

Discourse 26

*“VaYavo Moshe b'Toch HeAnan -
Moshe came into the cloud”*

Shabbat Parshat Mishpatim,
Shabbat Mevarchim Adar-Rishon, 5725¹²⁴⁰
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,¹²⁴¹ “Moshe came into the cloud.” Furthermore, as the verse states before this,¹²⁴² “The people stood from afar and Moshe approached the thick-cloud etc.” Rashi comments on this, “Within three partitions – darkness (*Choshech*-חושך), cloud (*Anan*-ענן), and thick cloud (*Arafel*-ערפל), as it states,¹²⁴³ ‘The mountain was burning with fire until the heart of heaven, darkness (*Choshech*-חושך), cloud (*Anan*-ענן), and thick cloud (*Arafel*-ערפל).’ The ‘*Arafel*-ערפל’ is the ‘thickness of the cloud (*Av HaAnan*-עב הענן),’ as *HaShem*-ה' said to him,¹²⁴⁴ ‘Behold, I come to you in the thickness of the cloud (*Av HaAnan*-עב הענן)’ (and the thickness of the cloud is the ‘*Arafel*-ערפל’).”

Now, we must understand why it only was Moshe who approached the “*Arafel*-ערפל,” which is the “thickness of the

¹²⁴⁰ This discourse is in concise form only.

¹²⁴¹ Exodus 24:18

¹²⁴² Exodus 20:18

¹²⁴³ Deuteronomy 4:11

¹²⁴⁴ Exodus 19:9 (and Rashi there)

cloud-*Av HaAnan*-עב הענן,” whereas all the rest of Jewish people stood from afar. For, was it not so, that at the giving of the Torah *HaShem*’s-יהוה Godliness was revealed to all the Jewish people? This is particularly so considering that the revelation of the giving of the Torah was from Above to below, as a result of which, it does not apply for there to be different levels of closer and farther etc., (however only Moshe approached etc., whereas all the rest of Jewish people stood from afar.)

2.

Now, to understand this, we first must explain the “thick cloud-*Arafel*” ערפל and its relationship to the giving of the Torah. This is as explained in the continuum discourse (*Hemshech*) of the holiday of Shavuot 5658,¹²⁴⁵ that “*Arafel*” ערפל (“the thickness of the cloud-*Av HaAnan*-עב הענן”) is a greater darkness than regular “darkness-*Choshech*” חושך (“thickness-*Av*” עב”).

However, even so, it is a very lofty level (as understood from the fact that only Moshe approached it), [as indicated by the verse],¹²⁴⁶ “He made darkness His concealment.” This is because of the overpowering strength of the light, that since it is such a great light it is not possible for it to illuminate in the recipients. This level is the aspect of “The most concealed of

¹²⁴⁵ See the discourse entitled “*VaYaamod HaAm MeiRachok*” 5658 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5658 p. 186 and on).

¹²⁴⁶ Psalms 18:12; Also see the preceding discourse of this year, Discourse 25 entitled “*uMoshe Nigash El HaArafel* – Moshe approached the thick cloud” (Sefer HaMaamarim 5725 p. 149 and on).

all concealed” (*Steema d’Khol Steemeen*). That is, it not only is an aspect of concealment relative to the recipients, this being the aspect of the Long Patient One-*Arich*, which is the light that relates to the emanations, except that it is not possible for them to absorb the light (but only a glimmer of radiance from it, whereas the remainder stays in an encompassing state (*Makif*) above).

Rather, it is the aspect of that which is concealed in essence, this being the aspect of the Ancient One-*Atik*-עתיק, which even transcends the category of being a source for the emanated, and transcends the category of revelation altogether, in that it is utterly transcendent and removed (*Ne’etak*-נעתק) within the concealment of His Essential Self. This refers to the aspect of the Unknowable Head (*Reisha d’Lo Ityada*), which is not in the state of being known, even in Himself.

With the above in mind, we can understand the relationship between the “thick cloud-*Arafel*-ערפל” and the giving of the Torah.¹²⁴⁷ This is because the root of the Torah is from the innerness (*Pnimityut*) of the Crown-*Keter* ([this being] the Ancient One-*Atik*).

This itself is the novelty of the giving of the Torah over and above the creation of the world, in that the creation of the world is also drawn from the aspect of the Crown-*Keter*. This is as the verse states, “In the beginning-*Bereishit*-בראשית God created,” which Targum Onkelos translates as “With the Primordial-*b’Kadmin*-בְּקַדְמִין *HaShem* created etc.”

¹²⁴⁷ See the discourse entitled “*Vayedaber Elohi”m* etc.,” 5658 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5658 p. 195 and on).

This refers to that which arose in His simple will to create the world, only that the creation of the world is from the aspect of the externality (*Chitzoniyut*). This includes the ten *Sefirot* of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) which are from the aspect of the externality (*Chitzoniyut*) of the Crown-*Keter*, as well as the totality of the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), which is from the aspect of the externality of the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that precedes the restraint of the *Tzimtzum*.

That is, [all this] is merely a radiance, which is why in this there was a constriction (*Tzimtzum*), this being the concealment of the light, which only applies to the aspect of a radiance (*Ha'arah*) (but not to the aspect of His Essential Self). It is upon this that the *Tzimtzum* had the effect of bringing about the divisions of above and below etc.

However, the Torah is much higher than the arousal of the desire to create the worlds, etc., as evident from the verse about Torah,¹²⁴⁸ "Through me kings will reign." That is, it is specifically through the Torah, that the desire to create the world was decided. This is because Torah is the innerness (*Pnimiyyut*) and ultimate intent in the creation of the world, (this being the matter of the word "In the beginning-*Bereishit*-בראשית," [meaning],¹²⁴⁹ "For the sake of the Torah which is called 'the beginning-*Reishit*-ראשית,'"") that there should be a dwelling place for the Holy One, blessed is He, in the lower worlds,¹²⁵⁰ meaning to draw down the aspect of the Essential

¹²⁴⁸ Proverbs 8:15; See Sifri to Numbers 18:19

¹²⁴⁹ See Rashi and Ramban to Genesis 1:1

¹²⁵⁰ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 36.

Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, to illuminate in a revealed way below.

This is brought about through the Torah, the first root of which is in the aspect of the innerness of the Essential Self of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in whom the matter of “constriction-*Tzimtzum*” is utterly inapplicable. Therefore, even upon its descent to below, its essential being undergoes no change, and it literally is below as it is above (not according to the descent and limitations of the worlds).

The root of the difference is that the drawing forth of the order of the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*) is only the aspect of a radiance (*Ha'arah*), this being the aspect of the externality (*Chitzoniyut*) of the limitless light of the Unlimited One, in that it is in the category of being drawn down and revealed according to the manner of the worlds. Therefore, the manner of the drawing down is that only the externality (*Chitzoniyut*) of the upper becomes the innerness (*Pnimiyut*) of the lower,¹²⁵¹ this being that which is according to the capacity of the receptacle of the lower. However, that which is is not possible to illuminate in a way of innerness (*b'Pnimiyut*) is drawn forth in a state of encompassing (*Makif*).

However, the Torah is rooted in the aspect of the innerness of the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, who is utterly not in the category of being drawn down (according to the capacities of the worlds), being that He is Essential etc.

¹²⁵¹ See Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 10.

Therefore, when He is drawn, the way of His being drawn is literally the matter of drawing His Essential Self.

3.

However, the drawing of His Essential Self brought about through Torah is a drawing forth in an inner way (*b'Pnimityut*), meaning that He is grasped and received in the innerness (*Pnimityut*) of the souls of the Jewish people. (This is unlike the drawing forth of the order of the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*), in which that which cannot possibly illuminate in an inner way (*b'Pnimityut*) is drawn in a state of transcendence and encompassing (*Makif*)).

Thus, since He is drawn forth in an inner way (*b'Pnimityut*), we therefore require vessels (*Keilim*) for the light (*Ohr*). (This is unlike the drawing that is drawn forth in a transcendent and encompassing state (*Makif*), in that for the encompassing light (*Ohr Makif*) there is no need for vessels, but rather, all can receive it, since from the aspect of the encompassing light (*Makif*) it is in a way in which “darkness and light are the same”).¹²⁵²

Rather, the vessels (*Keilim*) are not like the vessels (*Keilim*) of the order of the chaining down of the world (*Seder Hishtalshelut*), since the drawing down is unlike the drawing down of the order of the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*), which only is a radiance (*Ha'arah*), but is rather a drawing forth of Essence (*Etzem*).

¹²⁵² Psalms 139:12

Therefore, the vessel (*Kli*) for this is specifically the matter of nullifying (*Bittul*) and setting oneself aside. (In contrast, this is not so when it comes to the drawing down of the order of the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*), which only is the aspect of a radiance (*Ha'arah*), such that even that which is in the aspect of the existence of a something, is capable of being a receptacle for [that] light and revelation.)

4.

With the above in mind, we can understand the verse, “Moshe approached the thick cloud (*Arafel*-עֲרַפֶּל).” For, about Moshe the verse states,¹²⁵³ “For what are we-v’*Nachnu Mah-*נַחֲנוּ מֶה,” meaning that he was in a state of the utter nullification of his [independent] existence (*Bittul b’Metziyut*). In other words, he had no intention whatsoever of deriving any benefit for himself in his service, but it all stemmed from the Commander, solely to give satisfaction of spirit to the One who formed him.

Therefore, it specifically was Moshe, who approached the thick cloud (*Arafel*-עֲרַפֶּל). For, the root of the matter of the approach is as explained (in chapter three), that in the drawing forth of the inner aspect (*Pnimityut*), this being the drawing forth of the Torah, vessels (*Keilim*) are necessary, and it is through making vessels (*Keilim*) that we draw the light (*Ohr*) forth. Thus, since the vessel (*Kli*) for this is the matter of utterly nullifying (*Bittul*) and setting oneself aside, it therefore was

¹²⁵³ Exodus 16:7-8

specifically Moshe who approached in a way of closeness, such that he became a receptacle to receive, as in the teaching,¹²⁵⁴ “Moshe received the Torah from Sinai.”

In contrast, the rest of the Jewish people stood from afar, meaning that even though there was an illumination upon them of the Essential Light (*Ohr HaAtzmi*), they actually were not receptacles for this. Only in the coming future, upon the conclusion of the refinements (*Birurim*), will there then be the complete nullification of self (*Bittul*) in the souls of the Jewish people in general, and they all will literally be actual receptacles to receive this light in an inner way (*b'Pnimityut*). However, at the giving of the Torah this only occurred with Moshe alone.

¹²⁵⁴ Mishnah Avot 1:1