

Discourse 14

*“Va’era el Avraham... -
I appeared to Avraham...”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Va’era,
Shabbat Mevarchim Shvat, 5728
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,⁹³⁸ “I appeared to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Yaakov as *E”l Shaddai*” אֱלֹהֵי שַׁדַּי, but with My Name *HaShem*” ה' I did not make Myself known through them.” In his discourse by this title of the year 5628,⁹³⁹ (said one-hundred years ago), the Rebbe Maharash states that this must be better understood. For, is it not so that the Name *HaShem*” ה' is mentioned many times in regard to our forefathers, as the verse states about Avraham,⁹⁴⁰ “*HaShem*” ה' appeared to him,” which also is so of Yitzchak and Yaakov. This being so, why does this verse states, “with My

⁹³⁸ Exodus 6:3

⁹³⁹ Sefer HaMaamarim 5628 p. 77 and on; Also see the discourse entitled “*Midei Chodesh b’Chodsho*” 5628 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5628 p. 68 and on); Discourse entitled “*Yafeh Sha’ah Achat*” 5629 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5629 p. 41 and on); Discourse entitled “*Va’era*” in Torat Chayim, Va’era p. 68b and on (49c and on in the new edition); Ohr HaTorah, Va’era Vol. 8 p. 2,888 and on; Also see the discourse entitled “*Yafeh Sha’ah Achat*” 5729 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5729 p. 96 and on).

⁹⁴⁰ Genesis 18:1

Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה I did not make Myself known through them"??

2.

He continues the discourse stating: This may be understood by prefacing with what our sages, of blessed memory, stated in [Tractate] Shabbat,⁹⁴¹ "Like the creation of the world, at first it was dark and then the light followed," as the verse states,⁹⁴² "It was evening, and it was morning." That is, such is the order Above, and it therefore is also caused to be so throughout the order of creation, that "it was evening, and it was morning," such that this is also drawn into the particulars of the creation. This is as in the words of Talmud there, that this is why "goats walk in front and the ewes follow after," in that it is "like the creation of the world, which at first was dark and then the light followed," (in that "goats are usually black and ewes are usually white").⁹⁴³

However, we must understand why "at first it was dark." For, is it not so that in the world of Akudim, the vessels (*Keilim*) came into being after the lights (*Orot*) came into being?⁹⁴⁴ In other words, it goes without saying that in the worlds, the lights (*Orot*) preceded the vessels (*Keilim*). This certainly is so of the world of Action (*Asiyah*), that the light (*Ohr*) preceded the darkness (*Choshech*), but it likewise is so even in the world of

⁹⁴¹ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 77b

⁹⁴² Genesis 1:5

⁹⁴³ Rashi to Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 77b *ibid*.

⁹⁴⁴ Also see *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 2 p. 1,009 and on; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5704 p. 122 and on.

Emanation (*Atzilut*) and even in the world of Akudim, which is the root for the entire chaining down (*Hishtalshelut*), that the coming into being of the vessels (*Keilim*) is after the coming into being of the lights (*Orot*).

However, the explanation is that in the creations and emanations, up to and including even the highest emanations, the lights (*Orot*) preceded the vessels (*Keilim*). Thus, when it states, “at first it was darkness and then the light followed,” this is in the aspect of the Emanator (*Ma’atzil*-מאצייל). (Even though the name “Emanator-*Ma’atzil*-מאצייל” indicates relation to worlds, nonetheless, this is the Emanator, not the emanated). In this aspect, the root of the vessels (*Keilim*) is higher than the root of the lights (*Orot*).⁹⁴⁵

As explained in the discourse, the primary matter in the Knowledge of the Emanator is the coming into being of the vessel (*Kli*) and all the drawings down of the light (*Ohr*) are for the sake of the vessel (*Kli*). Thus, even though in revelation the light (*Ohr*) preceded, nonetheless, in its hidden source the vessel (*Kli*) preceded.

⁹⁴⁵ In redaction [of the discourse] it states that what is explained in this discourse (that in the world of Akudim, the coming into being of the vessels (*Keilim*) is subsequent to the coming into being of the lights (*Orot*), and that the precedence of the vessels (*Keilim*) to the lights (*Orot*) is solely from the perspective of the Emanator (*Ma’atzil*)), is in a different manner to what is explained elsewhere in regard to the matter of the root of souls within bodies etc. (but the [explanation] of the matter is missing).

3.

In the discourse he continues: This may be understood from the analogy of the bestowal from a teacher to his student (as will be explained). To preface, at first glance, since the matter of, first it was darkness and then the light followed” refers to the Emanator and the emanated, therefore at first glance, the analogy for this should be from the matter of the Creator and the created.

However, the explanation is that below the matter of the Creator and the created cannot be found, being that the entire matter of creation is not within the capacity of the creatures to grasp. This is why the analogy is brought from the bestowal a teacher to his student. This is because the true matter of the bestowal of a teacher to his student is as it is found in Torah, as the verse states,⁹⁴⁶ “You shall teach them to your children,” which “refers to one’s students,”⁹⁴⁷ as in the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,⁹⁴⁸ “Moshe received the Torah from Sinai and transmitted it to Yehoshua etc.”

Thus, since the matter of Torah is as the verse states,⁹⁴⁹ “The eternal truth of *HaShem*-יהו"ה to the world,” meaning that through the Torah there is a drawing down of the truth of *HaShem*-יהו"ה in the world, therefore, the bestowal of teacher to his student, as it is in Torah, can be an analogy for the matter of “at first there was darkness and then the light followed” as it is in the aspect of the Emanator.

⁹⁴⁶ Deuteronomy 6:7

⁹⁴⁷ Sifri to Deuteronomy 6:7

⁹⁴⁸ Mishnah Avot 1:1

⁹⁴⁹ Psalms 117:2

The analogy from the bestowal of a teacher to his student, is that of necessity, the teacher must assess the intellect and grasp of his student, meaning how the matter will become tangible in his comprehension, and he will bestow to him accordingly. This depends on the desire of the bestower, that according to the way he wants the matter become concrete for the recipient, so will the light of the bestowal, with comprehension and explanation, be formulated in order to make it tangible and concrete in the receptacle of the student. We thus find that in its root and source the vessel (*Kli*) precedes, even though in revelation the light (*Ohr*) precedes.

4.

However, we still must better understand this.⁹⁵⁰ For, at first glance, the analogy is unlike the analogue. This is because Above in Godliness, even the coming into being of the vessels (*Keilim*) is from the Emanator. Therefore, the fact that there first is an estimation of the vessels (*Keilim*) is only because the vessels (*Keilim*) precede the lights (*Orot*).

In contrast, in the bestowal of a teacher to his student, the vessel of the recipient is already present even before the intellect of the teacher is bestowed, and therefore the teacher is **forced** to assess the intellect and grasp of his student first, and only then bestow the light of his intellect to him, so that the bestowal will be according to the vessel of the recipient that was already present beforehand. This being so, there is no proof from this that the vessels (*Keilim*) precede the lights (*Orot*).

⁹⁵⁰ Also see the discourse entitled “*Yafeh Sha’ah Achat*” 5729 *ibid*.

It can be said that this is why the discourse is precise in explaining the analogy of the teacher, that when he assesses the intellect and grasp of his student, [he assesses] “how it will become tangible and concrete etc., in order to actualize the concreteness of the vessel of the recipient.” In other words, the **true** analogy of the bestower and his recipient is that the bestower also makes the receptacles of the recipient, until the senses of the student become like the senses of the teacher.

The explanation is that even when it comes to a regular bestower and recipient, the bestowal is in a way that the student receives and properly understands the intellect of the teacher etc. (This is because if he does not understand the intellect of the teacher, or if he understands it in a way that is the opposite [of the teacher’s intent] then the student is not at all a recipient.) Rather, it only is that the student receives according to his vessels (as he is, in and of himself, before the bestowal).

This is like Hillel and Shammai who received from Shemaya and Avtalyon,⁹⁵¹ in that each received according to his own vessel, whether it was a vessel of Kindness-*Chessed* (as with Hillel) or a vessel of Might-*Gevurah* (as with Shammai). That is, according to the vessels (*Keilim*) a leaning is caused in the reception of the bestowal of the intellect, either to the line of Kindness-*Chessed* or to the line of Might-*Gevurah*. This nevertheless, is called bestower and recipient, as in the language of the Mishnah, “Hillel and Shammai **received** from them.”

However, there is an even higher way as it is in a true bestower and recipient, in which the student (not only receives the light of the intellect) from the teacher (but also) the

⁹⁵¹ Mishnah Avot 1:12; See *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 1, p. 20 and on.

receptacle (*Kli*) of the intellect. This is like the verse,⁹⁵² “He will sustain you-*Yechalekelecha*-יכלכלך,” in that even the vessels-*Keilim*-כלים are granted from Above.

In other words, the student not only receives the intellect itself, but also the leaning of the intellect to either Kindness-*Chessed* or Might-*Gevurah*, to the point that he even receives the power of action in the intellect of the teacher. This comes about by the student being in the ultimate state of nullification (*Bittul*) to his teacher, who bestows. This is as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁹⁵³ “Any Torah scholar who sits before his teacher and his lips are not dripping with bitterness etc.” In other words, through ultimate nullification (*Bittul b’Tachlit*) the student even receives the vessel (*Kli*) from the teacher’s intellect.

Now, we can say that this likewise was the way of the bestowal to Hillel and Shammai, who received from Shmaya and Avtalyon, [in that they] also [received] the leanings to either Kindness-*Chessed* or Might-*Gevurah*. For, since their teachers were bestowers of the side of holiness, they had both lines of Kindness-*Chessed* and Might-*Gevurah*, and this was also bestowed to the recipients, only that in Hillel there was a predominance of the line of Kindness-*Chessed* over the line of Might-*Gevurah*, whereas in Shammai there was a

⁹⁵² Psalms 55:23; See Sefer HaMaamarim 5677 p. 107; Sefer HaMaamarim 5688 p. 28; Discourse entitled “*BaYom HaShemini Atzeret*” 5695, Ch. 25 (Sefer HaMaamarim, Kuntreisim Vol. 2, p. 338b); 5699 p. 21; Igrot Kodesh of the Rebbe Rayatz, Vol. 2, p. 328; Vol. 4 p. 453; Also see Pelach HaRimon of Rabbi Hillel Particher, Vayera 62c from the Tzemach Tzedek in the name of the Baal Shem Tov.

⁹⁵³ Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 117a

predominance of the line of *Might-Gevurah* over the line of *Kindness-Chessed*.

According to this, the analogy of the bestowal from teacher to student makes sense. For, since here we are discussing a true bestower and recipient, in that even the receptacle of the recipient is made by the teacher who bestows, we thus find that the estimation of the teacher does not necessitate that he estimates the receptacles of the recipient as they presently are (and that the bestowal of the light of the intellect will accord to them). Rather, it is in a way that he estimates how he will draw forth the vessel of the recipient, and according to this he will then draw the light of the intellect down.

This matter, that the estimation of the vessels of the recipient precedes the estimation of the light, is because this is how it is Above in the aspect of the Emanator, that in the mind of the Emanator [so to speak] the primary matter is entirely the coming into being of the receptacle (*Kli*) and all drawings down of the light (*Ohr*) are for the sake of the receptacle.

5.

In the discourse he continues [and states]: The root of the matter of “the light then followed” is as the verse states,⁹⁵⁴ “God-*Elohi*” *m-אלהי* called the light ‘day-*Yom*-יום.” That is, “God-*Elohi*” *m-אלהי* is the aspect of the constriction (*Tzimtzum*) of the vessel (*Kli*) of the recipient, and it calls the light of *HaShem*-יהוה to illuminate within it in a greater state

⁹⁵⁴ Genesis 1:5

of inner manifestation (*b'Pnimityut*). This is as stated in Zohar⁹⁵⁵ on the verse,⁹⁵⁶ “God-*Elohi*” *m-אלהי*, do not hold Yourself silent,” that “the lower flame burns constantly for the upper flame etc.”

Now, this requires further explanation. For, at first glance, it is not understood why the verse states, “God-*Elohi*” *m-אלהי* called the light ‘day.’” This is particularly so considering that it is referring to the light (*Ohr-אור*) that was created on the first day, with which “Adam, the first man, gazed from the end of the world to its end,”⁹⁵⁷ this being a much higher revelation than all revelations.⁹⁵⁸ This being so, why does the verse use the name, “God-*Elohi*” *m-אלהי*,” which is a matter of constriction and concealment, in reference to it?

Now, the answer is explained elsewhere. Namely, that relative to the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited One, *HaShem-יהוה* Himself, blessed is He, even the highest revelations are a matter of concealment,⁹⁵⁹ which is the matter of the name “God-*Elohi*” *m-אלהי*.” This is like the verse,⁹⁶⁰ “For, with You is the source of life,” in that even the aspect of the Source of Life is “**with** You,” meaning that it is secondary and nullified to “You.”⁹⁶¹

However, in this discourse, there is a novelty in the explanation of the verse, “God-*Elohi*” *m-אלהי* called the light

⁹⁵⁵ See Zohar II 140a; Zohar I 178b; 77b; 86b

⁹⁵⁶ Psalms 83:2

⁹⁵⁷ Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 12a

⁹⁵⁸ See Ohr HaTorah, Bereishit Vol. 3, p. 492a and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5626 p. 96 and on; 5697 p. 205 and on, and elsewhere.

⁹⁵⁹ Also see Likkutei Torah, Drushi Shabbat Shuvah 65d (citing Mishnat Chassidim, end of Mesechet Yoma).

⁹⁶⁰ Psalms 36:10

⁹⁶¹ See Torah Ohr, Mikeitz 35b; 36a, and elsewhere.

‘day.’” Namely, that the one who calls and draws down the revelation of the light (“the light (*Ohr*) ‘day’”) is the name “God-*Elohi*” מֵ-אֱלֹהִים, meaning the aspect of the constriction of the vessel (*Kli*) of the recipient.

As he explains in the discourse, the reason is because in the **true** root, the vessel (*Kli*) precedes, in that it was assessed first, and the light (*Ohr*) was only for the sake of the vessel (*Kli*). It therefore is in its ability to awaken the True Source, so that there will be a drawing down of light with greater bestowal etc.

Based on this, the teaching of the Zohar, “the lower flame burns constantly for the upper flame,” is also understood. That is, in addition to the simple meaning, that it refers to the “running” desire (*Ratzo*) of “the lower flame” which calls to “the upper flame,” on a deeper level, the explanation is that it is “the lower flame” that **calls and draws down** the revelation of “the upper flame,” similar to the fact that it is the vessel (*Kli*) that awakens the drawing down of the light.

6.

With the above in mind, the discourse explains why the verse states, “I appeared to Avraham,” [stating]: This then, is “I appeared to Avraham” using the Name *HaShem*-יהוה [as it means] “He who brings into being-*Mehaveh*-מְהַוֶּה.” The explanation is that the matter of Avraham is that he is the vessel (*Kli*) of Wisdom-*Chochmah* and the vessel (*Kli*) of Kindness-*Chessed*, (both as they are Above, as well as how they are below). Thus, because of the precedence of the vessels (*Keilim*)

in their root, it therefore is through the vessels (*Keilim*) of Avraham that there was a drawing down and revelation of an even higher light, this being the matter of “I appeared.”

Now, in the margins of the discourse there is a conclusion and summary of the matter, as follows: It appears that his intention is to answer [and explain that based on this language, it seems to indicate that the discourse itself is that of the Tzemach Tzedek], why it states “I appeared” with the name *HaShem*-יהו"ה to Avraham, this being the aspect of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה that illuminates in His title “Lord-*Adona*” אדני"י-י, which is the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה that “brings into being-*Mehaveh*,” מהוה-י, and this being so, it is like the same matter as “*E*”ל *Shaddai*-י-י שד"י.”

The explanation is that as known,⁹⁶² there is the lower Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה and there is the Upper Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה. The lower Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה is the aspect of the light (*Ohr*) that is drawn down by the vessels (*Keilim*). This refers to the aspect of the light (*Ohr*) of which the root of the vessels (*Keilim*) is higher, which is why it is drawn down by the vessels (*Keilim*) (as explained before). In contrast, the Upper Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה is the aspect of the light (*Ohr*) that altogether transcends the vessels (*Keilim*), meaning that it transcends the aspect of the light (*Ohr*) that can be drawn down by the vessels (*Keilim*).

This then, is the meaning of, “I appeared to Avraham... as *E*”ל *Shaddai*-י-י שד"י, but with My Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה I did not make Myself known through them.” This is because the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה that was revealed to our forefathers was

⁹⁶² See Zohar III (Idra Rabba) 138a; Torah Ohr, Beshalach 61d and on.

only the lower Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, which is the aspect of the light (*Ohr*) that is drawn down by the vessels (*Keilim*) (as explained before on the words, "I appeared to Avraham"). In the words of the discourse, this is "the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה that illuminates in the name 'Lord-*Adona*'-אדני-י, which is the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה that 'brings into being-*Mehaveh*-מְהוֹוֶה,' and this being so, it is like the same matter as 'E"l *Shaddai*-א"ל-שַׁדַּי."

About this the verse states,⁹⁶³ "Therefore, say to the children of Israel, 'I am *HaShem*-יהו"ה.'" In other words, it specifically was through the preface of servitude in Egypt that at the giving of the Torah there was the revelation of the Upper Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, which is the aspect of the light that transcends the light that is drawn down by the vessels (*Keilim*).

Now, as this matter relates to our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is that through the toil of restraining (*Itkafiya*) the side opposite holiness and transforming (*It'hapcha*) darkness into light, "the glory of the Holy One, blessed is He, is elevated in all worlds,"⁹⁶⁴ meaning, that there is a drawing down of the Upper Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, which is the aspect of the light (*Ohr*) that transcends the light (*Ohr*) that is drawn down by the vessels (*Keilim*).

This light will primarily be revealed in the coming future, though there already has been a foretaste of it from the

⁹⁶³ Exodus 6:6

⁹⁶⁴ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 27 (34a); Likkutei Torah, beginning of Pekudei cites to Zohar II 128b (and Likkutei Torah there also cites to Zohar ibid. 67b; Also see 184a there); See Torah Ohr, Vayakhel 89d; Likkutei Torah, Chukat 65c, and at length in *Hemshech* "Bati LeGani" 5710.

time of the giving of the Torah (as explained in Tanya).⁹⁶⁵ That is, through the servitude of the exile in Egypt, which is the matter of “at first it was darkness,” and “then the light followed,” in that through this the revelation of the Upper Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה at the giving of the Torah was caused.

The same is so of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, during the time of the exile, “at first it was darkness,” in that through this, “then the light followed,” is caused to be, this being the revelation of the coming future. This refers to the revelation of the innerness (*Pnimityut*) of the Torah through Moshiach, as Rashi explains on the verse,⁹⁶⁶ “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth.”

⁹⁶⁵ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 36

⁹⁶⁶ Song of Songs 1:2