

Discourse 33

*“Re’eh Anochi Notein LiPhneichem Hayom Brachah
Behold I have placed before you this day a blessing”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Re’eh,
Shabbat Mevarchim Elul, 5717
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,¹¹²⁴ “Behold, I have placed before you this day a blessing and a curse. The blessing: That you listen to the commandments of *HaShem*-יהוה, your God, that I command you today. And the curse: If you do not listen etc.” Now, we must understand¹¹²⁵ why the verse states, “That (*Asher*-אשר) you listen.” Seemingly, according to the style of the verse it should have said, “If (*Eem*-אם) you listen,” just like it does when it comes to its opposite and states, “If (*Eem*-אם) you do not listen.” This being so, why does it say, “That (*Asher*) you listen”?

Additionally, we must understand why it says “that you listen (*Tishme’u*-תשמעו).” For, seemingly, since the verse is speaking about the *mitzvot* (as in the continuation, “to the commandments (*mitzvot*) of *HaShem*-יהוה your God, that I

¹¹²⁴ Deuteronomy 11:26-28

¹¹²⁵ See the discourse entitled “*Re’eh*” 5678 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5678 p. 396 and on); Also see Ohr HaTorah, *Re’eh* p. 668 and on; Also see further in the discourse the final discourse of this year, 5717, Discourse 35, entitled “*Lecha Amar Leebee* – To You my heart has said.”

command you today) and the primary matter of *mitzvot* is that they be fulfillment in actual deed, this being so, the verse should have said “that you do (*Asher Ta’asu*-אשר תעשו) all the commandments.” This being so, why does the verse state, “that you listen (*Tishme’u*-תשמעו)”?

Now, at first glance, it seems possible to explain this according to what is stated in Midrash¹¹²⁶ on the verse,¹¹²⁷ “Listen (*Sheem’oo*-שמעו) to the word of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, O’ House of Yaakov.” Namely, “This is analogous to a king who had two goblets... In the same manner, the Holy One, blessed is He said: You poured two goblets for Me at Sinai, these being,¹¹²⁸ ‘We shall do-*Na’aseh*-נעשה’ and ‘We shall listen-*Nishma*-נשמע.’ However, you broke ‘We shall do-*Na’aseh*-נעשה,’¹¹²⁹ so be careful to guard yourselves with ‘We shall listen-*Nishma*-נשמע.’ This is the meaning of, ‘Listen (*Sheem’oo*-שמעו) to the word of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, O’ House of Yaakov.”

With this in mind, it is possible to explain why this verse also says “listen (*Tishme’u*-תשמעו).” For, since the goblet of “We shall do-*Na’aseh*-נעשה” was broken, the primary service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that is demanded of us now, is to be careful in guarding ourselves in regard to the goblet of “We shall listen-*Nishma*-נשמע,” and this is why the verse here says “that you listen (*Tishme’u*-תשמעו).”

However, the words of this Midrash also require explanation. For, it cannot be said that the matter of deed and

¹¹²⁶ Midrash Shemot Rabba 27:9

¹¹²⁷ Jeremiah 2:4

¹¹²⁸ Exodus 24:7

¹¹²⁹ With the golden calf.

action (*Asiyah*-עשייה) is not currently demanded of us, and that the entire matter of Torah and *mitzvot* as they are right now, is solely in the matter of listening (*Shmiyah*-שמיעה). For as known, “action is primary (*Asiyah*-עשייה).”¹¹³⁰ This is as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹¹³¹ “He who studies Torah not in order to do, would have been better off having been suffocated by his placenta.” This is because the whole matter of listening (*Shmiyah*-שמיעה) is solely to bring to action (*Asiyah*-עשייה). This being so, how could it be said that, as of now, all that is demanded of us by *HaShem*-יהוה above, blessed is He, is only the matter of listening (*Shmiyah*-שמיעה), as the verse states, “That you listen (*Tishme*’u-תשמעו).”

2.

Now, about the difference between the levels of listening (*Shmiyah*-שמיעה) and doing (*Asiyah*-עשייה), it states in *Zohar*,¹¹³² “Listening (*Shmiyah*-שמיעה) is tied to this aspect, whereas, action (*Asiyah*-עשייה) is above.” The *Mikdash Melech* and *Ramaz* explain that, “Listening (*Shmiyah*-שמיעה) is tied to this aspect” refers to the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut*, “whereas, action (*Asiyah*-עשייה) is above,” referring to the aspect of Understanding-*Binah*.

However, this must be better understood,¹¹³³ since the very opposite is stated in many places, namely, that the matter

¹¹³⁰ Mishnah Avot 1:17

¹¹³¹ Talmud Yerushalmi, Brachot 1:2; Kalla Rabbati 8:8; Midrash Vayikra Rabba 35:7; Tanchuma Eikev 6:1

¹¹³² *Zohar* III 108b

¹¹³³ See *Mikdash Melech* to *Zohar* III 108b *ibid*.

of listening (*Shmiyah*-שמיעה) is in understanding-*Binah*. For, as known,¹¹³⁴ wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah* correspond to the matter of seeing (*Re'iyah*-ראיה) and hearing (*Shmiyah*-שמיעה), respectively. This is why the word ear-*Ozen*-אזן-58 has the same numerical value as the Name *HaShem*-יהוה of *Sa"G*-ס"ג-63¹¹³⁵ [when the final letter is spelled] with the letter *Hey*-ה-5 [י"ד ה"י וא"ו ה"ה] instead of the letter *Yod*-י.¹¹³⁶ In contrast, it is explained in various places about Action (*Asiyah*-עשיה), that it is the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut*, and this is why the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut* of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) is called “Action (*Asiyah*) of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*).” This being so, it is the very opposite of what was just explained, that Listening (*Shmiyah*-שמיעה) is in Kingship-*Malchut* and Action (*Asiyah*-עשיה) is in Understanding-*Binah*.

Now, when it states in Zohar that “Listening (*Shmiyah*-שמיעה) is tied to this aspect” refers to Kingship-*Malchut*, it can be explained that this does not contradict what is stated in various other places that “Listening” (*Shmiyah*) is in the aspect of Understanding-*Binah*. For, this depends on what levels are being discussed. That is, when the matter of wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah* is being discussed, then seeing (*Re'iyah*) is in wisdom-*Chochmah* and hearing (*Shmiyah*) is in understanding-*Binah*. However, when the matter of *Zeir Anpin* and *Nukvah* is being discussed, then seeing

¹¹³⁴ See Torah Ohr, Mishpatim 75a and elsewhere.

¹¹³⁵ Which is the name of the *Sefirah* of Understanding-*Binah*. See Zohar III 246b (Ra'aya Mehemna); Etz Chayim Shaar 4 (Shaar Ozen Chotem Peh) Ch. 3; Shaar HaKlallim, Ch. 8; Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 27.

¹¹³⁶ See at length in Etz Chayim, Shaar 4 (Shaar Ozen Chotem Peh) Ch. 3-5; Also see Sefer HaArachim ChaBa"D, Vol. 8, section on “*Ozen*” p. 131.

(*Re'iyah*) is in *Zeir Anpin* and hearing (*Shmiyah*) is in Kingship-*Malchut*. In other words, relative to wisdom-*Chochmah*, hearing (*Shmiyah*) is in understanding-*Binah*, whereas relative to *Zeir Anpin*, hearing (*Shmiyah*) is in Kingship-*Malchut*.

An example of this can also be found regarding the matter of “This-Zeh-זה” and “Thus-Koh-כה.” That is, at times it is explained that the aspect of “This-Zeh-זה” refers to wisdom-*Chochmah* and the aspect of “Thus-Koh-כה” refers to understanding-*Binah*, as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹¹³⁷ “All the prophets prophesied with the word ‘Thus-Koh-כה’ whereas Moshe prophesied with the word ‘This-Zeh-זה.’” About this it is explained¹¹³⁸ that the prophecy of Moshe (“This-Zeh-זה”) was in the aspect of wisdom-*Chochmah*, whereas the prophecy of the other prophets (“Thus-Koh-כה”) was in the aspect of understanding-*Binah*. For, as known,¹¹³⁹ the root and source of prophecy is from understanding-*Binah*.

However, sometimes it is explained that the aspect of “This-Zeh-זה” is in *Zeir Anpin*, as in the verse,¹¹⁴⁰ “This is my God (*Zeh Eil*”י-אל”י),” and “Thus-Koh-כה,” is in Kingship-*Malchut*, which is the aspect of “In our likeness (*Kidmouteinu*-כדמותינו).”¹¹⁴¹

In other words, in the relationship of wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah*, wisdom-*Chochmah* is the aspect of “This-Zeh-זה,” and understanding-*Binah* is the aspect of “Thus-Koh-כה.” However, in the relationship of *Zeir Anpin*

¹¹³⁷ See Sifri and Rashi to Numbers 30:1

¹¹³⁸ See Ohr HaTorah, Matot p. 1,283 and on.

¹¹³⁹ See Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 21 (49a)

¹¹⁴⁰ Exodus 15:2

¹¹⁴¹ Genesis 1:26

and *Nukvah*, *Zeir Anpin* is the aspect of “This-Zeh-זה,” and Kingship-*Malchut* is the aspect of “Thus-Koh-כה.”

Now, as understood, the aspect of “Thus-Koh-כה” of understanding-*Binah* is much higher than the aspect of “This-Zeh-זה” of *Zeir Anpin*. Nevertheless, understanding-*Binah* is called “Thus-Koh-כה,” since relative to the aspect of “This-Zeh-זה” of wisdom-*Chochmah*, understanding-*Binah* is the aspect of “Thus-Koh-כה.”

The same may be understood regarding the matter of seeing (*Re'iyah*) and hearing (*Shmiyah*). That is, in the relationship of wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah*, wisdom-*Chochmah* is the aspect of seeing (*Re'iyah*) and understanding-*Binah* is the aspect of hearing (*Shmiyah*). That is, on the same level that wisdom-*Chochmah* grasps in a way of sight (*Re'iyah*), meaning that it sees the essence of something, on the very same level, understanding-*Binah* grasps in a way of hearing (*Shmiyah*), meaning that it knows of its existence.

However, regarding the fact that *Zeir Anpin* is also the aspect of seeing (*Re'iyah*) – even though *Zeir Anpin* certainly is lower than understanding-*Binah* – this is because its sight (*Re'iyah*) is on an entirely different level. In other words, the fact that understanding-*Binah* is an aspect of hearing (*Shmiyah*) is as it is relative to the level of wisdom-*Chochmah*, which grasps in a way of seeing (*Re'iyah*) the essential being of something, whereas understanding-*Binah* only grasps this level in a way of hearing (*Shmiyah*) and knowing of its existence. However, that which is grasped by *Zeir Anpin* in a way of seeing (*Re'iyah*), is on different level, and on that level, *Zeir Anpin* grasps in a way of seeing (*Re'iyah*) the essential being of

something, whereas Kingship-*Malchut* only grasps it in a way of hearing (*Shmiyah*) and knowing of its existence.

With the above in mind, this teaching of the Zohar can be explained that hearing (*Shmiyah*) is in Kingship-*Malchut*. Moreover, this does not at all contradict what is stated elsewhere that hearing (*Shmiyah*) is in understanding-*Binah*. However, regarding the conclusion of the Zohar, that “Action (*Asiyah*) is above,” meaning that in the comparison between hearing (*Shmiyah*) and action (*Asiyah*) themselves, action (*Asiyah*) is higher than hearing (*Shmiyah*), at first glance this is not understood. For, this is the opposite of the explanation in various places that hearing (*Shmiyah*) is in understanding-*Binah* and action (*Asiyah*) is in Kingship-*Malchut*. In other words, at first glance, hearing (*Shmiyah*) is higher than action (*Asiyah*). We therefore must understand why the Zohar states that, “Listening (*Shmiyah*-שמיעה) is tied to this aspect, whereas, action (*Asiyah*-עשיה) is above.”

3.

All this may be understood based on what we find about the giving of the Torah, that the children of Israel gave precedence to “We will do (*Na’aseh*-נעשה)” over “We will listen (*Nishma*-נשמע).”¹¹⁴² For, in general, there are three matters in this, as it relates to service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. There is the matter of “We will listen (*Nishma*-נשמע),” there is the matter of “We will do (*Na’aseh*-נעשה),” and there is

¹¹⁴² Exodus 24:7; Talmud Bavli, Mishpatim 88a

the precedence that they gave to “We will do (*Na’aseh*-נעשה)” over “We will listen (*Nishma*-נשמע).”

The explanation is that “We will listen (*Nishma*-נשמע)” refers to accepting the yoke of *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Kingship, blessed is He, which is the foundation of Torah study and the fulfillment of the *mitzvot*. In other words, the study of Torah and the fulfillment of the *mitzvot* do not stem from reason and intellect, that a person understands and grasps that this is how it must be, but rather, his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is with the acceptance of the yoke of *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Kingship, blessed is He. In other words, this is like the service of a servant, who is in the service of his master, which does not stem from reason or intellect. For, it is entirely irrelevant to the servant whether he understands the matter or not. Rather, he accepts the yoke of his master upon himself, that whatever he hears from his master he must fulfill, without any consideration as to whether or not it accords to his own grasp and understanding. This then, is the matter of “We will listen (*Nishma*-נשמע),” which is a matter of the self-nullification (*Bittul*) to the Master out of acceptance of the yoke of *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Kingship, irrespective of whether or not he has any understand of the matter or otherwise. Rather, since he is in a motion of accepting the yoke of *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Kingship - “We will listen (*Nishma*-נשמע)” - he therefore listens to everything that the Master commands and fulfills it.

Now, a person’s sublimation and self-nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way of accepting the yoke of His Kingship, is the foundation of his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in studying His Torah and

fulfilling His *mitzvot*. For, if a person's service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is according to his own reasoning and intellect, his service will not be sustained. For, it is possible that because of his own grasp he will come to err, to the point that he may even do the very opposite of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Supernal will, out of he rationalizing to himself that this is how it must be.

We find this in the case of King Shaul, whose service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, was according to reason and intellect – (“Shaul from *Rechovot HaNahar* – from the broadness of the river,”¹¹⁴³ which refers to the matter of understanding-*Binah*). Thus, because of his own grasp and understanding he stumbled [and lost the kingdom] etc. For, since he knew the greatness of the sacrificial offerings and that “the mystery of the sacrifices ascends to the mystery of the Unlimited One (*Ein Sof*),”¹¹⁴⁴ he rationalized to himself that if sacrificial offerings would be brought from the flocks that he captured from Amalek, that is, from the lowest depth (*Omek Tachat*), the ascent would be to an even higher level above. This is why he said,¹¹⁴⁵ “I have upheld the word of *HaShem*-יהו"ה.” The meaning of the word “I have upheld-*Hakimotee*-הקימות” is like in the verse,¹¹⁴⁶ “You uplifted (*VaTakam*-ותקם) your word (*Devarecha*-דברך), for You are righteous.” That is, the matter of “The word of *HaShem*-יהו"ה” refers to the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut*, and it is necessary to affect an

¹¹⁴³ See Genesis 36:37; Etz Chayim, Shaar 8 (Shaar Drushei Nekudot), Ch. 4; Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, Ch. 1.

¹¹⁴⁴ See Zohar II 239a; Zohar III 26b

¹¹⁴⁵ Samuel I 15:13

¹¹⁴⁶ Nehemiah 9:8

uplifting and ascent in it. Thus, it is in this way that Shaul stated, “I have upheld the word of *HaShem*-יהו”ה.” For, he rationalized that through refining the holy sparks that are in the lowest depth (*Omek Tachat*), this will bring about an ascent to the depth of the heights (*Omek Rom*).

However, in truth, Shmuel the prophet told him that this is the very opposite of *HaShem*’s-יהו”ה Supernal will. All this happened because his service of *HaShem*-יהו”ה, blessed is He, stemmed from reason and intellect, rather than from the sublimation and self-nullification (*Bittul*) of accepting the yoke of *HaShem*’s-יהו”ה Kingship. It is about this that Shmuel answered him, “Behold! To obey (*Shmo’a*-שמע) is better than the choicest offering, to be attentive, [is better] than the fat of rams.” In other words, the primary foundation for all service of *HaShem*-יהו”ה, blessed is He, is self-nullification (*Bittul*) and acceptance of the yoke of *HaShem*’s-יהו”ה Kingship, blessed is He. For, when one’s service of *HaShem*-יהו”ה stems from submission and self-nullification (*Bittul*) to Him, then it is entirely inapplicable that he would come to err, and his service will then be whole and perfect.

This matter itself is the superiority of the Jewish people, about whom it states,¹¹⁴⁷ “For the children of Israel are servants to Me, they are My servants etc.” For, their service of *HaShem*-יהו”ה, blessed is He, is like the service of a servant who accepts the yoke of his master. In other words, when they received the Torah at Mount Sinai and said “We will listen (*Nishma*-נשמע),” they accepted upon themselves to fulfill all the *mitzvot* like the service of a servant. About this the verse states, “For the

¹¹⁴⁷ Leviticus 25:55

children of Israel are servants to Me,” specifying “to Me-*Li*-לִי,” about which our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹¹⁴⁸ “Every place that it says ‘to Me-*Li*-לִי’ indicates that it has no cessation.”

In other words, if service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה stems from grasp and comprehension, it is possible to come to err, as mentioned above. However, if it stems from submission and self-nullification (*Bittul*) before *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and the acceptance of the yoke of His Kingship, then the service is sustaining, meaning that it is inapplicable for it to undergo any change or cessation at all.

Now, there is another element of superiority in the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that stems from the acceptance of His yoke, over and above serving Him in a way that stems from grasp and comprehension. That is, even if a person does not err in his grasp and comprehension and fulfills the study of Torah and the fulfillment of the *mitzvot* in all their details according to *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה, Supernal desire, blessed is He, nevertheless, if he lacks submission and self-nullification (*Bittul*) and the acceptance of the yoke of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, he then is entirely missing the most ultimate aspect of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה in fulfilling the *mitzvot*.

For, in regard to the ultimate matter of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, the Zohar¹¹⁴⁹ explains that through serving Him, “the glory of the Holy One, blessed is He, is elevated in all worlds.” Now, as known, when it states “in all

¹¹⁴⁸ See Midrash Vayikra Rabba 2:2

¹¹⁴⁹ Tanya, Ch. 27 and Likkutei Torah at the beginning of Pekudei cite to Zohar II 128b (and Likkutei Torah there also cites to Zohar II 67b; Also see Zohar II 184a); Also see Torah Ohr, Vayakhel 89d; Likkutei Torah, Chukat 65c.

worlds,” it refers to the light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that transcends all worlds (*Sovev Kol Almin*) and is equally present in all worlds.¹¹⁵⁰ In other words, this refers to drawing down the light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, which transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*).

Now, for there to be a drawing down of the light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), the service of Him must be like the manner that it is drawn down. In other words, one's service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה must also transcend the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), as it is in the soul.

To further explain, within the soul there also is the matter of a chaining down (*Hishtalshelut*). An example is the relationship between the intellect (*Sechel*) and the emotions (*Midot*), which is in a way of the chaining down of cause and effect. Thus, just as the order of cause and effect is such that at first the effect is included in its cause, and then comes to be revealed as an existence unto itself, so likewise, this is so of the intellect (*Sechel*) and the emotions (*Midot*). That is, at first the emotions (*Midot*) are included in the intellect (*Sechel*), which is the matter of the emotions of the intellect itself (*Midot ShebaSechel*), and then they are revealed as the existence of actual emotions (*Midot*). This is because the relationship between the intellect (*Sechel*) and the emotions (*Midot*) is in a way of a chaining down (*Hishtalshelut*) of cause and effect.

The same is true when the intellect (*Sechel*) subsequently becomes revealed in the emotions (*Midot*), and

¹¹⁵⁰ See the discourse entitled “*Bati LeGani*” 5710, Ch. 1 (Sefer HaMaamarim, 5710, p. 111).

even lower, in the thought (*Machshavah*), speech (*Dibur*) and action (*Asiyah*). In this case, the thought (*Machshavah*), speech (*Dibur*), and action (*Asiyah*), are also in a way of a chaining down of cause and effect from the emotions (*Midot*) and the intellect (*Sechel*). In other words, even though the thought (*Machshavah*), speech (*Dibur*), and action (*Asiyah*) are separate from the emotions (*Midot*) and the intellect (*Sechel*), nevertheless, the power of thought, and the power of speech, and even the power of action, are in a way of the chaining down of cause and effect. That is, they have some comparison relative to the emotions (*Midot*) and even relative to the intellect (*Sechel*).

Therefore, it is through service of יהו"ה-*HaShem*, blessed is He, that stems from the intellect (*Sechel*) and below, in a manner of a chaining down (*Hishtalshelut*), that there is a drawing down of the light of יהו"ה-*HaShem*, blessed is He, through the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*). That is, there is a drawing down of the light of יהו"ה-*HaShem*, blessed is He, which fills all worlds, in which there are divisions between one world and the next world, in which the light does not illuminate in each world equally.

However, for there to be a drawing down of the light of יהו"ה-*HaShem*, blessed is He, that surrounds and transcends all worlds (*Sovev Kol Almin*), which transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*) and is present in all worlds equally, it also is necessary for there to be service of יהו"ה-*HaShem*, blessed is He, in the soul of man, in a way that transcends reason and intellect, or at least is not according to reason and intellect. In other words, it can either be because his service of

HaShem-יהו"ה, blessed is He, stems from the desire of the heart (*Re'uta d'Leeba*) which transcends reason and intellect, or at least, it must stem from the submission and self-nullification (*Bittul*) of accepting the yoke of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Kingship, which is not in a manner of reason and intellect. In this case, the service of the soul is such that there are no divisions, and through this, there also is caused to be a drawing down commensurate to the manner of the service, so that there is a drawing down of the light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, which surrounds and transcends all worlds (*Sovev Kol Almin*) and is equally present in all worlds.

4.

However, in the self-nullification (*Bittul*) of accepting the yoke of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Kingship itself, there are various levels. For, as explained above, about the matter of the self-nullification (*Bittul*), which is the matter of "We will listen (*Nishma*-נשמע)," this is submission and self-nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Supernal will, as it comes down into revelation. For, the matter of "We will listen (*Nishmah*-נשמע) applies if there already is some existence of that which is being heard, meaning that it is a revealed desire (*Ratzon HaGaluy*).

However, as known, desire (*Ratzon*) is just the external aspect [of Keter], and there is a more inner matter than the desire (*Ratzon*), which is the matter of pleasure (*Ta'anug*), this being the inner aspect and reason for the desire.¹¹⁵¹ In other

¹¹⁵¹ See Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 24.

words, even though the desire (*Ratzon*) for the *mitzvot* is desire that transcends reason and intellect, meaning that it specifically transcends intellectual reasoning, still and all, there is a hidden reason for the desire. This refers to the pleasure (*Ta'anug*) in it, which in the terminology of the Zohar is called,¹¹⁵² “The upper concealed brain of the Ancient One (*Atik*).”

It is in this aspect that there is a superiority to the self-nullification (*Bittul*) of “We will do (*Na'aseh*-נעשה) over and above the self-nullification (*Bittul*) of “We will listen (*Nishma*-נשמע).” For, the self-nullification (*Bittul*) of “We will listen (*Nishma*-נשמע)” is submission and self-nullification (*Bittul*) to the desire of *HaShem*-יהו"ה as it has come into revelation. In contrast, the self-nullification (*Bittul*) of “We will do (*Na'aseh*-נעשה)” is nullification to the One who desires, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He. In other words, with his entire essence and being he is completely given over to the Master of the desire, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He. Therefore, he automatically is prepared that should there be a desire (*Ratzon*) from the Master of the desire, he will fulfill it in its entirety.

Now, it is through this self-nullification (*Bittul*) of “We will do (*Na'aseh*-נעשה),” which is self-nullification (*Bittul*) to the One who desires (*Ba'al HaRatzon*), *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, that we thereby come to the aspect of,¹¹⁵³ “They actualize the will of the Ever-Present One (*HaMakom*-המקום).” That is, we thereby affect and actualize that there should be a desire (*Ratzon*). For, the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה

¹¹⁵² Zohar III 288b (Idra Zuta)

¹¹⁵³ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 35b

Himself, blessed is He, utterly transcends desire (*Ratzon*), and for Him, the very matter of a desire (*Ratzon*) is a descent and a drawing down. In other words, even His desire for the *mitzvot* is merely a drawing down from Him, blessed is He, since in His Essential Self and Being, He utterly transcends even the desire for the *mitzvot*. This is as stated,¹¹⁵⁴ “All Your commandments (*mitzvot*) are charity.” Our sages, of blessed memory, similarly stated,¹¹⁵⁵ “The Holy One, blessed is He, desired to bestow merit on Israel; He therefore increased Torah and *mitzvot* for them.” In other words, the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, transcends the desire for *mitzvot*, and His desire for *mitzvot* is solely a matter of charity (*Tzedakah*) that the Holy One, blessed is He, does for the Jewish people, in that He lowers Himself to desire the *mitzvot*.

Now, to actualize the desire (*Ratzon*), this is brought about through the self-nullification (*Bittul*) of “We will do (*Na'aseh*-נעשה),” which is the self-nullification of the inner aspect of the soul to the Master of the desire (*Ba'al HaRatzon*), *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He. This self-nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, is the self-nullification indicated by the words,¹¹⁵⁶ “You shall love *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God... with all your being (*Bechol Me'odecha*).” That is, this is the matter of self-nullification (*Bittul*) that stems from the singular-*Yechidah* essence of the soul which is bound up with the Singular One-*Yachid*.¹¹⁵⁷ It is

¹¹⁵⁴ Psalms 119:172

¹¹⁵⁵ Mishnah Makkot 3:16

¹¹⁵⁶ Deuteronomy 6:5

¹¹⁵⁷ See Likkutei Torah, Re'eh 25a and elsewhere.

through this that we “actualize the will of the Ever-Present One (*HaMakom*-המקום).”

It is in this regard that our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹¹⁵⁸ “The first paragraph of the *Shema* recital refers to a time when they actualize the will of the Ever-Present One, whereas the second paragraph of the *Shema* recital refers to a time when they do not actualize the will of the Ever-Present One.” For, even though the second paragraph states,¹¹⁵⁹ “It shall be that if you will earnestly listen (*Shamo’a Tishme’u*-שמוע תשמעו) to My commandments,” regarding which it is explained elsewhere¹¹⁶⁰ that the meaning of “listen” (*Shmiyah*-שמיעה) in this verse does not only refer to the matter of understanding and comprehension, but that the matter indicated by “listen” (*Shmiyah*-שמיעה) also refers to the self-nullification (*Bittul*) of accepting the yoke of *HaShem*’s-יהוה Kingship, (and even includes the aspect of the desire of the heart (*Re’uta d’Leeba*) which transcends reason and intellect), nevertheless, since the second paragraph is lacking the love of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, “with all your being (*Bechol Me’odecha*),” which stems from the self-nullification (*Bittul*) of the essence of the soul to the Master of the desire (*Ba’al HaRatzon*), *HaShem*-יהוה Himself, blessed is He, it therefore is in the state of “they do not actualize the will of the Ever-Present One.” It is only the first paragraph, which states, “You shall love *HaShem*-יהוה, your God... with all your being (*Bechol Me’odecha*),” that

¹¹⁵⁸ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 35b *ibid.*; Also see Chiddushei Aggadot of the Maharsha there; Ohr Torah of the Holy Rav, the Maggid of Mezhrich 53d; Likkutei Torah, Shlach 42c, and elsewhere.

¹¹⁵⁹ Deuteronomy 11:13

¹¹⁶⁰ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5629 p. 306 and elsewhere.

through self-nullification (*Bittul*) to the Master of the desire (*Ba'al HaRatzon*), *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, we draw down and actualize the desire of the Ever-Present One (*HaMakom*-המקום).

5.

Now, the difference between “We will listen (*Nishma*-נשמע)” and “We will do (*Na'aseh*-נעשה),” is like the explanation of the two aspects of fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. For, the verse states,¹¹⁶¹ “Now Israel, what does *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God, ask of you? Just to fear *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God.” About this, it states in Talmud,¹¹⁶² that “fear (*Yirah*) is a minor matter.” In other words, fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is the beginning of serving Him. However, another verse states,¹¹⁶³ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה commanded us to do all these decrees, to fear *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” which seems to indicate that fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is the ultimate purpose and culmination of service of Him. That is, all the decrees are solely in order to come to fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה.

It therefore is explained¹¹⁶⁴ that when it states, “Just to fear *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” about which it states, “fear (*Yirah*) is a minor matter,” that this refers to the lower fear (*Yira Tata'ah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, which is the beginning of serving Him. However, when it states, “*HaShem*-יהו"ה commanded us to do all these decrees, to fear *HaShem*-יהו"ה,”

¹¹⁶¹ Deuteronomy 10:12

¹¹⁶² Talmud Bavli, Brachot 33b; Megillah 25a

¹¹⁶³ Deuteronomy 6:24

¹¹⁶⁴ See Tanya, Ch. 23 and elsewhere.

this refers to the upper fear (*Yirah Ila'ah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, which is the ultimate purpose and culmination of our service of Him.

This is also the meaning of the teaching,¹¹⁶⁵ “If there is no fear (*Yirah*), there is no wisdom (*Chochmah*), and if there is no wisdom (*Chochmah*), there is no fear (*Yirah*).” The wisdom-*Chochmah* referred to here is true wisdom, which is the wisdom of the Torah. About this they stated, “If there is no fear (*Yirah*), there is no wisdom (*Chochmah*),” referring to the lower fear (*Yirah Tata'ah*), which is the beginning of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. In other words, it is specifically through the lower fear (*Yirah Tata'ah*) that we come to wisdom (*Chochmah*), which is the matter of Torah and *mitzvot*. In contrast, when it states, “If there is no wisdom (*Chochmah*), there is no fear (*Yirah*),” this refers to the upper fear (*Yirah Ila'ah*), which is the ultimate purpose and culmination of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

Now, the two aspects of “We will listen (*Nishma*-נשמע)” and “We will do (*Na'aseh*-נעשה),” discussed above, generally correspond to these two aspects of the lower fear (*Yirah Tata'ah*) and the upper fear (*Yirah Ila'ah*), respectively. That is, “We will listen (*Nishma*-נשמע)” is the foundation and beginning of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, as discussed above, and is the aspect of the lower fear (*Yirah Tata'ah*). A person then ascends in his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, until he comes to the self-nullification (*Bittul*) indicated by “We will do

¹¹⁶⁵ Avot 3:17; Also see Tanya *ibid.*; Introduction to *Derech Chayim* of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as *The Path of Life*.

(*Na'aseh*-נעשה),” which is the aspect of the upper fear (*Yirah Ila'ah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

6.

Now, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹¹⁶⁶ “This is analogous to a king who came to a land... The king said: First let them accept my kingship and then I will issue my edicts.” Now, the two matters of accepting the kingship and accepting the edicts, are the two matters of “We will do (*Na'aseh*-נעשה)” and “We will listen (*Nishma*-נשמע).” In other words, “We will do (*Na'aseh*-נעשה)” refers to the matter of accepting His Kingship. For, as explained before, the self-nullification (*Bittul*) of “We will do (*Na'aseh*-נעשה)” is nullification to the Master of the desire (*Ba'al HaRatzon*), *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, through which we then “actualize the desire of the Ever-Present One,” which is the matter of drawing forth His desire (*Ratzon*) for Kingship. Thus, this is what is meant by, “First let them accept My kingship.” For, it is not applicable for there to be the matter of accepting His edicts, which is self-nullification (*Bittul*) to His desire (*Ratzon*), except if we first actualize His desire (*Ratzon*) through the self-nullification (*Bittul*) of “We will do (*Na'aseh*-נעשה),” through which we “actualize the desire of the Ever-Present One.”

This likewise is the general matter of the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, on Rosh HaShanah, as our sages, of blessed memory stated,¹¹⁶⁷ “Recite before Me on Rosh

¹¹⁶⁶ Mechilta to Exodus 20:3

¹¹⁶⁷ Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 16a, 34b

HaShanah, verses of Kingship, so that you will crown Me as King over you.” In other words, we must draw forth His desire (*Ratzon*) for Kingship. This is because, on Rosh HaShanah there is an ascent and withdrawal of Kingship-*Malchut*, in that it ascends to its source and root, to the point that it becomes included in the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic Being of *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He. It therefore is necessary for there to be the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of Rosh HaShanah, in order to affect the drawing forth of His essential desire for Kingship, which is the matter of the construction of the Kingship-*Malchut*. This is brought about through the self-nullification (*Bittul*) of “We will do (*Na'aseh*-נעשה),” which is the nullification to the Master of the desire (*Ba'al HaRatzon*), *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He.

However, for a person to reach this aspect of sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) to the Master of the desire (*Ba'al HaRatzon*), *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, there first must be service of Him of the lower fear (*Yirah Tata'ah*). One then can ascend in his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה until he comes to the upper fear (*Yirah Ila'ah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, (as discussed above). This is why the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה on Rosh HaShanah follows all the service of “We will listen (*Nishma*-נשמע)” that preceded it throughout the preceding year, and especially during the month of Elul, about which it states,¹¹⁶⁸ “Of you My heart has said, ‘seek My inner presence.’” It is through this that we subsequently come to Rosh HaShanah and to service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה in the manner

¹¹⁶⁸ Psalms 27:8

indicated by “We will do (*Na’aseh*-נעשה),” through which we thereby draw forth His essential desire (*Ratzon Atzme*) for Kingship.

With all the above in mind, we can also explain the teaching of the Zohar, “Listening (*Shmiyah*-שמיעה) is tied to this aspect, whereas, action (*Asiyah*-עשיה) is above.” That is, this refers to the superiority of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, stemming from the matter of “We will do (*Na’aseh*-נעשה),” over and above serving Him stemming from “We will listen (*Nishma*-נשמע).”

7.

This then, is the meaning of the verse,¹¹⁶⁹ “Behold, I have placed before you this day a blessing... that you listen (*Tishme'u*-תשמעו) to the commandments of *HaShem*-יהו"ה.” That is, the primary service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that is currently demanded of us, is the service indicated by “We will listen (*Nishma*-נשמע),” which is the matter of submission and self-nullification (*Bittul*) to His desire (*Ratzon*).

This is like the above-mentioned words of the Midrash,¹¹⁷⁰ “This is analogous to a king who had two goblets... ‘We shall do-*Na’aseh*-נעשה’ and ‘We shall listen-*Nishma*-נשמע.’ However, you broke ‘We shall do-*Na’aseh*-נעשה,’¹¹⁷¹ so be careful to guard yourselves with ‘We shall listen-*Nishma*-נשמע.’” In other words, the sin of the golden calf,

¹¹⁶⁹ Deuteronomy 11:26-28

¹¹⁷⁰ Midrash Shemot Rabba 27:9

¹¹⁷¹ With the golden calf.

which was a general sin, touched all the way to the aspect of the Master of the desire (*Ba'al HaRatzon*). Therefore, right now, all that is demanded is the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה indicated by the words “that you listen (*Tishme'u*-תשמעו),” which is the matter of at least “being careful to guard yourselves with ‘We will listen-*Nishma*-נשמע.”

However, since *HaShem's*-יהו"ה ultimate Supernal intent is that there should also be the self-nullification (*Bittul*) of “We will do (*Na'aseh*-נעשה),” since the self-nullification (*Bittul*) of “We will listen (*Nishma*-נשמע),” which is the lower fear (*Yirah Tata'ah*), is only the beginning of serving Him, whereas the ultimate culmination of serving Him is to come to the self-nullification (*Bittul*) of “We will do (*Na'aseh*-נעשה),” which is the upper fear (*Yirah Ila'ah*), therefore, it is in this regard that the verse states, “the blessing: that (*Asher*-אשר) you will listen.” That is, this is a blessing and granting of strength and ability to be able to fulfill the service indicated by “that you listen (*Tishme'u*-תשמעו),” through which we subsequently will also come to the aspect of “We will do (*Na'aseh*-נעשה).”

This also is the meaning of the beginning of the verse, “Behold, I (*Anochi*-אנכי) have placed before you (*Liphneichem*-לפניכם),” which refers to the inner aspect (*Pnimitiyut*-פנימיות) of the soul,¹¹⁷² which is the aspect of the singular-*Yechidah* essence of the soul that is bound to the aspect of the Singular One-*Yachid*, who is the aspect of “I (*Anochi*-אנכי).” It is from this aspect that the service of “We will do (*Na'aseh*-נעשה)” comes forth, which is the ultimate culmination of the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

¹¹⁷² See Likkutei Torah, Re'eh 18d

However, to reach this aspect, there must be the service of “that you listen (*Tishme’u*-תשמעו-ה),” which is the beginning of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and is the aspect of “We will listen (*Nishma*-נשמע-ה).” However, there is a blessing and granting of strength and ability through which one can subsequently come to the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה of “We will do (*Na’aseh*-נעשה-ה).” It is about this blessing that the verse states, “that (*Asher*-אשר) you listen.” That is, the verse does not say, “If (*Eem*-אם) you listen,” but specifies, “that (*Asher*-אשר) you listen,” in which the word “That (*Asher*-אשר)” indicates certainty. In other words, the blessing is that through serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way of “that you listen (*Tishme’u*-תשמעו-ה),” and that from the listening (*Tishme’u*-תשמעו-ה) you then will also come to the aspect of “We will do (*Na’aseh*-נעשה-ה),” that it is something that is certain, in which there is no doubt whatsoever.

The explanation of this is as known,¹¹⁷³ that regarding the difference between a blessing (*Brachah*) and a prayer (*Tefilah*), a blessing is solely a drawing down from the root and source. This is as stated,¹¹⁷⁴ “He blessed each one according to his appropriate blessing.” In contrast, prayer (*Tefillah*) is a drawing forth of novel desire (*Ratzon*) from higher than the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*). This is as we say, “**May it be** desirable before You... to heal the sick, and to bless the years etc.” On the other hand, there is an element of superiority to a blessing (*Brachah*), over and above prayer (*Tefillah*), in that a blessing (*Brachah*) is in a way of a

¹¹⁷³ Likkutei Torah, Re’eh 19a

¹¹⁷⁴ Genesis 49:28

command, as it states,¹¹⁷⁵ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה shall bless you etc.,” and a command, is a matter of certainty. In contrast, prayer (*Tefilah*) is in a way of supplication, in which there is doubt. For, there is a doubt whether he will succeed and his supplication will be granted.

Now, these two aspects are intertwined with each other. For, a blessing (*Brachah*) is the drawing forth of that which is already within the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), and is a matter in which there is certainty, whereas a prayer is the novel drawing forth from Higher than the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), and is a matter in which there is doubt.

However, based on this, it is understood that when the verse states, “The blessing: that you shall listen,” it informs us that this blessing (*Brachah*) has both levels of superiority. For, even though this is a drawing forth of the aspect of “We will do (*Na'aseh*-נעשה),” which transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), nevertheless, it is in a way of a blessing (*Brachah*), meaning that it is certain. It is for this reason that it states, “that (*Asher*-אשר) you will listen,” using a term of certainty.

The reason is because the drawing forth is from the aspect indicated by “*I-Anochi*-אנכי,” which refers to the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, for whom above and below are equal, meaning that for Him, higher than the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*) and the chaining down of the worlds, are equal. Therefore, even this drawing forth from

¹¹⁷⁵ Numbers 6:24

Higher than the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*) is certain.

This then, is the meaning of “The blessing: that (*Asher-אשר*) you will listen (*Tishme’u-תשמעו*),” meaning that it is certain that there will be the aspect of serving *HaShem-יהוה*, blessed is He, of “We will listen (*Nishma-נשמע*),” through which we will subsequently reach the aspect of “We will do (*Na’aseh-נעשה*)” on Rosh HaShanah, meaning that there will be self-nullification to the Master of the desire (*Ba’al HaRatzon*), *HaShem-יהוה* Himself, blessed is He, through which we will actualize the construction of His Kingship-*Malchut* from its essential root, and there will thereby be a novel drawing down of new desire from Higher than the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), for a good and sweet year, in all matters of children, health, and abundance sustenance!