## Discourse 21

## "Ki Tisa et Rosh B'nei Yisroel – When you take up the head [count] of the children of Israel"

Shabbat Parshat Vayakhel, Parshat Shekalim, Shabbat Mevarchim Adar Sheni, 5722 By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,<sup>1345</sup> "When you take up the head [count] of the children of Israel according to their numbers, [every man shall give *HaShem-הו*" an atonement for his soul when counting them], so that there will not be a plague amongst them when counting them. This shall they give, [everyone who passes through the census], a half *shekel* of the sacred *shekel* etc."

Now, we must understand the specific wording, "When you take up-*Tisa*-תשא," for the matter of taking a census could have been expressed in different terms. For example, the continuation of the verse states, "when counting them-*BiFekod Otam*-בפקוד אתם." This being so, why does it specifically use the term "When you take up-*Ki Tisa*-"?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1345</sup> Exodus 30:12-13

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1346</sup> Also see the beginning of the discourse by this title of the year 5665 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5665 p. 189); 5680 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5680 p. 263), and elsewhere.

We also must understand<sup>1347</sup> the general matter of giving a half *shekel*, for we find that the half *shekel* is the matter of atonement for the sin of the golden calf. This is as stated in Talmud Yerushalmi,<sup>1348</sup> "Because they sinned (with the golden calf) at midday, they [therefore] shall give a half *shekel*. Because they transgressed the ten commandments, they each shall give ten *gera*." [Zohar similarly states,<sup>1349</sup> "When the children of Israel gave gold for the golden calf, the Holy One, blessed is He, preempted them by giving them the remedy of [giving] gold for the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*)." That is, giving gold for the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) was the remedy for the affliction of giving gold for the golden calf.]

Now, since the sin of the golden calf is the general whole and root of the matter of sins, as the verse states, <sup>1350</sup> "On the day that I make My reckoning, [I will reckon their sin upon them]," about which our sages, of blessed memory, stated, <sup>1351</sup> that because of the sin of the golden calf, the contamination [instilled by the snake] that was removed when the Torah was given, returned to them. It thus is understood that the half *shekel* (which atones for the sin of the golden calf) includes atonement and repentance (*Teshuvah*) in general.

However, this is not understood, because from the half shekel the base-sockets (Adanim-אדנים) of the Tabernacle

<sup>1347</sup> See the beginning of the discourse by this title of the year 5675 (*Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 2, p. 893).

<sup>1348</sup> Talmud Yerushalmi, Shekalim 2:3

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1349</sup> Zohar II 224a; Also see Ohr HaChamah there citing Rabbi Chayim Vital.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1350</sup> Exodus 32:34

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1351</sup> Zohar I 36b, 52b

(Mishkan) were made, 1352 these being the foundations of the Tabernacle, as Talmud states, 1353 from this we learn that "the construct of the base-sockets (Adanim-אדנים) is considered to be like the ground."

Now, the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) was primarily for the purpose of serving *HaShem-*יהו״, blessed is He, through the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*), <sup>1354</sup> (as also explained in the continuum of discourses of the 10<sup>th</sup> of Shevat). <sup>1355</sup> This is a constant and orderly form of service ("the daily *Tamid* offerings according to their order"), <sup>1356</sup> which is the service of *HaShem-*יהו״, blessed is He, of the righteous *Tzaddikim*, rather than the service of repentance (*Teshuvah*).

2.

Now, to understand this,  $^{1357}$  we must begin by explaining the words of our sages, of blessed memory, that,  $^{1358}$  "In the place where those who return to HaShem- $^{-1}$ " in

<sup>1352</sup> Rashi to Exodus 30:15

<sup>1353</sup> Talmud Yerushalmi, Shabbat 7:2

<sup>1354</sup> See Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Beit HaBechirah

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1355</sup> See the discourse entitled "*Bati LeGani*" 5710 Ch. 2 and on (Sefer HaMaamarim 5710 p. 112 and on).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1356</sup> See the liturgy of the Shabbat *Musaf* prayer.

<sup>1357</sup> See the discourse entitled "Lo Teva'aru Aish" of Shabbat Parshat Vayakhel 5631 (which is the discourse entitled "BaYom HaZeh Yechaper" and "Hashiveinu" 5631 (printed in Sefer HaMaamarim 5630 p. 309 and on, 314 and on) — with additions at their beginning and end]. Also see the discourse entitled "BaYom HaZeh Yechaper" in Likkutei Torah, Acharei 25c and on; Discourse by the same title in Ohr HaTorah, Devarim Vol. 5 p. 2,128 and on. With respect to some other matters that will be explains later, also see the discourse entitled "Vayedaber... Zot Chukat" of Shabbat Parshat Vayakhel-Pekudei 5721, translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe 5721, Discourse 19 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5721 p. 136 and on).

<sup>1358</sup> Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah 7:4; See Talmud Bavli, Brachot 34b

repentance stand (*Baalei Teshuvah*), even the perfectly righteous (*Tzaddikim Gemurim*) cannot stand."

Now, it must be understood why those who return to HaShem-יהי' in repentance (Baalei Teshuvah) are much greater than the level of the righteous (Tzaddik). That is, a righteous Tzaddik, is a person who spends all his days studying HaShem's-יהו" Torah and fulfilling His mitzvot, so much so, that Torah itself attests that he is righteous (Tzaddik). This being so, why is it, that a person who returns to HaShemin' in repentance (Baal Teshuvah) is greater than him?

Now, although in truth, there is a superiority to the service of *HaShem-*ה"יהי of those who return to *HaShem-*יהו" in repentance (*Baalei Teshuvah*) [over and above the service of the righteous] in that they serve Him with greater strength, 1359 nonetheless, it still is not understood. This is because the reason the service of one who returns to *HaShem-*in repentance (*Baalei Teshuvah*) is with greater strength, is because he became distant from *HaShem-*in through sin and blemish etc.

In contrast, the righteous *Tzaddik*, whose every day has been spent engaged in Torah and *mitzvot*, does not require this greater strength. This being so, why is the portion of the righteous *Tzaddik* lesser, to such a degree that although he never became distant from *HaShem-*הי in the first place, he cannot stand in the place of the repentant (*Baalei Teshuvah*)?

This may be understood by prefacing with an explanation of the root of the matter of repentance (*Teshuvah*).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1359</sup> See Zohar I 129b; Maamarei Admor HaZaken Vol. 1, p. 494; Ohr HaTorah, Shir HaShirim Vol. 2, p. 685.

For, in regard to the matter of drawing down the thirteen attributes of mercy, which are the root of repentance (*Teshuvah*), the verse states, <sup>1360</sup> "I shall place you in the cleft of the rock." The "cleft of the rock" (*Nikrat HaTzur-* הצור ) refers to the inner aspect of a flintstone (*Tzur*-), which is the source of fire. This inner aspect is the root of the matter of repentance (*Teshuvah*).

Now, to explain this, we first must explain the superiority of fire (Aish-שא), which is superior to such an extent that [the Torah] specifically compares HaShem's-יהו"ה-Godliness to fire, as the verse states, 1361 "For HaShem-in" your God, He is a consuming fire." That is, out of all four fundamental elements of creation, these being fire, air, water, and earth, 1362 it is specifically the element of fire that is analogous to HaShem's-הו"ה-Godliness.

The reason is because out of all the elements, the distinction of fire is that its nature is to ascend. That is, it yearns to withdraw from whatever it is bound to and ascend above. Thus, for fire to remain below, there must be something for it to take hold of, by which it remains below. However, in and of itself, the nature of fire is to ascend, and this nature is only present in the element of fire, rather than the other elements.

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<sup>1360</sup> Exodus 33:22

<sup>1361</sup> Deuteronomy 4:24

<sup>1362</sup> See Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 4:1

<sup>1363</sup> See Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 4:2; Midrash Shemot Rabba 23:13; Bamidbar Rabba 14:12; Zohar II 24a (and the citations in Nitzutzei Zohar there); Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as HaShem Is One, Vol. 2 (The Letters of Creation, Part 1); Tanya, Ch. 19.

Thus, about this the verse states, "HaShem-יהו" your God, He is a consuming fire." For, just as, in and of itself, fire does not bond with the other elements, the same is so of HaShem's-הו"ה- Godliness, in that He is removed from and transcends the entire chaining down of the worlds (Hishtalshelut).

Even though the worlds and the chaining down (Hishtalshelut) consist of an incredible abundance [of creations], as the verse states, 1364 "And maidens-Alamot-שלמות beyond number," about which it states, 1365 "Do not just read it as 'maidens-Alamot- עלמות 'but read it as, 'worlds-Olamot-," nonetheless, the primary and essential aspect of HaShem's- יהו"ה- Godliness is not in the fact that worlds are brought into being from Him. 1366 For, the aspect of His Godliness that is drawn down to bring the creations into being is but a mere ray and glimmer of His radiance, which is utterly and completely incomparable to Himself, blessed is He.

3.

To further explain, 1367 the verse states, 1368 "All that is called by My Name and for My glory, I created it (*Barativ*-), I formed it (*Yatzartiv*-), I even actualized it (*Asitiv*-עשיתיו)." This verse refers to the totality of all the worlds, which generally include the three worlds of Creation,

<sup>1364</sup> Song of Songs 6:8

<sup>1365</sup> See Zohar III 71b; Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 14b; Also see Zohar III 58b; Talmud Bayli, Ayodah Zarah 35b

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1366</sup> Torah Ohr, Megillat Esther 99b; Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim 8a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1367</sup> Also see Sefer HaMaamarim 5698 p. 48 and on.

<sup>1368</sup> Isaiah 43:7

Formation, and Action (*Briyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Asiyah*), indicated by the words, "I created it (*Barativ*-בראתיו), I formed it (*Yatzartiv*-נצרתיו), I even actualized it (*Asitiv*-יצרתיו)."

About this the verse states, "All that is called by My Name." That is, all that is drawn down in the three worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action, is just in the aspect of a Name (Shem-שם), and a Name (Shem-שם) is but a glimmer of radiance (Ha'arah-הארה) [of the Bearer of the Name]. The verse adds "and for My glory." This is to say that even in regard to the aspect of the Name ("My Name-Shmi-ישמי"), for it to be drawn down to the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah), this is specifically only through the aspect of "My glory-Kvodi-"."

The explanation is that the three worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Asiyah*), indicated by the words, "I created it (*Barativ*-יבראתי), I formed it (*Yatzartiv*-), I even actualized it (*Asitiv*-יעשיתי)," are similar to how these aspects are in man, [the choicest creation, who includes all of creation, in that all of creation is for his sake, 1370 as our sages, of blessed memory, stated, 1371 "The word 'In the beginning-*Bereishit*-יבראשית-means for the sake of the Jewish people, who are called 'the beginning-*Reishit*-י"."]. This refers to the aspects of thought (*Machshavah*), speech (*Dibur*), and action (*Ma'aseh*).

<sup>1369</sup> See Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim 14d and elsewhere.

 $<sup>^{1370}</sup>$  See Talmud Bavli, Brachot 6b; Rambam's introduction to his commentary on Mishnah.

<sup>1371</sup> Rashi and Ramban to Genesis 1:1; Midrash Aggadah to Genesis 1:1; Tanchuma Bereishit 3; Midrash Bereishit Rabba 1:4; Vayikra Rabba 36:4

To explain, thought (*Machshavah*) is the beginning of the existence of the letters (*Otiyot*). For, although the letters of thought (*Machshavah*) also have a source in that which transcends thought, nevertheless, as they are in their source, they do not exist as letters (*Otiyot*) at all. Rather, their existence as letters (*Otiyot*) begins in thought (*Machshavah*). Now, even though thought already has letters (*Otiyot-אַחא*) that are of the root, "morning is coming-*Ata-אָחא*"."

indicating the matter of revelation, nonetheless, this revelation is only to oneself, and even to oneself it still is in a concealed way.

After this, the letters (Otiyot) come into speech (Dibur). The way the letters of thought (Machshavah) are drawn down [into speech (Dibur)] is the revelation of what [already is present] but concealed (Giluy HaHe'elem). That is, it is sensed in [the letters of speech] that their source is the letters of thought (Machshavah). (This is unlike the coming into being of letters of thought (Machshavah) from that which transcends thought (Machshavah) in which the source is not at all sensed in them, and they therefore are like the coming into being of something from nothing), only that as they are in their source, they are concealed, whereas in speech the letters come forth into revelation.

The likeness to this, as it is in the worlds, are the worlds of Creation (*Briyah*) and Formation (*Yetzirah*), as

<sup>1372</sup> Isaiah 21:12; Torah Ohr, Mikeitz 42b; Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim 33c and elsewhere; Also see at length in 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 various names of general classification, section on The Particular Noun (*Etzem Prati-*y).

indicated by the verse, <sup>1373</sup> "He forms (*Yotzer*-יוצר) light and creates (*Boreh*-בורא-) darkness." That is, Creation (*Briyah*) is [equated to] darkness and concealment, like the letters of thought (*Machshavah*) [which are hidden], whereas Formation (*Yetzirah*) is [equated to] light and revelation, like the letters of speech (*Dibur*) [which are revealed]. On the other hand, action (*Ma'aseh*) is in such a way that it becomes completely separate from the person, which is why another person can take hold of what he has actualized. The likeness to this in the worlds, is the world of Action (*Asiyah*).

Now, the powers of thought, speech, and action (Machshavah, Dibur, Ma'aseh) as they are in man, are only an example for the aspects of the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah), indicated by the words, "I created it (Barativ-בראתיו-ב), I formed it (Yatzartiv-יייי), I even actualized it (Asitiv-יייי)." About them the verse states, "All that is called by My Name and for My glory etc." That is, that which is drawn down into the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah) (indicated by the words, "I created it (Barativ-ייר), I formed it (Yatzartiv-יירי), I even actualized it (Asitiv-יירי)") is just the aspect of a Name (Shem-ש), which is a mere glimmer of radiance (Ha'arah-הארה) [of the bearer of the Name].

Beyond this, even in this glimmer of radiance, the way it is drawn down into the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Asiyah*), is specifically through Torah. This is the meaning of the word "for My glory-

 $<sup>^{1373}</sup>$  Isaiah 45:7; See the blessings of the *Shema* recital; See Pri Etz Chayim, Shaar HaKriyat Shema, Ch. 1.

L'Kvodi-לכבודי," as it states, "There is no glory (Kavod-כבודי) except for Torah." That is, Torah is compared to that which the fire and light from Above takes hold of.

In other words, through Torah, the light is drawn down to bring existence to the worlds. This is as our sages, of blessed memory, stated<sup>1375</sup> on the verse, <sup>1376</sup> "I was with Him as His nursling-Amon-אמון," that, "the Torah is saying, 'I was the craftsman's tool (Kli Umanuto-כלי אומנתו) of the Holy One, blessed is He." Our sages, of blessed memory, similarly stated, <sup>1377</sup> "The Holy One, blessed is He, gazed into the Torah and created the world," only that at the outset of creation this stemmed from the matter [indicated by the verse], <sup>1378</sup> "For He desires kindness," whereas presently, after the world has been created, which certainly applies to after the Torah has been given, there must be arousal from below. This refers to the matter of a person studying HaShem's-יהו"ה. Torah below, by which the fire from Above takes hold and thereby is drawn down into the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah).

4.

Now, just as in the drawing down from Above brought about through Torah ("My glory"), there is a division of three aspects, "I created it (*Barativ*-יבראתין), I formed it (*Yatzartiv*-

<sup>1374</sup> Mishnah Avot 6:3

<sup>1375</sup> Midrash Bereishit Rabba 1:1

<sup>1376</sup> Proverbs 8:30

<sup>1377</sup> Zohar II 161a and on

<sup>1378</sup> Micah 7:18

יצרחיי), I even actualized it (Asitiv-יצרחיי)," the same is so in our service of HaShem-הה", blessed is He. That is, the general matter of studying Torah is divided into three lines and modes, these being Torah, the Temple service (Avodah), and acts of loving-kindness (Gemilut Chassadim). (For, through the study of Torah it is possible for a person to know the conduct of all three lines and modes.) These [three aspects] correspond to thought, speech, and action (Machshavah, Dibur, Ma'aseh), corresponding to the three worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah).

The explanation is that the line and mode of the Temple service (meaning, sacrificial offerings – *Korbanot*), is the aspect of thought (*Machshavah*). This is because even through thought alone, sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*) can be rendered unfit.<sup>1379</sup> For, although in all the [other] *mitzvot* of the Torah, speech and action are primary, whereas punishment is not rendered for thought, <sup>1380</sup> nonetheless, in regard to the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*), even thought alone (*Machshavah*) can render them unfit.

Moreover, the Temple service of offering sacrifices (*Korbanot*) was performed by the Priests (*Kohanim*) and was done in "silence", with the desire of the heart (*Re'uta d'Leeba*)."<sup>1381</sup> This matter, that the sacrifices are offered in "silence" is like the concealment of thought (*Machshavah*)

 $<sup>^{1379}</sup>$  Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Pesulei Ha Mekudashin 13:1 and Mishneh L'Melech commentary there.

<sup>1380</sup> Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Pesulei HaMekudashin 14:2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1381</sup> See Zohar III 39a, 88b, 178a

and the matter of "the desire of the heart" (Re'uta d'Leeba) is even deeper.

Now, the line and mode of Torah study is the aspect of speech (*Dibur*). For, just as the drawing down of Torah from Above, was through the speech of the Holy One, blessed is He, as Torah states, "*HaShem-ה*" spoke to Moshe," or, "*HaShem-i*" said to Moshe," the same is so of Torah study, that it specifically must be brought into speech (*Dibur*). This is as stated in the verse, 1383 "For they are life to whoever finds them-*L'Motzeihem-*", "about which our sages, of blessed memory, said, 1384 "to those who bring them out-*L'Motzi'eihem-*" with their mouth," specifically.

Now, this does contradict the very elevated level of Torah, as our sages, of blessed memory, stated, "Study of Torah is equivalent to them all," including prayer (*Tefillah*). However, even so, prayer (*Tefillah*) [which corresponds to the sacrificial offerings – *Korbanot*], 1385 is the aspect of thought (*Machshavah*), whereas Torah study is the aspect of speech (*Dibur*), which is below thought (*Machshavah*). This is because its great elevation itself is the reason for this. That is, since Torah is from a much loftier place than prayer (*Tefillah*), it therefore is drawn further down and manifests specifically in speech, being that whatever is higher descends further down. 1386

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1382</sup> See Hilchot Talmud Torah of the Alter Rebbe 2:12; Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 37, Ch. 49; Sefer HaMaamarim 5698 p. 50 and on, and elsewhere.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1383</sup> Proverbs 4:22

<sup>1384</sup> Talmud Bayli, Eruvin 54a

<sup>1385</sup> Talmud Bavli, Brachot 26a-b

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1386</sup> See Likkutei Torah, Emor 34c; Shaarei Orah, Shaar HaPurim 58a and on, 65a and on, and elsewhere.

This is similar to what we find in the matters of seeing (*Re'iyah*) and hearing (*Shemiyah*). That is, with sight we see the actual thing itself, whereas with hearing, we only hear about its existence. However, even so, because of this itself, hearing can have a grasp of the spiritual, whereas in comparison, seeing only grasps the physical. The reason is because since the power of seeing is higher than the power of hearing, it therefore is drawn further down to grasp the physical. <sup>1387</sup>

However, in truth, the analogy of the superiority of sight (*Re'iyah*) cannot compare to the analogue, which is the superiority of Torah. For, in regard to sight (*Re'iyah*), it is specifically because of its superiority that it grasps physicality rather than spirituality. In contrast, in Torah, both speech (*Dibur*) and thought (*Machshavah*) are present. For, in addition to the speech (*Dibur*) of Torah, there also is the *mitzvah* of knowing and delving deeply (*Iyun*) into Torah.

That is, even though in regard to the Written Torah (*Torah SheB'Khtav*), (which was revealed at the giving of the Torah), the primary matter is speech (*Dibur*), which is why if a person utters the words [of the written Torah] with his mouth, but because he in unlearned, does not understand the meaning of the words, nevertheless he has fulfilled the *mitzvah* of "you shall learn them," 1388 (as explained in Hilchot Talmud Torah of the Alter Rebbe). 1389 However, even so,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1387</sup> See Ohr HaTorah, Va'etchanan p. 62-63

<sup>1388</sup> Deuteronomy 5:1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1389</sup> Hilchot Talmud Torah, Ch. 2 ibid.

there also is the *mitzvah* to know and delve into the Torah, and for this there must be thought (*Machshavah*).

Now, the line and mode of acts of lovingkindness (Gemilut Chassadim) is the aspect of action (Ma'aseh). This is because the matter of acts of lovingkindness (Gemilut Chassadim) specifically includes all action mitzvot in general. That is, the action mitzvot are even higher than Torah, and they therefore descended further down to even manifest in action (Ma'aseh).

Thus, through our general service of *HaShem-יהו"ה*, blessed is He, through Torah study, which subsequently is divided into the three modes, these being Torah study, the Temple service (*Avodah*), and acts of loving-kindness (*Gemilut Chassadim*), we affect a drawing down of light (*Ohr*) that transcends Torah ("My glory"), by which there subsequently is a drawing down into the three worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Asiyah*), (indicated by the words, "I created it (*Barativ-יצרחיו*), I formed it (*Yatzartiv-יצרחיו*), I even actualized it (*Asitiv-יצרחיו*)").

5.

In addition, since the drawing down of the light (*Ohr*) that brings the worlds into existence is through Torah, which is compared to that which the fire from Above is attached to, ("*HaShem-הו"*ה your God, He is a consuming fire"), therefore, just as the light (*Ohr*) does not take hold except to that which becomes consumed by the fire, such as a wick or wood, which

is burned and consumed by the fire, the same is so of our service of *HaShem-*הר", blessed is He, in all three abovementioned lines and modes of service. That is, for them to be receptacles by which to draw down the fire from Above, they specifically must be in a state of self-nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem-*הר".

More specifically, even when it comes to the line and mode of the Temple service (*Avodah*), this being the matter of prayer (*Tefillah*), even though the entire matter [of prayer] is that one [stands] "like a servant before his Master," this being the matter of self-nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem-הו*", nevertheless a person must be cautious to have self-nullification (*Bittul*) in this, in order to negate any element or sense that he is an independent existence who exists in and of himself, and certainly [to negate] any sense of selfishness and egotism. This is so, both in the toil of preparing oneself for prayer before praying, as well as during prayer itself, so that there will be no matters that distract his prayer etc.

This certainly is so in regard to Torah study. For, since the study of Torah is done with the human intellect and with physical speech, it is possible for a person to study Torah and [at the same time] forget the Giver of the Torah, 1391 Heaven forbid. Therefore, extra care must be taken for the study of Torah to be with self-nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem-*יהו",

<sup>1390</sup> See Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 10a

 $<sup>^{1391}</sup>$  See Talmud Bavli, Nedarim 81a and Ra"N there; Ba"Ch to Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 47.

which is the matter the blessings of Torah before the study of Torah. 1392

This most certainly is the case in regard to acts of lovingkindness (*Gemilut Chassadim*), which includes all [action] *mitzvot*. That is, since this involves actual physical deed and involvement with physical things etc., even greater care must be taken to do them in a state of self-nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem-*ה". In other words, to the degree that the line and mode of conduct reaches further down into physicality, to that degree, greater care must be taken for it to be in a way of self-nullification (*Bittul*).

The same is so Above in regard to the drawing down of the light (*Ohr*) (which is compared to fire), in the three levels of the vessels (*Keilim*); the inner part the vessels (*Pnimiyim*), the middle part of the vessels (*Emtza'eeyim*), and the outer part of the vessels (*Chitzoniyim*). That is, to the degree that the vessels (*Keilim*) are distant from the light (*Ohr*), to that degree they are in a greater state of [tangible] existence, and therefore the matter of self-nullification (*Bittul*) must be emphasized to a greater degree.

This may be understood from the limbs of the human body. [For, as explained (in chapter three), the totality of creation is included in man. This is because man is created in the Supernal image and form, which is true both of the powers of his soul, as well as the limbs of his body.] 1394

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1392</sup> See Talmud Bavli, Nedarim 81a and Ra"N there; Ba"Ch to Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1393</sup> See Genesis 1:26

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1394</sup> See Likkutei Torah, Vayikra 4b; Matot 81c, and elsewhere.

To explain, in general, the body is divided into three general parts, the head, the torso, and the legs and feet. These three aspects are the receptacles for the three powers of thought, speech, and action. That is, thought (Machshavah) manifests in the head. Speech (Dibur) manifests in the torso, being that the breath of speech emanates from the heart. (Even though speech itself comes from the five places in the mouth [the throat, middle palate, frontal palate, teeth and lips] from which the letters of speech issue, the mouth being in the lower part of the head, nonetheless the matter of these five places (is that through them the letters take form, however, their root and source is in the heart.)<sup>1395</sup> Moreover, the general matter of speech (Dibur) is that it is the garment that serves the emotions  $(Midot)^{1396}$  which dwell in the heart. On the other hand, the matter of action, (Ma'aseh) is in [the mobility of the legs and feet.

Now, of these three parts [of the body], the head is above the torso. This is because the vitality primarily rests in the head. That is, even though vitality is drawn to all the other limbs of the body, nonetheless, its primary dwelling place is in the head, and from there it is drawn to the various limbs of the body. Moreover, the head is the dwelling place of all the higher powers of the soul, such as the power of intellect (*Sechel*), the power of sight (*Re'iyah*) [hearing, smelling, tasting] etc. On the other hand, [though it is lower than the head], the torso is above the legs and feet.

1395 See Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 5

<sup>1397</sup> See Likkutei Torah, Emor 31a

<sup>1396</sup> See Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 4; Igrot Kodesh, Vol. 18, p. 558

Based on this, it would seem to make sense that the head should be larger than the torso, and the torso should be larger than the legs. However, in actuality, we see the opposite, that the head is smaller than the torso, and the torso smaller than the legs. The reason is because to the degree that the vessel (*Kli*) is closer to the light and vitality of the soul, to that degree it does not have a [big] existence, and is therefore smaller.

From this example we can understand how it is above in relation to the drawing down of light (*Ohr*) in the three levels of the vessels; the inner level of the vessels (*Pnimiyim*), the middle level of the vessels (*Emtza'eeyim*), and the outer level of the vessels (*Chitzonyim*). That is, the inner level of the vessels (*Pnimiyim*) does not have [tangible or independent] existence to the same degree as the middle level of the vessels (*Emtza'eeyim*), and the middle level of the vessels (*Etmza'eeyim*) does not have [tangible or independent] existence to the same degree as the outer level of the vessels (*Chitzoniyim*).

In general, this is the difference between the teaching, <sup>1398</sup> "He and His life force are one and He and His organs are one," in which the word "one" is mentioned twice. <sup>1399</sup> That is, there is no comparison between the union of "His organs," referring to the emotions (*Midot*), and the union of "His life force," referring to the intellect (*Mochin*). <sup>1400</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1398</sup> Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar, 3b

<sup>1399</sup> Also see Hemshech "Mayim Rabim" 5636, Ch. 32 and elsewhere.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1400</sup> See Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim 31c; Kitzurim v'Ha'arot L'Tanya, p. 105; Sefer HaMaamarim 5653 p. 228.

In the mind and intellect (*Mochin*) itself, the primary union (*Yichud*) is in Wisdom-*Chochmah*. This is as the Alter Rebbe explained in a note in Tanya, <sup>1401</sup> brought in the name of his teacher, the Rav, the Maggid of Mezhritch, in regard to why the Limitless Light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem-היויי*, blessed is He, does not manifest in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) except by first manifesting in the *Sefirah* of Wisdom-*Chochmah*. This is because the Limitless Light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem-היויי*, blessed is He, is "the True One, meaning that He alone exists and there is nothing besides Him, which, in fact, is the level of Wisdom-*Chochmah*."

That is, there is no comparison between the union (*Yichud*) in the aspects of Victory-*Netzach*, Majesty-*Hod*, and Foundation-*Yesod*, which are the "outside of the body," and the union (*Yichud*) in the aspects of Kindness-*Chessed*, Might-*Gevurah*, and Splendor-*Tiferet*.

From this it is understood that the more distant the vessels (*Keilim*) are from the light (*Ohr*), the more they have a greater [sense of tangible and independent] existence, and therefore there must be a greater degree of self-nullification (*Bittul*).

This then, explains how in our service of *HaShem*-יהו״ה, in all three lines and modes as a whole, these being the Temple service (*Avodah*), Torah study, and acts of lovingkindness (*Gemilut Chassadim*), corresponding to thought, speech, and action (*Machshavah*, *Dibur*, and *Ma'aseh*), and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1401</sup> Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 35

<sup>1402</sup> See Zohar I 21b

corresponding to the head, the torso, and the legs, we specifically must have self-nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהנ"ה, blessed is He. For, through this, there will be a drawing down of the fire from Above, ("*HaShem*-יהנ"ה your God, He is a consuming fire"), just as fire only takes hold of that which it consumes.

The reason one must be cautious that in all three lines and modes [of his service of *HaShem-*הו"] there should be self-nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem-*הו", blessed is He, is because in all three modes, the matter of sense of self, ego, and arrogance is possible, and [as known] arrogance is "the head of the nations," and the root for every kind of evil.

To further explain, in the side opposite holiness, there also are the three aspects of the head, the torso, and the legs. That is, not only is arrogance in the aspect of the head possible, meaning that in his mind he rationalizes that he has what to be arrogant about, but even if he only is in the aspect of the foot, the matter of arrogance is possible, as the verse states, "Let not the foot of arrogance come to me." It therefore is necessary to guard oneself from arrogance on all levels, being that it only is possible to draw down the upper fire specifically through self-nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1403</sup> Numbers 24:20; See Torah Ohr, end of Tetzaveh; Ohr HaTorah, Tetzaveh p. 1,433 and on; and elsewhere.

<sup>1404</sup> Psalms 36:12

Now, everything stated above applies the how a righteous Tzaddik serves HaShem-יהו", blessed is He, in that he spends all his days in the study of Torah, prayer (Avodah), and acts of lovingkindness (Gemilut Chassadim). Through doing so, he constructs the three worlds within his soul, being that "Man is a microcosm of the world." Through this, he also constructs the three worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah) themselves, thus affecting a drawing down of the Limitless Light of the Unlimited One, HaShem-יהו"ה, blessed is He, into them. For, even though, in and of Himself, HaShem-יהו" is utterly beyond comparison and relation to worlds, He nonetheless is drawn down and held in them through the receptacles of fulfilling His Torah and *mitzvot* in thought, speech, and action. This is similar to the example of fire, that although its nature is to ascend, nonetheless, if there is a receptacle for the fire, the fire takes hold of it.

However, a person who has sinned, blemished, and left the path is incapable of drawing down the upper fire, being that he does not have the receptacles for the fire to take hold of. It therefore is necessary for him to draw from the root and source of fire, this being the aspect of the "flintstone-*Tzur*-", by serving *HaShem*-", blessed is He, with repentance (*Teshuvah*), that is, with greater strength and force.

The explanation is that as the fire is in the flintstone (*Tzur*-עור) (the root and source of the fire), it is in a state of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1405</sup> Midrash Tanchuma, Pekudei 3; Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 69 (100b, 101a)

"concealment that has no existence", in which to reveal the fire, the flint must specifically be struck. (This is unlike fire that is in a [hot] coal, which is "concealment that has existence," and therefore to reveal it, all that is needed is to blow on it with a bellows.) This then, is what is meant that the toil of serving <code>HaShem-הו"ה</code>, blessed is He, in repentance (<code>Teshuvah</code>) is with greater strength, greater force (and greater abundance), similar to striking [a flint] by which we reveal the fire hidden in the flintstone (<code>Tzur-100</code>).

This then, is the meaning of the verse, 1406 "When My glory passes by, I shall place you in the cleft of the rock (Nikrat HaTzur-בבודי)." "My glory-Kvodi-"כבודי" refers to the Torah (as discussed in chapter three). However, "When My glory passes by (b'Avor Kvodi-"שובר (בעבור כבודי)," meaning, "When one transgresses and passes over (Over-עובר עובר) the Torah laws of HaShem-", "הו"ה, "I shall place you in the cleft of the rock (Nikrat HaTzur-נקרת הצור)." That is, one must then draw specifically from the aspect of "the cleft of the rock-Nikrat HaTzur-נקרת הצור," this being the source of fire.

This is also the meaning of the verse, 1407 "HaShem-יהו"ה said, 'There is a place (Makom-מקום) here with Me; you may stand on the rock (Tzur-צור")." The "place-Makom-מקום" refers to the general totality of the chaining down of the worlds (Seder Hishtalshelut), and more specifically, refers to [the Sefirah of] Kingship-Malchut. However, when there is a blemish in this, it then is necessary to draw from the aspect of

<sup>1406</sup> Exodus 33:22

<sup>1407</sup> Exadus 22:21

"there is a place here **with** Me," meaning that, 1408 "the place is secondary to Me," referring to the teaching, 1409 "He is the place (*Makom*-מקום) of the world, but the world is not His place." 1410

This verse was stated as a general introduction to the revelation of the thirteen attributes of mercy, which states "HaShem-יהו", HaShem-יהו" twice, once before one has sinned, and once after one has sinned and has repented. This is because to draw down the thirteen attributes of mercy, that is, forgiveness and atonement brought about through repentance (Teshuvah), this cannot be drawn down from the aspect of fire (Aish-wah), but specifically from the aspect of the flintstone (Tzur-יהו").

The explanation is that, as known, "there is no left side in this Holy Ancient One-*Atika*." That is, Above, the aspect of Might-*Gevurah* also is an aspect of [positive]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1408</sup> Midrash Shemot Rabba 45:6; See Ohr HaTorah ibid. p. 403 and on.

<sup>1409</sup> Midrash Bereishit Rabba 68:9; See Ohr HaTorah ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1410</sup> See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as HaShem Is One, Vol. 3 (The Letters of Creation, Part II), section entitled "The Gate explaining that *HaShem-*ה"ה, blessed is He, is the place-*Makom*-ס of all beings."

<sup>1411</sup> Exodus 34:6

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1412</sup> See Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 17b, cited in Rashi to Exodus 34:6

<sup>1413</sup> Zohar III 129a, 289a

bestowal. On the contrary, in three matters, the drawing down that stems from Might-Gevurah is superior.

The first matter is that there is a greater dominance of vitality in the severities-*Gevurot* than there is in the kindnesses-*Chassadim*. We observe this in the difference between domesticated animals (*Behemot*) and wild animals (*Chayot*). That is, although domesticated animals have great strength and can do much labor, as the verse states, <sup>1414</sup> "Many crops come through the power of the ox," and [as in the teaching], <sup>1415</sup> "[A person should take on the words of Torah] like an ox to the yoke and like a donkey to the burden," nonetheless, his labor is done slothfully and without alacrity.

In contrast, a wild animal moves quickly, with alacrity, in that it has a greater dominance of vitality. This is because the root of wild animals is the aspect of the severities-*Gevurot*, (whereas the root of domesticated animals is the aspect of the kindnesses-*Chassadim*). This is why a wild animal is called a "*Chayah-היה*," since there is a dominance of "vitality-*Chayoot-*" in them.

The second matter is that through the severities-Gevurot the vitality is even bestowed to a distant place. An example is the fact that "words from the heart enter the heart." This is because when words come from the blood seething in one's heart, this being the matter of the severities-Gevurot, they enter the heart of the recipient, even though he may be distant from the bestower.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1414</sup> Proverbs 14:4

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1415</sup> Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zarah 5b

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1416</sup> See Sefer HaYashar of Rabbeinu Tam, Shaar 13, cited in Shnei Luchot HaBrit 69a; Also see Sefer HaMaamarim 5689 p. 36.

The third matter is that through Might-Gevurah the light (Ohr) comes into division and abundance. An example is "the might of the rains (Gevurot Geshamim)," <sup>1417</sup> in that they divide into many different droplets. <sup>1418</sup> This is as our sages, of blessed memory, stated, <sup>1419</sup> "Every drop has its own channel, for if more than one drop would emerge from the same channel, they would [deluge and] destroy the earth." In other words, the severities-Gevurot cause division.

Similarly, the severities-*Gevurot* cause the matter of multiplicity and abundance. About this the verse states, <sup>1420</sup> "I multiplied (*Arbeh*-ארבה) his seed and gave him Yitzchak," in which the word "I multiplied-*Arbeh*-ארבה-208" shares the numerical value of "Yitzchak-יצחק-208," <sup>1421</sup> and [as known] Yitzchak is the aspect of the severities-*Gevurot*. <sup>1422</sup>

The same is understood in regard to the matter of the severities-*Gevurot* as they are Above, in *HaShem*'s-הו"ה-Godliness, in that "there is no left side in this Holy Ancient One-*Atika Kadisha*." That is, in the aspect of the Ancient One-*Atik*, even the severities-*Gevurot* are a matter of [positive] bestowal. On the contrary, the bestowal in a way of the dominance of vitality is drawn further down, and comes in a way of division, multiplicity, and abundance.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1417</sup> Mishnah Taanit 1:1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1418</sup> Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1419</sup> Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 16a

<sup>1420</sup> Joshua 24:3

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1421</sup> See Likkutei Torah of the Arizal, Vayera (Sod HaAkeida)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1422</sup> See Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as Gates of Light, Gate Five (*Tiferet*) and elsewhere.

With the above in mind, we can understand the superiority of the service of *HaShem-ה*", blessed is He, of the repentant (*Baalei Teshuvah*) over and above the service of *HaShem-*ה" of the righteous (*Tzaddikim*), and that [this is to such an extent that], 1423 "In the place where the repentant (*Baalei Teshuvah*) stand, even the perfectly righteous (*Tzaddikim Gemurim*) cannot stand."

This is because, through their service of *HaShem-ה*יהוי, blessed is He, the righteous (*Tzaddikim*) draw from the aspect of fire (*Aish-wa*). However, this is not so of the repentant (*Baalei Teshuvah*), in that because of the blemish of sin etc., their service of *HaShem-הוייה*, blessed is He, is caused to be with greater force and greater strength, and they thereby draw from the root and source of fire, this being the aspect of the flintstone (*Tzur-יור)*), the source of the severities-*Gevurot*. From there is a drawing down of bestowal in a way of the dominance of vitality, ("with greater strength and force"), and it also is drawn further down (meaning, to the distance caused by the blemish of sin).

7.

However, it still is not understood why the portion of the righteous *Tzaddik*, who never became distant from *HaShem-*הי" in the first place, should be lesser. The explanation is that about this, our sages, of blessed memory, said, 1424 "Moshiach is destined to bring the righteous to

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1423</sup> Talmud Bavli, Brachot 34b; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah 7:4

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1424</sup> See Zohar III 153b; Likkutei Torah, Shmini Atzeret 92b, and elsewhere.

repent." That is, even the righteous *Tzaddikim* will ascend to the level of repentance (*Teshuvah*).

This is similar to what we find about Moshe, that he ascended to the aspect of repentance (*Teshuvah*). For, even though his service of *HaShem-הו"ה*, blessed is He, was in the way of the righteous (*Tzaddikim*), nevertheless, it subsequently states, 1426 "I shall place you in the cleft of the rock (*Nikrat HaTzur-נקרת הצור)*," indicating that he reached the level of repentance (*Teshuvah*). Upon the coming of Moshiach, who "is destined to bring the righteous to repent," the same will be for all the righteous *Tzaddikim*.

Now, the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov is well known, 1427 namely, that there is a particular [spark of] Moshiach within each and every Jew, this being the singular-Yechidah essential self of his soul. This is likewise understood from the explanation in Iggeret HaKodesh 1428 on the verse, 1429 "He redeemed my soul in peace," that there is a particular redemption for each and every Jew.

The empowerment for the particular redemption and the coming of the particular Moshiach within each Jew, comes from our teacher Moshe. That is, it is Moshe who grants empowerment to reveal the particular [spark of] Moshiach, until we thereby come to the general redemption through the general Moshiach - the general *Yechidah* soul [of the Jewish

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1425</sup> See Likkutei Torah, Shmini Atzeret 92b ibid.

<sup>1426</sup> Exodus 33:22

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1427</sup> See Ma'or Einayim to Numbers 25:10 (Pinchas); Keter Shem Tov, Hosafot, Section 218; Also see Sefer HaMaamarim 5643 p. 70.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1428</sup> Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, end of Epistle 4

<sup>1429</sup> Psalms 55:19

people].<sup>1430</sup> Therefore, just as our teacher Moshe reached the elevated level of repentance (*Teshuvah*), he likewise affected the elevated level of repentance (*Teshuvah*) for all Jews

8.

This then, is the meaning of the verse, 1431 "When you take up the head [count] of the children of Israel etc." That is, giving the half *shekel* is the general matter of repentance (*Teshuvah*), (as explained in chapter one). Therefore, about this it states, "When you take up the head-*Tisa et Rosh-* מראש "refers to the service of *HaShem-*", "The head-*Rosh-*" refers to the service of *HaShem-*", blessed is He, of the righteous *Tzaddikim*. The words, "When you take up the head-*Tisa et Rosh-*", "refer to "elevating the head," meaning, that repentance (*Teshuvah*) should also be drawn to the righteous (*Tzaddikim*).

Thus, it is in this regard that the socket-bases (*Adanim*) of the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) were made from the half-*shekel*. This is because the general service of the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) is the service of *HaShem-הווה* of the righteous (*Tzaddikim*), (as explained above), and thus, because it is through repentance (*Teshuvah*), the service of the righteous (*Tzaddikim*) is caused to be elevated.

Now, in regard to the matter of repentance (*Teshuvah*) inherent in the half *shekel*, there are two views. The view of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1430</sup> See Sefer Arba Me'ot Shekel Kesef of the Arizal (p. 241 – Jerusalem 5745); Ramaz to Zohar II 40b; Zohar III 260b; Sefer HaMaamarim 5635 Vol. 1, p. 266; 5698 p. 200 and elsewhere.

<sup>1431</sup> Exodus 30:12-13

Talmud Yerushalmi<sup>1432</sup> is that this took place after the sin of the golden calf, whereas the view of the Zohar<sup>1433</sup> is that this took place before the sin of the golden calf.

The difference between them is that according to Talmud Yerushalmi, this refers to repentance (*Teshuvah*) that relates to actual sin. In contrast, according to the Zohar, this refers to attaining the perfection of repentance (*Teshuvah*), about which the verse states, <sup>1434</sup> "The spirit returns to God who gave it," meaning that the soul ascends to its source and root, as it was before it's descend to below. This is repentance (*Teshuvah*) as it is on the level of the righteous *Tzaddikim*, similar to [the teaching that] "Moshiach is destined to bring the righteous to repent," only that this is just the aspect of the particular [spark of] Moshiach within each and every Jew, through which we thereby will come to the aspect of the general Moshiach.

The explanation is that this repentance (*Teshuvah*), (meaning, the repentance indicated by the verse "The spirit returns to God who gave it"), is the ascent of the soul to its root, as it was before its descent, in that since the verse states, "He blew the soul of life into his nostrils," specifying, "He blew," it therefore is similar to blowing [on a hot coal] which only reveals the fire that already is in the coal, and nothing more.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1432</sup> Talmud Yerushalmi, Shekalim 2:3

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1433</sup> Zohar II 195a, 224a

 $<sup>^{1434}</sup>$  Ecclesiastes 12:7; See Likkutei Torah, beginning of Ha'azinu, and elsewhere.

<sup>1435</sup> Genesis 2:7

Higher than this, is the repentance (*Teshuvah*) by which we reach the aspect of the flintstone (*Tzur-צור)*, this being the root and source of fire, which transcends the fire in the coal, (as explained in chapter six). This will be drawn down and revealed in the coming future, through the general Moshiach, within each and every Jew, in all three levels [indicated by the verse], "I created it (*Barativ-יצרחיו*), I formed it (*Yatzartiv-יצרחיו*), I even actualized it (*Asitiv-* (ששיחיי))." (For, just as the aspect of the fire [indicated by the verse], "*HaShem-יהו"* your God, is a consuming fire," is drawn down in all three above-mentioned aspects, so too, the aspect of the "flintstone" (*Tzur-*) will be drawn down into all three above-mentioned aspects.)

It ultimately will be drawn all the way down, as the verse states, 1436 "The glory of *HaShem-*ה"יה will be revealed, and all flesh together will see that the mouth of *HaShem* 'הר"ה- has spoken," meaning that the revelation of *HaShem*'s הרו"ה- Godliness, in the aspect of the Rock-*Tzur*-צור, will even be in the physical flesh.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1436</sup> Isaiah 40:5; See Sefer HaMaamarim 5696 p. 100; Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 22 p. 37, note 72, and elsewhere.