

Discourse 28

*“V’Eirasteech Lee L’Olam... -
I will betroth you to Me forever...”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Bamidbar,
Erev Chag HaShavuot, 5728
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,¹⁷¹⁴ “I will betroth you to Me forever; and I will betroth you to Me with righteousness, with justice, with kindness and with mercy; and I will betroth you to Me with faith, and you will know *HaShem*-יהוה.” Now, “I will betroth you to Me” are the words of the Holy One, blessed is He, who is called the groom in relation to the souls of the Jewish people who are called the bride. This is as explained in Likkutei Torah,¹⁷¹⁵ that the Ingathering of the souls of Israel (*Knesset Yisroel*-the *Shechinah*), the source of all the souls of Israel, is called “the bride-*Kalah*-כלה.”

It should be pointed out that what it states in the note of the Tzemach Tzeddek, “See [Midrash] Rabbah, Bo etc.,” seems to indicate that even the soul as it is in the body is called “the bride-*Kalah*-כלה.” This matter (“I will **betroth you-**

¹⁷¹⁴ Hosea 2:21-22 – The conclusion of the Haftorah of Shabbat Parshat Bamidbar (see later in chapter five).

¹⁷¹⁵ In the discourse entitled “*V’Eirasteech Li L’Olam*,” Bamidbar 8a, (also see Sha’arei Orah, Gate One, of the rishon, Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated into English under the title Gates of Light.

v'Eirasteech וְאִרְשֶׁתֶּיךָ **to Me** etc.”) is said to every single Jew as an individual, which is why it says “you” in the singular, like the verse,¹⁷¹⁶ “I am *HaShem*-יְהוָה **your** God-*Elo*” *hecha*-אֱלֹהֶיךָ,” in the singular, as in the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,¹⁷¹⁷ “Every Jew as an individual said, ‘It is me that His word is speaking to.’”

2.

This is explained in Likkutei Torah, that [the word] “bride-*Kalah*-כִּלָּה” (is of the same root as “expiry-*Kilayon*-כִּלְיוֹן”) is in the verse,¹⁷¹⁸ “My soul yearns, indeed it expires-*Kaltah*-כָּלְתָה for the courtyards of *HaShem*-יְהוָה; my heart and flesh sing in prayer to the Living God.”

Now, we must understand the reason for the different wording used in this verse. That is, about “my soul” it says, “the courtyards of *HaShem*-יְהוָה,” but about “my heart and flesh” it says, “the Living God-*E*” *l Chai*-אֵל חַי.”

To explain, the aspect of “the Living God-*E*” *l Chai*-אֵל חַי” is much higher than the aspect of “the courtyards of *HaShem*-יְהוָה.” This is like how it is below, that the courtyard is below the house (which is why a person’s permanent dwelling is not in the courtyard, but specifically in the house). How much more is it certainly so that the courtyard is lower than the person dwelling in the house.

¹⁷¹⁶ Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 5:6

¹⁷¹⁷ Yalkut Shimoni, Yitro, Remez 286

¹⁷¹⁸ Psalms 84:3 [and Rashi there]

However, “my soul” is higher than “my heart and flesh.” This is because “my flesh” refers to the flesh of the body, and from the fact that the verse states, “my heart and flesh” (in that the verse connects “my heart” to “my flesh”) it is understood that “my heart” also refers to the physical heart. This being so, how can it be said that “My soul yearns, indeed it expires” only “for the courtyards of *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” whereas “my heart and flesh” (which are lower than “my soul”) sing in prayer to the Living God (which is higher than “the courtyards of *HaShem*-יהו"ה”)?

However, the explanation is that this itself is the reason. That is, in relation to “my soul,” it is enough to expire in yearning for “the courtyards of *HaShem*-יהו"ה.” However, in relation to “my heart and flesh,” “the courtyards of *HaShem*-יהו"ה” are not enough, since this will have no effect upon one’s heart and flesh. This is why the verse states, “my heart and flesh sing in prayer to the Living God-*E”l Chai*-א"ל חי,” that he yearns specifically for the Essential Self of *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself.

The explanation¹⁷¹⁹ is that there are two aspects of “bride-*Kalah*-כלה.” There is “the fair and attractive bride” and there is “the bride as she is.” This is as stated in Talmud,¹⁷²⁰ “How does one dance before the bride? The house of Shammai say, ‘[Praise her] as she is,’ and the house of Hillel say, ‘[One says,] A fair and attractive bride.’” The law is in accordance to the house of Hillel,¹⁷²¹ (such that [it states],¹⁷²² “[When] the

¹⁷¹⁹ Also see Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar ibid.

¹⁷²⁰ Talmud Bavli, Ketubot 17a

¹⁷²¹ Shulchan Aruch, Even HaEzer 65:1

¹⁷²² Talmud Bavli, Brachot 36b; Eruvin 6b

house of Shammai [express an opinion] that the house of Hillel [disagree with, their opinion is considered as if it is] not a Mishnah”), [whereas the House of Hillel] hold that even if she is lame or blind, one says to her that she is “a fair and attractive bride.”

As explained in Likkutei Torah,¹⁷²³ [the name] “Hillel-הלל” is of the same root [as in the verse],¹⁷²⁴ “When His flame shone-*b’Heelo*-בהלו above my head,” which is a matter of revelation (*Gilyu*). Therefore, even with a bride who is lame or blind, they reveal the matter of “a fair and attractive bride” in her.

Now, it is about the aspect of “the fair and attractive bride (*Kalah*-כלה)” that the verse states, “My soul yearns, indeed it expires (*Kaltah*-כלתה) for the courtyards of *HaShem*-יהו”ה.” The word “courtyards-*Chatzrot*-חצרות” is in the plural, referring to the outer courtyard and the inner courtyard.

The inner courtyard is greater in elevation than the outer courtyard, since it is between the outer courtyard and the house, (as we also find in the laws of Eruvin).¹⁷²⁵ This is as stated,¹⁷²⁶ “In the inner courtyard of the king’s palace, facing the entrance of the palace.” About this the verse states,¹⁷²⁷ “All... who approach... the inner court, who is not summoned etc.” In other words, it is entirely different there. This is why it is written,¹⁷²⁸ “The gate of the inner courtyard... shall be closed during the

¹⁷²³ Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim ibid. 48c

¹⁷²⁴ Job 29:3

¹⁷²⁵ See Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Eruvin 4:19 and on.

¹⁷²⁶ Esther 5:1

¹⁷²⁷ Esther 4:11

¹⁷²⁸ Ezekiel 46:1; See Pirush HaMilot of the Mittler Rebbe 22d and on.

six days of labor, but on the Shabbat day it shall be opened, and on the day of the New Moon it shall be opened.”

Their matter as they are in our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He,¹⁷²⁹ is that the outer courtyard, which is the outer service, is the matter of the verses of Song (*Pesukei d'Zimrah*) [section of the morning prayer service]. For, in the verses of Song (*Pesukei d'Zimrah*), the greatness of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is mentioned insofar as He enlivens the worlds etc.

In contrast, the inner courtyard, which is the inner service, is the matter of the *Shema* recital, in which we say,¹⁷³⁰ “You shall love *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God... with all your more (*Bechol Me'odecha*),” this being the matter of self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*). The matter of the yearning and expiry for the courtyards of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, is in the aspect of “my soul,” this being the aspect of the fair and attractive bride.

However, the aspect of the second bride, who is lame and blind, in whom we must bring about and reveal the “fair and attractive bride,” is similar to the matter of those who return to *HaShem*-יהו"ה in repentance (*Baalei Teshuvah*), about whom our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹⁷³¹ “In the place that the repentant (*Baalei Teshuvah*) stand, the perfectly righteous (*Tzaddikim Gemurim*) cannot stand.” About this the verse states, “My heart and flesh sing in prayer to the Living God,” specifically to the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent

¹⁷²⁹ See Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar 9a and on

¹⁷³⁰ Deuteronomy 6:5

¹⁷³¹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 34b; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah 7:4

Intrinsic and Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is he.

3.

Now, the aspect of the bride is that she is betrothed. About this the verse states, “I will betroth you to Me.” More specifically, there are three matters in betrothal. This is why it states, “I will betroth you to Me” three times. [That is, it states], “I will betroth you to Me forever,” and “I will betroth you to Me with righteousness, with justice, with kindness and with mercy” and “I will betroth you to Me with faith.” This is as stated in books on the reasons of the customs,¹⁷³² that the three windings of the Tefillin straps on the finger, correspond to the three times that “I will betroth you” is mentioned.

However, at first glance, it is not understood why it specifically states “I will betroth you” three times. On the contrary, it should either have [simply] stated, “I will betroth you to Me with righteousness, with justice, with kindness, with mercy, and with faith,” or it should have stated “I will betroth you” with each of the four matters [individually] - righteousness, justice, kindness and mercy. From this it is understood that the three mentions of “I will betroth you” are three levels in the matter of betrothal.

The explanation is that when it states, “I will betroth you to Me (*Lee*-ל) forever,”¹⁷³³ this is like the teaching of our sages,

¹⁷³² See Siddur Otzar HaTefilot, “*Seder Hanachat Tefilin*”

¹⁷³³ See Likkutei Torah Bamidbar ibid. 9c and on.

of blessed memory,¹⁷³⁴ “Wherever the word ‘to Me-*Lee*-לִי’ is stated, it is forever unmoving.” This is because it is from the aspect of the Ancient One-*Atik*, and “there is no left side in this Ancient One-*Atik*.”¹⁷³⁵

Now, as known, the revelation of the Ancient One-*Atik* is in Understanding-*Binah*.¹⁷³⁶ This is as stated in Zohar, “He-*Hoo*-הוּא (which refers to Understanding-*Binah*)¹⁷³⁷ – that is the Ancient One-*Atik*.” This is as we see in man below, that the revelation of the pleasure (*Taanug*) is specifically in the Understanding-*Binah*, in which the intellect comes forth with an abundance of particulars etc. In contrast, in Wisdom-*Chochmah*, which is only the aspect of a point (*Nekudah*), the pleasure (*Taanug*) is not yet revealed.

As this matter is in our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is that “I will betroth you to Me forever (*LeOlam*-לְעוֹלָם)” refers to the aspect of “Eternal Love” (*Ahavat Olam*-אהבת עולם) which is higher than Abundant love (*Ahavah Rabbah*),¹⁷³⁸ which is the aspect of *Zeir Anpin*.¹⁷³⁹

However, about a person who, as of yet, has no relation to serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, by way of contemplative meditation (*Hitbonenut*), which is the aspect of Understanding-*Binah*, the verse states, “I will betroth you to Me with righteousness, with justice, with kindness and with

¹⁷³⁴ Midrash Vayikra Rabba 2:2; Midrash Shmuel 19

¹⁷³⁵ Zohar III 129a (Idra Rabba) and similarly see 289a

¹⁷³⁶ Zohar III 178b; Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 40, and elsewhere.

¹⁷³⁷ See Etz Chayim, Shaar 34 (Shaar Tikkun Nukva), end of Ch. 2, cited in Likkutei Torah ibid.

¹⁷³⁸ See Tanna D'Bei Eliyahu Rabba, beginning of Ch. 6

¹⁷³⁹ Me'orei Ohr, Aleph 37; Pardes Rimonim, Shaar 23 (Shaar Erchei HaKinuyim), section on “love-*Ahavah*-אהבה.”

mercy.” [The word] “righteousness-*Tzeddek*-צדק” refers to the matter of charity (*Tzedakah*-צדקה), since “charity is great, in that it advances the redemption,”¹⁷⁴⁰ like Rabbi Elazar who would first give a *peruta* to a poor person and only afterwards pray.¹⁷⁴¹ This is because it is through charity (*Tzedakah*) that he redeems his soul from the exile etc., since¹⁷⁴² “Israel will only be redeemed through charity, as the verse states,¹⁷⁴³ ‘Those who return to her through charity.’”¹⁷⁴⁴

[The word] “justice-*Mishpat*-משפט” is as the verse,¹⁷⁴⁵ “The wicked surround the righteous,” about which the verse states,¹⁷⁴⁶ “You shall destroy the evil from your midst,” for which justice (*Mishpat*-משפט) is necessary.

About the words “kindness (*Chessed*-חסד) and mercy (*Rachamim*-רחמים),” Kindness-*Chessed* is the quality of Avraham, and mercy (*Splendor-Tiferet*) is the quality of Yaakov. About this the verse states,¹⁷⁴⁷ “Yaakov, who redeemed Avraham,” that is, through rousing abundant mercies upon his soul, as explained in Tanya¹⁷⁴⁸ in explanation of the verse,¹⁷⁴⁹ “And Yaakov kissed Rachel... and wept.” This is as explained in Likkutei Torah,¹⁷⁵⁰ that when a person sees that

¹⁷⁴⁰ Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 10a; See Tanya, Likkutei Amarim Ch. 37

¹⁷⁴¹ Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 10 ibid.

¹⁷⁴² Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Matnot Evyonim 10:1; Tur, Yoreh De’ah 247:1

¹⁷⁴³ Isaiah 1:27

¹⁷⁴⁴ See Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 4

¹⁷⁴⁵ Habakkuk 1:4

¹⁷⁴⁶ Deuteronomy 13:6 and elsewhere

¹⁷⁴⁷ Isaiah 29:22 (see the note of the Rebbe in Ha’arot v’Tikkunim L’Tanya, Ch. 32).

¹⁷⁴⁸ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 45

¹⁷⁴⁹ Genesis 29:11

¹⁷⁵⁰ Likkutei Torah, Emor 35c

nothing is having an effect on him, the remedy is to awaken abundant mercies upon his soul etc.

The verse continues, “I will betroth you to Me with faith (*Emunah*-אמונה).” That is, even someone who has no relation to contemplative meditation (*Hitbonenut*), and even a pauper who cannot give charity, [such that this matter can even be similar to the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,¹⁷⁵¹ on the verse,¹⁷⁵² “The strong-hearted who are far from charity,” that, “The entire world is sustained by charity, but they [the righteous] are sustained by the strength [of their own merits],” meaning that they are far from the charity of the Holy One, blessed is He, and because of this, it is arranged from Above that he is unable to give charity, since for him it is unnecessary.

However, this matter can also be in a way the he is in the lowest state, which is why from Above he is not given the ability to give charity.] However, even for him the matter of “I will betroth you,” is possible - to be the aspect of the bride (*Kalah*-כלה) through faith (*Emunah*-אמונה).

This is because the matter of faith (*Emunah*-אמונה) is present in each and every Jew, and as explained in Tanya,¹⁷⁵³ every Jew has faith in *HaShem*-יהו"ה, ([and they all are called] “the faithful, the children of the faithful”),¹⁷⁵⁴ and even the lowliest Jews and the sinners of Israel give up their lives with self-sacrifice for the sanctification of His Name.

Now, the three levels of the matter of “I will betroth you,” correspond to the three worlds of Creation, Formation,

¹⁷⁵¹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 17b

¹⁷⁵² Isaiah 46:12

¹⁷⁵³ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 18

¹⁷⁵⁴ See Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 97a

and Action (*Briyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Asiyah*). “I will betroth you to Me forever,” which is the aspect of Understanding-*Binah*, corresponds to the world of Creation (*Briyah*) (the concealed worlds that are not revealed) in that “the Supernal Mother-*Imma Ila’ah* dwells in the Throne.”¹⁷⁵⁵

“I will betroth you to Me with righteousness, with justice, with kindness and with mercy,” which are the aspect of the emotions (*Midot*), corresponding to the world of Formation (*Yetzirah*), in that “the six *Sefirot* dwell in the world of Formation (*Yezirah*).”¹⁷⁵⁶

“I will betroth you to Me with faith” corresponds to the world of Action (*Asiyah*), being that because of the lowly level of the world of Action (*Asiyah*), matters of the intellect (*Sechel*) and emotions (*Midot*) do not apply there, but only the matter of faith (*Emunah*). On the contrary, it is specifically in the world of Action (*Emunah*) that faith is strongest.

Now, the order of the levels in the verse, is in alignment with the order of the drawing down in the worlds, that from the world of Creation (*Briyah*), there is a drawing down to Formation (*Yetzirah*) and Action (*Asiyah*). This is like the explanation¹⁷⁵⁷ about [the verse],¹⁷⁵⁸ “With *Ya”H-ה”ה* did *HaShem-ה”ה* form worlds.” That is, the coming world was created with the *Yod-י* and this world was created with the *Hey-ה*,¹⁷⁵⁹ this being the matter of the drawing down from the *Yod-י*

¹⁷⁵⁵ Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 6 (23a)

¹⁷⁵⁶ Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 6 (23a) *ibid.*

¹⁷⁵⁷ See Torah Ohr, Vayechi 46b; Torat Chayim, Beshalach 260b (183c in the new edition).

¹⁷⁵⁸ Isaiah 26:4

¹⁷⁵⁹ Talmud Bavli, Menachot 29b

to the *Hey-ה* - from the concealed world (*Alma d'Itkasiya*) to the revealed world (*Alma d'Itgaliya*).

That is, initially there is a drawing down in the first *Hey-ה*, the aspect of Understanding-*Binah* - the world of Creation (*Briyah*), and from there it is drawn into the letter *Vav-ו*, until the letter *Hey-ה*, these being the worlds of Formation and Action (*Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*).

Now, it should be added that the general drawing down in these three levels corresponding to the three worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Asiyah*), is by way of the ladder (*Sulam-סלם*), in which there are two matters. This is as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹⁷⁶⁰ “The ladder (*Sulam-סלם*) refers to the altar,” and¹⁷⁶¹ “The ladder (*Sulam-סלם*) refers to Sinai.” These are the two matters of Torah study and prayer, through which there is the drawing down from Above to below, and the ascent from below to Above.

4.

Now, all this is about the bride (*Kalah-כלה*) and the betrothed, about which it states, “I will betroth you etc.” However, there then must be the matter of marriage. About this the verse concludes, “and you will **know** *HaShem-יהוה*,” [in which the word “you will know-*v’Yada’ata-וידעת*”] is of the same root as [in the verse],¹⁷⁶² “And Adam knew-*Yada-ידע*”

¹⁷⁶⁰ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 68:12; See Sefer HaMaamarim 5630 p. 238 and elsewhere.

¹⁷⁶¹ Bereishit Rabba 68:12 *ibid.*; See Sefer HaMaamarim 5630 *ibid.*

¹⁷⁶² Genesis 4:1; See Tanya, end of Ch. 3, Ch. 42 (59b)

Chava,” this being the matter of true bonding, and as the verse states about the coming future,¹⁷⁶³ “For the earth will be filled with the **knowledge-De’ah** דעה of *HaShem* יהו”ה.”

This level corresponds to the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), in which “He and His life force are one; He and His organs are one,” and is called “Emanation-*Atzilut* אצילות” meaning “near Him-*Etzlo* אצל,” indicating close proximity.¹⁷⁶⁴ This is because it is in the ultimate state of nullification (*Bittul*) to Him. This is also the reason why the verse states, “[You will know] *HaShem - et HaShem* יהו”ה-אֵת,” the [word] “*et* אֵת” signifying that which is secondary [and nullified] to *HaShem* יהו”ה.¹⁷⁶⁵

The preparation for this is through serving *HaShem* יהו”ה, blessed is He, in the three levels of, “I will betroth you to Me etc.,” which correspond to the three worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*), by which we come from the aspect of betrothal, which is in an encompassing state (*Makif*), to marriage, which is in a way of inner bonding.

5.

This then, is also why we recite the Haftorah with this verse on the Shabbat preceding the giving of the Torah. For, the matter of the giving of the Torah, [at which time there was also caused to be novelty in the *mitzvot* that preceded the giving

¹⁷⁶³ Isaiah 11:9

¹⁷⁶⁴ See Pardes Rimonim, Shaar 16 (Shaar ABY”A) Ch. 1

¹⁷⁶⁵ See Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar 13b and elsewhere.

of the Torah, as the Rambam wrote],¹⁷⁶⁶ is that “you will **know** *HaShem*-יהו”ה.”

The preparation for this is “I will betroth you to Me with faith.” This is because the preparation for the giving of the Torah was through saying “we will do and we will listen,”¹⁷⁶⁷ in a way that “we will do” (*Na’aseh*) was given precedence over “we will listen” (*Nishma*),¹⁷⁶⁸ which is like the matter of faith (*Emunah*).

The same is so of the matter of “you will know *HaShem*-יהו”ה of the coming future, that the preparation for this is through the service of *HaShem*-יהו”ה, blessed is He, of the generation of “the footsteps of Moshiach” specifically out of faith and self-sacrifice.

This is as explained¹⁷⁶⁹ about [the verse],¹⁷⁷⁰ “Now the man Moshe was exceedingly humble, more than any person on the face of the earth,” that Moshe’s humility came primarily from his contemplation of the generation of “the footsteps of Moshiach,” who though they have no relation to intellect (“I will betroth you to Me forever”) nor to emotions (“I will betroth you to Me with righteousness, with justice, with kindness and with mercy”), even so, they stand with self-sacrifice out of faith (*Emunah*) etc., this being the matter of “I will betroth you to Me with faith.”

Through this we merit that “you will **know** *HaShem*-יהו”ה,” with the true and complete redemption, at which time

¹⁷⁶⁶ In Pirush HaMishnayot, end of Tractate Chullin.

¹⁷⁶⁷ Exodus 24:7

¹⁷⁶⁸ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 88a

¹⁷⁶⁹ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5679 p. 464; 5689 p. 299

¹⁷⁷⁰ Numbers 12:3

there will be the fulfillment of the prophecy,¹⁷⁷¹ “The number of the children of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which can neither be measured nor counted,” in that there will be a drawing down of that which is beyond numeration within numeration,¹⁷⁷² with the coming of our righteous Moshiach, speedily and in the most literal sense!

¹⁷⁷¹ Hosea 2:1 – The beginning of the Haftorah

¹⁷⁷² See Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar 6a and on; 9c; Sefer HaMaamarim 5638 p. 2 and on.