

כל המאריך באחד תר"ץ

ONENESS IN CREATION

a chasidic discourse by
Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn

זצוק"לה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע
of Lubavitch

•

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CREATION**

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CONTENTS

preface

7

portrait of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak

9

manuscript of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak

10

introduction

13

translation and commentary

18

appendix

51

PREFACE

We are pleased to present *Oneness in Creation*, as part of the much acclaimed Chasidic Heritage Series.

In 5689 (1929), Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, of blessed memory, who was then based in Riga, Latvia, visited the United States of America. He spent ten months on American soil, traveling from New York to as far west as S. Louis, stopping along the way at cities with large Jewish populations.

One of these cities was Chicago. Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak held Chicago dear, as it was home to quite a large number of Chabad-Lubavitch Chasidim. It was here, in the spring of 5690 (1930), that the present discourse, beginning with the Hebrew words *Kol Hamaarich B'Echad*, was originally delivered.¹

* * *

Oneness in Creation examines the most fundamental of prayers—the twice-daily recited *Shema*. In the *Shema*, we proclaim *Havaya Echad*—“G-d is One.” G-d’s Oneness, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak explains in the discourse, is not a transcendent Singularity, separate and distinct from creation, but an immanent Harmony with all of existence. G-d is One with creation, with nature, with every living being, because G-dliness is the true life-force of everything. All of existence, at its core, is but a unique manifestation of Divinity.

Knowing this, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak says, one will recognize that ultimately it is G-d Who charts the course of man’s life and Who provides man’s sustenance. One will then view his pursuit of a livelihood in an entirely new light, con-

1. The discourse was originally published in Hebrew in honor of 12-13 Tammuz 5690 (1930), Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak’s birthday and the anniversary of his release from Soviet imprisonment. It was subsequently published in *Sefer Hamaamarim Kuntresim*, vol. 1, p. 102a ff.

ducting his business affairs in consonance with Torah's high standards.

This, continues Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, is the purpose of the soul's descent into the physical world: to reveal G-d's quintessential Oneness in all of creation, by learning Torah, fulfilling the *mitzvot*, and conducting one's material pursuits in the proper manner. This is a task incumbent upon every person, no matter where he may be. Hence, the word *Echad* is comprised of three letters: the *aleph* (the numerical value of one), symbolizing G-d; the *chet* (eight), signifying the soul's descent from on High down through the metaphysical seven heavens and into this world; and the *dalet* (four), indicating the soul's task to reveal G-d's Oneness throughout the four corners of the world.

* * *

As is the trademark of the Chasidic Heritage Series, *Oneness in Creation* is entirely reader-friendly, featuring a new, lucid translation of the text, as well as numerous explanatory notes and commentary. The original Hebrew text also appears on facing pages, newly typeset and vocalized.

To help the reader understand the unique significance of the discourse and of the Chicago visit, we have included: a) a brief historical sketch of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's delivery of the discourse, as an introduction; b) an open letter to the Jewish community of Chicago written by Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, that originally appeared in the *Chicago Daily Jewish Courier* on May 9, 1930, in which Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak expresses his impressions of the visit, and blesses the entire community. The letter appears here as an appendix.

The discourse was translated by Rabbi Y. Eliezer Danzinger. Rabbis Avraham D. Vaisfiche and Ari Sollish added the annotation and commentary. Special thanks are due to Rabbis Dovid Olidort and Yosef B. Friedman for their editorial guidance.

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Rosh Chodesh Sivan 5764

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION
HISTORICAL SKETCH

Chicago, Nissan 5690 (1930).

The sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, of righteous memory, had just completed an eleven-week visit to Chicago, during his ten-month stay in the United States. Having arrived in New York in Elul 5689 (1929), Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's itinerary included visits to several major cities, among them Philadelphia, Milwaukee, Detroit, S. Louis and Boston.

The purpose of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's trip was two-fold: firstly, he wished to create public awareness about the dire situation of Russian Jewry at the time; secondly, he wished to bolster and encourage *Yiddishkeit* in America.¹

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's itinerary also included a visit to Washington, where he was to be received by President Herbert Hoover in the White House. Here, he would thank the President for the religious freedom provided by the United States and for the government's interest in the well-being of Jewish communities abroad.

In those days, Chicago was home to a large number of Lubavitch Chasidim. The Chasidim established several Lubavitch *shuls*, including *Anshe Lubawitz*, *Beit Hakneset Tzemach Tzedek*, *Shaarei Tfila B'nai Reuven* and *Shaarei Tfila Nusach Ari*. These *shuls* hosted Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's public gatherings, where hundreds and sometimes thousands of people streamed to hear his words of Torah and inspiration.

During his stay in Chicago, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak delivered eleven Chasidic discourses. The *maamar* presented

1. See Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's *Igrot Kodesh*, vol. 11 p. 109. For an overview of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's visit to the United States (and the Holy Land), see *Sefer Hasichot 5688-5691*, Introduction, p. 41.

here, *Oneness in Creation*, is the final discourse delivered in Chicago, and begins with the words *Kol Hamaarich B'echad*. It was delivered at a "gathering of Chasidim, *Anshei Chabad*, in the City of Chicago, at *Beit Hakneset Lubavitch, Motzaei Shabbat Kodesh Shemini*, 28 Nissan 5690 (1930)."²

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak departed for Detroit the next morning, Sunday, *Erev Rosh Chodesh Iyar*. In a letter dated that day, from Detroit, he writes:

"...Shabbat-day I was introspective, thoughtful. I was to deliver a Chasidic discourse, say farewell, and share some words that would be remembered. Then I was to speak to a few people individually. This would be quite a task.

"At the close of Shabbat the Chasidim gathered at the Lubavitch *shul*. I arrived at nine o'clock, and delivered a Chasidic discourse entitled *Kol Hamaarich B'echad Maarichin Lo Yamav Ush'notav*. It took a half-hour or forty minutes, and the crowd was, thank G-d, large and attentive...

"Afterwards, I spoke for about fifteen minutes, sharing some heartfelt words. For seven minutes (I watched the clock—in every *shul* there is a large clock on the wall), I spoke of how small and low a human being can be... and how the teachings of Chasidus guide man in how to rid himself of all negative traits, and how to implant in their stead good traits, good deeds, compassion, and a pleasant disposition.

"In conclusion, I instructed that: 1) In every Chasidic *shul*, every day—weekday Shabbat and festival—*Tehillim* should be recited, as it is divided according to the days of the month. This should be followed by the recital of *Kaddish*. Other *shuls* are encouraged to adopt this custom as well. 2) Whoever considers himself part of the Chasidic community should study a portion of *Chumash* with *Rashi* every day."

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak then describes how he addressed the en-

2. This is the text at the title of the discourse.

tire crowd, and in particular the young people, those already married and those preparing to start a family. He urged them to strengthen their commitment to Torah and *mitzvot* with the following words:

“...When one travels on a journey, he purchases a ticket which will take him to the station of his destination, and not further. We too have stations! ‘Station *tefillin*,’ ‘station kosher,’ ‘station Shabbat,’ ‘station family sanctity.’

“To which station are *you* traveling? You don’t don *tefillin*, you don’t keep Shabbat, you don’t eat kosher [food], you don’t practice family sanctity! Until where do you expect to travel like this? You must know where you are and what will be the result of this. I appeal to you to form organizations, in which you will organize yourselves to uphold certain principles. I call upon you, and through you to all the youth of Chicago—establish yourself firmly and take the future of your family life in your hand, and you will be blissful.”

[I concluded with] a heartfelt blessing to the crowd...: “Be well, and may we meet in good health with Moshiach in the Land of Israel!”

[One of the people responded:] “Have a safe journey and succeed! We are not parting from you. Your visit here will always remain fresh and warm with the good, warm fresh air that you brought to Chicago!”

It was a warm farewell—the entire *shul* and gallery were packed, and the atmosphere was filled with friendliness, a sweet and dignified love.

As I descended from the *bimah*, from all sides of the *shul* and gallery the crowd called out, “Have a safe, successful journey!”

The street was full; the police were in formation, as a huge crowd waited on the street. It was well-lit, and as I stood on the steps of the *shul* I could see the immense crowd. I said, “Be well and be successful in everything!”

I arrived back at my residence at 10:30....

Thus ends Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak’s account of his departure

from Chicago, the conclusion of a truly memorable and inspirational visit. His words have reverberated now for three-quarters of a century, touching countless lives, drawing untold Jews closer to their heritage—in Chicago, and around the world.



NOTE ON THE HEBREW TEXT: In vocalizing the Hebrew words in this edition we have followed the grammatical rules of the Holy Tongue, which occasionally differ from the traditional or colloquial pronunciation.

TRANSLATION
AND
COMMENTARY

Our Rabbis taught: *Hear, O Israel, the L-rd is our G-d, the L-rd is One*. Until here, concentration of the heart is required. These are the words of R. Meir. Rava said: The law accords with R. Meir.

Sumchos said: "Whoever prolongs [the pronunciation of the word] *Echad* (One) [in order to have proper intent] has his days and years prolonged."

Rav Acha bar Yaakov said: And that [letter of *Echad* requiring prolongation] is the *dalet*. Rav Ashi said: Provided that he does not hurry the [pronunciation of the letter] *chet*.

(*Brachot* 13b)

תָּנוּ רַבָּנָן: שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד, עַד
כָּאן צְרִיכָה כְּוֹנֵנַת הַלֵּב, דְּבַרֵי רַבִּי מֵאִיר. אָמַר
רַבָּא הִלְכָה כְּרַבִּי מֵאִיר.

תְּנִיא, סוּמְכוּס אֹמֵר: כָּל הַמְּאָרִיף בְּאֶחָד
מְאָרִיכִין לוֹ יָמָיו וְשָׁנוֹתָיו.

אָמַר רַבִּי אַחָא בְּרַ יַעֲקֹב, וּבְדִלִית. אָמַר רַב
אֲשִׁי, וּבִלְבָד שְׁלֵא יַחֲטוּף בַּחִית.

(ברכות יג:)

With the help of Heaven.
 Gathering of Chasidim, *Anshei Chabad*, in the City of Chicago,
 at *Beit Hakneset Lubavitch*.
Motzaei Shabbat Kodesh Shemini, 28 Nissan, 5690 (1930).

Whoever prolongs the [pronunciation of the word]
Echad (One)¹ has his days and years prolonged.
 Rav Acha bar Yaakov said: And that [letter of *Echad*
 requiring prolongation] is the [letter] *dalet*. Rav Ashi
 said: Provided that he does not hurry the [pro-
 nunciation of the letter] *chet* (*Brachot* 13b).

The underlying idea of stretching out the pronunciation of the word *Echad* needs explanation, as does the reason why one's years and days are prolonged as a result.

Now, the word *Echad* is comprised of three letters—*alef*, *chet*, *dalet*, and we are to protract the enunciation of the *dalet*, providing we do not hasten our pronunciation of the *chet*. We need to clarify the idea of stretching out the *dalet*, and Rav Ashi's caveat not to slur the letter *chet*, from which it is understood that the protraction of the *dalet* must not be at the expense of shortening the *chet*.

THE BERAITA

The teaching of *Whoever prolongs the Echad...* comes in continuation to the following *Beraita*:²

*Hear, O Israel, Havaya*³ *is our G-d, Havaya is One.*⁴ Until here [i.e., until the end of the first verse of *Shema*], concentration of the heart is required. These are the words of R. Meir. Rava said: The law accords with R. Meir.⁵

1. This refers to the last word of the verse *Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad* (Hear O Israel, the L-rd is our G-d, the L-rd is One), recited twice daily in our prayers. The idea of prolonging the word *Echad* is to assist in one's concentration.

2. BERAITA. Collection of laws and expositions compiled or originated by the Sages following the completion of the *Mishnah*. These Sages include R. Chiya, R. Oshiya, R. Elazar ben Yaakov, R. Yishmael and R. Akiva.

The word *Beraita* is derived from

**בס"ד. אסיפת אגודת חסידים אנשי חב"ד
בעי"ת טשיקאגא בבהכנ"ס ליובאוויטש.
מוצש"ק שמיני כ"ח ניסן. תר צדיק.**

כָּל הַמְאָרִיף בְּאֶחָד מֵאֲרִיכִין לוֹ יָמָיו וּשְׁנוֹתָיו. אָמַר רַבִּי
אָחָא בְרַי יַעֲקֹב וּבְדִ' דְהָאֲרִיכוֹת בְּאֶחָד צְרִיכָה לְהֵיטִיב
בְּהַדְלִית, אָמַר רַב אֲשִׁי וּבִלְבָד שְׁלֵא יַחְטוּף בְּחֵית, (בְּרִכוֹת
י"ג ב').

וְצָרִיף לְהַבִּין מֵהוּ עֲנִין הָאֲרִיכוֹת בְּאֶחָד, וּמֵהוּ אֲרִיכוֹת
יָמִים וְשָׁנִים דְּמִי שְׁהוּא מֵאֲרִיף בְּאֶחָד מֵאֲרִיכִין לוֹ יָמָיו
וּשְׁנוֹתָיו.

דְּהֵנָּה תִּיבֵת אֶחָד הוּא בֵּת ג' אוֹתִיּוֹת, אִח'ד', וְהָאֲרִיכוֹת
הוּא בְּהַד' וּבִלְבָד שְׁלֵא יַחְטוּף גַּם אֶת הַח', וְצָרִיף לְהַבִּין מֵהוּ
הָאֲרִיכוֹת בְּהַד' וְאִזְהָרְתוּ שֶׁל רַב אֲשִׁי שְׁלֵא יַחְטוּף אֶת הַחֵית.
דְּמַכְל זֶה מוֹכֵן דְּהָאֲרִיכוֹת בְּהַד' הוּא דוֹקָא כְּשֶׁאִינוּ חוֹטְפִין אֶת
הַח'.

וְהֵנָּה מֵאָמַר זֶה דְּכָל הַמְאָרִיף בְּאֶחָד הוּא הַמְשָׁף
הַבְּרִייתָא

דְּתַנּוּ רַבָּנָן שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל הוּי' אֱלֹהֵינוּ הוּי' אֶחָד עַד כְּאֵן
צְרִיכִים כְּוֹנֵת הַלֵּב דְּכַרִּי רַבִּי מֵאִיר, אָמַר רַבָּא וְהִלְכָה כְּרַבִּי
מֵאִיר.

the Aramaic word *bara*, meaning "outside," implying that they were taught by the *Tannaim* outside of the study hall of R. Yehuda Hanassi—the redactor of the *Mishnah*.

3. The colloquial form of The In-

effable Divine Name, or Tetragrammaton, composed of the four letters Y-H-V-H.

4. Deuteronomy 6:4.

5. *Brachot*, *ibid*.

To summarize: The *Beraita* teach-

TWO CONCENTRATIONS

There are two types of concentration: concentration of the mind and concentration of the heart. Mental concentration entails intellectual comprehension—exerting one’s mind to understand and grasp a concept until one has it firmly pinned down and understands it in all of its details. Concentration of the heart means bringing one’s clear understanding of the concept from its abstract plane to an applied one, with the cultivation of fine character traits.⁶

Initially, a person should direct his efforts to unearth any personality trait that is not good—and certainly any that is loathsome—and then to uproot the trait thoroughly. Anything improper, whether in his relationship with people or with G-d, should be repulsed by him. All of his energy and efforts should be focused on implanting in himself commendable traits and proper behavior. This, then, is the meaning of “concentration of the heart”: steering his heart, since “the heart distributes to all the limbs,”⁷ to bring every fine quality into actuality.

HAVAYA AND ELOKIM

Now the recital of *Hear O Israel... One* is a call for our awareness and comprehension of the Creator’s Oneness. The words *Hear O Israel* mean that the Jew should perceive, understand and apprehend (*hear*) that *Havaya* is *Elokeinu* (our G-d): that *Elokeinu*, i.e., our power and our life, is *Havaya*.⁸ The Divine

es us that the first verse of *Shema* must be said with “concentration of the heart”; the Talmud adds that the word *Echad* of this verse should be protracted; Rav Acha bar Yaakov clarifies that this refers specifically to the letter *dalet* of the word *Echad*; and Rav Ashi cautions against hurrying the pronunciation of the letter *chet*. All of these statements will be expounded upon in this discourse.

6. I.e., one takes his knowledge and translates it into practice, into re-

fining his character.

7. See *Likkutei Torah, Shir Hashirim* 29b from *Zohar* III:161b: “The heart is the seat of one’s blood—the soul and energy of one’s body. The food one eats becomes digested and turns into blood. The liver takes most of it and transmits the choicest part to the heart, which in turn, distributes it to all the limbs.” In our context, this phrase is used to indicate that the concentration of the heart is to subsequently be applied to the whole

והנה ישנו פְּנוֹנַת הַמוֹחַ וּכְנוֹנַת הַלֵּב, פְּנוֹנַת הַמוֹחַ הִיא
הַשְּׂגָה שְׂכֵלִית מֵה שְׂמִינֵגַע מוֹחוֹ לְהַבִּין וּלְהַשִּׁיג עֲנִיָּן שְׂכֵלִי
עַד שְׂיַעֲמוֹד עָלָיו וַיְבִינֵנו בְּכָל פְּרָטֵי עֲנִיָּנֵינוּ, וּכְנוֹנַת הַלֵּב
הִיא לְהַבִּיא הַשְּׂגָתוֹ הַטּוֹבָה מֵהַכַּח אֶל הַפּוֹעֵל בְּמַדוּת
טוֹבוֹת,

וְהֵינּוּ דְרָאשִׁית עֲבוּדָתוֹ תִּהְיֶה לְחֻקּוֹר אַחַר כָּל מִדָּה לֹא
טוֹבָה וּמְכַל שְׂפֵן מִדָּה מְגוּנָה לְעֻקְרָה וּלְשִׁרְשָׁה אֲשֶׁר בֵּל
תְּרָאָה וּבֵל תְּמַצָּא, וְהַדְּבָר הַלֵּא טוֹב בֵּין אִם הוּא דָּבָר שְׂבִין
אָדָם לְמָקוֹם וּבֵין אִם הוּא דָּבָר אֲשֶׁר בֵּין אָדָם לְחֻבִּירוֹ, יִהְיֶה
מֵאוֹס אֶצְלוֹ, וְכָל יְגִיעָתוֹ וְהַשְׁתַּדְּלוּתוֹ יִהְיֶה לְנִטוּעַ בְּעַצְמוֹ
מַדוּת טוֹבוֹת וְהַנְּהָגוֹת יִשְׁרוֹת וְזֶהוּ כְּנוֹנַת הַלֵּב לְכוּוֹן אֶת
לְבוֹ, דְּלִיבָא פְּלִיג לְכָל שְׂיִיפִין לְהַבִּיא כָּל מִדָּה טוֹבָה לְפּוֹעֵל
מִמֶּשׁ.

וְהִנֵּה אֲמִירַת שְׂמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי אֶחָד הוּא יְדִיעַת וְהַשְּׂגָת
אַחַדוֹת הַבּוֹרָא בְּרוּךְ הוּא דְּזֶהוּ פִירוּשׁ שְׂמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל,
שֶׁהִיִּשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׂמַע וַיְבִין וַיִּשְׁיֵג כִּי הוּי אֱלֹקֵינוּ, דְּאֱלֹקֵינוּ הֵינּוּ
כְּחֵינוּ וְחֵיוֹתָנוּ הוּא הוּי. דְּהִנֵּה שְׂם אֱלֹקִים הוּא לְשׁוֹן כַּח

body in actual deed—perfecting all parts of one's character.

To explain this further: When one meditates on a G-dly matter and is intellectually inspired, this inspiration has not yet affected his entire body. However, when this inspiration flows from head to heart, then one's entire body is inspired, for the heart is at the center at the body—it distributes to all limbs and awakens the entire body. (*Torah Or* 8a; *Maamarei Admur Hatzemach Tzedek—Hanachot* 5615, p. 233; *B'Shaah Shehikdimu* 5672 vol. 2, p. 1015 ff.; *Likkutei Sichot* vol. 37, p. 160 and vol. 39, p. 42. See also dis-

course entitled *L'havin Inyan Pesach U'matzah*, 5728, ch. 2 and sources cited there.)

8. HAVAYA, ELOKIM: There are many Hebrew names for G-d in Scripture, each of which expresses a different aspect or attribute of the Divinity. *Havaya* refers to G-d the Infinite, transcending creation and nature, time and space completely—the aspect of Divinity that brings everything into existence *ex nihilo*; the life-force of all of creation.

Elokim, conversely, represents the aspect of G-d which *conceals* the In-

name of *Elokim* denotes power, as seen from the verse, “He has also taken away the mighty [*eilei*] of the land,”⁹ denoting power and strength. In addition, the word *Elokim* and the word *hateva* (the nature) are numerically equivalent,¹⁰ for the nature of something is also its power.¹¹

We declare *Havaya Elokeinu*: the power and life-force of the Jewish people is *Havaya*, a force that transcends nature. Nature is limited by time and by space. That which is delineated by space is delimited by its boundaries.¹² Likewise, something delineated by time is restricted by the boundaries of past, present and future. *Havaya*, however, indicates that He was, is and will be—simultaneously, for He transcends space and transcends time.¹³

This is the import of the words *Havaya Elokeinu*—the nature of the Jewish people is to elicit into the limitations of time-and-space the [G-dly] light¹⁴ and revelation that transcends time-and-space.¹⁵

* * *

finite Light and life-force, since this Infinite force is too intense for finite creatures to endure. *Elokim* is the power of G-d that makes the world appear as though it exists naturally and independently by itself. (*Elokim* therefore has the numerical value of the word *hateva*, nature.)

This, the discourse will soon explain, is the meaning of the verse *Havaya Elokeinu*: *Havaya* is *Elokim*. Though every creature feels its own independence (*Elokim*), in reality it is animated entirely by G-d's life-force (*Havaya*). Thus, “nature” is indeed *supernatural*.

[It's interesting to note that this theme appears in other discourses delivered around this time—in *Ma'ayan Ganim*, on 10 Shevat, and *Mayim Rabbim*, on 24 Shevat. (See also *Sefer Hamaamarim Melukat*, vol. 4, p. 49, and footnote 56 there.)]

9. Ezekiel 17:13. The words *Elokim* and *eilei* (“mighty”) share the same root—“*eil*” (לֵא).⁹

10. Each letter of the Hebrew alphabet has a numeric value. The first nine letters, from *alef* through *tet*, equal one through nine respectively. The next nine letters, *yud* through *tzaddik*, equal ten through ninety respectively. The next four letters, *kuf* through *tav*, equal one hundred through four hundred respectively.

(Other numbers are created by combining single Hebrew characters of different value. For example, one hundred and twenty-three would be *kuf chaf gimmel* — קכג. Five-hundred is represented by *tav kuf* — תק, six-hundred by *tav reish* — תר, nine-hundred by *tav tav kuf* — תתק, etc. One thousand is represented by a single letter followed by an apostrophe.

וְכִמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב וְאֵת אֵילֵי הָאָרֶץ לָקַח שְׁמוֹרָה עַל הַכַּחַשׁ וְהַחֲזוֹק,
וְאֵלֶּקִים בְּגִימְטְרִיא הִטְבַּע שֶׁבְּכָל דָּבָר וְדָבָר הָרִי טִבְעוֹ הוּא
כַּחוֹ.

וְאָנוּ אוֹמְרִים הוּי' אֱלֹקֵינוּ, דְּהַכַּחַשׁ וְהַחֲזוֹת דִּישְׂרָאֵל הוּא
הוּי', הֵינּוּ מֵהַ שְׁלֵמַעְלָה מֵהִטְבַּע דְּטִבְעַה הוּא הַמוֹגְדָר בְּזִמְנָא
וּמְקוּמָא, דְּהַמוֹגְדָר בְּמְקוּמָא הוּא מוֹגְבֵל בְּהַגְבֻלוֹתָיו, וְכֵן הוּא
בְּזִמְנָא שְׁמוֹגְבֵל בְּהַגְבֻלָּה דְעֵבֶר הוּא וְעֵתִידָא, וְהוּי' הוּא הֵיךָ
הוּא וְיֵהִיָּה כְּאֶחָד שֶׁהוּא לְמַעְלָה מִן הַמְּקוּמָא וְלְמַעְלָה מִן
הַזְּמַן.

וְזֶהוּ הוּי' אֱלֹקֵינוּ דְּהִטְבַּע דִּישְׂרָאֵל הוּא דְּבִהַגְבֻלוֹת דְּזִמְנָא
וּמְקוּמָא יִמְשִׁיכוּ הָאֹר וְהַגִּילוּי שְׁלֵמַעְלָה מִזְּמַן וּמְקוּמָא.

* * *

For example, 1001 would be written:
alef alef—א.א.)

The Hebrew letters that spell *Elokim* are of equal numerical value to the letters that spell *hateva*.

11. Everything that exists is enlivened by a specific G-dly life-force uniquely its own. This life-force is the “spiritual DNA” of that given entity—that which defines the parameters and nature of its existence. Therefore, the nature of any given entity directly reflects the spiritual power or life-force that it is enlivened by. That is why the Hebrew words for nature (*hateva*) and Divine power (*Elokim*) are numerically equivalent, since they are one and the same—the nature of something is also its power (life-force).

12. I.e., it is bound by its spatial limitations.

13. *Havaya* represents the aspect of G-dliness that transcends the limits of time and space. Indeed, the word *Havaya* implies *haya, hoveh, v'yihyeh* (“G-d is, was, and will be”)—a G-dly realm where past, present and future exist simultaneously (*Zohar* III:257b in *Raya Mehemna*).

14. LIGHT. Obviously, this does not refer to physical light. In the language of the mystics, light refers to the effusion of Divine “energy.” (The mystics prefer light as the metaphor for G-d’s “energy” for a number of reasons. Among them: light must remain attached to its source in order to exist; light is not affected by its surroundings; the effusion of light causes no depletion in the luminary. See Schochet, *Mystical Concepts in Chasidism* (Kehot, 1988).)

15. Through one’s spiritual service

ECHAD VS. YACHID

The understanding and comprehension that *Havaya* is *El-okeinu*—that our power and life-force is *Havaya* Who transcends time-and-space—is attained by contemplating the Oneness of G-d.

The meaning of *Echad* is *One*, similar to the definition of the word *Yachid*, which means *Singular*. The difference, though, between *Echad* and *Yachid* is that *Yachid* connotes Singular in essence, while *Echad* connotes Oneness that is discerned from the particulars of the created beings and the vivification [of creation].¹⁶ In other words, by contemplating G-d's Oneness, we attain this recognition of *Havaya El-okeinu*—that our power and life force is *Havaya*.¹⁷

Thus, the recital of *Shema Yisrael* entails concentration of the mind. So why does R. Meir say, "Until here concentration of the *heart* is required"?

DARK THEN LIGHT

To understand the solution to the above, we need to first present an elucidation of the word *Echad*.

The verse says, "And it was evening and it was morning, one day (*yom echad*)."¹⁸ This "one day" incorporates, specifically, both an evening and a morning. For the 24 hours of a day include 12 hours of nighttime and 12 hours of daytime, which make the day complete, since by definition, a day has an evening and a morning, and the evening precedes the morning.¹⁹

one demonstrates that creation is not just defined by its restrictions of time and space, but rather by the truth it reflects—the truth of the Infinite G-d, who wished to create a world upon which man would fulfill his will by learning His Torah and keeping His *mitzvot*. See p. 32 ff.

16. See p. 36 and references in footnote 49.

To explain the difference between

the word *yachid* ("singular") and the word *echad* ("one"):

"Singular" means that there is *only one*. "One," however, can also mean *the first of many*. For example, when counting several items we say "one, two, three..." using the term "one" to indicate the *first* item. It would therefore seem more appropriate to use the term *Yachid* ("Singular") when speaking of (*the One and Only*) G-d; why, then, does Scripture state *Havaya Ech-*

והנה ידיעת והשגת דבר זה שהוי' אלקינו, דכחנו
 וחיותנו הוא הוי' שלמעלה מזמן ומקום הוא בא על ידי
 ההתבוננות בהוי' אחד

כי אחד פירושו הוא איינער כמו יחיד פירושו איינציג,
 אלא דההפרש בין אחד ליחיד הוא, דיחיד הוא שמיוחד
 בעצם, ואחד הוא שהאחדות ניכרת מפרטי הנבראים
 וההתהוות, והיינו דעל ידי ההתבוננות בהוי' אחד הנה על
 ידי זה באים לידי הפרה זו דהוי' אלקינו, דכחנו וחיותנו
 הוא הוי'

ואם כן הרי אמירת שמע ישראל הוא פנונת המוח, ולמה
 אמר רבי מאיר דעד כאן צריכים פנונת הלב,

ולקבין זה צריך להקדים תחלה פירוש אחד,

הנה כתיב ויהי ערב ויהי בקר יום אחד, דיום אחד הוא
 כשכלול מערב ובקר דוקא, דכ"ד שעות היום הן י"ב שעות
 הלילה וי"ב שעות היום ואז הוא יום שלם, דהגדר היום הוא
 שהוא מוגדר בהגדרה דערב ובקר ושהערב יהיה קדום
 לבקר,

ad ("G-d is *One*"), a term that indicates the potential for plurality?

Chasidus explains that this in fact is the verse's emphasis: That even within the *plurality* of creation, "G-d is *One*"—absolute Oneness. (This idea would be lost had the verse said, *Havaya Yachid* ("G-d is Singular"); that would have been understood to be referring to G-d as He completely transcends creation. The point of this verse, however, is to speak of G-d's Oneness even as He is within creation.) See *Torah Or*, 55b; *Derech Mitzvetecha* 124a.

17. The verse is thus interpreted as follows: *Shema Yisrael*—Understand, Israel, that *Havaya Elokeinu*—our very nature is supernatural. Why? Because *Havaya Echad*—G-d's transcendent Oneness pervades the plurality of creation.

Obviously, then, this verse contains a deep and powerful message and requires intense concentration.

18. Genesis 1:5.

19. As is apparent from the aforementioned verse, "It was evening...and morning, one day."

In other words, in order for there to be morning light,²⁰ there must be an evening that precedes it. And by dint of one's labor in the evening, one reaches the light of morning.²¹

The reason for this [order] is that G-d first thought to create the world through the Attribute of Judgment, but He foresaw that the world would not be able to endure, so He merged it [the Attribute of Judgment] with the Attribute of Mercy,²² as the saying, "At the beginning, darkness; then light."²³ So it was at the creation of the world. At first, it is written, "In the beginning *Elokim* created the heavens and the earth,"²⁴ since the creation and vivification of the worlds, in actuality, is through the Divine name of *Elokim*, which is identified with the Attribute of Judgment and with the *tzimt-zum*²⁵ [of G-d's light]—"At the beginning, darkness." Later it is written, "On the day that *Havaya Elokim* made earth and heaven"²⁶—"then light." The state of "then light" can be attained only through the preceding state of "at the beginning, darkness."²⁷

HAVAYA AND ELOKIM = SUN AND SHIELD

[To explain:] It is written, "For *Havaya Elokim* is a sun and a shield."²⁸ The two names of *Havaya Elokim*, which refer to G-d as He is imminent in nature and as He transcends nature, respectively, are analogous to the sun and to the sun's

20. Cf. Genesis 44:3.

21. In Kabbalistic and Chasidic terminology, "evening" refers to a condition of spiritual darkness, when G-dliness is not apparent. "Morning," the time of light, indicates a condition of Divine manifestation—G-dly light. Thus, the fact that evening precedes morning (in the unit of "day") is quite significant: it indicates that one can only reach spiritual light through first battling the darkness. True G-dly revelation is only born of one's struggle with the forces that at-

tempt to conceal G-dliness.

22. See *Rashi*, Genesis 1:1; *Midrash Rabbah* 12:15; *ibid.*, 14:1.

The Attributes of Judgment and Mercy are not to be understood solely in their literal sense, in the context of reward and punishment—that G-d initially thought to be strict with creation, and then decided to be more lenient—but rather in a more metaphorical sense, referring to different states of G-dliness, as the discourse will explain. Judgment refers to the "restricting" of G-dliness, a state of

וְהֵינּוּ דְבִכְדֵי שִׁיְהִיָּה בְקָר אֹר צָרִיךְ לִהְיוֹת תַּחֲלָה עָרֵב
וְעַל יְדֵי הָעֲבוּדָה בְּהָעָרֵב עַל יְדֵי זֶה מְגִיעִים לְהַבְקָר אֹר.

וְטַעַם הַדְּבָר הוּא דְבִתְחִלָּה עָלָה בְּמַחְשְׁבָה לְבְרוּא אֵת
הָעוֹלָם בְּמִדַּת הַדִּין רָאָה שְׂאִין הָעוֹלָם יְכוּל לְהִתְקַיֵּם שִׁיתָף
עִמּוֹ מִדַּת הַרְחָמִים, וְכַמְּאֹר בְּרִישָׁא חֲשׂוּכָא וְהַדְר נְהוּרָא, וְכֵן
הִיָּה בְּבְרִיאַת הָעוֹלָם דְּתַחֲלָה כְּתִיב בְּרִאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹקִים אֵת
הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ דְּבְרִיאַת וְהַתְּהוּוֹת הָעוֹלָמוֹת בְּהַתְּהוּוֹת
בְּפוּעַל הוּא עַל יְדֵי שֵׁם אֱלֹקִים שֶׁהוּא מִדַּת הַדִּין וְהַצְמָצוּם
דְּבְרִישָׁא חֲשׂוּכָא וְאַחַר כֵּךְ כְּתִיב בְּיוֹם עֲשׂוֹת הוּי' אֱלֹקִים אָרֶץ
וְשָׁמַיִם שֶׁהוּא וְהַדְר נְהוּרָא. וּבְכַדֵי שִׁיְהִיָּה אַחַר כֵּךְ וְהַדְר
נְהוּרָא הוּא עַל יְדֵי בְרִישָׁא חֲשׂוּכָא.

דְּהֵנָּה כְּתִיב כִּי שֶׁמֶשׁ וּמַגֵּן הוּי' אֱלֹקִים דְּהֵב' שְׁמוֹת הוּי'
אֱלֹקִים שֶׁהוּא הֵטְבַע וְלִמְעַלָּה מִהֵטְבַע הוּא כְּדוּגְמַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ
וּמַגֵּן הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ, דְּהֵנָּה זֶה מַה שְׂאֵנוּ רוֹאִים אֵת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ הֵלָא אֲנִי

Divine concealment (darkness, *tzimtzum*), while Mercy refers to G-dly manifestation, a state of Divine revelation (light). Generally speaking, these two states (Divine concealment and revelation) are synonymous with *Elokim* and *Havaya*, respectively.

For a more comprehensive analysis of this topic see *Yom Tov Shel Rosh Hashanah 5659, Discourse One*, p. 23 ff. (Kehot, 2000).

23. *Shabbat* 77b. The Talmud states regarding Creation that “first [it was] dark; then [it was] light,” in accordance with Genesis 1:2-3.

24. Genesis 1:1.

25. TZIMTZUM. Self-contraction or self-limitation of the infinite revela-

tion of G-d—the *Or Ein Sof*—which allows finite worlds to exist. Prior to creation, there was only the Infinite light filling all existence. Within this infinite revelation, finite worlds and beings could not possibly exist. When it arose in G-d’s will to create the worlds and all their inhabitants, He contracted and concealed the Infinite light, creating a “void” in which finite existence can endure. This concealment of G-d’s Infinite light is analogous to darkness.

26. Genesis 2:4.

27. This concept will be explained further.

28. Psalms 84:12.

shield.²⁹ For when we look at the sun, we don't actually see the sun itself. We see only its shield, its sheath, which covers the orb of sun. The earth and its denizens can tolerate the sun's light and radiance only because of its cloaking shield and sheath. This [shield] enables the light to be received and to effect the results that it does—as it is written, “With the sweetness of the produce of the sun, and with the sweetness of the moon's yield.”³⁰ Accordingly, the resultant effects come about through the sun itself as it is concealed and hidden in its shield and covering, so that its light can be tolerated and produce its intended effects.³¹

* * *

HAVAYA AND ELOKIM IN CREATION

The [above scriptural] metaphor helps us understand how this concept applies in the spiritual realm to the two Divine names of *Elokim* and *Havaya*. In truth, the creation [of the world] originates from the name *Havaya*. It is the name *Havaya* that creates. As it is written, “[They shall praise the name of *Havaya*,] for He has commanded, and they were created”³²—the entire creation of the worlds and the creatures comes from the name of *Havaya*.

Nevertheless, if the name of *Havaya* were the instrument through which the creation took place *in actuality*, then it would not have created our present physical form of existence.³³ Instead, the existence of all beings would have been utterly abnegated, like the nullification of the sun's rays within the sun. And Divinity would not have been sensed by created beings, or recognized and grasped as it is now.³⁴

THE PURPOSE OF CREATION

It is written, “Who in His goodness, renews each day, con-

29. That the sun has a “sheath” independent of itself can be seen from *Nedarim* 9b: “In the World to Come, G-d will remove the sun from its sheath.”

speaks of the sweetness added to the produce by sunlight—a benefit that is possible only because of the shield that tempers the sun's naturally overpowering strength. See *Rashi* there.

30. Deuteronomy 33:14. This verse

31. I.e., the sun's *concealment* allows

רואים רק את המגן ונרתק שמכסה על מאור השמש, דמאור השמש עצמו לא היה באפשרות העולם והנבראים לקבל אורו וזיוו ורק על ידי כיסוי המגן ונרתק על ידי זה יוכל להתקבל ופועל פעולתו כמו שכתוב ממגד תבואות שמש וממגד גרש ירחים אם כן הרי הפעולה באה מעצם השמש שמתעלם ומסתתר בהמגן ונרתק בכדי שיוכל להתקבל ולפעול פעולתו.

* * *

והדוגמא מזה יובן למעלה בב' השמות דשם אלקים ושם הוי' דבאמת ההתהוות הוא משם הוי' דשם הוי' הוא המהווה כמו שכתוב כי הוא צנה ונבראו דכל התהוות דעולמות ונבראים הוא משם הוי',

אך אם היה ההתהוות בפועל על ידי שם הוי' אז לא הייתה ההתהוות במציאות יש גשמי כמו שהוא עתה אלא היה כל מציאותן בטלים בתכלית הביטול כביטול זיו השמש בהשמש ולא היה האלקות יתברך נרגש בנבראים וניכר ומושג בהכרתן והשגתן כמו שהוא עתה,

וכתיב המחדש בטובו בכל יום תמיד מעשה בראשית,

it to produce its intended effect: that its light be beneficial to earth.

32. Psalms 148:5.

33. *Havaya* is the Divine name connoting (intense) G-dly revelation. Were creation to stem solely from *Havaya*, there would be no possibility for the creation of independent, physical beings—beings that do not naturally recognize their G-dly source—since

G-dliness would pervade all of “existence.” Instead, all of creation would be completely subsumed in G-d’s Infinite light. It is only through the concealment of G-dliness—*Elokim*—that independent creatures can emerge. (And these creatures ultimately fulfill the Divine purpose in creation, as will be explained.)

34. Since there would be no independent beings to do so.

tinuously the work of creation.”³⁵ The work of creation is renewed because of His attribute of goodness and kindness, as “the nature of the benevolent is to do good.”³⁶ For “the Holy One, blessed be He, desired a dwelling place in the lower realms,”³⁷ to create and to bring into existence a physical universe that would appear to be an independent entity and being; and in this world, to create man with a physical body, into which He would lower a divine soul, endowing it with the force and strength to overcome the body’s corporeality and vanquish all of the body’s fleshly desires, through the power of Torah [study] and the “service of the heart” of prayer.³⁸

The Torah was given to us in this lowly terrestrial physical plane. Although the angels had wanted the Torah for themselves, as it is written, “You Who has set Your majesty upon the heavens,”³⁹ Moses countered, “Do you [angels] have an evil inclination!?”⁴⁰ So the Torah was given specifically to man, who possesses a physical body, with an evil inclination that entices him—with numerous manners of deceit—trying to lure him off the proper path. But by studying Torah and observing it, the Torah’s inner-luminous core enlightens him in the paths of [true] life, eternal life—as the saying, “Eternal life You planted within us.”⁴¹ That is, through the practical

35. Liturgy, morning blessings of the *Shema*.

36. See R. Tzvi Hirsch Ashkenazi, *Chacham Tzvi* (Responsa), Sec. 18; R. Yosef Irgas, *Shomer Emumim*, 2:14, quoting the Kabbalists. See also *Likkutei Sichot* vol. 24, p. 334 in footnote.

37. *Tanchuma, Nasso* 16.

38. See *Taanit* 2a: “‘To serve Him with all your heart’ (Deuteronomy 11:13). What is ‘service of the heart’? This is prayer.”

39. Psalms 8:2.

40. See *Shabbat* 88b: When Moshe ascended on High, the ministering angels asked G-d, “Why is there a human amongst us?” “He came to receive the Torah,” replied G-d. “The hidden treasure that was hidden from before Creation [i.e., the Torah]—you wish to give to humans?!” exclaimed the angels. “What is man that You should remember him, son of man that You should be mindful of him? L-rd our Master, how mighty is Your Name throughout the earth, You Who has set Your majesty upon the heavens!” (Psalms 8:5, 2). [You

דָּוָה מֵה שְׁמַעְשָׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית הֵם בְּהִתְחַדְּשׁוֹת הוּא מִצַּד מִדַּת
טוֹבו וְחִסְדּוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ דְּטַבַּע הַטּוֹב לְהִיטִיב כִּי נִתְאַוּהוּ
הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְהִיּוֹת לוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ דִּיכָּה בְּתַחֲתוּנִים
לְכַרְוֹא וּלְהוֹת עוֹלָם גְּשָׁמִי שְׁיִהְיֶה נִרְאָה לִישׁ וּמְצִיאוֹת
וּבְעוֹלָם זֶה לְכַרְוֹא אֶת הָאָדָם בְּעַל גּוֹף גְּשָׁמִי וּלְהוֹרִיד
נִשְׁמָה אֱלֹקִית וְלִיתֵן לָהּ כַח נְעוּז לְהִתְגַּבֵּר עַל חוּמְרֵיּוֹת
הַגּוֹף וּלְכַבּוֹשׁ אֶת כָּל תְּאוֹתָיו עַל יְדֵי כַח הַתּוֹרָה וְהַעֲבֹדָה
שְׂבֵלֵב בְּתַפְלָה,

דְּהַתּוֹרָה נִיתְנָה לְמִטָּה בְּאֶרֶץ הַלְזוֹ הַגְּשָׁמִית, דְּכֹאֲשֶׁר
הַמַּלְאָכִים בְּקִשׁוּ אֶת הַתּוֹרָה כְּמוֹ שְׁכַתּוֹב אֲשֶׁר תִּנָּה הַוִּדְיָה
עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם הַשִּׁיב לָהֶם מִשָּׁה כְּלוּם יִצָּר הָרַע יִשׁ בְּכֶם
וְנִיתְנָה דְּוָקָא לְבַעֲלֵי גּוֹף גְּשָׁמִי שְׁיִשׁ בְּהֵם יִצָּר הָרַע דְּהִיִּצָּר
הָרַע מִסִּית וּמְדִיחַ אֶת הָאָדָם בְּכַמָּה מִינֵי עֲרֻמוּמִיּוֹת לְהַסִּיתוֹ
וּלְהַדִּיחוֹ מִדְּרָךְ הַיִּשְׁרָה, הִנֵּה עַל יְדֵי לִימוּד הַתּוֹרָה וְקִיּוּמָה
הִנֵּה הַמְּאוּר שְׂבָה מְאִירָה לוֹ לְהָאָדָם בְּדְרָכֵי הַחַיִּים בְּחַיִּי
עוֹלָם כְּמֵאמֶר וְחַיִּי עוֹלָם נִטַּע בְּתוֹכְנוּ, וְהִינּוּ דְעַל יְדֵי זֶה
שְׁהָאָדָם עוֹשֶׂה בְּפוֹעַל בְּקִיּוּם הַמְּצוֹת מְעֻשְׂיוֹת הָרִי הוּא

set your might upon the earth to punish the wickedness of man; how, then, can you give man Your precious Torah? “Set Your majesty [Torah] upon the heavens!”—*Maharsha*.]

Said G-d to Moshe: “Answer them!” Moshe replied, “But I am afraid lest they burn me with their breath.” G-d replied, “Hold on to my throne and answer them!” ... Moshe said, “Master of the Universe, the Torah you are about to give us—what is written in it? ‘I am the L-rd your G-d who took you out of Egypt.’” Turning to the angels he asked, “Did *you*

descend to Egypt? Were *you* enslaved? Then why should you receive the Torah? What else is written in it? ... ‘Do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal.’ Is there jealousy among you? Do you have an evil inclination?” The angels immediately agreed with G-d...

41. The full phrase reads, “[He] has given us the Torah of truth *and implanted eternal life within us*” (liturgy, *Uva L’tziyon*; blessing recited at the conclusion of an *aliyah* to the Torah). Torah is referred to as “eternal life.”

observance of actual *mitzvot* a person fulfills the Supernal intention [of creation], namely, “The Holy One, blessed be He, desired a dwelling place in the lower realms.”⁴²

And this is [the meaning of the verse], “For *Havaya Elokim* is a sun and a shield”: Just as the cloaking of the sun’s shield and sheath enables the sun to be tolerated by the earth and its creatures, allowing them to benefit from the sun’s light, which is [a manifestation of] the essence of the luminary of the sun,⁴³ so, too, is this [dynamic] true regarding the two Divine names of *Havaya* and *Elokim*. Creation stems from the name of *Havaya*, but the actualization of creation comes about through the name *Elokim*.⁴⁴ This process allows man, by dint of his Divine service, to elicit a revelation from the name of *Havaya* into this physical world. Hence, “At the beginning, darkness,” refers to our Divine service within nature to transform the nature into a receptacle for that which transcends nature—which is the aspect of “then light.”⁴⁵

* * *

“G-D IS ONE”: BOTH IN MICROCOSM AND MACROCOSM

The Oneness of the Creator can be seen and discerned within all of creation. When a person ponders the world and all that was created, he can perceive the Divine light and vitality that creates and vivifies them.

For it is written, “From my flesh I see G-dliness [*Eloka*]⁴⁶: A person knows and feels that the critical component of his being is the light and vitality of his soul (and after engaging in

42. The discourse has thus established that the purpose of creation is that physical man overcome his many challenges and lead a Torah-true life, thereby making the world an abode for G-d. This is only possible with the creation of physical beings.

43. “Light is like the luminary” (*Iggeret Hakodesh* 20). Although the light yielded by the sun’s shield is in-

significant in the face of the powerful sun, it nonetheless directly reflects its luminous source. The same is true of creation: Although *Elokim* yields a Divine light that is greatly “diminished,” one can discern how this light in fact reflects the “luminary” of *Havaya*, as will be explained shortly (in both man and creation).

44. The power of creation stems from

משלים הפנונה העליונה דנתאונה הקדוש ברוד הוא להיות
לו יתברך דירה בתחתונים.

וזהו כי שמש ומגן הוי אלקים כמו בהשמש והמגן דעל
ידי כיוסי המגן ונתק השמש יוכל להתקבל בהעולם
והנבראים ונהנים מאורו שהוא עצם מאור השמש כמו כן
הוא בהב' שמות שם אלקים ושם הוי. דההתהוות הוא משם
הוי רק שההתהוות בפועל הוא על ידי שם אלקים בכדי
שהאדם על ידי עבודתו ימשיך גילוי שם הוי בארץ הליו
הגשמית. וזהו ברישא חשוכא שהיא העבודה בהטבע
לעשות הטבע כלי ללמעלה מהטבע שהוא ענין והדר
גהורא.

* * *

והנה אחדות הבורא יתברך הוא נראה וניכר בכל
הנבראים והיינו כאשר האדם מתבונן בהעולם והנבראים
הוא רואה האור והחיות האלקי דזהו מה שמהווה ומחיה
העולם והנבראים,

דהנה כתיב מבשרי אחזה אלקה, וכמו שהאדם יודע
ומרגיש בעצמו שהעיקר הוא בו אור וחיות הנפש ועל ידי

Havaya. But *Elokim* allows for the creation of physical, “independent” beings—creatures that do not naturally sense their spiritual source.

45. When man performs his Divine service amidst the spiritual darkness of our physical world, he is demonstrating that creation is not in fact independent of G-d, but rather a vital part of G-d’s supernal design. He therefore replaces the “darkness” with

Divine light.

46. Job 19:26. Contextually, the word *Eloka* is translated as “judgment.” Thus, the verse would read, “From my flesh I see *judgment*.” (See *Rashi* there.) Homiletically, however, the word is translated literally (“G-dliness”), giving support to the idea of learning about G-d’s interaction with the world by observing our soul’s interaction with our body.

Divine service, he can sense that this vitality is G-dliness⁴⁷)—for in and of itself, the body is insignificant, the proof being that after the soul departs, although the body may be perfectly intact, the eye cannot see and the mouth cannot speak. Thus, it is his vitality that is of consequence.

And just as this is the case with the person, so, too, understandably, is it true concerning the world as a whole. The main ingredient is the Divine light and vitality that vivifies the world and creation. As stated in *Avot d'Rabbi Nattan*,⁴⁸ man is a miniature world, and the world, a large body. And just as the critical component in the microcosm is the light and vitality, the same holds true concerning the macrocosm.

This is the import of *Havaya Echad* (“*Havaya* is One”): Empirically, we can perceive and see the Oneness of the blessed Creator in all of creation, as elucidated elsewhere at length.⁴⁹

This is what prolonging the pronunciation of *Echad* means: prolonging one’s protracted meditation on [the meaning implicit in the words] *Havaya Echad*. Even though this knowledge is gleaned from intense intellectual analysis, concerning which it says, “Can you by searching find G-d?”⁵⁰, nonetheless, in their soul’s understanding,⁵¹ all Jews perceive this [Oneness].

PROLONGING = PERCEIVING

Prolonging the *Echad* entails contemplating G-d’s specific providence over every aspect of creation, “For He—blessed be He—provides nourishment and sustenance for all.”⁵²

47. It is apparent that there is some sort of “life-force” that enlivens the body; otherwise, what difference is there between a live body and one that is not alive? In a deeper sense, Chasidus explains that this animating force is in fact a G-dly vitality. It is G-dliness that vivifies all of creation. One attains this realization through

Divine service.

48. Chapter 31. *Avot d'Rabbi Nattan* is a commentary on *Avot* by the Talmudic sage, R. Nattan of Babylonia (authored c. 121 CE). It is printed in the standard editions of the Talmud, usually at the end of the Tractates of *Nezikin*.

עבודָה הוא מְרַגֵּשׁ שֶׁהַחַיּוּת הוּא אֱלֹקוֹת) דְּהַגּוֹף בְּעֵצְמוֹ אֵינוֹ
דָּבָר כָּלֵל וְהִרְאִיָּה דְּכִצָּאת הַנֶּפֶשׁ מֵהַגּוֹף הַגַּם שִׁישָׁנָם כָּל
הָאֲבָרִים בְּשִׁלְמוֹת וּמְכַל מְקוֹם אֵין הָעֵינַן רוֹאֶה וְאֵין הַפֶּה
יְכוּל לְדַבֵּר וְכוּ' הֲרִי הָעֵינָר בּוֹ הוּא חַיּוּתוֹ,

וְכִמוֹ שֶׁהוּא בְּהֶאֱדָם הֵנָּה מִזֶּה יָבִין גַּם בְּעוֹלָם שֶׁהָעֵינָר
הוּא הָאוֹר וְהַחַיּוּת הָאֱלֹקִי הַמְּחִיָּה אֶת הָעוֹלָם וְהַנִּבְרָאִים
וְכִדְאִיתָא בְּאֲבוֹת דְּרַבִּי גֵּתָן דְּהֶאֱדָם הוּא עוֹלָם קָטָן וְהָעוֹלָם
הוּא גּוֹף גָּדוֹל, וְכַשֵּׁם שֶׁבְּהָעוֹלָם קָטָן הֲרִי הָעֵינָר הוּא הָאוֹר
וְהַחַיּוּת הֵנָּה כִּמוֹ כֵּן הוּא בְּהַגּוֹף גָּדוֹל,

וְזֶהוּ הוּי' אֶחָד דְּאֲחָדוֹת הַבוֹרָא יִתְבָּרַךְ הוּא נִיכָר וְנִרְאֶה
בְּמוֹחֶשׁ בְּכָל הַנִּבְרָאִים, כִּמוֹ שֶׁכְּתוּב בְּאַרוּכָה בְּמְקוֹם אַחַר
בְּעֵינָן זֶה.

וְזֶהוּ כָּל הַמְּאָרִיךְ בְּאֶחָד שֶׁהוּא לְהֶאֱרִיךְ בְּאֲרִיכוֹת
הַהִתְבּוֹנְנוֹת דִּהוּי' אֶחָד דְּעַם הַיּוֹת דִּידִיעָה זֹו הִיא הַבְּנָה
שְׂכֵלִית עֵיוֹנִית כִּמוֹ שֶׁכְּתוּב הַחֲקֵר אֱלֹקָה תִּמְצָא אֲפָעַר אֵין
נִשְׁמָה הַשְּׂגָה דְּעַר הָעֵרֶט זִיךְ דָּאֵס בָּא אֲלַע אִידְעָן

וְזֶהוּ הָאֲרִיכוֹת בְּאֶחָד לְהִתְבּוֹנֵן בְּכָל פְּרָטֵי הַנִּבְרָאִים
בְּעֵינָן הַהִשְׁגָּחָה פְּרָטִית כִּי הוּא יִתְבָּרַךְ זֵן וּמְפָרְנָס לְכָל.

49. *Likkutei Torah, Va'etchanan* 4a ff.; *Derech Mitzvotecha* 45a; *Sefer Ha-maamarim* 5657, p. 48a ff.

This reference apparently applies to the general subject matter discussed here. This last phrase, however—that the Oneness of the Creator can be discerned in all of creation—seems to be unique to our discourse.

50. Job 11:7. The literal interpretation of the verse is that one can-

not understand G-d's ways in reward and punishment (*Metzudat David*). Chasidus interprets the verse that one cannot “find G-d” through intellectual pursuits (*Tanya*, ch. 2).

51. I.e., the soul's pure intellect, as it is unencumbered by the restrictions of a physical brain.

52. From the Blessing After Meals. Meditating upon G-d's absolute One-

The verse states, “The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food at the proper time”⁵³—“at the proper time” of the food,⁵⁴ as determined by Divine providence. Hence, a person sees clearly that all of his various business maneuverings are of no avail.⁵⁵ Therefore, a person’s only task is to anticipate G-d’s kindness. This requires only that man make a conduit [for G-d’s kindness],⁵⁶ and then “G-d’s blessing will bring riches.”⁵⁷ Consequently, he needs to make time for communal prayer, and allocate fixed times for Torah-study. This is the meaning of, “[You give them their food] at the proper time”: [man receives his sustenance] in the moment decided upon by the Holy One, blessed be He—not [necessarily] in the moment the person wants.

It is written, “Six days you shall labor, and perform all your work.”⁵⁸ True, work must be performed. However, the work is only a vessel for the Supernal blessing. And in order for the blessing to rest on this vessel, not only must the vessel be pure of deceit, etc., but moreover his means of earning a livelihood must be a proper one according to Torah standards. Then his work will serve as a suitable medium to receive G-d’s blessings.

* * *

OPENING STATEMENT REVISITED

Prolonging *Echad* thus denotes focusing on the Oneness of the blessed Creator, in whatever a person sees, both in terms of the Divine Providence extended over himself—how the Holy One, blessed be He, provides his livelihood and watches over him—and in terms of the Divine Providence extended over the Community of Israel, “a single sheep among seventy wolves, and it is safeguarded.”⁵⁹ Like the saying, “And not just

ness within creation—that G-d is the vitality of all existence—leads to the realization that G-d is the true and only source of nourishment and sustenance.

53. Psalms 145:15.

54. Man will only be granted sustenance from on High when the time is ripe for that specific sustenance to be given to him. Hence, as the discourse continues, man’s business maneuvers are of no avail to elicit more than what has been allotted to him.

דְּכַתִּיב עֵינִי כָּל אֵלֶיךָ יִשְׁבְּרוּ וְאַתָּה נוֹתֵן לָהֶם אֶת אֲכָלָם
 בְּעֵתוֹ שֶׁל מֵאֵל מֵאֵל כְּפִי שֶׁהוֹקֵצֵב מִהֶשְׁגָּחָה הָעֲלִיּוֹנָה וְכֵן
 רוֹאֵה הָאָדָם בְּמוֹחַשׁ דְּכָל תַּחֲבוּלוֹתָיו בְּעֶסֶק מִשָּׂא וּמִתֵּן הֵם
 לְבָלִי הוֹעִיל, וְעַל כֵּן הֵנָּה כָּל עֲבוֹדַת הָאָדָם הוּא רַק לְצַפּוֹת
 לְחֻסְדּוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ דָּאיִנו צָרִיךְ אֵלָא לְעֲשׂוֹת כְּלִי וּבִרְכַּת הוּי'
 הִיא תַעֲשִׂיר, וּבְמִילָא צָרִיךְ לִהְיוֹת לוֹ זְמַן עַל תְּפִלָּה בְּצַבּוֹר
 וּקְבִיעוֹת עֵתִים לַתּוֹרָה דְּזֵהוּ וְאַתָּה נוֹתֵן לָהֶם אֶת אֲכָלָם
 בְּעֵתוֹ, בְּעֵתוֹ שֶׁל הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וְלֹא בְּעֵת שֶׁהָאָדָם
 רוֹצֵה,

וְכַתִּיב שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעֲשִׂיתָ כָּל מְלֹאכְתְּךָ שְׁצָרִיכִים
 עֲשִׂיתָ מְלֹאכָה, אֲמַנָּם אֵינּוּ אֵלָא רַק כְּלִי לְבִרְכָה הָעֲלִיּוֹנָה
 וּבְכַדִּי שְׁתַּשְׂרֶה בָּהּ הַבְּרָכָה הֵנָּה לֹא זֶה בְּלִבְדֹ שְׁצָרִיכָה
 לִהְיוֹת כְּלִי טְהוֹרָה מְגִיבַת דַּעַת וְכוּ' אֵלָא עוֹד זֹאת שְׁתַּהֲיֶה
 כְּלִי פְּרִנְסָתוֹ כְּשֶׁרָה עַל פִּי הַתּוֹרָה, וְאֵז הוּא כְּלִי לְבִרְכַּת
 הוּי'.

* * *

וְזֵהוּ כָּל הַמְּאָרִיךְ בְּאֶחָד שְׁצָרִיכִים לְהֵאָרִיךְ בְּאֶחָד הֵיִינוּ
 שְׁבָכֵל דְּבָר וְדָבָר שֶׁהָאָדָם רוֹאֵה יְשִׁים אֵל לְבוֹ אַחַדוֹת הַבוֹרָא
 יִתְבָּרַךְ הֵן מֵה שֶׁהָאָדָם רוֹאֵה בְּעֵצְמוֹ הַהִשְׁגָּחָה הָעֲלִיּוֹנָה
 בְּהַנּוֹגֵעַ לְעֵצְמוֹ שֶׁהַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְזַמֵּן לוֹ פְּרִנְסָתוֹ וְשׁוֹמֵר
 אוֹתוֹ כוּ' כֵּן הוּא הַהִשְׁגָּחָה פְּרִטִית בְּכֻלָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וּכְמֵאֵמֶר
 כְּבִשָּׂה אַחַת בֵּין עַ' זָאבִים וְהִיא מִשְׁתַּמְרֵת, וּכְמֵאֵמֶר וְלֹא אֶחָד

55. Overindulging in business schemes can only cause harm, since it will divert one's energy away from G-d, the true source of his blessing.

See *The Unbreakable Soul*, p. 20 ff. (Kehot 2003).

56. The discourse proceeds to explain

how one makes this conduit.

57. Proverbs 10:22.

58. Exodus 20:9.

59. See *Petikta Rabbati* 9:2; *Tanchuma*, *Toldot* 5; *Esther Rabbah* 10:11.

one alone has risen against us...and the Holy One, blessed be He, saves us from their hands."⁶⁰ Accordingly, one has to fortify one's worship of G-d by participating in communal prayer and by scheduling fixed times for Torah study.⁶¹

Hence, Rav Acha bar Yaakov remarks that the *dalet* of *Echad* is prolonged. The *dalet* alludes to the four directions⁶² of the world. Every individual has to realize that Torah and *mitzvot* are eternal, applicable at all times, and in all places.⁶³ A person cannot claim that his environment is responsible—that in certain countries, observing *mitzvot* is possible, while in other countries, it is not. Heaven forefend to say such a thing!

On the verse "For I have spread you as the four directions of the heavens,"⁶⁴ our Sages comment: "Just as it is impossible for the world to exist without its four directions, so is it impossible for the world to exist without the Jewish people."⁶⁵ "G-d guides the footsteps of man"⁶⁶ in the direction that will lead to the fulfillment of the Divine intent of desiring a dwelling place in the lower realms, through our service in Torah and *mitzvot*.⁶⁷ This is the meaning of protracting *Echad* by prolonging the enunciation of the *dalet*: it indicates that this [spiritual service] applies to every country equally.⁶⁸

PRECEDING BERAITA REVISITED

This is [the meaning of] *Our Sages taught: Hear O Israel, Havaya is our G-d (Elokeinu), Havaya is One (Echad):*

Hear O Israel—a Jew perceives that *Havaya Elokeinu*—that our power and life-force comes from the name of

60. Haggadah for Pesach, *V'hi She'amda*. his commitment to communal prayer and Torah study.

61. When one recognizes that the life-force of all of creation stems from G-d, who provides for and sustains each individual in particular and the entire Jewish nation as a whole, he will focus his attention toward the Source of his blessing and strengthen

62. I.e., "corners."

63. Torah and *mitzvot* are relevant in all four directions of the world—*dalet*.

64. Zechariah 2:10.

בְּלֶבֶד עָמַד עָלֵינוּ כּוֹי וְהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְצִילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם עַל כֵּן
צָרִיךְ לְהִתְחַזֵּק בְּעִבּוּדַת ה' בְּתַפְלָה בְּצַבּוּר וּבִקְבִיעוֹת עִתִּים
לְתוֹרָה,

וְזֶהוּ דְאָמַר רַבִּי אַחָא בְרִי אֲחָא בְרִי יַעֲקֹב שְׂצָרִיכִים לְהֶאָרִיךְ בְּהַד'
דְּאַחָד, דְּהַד' הוּא ד' רוּחוֹת הָעוֹלָם שְׁכָל אָדָם צָרִיךְ לְדַעַת
דְּהַתוֹרָה וּמִצּוֹת נְצָחִים הֵמָּה בְּכָל זְמַן וּבְכָל מְקוֹם וְאֵל
יֹאמַר הָאוֹמֵר כִּי הַמְּקוֹם גּוֹרֵם שְׁבַמְדִּינָה זֶה אֶפְשָׁר לְקַיִּים
תּוֹרָה וּמִצּוֹת וּבַמְדִּינָה אַחֲרַת אֵי אֶפְשָׁר, חַס וְשְׁלוֹם לְאֹמֵר
כּוֹי,

דְּהִנֵּה פְתִיב כִּי כְּאַרְבַּע רוּחוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם פִּרְשְׁתִּי אֶתְכֶם
וְאָמְרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ זְכוֹרֵנוּם לְבִרְכָה בְּשֵׁם שְׂאֵי אֶפְשָׁר לְעוֹלָם בְּלִי
רוּחוֹת כַּף אֵי אֶפְשָׁר לְעוֹלָם בְּלִי יִשְׂרָאֵל, דְּמָה' מַצְעָדֵי גְבַר
כּוֹנְנֵנוּ לְהַשְׁלִים הַכּוֹנֵנָה הָעֲלִיוֹנָה דְּגַתְאֹוָה הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא
לְהִיּוֹת לוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ דִּירָה בְּתַחְתּוֹנִים עַל יְדֵי עִבּוּדְתֶם בְּתוֹרָה
וּמִצּוֹת וְזֶהוּ דְאָרִיכוֹת הָאֶחָד הוּא בְּהַד' הֵינּוּ בְּכָל מְדִינָה
וּמְדִינָה בְּשׁוּהָ

וְזֶהוּ תַנּוּ רַבְּנָן שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל הוּי' אֱלֹקֵינוּ הוּי' אֶחָד,

דְּשְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵי אִיד דְּעַךְ הָעֵרֶט דְּהוּי' אֱלֹקֵינוּ, אִז
אוֹנְזֵער כַּח אֹן חִיּוֹת אִז פּוֹן שֵׁם הוּי' וְנָאס אִז הָעֵכְעֵר פּוֹן

65. *Taanit* 3b; *Zohar* II:4b.

66. *Psalms* 37:23.

67. Thus, not only are the Jewish people as vital to the world's existence as the "four directions," since they fulfill G-d's purpose in creation (as the Talmud's interpretation of the verse), their task also occurs *through-*

out the "four directions"—throughout the entire world, in every country, without exception (as the verse's literal meaning).

68. The *dalet* ("four") is prolonged to emphasize that all *four* directions of the world are equal with regards to the practice of Judaism.

Havaya, which transcends the [element of] nature that comes from the name *Elokim*.⁶⁹ And this knowledge results from the soul's understanding⁷⁰ of *Havaya Echad*—G-d's Oneness.⁷¹

R. Meir remarks, *Until here, concentration of the heart is required*: Although this knowledge and recognition of G-d's Oneness [initially] engages [only] the mind, nonetheless, each and every Jew has the ability to inculcate this intellectual realization into the heart. This is in consonance with the teaching, "An oath is administered [to the soul before its descent]: *Be righteous*."⁷² For how is it possible to make the soul responsible for the righteousness of the body?⁷³ Rather the explanation of this teaching is that this oath implies satiation.⁷⁴ The soul is satiated with the power necessary to vanquish the body and the natural soul, to purify and refine it, and thereby make it into a vessel that can contain the revelation of the Divine light.

* * *

So R. Meir remarks that *Until here, concentration of the heart is required*—that this knowledge should not remain relegated to the mind, but should lead to "concentration of the heart," so as to develop actual fine character-traits.⁷⁵

Hence, *Whoever prolongs the Echad*: Every individual is to *prolong the Echad*—[i.e., extend his recognition of] the Oneness of G-d, according to his ability. And the focus is on the *dalet*. A person should know that he must engage in the study of Torah and in Divine service wherever he may be. And everyone is obligated in the study of Torah;⁷⁶ even a person who is harried and extremely distracted must schedule fixed times for Torah study. Simple folk, too, who cannot study themselves, are obligated to attend public classes.

69. See p. 24.

72. *Niddah* 30b.

70. See footnote 51.

73. Soul and body are two opposites: the soul desires G-dliness, the body desires physicality. How, then, can the soul accept responsibility for the body?

71. See p. 26 and footnotes 16 and 17.

76. See p. 26 and footnotes 16 and 17.

דַּעַר טַבַּע וְנֹאס עַל יְדֵי שָׁם אֱלֻקִּים, אוֹן דַּעַר דַּעַרְהָעַר קוֹמַט
פּוֹן דַּעַר נִשְׁמָה פֶּאֶרְשֵׁטְאֵנְד אִין הוּי אַחַד הֵיִינוּ אַחַדוֹת
הַבוֹרָא יִתְבָּרַךְ

וְאָמַר רַבִּי מֵאִיר עַד כַּאֵן צְרִיכִים כְּנוֹנַת הַלֵּב, דְּהֵגַם
דִּידִיעָה וְהַשְׁגָּה זֹו דְּהוּי אַחַד הִיא כְּנוֹנַת הַמוֹחַ אֲבָל כָּל אַחַד
מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל בִּיכוּלְתוֹ לְהִבְיָא הַשְׁגָּה זֹו מִהַמוֹחַ אֶל הַלֵּב וּכְמֵאֲמַר
מִשְׁבִּיעִין אוֹתוֹ תְּהֵא צְדִיק, דְּלִכְאוּרְהָ אִיךְ אֲפִשֵׁר לְהַשְׁבִּיעַ אֶת
הַנִּשְׁמָה שֶׁהַגּוֹף יְהִי צְדִיק אֶלָּא הַפִּירוּשׁ מִשְׁבִּיעִין אוֹתוֹ תְּהֵא
צְדִיק דְּכַשְׁבוּעָה זֹו פִּירוּשָׁה שׁוֹבַע שְׁנוֹתָנִים כַּח וְשׁוֹבַע
לְהַנִּשְׁמָה שְׁתוּכַל לְהַתְגַּבֵּר עַל הַגּוֹף וּנְפֶשׁ הַטַּבְּעִי לְכַרְרוֹ
וּלְזַכְּכוֹ וְלַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ כְּלִי לְאוֹר הָאֱלֻקִּי בְּגִילוּי.

* * *

וְאָמַר רַבִּי מֵאִיר דַּעַד כַּאֵן צְרִיכִים כְּנוֹנַת הַלֵּב, הֵיִינוּ
דִּידִיעָה זֹו לֹא תִשָּׂאָר רַק בְּמוֹחַ כִּי אִם יְבִיא אוֹתָהּ בְּכְנוֹנַת
הַלֵּב עַל מְנַת לְהִבְיָאָהּ בְּמַדּוֹת טוֹבוֹת בְּפוּעַל מְמִשׁ.

וְזֵהוּ כָּל הַמְּאָרִיךְ בְּאֶחָד דְּכָל אַחַד וְאַחַד לְפִי כַחוֹ צְרִיךְ
לְהֵאָרִיךְ בְּאֶחָד, וְהֵיִינוּ בְּאַחַדוֹת הוּי וְהַעִיָּקֵר הוּא בְּהַד'
שִׂידַע הָאֵדָם דְּבְכָל מְקוֹם שֶׁהוּא צְרִיךְ לַעֲסוֹק בְּתוֹרָה
וְעַבּוּדָה, וְהַכֵּל חֵיִיבִים בְּתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה, אֲפִילוֹ מִי שֶׁהוּא טְרוּד
וּמוֹטְרָד בְּיוֹתֵר צְרִיךְ לְקַבּוֹעַ עֵתִים לְתוֹרָה, וְאַפִּילוֹ אֲנָשִׁים
פְּשוּטִים שְׂאִינָם יְכוּלִים לְלַמּוֹד בְּעֶצְמָם צְרִיכִים לְשִׁמוֹעַ מִפִּי
הַמְּלַמֵּד בְּרַבִּים.

74. The Hebrew word for oath, *sh'vuah*, is of the same root as *sovah*, satiation [שבַּע]. The letters of *shin* and *sin* are interchangeable with each other.

75. See p. 22.

76. *Rambam, Hilchot Talmud Torah* 1:8; *Shulchan Aruch, Yorah De'ah* 246:1; Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, *Hilchot Talmud Torah* 1:4, 2:1.

This, then, is the meaning of Rav Acha bar Yaakov's statement: *And that is the dalet*—that the prolongation of the word *Echad* lies primarily in the *dalet*.⁷⁷ Some people are mistaken in this respect, and to excuse their laxity, they devise absurd rationalizations.⁷⁸

And Rav Ashi said: *Provided that he does not hurry the* [pronunciation of the letter] *chet*. The *chet* [whose numerical value is eight] alludes to the seven firmaments⁷⁹ and to earth. A person should take to heart that the soul descends into the body to fulfill the purpose [of creation], that "G-d desired an abode in the lower realms." This is the idea of the seven firmaments and earth: The soul's descent from the seven firmaments to earth, to be vested within a physical body, is for the subsequent ascent⁸⁰ that occurs when man engages in the study of Torah and the observance of *mitzvot* on this physical earth.⁸¹

On the verse, "Is not man on earth for a limited time, and are his days [not] like the days of a hired worker?"⁸², *Rashi*

77. Every person, no matter where he may be (*dalet*), must recognize the Oneness of G-d (*Echad*) and engage in Torah study, prayer and the fulfillment of *mitzvot*.

78. Such as those who said at the time "America is different"—that the "customs" of the old country are not applicable in today's modern American society. See *Sefer Hasichot 5703*, p. 147; *Sefer Hasichot 5705*, p. 77.

79. SEVEN FIRMAMENTS. These are seven spiritual realms, one above the other. See *Chagigah 12b*: Rabbi Yehudah said, "There are two heavens, as it is written, 'The heaven, the heaven of heaven, the earth and everything in it, all belong to G-d' (Deuteronomy 10:14)." Reish Lakish maintained there are seven heavens, namely: *Vilon* ("Curtain"), *Rakiya* ("Sky"), *Sh'chakim*

("Mills"), *Z'vul* ("Residence"), *Ma'on* ("Abode"), *Machon* ("Arsenal") and *Aravot* ("Plains" or "Wide Spaces").

Reish Lakish enumerated: *Vilon* serves no purpose. *Rakiya* contains the sun, moon, stars, zodiac and all the Heavenly Hosts. In *Sh'chakim*, the mills grind manna for the Righteous for the World to Come. *Z'vul* contains an altar upon which the angel Michael, the great minister, offers sacrifices. In *Ma'on*, groups of angels chant song. *Machon* contains storages of snow and hail. *Aravot* contains righteousness and justice, the vaults of life and peace and the vaults of blessing, the souls of the righteous, spirits and souls to be born in the future and the dew with which G-d will resurrect the dead.

(*Kesef Mishnah (Yesodei Hatorah 3:1)*) explains that Rabbi Yehudah and Reish Lakish do not disagree; rather,

וְזֶהוּ שֶׁאָמַר רַבִּי אֲחָא בַר יַעֲקֹב וּבְדִלִיתָ, דְּהָאֲרִיכוֹת
בְּאֶחָד הָעֵינָקֵר הוּא בְּהַדְּ. דְּלִפִּי שֵׁישׁ טוֹעִים בְּזֶה וּמְקִילִים
לְעֲצָמָם בְּטַעֲנוֹת שֶׁל הַבֵּל.

וְאָמַר רַב אֲשִׁי שֶׁלֹּא יַחְטוּף בְּחַיִּיתָ. דְּכַוְנַת הַחַיִּיתָ הוּא ז'
רְקִיעִים וְאֶרֶץ וְהַיָּיִנוּ שֶׁהָאָדָם יִתֵּן אֶל לְבוֹ דִּירִידָת הַנְּשָׁמָה
בְּגוּף הִיא בְּשִׁבִיל הַכְּוֹנָה דְּנִתְאַוָּה הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְהִיּוֹת
לוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ דִּינָה בְּתַחְתּוּנִים דְּזֶהוּ הוּ' רְקִיעִים וְאֶרֶץ דְּמָה
שֶׁהַנְּשָׁמָה יוֹרֶדֶת מֵהוּ' רְקִיעִים לְאֶרֶץ הַלְּזוֹ לְהִתְלַבֵּשׁ בְּגוּף
גְּשָׁמִי הֵנָּה יִרְדָּה זֶה הִיא בְּשִׁבִיל הָעֲלִיָּה שֶׁתְּהִיָּה עַל יְדֵי
שֶׁהָאָדָם יִתְעַסֵּק בְּלִימוּד הַתּוֹרָה וְקִיּוּם הַמִּצְוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ הַלְּזוֹ
הַגְּשָׁמִית.

וְכַתִּיב הֲלֹא צָבָא לְאַנּוּשׁ עָלַי אֶרֶץ וְכִימִי שְׂכִיר יָמָיו.
וּפְרָשׁ רַש"י כְּמוֹ הַשְּׂכִיר הַזֶּה שֶׁנִּשְׁכָּר לְשָׂנֵה וְיודֵעַ שֶׁיִּכְלֶה

Rabbi Yehudah counts only the visible heavens (the *Shamayim*) containing the sun, moon and stars, whereas Reish Lakish also counts the celestial spheres—which are loftier than *Shamayim*—and calls them all *Shamayim*.)

80. Chasidus describes different aspects of the “ascent” that occurs through the soul’s descent into this world. Among them:

1. Prior to its descent, the soul is in a spiritual paradise, unchallenged in its spiritual service. When the soul descends below, however, it is met constantly with opposition from the body and the “animal soul,” who wish only to pursue material interests. When the soul overcomes this challenge and fulfills its spiritual calling, it expresses

its unwavering devotion to G-d, even in the face of adversity—something that cannot be recognized when the soul is in its spiritual oasis above.

2. It is only after its descent that the soul can *practically* fulfill Torah and *mitzvot*, and thereby gain their spiritual benefit.
3. Only through its spiritual service on this world can the soul can fulfill G-d’s purpose of creation—that the world be an abode for His presence.

For further discussion of this topic see *Likkutei Sichot*, vol. 15, p. 245 ff.

81. This adds even more import to one’s spiritual service, knowing that it was for this that his soul descended in the first place.

82. Job 7:1.

comments that just like a hired worker—contracted for a year—realizes that his time will eventually run out, similarly every person should consider that he too was given an allotted time, a certain number of years to live in this world. The days and years of each and every person is measured, as it says, “Days have been formed.”⁸³

It is also written, “[You shall therefore, observe the commandments, the statutes, and the ordinances, which I command you] *this day to do them*.”⁸⁴ Torah study—to know how to act—and practical mitzvah observance are possible only in *this* world.⁸⁵ And it was to this end that the soul descended below.

Thus, *Provided that he does not hurry the chet*. A man must not forget the truth as to why he came into the world.⁸⁶ And if he is genuinely engrossed [in this truth] then he will automatically prolong the *dalet*; [i.e.,] wherever he finds himself, he will study the Torah and observe its *mitzvot*. And *Whoever prolongs the Echad*—meaning, whoever devotes and dedicates himself to extend the Oneness [of G-d] by publicizing G-d in the world—*has his days and years prolonged*. The Holy One, blessed be He, grants the person longevity, with years of goodness illuminated by the light of Torah and Divine service, so that he will succeed in his Divine service—in order to accomplish the true intent [of creation], to make a dwelling place for G-d in this world.

* * *

May the Almighty grant us all—among all of Israel—long life, [enabling us] to disseminate the teachings of Torah and its study, and [to attract people to be] involved in “service of the heart”—prayer, so that we merit to achieve G-d’s objective, [doing so] with an abundance of everything good materially and spiritually.



83. Psalms 139:16. I.e., a specific amount of days are created for each individual.

84. Deuteronomy 7:11.

85. As opposed to the spiritual realms; see *Likkutei Torah, Va'etchanan* 6b. One can only study the practical application of Torah and fulfill the *mitzvot* in this physical world, a

זְמַנּוֹ כֵּן הָאָדָם צָרִיךְ לָשׁוּם לְבוֹ שְׁנֵיתָן לוֹ זְמַן קָצוּב כַּמָּה
שָׁנִים יַחֲיֶה בְּעוֹלָם זֶה. וְכָתִיב יָמִים יוֹצְרוֹ כֹּוּ דָּכַל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד
יָמָיו וְשְׁנוֹתָיו הֵם מְדוּדִים,

וְכָתִיב הַיּוֹם לַעֲשׂוֹתָם, דְּלִימוּד הַתּוֹרָה לְמַעַן לִידַע אֵת
הַמַּעֲשֶׂה אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשׂוּן וְקִיּוּם הַמִּצְוֹת מַעֲשִׂיּוֹת הֵם בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה
דּוֹקָא. וּבְשִׁבִיל זֶה הֵיטָה יְרִידַת הַנְּשֻׁמָּה לְמַטָּה,

וְזֶהוּ שְׁלֵא יַחֲטוּף בְּחֵיתָ, דְּעַר מְעַנְטֵשׁ זָאֵה לְנִיט
פֶּאָרְגֶּעֶסען אויפֶען אַמֶת צוֹלִיעֵב דְּעַם וְנָאס עַר אִיז
גְּעֻקוּמֶען אויף דְּעַר וועלֶט. און אז עַר וועט ליגען אין דְּעַם
מִיט אִיין אַמֶת הֵנָּה בְּמִילָא יֶאָרִיךְ בְּהַד, הֵיִינוּ דְּבָכַל מְקוּם
שֶׁהוּא נִמְצָא יִתְעַסֵּק בְּתוֹרָה וְקִיּוּם הַמִּצְוֹת, וְכָל הַמֶּאָרִיךְ
בְּאֶחָד הֵיִינוּ שְׁמוּסֵר וְנוֹתֵן עֲצָמוֹ לְהֶאָרִיךְ בְּאֶחָד לְפָרְסֵם
אַלְקוֹתוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ בְּעוֹלָם הֵנָּה מֶאָרִיכִין לוֹ יָמָיו וְשְׁנוֹתָיו
שֶׁהַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא נוֹתֵן לְהָאָדָם אַרְיִכוֹת יָמִים וְשָׁנִים
טוֹבוֹת וּמְאִירוֹת בְּאוֹר תּוֹרָה וְעִבּוּדָה, לְהַצְלִיחוֹ בְּעִבּוּדָתוֹ,
בְּכַדִּי לְהַשְׁלִים הַכְּוֹנָה הָאֲמִיתִית לַעֲשׂוֹת לוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ דִּיכָּה
בְּתַחְתּוּנִים.

* * *

וְהַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ יִתֵּן לָנוּ וְלָכֶם בְּתוֹךְ כָּלֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל אַרְיִכוֹת
יָמִים וְשָׁנִים, לְפַעוֹל הַרְבֵּצַת הַתּוֹרָה וְלִימוּדָה וְהַתְּעַסְקוֹת
עִבּוּדָה שְׁכַלֵּב זֹו תַּפְלָה בְּשִׁבִיל לְזָכוֹת לְהַשְׁלִים הַכְּוֹנָה
הַעֲלִיּוֹנָה בְּרוּב טוֹב בְּגִשְׁמִיּוֹת וְרוּחָנִיּוֹת.



world upon which man's time is limited. This should further encourage one to refocus on this most urgent of tasks.

Note *Eruvin* 22a: "Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: "What is the meaning of [the verse] *which I command you this day to do them?* ... To-

day—to do them, *in the future*—to receive their reward."

86. I.e., to make the world an abode for G-d through learning Torah and fulfilling *mitzvot*. The *chet*, as explained above, alludes to the soul's descent to this world and its purpose.

APPENDIX'
LETTER BY RABBI YOSEF YITZCHAK OF LUBAVITCH
FREE RENDITION

By the Grace of G-d,
3 Iyar 5690
Detroit

To the Jewish people of Chicago,
May G-d bless you.

Greeting and blessing!

Meeting with a large segment of the Jewish population, in various synagogues during my stay in Chicago, made a good impression on me, seeing, as it were, how warm the Jewish heart is.

I hope to G-d that my visit to Chicago will be remembered in every Jewish home, so as to strengthen Torah and Judaism.

I joyfully give my blessing to every Jewish family, that the Almighty, blessed be He, should bless them all with healthy Jewish children, with long and healthy years, and with abundant livelihood.

I remain their friend, who seeks their welfare, honors them and blesses them

Yosef Yitzchak

1. This letter originally appeared in Yiddish in the *Chicago Daily Jewish Courier* on 9 May, 1930, and subsequently in Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's *Igrot Kodesh*, vol. 13, p. 223.

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