מדרש
אותיות דרבי עקיבא

Osios D'Rabbi Akiva

The Letters of Rabbi Akiva
With Translation and Elucidation

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Osios D'Rabbi Akiva — The Letters of Rabbi Akiva

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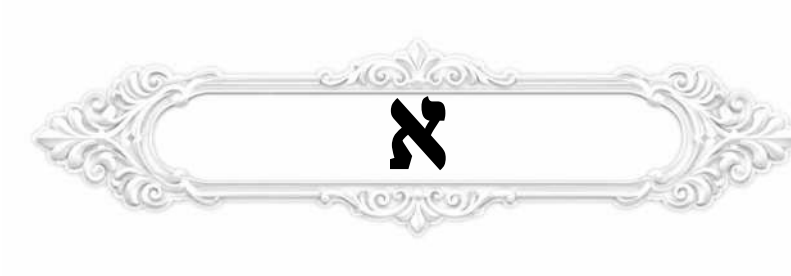
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Alef: Truth, Song and Faithfulness; the Holy One as First and Last; the Elevation of Metat

Summary

The Letter's Expositions. The Midrash opens the alef-beis by reading the name אל״ף as *notarikon* again and again. Forward and backward it spells אֱמֶת לַמֵּד פִּיךָ, "teach your mouth truth," the key to this world and the next, for the Holy One is called Truth. It spells אֶפְתַּח לְשׁוֹן פֶּה, "I shall open tongue and mouth": the world was created for the sake of song, and the mouth, likened at length to the sea and its waves, is the one limb fit to sing. The Holy One opens the mouth of Yisrael in Torah that they may praise Him. Further readings follow: Alef and Beis (Torah and the world) and Gimmel and Dalet (kindness and the poor) depend on one another. אֱמוּנָתִי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל פִּקָּדְתִּי: two "faithfulnesses" were entrusted at Sinai, one to Yisrael and one to Mashiach. אִמְרָתִי לְעַמִּי פָּאָרְתִּי: the Torah is a "good purchase" whose reward is the World to Come, and Shabbos is its likeness. אַצְתִּי לְפִעֹל פֶּלֶא opens a long chain of readings of *Iyov* 9:10. Alef as "thousand" yields the thousands of gates of wisdom opened to Moshe. Alef as the One who is "first and last" leads to a scene at the renewal of the world, where Metat, the *chayos* and Korach testify that there is none beside Him. A further exposition notes that Alef is written with one letter and read with three, matching the threefold praises of the One. The closing exposition reads אִבַּרְתִּיו לְקַחְתִּיו פִּקָּדְתִּיו, "I strengthened him, took him, appointed him," as referring to Metat.

Torah Basis. Chains of *u'minayin* proofs draw on *Tehillim* (19, 89, 92, 96, 98, 113, 148), *Yeshaya* (24:16, 25:1, 43:21, 55:11), *Mishlei* 8:30 and 21:20, *Iyov* 9:10, *Devarim* 32:39 and *Shemos* 23:21.

Aggadic Elaboration. The Midrash builds well beyond its verses. It sets out a cosmic choir of heaven, earth, seas, mountains and Adam HaRishon, and an extended simile of mouth and sea. Its courtroom at the end of days has the Holy One "arranging His own case" before all creatures, and the dead rise with their blemishes and only then are healed. It includes a list of seventy hidden Names borne in crowns of fire, and Heichalos material on Chanoch ben Yered transformed into Metat, his throne, his ninety-two names, his teaching of infants who died, and his revelation of the Name to Moshe over the protest of the heavenly hosts.

Thematic Significance. The first letter lays the foundations: the One who is Truth and Faithfulness, a world that exists for song and Torah, and a people whose praise below opens the song above.

א. אָמַר רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא, אָלֶף, מַהוּ אָלֶף — Rabbi Akiva said: Alef — what is Alef? The question asks for the root of the letter's name. אָלֶף is related to the Aramaic *alef*, "to teach" (as in *ulpana*, learning), and the Midrash unfolds that "teaching" as *notarikon* of the three letters א־ל־ף. **מְלַמֵּד שֶׁאָמְרָה תוֹרָה אֱמֶת לַמֵּד פִּיךָ כְּדֵי שֶׁתִּזָּכֶה לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה — It teaches that the Torah said: "Truth — teach your mouth," so that you may merit the life of this world.** The letters read forward: א׳מת ל׳מד

פ״ך. Perhaps the meaning is that one trains oneself in the trait of truth and teaches the mouth to guard it. The reward is a calm and settled life in this world, for people rely on the word of one who speaks the truth. פִּ״ךָ לַ׳מֵּד אֱ׳מֶת כְּדֵי שֶׁתִּזָּכֶה לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא — **"Your mouth — teach it truth," so that you may merit the life of the World to Come.** Read backward, the letters give פ״ך ל׳מד א׳מת. This second stage is far higher: one takes the mouth itself and trains it to become a vessel for truth, until truth is its whole path and way. Habit becomes nature, and the mouth itself has "learned truth." Such a person is the reverse of those of whom Yirmiya says that they "have taught their tongue to speak falsehood." Hence the reward is the World to Come. Be'er Moshe proposes a different reading of the letters: Alef as *ilem lamed picha*, "teach your mouth to be mute," after the Sages' teaching that one should make oneself mute in this world, though not in words of Torah. Hence the reversal, "your mouth, teach it truth," that is, the Torah; there one must not be silent. Avraham Azkor adds that the letter was first written אף, "anger." Seeing that the world could not endure through anger, the Holy One set a Lamed, *limud*, learning, in its midst. Learning sustains the world, but only learning that is truthful. The double reading, forward and back, teaches truth from the first word to the last. Liars, by contrast, begin with a little truth to win trust and then slip in falsehood.[1] מִפְּנֵי מָה, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא נִקְרָא אֱמֶת — **Why? Because the Holy One is called Truth.** One must walk in the ways of the Holy One and cleave to the Creator; to cleave to Him who is Truth is to make truth one's own. Perhaps the letters of אל״ף allude to what follows as well. Alef is the Holy One, who is One. Lamed points to His throne, as the second version of this Midrash expounds the letter Lamed. Pei points to His face (*panav*), before which kindness and truth go. וְכִסְאוֹ מֵאָז יוּשַׁב עָלָיו בֶּאֱמֶת, וּפָנָיו יְקַדְּמוּ חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת — **From of old, He has sat upon His throne in truth, and kindness and truth go before His face.** "From of old" borrows the language of the verse "Your throne is established from of old." That is, from before the world was created, as the Sages count the Throne of Glory among the things that preceded Creation. וְכָל דְּבָרָיו דִּבְרֵי אֱמֶת, וְכָל מִשְׁפָּטָיו מִשְׁפְּטֵי אֱמֶת, וְכָל אָרְחוֹתָיו חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת — **All His words are words of truth, all His judgments are judgments of truth, and all His paths are kindness and truth.** Six claims stand here: His Name, His throne, His face, His words, His judgments and His paths. Each will receive its proof-verse in the next paragraph.[2]

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1 *Yirmiya* 9:4; on habit becoming nature, cf. the notes to *Batei Midrashos*. *Chullin* 89a, on *Tehillim* 58:2. Eretz HaChaim on *Tehillim* 27; *Bereishis* 2:3. The New York manuscript lacks the reversed reading. The passage is quoted by the *Rokeach* (Bologna ed., 5a) and by the *Or Zarua* (I, Alpha Beta §1), "as taught in the Alpha Beta of Rabbi Akiva." The Mateh Moshe (Amud HaTorah 1) applies it to the small Alef: the penitent must speak the truth even when not asked, to make himself small (cf. Mishnah Shevi'is 10:8). Cf. the opening of the second version of this Midrash, where falsehood "has no legs"; cited from the beginning of Osios D'Rabbi Akiva in the Alter Rebbe's *Igros Kodesh*, note 40, alongside *Tikkunei Zohar* 22 (66a) (Zichron Aharon ed., notes (ב), (ג)).

2 *Tehillim* 93:2, "Your throne is established from of old"; *Nedarim* 39b. On the Holy One called Truth: *Shemos Rabbah* 38:4; cf. *Vayikra Rabbah* 6:6.

	פ	ל	א
"Truth — teach your mouth" *read backward: "Your mouth — teach it truth"*	פִּיךָ	לַמֵּד	אֱמֶת
"I shall open the tongue [and] mouth" *read backward: "the mouth [and] tongue I shall open"*	פֶּה	לְשׁוֹן	אֶפְתַּח
"My faithfulness I have entrusted to Yisrael" *read backward: "I have entrusted to Yisrael My faithfulness"*	פִּקַּדְתִּי	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	אֱמוּנָתִי
"My word I glorified for My people" *read backward: "and I glorified, for My people, My word"*	פְּאַרְתִּי	לְעַמִּי	אִמְרָתִי
"I hastened to work wonders"	פֶּלֶא	לִפְעֹל	אַצְתִּי

Five readings of Alef-Lamed-Pei. Most of them read both forward and backward.

וּמִנַּיִן שֶׁהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא נִקְרָא אֱמֶת, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ׳וַה׳ אֱלֹהִים אֱמֶת׳ — And from where do we know that the Holy One is called Truth? As it says, "But Hashem is Elokim of truth" (*Yirmiya* 10:10). The verse sets "truth" directly beside the Name, and the Midrash reads it as a Name in its own right. **וּמִנַּיִן שֶׁכִּסְאוֹ מֵאָז יוֹשֵׁב עָלָיו בֶּאֱמֶת, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ׳וְהוּכַן בַּחֶסֶד כִּסֵּא וְיָשַׁב עָלָיו בֶּאֱמֶת׳ — And from where do we know that He has sat upon His throne in truth from of old? As it says, "A throne shall be established in kindness, and He shall sit upon it in truth" (*Yeshaya* 16:5).** In its context the prophet speaks of a throne established "in the tent of Dovid." The Midrash lifts the phrase to the Throne of Glory itself. **וּמִנַּיִן שֶׁפָּנָיו יְקַדְּמוּ חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ׳צֶדֶק וּמִשְׁפָּט מְכוֹן כִּסְאֶךָ, חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת יְקַדְּמוּ פָנֶיךָ׳ — And from where do we know that kindness and truth go before His face? As it says, "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; kindness and truth go before Your face" (*Tehillim* 89:15).** **וּמִנַּיִן שֶׁדְּבָרָיו אֱמֶת, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ׳רֹאשׁ דְּבָרְךָ אֱמֶת׳ — And from where do we know that His words are truth? As it says, "The beginning of Your word is truth" (*Tehillim* 119:160).** **וּמִנַּיִן שֶׁמִּשְׁפָּטָיו אֱמֶת, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ׳מִשְׁפְּטֵי ה׳ אֱמֶת, צָדְקוּ יַחְדָּו׳ — And from where do we know that His judgments are truth? As it says, "The judgments of Hashem are truth; they are righteous altogether" (*Tehillim* 19:10).** **וְכָל אָרְחוֹתָיו חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ׳כָּל אָרְחוֹת ה׳ חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת׳ — And all His paths are kindness and truth, as it says, "All the paths of Hashem are kindness and truth" (*Tehillim* 25:10).** The chain closes as it began: kindness and truth surround His throne, go before His face, and mark every one of His ways.[3]

[3] The editor suggests reading here "And from where do we know that *all* His paths...", in line with the shorter version preserved by the *Or Zarua* (Zichron Aharon ed., note (ה)).

דָּבָר אַחֵר אָלֶ״ף, אֶפְתַּח לְשׁוֹן פֶּה. וּפֶה לְשׁוֹן אֶפְתַּח — **Another explanation: Alef — "I shall open the tongue [and] mouth," and "the mouth [and] tongue I shall open."** The letters spell א׳פתח ל׳שון פ׳ה, and again, reversed, פ׳ה ל׳שון א׳פתח. The *Pesher Davar* explains the doubling in two ways. In one, the second reading alludes to the song above, as the Midrash soon expounds "Majesty and splendor are before Him" as referring to the heavens. In the other, it follows the Sages' teaching that the ministering angels do not sing above until Yisrael sing below. Once "I shall open the tongue and mouth" is fulfilled below, "the mouth and tongue I shall open" is fulfilled above. For this reason the Midrash later places mankind before the angels. The order of the words fits as well. Below, the opening comes first: the Holy One opens people's mouths, and only then do they sing, as Dovid prays, "Hashem, open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Your praise." Above, the angels come to sing first, and only then does the Holy One open their mouths and grant them leave. אָמַר הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא, אֶפְתַּח לְשׁוֹן פֶּה שֶׁל כָּל בְּנֵי בָשָׂר וָדָם — **The Holy One said: I shall open the tongue and mouth of all creatures of flesh and blood.** It is the prayer "Hashem, open my lips" answered from Above: the power to praise Him is itself His gift. כְּדֵי שֶׁיִּהְיוּ מְקַלְסִין לְפָנַי בְּכָל יוֹם וּמַמְלִיכִין אוֹתִי בְּאַרְבַּע רוּחוֹת הָעוֹלָם — **So that they will extol Me every day and proclaim Me King in the four directions of the world.** שֶׁאִלְמָלֵא שִׁירָה וְזִמְרָה שֶׁהֵם אוֹמְרִים לְפָנַי בְּכָל יוֹם לֹא בָרָאתִי אֶת עוֹלָמִי — **For were it not for the song and melody that they sing before Me every day, I would not have created My world.** This is the thesis the following paragraphs will prove: the world exists for the sake of *shira*.[4]

וּמִנַּיִן שֶׁלֹּא בָרָא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת הָעוֹלָם אֶלָּא בִּשְׁבִיל שִׁירָה וְזִמְרָה — **And from where do we know that the Holy One created the world only for the sake of song and melody?** That is, so that His creatures would sing in praise and acclaim before Him, as the Midrash teaches: "This people I formed for Myself; they shall recount My praise." שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ״הוֹד וְהָדָר לְפָנָיו, עֹז וְתִפְאֶרֶת בְּמִקְדָּשׁוֹ״ — **As it says, "Majesty and splendor are before Him; might and beauty are in His Sanctuary" (*Tehillim* 96:6).** ״הוֹד וְהָדָר לְפָנָיו״ - בַּשָּׁמַיִם, ו״עֹז וְתִפְאֶרֶת בְּמִקְדָּשׁוֹ״ - בָּאָרֶץ — **"Majesty and splendor are before Him": in heaven; and "might and beauty are in His Sanctuary": on earth.** The two halves of the verse are bound together. The majesty above comes when there is might and beauty in His Sanctuary below, for song is not sung above until it is sung below. שָׁמַיִם (מכוסים) — **The heavens (are covered).** The sentence continues in the next paragraph, where the Midrash completes it with the verse from Chavakuk.[5]

[מְכַסִּים] הוֹדוֹ וּתְהִלָּתוֹ מָלְאָה הָאָרֶץ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ״כִּסָּה שָׁמַיִם הוֹדוֹ וּתְהִלָּתוֹ מָלְאָה הָאָרֶץ״ — **[The heavens] cover His majesty, and His praise fills the earth, as it says, "His**

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4 *Tehillim* 51:17, "Hashem, open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Your praise"; *Chullin* 91b. The *Or Zarua* (Alpha Beta §3) reads it, by an exchange of letters, as an allusion to Kedushah: one should lift the eyes on high and say Kedushah with a full mouth.

5 The printed text reads מכוסים, "are covered"; the editor marks it for deletion and supplies מְכַסִּים, "cover," at the head of the next paragraph, in accordance with the verse quoted there and with the *Or Zarua*, which has it correctly (Zichron Aharon ed., note (ח)).

majesty covers the heavens, and His praise fills the earth" (*Chavakuk* 3:3). The prophet's verse makes the same distinction as the psalm: *hod*, majesty, in heaven; praise, on earth. וּמִנַּיִן שֶׁבָּרָא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם לְעִנְיַן שִׁירָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ״הַשָּׁמַיִם מְסַפְּרִים כְּבוֹד אֵל״ — **And from where do we know that the Holy One created the heavens for the purpose of song? As it says, "The heavens recount the glory of Kel" (*Tehillim* 19:2).** He created the heavens so that they would sing and make melody before Him. וּמִנַּיִן שֶׁמִּיּוֹם שֶׁבָּרָא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת הָאָרֶץ אוֹמֶרֶת לְפָנָיו שִׁירָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ״מִכְּנַף הָאָרֶץ זְמִרֹת שָׁמַעְנוּ צְבִי לַצַּדִּיק״ — **And from where do we know that from the day the Holy One created the earth, it has sung before Him? As it says, "From the edge of the earth we have heard songs: splendor to the Righteous One" (*Yeshaya* 24:16).** *Kenaf*, literally "wing," is the edge of the earth; *tzvi* means splendor, as in "a crown of splendor" (*Yeshaya* 28:5). וְאֵין צַדִּיק אֶלָּא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ״צַדִּיק ה׳ בְּכָל דְּרָכָיו״ — **And "the Righteous One" is none other than the Holy One, as it says, "Hashem is righteous in all His ways" (*Tehillim* 145:17).** Identifying the "Righteous One" shows that the songs rising from the ends of the earth are addressed to the Creator Himself. וּמִנַּיִן שֶׁאַף יַמִּים וּנְהָרוֹת אוֹמְרִים שִׁירָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ״מִקֹּלוֹת מַיִם רַבִּים״ — **And from where do we know that even seas and rivers sing? As it says, "Above the voices of many waters" (*Tehillim* 93:4).** The same psalm names both: "the rivers have lifted up their voice" and "the breakers of the sea," so both join the voice of the many waters. וּמִנַּיִן שֶׁאַף הָרִים וּגְבָעוֹת אוֹמְרִים שִׁירָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ״הֶהָרִים וְכָל גְּבָעוֹת, עֵץ פְּרִי וְכָל אֲרָזִים. — **And from where do we know that even mountains and hills sing? As it says, "The mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars.** הַחַיָּה וְכָל בְּהֵמָה, רֶמֶשׂ וְצִפּוֹר כָּנָף. מַלְכֵי אֶרֶץ וְכָל לְאֻמִּים, שָׂרִים וְכָל שֹׁפְטֵי אָרֶץ. — **The beasts and all cattle, creeping things and winged birds; kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all judges of the earth.** בַּחוּרִים וְגַם בְּתוּלוֹת, זְקֵנִים עִם נְעָרִים. יְהַלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם ה׳ כִּי נִשְׂגָּב שְׁמוֹ לְבַדּוֹ״ — **Young men and also maidens, elders with youths. Let them praise the name of Hashem, for His name alone is exalted" (*Tehillim* 148:9–13).** The psalm itself gives all the creatures one verb: "let them praise." וּמִנַּיִן שֶׁכָּל סִדְרֵי בְּרֵאשִׁית אוֹמְרִים שִׁירָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ״מִמִּזְרַח שֶׁמֶשׁ עַד מְבוֹאוֹ וְגוֹמֵר״ — **And from where do we know that all the orders of Creation sing? As it says, "From the rising of the sun to its setting," etc. (*Tehillim* 113:3).** The verse ends "the name of Hashem is praised." Everything between east and west, the whole order of Creation, is included in that praise. וּמִנַּיִן שֶׁאַף אָדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן פָּתַח פִּיו בְּשִׁירָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ״מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר לְיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת טוֹב לְהֹדוֹת לַה׳, וּלְזַמֵּר לְשִׁמְךָ עֶלְיוֹן״ — **And from where do we know that even Adam HaRishon opened his mouth in song? As it says, "A psalm, a song for the Shabbos day. It is good to give thanks to Hashem, and to sing to Your name, Most High" (*Tehillim* 92:1–2).** The Sages teach that Adam HaRishon recited this psalm; the Midrash itself returns to the scene in paragraph 10. ״טוֹב לְהֹדוֹת לַה״ - בָּאָרֶץ, מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי אָדָם, ״וּלְזַמֵּר לְשִׁמְךָ עֶלְיוֹן״ - בִּשְׁמֵי מָרוֹם, בְּתוֹךְ מַלְאֲכֵי הַשָּׁרֵת — **"It is good to give thanks to Hashem": on earth, among human beings; "and to sing to Your name, Most High": in the heavens on high, among the ministering angels.** Adam names both choirs, mankind and the

angels, since all sing before the Holy One. Mankind is mentioned first because, as above, song below precedes song above.[6] דָּבָר אַחֵר אֶ׳פְתַּח לָ׳שׁוֹן פֶּ׳ה וּפֶ׳ה לָ׳שׁוֹן אֶ׳פְתַּח — **Another explanation: "I shall open the tongue [and] mouth," and "the mouth [and] tongue I shall open."** The *Pesher Davar* reads the doubling here in two ways. It may give the reason: why "I shall open" precisely the tongue and mouth? Because they are fit and ready to be opened in song. Or it may be a repetition that makes the point exclusive. The first reading teaches that mouth and tongue are fit to sing, and the second that no other limb is fit. שֶׁאֵין נָאֶה בְּמָאתַיִם [אַרְבָּעִים] וּשְׁמוֹנָה אֵבָרִים שֶׁבָּאָדָם לוֹמַר לְפָנָיו שִׁירָה אֶלָּא בְּפֶה וְלָשׁוֹן — **For among the two hundred [forty-]eight limbs of a person, none is fit to sing before Him except the mouth and tongue.** Mouth and tongue were made in any case for eating and breathing. The Almighty could have planted the power of speech in any other of the 248 limbs. He placed it in the mouth because the mouth resembles the sea and its waves, and the comparisons that follow explain the choice. Some of those comparisons concern good qualities, and others evil ones that issue from mouth and tongue. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ׳פִּי יְסַפֵּר צִדְקָתֶךָ׳ וְגוֹמֵר — **As it says, "My mouth shall recount Your righteousness," etc. (*Tehillim* 71:15).** שֶׁלֹּא נִמְשְׁלוּ פֶּה וְלָשׁוֹן אֶלָּא לַיָּם וּבְגַלָּיו — **For mouth and tongue are likened only to the sea and its waves.** Avraham Azkor brings the parable of a sick king whose physicians prescribed the milk of a doe. When a man finally brought it, each of his limbs boasted that it had made this possible: the eyes that saw the doe, the hands that caught her, the feet that went, the ears that heard where she was. Only the tongue was silent. Before the king the tongue said, "I have brought you dog's milk," and the king in his anger sought to kill the man. Then the tongue said, "Do not be angry; it is truly doe's milk; test it. I spoke so that all the limbs would know that I am king over them all." The tongue is king of the limbs, and it is fitting that the king should praise the great King. Since the mouth is likened to the sea, Yisrael's first song was sung at the sea. כְּשֵׁם שֶׁהַיָּם מַרְחִיב וּפוֹתֵחַ, כָּךְ הַפֶּה מַרְחִיב וּפוֹתֵחַ — **Just as the sea widens and opens, so the mouth widens and opens.** The sea does not diminish; it widens and makes room for itself. The mouth too opens far beyond its place, and in song this is a blessing, for it can widen and speak praises without end. כְּשֵׁם שֶׁהַיָּם מָלֵא מַרְגָּלִיּוֹת, כָּךְ הַפֶּה מָלֵא מַרְגָּלִיּוֹת שֶׁל עֲצָמוֹת — **Just as the sea is full of pearls, so the mouth is full of pearls of bone.** These are the teeth, gleaming like pearls. The Sages call them a wall of bone, and the Gemara speaks of a tooth as a "bone." כְּשֵׁם שֶׁהַיָּם מַבִּיעַ מַיִם, כָּךְ הַפֶּה מַבִּיעַ מַיִם — **Just as the sea pours forth water, so the mouth pours forth water.** *Mabia* means flowing forth like a spring, as in "let your waters well up." The mouth wells with moisture, and perhaps the abundance

[6] *Perek Shirah* ("The heavens say..., the earth says..., the seas and rivers say..."). On the earth's song: *Sanhedrin* 94a; *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 2:2. The New York manuscript omits *Yeshaya* 24:16. *Tehillim* 93:3, "the rivers have lifted up their voice." On Adam HaRishon and *Tehillim* 92: *Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer* 19; *Midrash Tehillim* 92; *Bereishis Rabbah* 22:13; *Vayikra Rabbah* 10:5; *Koheles Rabbah* 1:3; *Tanchuma Bereishis* 25; *Pesikta DeRav Kahana*, Shuvah 24; *Pesikta Rabbasi* 46; Avos DeRabbi Nassan A 1, B 45 (Zichron Aharon ed., notes (יג), (יב), (יא)–(ט)).

of water hints at the good that flows from a mouth that speaks songs and praises. כְּשֵׁם שֶׁגַּל מִתּוֹךְ הַיָּם מִתְגַּבֵּר וְעוֹלֶה, כָּךְ הַלָּשׁוֹן בְּתוֹךְ הַפֶּה מִתְגַּבֵּר וְעוֹלֶה — **Just as a wave surges and rises from within the sea, so the tongue surges and rises within the mouth.** So the wicked boast, "By our tongues we shall prevail." The verse speaks of evil, but the same power of the tongue can also be turned to good. כְּשֵׁם שֶׁהַיָּם מַטְבִּיעַ סְפִינָה בְּתוֹכוֹ, כָּךְ לָשׁוֹן מַרְשִׁיעַ אֶת הַבְּרִיאָה בְּדִבּוּר — **Just as the sea sinks a ship within it, so the tongue condemns a person by speech.** This happens when a person lacks merit. This capacity for harm explains further why the Holy One chose mouth and tongue for songs and praises: precisely because they are prone to evil as well, "this one opposite that one." The sea has fine qualities and harmful ones, and so does the mouth. The Holy One wanted the instrument of praise to carry both, so that the choice for good or for ill would be in a person's hands. One who guards the tongue from evil merits to use it for good. וּכְשֵׁם שֶׁהַיָּם מְצַפְצֵף, כָּךְ הַפֶּה מְצַפְצֵף — **Just as the sea shrieks, so the mouth shrieks.** The sea roars and thunders with its voice. וּכְשֵׁם שֶׁגַּל הַיָּם מַרְגִּישׁ, כָּךְ לָשׁוֹן מַרְגִּישׁ — **Just as the wave of the sea makes a tumult, so the tongue makes a tumult.** The sea gives forth the sound of a great multitude: Yeshaya compares the uproar of nations to "the roaring of the seas." It seems the tongue, by its speech, stirs crowds and gathers them in tumult for any cause, as in "we walked in a throng" (*be-ragesh*). כְּשֵׁם שֶׁגַּל הַיָּם מַסְעִיר בְּרוּחַ סְעָרָה, כָּךְ לָשׁוֹן שֶׁל אָדָם מַסְעִיר בְּרוּחַ עֲבֵירָה — **Just as the wave of the sea rages in a storm wind, so a person's tongue rages in a wind of sin.** It storms and clamors over a matter of transgression. כְּשֵׁם שֶׁהַיָּם פּוֹלֵט הַמַּיִם, כָּךְ הַפֶּה פּוֹלֵט מַיִם — **Just as the sea casts out the water, so the mouth casts out water.** כְּשֵׁם שֶׁגַּלֵּי הַיָּם הוֹרְגִין אֶת הַבְּרִיּוֹת, כָּךְ הַפֶּה וְלָשׁוֹן הָרַע הוֹרֵג אֶת הַבְּרִיּוֹת — **Just as the waves of the sea kill people, so the mouth and the evil tongue kill people.** The waves drag a person into the depths and he dies; evil speech destroys in the same way. וּכְשֵׁם שֶׁהַיָּם יֵשׁ לוֹ שָׂפָה מִזֶּה וּמִזֶּה, כָּךְ לָשׁוֹן יֵשׁ לוֹ שָׂפָה מִזֶּה וּמִזֶּה — **Just as the sea has a shore on this side and that, so the tongue has a lip on this side and that.** The comparison turns on the word *safah*, which means both "shore" and "lip." The sea is bounded by sand, "a perpetual boundary that it may not pass." The lips stand on either side of the tongue as a reminder to speak no evil. כְּשֵׁם שֶׁהַיָּם מַבְאִישׁ וּמַסְרִיחַ, כָּךְ הַפֶּה מַבְאִישׁ וּמַסְרִיחַ — **Just as the sea grows foul and reeks, so the mouth grows foul and reeks.** At times the waters of the sea become putrid and foul-smelling; at times the mouth does too. כְּשֵׁם שֶׁגַּל הַיָּם פְּעָמִים זוֹקֵף פְּעָמִים מֵטֶלֶת, כָּךְ לָשׁוֹן פְּעָמִים זוֹקֶפֶת וּפְעָמִים מֵטֶלֶת — **Just as the wave of the sea at times stands upright and at times lies flat, so the tongue at times stands upright and at times lies flat.** The wave sometimes stands and sometimes slants and lies down. The tongue does the same according to the sounds it forms: some raise it upright; others lay it flat. כְּשֵׁם שֶׁגַּל הַיָּם הַכֹּל מִתְיָרְאִין מִמֶּנּוּ, כָּךְ לְשׁוֹנוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם הַכֹּל מִתְיָרְאִין מִמֶּנּוּ — **Just as everyone fears the wave of the sea, so everyone fears a person's tongue.** Everyone fears the wave lest they drown, and everyone fears the tongue lest it speak evil of them. מַה הַיָּם לַסּוֹף מֵימָיו מִתְגָּרְשִׁים רֶפֶשׁ וָטִיט, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וַיִּגָּרְשׁוּ מֵימָיו רֶפֶשׁ וָטִיט׳ — **Just as at the end the sea's waters cast up mire and**

mud, as it says, "And its waters cast up mire and mud" (*Yeshaya* 57:20). At first the sea's waters are clear; in the end they churn up mire and mud. In Yeshaya the image describes the wicked, "like the troubled sea that cannot rest." כָּךְ הַפֶּה סוֹף דְּבָרָיו לְתֹהוּ וְהֶבֶל, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ״יַכְרֵת ה׳ כָּל שִׂפְתֵי חֲלָקוֹת׳ וְגוֹמֵר — **So the mouth: the end of its words is emptiness and vanity, as it says, "May Hashem cut off all smooth lips," etc. (*Tehillim* 12:4).** The words of one who speaks evil lead him, in the end, to emptiness and vanity. The simile closes where it began, with the choice between a mouth that sings and a mouth that destroys.[7] דָּבָר אַחֵר אֶ׳פְתַּח לְ׳שׁוֹן פֶּ׳ה וּפֶ׳ה לְ׳שׁוֹן אֶ׳פְתַּח — **Another explanation: "I shall open the tongue [and] mouth," and "the mouth [and] tongue I shall open."** Here the doubling is plain. "I open for you a mouth and tongue, so that you will open that mouth and tongue for Me," as in "Hashem, open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Your praise." אָמַר הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא, אֶפְתַּח לָהֶם לְיִשְׂרָאֵל פֶּה וְלָשׁוֹן בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה כְּדֵי שֶׁיְּשַׁבְּחוּ שְׁמִי בְּכָל יוֹם וָיוֹם — **The Holy One said: I shall open for Yisrael a mouth and tongue in words of Torah, so that they will praise My name each and every day.** He opens their mouths by teaching them laws and statutes. Through the Torah they learn to praise and glorify His name; or the Torah itself is the praise of the Omnipresent. שֶׁאִם אֵין יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּעוֹלָם אֵין לִי שֶׁבַח וּגְדֻלָּה — **For if there is no Yisrael in the world, I have no praise and greatness.** שֶׁאִלְמָלֵא שִׁירָה וְזִמְרָה שֶׁיִּשְׂרָאֵל אוֹמְרִים לְפָנַי בְּכָל יוֹם לֹא בָרָאתִי עוֹלָמִי — **For were it not for the song and melody that Yisrael sing before Me every day, I would not have created My world.** The general statement of paragraph 3, "all creatures of flesh and blood," is now focused on Yisrael. אֲפִלּוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁכָּל הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ נִבְרָא בִּשְׁבִילָן, לֹא בְרָאתִים אֶלָּא בִּשְׁבִיל שִׁירָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ״עַם זוּ יָצַרְתִּי לִי תְּהִלָּתִי יְסַפֵּרוּ׳ — **Even Yisrael, for whose sake the entire world was created — I created them only for the sake of song, as it says, "This people I formed for Myself; they shall recount My praise" (*Yeshaya* 43:21).** The Sages expound "In the beginning (*bereishis*) He created" as "for the sake of Yisrael," who are called *reishis*, "first." Yet even Yisrael, the purpose of Creation, have a purpose of their own: song.[8] דָּבָר אַחֵר אָלֶ״ף, אִם אֵין אָלֶ״ף אֵין בֵּי״ת, אִם אֵין בֵּי״ת אֵין אָלֶ״ף — **Another explanation: Alef — if there is no Alef, there is no Beis; if there is no Beis, there is no Alef.** The second version of this Midrash teaches that Creation opened with the letter Beis, "*Bereishis* He created," and the giving of the Torah opened with Alef, "*Anochi*, I am Hashem your Elokim." Alef and Beis stand side by side to teach that the two things they represent depend on each other, as the Midrash goes on to explain. Be'er Moshe reads the pair differently: Alef is the study of Torah and Beis is fear of Heaven.

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7 *Koheles* 7:14, "the one opposite the other He made." On the teeth: Erchin 15b; *Berachos* 5b with the *Aruch*. *Midrash Minyan* and Aggadas Olam Katan (*Beis HaMidrash* V, p. 59) lack "of bone," so the pearls would be words of wisdom, as in "a mouth that brought forth pearls" (*Kiddushin* 39b; noted in *Batei Midrashos*). *Taanis* 25b, with Rashi. *Tehillim* 12:5; *Yeshaya* 17:12; Rashi *Yoma* 24b; *Tehillim* 55:15. *Yirmiya* 5:22. On the lips and teeth as walls around the tongue: Erchin 15b; Avos DeRabbi Nassan, end of ch. 31; *Midrash Minyan* 18. The parable of the king: *Midrash Tehillim* 39:2 (Zichron Aharon ed., notes (כ)–(טו)).

8 *Tehillim* 51:17; *Bereishis* 1:1; cf. *Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer* 16.

Where there is no Torah there is no fear, and where there is no fear, even the Torah one has does not remain. אִם אֵין תּוֹרָה תְּמִימָה אֵין כָּל הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ מִתְקַיֵּם. אִם אֵין כָּל הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ מִתְקַיֵּם אֵין תּוֹרָה תְּמִימָה מִתְקַיֶּמֶת — **If there is no perfect Torah, the whole world cannot endure. If the whole world does not endure, the perfect Torah cannot endure.** Without the Torah the world cannot stand, as Hashem says, "If not for My covenant... I would not have set the laws of heaven and earth." The world itself was created for the sake of the Torah, so that there would be someone to fulfill it. Without a world, there is no one to keep the Torah. אִם אֵין גִּימֶ״ל אֵין דָּלֶ״ת, אִם אֵין דָּלֶ״ת אֵין גִּימֶ״ל — **If there is no Gimmel, there is no Dalet; if there is no Dalet, there is no Gimmel.** Gimmel alludes to the one who bestows kindness (*gomel*), and Dalet to the poor (*dal*), as the children's exposition in the Gemara reads the letters: "Gimmel Dalet, *gemol dalim*, be kind to the poor." אִם אֵין גְּמִילוּת חֲסָדִים אֵין דַּלִּים, אִם אֵין דַּלִּים בָּעוֹלָם אֵין גְּמִילוּת חֲסָדִים, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ׳חַסְדֵי ה׳ אַזְכִּיר׳ וְגוֹמֵר — **If there is no bestowing of kindness, there are no poor; if there are no poor in the world, there is no bestowing of kindness, as it says, "I will recall the kindnesses of Hashem," etc. (*Yeshaya* 63:7).** The Holy One created the poor only for the sake of kindness, so that the rich would sustain them and earn through them the life of the World to Come. Had there been no mitzvah of kindness in the Torah, the poor would not have been created. The Midrash teaches this in its account of Dovid's plea that the world be made equal. The Holy One answered: if I make My world equal, who will practice kindness and truth? Conversely, only once there are poor is there kindness in the world, and through the kindness they occasion, the world endures. There is a further hint: the kindness the Holy One Himself brings into the world comes in the merit of the poor. His goodness is that He bestows kindness on the poor, and through them kindness is drawn down from Above to the whole world. The verse fits: we recall His kindness to us in exile, when we were poor. The prophecy continues "in all their affliction He was afflicted," and it speaks also of the kindness He will show the poor of Yisrael at the end of days for what they suffered in this world. וּמִנַּיִן שֶׁיִּשְׂרָאֵל נִקְרָאוּ דַּלִּים, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ׳אַתָּה עַם עָנִי תוֹשִׁיעַ׳ — **And from where do we know that Yisrael are called poor? As it says, "You save a poor people" (*Tehillim* 18:28).** ׳וְעֵינַיִם רָמוֹת תַּשְׁפִּיל׳, אֵלּוּ אֻמּוֹת הָעוֹלָם — **"And haughty eyes You bring low": these are the nations of the world.** Having cited the verse, the Midrash expounds its continuation as well. The nations, whose eyes are lifted high in this world, are destined to be brought low in the World to Come.[9]

דָּבָר אַחֵר אָלֶ״ף, אָמַר הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא אֱמוּנָתִי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל פִּקָּדְתִּי, וּפִ׳קָּדְתִּי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֱמוּנָתִי — **Another explanation: Alef — the Holy One said: "My faithfulness I have entrusted to Yisrael," and "I have entrusted to Yisrael My faithfulness."** The letters spell א׳מונתי ל׳ישראל פ׳קדתי, and reversed, פ׳קדתי ל׳ישראל א׳מונתי. *Emunah* here is truth, so the letter returns to its first theme. The doubling anticipates the two "faithfulnesses" that the next paragraph will describe, one entrusted to

[9] *Bereishis* 1:1; *Shemos* 20:2. *Yirmiya* 33:25. *Shabbos* 104a; *Shemos Rabbah* 31:2, on *Tehillim* 61:8.

Yisrael and one to Mashiach. To "entrust" is to give them the Torah to study diligently and guard. אֵין אֱמוּנָתִי אֶלָּא תּוֹרָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ״וָאֶהְיֶה אֶצְלוֹ אָמוֹן״ — **"My faithfulness" is none other than the Torah, as it says, "And I was beside Him as a nursling (*amon*)" (*Mishlei* 8:30).** In Mishlei the Torah speaks of itself as His *amon*. The Midrash hears in *amon* the root of *emunah*: the whole Torah is the truth of the Holy One. וּמִנַּיִן שֶׁהִפְקִיד הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא אֱמוּנָתוֹ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ״זָכַר חַסְדּוֹ וֶאֱמוּנָתוֹ לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל״ — **And from where do we know that the Holy One entrusted His faithfulness to Yisrael? As it says, "He remembered His kindness and His faithfulness to the house of Yisrael" (*Tehillim* 98:3).** The verse places His *emunah*, the Torah, "with the house of Yisrael," and the Midrash reads it as a deposit placed in their keeping.

וְהָיוּ כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל פּוֹתְחִים אֶת פִּיהֶם וְאוֹמְרִים שִׁירָה לִפְנֵי הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא בְּאוֹתָהּ שָׁעָה — **And all Yisrael opened their mouths and sang a song before the Holy One at that hour.** "That hour" is the moment they received the Torah, when the Holy One placed His faithfulness in their care (Paragraph 6). The verse that follows is the song itself. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ״ה׳ אֱלֹהַי אַתָּה אֲרוֹמְמְךָ אוֹדֶה שִׁמְךָ, כִּי עָשִׂיתָ פֶּלֶא, עֵצוֹת מֵרָחֹק אֱמוּנָה אֹמֶן׳׳ — **As it says, "Hashem, You are my Elokim; I will exalt You, I will praise Your Name, for You have done wonders, counsels from afar, faithfulness and steadfastness"** (*Yeshaya* 25:1). In its plain sense the closing phrase *emunah omen* means "steadfast faithfulness." The Midrash hears two separate words of faith in it. אִם נֶאֱמַר ׳אֹמֶן׳, לָמָּה נֶאֱמַר ״אֱמוּנָה״, וְאִם נֶאֱמַר ״אֱמוּנָה״ לָמָּה נֶאֱמַר ׳אָמֵן׳ — **If it says "omen," why does it say "emunah"; and if it says "emunah," why does it say "amen"?** Both words come from the same root, so the verse seems to say the same thing twice. Each word must therefore teach something of its own. אֶלָּא מְלַמֵּד שֶׁשָּׁתַּי אֱמוּנוֹת הִפְקִיד הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַל הַר סִינַי, אַחַת לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְאַחַת לַמָּשִׁיחַ — **Rather, it teaches that the Holy One deposited two faithfulnesses with Yisrael at Mount Sinai: one for Yisrael and one for Moshiach.** *Emunah* here means truth, the Torah itself. The division does not mean that one portion belongs to Yisrael alone and the other to Moshiach alone. Yisrael heard one portion from the mouth of the Holy One in this world. The other is kept for the future: Moshiach will learn the secrets of the Torah, never revealed in this world, from the Holy One, and will teach them to Yisrael. אַחַת לְיִשְׂרָאֵל מִנַּיִן, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ״זָכַר חַסְדּוֹ וֶאֱמוּנָתוֹ לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל״ — **The one for Yisrael, from where do we know it? As it says, "He remembered His kindness and His faithfulness to the House of Yisrael"** (*Tehillim* 98:3). This is the same verse that proved, in the previous paragraph, that the Holy One deposited His faithfulness with Yisrael. וְאַחַת לַמָּשִׁיחַ מִנַּיִן, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ״וְהָיָה צֶדֶק אֵזוֹר מָתְנָיו, וְהָאֱמוּנָה אֵזוֹר חֲלָצָיו׳׳ — **And the one for Moshiach, from where do we know it? As it says, "Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his waist"** (*Yeshaya* 11:5). The chapter

describes the shoot from the stem of Yishai, the king Moshiach. The faithfulness he wears like a belt is the second deposit, the hidden Torah he will reveal.[10]

דָּבָר אַחֵר אָלֶ״ף, אָמַר הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא אִ׳מְרָתִי לְ׳עַמִּי פֵּ׳אַרְתִּי — Another explanation of Alef: the Holy One said, "My word I glorified for My people." Here the *notarikon* reads א as אִמְרָתִי (*imrasi*, "My word"), ל as לְעַמִּי (*le'ami*, "for My people"), and פ as פֵּאַרְתִּי (*pe'arti*, "I glorified"). Through the Torah He gave them, which is His own glory and splendor, the Holy One gave Yisrael glory and splendor. **וּפֵ׳אַרְתִּי לְ׳עַמִּי אִ׳מְרָתִי — "and I glorified, for My people, My word."** These are the same three letters read in reverse. As with the two faithfulnesses above, the doubled reading points to two acts of giving. One came in this world at the giving of the Torah. The other will come in the future, when the Holy One reveals the secrets of the Torah through Moshiach. Be'er Moshe offers additional readings. First, Yisrael are the ones in whom the Holy One glories. Or: Alef stands for *Anochi le'ami pe'er*, "Anochi is a glory for My people," because the first of the Ten Commandments ties His Name to Yisrael alone. Or: אֶשְׁלַח לְעַמִּי פְּדוּת, "I will send redemption to My people," when "your mouth teaches truth," since redemption comes through guarding the tongue.[11] **וְאֵין אִמְרָתִי אֶלָּא תּוֹרָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ״יַעֲרֹף כַּמָּטָר לִקְחִי תִּזַּל כַּטַּל אִמְרָתִי״ — And "My word" means nothing other than Torah, as it says, "My teaching shall drop as the rain, My word shall distill as the dew"** (*Devarim* 32:2). In the verse "My word" stands parallel to "My teaching." The next step shows that "My teaching" is Torah. **וְאֵין לִקְחִי אֶלָּא תּוֹרָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ״כִּי לֶקַח טוֹב נָתַתִּי לָכֶם, תּוֹרָתִי אַל תַּעֲזֹבוּ״ — And "My teaching" means nothing other than Torah, as it says, "For I have given you good teaching; do not forsake My Torah"** (*Mishlei* 4:2). Here *lekach*, "teaching," is set beside "My Torah." So *imrasi*, by way of *likchi*, is shown to be Torah.

וּמַהוּ ״אַל תַּעֲזֹבוּ״ — And what is meant by "do not forsake"? The verse had already said "I have given you good teaching." "Do not forsake" sounds like advice for the people's own good, so it must hint at some benefit that keeping the Torah will bring them. The Midrash now explains what that benefit is. **מְלַמֵּד שֶׁבְּשָׁעַת מַתַּן תּוֹרָה קָרָא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַר לָהֶם, בָּנַי, מֶקַח טוֹב יֵשׁ לִי בָּעוֹלָם וַאֲנִי נוֹתֵן אוֹתָהּ לָכֶם לָעַד לְעוֹלָם — It teaches that when the Torah was given, the Holy One called to Yisrael and said to them: "My children, I have a good acquisition in the world, and I give it to you forever and ever,"**[12] **אִם תְּקַבְּלוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתִי וְתִשְׁמְרוּ אֶת מִצְוֹתַי — "if you accept My Torah and keep My commandments."** The gift depends on not forsaking the Torah. **מְשִׁיבִין וְאוֹמְרִים לְפָנָיו, רִבּוֹנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, אֵיזֶהוּ מֶקַח טוֹב שֶׁאַתָּה נוֹתֵן לָנוּ אִם נִשְׁמֹר אֶת תּוֹרָתֶךָ — They answer and say before Him: "Master of the world, what is the good acquisition that You give us if we keep Your Torah?"** **מֵשִׁיב הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא וְאָמַר לָהֶם, זֶה הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא — The Holy One**

[10] On the Torah that Moshiach will reveal, see *Yeshaya* 51:4: "For Torah shall go forth from Me." This Midrash develops the theme in Nusach Gimmel, ch. 22.

[11] *Yeshaya* 49:3: "Yisrael, in whom I glory"; *Shemos* 20:2: "I (*Anochi*) am Hashem your Elokim."

[12] The verse's *lekach tov*, "good teaching," reappears in the Holy One's words as *mekach tov*, "a good acquisition."

answers and says to them: "It is the World to Come." מְשִׁיבִין יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאוֹמְרִים, **Yisrael answer and say: "Master of the world, show us a sample of the World to Come."** רִבּוֹנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, הַרְאֵנוּ דֻּגְמָא שֶׁל עוֹלָם הַבָּא מֵשִׁיב הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא **The Holy One answers and says to them: "It is Shabbos, which is one-sixtieth of the World to Come, which is entirely Shabbos."** The weekly Shabbos is a small taste of the World to Come, given here and now. וְאָמַר לָהֶם, זֶה שַׁבָּת, שֶׁהוּא אֶחָד מִשִּׁשִּׁים שֶׁל עוֹלָם הַבָּא שֶׁכֻּלּוֹ שַׁבָּת **As it says, "Remember the Shabbos day"** (*Shemos* 20:8). This verse does not yet prove that the World to Come is entirely Shabbos; the next paragraph brings a separate verse for that. It shows that at the giving of the Torah the Holy One told them to *remember* Shabbos. Of all the Ten Commandments, only Shabbos is introduced with the language of remembering. Through Shabbos they were to remember and take to heart what they would one day merit. Another view reads "*the* Shabbos day," with the definite article, as the Shabbos of the time to come that they will merit.[13] שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר זָכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת׳

And from where do we know that the World to Come is entirely Shabbos? As it says, "A psalm, a song for the Shabbos day" (*Tehillim* 92:1), **for the day that is entirely Shabbos.** The Psalm is recited for the day when the world will lie desolate, with no human inhabitants and all labor at an end. The song of Shabbos is sung for that day. וּמְנַיִן שֶׁעוֹלָם הַבָּא כֻּלּוֹ שַׁבָּת, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ׳מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר לְיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת׳, לְיוֹם שֶׁכֻּלּוֹ שַׁבָּת

For as soon as Adam HaRishon saw the Shabbos, he opened his mouth in praise of the Holy One[14] שֶׁכֵּיוָן שֶׁרָאָה אָדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת פָּתַח אֶת פִּיו בְּשִׁבְחוֹ שֶׁל הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא **and said: "A psalm, a song for the Shabbos day. It is good to give thanks to Hashem and to sing to Your Name, Most High"** (*Tehillim* 92:1–2).[15] וְאָמַר ׳מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר לְיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת. טוֹב לְהֹדוֹת לַה׳ וּלְזַמֵּר לְשִׁמְךָ עֶלְיוֹן׳

At that hour the ministering angels descend in company after company from the heavens[16] בְּאוֹתָהּ שָׁעָה מַלְאֲכֵי הַשָּׁרֵת יוֹרְדִין כִּתּוֹת כִּתּוֹת מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם **(and they say "Good," and so too the heavens),**[17] (וְאוֹמְרִים טוֹב וְכֵן הַשָּׁמַיִם) **some of them holding lyres and pipes in their hands,** מִקְצָתָן הָיוּ אוֹחֲזִים בִּידֵיהֶם כִּנּוֹרוֹת וְעוּגָבוֹת **and some of them with harps and cymbals and every instrument of song in their hands,** וּמִקְצָתָן הָיוּ בִּידֵיהֶם נְבָלִים וּמְצִלְתַּיִם וְכָל כְּלֵי שִׁיר **and they play before Him in song,** וּמְנַגְּנִין לְפָנָיו בְּשִׁיר, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר ׳וּלְזַמֵּר לְשִׁמְךָ עֶלְיוֹן׳

[13] *Berachos* 57b (Shabbos is one-sixtieth of the World to Come).

[14] The Sages teach that Adam HaRishon composed this Psalm, as the Midrash already said above (Paragraph 5). His first Shabbos showed him a likeness of the world that is entirely rest, and he burst into song.

[15] *Rosh Hashana* 31a and Rashi there; *Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer*, ch. 19; *Bereishis Rabbah* 22:13; *Midrash Tehillim* (*Shocher Tov*) 92.

[16] The angels enter because the second half of the verse speaks of them. The Midrash has already read "to give thanks to Hashem" as the praise on earth among human beings, and "to sing to Your Name, Most High" as the song in the heavens among the ministering angels (Paragraph 5). It relies on that reading here.

[17] The text is elliptical here. These words seem to echo the verse's "It is good," but the editor marks them as doubtful.