

Discourse 44

*“Ki HaMitzvah HaZot... -
For this commandment...”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Nitzavim,

28th of Elul, 5728

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

1.

The verse states,²⁶¹⁹ “For this commandment that I command you today – it is not hidden from you and is not distant. It is not in heaven... nor is it across the sea... Rather, the matter is very near to you – in your mouth and in your heart – to do it.” Now, we must understand why the verse states, “It is not hidden from you and is not distant,” which seems to indicate that, in and of itself, it **is** hidden and removed, only that it is not hidden or distant “**from you-*Meemcha*-ממך**.” This being so, we must understand the greatness of the matter of “from you-*Meemcha*-ממך” that causes that this *mitzvah*, which in and of itself, is hidden and distant, to not hidden or distant.

We must also understand the conclusion of the verse, “Rather, the matter is very near to you etc., to do it.” According to the simple explanation, that the word “*Ki*-כי” here means “rather,” it makes sense, and the continuation is understood. However, according to the explanation that the word “*Ki*-כי” here [means “because”] and gives the reason for the matter, we must understand the meaning of the reason given, that “the matter is

²⁶¹⁹ Deuteronomy 30:11-14

very near to you etc.,” and because of this “it is not hidden from you and is not distant.”

2.

This may be understood by prefacing with the explanation of the Alter Rebbe in Likkutei Torah,²⁶²⁰ and in Ohr HaTorah²⁶²¹ of the Tzemach Tzeddek (whose birthday is on Erev Rosh HaShanah). Namely, that wherever it says, “This day-*HaYom*-היום” it is referring to Rosh HaShanah,²⁶²² being that “this day (*HaYom*-היום) is the beginning of Your works.”²⁶²³

However, we must understand why Rosh HaShanah is called “the beginning of Your works.” This is because Rosh HaShanah is the day that Adam, the first man, was created, which was on the sixth day of creation, whereas the world was created on the 25th of Elul.²⁶²⁴ Thus, why is the day that Adam, the first man, was created, called “the beginning of Your works”?

The explanation is that the sustainment of all the creations depends on the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of man. That is, through man serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, this has an effect on all the creations. An example of this is the coronation [that takes place] on Rosh HaShanah. This is as stated in Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer, that on the day of his creation, Adam, the first man, said to all the creations,²⁶²⁵ “Come! Let us prostrate ourselves and bow, let us kneel before *HaShem*-יהו"ה our Maker.”

Through doing so, he caused all the creations to crown the Holy One, blessed is He, over them. Thus, since the sustainment of all the creations depends on man’s work in serving *HaShem*-

²⁶²⁰ Likkutei Torah, Tavo 41c; 42b

²⁶²¹ Ohr HaTorah, Na”Ch Vol. 1, p. 651

²⁶²² See Zohar II 32b and Ramaz there.

²⁶²³ Musaf liturgy of Rosh HaShanah (Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 27a)

²⁶²⁴ Midrash Vayikra Rabba, beginning of Ch. 29

²⁶²⁵ Psalms 95:6

יהו"ה, blessed is He, therefore the day of the creation of Adam, the first man, is called "the beginning of Your works."

However, this itself must be understood. For, how is it possible for man to have an effect on all the creations? For even though he is the choicest of the creations, this itself is not sufficient cause for him to be capable of affecting all the creations.

The explanation is that man includes all matters present in creation (as will be explained). It therefore is in his ability to affect all the creations, meaning, to draw down and give them matters that are present in himself.

3.

The explanation is that, as known²⁶²⁶ the creation of man differed from the creation of all other creatures. For, about the creation of man the verse states, "Let Us make man,"²⁶²⁷ in which the word "Let Us make-*Na'aseh*-נַעֲשֶׂה" is plural, and the verse does not say "Let there be man" as it does on the first day of creation,²⁶²⁸ "Let there be light-*Yehiy Ohr*-יְהִי אוֹר," and as is so of other creations created during the six days of creation (including the sixth day, the day that Adam, the first man, was created).

It is explained in Tikkunei Zohar²⁶²⁹ that about the creation of man, the verse states "Let Us make-*Na'aseh*-נַעֲשֶׂה" in the plural, because the creation of man was through all ten *Sefirot*. In contrast, this was not so of the other creations, each one being created from a single particular and level. For example, light (*Ohr*-אוֹר) was created from Kindness-*Chessed*, and similarly, the

²⁶²⁶ About the coming section, see Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5565 Vol. 2 p. 935 and on; Ohr HaTorah, Nitzavim p. 1,229 and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5626 p. 242 and on; 5638 p. 301 and on; Also see Sefer HaMitzvot of the Tzemach Tzedek, Mitzvat Viduy u'Teshuvah (38a and on).

²⁶²⁷ Genesis 1:26

²⁶²⁸ Genesis 1:3

²⁶²⁹ Tikkun 47 (83b); Tikkun 56 (90b); Tikkun 70 (120a)

first day of creation was from the aspect of Kindness-*Chessed*, and the same is so of the other creations, which were created on each of the six days of creation.

We should add that the same is so in the root of the creations, in the Supernal Chariot (*Merkavah*). That is, the face of the lion is to the right and the face of the ox is to the left,²⁶³⁰ whereas the Man upon the throne is higher than the divisions of the levels of right and left etc. This likewise is drawn down to below.

This is as stated by Rambam (in his introduction to his commentary on Mishnah),²⁶³¹ that all creations have one function or two functions, but man does many deeds etc. Thus, since man is created from all ten *Sefirot*, he therefore includes all levels in the order of the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*), and because of this, it is in his ability to affect them all.

Now, the creation of man from all ten *Sefirot* (which is why he includes all levels in the chaining down of the worlds), is for there to be the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in Torah and *mitzvot*, this being *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה ultimate intention in creating man, as in the teaching,²⁶³² "I was created to serve my Maker," meaning, through fulfilling the *mitzvot*.

This is as stated,²⁶³³ "*HaShem* God-*HaShem* *Elohi*" מ-יהו"ה took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden, to work it and to guard it," in that "to work it" (*L'Avdah*-לעבודה) refers to the 248-רמ"ח positive action *mitzvot*, and "to guard it" (*L'Shamrah*-לשמרה) refers to the 365-שס"ה negative prohibitive *mitzvot*.²⁶³⁴

²⁶³⁰ Ezekiel 1:10

²⁶³¹ In the section entitled "*Achar Kach Ra'ah LeHistapek*."

²⁶³² See the Mishnah and Baraita at the end of tractate Kiddushin

²⁶³³ Genesis 2:15

²⁶³⁴ See Targum Yonatan ben Uziel to Genesis 2:15; Zohar I 27a; Zohar II 165b; Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 21 (62a); Tikkun 55 (88b); Yalkut Reuveni to Genesis 2:15.

The explanation is that, as known, every Jew must fulfill all 613 *mitzvot* of the Torah, (as cited in Iggeret HaKodesh).²⁶³⁵ However, at first glance, how is it possible for every individual soul to fulfill all 613 *mitzvot*, given that they differ from each other and depend on all the ten *Sefirot*. This is as explained in Pri Etz Chayim and in Sefer HaKavanot of the Arizal, that every *mitzvah* depends on a particular *Sefirah*. That is, there are *mitzvot* that are in the aspect of pleasure (*Taanug*) and those that are in the aspect of desire (*Ratzon*). Likewise, there are *mitzvot* that are in the brains of the Father-*Abba* (Wisdom-*Chochmah*) and those in the brains of the Mother-*Imma* (Understanding-*Binah*) and likewise in the aspect of the emotions (*Midot*).

It likewise states in Tikkunei Zohar²⁶³⁶ that all the *mitzvot* depend on the Name *HaShem*-יהוה, “like grapes bound to the cluster). That is, there are *mitzvot* that are bound to the letter *Yod*-י (as well as to the thorn of the letter *Yod*-י) and there are *mitzvot* that are bound to the first letter *Hey*-ה, and likewise to the letter *Vav*-ו and to the final letter *Hey*-ה.

This being so, it makes sense that as the soul is Above, in the aspect of “she is pure,”²⁶³⁷ in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*),²⁶³⁸ which is the World of Oneness (*Olam HaAchdut*),²⁶³⁹ it has a relation to the ten *Sefirot* etc. However, this is not so upon its descent into the aspects of “You created her, You formed her, You blew her,”²⁶⁴⁰ which are the three worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Asiyah*),²⁶⁴¹ which is the

²⁶³⁵ Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, end of epistle 7; 19; beginning of 29.

²⁶³⁶ Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 2a

²⁶³⁷ Liturgy of the “*Elo ’hai Neshamah*” in the morning blessings.

²⁶³⁸ See Siddur HaArizal in the morning blessings; Likkutei Torah, Re’eh 27a and elsewhere.

²⁶³⁹ See Likkutei HaShas of the Arizal, beginning of Tractate Shabbat, and elsewhere.

²⁶⁴⁰ Liturgy of the “*Elo ’hai Neshamah*” in the morning blessings.

²⁶⁴¹ Siddur HaArizal *ibid*.

World of Division (*Olam HaPirud*),²⁶⁴² to the point of manifesting in the animalistic soul and the physical body in order to physically fulfill the *mitzvot*.

However, the explanation is that this is why about the creation of man the verse states, “Let Us make man,” in the plural. That is, he was created through all ten *Sefirot* and includes them all, so that through this, man has the power to fulfill all 613 *mitzvot* that are bound to the ten *Sefirot* etc.

Moreover, through fulfilling the *mitzvot* below, man can have an effect on the *Sefirot* [above], so that there is a drawing down of lights (*Orot*) into vessels (*Keilim*), and not only in the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*), but beyond this, through man’s service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, additional illumination of the lights (*Orot*) is even caused in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*).²⁶⁴³

The power for this to be is from the utterance, “Let Us make man-*Na’aseh Adam*-נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם,” which is the command **to the ten *Sefirot***, “Let Us make man-*Na’aseh Adam*-נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם.” This is because the One who says, “Let Us make man-*Na’aseh Adam*-נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם” transcends the ten *Sefirot* (which is why He can command them) and beyond this, He even transcends the aspect of the Crown-*Keter*. For, since the utterance “Let Us make man” is the empowerment for the fulfillment of the *mitzvot*, which also includes *mitzvot* that depend on the thorn of the letter *Yod*-י, which is the aspect of the Crown-*Keter* (as explained in Iggeret HaTeshuvah),²⁶⁴⁴ it therefore must be said that the One who says, “Let Us make man” even transcends the aspect of the Crown-*Keter*.

²⁶⁴² See Etz Chayim, Shaar 43 (Shaar Tziyur Olamot) Hakdamah L’Drush, and elsewhere.

²⁶⁴³ See Etz Chayim, Shaar 39 (Shaar Ma”N u”Ma”D), Drush 11, Section 16; Tanya, Kuntres Acharon 155a.

²⁶⁴⁴ Tanya, Iggeret HaTeshuvah, Ch. 4

4.

Based on this, we can understand the verse, “For this commandment that I command you today – it is not hidden from you, and it is not distant.” The explanation is that when it states “this *mitzvah*,” it simply is referring to all the *mitzvot*, as in the commentary of Rashi.²⁶⁴⁵

About this the verse states, “that **I-Anochi-אנכי** command you **today-HaYom-היום**.” That is, the command and granting of empowerment for the fulfillment of the *mitzvot* is from the aspect of “I-Anochi-אנכי,” meaning, “I-Anochi-אנכי - who I am-Mi SheAnochi-מי שאנכי,”²⁶⁴⁶ and the command to fulfill the *mitzvot* is specifically today-HaYom-היום.

This is as in the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,²⁶⁴⁷ “Today (*HaYom*-היום) is the time to do them,”²⁶⁴⁸ [specifically] in the world of Action (*Asiyah*) in which there is an illumination of His surrounding light (*Ohr HaSovev*) (as explained in the discourse entitled “*Yaviyu Levush Malchut*”).²⁶⁴⁹ This is why we can affect its drawing down through fulfilling the *mitzvot*.

The same is so according to the explanation that the verse “For this commandment” refers to the *mitzvah* of repentance (*Teshuvah*).²⁶⁵⁰ [To point out, there is a relationship between the *mitzvah* of repentance (*Teshuvah*) and the totality of all the *mitzvot*. This is because it causes ascent in all the *mitzvot*, as in the known²⁶⁵¹ explanation of the terminology of our sages, of

²⁶⁴⁵ See Rashi to Deuteronomy 30:14; Also see Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 14, p. 112, note 24.

²⁶⁴⁶ See Likkutei Torah, Nitzavim 45c

²⁶⁴⁷ Talmud Bavli, Eruvin 22a; Avodah Zarah 3a

²⁶⁴⁸ At the end of the Torah portion of Va'etchanan.

²⁶⁴⁹ Torah Ohr, Megillat Esther 90b and on

²⁶⁵⁰ Ramban to Deuteronomy 30:11

²⁶⁵¹ See Likkutei Torah, Matot 82a; Shemini Atzeret 85a; Shir HaShirim 17c

blessed memory,²⁶⁵² “repentance and good deeds,” that through repentance (*Teshuvah*) the *mitzvot* are made into “good deeds.”

That is, even though without repentance, according to Torah they are “deeds,” nevertheless, they are not yet “good deeds,” and it is only through repentance (*Teshuvah*) that they become “good deeds.” It therefore applies and is necessary for there to be repentance (*Teshuvah*), even in the righteous (*Tzaddikim*), for whom the matter of repenting for sins does not apply etc.] This is because the command and granting of empowerment for repentance, is also from the aspect of “I-*Anochi*-אֲנִי,” (“that I-*Anochi*-אֲנִי command you”).

Beyond this, about the matter of repentance (*Teshuvah*), it states “I-*Anochi*-אֲנִי” twice, as in the verse,²⁶⁵³ “I-*Anochi*-אֲנִי, [only] I-*Anochi*-אֲנִי, am He who wipes away your willful sins,” (similar to the verse,²⁶⁵⁴ “I-*Anochi*-אֲנִי, [only] I-*Anochi*-אֲנִי am He who comforts you”). That is, this is even higher than the giving of the Torah (the command for the general totality of the *mitzvot*), which only states “I-*Anochi*-אֲנִי” once.²⁶⁵⁵ In other words, the aspect of “I-*Anochi*-אֲנִי,” said in regard to repentance (*Teshuvah*), is the encompassing aspect (*Makif*) etc.²⁶⁵⁶

Similarly, the matter of repentance (*Teshuvah*) specifically relates to the world of Action (*Ma'aseh*), “today-*HaYom*-הַיּוֹם is the time to do them,” (“that I command you **today-*HaYom*-הַיּוֹם**”). For, it specifically is in this world, as it is before its refinement etc., that the matter of repentance (*Teshuvah*) is possible, such that

²⁶⁵² Mishnah Avot 4:17

²⁶⁵³ Isaiah 43:25

²⁶⁵⁴ Isaiah 51:12

²⁶⁵⁵ Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 5:6

²⁶⁵⁶ In the redaction of the discourse it states that there is a small portion of the discourse missing here. It can be pointed out, however, that based on what is explained in the discourse cited at the beginning of Ch. 3, the “I-*Anochi*-אֲנִי” stated in regard to the *mitzvah* of repentance (*Teshuvah*) refers to the aspect of the Ancient One-*Atik*.

in a single moment²⁶⁵⁷ one can be transformed from one extreme to the opposite extreme etc. This is because in this world there is the drawing down of the light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה that surrounds and transcends all worlds (*Sovev Kol Almin*) through fulfilling Torah and *mitzvot*.²⁶⁵⁸

About this the verse states, "It is not hidden from you, and it is not distant." The explanation is that "hidden-*Nifleit*-נפלאות" and "distant-*Rechokah*-רחוקה" refer to two aspects - the Ancient One-*Atik* and the Long Patient One-*Arich*.

That is "hidden-*Nifleit*-נפלאות" refers to the Ancient One-*Atik*, being that, as known, the Ancient One-*Atik* is called "The Upper Wonder-*Pele HaElyon*-פלא העליון," because of its distance, in that is in a way that is beyond all comparison. This is why it is called "Ancient-*Atik*-עתיק," being that it is "removed-*Ne'etakh*-נעתיק" and utterly separate.

"Distant-*Rechokah*-רחוקה" refers to the aspect of the Long Patient One-*Arich*, which although it transcends the worlds, at the very least is a source for them. That is, it is in a state of distance (*Reechook*-ריחוק) of comparison. This is like the verse,²⁶⁵⁹ "I thought I could become wise, but it is distant (*Rechokah*-רחוקה) from me," referring to the concealed wisdom, which is the Wisdom-*Chochmah* of the Long Patient One-*Arich*, which is in a state of distance of comparison. This is why it applies to say about it, "I thought I could become wise." (For, about that which is utterly beyond comparison, it cannot be said, "I thought I could become wise" in the first place.) However, even so, "it is distant (*Rechokah*-רחוקה) from me."

The verse then continues and explains, stating, "It is not in heaven... nor is it across the sea." This is because the two aspects

²⁶⁵⁷ Zohar I 129a

²⁶⁵⁸ See Sefer HaMitzvot of the Tzemach Tzedek ibid. (40a); Likkutei Torah, Pinchas 75b and on.

²⁶⁵⁹ Ecclesiastes 7:23s

of “hidden-*Nifleit*-נפלאות” and “distant-*Rechokah*-רחוקה,” which are the aspects of the Ancient One-*Atik* and the Long Patient One-*Arich*, are called “heaven” and “across the sea.”

To explain, the physical heavens are not actually seen altogether, whereas that which is seen by the eyes is only the radiance of the atmosphere, but not the essence of the heavens etc. This is an analogy to understand the matter of the upper heavens, this being the aspect of the Ancient One-*Atik*, which is called “Wondrous-*Pele*-פלא,” since it altogether is neither grasped nor seen. “Across the sea” refers to the aspect of the Long Patient One-*Arich*, which is “across the sea” of Wisdom-*Chochmah*, similar to the verse, “it is distant from me.”

About this the verse states, “For this commandment that I command you today – it is not hidden from you, and it is not distant. It is not in heaven... nor is it across the sea etc.” That is, even though, in and of itself, this *mitzvah* is hidden and distant, in the heaven and across the sea, these being the aspects of the Ancient One-*Atik* and the Long Patient One-*Arich* (as mentioned above), nevertheless, “It is not hidden **from you**,” specifying “from you-*Meemcha*-ממך.”

That is, it is not hidden or distant from you, neither in the heavens nor across the sea. This is because the soul also has the aspect that transcends the Long Patient One-*Arich* and the Ancient One-*Atik*, which is why it states, “that I-*Anochi*-אנכי command you.” That is, there is a drawing down from the aspect of “I-*Anochi*-אנכי, meaning who I am-*Mi SheAnochi*-מי שאנכי,” to be the aspect of “(HaShem-יהוה) your God-*Elo*”-*hecha*-אלהיך,” meaning, “your strength and vitality.”²⁶⁶⁰

Because of this, it is possible to fulfill the *mitzvot* that are in the aspects of desire (*Ratzon*) and pleasure (*Taanug*). This is because the *mitzvot* are the desire of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He,

²⁶⁶⁰ See Likkutei Torah, Balak 73c; Pinchas 80a, and elsewhere.

and through them the matter of pleasure is caused (which is the aspect of the Ancient One-*Atik*),²⁶⁶¹ as in the teaching,²⁶⁶² “It brings satisfaction of spirit before Me that I spoke and My will was done.”

This is as explained before (in chapter three) that for the *mitzvot* to be fulfilled, man was created in a way that he includes all the particulars of the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*) and has an effect on them etc. Therefore, even though the aspects of the Long Patient One-*Arich* and the Ancient One-*Atik* are called “hidden-*Pele*-פלא” and “distant-*Rachok*-רחוק” in relation to the emanations, nonetheless, in relation to man who includes them, they are not at all called “hidden-*Pele*-פלא” and “distant-*Rachok*-רחוק,” being that their light is not hidden from him, nor is it at all distant from him. This is because it was given to man that for him there even will be the revelation of the aspect of the Upper Wonder (*Pele HaElyon*-פלא העליון), being that he includes everything.

5.

However, we still must better understand this. That is, why did such a matter arise before Him, blessed is He, that there should specifically be the drawing down of His surrounding transcendent light (*Ohr HaSovev*) below, and likewise with the soul of man, that when it is below in the world of Action (*Asiyah*) there will be the aspect that transcends the Crown-*Keter* in it, even though this matter is the opposite of the order of the chaining down of the world (*Seder Hishtalshelut*)?

About this the verse continues, “**Because-*Ki*-כי** the matter (*HaDavar*-הדבר) is very near to you etc.” That is, this gives the

²⁶⁶¹ See Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 24.

²⁶⁶² Torat Kohanim and Rashi to Leviticus 1:9 and elsewhere.

reason, namely, that all this is for the sake of constructing and repairing Kingship-Malchut, which is called “the word-*Davar*,” as in the verse,²⁶⁶³ “The word (*Dvar*-דבר) of the King reigns,” and as known about the verse,²⁶⁶⁴ “You upheld Your word-*Devarecha*-דברך.”

That is, for the construct of Kingship-*Malchut* to be, there must be service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, through fulfilling Torah and *mitzvot* in a way of “in your mouth and in your heart – to do it.” [That is, even though at the beginning of the creation, the construct of Kingship-*Malchut* stemmed from [the aspect indicated by the verse], “For He desires kindness,”²⁶⁶⁵ nevertheless, it arose in His desire that this matter will subsequently be brought about specifically through man’s service.] Because of this the soul was given all the above-mentioned aspects, through which it is capable of toiling in service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in fulfilling Torah and *mitzvot*, “in your mouth and in your heart – to do it,” through which the construct of Kingship-*Malchut* is affected.

This also is its connection to Rosh HaShanah, (for as mentioned before, “today-*HaYom*-היום” refers to Rosh HaShanah) and as known,²⁶⁶⁶ on Rosh HaShanah the construct of Kingship-*Malchut* is made, and through this, it is also drawn down below to be inscribed and sealed for a good and sweet new year, in children, health, and abundant sustenance, with openly seen and revealed goodness.

²⁶⁶³ Ecclesiastes 8:4; See Tanya, Iggeret HaTeshuvah, Ch. 4; Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 25, and elsewhere.

²⁶⁶⁴ Nehemiah 9:8; See *Hemshechs* 5672 Vol. 2 p. 696 and on, and elsewhere.

²⁶⁶⁵ Micah 7:18; See Likkutei Torah, Nitzavim 47b; Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 10-11, and elsewhere.

²⁶⁶⁶ Pri Etz Chayim, Shaar Rosh HaShanah; Shaar HaKavanot, Drushei Rosh HaShanah, and elsewhere.