

Discourse 15

“Vayakhel Moshe et kol Adat Bnei Yisroel - Moshe gathered the entire assembly of the Children of Israel”

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Vayakhel,
Parshat Shekalim, Shabbat Mevarchim Adar-Sheini, 5719
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The¹¹⁵⁴ verse states,¹¹⁵⁵ “Moshe gathered the entire assembly of the children of Israel and said to them: ‘These are the things that *HaShem*-יהו"ה commanded, to do them.’” The simple meaning of the words, “These are the things that *HaShem*-יהו"ה commanded” is that it refers to the construction of the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*), except that he first instructed them about the prohibitions of Shabbat, thus intimating that constructing the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) does not supersede Shabbat.¹¹⁵⁶ This is why the entire assembly of the children of Israel had to be gathered, because the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) is a general matter that relates to all Jewish people, as the verse states,¹¹⁵⁷ “I will dwell within them,” meaning that it will be as

¹¹⁵⁴ It is noted that the Rebbe made various corrections to this discourse in his hand-writing on the transcript of this discourse in the library of Agudat Chassidei Chabad.

¹¹⁵⁵ Exodus 35:1

¹¹⁵⁶ Rashi to Exodus 35:2 citing Mechilta d'Rabbi Yishma'el, Exodus 35:1

¹¹⁵⁷ Exodus 25:8

it was at on the onset of creation, when “the world was initially created in a state of wholeness,”¹¹⁵⁸ and,¹¹⁵⁹ “The essential root of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, the *Ikkar Shechinah*, was in the lower worlds.”

Now, even though the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) is a general matter, it nonetheless is divided into several levels. There is the Courtyard (*Chatzer*) of the Meeting Tent (*Ohel Mo'ed*), the Meeting Tent (*Ohel Mo'ed*), and the Holy of Holies (*Kodesh HaKodoshim*).¹¹⁶⁰ These three aspects correspond to the three general divisions in the totality of the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*).¹¹⁶¹ That is, there are three worlds; the worlds of the Unlimited One, which transcend the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), and the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah*).¹¹⁶²

This likewise was so of the hides (*Yeriyot*) [of the Tabernacle-*Mishkan*], which as known, were the aspect of the encompassing lights (*Makifim*). Even so, they too were divided into their levels. That is, the lower hides were goat hides, there were ram hides dyed red, and there were *Tachash* hides. This was certainly so of the vessels and implements of the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*), which were vessels (*Keilim*) for the inner lights (*Pnimiyyim*) and also had divisions.

¹¹⁵⁸ See Midrash Bereishit Rabba 12:6; 13:3; 14:7

¹¹⁵⁹ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 19:7

¹¹⁶⁰ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Beit HaBechirah 1:5

¹¹⁶¹ See Ohr HaTorah, Vayakhel p. 2,195; Also see Sefer HaMaamarim 5663 p. 51.

¹¹⁶² Zohar III 159a and Ramaz there.

Now, the general preparation for all matters relating to the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) is as the verse states,¹¹⁶³ “You shall make a copper basin and its base of copper, for washing... and they shall wash their hands together with their feet etc.” That is, this preparation necessarily preceded all matters relating to the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*), including entrance into the Courtyard (*Chatzer*) of the Meeting Tent (*Ohel Mo’ed*), as the verse states,¹¹⁶⁴ “Whenever they come to the Meeting Tent (*Ohel Mo’ed*) they shall wash with water... or when they approach the Altar... (which was in the Courtyard (*Chatzer*) of the Meeting Tent (*Ohel Mo’ed*)).”

We thus find that there was a special involvement of Moshe in this, (as it states “Moshe assembled,” which relates to the general commandment about the Tabernacle-*Mishkan*), as the verse states,¹¹⁶⁵ “He placed the basin... and there he put water for washing. Moshe, Aharon, and his sons, washed their hands and feet from it.” Moreover, this does not only apply to that generation, but for all generations. This is as stated in Talmud,¹¹⁶⁶ “Any circumstance in which the basin does not contain enough water for four priests to sanctify [their hands and feet] from it, may not be used to sanctify, as it states, ‘Moshe, Aharon, and his sons, washed their hands and feet from it.’” (That is, Moshe and Aharon were two, and his sons were two.) From this it is understood that because the basin (*Kiyor*-כִּיּוֹר) was a general matter, Moshe’s involvement in the basin (*Kiyor*-כִּיּוֹר) relates to all generations.

¹¹⁶³ Exodus 30:18-19

¹¹⁶⁴ Exodus 30:20

¹¹⁶⁵ Exodus 40:30-31

¹¹⁶⁶ Talmud Bavli, Zevachim 19b (and Rashi there)

The matter of the basin (*Kiyor*)¹¹⁶⁷ may be understood based on what the basin (*Kiyor*-כִּיּוֹר) was made of. (For, the matter of the basin (*Kiyor*-כִּיּוֹר) is pronounced and expressed even by what it was made of). This is as the verse states,¹¹⁶⁸ “He made the basin of copper and its base of copper, from the mirrors of the legions (*Marot HaTzovot*-מִרְאוֹת הַצּוֹבֹאוֹת).” As explained in Torah Ohr¹¹⁶⁹ (and various other places), the verse says, “mirrors-*Marot*-מִרְאוֹת,” in the plural, because there are two types of “lenses-*Marot*-מִרְאוֹת.” That is, there is “a lens that illuminates” (*Aspaklariya HaMe’irah*) and “a lens that does not illuminate” (*Aspaklariya She’eino Me’irah*).

2.

The explanation of “the lens that illuminates” (*Aspaklariya HaMe’irah*) as it is in man’s service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, may be understood from the reward in serving Him. (In that,¹¹⁷⁰ “the reward of a *mitzvah* is the *mitzvah*”) and the reward begins in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*).

The explanation is that about the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*), our sages, of blessed memory, said,¹¹⁷¹ “The righteous-*Tzaddikim* sit with their crowns upon their heads, delighting in

¹¹⁶⁷ See the discourse entitled “*Vayasem et HaKiyor*” 5654 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5654 p. 188 and on); 5632 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5632 Vol. 1, p. 96 and on); 5679 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5679 p. 279 and on). Also see Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 6 p. 196 and on.

¹¹⁶⁸ Exodus 38:8

¹¹⁶⁹ Torah Ohr, Mikeitz 33c and on; cited and expounded upon in Ohr HaTorah, Naso p. 1,939 and on; Ohr HaTorah, Vayakhel p. 2,225 and on.

¹¹⁷⁰ Mishnah Avot 2:4

¹¹⁷¹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 17a

the ray of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He (the *Shechinah*).” It is explained that “the righteous-*Tzaddikim* sit (*Yoshveen*-יושבין),” refers to their being “settled” (*Hityashvut*-התיישבות). “With their crowns upon their heads” refers to the encompassing lights (*Makif*). The matter of being “settled” (*Hityashvut*-התיישבות) is that they delight “in the ray of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He (the *Shechinah*),” meaning, in a way of being inwardly settled (*Hityashvut b'Pnimityut*-בפנימיות-התיישבות). That is, in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) there is a revelation of *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Godliness.

This is also the difference between the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) and the world. For, even though the Godliness in creation is present in the world, it nevertheless is in a state of concealment. This is why the novel existence of the world is brought about through *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה title “God-*Elohi*”מ-אלהי”ם-86” which shares the same numerical value as “the natural order-*HaTeva*-הטבע-86.”¹¹⁷² The word “nature-*Teva*-טבע” is of the same root as in the verse,¹¹⁷³ “Her gates sunk (*Tavoo*-טבעו) into the ground,” in that they are immersed and covered over.¹¹⁷⁴ That is, it all is present and in a state of wholeness, but is concealed.

¹¹⁷² Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1 (The Foundations), The Gate of Intrinsic Being (*Shaar HaHavayah*) and The Gate of His Title (*Shaar HaKinuy*); Pardes Rimmonim, Shaar 12 (*Shaar HaNetivot*), Ch. 2; Reishit Chochmah, Shaar HaAhavah, Ch. 6 (section entitled “*v’Hamargeel*”); Shnei Luchot HaBrit 89a, 189a; Shaalot uTeshuvot Chacham Tzvi, Section 18; Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah, translated as The Gate of Unity and Faith, Ch. 6; Likkutei Torah, Re’ch 22b and on, and elsewhere.

¹¹⁷³ Lamentations 2:9

¹¹⁷⁴ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5678 p. 89; 5689 p. 51.

In contrast, in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) *HaShem*'s יהו"ה Godliness is openly revealed. This is the matter of their "delighting in the ray of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, (the *Shechinah*)," and delight specifically takes place when something is revealed.

However, more specifically, there is the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה and His title God-*Elohi*"מ-אלהי"ם both in the Garden of Eden and in the world, as written,¹¹⁷⁵ "*HaShem* God-*HaShem Elohi*"מ-אלהי"ם יהו"ה planted a Garden in Eden," and it further is written,¹¹⁷⁶ "On the day that *HaShem* God-*HaShem Elohi*"מ-אלהי"ם יהו"ה made earth and heaven." There nevertheless is a difference between them, which is like the difference between the interweaving (*Shiluv*) of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה into His title Lord-*Adona*"ע-אדני"י (אידהנוי"ה), or the interweaving (*Shiluv*) of His title Lord-*Adona*"ע-אדני"י into the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה (יאהדונה"י).¹¹⁷⁷

For, the matter of the interweaving (*Shiluv*) of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה into His title Lord-*Adona*"ע-אדני"י (אידהנוי"ה), is that His title Lord-*Adona*"ע-אדני"י is primary and revealed, whereas His Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה is concealed. The same is likewise so in the world, that even though it has the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה within it (as mentioned above), nevertheless, His title God-*Elohi*"מ-אלהי"ם is dominant and openly revealed. This is because the conduct of the world stems from His title

¹¹⁷⁵ Genesis 2:8

¹¹⁷⁶ Genesis 2:4

¹¹⁷⁷ See Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah, translated as The Gate of Unity and Faith, Ch. 7 (82a); Likkutei Torah, Dushim L'Shabbat Shuvah, 65d, and elsewhere.

God-*Elohi*”מ-אלהי”¹¹⁷⁸ which has the same numerical value as “the natural order-*HaTeva*”הטבע.

In contrast, the Name *HaShem*-יהו”ה is concealed, as the verse states,¹¹⁷⁹ “A sun and a shield is *HaShem* God-*HaShem Elohi*”מ-אלהי”ה.” That is, just as with the sun and its shield, the sun is present but covered by the shield, meaning that the sun is concealed and the shield is revealed, this is likewise so of the Name *HaShem*-יהו”ה and His title God-*Elohi*”מ-אלהי”ה as they are in the world, in that His title God-*Elohi*”מ-אלהי”ה is revealed, but His Name *HaShem*-יהו”ה is concealed.

In contrast, the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*), it is like the interweaving (*Shiluv*) of His title Lord-*Adona*”ע-אדני” into His Name *HaShem*-יהו”ה (”יאהדונה”), in which the Name *HaShem*-יהו”ה is primary and revealed, whereas the matter of His title God-*Elohi*”מ-אלהי”ה is just so that through it, His Name *HaShem*-יהו”ה will be revealed.

This is also why the revelation in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) is through the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut*.¹¹⁸⁰ This is because all revelation specifically comes through Kingship-*Malchut*, but even so, what is revealed is of the light of the Name *HaShem*-יהו”ה, which transcends the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut*. This is the meaning of their “delight in the ray of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו”ה (the *Shechinah*),” referring to the revelation of *HaShem*’s-יהו”ה Godliness.

¹¹⁷⁸ Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of His Title (*Shaar HaKinuy*) ibid.

¹¹⁷⁹ Psalms 84:12; Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah, translated as The Gate of Unity and Faith, Ch. 4 and on; Ohr HaTorah, Yahal Ohr, to Psalms 84:12.

¹¹⁸⁰ See Torah Ohr, Lech Lecha 12c and elsewhere.

This is as stated in Me'orei Ohr,¹¹⁸¹ that the “ray-Ziv-
זי” refers to the aspect of Foundation-*Yesod*, and as known,¹¹⁸²
the aspect of Foundation-*Yesod* is the end of the worlds of the
Unlimited One (*Ein Sof*), *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in that
it is the aspect of the Creator, rather than the aspect of the
created. We thus find that the difference between the Garden
of Eden (*Gan Eden*) and the world, is like the difference
between the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut*, which is the
beginning of the creations, and the aspect of Foundation-*Yesod*,
which is the end of the Unlimited.

3.

However, based on the above it is not understood how
it is possible for the soul, which is the existence of novel
creation, to delight in the ray of the Indwelling Presence of
HaShem-יהו"ה, blessed is He, (the *Shechinah*), which is the
existence of Godliness. For, even though the soul is “part of
God from above,”¹¹⁸³ (and more so, we even add the word)

¹¹⁸¹ Me'orei Ohr, Maarechet 7, Section 18.

¹¹⁸² See Torah Ohr, Terumah 81c; Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe,
translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 33-36; *Hemshech* 5672, Vol. 2, p. 767.

¹¹⁸³ Job 31:2; Pardes Rimonim 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 Rimonim 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.

“literally-*Mamash*-ממש,”¹¹⁸⁴ nevertheless, it chained down and descended to become a created being.¹¹⁸⁵

For, as known, the souls are rooted in the aspect of light (*Ohr*-אור), but they were drawn down and descended into the aspects of water (*Mayim*-מים) and firmament (*Rakiya*-רקיע),¹¹⁸⁶ as explained at length in the discourses of the month of Tishrei.¹¹⁸⁷ That is, the firmament (*Rakiya*-רקיע) is the aspect of waters that have frozen, meaning that even though the firmament (*Rakiya*-רקיע) is of the aspect of water (*Mayim*-מים), nevertheless, it is in a way that it becomes a different existence etc.

This being so, how is it possible for the soul – which is made to be in the aspect of a created being and is the aspect of the firmament (*Rakiya*-רקיע) – to delight in the ray of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, (the *Shechinah*), in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*)?

Furthermore, what is not understood is that the world and the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) are utterly of no comparison to each other, just as there is no comparison between a created being and the Creator, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, as mentioned above. This also is why we find that the ascent from the world to the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) happens through immersion in the River of Fire (*Nehar Dinor*),

Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 2

¹¹⁸⁵ See Etz Chayim, Shaar 42, Ch. 1 *ibid*.

¹¹⁸⁶ See Zohar II 167a and on; Siddur Im Divrei Elohi"m Chayim 70a and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5635 Vol. 2, p. 451, p. 454 and on.

¹¹⁸⁷ See the discourse entitled “*Torah Tzivah* – The Torah that Moshe commanded us,” Discourse 6, and “*Tzor Te’udah* – Fasten this warning,” Discourse 7, of this year 5719 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5719, p. 48 and on; p. 51 and on); Also see the discourse entitled “*Bati LeGani* – I have come to My garden” of this year 5719, Discourse 13, Ch. 4.

in order to “forget the visions of this world.”¹¹⁸⁸ It is specifically then only that the ascent to the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) is possible. This is because the ascent from the world to the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) as an incomparable ascent.

For, in regard to an ascent from one level to another level, in which the two levels are of some comparable measure to each other, it is not necessary to forget the previous level. On the contrary, the grasp of the previous level is a preface and preparation by which one thereby can grasp the higher level.

This is like what we find, that “after forty years one comes to grasp the depth of his teacher’s intent,”¹¹⁸⁹ meaning that specifically through contemplating the intellect he received from his teacher forty years earlier, along with everything he learned and grasped with this intellect throughout the forty years, he thereby comes to grasp the depth of his teacher’s intent, meaning that he reaches the inner depth and point of the intellect.

The same is so of the totality of the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), which is like “a ladder set on the earth, whose head reaches the heavens,”¹¹⁹⁰ that the ascent from rung to rung specifically comes through first grasping the preceding level, like ascending on the rungs of a ladder. However, all this is when the ascents have some measure of comparison to each other. However, since in the ascent from

¹¹⁸⁸ See Zohar I 201a; Zohar II 211b; Torah Ohr, Bereishit 7d, Vayetztei 22d, Mikeitz 31a, Yitro 69c, Megillat Esther 92a, 96a, 100c; Likkutei Torah, Beshalach 1d, and elsewhere.

¹¹⁸⁹ See Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zarah 5b

¹¹⁹⁰ Genesis 28:12

the world to the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) one must necessarily “forget the visions of this world,” it is understood that this ascent has no comparative measure.

The same is so of the ascents from level to level within the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) itself. For, even though all the levels are included in the general name “the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*),” they nevertheless are incomparable to each other. The reason is because the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) is of the aspect of Foundation-*Yesod*, which is the end of the worlds of the Unlimited (*Ein Sof*), as mentioned before, meaning that the light is limitless (*Bli Gvul*). Therefore, every level in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) is an aspect of limitlessness (*Bli Gvul*) relative to the level below it.

Thus, in the ascents within the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) itself, the grasp of the preceding level must be nullified to reach the grasp of the level that follows it, as known about the River of Fire (*Nehar Dinor*) and the Pillar (*Amud*) within the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) itself. This is because the ascents there are in a manner in which there is no comparison between one level and the next level.

We also find this in the matter of Torah, which generally transcends the worlds and relative to the world is the aspect of limitlessness (*Bli Gvul*). However, in Torah itself there also are ascents in an incomparable way, as we find with Rav Zeira,¹¹⁹¹ who undertook one-hundred fasts to forget Talmud Bavli in order to learn Talmud Yerushalmi.

¹¹⁹¹ Talmud Bavli, Bava Metziya 85a, explained in *Hemshech* 5666 p. 15; *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 2 p. 1,050 and on, and elsewhere.

Based on all the above, the question and wonderment is all the greater. That is, how is it possible for the soul, which is in the aspect of a created being, to delight in the ray of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, (the *Shechinah*), in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*), given that the Garden of Eden is in a state of limitlessness (*Bli Gvul*). This question is particularly compounded when considering the upper aspects of the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*).

4.

However, the explanation is that this is like what we find about the verse,¹¹⁹² “Moshe came into the midst of the cloud and ascended the mountain.” For, Moshe ascended with his body, and “he did not eat bread and did not drink water,”¹¹⁹³ but as the verse states, “the man ate the bread of the mighty ones,”¹¹⁹⁴ meaning, that he ate the bread of the angels. In other words, he was sustained by the ray of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, the *Shechinah*.

However, at first glance, how is it possible for a created being to be sustained by the ray of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, (the *Shechinah*), even from the angle of his soul and especially from the angle of his body? For, the physical body of Moshe was sustained by the ray of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, (the *Shechinah*).

¹¹⁹² Exodus 24:18; See Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 29 (149a)

¹¹⁹³ Exodus 34:28

¹¹⁹⁴ Psalms 78:25; Talmud Bavli, Yoma 75b; Torah Ohr 113c; See Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 4, p. 1,037, note 19.

However, about this the verse begins, “Moshe came into the midst of the cloud.” The effect of a cloud (*Anan*-ענן) is that it conceals the brightness and brilliance of the light, but does not completely conceal it. Rather, a radiance is nevertheless drawn through the concealment etc.

This is analogous to a person who gazes at a brilliant light through a lens that illuminates (*Aspaklariya HaMe'irah*), in which the lens conceals the essential brilliance [of the light], and thereby makes it possible for him to receive the light. It is in this way that Moshe prophesied, in that he prophesied with the word “This-Zeh-זה,”¹¹⁹⁵ which is the matter of the lens that illuminates (*Aspaklariya HaMe'irah*).

This then, is the meaning of the verse, “Moshe came into the midst of the cloud.” That is, it was through the garment of the cloud (*Anan*-ענן), which is the lens that illuminates (*Aspaklariya HaMe'irah*), that even Moshe’s physical body could be sustained by the ray of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, (the *Shechinah*).

The same is understood regarding each and every Jew, in regard to his soul. That is, Torah and *mitzvot*, which are the wisdom and will of the Holy One, blessed is He, descended and manifested below, and are like a lens that illuminates (*Aspaklariya HaMe'irah*). In other words, in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) they are made into the garment for the soul, by which it can delight in the ray of the Indwelling Presence of

¹¹⁹⁵ Sifri and Rashi to Numbers 30:2; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah, 7:6; Also see Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as Gates of Light, Gate Two (*Yesod*) and Gates Three & Four (*Netzach & Hod*), and elsewhere.

HaShem-יהו"ה, blessed is He, (the *Shechinah*), as explained briefly in Tanya.¹¹⁹⁶

5.

Now, it was explained before that the word “mirrors-*Marot*-מראות” is plural, indicating that there is a lens that illuminates (*Aspaklariya HaMe'irah*), and a lens that does not illuminate (*Aspaklariya SheEinah Me'irah*). The explanation is that the lens that does not illuminate (*Aspaklariya SheEinah Me'irah*) means that something is covering or concealing, making it impossible to see through it by way of direct light (*Ohr Yashar*). However, it does not conceal completely.

In other words, the concealment is only in that the existence of the thing seen is not as it is on its own level and place, in that all that is seen is a likeness and similitude. This comes about because of the covering, for without the covering, it would be possible to see through the lens in a way of direct light (*Ohr Yashar*).

However, because of the covering, one only sees it in a way of an indirect rebounding light (*Ohr Chozar*). Nevertheless, the covering must be a thin and refined covering. For, if the covering is too thick, it will absorb the light, to the point “[They came into them, but it was not known that they came into them,”¹¹⁹⁷ meaning that the covering would then conceal completely. However, when the covering is thin, it

¹¹⁹⁶ Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 29.

¹¹⁹⁷ See Genesis 41:21 – That is, the scrawny emaciated cows swallowed the cows of robust flesh and beautiful form, and “it was not known that they came into them,” in that, “their appearance remained as inferior as before.”

does not conceal completely, and it can be seen by way of an indirect rebounding light (*Ohr Chozer*).

Beyond this, there even is an advantage to the lens that does not illuminate (*Aspaklariya She'einah Me'irah*) [a mirror] over and above a lens that illuminates (*Aspaklariya HaMe'irah*) [a clear lens]. That is, with a lens that does not illuminate (*Aspaklariya She'einah Me'irah*) [a mirror], he can see himself, as well as what is behind him. In contrast, it is not possible to see this by way of the direct light (*Ohr Yashar*) [through a clear lens].

With the above in mind, we can also understand¹¹⁹⁸ the answer in Talmud¹¹⁹⁹ about the verse in the prophet Yishayahu that states,¹²⁰⁰ “I saw *HaShem*-יהוה,” even though it states about Moshe,¹²⁰¹ “No man can see me and live.” The sages answered that the difference is that “all other prophets gazed through the lens that does not illuminate (*Aspaklariya She'einah Me'irah*), whereas our teacher Moshe gazed through the lens that illuminates (*Aspaklariya HaMe'irah*).”

That is, through the concealment caused by the lens that does not illuminate (*Aspaklariya She'einah Me'irah*), it even is possible to see that which cannot be seen through the lens that illuminates (*Aspaklariya HaMe'irah*). This is because of the superiority of the indirect rebounding light (*Ohr Chozer*).

Now, the explanation of the lens that does not illuminate (*Aspaklariya She'einah Me'irah*) as it is in man's service of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, is that it refers to the light that

¹¹⁹⁸ See Likkutei Torah, Nitzavim 47c

¹¹⁹⁹ Talmud Bavli, Yevamot 49b

¹²⁰⁰ Isaiah 6:1

¹²⁰¹ Exodus 33:20

shines through toiling with the concealment of the animalistic soul, in that the animalistic soul covers over and conceals the light (*Ohr*). However, it is not a covering that is very thick or coarse, for there indeed is also good in it.

This is especially so in regard to the toil of the Godly soul in refining the animalistic soul etc. Therefore, even though it remains in place, in its state and standing as an animalistic soul, which is the matter of a covering, nonetheless, it is a thin and refined covering. However, the light (*Ohr*) that illuminates through the concealment of the animalistic soul is the indirect rebounding light (*Ohr Chozer*), the advantage of which is that it can reach a place that cannot be reached by way of the direct light (*Ohr Yashar*).

This is why the soul descended below into the body and animalistic soul, which is the greatest of descents. For, the soul is from the aspect of the firmament (*Rakiya*-רקיע) and even higher, from the aspect of the water (*Mayim*-מים), and even higher, from the aspect of the light (*Ohr*-אור), and even still higher, from the aspect of the light (*Ohr*-אור) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that precedes and transcends the restraint of the *Tzimtzum*.

[For, the three aspects of Light-*Ohr*-אור," "Water-*Mayim*-מים," and "Firmament-*Rakiya*-רקיע" are present even before the restraint of the *Tzimtzum*, and even as they are before the restraint of the *Tzimtzum*, the root of the soul is in the aspect of the light (*Ohr*-אור),] and even higher etc. This is as stated,¹²⁰² "They resided there in the service of the King." Our sages, of

¹²⁰² Chronicles I 4:23

blessed memory, similarly stated,¹²⁰³ “In whom did He consult? In the souls of the righteous-*Tzaddikim*.” It thus is from there that the soul descended below into the body and animalistic soul, which is a very great descent.

Nonetheless, the entire descent is worthwhile for the sake of the subsequent ascent brought about by the descent, as in the teaching, “The descent for the purpose of ascent.”¹²⁰⁴ It must therefore be said that the ascent is to even higher than the root of the souls.

The explanation is that the aspect of the firmament (*Rakiya*-רקיע), which is frozen waters, is in a state of limitation. Even the aspect of the waters (*Mayim*-מים), which have no [specific] measure in and of themselves, undergo change according to the measure and form of the vessels (*Keilim*). Even the aspect of the light (*Ohr*-אור), which is simple and completely limitless, nevertheless, since it is light (*Ohr*), it necessarily has some measure of limitation. For, even the light (*Ohr*) that precedes the restraint of the *Tzimtzum*, the very fact that it exists as light (*Ohr*) rather than some other existence, is itself a limitation, even though the light (*Ohr*) is like the Luminary (*Ma’or*).

Thus, to reach the One who is truly Limitless, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, this comes about specifically through the descent of the soul below, to manifest in a physical body and an animalistic soul, which are the diametric opposite of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness. In other words, this is the toil of

¹²⁰³ Midrash Ruth Rabba 2:3

¹²⁰⁴ See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 2 (The Letters of Creation, Part 1), Section entitled “The twelve letters ה"י ז"ח correspond to the Twelve Tribes of Israel.”

transforming the animalistic soul, which is the limitless aspect in man, and is the aspect of, “[You shall love *HaShem*-יהו"ה, your God...] with all your being (*Bechol Me'odecha*).”¹²⁰⁵

Thus, through this there also is a drawing down from above of the truly Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He. For, “the qualities of the Holy One, blessed is He, are in a way of measure for measure,”¹²⁰⁶ and therefore, through serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, “with all your being (*Bechol Me'odecha*),” we reach the aspect of the truly Unlimited One, meaning, the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic Being, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He.

Now, we should add that this likewise is so of the lens that illuminates (*Aspaklariya HaMe'irah*). For, it too has the matter of concealment, in that it conceals the intensity of the brilliance and brightness, as we explained before, that the lens that illuminates (*Aspaklariya HaMe'irah*) refers to the garments of Torah and *mitzvot*, which are the wisdom and will of the Holy One, blessed is He, and Torah and *mitzvot* also manifest in physical things, which is a matter of concealment.

Thus, since it is in their ability to conceal and garb the light (*Ohr*), this itself indicates that, in their root, they are higher than the light (*Ohr*), which is why they can garb it, only that the revelation is further below, and becomes the aspect of concealment. However, by removing the concealment, they reach even higher, as explained before about the superiority of the rebounding light (*Ohr Chozer*).

¹²⁰⁵ Deuteronomy 6:5

¹²⁰⁶ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 90a

This is also the meaning of the verse,¹²⁰⁷ “My dove, in the clefts of the rocks, hidden by the cliff, show Me your appearance, let Me hear your voice etc.” “My dove (*Yonati*-יֹנָתִי)” refers to the soul. “In the clefts of the rocks, hidden by the cliff” refers to the concealment and hiddenness of the manifestation of the soul in the physical body and animalistic soul, especially during exile. Nevertheless, specifically through toil in serving *HaShem*-יְהוָה below, by fulfilling His Torah and *mitzvot* (which are the aspect of the lens that illuminates (*Aspaklariya HaMe’irah*)), the aspect of, “show Me your appearance etc.,” is caused to be.

6.

This then, is the matter of the “mirrors of the legions (*Marot HaTzovot*-מְרֹאוֹת הַצִּבְאוֹת),” in which the word “mirrors-*Marot*-מְרֹאוֹת” is plural, referring to “the lens that illuminates” (*Aspaklariya HaMe’irah*) and “the lens that does not illuminate” (*Aspaklariya She’eino Me’irah*), both of which are “of the legions-*Tzovot*-צִבְאוֹת.”

The explanation¹²⁰⁸ is that when the Jewish people left Egypt, they were called,¹²⁰⁹ “The legions of *HaShem-Tzivot* *HaShem*-יְהוָה.” Now, as known,¹²¹⁰ *HaShem*’s-יְהוָה title “Legions-*Tzva’ot*-צִבְאוֹת” refers to *HaShem*’s-יְהוָה Godliness,

¹²⁰⁷ Song of Songs 2:14; Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim 16c and on.

¹²⁰⁸ See Ohr HaTorah, Tisa p. 1,941; Ohr HaTorah, Bo, p. 329

¹²⁰⁹ Exodus 12:41

¹²¹⁰ See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One* (The Foundations), The Gate of The Hosts (*Shaar HaTzva’ot*); Also see Torah Ohr, Bo 60a.

blessed is He, as it is in the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*). This is explained about the matter of Channah, who was the first to call the Holy One, blessed is He, by the title “Legions-*Tzva’ot*”¹²¹¹ *צבאות יהו"ה*. However, the matter of “The legions of *HaShem-Tzivot HaShem*” *צבאות יהו"ה* is that the legions (*Tzva’ot* *צבאות*) are utterly nullified and secondary to the Name *HaShem* *יהו"ה*.¹²¹² This refers to the nullification of the created beings to *HaShem* *יהו"ה*, blessed is He, who transcends the worlds.

This then, is the matter of the “mirrors of the legions (*Marot HaTzovot* *מראות הצובאות*).” For, the matter of a “mirror” or “lens” (*Mar’eh* *מארה*) – (including the lens that illuminates (*Aspaklariya HaMe’irah*)) – is the matter of concealment. That is, the concealment causes the existence and sense of self (*Yeshut*) of the created beings.

However, our toil in serving *HaShem* *יהו"ה*, blessed is He, is to bring about the nullification (*Bittul*) of the created beings to *HaShem* *יהו"ה*, blessed is He. More specifically, this is the matter of the descent of the soul below, into the hiddenness and concealment of the body and animalistic soul, in which the toil is to bring about the matter of “the legions of *HaShem-Tzivot HaShem*” *צבאות יהו"ה*,” for them to be secondary and nullified to *HaShem* *יהו"ה*, blessed is He.

Now, this is brought about through contemplating (*Hitbonenut*) the matter of the “Legions-*Tzva’ot*” *צבאות יהו"ה*

¹²¹¹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 31b

¹²¹² See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One* (The Foundations), The Gate of The Hosts (*Shaar HaTzva’ot*) *ibid*; Also see Torah Ohr, Bo 60c *ibid*.

itself,¹²¹³ and that “He is a sign (*Ot*-אות) amongst His legions (*Tzava*-צבא).”¹²¹⁴ In other words, all created beings, as they are in their existence and sense of self, even after having chained down from the seventy ministering angels etc., are all from *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and are merely from the aspect of a single letter (*Ot*-אות).

This is the general matter of the contemplations (*Hitbonenut*) that should take place during the verses of song (*Pesukei d'Zimra*), the blessings of the *Shema* recital, which are introductory to the recital of *Shema* itself, and the *Amidah* prayer. Through this contemplation (*Hitbonenut*) one nullifies the concealment and brings about the matter of “the legions of *HaShem-Tzivot HaShem*-יהו"ה-צבאות,” namely, that everything is utterly secondary and nullified to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

It likewise is in this regard that the “mirrors of the legions (*Marot HaTzovot*-מראות הצובאות)” were made of copper-*Nechoshet*-נחושת. For, in order to affect this below, one’s service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, must be in a way of,¹²¹⁵ “Your forehead is brazen-*Nechushah*-נחושה,” as in the teaching,¹²¹⁶ “Be as brazen as a leopard etc.,” meaning that,¹²¹⁷ “One should not be embarrassed by people who mock his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.” The empowerment for this is through Torah, as also hinted at in the word “copper-

¹²¹³ See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One* (The Foundations), The Gate of The Hosts (*Shaar HaTzva'ot*) *ibid*.

¹²¹⁴ Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 16a; Also see Ohr HaTorah, Bo *ibid*.

¹²¹⁵ Isaiah 48:4

¹²¹⁶ Mishnah Avot 5:20

¹²¹⁷ See the beginning of Tur and the Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch; Also see Rama to Orach Chayim 1:1 (citing Tur).

Nechoshet-נחשת,” which is an acronym for,¹²¹⁸ “The fallout of the Supernal wisdom is Torah-*Novelot Chochmah SheLema’alah Torah*-גובלות חכמה שלמעלה תורה.”¹²¹⁹

7.

Now, it is from the “mirrors of the legions (*Marot HaTzovot* הצובאות-מראות)” that the basin (*Kiyor*-כיוור) and its stand were made. About this the verse states,¹²²⁰ “He placed the basin... and there he put water for washing... [and they] washed their hands and feet from it.” The washing of the hands refers to refining (*Birur*) the emotional qualities (*Midot*), and “their feet” refers to the garments of thought, speech, and action (*Machshavah, Dibur, Ma’aseh*).

Thus, the washing of the feet refers to removing the garments of evil, as known¹²²¹ about the matter of the “dust that arose on their feet.”¹²²² That is, the foot refers to Kingship-*Malchut* of the external husks (*Kelipah*), which is the matter of thought, speech, and action (*Machshavah, Dibur, Ma’aseh*) of the side opposite holiness. The washing of the feet is with the waters of Wisdom-*Chochmah* that Moshe placed into the basin, which was made of the “mirrors of the legions (*Marot HaTzovot* הצובאות-מראות).” In other words, even the garments of Torah and *mitzvot*, as well as the refinement (*Birur*) of the

¹²¹⁸ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 17:5

¹²¹⁹ Torah Ohr, Hosafot 110d

¹²²⁰ Exodus 40:30-31

¹²²¹ See Torah Ohr, Vayishlach (Ohr HaTorah, Chukat p. 760(3)); Ohr HaTorah, Tisa, p. 1,833.

¹²²² Talmud Bavli, Chullin 91a

animalistic soul must be washed in the waters of Wisdom-*Chochmah* etc.

Now, this is preparatory to the whole matter of the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*), whether upon entering the Meeting Tent (*Ohel Mo'ed*) or whether upon approaching the Altar, which was in the Courtyard (*Chatzer*) of the Meeting Tent (*Ohel Mo'ed*). For, as previously explained, the Meeting Tent (*Ohel Mo'ed*) corresponds to the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), and the Courtyard (*Chatzer*) of the Meeting Tent (*Ohel Mo'ed*) refers to the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Asiyah*).

Based on this, it is understood that to enter the Meeting Tent (*Ohel Mo'ed*), which is the matter of inclusion in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), an additional refinement (*Birur*) is necessary through washing with the waters of Wisdom-*Chochmah* that are in the basin (*Kiyor*-כִּיּוֹר).

Now, about the statement that they also must wash before approaching the Altar, even though the Altar was in the Courtyard (*Chatzer*) of the Meeting Tent (*Ohel Mo'ed*), corresponding to the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Asiyah*), this is because every refinement (*Birur*) comes about through Wisdom-*Chochmah*, since “it is with Wisdom-*Chochmah* that they are refined,”¹²²³ specifically.

We also can say that this is similar to the statement in Likkutei Torah¹²²⁴ in explanation of the verse,¹²²⁵ “When a man brings an offering (*Adam Ki Yakreev*-אָדָם כִּי יִקְרִיב),” that there

¹²²³ See Zohar II (*Heichalot*) 254b; Etz Chayim, Shaar 8 (Shaar Drushei Nekudot), Ch. 6 and elsewhere.

¹²²⁴ Likkutei Torah, Vayikra 3a

¹²²⁵ Leviticus 1:2

must first be involvement in Torah study, which is the meaning of “When a man comes close (*Adam Ki Yakreev*-אדם כי יקרִיב).” This is followed by, “From the cattle or from the flock you shall bring your offering,” referring to the refinement (*Birur*) of the animalistic soul.

This is also the matter of Moshe’s involvement with the basin (*Kiyor*-כִּיּוֹר), because Moshe is the aspect of the nullification (*Bittul*) of *Ma”H*-מִ”ה-45, and beyond this, he is the aspect of *Ma”H*-מִ”ה of *Ma”H*-מִ”ה,¹²²⁶ as explained before.¹²²⁷ It therefore is specifically by his hand that all the various matters of serving *HaShem*-יהו”ה in the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) are possible.

With the above in mind, we can also understand why the basin (*Kiyor*-כִּיּוֹר) was a general matter in the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*). For, the general matter of the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) is the drawing down of *HaShem*’s-יהו”ה Godliness after the atonement of the sin (in that they were commanded to construct the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) the day after Yom HaKippurim.)¹²²⁸ In other words, its purpose is to affect that the drawing down of *HaShem*’s-יהו”ה Godliness so that it will be as it was before the sin, and even higher. For, the matter of repentance and return (*Teshuvah*) to *HaShem*-יהו”ה, blessed is He, is in a way of “a doubled portion of intelligence.”¹²²⁹

This likewise is the matter of the basin (*Kiyor*-כִּיּוֹר), which was made from the “mirrors of the legions (*Marot*

¹²²⁶ See Torah Ohr, Megillat Esther 99c

¹²²⁷ See the preceding discourse of this year, 5719, entitled “*Vayiru et Eloh”ei Yisroel* – And they saw the God of Israel,” Discourse 14, Ch. 3.

¹²²⁸ See Rashi to Exodus 35:1

¹²²⁹ Job 11:6; Midrash Shemot Rabba 46:1

HaTzovot (מראות הצובאות),” the matter of which is that through the concealment we reach even higher, in the aspect of the rebounding light (*Ohr Chozer*), as explained before.

This is also why it states, “Moshe gathered the entire assembly of the children of Israel.” That is, it is necessary to summon and gather all the powers, including the garments of thought, speech, and action (*Machshavah, Dibur, Ma’aseh*), as well as the inner powers of the soul. This gathering must specifically be done by Moshe, who is the aspect of *Ma”H*-ה"מ and *Ma”H*-ה"מ of *Ma”H*-ה"מ. For, through this it is possible to bring about the drawing down of *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Godliness into the Tabernacle-*Mishkan*, as it was at the beginning of creation, and even higher, which is the matter of,¹²³⁰ “You shall build a Sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell within them-*V’Shachantee b’Tocham*” וּשְׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם.

¹²³⁰ Exodus 25:8