

Discourse 17

*“HaYoshevet BaGanim... -
You who dwells in the gardens...”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Beshalach,
13th of Shvat, 5729
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,¹⁰⁴³ “You who dwell in the gardens, the companions listen to your voice; let me hear [your voice].” In his discourse from the 13th of Shvat,¹⁰⁴⁴ (the second discourse in the *Hemshech* of the Hilulah), his honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rebbe, brings the commentary of Rashi on this verse, that “the Holy One, blessed is He, says to the congregation of Israel, ‘You who are scattered in exile, grazing in the gardens of strangers and sitting in synagogues and study halls, the companions listen to your voice, [which refers to] the ministering angels, your friends, children of God like you, they hear and come to listen to your voice in the synagogues.’”

He adds and brings the teaching of Midrash Rabbah,¹⁰⁴⁵ “The Holy One, blessed is He, says, ‘I and My entourage come to hear your voice.’” In other words, the “companions” not only refers to the angels (as in Rashi’s commentary) but also to the

¹⁰⁴³ Song of Songs 8:13

¹⁰⁴⁴ The discourse entitled “*Hayoshevet BaGanim*” (Sefer HaMaamarim 5710 p. 119).

¹⁰⁴⁵ Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabba to Song of Songs 8:13

Holy One, blessed is He, (“I and My entourage”), in that He too comes to listen to the voice of the Jewish people.

Now, we must understand the connection between the matter of “the companions listen” and “You who dwell in the gardens,” [meaning], “grazing in the gardens of strangers,” and that it is specifically “when the congregation of Israel is scattered in exile and grazing in the gardens of strangers” that the Holy One, blessed is He, comes with His entourage to listen to their voices.

To explain, the general service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, during the time of exile, is of no comparison to the service of Him during the time of the Holy Temple. For, since the work of the Jewish people is to have an effect in the world, and “he who wrestles with a filthy person is bound to [become soiled] etc.,”¹⁰⁴⁶ it thus is understood that during the time of exile, and due to the great descent in the world, it likewise is so that the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the Jewish people, including even the service of Him of the righteous *Tzaddikim*, is of no comparison to the service of Him during the time of the Holy Temple.

Now, we should add that the words “You who dwells in the gardens” indicate the greatness of the descent during the time of the exile itself, such [a descent] that we do not even sense that we are in exile, and on the contrary, we sense that we are in a garden (*Gan*), this being the matter of pleasure (*Taanug*).

In other words, during the time of exile itself the darkness is doubled and quadrupled, - not just doubled, but

¹⁰⁴⁶ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 28

quadrupled - and this is to such an extent that “they make darkness into light,”¹⁰⁴⁷ indicating the great strength of the darkness. This is like the known saying of his honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rebbe,¹⁰⁴⁸ that when we are in a dark cellar, in a state of darkness, for a long time, because we have grown accustomed to it, we imagine it is bright.

This is also the meaning of the verse,¹⁰⁴⁹ “Hide, I shall hide (*Haster Asteer*-הסתר אסתיר) My face on that day,” stating “hide, I shall hide-*Haster Asteer*-הסתר אסתיר” twice, indicating that the concealment itself is concealed, meaning that we do not at all even sense that it is dark.

However, with all this, there is the matter of “the companions listen to your voice,” in that the Holy One, blessed is He, and His entourage, come and listen to the voices of the Jewish people, and this is specifically when the congregation of Israel is scattered in the exile and grazing in the gardens of strangers.

2.

Now, there is another explanation of “You who dwell in the gardens.” As his honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rebbe, cites,¹⁰⁵⁰ the word “gardens-*Ganim*-גנים” (in the plural,

¹⁰⁴⁷ Isaiah 5:20

¹⁰⁴⁸ Sefer HaSichot 5701 p. 140; Igrot Kodesh of the Rebbe Rayatz, Vol. 1, p. 482.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Deuteronomy 31:18; See Toldot Yaakov Yosef, beginning of Bereishit; Keter Shem Tov, Hosafot, Section 42.

¹⁰⁵⁰ In the aforementioned discourse entitled “*Hayoshevet BaGanim*,” Ch. 10 (Sefer HaMaamarim p. 124 and on).

and the smallest plurality is the number two),¹⁰⁵¹ refers to the two levels of the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*), these being the lower Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden HaTachton*) and the upper Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden HaElyon*).¹⁰⁵² For, as known, even though there are many levels to no end in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*), nonetheless, they all are generally included in the two levels, the lower Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden HaTachton*) and the upper Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden HaElyon*).¹⁰⁵³ This is like how it is in the worlds, that although there are a many worlds to no end, they generally are included within two categories, “the concealed worlds that are not revealed, and the revealed worlds.”¹⁰⁵⁴ Likewise, the many of levels of the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) are included in the two levels of the upper Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden HaElyon*) and the lower Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden HaTachton*), corresponding to the two above-mentioned categories in the worlds.

However, the explanation of “the companions listen,” in that the Holy One, blessed is He, and His entourage, come and listen to the voices of the congregation of Israel, is not cited by his honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rebbe, in connection to the explanation that “You who dwell in the gardens” refers to the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*). It rather is specifically in connection to the explanation that “You who dwell in the gardens” refers to the congregation of Israel as they are scattered in exile, grazing in the gardens of strangers.”

¹⁰⁵¹ See Likkutei Sichot Vol. 21 p. 111

¹⁰⁵² Zohar II 92a and Mikdash Melech there, cited in the discourse entitled “*Hayoshevet BaGanim*” in Ohr HaTorah, Shir HaShirim Vol. 2, p. 765 & p. 779.

¹⁰⁵³ See Torah Ohr, Tetzaveh 81c and elsewhere.

¹⁰⁵⁴ See introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 17a

Now, the two above-mentioned explanations of “You who dwell in the gardens” are related to each other. This may be understood according to the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,¹⁰⁵⁵ “One hour of repentance and good deeds in this world is more precious than all the life of the coming world.” That is, it is specifically through the toil in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in this world, that the highest level is possible to reach, and it is to this end that the soul descended into this world, “from a high peak to a deep pit,”¹⁰⁵⁶ to thereby reach the greatest elevation. That is, to reach this greatest elevation the soul had to specifically descend below. For, being that the Holy One, blessed is He, is the essence of goodness, and “it is the nature of the good to bestow goodness,”¹⁰⁵⁷ if there was a different way to reach this elevation, He would not have lowered the soul “from a high peak to a deep pit.”

The same is so in this world, that true elevation comes through toil in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, specifically in the time of exile. Moreover, in the time of the exile itself, true elevation is through toiling in service of Him while the strength of the exile is a doubled and quadrupled darkness.

This is as explained before¹⁰⁵⁸ about the superiority of toil in self-restraint (*Itkafiya*) over and above toiling in self-transformation (*It'hapcha*). That is, it is specifically through

¹⁰⁵⁵ Mishnah Avot 4:17

¹⁰⁵⁶ See Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 5b

¹⁰⁵⁷ See Emek HaMelech, Shaar 1 (Shaar Sha'ashu'ey HaMelech), Ch. 1; Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah, Ch. 4; See the note of the Rebbe to Maamarei Admor HaEmtza'ee, Kuntreisim p. 5.

¹⁰⁵⁸ In the discourse entitled “*Bati LeGani* – I have come to My garden” of the 10th of Shvat of this year, 5729, Discourse 16, Ch. 14 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5729 p. 117 and on).

breaking the side opposite holiness while it still is in its full strength and might, this being the toil of self-restraint (*Itkafiya*), that we draw down a much higher light.

With the above in mind, we can understand the relationship between the two explanations of “You who dwell in the gardens,” (the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*), and “grazing in the gardens of strangers”). That is, it is specifically through the work of the congregation of Israel at the time that she “grazes in the gardens of strangers” that we reach the highest level of the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*).

However, all the above is regarding the inner aspect (*Pnimiyyut*) of the matters. Nevertheless, externally (*b’Chitzoniyyut*), the matter of “grazing in the gardens of strangers” is the greatest descent. For, as mentioned above, it is the matter of “Hide, I shall hide-*Haster Asteer*-הסתר אסתר,” this being a doubled and quadrupled darkness, such that “they make darkness into light,” in that not only does he not sense that it is dark, but on the contrary, to him it seems to be bright. That is, to him the exile like a garden, this being the matter of pleasure (*Taanug*).

To explain, the world is divided into three categories. The first category is the desert, “[a land] that no man settled.”¹⁰⁵⁹ Spiritually, this refers to the place of the external husks (*Kelipot*) where the Supernal Man did not settle, as known.¹⁰⁶⁰ The second category is settled places, like homes and fields that are necessary for the settlement of the world. The third category is the garden, which is a place of pleasure

¹⁰⁵⁹ Jeremiah 2:6

¹⁰⁶⁰ Likkutei Torah, Re’eh 32b and elsewhere

and delight, beyond what is necessary. Moreover, the pleasure in the garden is so great that even if there undesirable matters, which are the opposite of pleasure, nonetheless, the pleasure of the garden nullifies them. This is as stated in the Megillah of Esther,¹⁰⁶¹ that when the king rose in his fury etc., in order to calm his wrath, he went to the palace garden.

This then, is the meaning of “grazing in the gardens of strangers.” That is, the darkness of the exile is so great that not only does he not sense that the exile is the matter of a desert, but on the contrary, to him it seems to be a garden, a place of pleasure and delight.

The substance of this as it is man’s service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is that engaging in physical matters during the time of the exile is a great pleasure for him. For, if he would sense that it is the aspect of a desert, or at the very least, a settlement, he would engage in them out of necessity, but not wholeheartedly,¹⁰⁶² as the verse states,¹⁰⁶³ “by the toil of your hands,” meaning that the toil in physical things must solely be the aspect of “the toil of your hands,” rather than the toil of your head, meaning that a person should not invest his intellect into them, and certainly not invest his heartfelt feelings into them.¹⁰⁶⁴ However, since he thinks that the exile is a garden, he therefore engages in the physical matters of the time of exile with great pleasure.

Nevertheless, after all this, when the congregation of Israel does its work in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, at

¹⁰⁶¹ Esther 7:7, and see Targum Sheini there.

¹⁰⁶² Chronicles I 12:34

¹⁰⁶³ Psalms 128:2

¹⁰⁶⁴ See Likkutei Torah, Shlach 42d; Chukat 66c, and elsewhere.

the time that she is “grazing in the gardens of strangers,” it specifically is then that the Holy One, blessed is He, says, “I and My entourage come to hear your voice.”

3.

This may be understood by prefacing with the discourse that was added to Chabad Chassidus two hundred years ago. For, as related in HaYom Yom,¹⁰⁶⁵ on Shabbat Parshat Beshalach of the year 5529, when the Alter Rebbe was in Mezhritch, the Rav, the Maggid of Mezhritch, called him to his chamber and said to him:

On Shabbat Parshat Beshalach of the year 5516, the Baal Shem Tov said a discourse on the verse,¹⁰⁶⁶ “Toward morning the sea returned to its strength-*L'Eitano*-לֹאִיתָנוּ,” meaning, “To its precondition-*L'Tna'o*-לְתִנְאוּ,” as in the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory. [His intention was to the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,¹⁰⁶⁷ “The Holy One, blessed is He, established a precondition with the sea, that it will split before Israel. This is the meaning of the verse, ‘The sea returned to its strength-*L'Eitano*-לֹאִיתָנוּ,’ – ‘To the precondition-*L'Tna'o*-לְתִנְאוּ’ that was made with it.]

The Rav, the Maggid, then continued his words stating: In the year 5521 (a year after the passing of the Baal Shem Tov) my teacher (the Baal Shem Tov) was present with me and repeated the discourse, but he added an explanation of the

¹⁰⁶⁵ Of Shabbat Parshat Beshalach, the 17th of Shvat.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Exodus 14:27

¹⁰⁶⁷ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 5:5; Shemot Rabba 21:6; Zohar II 198b

matter of “actualizing the **will** of the Ever Present One,”¹⁰⁶⁸ that it specifies “His will-*Retzono*-רצונו,” specifically, and not “His word-*Devaro*-דברו” [as in the verse,¹⁰⁶⁹ “who actualize His word (*Devaro*-דברו), to obey the voice of His word (*Devaro*-דברו)"].

Today (in the year 5529), my teacher was present with me to repeat the discourse. The Rav, the Maggid of Mezhritch, then said the discourse before the Alter Rebbe, and added an explanation on the matter of the River Ginai,¹⁰⁷⁰ and that it is akin to the matter of the splitting of the sea.

In the year 5565, his honorable holiness, the Alter Rebbe, related all this to his honorable holiness, the Tzemach Tzeddek, and in the year 5621 the Tzemach Tzeddek related this to his son and successor, the Rebbe Maharash, and added:

“Today, (on Shabbat Parshat Beshalach of the year 5621), the Baal Shem Tov, the Rav, the Maggid of Mezhritch, and my master, my grandfather, my teacher and rebbe [the Alter Rebbe] were present with me, and each one said the discourse to me in his own style.

Now, in HaYom Yom the matters of the above-mentioned discourse are only brought in short summary. However, this teaching is brought at greater length in Ohr Torah of the Rav, the Maggid of Mezhritch,¹⁰⁷¹ (even though, there too, it is not expansive in its explanation), as will be mentioned soon.

¹⁰⁶⁸ See Talmud Bavli, Brachot 35b

¹⁰⁶⁹ Psalms 103:19

¹⁰⁷⁰ Talmud Bavli, Chullin 7a

¹⁰⁷¹ Ohr Torah, p. 31c-d

Now, it should be point out that the book Ohr Torah is brought in many places in Chassidus. This is to such an extent that it is known¹⁰⁷² that his honorable holiness (the Rebbe Rashab) whose soul is in Eden, would delve into the books Keter Shem Tov and Ohr Torah etc., prior to Yechidus [private audiences with Chassidim].

Likewise, in his discourse entitled “*Olat Tamid*,”¹⁰⁷³ his honorable holiness, the Tzemach Tzeddek, writes about the discourse entitled “*Olat Tamid*” in Ohr Torah,¹⁰⁷⁴ “There are those who say that it was written by the holy hand of my master, my grandfather, my teacher and rebbe [the Alter Rebbe], but this is not clear.” From this it is understood that there are various discourses in Ohr Torah that [indeed] were written by the holy hand of the Alter Rebbe.¹⁰⁷⁵

Now, with the above in mind, we can understand why we find in various places that they are exacting (not only in the content, but also) in the precise wording in Ohr Torah. For example, in Yahel Ohr,¹⁰⁷⁶ and in *Hemshech* 5672,¹⁰⁷⁷ they are exacting about the precise wording in Ohr Torah¹⁰⁷⁸ on the verse,¹⁰⁷⁹ “Make for yourself two silver trumpets.” They also

¹⁰⁷² Sefer HaSichot 5709 p. 336

¹⁰⁷³ Ohr HaTorah, Pinchas p. 1,116

¹⁰⁷⁴ Ohr Torah, section 150

¹⁰⁷⁵ Also see Reshimot HaRav Baruch Shalom (Kehot 5761) p. 138.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Yahel Ohr, p. 357 and on.

¹⁰⁷⁷ *Hemshech* 5672, Vol. 2, p. 790 and on; Vol. 3, p. 1,349

¹⁰⁷⁸ Ohr Torah, Section 134

¹⁰⁷⁹ Numbers 10:2

are exacting¹⁰⁸⁰ on the wording in Ohr Torah¹⁰⁸¹ on the verse,¹⁰⁸² “They came to Marah.”

Now, although in Ohr Torah the [above-mentioned] discourse is said in its entirety as one continuum, nevertheless, based on what is related in HaYom Yom, it is understood at which time each part of the teaching was said, up to and including the part that was said to the Alter Rebbe two hundred years ago in the year 5529, at which time this matter was added to Chabad Chassidus.

It should be pointed out that even though a person only grasps the depth of his teacher’s intention after forty years,¹⁰⁸³ and this being so, how can it be said that at the time that the discourse was said, in the year 5529, this matter was added to Chabad Chassidus, nevertheless, the story related by the Chassidim is well known¹⁰⁸⁴ about what the Alter Rebbe wrote in Iggeret HaKodesh,¹⁰⁸⁵ “My ear has heard, and I have understood etc.,” that with these words he hints that “when my ear heard, I immediately understood.” Nonetheless, it is understood that after forty years, even for him, the matter came to be in a different way.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Ohr HaTorah, Tisa p. 2,000 and on; Masei p. 1,378 and on; p. 1,384; p. 1,387.

¹⁰⁸¹ Ohr Torah, Section 152

¹⁰⁸² Exodus 15:23

¹⁰⁸³ See Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zarah 5b

¹⁰⁸⁴ Also see Likkutei Hagahot L’Tanya (Kehot 5734) p. 81, cited in “Marei Mekomot, Hagahot, v’Ha’arot Ketzarot” 2nd edition, to Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 27 (Kehot 5749).

¹⁰⁸⁵ Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 27 *ibid*.

The following are the words of the discourse in Ohr Torah: [The verse states], “Toward morning the sea returned to its strength-*L'Eitano*-לֵאִיתָנוּ,” about which our sages, of blessed memory, explained, “To its precondition-*L'Tna'o*-לְתַנּוֹאֵי, in that the Holy One, blessed is He, made a precondition that the sea will split for Israel...” That is, at the time that He said the [creative] utterance, He made a condition that the sea would split, and if not, there would not be seas and they would not have been created in this place, since they would be nullified from the existence of the creation etc. (This concludes the passage that the Baal Shem Tov said in the year 5516.)¹⁰⁸⁶

It can be pointed out that in regard to the words, “they would be nullified from the existence of the creation,” this aligns with the explanation of the Baal Shem Tov on the verse,¹⁰⁸⁷ “Forever, *HaShem*-יְהוָה, your speech stands in the heavens” (brought at the beginning of Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah),¹⁰⁸⁸ that the speech of *HaShem*-יְהוָה is established and continuously stands within the firmament of the heavens to enliven it and bring it into being as something from nothing, and the same is so of all the creations etc. This is because if these letters of the [ten] utterances would be withdrawn from the creations, all the creations would return to absolute naught and nothingness, literally, and would be as if

¹⁰⁸⁶ In regard to the coming section, also see Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 6 p. 87 and on (also from this discourse).

¹⁰⁸⁷ Psalms 119:89

¹⁰⁸⁸ Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah, translated as The Gate of Unity and Faith, Ch. 1.

they altogether never were, like before the creation. In other words, it is not only that from now on, they would be nothing and naught, but it rather would be as if they never existed in the first place, (as will later be explained).

In the discourse he continues [and states]: It is with this [in mind] that we can understand what our sages, of blessed memory, taught,¹⁰⁸⁹ that the righteous-*Tzaddikim* “actualize the desire (*Retzono*-רצונו) of the Ever Present One,” and it does not say that they “actualize His word (*Dvaro*-דברו)” or “His utterance (*Ma’amaro*-מאמרו)...”

Now, the analogy for this is of a father who says a Halachic ruling or a novel idea in Torah to his son, and the son, on account of his great sharpness and astuteness, refutes his words. Now, even though the son opposes his father and refutes his words, nevertheless the father derives great satisfaction, pleasure, and joy from this... and this is more desirable to the father than had he remained silent and agreed to his words. Likewise, “the righteous (*Tzaddik*) rules with the fear of God,”¹⁰⁹⁰ so to speak. This then, is the meaning of [the teaching that the righteous-*Tzaddikim*] “actualize the desire (*Retzono*-רצונו) of the Ever Present One,” even though they do not actualize “His word (*Dvaro*-דברו)” or “His utterance (*Ma’amaro*-מאמרו).” (This concludes the passage that was said in the year 5521.)

Now, the three terms used in Ohr Torah – “satisfaction” (*Nachat*-נחת), “pleasure” (*Taanug*-תענוג), and “joy” (*Simchah*-שמחה) – are precise. (For, as mentioned before, in Ohr Torah

¹⁰⁸⁹ See Talmud Bavli, Brachot 35b

¹⁰⁹⁰ See Samuel II 23:3

there is precision not only in the content, but also in the words and terms used.)

The explanation is that the son's refutation of his father's words is the matter of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with repentance (*Teshuvah*). About one who returns in repentance (*Baal Teshuvah*) the Rambam writes,¹⁰⁹¹ "He does the *mitzvot* and accepts them with satisfaction (*Nachat*-נחת) and joy (*Simchah*-שמחה)... and moreover, he lusts (*Mit'aveen*-מתאווין) for them etc.," in which the matter of lust (*Ta'avah*-תאוה) is the matter of pleasure (*Taanug*-תענוג). We thus find that through repentance (*Teshuvah*) we draw down all three matters, satisfaction (*Nachat*-נחת), pleasure (*Taanug*-תענוג), and joy (*Simchah*-שמחה).

This then, is the meaning of the statement in Ohr Torah, that when the son refutes the words of the father, the father derives great satisfaction, pleasure, and joy from this. This is because the matter of refuting the words of the father, in that "the Holy One, blessed is He, issues a decree, and the righteous (*Tzaddik*) nullifies it,"¹⁰⁹² (and similarly, "the righteous (*Tzaddik*) issues a decree and the Holy One, blessed is He, fulfills it,"¹⁰⁹³ as the verse states,¹⁰⁹⁴ "You would utter a decree and it would be done") is like the matter of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in repentance (*Teshuvah*). This is because this is the matter of "actualizing the desire (*Retzono*-רצונו) of

¹⁰⁹¹ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah 7:7

¹⁰⁹² Talmud Bavli, Mo'ed Katan 16b

¹⁰⁹³ See Talmud Bavli, Taanit 23a; Zohar II 15a; Shabbat 59b; Also see the commentaries to Mishnah (Rabbi Ovadia Bartenura etc.) to Avot 2:4; Bava Metziya 85a, and elsewhere. Also see Sefer HaLikkutim of the Tzemach Tzedek, section on "*Tzaddik*-צדיק."

¹⁰⁹⁴ Job 22:28

the Ever Present One,” in that they actualize and draw down a new desire (*Ratzon*).¹⁰⁹⁵

In the discourse he continues – this being the passage that was added when the discourse was repeated in the year 5529, when the discourse reached Chabad Chassidus:

With this in mind, we can understand what Rabbi Pinchas ben Ya’ir said to the River Ginai (when he was on his way to rescue captives),¹⁰⁹⁶ “Part your water for me, since I am going to fulfill a *mitzvah*.” It responded to him, “I too am going to fulfill the will of My owner,” (as Rashi explains, “all the rivers flow to the sea¹⁰⁹⁷ by the decree of the King”). [The River Ginai continued], “About you, it is uncertain whether you will fulfill [His will successfully],” (as Rashi explains, “Since they may not give you the captives in exchange for the ransom”). [The River Ginai continued], “I, however, will certainly fulfill [His will successfully].” He responded to it, “If you do not part, I will decree upon you that water will never flow through you.”¹⁰⁹⁸

Now, at first glance, this poses a difficulty. For, did not (the river) respond to him with a proper response? However, this may be understood based on the explanation above, that the Holy One, blessed is He, established a precondition with the act of creation, that they [must] fulfill the will of the righteous (*Tzaddikim*), even though it is not in their nature, and from the positive said, one also understands the negative. Thus, what

¹⁰⁹⁵ See Likkutei Torah, Emor 32d; Shlach 43a; Balak 68a; Zot HaBrachah 99c, and elsewhere.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Talmud Bavli, Chullin 7a

¹⁰⁹⁷ Ecclesiastes 1:7

¹⁰⁹⁸ [And as it continues there, “[The river] parted for him.”]

Rabbi Pinchas ben Ya'ir said to [the river] is, “if you do not part your waters, you are not fulfilling the precondition stated when the utterance [that brought you into being] was said, and it is as if you never were, and as if water was never created here, and thus, water has never flowed here.” (This concludes the quote [of this part of the discourse].)

This also explains the precise wording, “I will decree upon you that water will **never** flow through you.” At first glance, the word “never-*L'Olam* לעולם” seems to be superfluous here (since if he decrees upon it that water will not flow through it, it follows automatically that water will never flow through it).

However, the explanation is that the words of Rabbi Pinchas ben Ya'ir, “I will decree upon you etc.,” are not only a decree, but with these words he answered the argument of the river. This is because the existence of the river stems entirely from the utterance that constantly brings it into being from nothing to something, and if the utterance withdraws from it, it then will revert to naught and nothingness, as it was before creation, as though it never was, as explained before.

Thus, since at the time that the utterance was [originally] said, the Holy One, blessed is He, established a condition with it, that it would not hinder the service of *HaShem* יהו"ה of the Jewish people, we thus find that if it did not part its waters, and did not fulfill the condition that was established with it at the time the utterance was said, then it has no existence in the first place. Thus, the river cannot argue that it is going to fulfill the will of its Owner, in that “all the rivers flow to the sea by the decree of the King,” since if it does not

fulfill the condition, there never was the existence of the river [in the first place].

In other words, since Rabbi Pinchas ben Ya'ir was on his way to fulfill the *mitzvah* of redeeming captives, and from the perspective of Rabbi Pinchas ben Ya'ir, there was no impediment to fulfilling the *mitzvot*, it therefore follows automatically that “I will decree upon you etc.” For, when a Jew is prepared to fulfill the will of his Owner and does not take any obstacles or impediments into account, all matters of the creation are then forced to be nullified of their nature for him to be able to fulfill the will of his Owner.

In Ohr Torah he concludes: Whosoever is called a son of the Holy One, blessed is He, is capable of actualizing the desire of his Owner. And who is this? One who guards the covenant [of the circumcision] (*Shomer HaBrit*), and is called “the righteous (*Tzaddik*) is the foundation (*Yesod*) of the world.”¹⁰⁹⁹ Understand this very well. (This matter is related to what we discussed in the recent past about studying Iggeret HaTeshuvah.¹¹⁰⁰ This is because the primary matter of Iggeret HaTeshuvah is to teach the matter of guarding the covenant [of the circumcision] (*Shemirat HaBrit*).)¹¹⁰¹

Now, about what was said before, that upon the withdrawal of the letters of the ten utterances from the creations, (and similarly, when they do not fulfill their

¹⁰⁹⁹ Proverbs 10:25

¹¹⁰⁰ See the Sichah talk of the 10th of Shvat of this year, Ch. 52 (Torat Menachem, Vol. 55, p. 224)

¹¹⁰¹ See the following Sichah talks: Shabbat Parshat Vayikra, Ch. 20, and Shabbat Parshat Pinchas, Ch. 8, of the year 5731 (Torat Menachem, Vol. 63 p. 393; Vol. 65 p. 38 and on); Also see the [Sichah talk of the] night of the holiday of Shavuot 5736.

precondition), they would return to naught and nothingness as though they never existed in the first place, this may be understood based on the explanation of his honorable holiness, the Rebbe (Rashab), whose soul is in Eden, in various discourses¹¹⁰² about the matter of “a stream whose waters fail once in seven years.”¹¹⁰³ That is, even though there presently is water in that flows well, nevertheless, since after seven years its waters cease, this retroactively reveals that its waters are false and are not living waters.

From this we can understand the matter as it relates to the creations, that since when the word of *HaShem*-יהו"ה withdraws from them (or if they do not fulfill their precondition) their existence ceases, it thus follows automatically that even the existence they initially had, was a false existence etc. This is the meaning of the statement in Tanya there, that “it would be as though they never existed altogether etc.”¹¹⁰⁴

5.

Now, the matters of “to its strength-*L'Eitano*-לְאִיתָנוּ,” meaning, “to its precondition-*L'Tna'o*-לְתִנְאוֹ,” as well as the explanation of “actualizing the will of the Ever Present One,” were already said previously (as discussed above), and that

¹¹⁰² Sefer HaMaamarim 5643 p. 96; 5656 p. 256 and on; Hagahot L'Dibur HaMatchil “*Patach Eliyahu*” ShebTorah Ohr, 5658 (p. 42 and on); *Hemshech* 5666 p. 432; Kuntres U'Maayon, Maamar 2, Ch. 2.

¹¹⁰³ Mishnah Parah 8:9; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Parah Adumah 6:12

¹¹⁰⁴ Also see Ohr HaTorah, Va'etchanan p. 415 and on; Also see the Sichah talks that followed the discourse (Likkutei Sichot Vol. 6 p. 87 and on).

which was newly introduced in the discourse at the time it was said to the Alter Rebbe, is the explanation of the matter of the River Ginai.

The explanation is that the nullification of the natural order of the creation for the sake of the Jewish people, as it is in the first two matters, (“to its strength-*L'Eitano*-לְאִיתָנוּ” meaning, “to its precondition-*L'Tna'o*-לְתִנְאוֹ,” and the explanation of “actualizing the will of the Ever Present One”) is that the natural order becomes nullified for the sake of the service of *HaShem*-יְהו"ה, blessed is He, of the righteous (*Tzaddikim*), and for the sake of the service of Him of those who return in repentance (*Baalei Teshuvah*).

This is because the splitting of the sea before the Jewish people, which was brought about through our teacher Moshe, was the matter of the nullification of the natural order for the sake of the service of *HaShem*-יְהו"ה, blessed is He, of the righteous (*Tzaddikim*).

The matter of “actualizing His will,” in that the Holy One, blessed is He, issues a decree, and the righteous *Tzaddik* nullifies it, and similarly, the righteous *Tzaddik* issues a decree [and the Holy One, blessed is He, fulfills it] etc., is the matter of the nullification of the decree that stems from service of Him through repentance (*Teshuvah*), as discussed before. These two matters relate [specifically] to singularly unique individuals (*Yechidei Segulah*).

However, the novelty of the matter of the River Ginai is that the natural order of the creation is nullified on behalf of every single Jew, provided that he guards the covenant [of the circumcision] (*Shomer HaBrit*). This is why this explanation

was added to the discourse when it was said to the Alter Rebbe, this specifically being the matter of Chabad Chassidus.

This is because the matter of Chabad Chassidus, especially after the 19th of Kislev, is “the spreading the wellsprings to the outside”¹¹⁰⁵ (*Hafatzat HaMaayanot Chutzah*) (as explained in the famous Sichah talk of his honorable holiness, the Rebbe (Rashab), whose soul is in Eden).¹¹⁰⁶

In other words, the wellsprings must reach every single Jew, even one who is found in “the outside,” so that he will be able to serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with no obstructions or impediments. To this end there is the explanation of the matter of the River Ginai. For, even though this matter took place in the time of exile, and in the time of exile itself, at a time when a Jew was in captivity, and moreover the captivity was such that there was doubt whether it was possible to redeem him, as the river said, “About you it is uncertain whether you will fulfill [His will successfully],” nonetheless, the river split for the sake of fulfilling the *mitzvah*. Moreover, it did not only do so for Rabbi Pinchas ben Ya’ir himself, but also for the people who accompanied him in his entourage.

It is from this that empowerment is drawn to each and every Jew, even those who are found in “the outside,” that they be able to serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in fulfilling Torah and *mitzvot* without any obstructions or obstacles, since all matters of the natural order are nullified on one’s behalf, so that he will be able to actualize the will of his Maker.

¹¹⁰⁵ 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.

¹¹⁰⁶ Sefer HaSichot, Torat Shalom p. 112 and on.

Now, this empowerment was drawn down through the discourse being said two-hundred years ago, and the words of the righteous (*Tzaddikim*) are eternally sustaining forever and ever.¹¹⁰⁷ This is especially so when we review their words (in that the very fact that we review their words indicates [their] eternality). Thus, by the fact that “his seed is alive,” therefore “he too is alive,”¹¹⁰⁸ and automatically the matter is again brought about anew.

As in the words of his honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rebbe, in a several of his Sichah talks,¹¹⁰⁹ when we relate a story (and although it is revealed as a story and not Torah) and we describe all the details and times etc., we relive the matter.

6.

However, we still must understand the explanation in the discourse about the matter of the River Ginai, that it is akin to the splitting of the sea. For, at first glance, being that the Holy One, blessed is He, established a condition with the act of creation, that they must do the will of the righteous (*Tzaddikim*) even though it is not according to their nature, therefore, in and of himself, Rabbi Pinchas ben Ya’ir could have said, “I

¹¹⁰⁷ See Igrot Kodesh of the Rebbe Rayatz, Vol. 3, p. 576; Vol. 4 p. 339, and elsewhere.

¹¹⁰⁸ See Talmud Bavli, Taanit 5b

¹¹⁰⁹ See the Sichah talk of the holiday of Shavuot 5694, Ch. 9 and on (Likkutei Dibburim, Vol. 1, p. 164a and on); Sefer HaSichot 5707 p. 89 and on; 5708 p. 229; 5710 p. 345, p. 351, p. 373.

command you etc.” This being so, what relation does this have specifically to the splitting of the sea?

This may be understood by prefacing with the explanation of his honorable holiness, the Mittler Rebbe,¹¹¹⁰ on the verse,¹¹¹¹ “He transformed the sea to dry land, they shall pass through the river on foot; there we shall rejoice in Him.” The words, “He transformed (*Hafach*-הפך) the sea to dry land,” in the past tense, refers to the splitting of the sea. The words, “They shall pass through (*Ya'avru*-יעברו) the river on foot; there we shall rejoice in Him,” in the future tense, refers to the coming redemption.

He explains the relationship between these two matters, that for the soul as it is in the body to be able to receive the revelations that will be in the coming redemption, at which time “we will rejoice in Him,” meaning, in His Essential Self, with the revelation of the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, the empowerment for this was [given] at the time of the splitting of the sea.

This is because, at the exodus from Egypt empowerment for the coming redemption was also given. This is like the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,¹¹¹² that had the Jewish people been meritorious, the redemption from Egypt would have been a complete redemption. This is why the verse

¹¹¹⁰ Torat Chayim, Beshalach 264a and on (Vol. 1, p. 185c and on)

¹¹¹¹ Psalms 66:6

¹¹¹² See Talmud Bavli, Nedarim 22b; Midrash Shemot Rabba 32:1, and elsewhere.

states,¹¹¹³ “As in the days that you left the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders,” in which the word “As in the days-*Kiyemei*-כִּי־יָמִים” is in the plural.¹¹¹⁴ In other words, from the time of the exodus from Egypt, we are [continuously] going toward the wonders that will take place in the coming redemption, and every day we go and come closer to the coming of Moshiach, and there are those who see this in an openly revealed way.

It is in this regard that he connects the matter of the River Ginai with the matter of the splitting of the sea. For, the reason that the sea split before Moshe, even though the sea argued, “I was created on the third day, whereas you were created on the sixth day,”¹¹¹⁵ is because the Holy One, blessed is He, established a precondition with the act of creation that they must nullify their nature and not obstruct the children of Israel from actualizing the will of their Owner.

Since then, empowerment has been granted to each and every Jew, even during the time of the exile, to be able to do their work in service of *HaShem*-יְהוָה, blessed is He, without any obstructions from worldly matters, and that their work in this regard, especially in the time of the footsteps of Moshiach, when there is doubled and quadrupled darkness etc., brings¹¹¹⁶ the coming redemption about.

¹¹¹³ Micah 7:15; Also see the beginning of the discourse entitled “*Kiyemei Tzeitcha*” 5708 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5708 p. 159).

¹¹¹⁴ See Zohar III 176a

¹¹¹⁵ Midrash Shemot Rabba 21:6 *ibid*.

¹¹¹⁶ There is a small portion of the discourse missing here.

This then, is the meaning of [the verse], “You who dwell in the gardens, the companions listen to your voice; let me hear [your voice].” That is, when the congregation of Israel “are scattered in the exile, grazing in the gardens of strangers,” which indicates the above-mentioned doubled and quadrupled darkness, but even so, she “sits in synagogues and study halls,” [and as the discourse specifies, “synagogues” (first and then) “study halls,” since the beginning of the daily order of serving *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, is serving Him in prayer, as in the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,¹¹¹⁷ “That my prayer should be adjacent to my bed,” and after prayer there must be Torah study, as it states in Shulchan Aruch,¹¹¹⁸ that one must go from the synagogue to the study hall], meaning that the conduct of a Jew is such that he engages in prayer and Torah study, and his study of Torah is for the sake of doing and fulfilling etc., thus, since “He does the will of those who fear Him,”¹¹¹⁹ the Holy One, blessed is He, assists him that his study will come into actualization.

Now, when he does this even during the time of the exile [in a state of] doubled and quadrupled darkness,¹¹²⁰ it is then that “the companions listen etc.,” in that the Holy One, blessed is He, and His entourage come and listen to his voice and they ask of him, “Let me hear [your voice].” In other words, since

¹¹¹⁷ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 5b; See Likkutei Torah, Zot HaBrachah 96b

¹¹¹⁸ Shulchan Aruch of the Alter Rebbe 155:1

¹¹¹⁹ Psalms 145:19

¹¹²⁰ There was also mention of the matter of “my heart is awake” (Song of Songs 5:2 – there is a small portion of the discourse missing here.

the *Shechinah* is also in exile,¹¹²¹ therefore the Holy One, blessed is He, also asks of him, “Let me hear [your voice],” so that through this there will be the redemption of the *Shechinah* from the exile.

This is as our sages, of blessed memory, taught,¹¹²² “Whosoever engages in Torah study.... has redeemed Me and My children from amongst the nations,” with the true and complete redemption through our righteous Moshiach, speedily and in the most literal sense!

¹¹²¹ See Talmud Bavli, Megillah 29a; Sifri to the end of Parshat Masei; Zohar I 120b

¹¹²² Talmud Bavli, Brachot 8a