

Discourse 21

“Vayehi BaChatzee HaLayla - It was at midnight”

Delivered on the second night of Passover, 5717

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

1.

The verse states,²⁰² “It was at midnight and *HaShem*-יהו"ה smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt etc.” The Midrash states²⁰³ that “wherever Torah states, ‘**and** *HaShem*-ויהו"ה’ it signifies Him and His Supernal Court.” In other words, it signifies that in this, there is the quality of mercy (*HaShem*-יהו"ה) and the quality of judgment (His Supernal Court). The reason²⁰⁴ is because below there had to be “affliction for Egypt, and healing for Israel.”²⁰⁵ Thus, because there had to be affliction from the side of judgment (*Din*) and healing from the side of mercy (*Rachamim*), therefore, Above in *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Godliness, there had to be a bond and inter-inclusion between these two modes of conduct, kindness and severity.

²⁰² Exodus 12:29

²⁰³ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 51:2 cited in Rashi to Exodus 12:29; Also see Zohar II 37b.

²⁰⁴ See Torat Chayim, Shemot 123a and on; Ohr HaTorah, Bo, Vol. 7 p. 2,633 and on; Vol. 8 p. 2,944 and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5658 p. 95 and on; 5678 p. 239 and on.

²⁰⁵ See Isaiah 29:22, Zohar II 36a

This is also the meaning of the beginning of the verse, “It was at midnight.” For, the moment of midnight (*Chatzot*) is the moment that the two halves of the night bond – the first half of night which precedes midnight, and the second half of night which follows midnight. The first half of night is the aspect of judgments (*Gevurot*), and the second half of night is the aspect of kindnesses (*Chassadim*). This is why, as we observe, since it is the aspect of judgments (*Gevurot*), during the first half of the night it becomes darker and darker with every passing moment. In contrast, in the second half of the night, with each passing moment, since it comes closer and closer to daybreak, it automatically becomes more and more illuminated. Now, the moment of midnight is when the two halves of night bond, that is, it is the bond between the mode of kindnesses (*Chassadim*) and the mode of judgments (*Gevurot*), as they are in the aspect of night (*Laylah*-לילה), which is the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut*.

Now, this bond between the two modes, comes about because of the revelation of light and illumination that transcends both. In other words, within the created beings themselves, it is impossible for the two modes of conduct to bond simultaneously. Rather, there can be either one or the other, either affliction or healing. Therefore, for there to be a bond between these two opposites, there must be a revelation of light that transcends both. This then, is the meaning of the words, “It was at midnight (*Chatzot*).” For, at that moment there is the revelation of light and illumination that transcends both modes of conduct.

This is like the teaching,²⁰⁶ “At midnight, the Holy One, blessed is He, comes to delight with the righteous (*Tzaddikim*) in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*).” It is explained in various places that the matter of the Holy One, blessed is He, coming to delight with the righteous (*Tzaddikim*) in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*), refers to a revelation of the *Sefirah* of beauty-*Tiferet*. On a loftier level, it refers to a revelation of the *Sefirah* of understanding-*Binah*, and on a still loftier level, it refers to the revelation of the Ancient One-*Atik* as it is revealed within understanding-*Binah*. Thus, because of the revelation of such a lofty light and illumination as this, there comes to be an inter-inclusion between the two modes of conduct.

This is like the explanation elsewhere²⁰⁷ about the verse,²⁰⁸ “Dominion and dread are with Him; He makes peace in His heights.” That is, as explained, the angel Michael is the minister of water (*Mayim*), whereas the angel Gavriel is the minister of fire (*Aish*), and yet they do not extinguish each other,²⁰⁹ due to the revelation of the light of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, that transcends them both.²¹⁰ By way of analogy as it is in man below, this is like two ministers who are diametrically opposed to each other. Nonetheless, when they come before the king, because the king himself is revealed, they unite and perform their duties in a way of unity. The same is understood here, that because of the revelation of the Holy One,

²⁰⁶ Zohar I 72a; 82b; 136b; 178b; 231b, and elsewhere.

²⁰⁷ See Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 12; Likkutei Torah, Emor 38a

²⁰⁸ Job 25:2

²⁰⁹ Midrash Bamidbar Rabba 18:8; Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh *ibid*.

²¹⁰ Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 22.

blessed is He, who comes to delight with the righteous (*Tzaddikim*), the two modes of the kindness (*Chassadim*) and judgment (*Gevurot*) become inter-included as they are in the aspect of night (*Laylah*-לילה), referring to the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut*. As a result, this is also drawn down below, so that there is “affliction for Egypt and healing for the Israel.” This is due to a revelation of light and illumination that is lofty in elevation after elevation (higher and higher, and still higher).

2.

Now,²¹¹ since *HaShem*’s יהו"ה ultimate Supernal intent was that this should be drawn below, meaning that below, in this world, there should be “affliction for Egypt and healing for Israel,” it therefore was necessary for the revelation be through the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut*, which is the root and source of created beings. This is the meaning of the verse,²¹² “*HaShem*-יהו"ה will pass over the entrance,” in which the word “entrance-*Petach*-פתח” refers to the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut*. However, in the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut* the manner of revelation is not in a way of inner manifestation (*Hitlabshoot*), but solely in a way that the revelation passes through (*Ma’avar*).

To further explain, if the revelation would be in a way of inner manifestation (*Hitlabshoot*), it would come in one of two ways. Either the existence of the *Sefirot* would become

²¹¹ See *Torat Chayim*, Shemot 123a and on; *Ohr HaTorah*, Bo, Vol. 7 p. 2,633 and on.

²¹² Exodus 12:23

completely nullified because of the revelation of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה light, in which case the light and revelation would not be drawn down below, or the *Sefirot* would limit *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה light (that is, they would bring measure and limitation to the light). In such a case, the revelation would not be of His light as He essentially is, in His full glory, but would only be as it is limited by the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut*. It therefore was necessary that the manner it was drawn forth in Kingship-*Malchut* would only be in a way of passing through (*Ma'avar*-מעבר). This is as stated,²¹³ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה will pass over the entrance,” specifying that He will “pass over” (*Posach*-פסח), and it similarly is written,²¹⁴ “I will pass through (*v'Avartee*-ועברתי) the land of Egypt on this night etc.,” which also specifies, “I will pass through (*v'Avartee*-ועברתי).”

However, even when the drawing down is in a way of passing through (*Ma'avar*), this passing through the *Sefirah* nevertheless causes that the issuance will be drawn down to this world to manifest in physical things, meaning, to bring about physical “affliction for Egypt and healing for Israel.” This is as explained in Kuntres Acharon,²¹⁵ that even when the light is only drawn down in a way of passing through (*Ma'avar*), it nevertheless causes the drawing down to come below in the physical world. On the other hand, since it only is in a way of passing through (*Ma'avar*), the light and illumination of *HaShem*-יהו"ה remains as it is, in its state of simplicity, with the revelation of His full glory as He essentially is.

²¹³ Exodus 12:23

²¹⁴ Exodus 12:12

²¹⁵ Tanya, Kuntres Acharon, discourse entitled “*Lehavin Mah SheKatuv b'Pri Etz Chayim*,” (158a).

This is why the drawing down was only in a way of passing (*Ma'avar*) through all the *Sefirot*, up to the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut*. Similarly, this is also the meaning of the verse,²¹⁶ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה will pass over the entrance... and the lintel and the two doorposts.” For, “the entrance-*Petach*-פתח” refers to the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut*, whereas “the lintel and the two doorposts” refer to the other *Sefirot*. Similarly, it is written,²¹⁷ “And *HaShem*-יהו"ה our God took us out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm.” The two words, “*HaShem* our God-*HaShem Elohei*”נו-אלהינו” refer to the *Sefirot* of wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah*, respectively. The words, “with a strong hand (*Yad Chazakah*-יד חזקה) and an outstretched arm (*Zro'a Netuyah*-זרוע נטויה)” refer to “the two arms” of Arich Anpin.²¹⁸

In other words, since *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה ultimate Supernal intent was for the light be drawn all the way down, it therefore was necessary for the light to be drawn down through the whole chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), from” the two arms” of Arich Anpin, all the way to the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut*. Moreover, on all levels it was necessary for there to be a bond between the two modes of conduct. That is, in the aspect of Arich Anpin, this refers to the bond between the two arms of Arich Anpin, even as they are in Arich Anpin. The same is true of the aspects of wisdom-*Chochmah* and

²¹⁶ See Exodus 12:23

²¹⁷ In the liturgy of the Passover Haggadah, in the section entitled “*Avadim HaYinu*,” which is based upon the verse in Deuteronomy 6:21

²¹⁸ Pri Etz Chayim, Shaar Chag HaMatzot, Ch. 7; Mishnat Chassidim, Mesechet Leil Pesach, Ch. 7; Siddur Im Divrei Elokim Chayim, p. 293c and on; Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 25 and the citations and notes there.

understanding-*Binah*, since the aspects of wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah* are the two modes of conduct as they are in the aspect of intellect and brains (*Mochin*). Likewise, this is even true until the bond of the two modes as they are the aspect of night (*Laylah*), which refers to the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut*. Through this, it was even drawn down below to be “affliction for Egypt and healing for Israel.” That is, because the light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, was drawn down by all the *Sefirot*, it therefore was also drawn down below, only that the way it was drawn down within the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*) was not in a way of inner manifestation (*Hitlabshut*), but only in a way of passing through (*Ma'avir*). This is why, as discussed above, the light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, remained as it is, the revelation of His glory as He essentially is.

3.

Now, even below in this world there also is a bond between the two modes of conduct. This is brought about through the three Matzahs and the four cups of wine [of the Passover Seder]. That is, the three Matzahs are of the mode of kindnesses (*Chassadim*), whereas the four cups of wine are of the mode of severities (*Gevurot*), (as will be discussed). However, the drawing down of the light below through the three Matzahs and the four cups of wine is not just in a way of passing through (*Ma'avar*), but is rather in a way of inner manifestation (*Hitlabshut*). This is because serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with the Matzahs and the cups of wine, is service in actual

deed. This being so, it is in a way of inner manifestation (*Hatlabshut*).

To further explain, the three Matzahs are the mode of kindnesses (*Chassadim*). This is because the matter of Matzah is self-nullification (*Bittul*), as known.²¹⁹ The matter of self-nullification (*Bittul*) is related to the mode of kindnesses (*Chassadim*), for if a person is in a state of ego and sense of self-importance (*Yeshut*), he is incapable of tolerating his fellow, and as an automatic result, the severities (*Gevurot*) are in a state of strength and dominance. This is not so if he is in a state of self-nullification (*Bittul*), in which case he gives room for his fellow and is in the mode of kindnesses (*Chassadim*). We thus find that the Matzahs are the matter of kindnesses (*Chassadim*).

The four cups, on the other hand, are of the mode of severities (*Gevurot*). For, as known, in the matter of the *Sefirot*, wine (*Yayin*-יין) corresponds to the *Sefirah* of understanding-*Binah*, and it states regarding the *Sefirah* of understanding-*Binah*, “Judgments are aroused from understanding-*Binah*.”²²⁰ The same is true in man below, that wine causes the blood to boil, the result of which is that the severities (*Gevurot*) are in a state of strength and dominance.

Nevertheless, the drawing down of the light below through the three Matzahs and the four cups of wine which we

²¹⁹ See Likkutei Torah, Tzav 13c and on; Also see Siddur Im Divrei Elokim Chayim, p. 284d and on; Shaar HaEmunah of the Mittler Rebbe (at length) 8b and on; Sefer HaMitzvot of the Tzemach Tzedek 22b and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5627 p. 236 and on.

²²⁰ See Zohar III 10b, 11b; Etz Chayim, Shaar 13 (Shaar Arich Anpin), Ch. 8; Shaar 14 (Shaar Abba v’Imma), Ch. 2.

physically consume, is in a way of inner manifestation (*Hitlabshut*). In other words, in all the levels between the Glory and Essential Self of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, until the Matzahs and the four cups of wine, the way the light is drawn down is only in passing way (*Ma'avir*). However, the light drawn down through consuming actual Matzahs and four cups of wine, is in a way of inner manifestation (*Hitlabshut*), as explained above.

The explanation is that, just as the matter of the Matzahs is kindnesses (*Chassadim*), as discussed above, this is likewise the effect of the Matzahs in our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. To explain, as well known²²¹ Matzah is called the “food of faith.”²²² This is like the what our sages, of blessed memory, stated,²²³ “A child does not know how to call ‘Abba-father’ until he has tasted the taste of grain.” That is, through having tasted the taste of grain he then calls “Abba-father.” Even though it is true that when he calls “Abba-father” it is not according to reason and intellect, since he has no understanding and comprehension of the matter, nevertheless, when he calls “Abba-father” it is with very great strength and force, to the point that when he calls out, it can be in the way indicated by the verse,²²⁴ “His soul departed as he spoke.”

²²¹ Zohar II 183b

²²² See Likkutei Torah, Tzav 13c and on; Also see Siddur Im Divrei Elokim Chayim, p. 284d and on; Shaar HaEmunah of the Mittler Rebbe (at length) 8b and on; Sefer HaMitzvot of the Tzemach Tzeddek 22b and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5627 p. 236 and on.

²²³ See Talmud Bavli, Brachot 40a; Matnot Kehunah to Midrash Bereishit Rabba 15:7; Mevo She'arim, Shaar 5, Section 1, Ch. 12, in the HaGahat Tzemach note (1).

²²⁴ Adapted from Song of Songs 5:6

The same is so in regard to eating the Matzah, which is the “food of faith.” That is, even if he has no understanding or comprehension of *HaShem*’s יהו"ה Godliness – as indicated by the fact that when the children of Israel were in Egypt they were in the state of the “immaturity of wisdom” (*Katnut Abba*)²²⁵ – nevertheless, the power of faith is extremely great and dominant.

However, there is a difference between physically calling out “father” and spiritually calling out “Father” (*Abba*-אבא). Namely, to physically call out “Abbe-father,” it is sufficient to have only tasted the taste of grain, and it makes no difference whether it is Matzah or the opposite of Matzah. That is, as long as there has been a taste of grain, this causes the matter of knowledge (*Da'at*), in that he knows to call “Abba-father.” This is like the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory, that,²²⁶ “The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was wheat.” This is why the taste of grain draws out the matter of knowledge (*Da'at*).

In contrast, when it comes to the spiritual matter of calling out “Father” (*Abba*-אבא), this refers to the matter of perceiving *HaShem*’s יהו"ה Godliness, or at least recognizing it, or at the very least having faith in *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, for it is in the merit of their faith in *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that our forefathers were redeemed from Egypt.²²⁷ In this

²²⁵ See Likkutei Torah, Tzav 13c and on; Also see Siddur Im Divrei Elokim Chayim, p. 284d and on; Shaar HaEmunah of the Mittler Rebbe (at length) 8b and on; Sefer HaMitzvot of the Tzemach Tzedek 22b and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5627 p. 236 and on.

²²⁶ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 15:8; See Mevo She'arim ibid.

²²⁷ Mechilta to Exodus 14:31; Yalkut Shimoni, Beshalach, Remez 240.

case, it is not adequate to only have tasted the taste of grain, but rather, it must specifically be Matzah. This is because the matter of Matzah is specifically that of self-nullification (*Bittul*), as discussed above. Additionally, Matzah is made of water and flour, in which the waters indicate the descent from a lofty place to a lowly place,²²⁸ and as explained elsewhere, the flour too is a matter of the kindnesses (*Chassadim*).²²⁹ We thus find that just as Matzah itself is the aspect of kindnesses (*Chassadim*), the effect of the Matzah in our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is also the matter of kindnesses (*Chassadim*).

The same is true of the four cups of wine. That is, just as they are the matter of judgments (*Gevurot*), their effect in our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is also the matter of judgments (*Gevurot*).

This is why the *mitzvah* of Matzah is a Biblical commandment in the Written Torah (*Torah SheB'Khtav*), because,²³⁰ “the Torah came forth from wisdom-*Chochmah*.” In contrast, the four cups of wine are a Rabbinical institution, which generally is the matter of the Oral Torah (*Torah SheBa'al Peh*). This is because the Written Torah (*Torah SheB'Khtav*) and the Oral Torah (*Torah SheBa'al Peh*) correspond to wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah*, as stated,²³¹ “Listen, my son, to the discipline of your father, and do not forsake the teaching of your mother.” The “discipline of your

²²⁸ Talmud Bavli, Taanit 7a

²²⁹ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5627 *ibid.* p. 241.

²³⁰ Zohar II 62a, 85a, and elsewhere.

²³¹ Proverbs 1:8

father” is the Written Torah (*Torah SheB’Khtav*),²³² this being the aspect of wisdom-*Chochmah*.²³³ The “teachings of your mother” is the Oral Torah (*Torah SheBa’al Peh*),²³⁴ this being the aspect of understanding-*Binah*,²³⁵ and as explained before, wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah* are the two modes of kindnesses (*Chassadim*) and judgments (*Gevurot*).

Similarly, the Written Torah (*Torah SheB’Khtav*) is the aspect of *Zeir Anpin*, whereas the Oral Torah (*Torah SheBa’al Peh*) is the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut*.²³⁶ Now, *Zeir Anpin* is primarily the aspect of the kindnesses (*Chassadim*),²³⁷ whereas Kingship-*Malchut* is of the mode of judgments (*Gevurot*).

Thus, with the above in mind we can understand that the Matzahs and the four cups are a drawing down of the light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way of inner manifestation (*Hitlabshut*). For, since the Matzahs and the four cups of wine are a matter of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, by fulfilling His Torah and *mitzvot*, which are the will of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, therefore the light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה is drawn in them in a way of inner manifestation (*Hitlabshut*). For, the general principle is that whatever is higher specifically manifests in that which is lower. Moreover, even though the

²³² See Midrash Mishlei, Ch. 1.

²³³ Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 29 (151); Likkutei Torah, Shmini Atzeret 85b, and elsewhere.

²³⁴ See Midrash Mishlei, Ch. 1.

²³⁵ Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 29 (151); Likkutei Torah, Shmini Atzeret 85b, and elsewhere.

²³⁶ See the introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 17a; Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 26 (144a).

²³⁷ For although *Zeir Anpin* also possesses judgments (*Gevurot*), ultimately He is the bestower, and all bestowal stems from kindness-*Chessed*, as it states (Micah 7:18), “For He desires kindness (*Chessed*),” and similarly (Psalms 89:3), “The world is built on kindness (*Chessed*).”

drawing down of the light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the matter of the Matzahs and the four cups of wine, is in a way of inner manifestation (*Hitlabshoot*), nevertheless, *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה light remains as it is, in a state of ultimate simplicity, that is, in the aspect of the revelation of His glory, as He essentially is.

4.

Now, it is written,²³⁸ "Like the days that you went out of Egypt I will show you wonders." That is, in the coming future there also will be a drawing down of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה light that transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalsheloot*). That is, the light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה that is higher than the two modes of conduct will be drawn down in a way of inner manifestation (*Hitlabshoot*).

Moreover, it states about the coming future, "I will show you wonders," in that there will be an even greater revelation of the light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, than in the exodus from Egypt. For, even though in the exodus from Egypt there also was a drawing down of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה light and illumination that transcends the two modes of conduct, nevertheless, it related to modes of conducts, and modes of conduct were drawn down from it. This is why in various places it is explained that when it states, "the aspect of the revelation of His glory (*Kvodo*-כבודו) as He essentially is (*Atzmo*-עצמו)," this refers to the aspect of the concealed beauty-*Tiferet HaNe'elam* and the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut* of the

²³⁸ Micah 7:15

Unlimited One (*Ein Sof*), *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.²³⁹ In contrast, in the coming future there will be a drawing down of the light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that utterly transcends modes and lines of conduct. That is, there will be a revelation of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential Being of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He. Moreover, this light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, will be drawn below in a way of inner manifestation (*Hitlabshoot b'Pnimiyyoot*).

The preparation for this is our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, on Passover, through the consumption of the three Matzahs and the four cups of wine, which correspond to the three fathers and the four mothers.²⁴⁰ For, through the fulfillment of these *mitzvot* we will merit the revelation of the coming future, as it states about the coming future,²⁴¹ "He will wave His hand over the River... He will break it into seven streams." That is, the seven streams correspond to the three Matzahs and the four cups of wine, and the three fathers and four mothers.²⁴²

May it be desirable before *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that through our service of Him with the consumption of the Matzahs and the cups of wine [on Passover] we will merit beholding the fulfillment of the prophecy, "Like the days that you went out of Egypt I will show you wonders." That is, may

²³⁹ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5671 p. 75 and on; *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 2 p. 924; Discourse entitled "*Mi Manah*" 5712, Ch. 8 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5712, p. 344; Translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe, 5712, Discourse 20, Ch. 8.

²⁴⁰ Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov; Sarah, Rivkah, Leah and Rachel. See Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 26 p. 47 and the citations there.

²⁴¹ Isaiah 11:15

²⁴² See Likkutei Torah, discourse entitled "*V'Heinif*," Tzav, 17b and on.

there be the literal revelation of the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, even higher than the aspects indicated by the words "the aspect of the revelation of His glory (*Kvodo*-כבוד) as He essentially is (*Atzmo*-עצמו)." Moreover, may this light be drawn down to manifest in an inner way, through David, King Moshiach, speedily in our days!