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Post

Issa B'Midrash Tehillim

In the Midrash T[eh]illim, it is written:

Rabbi Eliezer declared: 'Israel told the Holy One, blessed be He, 'Master of the world, we want to labor in the study of Torah during the day and at night, but we don't have the opportunity.'

The Holy One, blessed be He, replied: 'Fulfill the mitzvah of tefillin, and I will consider it as if you had labored in Torah study during the day and at night.'

[The fact that our Sages state that wearing tefillin can compensate for the inability to

study shows that there is a relationship between the two mitzvos. Nevertheless,] we must understand [the nature of] that relationship. How can the fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin free the Jewish people from the study of Torah? How are these mitzvos connected with each other?

[To understand this concept, we must first explain another idea:] It is written: " He tells His words to Yaakov, His statutes and His ordinances to Israel." {On this verse, the Midrash comments }

There are those who give commands to others to fulfill, but do not fulfill them themselves. However, what G d fulfills Himself, He commands to others, as the verse declares: He tells His words to Yaakov, His statutes and His ordinances....

[The verse implies that the "words, ordinances, and statutes" which G d commands to others, are "His," i.e., G d observes them Himself.]

This Midrash can be interpreted to mean: Who causes G d to fulfill the mitzvos? The Jewish people. The Jewish people's performance of mitzvos causes G d to observe those same mitzvos. Hence, when the Jewish people put on tefillin, this causes G d to put on tefillin.

[What is meant by the statement, "G d puts on tefillin"? Surely, the intent is not that He wears tefillin that resemble our own. Instead, His tefillin are spiritual. To explain:] Our sages declare:

What is written in the tefillin of the Master of the universe? "And who is like Your people, like Israel, one nation on earth."

Thus, when G d puts on tefillin, He raises up the stature of the Jewish people.

To explain this concept, [it is necessary to first elaborate on the deeper meaning of] the verse, "Look down from Your holy abode, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel." Behold it is written: "G d is high above all nations." [Here also the intent is not] that He is uplifted [in a physical sense, but that He is on a spiritual plane that far surpasses ours].

[For this reason, our limited human actions cannot, in and of themselves, relate to the exalted nature] of His essence, as implied by the verse: If you have sinned, what have you done against Him? If you are righteous, what do you give Him or what does He receive from your hand? [G d's essence does not only transcend the nature of man,] all the higher and lower realms are considered as nothing before Him.

This concept is [alluded to] in the verse: "for His Name is exalted unto itself," i.e., [His Name] is above all existence. Only "its glory," i.e., its radiance and reflection,"

[shines] on the earth and heaven." [The verse does not mention G d's essence at all. Even "His Name," a lower level, is "exalted," and] only" its glory," a mere radiance and a reflection of that lower level, can be revealed within earth and heaven.

[In this context, we can understand the expression used by the Zohar in regard to the exile,] "When the Holy One, blessed be He, rose to the heights"; i.e. when the G dly life-energy rose up from the [limited] radiance that shines "on the earth and heaven," level after level upward, to its source [in G d's essence].

[G d's ascent to this level leads to exile, for] at this level, the worlds are of no importance. [And therefore, G d's control over them is not manifest. He does not, however, abandon them entirely. To explain by analogy,] He controls the world as if in a state of sleep, as it were.

[What is meant by this analogy?] When a person sleeps, his mind rises above its vessel, his body, and ascends to its source. All that remains is the power of fantasy, a mere trace of [the mind's original] power. [Similarly, in the era of exile, "when G d rises to the heights," His presence is not openly revealed in the world and a mere trace of His power is felt within the world.]

[Conversely, in reference to the Redemption,] we find expressions like "And G d awoke as one out of sleep" and, "Awake, why are You sleeping, O G d." For [when G d "awakes,"] there will be a revelation of Or Ein Sof, [G d's in-finite light] in the Sefiros of Chochmah [wisdom] and Chesed [kindness]. [Through these mediums, it will be expressed in the world at large]. "His countenance will shine" i.e., He will reveal His essence and His nature in its glory, as it truly is, through the inner aspects of His will.

[How will this Divine influence be conveyed to the world?] Through drawing down the Torah and its mitzvos.

In this context, we can understand the verse: Look from heaven and behold and the verse: " Look down from Your holy abode, from heaven." [The Hebrew word shamayim, heaven is a combination of two words,] shom and mayim meaning "There is water there."

This refers to the Torah which is described using the analogy of water. {[As in the verse ]: "Behold all who are thirsty, go to the water," [in which the Prophet Yeshayahu] refers to the Torah.} Through the Torah, [we will merit fulfillment of the verse,] "bless Your people Israel," [blessing will be drawn down to the Jewish people]. [Why does the Torah generate blessing?] Because the Torah causes G d to view the Jewish nation as an important entity. For all the essential appreciation and revelation

[of G dliness] comes about through the medium of the Torah, and the Torah is revealed to us. [Previously, it was explained that all the worlds, in and of themselves, are of no importance. Nevertheless, when the Jews study and observe the Torah, they become important entities. Therefore, they are worthy of blessing.]

This concept is [alluded to in] the verse: "The heavens opened and I saw Divine visions." The heavens [i.e., the Torah] are compared to a shining mirror through which we are seen by G d, as it were. A fine, shining glass mirror improves the image of the object it reflects, making it seem greater and more praiseworthy than it would appear without the mirror. In a similar manner, the Torah makes the Jewish people who fulfill it seem greater and more praiseworthy.

Through the Torah, [added meaning is given to] the verse [which, as mentioned above, is written in G d's tefillin]: "And who is like Your people, Israel, one nation on earth." This can be interpreted to mean that the Jewish people draw down oneness into the earth. They reveal the aspects of "G d is one" in this lowly earth.

The unique quality of the Torah [and why the Torah endows the Jewish people with importance] can be understood in terms of our Sages statement:<sup>1</sup> "The Torah preceded the world by two thousand years." That statement does not refer to chronological precedence, for both time and space are creations. Before the creation of the world, time also did not exist. Here the concept of precedence refers to a higher spiritual level. [The Torah reflects a level of G dliness higher than that vested in creation.]

[G d's] emotional attributes are the source for the world. The Zohar<sup>2</sup> explains that the verse,<sup>3</sup> "For in six days, G d made [the heavens and the earth]" alludes to this concept. The Hebrew which reads "Shayshes Yomim As-ah" literally means "Six days made." The prefix ב which means "in" was omitted. [The Zohar explains the reason for the omission.] The six days refer to G d's six emotional attributes as they underwent a great descent into the realm of Asiyah, the realm of action.

[The original level of the six emotional attributes is the realm of Atzilus, the realm of emanation, where all existence is totally at one with G d. To bring about the creation of a physical world, these potentials descended into the realm of Asiyah.]

[On this basis, we can understand another statement of the Zohar. The Zohar explains<sup>4</sup> that the first word of the Torah,] (Bereishis), the first of the ten statements of creation, is a combination of two words, (Borah Shis) He created six [a reference to G d's six emotional attributes]. [Through these six emotional attributes, all existence came into being.]

This concept can be further understood in terms of the interpretation of the verse,<sup>5</sup> "The world shall be built with kindness." There are two ways to explain this verse: a) the attribute of kindness was necessary in order to build the worlds. [Kindness is the first of the six emotional attributes. It motivates the expression of all the other attributes that are necessary for creation. To cite an example in the personal realm: The very connection with others expressed by the other emotional qualities is an expression of kindness and love. Accordingly, the Etz Chaim explains<sup>6</sup> the first day which is symbolic of the attribute of kindness] proceeds together with all the other days.

b) The attribute of kindness itself must be built. [In this context, the above expression would be read: "For the sake of the world, kindness was built."] In a similar vein, the above expression, "He created six" describes the building of the six emotional attributes in order that they, in turn, become the source for the lower worlds Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah.

[The above explains how G d's emotional attributes are related to the lower worlds. They were brought into being to act as the creative agents to form those realms. The Torah, by contrast, reflects G d's intellectual attributes, and exists independent of the existence of the lower realms. As mentioned above,] "The Torah preceded the world." [Similarly, the Zohar states,<sup>7</sup> ] "The Torah emanates from wisdom," [i.e., G d's] intellectual attributes which transcend the [lower] worlds entirely.

[The difference between G d's attributes of intellect and emotion can be seen through analyzing the functioning of these potentials in the human realm.] Intellect does not require another person. Even when one is alone, without someone with whom to share an idea, it is possible to think intellectually. The emotions, by contrast, require a recipient. For example, the attribute of kindness requires someone to receive one's generosity and kindness. If there is no recipient, the emotion itself disappears as if it never existed. This principle [is reflected in a story the Torah relates concerning] Avraham. "He sat at the tent door in the heat of the day" looking for passersby. He wanted to find someone to show kindness to, for without a recipient, the giver loses this potential for expression.

Similarly, this principle can be understood in regard to the spiritual realms. [G d's emotional attributes require, as it were, the existence of an entity that feels itself as separate from Him.] Thus, it is written: "Remember Your mercies... and kindnesses, for they have existed for all time." [The Hebrew word "MeOlam" translated as "for all time," can also mean "from the world."] G d's mercies and kindnesses are related to the worlds. As explained in the [second] interpretation of the verse, "the world shall

be built with kindness," kindness was built, brought into being, for the sake of the creation. If there had not been a creation, the attribute of kindness would not have been required. For who would receive that kindness?

These concepts explain the opening statement of the Etz Chaim [regarding the order for the creation]: "When it arose in His simple will to be generous to His creations..." [His will was aroused] because G d is good and it is the nature of the good to be generous. This kindness is drawn down from the level of "He who desires kindness." It reflects the kindness that exists in G d's will. [This potential for kindness exists only at the level of G dliness that relates to the creation of the worlds.]

G d's intellectual attributes, by contrast, were not drawn down in the creation of the worlds. Even though we find references to G d's use of intellect in the creation. For example, our Sages declared, "G d created the world with ten qualities: with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge." In a similar vein, the Sefer Yetzirah writes: "The world [was created] by three Seforim, Sefer, Sofer, and Sippur." The maamar Ushavtem explains that the level Sofer (scribe) refers to the level of wisdom and the level of Sefer [a book] refers to the level of understanding. Just as a scribe writes a book, [understanding is a product of wisdom.]

[Despite these indications that G d's intellectual attributes were invested in the creation, it can be explained that the intellectual aspects] that were drawn down to the emotions [and thus into the creation] reflect a [lower] level of intellect, that which is related to the emotions. The essence of intellect, by contrast, [stands above the emotions and above creation]. The Torah emanates from wisdom, the essence of G d's intellect. Therefore, Torah preceded the world by two thousands years.

{[The number two thousand is also significant. The root of the Hebrew word for thousand "Aleph" resembles the word] "Aalefcha", which means I will teach you. Two thousand [can mean two approaches of teaching as is stated,] I will teach you wisdom, I will teach you understanding. [This further expresses how] the Torah represents the realm of intellect that precedes the world which is related to the realm of emotions.}

Through the above, we can understand the passage cited at the outset: Rabbi Eliezer declared: "Israel told the Holy One, blessed be He, We want to labor in Torah study," for through Torah study we draw G d's intellectual attributes into His emotional attributes. This reflects a great and wondrous level.

The passage continues:

"...But we dont have the opportunity."

The Holy One, blessed be He, replied: "Fulfill the mitzvah of tefillin and I will

consider it as if you had labored in Torah study during the day and at night."

This is possible for through performing the mitzvah of tefillin, we cause the Holy One, blessed be He, to put on te-fillin as mentioned above.

[The union of G d's intellectual attributes with His emotional attributes is also alluded to in the term the Talmud uses for G d in that statement] "The Holy One, blessed be He," Hakodosh Boruch Hu refers to the male and fe-male aspects of the realm of Atzilus. The male aspects Zeer Anpin, G d's emotional attributes, are alluded to by the word Kodosh; and the feminine aspects, Malchus, the power of royalty, by the word Boruch.

These allusions are reflected [in our Sages' statements explaining how Moshe was able to follow the passage of time when he was on Mt. Sinai]: "When [the angels] said Kodosh, he knew it was day; when they said Boruch he knew it was night." [For day and night refer to Zeer Anpin and Malchus respectively.]

G d's putting on tefillin [represents a higher level. By putting on tefillin,] He draws the essence of intellect into the realm of emotion.

[The connection between tefillin and intellect is illustrated by the fact that] a child less than 13 years of age is not obligated to put on tefillin. He is not called a man and possesses only a small aspect of intellect. When he becomes 13 years old he becomes a man. Then, through his deed of putting on tefillin, he causes G d to put on tefillin. [The connection between tefillin and intellect is further emphasized by the fact that they are placed on the head.]

Thus, we see that the spiritual aspect of tefillin is the drawing down of the essence of intellect. Thus, tefillin and the study of the Torah represent the same level. Therefore, through the fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin, G d will consider it as if we had labored in the study of the Torah during the day and at night.

The word "as if" is used, for the two [Torah and tefillin are not entirely similar].

Through Torah study, [G d's intellectual attributes] are [actually] drawn down within the world. Through tefillin, by contrast, intellect is drawn down only within the source for the creation of the world. Nevertheless, G d considers the fulfillment of tefillin equal to the study of Torah during the day and at night. [Day and night] refer to this lowly world. [This implies that, although the two are not entirely analogous, G d causes our fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin to affect this world in the same manner as Torah study would.]

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[Despite these indications that G d's intellectual attributes were invested in the creation, it can be explained that the intellectual aspects] that were drawn down to the emotions [and thus into the creation] reflect a [lower] level of intellect, that which is related to the emotions. The essence of intellect, by contrast, [stands above the emotions and above creation]. The Torah emanates from wisdom, the essence of G d's intellect. Therefore, Torah preceded the world by two thousands years.

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Thus, we see that the spiritual aspect of tefillin is the drawing down of the essence of intellect. Thus, tefillin and the study of the Torah represent the same level. Therefore, through the fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin, G d will consider it as if we had labored in the study of the Torah during the day and at night.

The word "as if" is used, for the two [Torah and tefillin are not entirely similar]. Through Torah study, [G d's intellectual attributes] are [actually] drawn down within the world. Through tefillin, by contrast, intellect is drawn down only within the source for the creation of the world. Nevertheless, G d considers the fulfillment of tefillin equal to the study of Torah during the day and at night. [Day and night] refer to this lowly world. [This implies that, although the two are not entirely analogous, G d causes our fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin to affect this world in the same manner as Torah study would.]

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In the Midrash T[eh]illim, it is written:

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[The fact that our Sages state that wearing tefillin can compensate for the inability to study shows that there is a relationship between the two mitzvos. Nevertheless,] we must understand [the nature of] that relationship. How can the fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin free the Jewish people from the study of Torah? How are these mitzvos connected with each other?

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This Midrash can be interpreted to mean: Who causes G d to fulfill the mitzvos? The Jewish people. The Jewish people's performance of mitzvos causes G d to observe those same mitzvos. Hence, when the Jewish people put on tefillin, this causes G d to put on tefillin.

[What is meant by the statement, "G d puts on tefillin"? Surely, the intent is not that He wears tefillin that resemble our own. Instead, His tefillin are spiritual. To explain:] Our sages declare:

What is written in the tefillin of the Master of the universe? "And who is like Your people, like Israel, one nation on earth."

Thus, when G d puts on tefillin, He raises up the stature of the Jewish people.

To explain this concept, [it is necessary to first elaborate on the deeper meaning of] the verse, "Look down from Your holy abode, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel." Behold it is written: "G d is high above all nations." [Here also the intent is not] that He is uplifted [in a physical sense, but that He is on a spiritual plane that far surpasses ours].

[For this reason, our limited human actions cannot, in and of themselves, relate to the

exalted nature] of His essence, as implied by the verse: If you have sinned, what have you done against Him? If you are righteous, what do you give Him or what does He receive from your hand? [G d's essence does not only transcend the nature of man,] all the higher and lower realms are considered as nothing before Him.

This concept is [alluded to] in the verse: "for His Name is exalted unto itself," i.e., [His Name] is above all existence. Only "its glory," i.e., its radiance and reflection," [shines] on the earth and heaven." [The verse does not mention G d's essence at all. Even "His Name," a lower level, is "exalted," and] only "its glory," a mere radiance and a reflection of that lower level, can be revealed within earth and heaven.

[In this context, we can understand the expression used by the Zohar in regard to the exile,] "When the Holy One, blessed be He, rose to the heights"; i.e. when the G dly life-energy rose up from the [limited] radiance that shines "on the earth and heaven," level after level upward, to its source [in G d's essence].

[G d's ascent to this level leads to exile, for] at this level, the worlds are of no importance. [And therefore, G d's control over them is not manifest. He does not, however, abandon them entirely. To explain by analogy,] He controls the world as if in a state of sleep, as it were.

[What is meant by this analogy?] When a person sleeps, his mind rises above its vessel, his body, and ascends to its source. All that remains is the power of fantasy, a mere trace of [the mind's original] power. [Similarly, in the era of exile, "when G d rises to the heights," His presence is not openly revealed in the world and a mere trace of His power is felt within the world.]

[Conversely, in reference to the Redemption,] we find expressions like "And G d awoke as one out of sleep" and, "Awake, why are You sleeping, O G d." For [when G d "awakes,"] there will be a revelation of Or Ein Sof, [G d's in-finite light] in the Sefiros of Chochmah [wisdom] and Chesed [kindness]. [Through these mediums, it will be expressed in the world at large]. "His countenance will shine" i.e., He will reveal His essence and His nature in its glory, as it truly is, through the inner aspects of His will.

[How will this Divine influence be conveyed to the world?] Through drawing down the Torah and its mitzvos.

In this context, we can understand the verse: Look from heaven and behold and the verse: " Look down from Your holy abode, from heaven." [The Hebrew word shamayim, heaven is a combination of two words,] shom and mayim meaning "There is water there."

This refers to the Torah which is described using the analogy of water. {[As in the

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This concept is [alluded to in] the verse: "The heavens opened and I saw Divine visions." The heavens [i.e., the Torah] are compared to a shining mirror through which we are seen by G d, as it were. A fine, shining glass mirror improves the image of the object it reflects, making it seem greater and more praiseworthy than it would appear without the mirror. In a similar manner, the Torah makes the Jewish people who fulfill it seem greater and more praiseworthy.

Through the Torah, [added meaning is given to] the verse [which, as mentioned above, is written in G d's tefillin]: "And who is like Your people, Israel, one nation on earth." This can be interpreted to mean that the Jewish people draw down oneness into the earth. They reveal the aspects of "G d is one" in this lowly earth.

The unique quality of the Torah [and why the Torah endows the Jewish people with importance] can be understood in terms of our Sages statement:<sup>1</sup> "The Torah preceded the world by two thousand years." That statement does not refer to chronological precedence, for both time and space are creations. Before the creation of the world, time also did not exist. Here the concept of precedence refers to a higher spiritual level. [The Torah reflects a level of G dliness higher than that vested in creation.]

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[On this basis, we can understand another statement of the Zohar. The Zohar

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[The above explains how G d's emotional attributes are related to the lower worlds. They were brought into being to act as the creative agents to form those realms. The Torah, by contrast, reflects G d's intellectual attributes, and exists independent of the existence of the lower realms. As mentioned above,] "The Torah preceded the world." [Similarly, the Zohar states,<sup>7</sup> ] "The Torah emanates from wisdom," [i.e., G d's] intellectual attributes which transcend the [lower] worlds entirely.

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Similarly, this principle can be understood in regard to the spiritual realms. [G d's emotional attributes require, as it were, the existence of an entity that feels itself as separate from Him.] Thus, it is written: "Remember Your mercies... and kindnesses, for they have existed for all time." [The Hebrew word "MeOlam" translated as "for all time," can also mean "from the world."] G d's mercies and kindnesses are related to the worlds. As explained in the [second] interpretation of the verse, "the world shall be built with kindness," kindness was built, brought into being, for the sake of the creation. If there had not been a creation, the attribute of kindness would not have been required. For who would receive that kindness?

These concepts explain the opening statement of the Etz Chaim [regarding the order for the creation]: "When it arose in His simple will to be generous to His creations..." [His will was aroused] because G d is good and it is the nature of the good to be generous. This kindness is drawn down from the level of "He who desires kindness." It reflects the kindness that exists in G d's will. [This potential for kindness exists only at the level of G dliness that relates to the creation of the worlds.]

G d's intellectual attributes, by contrast, were not drawn down in the creation of the worlds. Even though we find references to G d's use of intellect in the creation. For example, our Sages declared, "G d created the world with ten qualities: with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge." In a similar vein, the Sefer Yetzirah writes: "The world [was created] by three Seforim, Sefer, Sofer, and Sippur." The maamar Ushavtem explains that the level Sofer (scribe) refers to the level of wisdom and the level of Sefer [a book] refers to the level of understanding. Just as a scribe writes a book, [understanding is a product of wisdom.]

[Despite these indications that G d's intellectual attributes were invested in the creation, it can be explained that the intellectual aspects] that were drawn down to the emotions [and thus into the creation] reflect a [lower] level of intellect, that which is related to the emotions. The essence of intellect, by contrast, [stands above the emotions and above creation]. The Torah emanates from wisdom, the essence of G d's intellect. Therefore, Torah preceded the world by two thousands years.

{[The number two thousand is also significant. The root of the Hebrew word for thousand "Aleph" resembles the word] "Aalefcha", which means I will teach you. Two thousand [can mean two approaches of teaching as is stated,] I will teach you wisdom, I will teach you understanding. [This further expresses how] the Torah represents the realm of intellect that precedes the world which is related to the realm of emotions.}

Through the above, we can understand the passage cited at the outset: Rabbi Eliezer declared: "Israel told the Holy One, blessed be He, We want to labor in Torah study," for through Torah study we draw G d's intellectual attributes into His emotional attributes. This reflects a great and wondrous level.

The passage continues:

"...But we dont have the opportunity."

The Holy One, blessed be He, replied: "Fulfill the mitzvah of tefillin and I will consider it as if you had labored in Torah study during the day and at night."

This is possible for through performing the mitzvah of tefillin, we cause the Holy One, blessed be He, to put on te-fillin as mentioned above.

[The union of G d's intellectual attributes with His emotional attributes is also alluded

to in the term the Talmud uses for G d in that statement] "The Holy One, blessed be He," Hakodosh Boruch Hu refers to the male and fe-male aspects of the realm of Atzilus. The male aspects Zeer Anpin, G d's emotional attributes, are alluded to by the word Kodosh; and the feminine aspects, Malchus, the power of royalty, by the word Boruch.

These allusions are reflected [in our Sages' statements explaining how Moshe was able to follow the passage of time when he was on Mt. Sinai]: "When [the angels] said Kodosh, he knew it was day; when they said Boruch he knew it was night." [For day and night refer to Zeer Anpin and Malchus respectively.]

G d's putting on tefillin [represents a higher level. By putting on tefillin,] He draws the essence of intellect into the realm of emotion.

[The connection between tefillin and intellect is illustrated by the fact that] a child less than 13 years of age is not obligated to put on tefillin. He is not called a man and possesses only a small aspect of intellect. When he becomes 13 years old he becomes a man. Then, through his deed of putting on tefillin, he causes G d to put on tefillin. [The connection between tefillin and intellect is further emphasized by the fact that they are placed on the head.]

Thus, we see that the spiritual aspect of tefillin is the drawing down of the essence of intellect. Thus, tefillin and the study of the Torah represent the same level. Therefore, through the fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin, G d will consider it as if we had labored in the study of the Torah during the day and at night.

The word "as if" is used, for the two [Torah and tefillin are not entirely similar]. Through Torah study, [G d's intellectual attributes] are [actually] drawn down within the world. Through tefillin, by contrast, intellect is drawn down only within the source for the creation of the world. Nevertheless, G d considers the fulfillment of tefillin equal to the study of Torah during the day and at night. [Day and night] refer to this lowly world. [This implies that, although the two are not entirely analogous, G d causes our fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin to affect this world in the same manner as Torah study would.]

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It is customary among Lubavitcher families for the Bar Mitzvah boy to recite the Maamar Issa B'Midrash Tehilim, which was previously recited by previous Lubavitcher Rebbes.

Here you can find its translation in English.

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Here you can find its translation in English.

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Here you can find its translation in English.

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It is customary among Lubavitcher families for the Bar Mitzvah boy to recite the Maamar Issa B'Midrash Tehilim, which was previously recited by previous Lubavitcher Rebbes.

Here you can find its translation in English.

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Here you can find its translation in English.

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Here you can find its translation in English.

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Issa B'Midrash Tehillim

In the Midrash T[eh]illim, it is written:

Rabbi Eliezer declared: "Israel told the Holy One, blessed be He, 'Master of the world, we want to labor in the study of Torah during the day and at night, but we don't have the opportunity.'

The Holy One, blessed be He, replied: 'Fulfill the mitzvah of tefillin, and I will consider it as if you had labored in Torah study during the day and at night.'

[The fact that our Sages state that wearing tefillin can compensate for the inability to study shows that there is a relationship between the two mitzvos. Nevertheless,] we must understand [the nature of] that relationship. How can the fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin free the Jewish people from the study of Torah? How are these mitzvos connected with each other?

[To understand this concept, we must first explain another idea:] It is written: " He tells His words to Yaakov, His statutes and His ordinances to Israel." {On this verse, the Midrash comments }

There are those who give commands to others to fulfill, but do not fulfill them themselves. However, what G d fulfills Himself, He commands to others, as the verse declares: He tells His words to Yaakov, His statutes and His ordinances....

[The verse implies that the "words, ordinances, and statutes" which G d commands to others, are "His," i.e., G d observes them Himself.]

This Midrash can be interpreted to mean: Who causes G d to fulfill the mitzvos? The Jewish people. The Jewish people's performance of mitzvos causes G d to observe those same mitzvos. Hence, when the Jewish people put on tefillin, this causes G d to put on tefillin.

[What is meant by the statement, "G d puts on tefillin"? Surely, the intent is not that He wears tefillin that resemble our own. Instead, His tefillin are spiritual. To explain:] Our sages declare:

What is written in the tefillin of the Master of the universe? "And who is like Your people, like Israel, one nation on earth."

Thus, when G d puts on tefillin, He raises up the stature of the Jewish people.

To explain this concept, [it is necessary to first elaborate on the deeper meaning of] the verse, "Look down from Your holy abode, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel." Behold it is written: "G d is high above all nations." [Here also the intent is not] that He is uplifted [in a physical sense, but that He is on a spiritual plane that far surpasses ours].

[For this reason, our limited human actions cannot, in and of themselves, relate to the exalted nature] of His essence, as implied by the verse: If you have sinned, what have you done against Him? If you are righteous, what do you give Him or what does He receive from your hand? [G d's essence does not only transcend the nature of man,] all the higher and lower realms are considered as nothing before Him.

This concept is [alluded to] in the verse: "for His Name is exalted unto itself," i.e.,

[His Name] is above all existence. Only "its glory," i.e., its radiance and reflection," [shines] on the earth and heaven." [The verse does not mention G d's essence at all. Even "His Name," a lower level, is "exalted," and] only "its glory," a mere radiance and a reflection of that lower level, can be revealed within earth and heaven.

[In this context, we can understand the expression used by the Zohar in regard to the exile,] "When the Holy One, blessed be He, rose to the heights"; i.e. when the G dly life-energy rose up from the [limited] radiance that shines "on the earth and heaven," level after level upward, to its source [in G d's essence].

[G d's ascent to this level leads to exile, for] at this level, the worlds are of no importance. [And therefore, G d's control over them is not manifest. He does not, however, abandon them entirely. To explain by analogy,] He controls the world as if in a state of sleep, as it were.

[What is meant by this analogy?] When a person sleeps, his mind rises above its vessel, his body, and ascends to its source. All that remains is the power of fantasy, a mere trace of [the mind's original] power. [Similarly, in the era of exile, "when G d rises to the heights," His presence is not openly revealed in the world and a mere trace of His power is felt within the world.]

[Conversely, in reference to the Redemption,] we find expressions like "And G d awoke as one out of sleep" and, "Awake, why are You sleeping, O G d." For [when G d "awakes,"] there will be a revelation of Or Ein Sof, [G d's in-finite light] in the Sefiros of Chochmah [wisdom] and Chesed [kindness]. [Through these mediums, it will be expressed in the world at large]. "His countenance will shine" i.e., He will reveal His essence and His nature in its glory, as it truly is, through the inner aspects of His will.

[How will this Divine influence be conveyed to the world?] Through drawing down the Torah and its mitzvos.

In this context, we can understand the verse: Look from heaven and behold and the verse: " Look down from Your holy abode, from heaven." [The Hebrew word shamayim, heaven is a combination of two words,] shom and mayim meaning "There is water there."

This refers to the Torah which is described using the analogy of water. {[As in the verse ]: "Behold all who are thirsty, go to the water," [in which the Prophet Yeshayahu] refers to the Torah.} Through the Torah, [we will merit fulfillment of the verse,] "bless Your people Israel," [blessing will be drawn down to the Jewish people]. [Why does the Torah generate blessing?] Because the Torah causes G d to view the Jewish nation as an important entity. For all the essential appreciation and revelation

[of G dliness] comes about through the medium of the Torah, and the Torah is revealed to us. [Previously, it was explained that all the worlds, in and of themselves, are of no importance. Nevertheless, when the Jews study and observe the Torah, they become important entities. Therefore, they are worthy of blessing.]

This concept is [alluded to in] the verse: "The heavens opened and I saw Divine visions." The heavens [i.e., the Torah] are compared to a shining mirror through which we are seen by G d, as it were. A fine, shining glass mirror improves the image of the object it reflects, making it seem greater and more praiseworthy than it would appear without the mirror. In a similar manner, the Torah makes the Jewish people who fulfill it seem greater and more praiseworthy.

Through the Torah, [added meaning is given to] the verse [which, as mentioned above, is written in G d's tefillin]: "And who is like Your people, Israel, one nation on earth." This can be interpreted to mean that the Jewish people draw down oneness into the earth. They reveal the aspects of "G d is one" in this lowly earth.

The unique quality of the Torah [and why the Torah endows the Jewish people with importance] can be understood in terms of our Sages statement:<sup>1</sup> "The Torah preceded the world by two thousand years." That statement does not refer to chronological precedence, for both time and space are creations. Before the creation of the world, time also did not exist. Here the concept of precedence refers to a higher spiritual level. [The Torah reflects a level of G dliness higher than that vested in creation.]

[G d's] emotional attributes are the source for the world. The Zohar<sup>2</sup> explains that the verse,<sup>3</sup> "For in six days, G d made [the heavens and the earth]" alludes to this concept. The Hebrew which reads "Shayshes Yomim As-ah" literally means "Six days made." The prefix ׀ which means "in" was omitted. [The Zohar explains the reason for the omission.] The six days refer to G d's six emotional attributes as they underwent a great descent into the realm of Asiyah, the realm of action.

[The original level of the six emotional attributes is the realm of Atzilus, the realm of emanation, where all existence is totally at one with G d. To bring about the creation of a physical world, these potentials descended into the realm of Asiyah.]

[On this basis, we can understand another statement of the Zohar. The Zohar explains<sup>4</sup> that the first word of the Torah,] (Bereishis), the first of the ten statements of creation, is a combination of two words, (Borah Shis) He created six [a reference to G d's six emotional attributes]. [Through these six emotional attributes, all existence came into being.]

This concept can be further understood in terms of the interpretation of the verse,<sup>5</sup>

"The world shall be built with kindness." There are two ways to explain this verse: a) the attribute of kindness was necessary in order to build the worlds. [Kindness is the first of the six emotional attributes. It motivates the expression of all the other attributes that are necessary for creation. To cite an example in the personal realm: The very connection with others expressed by the other emotional qualities is an expression of kindness and love. Accordingly, the Etz Chaim explains<sup>6</sup> the first day which is symbolic of the attribute of kindness] proceeds together with all the other days.

b) The attribute of kindness itself must be built. [In this context, the above expression would be read: "For the sake of the world, kindness was built."] In a similar vein, the above expression, "He created six" describes the building of the six emotional attributes in order that they, in turn, become the source for the lower worlds Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah.

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This is possible for through performing the mitzvah of tefillin, we cause the Holy

One, blessed be He, to put on te-fillin as mentioned above.

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G d's putting on tefillin [represents a higher level. By putting on tefillin,] He draws the essence of intellect into the realm of emotion.

[The connection between tefillin and intellect is illustrated by the fact that] a child less than 13 years of age is not obligated to put on tefillin. He is not called a man and possesses only a small aspect of intellect. When he becomes 13 years old he becomes a man. Then, through his deed of putting on tefillin, he causes G d to put on tefillin. [The connection between tefillin and intellect is further emphasized by the fact that they are placed on the head.]

Thus, we see that the spiritual aspect of tefillin is the drawing down of the essence of intellect. Thus, tefillin and the study of the Torah represent the same level. Therefore, through the fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin, G d will consider it as if we had labored in the study of the Torah during the day and at night.

The word "as if" is used, for the two [Torah and tefillin are not entirely similar]. Through Torah study, [G d's intellectual attributes] are [actually] drawn down within the world. Through tefillin, by contrast, intellect is drawn down only within the source for the creation of the world. Nevertheless, G d considers the fulfillment of tefillin equal to the study of Torah during the day and at night. [Day and night] refer to this lowly world. [This implies that, although the two are not entirely analogous, G d causes our fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin to affect this world in the same manner as Torah study would.]

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In the Midrash T[eh]illim, it is written:

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[The fact that our Sages state that wearing tefillin can compensate for the inability to study shows that there is a relationship between the two mitzvos. Nevertheless,] we must understand [the nature of] that relationship. How can the fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin free the Jewish people from the study of Torah? How are these mitzvos connected with each other?

[To understand this concept, we must first explain another idea:] It is written: " He tells His words to Yaakov, His statutes and His ordinances to Israel." {On this verse, the Midrash comments }

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This Midrash can be interpreted to mean: Who causes G d to fulfill the mitzvos? The Jewish people. The Jewish people's performance of mitzvos causes G d to observe those same mitzvos. Hence, when the Jewish people put on tefillin, this causes G d to put on tefillin.

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What is written in the tefillin of the Master of the universe? "And who is like Your people, like Israel, one nation on earth."

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To explain this concept, [it is necessary to first elaborate on the deeper meaning of] the verse, "Look down from Your holy abode, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel." Behold it is written: "G d is high above all nations." [Here also the intent is not] that He is uplifted [in a physical sense, but that He is on a spiritual plane that far surpasses ours].

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This concept is [alluded to] in the verse: "for His Name is exalted unto itself," i.e., [His Name] is above all existence. Only "its glory," i.e., its radiance and reflection," [shines] on the earth and heaven." [The verse does not mention G d's essence at all. Even "His Name," a lower level, is "exalted," and] only "its glory," a mere radiance and a reflection of that lower level, can be revealed within earth and heaven.

[In this context, we can understand the expression used by the Zohar in regard to the exile,] "When the Holy One, blessed be He, rose to the heights"; i.e. when the G dly life-energy rose up from the [limited] radiance that shines "on the earth and heaven," level after level upward, to its source [in G d's essence].

[G d's ascent to this level leads to exile, for] at this level, the worlds are of no importance. [And therefore, G d's control over them is not manifest. He does not, however, abandon them entirely. To explain by analogy,] He controls the world as if in a state of sleep, as it were.

[What is meant by this analogy?] When a person sleeps, his mind rises above its vessel, his body, and ascends to its source. All that remains is the power of fantasy, a mere trace of [the mind's original] power. [Similarly, in the era of exile, "when G d rises to the heights," His presence is not openly revealed in the world and a mere trace of His power is felt within the world.]

[Conversely, in reference to the Redemption,] we find expressions like "And G d awoke as one out of sleep" and, "Awake, why are You sleeping, O G d." For [when G d "awakes,"] there will be a revelation of Or Ein Sof, [G d's in-finite light] in the Sefiros of Chochmah [wisdom] and Chesed [kindness]. [Through these mediums, it will be expressed in the world at large]. "His countenance will shine" i.e., He will reveal His essence and His nature in its glory, as it truly is, through the inner aspects of His will.

[How will this Divine influence be conveyed to the world?] Through drawing down the Torah and its mitzvos.

In this context, we can understand the verse: Look from heaven and behold and the verse: " Look down from Your holy abode, from heaven." [The Hebrew word shamayim, heaven is a combination of two words,] shom and mayim meaning "There is water there."

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[The above explains how G d's emotional attributes are related to the lower worlds. They were brought into being to act as the creative agents to form those realms. The Torah, by contrast, reflects G d's intellectual attributes, and exists independent of the existence of the lower realms. As mentioned above,] "The Torah preceded the world." [Similarly, the Zohar states,<sup>7</sup>] "The Torah emanates from wisdom," [i.e., G d's] intellectual attributes which transcend the [lower] worlds entirely.

[The difference between G d's attributes of intellect and emotion can be seen through analyzing the functioning of these potentials in the human realm.] Intellect does not require another person. Even when one is alone, without someone with whom to share an idea, it is possible to think intellectually. The emotions, by contrast, require a recipient. For example, the attribute of kindness requires someone to receive one's generosity and kindness. If there is no recipient, the emotion itself disappears as if it never existed. This principle [is reflected in a story the Torah relates concerning] Avraham. "He sat at the tent door in the heat of the day" looking for passersby. He wanted to find someone to show kindness to, for without a recipient, the giver loses this potential for expression.

Similarly, this principle can be understood in regard to the spiritual realms. [G d's emotional attributes require, as it were, the existence of an entity that feels itself as separate from Him.] Thus, it is written: "Remember Your mercies... and kindnesses, for they have existed for all time." [The Hebrew word "MeOlam" translated as "for all time," can also mean "from the world."] G d's mercies and kindnesses are related to the worlds. As explained in the [second] interpretation of the verse, "the world shall be built with kindness," kindness was built, brought into being, for the sake of the creation. If there had not been a creation, the attribute of kindness would not have been required. For who would receive that kindness?

These concepts explain the opening statement of the Etz Chaim [regarding the order for the creation]: "When it arose in His simple will to be generous to His creations..." [His will was aroused] because G d is good and it is the nature of the good to be generous. This kindness is drawn down from the level of "He who desires kindness." It reflects the kindness that exists in G d's will. [This potential for kindness exists only at the level of G dliness that relates to the creation of the worlds.]

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[Despite these indications that G d's intellectual attributes were invested in the creation, it can be explained that the intellectual aspects] that were drawn down to the emotions [and thus into the creation] reflect a [lower] level of intellect, that which is related to the emotions. The essence of intellect, by contrast, [stands above the emotions and above creation]. The Torah emanates from wisdom, the essence of G d's intellect. Therefore, Torah preceded the world by two thousand years.

{[The number two thousand is also significant. The root of the Hebrew word for thousand "Aleph" resembles the word] "Aalefcha", which means I will teach you. Two thousand [can mean two approaches of teaching as is stated,] I will teach you wisdom, I will teach you understanding. [This further expresses how] the Torah represents the realm of intellect that precedes the world which is related to the realm of emotions.}

Through the above, we can understand the passage cited at the outset: Rabbi Eliezer declared: "Israel told the Holy One, blessed be He, We want to labor in Torah study," for through Torah study we draw G d's intellectual attributes into His emotional attributes. This reflects a great and wondrous level.

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The Holy One, blessed be He, replied: "Fulfill the mitzvah of tefillin and I will consider it as if you had labored in Torah study during the day and at night."

This is possible for through performing the mitzvah of tefillin, we cause the Holy One, blessed be He, to put on te-fillin as mentioned above.

[The union of G d's intellectual attributes with His emotional attributes is also alluded to in the term the Talmud uses for G d in that statement] "The Holy One, blessed be He," Hakodosh Boruch Hu refers to the male and fe-male aspects of the realm of Atzilus. The male aspects Zeer Anpin, G d's emotional attributes, are alluded to by the word Kodosh; and the feminine aspects, Malchus, the power of royalty, by the word Boruch.

These allusions are reflected [in our Sages' statements explaining how Moshe was

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G d's putting on tefillin [represents a higher level. By putting on tefillin,] He draws the essence of intellect into the realm of emotion.

[The connection between tefillin and intellect is illustrated by the fact that] a child less than 13 years of age is not obligated to put on tefillin. He is not called a man and possesses only a small aspect of intellect. When he becomes 13 years old he becomes a man. Then, through his deed of putting on tefillin, he causes G d to put on tefillin. [The connection between tefillin and intellect is further emphasized by the fact that they are placed on the head.]

Thus, we see that the spiritual aspect of tefillin is the drawing down of the essence of intellect. Thus, tefillin and the study of the Torah represent the same level. Therefore, through the fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin, G d will consider it as if we had labored in the study of the Torah during the day and at night.

The word "as if" is used, for the two [Torah and tefillin are not entirely similar]. Through Torah study, [G d's intellectual attributes] are [actually] drawn down within the world. Through tefillin, by contrast, intellect is drawn down only within the source for the creation of the world. Nevertheless, G d considers the fulfillment of tefillin equal to the study of Torah during the day and at night. [Day and night] refer to this lowly world. [This implies that, although the two are not entirely analogous, G d causes our fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin to affect this world in the same manner as Torah study would.]

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[The fact that our Sages state that wearing tefillin can compensate for the inability to study shows that there is a relationship between the two mitzvos. Nevertheless,] we must understand [the nature of] that relationship. How can the fulfillment of the

mitzvah of tefillin free the Jewish people from the study of Torah? How are these mitzvos connected with each other?

[To understand this concept, we must first explain another idea:] It is written: " He tells His words to Yaakov, His statutes and His ordinances to Israel." {On this verse, the Midrash comments }

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[The verse implies that the "words, ordinances, and statutes" which G d commands to others, are "His," i.e., G d observes them Himself.]

This Midrash can be interpreted to mean: Who causes G d to fulfill the mitzvos? The Jewish people. The Jewish people's performance of mitzvos causes G d to observe those same mitzvos. Hence, when the Jewish people put on tefillin, this causes G d to put on tefillin.

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What is written in the tefillin of the Master of the universe? "And who is like Your people, like Israel, one nation on earth."

Thus, when G d puts on tefillin, He raises up the stature of the Jewish people.

To explain this concept, [it is necessary to first elaborate on the deeper meaning of] the verse, "Look down from Your holy abode, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel." Behold it is written: "G d is high above all nations." [Here also the intent is not] that He is uplifted [in a physical sense, but that He is on a spiritual plane that far surpasses ours].

[For this reason, our limited human actions cannot, in and of themselves, relate to the exalted nature] of His essence, as implied by the verse: If you have sinned, what have you done against Him? If you are righteous, what do you give Him or what does He receive from your hand? [G d's essence does not only transcend the nature of man,] all the higher and lower realms are considered as nothing before Him.

This concept is [alluded to] in the verse: "for His Name is exalted unto itself," i.e., [His Name] is above all existence. Only "its glory," i.e., its radiance and reflection, [shines] on the earth and heaven." [The verse does not mention G d's essence at all. Even "His Name," a lower level, is "exalted," and] only "its glory," a mere radiance and a reflection of that lower level, can be revealed within earth and heaven.

[In this context, we can understand the expression used by the Zohar in regard to the exile,] "When the Holy One, blessed be He, rose to the heights"; i.e. when the G dly life-energy rose up from the [limited] radiance that shines "on the earth and heaven," level after level upward, to its source [in G d's essence].

[G d's ascent to this level leads to exile, for] at this level, the worlds are of no importance. [And therefore, G d's control over them is not manifest. He does not, however, abandon them entirely. To explain by analogy,] He controls the world as if in a state of sleep, as it were.

[What is meant by this analogy?] When a person sleeps, his mind rises above its vessel, his body, and ascends to its source. All that remains is the power of fantasy, a mere trace of [the mind's original] power. [Similarly, in the era of exile, "when G d rises to the heights," His presence is not openly revealed in the world and a mere trace of His power is felt within the world.]

[Conversely, in reference to the Redemption,] we find expressions like "And G d awoke as one out of sleep" and, "Awake, why are You sleeping, O G d." For [when G d "awakes,"] there will be a revelation of Or Ein Sof, [G d's in-finite light] in the Sefiros of Chochmah [wisdom] and Chesed [kindness]. [Through these mediums, it will be expressed in the world at large]. "His countenance will shine" i.e., He will reveal His essence and His nature in its glory, as it truly is, through the inner aspects of His will.

[How will this Divine influence be conveyed to the world?] Through drawing down the Torah and its mitzvos.

In this context, we can understand the verse: Look from heaven and behold and the verse: " Look down from Your holy abode, from heaven." [The Hebrew word shamayim, heaven is a combination of two words,] shom and mayim meaning "There is water there."

This refers to the Torah which is described using the analogy of water. {[As in the verse ]: "Behold all who are thirsty, go to the water," [in which the Prophet Yeshayahu] refers to the Torah.} Through the Torah, [we will merit fulfillment of the verse,] "bless Your people Israel," [blessing will be drawn down to the Jewish people]. [Why does the Torah generate blessing?] Because the Torah causes G d to view the Jewish nation as an important entity. For all the essential appreciation and revelation [of G dliness] comes about through the medium of the Torah, and the Torah is revealed to us. [Previously, it was explained that all the worlds, in and of themselves, are of no importance. Nevertheless, when the Jews study and observe the Torah, they become important entities. Therefore, they are worthy of blessing.]

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[The original level of the six emotional attributes is the realm of Atzilus, the realm of emanation, where all existence is totally at one with G d. To bring about the creation

of a physical world, these potentials descended into the realm of Asiyah.]

[On this basis, we can understand another statement of the Zohar. The Zohar explains<sup>4</sup> that the first word of the Torah,] (Bereishis), the first of the ten statements of creation, is a combination of two words, (Borah Shis) He created six [a reference to G d's six emotional attributes]. [Through these six emotional attributes, all existence came into being.]

This concept can be further understood in terms of the interpretation of the verse,<sup>5</sup> "The world shall be built with kindness." There are two ways to explain this verse: a) the attribute of kindness was necessary in order to build the worlds. [Kindness is the first of the six emotional attributes. It motivates the expression of all the other attributes that are necessary for creation. To cite an example in the personal realm: The very connection with others expressed by the other emotional qualities is an expression of kindness and love. Accordingly, the Etz Chaim explains<sup>6</sup> the first day which is symbolic of the attribute of kindness] proceeds together with all the other days.

b) The attribute of kindness itself must be built. [In this context, the above expression would be read: "For the sake of the world, kindness was built."] In a similar vein, the above expression, "He created six" describes the building of the six emotional attributes in order that they, in turn, become the source for the lower worlds Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah.

[The above explains how G d's emotional attributes are related to the lower worlds. They were brought into being to act as the creative agents to form those realms. The Torah, by contrast, reflects G d's intellectual attributes, and exists independent of the existence of the lower realms. As mentioned above,] "The Torah preceded the world." [Similarly, the Zohar states,<sup>7</sup> ] "The Torah emanates from wisdom," [i.e., G d's] intellectual attributes which transcend the [lower] worlds entirely.

[The difference between G d's attributes of intellect and emotion can be seen through analyzing the functioning of these potentials in the human realm.] Intellect does not require another person. Even when one is alone, without someone with whom to share an idea, it is possible to think intellectually. The emotions, by contrast, require a recipient. For example, the attribute of kindness requires someone to receive one's generosity and kindness. If there is no recipient, the emotion itself disappears as if it never existed. This principle [is reflected in a story the Torah relates concerning] Avraham. "He sat at the tent door in the heat of the day" looking for passersby. He wanted to find someone to show kindness to, for without a recipient, the giver loses this potential for expression.

Similarly, this principle can be understood in regard to the spiritual realms. [G d's emotional attributes require, as it were, the existence of an entity that feels itself as separate from Him.] Thus, it is written: "Remember Your mercies... and kindnesses, for they have existed for all time." [The Hebrew word "MeOlam" translated as "for all time," can also mean "from the world."] G d's mercies and kindnesses are related to the worlds. As explained in the [second] interpretation of the verse, "the world shall be built with kindness," kindness was built, brought into being, for the sake of the creation. If there had not been a creation, the attribute of kindness would not have been required. For who would receive that kindness?

These concepts explain the opening statement of the Etz Chaim [regarding the order for the creation]: "When it arose in His simple will to be generous to His creations..." [His will was aroused] because G d is good and it is the nature of the good to be generous. This kindness is drawn down from the level of "He who desires kindness." It reflects the kindness that exists in G d's will. [This potential for kindness exists only at the level of G dliness that relates to the creation of the worlds.]

G d's intellectual attributes, by contrast, were not drawn down in the creation of the worlds. Even though we find references to G d's use of intellect in the creation. For example, our Sages declared, "G d created the world with ten qualities: with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge." In a similar vein, the Sefer Yetzirah writes: "The world [was created] by three Seforim, Sefer, Sofer, and Sippur." The maamar Ushavtem explains that the level Sofer (scribe) refers to the level of wisdom and the level of Sefer [a book] refers to the level of understanding. Just as a scribe writes a book, [understanding is a product of wisdom.]

[Despite these indications that G d's intellectual attributes were invested in the creation, it can be explained that the intellectual aspects] that were drawn down to the emotions [and thus into the creation] reflect a [lower] level of intellect, that which is related to the emotions. The essence of intellect, by contrast, [stands above the emotions and above creation]. The Torah emanates from wisdom, the essence of G d's intellect. Therefore, Torah preceded the world by two thousands years.

{[The number two thousand is also significant. The root of the Hebrew word for thousand "Aleph" resembles the word] "Aalefcha", which means I will teach you. Two thousand [can mean two approaches of teaching as is stated,] I will teach you wisdom, I will teach you understanding. [This further expresses how] the Torah represents the realm of intellect that precedes the world which is related to the realm of emotions.}

Through the above, we can understand the passage cited at the outset: Rabbi Eliezer declared: "Israel told the Holy One, blessed be He, We want to labor in Torah study,"

for through Torah study we draw G d's intellectual attributes into His emotional attributes. This reflects a great and wondrous level.

The passage continues:

"...But we don't have the opportunity."

The Holy One, blessed be He, replied: "Fulfill the mitzvah of tefillin and I will consider it as if you had labored in Torah study during the day and at night."

This is possible for through performing the mitzvah of tefillin, we cause the Holy One, blessed be He, to put on te-fillin as mentioned above.

[The union of G d's intellectual attributes with His emotional attributes is also alluded to in the term the Talmud uses for G d in that statement] "The Holy One, blessed be He," Hakodosh Boruch Hu refers to the male and fe-male aspects of the realm of Atzilus. The male aspects Zeer Anpin, G d's emotional attributes, are alluded to by the word Kodosh; and the feminine aspects, Malchus, the power of royalty, by the word Boruch.

These allusions are reflected [in our Sages' statements explaining how Moshe was able to follow the passage of time when he was on Mt. Sinai]: "When [the angels] said Kodosh, he knew it was day; when they said Boruch he knew it was night." [For day and night refer to Zeer Anpin and Malchus respectively.]

G d's putting on tefillin [represents a higher level. By putting on tefillin,] He draws the essence of intellect into the realm of emotion.

[The connection between tefillin and intellect is illustrated by the fact that] a child less than 13 years of age is not obligated to put on tefillin. He is not called a man and possesses only a small aspect of intellect. When he becomes 13 years old he becomes a man. Then, through his deed of putting on tefillin, he causes G d to put on tefillin. [The connection between tefillin and intellect is further emphasized by the fact that they are placed on the head.]

Thus, we see that the spiritual aspect of tefillin is the drawing down of the essence of intellect. Thus, tefillin and the study of the Torah represent the same level. Therefore, through the fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin, G d will consider it as if we had labored in the study of the Torah during the day and at night.

The word "as if" is used, for the two [Torah and tefillin are not entirely similar].

Through Torah study, [G d's intellectual attributes] are [actually] drawn down within the world. Through tefillin, by contrast, intellect is drawn down only within the source for the creation of the world. Nevertheless, G d considers the fulfillment of tefillin equal to the study of Torah during the day and at night. [Day and night] refer to this lowly world. [This implies that, although the two are not entirely analogous, G

d causes our fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin to affect this world in the same manner as Torah study would.]

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Post

Issa B'Midrash Tehillim

In the Midrash T[eh]illim, it is written:

Rabbi Eliezer declared: "Israel told the Holy One, blessed be He, 'Master of the world, we want to labor in the study of Torah during the day and at night, but we don't have the opportunity.'

The Holy One, blessed be He, replied: 'Fulfill the mitzvah of tefillin, and I will consider it as if you had labored in Torah study during the day and at night.'

[The fact that our Sages state that wearing tefillin can compensate for the inability to study shows that there is a relationship between the two mitzvos. Nevertheless,] we must understand [the nature of] that relationship. How can the fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin free the Jewish people from the study of Torah? How are these mitzvos connected with each other?

[To understand this concept, we must first explain another idea:] It is written: " He tells His words to Yaakov, His statutes and His ordinances to Israel." {On this verse, the Midrash comments }

There are those who give commands to others to fulfill, but do not fulfill them themselves. However, what G d fulfills Himself, He commands to others, as the verse declares: He tells His words to Yaakov, His statutes and His ordinances....

[The verse implies that the "words, ordinances, and statutes" which G d commands to others, are "His," i.e., G d observes them Himself.]

This Midrash can be interpreted to mean: Who causes G d to fulfill the mitzvos? The Jewish people. The Jewish people's performance of mitzvos causes G d to observe those same mitzvos. Hence, when the Jewish people put on tefillin, this causes G d to put on tefillin.

[What is meant by the statement, "G d puts on tefillin"? Surely, the intent is not that He wears tefillin that resemble our own. Instead, His tefillin are spiritual. To explain:]

Our sages declare:

What is written in the tefillin of the Master of the universe? "And who is like Your people, like Israel, one nation on earth."

Thus, when G d puts on tefillin, He raises up the stature of the Jewish people.

To explain this concept, [it is necessary to first elaborate on the deeper meaning of] the verse, "Look down from Your holy abode, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel." Behold it is written: "G d is high above all nations." [Here also the intent is not] that He is uplifted [in a physical sense, but that He is on a spiritual plane that far surpasses ours].

[For this reason, our limited human actions cannot, in and of themselves, relate to the exalted nature] of His essence, as implied by the verse: If you have sinned, what have you done against Him? If you are righteous, what do you give Him or what does He receive from your hand? [G d's essence does not only transcend the nature of man,] all the higher and lower realms are considered as nothing before Him.

This concept is [alluded to] in the verse: "for His Name is exalted unto itself," i.e., [His Name] is above all existence. Only "its glory," i.e., its radiance and reflection, [shines] on the earth and heaven." [The verse does not mention G d's essence at all. Even "His Name," a lower level, is "exalted," and] only "its glory," a mere radiance and a reflection of that lower level, can be revealed within earth and heaven.

[In this context, we can understand the expression used by the Zohar in regard to the exile,] "When the Holy One, blessed be He, rose to the heights"; i.e. when the G dly life-energy rose up from the [limited] radiance that shines "on the earth and heaven," level after level upward, to its source [in G d's essence].

[G d's ascent to this level leads to exile, for] at this level, the worlds are of no importance. [And therefore, G d's control over them is not manifest. He does not, however, abandon them entirely. To explain by analogy,] He controls the world as if in a state of sleep, as it were.

[What is meant by this analogy?] When a person sleeps, his mind rises above its vessel, his body, and ascends to its source. All that remains is the power of fantasy, a mere trace of [the mind's original] power. [Similarly, in the era of exile, "when G d rises to the heights," His presence is not openly revealed in the world and a mere trace of His power is felt within the world.]

[Conversely, in reference to the Redemption,] we find expressions like "And G d awoke as one out of sleep" and, "Awake, why are You sleeping, O G d." For [when G d "awakes,"] there will be a revelation of Or Ein Sof, [G d's in-finite light] in the Sefiros of Chochmah [wisdom] and Chesed [kindness]. [Through these mediums, it will be expressed in the world at large]. "His countenance will shine" i.e., He will

reveal His essence and His nature in its glory, as it truly is, through the inner aspects of His will.

[How will this Divine influence be conveyed to the world?] Through drawing down the Torah and its mitzvos.

In this context, we can understand the verse: Look from heaven and behold and the verse: "Look down from Your holy abode, from heaven." [The Hebrew word shamayim, heaven is a combination of two words,] shom and mayim meaning "There is water there."

This refers to the Torah which is described using the analogy of water. {[As in the verse]: "Behold all who are thirsty, go to the water," [in which the Prophet Yeshayahu] refers to the Torah.} Through the Torah, [we will merit fulfillment of the verse,] "bless Your people Israel," [blessing will be drawn down to the Jewish people]. [Why does the Torah generate blessing?] Because the Torah causes G d to view the Jewish nation as an important entity. For all the essential appreciation and revelation [of G dliness] comes about through the medium of the Torah, and the Torah is revealed to us. [Previously, it was explained that all the worlds, in and of themselves, are of no importance. Nevertheless, when the Jews study and observe the Torah, they become important entities. Therefore, they are worthy of blessing.]

This concept is [alluded to in] the verse: "The heavens opened and I saw Divine visions." The heavens [i.e., the Torah] are compared to a shining mirror through which we are seen by G d, as it were. A fine, shining glass mirror improves the image of the object it reflects, making it seem greater and more praiseworthy than it would appear without the mirror. In a similar manner, the Torah makes the Jewish people who fulfill it seem greater and more praiseworthy.

Through the Torah, [added meaning is given to] the verse [which, as mentioned above, is written in G d's tefillin]: "And who is like Your people, Israel, one nation on earth." This can be interpreted to mean that the Jewish people draw down oneness into the earth. They reveal the aspects of "G d is one" in this lowly earth.

The unique quality of the Torah [and why the Torah endows the Jewish people with importance] can be understood in terms of our Sages statement:<sup>1</sup> "The Torah preceded the world by two thousand years." That statement does not refer to chronological precedence, for both time and space are creations. Before the creation of the world, time also did not exist. Here the concept of precedence refers to a higher spiritual level. [The Torah reflects a level of G dliness higher than that vested in creation.]

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Date: 2016-01

It is customary among Lubavitcher families for the Bar Mitzvah boy to recite the Maamar Issa B'Midrash Tehilim, which was previously recited by previous Lubavitcher Rebbes.

Here you can find its translation in English.

Post

Issa B'Midrash Tehillim

In the Midrash T[eh]illim, it is written:

Rabbi Eliezer declared: "Israel told the Holy One, blessed be He, 'Master of the world, we want to labor in the study of Torah during the day and at night, but we don't have the opportunity.'

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[of G dliness] comes about through the medium of the Torah, and the Torah is revealed to us. [Previously, it was explained that all the worlds, in and of themselves, are of no importance. Nevertheless, when the Jews study and observe the Torah, they become important entities. Therefore, they are worthy of blessing.]

This concept is [alluded to in] the verse: "The heavens opened and I saw Divine visions." The heavens [i.e., the Torah] are compared to a shining mirror through which we are seen by G d, as it were. A fine, shining glass mirror improves the image of the object it reflects, making it seem greater and more praiseworthy than it would appear without the mirror. In a similar manner, the Torah makes the Jewish people who fulfill it seem greater and more praiseworthy.

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This concept can be further understood in terms of the interpretation of the verse,<sup>5</sup>

"The world shall be built with kindness." There are two ways to explain this verse: a) the attribute of kindness was necessary in order to build the worlds. [Kindness is the first of the six emotional attributes. It motivates the expression of all the other attributes that are necessary for creation. To cite an example in the personal realm: The very connection with others expressed by the other emotional qualities is an expression of kindness and love. Accordingly, the Etz Chaim explains<sup>6</sup> the first day which is symbolic of the attribute of kindness] proceeds together with all the other days.

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[The above explains how G d's emotional attributes are related to the lower worlds. They were brought into being to act as the creative agents to form those realms. The Torah, by contrast, reflects G d's intellectual attributes, and exists independent of the existence of the lower realms. As mentioned above,] "The Torah preceded the world." [Similarly, the Zohar states,<sup>7</sup> ] "The Torah emanates from wisdom," [i.e., G d's] intellectual attributes which transcend the [lower] worlds entirely.

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Similarly, this principle can be understood in regard to the spiritual realms. [G d's emotional attributes require, as it were, the existence of an entity that feels itself as separate from Him.] Thus, it is written: "Remember Your mercies... and kindnesses, for they have existed for all time." [The Hebrew word "MeOlam" translated as "for all time," can also mean "from the world."] G d's mercies and kindnesses are related to the worlds. As explained in the [second] interpretation of the verse, "the world shall be built with kindness," kindness was built, brought into being, for the sake of the

creation. If there had not been a creation, the attribute of kindness would not have been required. For who would receive that kindness?

These concepts explain the opening statement of the Etz Chaim [regarding the order for the creation]: "When it arose in His simple will to be generous to His creations..." [His will was aroused] because G d is good and it is the nature of the good to be generous. This kindness is drawn down from the level of "He who desires kindness." It reflects the kindness that exists in G d's will. [This potential for kindness exists only at the level of G dliness that relates to the creation of the worlds.]

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{[The number two thousand is also significant. The root of the Hebrew word for thousand "Aleph" resembles the word] "Aalefcha", which means I will teach you. Two thousand [can mean two approaches of teaching as is stated,] I will teach you wisdom, I will teach you understanding. [This further expresses how] the Torah represents the realm of intellect that precedes the world which is related to the realm of emotions.}

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The Holy One, blessed be He, replied: "Fulfill the mitzvah of tefillin and I will consider it as if you had labored in Torah study during the day and at night."

This is possible for through performing the mitzvah of tefillin, we cause the Holy

One, blessed be He, to put on te–fillin as mentioned above.

[The union of G d's intellectual attributes with His emotional attributes is also alluded to in the term the Talmud uses for G d in that statement] "The Holy One, blessed be He," Hakodosh Boruch Hu refers to the male and fe–male aspects of the realm of Atzilus. The male aspects Zeer Anpin, G d's emotional attributes, are alluded to by the word Kodosh; and the feminine aspects, Malchus, the power of royalty, by the word Boruch.

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G d's putting on tefillin [represents a higher level. By putting on tefillin,] He draws the essence of intellect into the realm of emotion.

[The connection between tefillin and intellect is illustrated by the fact that] a child less than 13 years of age is not obligated to put on tefillin. He is not called a man and possesses only a small aspect of intellect. When he becomes 13 years old he becomes a man. Then, through his deed of putting on tefillin, he causes G d to put on tefillin. [The connection between tefillin and intellect is further emphasized by the fact that they are placed on the head.]

Thus, we see that the spiritual aspect of tefillin is the drawing down of the essence of intellect. Thus, tefillin and the study of the Torah represent the same level. Therefore, through the fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin, G d will consider it as if we had labored in the study of the Torah during the day and at night.

The word "as if" is used, for the two [Torah and tefillin are not entirely similar]. Through Torah study, [G d's intellectual attributes] are [actually] drawn down within the world. Through tefillin, by contrast, intellect is drawn down only within the source for the creation of the world. Nevertheless, G d considers the fulfillment of tefillin equal to the study of Torah during the day and at night. [Day and night] refer to this lowly world. [This implies that, although the two are not entirely analogous, G d causes our fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin to affect this world in the same manner as Torah study would.]

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Date: 2016-01

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In the Midrash T[eh]illim, it is written:

Rabbi Eliezer declared: "Israel told the Holy One, blessed be He, 'Master of the world, we want to labor in the study of Torah during the day and at night, but we don't have the opportunity.'

The Holy One, blessed be He, replied: 'Fulfill the mitzvah of tefillin, and I will consider it as if you had labored in Torah study during the day and at night.'

[The fact that our Sages state that wearing tefillin can compensate for the inability to study shows that there is a relationship between the two mitzvos. Nevertheless,] we must understand [the nature of] that relationship. How can the fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin free the Jewish people from the study of Torah? How are these mitzvos connected with each other?

[To understand this concept, we must first explain another idea:] It is written: " He tells His words to Yaakov, His statutes and His ordinances to Israel." {On this verse, the Midrash comments }

There are those who give commands to others to fulfill, but do not fulfill them themselves. However, what G d fulfills Himself, He commands to others, as the verse declares: He tells His words to Yaakov, His statutes and His ordinances....

[The verse implies that the "words, ordinances, and statutes" which G d commands to others, are "His," i.e., G d observes them Himself.]

This Midrash can be interpreted to mean: Who causes G d to fulfill the mitzvos? The Jewish people. The Jewish people's performance of mitzvos causes G d to observe those same mitzvos. Hence, when the Jewish people put on tefillin, this causes G d to put on tefillin.

[What is meant by the statement, "G d puts on tefillin"? Surely, the intent is not that He wears tefillin that resemble our own. Instead, His tefillin are spiritual. To explain:] Our sages declare:

What is written in the tefillin of the Master of the universe? "And who is like Your people, like Israel, one nation on earth."

Thus, when G d puts on tefillin, He raises up the stature of the Jewish people.

To explain this concept, [it is necessary to first elaborate on the deeper meaning of] the verse, "Look down from Your holy abode, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel." Behold it is written: "G d is high above all nations." [Here also the intent is not] that He is uplifted [in a physical sense, but that He is on a spiritual plane that far surpasses ours].

[For this reason, our limited human actions cannot, in and of themselves, relate to the exalted nature] of His essence, as implied by the verse: If you have sinned, what have you done against Him? If you are righteous, what do you give Him or what does He receive from your hand? [G d's essence does not only transcend the nature of man,] all the higher and lower realms are considered as nothing before Him.

This concept is [alluded to] in the verse: "for His Name is exalted unto itself," i.e., [His Name] is above all existence. Only "its glory," i.e., its radiance and reflection, [shines] on the earth and heaven." [The verse does not mention G d's essence at all. Even "His Name," a lower level, is "exalted," and] only "its glory," a mere radiance and a reflection of that lower level, can be revealed within earth and heaven.

[In this context, we can understand the expression used by the Zohar in regard to the exile,] "When the Holy One, blessed be He, rose to the heights"; i.e. when the G dly life-energy rose up from the [limited] radiance that shines "on the earth and heaven," level after level upward, to its source [in G d's essence].

[G d's ascent to this level leads to exile, for] at this level, the worlds are of no importance. [And therefore, G d's control over them is not manifest. He does not, however, abandon them entirely. To explain by analogy,] He controls the world as if in a state of sleep, as it were.

[What is meant by this analogy?] When a person sleeps, his mind rises above its vessel, his body, and ascends to its source. All that remains is the power of fantasy, a mere trace of [the mind's original] power. [Similarly, in the era of exile, "when G d rises to the heights," His presence is not openly revealed in the world and a mere trace of His power is felt within the world.]

[Conversely, in reference to the Redemption,] we find expressions like "And G d awoke as one out of sleep" and, "Awake, why are You sleeping, O G d." For [when G d "awakes,"] there will be a revelation of Or Ein Sof, [G d's in-finite light] in the Sefiros of Chochmah [wisdom] and Chesed [kindness]. [Through these mediums, it will be expressed in the world at large]. "His countenance will shine" i.e., He will reveal His essence and His nature in its glory, as it truly is, through the inner aspects of His will.

[How will this Divine influence be conveyed to the world?] Through drawing down the Torah and its mitzvos.

In this context, we can understand the verse: Look from heaven and behold and the verse: "Look down from Your holy abode, from heaven." [The Hebrew word shamayim, heaven is a combination of two words,] shom and mayim meaning "There is water there."

This refers to the Torah which is described using the analogy of water. {[As in the verse ]: "Behold all who are thirsty, go to the water," [in which the Prophet Yeshayahu] refers to the Torah.} Through the Torah, [we will merit fulfillment of the verse,] "bless Your people Israel," [blessing will be drawn down to the Jewish people]. [Why does the Torah generate blessing?] Because the Torah causes G d to view the Jewish nation as an important entity. For all the essential appreciation and revelation [of G dliness] comes about through the medium of the Torah, and the Torah is revealed to us. [Previously, it was explained that all the worlds, in and of themselves, are of no importance. Nevertheless, when the Jews study and observe the Torah, they become important entities. Therefore, they are worthy of blessing.]

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## Bar Mitsva Maamar

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[How will this Divine influence be conveyed to the world?] Through drawing down the Torah and its mitzvos.

In this context, we can understand the verse: Look from heaven and behold and the verse: "Look down from Your holy abode, from heaven." [The Hebrew word shamayim, heaven is a combination of two words,] shom and mayim meaning "There is water there."

This refers to the Torah which is described using the analogy of water. {[As in the verse]: "Behold all who are thirsty, go to the water," [in which the Prophet Yeshayahu] refers to the Torah.} Through the Torah, [we will merit fulfillment of the verse,] "bless Your people Israel," [blessing will be drawn down to the Jewish people]. [Why does the Torah generate blessing?] Because the Torah causes G d to view the Jewish nation as an important entity. For all the essential appreciation and revelation [of G dliness] comes about through the medium of the Torah, and the Torah is revealed to us. [Previously, it was explained that all the worlds, in and of themselves, are of no importance. Nevertheless, when the Jews study and observe the Torah, they become important entities. Therefore, they are worthy of blessing.]

This concept is [alluded to in] the verse: "The heavens opened and I saw Divine visions." The heavens [i.e., the Torah] are compared to a shining mirror through which we are seen by G d, as it were. A fine, shining glass mirror improves the image of the object it reflects, making it seem greater and more praiseworthy than it would appear without the mirror. In a similar manner, the Torah makes the Jewish people who fulfill it seem greater and more praiseworthy.

Through the Torah, [added meaning is given to] the verse [which, as mentioned above, is written in G d's tefillin]: "And who is like Your people, Israel, one nation on earth." This can be interpreted to mean that the Jewish people draw down oneness into the earth. They reveal the aspects of "G d is one" in this lowly earth.

The unique quality of the Torah [and why the Torah endows the Jewish people with importance] can be understood in terms of our Sages statement:<sup>1</sup> "The Torah preceded the world by two thousand years." That statement does not refer to chronological precedence, for both time and space are creations. Before the creation of the world, time also did not exist. Here the concept of precedence refers to a higher spiritual level. [The Torah reflects a level of G dliness higher than that vested in creation.]

[G d's] emotional attributes are the source for the world. The Zohar<sup>2</sup> explains that

the verse,<sup>3</sup> "For in six days, G d made [the heavens and the earth]" alludes to this concept. The Hebrew which reads "Shayshes Yomim As-ah" literally means "Six days made." The prefix ׀ which means "in" was omitted. [The Zohar explains the reason for the omission.] The six days refer to G d's six emotional attributes as they underwent a great descent into the realm of Asiyah, the realm of action.

[The original level of the six emotional attributes is the realm of Atzilus, the realm of emanation, where all existence is totally at one with G d. To bring about the creation of a physical world, these potentials descended into the realm of Asiyah.]

[On this basis, we can understand another statement of the Zohar. The Zohar explains<sup>4</sup> that the first word of the Torah,] (Bereishis), the first of the ten statements of creation, is a combination of two words, (Borah Shis) He created six [a reference to G d's six emotional attributes]. [Through these six emotional attributes, all existence came into being.]

This concept can be further understood in terms of the interpretation of the verse,<sup>5</sup> "The world shall be built with kindness." There are two ways to explain this verse: a) the attribute of kindness was necessary in order to build the worlds. [Kindness is the first of the six emotional attributes. It motivates the expression of all the other attributes that are necessary for creation. To cite an example in the personal realm: The very connection with others expressed by the other emotional qualities is an expression of kindness and love. Accordingly, the Etz Chaim explains<sup>6</sup> the first day which is symbolic of the attribute of kindness] proceeds together with all the other days.

b) The attribute of kindness itself must be built. [In this context, the above expression would be read: "For the sake of the world, kindness was built."] In a similar vein, the above expression, "He created six" describes the building of the six emotional attributes in order that they, in turn, become the source for the lower worlds Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah.

[The above explains how G d's emotional attributes are related to the lower worlds. They were brought into being to act as the creative agents to form those realms. The Torah, by contrast, reflects G d's intellectual attributes, and exists independent of the existence of the lower realms. As mentioned above,] "The Torah preceded the world." [Similarly, the Zohar states,<sup>7</sup> ] "The Torah emanates from wisdom," [i.e., G d's] intellectual attributes which transcend the [lower] worlds entirely.

[The difference between G d's attributes of intellect and emotion can be seen through analyzing the functioning of these potentials in the human realm.] Intellect does not require another person. Even when one is alone, without someone with whom to

share an idea, it is possible to think intellectually. The emotions, by contrast, require a recipient. For example, the attribute of kindness requires someone to receive one's generosity and kindness. If there is no recipient, the emotion itself disappears as if it never existed. This principle [is reflected in a story the Torah relates concerning] Avraham. "He sat at the tent door in the heat of the day" looking for passersby. He wanted to find someone to show kindness to, for without a recipient, the giver loses this potential for expression.

Similarly, this principle can be understood in regard to the spiritual realms. [G d's emotional attributes require, as it were, the existence of an entity that feels itself as separate from Him.] Thus, it is written: "Remember Your mercies... and kindnesses, for they have existed for all time." [The Hebrew word "MeOlam" translated as "for all time," can also mean "from the world."] G d's mercies and kindnesses are related to the worlds. As explained in the [second] interpretation of the verse, "the world shall be built with kindness," kindness was built, brought into being, for the sake of the creation. If there had not been a creation, the attribute of kindness would not have been required. For who would receive that kindness?

These concepts explain the opening statement of the Etz Chaim [regarding the order for the creation]: "When it arose in His simple will to be generous to His creations..." [His will was aroused] because G d is good and it is the nature of the good to be generous. This kindness is drawn down from the level of "He who desires kindness." It reflects the kindness that exists in G d's will. [This potential for kindness exists only at the level of G dliness that relates to the creation of the worlds.]

G d's intellectual attributes, by contrast, were not drawn down in the creation of the worlds. Even though we find references to G d's use of intellect in the creation. For example, our Sages declared, "G d created the world with ten qualities: with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge." In a similar vein, the Sefer Yetzirah writes: "The world [was created] by three Seforim, Sefer, Sofer, and Sippur." The maamar Ushavtem explains that the level Sofer (scribe) refers to the level of wisdom and the level of Sefer [a book] refers to the level of understanding. Just as a scribe writes a book, [understanding is a product of wisdom.]

[Despite these indications that G d's intellectual attributes were invested in the creation, it can be explained that the intellectual aspects] that were drawn down to the emotions [and thus into the creation] reflect a [lower] level of intellect, that which is related to the emotions. The essence of intellect, by contrast, [stands above the emotions and above creation]. The Torah emanates from wisdom, the essence of G d's intellect. Therefore, Torah preceded the world by two thousands years.

{[The number two thousand is also significant. The root of the Hebrew word for thousand "Aleph" resembles the word] "Aalefcha", which means I will teach you. Two thousand [can mean two approaches of teaching as is stated,] I will teach you wisdom, I will teach you understanding. [This further expresses how] the Torah represents the realm of intellect that precedes the world which is related to the realm of emotions.}

Through the above, we can understand the passage cited at the outset: Rabbi Eliezer declared: "Israel told the Holy One, blessed be He, We want to labor in Torah study," for through Torah study we draw G d's intellectual attributes into His emotional attributes. This reflects a great and wondrous level.

The passage continues:

"...But we dont have the opportunity."

The Holy One, blessed be He, replied: "Fulfill the mitzvah of tefillin and I will consider it as if you had labored in Torah study during the day and at night."

This is possible for through performing the mitzvah of tefillin, we cause the Holy One, blessed be He, to put on te-fillin as mentioned above.

[The union of G d's intellectual attributes with His emotional attributes is also alluded to in the term the Talmud uses for G d in that statement] "The Holy One, blessed be He," Hakodosh Boruch Hu refers to the male and fe-male aspects of the realm of Atzilus. The male aspects Zeer Anpin, G d's emotional attributes, are alluded to by the word Kodosh; and the feminine aspects, Malchus, the power of royalty, by the word Boruch.

These allusions are reflected [in our Sages' statements explaining how Moshe was able to follow the passage of time when he was on Mt. Sinai]: "When [the angels] said Kodosh, he knew it was day; when they said Boruch he knew it was night." [For day and night refer to Zeer Anpin and Malchus respectively.]

G d's putting on tefillin [represents a higher level. By putting on tefillin,] He draws the essence of intellect into the realm of emotion.

[The connection between tefillin and intellect is illustrated by the fact that] a child less than 13 years of age is not obligated to put on tefillin. He is not called a man and possesses only a small aspect of intellect. When he becomes 13 years old he becomes a man. Then, through his deed of putting on tefillin, he causes G d to put on tefillin. [The connection between tefillin and intellect is further emphasized by the fact that they are placed on the head.]

Thus, we see that the spiritual aspect of tefillin is the drawing down of the essence of intellect. Thus, tefillin and the study of the Torah represent the same level. Therefore, through the fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin, G d will consider it as if we had

labored in the study of the Torah during the day and at night.

The word "as if" is used, for the two [Torah and tefillin are not entirely similar].

Through Torah study, [G d's intellectual attributes] are [actually] drawn down within the world. Through tefillin, by contrast, intellect is drawn down only within the source for the creation of the world. Nevertheless, G d considers the fulfillment of tefillin equal to the study of Torah during the day and at night. [Day and night] refer to this lowly world. [This implies that, although the two are not entirely analogous, G d causes our fulfillment of the mitzvah of tefillin to affect this world in the same manner as Torah study would.]

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