

Discourse 32

*“BeHa’alotcha et HaNeirot... -
When you kindle the flames...”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Beha’alotcha,

21st of Nissan, 5729⁶⁶⁸

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

1.

The verse states,⁶⁶⁹ “When you kindle the flames (*Neirot*-נרות).” About this it states in *Likkutei Torah*,⁶⁷⁰ that “flames-*Neirot*-נרות” refers to the souls, as it states,⁶⁷¹ “The soul of man is the flame (*Ner*-נר) of *HaShem*-יהו”ה.” [The seven flames of the Candelabrum (*Menorah*) are the seven categories amongst the Jewish people in the service of *HaShem*-יהו”ה, blessed is He. There are those who serve with love (*Ahavah*) drawn forth like water (Kindness-*Chessed*) and those who serve with love (*Ahavah*) like flames of fire (Might-*Gevurah*) etc.]

In his discourse entitled “*Vayedaber... Beha’alotcha et HaNeirot*,” said one-hundred years ago,⁶⁷² the Rebbe Maharash explains that the reason the souls are called “flames-*Neirot*-

⁶⁶⁸ The original discourse was edited by the Rebbe and published as a pamphlet for the 15th of Sivan 5751.

⁶⁶⁹ Numbers 8:2 (*Beha’alotcha*)

⁶⁷⁰ *Likkutei Torah* (*Beha’alotcha*) 8b

⁶⁷¹ Proverbs 20:27

⁶⁷² From the time that this discourse was said (in 5729) – printed in *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5729 p. 214 and on; Also see the discourse entitled “*Beha’alotcha*” 5678 (*Sefer HaMaamarim* 5678 p. 336 and on).

”נרות,” is as in the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,⁶⁷³ “The Holy One, blessed is He, said to man, ‘My flame is in your hand, and your flame is in My hand. My flame is in your hand – this is the Torah, as the verse states,⁶⁷⁴ ‘For a *mitzvah* is a flame and Torah is light.’ Your flame is in My hand – this is the soul, as the verse states, ‘The soul of man is the flame of *HaShem*-יהו”ה.’ If you guard My flame, I guard your flame, and if you extinguish My flame, I extinguish your flame.”

Now, this must be better understood. This is because the fact that souls are called “flames-*Neirot*-נרות” is expressly stated in Scripture, (“The soul of man is the flame (*Ner*-נר) of *HaShem*-יהו”ה”). This being so, why does the discourse bring the words of the Midrash, “My flame is in your hand, and your flame is in My hand”? We must better understand that the verse specifies “The soul of man is the flame **of** *HaShem*-יהו”ה,” in that the soul is the flame of *HaShem*-יהו”ה, whereas in the above-mentioned Midrash it states that the soul is “**your** flame -*Nercha*-נרך” (of the person) and the Torah is “**My** flame -*Neri*-נרי” (of the Holy One, blessed is He).

2.

Now, to understand this we must preface with the explanation in various places,⁶⁷⁵ that the matter of [the verse],

⁶⁷³ Midrash Devarim Rabba 4:4

⁶⁷⁴ Proverbs 6:23

⁶⁷⁵ Ohr HaTorah to this week’s Torah portion entitled “*Beha’alotcha et HaNeirot*” (p. 327; p. 332); See the discourse by this title in Sefer HaMaamarim 5679 (p. 473 and on); 5700 (p. 127 and on); Also see the discourse entitled “*Zot Torat HaBayit*” 5689 Ch. 2 and on (Sefer HaMaamarim 5689 p. 164 [p. 240 in the new edition] and on) and elsewhere.

“When you kindle the flame,” is that Aharon awakens the souls to have the desire to ascend Above to the point of becoming subsumed in the Essential Self of the limitless light of the Unlimited One.

Even though this desire is the nature of the soul, and as is explained in Tanya,⁶⁷⁶ the reason the souls are called “flames -*Neirot*-נרות” is because just as it is the nature a flame to ascend above and adhere to its root (which is the general foundational element of fire under the sphere of the moon),⁶⁷⁷ so likewise, the soul naturally desires to ascend above and become subsumed in the source from where it was hewn. Yet, even so, it is necessary for Aharon to kindle the flames (the souls). This is because through the descent of the soul to below and its manifestation in the body, its natural desire becomes hidden.

As is explained at length in Chassidic discourses,⁶⁷⁸ amongst the reasons that the souls of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) are called “the seed of man,” whereas the souls of the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Asiyah*) are called “the seed of animal,”⁶⁷⁹ because when it comes to the souls of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), even upon their descent to below, their natural desire and yearning to ascend is revealed. This is why they are called “man,” as in the verse,⁶⁸⁰ “It is the spirit of man that ascends above.” In contrast,

⁶⁷⁶ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, beginning of Ch. 19.

⁶⁷⁷ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodot HaTorah 3:10

⁶⁷⁸ Ohr HaTorah to this week’s Torah portion entitled “*Beha’alotcha et HaNeirot*” (p. 327; p. 332); See the discourse by this title in Sefer HaMaamarim 5679 (p. 473 and on); 5700 (p. 127 and on); Also see the discourse entitled “*Zot Torat HaBayit*” 5689 Ch. 2 and on (Sefer HaMaamarim 5689 p. 164 [p. 240 in the new edition] and on) and elsewhere.

⁶⁷⁹ Jeremiah 31:26; See Torah Ohr, beginning of Mishpatim and elsewhere.

⁶⁸⁰ Ecclesiastes 3:21

the souls of the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*) (which includes most souls),⁶⁸¹ when they descend below and manifest in the body, they come to be drawn after the body and the matters of this physical world. This is why they are called “animal,” as in, “it is the spirit of the animal that descends below.”⁶⁸²

Thus the work of Aharon is to awaken and reveal the nature of the yearning desire (*Ratzo*) and the ascent that also is present in the souls of the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*), “When you kindle the flames,” that their nature to ascend should be in them in a revealed way.

Now, in the discourses⁶⁸³ it is explained that the reason that the kindling of the flames [the revelation of the natural yearning desire and ascent of the souls] is specifically through Aharon, is because about Aharon it is written,⁶⁸⁴ “Like the good oil upon the head running down upon the beard, the beard of Aharon, running down over his garments.” The matter of “the beard of Aharon” is the laws (*Halachot*) of the Torah,⁶⁸⁵ and it is through the Torah, “Torah is light,”⁶⁸⁶ that there is a revelation and illumination of the nature of the soul to ascend,

⁶⁸¹ See Torah Ohr *ibid.*, that “they (the souls of the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*) are almost all the souls in our generations, since the souls of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) are “men of ascent who are few etc.,” even in the early generations.”

⁶⁸² Ecclesiastes 3:21 *ibid.*

⁶⁸³ Ohr HaTorah to this week’s Torah portion *ibid.* (p. 327 and on; p. 332); Sefer HaMaamarim 5679 *ibid.* (p. 474-6).

⁶⁸⁴ Psalms 133:2

⁶⁸⁵ Also see Likkutei Torah to this week’s Torah portion *ibid.* (30c).

⁶⁸⁶ Proverbs 6:23 *ibid.*

(which even is present upon its descent below to manifest in the body), “when you kindle the flames.”

With this in mind, we can explain the relationship between the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory (brought in the discourse), “If you guard My flame, I guard your flame” and [the verse] “When you kindle the flames.” For, the matter of “I guard your flame” (guarding the flame that it will not be extinguished) is that the flame of the soul (its natural yearning and ascent) should be revealed. This then, is why guarding the flame of the soul is through guarding the flame of the Torah, this being similar to the matter of “When you kindle the flames” brought about by Aharon, that is, Torah.

3.

The discourse continues [stating] that we must understand [why it is that] “If you guard My flame, I guard your flame.” That is, what is the relationship between them, such that they are interdependent? He explains this based on the statement in Midrash,⁶⁸⁷ “[‘Lift your eyes on high and see who created these (*Eileh*-אלה)’]⁶⁸⁸ In whose merit were these (*Eileh*-אלה) created? In the merit of ‘These (*Eileh*-אלה) are the generations of the heavens and the earth.’⁶⁸⁹ In whose merit do they endure? In the merit of ‘These (*Eileh*-אלה) are the names of the children of Israel.’⁶⁹⁰ And by what merit do they endure?

⁶⁸⁷ Midrash Shemot Rabba 48:2

⁶⁸⁸ [Isaiah 40:25]

⁶⁸⁹ Genesis 2:4

⁶⁹⁰ Exodus 1:1

In the merit of, ‘These (*Eileh*-אלה) are the testimonies, the statutes, and the ordinances.’”⁶⁹¹

That is, *HaShem* יהו"ה's Supernal intention in creating the world is for the Jewish people, and the Jewish people are perfected through the Torah. This is because through the Jewish people fulfilling the 613 תרי"ג *mitzvot* [of the Torah] they ascend to a much higher level than they are on their own.

This is also why to fulfill Torah and *mitzvot* the soul descends below and manifests in the physical body. For, it is through fulfilling Torah and *mitzvot* that the soul ascends much higher than as it was before to its descent. This is also the meaning of, “If you guard My flame, I guard your flame.” That is, guarding the flame of the soul is through guarding the flame of the Torah.

Now, based on what is written in the discourse, that the matter of “If you guard My flame, I guard your flame” is that through fulfilling Torah and *mitzvot* the soul ascends much higher than as it was before its descent, it can be said that the reason that he connects this matter with [the verse] “when you kindle the flames,” is because the matter of “when you kindle the flames” is⁶⁹² also a matter of ascent brought about in the souls to a much higher level than how they were before their descent to below.

⁶⁹¹ Deuteronomy 4:45

⁶⁹² See Sefer HaMaamarim 5629 p. 220 and on; Also see the discourse entitled “*Beha'alotcha*” 5734 Ch. 2 (Torat Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Sivan p. 369).

To explain in greater detail, we should first preface on the question of the discourse, about why they [guarding the flame of the soul and guarding the flame of the Torah] are interdependent on each other. For, “if you guard My flame” not only means that a person does not transgress the *mitzvot* of the Torah, but that **he fulfills** the *mitzvot* of the Torah.⁶⁹³ This is why the discourse asks why they are interdependent on each other. For, the fact that guarding the flame of the soul depends on one not transgressing the commandments of the Torah, is because when a person transgresses a commandment of the Torah, a blemish is caused in the soul. However, the question of the discourse is as to **how** guarding of the flame of the soul depends on **fulfilling** the Torah.⁶⁹⁴

It should be added that the question in the discourse primarily is regarding souls of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*). For, in regard to souls of the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Asiyah*) (these being most souls) it

⁶⁹³ Based on this, the language of the Midrash is sweetened as to why it states “If you guard My flame... and if you extinguish My flame,” in that this is not simply repetitious language, but rather, they are two matters. “If you extinguish My flame” means that the person transgresses the *mitzvot* of the Torah, Heaven forbid, [in which case, “I **extinguish** your flame,” in that blemish is caused in the soul, as will be explained in the discourse]. And “if you guard My flame” is not only that he does not transgress, Heaven forbid, but rather, he **fulfills** the *mitzvot* of the Torah, [in which case “I **will guard** your flame,” in that there is **addition** in the guarding.]

⁶⁹⁴ It is with the above in mind that what is stated in the discourse, that we must understand [this teaching], “If you guard My flame, I will guard your flame,” what their relationship is with one another etc. For, seemingly it would have been adequate for it to state “we need to understand what their relationship is etc.” Why does he again copy the language of the Midrash? It can be suggested that his intent in this is to emphasize that the question is only in regard to “if you guard” etc., (and not in regard to “if you extinguish”).

can be said that the reason that guarding the flame of the soul depends on [guarding] the flame of the Torah, is because since, for them, the body and animalistic soul conceal the [Godly] soul, therefore, guarding the flame of their souls is through fulfilling Torah and *mitzvot* (as mentioned in chapter two). However, [as said above] the question of the discourse is primarily regarding souls of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*). That is, since for them, their souls are revealed, why do they require the flame of the Torah?

Based on the above, we must understand the statement in the discourse, that the reason that guarding the flame of the souls is through guarding the flame of Torah, is because [the verse] “these (*Eileh*-אלה) are the names of the children of Israel” endures in the merit of [the verse], “these (*Eileh*-אלה) are the testimonies, the statutes, and the ordinances.” For, at first glance, the reason that Israel endures in the merit of Torah and *mitzvot*, is because through fulfilling Torah and *mitzvot* they ascend to a much higher level,⁶⁹⁵ (whereas the level of the souls of the Jewish people as they are, in and of themselves, seemingly is not dependent on the Torah). However, the explanation of “if you guard My flame, I will guard your flame” is that guarding the flame of the soul (meaning the level of the flame of the soul, as it is, in and of itself),⁶⁹⁶ is through guarding the flame of the Torah.

⁶⁹⁵ This is as it states in the discourse, that “it is through man fulfilling the 613-*mitzvot* תרי”ג that he ascends [to a much higher level] etc.”

⁶⁹⁶ Even though the matter of “[I] will **guard** your flame” is that there is **added** guarding of it (as mentioned in the [previous] note 21 [in the original discourse]) – nevertheless, the matter of guarding is that the thing itself is guarded, [similar to “[if you] guard My flame, wherein even though the matter of the guarding is not only

This can be explained based on the teaching of the Zohar,⁶⁹⁷ brought in Tanya,⁶⁹⁸ that just as the flame of a lamp does not illuminate, nor is it retained by the wick without oil, so likewise, the *Shechinah* does not rest upon the body of man, which is compared to the wick, except through good deeds which are compared to oil.

In Tanya⁶⁹⁹ he explains that the reason for this (that the *Shechinah* rests upon the body of man specifically through fulfilling the *mitzvot* (good deeds) and) that his soul by itself, which is a part of God from on high, is not sufficient to be as oil for the wick, is because when it comes to the soul of man, even if he is a perfectly righteous *Tzaddik* who serves *HaShem*-יהו"ה with fear and love with delight [in Him], [his soul] is not completely nullified in its existence, but it rather is something unto itself that fears *HaShem*-יהו"ה and loves him.

In contrast, when it comes to the *mitzvot*, which are the inner aspect (*Pnimitiyut*) of His desire, blessed is He, the vitality within them is not separate unto itself whatsoever, but is rather unified and subsumed in His desire, blessed is He. Therefore, the *Shechinah* rests upon the body of man specifically through fulfilling the *mitzvot*.

This is because the matter of the *Shechinah* resting on any given thing, is that the thing becomes subsumed in the light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה and its existence is utterly nullified to Him,

that he does not transgress, but that he [also] fulfills the *mitzvah*, nevertheless, this is not an addition in the *mitzvah*, but only that he fulfills the *mitzvah* itself].

⁶⁹⁷ Zohar III 187a (Balak)

⁶⁹⁸ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 35

⁶⁹⁹ Ch. 35 *ibid.* (44a)

and it specifically is then that *HaShem* is One-*HaShem Echad*-יהו"ה אחד rests and is revealed and illuminates in it.

Based on this, we can explain why guarding the flame of the soul is through guarding the flame of the Torah. For, the matter of the flame of the soul is its nullification (*Bittul*),⁷⁰⁰ and the perfection of its nullification (this being the complete nullification of its existence (*Bittul b'Metziyut*)) is through fulfilling the *mitzvot*. This is why the soul is called “**your** flame-*Nercha*-נֶרְכָּה” (of man), whereas Torah and *mitzvot* are called “**My** flame-*Neree*-נֶרִי” (of the Holy One, blessed is He).

This is because the nullification (*Bittul*) of the soul (as it is, in and of itself) is not the ultimate state of nullification (*Bittul b'Tachlit*) – [in that it is] “**your** flame-*Nercha*-נֶרְכָּה,” of the person. In contrast, the flame of the *mitzvot*, which is the inner aspect (*Pnimitiyut*) of His desire, blessed is He, is “**My** flame-*Neree*-נֶרִי” of the Holy One, blessed is He.⁷⁰¹

5.

To explain, the above-mentioned discourse is related to the holiday of Shavuot. For, in addition to the fact that the Torah portion of “When you kindle the flames” (the beginning

⁷⁰⁰ See Tanya, beginning of Ch. 19 (24b), that [this is so] “even though it would become null and naught, and its existence would be completely nullified.”

⁷⁰¹ Even though the nullification (*Bittul*) that is drawn forth in the soul through the fulfillment of the *mitzvot* transcends the nullification (*Bittul*) of the soul in and of itself, it is nevertheless called “guarding” (“I will guard your flame”). For, the matter of “guarding” is that the thing itself is guarded (as explained before in note 24 [of the original discourse]). For, this nullification (*Bittul*) also relates to the soul, as will be explained later in chapter nine.

of the discourse) is read after the holiday of Shavuot,⁷⁰² it is noted at the beginning of the discourse that it is related to the discourse entitled “*Vayedaber... Anochi.*”⁷⁰³ Based on this we can say that the explanation in the discourse, that through fulfilling Torah and *mitzvot* elevation is caused in the soul, is similar to the elevation introduced at the giving of the Torah.

The explanation is that the natural love that every Jew has to adhere to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and not to separate from Him, blessed is He, in any way, even if this means having literal self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*), is something that was present even before to the Torah was given. This is because this love is an inheritance to us from our forefathers [Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov].

According to the explanation in Tanya,⁷⁰⁴ the reason our forefathers bequeathed this love to each and every Jew, is related to the fact that “our forefathers, they themselves are the Supernal Chariot (*Merkavah*).”⁷⁰⁵ The matter of the chariot (*Merkavah*) is that it is **nullified** to the Rider. [That is, the chariot (the horses) travel according to the will of the rider, not because they want to relate to the rider (as it is with the above-mentioned natural love, which is the desire to adhere to *HaShem*-יהו"ה) but rather because of their nullification to the rider.] It can thus be said that the natural love which comes to

⁷⁰² Only that there are some years on which the Torah portion of Naso is also read after the holiday of Shavuot, (such as on this year – 5729), similar to the fact that the Torah portion of Bamidbar is always read on the Shabbat before the holiday of Shavuot, and sometimes also the Torah portion of Naso.

⁷⁰³ Of the holiday of Shavuot 5629 (printed in Sefer HaMaamarim 5629 p. 193 and on).

⁷⁰⁴ Ch. 18 (23b); See Kitzurim v'Ha'arot L'Tanya there (p. 100).

⁷⁰⁵ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 47:6; 82:6

us as an inheritance from our forefathers, “they themselves [being] the chariot” (in a concealed way) also includes love that is in a state of nullification (*Bittul*),⁷⁰⁶ meaning that one altogether does not desire anything for himself, but his desire is entirely for there to be the revelation of Godliness in the world⁷⁰⁷ and that *HaShem's*-הו"ה Supernal intent for “a dwelling place for Himself, blessed is He, in the lower worlds,”⁷⁰⁸ should be fulfilled.

Now, as known,⁷⁰⁹ love (*Ahavah*) is the love and desire of the one (who loves). Thus, even when his love and desire is that the will of the Supernal One, should be fulfilled, nonetheless, in essence, the matter of love and desire is [of his] existence. However, the true matter of nullification (*Bittul*) is serving *HaShem*-הו"ה, blessed is He, in accepting the yoke, like a servant who has no desires [of his own] and whatever he does

⁷⁰⁶ In regard to the superiority of this love over the natural love – see Tanya, Ch. 41 (57b and on), and at length in Sefer HaMaamarim 5660 p. 149 and on. In Tanya there (58a) [it states], “the natural love in the heart of every Jew” is (not only to be in a state of adhesion to Him) but also “to do everything that is the will of the Supernal One, blessed is He,” and therefore, “every person should accustom himself to this intention.”

⁷⁰⁷ In Likkutei Torah on this weeks Torah portion (30a (cited in Sefer HaMaamarim 5660 *ibid.*)), [it states] that this love is the love of Aharon which transcends the love of Avraham. However, see Tanya in the preceding note, that this matter is applicable to each and every Jew on account of the hidden love that we inherited **from our forefathers**. Also see Ohr HaTorah on this weeks Torah portion (p. 338) [where it states], “One who is intelligent will understand that this is not to say that Avraham did not attain the level of the abundant love (*Ahavah Rabba*) of Aharon, Heaven forbid to think so, but only that this is like how at the giving of the Torah there was a drawing forth of empowerment to the Jewish people, so that they are able to draw forth the limitless light of the Unlimited One through the [fulfillment] of the *mitzvot* in action, which Avraham did not merit.”

⁷⁰⁸ See Midrash Tanchuma Naso 16; Bechukotai 3; Bereishit Rabba end of Ch. 3; Bamidbar Rabba 13:6; Tanya, beginning of Ch. 36.

⁷⁰⁹ See Torat Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Tammuz p. 17

is because the yoke of the master is upon him, because of which he **must** fulfill the will of the master.

Now, it can be said that since the nullification of the chariot to the rider is not because of the desire of the chariot, (that it desires to be nullified to the rider and to be a chariot for him), but is because of the rider, therefore, in the inheritance of “our forefathers, they themselves are the chariot,” there also is included in a concealed way, the nullification (*Bittul*) of accepting the yoke (*Kabbalat Ol*).

[To explain based on the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,⁷¹⁰ “When Israel accorded precedence to ‘we will do’ (*Na’aseh*-נעשה) over ‘we will listen’ (*Nishma*-נשמע)... [a Heavenly Proclamation (*Bat Kol*) emerged and said], ‘Who revealed this secret to My children?’” About this, it is explained in Chassidus⁷¹¹ that their according precedence to “we will do” over “we will listen,” [that the nullification (*Bittul*) of accepting the yoke (*Kabbalat Ol*) is a higher nullification (*Bittul*) - the nullification (*Bittul*) to the Master of the Desire (*Baal HaRatzon*)], is through the revelation of the hidden love (*Ahavah Mesuteret*) – that is, “[this] secret-*Raz*-רז.” It can be said that the relationship between the hidden **love** (existence) to accord precedence to “we will do” over “we will listen” (the **nullification** (*Bittul*) of accepting the yoke (*Kabbalat Ol*), is because the hidden love is an inheritance from our forefathers who “are themselves **the chariot**.”]

From this it is understood that the nullification (*Bittul*) drawn to the Jewish people at the giving of the Torah (**after**

⁷¹⁰ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 88a

⁷¹¹ Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar, “*Biur Al b'Sha'ah SheHeekdeemoo*” (14d).

they accorded precedence to “we will do” over “we will listen”) is a much higher nullification, even than the nullification (*Bittul*) of the chariot (*Merkavah*).

6.

The explanation is that in Talmud it states,⁷¹² “They said about Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai that he neither neglected a great matter or a small matter. A great matter refers to the Act of the Chariot (*Ma’aseh Merkavah*). A small matter refers to the disputes of Abaye and Rava.”

In the discourse it is explained⁷¹³ that the reason that the Act of the Chariot (*Ma’aseh Merkavah*) is called “a great matter” is because it is by means of the chariot⁷¹⁴ that the rider upon the chariot reaches a place that he could not reach on his own. The same is so of the Supernal Chariot (*Merkavah*), that the animal-*Chayot* [angels] carry the throne⁷¹⁵ and the man upon the throne⁷¹⁶ to the aspect of “He is not a man.”⁷¹⁷

The primary elevation to the aspect of “He is not a man” is with the Chariot (*Merkavah*) of our forefathers, (“our forefathers, they themselves are the Chariot (*Merkavah*)”), this being the Chariot (*Merkavah*) of the world of Emanation

⁷¹² Talmud Bavli, Sukkah 28a

⁷¹³ Sefer HaMaamarim 5629 p. 216 and on.

⁷¹⁴ In regard to the coming section, also see Torah Ohr, Yitro 71b and elsewhere.

⁷¹⁵ See Bachaye to Exodus 25:11 citing Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer (end of Ch. 4, and see Radal there]; Shemot Rabba, end of Ch. 23; Bamidbar Rabba, end of Ch. 14; Also see the liturgical hymn “v’*Hachayot*” in the Musaf prayer of Rosh HaShanah (in the “*Kedushah*” liturgy), in the Ashkenazi version of the liturgy.

⁷¹⁶ See Ezekiel 1:26

⁷¹⁷ As in the language of Samuel I 15:29

(*Atzilut*). For the elevation of the aspect of “man” to the aspect of “not a man” brought about through the chariot of the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*) is that the “man upon the throne” (the “man” of the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*)) ascends to the level that is “not a man” relative to the “man” of the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*).

However, through the chariot (*Merkavah*) of our forefathers, this being the chariot of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), there is caused to be the ascent of the aspect of the “man” of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) to the aspect of “not a man” that transcends the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), this being the Long Patient One-*Arich*.

This is why the Act of the Chariot (*Ma'aseh Merkavah*) is called a “great matter-*Davar Gadol* גדול-דבר.” For, “man,” that is, *Zeir Anpin*, is an aspect of immaturity (*Katnut*) and constriction (*Tzimtzum*), but through the Chariot (*Merkavah*) he ascends to the aspect of the Long Patient One-*Arich*, an “**adult-Gadol** גדול-גדול.”

The reason that the disputes of Abaye and Rava are called “a small matter” (even though they are the primary aspect of the Oral Torah) is because the laws of the Torah manifested in “small” matters. That is, in addition to the fact that the *mitzvot* manifest in physical things, each and every *mitzvah* has many particular laws, and the matter of division (particulars) is constriction and limitation, “smallness” (*Katnut*).

[Based on this,⁷¹⁸ the difference between the Act of the Chariot (*Ma'aseh Merkavah*) and the disputes of Abaye and Rava is from one extreme to the opposite extreme. For, the matter of the Chariot (*Merkavah*) is the departure from the aspect of limitation (“man”) to the aspect of limitlessness (“not a man”) – “a great matter” (*Davar Gadol*). (This is because the true matter of “greatness” (*Gadlut*) is in something that is unlimited.)⁷¹⁹ In contrast, when it comes to the disputes of Abaye and Rava it is the opposite, the manifestation of the will of the Supernal One, the limitless, in things that are limited – “a small matter.”]

In the discourse he continues and explains another reason that the disputes of Abaye and Rava are called “a small matter.” This is because the Torah of now is “a small matter” compared to the innerness (*Pnimitiyut*) of Torah that will be revealed in the coming future. Additionally, it also is because the Torah is an allegory and garment for the limitless light of the Unlimited One that manifests within it. This is why the Torah is called “the primordial allegory-*Mashal HaKadmoni* מִשַּׁל הַקַּדְמוֹנִי,”⁷²⁰ in that it is an allegory and garment for the aspect of “The Preexistent One of the world-*Kadmono Shel Olam* קַדְמוֹנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם-”⁷²¹ and relative to the analogue the allegory is “something small.”

⁷¹⁸ Regarding the coming section (in the brackets) see the discourse entitled “*Beha'alotcha*” 5678 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5678 p. 341).

⁷¹⁹ For, when it is said about something limited that it is “great,” its greatness is only relative to things that are smaller than it, but relative to things that are greater than it, it is “small.”

⁷²⁰ Samuel I 24:14 and see Rashi there; Makkot 10b and Rashi there; Rashi to Exodus 21:13.

⁷²¹ See at length in Torah Ohr, Megillat Esther 98b

It can be said that according to the reason that the disputes of Abaye and Rava are called “something small” is because the Torah manifested in “small” things, the descriptive term “small” is in reference to the garments of the Torah. This is why he adds that the Torah of now is something “small” compared to the innerness of the Torah that will be revealed in the coming future, [and that it also is “small” relative to the limitless light of the Unlimited One that manifests in it].

According to this reason, the descriptive term “small” is (also) in reference to the Torah itself. [In regard to the fact that he also brings the first reason, that the Torah manifested in “small” things, it can be said that this reason emphasizes that the difference between the disputes of Abaya and Rava and the Act of the Chariot (*Ma’aseh Merkavah*) is a difference that is from one extreme to the other extreme, discussed before.]

7.

In the discourse he continues and gives another explanation for why the Torah is called “something small-*Davar Katan* דבר קטן,” in that it is thus named in regard to the [state of] great nullification of the law (*Halachah*) in relation to the limitless light of the Unlimited One that manifests within it. For, just as one’s study of Torah must be with nullification (*Bittul*), [as in the verse],⁷²² “My tongue shall answer with Your word,” “like one who repeats after the reader,”⁷²³ the same is so of the laws (*Halachot*) of Torah themselves, that they are

⁷²² Psalms 119:172

⁷²³ Torah Ohr, Yitro 67b and elsewhere; See before beginning of p. 219.

nullified (*Bittul*) to the limitless light of the Unlimited One that manifests within them, as will soon be explained.

[It can be said that when it comes to the explanation of “small-*Katan*-קטן” in the literal sense, the descriptive term “a small matter-*Davar Katan*-דבר קטן” is relative to other matters, whereas according to the explanation that “small-*Katan*-קטן” refers to nullification (*Bittul*), [similar to [the verse],⁷²⁴ “I have become small-*Katontee*-קטנתי from all the kindnesses”], the “smallness-*Katnut*-קטנות” is in the thing itself.]

We must therefore better understand this, (the explanation that the term “small-*Katan*-קטן” refers to the nullification (*Bittul*)). For, the Chariot (*Merkavah*) is also in a state of nullification (*Bittul*) relative to the rider, and even so, it is called “something big” (*Davar Gadol*).

It can be said that the essential point of the explanation is that the nullification (*Bittul*) called “something small-*Davar Katan*-דבר קטן” (“I have become small-*Katontee*-קטנתי”) is that one is completely nullified and has no quality of superiority whatsoever. This is like the statement in Iggeret HaKodesh, in the Epistle beginning “I have become small-*Katontee*-קטנתי,”⁷²⁵ that, “He regards himself as a remnant, as something truly superfluous.”

In contrast, since the Chariot (*Merkavah*) is an existence, such that it has an advantage relative to the rider [for as explained before, through the chariot (*Merkavah*) the rider can reach a place that he would not be able to reach on his own], it therefore is not “something small-*Davar Katan*-דבר קטן.” [On

⁷²⁴ Genesis 32:11

⁷²⁵ Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 2

the contrary, it is because of its elevation, that through it there is the ascent to the aspect of the “great-*Gadol*-גדול” (the Long Patient One-*Arich*), that the Chariot (*Merkavah*) is also called “something great-*Davar Gadol*-דבר גדול.”]

In contrast, when it comes to the laws (*Halachot*) of the Torah which manifested in physical things, [the first meaning of “something small-*Davar Katan*-דבר קטן”], since the physical things have no relative comparison⁷²⁶ to His wisdom and His will, blessed is He, that manifest within them, they thus are in a state of ultimate nullification (*Bittul*), [and are thus] “something small-*Davar Katan*-דבר קטן.”

Through the nullification (*Bittul*) in the laws of the Torah themselves there is also a drawing forth of nullification (*Bittul*) in the person who engages in the study of Torah, that his study of Torah will also be in a way that “my tongue shall answer with Your word,” “like one who repeats after the reader.”

8.

This then, is the meaning of [the verse],⁷²⁷ “God spoke all these things to say-*Leimor*-לאמר.” It is explained in Chassidus⁷²⁸ that at the giving of the Torah, empowerment was granted for one’s study of Torah be in a way of “to say-*Leimor*-לאמר,” meaning to repeat the words that the Holy One, blessed

⁷²⁶ See *Hemshech* 5666 p. 55

⁷²⁷ Exodus 20:1

⁷²⁸ Torah Ohr, Yitro 67b and elsewhere. Also see [the beginning of the preceding discourse entitled “*Vayedaber Elokim* – God spoke etc.,” Discourse 30, Sefer HaMaamarim 5729], p. 219.

is He, says, “my tongue shall answer with Your word.” For, at first glance, even before the Torah was given, the Jewish people accorded precedence to “we will do” (*Na’aseh*-נעשה) over “we will listen” (*Nishmah*-נשמע) and according precedence to “we will do” over “we will listen” is nullification to the Master of the will. This being so, what is the novelty in the nullification (*Bittul*) of “to say-*Leimor*-לאמר” of the giving of the Torah relative to the nullification (*Bittul*) of [according precedence to] “we will do” over “we will listen”?

The explanation is that the nullification (*Bittul*) of according precedence to “we will do” over “we will listen” has an element of superiority to it. This is because according precedence to “we will do” over “we will listen” is the matter of accepting the yoke of His Kingship (*Kabbalat Ol Malchut*), and through the people accepting the yoke of His Kingship He is made King, [similar to the nullification of the Chariot (*Merkavah*), that through the nullification of the Chariot (*Merkavah*) to the Rider, it thereby⁷²⁹ carries and elevates the Rider.] However, the nullification (*Bittul*) introduced at the giving of the Torah is complete nullification (*Bittul b’Tachlit*).

The same is so when it comes to fulfilling the *mitzvot*, that at the giving of the Torah, empowerment was granted that one’s fulfillment of the *mitzvot* can be with the ultimate nullification (*Bittul b’Tachlit*). In other words, his fulfillment of the *mitzvot* can be (not because he accepts upon himself the yoke of the Kingship of Heaven and the yoke of the *mitzvot*, but) because the command of the Holy One, blessed is He, decrees upon him to be in accordance with the command.

⁷²⁹ See Torah Ohr, Yitro 71b

This is like the explanation in Likkutei Torah⁷³⁰ about the Ten Commandments said at the giving of the Torah, [and this similarly applies to all the commands of the Torah], that they were said in the form of a command, as well as in the future tense, being that the [Supernal] speech itself **decrees** upon man and the world (and forces them)⁷³¹ to be so.

It can be said that the superiority of the nullification (*Bittul*) of the fulfillment of the *mitzvot* in this way, relative to the nullification (*Bittul*) of the acceptance of the yoke (*Kabbalat Ol*) is in two matters: Because the nullification (*Bittul*) of the acceptance of the yoke (*Kabbalat Ol*) is through **him** accepting upon himself to be the servant of the King, King of kings, the Holy One, blessed is He.⁷³² And beyond this, the nullification of the servant to his master [even when he **is born** as a slave] is connected to his own existence, that his substance is that he is a servant of the master.⁷³³

In contrast, the nullification (*Bittul*) in the above-mentioned way is (not because of the substance of the person, but) because it is impossible for there to be any existence in the

⁷³⁰ Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar ibid. (13c). Also see the citations in Hitva'aduyot 5749 Vol. 3, p. 235.

⁷³¹ That is, from the aspect of **the nature of the creation** they are forced to be so, and it is only that man possesses the free choice to choose that which is the opposite the nature of the creation.

⁷³² It is for this reason that even after having become a servant, he is not so nullified. See Torat Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Sivan p. 357, note 28. It can be said that this is the reason that the servitude of a servant that was sold by the court is greater than the servitude of one who sells himself [into servitude].

⁷³³ For this reason, even a servant understands that one who is not a servant of his master is not obligated to fulfill his commandments.

world that is the opposite of **the command of the Holy One, blessed is He.**⁷³⁴

9.

Now, even though the nullification (*Bittul*) of the study of Torah and the fulfillment of the *mitzvot* in the above-mentioned way is the ultimate nullification (*Bittul b'Tachlit*), nonetheless, since “Israel and the Holy One, blessed is He, are entirely one,”⁷³⁵ therefore, this nullification (*Bittul*) does not negate their existence, but on the contrary, this itself **is** their existence.

This then, is the meaning of “if you guard My flame, I will guard your flame.” For, even though the matter of “I will guard your flame” is that man comes to the ultimate state of nullification (*Bittul*) (which even transcends the nullification of the Chariot (*Merkavah*)), nevertheless, this does not negate his existence, but on the contrary, it **“guards** your flame.”

This is also why on the verse, “When you kindle the flames,” Rashi explains that “the flame must ascend on its own.” For, although the ascent of the souls (“When you kindle the flames”) is that they come to the ultimate nullification

⁷³⁴ Torat Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim ibid. note 32, that the nullification (*Bittul*) of the Jewish people brought about through “the Holy One, blessed is He, overturned the mountain over them like a tub” (Shabbat 88a) is a higher nullification (*Bittul*) than their nullification (*Bittul*) in according precedence to “we will do” over “we will listen,” (similar to the difference between one who sold himself and one who was sold by the court). Based on what is explained [here] in the discourse, the nullification (*Bittul*) that was drawn forth at the giving of the Torah is a much higher nullification (*Bittul*) even than the nullification of Him turning [the mountain over them] etc.

⁷³⁵ See Zohar III 73a

(*Tachlit HaBittul*), nevertheless, it is in a way that relates to the flames (*Neirot*) (the souls) themselves, “the flame ascends on its own.” In other words, the study of Torah and the fulfillment of the *mitzvot* is with nullification (*Bittul*), and at the same time it is with vitality and joy. Now, since joy breaks boundaries,⁷³⁶ it therefore is through the joy of the Torah and the joy of the *mitzvah* that there is a drawing down of all matters, both spiritual and physical, without limitations.

⁷³⁶ See at length in Sefer Maamarei Admor HaEmtza’ee – Drushei Chatunah, Vol. 2 p. 417 and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5657 p. 223 and on, and elsewhere.