

Discourse 31

“Teekoo BaChodesh Shofar - Blow the Shofar at the Renewal of the Moon”

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Netzavim,

28th of Elul, 5718

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

1.

The verse states,¹⁴⁹⁴ “Blow the Shofar at the renewal of the moon, at the time appointed for our festive day, because it is a decree for Israel, a judgment [day] for the God of Yaakov.” Now,¹⁴⁹⁵ we must understand why the verse simply states “at the renewal of the moon-*BaChodesh*-בחדש,” without saying what month it is, (thus requiring our sages, of blessed memory, to expound and explain which month it refers to).¹⁴⁹⁶ At first glance, the verse could have expressly said, “in the seventh month-*BaChodesh HaShvee’ee*-בחדש השביעי.”¹⁴⁹⁷

We also must understand why the verse states, “Because it is a decree (*Chok*-חוק) for Israel, a judgment [day] (*Mishpat*-משפט) for the God of Yaakov.” The indication of the verse is that through the “decree (*Chok*-חוק) for Israel, there thereby is

¹⁴⁹⁴ Psalms 81:4-5

¹⁴⁹⁵ See the discourse entitled “*Tikoo*” 5634 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5634 p. 309 and on).

¹⁴⁹⁶ Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 8a and on.

¹⁴⁹⁷ As specified in Leviticus 23:24 and Numbers 29:1

the “judgment [day] (*Mishpat*-משפט) for the God of Yaakov.” However, how do these matters relate to each other?

Now, on the Torah portion of Kedoshim,¹⁴⁹⁸ Rabbeinu Bacheye wrote that the Holy One, blessed is He, gave those *mitzvot* known as “decrees-*Chukim*-חוקים” specifically to the Jewish people, as it states,¹⁴⁹⁹ “His decrees (*Chukav*-חוקיו) and His statutes (*Mishpatav*-משפטיו) to Israel,” and similarly,¹⁵⁰⁰ “It is a decree (*Chok*-חוק) for Israel.” He explains that the terminology “decrees-*Chukim*-חוקים” is of the same root as “an engraving-*Chakikah*-חקיקה” of a depictive form (*Tziyur*), since they are depictions of Supernal matters above. It is for this reason that this was specifically given to the Jewish people.

In the Torah portion of Emor,¹⁵⁰¹ at the beginning of the Torah portion on the Festivals, he wrote, citing Talmud Yerushalmi¹⁵⁰² and Midrash Tehillim, that¹⁵⁰³ “No other nation sets the laws for its God, as does the Jewish people. [That is, when the Sanhedrin convenes to proclaim a particular day as the beginning of the New Year, the Holy One, blessed is He, Himself conforms to their decision.¹⁵⁰⁴ He calls His Supreme Court of angels together and tells them, ‘Go and find out what the Sanhedrin on earth has decided.’ They answer Him, ‘Master of the world, Your children have decreed that Rosh HaShanah shall be on such and such day.’ The Holy One, blessed is He,

¹⁴⁹⁸ Leviticus 19:19

¹⁴⁹⁹ Psalms 147:19

¹⁵⁰⁰ Psalms 81:4-5

¹⁵⁰¹ Leviticus 23:4

¹⁵⁰² Talmud Yerushalmi, Sanhedrin 1:2

¹⁵⁰³ Midrash Tehillim, Ch. 4

¹⁵⁰⁴ That is, the appointment of the new months and the calendrical calculations were given to the Jewish people to determine.

immediately [accepts their ruling] and on that day He assembles His court to sit in judgment of mankind. Why is this? ‘Because it is a decree (*Chok*-חוק) for Israel,’ in that the Jewish people issue the decree (*Chok*-חוק) of Rosh HaShanah, and that day is then ‘a judgment [day] (*Mishpat*-משפט) for the God of Yaakov,’ meaning that He agrees and upholds their decree. About this the verse states,¹⁵⁰⁵ ‘I will call upon God, Most High, to the God who fulfills for me.’”

According to this Midrash, the explanation of the verse, “Because it is a decree (*Chok*-חוק) for Israel, a judgment [day] (*Mishpat*-משפט) for the God of Yaakov,” is that through the “decree (*Chok*-חוק) for Israel,” that the Jewish people establish the day of Rosh HaShanah below, there then is made to be the “judgment [day] (*Mishpat*-משפט) for the God of Yaakov,” that the Holy One, blessed is He, then sits in judgment.

2.

This may be understood with a general explanation of the matter of Rosh HaShanah, for the reason it is specifically called by this name is well known. That is, it is specifically called “The head of the Year-*Rosh HaShanah*-ראש השנה,” rather than, “The beginning of the Year-*Tchilat HaShanah*-תחילת השנה.”¹⁵⁰⁶ That is, just as in man, his head (*Rosh*-ראש) includes the vitality of all his limbs and organs, and from there the vitality is drawn to each limb in particular, this is likewise so of

¹⁵⁰⁵ Psalms 57:3

¹⁵⁰⁶ See Likkutei Torah, Ki Tavo 41c; Nitzavim 47a-b; Rosh HaShanah 58a-b; Also see the beginning of Ateret Rosh of the Mittler Rebbe.

“The head of the Year-*Rosh HaShanah*-ראש השנה,” that it includes the vitality of the entire year.

With the above in mind, we can also understand this as it relates to serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. That is, the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה on Rosh HaShanah is similar to serving Him throughout the whole year, except that it is the general totality of serving Him, like the head (*Rosh*-ראש), which contains the general vitality of the entire body. What is further understood from this, is that on every day [of the year] there must be a similarity to the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of Rosh HaShanah, just as in man the vitality is drawn from the head to each particular limb.

The explanation is that [there is something] in addition to the fact that Rosh HaShanah begins the ten days of repentance (*Aseret Yemei Teshuvah*), in that the *mitzvah* of the day is with the Shofar,¹⁵⁰⁷ and the Shofar is the matter of repentance (*Teshuvah*), as the Rambam wrote¹⁵⁰⁸ (and is cited in many places) that,¹⁵⁰⁹ “though the sounding of the Shofar on Rosh HaShanah is a Torah decree, it also contains an allusion, as if [the Shofar is calling out and] saying, ‘Wake up you sleepy ones from your sleep, and you who slumber, arise from your slumber. Inspect your deeds, repent, and remember your Creator.’”

Nevertheless, the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, on Rosh HaShanah is not just repentance (*Teshuvah*), which is the matter of removing all matters that are undesirable, but

¹⁵⁰⁷ Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 26b

¹⁵⁰⁸ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah 3:4

¹⁵⁰⁹ *Hemshech* “*Yom Tov Shel Rosh HaShanah*” 5666 p. 2 and on (translated as Revealing the Infinite); Sefer HaMaamarim 5710 p. 8 and on, and elsewhere.

there also is the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of Rosh HaShanah, that is a service unto itself. This itself is demonstrated by the fact that the Shofar is a *mitzvah* unto itself, separate from the matter of repentance (*Teshuvah*). That is, even those authorities who count the *mitzvah* of repentance (*Teshuvah*) as one of the six-hundred and thirteen commandments,¹⁵¹⁰ count the *mitzvah* of Shofar and the *mitzvah* of repentance (*Teshuvah*) as two distinct *mitzvot*.

We thus can understand this as it relates to the general toil of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה on Rosh HaShanah, that it also is a service unto itself, separate from repentance (*Teshuvah*), and that it includes the toil of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, during the entire year.

In other words, even if the generation is meritorious, in which case the service of Rosh HaShanah and of the Shofar, stem from perfection and wholeness in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, even then, it is the general inclusive service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, for the entire year.

3.

To further explain, in regard to serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, throughout the entire year, the verse states,¹⁵¹¹ “Because you... serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה, your God, with gladness and goodness of heart.” That is, service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, must specifically be done joyfully.

¹⁵¹⁰ Sefer Mitzvot Katan, Mitzvah 53; See Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 38, p. 18 and on.

¹⁵¹¹ Deuteronomy 28:47

To explain, the foundation, root, and beginning of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is to be a fitting receptacle for the drawing down of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness. The fitting receptacle for such drawings from Above is as stated by our sages, of blessed memory,¹⁵¹² "An empty vessel holds [whatever is put into it]."

In other words, the beginning of toil in service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is to make oneself an empty vessel. However, being an empty vessel cannot come about through sadness. On the contrary, sadness is undesirable, as explained at length in Tanya,¹⁵¹³ with the analogy of two people who are wrestling, that if one of them is lazy or lethargic, he will be easily overcome, even though, in actuality, he may be stronger than this his opponent. The same is so of victory over one's inclination, that it is impossible to be victorious over him through laziness or lethargy, both of which stem from sadness. Rather, [victory comes about] through alacrity, which stems from joy.

Now, although the verse states,¹⁵¹⁴ "In all sadness there will be a gain," nevertheless, the verse actually indicates the opposite, that in and of itself, there is no positive aspect to sadness, only that he will come to have some gain from it. This gain is the joy that, on various occasions, follows the sadness, through which there then comes to be the fulfillment of the

¹⁵¹² Talmud Bavli, Brachot 40a; Also see the discourse entitled "*Atem Nitzavim* – You are standing this day, all of you, before *HaShem*-יהו"ה" 5711 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5711 p. 137 and on), translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe, 5711, Discourse 16.

¹⁵¹³ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 26

¹⁵¹⁴ Proverbs 14:23; Also see Sefer HaMashalim of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as The Book of Allegories, Section 97.

verse,¹⁵¹⁵ “Make me hear joy and gladness, may the bones that You crushed exult,” (after having been crushed). This is why the Arizal established that we recite this Psalm after the midnight prayer of Tikkun Chatzot¹⁵¹⁶ and before starting the study of Torah study after Tikkun Chatzot, so that it will be with the true joy that comes after sadness etc.

We thus find that the toil itself in service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, must be fulfilled with joy, only that before starting to serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in order to remove all undesirable matters, it must sometimes be preceded by bitterness (*Merirut*).

More particularly, a person's bitterness (*Merirut*) may not necessarily be over sins and transgression, but just over the essential fact that his soul has descended below. For, when the soul was still Above, about this the verse states,¹⁵¹⁷ “As *HaShem*-יהו"ה, before Whom I stood, lives.” That is, in that state the soul only related to matters of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness, whereas upon its descent below it also came to relate to matters of physicality.

Even if he knows that there is an element of superiority to physicality, in that *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה transcendent encompassing light (*Ohr HaSovev*) is specifically drawn in the physical, specifically in the lower worlds, nevertheless, as he is below, sometimes lust may enter his heart etc., and from there it ascends to the thoughts of his mind.

¹⁵¹⁵ Psalms 51:10

¹⁵¹⁶ Which is a prayer of mourning over the exile.

¹⁵¹⁷ Kings II 5:16

In other words, even when all matters relating to his thoughts, speech, and action are as they should be, and even if it never is drawn from thought to action, and even if he immediately pushes the thought away, nevertheless, being that for a few moments the lustful thought came into his heart and mind, this itself indicates that evil is still complete and whole in him.¹⁵¹⁸ In other words, since these [negative] powers have no receptacle by which to be actualized, it is evident that, they already are complete and whole in and of themselves, this being the wholeness of evil.

From this it is understood that for the Godly soul this is very painful. That is, this pain stems from the essential matter that the soul knows of the existence of evil. For, about the Godly soul as it is, in and of itself, the verse states, “As *HaShem*-יהוה, before Whom I stood, lives.” However, once the lust came into his heart and mind, the soul is now aware of evil and knows of its existence, which is very painful for it.

Moreover, the pain is also caused by the fact that, when the lust comes into his mind, at that very moment his heart and mind are invested in matters of evil. That is, instead of being invested in holiness, they are invested in evil.

In this itself there are two matters. The first is that the power of thought and lust are invested in matters of evil, and secondly – which is even more primary – at that moment he did not make use of those powers for the sake of holiness. This second matter is even more grave, for as explained

¹⁵¹⁸ Also see Kuntres HaAvodah, Ch. 2.

elsewhere,¹⁵¹⁹ the withdrawal of the light of *HaShem*'s יהו"ה Godliness is even more grave than the descent into evil.

This is why the Alter Rebbe ruled, as a matter of *Halachah* in Hilchot Talmud Torah,¹⁵²⁰ (founded on the words of the Rishonim),¹⁵²¹ that even a person about whom the verse states,¹⁵²² “[To the wicked, God said], ‘Why do you recount My decrees?’” nevertheless, in and of himself, he must study Torah and fulfill the *mitzvot*.

In other words, even though because of his spiritual state he has no relation to matters of Torah and *mitzvot*, as stated in Tanya,¹⁵²³ that he must “first repent in order to shatter the external husks of *Kelipah* which form a separating veil and a partition of iron that interposes between him and his Father in Heaven,” and beyond that, through engaging himself in fulfilling Torah and *mitzvot* he temporarily adds strength to the external husks of *Kelipah*,¹⁵²⁴ nevertheless, when he then returns to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in repentance (*Teshuvah*), all his Torah and *mitzvot* will then ascend with him to holiness. Thus, since he will certainly return and repent, for,¹⁵²⁵ “The banished one shall not remain banished from Him,” therefore, even now, [before actually repenting] he must engage in the study of Torah and the fulfillment of *mitzvot*.

In contrast, this is not so if he does not engage in the study of Torah and the fulfillment of *mitzvot*. For, in such a

¹⁵¹⁹ Sefer HaMaamarim 5665 p. 28-29 and elsewhere.

¹⁵²⁰ Hilchot Talmud Torah 4:3

¹⁵²¹ See Menorat HaMa'or and Rambam cited in Hilchot Talmud Torah 4:3.

¹⁵²² Psalms 50:16; Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 106b; Chagigah 15b

¹⁵²³ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 17 (23a)

¹⁵²⁴ See Hilchot Talmud Torah 4:3 *ibid*.

¹⁵²⁵ Samuel II 14:14

case he will not have what to elevate and ascend with him when he finally returns to holiness.

From the above we also can understand this as it relates to the above-mentioned matter, that besides the fact that the power of his thought is invested in matters of evil, by the very fact that he was capable of using those moments to engage his mind in matters of holiness, but did not, he loses a very great and vast treasure.

If he contemplates this, the contemplation (*Hitbonenut*) itself will be enough to bring him to extreme bitterness (*Merirut*). However, all this is before the toil in service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in which the toil itself must specifically be done with joy, and through serving Him with joy, he becomes like an empty vessel that holds whatever is put into it.

4.

However, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹⁵²⁶ “A prisoner cannot free himself from prison.” Therefore, to be an empty vessel requires assistance from Above. This matter is drawn down from Above through our forefathers, as stated,¹⁵²⁷ “The well (*Be'er*-באר) that the princes (*Sarim*-שרים) dug.” The “well (*Be'er*-באר)” is an excavation by which an empty vessel is made, and those who dig the well (*Be'er*-באר) are the “princes (*Sarim*-שרים),” referring to the forefathers of the world. For

¹⁵²⁶ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 5b

¹⁵²⁷ Numbers 21:18; Midrash Tanchuma to Numbers 21:18; Likkutei Torah, Chukat 62d and elsewhere.

through them the ingathering of the souls of Israel become an empty vessel that holds whatever is put into it.

This is why at the beginning of every day we recall the merit of our forefathers. That is, after reciting,¹⁵²⁸ “How goodly are your tents, O’ Yaakov; your dwelling places, O’ Israel,” in which “your tents” (*Ohalecha*-אהליך) and “your dwelling places” (*Mishkenotecha*-משכנותיך) refer to Torah and prayer, which is the beginning of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, throughout the day, we then say, “And I, through Your abundant kindness (*Rov Chasdecha*-רוב חסדך) come into Your house,”¹⁵²⁹ in the merit of Avraham.¹⁵³⁰

The meaning of the word “merit-*Zechut*,” is as explained by his honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rebbe,¹⁵³¹ that it indicates “brilliance-*Zachut*.” Thus, the “merit of Avraham-*Zechut Avraham*-זכות אברהם” refers to the purity and brilliant clarity that Avraham brought about in the world. This matter is hinted in the words, “Your abundant kindness (*Rov Chasdecha*-רוב חסדך),” since Avraham’s primary service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, was in the matter of kindness-*Chessed*.¹⁵³²

For, even though our forefather Avraham “was an elder who sat and studied Torah in Yeshivah,”¹⁵³³ and,¹⁵³⁴ “he fulfilled the entire Torah even before it was given,” and he both

¹⁵²⁸ In the “*Mah Tovu*” liturgy at the beginning of the morning prayers; Numbers 24:5

¹⁵²⁹ Psalms 5:8

¹⁵³⁰ See introduction to Zohar 11a; Zohar III 8b

¹⁵³¹ Likkutei Dibburim, Vol. 4, p. 607b; Sefer HaSichot, 5704 p. 124

¹⁵³² Also see Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as Gates of Light, Gate Five (*Tiferet*), and elsewhere.

¹⁵³³ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 28b

¹⁵³⁴ Yoma *ibid.*; Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 82a

studied himself, as well as taught (as demonstrated by what our sages, of blessed memory, taught that,¹⁵³⁵ “His servant Eliezer would draw from his master’s teachings and give others to drink,”) nevertheless, his primary service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, was in the matter of kindness-*Chessed*.

This is why he is called,¹⁵³⁶ “Avraham who loved Me.” This is also as stated in *Sefer HaBahir*¹⁵³⁷ and cited in *Pardes Rimonim* that,¹⁵³⁸ “The quality of kindness-*Chessed* said before the Holy One, blessed is He: ‘All the days that Avraham is on earth, I have not needed to perform my function, since Avraham stands and serves in my place.’”

We then say,¹⁵³⁹ “I bow toward Your holy sanctuary in fear of You,” which is in the merit of Yitzchak. For, Yitzchak’s primary mode in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, was in the line of Might-*Gevurah*, as it states,¹⁵⁴⁰ “The dread of Yitzchak (*Pachad Yitzchak*-פחד יצחק).” We then say, “As for me, may my prayer to You, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, be at a propitious time,”¹⁵⁴¹ which is in the merit of Yaakov.

Thus, it is in this way that at the beginning of each day we recall and mention the merit of our forefathers. For, the matter of our forefathers is present in each and every Jew. This

¹⁵³⁵ Yoma *ibid.*; Also see Rashi to Genesis 15:2

¹⁵³⁶ Isaiah 41:8

¹⁵³⁷ *Sefer HaBahir*, Section 191

¹⁵³⁸ *Pardes Rimonim*, Shaar 22 (*Shaar HaKinuyim*), Ch. 4

¹⁵³⁹ In the “*Mah Tov*” liturgy at the beginning of the morning prayers; Psalms 5:8

¹⁵⁴⁰ Genesis 31:42; Also see *Shaarei Orah* of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *Gates of Light*, Gate Five (*Tiferet*) *ibid.*, and elsewhere.

¹⁵⁴¹ Psalms 69:14

is as explained in Torah Ohr,¹⁵⁴² in explanation of the verse,¹⁵⁴³ “I appeared (*Va’era*-וארא) to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Yaakov,” that the word, “I appeared-*Va’era*-וארא” is also in the future tense (“I shall appear-*Va’era*-וארא”) and in the present tense (“I appear-*Va’era*-וארא”). That is, this aspect is always present in every Jew. In other words, because of the presence of the matters of our forefathers, inherent in every Jew, the matter of “I appear-*Va’era*-וארא,” referring to the revelation of *HaShem*’s יהו"ה Godliness, is present in every Jew.

This then, is the meaning of the verse,¹⁵⁴⁴ “The well (*Be’er*-באר) that the princes (*Sarim*-שרים) dug.” That is, the matter of digging and excavating is for the purpose of removing those matters that cover over and conceal, and this digging and excavation comes about through the presence of our forefathers in every Jew. For, through them those things that cause concealment etc., are removed, and through this one becomes an empty vessel that can receive and retain the drawing down of *HaShem*’s יהו"ה Godliness.

As this matter is Above in *HaShem*’s יהו"ה Godliness, it is the aspect of the Foundation-*Yesod* of the feminine-*Nukvah* (Kingship-*Malchut*), which is the receptacle for all that is drawn down, stemming from the aspect sublimation and self-nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

¹⁵⁴² Torah Ohr, Va’era 55a

¹⁵⁴³ Exodus 6:3

¹⁵⁴⁴ Numbers 21:18; Midrash Tanchuma to Numbers 21:18; Likkutei Torah, Chukat 62d and elsewhere.

Now, just as this is so of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, throughout the course of the entire year, it likewise is so of the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, on Rosh HaShanah. For, on Rosh HaShanah there must be the general matter of the engraving and excavation, for one to be an empty vessel that can receive Godly bestowal throughout the rest of the year.

This matter comes about through sounding the Shofar, which corresponds to the three forefathers.¹⁵⁴⁵ That is, the *Tekiyah* (one long blast) is a drawing down from Above to below, and corresponds to Avraham. The *Shevarim* (three short blasts) is the matter of ascent from below to Above, and corresponds to Yitzchak. And the *Teru'ah* (nine short blasts) corresponds to Yaakov, as it states,¹⁵⁴⁶ "Who hears the sound of the *Teru'ah* of His people Yisroel with mercy," and as known, Yaakov is the quality of Mercy-*Rachamim* (*Tiferet*).

Then, after the three sounds of *Tekiyah* (one long blast), *Shevarim* (three short blasts) and *Teru'ah* (nine short blasts), they are followed by the final *Tekiyah* (one long blast), which also is a drawing down from Above to below. The final *Tekiyah* is the matter of the drawing down brought about after the toil of "running" (*Ratzo*) and "returning" (*Shov*) of the three preceding sounds.

This also is why on Rosh Hashanah we recite the four paragraphs that begin with the word, "And as such-*u'Vechein-*

¹⁵⁴⁵ See Zohar III 99b and Biurei HaZohar there.

¹⁵⁴⁶ In the blessing of the *Shofarot* in the *Musaf* prayer of Rosh HaShanah.

ובכן.¹⁵⁴⁷ For, the word “As such-*Vechein*-בִּכְנִי” has a numerical value of ע”ב-72, this being the name that arises from the three verses,¹⁵⁴⁸ “*VaYeesa*-וַיֵּסַע,” “*VaYavo*-וַיָּבֹא,” “*VaYeit*-וַיֵּיט.”

That is, each of these verses has ע”ב-72 letters, and there are three manners in this, corresponding to the three forefathers. Therefore, the name of ע”ב-72 of the verse “*VaYeesa*-וַיֵּסַע” is in forward order, being that it corresponds to Avraham, whose quality is that of drawing down in a straightforward order (*Yashar*) [from Above to below]. The name of ע”ב-72 of the verse “*VaYavo*-וַיָּבֹא” is in reverse order (*Hafuch*), being that it corresponds to Yitzchak, the quality of Might-*Gevurah*, the matter of which is ascent from below to Above. The third verse, “*VaYeit*-וַיֵּיט,” corresponds to Yaakov, who is the quality of Splendor-*Tiferet*, and even though it is the intermediary between Kindness-*Chessed* and Might-*Gevurah*, it nevertheless leans toward Kindness-*Chessed*,¹⁵⁴⁹ as in the teaching,¹⁵⁵⁰ “Justice-*Mishpat*-מִשְׁפָּט (is the middle column), and it is merciful.” Therefore, the name of ע”ב-72 that arises from the verse “*VaYeit*-וַיֵּיט” is also in straightforward order (*Yashar*), similar to the verse “*VaYisa*-וַיֵּסַע,” which corresponds to Avraham.

¹⁵⁴⁷ In the Rosh HaShanah *Amidah* prayers. See Zohar II 52a; Biurei HaZohar of the Tzemach Tzeddek p. 411 and on.

¹⁵⁴⁸ Exodus 14:19-21; See Zohar II 52a *ibid*. Also see Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as HaShem Is One, Vol. 2 (The Letters of Creation, Part 1), section entitled “The three letters אב”ש correspond to the three verses ‘*VaYeesa*-וַיֵּסַע,’ ‘*VaYavo*-וַיָּבֹא,’ ‘*VaYeit*-וַיֵּיט,’ and Vol. 3 (The Letters of Creation, Part 2), The Gate explaining that the Explicit Name-*Shem HaMeforash* is ע”ב-72 and יר”ו-216, and elsewhere.

¹⁵⁴⁹ See Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as Gates of Light, Gate Five (*Tiferet*).

¹⁵⁵⁰ Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 17b

The substance of these names is that they are the kindnesses (*Chassadim*) of the Father-*Abba* (Wisdom-*Chochmah*), the judgments (*Gevurot*) of the Mother-*Imma* (Understanding-*Binah*), and the quality of Knowledge-*Da'at* that binds them is the aspect of “the pure air” (*Avira Dachya-*אִוִּירָא דְכִיָּא).¹⁵⁵¹ This is why in the third verse “*Vayeit-וַיֵּט*” states that there was an “east wind-*Ru'ach Kadeem-רוּחַ קְדִימִים*,” referring to the aspect of the Primordial Spirit-*Aveer Kadmon-אִוִּיר קְדִמון*,¹⁵⁵² through which the splitting of the sea came about, as the verse states,¹⁵⁵³ “You shall remain silent,” in that,¹⁵⁵⁴ “This matter depends on the Ancient One-*Atika-עֵתִיקָא*.”

The same is understood about the drawings down of Rosh HaShanah, that since it is from such a lofty aspect, it is therefore drawn down through the three times that the word “And as such-*u'Vechein-וּבְכֵן*” is mentioned, which is the matter of the three names of ע"ב-72 that correspond to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov.

All the above applies when the generation is meritorious. However, in addition to this, there also is a fourth mention of the word, “And as such-*u'Vechein-וּבְכֵן*,” referring to repentance and returning (*Teshuvah*) to *HaShem-יְהוָה*,

¹⁵⁵¹ See Zohar III 292b (Idra Zuta) and elsewhere; With respect to the various aspects of Knowledge-*Da'at* which affects the bond of Wisdom-*Chochmah* (*Abba*) and Understanding-*Binah* (*Imma*), see Listen Israel, a translation of Rabbi Hillel HaLevi of Paritch's commentary to Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, Ch. 1 (translated as The Gate of Unity).

¹⁵⁵² See the preceding discourse of this year, 5718, entitled “*V'Hechereem HaShem – HaShem will dry up the gulf of the sea of Egypt*,” Discourse 19, Ch. 3 and on, and elsewhere.

¹⁵⁵³ Exodus 14:14

¹⁵⁵⁴ Zohar II 48a

blessed is He. About this the verse states,¹⁵⁵⁵ “As such-*u’Vechein*-ובכן I shall come to the king, though it is unlawful.” In other words, even if a person has trespassed the law of the Torah, nevertheless, repentance and return (*Teshuvah*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is effective. This is because repentance and return (*Teshuvah*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, transcends Torah,¹⁵⁵⁶ and is even loftier than the merit of the forefathers.

In other words, even if a person is in a spiritual state that even the merits of our forefathers is not effective, being that he has sinned, transgressed and left the path, nevertheless, repentance and return (*Teshuvah*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is indeed effective. This is hinted in the fourth time that the word “And as such-*u’Vechein*-ובכן” is mentioned, which reaches the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, reaching the truth of His Essential Self, for it is there that repentance stems from and is rooted.

More specifically, with the addition of the letter *Vav*-ו in “And as such-*u’Vechein*-ובכן-78,” it equals “His Kindness-*Chasdo*-חסדו-78,” this being the kindness-*Chessed* of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה which transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*).¹⁵⁵⁷ It therefore transcends the merit of

¹⁵⁵⁵ Esther 4:16

¹⁵⁵⁶ See Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 22 & 26 and the notes and citations there, and elsewhere.

¹⁵⁵⁷ This refers to the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה as it means “He Is and Was and Will Be-יהי"ה ויהי"ה ויהי"ה-78,” which transcends the chaining down of the worlds. More specifically, the 12 letters of “He Is and Was and Will Be-יהי"ה ויהי"ה ויהי"ה-78,” are equal to יהו"ה יהו"ה יהו"ה-78, which are the three times that *HaShem*-יהו"ה is mentioned in verse (Exodus 34:6), “And *HaShem*-יהו"ה passed before him and called out *HaShem*-יהו"ה, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and

our forefathers, who are below the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, as the verse states,¹⁵⁵⁸ "I appeared to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Yaakov with *E"l Shadday*-א"ל שד"י, but with My Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה I did not make myself known through them."

Now, the four times that "As such-*u'Vechein*-ובכן-78" is mentioned, correspond to the four manners of the kindness-*Chessed* of *HaShem*-יהו"ה. This is why the Psalm of Thanks,¹⁵⁵⁹ mentions "His Kindness-*Chasdo*-חסדו-78" four times. That is, "Give thanks to *HaShem*-יהו"ה for He is good; for His Kindness-*Chasdo*-חסדו-78 endures forever! Let Israel say now, 'For His Kindness-*Chasdo*-חסדו-78 endures forever!' Let the House of Aharon say now, 'For His Kindness-*Chasdo*-חסדו-78 endures forever!' Let those who fear *HaShem*-יהו"ה say now, 'For His Kindness-*Chasdo*-חסדו-78 endures forever!'" These four times correspond to the four letters of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה.

This is then drawn down in greater detail in the Great Hallel,¹⁵⁶⁰ in which it states "For His Kindness-*Chasdo*-חסדו-78 endures forever" 26-כ"ו times, which is the numerical value of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה-26. This likewise explains the matter of the "26-כ"ו generations that were sustained by the Kindness-

abundant in kindness and truth," which are the thirteen attributes of mercy and forgiveness (*Yod Gimel Midot HaRachamim*). Similarly, the verse states,¹⁵⁵⁷ "Please *HaShem*-*Ana HaShem*-יהי"ה-אנחנו-78, save us now," which is equal to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, that is 78, which is "His Kindness-*Chasdo*-חסדו-78." See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 3 (The Letters of Creation, Part 2) The Gate explaining that the Explicit Name-*Shem HaMeforash* is 72-ע"ב and 216-י"ד, and Vol. 4 (The Vowels of Creation), Section on the *Cholem*-חלם-78 vowel (which is positioned above the letters).

¹⁵⁵⁸ Exodus 6:2

¹⁵⁵⁹ Psalms 118:1-4

¹⁵⁶⁰ Psalm 136

Chasdo-חסדו of the Holy One, blessed is He.”¹⁵⁶¹ For, although those were undesirable generations, and therefore could not be sustained by the aspect of kindness-*Chessed* of the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshehut*), nevertheless, the kindness-*Chessed* was bestowed even to them, and in greater abundance. This is because this drawing down specifically stems from the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, who transcends the chaining down of the worlds.¹⁵⁶²

This then, is the general matter of the toil in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, on Rosh HaShanah, in which there are two manners. The first is when the generation is meritorious, at which time the matter of the Shofar is to affect the drawing down by means of the forefathers. The second is when there are matters that are undesirable, and the matter of repentance and return (*Teshuvah*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה is necessary, by removing those matters.

In this case, the matter of Shofar is the toil of repentance and return (*Teshuvah*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, who transcends the merit of our forefathers. This is because the three forefathers correspond to the aspects of *Akudim*, *Nekudim*, and *Berudim*.¹⁵⁶³ However, through repentance and return

¹⁵⁶¹ Talmud Pesachim 118a; Also see the preceding discourse of this year, 5718, entitled “*Chayav Inish* – A person is obligated to become intoxicated on Purim,” Discourse 16, Ch. 4, and elsewhere.

¹⁵⁶² See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of Intrinsic Being (*Shaar HaHavayah*) and on.

¹⁵⁶³ Otzrot Chayim, Drush HaAkudim, Ch. 1, Mahadura Tinyana; The two levels of the world of *Tohu*, plus the level of the world of *Tikkun* correspond to the three worlds of *Akudim*, *Nekudim* and *Berudim*. These terms, which mean “bound,” “speckled” and “splotted,” have their source in the Torah account of how Lavan tried to swindle Yaakov out of the wages due him for tending Lavan’s flock. After working without pay for fourteen years in return for marrying his daughters, Lavan agreed that Yaakov would receive his payment with those goats that were born with

(*Teshuvah*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, we draw down the essential love of the Holy One, blessed is He, for the Jewish people, which is the matter of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*) and is the true reality of His Essential Self, blessed is He.

6.

However, we still must understand what was explained before, that the primary matter in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is to be like an empty vessel that retains whatever is put into it. At first glance, this seems to contradict another teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,¹⁵⁶⁴ “The attribute of the Holy One, blessed is He, is that a full vessel holds, whereas an empty vessel does not,” which seems to indicate that a person must specifically be like a full vessel.

The explanation is that, in truth, this is not at all a contradiction. For, from the angle of the body and animalistic

“bands” around their ankles (*Akudim*), small speckles (*Nekudim*) or large splotches (*Brudim*). These Torah terms hint at the three levels of *Nekudah*, *Sefirah* and *Partzuf*. The term *Akudim* (bands) represents the level of *Nekudah*, in which the *sefirot* are all “bound” up in a single vessel and are thus indistinguishable from each other (*Akudim*). They are all expressed in the essential desire, such as the essential desire for kindness, for example, similar to a band which is circular, representing that it is bound up within itself. The small speckles (*Nekudim*) represent the level of *sefirah*, in which the particular divisions of each *sefirah* are recognizable, but nonetheless, remain disjointed and do not interconnect to work in conjunction as a unified system (*Nekudim*). The large splotches (*Brudim*) represent the level of *Partzuf*, in which the *sefirot* are recognizable as distinct qualities, but nonetheless, unite and connect to work in conjunction as a unified system. This is comparable to the merging of many specks into one large splotch. See Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as *The Gate of Unity*, Ch. 20 and the notes there.

¹⁵⁶⁴ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 40a

soul, one must be like an empty vessel, whereas from the angle of the Godly soul one must be like a full vessel, meaning a vessel filled with Torah and *mitzvot*.

On a deeper level, the terminology of our sages here seems to indicate that in the very same matter that he must be like an empty vessel – “an empty vessel retains whatever is put into it” – in that very same matter he must also be like a full vessel.

This may be understood from another teaching of our sages, of blessed memory, that,¹⁵⁶⁵ “The Holy One, blessed is He, only grants wisdom to one who has wisdom, as the verse states,¹⁵⁶⁶ ‘He gives wisdom to the wise.’” They also said,¹⁵⁶⁷ “The Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהוה, the *Shechinah*, only rests upon one who is wise and mighty etc.” In terms of Kabbalah it is explained that the lower wisdom (*Chochmah Tata’ah*) is the receptacle for the upper wisdom (*Chochmah Ila’ah*).¹⁵⁶⁸

By way of analogy, this is like a teacher who bestows intellect to a student who, intellectually, is of no comparison to himself, in which case the student must specifically be like a full vessel. That is, the student must already have intellect himself. For, even if the teacher bestowing the wisdom has all the qualities and talents of a good teacher, nevertheless, as the popular saying goes,¹⁵⁶⁹ “A head you cannot give someone,”

¹⁵⁶⁵ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 55a

¹⁵⁶⁶ Daniel 2:21

¹⁵⁶⁷ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 92a

¹⁵⁶⁸ See Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as Gates of Light, Gate Five (*Tiferet*) and Gate Nine (*Chochmah*).

¹⁵⁶⁹ Sefer HaMitzvot of the Tzemach Tzedek 3a; Sefer HaMaamarim 5659 p. 3, and elsewhere.

and it therefore is of vital importance for the student himself to have intellect. Nevertheless, at the very same time, [to be a student and receive the intellect of the teacher] the student must also become an empty vessel, as in the teaching [that a teacher must], ¹⁵⁷⁰ “Cast awe upon the students.” In other words, not only must the student empty himself of alien thoughts and desires that will distract his mind while receiving the intellect, but beyond this, even in the understanding and comprehension of the intellect, which are the vessels by which to receive the intellect, the student must be like an empty vessel. Moreover, even in the very matter being bestowed to him, he must be like an empty vessel. In other words, while receiving the teaching he should not analyze it at all, but should receive the words of his teacher as they are. For, if the student begins analyzing the intellect in the middle of receiving it, what the teacher is bestowing becomes intermingled with the intellect of the student. Moreover, and this is most important, by analyzing the matter while it is being bestowed, at that moment he misses the words of the teacher, and does not receive all his words, which is even worse. This is as explained before, that the withdrawal of the light is worse than the descent into evil.

The same is understood in regard to serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. That is, at the very same time and in the very same matter, a person must be both a full vessel and an empty vessel. In other words, even though he must be a full vessel in matters of learning Torah and doing *mitzvot*, in this itself he also must be an empty vessel, meaning that he must be nullified (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. He then will

¹⁵⁷⁰ Talmud Bavli, Ketubot 103b

be a fitting receptacle for drawing down *HaShem*'s יהו"ה Godliness.

7.

This then, is the meaning of the verse,¹⁵⁷¹ “Blow the Shofar at the renewal of the moon, at the time appointed for our festive day, because it is a decree for Israel, a judgment [day] for the God of Yaakov.” The word “at the renewal of the moon-*BaChodesh*-שִׁבְחָה” refers to Rosh HaShanah, on which there is a renewal of vitality for the whole year. That is, throughout the year there is no matter of novel renewal throughout, but only a drawing down to that particular day, from the general vitality (drawn down on Rosh HaShanah). However, on Rosh HaShanah there is a novel renewal that is drawn down for a full year, and on the next Rosh HaShanah there is a new drawing down of vitality for that year.

Now, “at the renewal of the moon-*BaChodesh*-שִׁבְחָה,” referring to Rosh HaShanah, we must serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with the Shofar, referring to the drawing down accomplished by our forefathers, as explained above. However, the Shofar also hints to the matter of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, through repentance and return (*Teshuvah*), (if the generation is unworthy), which is the matter of the four times that “As such-*uVechein*-וְכֵן-78,” is mentioned, as explained above.

About this the verse concludes, “Because it is a decree (*Chok*-חֹק) for Israel.” The word “*Chok*-חֹק” refers to a signet

¹⁵⁷¹ Psalms 81:4-5

(*Chotem*) that protrudes from Above, and [when stamped] in the souls of the Jewish people, affects an indentation of the signet.¹⁵⁷² The protruding signet (*Chotem*) from Above is the drawing down of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה essential love, which causes the indentation of the seal below, this being the nullification (*Bittul*) of the empty vessel to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

The explanation is that when the merit of our forefathers is insufficient, and there also must be the matter of repentance and return (*Teshuvah*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, through the Shofar, then the revelation of the essential love that stems from the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, is necessary. Through this, the Jewish people become like an empty vessel to drawing down *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness. This is the meaning of the continuation of the verse, “a judgment [day] (*Mishpat*-משפט) for the God of Yaakov,” referring to the drawing down of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness in Yaakov-יעקב, which is the aspect of *Zeir Anpin*, and even lower, in the aspect of the *Yod*-י as it is in the heel-*Eikev*-עקב, that is, into the lowest of levels. This drawing down is even into matters of physicality, so that we are inscribed and sealed for a good and sweet new year, with openly revealed and clearly apparent goodness!

¹⁵⁷² See Likkutei Torah, Eikev 13c, 17c; Shir HaShirim 45a and on.