

Discourse 20

*“Zot Chukat HaTorah... -
This is the decree of the Torah...”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Tisa,
Parshat Parah, 20th of Adar, 5726
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,¹¹⁶⁴ “This is the decree of the Torah... they shall take to you a completely red cow etc.” Rashi explains, “Because Satan and the nations of the world taunt Israel, saying, ‘What is this commandment, and what reasoning is there for it? This is why the word ‘decree-*Chukat*-חוקת’ is used in regard to it, to indicate that it is My decree and you have no right to question it.”

Now, it is known about the precise wording used in regard to the *mitzvah* of the Red Heifer, “This is the decree (*Chukat*-חוקת) of the Torah,” that this is because the *mitzvah* of the Red Heifer is the totality of the matter of Torah.¹¹⁶⁵ That is, all the *mitzvot* of the Torah – and not only those *mitzvot* called “decrees-*Chukim*-חוקים,” but also the *mitzvot* that are called “testimonies-*Edut*-עדות,” and “ordinances-*Mishpatim*-משפטים,” – their primary matter is that they are the Supernal will of *HaShem*-ה'יהו"ה, blessed is He, which transcends the intellect, this

¹¹⁶⁴ Numbers 19:2

¹¹⁶⁵ See Likkutei Torah, Chukat (56a)

being the meaning of, “I have decreed a decree and I have issued an edict.”¹¹⁶⁶

We should add that when it states that the Red Heifer is the general matter of the Torah, this is primarily referring to the *mitzvot* of the Torah, nonetheless, being that the verse states, “This is the decree **of the Torah**,” it thus is also referring **to the Torah itself**. In other words, even when the *mitzvot* are drawn forth in the Torah, the substance of which is the matter of understanding and comprehension, nevertheless, the aspect of *HaShem*’s יהו"ה Supernal desire (*Ratzon*) that transcends Wisdom-*Chochmah* must be sensed in them.¹¹⁶⁷

This is the meaning of the words, “You have no right to question it.” That is, this not only is the negation of questioning that leads to diminishing fulfilling the *mitzvah* in actuality, Heaven forbid, but even questioning entirely to understand and grasping it, this being the matter of Torah [study] (and it goes without saying that he obviously fulfills the *mitzvah* in actuality). That is, even in regard to this it states, “You have no right to question it,” meaning that being that it is something that transcends intellect and understanding, it is impossible to come to its ultimate depth through understanding and grasp.¹¹⁶⁸

Now, the general matter of [the words], “They shall take to you a completely red cow etc.,” (about which the verse states, “This is the decree of the Torah”) is in order to purify someone who has contracted the impurity imparted by a corpse, in that

¹¹⁶⁶ Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 3, Chukat 8; Bamidbar Rabba, beginning of Chukat, and elsewhere.

¹¹⁶⁷ Also see Torat Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Tammuz, p. 23, note 21.

¹¹⁶⁸ Also see Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 19 (128a).

[death] is the father of all impurities.¹¹⁶⁹ That is, it is the most severe form of impurity.

This is as Midrash states,¹¹⁷⁰ “In every single matter that the Holy One, blessed is He, said to Moshe, He would tell him [how it becomes] impure and [how it becomes] pure. When He reached the Torah portion of, ‘Say to the priests,’ Moshe asked Him, ‘Master of the world, if they become impure, by what shall they become pure? And He did not answer him. At that moment, Moshe’s face turned pale. However, when He reached the portion of the Red Heifer, the Holy One, blessed is He, said to him... ‘This is his purification etc.’ Moshe said before Him,¹¹⁷¹ ‘Master of the world, is that purification?’ The Holy One, blessed is He, said to him, ‘It is a decree... [as it states], ‘This is the decree (*Chukat*-חוקת) of the Torah.’”

We therefore must specifically understand the matter of the purification of impurity contracted by contact with a corpse (*Tumat Meit*) brought about through the Red Heifer (*Parah Adumah*), for as known, the Red Heifer (*Parah Adumah*) receives from the left [side and mode],¹¹⁷² this being the aspect of the harshest judgments (*Gevurot*).¹¹⁷³ However, even so, it was specifically through it that the purification of impurity contracted by contact with a corpse (*Tumat Meit*) came about.

¹¹⁶⁹ Rashi to Numbers 20:22; See Mishnah Ohalot 2:1; Mishneh Torah of the Rambam, Hilchot Tumat Meit 3:1.

¹¹⁷⁰ Midrash Bamidbar Rabba 19:4; Tanchumah, Chukat 6; Kohelet Rabba 8:1(5).

¹¹⁷¹ See Midrash Kohelet Rabba *ibid*.

¹¹⁷² Zohar III 180b – cited and explained in Likkutei Torah, Chukat 56c

¹¹⁷³ Likkutei Torah *ibid*. 60c and elsewhere.

Now, to understand this, we first must preface with the explanation in the discourse of his honorable holiness, the Tzemach Tzeddek, (this year being the hundredth year anniversary of his passing and Hilulah),¹¹⁷⁴ about the verse,¹¹⁷⁵ “Moshe implored (*VaYechal Moshe*-ויחל משה) etc.” It states in the Midrash,¹¹⁷⁶ “What is the meaning of the words, ‘*VaYechal Moshe*-ויחל משה?’ That Moshe (pleaded) and transformed the bitter to sweet, in that [the word] ‘*VaYechal*-ויחל’ is related to ‘sweetening-*Chiluy*-חלוי’ (sweetness).¹¹⁷⁷ How so? When Israel came to Marah, what is written there? ‘They came to Marah [and could not drink water from Marah, for it was bitter].’¹¹⁷⁸ Moshe began ruminating within himself, ‘Why was this water created? What benefit does the world have from it?’ The Holy One, blessed is He, said to him, ‘Do not say this. Is it not My handiwork? Is there anything in the world that was created without purpose? Rather, I will teach you what you should say. Say this: Transform the bitter to sweet.’ From where is it derived that the Holy One, blessed is He, taught him to say this? See what is written,¹¹⁷⁹ ‘He cried out to *HaShem*-יהו"ה and *HaShem*-יהו"ה showed him a tree.’ It is not written

¹¹⁷⁴ Subsequently printed in Ohr HaTorah, Tisa (Vol. 6) p. 1,990 and on; p. 2,010 and on; p. 2,014 and on; Also see Ohr HaTorah, Masei p. 1,378 and on; Discourse entitled “*Vayivez b'Einav*” 5629 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5629 p. 87 and on).

¹¹⁷⁵ Exodus 32:11

¹¹⁷⁶ Midrash Shemot Rabba 43:3

¹¹⁷⁷ See Matnot Kehuna to Shemot Rabba *ibid.*, that “*Mechalia*-מחליא” means to sweeten, (citing Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zarah 39a [and see Rashi there]). Also see Etz Yosef there that the sweet dish known as “*Chalvah*-חלוה” is of the same root.

¹¹⁷⁸ Exodus 15:23

¹¹⁷⁹ Exodus 15:25

here, ‘He showed him-*Vayareihu*-ויראהו,’ but rather, ‘He taught him-*Vayoreihu*-ויררהו,’ in that ‘*Yoreihu*-ויררהו’ is nothing other than an expression of instruction etc.’ When Israel came to the Wilderness and God sought to destroy them (because of the sin of the [golden] calf), Moshe said to Him, ‘Master of the world, did You not tell me at Marah: Pray and say, ‘Transform the bitter to sweet’? Now too, sweeten (*Chali*-חלי) Israel’s bitterness and heal them.’” (This concludes the quote from the words of the Midrash).

This then, is why it states, “Moshe implored (*VaYechal Moshe*-ויחל משה),” specifically using the word “*VaYechal*-ויחל,” rather than any the other term for prayer used throughout the Torah, in order to hint at Moshe’s work in sweetening (“*VaYechal*-ויחל” indicating “sweetness”) the bitterness of Israel, by which he thereby nullified the thought to destroy them, Heaven forbid. This is as stated,¹¹⁸⁰ “He said He would destroy them, had not Moshe, His chosen one, stood in the breach before Him to turn back His wrath from destroying,” (as mentioned in the previous discourse).¹¹⁸¹

3.

He continues that this may be better understood by explaining the words of the Zohar¹¹⁸² (brought in Tanya),¹¹⁸³

¹¹⁸⁰ Psalms 106:23; Also see Midrash Shemot Rabba ibid. 43:1

¹¹⁸¹ See the prior discourse of Purim of this year, 5726, entitled “*Vayivez b’Einav* – It seemed contemptible in his eyes,” Discourse 19 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5726, p. 136).

¹¹⁸² Zohar I 4a

¹¹⁸³ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 10

“Who among you has transformed darkness to light, and bitter to sweet etc.” That is, this itself is the entire matter of the toiling in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, which generally is divided into two ways of service. That is, there is the transformation of darkness to light, and the transformation of bitter to sweet.

The explanation of transforming darkness to light¹¹⁸⁴ is that the verse states,¹¹⁸⁵ “God called the light ‘Day,’ and to the darkness He called: ‘Night.’” That is, “Day” (*Yom*-יום) is the matter of light and revelation, whereas “Night” (*Laylah*-לילה) is the matter of darkness and concealment.

This matter is present on all levels, even in the matter of His holy Names, in that this is the difference between His Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה and His title *God-Elohi*"מ-אלהי"ם.¹¹⁸⁶ That is, His Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה is the matter of light and revelation, as the verse states,¹¹⁸⁷ “For *HaShem*-יהו"ה is a sun.” In contrast, His title “*God-Elohi*"מ-אלהי"ם” is in the plural,¹¹⁸⁸ and moreover, His title “*God-Elohi*"מ-אלהי"ם-86” shares the same numerical value (*Gematria*) as “the natural order-*HaTeva*-הטבע-86,” in that it is the matter of concealing and hiding the light. This is why the verse states,¹¹⁸⁹ “In the beginning *God-Elohi*"מ-

¹¹⁸⁴ Also see *Hemshechs* 5672 Vol. 2, p. 989 and on.

¹¹⁸⁵ Genesis 1:5

¹¹⁸⁶ See *Ginat Egoz* of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of Intrinsic Being (*Shaar HaHavayah*) and the Gate of His Title (*Shaar HaKinuy*).

¹¹⁸⁷ Psalms 84:12; Also see *Tanya*, *Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah*, translated as *The Gate of Unity and Faith*, Ch. 4-5.

¹¹⁸⁸ See *Rashi* to Genesis 35:7; See *Ginat Egoz* translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of His Title (*Shaar HaKinuy*) *ibid.*; *Torah Ohr*, *Va'era* 56b; *Likkutei Torah*, *Emor* 31c; *Sefer HaMitzvot* of the *Tzemach Tzedek* 5b, and elsewhere.

¹¹⁸⁹ Genesis 1:1

אלהי"ם created," specifying "God-*Elohi*"*m*-אלהי"ם," being that the world was created in a way that the Creator is hidden and concealed from the created.

With the above in mind, we can also answer why the creation is called "something from nothing" (*Yesh MeAyin*).¹¹⁹⁰ For, at first glance, this is not understood, given that the Holy One, blessed is He, is the True Something (*Yesh HaAmeete*), whereas the creation only is that which is brought forth from the true reality of His Being, (in that "from the true reality of His Being all other beings are brought into being").¹¹⁹¹ This being so, why are novel created beings called "something" (*Yesh*), whereas the Creator, who brings them into being, is called "nothing" (*Ayin*)?

However, the explanation is that the creation specifically comes about through His title "God-*Elohi*"*m*-אלהי"ם," which is the matter of the Creator being concealed from the created. This is why the Creator is called "nothing" (*Ayin*), being that He is not understood, nor is He grasped, nor even sensed. This is why proofs and substantiations are needed that "there is a Master to this city"¹¹⁹² etc.

However, the general matter of the toil in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is to transform the darkness to light, meaning that His Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה should be revealed in the world, by which we come to sense that the existence of the "something" (*Yesh*) is entirely Godliness.

¹¹⁹⁰ See Torah Ohr, Lech Lecha 13a; Beshalach 61d; Likkutei Torah, Re'eh 19c, 26d, and elsewhere.

¹¹⁹¹ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 1:1 and on.

¹¹⁹² See Midrash Bereishit Rabba 39:1

However, at first glance, it is not understood how it could be possible to bring about the revelation of Godly light in the world, when at the same time, the creation of the world in the six days of creation was by way of concealing the Creator from the created.

The explanation is that the ultimate perfection of the creation was on the sixth day creation when Adam, the first man, was created and immediately said to all the creations,¹¹⁹³ “Come! Let us prostrate ourselves and bow, let us kneel before *HaShem*-יהו"ה, our Maker.” That is, Adam, the first man, revealed *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness in the world, and in the same way, every Jew must reveal *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness in the world.

Now, the empowerment for this is because of the soul of man, as the verse states,¹¹⁹⁴ “The soul of man is the flame of *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” in that the souls of the Jewish people are called “the flame of *HaShem*-יהו"ה.” That is, just as the light of a physical flame illuminates the darkness, so it is of the souls of the Jewish people, that through their toil [in serving Him] they draw down and reveal His Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה below to illuminate the darkness of the world.¹¹⁹⁵

More specifically, [another] verse states,¹¹⁹⁶ “For You are my flame, *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” and it also is written,¹¹⁹⁷ “A *mitzvah* is a flame [and Torah is light].” The explanation is that to be capable of illuminating the darkness of the world through

¹¹⁹³ Psalms 95:6; Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer, Ch. 11; Zohar I 221b; Zohar III 107b

¹¹⁹⁴ Proverbs 20:27

¹¹⁹⁵ Also see Likkutei Torah, Va'etchanan 2a; Ohr HaTorah ibid. p. 45.

¹¹⁹⁶ Samuel II 22:29

¹¹⁹⁷ Proverbs 6:23

the revelation in his soul of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, ("Man's soul is the flame of *HaShem*-יהו"ה"), the empowerment for this must be granted from Above, ("the Holy One, blessed is He, assists him").¹¹⁹⁸ This is the meaning of, "For **You** are my flame, *HaShem*-יהו"ה."

This empowerment from Above is drawn down through the *mitzvot*, which is the matter of "A *mitzvah* is a flame." Through this, the toil of the souls of the Jewish people transforms darkness to light. That is, the **empowerment** for this toil is drawn forth from Above, but the **actual toil** of transforming darkness to light is specifically done by the souls of the Jewish people.

This is done through the general toil of fulfilling the *mitzvot*,¹¹⁹⁹ by which we draw a revelation of the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, into physical things of the shiny husk (*Kelipat Nogah*), referring to all things that are pure and permissible, through which the physical *mitzvot* are performed, such as the parchment of the *mitzvah* of Tefillin, (which equally applies to all other *mitzvot* of the Torah, since all the *mitzvot* are equated to Tefillin).¹²⁰⁰ This is as our sages, of blessed memory, taught,¹²⁰¹ "The hide of a kosher animal alone is suitable for Heavenly service...[meaning] from that which is permitted in your mouth."¹²⁰²

¹¹⁹⁸ See Talmud Bavli, Sukkah 52b; Kiddushin 30b; Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, beginning of Ch. 13.

¹¹⁹⁹ Also see Ramaz to Zohar I *ibid.*, cited in Ohr HaTorah, Tisa p. 2,000.

¹²⁰⁰ Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 35a

¹²⁰¹ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 28b

¹²⁰² See Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 7.

There also is another way in one's toil in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, which is the matter of transforming the bitter to sweet. That is, the bitter should be transformed to sweet. This is the general matter of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, by turning to Him in repentance (*Teshuvah*),¹²⁰³ such that "his willful sins are transformed and become as merits for him."¹²⁰⁴

In explaining the matter of transforming the bitter to sweet, it states in Tanya,¹²⁰⁵ "This advice is contained in the well-known saying of our sages, of blessed memory,¹²⁰⁶ 'Just as a person makes a blessing over good [fortune, so must he also makes a blessing over misfortune] etc.'

The Talmud explains¹²⁰⁷ (that what is meant here is not the wording of the blessing, being that over good tidings one recites the blessing, 'He who is good and does good,' whereas over bad tidings he recites [a different blessing] etc. It rather means 'that he is to accept it with joy,' like the joy in goodness that is visibly and obviously good, being that 'this too is good,'¹²⁰⁸ except that it is not visible and apparent to one's eyes of flesh, being that it stems from the concealed world (*Alma d'Itkasiya*) which is higher than the revealed world (*Alma d'Itgaliya*), the [revealed world] stemming from the letters *Vav*-

¹²⁰³ Also see *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 3, p. 1,315.

¹²⁰⁴ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 86b

¹²⁰⁵ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 26

¹²⁰⁶ Mishnah Brachot 9:5; Talmud Bavli, Brachot 54a

¹²⁰⁷ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 60b

¹²⁰⁸ Talmud Bavli, Taanit 21a

Hey-ה"י of His Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, whereas the concealed world (*Alma d'Itkasiya*) stems from the letters *Yod-Hey-ה"י* etc.”

However, the above is only in relation to how one **accepts** the suffering with joy. That is, by contemplating this matter, that Above, the root and source of suffering is the hidden goodness of the concealed world (*Alma d'Itkasiya*), he thereby accepts the suffering with joy. Nonetheless, as this actually is below, as perceived by his eyes of flesh, it is the opposite of goodness.

Now, there is an even higher way,¹²⁰⁹ as explained in Iggeret HaKodesh,¹²¹⁰ “When one truly believes this (that in truth, ‘no bad comes down from Above,’¹²¹¹ and it all is good, except that it cannot be grasped because of its great and immense goodness), it all becomes good, even on a revealed level. For, with such faith, that a person believes that what manifestly seems to be bad, in fact receives all its vitality from *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Supernal goodness etc., through this faith the imagined evil becomes truly subsumed and elevated in *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Supernal hidden goodness.”

This is like what we found about Nachum Ish Gam Zu, that he would say, “This too is good” (*Gam Zu LeTovah*) about everything that happened to him,¹²¹² such that even the undesirable literally became good. This is as related in

¹²⁰⁹ Also see Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 1, p. 284 and on.

¹²¹⁰ Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 11

¹²¹¹ See Midrash Bereishit Rabba 51:3; Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of Intrinsic Being (*Shaar HaHavayah*); Shnei Luchot HaBrit 106b

¹²¹² Talmud Bavli, Taanit 21a

Talmud,¹²¹³ “They sent with him a chest full of jewels and pearls to bring as a gift to Caesar. [On his way], he spent the night in a certain inn. While at the inn, they took all the jewels and pearls and filled the chest with sand. He accepted this with joy and said, ‘This too is good.’” Later it became apparent, in a revealed way, that this actually was for the good, in that the sand that he brought was more precious [to Caesar] than jewels and pearls.

As explained in Likkutei Torah,¹²¹⁴ he would contemplate that, in truth, the root of the bad is good, thus elevating it to its root Above, and there he could affect the change etc., thus causing a change in the drawing down from Above to below, so that below it [also] was physically observable as actual goodness.

However, this matter does not apply to every Jew, but only to singularly unique individuals, such as Nachum Ish Gam Zu. In contrast, this is not so of other Jews, including even righteous *Tzaddikim*. For, even if¹²¹⁵ they would align their thoughts in this way (and contemplate that, in truth, the root of the bad is good), nonetheless, the (upper goodness) would remain Above as it was, without coming into comprehension etc.

We thus find that the general order in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in this way, is solely by way of receiving the matter with joy, by contemplating that the root of the bad is

¹²¹³ Talmud Bavli, Taanit 21a *ibid*.

¹²¹⁴ Likkutei Torah, Chukat *ibid*. 62a

¹²¹⁵ Likkutei Torah *ibid*.

good, but not in a way that the bad is actually and literally transformed to good.

This is because, presently it is not possible for the hidden goodness to be drawn down and be revealed in this world, being that the world has yet to become sufficiently refined. Only in the coming future, when the prophecy,¹²¹⁶ “I will remove the spirit of impurity from the earth,” will be fulfilled, will even the hidden goodness be drawn and revealed in this world.

This also is the meaning of what our sages, of blessed memory, stated¹²¹⁷ about the verse,¹²¹⁸ “On that day *HaShem*-יהוה will be One and His Name One.” They said, “Is this to say that now He is not One? Rather, the coming world is not like this world. In this world [the blessing] we recite for good tidings is, ‘He who is good and does good,’ and over bad tidings one recites, ‘Blessed is the True Judge.’ However, in the coming world a person will always recite, ‘He who is good and does good.’”

In other words, in this world there are bad tidings, (and even when one accepts them with joy and makes the blessing over them, nevertheless, the blessing [one recites] differs in its wording from the blessing made over good tidings). In contrast, in the coming world there only will be good tidings, in actuality and in a revealed way, over which one recites, “He who is good and does good.”

¹²¹⁶ Zachariah 13:2

¹²¹⁷ Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 50a

¹²¹⁸ Zachariah 14:9

This is because in the coming world (in the coming future) His Upper Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה will be revealed (the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה of the Holy Ancient One-*Atika Kadisha*) which is in the concealed world (*Alma d'Itkasiya*). [This is also understood from the continuing words of the above-mentioned teaching of our sages, of blessed memory, on the words, "and His Name One."

They said, "The coming world is not like this world. In this world His Name is written with *Yod-Hey*-י"ד ה"י but is read with *Aleph-Dalet*-דל"ה א"ל, but in the coming world it all will be one, that is, it will be written with *Yod-Hey*-י"ד ה"י and read with *Yod-Hey*-י"ד ה"י.] As a result, even matters that are the opposite of good, will be transformed to openly revealed and clearly apparent good.

Now, since all matters of the coming future depend on our deeds and service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, throughout the time of exile,¹²¹⁹ it is understood that the preparation for the fulfillment of the prophecy, "On that day *HaShem*-יהו"ה will be One and His Name One," when we only will recite, "He who is good and does good," comes about through serving Him in a way that is similar to this, this being the matter of accepting [what seems to be bad] with joy.

This comes about through contemplating that the root of the bad is good, (even though it is not seen or revealed to one's eyes of flesh). Through this we merit the state and standing of the coming future, when we only will recite, "He who is good and does good," in a way that [the good] is seen and openly revealed to one's eyes of flesh.

¹²¹⁹ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 37.

This also is the meaning of the statement in Tanya,¹²²⁰ on the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,¹²²¹ that about those who rejoice in suffering, the verse states,¹²²² “Those who love Him shall be as the sun when it comes out in its might,” that “he will merit [seeing] ‘the sun coming out in its might’ in the coming world, when the ‘sun’ will emerge from its ‘sheath’ within which it is hidden in this world, whereas in the coming world it will be revealed from its sheath.

This is because the concealed world (*Alma d'Itkasiya*) will be revealed, and He will shine and illuminate with great revelation etc.” That is, through the toil in serving *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, of accepting [suffering] with joy, we merit that the good of the concealed world (*Alma d'Itkasiya*) will be drawn down to illuminate in a revealed way below.

5.

With the above in mind, we can also understand the meaning of the words, “Moshe implored-*VaYechal Moshe*- ויחל משה,” meaning that “he transformed the bitter to sweet,” this being the matter of “[those of you] who taste the bitter as sweet,” in that the bitter becomes transformed to sweetness. This is like what took place at Marah, that the bitter waters were transformed and became sweet, as it states,¹²²³ “The water became sweet,” in that he caused them to literally become sweet below, in actuality.

¹²²⁰ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 26

¹²²¹ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 88b

¹²²² Judges 5:31

¹²²³ Exodus 15:25

A radiance of this aspect of Moshe that was also present in Nachum Ish Gam Zu.¹²²⁴ However, this matter was primarily in Moshe. This is as stated in Talmud,¹²²⁵ “Where in the Torah is there an allusion to Moshe? In the verse,¹²²⁶ ‘since he is but (*b’SheGam*-בשגם) flesh,’” in which the word “since he is but-*b’SheGam*-בשגם-345” shares the same numerical value as “Moshe-משה-345.” In other words, Moshe drew down the aspect of “This too is good-*Gam Zu LeTovah*-גם זו לטובה,” this being the matter of “Moshe sweetened-*VaYechal Moshe*-ויחל משה,” in that he sweetened the bitterness of Israel, and “turned back His wrath from destroying.”

This is as explained above, that the transformation of bitter to sweet, (so that even matters that are the opposite of goodness are transformed into literal goodness), comes through the revelation of His Upper Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, (the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה of the Holy Ancient One-*Atika Kadisha*). This relates to our teacher Moshe, who drew forth the thirteen attributes of mercy “which do not return emptyhanded.”¹²²⁷ This is as stated in Zohar¹²²⁸ that Moshe drew forth the thirteen attributes of mercy from the Holy Ancient One-*Atika Kadisha* to *Zeir Anpin*, this being the matter of his Upper Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה which was specifically drawn forth by Moshe.

This is as explained in Torah Ohr, Va’era,¹²²⁹ and at length in the discourses of the Tzemach Tzeddek in Ohr

¹²²⁴ Likkutei Torah, Chukat 62a

¹²²⁵ Talmud Bavli, Chullin 139b (and Rashi there)

¹²²⁶ Genesis 6:3

¹²²⁷ Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 17b, cited in Rashi to Exodus 33:19

¹²²⁸ Zohar III 138a

¹²²⁹ Torah Ohr, Va’era 56c

HaTorah,¹²³⁰ (that are founded on the discourse in Torah Ohr), in explanation of the verse,¹²³¹ “I appeared to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Yaakov as *E”l Shaddai*—א”ל שד”י, but with My Name *HaShem*—יהו”ה I did not make Myself known through them... Therefore, say to the children of Israel, ‘I am *HaShem*—יהו”ה.”¹²³²

That is, even though we find that His Name *HaShem*—יהו”ה was also revealed to our forefathers, nonetheless, only His lower Name *HaShem*—יהו”ה was revealed to our forefathers, whereas through Moshe there was a drawing forth and revelation of His Upper Name *HaShem*—יהו”ה as well. Thus, since for our teacher Moshe there was the revelation of His Upper Name *HaShem*—יהו”ה, through this he sweetened the bitter in actuality, so that in a revealed way it only is good.

6.

Now, this matter can be connected to the explanation in the discourse of the Alter Rebbe, (in the booklet of manuscripts¹²³³ that recently came out of exile to

¹²³⁰ Ohr HaTorah, Vol. 1, p. 144; Vol. 7, p. 2,503 and on, and elsewhere.

¹²³¹ Exodus 6:3-6

¹²³² [Also see Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of Intrinsic Being (*Shaar HaHavayah*) and The Gate of The Name (*Shaar HaShem*).]

¹²³³ A very old manuscript [booklet number 757 in the library of Agudat Chassidei Chabad, subsequently printed in *Maamarei Admor HaZaken* 5563 Vol. 2, p. 736 and on], based on the appearance of the paper etc. It was written by copyists whose handwriting is similar to the handwriting of the Alter Rebbe. [This is as related by his honorable holiness, my father-in-law the Rebbe, that from generation to generation the copyists endeavored that their handwriting should be similar to the handwriting of our Rebbes, our leaders. (Also see *Torat Menachem*, Vol. 42 p. 140).] It appears that it was written even before the printing of *Torah Ohr* and *Likkutei*

redemption),¹²³⁴ on the verse,¹²³⁵ “Tell me, love of my soul, where do You pasture etc.”

He explains that the word, “Tell me-*Hagidah*-הגידה” is a word that indicates drawing forth (*Hamshachah*), as in the verse,¹²³⁶ “A river streamed forth (*Nageid*-נגיד) etc.,” and similarly,¹²³⁷ “That my mouth will flow (*Yageed*-יגיד) [with Your praises] etc.” That is, this verse is the request of the ingathering of [the souls of] Israel from the Holy One, blessed is He, that He should draw forth to her (“Draw forth to me-*Hagidah Li*-לי-הגידה”) the love that is the “love of my soul.”

That is, the love that He loved her, when she still was Above before descending into the body, should flow and be drawn to her even now, as she has descended into the materiality of the body. This refers to the revelation of the hidden light of the concealed love (*Ahavah Mesuteret*) present in the souls of all Jews.

He explains in the discourse that even though there are matters that hide and conceal the hidden light of the concealed love, this nevertheless is drawn forth and revealed through the thirteen attributes of mercy. [This is as hinted at in the word “Tell me-*Hagidah*-הגידה” which has the letters *Yod-Gimel*-י”ג-

Torah, since it has within it discourses that also were subsequently printed in Likkutei Torah. It is possible that it was even written during the lifetime of the Alter Rebbe, or at the very least, a short while after his passing.

¹²³⁴ Until now this manuscript was in the possession of a Jew who, until now, at least openly, was not observant of Torah and *mitzvot*. It seems that he was roused to send the manuscript here.

¹²³⁵ Song Songs 1:7

¹²³⁶ Daniel 7:10

¹²³⁷ Psalms 51:17

13 within it.] These are the “thirteen rivers of pure balsam oil” (*Yod-Gimmel Naharei d’Afarsemona Dachya*).¹²³⁸

In other words, just as a river purifies and cleanses everything of the dirt, and washes away all things that obstruct etc., this likewise is so of the radiance of the thirteen attributes of mercy, that they whiten and purify the external husks of the uncircumcised heart, opening that which is closed and concealed etc.

The verse continues, “Where do you pasture (*Eichah Tireh*-איכה תרעה) etc.” This provides the reason for the request, “Tell me, love of my soul,” (that there should be the drawing forth and revelation of the hidden love). For, if You do not “tell” [and draw forth], then “How do you pasture (*Eichah Tireh*-איכה תרעה)?” That is, how can there be the matter indicated by the word, “My beloved-*Ra’ayati*-רעיתי”¹²³⁹ (which is of the same root as the word “you Pasture-*Tireh*-תרעה”), meaning, “My benefactor-*Parnasati*-פרנסתי”¹²⁴⁰ in that “Israel provides the livelihood (*Parnassah*-פרנסה) of their Father in Heaven.”¹²⁴¹

In other words, if there is no drawing and revelation of the hidden love (*Ahavah Mesuteret*), the livelihood (*Parnassah*) of our Father in Heaven will not be possible, since it is brought about through the toil and service of Him of the Jewish people. That is, the request entreated by the ingathering of the souls of Israel (*Knesset Yisroel*), “Tell me, love of my soul-*Hagidah Li*

¹²³⁸ See Taanit 25a; Zohar Chadash, Ruth 76c; Torah Ohr, Terumah 81a, and elsewhere.

¹²³⁹ Song of Songs 1:9

¹²⁴⁰ Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabba 1:9 (6)

¹²⁴¹ See Zohar III 7b

SheAhavah Nafshi-נפשי-שאהבה לי שהגידה,” (meaning, that the hidden love should be drawn forth and revealed), is not for her own sake, but is for the sake of the Holy One, blessed is He, so that thereby the matter of “Israel provides the livelihood (*Parnassah*-פרנסה) of their Father in Heaven,” would be possible.

In the discourse, the Alter Rebbe points out that the ingathering of the souls of Israel (*Kneset Yisroel*) humbles herself, [saying], “I myself am not worthy of it, but for Your sake, ‘Tell me etc.’” From this it is understood that, in truth, the ingathering of the souls of Israel (*Kneset Yisroel*) indeed can request for her own sake and by her own merit, (being that the children of Israel are the “children of the Ever Present One”).¹²⁴² However she nevertheless humbles herself and requests this for the sake of the Holy One, blessed is He.

This matter, that the radiance of the thirteen attributes of mercy whiten and cleanse the external husks of the heart, thus revealing the hidden light of the concealed love, is connected to the explanation above, that through the thirteen attributes of mercy the transformation of bitter to sweet is caused, so that there only is openly revealed goodness.

7.

Based on this, we can explain the purification of the impurity contracted by a corpse (*Tumat Meit*) through the Red Heifer (*Parah Adumah*), even though it is the aspect of very harsh judgments (*Gevurot*).

¹²⁴² Avot 3:14

The explanation is that about the Red Heifer (*Parah Adumah*) the verse states,¹²⁴³ “They shall take to you,” meaning, specifically to Moshe. This is as Rashi states,¹²⁴⁴ “It will always be called by your name, ‘the cow that Moshe prepared.’” Now, based on the explanation above, that the matter of Moshe is that through him there is a drawing down of the thirteen attributes of mercy to transform the bitter to sweet, it is understood that it is in Moshe’s power to even transform the harsh judgments (*Gevurot*) of the Red Heifer and sweeten them, such that by means of them there even can be the purification of impurity contracted from a corpse (*Tumat Meit*).¹²⁴⁵

This then, is also why the matter of Moshe is to sweeten the bitterness of Israel, as indicated by the words “Moshe sweetened-*VaYechal Moshe* וַיַּחֵל מֹשֶׁה.” This is also as stated in Midrash,¹²⁴⁶ “To what is the wicked Haman analogues to? To a bird who made a nest on the seashore and [the sea swept his nest away, and he said, ‘I will not move from here until the sea becomes dry land and the dry land becomes sea.’”

What did he do? He took water from the sea in his beak and poured it on the land, and took sand from the land and cast it into the sea.] His friend came and stood over him and said to him, [‘Luckless and unfortunate one! Ultimately what can you accomplish?’] So said the Holy One, blessed is He, to the wicked Haman, ‘World class fool! I said I would destroy them,

¹²⁴³ Numbers 19:2 *ibid*.

¹²⁴⁴ Rashi to Numbers 19:2

¹²⁴⁵ Also see Ohr HaTorah, Masei p. 1,391

¹²⁴⁶ Midrash Esther Rabba 7:10

so to speak, and could not do so, as the verse states,¹²⁴⁷ ‘He said He would destroy them, had not Moshe, His chosen one, stood in the breach before Him to turn back His wrath from destroying,’ and you said, ‘to destroy, to kill, and to eliminate’ [them]? By your life, your head will be severed instead of their heads, for they are destined for deliverance and you for hanging.”

In the preceding discourse¹²⁴⁸ it was explained that “his friend” refers to *Zeir Anpin* of the world of Repair-*Tikkun*, who is the friend of *Zeir Anpin* of the world of Chaos-*Tohu*. About this “his friend said to him,” this being *Zeir Anpin* of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), “I said I would destroy them, so to speak, and could not do so, as it states, ‘He said He would destroy them, had not Moshe, His chosen one, stood in the breach before Him to turn back His wrath from destroying.’”

In other words, when the Jewish people sinned and caused blemish in *Zeir Anpin* of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), which is why He sought to destroy them, He was unable to do so, so to speak, being that “Moshe, His chosen one, stood in the breach before Him, to turn back His wrath from destroying,” through drawing the thirteen attributes of mercy forth, through which he transformed the bitter to sweet, to sweeten the bitterness of Israel.

To explain, even though the verse states, “had not Moshe,” specifying “had not-*Loolei*-לוֹלֵי,” and about the word

¹²⁴⁷ Psalms 106:23

¹²⁴⁸ See the prior discourse of Purim of this year, 5726, entitled “*Vayivez b’Einav* – It seemed contemptible in his eyes,” Discourse 19 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5726, p. 136).

“had not-*Loolei*-לוֹלֵי” it states in Midrash¹²⁴⁹ on the verse,¹²⁵⁰ “Had not (*Loolei*-לוֹלֵי) the God of my father – the God of Avraham and the dread of Yitzchak etc.,” that every place where it states “had not-*Loolei*-לוֹלֵי,” it comes in the merit of our forefathers. Thus, here too, Moshe said,¹²⁵¹ “Remember for the sake of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yisroel, Your servants.” Nevertheless, this was only for the **merit** of our forefathers, however, **in actuality**, this was specifically brought about by Moshe.¹²⁵²

¹²⁴⁹ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 74:12

¹²⁵⁰ Genesis 31:42

¹²⁵¹ Exodus 32:13

¹²⁵² The conclusion of this discourse is missing.