

Discourse 14

“VaYiru et Eloh”ei Yisroel - They saw the God of Israel”

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Mishpatim,
Shabbat Mevarchim Adar-Rishon, 5719
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,¹⁰⁸⁴ “They saw the God of Israel, and under His feet was the likeness of sapphire brickwork, and it was like the essence of the heavens in purity.” Now, there are two explanations of this verse.¹⁰⁸⁵ The first is as stated in Midrash¹⁰⁸⁶ and Talmud Yerushalmi,¹⁰⁸⁷ that when it states, “under His feet was the likeness of sapphire brickwork,” this refers to before their redemption [from Egypt], (at which time there was a likeness of brickwork under His feet to recall their suffering and servitude with mortar and bricks). However, after they were redeemed, the brickwork was put in its appropriate place, and instead of brickwork, there was “like the essence of

¹⁰⁸⁴ Exodus 24:10

¹⁰⁸⁵ See the discourse entitled “*Darash Rabbi Levi bar Sisi b’Naharda’ah*” 5655 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5655 p. 94 and on); Also see the discourse entitled “*VaYiru et Eloh”ei Yisroel*” 5668 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5668 p. 106 and on); “*V’Hayah HaNishar b’Tziyon*” Ohr HaTorah, Na”Ch, Vol. 3, p. 1,197 and on.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Midrash Vayikra Rabba 23:8 (and Matnot Kehunah there).

¹⁰⁸⁷ Talmud Yerushalmi, Sukkah 4:3

the heavens in purity.”¹⁰⁸⁸ That is, “the sapphire brickwork” and “the essence of the heavens in purity” were two different matters at two different times.

The second explanation is as stated in Targum Yonatan,¹⁰⁸⁹ that when the Egyptians enslaved the Jewish people to rigorous labor with brick and mortar etc., a Jewish woman [who was treading the mortar with her husband] had a miscarriage, and the fetus got mixed into the mortar etc. [The angel] Gavriel descended, made a brick from it, elevated it to the heavens on high, making it into a footstool under the Throne of Glory, and its appearance was like a sapphire stone, which is a precious stone that is similar to the essence of the heavens when it is pure. In other words, “the sapphire brickwork” and “the essence of the heavens in purity” are one matter.

We must therefore understand the difference between these two explanations. We must also understand that according to the first explanation, the words “under His feet was the likeness of sapphire brickwork” refer to before their redemption, however the beginning of the verse, “They saw the God of Israel,” took place after their exodus from Egypt. This being so, how is it that they saw “below His feet the likeness of sapphire brickwork” which took place during their enslavement in Egypt?

We must also understand the general matter of the “sapphire brickwork” beneath the Throne of Glory. For, in Tractate Chullin it states,¹⁰⁹⁰ “The [color] of *Techelet*-the blue

¹⁰⁸⁸ See Matnot Kehunah to Vayikra Rabba ibid. and Korban HaEidah to Talmud Yerushalmi ibid.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Targum Yonatan ben Uziel to Exodus 24:10

¹⁰⁹⁰ Talmud Bavli, Chullin 89a

dye [of the *Tzitzit*] is similar to the sea, the sea is similar to the sky, the sky is similar to the sapphire stone, and the sapphire stone is similar to the Throne of Glory, as written, ‘And they saw the God of Israel, and under His feet etc.,’ and it is written,¹⁰⁹¹ ‘the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of the sapphire stone (*Even Sapeer*-אבן ספיר).” However, here it states, “sapphire brickwork-*Livnat HaSapeer*-לבנת הספיר” rather than “sapphire stone-*Even Sapeer*-אבן ספיר.” That is, a brick (*Leveinah*-לבינה) is lower than a stone (*Even*-אבן), (as will be explained in chapter three).

We also must understand what it states in Talmud Yerushalmi,¹⁰⁹² “About Babylonia it is written, ‘like the appearance of sapphire stone (*Even Sapeer*-אבן ספיר),’ about Egypt it is written, ‘the likeness of sapphire brickwork (*Livnat HaSapeer*-לבנת הספיר).’ This is to teach that just as a stone is harder than a brick, likewise the servitude of Babylonia was harder than the servitude of Egypt.” [This is because the enslavement in Egypt was only physical, whereas in Babylonia and the exiles that followed it, the enslavement was also spiritual, as it states,¹⁰⁹³ “[The Greeks told the Jewish people], ‘Inscribe on the horn of an ox that you have no portion in the God of Israel etc.,’” and they wanted to make them¹⁰⁹⁴ “forget Your Torah and cause them to depart from the decrees that You desire.”] However, this does not seem to fit with what was stated before, that the aspect of the “sapphire stone-*Even*

¹⁰⁹¹ Ezekiel 1:26

¹⁰⁹² Talmud Yerushalmi, Sukkah 4:3

¹⁰⁹³ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 16:4; Torah Ohr, Vayeishev, discourse entitled “*b’Khaf Hey b’Kislev*” 30a.

¹⁰⁹⁴ See the liturgy of the “*Al HaNissim*” recited on Chanukah.

Sapeer-ספיר” is higher than the aspect of the “sapphire brickwork-*Livnat HaSapeer*-לבנת הספיר.”

2.

This may be better understood with a preface explaining the general matter of the exile in Egypt, because it was an exile for which there was no intellectual room, to such an extent that even our teacher Moshe asked,¹⁰⁹⁵ “Why have You done evil to this people?” As explained in Midrash,¹⁰⁹⁶ “Moshe said before the Holy One, blessed is He, ‘I took the book of Genesis and read it, and saw the generation of the flood... and [the generation] of the dispersion... and how they were judged, and it was with the quality of judgment-*Din* (meaning that they were deserving of the punishment according to their sins). However, what did this people do etc.?’”

About this he was answered,¹⁰⁹⁷ “God-*Elohi*”-אלהי”מ spoke to Moshe and said to him, ‘I am *HaShem*-יהו”ה.’” That is, this conduct not only has a place according to the quality of judgment-*Din*, but beyond this, it stems from the Name *HaShem*-יהו”ה, which is the quality of mercy-*Rachamim*.¹⁰⁹⁸

The explanation of this is according to Pri Etz Chayim, Shaar Chag HaMatzot,¹⁰⁹⁹ that the Jewish people who were enslaved in Egypt were reincarnations of the souls of the

¹⁰⁹⁵ Exodus 5:22

¹⁰⁹⁶ Midrash Shemot Rabba 5:22

¹⁰⁹⁷ Exodus 6:2

¹⁰⁹⁸ See Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as Gates of Light, Gate Five (*Tiferet*).

¹⁰⁹⁹ Pri Etz Chayim, Shaar Chag HaMatzot, Ch. 1.

generation of the dispersion. These were very holy and powerful souls, only that they sinned by stating,¹¹⁰⁰ “‘Come let us make bricks and burn them in fire,’ and the brick served them as stone.” They therefore were reincarnated in the generation of Egypt and were enslaved “with mortar and bricks,”¹¹⁰¹ which was not just as a punishment, but also as rectification for their sin.

This then, is the meaning of “I am *HaShem*-יהוה,” in that this conduct stemmed from the quality of mercy-*Rachamim*, for through this their sin was rectified and they thereby merited everything that happened upon their exodus from Egypt.

However, we still must understand this. For, at first glance, the sin of the generation of the dispersion was that they said,¹¹⁰² “Come, let us build a city and a tower with its top in the heavens,” meaning, “let us ascend to the firmament and wage war against Him.”¹¹⁰³ However, what was their sin in saying, “‘Come let us make bricks and burn them in fire,’ and the brick served them as stone,” because of which the rectification for this was enslavement in Egypt specifically with the labor of mortar and bricks?

3.

The explanation is that when it states, “the brick served them as stone,” this demonstrates that a brick (*Leveinah*-לבנה)

¹¹⁰⁰ Genesis 11:3

¹¹⁰¹ Exodus 1:14

¹¹⁰² Genesis 11:4

¹¹⁰³ Rashi to Genesis 11:1

and a stone (*Even*-אבן) are two different matters. Torah Ohr¹¹⁰⁴ explains the difference between them, that stones are heaven-made, whereas bricks are manmade.

However, we first must explain the general matter of stones (*Avanim*-אבנים), for as known, “stones” (*Avanim*-אבנים) refer to the letters (*Otiyot*), as stated in Sefer Yetzirah,¹¹⁰⁵ “Two stones build two houses, three stones build six houses etc.” The term “letters-*Otiyot*-אותיות” is of the same root as in the verse,¹¹⁰⁶ “The morning comes-*Ata Boker*-אתא בוקר.” That is, the letters (*Otiyot*-אותיות) are receptacles for a certain drawing down and revelation that is drawn down and revealed through them.

For example, two “stones,” such as the letters (*Otiyot*) *Aleph*-א and *Beit*-ב, build two houses “father-*Av*-אב” and “come-*Ba*-בא.” That is, when the letters are combined to form the combination “*Av*-אב,” they draw down the revelation of the matter of a “father-*Av*-אב” who gives birth etc. However, when they are combined to form the combination “*Ba*-בא,” they draw down the revelation of the matter of “coming-*Biyah*-ביאה.”

We thus find that there are two matters in the letters. There is the body of the letters (*Otiyot*) themselves, and there is the drawing down and revelation revealed in them. In the language of Kabbalah, these are the matters of lights (*Orot*) and vessels (*Keilim*). In the matter of *HaShem*’s יהו"ה holy names,

¹¹⁰⁴ Torah Ohr 73c; See Likkutei Torah, L’Gimmel Parshiot 72c [Ohr HaTorah, No’ach, Vol. 6, p. 1,066a and on].

¹¹⁰⁵ Sefer Yetzirah 2:12 (2:16 in some editions).

¹¹⁰⁶ Isaiah 21:12; See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 3 (The Letters of Creation, Part 2), The Gate explaining the difference between the names of general classification. Also see Torah Ohr 42b and elsewhere.

these are the Name of *Ma''H-m''H-45* (י"ד ה"א וא"ו ה"א) and the Name of *Ba''N-b''N-52* (י"ד ה"ה ו"ו ה"ה). For, as known, the Name of *Ma''H-m''H-45* (י"ד ה"א וא"ו ה"א) is the matter of lights (*Orot*), whereas the Name of *Ba''N-b''N-52* (י"ד ה"ה ו"ו ה"ה) is the matter of vessels (*Keilim*).

However, all the above is in general. More specifically, in the Name of *Ma''H-m''H-45* (י"ד ה"א וא"ו ה"א) itself, even though generally it is the matter of lights (*Orot*), it also has the matter of vessels (*Keilim*), which are its aspects of *Ba''N-b''N-52* and *Ma''H-m''H-45*. In other words, in the Name of *Ma''H-m''H-45* (י"ד ה"א וא"ו ה"א) itself, there are the aspects of *Ma''H-m''H* of *Ma''H-m''H*, and the aspect of *Ba''N-b''N* of *Ma''H-m''H*.¹¹⁰⁷

The same is so of the Name of *Ba''N-b''N-52* (י"ד ה"ה ו"ו ה"ה) itself, that even though generally it is the matter of vessels (*Keilim*), nevertheless, it too has the matter of lights (*Orot*), which are its aspects of *Ma''H-m''H-45* and *Ba''N-b''N-52*. In other words, in the Name of *Ba''N-b''N-52* (י"ד ה"ה ו"ו ה"ה) itself, there is the aspect of *Ma''H-m''H* of *Ba''N-b''N* and the aspect of *Ba''N-b''N* of *Ba''N-b''N*.

In the matter of the worlds, this is the difference between the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) and the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Asiyah*). For, the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) is the aspect of *Ma''H-m''H-45*, as stated in the teaching,¹¹⁰⁸ “*Patach Eliyahu* – Eliyahu began and said, ‘Within them is the Name of *Ma''H-m''H-45* (י"ד ה"א וא"ו ה"א) which is the path of Emanation (*Atzilut*).’”

¹¹⁰⁷ Torah Ohr, Megillat Esther 99c

¹¹⁰⁸ Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 17a

In contrast, the Name of *Ba"ן-N-52* (י"ד ה"ה ו"ו ה"ה) is the aspect of the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*). This is because the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*) have the matter of sense of self (*Yeshut*) and separateness (*Pirud*), whereas the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) is in the ultimate state of nullification (*Bittul*) and unity (*Yichud*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, as in the teaching,¹¹⁰⁹ "He and His life force are one, and He and His organs are one."

Nevertheless, even in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) the matter of vessels (*Keilim*) is present, and even in the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*) the matter of lights (*Orot*) is present, (similar to the above explanation about the Names *Ma"ן-H-ה"ה* and *Ba"ן-N-ב"ן*).

4.

Now, to understand the difference between the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) and the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*) in greater depth, the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) stems from the aspect of Wisdom-*Chochmah*, whereas the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*) stem from the *Sefirah* of Understanding-*Binah* and the *Sefirot* below it. To explain, the matter of the *Sefirah* of Wisdom-*Chochmah* is the aspect of light (*Ohr*). For, as known,¹¹¹⁰ the vessels (*Keilim*) begin from

¹¹⁰⁹ Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 3b

¹¹¹⁰ Sefer HaMaamarim 5678 p. 366 and elsewhere.

the *Sefirah* of Understanding-*Binah*, whereas Wisdom-*Chochmah* is the matter of lights (*Orot*).

Now, in the matter of the light (*Ohr*) itself, there is the light (*Ohr*) as it is revealed, and there is the light (*Ohr*) as it is included in the essence, and it is self-understood that there is no comparison between how the light (*Ohr*) is when it is revealed and how it is included in the essence. In other words, even though as the light (*Ohr*) is revealed, it still adheres to the Luminary (*Ma'or*) – as we observe with the light of the sun, that when there are clouds covering it, its light becomes nullified as well – and beyond this, it is not merely in a state of adhesion, but in fact, in the existence of the light (*Ohr*) there is the sense that its existence is from the Luminary (*Ma'or*) and it therefore is in a state of nullification (*Bittul*) to the Luminary (*Ma'or*) etc. Nonetheless, this is not at all comparable to how the light (*Ohr*) is as it is included in the essence. Thus, for there to be the revelation of the existence of the light (*Ohr*), it specifically is necessary for there to be the matter of vessels (*Keilim*), which cause three matters.

The first matter is that through the vessels (*Keilim*), the light (*Ohr*) is caused to have tangible existence. This is similar to the matter of fire, the nature of which is to ascend above. For it to have tangible existence, there must be something separate that the fire takes hold of. The same is so of the matter of light (*Ohr*), that for the light (*Ohr*) to have tangible existence, this specifically comes about by means of the vessels (*Keilim*), within which the light (*Ohr*) takes hold.

The second matter is the effect of the vessels (*Keilim*), in that they draw down the light (*Ohr*) from its source. For, as

known about the matter of vessels (*Keilim*) as they are above in *HaShem*'s יהו"ה Godliness, they not only contain the light (*Ohr*) within them, but they also draw the light (*Ohr*) down from its source.

The third matter is the effect of the vessels (*Keilim*) on the light (*Ohr*). That is, through the vessels (*Keilim*) the light (*Ohr*) is drawn down and revealed below. In other words, the ultimate intent of the drawing down of the light (*Ohr*) is for it to be revealed below. However, in and of itself, it is impossible for the light (*Ohr*) to be revealed below, but it only is through the medium of the vessels (*Keilim*) that the light (*Ohr*) can come into revelation below.

However, even in regard to the vessels (*Keilim*) of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), since they are in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), they are in the state of utmost nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. This nullification (*Bittul*) is not from something external to them, but stems from the very essence of their emanation, meaning that the nullification (*Bittul*) is essential to them. Even though the vessels (*Keilim*) are called the emanated "something" (*Yesh HaNe'etzel*), nevertheless, they only are called by this name as a borrowed term, since through them there subsequently comes to be the tangible "something" (*Yesh*) of the worlds of Creation, Formation and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*).

However, they themselves are not actually the aspect of a tangible "something" (*Yesh*), heaven forbid to think so. This is self-understood from the fact that they are called "emanated" (*Ne'etzel*), which is a term indicating "nearness-*Etzel*-אצל" to

HaShem-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and proximity to Him.¹¹¹¹ Thus, since they are "near-*Etzel*-אצל" *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and in close proximity to Him, they are in a state of ultimate nullification (*Bittul*) to Him.

This is similar to the teaching,¹¹¹² "He and His life force are one, He and His organs are one." That is, even the vessels (*Keilim*) – ("His organs") – are one with the aspect of "He." The reason there is a differentiation, so that "He and His life force are one" is expressed independently, and "He and His organs are one" is expressed independently, is because the adhesion (*Dveikut*) of the vessels (*Keilim*) [to their Source] is not like the adhesion of the lights (*Orot*) [to their Source].

For, the lights (*Orot*) are in a state of recognizable adhesion [to their Source], whereas the vessels (*Keilim*) are in a state of adhesion [to their Source] in a way that is unrecognizable in them. Nevertheless, even the vessels (*Keilim*) are in a state of adhesion (*Dveikut*) and ultimate nullification (*Bittul*) [to their Source].

Now, since the vessels (*Keilim*) are "near-*Etzel*-אצל" and in close proximity to the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, therefore, just as *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is limitless (*Bli Gvul*), so likewise the vessels (*Keilim*) are in a state of limitlessness (*Bli Gvul*). In other words, the aspect of limitation (*Gvul*) in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) is not actual limitation, but solely that He actualizes limitation. Moreover, even this [limitation] is only in the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah*, *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*).

¹¹¹¹ See Pardes Rimonim, Shaar 16, Ch. 1, and elsewhere.

¹¹¹² Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 3b

However, as He is in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), He is in a state of limitlessness (*Bli Gvul*).

The analogy for this is from the power of movement or the power of writing as it is in man, which relative to man is a limitless power. For, he can make movements and write letters without end or limit, (as long as there are no external factors obstructing him from doing so). Nevertheless, the form and limitation of each movement or letter, in that each movement and each letter is in a particular state of limitation, specifically comes from the power of limitation (*Ko'ach HaGvul*).

This being so, even the power of limitation (*Ko'ach HaGvul*) is limitless (*Bli Gvul*), being that he is able to limit his movements and letters to no end or limit. In other words, the power of limitation (*Ko'ach HaGvul*) is limitless (*Bli Gvul*). For, the matter of the limitless powers of movement or writing, is to move or to write, meaning, to make particular movements or write particular letters, specifically through the power of limitation (*Ko'ach HaGvul*). This being so, the power of limitation (*Ko'ach HaGvul*) is limitless (*Bli Gvul*), only that it is the power that brings about limitation (*Ko'ach HaMagbeel*),¹¹¹³ unlike the power of limitlessness (*Ko'ach HaBli Gvul*).¹¹¹⁴

The same is understood about the matter of the vessels (*Keilim*) of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*). That is, even

¹¹¹³ See Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim, discourse entitled “*Mah Yafu Pa'amayich*” – (Also printed at the end of Derech Mitzvotecha with variations); Also see Hemshech “*Mayim Rabim*” (5636), Ch. 30 and on; Drush “*Gimmel Shitot*” (Ohr HaTorah, Inyanim, p. 273 and on).

¹¹¹⁴ Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 29.

though they are in a state of limitation (*Gvul*), what this means is that they bring limitations about, and this [limitation] too is only in the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*). However, they themselves are in a state of limitlessness (*Bli Gvul*).

Now, all the above is in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), which in general is the aspect of the Name of *Ma" H-מ"ה* 45-46 (י"ד ה"ה ו"א ה"ה), in which even the vessels (*Keilim*) are in a state of essential nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem-ה'ה*, blessed is He. This is not so of the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*), beginning with the world of Creation (*Briyah*), in which the matter of sense of self (*Yeshut*) begins, and are of the aspect of the Name of *Ba" N-ב"ן* 52-53 (י"ד ה"ה ו"א ה"ה). However, even in the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*), there is the matter of the lights (*Orot*). This is as explained before, that even in the aspect of *Ba" N-ב"ן*, there also are the names of *Ma" H-מ"ה* and *Ba" N-ב"ן*.

This may be better understood by the service of *HaShem-ה'ה*, blessed is He, of the angels, as written,¹¹¹⁵ “When they would halt, they would release their wings.” This refers to the matter of the service of *HaShem-ה'ה*, blessed is He, of the angels, with love and fear of Him. For example, the angel Gavriel [serves] with fear (*Yirah*) of *HaShem-ה'ה*, blessed is He, and the angel Michael [serves] with love (*Ahavah*) of Him, which is the aspect of “there is the one who loves.”

¹¹¹⁵ Ezekiel 1:24-25

In this, there are two explanations. The first is that he is the aspect of a “something” (*Yesh*) with a sense of self, and he therefore fulfills his service with love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. The second explanation (which is deeper) is that even the love itself is the aspect of “somethingness” (*Yesh*) and a sense of self (*Yeshut*).

Nevertheless, (even according to the second explanation), as known,¹¹¹⁶ at the time that an angel is fulfilling his mission, the angel becomes completely nullified of his own sense of self, to the point that he can call himself by the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, as it states,¹¹¹⁷ “And she called the Name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה that spoke to her,” and it is written,¹¹¹⁸ “In myself I swear – the word of *HaShem*-יהו"ה.” This is because, when the angel is on his mission, his entire existence is that of the One who sent him.

We thus find that in the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the angels, there are two matters. There is the essential existence of the angels, meaning, the body of the angels. For as known, angels have bodies, as it states,¹¹¹⁹ “He makes the wind His messengers, the flaming fire His attendants,” these being the two refined foundational elements.¹¹²⁰ Even so, it is a body, and is the aspect of *Ba"N*-ב"ן of *Ba"N*-ב"ן. In addition to this, there also is the presence of light (*Ohr*) within them, which is their service of *HaShem*-

¹¹¹⁶ Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 25 (145a); Kuntres Acharon 159a; Likkutei Torah, Vayikra 1c; Sefer HaMaamarim 5655 p. 55, and elsewhere.

¹¹¹⁷ Genesis 16:13

¹¹¹⁸ Genesis 22:16

¹¹¹⁹ Psalms 104:4

¹¹²⁰ Ramban to the end of his Shaar HaGemul, cited in Torah Ohr 4b; Likkutei Torah, Zot HaBrachah 98a

יהו"ה, blessed is He, with love and fear of Him (according to the first explanation), and especially the matter of being an emissary of *HaShem*-יהו"ה etc. This is the aspect of *Ma" H*-מ"ה of *Ba" N*-ב"ן.

However, it is understood that there is no comparison between the aspect of *Ba" N*-ב"ן of *Ba" N*-ב"ן and the aspect of *Ba" N*-ב"ן of *Ma" H*-מ"ה. For, when it comes to the aspect of *Ba" N*-ב"ן of *Ma" H*-מ"ה, which is the matter of the vessels (*Keilim*) of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), as explained before, their nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is essential to them, and does not stem from something external to them. This is why the vessels (*Keilim*) of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) do not require rectification, since they are in a state of essential nullification (*Bittul Atzmi*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. This is not the case, however, with the aspect of *Ba" N*-ב"ן of *Ba" N*-ב"ן. For, since in the essence of their existence they are the aspect of "something" (*Yesh*), it is necessary for there to be toil in affecting the nullification of their existence to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

5.

This then, is the general difference between the letters (*Otiyot*) of *Ma" H*-מ"ה-45 (י"ד ה"א וא"ו ה"א), which are in a state of essential nullification (*Bittul Atzmi*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and are the matter of stones (*Avanim*-אבנים) which stem from Heaven, and the letters (*Otiyot*) of *Ba" N*-ב"ן-52 (י"ד ה"ה (ו"ו ה"ה) which are only in a state of the nullification of their somethingness (*Bittul HaYesh*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He,

and are the matter of bricks (*Leveinim*-לבנים) which are made by man.

Now, it is with these [the stones (*Avanim*-אבנים) and bricks (*Leveinim*-לבנים)] that the city and tower of holiness are constructed. For, the matter of the city (*Eer*-עיר) is as stated,¹¹²¹ “The city of our God-*Eer Elohei*”nu אלהינו-עיר,” and the tower (*Migdal*-מגדל) is as stated,¹¹²² “The Name *HaShem*-יהוה is a tower of strength (*Migdal Oz*-מגדל עוז).” In other words, the city (*Eer*-עיר) is called by *HaShem*’s-יהוה title God-*Elohi*”m-אלהים, which is the source of the vessels (*Keilim*), whereas the tower (*Migdal*-מגדל) which is high and protrudes above the city is called by the Name *HaShem*-יהוה, the root of the lights (*Orot*).

Now, to build the city and tower of holiness, its construction can also be of bricks (*Leveinim*-לבנים), except that such a building is only the aspect of the nullification of the somethingness (*Bittul HaYesh*) to *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, which is the matter of the city (*Eer*-עיר). However, afterwards, there is the construction of the “tower of strength (*Migdal Oz*-מגדל עוז)” which is the Name *HaShem*-יהוה, and are the stones (*Avanim*-אבנים) that are from Heaven.¹¹²³

¹¹²¹ Psalms 48:2

¹¹²² Proverbs 18:10

¹¹²³ This matter is explained in Likkutei Torah L’Gimmel Parshiot at the end of the Torah portion of Noach, and in various other places in regard to the matters of the “city-*Eer*” and “tower-*Migdal*” of holiness. [Also see Ohr HaTorah, Vol. 6, p. 1,070a and on.]

A summary of the explanation of the matter is that it states in Talmud Yerushalmi¹¹²⁴ about the verse,¹¹²⁵ “And I have placed My words in your mouth – and with the shade of My hand I have covered you – to implant the heavens and to set a foundation for the earth and to say to Tziyon, ‘You are My people!’” – [Talmud Yerushalmi states] “We have reviewed the whole of Scripture and have not found any verse in which the Jewish people are called ‘Tziyon-צִיּוֹן’ except for this one.” In other words, it is through service of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, with the aspect of “I have placed My words in your mouth” that they thereby are caused to be in the aspect of “Tziyon-צִיּוֹן.”

This refers to service in the three modes of Torah study, sacrificial offerings (*Avodah*), and acts of lovingkindness (*Gmilut Chassadim*).¹¹²⁶ The words, “I have placed My word in your mouth” refer to “the word of *HaShem*-יהוה is Torah law (*Halachah*),”¹¹²⁷ and is the matter of Torah study. About this the verse states, “(I place My word) in your mouth,” since the Torah is a drawing down in an inner manner (*Pnimityut*), as it states,¹¹²⁸ “Your Torah is in my innards.” The words, “and with the shade of My hand I have covered you,” refers to the matter of the *mitzvot*, which are the transcendent aspect of the encompassing lights (*Makifim*), and are therefore called, “shade-*Tzeil*-צֶל,” about which it states, “I have covered you,”

¹¹²⁴ Talmud Yerushalmi, Taanit 4:2; Also see the discourse entitled “*VeHayah HaNishar b'Tziyon*” in Ohr HaTorah, Na”Ch, Vol. 3 p. 1,197 and on; Discourse by the same title of the year 5631 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5631 p. 11 and on; Hosafot to Sefer HaMaamarim 5662 p. 372 and on); 5691 Ch. 4 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5691 p. 51 and on).

¹¹²⁵ Isaiah 51:16

¹¹²⁶ Mishnah Avot 1:2

¹¹²⁷ Amos 8:12; Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 138b

¹¹²⁸ Psalms 40:9; See Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 5.

referring to the matter of the garments (*Levushim*), and is the mode of acts of lovingkindness.

The continuation, “to implant the heavens and to set a foundation for the earth,” refers to the matter of the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*). This is as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹¹²⁹ “Were it not for engaging in the sacrificial offerings, heaven and earth would not continue to exist.” Thus, this is what is meant by “to implant the heavens and to set a foundation for the earth,” namely, that the sustainment of the heavens and the earth is through the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*).

However, since the Holy Temple was destroyed, this is accomplished through serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in prayer, the matter of which is that it is “a ladder set on the earth, whose head reaches the heavens.”¹¹³⁰ It is for this reason that the beginning of prayer starts at the lowest rung, such as “Blessed are You, *HaShem*-יהו"ה... Who has not made me a gentile,” and “Who has not made me a slave.” However, its head reaches the heavens with the nullification (*Bittul*) and self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) of the *Shema* recital and the Amidah prayer, in which we say, “Blessed are You, *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” in a manner in which we affect drawings down in the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה.¹¹³¹

This then, is the meaning of how it is through the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the three aforementioned lines (“I have placed My words in your mouth etc.”) that the

¹¹²⁹ Talmud Bavli, Taanit 27b

¹¹³⁰ Genesis 28:12; Zohar I 266b; Zohar III 306b; Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 45 (83a).

¹¹³¹ See the Opening Gateway (*Petach HaShaar*) to Imrei Binah of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gateway to Understanding, Ch. 17 and on.

Jewish people become the aspect of “Tziyon,” which is the aspect indicated by the verse,¹¹³² “The Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה is a tower of strength (*Migdal Oz*-מגדל עוז).”

Now, this does not contradict what was stated before, that since the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*) are the aspects of “somethingness” (*Yesh*), it is not possible for them to have the true matter of the nullification (*Bittul*) of *Ma" H*-מ"ה-45 (י"ד ה"א ו"א ה"א), because the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*) are themselves the aspect of “somethingness” (*Yesh*), and their sublimation and nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is external and superimposed on them.

In contrast, this is not so of the souls of the Jewish people. For, the souls of all Jews are from the aspect of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), (as explained in Likkutei Torah, in the discourse entitled “*Shechorah Ani v'Na'avah*”).¹¹³³ Even as they are in their descent below, they still are essentially Godly in their being. For, when it comes to the Godly soul (even as it manifests in a body below), it is “a part of God from above”¹¹³⁴ (and moreover, we even add the word) “literally-

¹¹³² Proverbs 18:10

¹¹³³ Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim 6c

¹¹³⁴ Job 31:2; Pardes Rimmonim of Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, Shaar 32, Ch. 1; Ohr Ne'erav by the same author, Chelek 1, Ch. 3; Likkutei Torah of the Arizal, Bereishit; Etz Chayim, Shaar 42, Ch. 1; Etz HaDa'at Tov of Rabbi Chayim Vital, VaEtchanan; Asis Rimmonim v'Pelach HaRimon, Shaar 32, Ch. 1; Chessed L'Avraham, Maayan 3, Nahar 25; Introduction to Siddur HaArizal of Rabbi Yaakov Kopel of Mezhritch; Da'at Tevunot of the Ramchal, Section 158; Shefa Tal, Introduction; GR"A to Heichalot, Heichala Tinyana, Heichal 1; Nefesh HaChayim, Shaar 1, Ch 5, and elsewhere.

Mamash-מש.”¹¹³⁵ We thus are able to attain the aspect of “Tziyon-ציון,” which is the matter of, “The Name *HaShem*-יהוה” is a tower of strength (*Migdal Oz*-עוז-מגדל).”

In addition to this, there also is the toil indicated by the words,¹¹³⁶ “‘Come let us make bricks and burn them in fire,’ and the brick served them as stone,” as it is on the side of holiness. The explanation is that the bricks (*Leveinim*-לבנים), which are manmade, refer to the matter of the refinement (*Birur*) of the Name of *Ba”N*-ב”ן-52 (יהוה). In this, there must be the matter of burning, which is the matter of self-nullification (*Bittul*) and self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) to *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, of the *Shema* recital. Through this “they are made to be as stone,” as it states, “and the brick (*Leveinah*-לבנה) served them as stone (*Even*-אבן),” until we reach the aspect of the stones (*Avanim*-אבנים) that are from Heaven.

6.

However, since¹¹³⁷ “God made this opposite that,” this matter is also present on the side opposite holiness, and this was the sin of the generation of the dispersion. The explanation is that, as known, to receive the bestowals of *HaShem*’s-יהוה’s Godliness, one specifically must be in a state of nullification (*Bittul*) to Him, as explained at length in Kuntras U’Maayon.¹¹³⁸ However, the generation of the dispersion did not want to be

Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 2

¹¹³⁶ Genesis 11:3

¹¹³⁷ Ecclesiastes 7:14

¹¹³⁸ Kuntres U’Maayon, Discourse 2, Ch. 2 and on.

nullified (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. They therefore said, "Come let us make bricks and burn them in fire," which is not the matter of nullification (*Bittul*) and love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, like flames of fire on the side of holiness.

Rather, it refers to fire of that is alien to Godliness (*Aish Zarah*), as it states,¹¹³⁹ "[Their passions] burning like an oven fired by a baker." That is, they wanted to affect drawings down of bestowals and beneficence from Above into the aspect of their "somethingness" (*Yesh*) by force.

It is to this end that they said, "'Come let us make bricks and burn them in fire,' and the brick served them as stone." In other words, through these bricks (*Leveinim*-לבנים) they wanted to build a city (*Eer*-עיר) and tower (*Migdal*-מגדל) of the side opposite holiness, and to affect the same drawings that are drawn down by the city (*Eer*-עיר) and tower (*Migdal*-מגדל) of the side of holiness, built of stone (*Even*-אבן).

This is similar to the verse,¹¹⁴⁰ "I shall be filled because she was destroyed," about which our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹¹⁴¹ "Tyre became filled through the destruction of Yerushalayim." About this it states,¹¹⁴² "Your evil shall castigate you," and they were caused to reincarnate into the generation that descended to Egypt, and were punished by being enslaved to work with mortar and bricks.

However, this was not just a matter of punishment, but was also a rectification of their sin. For, even though it states

¹¹³⁹ Hosea 7:4

¹¹⁴⁰ Ezekiel 26:2

¹¹⁴¹ Talmud Bavli, Megillah 6a

¹¹⁴² Jeremiah 2:19

in Talmud¹¹⁴³ that the generation of the dispersion has no share in the Coming World, it can be said that what is meant here is that in the time of the resurrection of the dead (which is the ultimate reward of the Coming World, which as known, will be souls in bodies), they will not arise in the bodies of the generation of the dispersion.

Nevertheless, the souls of the generation of the dispersion which then manifested in the bodies of those who descended to Egypt, through [the rectification brought about by] their enslavement in Egypt, they indeed will have a portion in the Coming World. This is as stated in Talmud,¹¹⁴⁴ “Rabbi Yochanan said: Rabbi Akiva abandoned his piety [and uncharacteristically interpreted the verses harshly] in stating that the generation of the desert has no share in the Coming World, for states about them,¹¹⁴⁵ ‘I recall for you the kindness of your youth, the love of your nuptials, your following Me into the desert, into an unsown land.’ Now, if others come [into the Coming World] in the merit [of the generation that left Egypt and followed *HaShem*-יהו"ה in the desert], is it not all the more so that they themselves [have a share in the Coming World]?”

Now, just as it was that through the enslavement in Egypt there came to be the rectification of the city (*Eer*-עיר) and tower (*Migdal*-מגדל) of the side opposite holiness, so likewise, in our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, every single day, it is necessary to build the city (*Eer*-עיר) and tower (*Migdal*-מגדל) of the side of holiness, through toiling with bricks

¹¹⁴³ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 110b

¹¹⁴⁴ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 110b *ibid.*

¹¹⁴⁵ Jeremiah 2:2

(*Leveinah*-לבנה) that are manmade, as well as stones (*Even*-אבן) that are from Heaven. This refers to serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in prayer, in the verses of song (*Pesukei d'Zimra*), the blessings of the *Shema* recital, the *Shema* recital itself, and the *Amidah* prayer. This brings about the refinement of the city (*Eer*-עיר) and tower (*Migdal*-מגדל) of the side opposite holiness.

The explanation is that in the general matter of refinement (*Birur*), there are two possibilities. There is refinement (*Birur*) in way of battle and refinement (*Birur*) in a way of tranquility.¹¹⁴⁶ Now, refinement (*Birur*) in a way of battle, is the refinement of the Name of *Ba''N*-ב"ן-52 (י"ד ה"ה), meaning that one is essentially in the aspect of a “something” (*Yesh*) and therefore battle is necessary etc. Even though he is victorious, it nevertheless is by way of battle. However, the refinement (*Birur*) of the Name of *Ma''H*-מ"ה-45 (י"ד ה"ה וא"ו ה"ה) is refinement in a way of tranquility. This is the difference between bricks (*Leveinim*-לבנים) which are manmade, and stones (*Avanim*-אבנים), which are from Heaven.

7.

This then, is the meaning of the verse,¹¹⁴⁷ “They saw the God of Israel, and under His feet was the likeness of sapphire brickwork, and it was like the essence of the heavens in purity.” That is, the matter of the “sapphire brickwork (*Livnat HaSapeer*-לבנת הספיר)” refers to refinement (*Birur*) by way of battle, meaning that one still is in the aspect of a “something”

¹¹⁴⁶ See *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5704 p. 106-107, and elsewhere.

¹¹⁴⁷ Exodus 24:10

(*Yesh*), and it therefore is necessary for him to do battle etc. This is not an essential nullification (*Bittul Atzmi*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

In contrast, the matter of “like the essence of the heavens in purity” refers to the essential nullification (*Bittul Atzmi*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the Name of *Ma" H-*מ"ה-45 (י"ד ה"א וא"ו ה"א). This is the matter of the “sapphire stone (*Even Sapeer*-ספיר),” which are stones (*Avanim*-אבנים) from Heaven, about which it states,¹¹⁴⁸ “No evil descends from Above.” In other words, Above in *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Godliness there only is the matter of purity, and the matter of “self” and “somethingness” (*Yesh*) is not at all applicable.

This then, is the inner matter and explanation of the Midrash and Talmud Yerushalmi, that the “sapphire brickwork (*Livnat HaSapeer*-לבנת הספיר)” is not the same matter as “the essence of the heavens in purity.” For, “the likeness of sapphire brickwork” refers to the refinement of the Name of *Ba" N-*ב"ן-52 (י"ד ה"ה ו"ו ה"ה), which was refined through the enslavement in Egypt with mortar and bricks, by which there was the rectification of the sin of the generation of dispersion.

However, since this only is refinement by way of battle, it is not essential nullification (*Bittul Atzmi*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. Therefore, when they were redeemed, “the brickwork was put in its appropriate place,” meaning that relative to holiness, the brickwork is a lower level, and holiness does not manifest in it. Instead, the refinement (*Birur*) occurs

¹¹⁴⁸ See Midrash Bereishit Rabba 51:3; Also see Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of Intrinsic Being (*Shaar HaHavayah*).

automatically because of the strength of the light and illumination, which is the matter of “like the essence of the heavens in purity.” This is similar to the refinement (*Birur*) that took place in the days of Shlomo, who was “a man of tranquility,”¹¹⁴⁹ and in his days “the moon existed in its fullness,”¹¹⁵⁰ in that all the sparks of holiness were brought to him from all places etc.¹¹⁵¹

However, the explanation of Targum Yonatan is that the brick (*Leveinah*-לבנה) itself became “like the essence of the heavens in purity.” This is because due to serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, by nullifying one's “somethingness” (*Bittul HaYesh*), we thereby arrive at essential nullification (*Bittul Atzmi*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

This is similar to the statement in Tractate Yoma¹¹⁵² about repentance and return (*Teshuvah*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, out of love (*Ahavah*), that through this, willful transgressions are transformed to merits. In other words, the evil itself becomes transformed to goodness, and similarly, the bricks (*Leveinah*-לבנה) themselves become “like the essence of the heavens in purity.”

Now, the primary matter of “the essence of the heavens in purity” will take place in the coming future. For, in that time there will be refinement (*Birur*) in a way of tranquility (to an even greater degree than in the days of Shlomo), as the verse states,¹¹⁵³ “[It will happen in the end of days: The mountain of

¹¹⁴⁹ See Chronicles I 22:9

¹¹⁵⁰ See Midrash Shemot Rabba 15:26 and elsewhere.

¹¹⁵¹ See Torah Ohr, Bereishit 6a; Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar 4a, and elsewhere.

¹¹⁵² Talmud Bavli, Yoma 86b

¹¹⁵³ Isaiah 2:2

the Temple of *HaShem*-יהו"ה will be firmly established as the most prominent of mountains, and will be exalted above the hills and] all nations will stream to it. [Many peoples will go and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, to the Temple of the God of Yaakov, and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths etc.]"

However, since all the revelations of the coming future are brought about through our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, right now, it therefore is necessary that even now, our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, should be in a way of tranquility. For, through this there will be the revelation of the tranquility of the coming future, through our righteous Moshiach, very soon, in the most literal sense!