

Discourse 52

*“Lehavin Inyan Taanat HaMeraglim... -
To understand the argument of the spies...”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Shlach,
Shabbat Mevarchim Tammuz, 5725
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

To understand the argument of the spies who did not want to enter the land of Israel (*Eretz Yisroel*) saying that it is “a land that devours its inhabitants,”⁹⁰⁰ we first must explain the matter of “the land was nullified”⁹⁰¹ (similar to “a land that devours its inhabitants”), of which there are two explanations.⁹⁰²

The first explanation is that when the primordial kings of the world of Chaos-*Tohu* fell in the shattering of the vessels (*Shevirat HaKeilim*), the function of the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut* (“the land”) was nullified, but it nonetheless did not fall in the shattering etc. This⁹⁰³ is because the shattering was caused because they had an aspect of the sense of self (*Yeshut*) etc., which is a matter that only is present in the other emotional qualities (*Midot*), but not in the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut*,

⁹⁰⁰ Numbers 13:32

⁹⁰¹ Beginning of Sifra d’Tzniyuta, Ch. 1 – Zohar II 176b

⁹⁰² Also see Sefer HaMaamarim 5631 p. 346 and on.

⁹⁰³ Also see Ohr HaTorah, Bereishit 17b

which is not in a state of sense of self and somethingness (*Yesh Murgash*) to the same degree.

In other words, even though it is the aspect of a “something” (*Yesh*), nonetheless, it also has the aspect of self-nullification (*Bittul*) in that the nature of its existence is that it bears both opposites as one. Therefore, it did not undergo a complete shattering and fall, but only in a way that “the land was nullified,” meaning that there only was a lack of the spreading forth of its light.

The second explanation is as stated in Likkutei Torah⁹⁰⁴ about the matter of having self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) in prayer, so much so, that the power of the soul’s being is nullified, like a flame that, of itself, ascends to be subsumed in *HaShem*’s יהו"ה light, blessed is He, this being the matter of “the land was nullified.”

Aligned to this are two explanations of the matter of “a land that devours its inhabitants.” The first explanation is as stated in Likkutei Torah on our Torah portion,⁹⁰⁵ “that it was their view that if below as above, there would be a revelation of the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He (through fulfilling the positive action *mitzvot*), their existence would be utterly nullified, which is the meaning of their words, ‘that devours its inhabitants.’”⁹⁰⁶

That is, [in and of themselves] ‘it’s inhabitants’ take up no space, are of no consideration unto themselves, and nullify themselves to His unity, blessed is He, in the lower worlds, so

⁹⁰⁴ Likkutei Torah, Behar 40a

⁹⁰⁵ Also see Likkutei Torah, Drushei Shmini Atzeret 79c

⁹⁰⁶ Likkutei Torah *ibid.* 37a

that there will be the [realization of] ‘there is nothing else etc.’”⁹⁰⁷ (This is similar to the second explanation of “the land is nullified,” which refers to the matter of the nullification of independent existence (*Bittul b’Metziyut*).)⁹⁰⁸

The second explanation is as explained in various Chassidic discourses⁹⁰⁹ in elucidation of the words “a land that consumes its inhabitants,” that their argument was that engaging in the physical (action *mitzvot*) cause [a person] to become [coarse and] physical etc. They therefore did not want to enter the land and engage in refining physical things, in that they feared that perhaps, not only would they not accomplish the refinement etc., but on the contrary, being engaged in physicality would damage them, in that through doing so they would fall from their level etc.⁹¹⁰ (This is similar to the first explanation of “the land was nullified,” which is connected to the matter of the shattering of the vessels (*Shevirat HaKeilim*) of the world of Chaos-*Tohu*), as will be explained.)

2.

Now, the explanation is as explained in Likkutei Torah at the beginning of our Torah portion,⁹¹¹ about the level and being of the land of Israel (*Eretz Yisroel*). To explain, most if

⁹⁰⁷ Likkutei Torah *ibid.* 41b; Also see 45c

⁹⁰⁸ Also see Ohr HaTorah, Shlach p. 458, “‘A land that devours its inhabitants’ is the aspect [indicated by the verse (Psalms 73:26)], ‘My flesh and my heart have become extinguished.’”

⁹⁰⁹ See Ohr HaToraah *ibid.* p. 527; Hosafot (Kehot 5757) p. 66.

⁹¹⁰ Also see Maamarei HaTzemach Tzeddek 5614 p. 21, “As it states, ‘a land that consumes its inhabitants’ (according to the first explanation)” Also see Ohr Torah of the Rav, the Maggid of Mezritch, Section 152.

⁹¹¹ Likkutei Torah *ibid.* 36c

not all of the action *mitzvot* depend specifically on the land of Israel (*Eretz Yisroel*). This is especially so in regard to matters [discussed in the Mishnaic orders of] *Zeraim* and *Kodshim*.

He continues that the verse states,⁹¹² “Not by bread alone does man live, but by all that comes out of the mouth of *HaShem*-יהו"ה etc.” We therefore must understand the advantage of bread, for is it not so, that man was also created through the utterance of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, as the verse states,⁹¹³ “Let Us make man etc.” This being so, why must man specifically receive his vitality from bread?

[Beyond this, how is it⁹¹⁴ that there is power in food to vitalize man? That is, bread is of the vegetative class (*Tzome'ach*) (and the earth, from which the bread comes forth, is of the inanimate class (*Domem*)), whereas man is of the speaking class (*Medaber*). This being so, how can it be that vegetation (*Tzome'ach*) enlivens the speaker (*Medaber*) who is much higher than it?]

However, the explanation is that, “that which comes out of the mouth of *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” as it is in the inanimate (*Domem*), vegetative (*Tzome'ach*) and animal (*Chai*), is the matter of the 288-ה"ה sparks that fell in the shattering of the vessels (*Shevirat HaKeilim*) [of the world of Chaos]. In contrast, man is from the world of Repair-*Tikkun*. Therefore, man must specifically receive his vitality from the inanimate (*Domem*), vegetative (*Tzome'ach*) and animal (*Chai*). This is

⁹¹² Deuteronomy 8:3

⁹¹³ Genesis 1:26

⁹¹⁴ See Likkutei Torah, Tzav 13b

because the root of the 288-רפ"ה sparks is very lofty etc., (which is why they fell further down.

This is as in the well-known⁹¹⁵ analogy of a wall that has fallen over, that the stones of the top of the wall fall further [from its base]). This is as explained in the writings of the Arizal,⁹¹⁶ and explained at great length in the teachings of Chassidus, beginning with the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov⁹¹⁷ and the Alter Rebbe,⁹¹⁸ and also in the Chassidic discourses of our Rebbes and leaders who followed after them, up to and including his honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rebbe, the leader of our generation.

Based on this, we can understand the great superiority of entering the land of Israel (*Eretz Yisroel*) to engage in physical matters. For, through the refinement of physical things, the root of which in the world of Chaos-*Tohu* which transcends the world of Repair-*Tikkun* and is very lofty, there is a drawing down of an even loftier light, this being the matter of drawing down the essential light of the world of Chaos-*Tohu* etc.⁹¹⁹

However, for there to be a drawing down of this lofty light (in which case, because of the great loftiness of the light, it applies for there to be the complete nullification of their existence) brought about specifically through affecting the

⁹¹⁵ Likkutei Torah, Re'eh 19c

⁹¹⁶ Likkutei Torah Eikev ibid.

⁹¹⁷ Keter Shem Tov, Section 194

⁹¹⁸ Likkutei Torah, Tzav ibid.; Matot 81d; Eikev 14a and on, and elsewhere.

⁹¹⁹ Also see the discourse entitled "*Vayahas Calev*" 5674 (*Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 1, p. 521).

refinement of physical things in which the sparks of the [lights of the] world of Chaos-*Tohu* manifest etc.⁹²⁰

It is about this that the spies argued and said,⁹²¹ “We cannot... for it is too strong for us,” [about which our sages, of blessed memory, stated],⁹²² “do not only read this [as ‘for us-*Mimenu*-מִמֶּנּוּ,’ but read it as ‘for Him-*Mimeno*-מִמֶּנּוּ’] (that they were speaking about the One Above)⁹²³ as if to say, ‘Even the Master of the house cannot extract His vessels from there.’”

His “vessels-*Keilav*-כְּלִי” refers to the vessels (*Keilim*-כלים) of the world of Chaos-*Tohu* which shattered into sparks and [fell] below etc. The “Master of the house” refers to the world of Repair-*Tikkun*, which must affect the refinement and extraction of the sparks (“His vessels-*Keilav*-כְּלִי”). The meaning of “Even the Master of the house cannot extract His vessels” is that⁹²⁴ it is not in the ability of the world of Repair-*Tikkun* to affect the refinement of the sparks of the world of Chaos-*Tohu*. This is because the lights of the world of Repair-*Tikkun* are very small, which is why they are weak, whereas the lights of the world of Chaos-*Tohu* are very great, which is why they are very strong etc.

⁹²⁰ Also see the discourse entitled “*Vayahas Calev*” 5674 (*Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 1, p. 521).

⁹²¹ Numbers 13:31

⁹²² Talmud Bavli, Sotah 35a

⁹²³ Rashi to Numbers 13:31

⁹²⁴ See Ohr HaTorah, Shlach p. 451

3.

However, about this the verse states,⁹²⁵ “Calev silenced the people for Moshe and said, ‘We certainly shall ascend and inherit it, for we certainly can do it.’” In other words, we indeed can refine the sparks of the world of Chaos-*Tohu* etc. However, [to understand this], we first must preface with some questions on this verse.⁹²⁶ That is, why does the verse state, “(Calev silenced the people) for Moshe”? At first glance, it should only have said, “Calev silenced the people.” We also must understand why he said, “we certainly can do it” after having already said, “We certainly shall ascend and inherit it.”

The explanation⁹²⁷ is that the reason there was a shattering of the vessels (*Shevirat HaKeilim*) in the emotional qualities (*Midot*) of the world of Chaos-*Tohu* etc., (to the point that there subsequently was room for the argument of the spies that “even the Master of the house cannot extract His vessels”), is because the state of the emotions (*Midot*) of the world of Chaos-*Tohu* is that of sense of self (*Yeshut*) etc., this being the arousal of emotions in a way of commotion and excitement etc.

This is why the spies said,⁹²⁸ “But the people that dwell in the Land are powerful... it is too strong,” this being the matter of the great strength of the emotional qualities (*Midot*) of the world of Chaos-*Tohu*.

⁹²⁵ Numbers 13:30

⁹²⁶ Also see the beginning of the aforementioned discourse entitled “*VaYahas Calev*” (p. 514).

⁹²⁷ Also see the end of the aforementioned discourse entitled “*VaYahas Calev*” (p. 523 and on).

⁹²⁸ Numbers 13:28-31

Therefore, to affect their refinement, the solution is to weaken the emotions (*Midot*), so the matter of self-nullification (*Bittul*) will be in them. This is the meaning of “Calev silenced-*Vayahas Calev* וַיְהִים כָּלֵב,” in that the word “*Vayahas*-וַיְהִים” is a term of silencing, and as known, silence is the matter of self-nullification (*Bittul*). In other words, he caused the weakening and nullification (*Bittul*) of the emotions (*Midot*).

To explain, self-nullification (*Bittul*) comes about through drawing the intellect (*Mochin*) down, as we clearly observe, that the more intellect (*Mochin*) a person has, to that degree the arousal of his emotions (*Midot*) will be weaker. This is because, in general, the nature of intellect (*Mochin*) is that it is settled and tranquil, like “an elder sage whose knowledge is sealed, like good wine that quietly rests upon [its sediment] etc.”⁹²⁹ This is why there only was a shattering (*Shevirah*) in the emotional qualities (*Midot*), rather than the intellectual qualities (*Mochin*).⁹³⁰

This is why the verse states, “(Calev silenced etc.,) for Moshe,” in that the effect of the nullification of the emotions (*Midot*) is the bond with Moshe, who is the aspect of Wisdom-*Chochmah*-חִכְמָה, this being the aspect of *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Name of *Ma" H*-מ"ה-45 [י"ד ה"א ו"ו ה"א], which has the ability to nullify (*Bittul*) the emotional qualities of the world of Chaos-*Tohu*. This matter had to be brought about through Calev, because the best way to nullify the words of the spies was specifically by one of the spies themselves.

⁹²⁹ Zohar III 128b

⁹³⁰ See Etz Chayim, Shaar 8 (Shaar Drushei Nekudot), Ch. 2; Torah Ohr, 110d, 118c, and elsewhere.

This is as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁹³¹ “The handle of the axe comes and is made from the forest itself.” This was also because Calev was the intermediary between Moshe and all the people, being that⁹³² Calev-כלב-52 has the same numerical value as Eliyahu-אליהו-52 and also has the numerical value of *HaShem*’s-יהו”ה Name of *Ba”N*-ב”ן-52 [י”ד [ה”ה ו”ו ה”ה].⁹³³

As known, Eliyahu-אליהו is the aspect of *HaShem*’s-יהו”ה Name of *Ba”N*-ב”ן-52 [י”ד ה”ה ו”ו ה”ה]⁹³⁴ within His Name of *Ma”H*-מ”ה-45 [י”ד ה”ה ו”ו ה”ה].⁹³⁵ It therefore was in his power to bond the people with Moshe, and draw the matter of self-nullification (*Bittul*) in them etc.

Through this [we thereby come to], “We certainly shall ascend and inherit it, for we certainly can do it.” The explanation is that when it states, “and inherit it,” this refers to inheriting the lights of the world of Chaos-*Tohu*, brought about particularly through refinement in a way of inner manifestation etc.

This particular refinement comes about after being preceded by the general weakening, this being the meaning of the words, “for we certainly can do it,” except that the general weakening is only the beginning of the work, like the general axiom that one must be “like a servant before his Master,”⁹³⁶ as

⁹³¹ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 39b, cited in Tanya, Ch. 31 (39b)

⁹³² Also see Ohr HaTorah, Shlach, Hosafot p. 52 (Kehot 5757)

⁹³³ Etz Chayim, Shaar 48, Ch. 4

⁹³⁴ Pri Etz Chayim, Shaar HaKriyat Shema, Ch. 8; Meorei Ohr, Aleph 141

⁹³⁵ See Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5565 Vol. 2 p. 956; 5566 Vol. 1, p. 178 and on, and elsewhere.

⁹³⁶ See Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 10a

in the words of Calev,⁹³⁷ “If *HaShem*-יהו"ה desires us... But do not rebel against *HaShem*-יהו"ה etc.” This is the introduction that precedes the refinement in a way of inner manifestation in each particular etc., which is the culmination of the work.

This is like the fact that the beginning of toil in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is in a way of “draw me (*Mashcheini*) etc.,”⁹³⁸ this being the general arousal that comes from Above etc. This is then followed by the toil during the counting of the Omer (*Sefirat HaOmer*) throughout the forty-nine days that we refine the particulars of the seven emotions (*Midot*) as they are inter-included with each other, the total of which is forty-nine.⁹³⁹

The explanation is that the general weakening comes through breaking oneself etc. This is as Tanya explains⁹⁴⁰ that when Moshe told them that *HaShem*-יהו"ה was angry with them etc., by hearing these harsh words [of rebuke], they were humbled, and their hearts broke within them etc. Nonetheless, this still was in a transcendent encompassing way (*Makif*) etc. and for this to be in an inner manifest way (*b'Pnimityut*) there must be contemplation of the particulars (*Hitbonenut Pratit*), in a way that each particular intellect refines a particular of the emotion, until there is the refinement of all the particulars of the emotions (*Midot*) etc.⁹⁴¹

⁹³⁷ Numbers 14:8-9

⁹³⁸ Song of Songs 1:4; See the discourse entitled “*Mashcheini*” in Ohr HaTorah, Shir HaShirim Vol. 1, p. 59 and on; Discourse by the same title of the year 5655 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5655 p. 172 and on), and elsewhere.

⁹³⁹ Sefer HaMaamarim 5655 *ibid.*, and elsewhere.

⁹⁴⁰ At the end of Ch. 29 (37b and on)

⁹⁴¹ The end of this discourse is missing.