

The Zwelling Family Edition

שני מאמרים

מזמור שיר חנוכת הבית

מלקוטי תורה, פרשת וזאת הברכה

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MIZMOR SHIR CHANUKAS HABAYIS

The Hebrew Text with an Elucidated English Translation

Likkutei Torah · Parshas V'Zos HaBerachah

Kesser Shem Tov
PUBLISHING

Mizmor Shir Chanukas HaBayis

The Two Discourses — Hebrew Text with an Elucidated English Translation

Likkutei Torah, Parshas V'Zos HaBerachah (*daf* 98–100)

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The Hebrew text of the maamarim follows the Zhitomir 5626 (1866)
printing of *Likkutei Torah* (scan courtesy of HebrewBooks.org).

ISBN (hardcover): 979-8-1880834-5-8

Edition 1.5 — 5786 / 2026

Kesser Shem Tov

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A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

The Nature of this Work

This volume presents an original English elucidation and commentary, prepared through a combination of advanced language and translation technology and experienced human editorial oversight. The methods employed were carefully configured to adhere to Orthodox Jewish *hashkafa* and to preserve fidelity to the original Hebrew text, and the translation was reviewed against the original. The Hebrew text of the maamarim follows the Zhitomir 5626 (1866) printing of *Likkutei Torah*; its vocalization was likewise prepared for this edition through the same combination of technology and editorial oversight. Even so, this edition does not carry the authority of a translation prepared and certified by a full team of rabbinic scholars.

Usage and Limitations

This translation is intended as a tool to help advanced learners access the depth of the original work. It is **not** intended to replace the original Hebrew source, nor to serve as a substitute for study under a qualified teacher.

Because the nuance of Torah study often transcends any single method of preparation, we ask the reader to keep two things in mind:

1. **Verification:** Any novel insight, ruling, or conclusion drawn from this translation should be checked against the original Hebrew.
2. **Consultation:** All practical questions or derived lessons should be discussed with and verified by a qualified rabbinic authority before being relied upon.

The goal of this edition is to make these teachings accessible to a wider audience, but the responsibility for accurate understanding and practical application remains with the reader.

מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר חֲנֻכַּת הַבַּיִת לְדָוִד

(Tehillim 30:1)

A psalm, a song for the dedication of the House, by David.

With profound gratitude to Hashem for the blessing of our new home and our growing family, we dedicate this volume to the sacred purpose of building a home illuminated by Torah and Chassidus.

May our home always be filled with the sounds of Torah learning, the warmth of mitzvos, and the joy of Yiddishkeit. May it be a place where Torah is not only studied, but taught and shared — a home whose light reaches beyond its walls and inspires others.

It is our hope that the publication of this maamar will help make the Alter Rebbe's teachings more accessible and contribute to the fulfillment of:

לְכִשֶּׁיָּפוּצוּ מַעְיְנוֹתֶיךָ חוּצָה

"When your wellsprings spread outward."

May we merit to raise our family together in good health and happiness, growing continually in Torah, yiras Shamayim, and ahavas Yisrael, and preparing ourselves and the world for the coming of Moshiach.

The Zwelling Family

5786 / 2026

zman.

שֶׁמֵּאַחַר שֶׁהֵם בבחי' מָקוֹם מַהֲלַךְ ת"ק שָׁנָה וּשְׁלִישׁ הָעוֹלָם כו' הֲרֵי הֵם ג"כ בבחי' זְמַן שֶׁהַמָּקוֹם וְהַזְּמַן שְׁנֵיהֶם הֵם נִבְרָאִים בִּבְחִינָה אֶחָד.

For since they are in the aspect of place — a journey of five hundred years, a third of the world — they are therefore also in the aspect of time; for place and time are both created as one aspect.[19] Boundedness in space entails boundedness in time. *Makom* and *zman* were created together, as a single dimension of finitude; whatever is measured in one is measured in the other.

וְלָכֵן יֵשׁ לָהֶם עֵת קָבוּעַ לוֹמַר שִׁיר כַּיָּדוּעַ

And therefore they have a fixed time to say song, as is known. Being subject to time, the angels sing only at set, appointed moments — some by day, some by night — never continuously.

משא"כ הַנְּשָׁמוֹת אֵין לָהֶם בחי' זְמַן וּמָקוֹם אֶלָּא בְּכָל יוֹם תָּמִיד יְהַלְלוּךְ וְגַם סֶלָה בְּלִי הפסק:

Which is not so with the souls: they have no aspect of time and place, but rather "every day, continually, they praise You," and even "selah" — without interruption.[20]***m***
The *neshamos*, unbounded by *makom* and *zman*, are not confined to appointed hours. Their praise is "every day, continually" — and *selah*, without cease. This unbroken, boundless song is the mark of their superiority over the angels: what the soul lacks in audibility, it possesses in unlimited, ceaseless *bittul*.

THE TWO BEINGS AT A GLANCE

Notes

[19] *Makom* and *zman* — space and time — were both created and are correlative dimensions of finitude; boundedness in one entails boundedness in the other.

[20] "Selah" denotes eternity, without interruption — *Eruvin* 54a.

Aspect	*Malachim* (Angels)	*Neshamos* (Souls)
Their *shira*	*heard* by the prophet, as a "voice"	*unheard* — pure *sechel*
Can be seen?	yes, to refined physical eyes	no
"Body"	*ruach* and *eish* (Ramban) — a bounding vessel	none
Place and time	bounded — a 500-year stature, a third of the world	free of both; praise "continually... Selah"
Bittul	in a vessel — "voice and noise" (*chitzoniyus*)	*ner b'pnei ha'avukah* (*pnimiyus*)

Takeaway — Perek Alef: The angels' "enemies" of man are answered by understanding the difference between *malachim* and *neshamos*: both sing, but only the angel's song is heard — because the angel has a "body" of *ruach* and *eish*, bounded in place and time, in which its song can vest itself as audible sound. The soul, being pure intellect with no garment, sings silently and ceaselessly — and that very inaudibility is a sign of its loftier, boundless nature.

Perek Beis: The Descent of the Neshama and the Two Bowings

THE ANGELS' PROTEST AND THE SECRET OF THE PHYSICAL BODY

ב אַךְ הַמַּלְאָכִים שֶׁאָמְרוּ מָה אֱנוֹשׁ כו' עִם הֱיוֹת שֶׁיָּדְעוּ שֶׁמַּעֲלַת וּמַדְרֵגַת הַנְּשָׁמוֹת הִיא מְאֹד נַעֲלֶה מִמַּעֲלָתָם וּמַדְרֵגָתָם כנ"ל

But the malachim who said "Mah enosh" ("What is man") — even though they knew that the rank and level of the neshamos is exceedingly loftier than their own rank and level, as explained above — Having established in the previous perek that the neshama, being pure *sechel* with no bodily garment, actually stands *above* the *malachim*, the Alter Rebbe now confronts a difficulty: if the angels themselves recognized the neshama's superiority, what exactly were they protesting? The point of their "Mah enosh" was not a claim that they outrank the soul as such.[21]

עכ"ז חֵרֵי הַנְּשָׁמָה כְּמוֹת שֶׁהִיא הִיא בִּלְי הִתְלַבְּשׁוּת גּוּף כְּלָל.

nevertheless, the neshama as it is in itself is entirely without any garment of a body — In its native state, the neshama is exactly as the angels understood it to be — a purely spiritual intelligence, higher than themselves, unclothed in any physical vessel. Regarding the neshama in *that* state, the angels raised no objection.

אַךְ עַל יְרִידָתָהּ לְהִתְלַבֵּשׁ בְּגוּף בעוה"ז אָמְרוּ מָה אֱנוֹשׁ כִּי מִצַּד הַגּוּף מוּכָן הָאָדָם לַחֲטֹא

but concerning its descent to be clothed in a body in this world they said "Mah enosh," for on account of the body a person is prone to sin — Their entire complaint was aimed

Notes

[21] The angels' objection "*Mah enosh ki tizkerenu*" (*Tehillim* 8:5), voiced at the creation of man (*Bereishis Rabbah* 8:6; *Shabbos* 88b), and — per the sources — at three moments: man's creation, Matan Torah, and the sin of the Golden Calf. The Alter Rebbe's move here is to specify *what precisely* the angels were protesting.

at the *descent*. Why should so exalted a spiritual entity be lowered into coarse flesh — a body whose very physicality makes man vulnerable to transgression? To the angels this looked like a needless degradation of something sublime, and a setup for failure.

וע"כ אָמְרוּ שֶׁתִּנָּתֵן לָהֶם הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁיֵּשׁ לָהֶם ג"כ גּוּף וָנֶפֶשׁ וְהַגּוּף רוּחָנִי.

and therefore they said that the Torah should be given to them, since they too have a body and a soul, and their body is spiritual — The angels reasoned: if the purpose of clothing a soul in a body is so that Torah and mitzvos can be fulfilled by an embodied being, then *we* are candidates as well — for we too are composed of a "body" (of *ruach* and *eish*) and a soul. And our body, being spiritual rather than gross matter, is far more refined; give the Torah to *us*.[22]

וּתְשׁוּבַת הקב"ה הָיָה שֶׁנִּצְטָרֵךְ לִהְיוֹת הַנְּשָׁמָה שֶׁמִּפְּנִימִית הָעוֹלָמוֹת שֶׁהִיא מִצַּד עַצְמָהּ מוּפְשֶׁטֶת מֵחוֹמֶר גּוּפָנִי לְגַמְרֵי וְשֶׁתֵּרֵד דַּוְקָא בְּגוּף גַּשְׁמִי מַמָּשׁ שעי"ז יִהְיֶה דִּירָה בַּתַּחְתּוֹנִים משא"כ בַּמַּלְאָכִים.

And the answer of the Holy One was that it is necessary for the neshama — which is from the innerness of the worlds, and which in its own right is entirely abstracted from bodily matter — to descend specifically into an actual physical body, for through this there comes to be a "dwelling in the lower realms," which is not the case with the malachim — Precisely *because* the neshama derives from the *pnimiyus* (the inner dimension) of the worlds and is by nature utterly free of any material substance, its descent into a genuinely *physical* body accomplishes something an angel never could: it draws G-dliness into the very lowest, most opaque stratum of creation, transforming coarse matter itself into a *dirah b'tachtonim* — a dwelling place for the divine in the lowest of realms.[23] The angel's "spiritual body" misses the point: a refined, spiritual vessel is not the arena where G-d desires His dwelling. Only actual physicality, refined and elevated, fulfills that will.

(ועמ"ש מִזֶּה בד"ה וַיִּיצֶר ה' אֱלֹקִים אֶת הָאָדָם עָפָר כו' והבהמ"ק נַעֲשָׂה ג"כ מִדְּבָרִים גַּשְׁמִיִּים וְהָיָה בּוֹ גִּילּוּי מִבְּחִינָה שֶׁלְּמַעְלָה מֵהִשְׁתַּלְשְׁלוּת ועמ"ש בְּדִבּוּר הַשֵּׁנִי שע"פ מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר חֲנוּכַּת)

Notes

[22] This builds directly on Perek Alef: the *malachim* are composed of *chomer v'tzurah* — a "body" (*guf*) fashioned from the refined spiritual elements of *ruach* and *eish* ("*oseh malachav ruchos, mesharsav eish loheit*," *Tehillim* 104:4, per the Ramban), and a soul of intellect. Their argument is: since our "body" is already spiritual and refined, we are the fitter recipients for a Torah of an embodied being.

[23] *Dirah b'tachtonim* — G-d's desire for "a dwelling in the lower realms" — *Midrash Tanchuma*, Naso 16; Bechukosai 3; *Bereishis Rabbah* 3. The core teaching (elaborated in *Tanya*, ch. 36) that the ultimate purpose of creation is fulfilled specifically in the lowest, physical world.

(And see what is written concerning this in the discourse beginning "And Hashem G-d formed the man [of] dust," etc. And the *Beis HaMikdash* too was made from physical things, and there was in it a revelation from a level higher than the order of hishtalshelus. And see what is written in the second discourse on "Mizmor shir chanukas [habayis].") — The Alter Rebbe cross-references his fuller treatment of why man's bodily formation differs from all other creations, and links the same principle to the Mikdash itself: the Sanctuary too was built of physical wood, stone, gold — and *because* it was physical, it became the vessel for a revelation drawn from a plane transcending the entire chain of *hishtalshelus*.[24]

"DWELL WITHIN THEM" — WHY A HOUSE OF WOOD AND STONE

וְהִנֵּה כַּאֲשֶׁר נִבְנָה בהמ"ק אָז נֶאֱמַר וְלֹא שָׂמַחְתָּ כו'

Now when the *Beis HaMikdash* was built, then it was said "v'lo simachta" ("and You did not gladden [my enemies]"), etc. — With the building of the Mikdash the very protest of the angels was finally silenced. This is what Dovid sang: You did not let my "enemies" — the accusing angels — rejoice, for the Mikdash demonstrated in the plainest terms the supremacy of the embodied soul's avodah.

כִּי הִנֵּה כָּתִיב וְעָשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם בְּתוֹכוֹ לֹא נֶאֱמַר אֶלָּא בְּתוֹכָם

For behold it is written, "And they shall make Me a Mikdash and I shall dwell within them" — it does not say "within it" but "within them" — The Alter Rebbe draws on the classic reading of the verse: G-d does not say He will dwell *within it* (the building), but *within them* — within the Jewish people.[25]

שֶׁהַשְׁרָאַת הַשְׁכִינָה הָיְתָה בְּתוֹךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַצְמָם

meaning that the resting of the Shechina was within Yisroel themselves — The true "dwelling place" was never the stones of the structure; it was the souls of the Jewish people. *They* are the sanctuary in which the Shechina comes to rest.

אֶלָּא שאעפ"כ הָיָה צָרִיךְ לִבְנוֹת בַּיִת מֵעֵצִים וַאֲבָנִים כְּדֵי שעי"ז יִהְיֶה גִּילּוּי הַשְׁכִינָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל

yet even so it was necessary to build a house of wood and stones, so that through this there would be a revelation of the Shechina among Yisroel — And yet — here is the para-

Notes

[24] The cross-reference "*va'yitzer Hashem Elokim es ha'adam afar*" is to Torah Or 3d (on the unique formation of man's body from dust). "The second discourse" refers to the companion maamar on this same pasuk (*Likkutei Torah*, further on, daf 99).

[25] "*V'asu li mikdash v'shachanti b'socham*" — *Shemos* 25:8. The reading "*b'socham* — within *them*, and not *b'socho* — within it" is cited by *Reishis Chochmah* (Sha'ar HaAhavah, ch. 6) and the *Shelah*.

dox — for the Shechina to rest *within them* in a *revealed* way, a physical house of wood and stone was indispensable. The very same principle that answered the angels reappears: it is specifically the physical vessel that draws down and makes manifest the indwelling Presence. Without the material Mikdash, the *hashra'ah* within the Jewish people would remain hidden.

וְכֵן עַכְשָׁיו מִשֶּׁחָרַב בהמ"ק נִתְפַּשְׁטָה הקדושה בְּכָל בהכ"נ ובהמ"ד וכמ"ש וָאֱהִי לָהֶם לְמִקְדָּשׁ מְעַט כו'.

and likewise now, since the *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed, the holiness has spread into every shul and beis midrash, as it is written, "and I have been for them a small sanctuary," etc. — Even in exile the principle holds. The concentrated holiness of the destroyed Temple has diffused and rests now in every *beis knesses* and *beis midrash* — each a *mikdash me'at*, a "sanctuary in miniature," a physical structure that is still the vessel for a portion of that indwelling Presence.[26]*q*

TWO KINDS OF BOWING

וּלְהָבִין זֶה צָרִיךְ לְהָבִין עִנְיַן הַשְׁרָאַת הַשְּׁכִינָה מַה הִיא

And to understand this we must understand the matter of the resting of the Shechina, what it is — To grasp why a physical space is required for the Shechina to be revealed, we must first clarify what *hashra'as haShechina* actually accomplishes in the one who stands within it.

וְהִנֵּה אָנוּ אוֹמְרִים וְאֵין אָנוּ יְכוֹלִים לַעֲלוֹת וְלֵרָאוֹת ולהשתחוות לְפָנֶיךָ.

Now we say [in the Musaf of the festivals], "and we are unable to ascend and to appear and to bow before You" — The Alter Rebbe opens the inquiry from the liturgy: in the Musaf of the Shalosh Regalim we lament that, lacking the Mikdash, we can no longer *ascend, appear,* and *bow* before Hashem.[27]*r*

וְצָרִיךְ לְהָבִין מַהוּ ולהשתחוות.

and we must understand what is meant by "and to bow" — The first two — ascending to Yerushalayim and "appearing" (*re'iyah*) in the Temple courtyard — obviously depend on a standing Mikdash. But why should *bowing* be listed among the things we can no longer do?

וְלָמָּה אֵין אָנוּ יְכוֹלִים בִּשְׁלָמָא לַעֲלוֹת וְלֵרָאוֹת א"א מִפְּנֵי הַיָּד כו'

Notes

[26] "*Va'ehi lahem l'mikdash me'at*" — *Yechezkel* 11:16, which the Gemara (*Megillah* 29a) applies to the batei knesses and batei midrash of the exile.

[27] From the Musaf Amidah of the Shalosh Regalim: "*v'ein anachnu yecholim la'alos v'liros u'lhishtachavos lefanecha...mipnei ha'yad she'nishtalcha b'mikdashecha*."

and why we are unable — granted that to ascend and to appear is impossible on account of "the hand [that was sent against Your Sanctuary]," etc. — We readily understand that ascending and appearing became impossible once "the hand" of destruction fell upon the Sanctuary.

אֲבָל הַהִשְׁתַּחֲוָאָה אֶפְשָׁר לִהְיוֹת בְּכָל מָקוֹם לְפָנָיו יִת' כְּמוֹ וַאֲנַחְנוּ כּוֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים כו'.

but bowing is possible in every place before Him, blessed be He, as [we say] "and we kneel and bow," etc. — Yet bowing seems different: we prostrate ourselves in prayer daily, anywhere — "*va'anachnu kor'im u'mishtachavim*." Bowing to G-d requires no Temple at all. So why does the liturgy imply that this bowing, too, was lost with the Mikdash?

וְלָמָּה צָרִיךְ לָזֶה בהמ"ק דַּוְקָא.

so why does this require specifically the *Beis HaMikdash*? — The question is now sharpened to its point: what kind of bowing is it that could be performed *only* in the *Beis HaMikdash*?

אַךְ הִנֵּה יֵשׁ שְׁנֵי בְחִינוֹת בהשתחוואה

But there are two aspects to bowing — The resolution: the word *hishtachavaya* denotes two entirely different levels of self-surrender, and only the deeper one was uniquely available in the Mikdash.

כִּי הִנֵּה עִנְיַן ההשתחוואה הוּא שֶׁמְּבַטֵּל וּמַכְנִיעַ א"ע לְפָנָיו יִת' כְּמוֹ שֶׁמְּבַטֵּל א"ע לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וּמְקַבֵּל עָלָיו לְעָבְדוֹ ולשמועו בְּקוֹלוֹ.

For the matter of bowing is that one nullifies and subjugates himself before Him, blessed be He, just as one nullifies himself before a king and accepts upon himself to serve him and to obey his voice — In its essence, bowing is an act of *bittul* — laying oneself low, submitting one's will before the Sovereign and accepting the yoke of His service. That much is the shared root of both aspects; the difference lies in *how deeply* the self is surrendered.

FROM SUBMISSION OF THE BODY TO NULLIFICATION OF THE SOUL

וְהִנֵּה יֵשׁ השתחוואה בִּבְחִי' חִיצוֹנִיוּת שֶׁמַּכְנִיעַ אֶת הַגּוּף שֶׁלֹּא יִמְרוֹד

Now there is a bowing on the level of chitzoniyus (externality), which subdues the body so that it will not rebel — The lower form of *hishtachavaya* reaches only the outer man. It bends and disciplines the *body* — its actions, its rebelliousness — bringing the physical self into submission.

אֲבָל עִיקַּר רָצוֹן וּפְנִימִית הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֵינָהּ מְבוּטֶלֶת שֶׁאַעפ"כ הוּא דָּבָר בפ"ע וְיֵשׁ לוֹ רָצוֹן אַחֵר

וּמַחֲשָׁבָה אַחֶרֶת בפ"ע זוּלַת עִנְיַן הַהַכְנָעָה.

but the essential will and inner core of the soul is not nullified, for even so he remains a separate entity, and he has another will and another thought, apart from the matter of submission — In this outer bowing the person's *ratzon*, the innermost will of his soul, remains fully intact and untouched. He is still a distinct "self" standing apart, capable — even in the midst of prostrating — of harboring some other desire and some other thought entirely unrelated to his act of submission. The bowing is real, but it is only skin-deep.

משא"כ בְּחִי' ההשתחוואה בִּבְחִי' פְּנִימִי' הוּא בְּחִי' בַּטֵּל רְצוֹנְךָ מִפְּנֵי רְצוֹנוֹ

whereas the aspect of bowing on the level of pnimiyus (innerness) is the aspect of "nullify your will before His will" — The higher *hishtachavaya* penetrates to the core. It is the state our Sages describe as "nullify your will before His will"[28][s] — where one's own will is not merely disciplined but dissolved into the divine will.

שֶׁאֵין לוֹ רָצוֹן וָחֵפֶץ אַחֵר כְּלָל וּכְמוֹ בְּרָא כַּרְעָא כוּ' שֶׁהָרֶגֶל הִיא בְּטֵלָה מַמָּשׁ כוּ' וְהוּא השתחוואות הַנֶּפֶשׁ

that he has no other will or desire at all, like "the son is the leg [of the father]" — that the leg is utterly nullified — and this is the bowing of the soul itself — At this depth there simply is no competing will or desire left in the person. The Alter Rebbe illustrates with the *Zohar*'s image: *"bra kar'a d'avuha"* — the son is, as it were, the "leg" of the father.[29][t] Just as one's leg has no independent will of its own but moves the instant the person wills it, so the truly bowing soul has utterly surrendered its autonomy. This is not the bowing of the body but *the bowing of the soul itself*.

A CANDLE BEFORE A TORCH

והשתחוואה זוֹ הָיוּ מְקַבְּלִים יִשְׂרָאֵל ע"י רְאִיָּה שָׁלֹשׁ רְגָלִים בַּשָּׁנָה בבהמ"ק

and this bowing Yisroel would receive through "appearing" [before Hashem] the three pilgrimage festivals in the year in the *Beis HaMikdash* — This inner, soul-deep *hishtachavaya* was not something a person could generate on his own. The Jewish people *received* it — as a gift bestowed from Above — precisely through *re'iyah*, the thrice-yearly ascent to appear in the Temple.

Notes

[28] "*Batel retzoncha mipnei retzono*" — *Avos* 2:4.

[29] "*Bra kar'a d'avuha*" ("the son is the leg of the father") — a Zoharic idiom expressing how a child is an organic extension of the parent, moving in complete subordination to the parent's will, as a limb to the person.

שֶׁשָּׁם הָיָה גִּילּוּי שְׁכִינָה פֵּי' שְׁכִינָה מַה שֶּׁשּׁוֹכֵן בַּתַּחְתּוֹנִים בִּבְחִי' גִּילּוּי (וקב"ה קָדוֹשׁ וּמוּבְדָּל כו')

for there was the revelation of the Shechina — meaning "Shechina," that which dwells in the lower realms in a revealed manner (whereas the Holy One is holy and separate, etc.) — What made this possible was the *gilui Shechina* in the Mikdash. The very term *Shechina* (from *shochein*, "to dwell") denotes the immanent Divine Presence that *indwells* the lower worlds in a manifest way — as distinct from *Kudsha Brich Hu*, the transcendent aspect of G-d that remains "holy and separate," removed and beyond.[30]

שֶׁעַ"י"ז כָּל הַנְּשָׁמוֹת מִתְבַּטְּלִים כְּנֵר בִּפְנֵי הָאֻבוּקָה

for through this all the neshamos are nullified like a candle before a torch — In the presence of that revealed Shechina, the souls of all who "appeared" were spontaneously nullified — not by their own effort but by the sheer overwhelming light — like a candle-flame before a great torch.

פֵּי' כְּשֶׁדּוֹלֶקֶת אֻבוּקָה גְּדוֹלָה מְאֹד אֲזַי כָּל נֵר יְחִידִי הַדּוֹלֵק בִּסְמוּךְ לָהּ הוֹלֵךְ אוֹרוֹ וְנִכְלָל בְּאוֹר הָאֻבוּקָה וְהָיוּ לַאֲחָדִים מַמָּשׁ.

meaning, when a very great torch is burning, then every single candle burning near it — its light goes and becomes absorbed into the light of the torch, and they become literally one — The metaphor is exact. A small candle set beside a blazing torch does not "submit" to it by an act of will; its flame is simply drawn out, swallowed up, and absorbed into the torch's light until the two are indistinguishable — *literally one*. So too the neshama, in the radiance of the revealed Shechina, is drawn out of its separate self-existence and absorbed into its Source. This is *pnimiyus*-bittul — total, effortless, essential.

"MY FACES" — THE UNION OF THE TRANSCENDENT AND THE IMMANENT

וְזֶהוּ וְלֹא יֵרָאוּ פָּנַי רֵיקָם כְּדֶרֶךְ שֶׁבָּא לִרְאוֹת שֶׁהָיָה רְאִיָּה וְהִתְגַּלּוּת פְּנִימִית

and this is [the meaning of] "and they shall not appear before Me empty-handed," "in the same manner as he came to be seen" — that it was a seeing and an inner revelation — The Sages teach that the *re'iyah* was a mutual "seeing": "just as he came to *be seen*, so he came

Notes

[30] The distinction between the *immanent* Divine Presence (*Shechina*, from *shochein*, which indwells the worlds and corresponds to *memale kol almin*) and the *transcendent* aspect (*Kudsha Brich Hu*, "holy and separate," corresponding to *sovev kol almin*).

to *see*."[31] The Alter Rebbe reads this as the disclosure of an *inner* revelation — the pilgrim did not merely present himself; he beheld and was inwardly transformed by the manifest Presence.

וּכְתִיב פָּנַי הַיֵּינוּ בְּחִי' ממכ"ע וסוכ"ע בְּחִינַת יִחוּד קוב"ה וּשְׁכִי' נְתִיהּ

and it is written "Panai" (My face) — this is the aspect of memale kol almin and sovev kol almin, the aspect of the union of Kudsha Brich Hu and His Shechina — The verse speaks of appearing before *Panai / pnei Hashem* — the divine "face." The Alter Rebbe unpacks this as the revelation, together, of both dimensions of G-dliness: *memale kol almin*, the immanent light that fills and vivifies all worlds (the Shechina), and *sovev kol almin*, the transcendent encompassing light (Kudsha Brich Hu). In the Mikdash these two were *united* — the union of *Kudsha Brich Hu u'Shechintei* — so that the pilgrim experienced the transcendent within the immanent.[32]

וְעוֹד שֶׁכָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל לְפוּם שִׁיעוּרָא דִּילֵיהּ הָיָה מְקַבֵּל גִּילּוּי זֶה כְּשֶׁהָיוּ עוֹלִין לָרֶגֶל

and furthermore, each and every one of Yisroel, according to his own measure, would receive this revelation when they ascended for the festival — The gift was not uniform. Every Jew received the divine self-disclosure *l'fum shi'ura dilei* — calibrated to his own spiritual capacity.

שֶׁכּוּלָּן חַיָּיבִין בִּרְאִיָּה לְכָךְ נֶאֱמַר פְּנֵי הוי' לְשׁוֹן רַבִּים שֶׁלְּכָל אֶחָד הָיָה הַגִּילּוּי לְפִי עֶרְכּוֹ

for all are obligated in "appearing," therefore it is stated "the face of Havayah" in the plural form, since to each one the revelation was according to his level — Because the mitzvah of *re'iyah* obligated *every* Jew, the Torah uses the plural construct "*pnei* Hashem" ("the faces of Havayah") — hinting that the one revelation refracted into countless individual disclosures, each pilgrim receiving a different "face" fitted to his own level.

וְעִיקַּר הָרְאִיָּה הִיא ההשתחוואה שֶׁהָיָה משתחווה וְיוֹצֵא (אֶלָּא דִּכְתִיב וְלֹא יֵרָאוּ פָּנַי רֵיקָם)

and the essence of the "appearing" is the bowing, that one would bow and depart (except that it is written "and they shall not appear before Me empty-handed") — The very heart of the *re'iyah* was this *hishtachavaya* — the soul's absorption-bittul. So central was the bowing that, in a sense, one "bowed and departed"; the bowing *was* the point. (The Alter

Notes

[31] "*V'lo yera'u panai reikam*" (*Shemos* 34:20) and the Mishnaic derivation "*k'derech she'ba liros kach ba l'heiraos*" (*Chagigah* 2a) — the *re'iyah* is a reciprocal "seeing": one comes to see the Divine Presence just as he comes to be seen by it.

[32] *Memale kol almin / sovev kol almin* — the immanent light that pervades all worlds and the transcendent light that encompasses them; their union in the Mikdash is the *yichud Kudsha Brich Hu u'Shechintei*, the joining of the transcendent Groom and the immanent Bride.