

Discourse 13

“v’Al HaNissim... -
And for the miracles...”

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Mikeitz,
Shabbat Chanukah, 1st day of Rosh Chodesh Tevet, 5729⁷⁷⁴
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

We recite,⁷⁷⁵ “[We thank You] for the miracles, for the redemption, for the mighty deeds, for the deliverances, and for the wonders that You performed for our forefathers in those days at this time.” The Chanukah prayer of thanks then continues [after being preceded by words that are the same for both Chanukah and Purim], “In the days of Matityahu... when the evil Greek kingdom rose up against Your people Israel to make them forget Your Torah and to turn them away from the statutes of Your will.”

In his discourse by the title “*Amar Rabbi Oshiya*” of the year 5689,⁷⁷⁶ his honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rebbe, explains that the entire desire of the Greeks was to cause

⁷⁷⁴ Some aspects of this discourse are a continuation of the preceding discourses entitled “*Amar Rabbi Oshiya* – Rabbi Oshiya said,” of the 19th of Kislev of this year, 5729, Discourse 11, and the discourse entitled “*Padah b’Shalom* – He redeemed my soul in peace,” of Shabbat Parshat Vayeishev, the 23rd of Kislev, Discourse 12.

⁷⁷⁵ In the liturgy of the “*Al HaNissim*” that is recited on Chanukah.

⁷⁷⁶ Ch. 1 (Sefer HaMaamarim Kuntreisim Vol. 1, p. 33a; Sefer HaMaamarim 5689 p. 161 and on)

the Jewish people to forget that the Torah is the Torah of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, Heaven forbid. That is, they agreed to the intellectual aspects of Torah, and only wanted to uproot the Godliness of the Torah.

This is the meaning of [the precise] wording, “to make them forget **Your** Torah-*Toratecha*-תורתך,” meaning, that it is the Torah of *HaShem*-יהו"ה. This also is the meaning of their desire “to turn them away from the statutes of **Your** will.” That is, when it came to those *mitzvot* for which there is reason according to human intellect, they agreed, and it was only in regard to the statutes (*Chukim*) of the Torah that they did not agree.

The explanation⁷⁷⁷ is that the Greeks did not only agree to the *mitzvot* known as ordinances (*Mishpatim*), these being those *mitzvot* that are necessitated [even] by the intellect (which is why they are called “rational commandments” (*Mitzvot Shimiyyot*-שמעיות) in the books of the great Jewish philosophers),⁷⁷⁸ but beyond this, even the *mitzvot* that are known as testimonies (*Eidut*) and are not necessitated by the intellect in and of itself, nonetheless, being that the Torah commanded them and they also are agreeable to the intellect, (since even the intellect is in agreement that when there is a miraculous matter, it is necessary to create a sign and remembrance for it, at least once a year or even daily). These *mitzvot* were also not opposed by the Greeks.

⁷⁷⁷ Also see the discourse entitled “v’Atah b’Rachamecha HaRabim” 5698 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5698 p. 173 and on); Discourse entitled “Mai Chanukah” 5701 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5701 p. 59 and on).

⁷⁷⁸ See Kuzari 2:48, 4:13; Saadya Ga’on to Genesis 18:19; Also see Aruch HaShulchan, Choshen Mishpat 427:10

It was only *mitzvot* that transcend intellect, this being the meaning of statutes (*Chukim*), as in the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,⁷⁷⁹ “I have issued an edict⁷⁸⁰ and decreed a decree and you have no right to question it” (as also brought in Mishneh Torah of the Rambam).⁷⁸¹

In other words, even when the questioning is not about doing the *mitzvah*, meaning that he will certainly do the *mitzvah* in whatever way it may be, whether he understands the reason or does not understand the reason, and he only wants to question in order to understanding the reasoning of the *mitzvah*, nevertheless, about this they also stated, “you have no right to question it.”

This was what the Greeks apposed, being that this is entirely in opposition to the intellect. This is because the substance of Torah is understanding and comprehension, as the verse states,⁷⁸² “It is your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the nations,” and furthermore, “Study is greater in that it brings to action.”⁷⁸³

On a deeper level, in the statutes (*Chukim*) themselves, the Greeks specifically battled against “the statutes of **Your will**” (*Chukei Retzonecha-חוקי רצונך*).” For, when it comes to fulfilling *mitzvot* that are of the category of statutes (*Chukim*) that transcend intellect, there is reasoning that accords to intellect, in that even the intellect understands that there

⁷⁷⁹ Rashi to Numbers 19:2, citing Talmud Bavli, Yoma 67b

⁷⁸⁰ Midrash Bamidbar Rabba, beginning of Parshat Chukat; Midrash Tanchuma Chukat 3 & 8.

⁷⁸¹ Mishneh Torah, end of Hilchot Me'ilah

⁷⁸² Deuteronomy 4:6

⁷⁸³ Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 40b

necessarily are matters that transcend intellect. For, even a person who posits that the general matter of intellect is unlimited, from which it follows automatically that intellect does not agree that there are matters that transcend intellect, nonetheless, at the very least he will admit that **his** intellect is limited.

That is, [he admits] that he is in a state [about which the verse says],⁷⁸⁴ “Abundant years teach wisdom,” and that he has yet to reached the fullness and perfection of intellect. This being so, there certainly are matters that at the very least transcend **his** intellect. This is especially so considering that in reality the entire matter of intellect is indeed limited, and there are matters that entirely transcend the matter of intellect, such as the matter of the desire, in that even as it is in man below, it transcends intellect.

Thus, since even the intellect agrees that there are matters that transcend intellect, therefore the Greeks did not even oppose fulfilling *mitzvot* that are in the category of statutes (*Chukim*). Rather, their primary battle was “to turn them away from the statutes of **Your will** (*Chukei Retzonecha*-חוקי רצונך).” That is, the opposition of the Greeks to *mitzvot* in the category of statutes (*Chukim*) was (not because they are not intellectually understood, but) because they are the will of the Holy One, blessed is He.⁷⁸⁵

⁷⁸⁴ Job 32:7

⁷⁸⁵ Also see the discourse entitled “*Tanu Rabbanan Mitzvat Ner Chanukah*” 5738 (Torat Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Kislev p. 164) note 36; Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 3, p. 815.

2.

In the discourse⁷⁸⁶ he continues and states that the battle of the Greeks was in such a way that they said,⁷⁸⁷ “Write on the horn of a bull that you have no portion in the God of Israel.” Now, we must understand the precise wording [of why they said], “Write on the horn of a bull,” specifically. We also must understand what the relationship is between them specifically writing on the horn of a bull, and the fact that they sought to “turn them away from the statutes of Your will.”

The explanation is as elucidated in Torah Ohr,⁷⁸⁸ and at greater length in Ohr HaTorah,⁷⁸⁹ that the nations of the world, who derive vitality from the aspect of the face of the bull on the Supernal Chariot (*Merkavah*), only derive from the aspect of the horn of the bull, this only being the aspect of the externality and dross.

This is to such an extent that we find in Tractate Chullin,⁷⁹⁰ in regard to the susceptibility to ritual impurity, that the relation of the horns and the hoofs to the primary [body] of the bull is even less than that of the hide. It is for this reason that the Greeks said, “Write on the horn of a bull etc.,” in that they wanted the Jewish people to also receive from the aspects of the horns and hooves, this only being the externality (*Chitzoniyut*), and not from the innerness (*Pnimityut*) which is

⁷⁸⁶ Ch. 2 (Sefer HaMaamarim, Kuntreisim ibid. p. 33b; Sefer HaMaamarim 5689 p. 162 and on)

⁷⁸⁷ See Midrash Bereishit Rabba 2:4; 16:4; 44:17

⁷⁸⁸ Torah Ohr, Vayeishev 30a

⁷⁸⁹ Ohr HaTorah, Chanukah 300a and on

⁷⁹⁰ See Talmud Bavli, Chullin 117b (in the Mishnah), and Rashi and Tosefot there; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Tumat Ochlin 4:4

from where the vitality is drawn to the Jewish people, as the verse states,⁷⁹¹ “And He blew into his nostrils the soul of life,” [about which it states],⁷⁹² “He who blows, blows from within himself.”

That is, the descent of the soul to below (“He blew into his nostrils”) is “from His inwardness and innermost being.”⁷⁹³ This is as explained in Iggeret HaTeshuvah⁷⁹⁴ in explanation of the verse,⁷⁹⁵ “For His people are a part of *HaShem*-יהוה,” that the soul of man is drawn from the innerness (*Pnimitut*) etc.

Now, it can be said that the battle of the Greeks who said, “Write on the horn of a bull etc.,” specifying the “horn” (of the bull), was through the aspect of the horn (*Keren*-קרן) as it is on the side of holiness, as will be explained.

3.

The explanation is that the war against the Greeks was in a way of self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*), in that the weak were against the mighty, and the few were against the many (as it states in the words of the thanksgiving prayer (*Al HaNissim*), “You delivered the mighty into the hands of the weak, and the many into the hands of the few”).

⁷⁹¹ Genesis 2:7

⁷⁹² Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 2, citing Zohar; See Igrot Kodesh, Vol. 20 p. 131; Also see Hakdama Ben Me’ah Shanah to Shefa Tal and the note there.

⁷⁹³ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 2 *ibid.*; Also see Hakdama Ben Me’ah Shanah to Shefa Tal and the note there.

⁷⁹⁴ Tanya, Iggeret HaTeshuvah, Ch. 4; Also see at length in Hakdama Ben Me’ah Shanah to Shefa Tal *ibid.*

⁷⁹⁵ Deuteronomy 32:9

This likewise was so of their general service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in fulfilling Torah and *mitzvot*, that it was in a way of self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) that transcends intellect. That is, this was the very opposite of what the Greeks sought, "to make them forget Your Torah and to turn them away from the statutes of Your will," in that they did not oppose service of Him that accords to intellect, but rather, opposed service of Him that transcends intellect, and it was about this that they battled against the Jewish people.

However, instead of what the Greeks sought, that even the *mitzvot* in the category of statutes (*Chukim*) it should not be sensed that they are fulfilled because they are "the statutes of **Your will**," the Jewish people instead served *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way that even the *mitzvot* called ordinances (*Mishpatim*) that are understood and comprehended, were fulfilled (not because they are necessitated by the intellect, but) only because they are the command and desire of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

This is as explained by his honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rebbe,⁷⁹⁶ that even *mitzvot* in the category of ordinances (*Mishpatim*) must be fulfilled in the same way as statutes (*Chukim*). That is, even the matter of understanding and comprehension itself must be like the matter of a statute (*Chok*). The same is so in the reverse, that even fulfilling *mitzvot* that are in the category of statutes (*Chukim*) should be done with flavor and pleasure, just as *mitzvot* in the category of

⁷⁹⁶ In the discourse entitled "ו'Atah b'Rachamecha HaRabim" *ibid.* (Sefer HaMaamarim 5698 p. 175); Discourse entitled "Mai Chanukah" *ibid.* (Sefer HaMaamarim 5701 p. 60); Sefer HaMaamarim 5687 p. 203, and elsewhere.

ordinances (*Mishpatim*) which are intellectually understood. For, it then is in the capacity of the intellectual soul (*Nefesh HaSichleet*) to also explain this to the animalistic soul (*Nefesh HaBehameet*) to the point that it too will derive pleasure in this.

For, as known,⁷⁹⁷ there are two intentions in the fulfillment of every *mitzvah*. There is the intention that is particular to each *mitzvah* in and of itself, this being the reason for the *mitzvah* etc., and there is the general intention present in all *mitzvot* equally, this being the matter of accepting the yoke. This is as we recite in the words of the blessings made over every *mitzvah*, “Blessed are You, *HaShem*-ה'... who has sanctified us with His commandments **and commanded us etc.**”

In other words, we fulfill the *mitzvah* (not because of the reasoning of it, but) only because we were commanded to fulfill it, this being the mode of serving *HaShem*-ה', blessed is He, stemming from self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) which transcends intellect.

This is as explained in Tanya,⁷⁹⁸ that our teacher Moshe, peace be upon him, commanded the generation that entered the Holy Land to recite the *Shema* twice daily, so that they accept the Kingdom of Heaven upon themselves with self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*). For, at first glance, it is not understood why the matter of self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) is necessary, given that he promised them,⁷⁹⁹ “*HaShem*-ה' your God will place the fear and dread of you [over the entire land upon which you

⁷⁹⁷ See Likkutei Torah, Shlach 40a; Ateret Rosh, Drush L'Aseret Yemei Teshuvah 58b and on, and elsewhere.

⁷⁹⁸ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, end of Ch. 25

⁷⁹⁹ Deuteronomy 11:25

tread”] However, it is because the fulfillment of Torah and *mitzvot* depends on the constant remembrance of having self-sacrifice for *HaShem*-יהו"ה etc.

4.

Now, this can be connected to the matter of the “horn.” For, in addition to the matter of the horn as the aspect of externality and dross, in which the horns and hooves are in the same category, there also is the matter of the horn as it is in an elevated state, this being the inner aspect of the horn (*Keren*-קרן). This is as explained in Ohr HaTorah⁸⁰⁰ on the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,⁸⁰¹ “Dovid and Shlomo, who were anointed [with oil] from a horn, their kingship was sustaining, whereas Shaul and Yehu, who were anointed [with oil] from a pitcher, their kingship was not sustaining.”

The explanation is that the horn is outside and above the head. The substance of this, as it relates to serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is the matter of self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*)⁸⁰² which is outside and above the intellect. That is, the matter of the “horn” reaches the essence. This is the reason that Dovid and Shlomo, who were anointed [with oil] from a horn, their kingship continued, this being the matter of strength and eternity, like a horn, which is something strong and sustaining. This is because the matter of the “horn” reaches the

⁸⁰⁰ Ohr HaTorah ibid. p. 301a

⁸⁰¹ Talmud Bavli, Megillah 14a

⁸⁰² Also see Sefer HaMaamarim 5697 p. 148

essence, and as we explained before,⁸⁰³ the essence does not undergo change.

It is in this matter that Dovid and Shlomo were superior to Shaul, [who is related to] “Shaul from the Expanse of the River (*Rehovot HaNahar*),”⁸⁰⁴ which is the matter of Understanding-*Binah*.⁸⁰⁵ For, even though man’s superiority is that he has intellect, and the mind rules over the heart,⁸⁰⁶ and this is especially so of the perfection of the intellect in a way of “the expanse of the river” (*Rehovot HaNahar*) as it was in Shaul, nevertheless, his kingship was not sustaining. This is because intellect does not reach that place where there are no changes.

Thus, it was specifically Dovid and Shlomo, who were anointed [with oil] from a horn, which indicates the matter of self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) that transcends intellect, that their kingdom was sustaining, being that they reached the essence, in which there are no changes.

This is also the meaning of the verse,⁸⁰⁷ “The Eternal Victor of Israel (*Netzach Yisroel*-נצח ישראל) does not lie and does not relent.” That is, the kingship of Dovid is in a way of eternity (*Netzach*-נצח). This is as explained previously⁸⁰⁸ that “*Netzach*-נצח” is also of the root “eternity-*Nitzchiyoot*.” In other words, not only did their kingship continue, but beyond

⁸⁰³ In the discourse entitled “*Padah b’Shalom* – He redeemed my soul in peace,” Discourse 12, Ch. 3 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5729, p. 81)

⁸⁰⁴ Genesis 36:37; Etz Chayim, Shaar 8 (Shaar Drushei Nekudot), Ch. 4

⁸⁰⁵ Zohar III 142a; Etz Chayim *ibid.*; Also see Likkutei Torah, Re’eh 18b, and elsewhere.

⁸⁰⁶ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 12 (17a) citing Zohar III 224a

⁸⁰⁷ Samuel I 15:29

⁸⁰⁸ In the discourse entitled “*Padah b’Shalom* – He redeemed my soul in peace,” Discourse 12, Ch. 3 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5729, p. 81)

this, their kingship is eternal, and eternity is in a manner that even at its beginning it is recognized as a matter that is eternal.

This is like what we find about the matter of decomposition, in that all novel beings that undergo composition and decomposition begin to decompose at the very beginning of their existence. This is as stated by Rabbeinu Bachaye,⁸⁰⁹ that from the moment a baby is born he begins drying out.

In contrast, this is not so of beings that do not undergo decomposition, indicating that they have the matter of eternity. The same is so of the kingship of Dovid, that the fact that his kingship was drawn forth in an eternal way, [is something] that began at the very beginning of his kingship, similar to the explanation in Torah Ohr⁸¹⁰ about the matter of “the day that is entirely long,”⁸¹¹ that it is “long” from its beginning.

We can add that based on the explanation in Ohr HaTorah⁸¹² about the matter of the “horn-*Keren* קרן,” that it is the aspect of Understanding-*Binah*, like the “[extended blast of the] Jubilee horn-*Keren HaYovel* קרן הַיּוֹבֵל,”⁸¹³ in which the Jubilee (*Yovel*) is Understanding-*Binah*,⁸¹⁴ and even so, this relates to Dovid, who is the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut*, this is because, according to what the Arizal stated,⁸¹⁵ the inner aspect

⁸⁰⁹ “Perhaps the intention is to what he writes in his commentary to Genesis 1:28” – A note of the Rebbe to Sefer HaMaamarim 5711 p. 142.

⁸¹⁰ Torah Ohr, Toldot 18d

⁸¹¹ Midrash Tehillim 23:6

⁸¹² Ohr HaTorah, Chanukah 300a and on ibid.

⁸¹³ Joshua 6:5

⁸¹⁴ See Zohar I 123a; Also see Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as Gates of Light, Gate Eight (*Binah*).

⁸¹⁵ Zohar HaRakiya, beginning of Bereishit

(*Pnimiyut*) of Kingship-*Malchut* is like Understanding-*Binah*. According to this, the matter of Dovid and Shlomo who were anointed with [oil from] a horn, this being the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut*, must be when the Upper *Hey-ה* (Understanding-*Binah*) actually illuminates within it.⁸¹⁶

Now, we must understand what the elevation is that Understanding-*Binah* is drawn forth and illuminates within Kingship-*Malchut*. For, at first glance, when Understanding-*Binah* remains in her own place, she is in a much greater elevation.

However, the explanation of is that the primary perfection is specifically in Kingship-*Malchut*, due to the matter of accepting the yoke and self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) which transcends the intellect (Understanding-*Binah*). This is as explained before about the superiority of Dovid and Shlomo over and above Shaul.

This likewise is the difference between Dovid and Shlomo. For, notwithstanding the great wondrousness of the level of Shlomo, about whom it states,⁸¹⁷ “He will be a man of rest... His name will be Shlomo, and I will bestow peace and tranquility upon Israel in his days,” to the point that it states,⁸¹⁸ “Shlomo sat upon the throne of *HaShem-יהוה*,” and during his times “the moon was in a state of wholeness,”⁸¹⁹ nevertheless, the preparation for all this was specifically by Dovid.

⁸¹⁶ Ohr HaTorah ibid. p. 301b

⁸¹⁷ Chronicles I 22:9

⁸¹⁸ Chronicles I 29:23

⁸¹⁹ See Zohar I 150a; 225b; Midrash Shemot Rabba 15:26

This is as Dovid said to Shlomo (about the construction of the Holy Temple),⁸²⁰ “Everything is in writing, by the hand of *HaShem*-יהוה that He gave me understanding to know.” This is because the matter of Shlomo is the [*Sefirah*] of Wisdom-*Chochmah* within Kingship-*Malchut* (as stated in Sefer HaMitzvot of the Tzemach Tzedek, Mitzvat Minui Melech). In contrast, the matter of Dovid is the general *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut* as a whole. That is, even in the matter of Wisdom-*Chochmah*, the primary emphasis is its relationship to the general *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut*, this being the matter of self-nullification (*Bittul*) and acceptance of the yoke, which transcends intellect.

This is similar to what we explained before⁸²¹ on the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,⁸²² “The ultimate objective of wisdom is repentance and good deeds,” (based on what is explained in an older manuscript that already has been printed),⁸²³ that the primary matter of Wisdom-*Chochmah* is the matter of nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, only that since it is a complete stature, it also possesses the matter of conceptualization and intellect.

5.

This then, explains the fact that the war against the Greeks, who said, “Write on the horn of a bull that you have no portion in

⁸²⁰ Chronicles I 28:19

⁸²¹ In the prior discourse entitled “*Margela b’Pumei d’Rava* – Rava was wont to say,” of Shabbat Parshat Vayishlach, of this year, 5729, Discourse 10 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5729, p. 60 and on).

⁸²² Talmud Bavli, Brachot 17a

⁸²³ Sefer HaSichot, Torat Shalom p. 158 and on

the God of Israel,” was through the aspect of the horn of the side of holiness, this being the matter of the strength of the self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) that transcends the intellect, through which there was the nullification of the decree, “Write on the horn of a bull etc.,” and that what they thought and sought to do was nullified, namely, “to make them forget Your Torah and to turn them away from the statutes of Your will.”

It was through serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way of self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*), that there also was the victory (*Nitzachon*-נצחון) in the war, in a way that “You delivered the mighty into the hands of the weak, and the many into the hands of the few etc.,” to the point of “Thanking and praising Your Great Name,” specifying, “Your Great Name,” about which it states in *Pirke d'Rabbi Eliezer*⁸²⁴ (as in the version of the *Shnei Luchot HaBrit*),⁸²⁵ “Before the world was created there was Him and His Name alone.” It is called His Great Name (*Shmo HaGadol*-שמו הגדול),⁸²⁶ this being a matter that is essential, in that it is drawn forth and comes into revelation, as it states,⁸²⁷ “The glory of *HaShem*-יהו"ה will be revealed and all flesh together shall see that the mouth of *HaShem*-יהו"ה has spoken.”

⁸²⁴ *Pirke d'Rabbi Eliezer*, Ch. 3; Also see *Ginat Egoz* of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of Intrinsic Being (*Shaar HaHavayah*).

⁸²⁵ *Shnei Luchot HaBrit* 3b cited in *Likkutei Torah*, *Shir HaShirim* 14c.

⁸²⁶ *Sefer HaMitzvot* of the *Tzemach Tzedek* 153a; *Ohr HaTorah*, *Shir HaShirim* Vol. 1 p. 264 – based on *Likkutei Torah*, *Shlach* 48c.

⁸²⁷ *Isaiah* 40:5