

**Temach Tzedek  
Ohr HaTorah**

בס"ד, שבת חנוכה, מקץ  
ה Chelek

**ואתה ברחמיך הרבים עמדת להם נו**

"And You, in Your abundant mercy, stood by them... and they lit the lamps... and established these eight days of Chanukah to give thanks and praise..."

Behold, one could ask: the primary victory in the war occurred on the 24th [of Kislev], while the miracle of the lamps happened on the 25th. Why then were the eight days of Chanukah primarily established to commemorate the miracle of the lamps rather than the day of the military victory?

The explanation is that the primary intent of the idolaters who rose against them was to make them forget Your Torah, as it says. Therefore, the emphasis of the miracle was placed on the lamps, for "the Torah is light, and a mitzvah is a lamp." The name "Chanukah" (חנוכה) is interpreted as "they rested on the 25th" (חנו בכ"ה) of Kislev.

Regarding Avraham, it is written: "So shall your descendants be," and in the Zohar (Lech Lecha 91b), it interprets this as "the secret of the holy name," which serves as the gateway to prayer. Additionally, the first verse of the Shema contains 25 letters, and in the priestly blessing it states, "Thus (כה) shall you bless..." Also, "Your pious ones shall bless You" (יברכוכה) hints at "bless כה."

The matter is as follows: Our sages taught that all the prophets prophesied with the phrase "Thus (כה) said Hashem," while Moshe added with "This (זה) is the matter." The idea is connected to the verse "Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness." The term "Our likeness" (כדמותנו) refers to the aspect of *memalei kol almin* ("filling all worlds")—a relative likeness, as if resembling. In contrast, "Our image" (בצלמנו) refers to the revelation of His very essence, as it were, which corresponds to *yechuda ila'ah* (the higher unity) and *yechuda tata'ah* (the lower unity).

"Our likeness" represents *yechuda tata'ah*, which is the appearance and image through which the heavens, earth, and all creations are perceived as existing entities. However, in truth, it is written, "I, Hashem, have not changed," and "You are He before the world was created..." All is truly considered as nothing before Him. Yet the world appears to physical eyes as an independent existence, and therefore it is called "Our likeness"—like the phrase "and upon the throne was the likeness of the appearance," which is only an appearance. In truth, it is written, "He is not a man..." This applies specifically to the realm of the throne, the world of Beriah, where the form of man is perceived. But beyond the throne, it is not so, as explained in the commentary on the verse "and beneath His feet..."

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In this way, the term "Our likeness" implies the perception of the world as an independent existence. Nevertheless, it is still called "Our likeness" because *yechuda tata'ah* also reflects a state of nullification, though it is a nullification of something—like the heavenly hosts bowing to Him. In contrast, "Our image" refers to *yechuda ila'ah*, as it truly is, where "all before Him is considered as nothing," as it was before the creation of the world.

So too, now, there is no change, as it were. The matter and the reason for the distinction between *yechuda ila'ah* (the higher unity) and *yechuda tata'ah* (the lower unity) are explained in *Tanya*, Part II and Part I, Chapters 20-21.

Behold, the creation of all the worlds is only from the "Word of Hashem," as it is stated. And the attribute of the Holy One, blessed be He, is not like that of humans—His speech is not separate from Him, Heaven forbid. Rather, His speech and thought, as it were, are completely unified with Him, similar to the way a person's speech and thought are unified within their inner wisdom, and so forth. This is the concept of *yechuda ila'ah*, as it is before Him, and therefore the worlds exist in a state of true nullification.

However, *yechuda tata'ah* comes about through numerous contractions (*tzimtzumim*) via the name *Elokim*, which conceals and obscures [the divine presence] to the extent that the created beings perceive the light and vitality of the "Word of Hashem" that is invested in them as if it were something separate from His essence, as if it were emanating from Him like a person's speech emanates from their soul.

Thus, it seems to them that they are independent entities, separate and distinct, though they experience nullification as "something nullified," since the divine speech continually sustains them.

The source of this level, which brings about the creation of Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah (Bri'ah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah—worlds of creation, formation, and action), is called "Thus (כה) said Hashem." Therefore, our sages said that on the 25th of Elul the world was created, because the creation of the world through the "Word of Hashem" emanated from this attribute called כה, which corresponds to "Our likeness" (כדמותנו).

Furthermore, the vitality and continuation of the 22 letters of speech derive from the breath of the heart, which is known to include three elements: fire, air, and water. Without the proper balance of these three, the voice will not resonate clearly. The combination of the 22 letters and these three elements forms the concept of 25 (כה).

Since this level of speech manifests in a way that appears as though it is something separate, as explained above, it is called כה—indicating the "kaf" (כ) of comparison (כף הדמיון), a likeness or semblance.

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Our sages also taught that all the prophets, except Moshe, saw through an "unclear lens" (*aspaklaria she'eina me'ira*). This means they saw as if through a mirror (or reflection)—not the thing itself, but its image. Similarly, it is said, "I have multiplied visions and used likenesses through the prophets" (*B'yad ha'nevi'im adameh*). This indicates that the "Word of Hashem" revealed to them was not as it truly is, united with His essence, like a person's speech is united with their inner wisdom. Instead, it was akin to *yechuda tata'ah* (the lower unity), as explained earlier. The prophets' perception was from the realms of Beriah and Yetzirah, not from Atzilut itself.

Thus, they prophesied with "Thus (כה) said Hashem," meaning the "Word of Hashem" they perceived was in the form of "Our likeness" (כדמותנו), as a semblance. However, Moshe Rabbeinu prophesied with "This (זה) is the matter," referring to the higher speech as it is revealed in the form of *yechuda ila'ah* (the higher unity), as it is written, "And they will say on that day: This is our God" (*zeh Elokeinu*). This is the concept of a "clear lens" (*aspaklaria me'ira*).

The ultimate purpose of creation is to establish a dwelling place for the Divine in the lower worlds, where the revelation below mirrors the reality above. This is the purpose of human service. The idea is that the Torah is also referred to as "man" (*adam*), paralleling the verse, "Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness." Through Torah and mitzvot, the souls of Israel draw down the level of *yechuda ila'ah*, referred to as "Our image" (*b'tzalmeinu*), as it exists before Him, to manifest this revelation below in *yechuda tata'ah*, referred to as "Our likeness" (*k'demuseinu*), so that the revelation below mirrors the reality above.

This is the meaning of "And Moshe spoke... saying, 'This is the matter'"—indicating that every Jew, when studying a portion of Torah or oral Torah, achieves "This is the matter," meaning the revelation of *yechuda ila'ah*. As it is written, "And these words that I command you today... and you shall speak of them," signifying the revelation of "these words," which stem from "I am [Anochi] who I am." Therefore, the Torah is called by the name of Moshe, who embodies the nullification of *yechuda ila'ah*, enabling every individual to draw this revelation into *yechuda tata'ah*, uniting the two into one.

"In the oneness" (*ba'echad*), but to reach this state where Torah study aligns with the aforementioned manner, one must first recite the Shema: "Hear, O Israel," and then proceed to "and you shall speak of them." For Moshe represents the attribute of *da'at* (knowledge), which imparts awareness to the souls of Israel, connecting their understanding strongly during the Shema by meditating on how Hashem is one: "I, Hashem, have not changed," for the vitality of all the worlds is merely a radiance and illumination, and "all before Him is as nothing." Through this contemplation, one reaches self-sacrifice (*mesirut nefesh*) in the *echad* (oneness), where the desire is to be nullified

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and absorbed into the infinite essence of Hashem, rather than remaining a separate and independent entity.

However, the animal soul (*nefesh habehemit*) and the body obstruct and hinder this. From this comes the state of "their hearts cried out," which corresponds to "with all your might" (*b'chol me'odecha*). As our sages said, "Good" refers to the good inclination (*yetzer tov*), and "very good" (*me'od*) refers to the evil inclination (*yetzer hara*). How can the *yetzer hara* be called "very good"? It is because through *iskafya* (subjugating) and *it'hapcha* (transforming), an even greater light emerges specifically from the darkness.

This can be understood through the analogy of a silver coating on clear glass (referred to as a "mirror"), where the coating obstructs the eye's ability to see straight through, as with ordinary glass. Instead, it reflects the vision back to the observer, allowing them to see what is behind them—something otherwise impossible without the obstructing coating. However, this only works when the coating is thin and delicate.

The parallel is the descent and embodiment of the soul within the body and the animal soul, which obstruct and hinder the vision of divine light. Yet, through the "crying out of their hearts" in the mode of *b'chol me'odecha*—when darkness is transformed into light—a new light is drawn from above the order of creation (*sefer hishtalshelut*), surpassing even the level of *yechuda ila'ah* (higher unity). For *yechuda ila'ah* represents the state of "He and His causations are one," but Hashem's essence transcends even this and cannot be described by such unity. Instead, He is *yachid* (singular). Through this, one draws from the level of *yachid* into "Hashem is one," unifying heaven, earth, and the four directions.

This drawing of light beyond the order of creation occurs specifically through the transformation of darkness into light. It is the nullification of existence (*bittul hayesh*), a true novelty, like a bird that speaks. In contrast, the nullification at the level of *yechuda ila'ah* is not a novelty since it already exists in the revelation of the Infinite. However, when existence in the realm of *yechuda tata'ah*—where the world appears as an independent entity—is nullified, a new light is specifically drawn from beyond the order of creation.

This is the concept of the 25 letters of unity (*yichuda*) in the first verse of the Shema. Even though one meditates deeply during the Shema on *yechuda ila'ah*, perceiving that "all before Him is as nothing," this awareness exists only in the intellect, not in physical sight, which will only occur in the future, as it is written, "And all flesh will see." Therefore, this state is referred to as *koh* ("thus"), representing only "Our likeness" (*k'demuseinu*), because this revelation is not fully manifest to us. Even the prophets

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prophesied only with "Thus said Hashem" (*koh amar Hashem*), not with the clarity of "This" (*zeh*). How much more so is this true in intellectual contemplation.

Nevertheless, the very act of *mesirut nefesh* during the Shema arouses a new light from beyond the order of creation, stemming from the nullification of existence, like the analogy of the reflective coating. This works only when the coating is thin and delicate, meaning the individual has not become spiritually defiled through sin, which causes complete concealment and darkness until repentance (*teshuvah*) rectifies it.

Through this elevation and nullification during the Shema, one draws down a new light from beyond the order of creation, enabling the subsequent fulfillment of "and you shall speak of them" (*v'dibarta bam*). This light manifests in Torah, which is "He and His vitality are one," and through this, the revelation extends downward, even into *yechuda tata'ah*, making the lower world a reflection of the higher.

This explains the Akedat Yitzchak (binding of Isaac), where Avraham said, "Let us go until *koh* (thus) and bow down, and then we will return." The self-sacrifice of Avraham and Yitzchak is described as "Let us go until *koh*," akin to the 25 letters of unity (*yichuda*) in the Shema. However, in the Shema, it is only in potential, whereas their action was in actual practice, which aroused and drew a new light beyond the order of creation. As it is written afterward: "I have sworn by Myself."

"The declaration of Hashem": the name *Havaya* represents the aspect of *yechuda ila'ah* (the higher unity), where "He and His vitality and His vessels are one" (*ihu v'chayohi v'garmohi chad*). The letter *yud* corresponds to the vitality of *chochmah* (wisdom), and the meaning of "By Myself I have sworn" (*bi nishba'ati*) refers to His very essence, beyond the level of His vitality and vessels. This is as explained in the Zohar regarding this matter.

All of this is drawn down through actualized self-sacrifice (*mesirut nefesh*) in the manner of "Let us go until *koh* (thus)." This corresponds to "and you did not withhold your son," meaning that instead of withholding, it brought about an even greater light emerging from the darkness. This represents the integration and nullification of *yechuda tata'ah* (the lower unity) within *yechuda ila'ah*.

Following this, "and we will return" signifies the aspect of "returning to one," drawing the divine revelation from above to below. This corresponds to Torah, which is referred to as "This is the matter" (*zeh hadavar*).

As mentioned earlier, this revelation draws the level of "This" (*zeh*) into the level of "Thus" (*koh*), uniting "one within one" (*echad b'echad*), as explained above.

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The aspect of the "Word of Hashem" (*D'var Hashem*) is also called "the city of our God," as it is written in *Sefer Yetzirah*: "Two stones build two houses," referring to the stones as letters. Therefore, Torah scholars are called builders, as our sages expound on the verse "And all your children will be taught by Hashem"—"Do not read *banayich* (your children) but *bonayich* (your builders)." They are engaged in building the world by drawing down the revelation of the Infinite Light (*Or Ein Sof*) into the aspect of the "city of our God." This is accomplished through the letters of the Torah, which are called stones and bricks, as it is written, "And under His feet, it was like the work of a brick of sapphire."

This reflects the concept of *zeh l'umat zeh asah Elokim* ("this corresponding to that, God made"), meaning that in the realm of impurity (*sitra achra*), there are also letters that fell during the shattering of the vessels (*shevirat ha-kelim*), which draw vitality from holiness. However, our sages taught, "I will fill the ruined place"—"If this one is full, the other is desolate" (Megillah 6a). When the "city of our God" is in its proper state of construction, the external forces (*chitzonim*) draw their vitality only from the remnants and the dregs of holiness.

This is the idea of the "walls of Jerusalem." The word *chomat* (walls) can also be read as *chotam* (seal) or *tachum* (boundary), signifying that outsiders cannot approach, as it is written, "I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated." This seal is formed through the walls, which are the stones and letters of the Torah, as it says, "I am a wall," referring to the Torah.

This was the issue in the war of the idolaters against Jerusalem: they entered the sanctuary and breached its walls in thirteen places, similar to the verse, "If you soar like an eagle." The idea of "soaring" relates to the fact that creating a seal and limiting the flow of divine vitality so that it descends into holiness alone, without providing sustenance to the external forces, is a significant contraction relative to the Infinite Light, before which "all is considered as nothing," like "a drop of water in the ocean." As it is written, "If you are righteous, what do you give Him?"

Nevertheless, through human effort (*it'aruta d'letata*, an arousal from below), achieved by observing Torah and mitzvot, this limitation is drawn down. Therefore, we bless, "He who chooses the Torah and Moshe His servant," as this elevates the sanctity to draw down vitality from a level beyond human effort. As our sages said regarding the verse, "We remember the fish we ate in Egypt for free"—free of mitzvot, where the forces of impurity received sustenance freely, unbound by divine commandments.

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This relates to the "city and tower" built by the generation of the dispersion, opposing the "city of our God." Just as in holiness there are letters that ascend and letters that draw down, so too in the opposing forces, represented by the "city and tower."

The thirteen breaches in the sanctuary correspond to the thirteen attributes of mercy (*middot ha-rachamim*), which are beyond human effort, as it is written, "I will favor those I favor, even if they are undeserving." However, Moshe requested, "And we shall be distinguished, I and Your people," so that these attributes would be drawn exclusively into holiness. This is achieved through the aforementioned "seal" and "wall" formed by the letters of the Torah.

When sins increased, the enemy entered the sanctuary and breached thirteen openings, drawing vitality from these lofty attributes into the realm of impurity. Nevertheless, it is said, "And You stood by them in their time of distress." Regarding the future, it is written, "And His feet shall stand on that day on the Mount of Olives." The "feet" refer to the letters, but these are letters from a level beyond the order of creation (*sefer hishtalshelut*), as it says, "on the mount," corresponding to the crown, the source of oil. These letters are from a supremely elevated level, as alluded to by "His great name" and the splitting of the sea, when "You remained silent" due to the revelation of letters from beyond human effort.

Even so, "You stood by them," drawing this revelation specifically into the "city of our God," despite their time of distress. This occurred through their outcry in the manner of "with all your might" (*b'chol me'odecha*), arousing a profound trembling and awe from the innermost level.

"From the letters," as also in the splitting of the sea, "And they cried out," referring to "My dove... let me hear your voice." This corresponds to "You delivered... the many into the hands of the few," for *malchut* (sovereignty) is referred to as a "small city," reflecting its state of nullification. This aligns with the phrase "small Jacob," as in "I am small" (*katonti*), emphasizing self-nullification. Similarly, the people within it are in a state of "few," as they minimize themselves in a mode of nullification.

This is why the primary miracle was associated with the lamps, and the festival is called "Chanukah," meaning "they rested on the 25th" (*chanu kaf-hei*), which is also associated with the term *chen* (grace) and *chanayah* (resting). The term *chen* reflects the idea of "And I pleaded" (*v'etchanan*), which connotes a free gift, as it draws down the level of *koh* (thus). This drawing is also referred to as the thirteen attributes of mercy (*yud gimel middot ha-rachamim*) in the higher realms (*Arich Anpin*), which correspond to the nine attributes of *Ze'ir Anpin* combined with the three intellectual faculties.

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One could also say their root is in the "three heads" (*telat reishin*) above. Additionally, regarding the verse "And His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives," similarly, when "You stood by them," they kindled lamps of oil and light, as it is written, "He dips his foot in oil." This relates to the concept of the two olive trees—one to the right of the bowl, and so on—representing the Mount of Olives.

When *Abba* and *Ima* (the intellectual faculties of wisdom and understanding) clothe the arms of *Arich Anpin*, no external forces can derive sustenance. This reflects the drawing down of the light of Torah. As it says, "For you are a stranger, for in *koh* (thus) the land will be yours," with the added *hei* indicating the state of fullness called *koh*. Through this construction of *malchut* (sovereignty), "I will leap" (*adalga*), "for I will fill [the ruined place]." As it is written, "The Holy One is in your midst, and I will not enter the city," referring to the drawing down of "You are my lamp."

"You" in this context refers to the letters of "You stood by them," as mentioned above.

**נס דחנוכה, ח' נרות ע' מנה"מ גדולה מנורת חשמונאי ח' נרות ועב"י, וי"ל כי כל נס נמשך ע"י הארת כתר במל' כדפי' בזהר בשלח ע"פ אז ישיר דנמשך מבחי' א' בבחי' מל' הנק' ז' משא"כ במנורה מבחי' שם הוי' דז"א לכן רק ז', וע"י כי נר מצוה כו', אך דחנוכה מי"ג מדח"ר וגדולה מהטבת הנרות וכן בענין רני ושמחי, ובחנוכה הנני בא אני ממש, לכן א' ז' ח**

The miracle of Chanukah: eight lamps, seventy branches, a great source from the Menorah of the Hasmoneans, eight lamps, and *Av"i*. It can be explained that every miracle is drawn through the illumination of *Keter* (Crown) into *Malchut* (Kingship), as explained in the *Zohar* on Parashat Beshalach regarding the verse "Then Moses and the children of Israel sang," where an illumination from the level of *Aleph* (representing *Keter*) descends into the level of *Malchut*, referred to as seven.

In contrast, the Menorah in the Temple corresponds to the name *Havaya* associated with *Ze'ir Anpin* (the small face), and therefore it only has seven branches. However, through "For the mitzvah is a lamp..." (Proverbs 6:23), the Chanukah lights are drawn from the thirteen attributes of mercy (*yud gimel middot ha-rachamim*), which is greater than the Temple's lighting of the Menorah.

This greatness is also reflected in the context of the verse "Sing and rejoice" (*Rani v'simchi*). On Chanukah, there is the revelation of "I am coming Myself" (*Ani mamash*). Therefore, it is expressed through the levels of *Aleph* (one) and *Zayin* (seven).