

Discourse 26

*“Vayehi BaYom HaShemini... -
And it was on the eighth day...”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Shemini,
Shabbat Mevarchim Iyar, 5729
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,²⁵³ “And it was on the eighth day, that Moshe summoned Aharon and his sons, and the elders of Israel.” Now, we must understand the superiority of the eighth day, such that [the Torah found it] necessary to inform us that “it was on the eighth day,” and “give reason as to [the distinction between] this day and the preceding day,” (as written in *Kli Yakar*,²⁵⁴ cited in the discourses of Chassidus).²⁵⁵

We also must understand²⁵⁶ why it states, “Moshe summoned Aharon and his sons.” For, were not Aharon and his sons already in the Tent of Meeting (*Ohel Mo’ed*), as stated at the end of the preceding Torah portion,²⁵⁷ “You shall not leave the entrance of the Tent of Meeting (*Ohel Mo’ed*) etc.” This

²⁵³ Leviticus 9:1

²⁵⁴ *Kli Yakar* to Leviticus 9:1 *ibid*.

²⁵⁵ See the discourse entitled “*Vayehi BaYom HaShemini*” in *Ohr HaTorah*, Shemini p. 25; 5678 (*Sefer HaMaamarim* 5678 p. 269); 5704 (*Sefer HaMaamarim* 5704 p. 191).

²⁵⁶ See the beginning of the discourse entitled “*Vayehi BaYom HaShemini*” 5675 (*Hemshechs* 5672 Vol. 2, p. 943).

²⁵⁷ Leviticus 8:33

being so, where were they on the eighth day that it was necessary to summon them?

We also must understand why it states, “and the elders of Israel.” For, at first glance, why did he need them? That is, we find no matter in the continuation of the Torah portion for which he needed the elders of Israel.

2.

This may be understood by prefacing with the explanation in the discourse entitled “*Az Yashir*” of the year 5629,²⁵⁸ said one-hundred years ago (upon which the [previous] discourse, said on the last day of Pesach,²⁵⁹ was founded).

In it, he brings the teaching of the Midrash,²⁶⁰ “This is the meaning of the verse,²⁶¹ ‘Your throne is established from then (*Me’az-זמן*).’ That is, even though You have existed for all eternity, Your throne was not settled and You were not known in Your world, until Your children sang a song (referring to the splitting of the sea, as the verse states,²⁶² “Then (*Az-זא*) Moshe and the children of Israel sang etc.”). It therefore states, ‘Your throne is established from then (*Me’az-זמן*),” meaning from, “Then (*Az-זא*) [Moshe and the children of Israel] sang.”

In other words, through the splitting of the sea (“Then (*Az-זא*) they sang”) the matter of “sitting” was caused Above,

²⁵⁸ Sefer HaMaamarim 5629 p. 144 and on.

²⁵⁹ The preceding discourse of this year, 5729, entitled “*v’Hechereem HaShem* – *HaShem* will dry up the gulf of the sea of Egypt,” Discourse 25 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5729 p. 175 and on).

²⁶⁰ Midrash Shemot Rabbah 23:1

²⁶¹ Psalms 93:2

²⁶² Exodus 15:1

this being the matter of the throne upon which one sits, [as in the verse], “Your throne was established from then (*Az-ṯ*).” This is as in the [continuation of the] Midrash, which brings the analogy of “a king... who they made emperor... What is the difference between the deference accorded to a king and the deference accorded to an emperor? A king stands... whereas the emperor sits.”

To clarify,²⁶³ when the king stands amongst all his ministers who stand around him, it is not recognized who is the king, being that he too is standing. However, the emperor sits, and it then is recognized and known to all who the king is, being that all others stand, and he sits. Thus, sitting indicates the exaltedness of the kingship. (This is similar to the explanation in Tanya,²⁶⁴ that even a person who never has seen the king, nevertheless, when he enters the royal court and sees many eminent noblemen bowing before one man, dread and awe fall upon him.)

The same is likewise so in the analogue, that the Jewish people said to the Holy One, blessed is He, “When You stood at the sea and we sang before You, ‘Then-*Az-ṯ*’ Your Kingdom was settled and Your throne was established.”

3.

In the discourse he continues [to explain] the matter of the splitting of the sea (by which “Your Kingdom was settled”), that on the one hand, there is a greater superiority to the children

²⁶³ Sefer HaMaamarim ibid. p. 154

²⁶⁴ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 42 (in the note)

of Israel over the sea, which is why it split before them, as it states,²⁶⁵ “You split the sea before Moshe,” and as it states in Midrash²⁶⁶ in explanation of the verse,²⁶⁷ “To Him who cut (*l’Gozer*-לגזר) the Sea of Reeds for the cut ones-*L’Gezarim*-לגזרים,” being that, “It was in the merit of the circumcision (*Milah*) that the sea was split, in that in Aramaic the circumcised are called ‘the cut ones-*Gezurim*-גזורים.” This is because all the people who left Egypt were circumcised.²⁶⁸ This is why the sea split before them, and this being so, they were greater in level than the sea.

On the other hand, we also find that the sea had an element of superiority over the children of Israel. This is as in the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,²⁶⁹ “A maidservant at the sea saw that which even the prophets did not see.”

Now, since the splitting of the sea was preparatory to the giving of the Torah, thus, just as in the splitting of the sea we find the two above-mentioned matters, so likewise, we find this in the matter of Torah and *mitzvot* relative to the Jewish people.

That is, there is an element of superiority to the Jewish people over Torah and *mitzvot*, and there is an element of superiority to Torah and *mitzvot* over the Jewish people. For, from the teaching that states,²⁷⁰ “There are three knots that are

²⁶⁵ In the evening prayers

²⁶⁶ Midrash Tanchuma Buber Beshalach 12; Yalkut Shimoni Bo, Remez 241

²⁶⁷ Psalms 136:13

²⁶⁸ See Joshua 5:5

²⁶⁹ See Mechilta and Rashi to Exodus 15:2

²⁷⁰ Zohar III 73a

bound to each other: Israel to the Torah, and the Torah to the Holy One, blessed is He,” this indicates that the Torah is superior and more elevated than the level of the Jewish people, since it is through the Torah that the Jewish people are bound to the Holy One, blessed is He.

However, from the fact that it states about studying Torah for its sake (*Lishmah*), that through this we bind the Torah to the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, (like Dovid, who would bind the Torah as it is Above to the limitless light of the Unlimited One, and the same is so of every Jew),²⁷¹ it is understood that the Jewish people are higher than the Torah, which is why it is in their power to bind the Torah to the limitless light of the Unlimited One.

The same is so of the *mitzvot*, for from the fact that we say,²⁷² “Who has sanctified us with His commandments,” and “You have sanctified us with Your commandments,” it is understood that the *mitzvot* are higher than the Jewish people.

However, from the verse that states,²⁷³ “And you shall actualize them-*v'Aseetem Otam*-ועשיתם אותם,” [about which our sages, of blessed memory, stated],²⁷⁴ “Do not just read it as ‘them-*Otam*-אותם’ but read it as ‘You-*Atem*-אתם,’ [in the plural] in that ‘I ascribe it as though you have actualized Me,” so to speak,” this means that when the Jewish people fulfill the 248-*רמ"ח* positive action *mitzvot* and the 365-*שס"ה* negative prohibitive *mitzvot*, this brings about the “248-*רמ"ח* limbs and

²⁷¹ See Zohar III 222b (Raaya Mehemna); Sefer HaBahir (Section 58); Section 196 and the Ohr HaBahir there.

²⁷² In the liturgy of the blessings.

²⁷³ Leviticus 26:3

²⁷⁴ Zohar III 113a; Midrash Vayikra Rabbah 35:7

365 שט"ה-veins of the King,” so to speak. It thus is understood that the Jewish people are higher than the *mitzvot*.

About this it is explained that just as at the splitting of the sea, the two above-mentioned matters were simultaneous, (the superiority of the sea over the children of Israel, and the superiority of the children of Israel over the sea) the same is so of Torah and *mitzvot*.

That is, the superiority of Torah and *mitzvot* over the children of Israel, and the superiority of the children of Israel over the *mitzvot*, are simultaneous. In other words, the superiority of the children of Israel over the Torah is not just when they come to the perfection of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, for its own sake (*Lishmah*), but even at the beginning of serving Him there already is the superiority of the Jewish people over Torah and *mitzvot*.

The explanation is as we find, that immediately upon receiving the Torah the verse already states,²⁷⁵ “The Torah that Moshe commanded us is the heritage of the congregation of Yaakov,” [about which it states],²⁷⁶ “Do not just read it as ‘heritage-*Morashah*-מורשה,’ but read it as ‘betrothed-*Me’orashah*-מאורסה,’” in that the Torah is called the bride and the Jewish people are called the groom.

This is because the souls of the Jewish people preceded the Torah.²⁷⁷ Therefore, even immediately upon beginning studying Torah, there already is a revelation within him of the root of his soul, and it is by this power that he then is able to

²⁷⁵ Deuteronomy 33:4; See Likkutei Torah, Zot HaBrachah 93c and on

²⁷⁶ Sifri to Deuteronomy 33:4

²⁷⁷ See Midrash Bereishit Rabbah 1:4

study Torah for its own sake, to bond the Torah to the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

The same is so of fulfilling the *mitzvot*, that every *mitzvah* fulfilled by any Jew, even the lowest Jew, is as explained in Tanya,²⁷⁸ that the hand which distributes charity to the poor literally becomes a chariot (*Merkavah*) for *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Supernal will.

The matter of a chariot (*Merkavah*) is that, without it, the rider would be incapable of reaching his destination, and it only is by means of the chariot (*Merkavah*) that he reaches there. We thus find that at the moment that a Jew fulfills the deed of the *mitzvah*, he is higher than the *mitzvah*.

It should be added that we also find this in the counting of the Omer. For, as known, the order in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in counting the Omer is by way [of descent], from Above to below. That is, the count begins with Kindness of Kindness (*Chessed of Chessed*) [and descends] until we reach Kingship of Kingship (*Malchut of Malchut*), as we find in the Siddur.

However, there also is the order of counting the Omer from below to Above. It is brought in the name of the Arizal,²⁷⁹ that we begin from Kingship of Kingship (*Malchut of Malchut*) [and ascend] until we arrive at Kindness of Kindness (*Chessed of Chessed*), and both methods are true.

We thus find that on the first night of counting the Omer, and likewise every day of counting the Omer, there are both

²⁷⁸ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 23

²⁷⁹ Siddur HaArizal (Siddur of Rabbi Shabtai of Rashkov), Sod Sefirat HaOmer; Also see Sefer HaSichot 5701 p. 116 and the note of the Rebbe there; Also see the Sichah talk of the 2nd day of Iyar 5710 (Torat Menachem, Vol. 1, p. 38).

motions simultaneously, both the drawing down from Above to below and the ascent from below to Above.

4.

Now, in general, the matter of the splitting of the sea, is that it was preparatory and instructional to the giving of the Torah, when there was the novelty of the nullification of the decree [that the upper cannot descend to the lower and the lower cannot ascend to the upper],²⁸⁰ meaning that [from then on] the upper can descend to below and the lower can ascend to above, thus granting empowerment to serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in His Torah and *mitzvot*, through which we affect the refinement and purification of all the materiality and physicality of the world, as will be openly revealed in the coming future. The preparation and instruction for all this was at the splitting of the sea, at which time the matter of the exodus from Egypt was concluded.

Now, even though the ultimate completion of the refinement and purification of the physical will take place in the coming future, nevertheless, its beginning already took place in the exodus from Egypt and the splitting of the sea. This is as known from the teaching of his honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rebbe,²⁸¹ founded on the statement of Zohar²⁸² on the verse,²⁸³ “As in the days when you left the land of Egypt, I

²⁸⁰ Midrash Shemot Rabbah 12:3

²⁸¹ In the discourse entitled “*KiYemei Tzeitcha*” 5708 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5708 p. 159).

²⁸² Zohar III 176a

²⁸³ Micah 7:15

will show them wonders,” in explanation of the precise wording “as in the **days-KiYemei-כימי**” in the plural.

That is, “at first glance, it should have said, ‘As in the day-K’Yom-כיום,’ since they left at one time.” However, the explanation is that from the time of the exodus from Egypt until the coming redemption, may it be speedily in our days, they [still] are “the days when you left the land of Egypt.” (That is, every single day another level is added to the exodus from Egypt.)

Now, in explanation to the words of the Rebbe, we can add that just as there is the matter of the exodus from Egypt every day, so likewise, every day there is the matter of “I will show them wonders.” Proof of this is that since the verse includes and connects the matter of “the days that you left the land of Egypt” to the matter of “I will show them wonders,” and makes an equation between them, it thus is understood that at the very same time that there is the matter of going out of Egypt, there already is the matter of “I will show them wonders.”

The reason for this, is that since all the revelations of the coming future depend on our deeds and service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, throughout the time of the exile²⁸⁴ in the matter of refining and purifying the physical, we thus find that through our deeds and service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, we draw down and bring about the coming of Moshiach. It thus follows that there already are all the matters and revelations of the coming future, except that presently they are concealed, and their revelation will take place in the coming future.

²⁸⁴ See Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 37

Now, since the perfection of the coming future is that the world will be refined and purified, so that it could be nullified to the revelation of Godliness that will illuminate in it, this being the matter of “Your throne is established,” such that, “Your Kingship is settled,” and “the Emperor sits,” about this it states, ““Your throne is established from then (*Me’az-זאז*),’ meaning from when You stood at the sea and we sang before You with [the word] ‘Then-*Az-זא*.’” This is because the splitting of the sea (which was the conclusion of the exodus from Egypt) was preparatory and introductory to the novelty of the giving of the Torah, in affecting the refinement and purification of the world.

About this the discourse concludes²⁸⁵ that about the coming future the verse states,²⁸⁶ “For then I will transform the nations to [speak] a pure language, [so that they all will proclaim the Name *HaShem-יהוה*] to serve Him with united resolve.” (At first glance, why did he specifically choose this verse?) For, since he begins with the matter of “Then (*Az-זא*) sang [Moshe] etc.,” which took place at the splitting of the sea, this being preparatory to the novelty of the giving of the Torah, when the upper descended to below and the lower ascended to above, the perfection of this and its ultimate end being the revelation of Godliness in a way that “the Emperor sits,” about which it states, “Your throne is established from then (*Me’az-זאז*),” therefore it also concludes with the same matter, “Then (*Az-זא*) I will transform the nations etc.”

²⁸⁵ Sefer HaMaamarim 5629 *ibid.* p. 153

²⁸⁶ Zephaniah 3:9

This is why Rambam also concludes²⁸⁷ with this verse. For, since he is explaining the particulars of King Moshiach and the order of his coming, this being brought about through the general service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of studying Torah and fulfilling the *mitzvot*, [which is why he emphasizes both the matter of the Torah, as well as the matter of the *mitzvot* in regard to Moshiach himself, [stating],²⁸⁸ “He diligently studies Torah and observes the *mitzvot*,” and also in regard to his effect on others, “[He will compel all of Israel] to walk in its [ways] and rectify the breaches [in its observance],” in which “walk in its ways” refers to the matter of studying Torah, as it states,²⁸⁹ “If you walk in My statutes,” meaning,²⁹⁰ “that you study the Torah laboriously,” and “rectify the breaches” referring to the matter of fulfilling the *mitzvot*], he therefore concludes with the verse, “Then (*Az-אז*) I will transform all the nations etc.”

5.

Now, the general matter of the splitting of the sea is a revelation that transcends the order of the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*).²⁹¹ This also is the connection to the verse, “And it was on the eighth day.”²⁹² That is, this matter

²⁸⁷ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Melachim, end of Ch. 11

²⁸⁸ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Melachim 11:4

²⁸⁹ Leviticus 26:3

²⁹⁰ Rashi to Leviticus 26:3

²⁹¹ See Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5570 p. 79; Ohr HaTorah, Beshalach p. 573, and elsewhere.

²⁹² In regard to the coming section, also see the end of the discourse entitled “*Vayehi BaYom HaShemini*” 5675 (*Hemshechs* 5672 *ibid.* p. 951).

also is higher than the order of the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*). This is as stated in the responsa of Rashba,²⁹³ that “seven” refers to the matter of the seven revolving days in the order of the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*), whereas “eight” is the aspect that transcends the chaining down of the worlds. This is why “the harp [that will be played] in the days of Moshiach, will have eight strings.”²⁹⁴ This is also the meaning of “Then-*Az-זא-8*,” in which the *Aleph-א-1* rides upon the *Zayin-ז-7*,²⁹⁵ its numerical value being eight. In the *Sefirot* it is the matter of the *Sefirah* of Understanding-*Binah*,²⁹⁶ which is the eighth *Sefirah* from below to Above. With the above in mind, we can understand the greatness of, “And it was on the eighth day.”

This is also why “that day took ten crowns,”²⁹⁷ referring to the matter of the ten *Sefirot* of the Ancient One-*Atik*. For, the revelation of the Ancient One-*Atik* is in Understanding-*Binah*,²⁹⁸ up to and including the ten hidden *Sefirot* (*Eser Sefirot HaGenuzot*),²⁹⁹ which generally are called “crowns-*Atarot-עטרות*.”

²⁹³ Shaalot uTeshuvot HaRashba, Vol. 1, Section 9, cited in the discourse entitled “*Vayehi BaYom HaShemini*” 5678 and 5704 *ibid*.

²⁹⁴ Talmud Bavli, Arakhin 13b

²⁹⁵ Kli Yakar in the name of the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni, Shemot, Remez 241; Shemot Rabbah 23:3); Also see Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as Gates of Light, Gate Eight (*Binah*).

²⁹⁶ See Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as Gates of Light, Gate Eight (*Binah*) *ibid*.

²⁹⁷ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 87b; Rashi to Leviticus 9:1 *ibid*.

²⁹⁸ See Zohar III 178b; Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 40, and the notes and citations there.

²⁹⁹ See Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 10-11 and elsewhere.

However, all the above is in the Supernal levels etc., whereas the novelty of the giving of the Torah (the completion of which was with the erection of the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) on the eighth day) is for there to be the matter of the arousal from below.

About this the verse states, “Moshe summoned Aharon and his sons.” What is meant is not that he summoned them to the Tent of Meeting (*Ohel Mo'ed*), since they already were in the Tent of Meeting (*Ohel Mo'ed*). Rather, the explanation is that Moshe and Aharon are Wisdom-*Chochmah* and Understanding-*Binah*. Moshe is the *Sefirah* of Wisdom-*Chochmah*, as the verse states about Moshe,³⁰⁰ “He saw (*Vayar*-וירא) the beginning (*Reishit*-ראשית) as his own portion,” and sight (*Re'iyah*-ראיה) is the *Sefirah* of Wisdom-*Chochmah*. Aharon-אהרן is “the light of the *Nun*-נ,” which is the matter of the *Sefirah* of Understanding-*Binah*. The matter of Moshe summoning Aharon, is the drawing down from the aspect of Wisdom-*Chochmah* to the aspect of Understanding-*Binah*. In addition, he also summoned the elders of Israel, this being the matter of even drawing down the aspect of intellect (*Mochin*) that relates to the emotions (*Midot*).³⁰¹

On a deeper level, Moshe summoning Aharon is the matter of the inner union (*Yichud Pnimi*) of the Father-*Abba* (Wisdom-*Chochmah*) and Mother-*Imma* (Understanding-*Binah*).³⁰² That is, the outer union (*Yichud Chitzoni*) of the Father-*Abba* (Wisdom-*Chochmah*) and Mother-*Imma*

³⁰⁰ Deuteronomy 33:21; See Torah Ohr, Shemot 52b and elsewhere.

³⁰¹ See Ohr HaTorah, Matot p. 1,314

³⁰² See Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 25-26 and the notes and citations there.

(Understanding-*Binah*) takes place at all times. However, the summoning is for affecting the inner union (*Yichud Pnimi*) of Wisdom-*Chochmah* and Understanding-*Binah*, the root of which is the innerness (*Pnimityut*) of the Ancient One-*Atik*,³⁰³ through which there also will be a drawing down into the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*), this being the elevation of Moshe, through whom the drawing down is also in the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*). About this the verse states,³⁰⁴ “A fire went forth from before *HaShem*-יהוה,” to the point that “all the people saw etc.,” this being the revelation in the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*).

This then, is also the meaning of the statement before this,³⁰⁵ “Moshe and Aharon came [to the Tent of Meeting (*Ohel Mo'ed*)] and they went out and blessed the people,” and they said,³⁰⁶ “May the pleasantness of *HaShem*-יהוה our God, be upon us.”³⁰⁷

The matter of “pleasantness-*No'am*-נועם” is pleasure (*Taanug*),³⁰⁸ referring to the drawing down of the innerness (*Pnimityut*) of the Ancient One-*Atik*. This comes about through the inner union (*Yichud Pnimi*) of the Father-*Abba* (Wisdom-*Chochmah*) and the Mother-*Imma* (Understanding-*Binah*),³⁰⁹ (that is, “Moshe summoned Aharon etc.”), which is rooted in

³⁰³ See Likkutei Torah, Emor 33c

³⁰⁴ Leviticus 9:24

³⁰⁵ Leviticus 9:23

³⁰⁶ Rashi to Leviticus 9:23

³⁰⁷ Psalms 90:17

³⁰⁸ See Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 29.

³⁰⁹ See Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 25-26 *ibid*.

the innerness (*Pnimityut*) of the Ancient One-*Atik*, through which there also is caused to be the drawing all the way to down below.

This is also the meaning of the verse,³¹⁰ “Aharon raised his hands toward the people and blessed them,” that is, “With the priestly blessing,³¹¹ ‘May *HaShem*-יהו"ה bless you and protect you. May *HaShem*-יהו"ה illuminate His face to you and be gracious to you. May *HaShem*-יהו"ה lift His face to you and establish peace for you,”” this being the matter of drawing down in a way that “His word runs swiftly,”³¹² without any obstacles or obstructions in all that is needed, both in all your particular matters, “‘bless you’ with sons, ‘and protect you’ with money,”³¹³ as well as in all your general matters, up to and including the greatest need of all - the true and complete redemption through our righteous Moshiach, may he come and redeem us and take us upright to our land, speedily and in the most literal sense!

³¹⁰ Leviticus 9:22

³¹¹ Numbers 6:24-6:26

³¹² Psalms 147:15; Likkutei Torah, Korach 55:4

³¹³ See Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 11:5