

Discourse 36

“VaEheyeh Etzlo Amon - I was with Him as His nursling”

12th of Sivan, 5724

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

1.

The verse states,¹⁸⁵⁴ “I was with Him as His nursling, I was then His delight day by day, playing before Him at all times, playing in the inhabited areas of His earth, My delights are with the children of man.” We explained before,¹⁸⁵⁵ (based on the explanation in the discourse entitled “*VaEheyeh Etzlo Amon* etc.,” that was delivered on the eve of the holiday of Shavuot 5674),¹⁸⁵⁶ that this verse refers to the drawing down of the pleasure of the Torah is as it is drawn from the Essential Self of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, all the way down below.

The words, “I was with Him as (*Etzlo*-אצל) as His nursling” is as Rashi explains, “One who was reared with Him, as in the verse,¹⁸⁵⁷ “Those that were reared (*HaEmunim*-האמונים) in scarlet [clothing],” and as in the verse,¹⁸⁵⁸ “As a nursemaid

¹⁸⁵⁴ Proverbs 8:30-31

¹⁸⁵⁵ See the preceding discourse of this year, of the 2nd day of Shavuot, entitled “*Vayedaber... Anochi HaShem* – God spoke... I am *HaShem*,” Discourse 35 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5724 p. 229, and the citations there).

¹⁸⁵⁶ *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 1, p. 461 and on.

¹⁸⁵⁷ Lamentations 4:5

¹⁸⁵⁸ Numbers 11:12

(*HaOmein*-האומין) carries a suckling.”¹⁸⁵⁹ This refers to the Torah as it is “with Him-*Etzlo*-אצלו,” referring to His Essential Self, blessed is He.

“I was His delights day by day” refers to the Torah as it is drawn in the aspects of Wisdom-*Chochmah* and Understanding-*Binah* (“day by day-*Yom Yom*-יום יום”), in which the revelation of the pleasure (*Taanug*) called “delights-*Sha’ashu’im*-שעשועים,” is caused.

“Playing before Him at all times” refers to the drawing of the Torah into the aspect of *Zeir Anpin*, which is “at all times-*BeKhol Eit*-בכל עת,” referring to the 28-כ”ח times,¹⁸⁶⁰ 14-ד” for good and 14-ד” for bad etc.¹⁸⁶¹ This is the matter of the division into the two lines and modes of Kindness-*Chessed* and Might-*Gevurah*, which are the aspects of the emotions (*Midot*) (*Zeir Anpin*).

About this aspect the verse uses the word “playing-*Schok*-שחוק,” meaning “laughter,” rather than the word “delights-*Sha’ashu’im*-שעשועים.” This is because in the drawing forth in *Zeir Anpin*, which is under Wisdom-*Chochmah* and Understanding-*Binah*, the pleasure comes with even greater revelation.

This is why the verse uses the word “laughter-*Schok*-שחוק,” indicating the ultimate revelation of the pleasure (*Taanug*) to the eyes of all. This is as we observe in man below,

¹⁸⁵⁹ See Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra to Proverbs 8:30 *ibid*.

¹⁸⁶⁰ Ecclesiastes 3:2-8; Also see Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 2 (The Letters of Creation, Part 1), section entitled “The seven letters בגיד כפר” correspond to the seven days of the week (Time and its measurement),” and the notes there.

¹⁸⁶¹ See *Likkutei Torah*, Bamidbar 18c; *Ohr HaTorah*, Shavuot p. 69 and on.

that even when he is in a state of great delight, it is possible that the pleasure is concealed and hidden within his essential self, and all that is revealed of it is just a small glimmer in illumination of his face, in his two cheeks, this being the matter of “the two apples” etc.¹⁸⁶² However, when the pleasure is in a state of greater revelation, he will have the matter of “laughter-*Schok*-שחוק,” to the point that “laughter did not cease from his mouth.”¹⁸⁶³

The words, “playing in the inhabited areas of His earth,” refers to the drawing down of the Torah into the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut*. Here too, the verse uses the word “playing-*Mesacheket*-משחקת,” meaning “laughter-*Schok*-שחוק.” This certainly is so, in that the word “laughter-*Schok*-שחוק” was used in relation to *Zeir Anpin*, which is not yet the drawing down to below. For, *Zeir Anpin* is the end of the worlds of the Unlimited One,¹⁸⁶⁴ and only includes nine *Sefirot* within it, and it is specifically through the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut* that there is caused to be the revelation and drawing down to below.

The verse concludes, “My delights (*Sha’ashu’ay*-שעשועי) are with the children of man.” This refers to the pleasure (*Taanug*) of the Torah as it is drawn down in the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*).

However, we still must understand why in relation to the drawing down in the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*), the verse states, “My delights

¹⁸⁶² See Likkutei Torah, Masei 93b and on.

¹⁸⁶³ See Talmud Bavli, Brachot 31a

¹⁸⁶⁴ See Torah Ohr, end of Terumah; Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 32-33.

(*Sha'ashu'ay*-שעשועי) are with the children of man,” specifying “My delights-*Sha'ashu'ay*-שעשועי.” For, at first glance, it should have used the word “laughter-*Schok*-שחוק” about this. This is derived a priori from the fact that the word “laughter-*Schok*-שחוק” is used in regard to the drawing down in *Zeir Anpin* and *Kingship-Malchut*. How much more so should this then be when the drawing down and revelation is even further below, in the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*), where it certainly should be a matter of “laughter-*Schok*-שחוק,” indicating even greater revelation. This being so, why does the verse use the word “My delights-*Sha'ashu'ay*-שעשועי” here?

We also must understand why the verse does not use the word “delights-*Sha'ashu'im*-שעשועים” simply [without specifying whose delights] as it does in regard to Wisdom-*Chochmah* and Understanding-*Binah* (“delights day by day-*Sha'ashu'im Yom Yom*-יום יום שעשועים”). It rather specifies “My delights-*Sha'ashu'ay*-שעשועי” (the delights that are **Mine**), referring back to the beginning of the verse, “I was **with Him**-*Etzlo*-אצל (as His nursling).”

Is it not so that “I was with Him (*Etzlo*-אצל) as His nursling” refers to the Torah as it is in His Essential Self, blessed is He, wherein the pleasure (*Taanug*) is in a way of the delights of the King in His Essential Self (also hinted at in *Iggeret HaKodesh*),¹⁸⁶⁵ this being the highest level? This being so, what relation is there between this matter and the drawing down of the pleasure of the Torah all the way down below, to the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah,*

¹⁸⁶⁵ Tanya, Kuntres Acharon, entitled “*Dovid Zemirot Karit Lahu*” 161a.

Yetzirah, Asiyah), that there should be a matter of “**My** delights-*Sha’ashu’ ai*” שְׂעִשְׂוֵי-*ai*, specifically?

2.

This may be understood by prefacing with the explanation in the discourse of the Alter Rebbe, [in one of the booklets of manuscripts that recently were freed from captivity. To explain, the substance of the discourse is also found in the redactions of Rabbi Pinchas [*Hanachot HaRav Pinchas*],¹⁸⁶⁶ but the above-mentioned booklet also has the addition of glosses in the handwriting of the Tzemach Tzeddek, and it appears that he studied from this booklet].

This refers to the discourse entitled,¹⁸⁶⁷ “*Al Yithalal* – Let not the wise man glorify himself with his wisdom and let not the strong man glorify himself with his strength etc.” [This is as his honorable holiness, the Rebbe Rashab, whose soul is in Eden, brings the matter of [this verse], “Let not the wise man glorify himself in his wisdom etc.,” in continuation of the explanation of the particular levels of the verse, “I was with Him as His nursling etc.,” and it appears that the source for this is from the above-mentioned discourse of the Alter Rebbe.]

In it he explains that it certainly is so that when the verse states, “Let not the wise man glorify himself with his wisdom,” what is meant is not human intellect, but specifically Godly intellect. The Tzemach Tzeddek adds that this likewise is indicated by the statement in the second volume of Zohar, on

¹⁸⁶⁶ Maamarei Admor HaZaken, *Hanachot HaRav Pinchas*, p. 78-79.

¹⁸⁶⁷ Jeremiah 9:22-23

the Torah portion of Terumah,¹⁸⁶⁸ “The prophet cried out and said to the Masters of the Torah, these being the wise sages of the Torah, saying, ‘Let not the wise man glorify etc.’” Thus, since the verse states, “Let not the wise man glorify himself with his wisdom,” referring Godly wisdom, what then is the meaning of the end of the verse, “For only with this may one glorify himself – contemplating and knowing Me,” which also is the aspect of Godly wisdom. This being so, the end of the verse poses a difficulty to the beginning of the verse.

To understand this, we must preface with the explanation of what our sages, of blessed memory, stated¹⁸⁶⁹ about the son of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi who became sick and whose spirit flew Above. When he returned to good health, his father asked him, “What did you see?” He responded, “I saw an upside-down world. Those above were below, and those below were above.” His father said to him, “My son, you have seen a clear world.”

This may be understood by prefacing with the general principle¹⁸⁷⁰ about the bestowal from the upper to the lower. That is, what comes last for the recipient is first for the bestower. For example, in the bestowal from thought (*Machshavah*) to speech (*Dibur*), that which came first in the thought (*Machshavah*) comes out last in speech (*Dibur*).

We see this clearly, that when a person wants to bestow a certain intellectual insight or idea [to another], first he has the essence of the intellectual idea that he wants to bestow, and he

¹⁸⁶⁸ Zohar II 158b

¹⁸⁶⁹ Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 50a

¹⁸⁷⁰ Also see Sefer HaMaamarim 5665 p. 85 and on.

then contemplates in this thought how and what to bestow to his fellow. However, in the bestowal to the recipient, the order is reversed. That is, he first bestows that which he contemplated how and what to bestow, and only then does he bestow the essence of the intellectual idea. In other words, what was first for the bestower is last for the recipient.

This also explains the dispute between the school of Shammai and the school of Hillel about the order of creation.¹⁸⁷¹ The school of Shammai say that the heavens were created first and the earth was created after, as the verse states,¹⁸⁷² “In the beginning God-*Elohi*”מ־אֱלֹהִים created the heavens and the earth.” The school of Hillel say that the earth was created first, and heavens were created after, as the verse states,¹⁸⁷³ “On the day that *HaShem* God-*HaShem Elohi*”מ־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ created earth and heaven.”

The explanation is that there is a difference between the actual novel coming into being brought about through the Supernal speech (*Dibur*), and the root of the matter in the [Supernal] thought (*Machshavah*). That is, when it came to the actual bringing into being brought about through the ten utterances, it was in a way in which it first was said,¹⁸⁷⁴ “Let there be a firmament etc.,” and it then was said,¹⁸⁷⁵ “Let the waters be gathered... and let the dry land appear etc.” That is, the heavens were created first, and then the earth was created.

¹⁸⁷¹ Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 12a; Also see Torah Ohr, Vayigash 43c and elsewhere.

¹⁸⁷² Genesis 1:1

¹⁸⁷³ Genesis 2:4

¹⁸⁷⁴ Genesis 1:6

¹⁸⁷⁵ Genesis 1:9

However, as it arose in the Supernal thought (*Machshavah*), the earth preceded the heavens. This is as explained above, that whatever comes last to the recipient is present first in the bestower. This is the matter of “the end action arose first in thought.”¹⁸⁷⁶ That is, that which comes as the end action, is first in thought.

With this in mind, we can understand what Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi’s son responded, “I saw an upside-down world. Those above were below, and those below were above.” For, since he had an ascent from the revealed world (*Alma d’Itgaliya*), which is the world of speech (*Dibur*), to the concealed world (*Alma d’Itkasiya*), which is the world of thought (*Machshavah*), he therefore said, “I saw those above were below.” This is because that which is considered upper in level in the revealed world (*Alma d’Itgaliya*) is considered lower in level in the concealed world (*Alma d’Itkasiya*).

This likewise is true in the reverse, that “those below were above.” That is, that which is considered to be the lower level relative to the recipient, is in truth the beginning and upper level relative to the bestower. His father therefore answered him, “You saw a clear world,” since the truth of the matter is that what is considered upper in the Bestower, is in truth called upper.

With the above we also can understand the verse, “Let not the wise man glorify himself in his wisdom... For only with this may one glorify himself – contemplating and knowing Me.” The explanation is that there are two levels in the aspect of Wisdom-*Chochmah*. The first is the aspect of Wisdom-

¹⁸⁷⁶ See the liturgical hymn “*Lecha Dod*”

Chochmah as it is in the person himself, and the second is the spreading forth of the wisdom-*Chochmah* by way garbing it in an analogy etc.

Now, we clearly observe that whoever has a stronger grasp of any particular wisdom, will be able to garb and lower that wisdom further down, including to those who are of lesser [intellectual] stature.¹⁸⁷⁷ We thus find that to the degree that the wisdom-*Chochmah* is drawn down and spreads forth below, so that it can be garbed in a more external garment, to that degree it is a more primary power in the essence of the wisdom. This is because of the above-mentioned reason, that “the end action arose first in thought.”

This likewise is the meaning of “Let not the wise man glorify himself in his wisdom,” referring to the aspect of the Wisdom-*Chochmah* as it is in the person himself, which is not its ultimate end. Rather, its ultimate end is specifically when the wisdom spreads forth below. This explains the precise wording, “contemplating and knowing Me (*Haskel v’Yado’a Otee* והשכל וידוע אותי-),” meaning that one must affect the conceptualization and knowledge of *HaShem*’s יהו"ה Godliness (not only Above, but) even below.

This is the meaning of the conclusion of the verse,¹⁸⁷⁸ “for I am *HaShem* יהו"ה Who does kindness, justice, and righteousness in the earth,” specifically stating, “in the earth-*BaAretz* בארץ.” It is specifically the drawing forth to below, “in the earth-*BaAretz* בארץ,” that is bound to the most primary

¹⁸⁷⁷ See Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 1-3 and elsewhere.

¹⁸⁷⁸ Jeremiah 9:23

power. This is the meaning of the words, “contemplating and knowing Me-*Otee*-אוֹתִי,” in that through the drawing down to below (“contemplating and knowing”) we take hold of the aspect of “Me-*Otee*-אוֹתִי,” this being the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, who transcends His title God-*Elohi*”מ-אלהי"ם and [the letters of] His Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה.¹⁸⁷⁹ This will suffice for the understanding.

3.

Now, based on what was explained above, it is understood that the primary aspect is not the matter of the heavens, but specifically the matter of the earth, and this is why the earth preceded the heavens in *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Supernal thought (*Machshavah*) where the truth of the matter is “the clear world.” In this itself, the primary aspect is not the earth as it is in the aspect of the Supernal thought (*Machshavah*), the earth that preceded the heavens, but there rather must also be the matter of the earth, as it is in the aspect of the Supernal speech (*Dibur*), which is “the upside-down world” in which the heavens preceded the earth.

(This is because the view that the heavens preceded the earth is also true, in that “both these and those are the words of

¹⁸⁷⁹ See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of Intrinsic Being (*Shaar HaHavyah*), and The Gate of His Title (*Shaar HaKinuy*); Also see the discourse entitled “*Shiviti HaShem* – I have set *HaShem* before me always,” 5720, translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe 5720, Discourse 21 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5721 p. 160 and on), and elsewhere.

the Living God,”¹⁸⁸⁰ except that it is in a way of an “upside-down world.”) It is specifically the earth, as it is in the aspect of the Supernal speech (*Dibur*), that comes after being preceded by the heavens, (not as it precedes the heavens in the aspect of the Supernal thought (*Machshavah*)), where the highest level of the Bestower comes forth.

This is the meaning of the verse, “My delights are with the children of man.” That is, the ultimate perfection of the matter of pleasure (*Taanug*) is not as the Torah is in His Essential Self, blessed is He, (“I was with Him as His nursling”), nor only as it is drawn down in the particular levels of Wisdom-*Chochmah* and Understanding-*Binah*, *Zeir Anpin* and Kingship-*Malchut*, (“I was His delight day by day... playing before Him... in the inhabited areas of His earth”), but rather as it is drawn down below specifically in the earth (to “the children of man”).

In other words, this refers to the earth as it was created in actuality, through the aspect of the Supernal speech (*Dibur*) following the heavens, which were created first. It is specifically below, on the earth, that there is the matter of “My delights,” not only “delights-*Sha’ashu’im*-שעשועים” simply [without mentioning whose delights], but, “My delights-*Sha’ashu’ay*-שעשועי,” referring to the essential pleasures of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He.

(This is similar to what was explained before, that it is specifically through the drawing down of the wisdom below, [indicated by the words] “contemplating and knowing,” that the aspect of “Me-*Otee*-אותי” is present, this being the Essential

¹⁸⁸⁰ Talmud Bavli, Eruvin 13b

Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He.

With the above in mind, we can understand why the verse uses the word “delights-*Sha'ashu'im*-שעשועים” here, (“My delights (*Sha'ashu'ay*-שעשועי) are with the children of man”), as opposed to using the word “laughter-*Schok*-שחוק,” which indicates revelation. This is because *HaShem's*-ה"ה Supernal intent is not only that this be drawn down in the place of revelation, which is the matter of the earth as it precedes the heavens, but even in the earth that comes after and is below the heavens. That is, the drawing forth should be into the aspect of the concealment, and it is specifically there that there is a drawing down of the essential pleasures (*Sha'ashu'im HaAtzmiyim*).

Now, through the drawing down of the essential pleasures (*Sha'ashu'im HaAtzmiyim*) into the aspect of the concealment, done through our deeds and service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in our times, that in the coming future there will be the drawing forth of the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, below, specifically in a revealed way.

This is because the concealment is only as it presently is now, whereas in the coming future all matters will be openly revealed, as the verse states,¹⁸⁸¹ “Your Teacher will no longer be hidden behind His garment.” As the Alter Rebbe explained,¹⁸⁸² He will no longer be concealed from you through

¹⁸⁸¹ Isaiah 30:20

¹⁸⁸² Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 36; Also see Shaarei Orach of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as Gates of Light, Gate Five (*Tiferet*)

a cloak and a garment. For, as explained by the Tzemach Tzeddek¹⁸⁸³ in explanation of the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,¹⁸⁸⁴ “One who says, ‘I do not want [to have marital relations with my wife] unless I am in my clothes and she is in her clothes,’ must divorce [her] and give [her the payment for her] marriage contract.”

This is because the matter of union (*Yichud*) must specifically be without any garments. However, the revelation of the coming future is only brought about after there already has been the drawing below of the aspect of the essential delights (*Sha’ashu’im HaAtzmiyim*), at the very least in a concealed way. It is specifically then that this drawing down comes in a revealed way in the coming future.¹⁸⁸⁵

¹⁸⁸³ See Ohr HaTorah, Pinchas p. 1,082(4); Also see Ohr HaTorah, Behar p. 616(s), and elsewhere.

¹⁸⁸⁴ Talmud Bavli, Ketubot 48a

¹⁸⁸⁵ The conclusion of this discourse is missing.