

Discourse 30

*“Baruch HaGomel LaChayavim Tovot -
Blessed are You Who bestows goodness upon the
guilty”*

Delivered at Gan Israel summer camp,
On the 15th of Tammuz, 5717
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The blessing states,⁸⁹⁰ “Blessed are You, *HaShem*-יהוה our God, King of the world, who bestows goodness upon the guilty, who has bestowed goodness upon me.” His honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rebbe, whose joyous occasion we are celebrating, states in the discourse,⁸⁹¹ that this must be better understood. For, the liturgical format of the blessing over miracles is “Blessed are You, *HaShem*-יהוה our God, King of the world, who has performed a miracle for me.” This being so, why does this blessing use the word “goodness-*Tov*-טוב”? Furthermore, we must understand why the blessing states, “Who bestows goodness upon the guilty.” That is, why is it that one mentions his own guilt and culpability?

⁸⁹⁰ See Talmud Bavli, Brachot 54b; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Brachot 10:8

⁸⁹¹ See the discourse entitled “*Baruch HaGomel*” of Shabbat Parshat Pinchas 5687 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5687 p. 211); Also see the discourse by the same title of the 13th of Tammuz, 5687 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5687 p. 208).

In the discourse, he explains at length that, as known, the descent of the Godly soul into the body is an extremely great and awesome descent. For, about the Godly soul as it is Above, the verse states,⁸⁹² “As *HaShem*-יהו"ה, God of Israel lives, before Whom I stood.” That is, before the soul descended into the body, it stood on a very high level [standing in the presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה] and then descended “from a high peak to a deep pit,”⁸⁹³ in that the Godly soul of the Jew descended to become enclothed and manifest within the animalistic soul, the body, and matters of the world. Now, just as when the Godly soul was above, it only related to matters of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness, so too, when it descended below, because of the concealment brought about by being enclothed in the animalistic soul, the body, and matters of the world; as a result of this concealment, we require proofs of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה existence and matters of His Godliness. Moreover, even **with** the proofs, we can only know **that** He Is, but can have no knowledge of What He Is.

Albeit, the descent is for the purpose of ascent. That is, by the Godly soul specifically manifesting below, within the concealment, but nevertheless, engaging in the study *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Torah and fulfilling His *mitzvot* with precision, by performing them in the most beautiful way (*b"Hidur*-בהידור), and by restraining and transforming the opposite of holiness [of the animalistic soul] (all of which only apply in this physical world), through this, the Glory of the Holy One, blessed is He,

⁸⁹² Kings I 17:1

⁸⁹³ Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 5b

is elevated in all worlds,⁸⁹⁴ higher than before the descent of the soul. Through this the soul too ascends higher than before its descent.

Now, this matter involves two opposites. For, at the very same time that the soul is in the “deep pit,” enlothed within the concealment of the animalistic soul, the body, and matters of the world, the Godly soul must stand steadfast in a motion of Torah study and the fulfillment of *mitzvot*, in the same way that after seventy [or eighty] years, at the point when the soul is departing from the body, it no longer worries about the needs of the body (as explained in Tanya).⁸⁹⁵

It is to this end that the giving of the Torah came about, whereupon all Jewish souls stood at Mount Sinai, not only the souls of that generation, but the souls before that generation, and the souls of all generations that are destined to be.⁸⁹⁶ At the giving of the Torah, each and every Jew [of all generations] was given the ability and strength to accomplish this, as we learn from the teaching,⁸⁹⁷ “[Before its descent, the soul] is given an oath (*Mashbi'in Oto*-משביעין אותו), be righteous and do not be wicked, and even if the whole world tells you, ‘you are righteous’ regard yourself as if you are wicked.” Now the word, “given an oath-*MaShbi'in*-משביעין” is related to the word “full satisfaction-*Sova*-שובע,”⁸⁹⁸ in that the Godly soul of every Jew

⁸⁹⁴ Tanya Ch. 27 and Likkutei Torah Pekudei cite to Zohar II 128b (and Likkutei Torah there also cites to Zohar ibid. 67b; Also see 184a); Also see Torah Ohr Vayakhel 89d; Likkutei Torah Chukat 65c; The discourse entitled “*Bati LeGani* – I have come to My garden” 5710, Ch. 1, and elsewhere.

⁸⁹⁵ See Tanya, Ch. 41 (58a)

⁸⁹⁶ Midrash Shemot Rabba 28:6

⁸⁹⁷ Talmud Bavli, Niddah 30b; Tanya Ch. 1

⁸⁹⁸ See Kitzurim v’Ha’arot to Tanya p. 57 and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5698 p. 235 and on.

is given the power to stand steadfast, even with all the concealments, and fulfill *HaShem's* יהו"ה Supernal intent of making the lower worlds a dwelling place for the Holy One, blessed is He.⁸⁹⁹

The discourse concludes⁹⁰⁰ that it is written,⁹⁰¹ “I *HaShem* יהו"ה have not changed, and you, the children of Yaakov have not expired,” and explains that the prophet stated this as a question. [“If I *HaShem* יהו"ה have not changed, why have you the children of Yaakov not expired?”] In other words, the prophet is asking the Jewish people, “Don’t you see that *HaShem* יהו"ה, blessed is He, does not deviate from His promise?” (That is, *HaShem's* יהו"ה promise in the oath that every Jewish soul takes before descending into the world, is that in every place and generation, every Jew will be capable of fulfilling the directive [be righteous and do not be wicked] for which his soul descended into the world. This promise is unchanging – “I have not changed” – meaning that, in this, no change whatsoever takes place.) “This being so, why have you, the children of Yaakov, not expired? That is, why are you not drawn to fulfill *HaShem's* יהו"ה Torah and *mitzvot* to the point of expiry [in which the soul no longer worries about the needs of the body]?”

⁸⁹⁹ See Midrash Tanchuma Bechukotai 3, Naso 16; Midrash Bereishit Rabba 3; Bamidbar Rabba 13:6; Tanya, Ch. 36, and elsewhere.

⁹⁰⁰ Sefer HaMaamarim 5687 *ibid.* p. 216

⁹⁰¹ Malachi 3:6

Now, the reason that there is no change to *HaShem's*-יהו"ה promise, blessed is He, (this being the simple meaning of the verse, "I יהו"ה-*HaShem* have not changed"), is because of the drawing down from the most supernal root and source, the Highest of the high,⁹⁰² to the point that the drawing down is from the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, יהו"ה-*HaShem* Himself, blessed is He, who transcends all change. That is, He does not only transcend the changes of time and space of this physical world (which simply put, means that there is no change in the fulfillment of His promise), but He entirely transcends all changes and divisions.

This was explained in the preceding discourses,⁹⁰³ about the Name יהו"ה-*HaShem*, that in its simplest meaning, it means "He who brings into being-*Mehaveh*-מְהַוֶּה,"⁹⁰⁴ in that all novel existence comes into being from Him, and even though this is through His manifestation in His title God-*Elohi*"ם-86, which shares the numerical value of "the natural order-*HaTeva*-הַטֵּבַע-86,"⁹⁰⁵ nevertheless, the actual existence itself is brought

⁹⁰² Ecclesiastes 5:7

⁹⁰³ In the continuum of the preceding two discourses, "*HaShem* is amongst my helpers," Discourse 28, Ch. 12, and "Uplift your hands to holiness," Discourse 29, Ch. 2.

⁹⁰⁴ Pardes Rimmonim, Shaar 1 (Shaar Eser v'Lo Teisha), Ch. 9; Zohar III 257b (Ra'aya Mehemna); Moreh Nevuchim, Part 1, Ch. 61; Tanya, Shaar HaYichud v'HaEmunah, Ch. 4.

⁹⁰⁵ See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of His Title (*Shaar HaKinuy*).; Pardes Rimmonim, Shaar 12 (Shaar HaNetivot), Ch. 2; Reishit Chochmah, Shaar HaAhavah Ch. 6 (section entitled "v'*Hamargeel*"); She'elot uTeshuvot Chacham Tzvi, Section 18; Tanya, Shaar HaYichud v'HaEmunah, translated as *The Gate of Unity and Faith*, Ch. 6; Likkutei Torah, Re'eh 22b and on.

about by the word of *HaShem*-יהו"ה,⁹⁰⁶ as it states,⁹⁰⁷ "Whatever *HaShem*-יהו"ה desired, He did, in the heavens and on the earth."

However, there are higher levels of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה. A yet higher meaning of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה is that it means "He is and He was and He will be as one (*Hoveh v'Hayah v'Yihyeh* ויהי"ה והיה ויהיה"),⁹⁰⁸ which includes all tenses of time as one, indicating that He utterly transcends time. Moreover, there is an even higher matter in the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, which is the True Reality of His Being, in which He utterly transcends all divisions, and thus, He also transcends all change, about which the verse states, "I *HaShem*-יהו"ה have not changed." It is specifically from this level that *HaShem*'s-ה"ה promise, as it is simply understood, is fulfilled as it also relates to matters of this physical world, such that all the changes of this world have absolutely no effect on this promise, God forbid to think so.

3.

The explanation is that, as previously explained,⁹⁰⁹ there are several views regarding the matter of the Name *HaShem*-

⁹⁰⁶ See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of Intrinsic Being (*Shaar HaHavayah*); Also see Tanya, *Shaar HaYichud veHaEmunah*, translated as *The Gate of Unity and Faith*, Ch. 1 and on.

⁹⁰⁷ Psalms 135:6

⁹⁰⁸ See 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 Rimmonim, *Shaar 1* (*Shaar Eser v'Lo Teisha*) Ch. 9; Tanya, *Shaar HaYichud v'HaEmunah*, translated as *The Gate of Unity and Faith*, Ch. 7 (82a).

⁹⁰⁹ In the two preceding discourses of this year 5717, "*HaShem* is amongst my helpers," Discourse 28, and "Uplift your hands to the Holy," Discourse 29.

יהו"ה. The view of Pardes Rimonim⁹¹⁰ is that even though the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה is called the name of the essential self (*Shem HaEzem*), nevertheless, this is not the name of His Essential Being Himself, blessed is He, but only the essential self of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*). This was explained in detail, that in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) itself, there are the lights (*Orot*) of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) and there are the lights (*Orot*) as they manifest within the vessels (*Keilim*) of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), or at the very least, the lights (*Orot*) as they already relate to the parameters of the vessels (*Keilim*), so that the vessels (*Keilim*) can affect the matter of manifestation (*Hitlabshut*) in them and even the matter of restraint (*Tzimtzum*).

To further explain,⁹¹¹ generally, the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה includes three matters. The first matter is the four letters of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, which indicate the matters of restraint (*Tzimtzum*-י), expression (*Hitpashtut*-ה), drawing down (*Hamshachah*-ו), and expression (*Hitpashtut*-ה). This generally includes the totality of the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), along with all the restraints (*Tzimtzumim*) within them. Lower than this, is the matter of the vowels (*Nikud*) of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה.⁹¹²

⁹¹⁰ Pardes Rimonim, Shaar 19 (Sha'ar Shem Ben Dalet), Ch. 1;

⁹¹¹ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5668 p. 179 and on.

⁹¹² See the Opening Gateway (Petach HaSha'ar) to Imrei Binah of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gateway to Understanding, Ch. 17 and on. It is explained that the Essential Name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה utterly transcends all division of the expressions of the different vowels, and no form of vowels can possibly express the ultimate Truth of His Being, as He is. Nevertheless, each particular form of vowelization indicates a further particular restriction and drawing forth of limited expression from *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. Also see Pardes Rimonim, The Gate of the Vowels, Shaar 28, Ch. 5 and elsewhere. Also see Ginat Egoz, translated as

The second matter is the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה as He transcends the natural order (*HaTeva*-הטבע). Openly revealed miracles, which transcend the natural order, stem from this aspect.

The third matter is the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה from which there also are openly revealed miracles, but as they manifest within the natural order (*HaTeva*-הטבע). That is, in this aspect there is the bonding of two opposites – the bonding of the natural order with that which transcends the natural order. This is like the teaching,⁹¹³ “Break the barrel but save its wine.” That is, the natural order (*HaTeva*-הטבע) is broken, but in a manner of “saving its wine,” meaning that the natural order remains in existence. This is like the miracle of Purim, in which all ends of the earth acknowledged the miracles of the Holy One, blessed is He, but even so, the natural order remained in its existence (with kings and ministers and various other matters), as related in the book of Esther. This matter, in which two opposites are bonded (“break the barrel but save its wine”) transcends miracles that nullify the natural order completely.

The drawing forth of this matter is from the aspect that transcends all change. In other words, since *HaShem*-יהו"ה transcends both – in that He both transcends the natural order and the miraculous, and He both transcends time and space and transcends the negation of time and space – He therefore is capable of unifying two opposites, like the space of the Holy

HaShem is One, Volume 1, The Gate of the Sanctuary, and Volume 4, The Vowels of Creation, where the vowels are explained at greater length.

⁹¹³ Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 16a

Ark, which took up no measure.⁹¹⁴ That is, even though the Holy Ark had the specific measure of two and a half cubits in length, one and a half cubits in width and one and a half cubits in height,⁹¹⁵ nevertheless, [when measured against the chamber of the Holy of Holies] “the space of the Holy Ark took up no measure.” That is, two opposites existed simultaneously.

Now, this (highest aspect of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה by which opposites bond) also accords with the view of Rabbi Moshe Cordovero in *Pardes Rimmonim*, in which he states that the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה refers to the essential self of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), meaning the lights (*Orot*) of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) as they manifest in the vessels (*Keilim*) of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), or at least, as they already are within the parameters of relating to the vessels (*Keilim*), to the point that the vessels (*Keilim*) can affect the matter of manifestation (*Hitlabshut*) and restraint (*Tzimtzum*) in them.

This is like the explanation of the verse,⁹¹⁶ “For over every honor there is a canopy.” That is, since the *Sefirah* of understanding-*Binah* transcends both *Zeir Anpin* and Kingship-*Malchut* – (Kingship-*Malchut* being the matter of time and space, and *Zeir Anpin* being the aspect that transcends time and space) – understanding-*Binah* is therefore the aspect of a

⁹¹⁴ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 21a – That is, when measured against itself, the ark had specific measure, however, when measured against the room it took up no space. For, although the room measured twenty-cubits by twenty-cubits, nevertheless, when measuring the ark against the room, there were ten-cubits from each side of the ark, to the wall on each side of the room. Also see the Opening Gateway (*Petach HaShaar*) to Imrei Binah of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gateway to Understanding, Ch. 6.

⁹¹⁵ Talmud Bavli, Terumah 25:10

⁹¹⁶ Isaiah 4:5; Also see Siddur Im Divrei Elokim Chayim and Likkutei Torah Shir HaShirim in the discourse entitled “*Ki Al Kol Kavod Chupah*.”

transcendent encompassing light (a “canopy”) that equally transcends both. For, since it is above both, it therefore can equally transcend both and unify them as one. Now, the *Sefirah* of understanding-*Binah* is the aspect of the lights (*Orot*) of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) as they already relate to vessels (*Keilim*), even to the point that they manifest in the vessels (*Keilim*). (This aspect is the matter of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה in the view of Pardes Rimonim.) For, as known,⁹¹⁷ that which is indicated by the teaching, “He and His life force are one,”⁹¹⁸ extends down until the *Sefirah* of wisdom-*Chochmah*, whereas that which is indicated by “He and His organs are one,”⁹¹⁹ begins from the *Sefirah* of understanding-*Binah* and goes down from there. We thus find that even in this aspect, there is the great superiority of unifying and bonding two opposites.

However, as the book *Pelach HaRimon* states,⁹²⁰ most Kabbalists were dissatisfied with the view of the Pardes Rimonim that the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה only refers to the essential self of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) – meaning, the lights (*Orot*) of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) as they already relate to the vessels (*Keilim*) of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*). For, did not our sages, of blessed memory, say,⁹²¹ “Before the creation of the world there was Him and His Name alone?” The words, “**Before** the creation of the world” mean **all** worlds in general, including the world of Emanation

⁹¹⁷ See Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim 39c; Kitzurim v’Ha’arot L’Tanya p. 105; Sefer HaMaamarim 5653 p. 228; Sefer HaMaamarim 5708 p. 161 and the note there.

⁹¹⁸ Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 3b

⁹¹⁹ See Tikkunei Zohar ibid.

⁹²⁰ *Pelach HaRimon*, Shaar 4 (Shaar Atzmut v’Keilim) Ch. 2

⁹²¹ *Pirke d’Rabbi Eliezer*, Ch. 3

(*Atzilut*)!⁹²² This being so, it cannot be said that “His Name” only applies after the creation of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), being that our sages, of blessed memory, expressly stated that even before its creation, the Name (*HaShem*-השם) applies.

Therefore, the Pelach HaRimon explains (and his view is also mentioned in *Shnei Luchot HaBrit*)⁹²³ that when it states, “Before the creation of the world there was Him and His Name (*Shmo*-שמו) alone,” it refers to the arousal of His desire (*Ratzon*-רצון),⁹²⁴ about which it can be said that it arose before the creation of the world, since it only is the arousal of His desire to create the world. Thus, there is the matter of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה on this level and it can be said that it was preexistent. In other words, even though the name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, as it is in the arousal of His desire (*Ratzon*-רצון), is not intrinsically preexistent, in and of itself, in that there was that which preceded the arousal of desire (*Ratzon*-רצון), in which (according to this view) the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה is inapplicable, nevertheless, relative to the worlds, the arousal of desire is applicable, including the beginning of all worlds, which is the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*). For, the arousal of His desire (*Ratzon*-רצון) that all worlds should be, beginning with the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) – **preceded** the existence of the worlds, even the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*).

⁹²² See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of Intrinsic Being (*Shaar HaHavayah*); Also see *Avodat HaKodesh* of Rabbi Meir Ibn Gabbai, Section 1, Ch. 2.

⁹²³ *Shnei Luchot HaBrit* (ShaLa”H), Beit HaShem 4a

⁹²⁴ The numerical value of “desire-*Ratzon*-רצון-346” is this same as “His Name-*Shmo*-שמו-346.” See *Shnei Luchot HaBrit* *ibid*.

However, according to most Kabbalists, and this also is the **definitive conclusion** of the teachings of Chassidus, the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה is present and even precedes the arousal of the desire (*Ratzon*-רצון). The explanation is that, when we explained before that the teaching “Before the creation of the world there was Him and His Name alone” also refers to the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), the inner intention of this statement is not merely about how the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) is, but also about the root of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), meaning, the root of the aspect of *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה light that fills all worlds, as it is before the restraint of the *Tzimtzum*. That is, even before this, there is the matter of “Him and His Name alone.” It therefore must be said that the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה is preexistent and present even before the arousal of the desire (*Ratzon*-רצון). This is because the arousal of the desire, even as it is before the restraint of the *Tzimtzum*, is already a matter of the revelation of light (*Giluy Ohr*). However, even before this – meaning, before the arousal of the desire (*Ratzon*-רצון) – there already was the matter of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה.

The explanation is as stated in the book *Ginat Egoz*,⁹²⁵ that there is the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה of the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, which is not in the aspect of letters (*Otiyot*).⁹²⁶ This Name is indicative of

⁹²⁵ See *Ginat Egoz* of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of Intrinsic Being (*Shaar HaHavayah*) (4a and on), also cited (after citing the view of the Pardes Rimonim and the view of the Pelach HaRimon, as “three ascensions, level upon level,” this being the highest level) in the *Shnei Luchot HaBrit* (the author of which originally published *Ginat Egoz* from manuscript) 4c and on.

⁹²⁶ The following is an excerpt of *Ginat Egoz*, The Gate of Intrinsic Being (*Shaar HaHavayah*): My dear brother, may *HaShem* keep and protect you, know

that the singular name *HaShem*, that is called the four-letter ineffable name, is spelled with the following four letters:

י"ד ה"א ו"א ה"א
Yud Hey Vav Hey

This name is holy and unique to *HaShem*-יהו"ה alone, blessed is He, and teaches a very deep matter, which is the mystery of His intrinsic, infinite, eternal Being. This name is not a created thing that came out anew with the creation of the worlds, like all His other names. For just as He, blessed is He, is not created, so likewise, His unique name is not created, because it specifically expresses and bears witness to His original, preexistent, intrinsic Being, that precedes time, space and all creation, as will later be explained.

Regarding this name, the Sages of blessed memory stated (Pirke d'Rabbi Eliezer Ch. 3), "Before the creation of the world there was Him and His Name alone." So true. Notice that the Sages did not state, "Him and His names," but rather "Him and His Name" - in the singular. Additionally, they used the word "*Hayah*-היה-was" which is related to "*Hoveh*-הוה-is," and "*Havayah*-הויה-being."

For in truth, the Holy One, blessed is He, only has one name that applies to His true, infinite, eternal and intrinsic Being that precedes all. Just as He is one, so likewise, His true name is one. It is for this reason that we testify morning and evening:

שמע ישראל יהו"ה אלהינו יהו"ה אחד
Listen Israel, *HaShem* our God, *HaShem* is One!

In other words, we bear witness morning and evening that whenever we make mention of *HaShem*'s four-letter name, we are testifying that He is one and His name is one. In other words, this name is singular, preexistent and intrinsic, just as He is singular, preexistent and intrinsic. It is for this reason that it first states, "Listen Israel, *HaShem* our God," and then explains with the continuation of the verse, that whenever we recall the name *HaShem*-יהו"ה it always means, "*HaShem* is One-יהו"ה אחד."

[...]

This is to say that this name bears witness to the fact that any beings that may exist are totally dependent upon and come into being solely from the truth of *HaShem*'s intrinsic Being. That is, His name denotes His eternal, unlimited, intrinsic being alone. Since this is the case, it bears clear testimony that He, blessed is He, is unique in His existence and that His is the ultimate singularity and only true existence. Therefore, this name is His proper name and cannot be applied to anyone or anything other than Him.

Now, do not err to think that what is meant here is *HaShem*'s name merely as a formulation of letters. Rather, it is primarily the **meaning** of the name that is being imparted here. Therefore, we can say that "He was, is and will be as one-*Hayah Hoveh v'Yihyeh*-והיה ויהיה והיה." Or alternately, we may say "*VeHayah*-והיה-and He

was,” as in the above-mentioned statement of the sages,⁹²⁶ “There was He and His name alone.”

In other words, since there was no other being aside for His intrinsic Being, there was no other name aside for the name of His intrinsic Being, *HaShem*-יהוה. In other words, rather than understanding this name to be limited to form or definition, it bears witness to the very opposite, namely that *HaShem* is removed from all tangible form or substance in every possible way.

This being the case, be aware that when the sages stated that “There was Him and His name alone,” they were not referring to His Being in the form of letters at all. That is, what is meant is not a formation of letters, but rather the essential reality of His Being. Therefore, just as His Being does not require tangible form to be, so likewise His name does not require letters to be. Rather, He is the essential intrinsic Being and everything else, including the letters, depends on His Being to be.

However, we are tangible, limited beings and can only grasp through the medium of vessels or letters. Nonetheless, no vessel can contain Him for He is not constrained by the parameters of space, but rather is the source of space and transcends it. Nevertheless, through understanding the form of the vessels and letters and what they convey, we can know of the truth of His Being.

This may be compared to the fact that we can grasp concepts, which themselves are intangible, through the medium of tangible letters of thought or speech. That is, the letters are the “vessels” or “mediums” through which we may grasp concepts, even though concepts themselves are intangible and take up no space. However, do not err to think that *HaShem* is conceptual, God forbid, for nothing can be further from the truth. On the contrary, there is nothing as real as the reality of *HaShem*, for He alone is the only true reality. Moreover, there is nothing more beyond conception than *HaShem*, for He is unlimited and beyond definition and conception.

Now, since He is the only true being whose existence precedes everything, therefore before creation, no other name existed except for *HaShem*-יהוה, which identifies Him as the only true existence that precedes all existence. Thus, this name is not at all separate in any way from the ultimate truth of His Being, blessed is He. Rather, it expresses the very essence of His truth; that He is the foundation of all and that nothing exists without Him.

Thus, even before creation, this name and this name alone, was sufficient in identifying and bearing witness to the truth of His Being. In other words, since before creation no other being existed, there were likewise no other names except for this name alone and this name alone sufficed.

This explains the statement of the Sages that “Before the creation of the world there was Him and His name alone.” That is, it is impossible to testify about *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, and say that He was, is and will be as one, without referring to His name *HaShem*-יהוה, which identifies and bears witness to His true and essential Being, because this name does not at all describe Him. Rather, it identifies that He is, and that His Being is singular, infinite, eternal, intrinsic and essential to Him.

the singular preexistent and absolute Being Himself, whose existence is intrinsic to Him, this being the True Reality of the Essential Self of יהו"ה-*HaShem*, blessed is He. That is, His existence is intrinsic and essential to Him, and there is no cause that preceded Him, God forbid to think so.⁹²⁷ It therefore can be said about His Name יהו"ה-*HaShem* that it is preexistent just as He is preexistent, blessed is He and blessed is His Name. (This is not so according to the view that the Name (*HaShem*-

Thus, this name itself is singular, intrinsic and essential to Him. Therefore, as soon as one mentions that He is, in essence, one is stating that יהו"ה-*HaShem* - the name that identifies Him, is.

Now, because His name יהו"ה-*HaShem* is the true foundation of everything that is, it gives truth and being to all existence. *HaShem* is therefore the beginning of all beginnings and the foundation upon which all beginnings are founded, since He is the source and cause of everything. Therefore, of necessity, He is called by the name of intrinsic and eternal Being, for He causes all being, blessed is He and blessed is His name. Thus, it is from the truth of His Being that all beings receive their existence, for without the foundation of His Being, they altogether could not exist.

From all the above we clearly see that the fact that anything exists at all is itself the greatest proof that יהו"ה-*HaShem* exists. For if we recognize that He exists, then we can recognize that all other beings can exist by the power of His existence, blessed is He. However, if ever it would arise in a person's mind that יהו"ה-*HaShem* does not exist, how then could anything else exist? Their existence is not intrinsic, for they do not have to be, and obviously nothing cannot bring something into being. In other words, by themselves they cannot be and without Him there would not be a primal, intrinsic Being to bring them into being.

On the other hand, His existence is intrinsic, for He must be. Since He is the truth of all being, all beings are caused by Him, are dependent on Him and are as nothing before Him, for He is the very foundation of their existence without Whom they cannot be.

His existence, on the other hand, would not cease even if everything else ceased to be, since only He is truly independent and self-sufficient, in and of Himself, without anything external to Him bringing Him into being, for nothing exists outside of Him.

Thus, it is clear, that the name of His intrinsic, eternal Being, blessed is He, precedes all that exist, since their existence comes about solely through the power of His existence. In other words, if not for the Name of the eternal, unlimited, intrinsic Being, יהו"ה-*HaShem*, nothing could be, and as stated above, what is meant by "His Name" is not merely the formation of letters, but rather, the reality of His Being.

⁹²⁷ Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 20.

השם) only began with the arousal of His desire (*Ratzon*-רצון). According to this view it cannot be said that His Name is preexistent just as He is preexistent, since His preexistence even precedes the arousal of the desire.)

4.

The explanation is that the Name *HaShem*-יהו consists of the letters *Yod-Hey*-י"ה and *Vav-Hey*-ו"ה. Now, just as in the lower name *HaShem*-יהו, the matter of the letters *Vav-Hey*-ו"ה is the aspect of the light of *HaShem*-יהו that fills all worlds (*Memaleh Kol Almin*),⁹²⁸ as indicated by the verse,⁹²⁹ “The revealed are for us and our children,” whereas the letters *Yod-Hey*-י"ה are the aspect of the light of *HaShem*-יהו that surrounds all worlds (*Sovev Kol Almin*), as indicated by the beginning of the verse, “The concealed are for *HaShem*-יהו our God,” in the same way, these matters also exist in the upper Name *HaShem*-יהו. This refers to the root of *HaShem*’s-יהו light that fills all worlds (*Memaleh Kol Almin*) and *HaShem*’s-יהו light that transcends all worlds (*Sovev Kol Almin*), as they are before the restraint of the *Tzimtzum*. In general, these are the aspects of Kingship-*Malchut* of the Unlimited One, and the Hidden Beauty-*Tiferet HaNe’elam* of the Unlimited One, as they are in the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being Himself, blessed is He.

⁹²⁸ See *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5656 p. 374

⁹²⁹ Deuteronomy 29:28; *Tikkunei Zohar*, *Tikkun* 10; *Likkutei Torah*, *Pekudei* 3b and on; *Likkutei Torah Re’eh* 29a

Now, based on the statement above, that the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה is present (not only before the restraint of *Tzimtzum*, but) even before the arousal of the desire (*Ratzon*), we find that even included in the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה that precedes the arousal of the desire (*Ratzon*) there is not only the aspect of *Yod-Hey*-י"ה – this being the root of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה light that transcends all worlds (*Sovev Kol Almin*) – but even the aspect of *Vav-Hey*-ו"ה – this being the root of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה light that fills all worlds (*Memaleh Kol Almin*).

Now, it also is understood that the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה of four letters (*Otiyot*) is utterly inconsequential relative to the Essential Self and Being of *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, even as it is before the restraint of the *Tzimtzum* and even as it precedes the arousal of the desire. For, since it is the root of novel existence, even though it is in the most refined and supernal way, it nevertheless cannot compare to His Essential Self and Being, blessed is He. Even so, it can be said that the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה that precedes the arousal of the desire (*Ratzon*) is preexistent just as He is preexistent, blessed is He. For, even though it is of no comparison to His Essential Self, nevertheless, since it is included in His Essential Self, it is preexistent just as He is preexistent, blessed is He.

An example of this can be gleaned from the statement of our sages, of blessed memory,⁹³⁰ “The Divine Presence only rests upon one who is wise, strong, wealthy and tall, and all these qualities are derived from Moshe.” What is understood from this is that the statement that Moshe was strong, meaning that he was physically strong in the literal sense, nonetheless,

⁹³⁰ Talmud Bavli, Nedarim 38a; Shabbat 92a

obviously his bodily strength could not compare to his superior wisdom. (In other words, even in the enumeration of Moshe's strengths, obviously his physical strength could not compare to the strength of his wisdom.) Nonetheless, the power of his physical strength, which is below the power of his wisdom, was also included in him.

We may understand the matter of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה as it is before the restraint of *Tzimtzum*, in the same way, so to speak. That is, not only is the aspect of *Yod-Hey*-י"ה there, but even the aspect of *Vav-Hey*-ו"ה, which is the root of the coming into being of novel existence and is utterly unrelated to the Essential Self and Being of *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, is nevertheless there, included in His Essential Self. It therefore can be said that His Name is preexistent just as He is preexistent, blessed is He.

5.

This is the inner meaning of the verse,⁹³¹ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה is amongst my helpers.” For, it was explained before,⁹³² “my helpers” refers to the sparks of holiness that are refined through our toil in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה below, blessed is He. Now, the refinement (*Birur*) must be in a way that we refine, clarify, and elevate the spark of holiness below, until it becomes included in the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. However, at first

⁹³¹ Psalms 118:7 – Also see the prior discourse of this year 5717, by this title, Discourse 28.

⁹³² See the prior discourse of this year 5717, by this title, Discourse 28.

glance, these are two opposites that have utterly no relation to each other. However, about this the verse states, “*HaShem-יהו"ה* is amongst my helpers.” In other words, through drawing down the Name *HaShem-יהו"ה* into the sparks, they can be refined through the union of opposites.

To clarify, this is because this verse does not just refer to the lower name *HaShem-יהו"ה*, from which the matter of “I *HaShem-יהו"ה* have not changed” stems, as *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה-s promise is simply understood (and explained in chapter one). Moreover, it does not just refer to the upper Name *HaShem-יהו"ה*, which is the Name *HaShem-יהו"ה* as it precedes the restraint of the *Tzimtzum* and is the root of the light of *HaShem-יהו"ה* that fills all worlds (*Memaleh Kol Almin*) and therefore is in the form of four letters. Rather, this verse refers to the Name *HaShem-יהו"ה* that even precedes the arousal of the desire, and is not in a state of letters (*Otiyot*), referring to the Absolute Essential Preexistent Being, *HaShem-יהו"ה* Himself, blessed is He, whose existence is intrinsic (as explained before). Thus, since the Essential Self and Being of *HaShem-יהו"ה* transcends all opposites, He therefore is capable of the impossible,⁹³³ and He therefore can bond all opposites.

Likewise, this explains the teaching,⁹³⁴ “[Before the soul descends] he is given an oath (*Mashbi'in Oto-משביעין אותו*),” which is related to the word, “fully satisfied-*Sova-*

⁹³³ Sha'alot u'Teshuvot HaRashba, Vol. 1, Section 418; Sefer HaChakirah of the Tzemach Tzeddek 34b and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5678 p. 420; Also see the previous discourse of this year, 5717, “*Mayim Rabim – Many waters cannot extinguish the love*,” Discourse 6, Ch. 9.

⁹³⁴ Talmud Bavli, Niddah 30b; Tanya Ch. 1

שובע.”⁹³⁵ That is, despite all the concealments of the world, every single Jew is given the strength to stand steadfast, and as he is in this world, he is capable of fulfill the directives of the Supernal Man, and even higher, the directives of the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He.

This likewise is the matter indicated by the verse,⁹³⁶ “He established a testimony-*Eidut*-עדות,” as well as the matter of “decrees-*Chukim*-חוקים” and “judgments-*Mishpatim*-משפטים,” these being the three categories of Torah and *mitzvot*⁹³⁷ as they apply to physical matters below. For, the Torah was not given to the ministering angels,⁹³⁸ and all *mitzvot* are connected to our physical organs. Moreover, even those *mitzvot* that are “duties of the heart” must be felt physically, in the physical heart of flesh, as explained in several places.⁹³⁹ All this is the matter of bonding opposites, which is specifically brought about by the power of the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, as explained before.

Now, in this, there is another matter as well. That is, since the power for this service is drawn from the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, the drawing down is in

⁹³⁵ See Kitzurim v’Ha’arot to Tanya p. 57 and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5698 p. 235 and on.

⁹³⁶ Psalms 78:5

⁹³⁷ This was discussed at length in the preceding discourse of this year 5717, “*HaShem* is among my helpers,” Discourse 28.

⁹³⁸ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 25b

⁹³⁹ Sefer HaMaamarim 5697 p. 282; Discourse entitled “*Bati LeGani* – I have come to My garden” 5712, translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe 5712, Discourse 8, Ch. 4 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5712, p. 225 and on), and elsewhere.

such a manner, that without taking the changes of the world into consideration, or even the changes within the one who is serving Him, nonetheless, “no one banished from Him will remain banished.”⁹⁴⁰ The reason is because the one who serves Him is “in Our form and after Our likeness,”⁹⁴¹ meaning that he has the essential self of the soul, which is the singular-*Yechidah* level of the soul, in which change is utterly inapplicable. This aspect of the soul is always in a state of faithfulness with Him,⁹⁴² in that it “hugs and adheres to You.”⁹⁴³ From this aspect of the soul service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is drawn forth with the desire of the heart (*Re'uta d'Leeba*) and with self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) for *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, so that without taking any consideration of the concealments and hiddenness, a Jew is capable of fulfilling the directives of *HaShem*-יהו"ה in a manner of unifying all opposites.

6.

This then, is the meaning of the blessing, “Blessed are You, *HaShem*-יהו"ה our God, King of the world, Who bestows goodness upon the guilty, Who has bestowed goodness upon me.” The “guilty” refers to those who have not fulfilled all that they need to fulfill in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, because of one of four impediments; traveling in the desert, illness, imprisonment, or traversing the sea, the particular

⁹⁴⁰ See Samuel II 14:14; Also see Tanya, Ch. 39.

⁹⁴¹ Genesis 1:26

⁹⁴² Tanya, Ch. 24

⁹⁴³ See the liturgy of the *Hosha'anot* for the third day.

details and divisions of which are explained in the discourse.⁹⁴⁴ Because of this, from time to time, there can be a lack in a person's service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. However, even so, the Holy One, blessed is He, "bestows goodness upon the guilty" and, "but for Torah there is no good,"⁹⁴⁵ and but for *mitzvot* there is no good. This is true goodness, which is called "good for Heaven and good for the creatures."⁹⁴⁶ That is, as an act of charitable kindness from Above, they (the guilty) were granted exodus from all four matters that obstruct and hinder service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and were brought to a state of freedom and redemption. (For, according to Torah law, we recite the above blessing of *HaGomel* at a time that a person is restored to good health and standing.)⁹⁴⁷ Thus, they then can fulfill their obligations to *HaShem*-יהו"ה etc.

This then, is why the liturgical text of the blessing makes mention of guilt and obligation. For, since *HaShem's*-יהו"ה ultimate, innermost Supernal intent is for a Jew to indeed fulfill the directive and purpose for which he was sent to this world [be righteous and do not be wicked], without taking external changes into consideration, or even taking changes stemming from the inner powers of his soul into consideration, or even taking changes that stem from the encompassing powers into consideration, but rather, his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, should stem from the desire of the heart (*Re'uta d'Leeba*) with self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) for *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, stemming from the singular-

⁹⁴⁴ At the end of the discourse entitled "*HaShem Lee b'Ozrai*" 5687, p. 216.

⁹⁴⁵ Mishnah Avot 6:3

⁹⁴⁶ Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 40a

⁹⁴⁷ See Seder Birchah HaNehenin of the Alter Rebbe, 13:5.

Yechidah essential self of his soul. This will then bring about that the “sons of Yaakov” will have the matter of “expiry,” meaning that they will be in a state and motion of the expiry of the soul [in which there no longer is worry about the needs of the body] and through this, we draw down the matter indicated by the verse, “I *HaShem*-יהו"ה have not changed,” so that there are no changes whatsoever even in the promise, and the Holy One, blessed is He, blesses the Jewish people (He “bestows goodness upon the guilty”) so that they can fulfill their mission in matters of Torah and *mitzvot*. Through doing so, there will be a drawing forth of the blessing of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in all the needs of man, both for oneself and the members of his household, in matters pertaining to children, good health, and abundant livelihood!