

Discourse 6

*“Vayechulu HaShamayim v’HaAretz... -
The Heavens and Earth were completed...”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Bereishit,
Shabbat Mevarchim Marcheshvan, 5728⁴⁷³
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,⁴⁷⁴ “The heavens and earth were completed, and all their hosts.” In Ohr HaTorah,⁴⁷⁵ the Tzemach Tzedek brings several explanations for the word “completed-*Vayechulu*-ויכלו,” which in general are three explanations.

The first explanation is the literal meaning (being that⁴⁷⁶ “the Torah does not depart from its simple meaning”) in that the word “*Vayechulu*-ויכלו” is a word of “completion,” meaning that the act of creating the heavens and the earth was completed. The second explanation is that this word is of the same root as “expiry-*Kilayon*-כליין.” The third explanation is that it is a word indicating pleasure, as in the verse,⁴⁷⁷ “To every delight (*Tichlah*-תכלה) I have seen an end,” in which the word “*Tichlah*-

⁴⁷³ This discourse was said in the first gathering of this Shabbat.

⁴⁷⁴ Genesis 2:1

⁴⁷⁵ Ohr HaTorah, Bereishit 42b and on; Zohar III 505b and on; 508a and on.

⁴⁷⁶ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 63a

⁴⁷⁷ Psalms 119:96

תכלה" indicates the matter of "pleasure" (according to some commentators).⁴⁷⁸

Now, the difference between these three explanations is that according to the first one, the word "*Vayechulu*-ויכלו" refers to the matter of creation (the completion of the creation). According to the second explanation, the word "*Vayechulu*-ויכלו" (does not refer to the creation from Above, but) refers to man's toil of affecting nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה in the world, this being the matter of "expiry-*Kilayon*-כליין."

This is as known⁴⁷⁹ about the explanation of the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,⁴⁸⁰ "Heaven gives but does not take back," in that Above there is the matter of the creation of something from nothing, whereas man's toil is to transform the something into nothing.

According to the third explanation, that the word "*Vayechulu*-ויכלו" is a word meaning "pleasure," this is even higher than the matter of toil. That is, after man's toil in affecting the matter of nullification (*Bittul*) [beginning with] the nullification of the "something" (*Bittul HaYesh*), and ultimately the nullification of [independent] existence (*Bittul b'Metziyut*), he is then given the aspect of pleasure (*Taanug*) from Above, this being the aspect of service in the way of a gift from Above.

The explanation is that⁴⁸¹ about Shabbat (about which "*Vayechulu*-ויכלו" was stated in the verse), our sages, of blessed

⁴⁷⁸ See the commentary of Ibn Yichye to Chamesh Megillot and Ketuvim, cited in Ohr HaTorah ibid. (506a); Sefer HaMaamarim 5659 p. 97.

⁴⁷⁹ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5685 p. 151 and elsewhere.

⁴⁸⁰ Talmud Bavli, Taanit 25a, as per the version of Ein Yaakov

⁴⁸¹ See the discourse entitled "*Zachor et Yom HaShabbat L'Kadesho*" in Torah Ohr, Yitro 69c; Torat Chayim ibid. 385b and on, (264a and on in the new edition); Sefer HaMaamarim 5627 p. 125 and on; Also see the discourse entitled "*Re'u Kee*

memory, said,⁴⁸² “Is it the Jewish people who sanctify the Shabbat? Is Shabbat not already sanctified [from the six days of creation]?” In other words, Shabbat does not depend on man’s toil (as it is with the holidays, in that “the Jewish people are the ones who sanctify the appointed times”),⁴⁸³ but it rather is a matter that stems from the creation. On the other hand, about Shabbat the verse also states,⁴⁸⁴ “Remember the day of Shabbat to sanctify it.” That is, the matter of “sanctifying it” depends on man’s toil.

Elsewhere, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁴⁸⁵ “The Holy One, blessed is He, said to Moshe, ‘I have a good gift in My treasury and Shabbat is its name, and I seek to give it to Israel. Go and inform them [about it].’” In other words, Shabbat is also the aspect of a gift (*Matanah*-מתנה).

Now, these three matters differ from each other from one extreme to the opposite extreme. For, the matter of “Shabbat is already sanctified” stems from creation and is from Above, not being dependent on man’s toil at all.

In contrast, the matter of [the verse], “Remember the day of Shabbat to sanctify it,” depends on man’s toil, and is drawn down commensurate to his toil.

In contrast, the matter of [the teaching], “I have a good gift, and Shabbat is its name,” transcends man’s toil. This is because a gift is unlike labor, in which one can demand payment

HaShem Natan Lachem HaShabbat” 5658 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5658 p. 105 and on); Discourse entitled “*Et Shabbotai*” 5679; 5705 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5679 p. 407 and on; 5700 p. 81 and on).

⁴⁸² Talmud Bavli, Beitzah 17a [and Rashi there]

⁴⁸³ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 49a

⁴⁸⁴ Exodus 20:8

⁴⁸⁵ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 10b

for his work. This is why the Holy One, blessed is He, told Moshe, “Go and inform them [about it].” This is because if it was possible to demand it, as with labor, it would not be necessary to inform them of this.

Rather, the need to inform them only applies to something novel, that without being informed about it, they would not know it. This is the matter of a gift (*Matanah*), which does not stem from man’s labor, but is given from Above in the form of a gift. On the other hand, a gift also depends on the recipient, for “if he was not pleasing to him, he would not give him a gift.”⁴⁸⁶

2.

Now, to understand this, we must preface with the explanation before⁴⁸⁷ about the matter of Torah. For, since “He gazed into the Torah and created the world,”⁴⁸⁸ therefore, by explaining the matter of Torah, we also can come to understand the matter of Shabbat. This is especially so considering that Shabbat is connected to the Torah, as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁴⁸⁹ “All are in agreement that the Torah was given to the Jewish people on Shabbat.”

⁴⁸⁶ See Bava Metziya 16a; Bava Batra 156a

⁴⁸⁷ In the preceding discourse entitled “*BaYom HaShemini Atzeret* – The eighth day shall be a restriction,” of Simchat Torah of this year, 5728, Discourse 5, Ch. 2 and on (p. 42 and on).

⁴⁸⁸ Zohar I 161a and on

⁴⁸⁹ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 86b

About this it is explained that there are several levels in the Torah.⁴⁹⁰ There is the matter of “inheritance” (*Yerushah*-ירושה), as it states,⁴⁹¹ “The Torah that Moshe commanded us is the inheritance (*Morashah*-מורשה) of the congregation of Yaakov.” The matter of inheritance (*Yerushah*) is something that is affixed [by Torah] and does not depend on the state and standing of the heir.⁴⁹² For, since he is the son of the one leaving the inheritance, Torah law dictates that he has standing as the heir. Moreover, inheritance does not depend on toil, for nothing will be added to the inheritance on account of his toil.

Now, in addition to this, there is a matter in Torah about which the sages said,⁴⁹³ “Make yourself fit to study Torah for it is not yours by inheritance (*Yerushah*-ירושה).” In other words, this is not a matter of inheritance but is dependent on toil (*Avodah*-עבודה), in that commensurate to one’s toil, the matter of Torah will be drawn to him.

In addition, there also is the matter of a gift (*Matanah*-מתנה) in Torah. This is as the verse states,⁴⁹⁴ “When He finished speaking to him on Mount Sinai, He gave (*VaYitein*-ויתן) Moshe,” in that “it was given to him as a gift (*Matanah*-מתנה).”⁴⁹⁵ Now, if the Torah had to be given to Moshe as a gift, how much more so is it necessary for all of the Jewish people to specifically be given the Torah as a gift (*Matanah*-מתנה).

⁴⁹⁰ See the discourse entitled “*Torah Tzivah*” 5634; 5654 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5633 Vol. 2, p. 551 and on; 5654 p. 26 and on).

⁴⁹¹ Deuteronomy 33:4

⁴⁹² See Talmud Bavli, Niddah 43b and on (in the Mishnah).

⁴⁹³ Mishnah Avot 2:12

⁴⁹⁴ Exodus 31:18

⁴⁹⁵ Talmud Bavli, Nedarim 38a; Midrash Shemot Rabba 41:6; Also see the discourse entitled “*VaYitein el Moshe k’Khaloto*” in Ohr HaTorah, Tisa p. 1,966 and on.

This is the reason for the precise wording, “The **giving** of the Torah-*Matan Torah*-מתן תורה,” as well as the wording of the blessing over the Torah, “the **Giver-Notein**-נותן of the Torah.”

About this it is explained that the matters of “inheritance” (*Yerushah*) and “toil” (*Avodah*) of Torah, are from the aspect of the “back” (*Achor*-אחור) of Torah, this being the level of Torah that relates to worlds. In contrast, the matter of the “gift” (*Matanah*) of Torah is from the aspect of the “front” (*Panim*-פנים) of Torah, as the Torah is in His Essential Self, blessed is He, this being the aspect of “the delight of the King in His Essential Self” (*Sha’ashu’ey HaMelech b’Atzmuto*).⁴⁹⁶ This aspect was also given to the Jewish people, being that they are rooted in His Essential Self, blessed is He, as the verse states,⁴⁹⁷ “He will choose our heritage for us, the pride of Yaakov that He loves always!”

About this it is explained that the matter of the gift (*Matanah*) of Torah is not just that there is a drawing down of a higher matter etc., but that this also has an effect on the matters of the inheritance (*Yerushah*) and toil (*Avodah*) of Torah.

In other words, the matter of the gift (*Matanah*) which was newly introduced at the giving of the Torah, also affected the inheritance (*Yerushah*) of the Torah which was present before the giving of the Torah. This is because even before the giving of the Torah, “Avraham was an elder and would sit in

⁴⁹⁶ Elucidated in Emek HaMelech, Shaar 1. See Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim 27a.

⁴⁹⁷ Psalms 47:5; See the end of the discourse entitled “*Yivchar Lanu*” 5703.

Yeshivah, and the same with Yitzchak and Yaakov... and from the days of our forefathers, Yeshivah never left them etc.”⁴⁹⁸

However, even so, after all this, there was the addition of the matter of giving the Torah as well, at which time there was a drawing down of the aspect of the gift (*Matanah*) of Torah, and this also had an effect on the levels of Torah that preceded the giving of the Torah. This is because the innerness (*Pnimiyut*), up to and including the innerness (*Pnimiyut*) of the Crown-*Keter*, also has an effect on the externality (*Chitzoniyut*) that relate to worlds.

Now, since “He gazed into the Torah and created the world,” therefore all matters in Torah must also be present in the world. Therefore, just as when it comes to Torah, the innerness (*Pnimiyut*) has an effect on the externality (*Chitzoniyut*), the same is so in the world.

This may be better understood from the matter of Rosh HaShanah, at which time all things revert to their initial state, as known.⁴⁹⁹ It then is necessary to affect a drawing down from His Essential Exaltedness, this being the innerness (*Pnimiyut*), and specifically through doing so, we also affect the externality (*Chitzoniyut*), so that there also will be a drawing down into worldly matters.

The explanation is that even though the world was created on the 25th of Elul,⁵⁰⁰ nevertheless, we do not celebrate Rosh HaShanah then etc. [This is so even though, as known,

⁴⁹⁸ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 28b

⁴⁹⁹ See Pri Etz Chayim, Shaar HaKavanot, Shaar Rosh HaShanah; Siddur of the Arizal there, and elsewhere; Also see Likkutei Torah, Ha’azinu 51b, and elsewhere.

⁵⁰⁰ Midrash Vayikra Rabba 29:1

his honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rebbe related⁵⁰¹ that the early Chassidim would study the portion of the act of creation that relates to that day, beginning on the 25th of Elul and on. However, in addition to the fact that this was only the conduct of singularly unique individuals, the early Chassidim, in addition, this conduct certainly is not the matter of Rosh HaShanah etc.]

The reason is because on the 25th of Elul there was not yet a drawing down from the innerness (*Pnimiyut*). This is because the drawing down of the innerness (*Pnimiyut*), which comes about through the service of *HaShem*-יהוה of the Jewish people, is on the sixth day of the act of creation, the day that Adam, the first man, was created.

This is why it is specifically then that we celebrate Rosh HaShanah, since it is the drawing down of the innerness (*Pnimiyut*) which also affects the externality (*Chitzoniyut*) that relates to worlds, through which there is a drawing down of [the fulfillment of], “Reveal the glory of Your Kingship upon us,”⁵⁰² in a way that “all that has been made will know that You made it etc.,” to the point that, “His Kingship rules over all,”⁵⁰³ which as stated in the Siddur of the Arizal,⁵⁰⁴ even refers to the husks of evil (*Kelipot*) “who contradict the Supernal entourage.”⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰¹ Also see Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 16 p. 488, note 54.

⁵⁰² See the liturgy of the Musaf prayer of Yom Tov and the High Holidays.

⁵⁰³ Psalms 103:19; See the Amidah prayer of Rosh HaShanah.

⁵⁰⁴ In the Rosh HaShanah prayers, (in the Siddur of Rabbi Shabtai of Rashkov (5555) it is in the “*Lu’ach HaTa’ut*”).

⁵⁰⁵ Talmud Bavli, Chullin 7b

Now, based on the explanation before, that in the world there also is a matter of innerness (*Pnimiyut*) and externality (*Chitzoniyut*), these being the aspects of “front” (*Panim*-פנים) and “back” (*Achor*-אחור), and in a way that the innerness (*Pnimiyut*) has an effect on the externality (*Chitzoniyut*), this thus is likewise understood about the matter of Shabbat, which is the matter of the perfection of the world. This is as our sages, of blessed memory, taught,⁵⁰⁶ “What did the world lack...? Shabbat came etc.” In other words, Shabbat brings about the completion and perfection of the world.

The explanation is that “Shabbat is already sanctified and affixed” is the matter of Shabbat as it stems from the creation. That is, after the six days of action, the day of Shabbat comes automatically. Therefore, this is only the aspect of the “back” (*Achor*) and externality (*Chitzoniyut*) of Shabbat.

Likewise, when it comes to the matter of Shabbat that stems from the matter of toil (*Avodah*), this being the matter of the verse, “Remember the day of Shabbat to sanctify it,” since this comes about through man’s toil, it still is only connected to the aspect of the “back” (*Achor*) and externality (*Chitzoniyut*) of Shabbat.

However, after this there is the drawing down of the aspect of the gift (*Matanah*) of Shabbat, which transcends the matter of Shabbat as it stems from the creation, and even

⁵⁰⁶ Rashi to Genesis 2:2; Rashi to Talmud Bavli, Megillah 9a (section beginning “*Vayechal*-וייכל”); Tosefot to Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 38a (section beginning “*Chatzvah*-הצצה”); Midrash Bereishit Rabba 10:9

transcends the matter of Shabbat brought about through toil (*Avodah*). That is, it is not possible to come to this through toil. About this the Holy One, blessed is He, said [to Moshe], “I have a good gift in My treasury etc.” This is the innerness (*Pnimiyut*) of Shabbat, which is the essence of Shabbat (unlike the other levels of Shabbat that are drawn from the aspect of the “back” (*Achor*) and externality (*Chitzoniyut*) and therefore automatically are not the essence of Shabbat). It is this aspect that the Holy One, blessed is He, sought to give to the Jewish people, and is drawn down in the form of a gift from Above.

These three levels correspond to the three times of Shabbat, these being the evening of Shabbat, the day of Shabbat, and the time of “the desire of all desires” (*Ra’ava d’Kol Ra’avin*) of Shabbat.⁵⁰⁷

Now, the aspect of the gift (*Matanah*) of Shabbat, which is the innerness (*Pnimiyut*), is drawn down and also affects the aspect of Shabbat that stems from the creation, which is from the externality (*Chitzoniyut*). (This is as explained before about the matter of Torah, and the same is so of the world in general, that the innerness (*Pnimiyut*) also affects the externality (*Chitzoniyut*)).

The explanation is that the matter of “Shabbat is already sanctified and affixed” from the time of creation, in that it already was present at the beginning of creation, in the time of Adam, the first man, and was meant to relate not only to the Jewish people. Nevertheless, since the aspect of the gift of Shabbat which stems from the innerness (*Pnimiyut*) was only given to the Jewish people, because of the matter [expressed in

⁵⁰⁷ See *Torat Chayim* *ibid.*; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5627 *ibid.* (p. 132).

the verse], “He will choose our heritage for us, the pride of Yaakov that He loves always,” which is why the aspect of the gift of Shabbat was given to them, this also has an effect on the externality (*Chitzoniyut*) of Shabbat, which also relates specifically to the Jewish people.

This is to such an extent that our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁵⁰⁸ “A gentile who observes Shabbat is liable to [receive] the death penalty, as it states (in the Torah portion of Noach,⁵⁰⁹ which is read immediately after the Torah portion of Bereishit), ‘And day and night they shall not rest.’”

In other words, even though this verse refers to the order of creation, nevertheless, it also is about the matter of Shabbat as it stems from the creation, that they stated, “A gentile who observed Shabbat is liable to [receive] the death penalty.” This is because the innerness (*Pnimiyut*) also has an effect on the externality (*Chitzoniyut*).

The same is so of the matter of Torah, that (even though Torah is the Torah of life),⁵¹⁰ “a gentile who engages in the study of Torah is liable to [receive] the death penalty.”⁵¹¹ The reason is because since the innerness (*Pnimiyut*) of Torah specifically relates to the Jewish people, therefore this also has an effect on the externality (*Chitzoniyut*) of Torah, that it too relates solely to the Jewish people.

⁵⁰⁸ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 58b

⁵⁰⁹ Genesis 8:22

⁵¹⁰ See the “*Seem Shalom*” blessing at the end of the Amidah prayer.

⁵¹¹ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 59a

4.

This then, is the meaning of [the verse],⁵¹² “The heavens and earth were completed etc.,” about which we said before that there are three explanations [of the word “*Vayechulu*-ויכלו-], these being the three above-mentioned levels.

That is, the first explanation is that “*Vayechulu*-ויכלו” is a word that means the “completion” of the work of creating the heavens and the earth, this being the matter of “Shabbat is already sanctified and affixed” from the creation. For, as known, the general matter of time is a creation.⁵¹³ Thus, since within time there is the division between the six days of the week and the day of Shabbat, it is understood that the time of Shabbat is a creation unto itself.

The second explanation is that “*Vayechulu*-ויכלו” is a word meaning “expiry-*Kilayon*-כליין.” This is the matter of Shabbat as brought about through man’s toil, [as indicated by the verse], “Remember the day of Shabbat to sanctify it,” in that this toil is a matter of “expiry-*Kilayon*-כליין.” More specifically, there are two levels in the matter of “expiry-*Kilayon*-כליין,” as explained in Likkutei Torah, at the beginning of Shir HaShirim, in regard to the matter of the two aspects of the [three letter] root “*Kalah*-כלה.”⁵¹⁴

⁵¹² Genesis 2:1

⁵¹³ Siddur Im Da”Ch 75d and on; Also see the citations in Likkutei Sichot Vol. 17 p. 59, note 25.

⁵¹⁴ [One being a term of “expiry” that means “to extinguish-*Mekhaleh*-מכלה” or “to fail-*Kalah*-כלה” (see Psalms 73:26), and the other being a term of “expiry” that means “yearning” as in (Psalms 84:3) “my soul yearns-*Khalta*-כלתה.”]

The third explanation is that “*Vayechulu*-ויכלו” is a word meaning “pleasure,” this being the matter of Shabbat that is the aspect of toil in the form of a gift (*Matanah*), about which it states, “I have a good gift in My treasury and Shabbat is its name.”

5.

All this is in preparation for “the day that is entirely Shabbat,”⁵¹⁵ this being the seventh millennium, “[for] one [millennium it will be] destroyed,”⁵¹⁶ in which there also will be the three above-mentioned levels.

That is, there is the matter of the seventh millennium as it stems from the creation, in which the order of the creation is such that after “the six thousand years of the world,” there then comes “the seventh millennium.” In addition to this, there then will also be the matter of the toil (*Avodah*), this being the matter of the song that the Levites would sing,⁵¹⁷ “A Psalm, a Song for the day of Shabbat,”⁵¹⁸ for “the day that is completely rest (Shabbat) and tranquility for all eternity.”⁵¹⁹ In addition to this there then will also be the aspect of the gift (*Matanah*), which is the matter of the revelation of *HaShem*’s-ה' Supernal pleasure that transcends relation to the world, this being the matter of “the delight of the King in His Essential Self” (*Sha’ashu’ey HaMelech b’Atzmuto*).

⁵¹⁵ Mishnah Tamid 7:4

⁵¹⁶ Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 31a

⁵¹⁷ Mishnah Tamid 7:4 *ibid*.

⁵¹⁸ Psalms 92:1

⁵¹⁹ Mishnah Tamid 7:4 *ibid*.

However, even so, there also is a foretaste of this level, which even now is revealed to us in the innerness (*Pnimityut*) of the Torah, which is similar to the perfection and complete pleasure of the seventh millennium, and it is in such a way that we must engage in the toil of spreading the wellsprings [of the teachings of Chassidus] to the outside, out of tranquility and pleasure, by which we bring about that “the Master will come,” this being King Moshiach,⁵²⁰ in the near future and in the most literal sense!

⁵²⁰ See the famous letter of the Baal Shem Tov, printed at the beginning of Keter Shem Tov, and translated in the beginning of The Way of the Baal Shem Tov, a translation of Tzava’at HaRivash, and elsewhere.