

Discourse 5

“Mageed MeReishit Acharit - From the beginning I foretell the end”

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Bereishit,
Shabbat Mevarchim Marcheshvan (in the first gathering), 5718
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,³⁰³ “From the beginning (*MeReishit*-*מראשית*) I foretell the end; and from before, what has not yet been done; I say, My plan will stand and I will carry out My every desire.” The Alter Rebbe explains³⁰⁴ the well-known question of Ramban³⁰⁵ regarding the juxtaposition of the word “In the beginning-*Bereishit*-*בראשית*” to other words. (For as stated by Rashi,³⁰⁶ “There is no instance in the Torah in which the word “Beginning-*Reshit*-*ראשית*” is not connected with the words that follows it, such as the verse,³⁰⁷ ‘In the beginning-*Bereishit*-*בראשית* of the reign of Yehoyakim.’ The same is true here, that ‘*Bereishit Bara Elohi*”*m-אלהי"ם*’ is to be rendered, ‘In the beginning of [God’s] creating-*Breishit Bero*-*ברואשית ברו*.”) The Ramban’s question is that in this verse,

³⁰³ Isaiah 46:10; Also see the format of the Shtar Tana'im engagement document.

³⁰⁴ Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5562 Vol. 2 p. 323; Also see Ohr HaTorah, Bereishit Vol. 6, p. 1,154a and on.

³⁰⁵ Ramban (Nachmanides) to Genesis 1:1

³⁰⁶ Rashi to Genesis 1:1

³⁰⁷ Jeremiah 26:1

“From the beginning (*MeReishit*-מראשית) I foretell the end,” the word “From the beginning-*Mereishit*-מראשית” is independent and not attached to the juxtaposed words.

However, the explanation of the matter is that the word “In the beginning-*Bereishit*-בראשית” is the first word of the Torah, and any place in Torah where the term “beginning-*Reishit*-ראשית” is mentioned, refers back to the beginning of the Torah, which itself is called “The beginning-*Reishit*-ראשית.”³⁰⁸ Thus, the meaning of the verse, “From the beginning (*MeReishit*-מראשית) I foretell the end,” is that it refers to that “beginning-*Reshit*-ראשית” about which it states, “In the beginning-*Bereishit*-בראשית God created.”

Now, at first glance, this must be better understood. For, according to this explanation, that the verse “From the beginning (*MeReishit*-מראשית) I foretell the end” refers to the verse “In the beginning-*Bereishit*-בראשית God created,” from which all matters of Torah relating to “the beginning-*Reishit*-ראשית” are drawn, the verse should have instead said, “From the beginning (*MeReishit*-מראשית) I foretell the beginning (*Reishit*-ראשית).” Why then does the verse state, “From the beginning (*MeReishit*-מראשית) I foretell the end (*Acharit*-אחרית)”?

However, the explanation is that the reason it says “From the beginning (*MeReishit*-מראשית) I foretell the end,” is because all matters are considered to be the aspect of “the end-*Acharit*-אחרית” relative to the beginning indicated by “In the beginning-*Bereishit*-בראשית God created.” In other words, they only are called the “beginning-*Reishit*-ראשית” in relation to their own level, in that in comparison to the levels below them

³⁰⁸ See Ramban (Nachmanides) and Rashi to Genesis 1:1 *ibid*.

they are the beginning. Nevertheless, in truth, relative to the beginning indicated by “In the beginning-*Bereishit*-בראשית God created,” they are the aspect of the “end-*Acharit*-אחרית.”

2.

The explanation is that there are several explanations and levels to the verse, “In the beginning-*Bereishit*-בראשית God created.”³⁰⁹ The simple explanation is as taught by our sages, of blessed memory,³¹⁰ that ““In the beginning-*Bereishit*-בראשית’ is also a creative utterance.” That is, it is the word of *HaShem*-יהו"ה and the Godly utterance that brings the physical heavens and earth into being. The Zohar³¹¹ states that the verse, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth-*Bereishit Bara Elohi”m eit HaShamayim v’Eit HaAretz*,” refers to the ten *Sefirot*. That is, the word “In the beginning-*Bereishit*-בראשית” refers to the *Sefirah* of Wisdom-*Chochmah*, and the word “the earth-*HaAretz*-הארץ” refers to the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut*.

We thus find that the word “In the beginning-*Bereishit*-בראשית” refers to the *Sefirah* of Wisdom-*Chochmah* of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), just as all the *Sefirot* refer to the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*). For, as known, whenever it simply states, “ten *Sefirot*,” it refers to the *Sefirot* of the world

³⁰⁹ See Torat Chayim, Bereishit 7a and on, 14c and on.

³¹⁰ Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 32a

³¹¹ Zohar I 31b (*Tosefta*), cited and explained in the discourse entitled “*Bereishit Bara*” 5651 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5651 p. 89).

of Emanation (*Atzilut*), since that is the beginning of the limitation of, “ten and not nine; ten and not eleven.”³¹²

In similar vein, Targum [Yerushalmi] translates the word “In the beginning-*Bereishit*-בראשית” as “with Wisdom-*B’Chochmeta*-בְּחֹכְמָתָא.”³¹³ Additionally, Targum [Onkolos] translates “In the beginning-*Bereishit*-בראשית” as “Primordially-*b’Kadmin*-בְּקֶדְמִין,”³¹⁴ referring to the *Sefirah* of the Crown-*Keter*,³¹⁵ which transcends the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*). Higher than this, the word “In the beginning-*Bereishit*-בראשית” refers to the beginning of the line-*Kav*, which is the beginning of all matters relating to the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*) after the restraint of the *Tzimtzum*. Higher than this, since even before the restraint of the *Tzimtzum* there is the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) of the general worlds (*Klallut*),³¹⁶ (and as explained before,³¹⁷ in the general world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) there is a likeness to all matters that exist in the particular world of Emanation, and therefore, just as “In the beginning-*Bereishit*-בראשית” refers to Wisdom-*Chochmah* of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), this likewise is so in the general world of Emanation (*Atzilut d’Klallut*), which precedes and transcends the restraint of the *Tzimtzum*.)

³¹² Sefer Yetzirah 1:4

³¹³ Targum Yerushalmi to Genesis 1:1; Zohar I 31b; Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 8.

³¹⁴ Targum Onkelos to Genesis 1:1

³¹⁵ See Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as Gates of Light, Gate 10 (*Keter*); Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 8.

³¹⁶ See Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 18.

³¹⁷ In the preceding discourse entitled “*Lahavin Inyan Simchat Torah* – To understand the matter of Simchat Torah,” Discourse 4, Ch. 2.

Higher than this, the word “In the beginning-*Bereishit*-בראשית” refers to the aspect of the light (*Ohr*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, which is much higher than even the general world of Emanation (*Atzilut d'Klallut*). That is, it refers to the aspect of the light (*Ohr*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, as it is included in the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He.

However, ultimately, the true matter indicated by “In the beginning-*Bereishit*-בראשית” refers to the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, whose existence is intrinsic to Him, and from whom all beings in existence, are newly brought into being. This even includes the highest revelations in the aspect of the light (*Ohr*) that precedes and transcends the restraint of the *Tzimtzum*, until even physical beings that exist below. For, it is from the reality of His Intrinsic Being that all other beings are brought into novel being.³¹⁸

Now, the highest explanation of “In the beginning-*Bereishit*-בראשית God created,” that it refers to the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, is tied to and is specifically related to the most final explanation, in that it refers to the Godly utterance that newly brings into existence and enlivens the physical heavens and the earth. This is as stated by the Alter Rebbe in *Iggeret HaKodesh*,³¹⁹ “It is the Essential Being of the Emanator, blessed is He, whose existence is

³¹⁸ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 1:1

³¹⁹ Tanya, *Iggeret HaKodesh*, Epistle 20

intrinsic to Him, and who is not caused by any other cause that precedes Him, God forbid to think so, it is solely within His power and ability to create something from absolute nothing and naught, without there being any other cause that precedes the tangible something that is brought forth.” In other words, the very existence of the tangible physical something (*Yesh*) which senses itself as existing intrinsically, is solely in the power of the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, whose existence is [truly] intrinsic to Him.

This is similar to what we explained before³²⁰ on the verse,³²¹ “אף עשיתיו-*Af Aseeteev*,” as it relates to man’s service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in which there are two explanations. The first explanation is that it refers to the highest level of acceptance of the yoke of *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Kingship, in which a person is in a state of complete self-nullification of his existence (*Bittul b’Metziyut*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. That is, he has no sense of independent existence whatsoever, and the totality of his being is solely to fulfill *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Supernal will, blessed is He.

The second explanation is that it refers to the lowest level of accepting the yoke of *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Kingship, in which a person is in a state and standing of ego and sense of self-existence, and does not desire *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Godliness, but nonetheless compels himself to accept the yoke of *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Kingship upon himself.

³²⁰ In the preceding discourse entitled “*Lahavin Inyan Simchat Torah* – To understand the matter of Simchat Torah,” Discourse 4, Ch. 7.

³²¹ Isaiah 43:7

It was explained about this that since both these levels are hinted in the word, “I actualized it-*Aseeteev*-עשיתיו,” they therefore are related to each other. That is, since this is a matter of self-nullification (*Bittul*), it thus is related to the matter of “I actualized it-*Aseeteev*-עשיתיו,” which hints to the nullification of one’s sense of self-existence (*Bittul b’Metziyut*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and transcends the matters hinted in the preceding words of the verse,³²² “I created it-*Barateev*-בראתיו,” and “I formed it-*Yatzarteev*-יצרתיו and even transcends all lights (*Orot*) and revelations (*Gilyim*), even including the light (*Ohr*) as it is included in the Essential Self of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. It rather literally reaches the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He.

The same is likewise true regarding our subject here, that the Godly power which brings forth the novel existence of physical creations, is specifically bound to the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He. This is to say that the existence of physicality is [specifically] from the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He.

With the above in mind, we can understand the verse,³²³ “From the beginning (*MeReishit*-מראשית) I foretell the end (*Acharit*-אחרית).” That is, all aspects of beginning-*Reishit*-ראשית within the totality of the chaining down of all the worlds

³²² Isaiah 43:7

³²³ Isaiah 46:10; Also see the format of the Shtar Tana'im engagement document.

(*Hishtalshelut*), are all in the aspect of an “end-*Acharit*-אחרית” relative to the true matter of beginning-*Reishit*-ראשית, which is, “In the beginning-*Bereishit*-בראשית God created.” This is because the root of “In the beginning God created,” is the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He. (Though it is true that on the simple level, it refers to the Godly utterance which brings novel physical creations into existence, nevertheless, this is solely due to the power of the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, within it.)

Thus, relative to the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, all other matters are considered to be the “end-*Acharit*-אחרית.” In other words, relative to the Essential Self of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, it is utterly inapplicable to say that this level is the lowest level, or is on the second level or the third level, and the like. Rather, relative to Him all other matters are considered to be the “end-*Acharit*-אחרית,” in that they altogether are utterly incomparable to Him.

3.

Now, even though all matters of the most supernal and loftiest lights (*Orot*) and revelations (*Giluyim*) are the aspect of the “end-*Acharit*-אחרית” relative to the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, nevertheless, His Essential Self, blessed is He, is present within them. For, as known, the

ultimate Supernal intent in the novel existence of all novel beings, whether they are the most supernal lights (*Orot*) and revelations (*Gilyim*), even including the light (*Ohr*) as it is included in His Essential Self, blessed is He, to even the lowest matters in the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), and even this physical world, exist solely to fulfill His Supernal intention that, “The Holy One, blessed is He, desired a dwelling place for Himself in the lower worlds.”³²⁴

In the words of our Rebbes and Leaders,³²⁵ “We do not know **why** the Holy One, blessed is He, desired it, but what we do know is that the Holy One, blessed is He, desired a dwelling place for Himself in the lower worlds.” This also is explained about the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,³²⁶ “In whom did He consult? In the souls of the righteous-*Tzaddikim*.” That is, the great pleasure that *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, would have through the service of Him by the righteous-*Tzaddikim*, arose before Him, as it states,³²⁷ “Your nation are all righteous-*Tzaddikim*,” in that it is the souls of the Jewish people who will fulfill the Supernal intent of making a “dwelling place for the Holy One, blessed is He, in the lower worlds.”

It thus is understood that the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהוה Himself, blessed is He, is found within all beings in

³²⁴ See Midrash Tanchuma Bechukotai 3, Naso 16; Midrash Bamidbar Rabba 13:6; Tanya Ch. 36, and elsewhere.

³²⁵ Sefer HaMaamarim 5679 p. 302; See Hemshech 5666 p. 7; Sefer HaMaamarim 5700 p. 18 and elsewhere. Also see Chayei HaNefesh of Rabbi Avraham Abulafia.

³²⁶ Midrash Ruth Rabba 2:3

³²⁷ Isaiah 60:21; Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1

existence. For, as known, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and His will (*Ratzon*-רצון), are One, and therefore, certainly He and His pleasure (*Ta'anug*-תענוג) are One. Thus, since the Supernal will and pleasure of the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is found in all existent beings, therefore He Himself is also found in them. That is, the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, is found in all existent beings. This is because the very existence, vitality, and sustainment of all novel beings comes from the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, at every moment.

4.

This then, is the meaning of the verse,³²⁸ “From the beginning I foretell (*Magid*-מגיד) the end.” The term “foretell-*Magid*-מגיד” indicates “drawing down-*Hamshachah*-המשכה,”³²⁹ as in the verse,³³⁰ “A stream that flows forth-*Nageid*-נגד,” as known regarding the distinction between an illumination (*Ha'arah*-הארה) and drawing down (*Hamshachah*-המשכה). That is, in the case of an illumination (*Ha'arah*), the luminary remains in its place, only that it puts forth an illumination of its radiance. In contrast, drawing down (*Hamshachah*) refers to

³²⁸ Isaiah 46:10; Also see the format of the Shtar Tana'im engagement document.

³²⁹ See Pri Etz Chayim, Shaar HaAmidah, Ch. 1; Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim 2c; Also see the note of the Rebbe to Maamarei Admor HaEmtza'ee, Na"Ch p. 547.

³³⁰ See Daniel 7:10

when the essential thing itself is drawn down, such the drawing forth of a river, in which the river itself is drawn forth.

This then, is the meaning of the verse, “From the beginning I foretell (*Magid*-מגיד) the end.” Namely, “the beginning-*Reishit*-ראשית” refers to the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, who is the true beginning-*Reishit*-ראשית. In this regard the verse states, “From the beginning I foretell (*Magid*-מגיד) the end,” meaning that, so to speak, His Essential Self, blessed is He, is drawn down (*Nimshach*-נמשך) in the aspect of the “end-*Acharit*-אחרית,” referring to all of novel existence, which are all in the category of the “end-*Acharit*-אחרית” relative to the Essential Self of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and His Essential Self is found within them (as discussed before).

This then, is what the Alter Rebbe explained about the verse, “From the beginning (*MeReishit*-מראשית) I foretell the end.” Namely, every place in Torah where the term “beginning-*Reishit*-ראשית” is mentioned, stems from the very first “beginning-*Reishit*-ראשית,” of the verse, “In the beginning-*Bereishit*-בראשית God created etc.” (That is, all matters of “beginning-*Reishit*-ראשית” are drawn from and adhere to the True Beginning-*Reishit*-ראשית.) In other words, even when discussing matters of “beginning-*Reishit*-ראשית,” the verse nevertheless calls them the “end-*Acharit*-אחרית,” and both matters are simultaneously true, since relative to the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, they are the “end-*Acharit*-אחרית.”

As explained before, whatever is not the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is in the aspect of the "end-*Acharit*-אחרית," and is only called the "beginning-*Reishit*-ראשית" relative to its own level, and is the aspect of a "beginning-*Reishit*-ראשית" relative to the levels below it. However, the depth of the matter is that the very fact that they are all the aspect of the "beginning-*Reishit*-ראשית" relative to the levels below them, is due to the matter indicated by this verse, "From the beginning I foretell (*Magid*-מגיד) the end," namely, it is because the Essential Self of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, who is the True Beginning-*Reishit*-ראשית, is found within them, and they therefore are also called the "beginning-*Reishit*-ראשית."

5.

With the above in mind, we can better understand the explanation in the discourse of his honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rebbe,³³¹ that how we conduct ourselves on the Shabbat in which the Torah portion of Bereishit is read, affects all matters throughout the year.

To explain, in addition to the simple meaning of "all matters throughout the year," there is also an inner meaning, which refers to all matters of the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*). This is because the word, "year-*Shanah*-שנה,"

³³¹ See Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 2, p. 449; Vol. 20 p. 556

is of the same root as “change-*Shinuy*”³³² [This is similar to the explanation in the teachings of Chassidus³³³ about the Etrog, which is called, “*Hadar*”³³⁴, because “It dwells-*Dar*” on its tree from year-*Shanah* to year-*Shanah*.] That is, it is impervious to all [seasonal] changes-*Shinuyim*. This is because the matter of the Etrog is the world of Oneness-*Achdut*.] It thus refers to all the “changes-*Shinuyim*” throughout all the levels of the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), even including the aspect of the light (*Ohr*) which is included in the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*, blessed is He.

All those levels are affected by how we conduct ourselves on Shabbat Bereishit, since we then read, “In the beginning-*Bereishit*” God created,” and as mentioned before (in chapter two), there are numerous levels in this, beginning with the simple explanation, that it refers to the Godly power that brings the physical heavens and earth into existence, and concluding with the explanation (which also is tied to the simple meaning, which has this in an inner way) that “In the beginning-*Bereishit*” refers to the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential Being, *HaShem* Himself, blessed is He, who is the True Beginning (*Reishit HaAmeete*), and upon Whom all matters and changes-

³³² See Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as Gates of Light, Gate 5 (*HaShem*); Also see Avodat HaKodesh of Rabbi Meir Ibn Gabbai, Section 4, Ch. 19; Ohr HaTorah, Mikeitz p. 338b.

³³³ *Hemshech* “*Kachah*” 5637 Ch. 87 & 94 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5637 Vol. 2, p. 612 and on, and p. 627 and on).

³³⁴ Talmud Bavli, Sukkah 35a

Shinuyim-שינויים throughout the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*) depend, up to and including even the aspect of the light (*Ohr*) as it is included in His Essential Self, blessed is He. Therefore, if our conduct on Shabbat Bereishit is in a way of expansiveness, this draws down expansiveness in all matters, from the highest of the high to the lowest of the low.