²⁵² "Pruning the mighty-*Zemir Aritzim*-זמיר עריצים." In other words, it refers to pruning and cutting off the thorns and thistles of the animalistic soul, which obstruct the revelation of the powers of the Godly soul.

The matter of thorns and thistles is to be understood simply, that it refers to matters that are of no value. In regard to serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, this refers to idle chatter and frivolity. In other words, these are matters that are not necessarily considered to be pursuing one's lusts, but are simply matters that are devoid of value.

As a result, a person might err to think that because they simply are empty matters, with nothing to them, they have no

¹²⁵² Isaiah 25:5

negative effect. However, in reality, they cause his (Godly) soul to become coarse and gross, meaning that he becomes gross and desensitized to delighting in matters of spirituality, to the extent that he can no longer relate to matters of Godliness and spirituality altogether.

It goes without saying that his animalistic soul is certainly affected and remains completely physical and incapable of becoming refined. Moreover, through idle chatter, he then comes to have thoughts that are alien to Godliness and other thoughts that distract him during prayer and confuse the grasp of his Godly soul and even of his animalistic soul.

Similarly, as explained elsewhere,¹²⁵³ when it comes to the matter of gazing at undesirable and inappropriate things (and the same applies to hearing), a person may think that there is no harm in this at all. However, in reality, about this the verse states,¹²⁵⁴ “Do not stray after your hearts and after your eyes.” For, though in and of itself, it is not a sin, nevertheless,¹²⁵⁵ “The heart and the eyes are the two agents of sin.”

From all the above it is understood that these matters distract and confuse a person in his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. This then, is the matter of the verses of song (*Psukei d'Zimrah*-זמרה-פסוקי), which is the matter of “Pruning the mighty-*Zmir Aritzim*-זמיר עריצים,” meaning, the removal of all matters that may restrain, obstruct or distract a person from

¹²⁵³ See Kuntres HaAvodah Ch. 2

¹²⁵⁴ Numbers 15:39; See Tanya Ch. 27.

¹²⁵⁵ Rashi to Numbers 15:39; Midrash Tanchuma Shlach, and elsewhere; Also see Sefer HaMaamarim 5701 p. 157.

his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, when he arrives at blessings of the *Shema* and the recital of *Shema* itself.

Now, this does not contradict the explanation elsewhere,¹²⁵⁶ that before prayer a person must make a general preparation in himself, as indicated by the verse,¹²⁵⁷ “Go for yourself, from your land, from your birthplace and from your father’s house,” and by the verse,¹²⁵⁸ “Forget your people and your father’s house.”

This is because this general preparation must come before prayer and therefore is unlike the preparation of the verses of song (*Psukei d’Zimrah*) during prayer. That is, the general preparation of “Go for yourself, from your land, from your birthplace and from your father’s house,” and, “Forget your people and your father’s house,” only relates to tangible action. In other words, this is within the capacity of every single Jew, in that he can force himself to “Go for yourself, from your fathers land etc.,” as it relates to tangible action.¹²⁵⁹

In contrast, the toil in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, during the verses of song (*Psukei d’Zimrah*), is in order to affect himself to the point that he has no connection to such matters in the first place (not only to not actualizing them, but to have no feel for them altogether).

Now, although the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the verses of song (*Psukei d’Zimrah*) does not have a transformative (*It’haphcha*) effect on him, to truly have no

¹²⁵⁶ See *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 2 p. 787; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5668 p. 5 and on.

¹²⁵⁷ Genesis 12:1

¹²⁵⁸ Psalms 45:11

¹²⁵⁹ Tanya, Ch. 14

connection to such matters at all, nevertheless, even though he still actually relates to such matters, nonetheless, through serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the verses of song (*Psukei d'Zimrah*), he brings about an elevation and exaltedness in his soul and is automatically caused to be distant from such matters.

After the above preparations he can then serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the mode of the blessings of the *Shema*, which is service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with comprehension and grasp (*Hasagah*).

To clarify, in the blessings of the *Shema*, the contemplation (*Hitbonenut*) that one engages in, is of the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה of the angelic beings, which are generally divided into two categories. There are Seraphim angels, who have actual grasp of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness, and recite "Holy, Holy, Holy is *HaShem Tzva'ot*-צבאו"ה," and there are Ophanim angels, who are in a state of great noise and commotion, specifically because they lack grasp and comprehension of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness.

In other words, they only grasp His awesome wondrousness (*Hafla'ah*) and as a result, are in a state of great noise and commotion. Thus, the Ophanim angels recite,¹²⁶⁰ "May the glory of *HaShem*-יהו"ה be blessed (*Baruch*-ברוך) from His place," meaning that they yearn that He be drawn down.¹²⁶¹

¹²⁶⁰ Ezekiel 3:12

¹²⁶¹ See Torah Ohr, Mikeitz 37c and elsewhere; Also see Mishnah Kilayim 7:1, "*Hamavrich et HaGefen ba'Aretz* בארץ את הגפן" which means, "If one has bent a vine down to the ground." Thus, the term "*Brachah*-ברכה" or "*Baruch*-ברוך" also mean to be "drawn down."

Now, when a person contemplates the service of *HaShem* יהו"ה of the angelic beings, and particularly the service of the Ophanim angels, which are the root of the animalistic soul, he too is caused have one of these two motions. That is, there is the motion of ascent (similar to the service of the Seraphim angels, which is in a way of ascent as they recite "Holy-Kadosh-קדוש"). In other words, he comes to yearn for ascent and inclusion Above in *HaShem*'s יהו"ה Godliness. Or he can come to yearn and desire to draw down revelations of *HaShem*'s יהו"ה Godliness below, (similar to the service of the Ophanim angels, which is in a manner of drawing down when they recite "Blessed-Baruch-ברוך").

This motion is then drawn forth in his recital of *Shema* itself, when he recites the words, "*HaShem* is One-*HaShem Echad*-אהד יהו"ה," which also has two aspects.¹²⁶² The first aspect is the meaning of, "*HaShem* is One-*HaShem Echad*-אהד יהו"ה,"¹²⁶³ and the second aspect is, "to coronate Him as King above and below and in the four directions of the earth."¹²⁶⁴

HaShem is One-*HaShem Echad*-אהד יהו"ה is the grasp and comprehension that everything that *HaShem* יהו"ה created in the seven firmaments of the heavens and the earth and in the four directions, are all utterly and completely nullified before Him, just as they were before their creation. This is the matter of the nullification of their very existence (*Bittul b'Metziyut*) to

¹²⁶² See at length in the Opening Gateway (Petach HaShaar) to Imrei Binah of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gateway to Understanding.

¹²⁶³ See Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 1:7, and Ginat Egoz of the Rishon, Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as HaShem Is One.

¹²⁶⁴ See Talmud Bavli, Brachot 13b

the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential Being of *HaShem*-יהו"ה alone, blessed is He, which is in a manner of ascent from below to Above.

In contrast, "To coronate Him as King above and below and in the four directions of the earth," is what follows in the recitation of "*Baruch Shem* – May the Name of His glorious kingship be blessed (drawn down) forever and ever." That is, it is in a manner of drawing down from Above to below and is the sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) of the lower unity of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He (*Yichuda Tata'ah*).

Now, after the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the blessings of the *Shema* and the recital of *Shema* itself, he toils in his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in ascent after ascent, until he comes to the nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the *Amidah* prayer. At this point he should be "like a servant who stands in the presence his Master,"¹²⁶⁵ meaning that his sense of independent existence becomes totally nullified (*Bittul b'Metziyut*) in the presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

This then, is the general order of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in prayer, which is a mode of service that is in a way of ascent from below to Above. However, because it is service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way of ascent, it therefore depends on the toil and effort of the created being himself. It thus is understood that even the loftiest levels of ascent in this, are not a complete and true nullification of one's

¹²⁶⁵ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 10a

existence (*Bittul b'Metziyut*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, but are only the nullification of his ego and sense of "somethingness" (*Bittul HaYesh*).

4.

However, we still must better understand this. For, the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, during prayer, involves grasp and comprehension, and as known, when someone comprehends something, his mind becomes settled. That is, comprehension brings satisfaction to the one who seeks to comprehend. This being so, it seems to be the opposite of the above explanation that comprehension and grasp during prayer brings about an ascent from below to Above.

However, the explanation of the matter is that the comprehension and grasp that one attains during prayer is primarily not for the actual grasp and comprehension, in and of itself, but is primarily in order to awaken passion and excitement in the one who grasps and comprehends.

Therefore, it is not sufficient that he comprehends the explanation of these matters alone, but rather, of primary importance is to come to sense the Godliness in the matter that he comprehends and thus awaken passion and excitement toward Godliness.¹²⁶⁶ In other words, this is the primary aspect of the comprehension attained during prayer, that it awakens the emotions (*Midot*). Moreover, this applies to all levels of prayer.

¹²⁶⁶ See HaYom Yom for 20 Tammuz; Also see at length in Kuntres HaHitpa'alut of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as Divine Inspiration.

For example, when it comes to comprehending the matter of submission (*Hoda'ah*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He – whether it is the comprehension of the submission (*Hoda'ah*) of “I submit before You – *Modeh Ani*,” in which there only is a very limited comprehension when he continues the verse and says, “that You have returned my soul within me,” or whether it is the comprehension of the submission (*Hoda'ah*) of “Submit to *HaShem*-יהו"ה” – in both, the entire matter of the comprehension is for the purpose of awakening submission (*Hoda'ah*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

The same is so of the comprehensions of the verses of song (*Psukei d'Zimrah*), which is a higher level of comprehension. Nevertheless, it too is not what is ultimately meant by grasp and comprehension (*Hasagah*), for as explained above, the creation of something from nothing never comes into actual grasp and comprehension at all.

Rather, the entire matter of grasp and comprehension during the verses of song (*Psukei d'Zimrah*) is in order to arouse the passion and excitement of the emotions. This is the meaning of the statement that purpose of the verses of song (*Psukei d'Zimrah*) is to bring about an “external engraving” in oneself.¹²⁶⁷ For, since this is not truly a matter of grasp and comprehension, its sole purpose is to arouse one’s emotions (*Midot*) toward *HaShem*-יהו"ה.

This is why, in and of themselves, wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah* are insufficient, because true arousal

¹²⁶⁷ See Likkutei Torah, Bechukotai 47d; *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 2 *ibid.*; Vol. 3, p. 1,313.

of the soul is not born of wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah* by themselves, since the matter remains distant and removed from himself.

For example, although a person may have a good grasp of the wealth of a rich person, nevertheless, since it is unrelated and distant from himself, it does not arouse a yearning for wealth in him.¹²⁶⁸ This is like the analogy given in holy books,¹²⁶⁹ that though a peasant may be aware of the extraordinary beauty and refined characteristics of the princess, he will not yearn to marry her, since he is completely removed and distant from her.

The same is true in our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. The arousal of the heartfelt passion does not come from wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah* alone. Rather, the primary matter that specifically leads to the arousal of heartfelt passion to *HaShem*-יהו"ה is the matter of knowledge-*Da'at*, meaning that his mind becomes bound to *HaShem*-יהו"ה and this becomes embedded in his thoughts, as explained at length in Tanya.¹²⁷⁰

In other words, it is specifically the faculty of knowledge-*Da'at* that brings a person close to a matter and brings the matter close to him. It is therefore specifically through the bonding of one's faculty of knowledge-*Da'at* to

¹²⁶⁸ See Kuntres HaHitpaalut of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as Divine Inspiration.

¹²⁶⁹ See Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra to Exodus 20:14

¹²⁷⁰ See Tanya Ch. 3, Ch. 42; Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 1-3; See at length in Listen Israel, a translation of Rabbi Hillel Paritchers (second) explanation to Shaar HaYichud, Ch. 1.

HaShem-יהו"ה that he then will be roused with heartfelt passion and excitement for *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

Beyond all this, even when it comes to the comprehension and grasp during the blessings of the *Shema*, although it indeed is the true matter of what is meant by grasp and comprehension, and is no longer just an “external engraving” but rather is an “inner engraving,”¹²⁷¹ nevertheless, the ultimate grasp is to come to be in the state indicated by the verse,¹²⁷² “And you shall love *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God etc.”

In other words, the ultimate purpose is that his knowledge (*Da'at*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, be drawn forth into the sensitivities and feelings of his heart. This is as stated,¹²⁷³ “You shall know this day and **set it upon your heart** that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, He is the God etc.” This is why grasp and comprehension with the externality of the mind and intellect is insufficient, but there specifically must be grasp and comprehension with the inner aspects of the mind and intellect. This is because it is specifically from grasping with the inner aspects of the mind and intellect that light (*Ohr*) will be drawn into the heart, just as it is in the brain and mind.¹²⁷⁴

We thus see that the primary aspect of the contemplation (*Hitbonenut*) is to come to the state of “You shall love

¹²⁷¹ See *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 1 p. 173; Vol. 2 p. 806 and on; See the discourse entitled “*V'Eileh Shemot*” 5716, Ch. 5 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5716 p. 96 and on).

¹²⁷² Deuteronomy 6:5

¹²⁷³ Deuteronomy 4:39

¹²⁷⁴ See Kuntres HaHitpa'alut of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as Divine Inspiration; See Kuntres HaAvodah, p. 6 and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5670 p. 13 and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5710 p. 22 and on; Likkutei Sichot Vol. 39 p. 28; Also see the discourse entitled “*V'Eileh Shemot*” 5716 *ibid*.

(*V'Ahavtah*-ואהבת) *HaShem*-יהו"ה," which is a term of "desire-*Avah*-אבה,"¹²⁷⁵ and indicates an ascent from below to Above. Moreover, this love and desire should even be felt by one's animalistic soul, as we continue and recite,¹²⁷⁶ "With all your hearts (*Bechol Levavecha*-בכל לבבך)," in the plural, about which our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹²⁷⁷ "With both of your inclinations."

That is, the refinement of one's animalistic soul brings about "the superiority of light that comes out of darkness,"¹²⁷⁸ so that the love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה of one's Godly soul becomes strengthened to a much greater degree.¹²⁷⁹ This is because, in and of itself, the Godly soul does not have the same intensity of desire as the animalistic soul has. Thus, through the refinement of one's animalistic soul, his Godly soul is affected to also have this kind of desire.

This is the love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, which consequently follows and is the love indicated by the words "with all your being (*Bechol Me'odecha*)," which is in a manner of ascent. This aspect is comparable to the superiority of a true penitent (*Ba'al Teshuvah*), over and above the level of a perfectly righteous person (*Tzaddik Gamur*). (Moreover, it should be pointed out that repentance-*Teshuvah* is also a matter of ascent and elevation).

¹²⁷⁵ See Sefer HaShoroshim of the Radak, section on "*Avah*-אבה"; Also see Likkutei Torah, BeHa'alotcha 29d; VaEtchanan 2c, 9b, and elsewhere.

¹²⁷⁶ Deuteronomy 6:5

¹²⁷⁷ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 54a

¹²⁷⁸ Ecclesiastes 2:13

¹²⁷⁹ See Zohar I 129b

Similarly, the *Amidah* prayer, which follows the recital of *Shema* and its blessings, is also in a manner of ascent. For, although it is true that the theme of the twelve intermediate blessings of the *Amidah* prayer, is to draw down blessings from *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in order to satisfy one's needs, nevertheless, the actual service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, required to bring this about – meaning, the approach that a person must take when coming before *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in supplication for his needs – is through the bowing and all of the other matters that preceded this in prayer, all of which are in a manner of ascent. This is because the matter of prayer is primarily in a manner of ascent from below to Above.

5.

However, the matter of Torah is that of drawing down from Above to below. For, the general matter of the giving of the Torah was that it was given from Above to below. This is because, at that time, the Jewish people were sunken in the forty-nine gates of impurity,¹²⁸⁰ and even though they left Egypt in the manner indicated by the words,¹²⁸¹ “The people fled,” [meaning that they separated themselves from the impurities of Egypt] nonetheless, it cannot be said that in a mere period of fifty-one days they came to be on a level of being fit to receive the Torah in and of themselves. Rather, the way the Torah was given was from Above to below.

¹²⁸⁰ See Zohar Chadash Yitro and elsewhere.

¹²⁸¹ Exodus 14:5; Tanya Ch. 31

The above has to do with the manner that the Torah was given. However, this is also the case in regard to Torah itself, which is the will and wisdom of the Holy One, blessed is He, about whom it states,¹²⁸² “He and His wisdom are One.” Moreover, this is not like the wisdom-*Chochmah* of the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*, since in the wisdom-*Chochmah* of the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*, the light (*Ohr*) is simple and the form results from the vessel (*Klee*).¹²⁸³

Rather, in and of itself, the Torah has form and measure, which is an essential measurement.¹²⁸⁴ In other words, the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential Being, *HaShem*-יה"ה Himself, blessed is He, placed Himself into the wisdom-*Chochmah* of the Torah.¹²⁸⁵ Thus, the Torah is the same below as it is Above. That is, even as it is below, the Torah is higher than the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*).

This is why the words of Torah do not contract impurity.¹²⁸⁶ For, since the Torah transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), even as it is below, therefore, the entire matter of a vessel (*Klee*) and the entire matter of the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), are incapable of affecting it in any way whatsoever. This is because the Torah is the essential drawing down of the Singular Preexistent

¹²⁸² See Tanya Ch. 4-5 and the citations there, and elsewhere.

¹²⁸³ See Sefer HaMitzvot of the Tzemach Tzedek 48a and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5668 p. 204 and on, and elsewhere.

¹²⁸⁴ See *Hemshech* 5666 p. 53 and on.

¹²⁸⁵ See Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 105a – The word “*I-Anochi*-אנכי” which is the opening word of the Ten Commandments is an acronym for the words, “I have placed Myself in My writings-*Ana Nafshi Ketavit Yahavit*-אנא נפשי כתבתי יהבית.”

¹²⁸⁶ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 22a

Intrinsic and Essential Being of *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He.

This is why we find that when it comes to the study of Torah, whether a person studies and comprehends the Torah or whether he studies and does not comprehend, such as when he studies the written word, in and of itself (*Mikra*-מקרא), it nevertheless states about him,¹²⁸⁷ “Whoever sits and reads (*Kore*-קורא) the Torah, the Holy One, blessed is He, sits and reads opposite him.”

The term reads (*Koreh*-קורא) also means to call, and thus, reading the Torah is compared to a person who calls his friend to come to him, or to a toddler who calls his father to come to him.¹²⁸⁸ In other words, when a person studies Torah he calls and draws down the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential Being of *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, from Above to below.

6.

This then, is also the difference between the month of Nissan and the month of Elul. That is, the month of Nissan is in preparation for the giving of the Torah, as it states,¹²⁸⁹ “When you take the people out of Egypt, you will serve God on this mountain,” and the giving of the Torah itself, is a drawing down

¹²⁸⁷ Tanna d’Bei Eliyahu Rabba, Ch. 18

¹²⁸⁸ See Tanya, Ch. 37.

¹²⁸⁹ Exodus 3:12

from Above to below. Thus, about the month of Nissan, the verse states,¹²⁹⁰ “My Beloved is mine and I am His.”

In contrast, the month of Elul is a preparation for the month of Tishrei, and therefore the order of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the month of Elul, is in a way of ascent from below to Above, in which there is order and gradation. For, just as in the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, through prayer, it was explained above that it is in a manner of ascent with order and gradation of levels, this is also the case in regard to the ascents of the month of Elul.

That is, after the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, at the beginning of the month of Elul, we come to the end of the month of Elul and the days of *Selichot* and penitence, after which we arrive at Rosh HaShanah, the ten days of repentance and Yom Kippur, until we finally arrive at the culmination of the closing *Ne'ilah* prayer of Yom Kippur, which is the ultimate state of ascent. Therefore, since the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in Elul, is in a way of ascent from below to Above, the verse states,¹²⁹¹ “I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine,” (*Ani LeDodi v’Dodi Li*-אני לדודי ודודי לי) about the month of Elul.

With the above in mind, we may now understand the verse, “My Beloved is mine and I am His,” and the verse, “I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine,” and that both verses conclude with the words, “He grazes [His sheep] amongst the roses.” For, the words, “My Beloved is mine and I am His,” is

¹²⁹⁰ Song of Songs 2:16

¹²⁹¹ Song of Songs 6:3

the order from Above to below, referring to the time of Nissan, which is preparatory to the giving of the Torah. Thus, it is in this regard that the verse concludes, “He grazes [His sheep] amongst the roses (*Shoshanim*-שׁוֹשָׁנִים),” referring to their study (*Shonim*-שׁוֹנִים) of Torah.¹²⁹² This is the matter in which Torah is drawn down, in and of itself, which is the aspect of drawing down from Above to below.

The other verse, which states, “I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine,” refers to the time of Elul, in which the service of *HaShem*-יְהוָה, blessed is He, is ordered from below to Above. That is, there first must be the aspect of “I am my Beloved’s,” which is the service of *HaShem*-יְהוָה, blessed is He, of Elul, that is the toil that is preparatory to the matter of “my Beloved is mine,” which follows in the month Tishrei.

This verse also concludes with the words, “He grazes [His sheep] amongst the roses (*Shoshanim*-שׁוֹשָׁנִים).” In this case, the word “rose” (*Shoshanah*-שׁוֹשָׁנָה) is a reference to the *Sefirah* of kingship-*Malchut*,¹²⁹³ which ascends to the aspect of the crown-*Keter*. This matter primarily occurs on Rosh HaShanah, upon which there is a coronation and construction of the kingship-*Malchut* of *HaShem*-יְהוָה, blessed is He.

We thus find that the explanation of the words, “He grazes [His sheep] amongst the roses (*Shoshanim*-שׁוֹשָׁנִים),” stated in relation to the verse “I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine,” is in the mode of ascension. Nevertheless, it is through the service of *HaShem*-יְהוָה, blessed is He, during

¹²⁹² See Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 30b; Likkutei Torah, Re’eh 32d, 33d.

¹²⁹³ See the opening words of Zohar Vol. 1 and the commentators there.

the month of Elul in the mode of ascension, referring to service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in prayer, and especially to toil in repentance (*Teshuvah*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that an ascension in Torah is also caused.

This is the matter of the words, "He grazes [His sheep] amongst the roses (*Shoshanim*-שושנים)," as referring to the study (*Shonim*-שונים) of Torah. For, it is specifically through serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way of ascent from below to Above that we bond the Torah as it is Above, with the Holy One blessed is He.¹²⁹⁴

This refers to drawing down additional illumination and light in Torah, higher than how the Torah was when it was initially created and when it was initially given. For, it is through the service of repenting and returning (*Teshuvah*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that even the Torah is caused to ascend. This then, explains the verse, "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine, He grazes [His sheep] amongst the roses."

¹²⁹⁴ See Zohar III 222b (Ra'aya Mehemna); Sefer HaBahir (Section 58), Section 196, and the Ohr HaBahir; Likkutei Torah, Shelach 47c, 51a.