

Shamati (I Heard)



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Shamati (I Heard)

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The Bright One

Rav Yehuda Ashlag

The Bright One!

And from the Heavens He shines.

There—within the curtain of the screen.

The secret of the righteous is there made clear,

And Light and darkness shine together.

How good it is to delve in His deeds,

But beware not to reach out your hand for Him.

Then shall you hear Him, and so will you meet Him,

In the tower of might, the All Inclusive Name.

You shall relish in words of truth,

To speak untainted words.

And all you will see,

Your own eyes will see, and not a stranger's eye!

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1. There Is None Else Besides Him

I heard on *Parashat Yitro*, 1, February 6, 1944

It is written, “there is none else besides Him.” This means that there is no other force in the world that has the ability to do anything against Him. And what man sees, that there are things in the world that deny the Higher Household, the reason is that this is His will.

And it is deemed a correction, called “the left rejects and the right adducts,” meaning that which the left rejects is considered correction. This means that there are things in the world, which, to begin with, aim to divert a person from the right way, and by which he is rejected from Sanctity.

And the benefit from the rejections is that through them a person receives a need and a complete desire for the Creator to help him, since he sees that otherwise he is lost. Not only does he not progress in his work, but he sees that he regresses, that is, he lacks the strength to observe Torah and *Mitzvot* even in *Lo Lishma* (not for Her Name). That only by genuinely overcoming all the obstacles, above reason, can he observe the Torah and *Mitzvot*. But he does not always have the strength to overcome above reason;

otherwise, he is forced to deviate, God forbid, from the way of the Creator, even from *Lo Lishma*.

And he, who always feels that the shattered is greater than the whole, meaning that there are many more descents than ascents, and he does not see an end to these states, and he will forever remain outside of holiness, for he sees that it is difficult for him to observe even as little as a jot, unless by overcoming above reason. But he is not always able to overcome. And what shall be the end?

Then he comes to the decision that no one can help him but the Creator Himself. This causes him to make a heartfelt demand that the Creator will open his eyes and heart, and truly bring him nearer to eternal adhesion with God. It thus follows, that all the rejections he had experienced had come from the Creator.

This means that it was not because he was at fault, that he did not have the ability to overcome. Rather, for those people who truly want to draw near the Creator, and so they will not settle for little, meaning remain as senseless children, he is therefore given help from Above, so he will not be able to say that thank God,

I have Torah and *Mitzvot* and good deeds, and what else do I need?

And only if that person has a true desire will he receive help from Above. And he is constantly shown how he is at fault in his present state. Namely, he is sent thoughts and views, which are against the work. This is in order for him to see that he is not one with the Lord. And as much as he overcomes, he always sees how he is farther from holiness than others, who feel that they are one with the Creator.

But he, on the other hand, always has complaints and demands, and he cannot justify the Creator's behavior, and how He behaves toward him. This pains him. Why is he not one with the Creator? Finally, he comes to feel that he has no part in holiness whatsoever.

Although he occasionally receives awakening from Above, which momentarily revives him, but soon after he falls into the place of baseness. However, this is what causes him to come to realize that only God can help and really bring him closer.

A man must always try and cleave to the Creator; namely, that all his thoughts will be about Him. That is to say, that even if he is in the worst

state, from which there cannot be a greater decline, he should not leave His domain, namely, that there is another authority which prevents him from entering holiness, and which can bring benefit or harm.

That is, he must not think that there is the force of the *Sitra Achra* (Other Side), which does not allow a person to do good deeds and follow God's ways. Rather, all is done by the Creator.

The Baal Shem Tov said that he who says that there is another force in the world, namely *Klipot* (shells), that person is in a state of "serving other gods." It is not necessarily the thought of heresy that is the transgression, but if he thinks that there is another authority and force apart from the Creator, by that he is committing a sin.

Furthermore, he who says that man has his own authority, that is, he says that yesterday he himself did not want to follow God's ways, that too is considered committing the sin of heresy, meaning that he does not believe that only the Creator is the leader of the world.

But when he has committed a sin, he must certainly regret it and be sorry for having committed it. But here too we should place the pain and sor-

row in the right order: where does he place the cause of the sin, for that is the point that should be regretted.

Then, one should be remorseful and say: “I committed that sin because the Creator hurled me down from holiness to a place of filth, to the lavatory, the place of filth.” That is to say that the Creator gave him a desire and craving to amuse himself and breathe air in a place of stench.

(And you might say that it is written in books, that sometimes one comes incarnated as a pig. We should interpret that, as he says, one receives a desire and craving to take liveliness from things he had already determined were litter, but now he wants to receive nourishment from them).

Also, when one feels that now he is in a state of ascent, and feels some good flavor in the work, he must not say: “Now I am in a state that I understand that it is worthwhile to worship the Creator.” Rather he should know that now he was favored by the Creator, hence the Creator brought him closer, and for this reason he now feels good flavor in the work. And he should be careful never to leave the domain of Sanctity, and say that there is another who operates besides the Creator.

(But this means that the matter of being favored by the Creator, or the opposite, does not depend on the person himself, but only on the Creator. And man, with his external mind, cannot comprehend why now the Lord has favored him and afterwards did not.)

Likewise, when he regrets that the Creator does not draw him near, he should also be careful that it would not be concerning himself, meaning that he is remote from the Creator. This is because thus he becomes a receiver for his own benefit, and one who receives is separated. Rather, he should regret the exile of the *Shechina* (Divinity), meaning that he is causing the sorrow of Divinity.

One should imagine that it is as though a small organ of the person is sore. The pain is nonetheless felt primarily in the mind and in the heart. The heart and the mind, which are the whole of man. And certainly, the sensation of a single organ cannot resemble the sensation of a person's full stature, where most of the pain is felt.

Likewise is the pain that a person feels when he is remote from the Creator. Since man is but a single organ of the Holy *Shechina*, for the Holy

Shechina is the common soul of Israel, hence, the sensation of a single organ does not resemble the sensation of the pain in general. That is to say that there is sorrow in the *Shechina* when the organs are detached from her, and she cannot nurture her organs.

(And we should say that this is what our sages said: “When a man regrets, what does *Shechina* say? ‘It is lighter than my head.’”). By not relating the sorrow of remoteness to oneself, one is spared falling into the trap of the desire to receive for oneself, which is considered separation from holiness.

The same applies when one feels some closeness to holiness, when he feels joy at having been favored by the Creator. Then, too, one must say that one’s joy is primarily because now there is joy Above, within the Holy *Shechina*, at being able to bring her private organ near her, and that she did not have to send her private organ away.

And one derives joy from being rewarded with pleasing the *Shechina*. This is in accord with the above calculation that when there is joy for the part, it is only a part of the joy of the whole. Through these calculations he loses

his individuality and avoids being trapped by the *Sitra Achra*, which is the will to receive for his own benefit.

Although, the will to receive is necessary, since this is the whole of man, since anything that exists in a person apart from the will to receive does not belong to the creature, but is attributed to the Creator, but the will to receive pleasure should be corrected to being in order to bestow.

That is to say, the pleasure and joy, which the will to receive takes, should be with the intention that there is contentment Above when the creatures feel pleasure, for this was the purpose of creation—to benefit His creations. And this is called the joy of the *Shechina* Above.

For this reason, one must seek advice as to how he can bring contentment Above. And certainly, if he receives pleasure, contentment shall be felt Above. Therefore, he yearns to always be in the King's palace, and to have the ability to play with the King's treasures. And that will certainly cause contentment Above. It follows that his entire longing should be only for the sake of the Creator.

2. Divinity in Exile

I heard in 1942

The Holy *Zohar* says: “He is *Shochen* (Dweller), and She is *Shechina* (Divinity).” We should interpret its words: It is known with regard to the Upper Light, that they say that there is no change, as it is written, “I the Lord change not.” All the names and appellations are only with respect to the *Kelim* (vessels), which is the will to receive included in *Malchut*—the root of creation. From there it hangs down to this world, to the creatures.

All these discernments, beginning with *Malchut*, being the root of the creation of the worlds, through the creatures, is named *Shechina*. The general *Tikkun* (correction) is that the Upper Light will shine in them in utter completeness.

The Light that shines in the *Kelim* is named *Shochen*, and the *Kelim* are generally named, *Shechina*. In other words, **the Light dwells inside the *Shechina***. This means that the Light is called *Shochen* because it dwells within the *Kelim*, that is, the whole of the *Kelim* are named *Shechina*.

Before the Light shines in them in utter completeness, we name that time, “**A Time of Corrections.**” This means that we make corrections

so that the Light will shine in them in completeness. Until then, that state is called **“Divinity in Exile.”**

It means that there is still no perfection in the Upper Worlds. Below, in this world, there should be a state where the Upper Light is within the will to receive. **This *Tikkun* is deemed receiving in order to bestow.**

Meanwhile, the will to receive is filled with ignoble and foolish things that do not make a place where the glory of Heaven can be revealed. This means that where the heart should be a Tabernacle for the Light of God, the heart becomes a place of waste and filth. In other words, ignobility captures the whole of the heart.

This is called “Divinity in the dust.” It means that it is lowered to the ground, and each and every one loathes matters of Sanctity, and there is no desire whatsoever to raise it from the dust. Instead, they choose ignoble things, and this brings on the sorrow of the *Shechina*, when one does not make a place in the heart that will become a Tabernacle for the Light of God.

3. The Matter of Spiritual Attainment

I heard

We discern many degrees and discernments in the worlds. We must know that everything that relates to discernments and degrees speaks of the attainment of the souls with regard to what they receive from the worlds. This adheres to the rule, **“What we do not attain we do not know by name.”** This is so because the word “name” indicates attainment, like a person who names some object after having attained something about it according to one’s attainment.

Hence, reality in general is divided into three discernments, with respect to spiritual attainment:

1. *Atzmuto* (His Essence)
2. *Ein Sof* (Infinity)
3. The Souls

1) We do not speak of *Atzmuto* at all. This is because the root and the place of the creatures begin in the Thought of Creation, where they are incorporated, as it is written, “The end of an act is in the preliminary thought.”

2) *Ein Sof* pertains to the Thought of Creation, which is “His desire to do good to His creations.”

This is considered *Ein Sof*, and it is the connection existing between *Atzmut* and the souls. We perceive this connection in the form of “desire to delight the creatures.”

Ein Sof is the beginning. It is called “a Light without a *Kli* (vessel),” yet there is the root of the creatures, meaning the connection between the Creator and the creatures, called “His desire to do good to His creations.” This desire begins in the world of *Ein Sof* and extends through the world of *Assiya*.

3) The **Souls**, which are the receivers of the good that He wishes to do.

He is called *Ein Sof* because this is the connection between *Atzmut* and the souls, which we perceive as “His desire to do good to His creations.” We have no utterance except for that connection of desire to enjoy and this is the beginning of the engagement, and it is called “Light without a *Kli*.”

Yet, there begins the root of the creatures, meaning the connection between the Creator and the creatures, called “His desire to do good to His creations.” This desire begins in the world of *Ein Sof* and extends through the world of *Assiya*.

All the worlds are in themselves considered Light without a *Kli*, where there is no utterance. They are discerned as *Atzmuto*, and there is no attainment in them.

Do not wonder that we discern many discernments there. This is because these discernments are there in potential. Afterwards, when the souls come, these discernments will appear in the souls that receive the Upper Lights according to what they have corrected and arranged. Thus, the souls will be able to receive them, each according to its ability and qualification. And then these discernments appear in actual fact. However, while the souls do not attain the Upper Light they, in themselves, are considered *Atzmuto*.

With respect to the souls that receive from the worlds, the worlds are considered *Ein Sof*. This is because this connection between the worlds and the souls, meaning what the worlds give to the souls, extends from the Thought of Creation, which is a correlation between the souls and *Atzmuto*.

This connection is called *Ein Sof*. When we pray to the Creator and ask of Him to help us and to give us what we want, we relate to the

discernment of *Ein Sof*. There is the root of the creatures, which wants to impart them delight and pleasure, called “His desire to do good to His creations.”

The prayer is to the Creator who created us, and His Name is “**His desire to do good to His creations.**” He is called *Ein Sof* because this speaks of prior to the restriction. And even after the restriction, no change occurs in Him as there is no change in the Light and He always remains with this name.

The proliferation of the names is only with respect to the receivers. Hence, the first name that appeared, that is, the root for the creatures, is called *Ein Sof*. And this name remains unchanged. All the restrictions and the changes are made only with regard to the receivers, and He always shines in the first name, “His desire to do good to His creations,” endlessly.

This is why we pray to the Creator, called *Ein Sof*, who shines without restriction or end. The end, which appears subsequently, is corrections for the receivers so that they may receive His Light.

The Upper Light is made of two discernments: attaining and attained. Everything we say regarding the Upper Light concerns only how the attaining is impressed by the attained. However, in themselves, meaning only the attaining, or only the attained, they are not called *Ein Sof*. Rather, the attained is called *Atzmuto* and the attaining is called “souls,” being a new discernment, which is a part of the whole. It is new in the sense that the will to receive is imprinted in it. And in that sense, creation is called “existence from absence.”

For themselves, all the worlds are regarded as simple unity and there is no change in Godliness. This is the meaning of “I the Lord do not change.” There are no *Sefirot* and *Behinot* (discernments) in Godliness.

Even the most subtle appellations do not refer to the Light itself, as this is a discernment of *Atzmuto* where there is no attainment. Rather, all the *Sefirot* and the discernments speak only of what a person attains in them. This is because the Creator wanted us to attain and understand the abundance as “His desire to do good to His creations.”

In order for us to attain what He had wanted us to attain and understand as “His desire to do good to His creations,” He created and imparted us with these senses, and these senses attain their impressions of the Upper Light.

Accordingly, we have been given many discernments, since the general sense is called “the will to receive,” and is divided into many details, according to the measure that the receivers are able to receive. Thus, we find many divisions and details, called ascents and descents, expansion and departure etc.

Since the will to receive is called “creature” and a “new discernment,” the utterance begins precisely from the place where the will to receive begins to receive impressions. The speech is discernments, parts of impressions. For here there is already a correlation between the Light and the will to receive.

This is called “Light and *Kli*.” However, there is no utterance in the Light without a *Kli*, since a Light that is not attained by the receiver is considered *Atzmuto*, where the utterance is forbidden since it is unattainable, and how can we name what we do not attain?

From this we learn that when we pray for the Creator to send us salvation, cure, and so on, there are two things we should distinguish: 1 – The Creator; 2 – That which extends from Him.

In the first discernment, considered *Atzmuto*, the utterance is forbidden, as we have said above. In the second discernment, that which extends from Him, which is considered the Light that expands into our *Kelim*, meaning into our will to receive, that is what we call *Ein Sof*. This is the connection of the Creator with the creatures, being “His desire to do good to His creations.” The will to receive is regarded as the expanding Light that finally reaches the will to receive.

When the will to receive receives the expanding Light, the expanding Light is then called *Ein Sof*. It comes to the receivers through many covers so that the lower one will be able to receive them.

It turns out that all the discernments and the changes are made specifically in the receiver, with relation to how the receiver is impressed by them. However, we must discern the matter we are speaking of. When we speak of discernments in the worlds, these are potential discernments.

And when the receiver attains these discernments, they are called “actual.”

Spiritual attainment is when the attaining and the attained come together, as without an attaining there is no form to the attained, since there is no one to obtain the form of the attained. Hence, this discernment is considered *Atzmut*, where there is no room for any utterance. Therefore, how can we say that the attained has its own form?

We can only speak from where our senses are impressed by the expanding Light, which is “His desire to do good to His creations,” which comes into the hands of the receivers in actual fact.

Similarly, when we examine a table our sense of touch feels it as something hard. We also discern its length and width, all according to our senses. However, that does not necessitate that the table will appear so to one who has other senses. For example, in the eyes of an angel, when it examines the table, it will see it according to *its* senses. Hence, we cannot determine any form with regard to an angel, since we do not know its senses.

Thus, since we have no attainment in the Creator, we cannot say which form the worlds have from His perspective. We only attain the worlds according to our senses and sensations, as it was His will for us to attain Him so.

This is the meaning of “There is no change in the Light.” Rather, all the changes are in the *Kelim*, meaning in our senses. We measure everything according to our imagination. From this it follows that if many people examine one spiritual thing, each will attain according to his imagination and senses, thereby seeing a different form.

In addition, the form itself will change in a person according to his ups and downs, as we have said above that the Light is Simple Light and all the changes are only in the receivers.

May we be granted with His Light and follow in the ways of the Creator and serve Him not in order to be rewarded, but to give contentment to the Creator and raise Divinity from the dust. May we be granted adhesion with the Creator and the revelation of His Godliness to His creatures.

HOW TO CONTACT BNEI BARUCH

1057 Steeles Avenue West, Suite 532
Toronto, ON, M2R 3X1
Canada

Bnei Baruch USA,
2009 85th street, #51,
Brooklyn, NY 11214,
USA

E-mail: info@kabbalah.info
Web site: www.kab.info

Toll free in USA and Canada:
1-866-LAITMAN
Fax: 1-905 886 9697