A True Kabbalist Prays with a Simple Siddur | Zohar Pekudei Introduction Ki Tavo 5786 (Auto Translated)

English

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Shiur Overview

What is a Mitzvah — Zachor and Shamor in One Utterance

Introduction to the Zohar, Pekudei Oraita, Parashat Ki Tavo 5786

Rabbosai, we are learning our holy Torah. This shiur is the fourth, I believe, in our examination of the Introduction to the Zohar, on the verse 'Pekudei Oraita, pekudei d'mara alma' (Introduction to the Zohar) — the commandments of the Master of the World. And we are still standing in the introduction, for the introduction deals with a very fundamental matter, which is the question: What is a mitzvah? And this question, what is the meaning of mitzvah, it clarifies through the fundamental division of the types of mitzvos that exist, which are positive commandments and negative commandments. And as we said, that the understanding of anything is revealed through standing upon the main divisions within that subject, so is the way of the learner to stand well upon every sugya.

The Fundamental Division of the Mitzvos

Certainly there are many other divisions of the mitzvos besides positive and negative. There are different ways to divide the mitzvos: positive commandments that are time-bound, mitzvos that depend on time, mitzvos that depend on place, mitzvos that are specifically for certain people, mitzvos that are incumbent upon the community, mitzvos that are incumbent upon the individual, mitzvos that depend on the Land of Israel, mitzvos that apply always, and mitzvos that depend on a specific time. And also divisions of obligatory mitzvos and optional mitzvos. And there is also the severity of each mitzvah, especially in negative commandments, whether it carries a prohibition of a simple negative commandment, a prohibition with kares, a prohibition with lashes, or a prohibition with death penalty. Each one of these divisions raises, in truth, a general point in what a mitzvah is, and consequently to which category each particular mitzvah belongs. But the first division, the most general, which divides all the mitzvos into only two, is the division of positive commandments and negative commandments.

Why We Must Understand What a Mitzvah Is

And we must return and stand upon this: Why is it so important to understand what a mitzvah is. For to be a Jew means to be one who fulfills the mitzvos. So it is stated in the Ten Commandments, and as we spoke in the previous shiur about the Ten Commandments. For already in the first part it is said that the Holy One, Blessed be He, is 'pokeid avon avos al banim' (Exodus 20:5) — 'to His enemies,' and they are the enemies of Hashem, and this is none other than one who does not serve the Creator, one who worships idolatry or one who does not do what is incumbent upon him, and he is called an enemy of Hashem. And against them 'and showing kindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments' (Exodus 20:6). The matter is quite clear: there are against the enemies, who are enemies of Hashem, primarily those who do not serve the Creator and do not follow Him, who receive the evil and the punishment that is stated there; and against them the love, and they are the keepers of His commandments. And it is possible that there are two things here, 'to those who love Me and keep My commandments,' and it is possible that they are one thing — those who love Him who are the keepers of His commandments. And according to what we learned from the Ramban, that love is a positive commandment, and 'beware' is from negative commandments which is fear, one can say that love is against those who do positive commandments, and keepers of His commandments against those who keep primarily the negative commandments. But in a general way, keepers of His commandments certainly goes on all the mitzvos.

And as we call ourselves Jews, a Jew is a keeper of mitzvos. Many times they say 'shomer Torah u'mitzvos,' for the Torah is the totality of the mitzvos, and learning the mitzvos is the Torah. So it is extremely important to understand what a mitzvah is in its totality. We are created as ones who do mitzvos, and this is the nature of the Jew — a type of person, a type of human being who does mitzvos and keeps mitzvos. And what is the nature of the mitzvah in general?

Different Ways of Understanding the Mitzvah

And from here we will jump to the way of the Zohar on the matter. There are very many ways. It is self-evident that most people think, nebech, that mitzvah means commandment, from the language of command, command — something that must be done; but this is not the essence of the matter for the Jew. As is known, the books of Chassidus say that mitzvah is from the language of tzavsa, and not from the language of command, but from the language of tzavsa alone. And certainly this is a derash, but it raises something deep, and it is certainly possible to bring it even into the language of the mitzvah and the command themselves. For one must understand what a command is. There were those who said, like Martin Buber I believe, that the Torah is not law but request — something that the Holy One, Blessed be He, requests from the Jews. These are all kinds of formulations in which one can speak about the matter.

The Way of the Zohar: Shamor and Zachor

But the Zohar teaches us its way, and since we are learning Zohar, we will jump to the way of the Zohar. And thus says the Zohar: The mitzvos are shamor and zachor. Shamor and zachor — these are the mitzvos, and they are both one, as it is said 'zachor and shamor were said in one utterance' (Mechilta, Rashi Exodus 20:8), and as we learned last week, that we reached the point where we understand that this is not just a derash about why two different expressions were said in the

Ten Commandments, and this is not just a derash explaining why the same expression was said twice, but this is a fundamental matter in the question of what are the types of mitzvos that exist.

And in a general way it is true about the entire Torah that it has zachor and shamor, and we learned that the Ramban explained that this is actually directed toward positive and negative commandments. And that positive and negative come from different places and go to different places, that they are a completely different essence, and yet both things called positive and negative join together. And the great principle called 613 mitzvos means that everything is one, the same God Himself, 'all of them were given from one shepherd' (Ecclesiastes 12:11) — there is unity in all 613 mitzvos, and as we spoke at the end of the previous shiur. And this unity comes on Shabbos, for about Shabbos it is said 'zachor and shamor in one utterance,' and therefore we light two candles and take two hadassim, in order to express the shamor and zachor that were said in one utterance. And this is the thing that we must clarify here well.

The Question on 'U'shmartem Va'asitem'

And according to Kabbalah, the matter is thus. The first thing the Zohar says is this: It brings a verse in which it is said 'u'shmartem mitzvosai va'asitem osam' (Leviticus 22:31). And the Zohar says, for we just said that there are two types of mitzvos called zachor and shamor, and seemingly it would be more appropriate to say 'u'shmartem mitzvosai u'zechartem osam.' And in my opinion this is only a question of positioning, whose intention is to arrive at its answer, for he cannot write 'u'zechartem mitzvosai,' 'u'shmartem u'zechartem' — this is not acceptable to the mind. Rather his intention is to arouse that there is a double expression, for in the tablets we see that there is a double expression of zachor and shamor, zachor one time and shamor another time, which is an explanation of this. And seemingly the matter should indicate that same subject, or another side of that same subject, as we will need to speak a bit in depth about zachor and shamor. So they are like two sides, two types of mitzvos. And the Ramban said that they are the positive commandment of Shabbos and the negative commandment of Shabbos, and it turns out that positive and negative are in a general way.

And behold there is a verse in which it is said 'u'shmartem va'asitem.' And if so you will ask, why is it said 'u'shmartem va'asitem'? And why is remembrance missing from it? For the doing — this is the doing, and it fits very well that the positive corresponds to the keeping, which is not doing but negative. But where is the remembrance? Why was remembrance not said? As if this is the assumption of the Zohar in its question — it assumes that seemingly it would be proper that there should be here corresponding to keeping and remembering, shamor and zachor. And why was zachor not said? And since the Zohar asks a question, even though seemingly this is a question that was made in order to arrive at the answer — and I don't believe this is a real question. For there are two types of questions: there is a question that a person was truly troubled by something and found an answer and approach for it, and this is not the simple meaning of the question; and there are questions that the Zohar asks of this type, but here his intention is not for this, this is not a question of this type. Here he asks seemingly in order to arrive at showing the simple meaning in keeping and remembering. And he shows, and so he will show, that in this verse, and indeed in very many verses, it does not say keeping and remembering but keeping and doing.

Keeping and Doing Go Together

And since the Zohar noted this, a desire was aroused in me to check the matter. And I checked in the Torah, and it appears that it is said very many times in the Chumash the language of keeping — 'u'shmartem va'asitem,' 'lishmor v'la'asos' — and even in the book of Deuteronomy it is said many times 'lishmor v'la'asos es kol haTorah' or 'es kol hamitzvah,' and several similar expressions. Keeping and doing go together with great strength. And not only do they go together, but they are bound to each other to the point that it is said many times 'u'shmartem la'asos,' without end — I believe dozens of times such expressions were said. And one sees clearly, for it is impossible that it should be said the opposite: it is never said 'la'asos shemirah,' one does not 'do' keeping, keeping is not something that one does. Rather keeping simply means like to keep, as they say in Yiddish 'to keep the Torah.' And how does one keep the Torah? Through doing, and sometimes through not doing.

But the language is, as it is said once 'motza sefasecha tishmor v'asisa' (Deuteronomy 23:24), that you should keep to do. And like 'and his father kept the matter' (Genesis 37:11), that keeping here does not mean to guard something like a guard. And it is possible that even a guard himself is only one who is responsible that the thing should be done properly, that it should be kept and no damage should be caused to it and the like. But keeping here means like they say 'to keep the Torah.' The intention is not that you should stand as a guard on watch before the Torah, and the intention is not to guard the Torah. The intention, as they say in English 'to keep' the Torah, and in Yiddish 'haltn,' 'kipn.' The intention is to do. But there is here, and I seek to express something subtle that I don't have the right words to express, but as it were there is here doing: doing means that one does. I do, I put on tefillin, I take a lulav, I blow a shofar, I do something. But keeping must come with it. That is, you are liable to forget to do it, and therefore you will remember to do it.

The Jew is a Shomer Torah — A Din in the Person

And in my opinion it is always good to learn from our regular language, from the way we speak about understanding the Torah. Sometimes it turns out that the matter is not appropriate, but if it is understood, it is sometimes good to use it, and it is always good to start from what we understand. We say that a Jew is a shomer haTorah, shomer Torah. And one must understand that the intention is not that the Jew never errs and never sins. One is not considered less, let's say, one who stole, that he is not a God-fearing Jew, that he is not a shomer Torah — this is not true. Fortunate is the shomer Torah, a shomer Torah is a Jew who keeps the Torah. It is not said that he is one who does the Torah, and he is not called an 'oseh Torah,' and one does not say that Jews are osim Torah u'mitzvos — even though this is the essence, the keeping.

And even though to keep also means not to do transgressions. And what is more important, not to do transgressions or to do mitzvos? Both are important, but both together are called keeping. That is, a shomer Torah is a type of person who has like a concern, a kind of humanity, a kind of personality. He keeps the Torah, he is a shomer Torah. And does he actually do them, does he do every mitzvah? This is already their

fulfillment. But this is the meaning of keeping. And therefore keeping is the general name. Keeping and doing, and even keeping precedes doing. Keeping precedes doing, and as we learn, this is the attribute of Malchus, that is, the personality, the 'I' that does the Torah, which is the Malchus of the person. And this is the first thing: first there must be keeping, that he is a keeper of the Torah.

The Remembrance: 'Zachor Es Yom HaShabbos' and 'Zachor Amalek'

And it is interesting that I checked: about the same thing it is not possible to say 'doing to keep,' for this has no meaning, since keeping is the totality. And I also checked, and according to what I found, if one remembers another place, it is said 'zachor es yom haShabbos l'kadsho' (Exodus 20:8). And besides zachor es yom haShabbos l'kadsho there are other remembrances. It is said 'zachor es asher asah lecha Amalek' (Deuteronomy 25:17), but this is not 'zachor la'asos.' It does not say 'zachor limchos,' but it says zachor es asher asah Amalek, and following this there is a positive commandment 'timcheh es zecher Amalek' (Deuteronomy 25:19). But the remembrance does not go on the erasing. People think that the mitzvah of zachor — and it is possible that the Rambam learns this way — means that he should remember to do, but in truth two stages are separated there. 'Zachor es asher asah lecha Amalek' is very different from 'zachor es yom haShabbos.' 'Zachor es yom haShabbos' means remember to keep Shabbos, while 'zachor es asher asah lecha Amalek' means remember what Amalek did, and this will cause, or this is a separate mitzvah connected to the mitzvah of erasing Amalek, but this is not zachor to erase Amalek.

Once, once in the entire Torah that I know of, it is said that one must remember all the mitzvos — the language of remembrance on all the mitzvos. The Zohar asks here seemingly, and I said that the question is a bit puzzling, and it seems to me that the Zohar does not intend literally to ask a question, but he intends by this to raise his point. But in practice, once in the entire Torah it is said to remember all the mitzvos, and we say it twice or three times a day: 'l'ma'an tizkeru va'asitem es kol mitzvosai' (Numbers 15:40), 'u'zechartem es kol mitzvos Hashem va'asitem osam' (Numbers 15:39). Here is said the only time, in Parshas Tzitzis, that one must remember all the mitzvos of the Creator and do them.

And we already spoke in the talk on Parshas Shelach, or in one of the weeks close to Parshas Shelach, about the proof from Parshas Tzitzis, that this is the last mitzvah in that order of mitzvos, and there already another language is said, 'v'lo sasuru' (Numbers 15:39), that one must remember, and there there is like remembrance against forgetting (as we explained in the talk on Parshas Shelach about Parshas Tzitzis and this is not its place). But according to what we are speaking today, it is possible that there is here indeed another explanation a bit for remembrance. And we will just first introduce the explanation of the Zohar on remembrance, and afterwards we will already understand that Parshas Tzitzis is a special thing. And one sees this from the fact that we say it every day, also because of remembering the Exodus from Egypt, but also because of remembering all the mitzvos. And remembering all the mitzvos is perhaps a higher level, deeper, according to Kabbalah the level of sod of understanding all the mitzvos.

The Zohar's Answer: Remembrance is Doing — Remembered and Done

The Zohar says thus: Why must remembrance be said, what is the remembrance, and what is the doing? The Zohar says, the remembrance is exactly the same thing as the doing. And this is very puzzling, for according to what we learn and what the world knows, it is always said remembrance and doing, 'and these days are remembered and done' (Esther 9:28). And the Gemara learns that there is remembrance — zachor that one reads it; the Gemara explains that remembrance is reading. And so the Gemara explains halachically 'zachor es yom haShabbos l'kadsho' — that he should speak about Shabbos, mention it. And as we always say, it means to mention and not to remember. This is a matter of speech. And doing is doing, doing in action, certainly.

The Zohar says, that here where doing is said, it means the same thing as remembrance. The remembrance that we speak of, 'zachor es yom haShabbos,' is doing. And what does this mean? The Zohar explains, and what do I mean to say? The Zohar says: 'For whoever mentions something below, mentions and that secret is made above' (Zohar) — that when a person mentions, mentions something here below, that thing is made above. That is, everyone understands that this is the foundation that the Zohar always says. The entire Torah, this is the simple meaning of the Zohar on the mitzvos. So here is the answer to the question: What is a mitzvah? What is a mitzvah according to Kabbalah? A mitzvah is something that is remembered and done. One mentions it here and it is done. That is, here this is not doing. Here indeed it is called the world of action, but this is from our point of view, for we think that here things are done. But the doing is very weak — what does one do here in waving a lulav? And one can say that when one mentions here a remembrance, when they remembered, we speak primarily of a mitzvah that is in remembrance, that is in speech. But the truth is, that relative to the upper worlds, relative to what is real, all our actions are only remembrances, they are only a remembrance. This is not the thing itself, but a remembrance of the thing. This is a sign, as they say, a shadow of the thing, an image of the thing, a picture of the thing, a remembrance, a mere remembrance.

The Mitzvah is a Remembrance of the Upper Worlds

And all the mitzvos are called remembrance. And why are they remembrance? Because therefore the Torah says almost always only remembrance, for the Torah speaks as it truly is. The Torah says that something is done, that it is done. And what is 'done'? Remembered and done. A person remembers, for through the mitzvos he remembers. And what does he remember? For they say the principle, that all the things of this world are remembrances, signs, of upper matters, of real matters. That is, we see only examples of things, we see only the matter that exists here today and is clothed in one body that lives at one time and in one place and the like. But the thing reminds us — and the intention is not that it only reminds us, for this was the more rationalistic simple meaning, but it truly reminds, that is, it has the properties, it has the form, because it reminds us of the roots in it, of the reality upon which it is built. For example, that the mitzvah of tefillin reminds of the thing called 'that the Holy One, Blessed be He, puts on tefillin' (Berachos 6a), that is, the seal of truth, the seal of the existence of the Name, the unification of the Name and the Exodus from Egypt, all the passages of tefillin.

Our tefillin are like a remembrance, like a telephone line through which arrives an echo, a voice from what the reality is. And since this is an echo, it means that it truly reminds.

And consequently, when you put on tefillin, you remember, and not only do you remember — for you this is remembrance, and in heaven, in the true reality, tefillin are made, real tefillin are made. Or when a Jew makes Shabbos, makes the zachor and shamor of Shabbos, the zachor and shamor is made which is the original zachor and shamor, the true zachor and shamor, it is then made after he does this. This is the explanation of the Zohar for remembrance, that is, for the mitzvah of zachor, positive commandments — and we will return to connect this to positive commandments, but it seems seemingly that this must be about all the mitzvos. And zachor is the explanation according to Kabbalah of all the mitzvos, that the mitzvos are things that everyone knows, 'with an awakening from below there is an awakening above' (Zohar). And we already spoke at length that there are two points in this, two explanations. There is that through what a person uses signs, he draws upon himself the drawing down of the light, of the abundance, of the reality that this is a remembrance to it.

And therefore the Mekubalim say that one must learn about everything the signs, one must learn the signs in the world, every object, and especially the objects of mitzvos — the siddur, the esrog, the Sefer Torah, the esrog, the lulav, the sukkah, the shofar — what is this, what does it indicate, and through this, when one does it with this intention, a remembrance is made. You remind of the thing, of the upper shofar, the great shofar, the true shofar that is awakened through the shofar. And in this there is like the passive way, that we say that since this is a vessel, that the remembrance is like a vessel, like the example is like a radio, like a telephone that catches the waves that exist in the world, so since it is built in a way that can catch them, it catches them. And there is also the active way. For previously there were only receivers, there was a radio that sends, the television sends signals from every side, and whoever has the tools has the sign, the remembrance. A telephone device, a television device, a radio — they are only a remembrance. They are not the voice, but a remembrance of the voice. They can receive the voice, and if one tunes them to the right frequency, they receive it.

Mutuality: Returning Light

And in this time, and I believe that technically it was always so, but in this time almost all the tools we have speak back. That is, not only can they receive, but they can also influence as it were. One cannot call this true influence, for the power of the entire system is placed in the upper. And I understand myself that when we say that they influence above, the intention is not that they can stand above the Holy One, Blessed be He, that they can stand above the upper worlds. For therefore they are called upper, because they are above us. But one can speak back.

And I saw something very beautiful that someone said this week, who spoke about a rabbi and student, or about other situations where there is like a certain hierarchy. In this time people are not comfortable with this. Everyone, as is known, wants to be a friend of everyone, wants to be a friend of the Rebbe, of the guide, of the rabbi — as long as it won't be with the Holy One, Blessed be He, alone. He wants to be a friend, he doesn't want the Holy One, Blessed be He, to stand above and he to speak with Him.

And whoever learns books of Chassidus, or the new Chassidic world in this time, finds this on every side. And he now said, that all of Kabbalah is built on this, that there are two ways: this is not a radio but a telephone. This is not something that one can only hear, but something that one can also speak with it back. He says, when the Rebbe gives a shiur, I want to be able to speak back. And certainly this is true, as it is said 'and from my students more than all' (Ta'anis 7a), and Judaism is built on question and answer, that every shiur, every learning must be with question and answer, for otherwise there is almost no law in it. And this is known, and in all the books of Chassidus the matter of 'halo es' is said — 'what descended,' that one must raise mayin nukvin, which is Elokim, and mayin duchrin. The thing goes in both directions. 'From Hashem was this, it is wondrous in our eyes' (Psalms 118:23) — as it were, as the Maggid of Mezritch says, the Holy One, Blessed be He, becomes 'this,' the aspect of female, from us. We arouse through our mitzvos, through our desires, through our Torah learning, through our love of friends, through what we do, we arouse as it were above.

And this that person explained very beautifully: that the world is a bit confused about what this indicates, for this does not yet say that it becomes equal. Like a ba'al teshuvah, did you think it becomes equal? It is not equal. And what is his intention? He says in English, there is here mutuality, that is, the thing goes in both directions. And certainly one can call this as it were, that there is a certain influence that goes back in both directions, returning light. There is something that the lower does to the upper as well.

The Connection Must Go in Both Directions

And the truth is that it must be so, for if not there is no connection, there is no real connection. When there are two people, a rabbi and student who speak, the rabbi must listen to the student, for if not there is no human connection. A human connection always goes in both directions. A woman and a man — they will say complete teachings that the man must be the giver and the woman must be the receiver for him. And very good, this is the basic structure. But it is clear, and everyone understands, that even in the most chauvinistic and patriarchal Torah you will find, it will also be said that the man must be pleasing to the woman, that he must listen to what she says, that he must ask her opinion on certain things, that he must receive from her as well — that what she says touches the matter.

And the Holy One, Blessed be He — one of the descriptions of the great God, that He is all that He is, He hears prayer, according to all opinions. Everyone agrees that it is permitted to say that the Holy One, Blessed be He, hears prayer. He listens, for if not I would be like a wild animal — you are a man, you are the giver, and therefore you don't receive anything from her, there is no way back? Rather there is a way back. And the way back means, as they say, that it is possible that there will be as it were the aspect of 'and from my students more than all.' We are students of the Holy One, Blessed be He, and in a certain sense, the way in which the Holy One, Blessed be He, conducts Himself with us touches us more than Him, for 'and from my students more than all.' The female is 'a woman of valor is the crown of her husband' (Proverbs 12:4), and she influences many times more on the manner of conducting the matter with her. But that person explained that this does not say that all the hierarchy is

missing. The intention is not that all, on the contrary, that same mutuality, as I say, that goes in both directions, the two-way communication, is built on the fact that essentially there is a father and son, man and woman, rabbi and student, chassid and rebbe — all types of existing connections function only with the hierarchy. And if they will nullify the entire thing, it also will not function. For how does the male receive, the abundance, how does the female listen? Since he is her husband and she is his wife. And a man and woman are something that stand in such a form, that from this side he listens to her in her being his wife, in our being children of the Holy One, Blessed be He, in our being His creations — from this power He listens to us. And even as it were it appears that we do more than He does. But one must not err and nullify all the hierarchy, for if then it does not exist, He is not the father and I am not the son, and there is nothing at all. A father and son are something of this type.

And that person explained to people who are rabbis — and in this time there are many people who are also fathers, also husbands, also rabbis, also guides of every type — that many times he forgets himself, and many times he spoke more than the rabbi's will, for it is difficult to be one who stands at zero, and he lacks that he should restrain himself a bit, that he should not say all that he feels and not reveal everything. But a bit is necessary, for the thing must be in both directions. It is impossible that a person should be a rabbi and all that he says should be false. He must say, and he must also be able to be influenced by the student and receive from him. And if the student says a compliment to him, he receives it, as the Holy One, Blessed be He, Himself receives, hears prayer, hears our praise and thanksgiving. And what is the nature of this thing? He has no need for our praise and thanksgiving, but this is as it were the humanity. This is the conduct of the Name according to His sefiros, according to His attributes, that He receives from us, that He relates to us as groom and bride, as rabbi and student, as man and woman, as master and worker. As you wish to call it, so He is human.

The Foundation: Mutuality Without Nullifying the Hierarchy

But the thing occurs only in His being 'I am with you and you are my superior.' It does not occur through nullifying this. On the contrary, if they will nullify the very hierarchy, there will also not be this. For then, people say that they lose the fear — and not only do they lose the fear, but they lose the entire thing, they also lose the love, for the love is the love of man and woman. This is not love, but two people who are not married, there is nothing. So are the fundamental things. And from here there is also a practical difference for what was said above, that in every connection there is almost always a giver and receiver. And certainly the giver must be pleasing, and it must be mutual, that it cannot be one-sided. One-sided connections — this is the sitra achra, like rape. For one must not make 'children of coercion,' and even within marriage it is forbidden that there should be rape, it is forbidden to force women, it is forbidden to force students, even to do good things. One must teach them. And teaching has a part as it were in lower fear, in fear of punishment, but as long as the child understands that he is here under the authority, he receives willingly, 'and His kingship they accepted upon themselves willingly' (prayer text), he understands in a general way that so is proper, and through this sometimes with difficulty with the slave there is 'he who spares the rod hates his son' (Proverbs 13:24), that one forces him. But the thing itself certainly cannot be by force. But this does not negate that he is the master, that he is the leader. This is an important foundation that I saw this week, and I believe that it arranges the matters a bit.

The Mitzvah is a Picture of the World of Atzilus

And we will return to what we are learning here in the Zohar. We see that the mitzvos are things that are remembered and done, that they are called remembrance and doing. The remembrance — what we do is only a remembrance. And the remembrance arouses above, is done, makes a doing there, in the place of the true doing, in the place where something is truly done. And this is the explanation of the mitzvah, this is the explanation of the Zohar for the mitzvah. And one must understand this more deeply. What does it mean that this is the explanation of

The Mitzvah is a Picture of the World of Atzilus

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And if so, in the most general way, all the mitzvos — and from here we will learn afterwards that the mitzvos are 248 limbs and 365 sinews. Of whom? Certainly a person rectifies the 248 limbs and 365 sinews of the person. But how does he rectify the 248 limbs and 365 sinews of the person, what is this? These are the 248 limbs and 365 sinews of the Shechinah with the Holy One, Blessed be He. This is the thing, this is 613 mitzvos. What is a mitzvah? When Chassidim of the world say, a mitzvah is how a Jew together with God. A mitzvah is God. This is the meaning of mitzvah, a holy mitzvah, a mitzvah about which one says 'who sanctified us with His commandments' (text of blessings), in Him, in His commandments, in what He does, not in what we do for Him, according to Kabbalah. 'Who sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us' — He sanctified us in that we are in His commandments. The mitzvos that we do, they are in Him. This is the meaning of the mitzvah.

And what does this have to do with our mitzvos? These are the mitzvos as they are in the world of Atzilus. Our mitzvos are a remembrance of them. 'He made a remembrance for His wonders, gracious and merciful is Hashem' (Psalms 111:4). The Holy One, Blessed be He, made for the upper wonders that exist in the upper worlds, that exist in the real world, in truth

— He made a remembrance here below. And why? Because He is gracious and merciful, because He has mercy, lowers Himself to us and makes a remembrance. Every thing in the world is a remembrance of an upper thing. And the mitzvos — one must ask why specifically the mitzvos, but the mitzvos are a better remembrance, they are things that were chosen to be the remembrance of the Holy One, Blessed be He, and His Shechinah. This is the meaning of the mitzvah.

Why Zachor is Said Only on Shabbos and Tzitzis

Now we will understand — I would say that I will reveal a secret — now we will understand why in the entire Torah zachor is not said except once or twice, literally once, and only on Shabbos. And since the matter does not come openly in the Torah, it was necessary to hide it a bit and wrote shamor, for it truly means shamor according to the simple meaning. This is the explanation, as the Ramban also admits at the end according to the simple meaning to Ibn Ezra that this is the explanation. And in the entire Torah the remembrance of the mitzvos is not said except in Parshas Tzitzis. And why? Because as we said, the Torah speaks from what is truly so. The Torah speaks according to the simple meaning.

And in other words, what do I mean? What is the difference between simple meaning and secret? I will tell you something interesting. According to the simple meaning there is only one world, and even according to the true secret there is only one world. According to the simple meaning — action, one does mitzvos in the body, Jews do mitzvos. This is the simple meaning. According to the secret — this is not considered, this does not exist. The entire world of action, from the point of view of the world of Atzilus, from the point of view of the real world — what exists? Only this exists.

How a True Mekubal Prays

And as we say in Kabbalah, how does a mekubal pray? The matter depends, for there are two levels of mekubalim. A simple person prays in a simple siddur: it says baruch — blessed, atah — You, Hashem — the Holy One, Blessed be He, Elokeinu — our God, our God, and so forth. A mekubal prays in a siddur according to Kabbalah, but a true mekubal prays in a simple siddur. In other words, but in his simple siddur. A mekubal prays in a double siddur, lechem mishneh. A mekubal prays in a siddur, and a mekubal that we know prays in a siddur that is written in it baruch — Keter, atah — Chochmah, Hashem — Tiferes, and whatever the intention will be. The siddur is essentially a strange siddur. The siddur is not a siddur of this world nor of the world of Atzilus. For in the world of Atzilus, when baruch is said in the letters beis, reish, vav, chaf, in the syllable that is heard baruch, in its meaning 'blessed,' the intention from the outset is the upper Keter that continues abundance to Chochmah Binah etc. This is the intention, and there is no need to add a translation.

Like one who speaks Yiddish: what does 'yid' mean in Yiddish? 'Yid' in Yiddish is a yid. 'Yid' in English is 'Jew.' And where is it said that yid is 'Jew'? Only in a dictionary, in a translation layer between Yiddish and English. One who speaks only English says only 'Jew,' and he doesn't have the piece at all. One who speaks only Yiddish says 'yid.' And one who speaks both languages needs a translation layer. Correct.

So the true mekubal, one who was a true mekubal, one who lived entirely in the world of Atzilus, would pray in a simple siddur. And therefore there were Chassidic rabbis who thought so, that it is not proper to pray in the siddur of the Arizal, for the siddur of the Arizal is translating, it is like a dictionary. It says about every word as the word appears here, for you need to think that baruch means blessed, and you grasp, but you don't yet live completely that baruch means blessed, but blessed means something else and baruch means something else, everything means something else. So I give you a dictionary, a ladder, a sulam — true, when Rav Friedman called the siddur of the Rashash the dictionary siddur, the ladder siddur. That person from Gan Eden who wrote the commentary on Kabbalah called it 'sulam,' and I believe this is because of this. This is a sulam — a ladder from the explanation of 'baruch' in this world to the explanation of 'baruch' in the world to come, through truth.

All the Torah Has Two Explanations

So this is indeed the secret, this is the thing that is not usually said. Very interesting. And therefore the Ramban says that all the Torah has two explanations. From 'Bereishis' that all of Israel reads one can explain the world of action and one can explain the world of Atzilus, and one never needs to mention both of them. If you are here and learning the Torah, you learn 'Bereishis' — in the beginning, 'bara Elokim' — the Holy One, Blessed be He, created. And if you are in Gan Eden and learning, you also learn Bereishis — Keter, Chochmah, Keter, bara Elokim — Chochmah and Binah were made. And how does one say the explanation? Only to the schoolchildren. We who are schoolchildren of Kabbalah, of Chassidus, of the truth, of the truth of Torah — to us it is still necessary to say 'Bereishis' in Chochmah, and so forth.

And this is indeed the secret. For the matter does not come — 'your soul yearned': if you are not there, what are you speaking about it? And if you are there, you don't need it. So, 'your soul yearned,' but what? This is the kindness. This is like the place where they tell you: I know that you are not there, and I know that you can get there, and I translate, I teach you the explanation. You are still a child, you don't know what 'Bereishis' means. I say, Bereishis means such and such. And when you will be a father, you will no longer need the explanation. A father does not pray seemingly in a siddur with translation, most fathers, for he already knows and doesn't even need to think — Bereishis means in the beginning. Bereishis means Bereishis, and not that it means something, but he doesn't need a translator. Correct? A true mekubal does not have kavanos, a true mekubal says the words as they are, but he is already in the world of Atzilus. But a false mekubal — not a false mekubal, but a child, a student of the mekubalim, a student of Kabbalah — he needs both things.

Application of This to Zachor and Shamor

I will return to apply this to what we are speaking about now. If remembrance is the explanation when it is a mere remembrance — 'zachor es yom haShabbos l'kadsho,' Moshe Rabbeinu says, remember that there is something called Shabbos to sanctify it, this is a holy thing. Shabbos means Tiferes Malchus, the Holy One, Blessed be He, this is the explanation of Shabbos. 'Leil Shabbos shamor' — means the Shechinah; 'zachor' — means Ze'ir Anpin. And so, this is already the explanation that one learns in the world of Atzilus, that one learns in heaven, that the Ramban learned in the way of truth. But what do I tell you? Zachor, zachor! But where is the true Shabbos? Why must one remember Shabbos, why not make Shabbos? Because you are not there. And usually one

does not say so. The same thing — 'all My commandments you shall keep and do,' do it, do the keeping part, do the doing part, do the entire thing. If you are in this world, this is its meaning; if you are in the world of Atzilus, this is its meaning.

Once, because Parshas Tzitzis is the passage that protrudes from the edge of the garment, protrudes from the end of the Torah of Parshas Shelach, according to what they learned that this is the end of the Torah, it protrudes and says: I know that you are not a shomer Torah, I know that you don't yet have that quality of soul that you will understand, that you will be a type of person who cares about the Torah. But remember it. Or that the entire Torah has a true meaning, and the true meaning is the doing, doing above, doing that makes the upper unifications. But you who live in the world of action, who so you appear for now, I tell you zachor, this is remembrance.

There is Only One World — From the World to the World

And that once or twice one can call this remembrance — this is a secret. And secret does not mean that the secret is not said at all, for in the entire Torah the secret is said after the simple simple meaning. But that it should be said twice of this, this is very little, there is once or twice, and people wonder: why were the secrets of the Torah not hinted at in the Torah? For the secrets of the Torah are indeed found in the Torah. But a hint that two worlds exist, that there is also Torah and also secrets of the Torah, this is said only once. As the Gemara says in the Mishnah in Berachos: Previously they said 'baruch Hashem Elokei Yisrael me'olam,' from all the world, me'olam. When the heretics corrupted and said there is only one world, they established that one should say 'min ha'olam v'ad ha'olam' (Berachos 54a). And seemingly it is difficult from the side of physicality: what did we think, that there is one world? What is the big thing? Why must one wait until the heretics corrupted?

He explains thus: The truth is that there is only one world, there is one God and He made one world, there is only one world. The question is only which world He made. And it appears that there are two worlds, this world and the world to come, the world of Atzilus and the world of action, but this is only because we went mad to say that the two things are separate. For this is like one asks — and I ask this many times — how many tractates of Berachos are there? And if I don't know how many, I will need to ask the printer, I will need to see at the end. How many Tanyas are there? At the end of the Tanya there is a list of ten thousand times that Tanya was printed. And are there ten thousand Tanyas? No, there is only one Tanya. If you look at the body, at the papers of Tanya, how are papers found on which tractate Berachos was printed many times — how many tractates of Berachos are there? There is only one. For from the side of the form, from the side of the idea. If you have such a crude and strange view, one will ask a question and say: For there are many tractates of Berachos. Then they will need to fix and say, no, from the Berachos to the Berachos there is only one, for the meaning is one. But this is not initially a question of fools.

So exactly, in truth there is only one world. Which world? The world of truth. And what does it mean that for every world exists? Certainly, for the world is a sign for it. For if one says, the remembrance of things and the thing itself are not two things. A picture of me and I are not two things, but pictures of me. And this is what it is. If one separates the picture from me and says: For there are pictures and there is you, I will need to fix and write on the picture an address, to say, no, this is a picture that is from me. Then one must say min ha'olam v'ad ha'olam. But this is not the regular situation. The regular situation is that there is only one, and the one is the correct one.

The Practical Difference of Zachor: A Mere Remembrance

And if so, we will already understand. We said that we must understand what is the meaning of 'zachor and shamor were said in one utterance.' They say that shamor is said as usual — and indeed usually it is said shamor and do. Shamor and do means that you have the quality of soul, you have a soul that cares about the mitzvos and does them. And why must zachor be written? According to what we are learning here, zachor is not lower — it is not lower, but it raises that the mitzvos are only a mere remembrance of the upper world, of what the mitzvos truly are. And this is only one week in the year, and why? Because one must mention that there is such a thing as Torah, that there is such a thing as the world of truth. But if this is Shabbos, if he already thinks from the true point of view, from the point of view of the idea — there is no need to mention. Zachor and shamor in one utterance, they are the same thing.

Positive and Negative: Which Mitzvos Make Unifications

And one can say another point, if one wants to connect to the matter of positive and negative, about which I don't have clarity, but what I said now is clearer. One can connect to the matter of positive and negative approximately thus, I believe, and it is possible that this is the same thing. One must ask a question according to Kabbalah: which mitzvos make unifications? Very interesting, and I saw books of Chassidus that speak about this question. And I saw an interesting source for the question, that in Toldos he brings a question, I don't remember in whose name, that someone asked a question, for it is known that every mitzvah is a unification, and the question touches every mitzvah that is a unification: what unification is the mitzvah of giving a get? For a get is the opposite of unification, it is separation. And how can one say that a get is a unification? It must be that there is a connection with the simple meaning, one cannot say just unification. What kind of unification is a get? For a get is one of the 613 mitzvos. So he brings a question, and his answer is approximately this, and we will try to explain it.

Or one can say, if possible, that a get is specifically a positive commandment, and this is a good question. But one can ask the same question about negative commandments in general. Everyone understands that there is an order of mekubalim for the mitzvah of Shabbos, for the mitzvah of shofar. What is the true meaning of shofar, what does one have in mind? This even one who is not a mekubal has a certain intention in this. But still I have not seen a mekubal — the truth is that only in Sha'arei Mitzvos there are a few kavanos that go in this way, very few — but I have not seen, not just a mekubal, and certainly not a Chassidic young man, who would seek to have in mind what are the kavanos of the mitzvah of niddah. And why don't they teach this? All the young men, the chasan-rav teaches the young man the mitzvah of yichud certainly, the mitzvah of procreation, which is a great mitzvah, and the laws that they teach, the prohibition of niddah. And after all the proofs — I believe thousands of negative commandments exist, 365 negative commandments — I have not seen that they

would teach, that they would speak about the mitzvah of yichud what intention there is in it. And certainly niddah is a great thing, and the mekubalim have many drashos about the blood of niddah, and something that the Arizal speaks about at length. But I have not seen that there should be like a gate of kavanos of negative commandments, of the mitzvah of niddah.

Or anything, what intention is not to eat non-kosher? What is there to have in mind? One does not have kavanos. There is a positive that comes from a negative, there is a positive commandment to eat kosher foods, but this is a negative that comes from a positive, when one eats kosher intentionally. I have not seen that the intention of eating is interesting — there is an intention of eating, there is an intention of the unification, that the body is nourished from the eating, and what is its inner aspect. But why are there no kavanos of not eating non-kosher? And certainly I saw, indeed, that someone made an order of kavanos of placing a strainer on the faucet, just joking. 'One who is careful passed,' as the Gemara says in Kiddushin, that if one comes to a negative commandment, he receives reward like one who does a mitzvah — so one must make a tikkun, one must make some intention about this.

The Unification of Negative Commandments: The Keeping, Not the Doing

And so, in the details of the matter one must investigate better. It is possible that there are indeed ways, and it probably depends on the matter, that there is a secret of zachor and shamor in one utterance. But if in general the matter does not exist, we do not do it, we do not usually do such things. And the answer is, and the answer of Toldos is approximately thus, that the unification of a get, and one can say that the unification of negative commandments in general, is the keeping in them, and not the doing. A unification is not made through doing a negative commandment. A negative commandment is on the list of three hundred sixty-five things that can ruin a unification. They are called kelippos, and this is the explanation of kelippos.

And it is very interesting, that the Rambam says that negative commandments — sometimes it is said in the Torah 'lo,' and the intention is not that one should not do something but that there is no need to do something. He calls this negation, different from warning. Warning is a negative commandment, but negation — for example, we will remember that it is said 'and to the maiden you shall do nothing' (Deuteronomy 22:26), this is not a negative commandment not to do something to the one who was raped, but only negation, that there is no need, that she is exempt, this is exemption and not a negative commandment.

True, but if we think more deeply, we will understand that all negative commandments are negation, that there is not. That a Jew is a type of thing that does not eat pig. And when does he not eat pig? Always not. This is a law in keeping, as I said before, that keeping is a type of person who does not eat pig. And when is he a type of person like this? Always.

And so, from here it comes out that when in general is there a matter of negative commandments? A true Jew, a Jew in a rectified state, would never have needed to remember negative commandments. For he is already a type of person who does not live in a world of negative commandments, does not live with the kelippos. And when in general is there to speak about negative commandments? When necessary, when they are already in separation, in a state where it is possible that he will sin, that it is possible that he will go with some kelipah, then one must tell him. And about this again 'gracious and merciful is Hashem,' and about this there is also 'gracious and merciful is Hashem.' That the Holy One, Blessed be He, remembered every type of kelipah that can be to a person, and wrote a special negative commandment for every type, in a general way, and the rabbis add more. For every existing negative commandment He attached a kelipah, attached a prohibition that they should not go to it.

But essentially, from our point of view it is possible that there is a state of negative commandments, and afterwards a state of positive commandments. From the point of view of the Holy One, Blessed be He, from the point of view of truth, this is the same thing. That is, what the good is good, this that it is not evil, these are not two laws, 'turn from evil and do good' (Psalms 34:15). In any case, according to truth they have no existence, it cannot be that there are two other things, for this is the same thing, turn from evil and do good, the good is not evil. And the evil also is not good, but the evil does not truly exist, but one who is stuck in the evil state — about him one must speak.

Zachor and Shamor in One Utterance: Positive and Negative as One

And so, shamor and zachor in one utterance means that according to the absolute truth one cannot speak about negative commandments separately from positive commandments. They are the same thing. Or one can say even as something deeper, that a negative commandment means not to do, and a positive commandment means yes to do. And with a person there are times when he yes does and times he does not do, because he is limited from many things that are lacking to him. But the Holy One, Blessed be He, is not limited. With the Holy One, Blessed be He, from His side, the non-doing is a decision like the yes-doing. It is not that it is difficult, that He must exert Himself more to do something than not to do something. Both are equally easy, as it were, if it is permitted to say a word like 'easy.' So there is no difference. And I believe that the root of that matter is the same thing that is said here. For if there is a negative commandment, this is only like the boundary of what it is. There is a certain tzimtzum, there is a boundary, every thing is what it is and is not something else. This is the negative commandment in it. But the negative commandment is not a thing in itself, but it is the boundary of the thing.

And therefore, the places where positive commandments and negative commandments unite, like Shabbos, like Pesach, which is 'whoever is in remembrance is in keeping.' The Master of the World says only — this is the practical difference of zachor and shamor were said in one utterance, and therefore women are obligated in Shabbos. For Shabbos, like that same thing that I say, keeping Shabbos — what does keeping Shabbos mean? It means not to do work. But it is very interesting that not doing work, as is known, with the rabbis and with matters of Kabbalah there is oneg Shabbos, there are things that one yes does on Shabbos, one prays and sings and eats meals. And all these are not things that are said in the Torah at all. In the Torah seemingly only the shamor is said, and almost according to halachah its essence is the shamor. Yes, there is a mitzvah to make kiddush and so forth, but not all the expansion, which is perhaps only from matters of Kabbalah, from rabbinic matters. But everyone understands

that zachor and shamor were said in one utterance. A regular Jew who keeps Shabbos, a Chassidic Jew who keeps Shabbos, almost does not need to remember the 39 melachos. This one needs when a question arises, a problem, when he needs to do something, that he should know what is permitted and in what way it is permitted. But in truth, what does he do? He does keeping Shabbos, he sanctifies the Shabbos. These are not two things. As it were so with the Holy One, Blessed be He, the non-doing and the yes-doing, this that the good is good and is not evil — it is the same thing, there is no need to divide. The same thing with a Jew who keeps Shabbos, there is no need to divide the two things, what is good and what is not good. This is the same thing, the good also is not not-good, is not evil, the same thing.

The Foundation in the Month of Elul

And this is the nature of zachor and shamor, that all the mitzvos are positive and negative as one. And it is possible that even negative commandments — I don't know if there is a time when one does them, except like coming to it, that the Arizal says that one who cuts hair should have in mind 'do not round.' But there is also like a matter, that a Jew cuts hair with peyos, and from here already an obligation is created. Interesting, one of the things in which a situation was created such that one makes peyos, even though it is only a negative commandment. It appears that the Jews understand that there is zachor and shamor in one utterance on many mitzvos indeed. And one can say, only because now is the month of Elul and we are trying to be good and not evil. This is the same thing, the wonderful investigations whether it is proper to engage more in turning from evil or more in doing good, more to be rid, as the Chiddushei HaRim spoke, whether it is proper to say more about sin or more 'and You shall reign.' The entire question is only when one stands in the middle of sin. But when one stands in the middle of Shabbos, in the middle of Yom Tov, or in the month of Elul that has holiness in it, illumination — this is the same thing, they were said in one utterance.

Gut Shabbos.

Full Transcript

What is the Meaning of a Mitzvah — Zachor and Shamor in One Utterance

Introduction to the Zohar, Pekudei Oraita, Parshat Ki Tavo 5786

The Basic Division of Mitzvot

Rabbotai, we are learning the holy Torah. Today is Erev Shabbat Parshat Ki Tavo 5786, the middle of Elul. We are holding in the fourth shiur on the introduction of the Zohar, on **Pekudei Oraita, Pekudei D'mara Alma** (Introduction to the Zohar), the commandments of the Master of the World.

The introduction speaks about something very fundamental, which is the question: What is the meaning of a mitzvah? And it speaks about this through the basic division of the types of mitzvot that exist — positive commandments (mitzvot aseh) and negative commandments (mitzvot lo ta'aseh). As we have said, the understanding of anything is found through the primary divisions that exist in that subject.

Certainly there are many more divisions of the mitzvot: time-bound positive commandments, mitzvot dependent on time, mitzvot dependent on place, mitzvot that are only for certain people, only for the community, only for the individual, only in the Land of Israel, obligatory mitzvot, optional mitzvot. There is the severity of each mitzvah, especially of negative commandments — the obligation of prohibitions, the obligation of karet, the obligation of lashes, the obligation of death. But the first, most general division, which divides all mitzvot into only two, is the division of positive commandments and negative commandments.

Why Must We Understand What a Mitzvah Is

Why is it so important to understand what a mitzvah is? Because to be a Jew means to be one who does the mitzvot. So it says in the Ten Commandments, that the Almighty is **poked avon avot al banim** (Exodus 20:5) to His enemies — which means one who does not serve the Almighty, one who keeps idolatry, or whoever does not do what he should. **V'oseh chesed la'alafim l'ohavai ul'shomrei mitzvotai** (Exodus 20:6) — the lovers are the keepers of His commandments. It could be it's the same thing, His lovers who are keepers of His commandments. According to what we learned from the Ramban that love is a positive commandment, and "beware" is from negative commandments, fear — it could be that love means those who do positive commandments, and keepers of His commandments those who primarily keep negative commandments. But in general, keepers of His commandments refers to all mitzvot.

We call ourselves a Jew, a keeper of mitzvot, many times one says keeper of Torah and mitzvot. So it's extremely important to understand what is a mitzvah at all? A Jew is such a type of person, such a type of person who does mitzvot, who keeps mitzvot — what kind of thing is a mitzvah at all?

Different Approaches to What a Mitzvah Is

Most people think that a mitzvah means a command, from the language of tzivui, a command — something that must be done. But that's not the essential thing of being a Jew. Chassidic books say that mitzvah is from the language of tzavta (connection), not from the language of tzivui (command). It's certainly a drash, but it brings out something deep. Martin Buber said that the Torah is not a law, but a request, something that the Almighty asks of the Jews. These are all kinds of formulations that one can speak about this.

The Zohar's Approach: Shamor and Zachor

The Zohar says that mitzvot are shamor and zachor, and they are both one, as it says **zachor v'shamor b'dibur echad ne'emru** (Mechilta, Rashi Exodus 20:8), which we learned last week. This is not just a Torah about why two different expressions appear in the Ten Commandments, but this is a fundamental thing about what types of mitzvot exist.

It is generally true about the entire Torah that there is zachor and shamor, which the Ramban explained means truly positive and negative commandments. The two things come from different places, go to different places, it's a different type of essence, and they come together. The general thing called 613 mitzvot is all one, **kulam mei'ro'eh echad nitnu** (Kohelet 12:11) — there is a unity of all 613 mitzvot. The unity comes on Shabbat, because on Shabbat it says **zachor**

v'shamor b'dibur echad, and one must make two candles, two hadassim, in order to show the shamor and zachor b'dibur echad ne'emru.

The Question on U'shmartem Va'asitem

The Zohar speaks about a verse, **u'shmartem mitzvotai va'asitem otam** (Leviticus 22:31). Seemingly, since there are two types of mitzvot called zachor and shamor, it would be more fitting if it said u'shmartem mitzvotai u'zechartem otam. The question is like a fake question, he means to arrive at his answer — he can't write u'shmartem u'zechartem, it doesn't make any sense. But he wants to arouse that in the tablets we see the double language zachor and shamor, which must mean a different aspect of the same thing, two types of mitzvot. The Ramban says, it means positive commandments of Shabbat and negative commandments of Shabbat. It comes out that positive and negative commandments are called remembering and keeping.

So there is such a verse that says u'shmartem va'asitem. Why does it say the doing? Because it fits very well: positive commandment, keeping is not doing, negative commandment. But where is the remembering? The Zohar establishes that it is seemingly corresponding to keeping and remembering. He shows that in this verse, and in very many verses, it doesn't say keeping and remembering, but keeping and doing.

Keeping and Doing Go Together

I searched through the Torah and saw that very often it says the language of keeping, **u'shmartem va'asitem**, **lishmor v'la'asot**, especially in the book of Deuteronomy — to keep and to do all the Torah or all the commandment. Keeping and doing go very strongly together. Sometimes it says **u'shmartem la'asot**. But it never says the opposite, to do keeping — one doesn't make keeping, keeping is not something that one does.

Keeping means to guard, as we say in Yiddish to guard the Torah. How does one guard the Torah? Through doing, and sometimes through not doing. As it says **motza sefatecha tishmor v'asita** (Deuteronomy 23:24), you shall guard to do, and **v'aviv shamar et hadavar** (Genesis 37:11) — keeping here doesn't mean to guard like a guard with a watchman. One says in English keeping the Torah. It means doing. But there is something more refined: there is the doing — I put on tefillin, I shake lulav, I blow shofar, I do something. But with this must come a keeping — you could forget to do it, you should remember to do it.

A Jew is a Keeper of Torah — A Status in the Person

A Jew is a guardian of the Torah, a keeper of Torah. This doesn't mean that the Jew never commits any sin. If he stole he's not a keeper of Torah — that's not true. A keeper of Torah is a Jew who keeps the Torah. It doesn't say that he is one who does the Torah, we don't call him a doer of Torah, no one says that Jews are doers of Torah and mitzvot — although that is the essence, the doing.

Which is more important — not doing sins, or yes doing mitzvot? Both are important, and both together are called keeping. A keeper of Torah is such a type of person who has a concern, a certain personality — he keeps the Torah. It's more a status in the person than in the action. Such a type of person, his doing comes out from the keeping. It's connected to what we've been speaking about lately in the shiurim on character traits, that there is such a thing that the person's nature becomes that he is a Torah keeper. A keeper of Torah is a type of person, not a type of deed.

One can call it the concern, he cares — not because he's afraid, but he is such a type of person that he remembers, he has upon himself a certain awareness. The word yoke is perhaps not such a good word, because we don't call Jews bearers of the yoke of Torah, and the title for a Jew is not one who is under the yoke of Torah, enslaved to Torah like a slave. We call him a keeper. He has a certain care, he cares about the Torah, about doing the Torah. It's much more refined, as we said that a mitzvah is not a command, and the keeper of mitzvot is not the fulfiller of commands, but one who has an inclination of the heart, an inclination of the mind, that he is connected. He guards the Torah literally, he is related to guarding the Torah.

Just as to be a Jew is a status in the person, not a status in the object. This doesn't mean that it's a fact about the body of a person — one becomes a Jew, and one of the things with which one becomes a Jew is being born to a Jewish mother. But to be a Jew is a type of person, and a person is something that does things.

Someone who has never heard of keeping the Torah — he is compelled, exempt, but he is not a Jew in this sense. A Jew is one who keeps the Torah, he has a relationship called keeping. Whether he does it in practice, every mitzvah — that is already the fulfillment of this. Therefore keeping is the general name, and keeping comes before doing, as according to what we are learning this is the attribute of Malchut, the personality, the self that does the Torah.

The Remembering: Remember the Shabbat Day and Remember Amalek

On the same thing there cannot be doing to keep — keeping is the generality. If one remembers another place of remembering: it says **zachor et yom haShabbat l'kadsho** (Exodus 20:8), and it says **zachor et asher asah lecha Amalek** (Deuteronomy 25:17) — but it's not remember to do. It says remember what Amalek did, and about this you have a positive commandment **timcheh et zecher Amalek** (Deuteronomy 25:19). But the remembering doesn't go on the obliteration. People think, perhaps the Rambam learns this way, that the commandment of remembering means one should remember to do, but it's more divided into two steps. Remember what Amalek did to you means remember what Amalek was, which will cause, or is a separate mitzvah — but not remembering to obliterate Amalek.

One time in the entire Torah it says the language of remembering about all the mitzvot, and we say it two, three times a day: **l'ma'an tizkeru va'asitem et kol mitzvotai** (Numbers 15:40), **u'zechartem et kol mitzvot Hashem va'asitem otam** (Numbers 15:39). In the portion of tzitzit it says that one should remember all the mitzvot of the Almighty and one should do them. We spoke about this that this is the last mitzvah of that order of mitzvot, there it says **v'lo taturu** (Numbers 15:39), a remembering against forgetting. But according to what we are speaking today, there could be another meaning of remembering, and afterwards we will understand that the portion of tzitzit is something special, a higher level, a secret level of understanding all the mitzvot.

The Zohar's Answer: Remembering is Doing — Remembered and Done

The Zohar says: remembering is the same thing as doing. It says **v'hayamim ha'eleh nizkarim v'na'asim** (Esther 9:28), and the Gemara learns that remembering is reading, just as remember the Shabbat day to sanctify it — one should speak about Shabbat, mention it. It's a matter of speech. And doing is doing with action.

The Zohar says, here where it says doing it means the same thing as remembering. The remembering that we speak of, remember the Shabbat day, is a doing. **D'ha man d'adchar mila l'tata, adchar v'it'avid hahu raza l'eila** (Zohar) — when a person remembers, he mentions a word down below, the matter above is done. This is the answer to the question of what is a mitzvah according to Kabbalah: a mitzvah is a type of thing that is remembered and done. One mentions it here and it gets done. Here we call it the world of action, but that's from our perspective. Relative to the upper worlds, relative to what is real, all our actions are only memories, only a remembrance. It's not a thing in itself, it's a remembrance of the thing, a sign, a shadow, a shadow, an image of the thing.

All mitzvot are called remembering. About this it says in the Torah almost never only remembering, because the Torah speaks as it is truly — something is done, it is done. What does done mean? Remembered and done. A person remembers, he mentions through the mitzvot, and what does he mention?

The Mitzvah is a Remembrance of the Upper Worlds

The principle: all things of this world are memories, signs, of upper matters, of real things. We see only examples of things, only the one that is here today clothed in one body that lives at one time and one place. But this truly reminds us — not the more rationalistic simple meaning, but it has the qualities, it has the form, because it reminds us of its roots within it, of the reality upon which it is built. For example, the mitzvah of tefillin reminds of the thing called **she'haKadosh Baruch Hu maniach tefillin** (Berachot 6a), the seal of truth, the seal of the unity of the Name and the Exodus from Egypt, of all the portions of tefillin. Our tefillin is like a remembrance, like a telephone line, there comes an echo, a voice from what the reality is.

Consequently, when you put on tefillin, for you it is a reminder, and it becomes in heaven, in the true reality, a true tefillin. When a Jew does Shabbat, he makes zachor and shamor of Shabbat, the original true zachor and shamor becomes after he does it. This is the Zohar's meaning of remembering, of the commandments of remembering, positive commandments — and it seems that this must be about all mitzvot. When mitzvot are such things, **b'it'aruta d'letata it'ar l'eila** (Zohar).

There are two points about this. Through the fact that a person uses the signs, he brings upon himself the drawing down of the light, of the abundance, of the reality of which this is a remembrance. Therefore the Kabbalists say one must learn the signs in the world, every object, especially the objects of mitzvot — the siddur, the etrog, a Torah scroll, a lulav, a sukkah, a shofar — what this points to, and through this, when one does it with this intention, it becomes a remembrance. You mention the upper shofar, the true shofar that is awakened through the shofar.

Here there is the passive way: the remembrance is like a vessel, like a radio or a telephone, it catches the waves that are in the world, and since it is in such a way that it can catch it, it catches it. Once there were only receivers — a radio sent, the television sends signals from all sides, and whoever has the vessels has the remembrance. A television set, a radio is only a remembrance of the sound, it's not the sound. It can receive the sound, and one must turn it on to the right frequency, it catches it.

Mutuality: A Returning Light

In modern times, almost all the vessels we have speak back — not only can it receive, it can also influence as it were. You can't call it a true influence, because the power of the entire system lies in the upper one. When we say that they influence above, it doesn't mean that they can stand higher than the Almighty. They are called upper ones because they are higher than us. But one can speak back.

I saw a beautiful word this week, speaking about a rabbi with a student, where there is a certain hierarchy. In modern times the person is not comfortable with this — everyone wants to be a friend with the rabbi, with the rav, what should only be with the Almighty Himself; he doesn't want the Almighty to stand higher. The entire Kabbalah is built on the fact that it's not a radio, it's a telephone — not something that one can only hear, but that one can speak back also.

It's certainly true, as it says **u'mitalmidai yoter mikulam** (Ta'anit 7a), and Judaism is built on question and answer. All the Chassidic books speak of **halo et mah neredet mah**, that one must raise my feminine waters, this is Elokim, and my masculine waters. **Me'et Hashem hayta zot hi nifla'at b'eineinu** (Psalms 118:23) — says the Maggid of Mezeritch, the Almighty becomes a zot, aspect of female, from us. We arouse through our mitzvot, our desires, our Torah learning, our love of friends — we arouse as it were above.

This was explained very beautifully by someone: the world is confused, because this doesn't yet mean that it becomes equal to equal. Just like the penitent — it's not equal to equal. He says in English, there is mutuality, it goes both ways, a returning light. There is something that the lower one does to the upper one also.

The Connection Must Go Both Ways

It must be so, because otherwise there is no true connection. When there are two people speaking, the rabbi must listen to the student; a human connection always goes two ways. A man must be the giver and the woman receive him — that's the basic structure. But even in the most patriarchal Torah that you will find, it will also say that the man must listen to what she says, he must ask her opinion, take from her. What she says matters.

And the Almighty, one of the attributes of the great God, is He hears prayer from all opinions. He listens, because otherwise He would be a wild beast. There is a way back, aspect of and from my students more than all — we are students of the Almighty, and in a certain sense the way that the Almighty conducts Himself with us has more to do with us than with Him. The female is **eshet chayil ateret ba'alah** (Proverbs 12:4), she is often more influential on how the game is played.

However, this doesn't mean that the entire hierarchy is absent. On the contrary — this kind of mutuality, this two-way communication, is built on the fact that there actually is a father and a son, a husband and a wife, a rebbe and a talmid (student), a chassid and a rebbe. If one were to nullify the whole thing, it won't work. How does the nekeva (feminine

aspect) hear the shefa (divine flow)? Because he is her husband and she is his wife, in that kind of form. Insofar as we are the Almighty's children, His creations, He hears us out, and it can even appear that we do more than He does. But one must not make the mistake of nullifying the hierarchy, because if He is not the Father and I am not a son, then there's nothing there at all.

Someone explained to a person who is both a father, a husband, and a rebbe — many times he forgets himself and says more than the rebbe's will, because it's hard to be the one who stands in the position of authority. There's a need to hold back a bit, not let everything out. It must be both ways — it can't be that everything a rebbe says is false, he must speak, and it must even be that he can be caught by the student, and that when the student gives him a compliment he accepts it. Just as the Almighty Himself accepts, shomea tefila (hears prayer), hears our praise and thanksgiving. He doesn't lack our praise and thanksgiving, but this is, so to speak, the humanity. This is the conduct of Hashem according to His sefirot (divine emanations), that He accepts from us, He relates to us like a groom and a bride, a husband and a wife, a boss and a worker.

The Foundation: Mutuality Without Nullifying the Hierarchy

But this only happens insofar as He is **ani imach ve'at elyoni** (I am with you and you are my superior) — not by nullifying this. If one were to nullify the essential hierarchy, one loses not only the yira (fear/awe), but the whole thing, even the ahava (love), because the love is ahavat ish ve'isha (the love of man and woman). Otherwise it's two people who are not on the same wavelength, it's nothing.

In every relationship there is almost always a mashpia (giver) and a mekabel (receiver). The mashpia must be beautiful, it must be mutual, it can't be one-sided. One-sided relationships, that is sitra achra (the other side), like rape. One may not force women, not force students, even to do good things — one must teach them. Teaching has an element of yira tata'a (lower fear), of yirat ha'onesh (fear of punishment), but as long as the child grasps that he is under the authority, he accepts willingly, **umalchuto beratzon kiblu aleihem** (and they accepted His kingship willingly) (from the prayer liturgy). Sometimes with force, with the slave, there is **chosech shivto sonei beno** (he who spares the rod hates his son) (Proverbs 13:24), one forces him. But the essential thing cannot be by force — although not because of this is he not the master.

The Mitzva is an Image of Olam HaAtzilut

Back to what we're learning: the mitzvot are such things that are nizkharim ve'na'asim (remembered and done). What we do is only a zecher (remembrance), which arouses above, na'ase (it is done), it makes action there which is true action, there where it truly accomplishes something. This is the Zohar's interpretation of a mitzva: what we call mitzvot are essentially the images of the Almighty. Every mitzva is a picture of how the Almighty looks — not His hidden essence, but the Almighty according to how He reveals Himself to the world, according to how He wants us to relate to Him. A mitzva is an image of olam ha'atzilut (the World of Emanation), of the tiferet u'malchut d'atzilut (beauty and kingship of Emanation), the zachar u'nekeva (male and female) so to speak above, the du partzufin (two faces).

In the most general way — from this we will later learn that the mitzvot are 248 limbs and 365 sinews. Of whom? Through this a person rectifies the 248 limbs and 365 sinews of himself. But how? The 248 limbs and 365 sinews of the Shechina (Divine Presence) with the Kudsha Brich Hu (Holy One, Blessed be He). These are the 613 mitzvot. When chassidei olam (pious ones of the world) say a mitzva is like a Jew being together with God — a mitzva is God. This is the meaning of a holy mitzva, which we say about this **asher kidshanu bemitzvotav** (who sanctified us with His commandments) (from the blessing formula) — He sanctified us through our being in His mitzvot. The mitzvot that we do are in Him.

What does this have to do with our mitzvot? Our mitzvot are a zecher to this. **Zecher asa lenifla'otav chanun verachum Hashem** (He has made a remembrance for His wonders, gracious and merciful is Hashem) (Psalms 111:4) — the Almighty made for the supernal wonders that exist in the real world a zecher here below. Why? Because He is chanun verachum (gracious and merciful), He lowers Himself to us. Everything in the world is a zecher for a davar elyon (supernal matter), but the mitzvot are a better zecher — things that were chosen to be the zecher of Kudsha Brich Hu u'Shechintei (the Holy One, Blessed be He, and His Shechina).

Why Zachor Appears Only by Shabbat and Tzitzit

Now we understand why in the entire Torah zachor (remember) appears only twice, literally once, by Shabbat. He already had to cover it a bit, so He wrote shamor (keep), because it means shamor according to the plain meaning — as the Ramban also admits in the end to Ibn Ezra that it is an interpretation. And zechirat hamitzvot (remembrance of the commandments) appears only in parshat tzitzit (the portion about fringes). Why? Because the Torah speaks of what it is like, al pi peshat (according to the plain meaning).

What is the difference between peshat (plain meaning) and sod (secret)? Al pi peshat there is only one world, and al pi sod amiti (according to the true secret) there is also only one world. Al pi peshat, one does mitzvot with the body, Jews do mitzvot. Al pi sod, that doesn't count, that doesn't exist — from the perspective of olam ha'atzilut, from the real world, there is only that.

How a True Mekubal Prays

There are two levels of mekubalim (kabbalists). A simple person prays with a simple siddur: baruch (blessed) — blessed, ata (You) — You, Hashem — the Almighty, Elokeinu (our God) — our God. A mekubal prays a siddur al pi kabala (according to Kabbalah) — but a true mekubal prays with a simple siddur. A mekubal that we know prays with a double layer, lechem mishneh (double portion): baruch — keter (crown), ata — chochma (wisdom), Hashem — tiferet (beauty), whatever the kavana (intention). The siddur is not from olam hazeh (this world) and not from olam ha'atzilut. Because in olam ha'atzilut, when it says baruch in the letters beit, reish, vav, chaf, it means lechatchila (from the outset) keter elyon (supernal crown) which brings down a flow to chochma bina (wisdom and understanding). One doesn't need to add translation.

Just as a Jew in Yiddish is a yid, and a Jew in English is a Jew. Where does it say that a yid is a Jew? Only in the dictionary, in a translation layer. Someone who speaks only English says only a Jew, he doesn't have the actual thing. Someone who

knows only Yiddish says a yid. Someone who speaks both languages needs a translation layer.

So the true mekubal, someone who would live entirely in olam ha'atzilut, would pray with a simple siddur. About this there were Chassidic rebbes who thought it wasn't appropriate to pray with a siddur of the Arizal, because the siddur of the Arizal is a translator, a dictionary, a ladder. He takes you and thinks that it seems to you that baruch means blessed, but you don't yet live entirely that baruch means something else. I give you a ladder, a ladder from the meaning of baruch in this world to the meaning of baruch in the next world, al yedei emet (through truth). When Rav Friedman would call the siddur of the Rashash siddur hasulam (the ladder siddur) — he wrote a Kabbalah and called it a ladder, I think it's about this.

The Entire Torah Has Two Meanings

Says the Ramban, the entire Torah has two meanings. From Bereishit one can translate olam ha'asiya (the World of Action), one can translate olam ha'atzilut. Never does one need to mention both. If you're learning the Torah, you learn Bereishit — beginning, bara Elokim (God created) — the Almighty created. If you're in Gan Eden (Paradise), you also learn Bereishit — keter, chochma, bara Elokim — one made the chochma and bina. How does one say the translation? Only by the tinokot shel beit raban (schoolchildren) — the people who are schoolchildren of Kabbalah, of the truth of Torah. We still need to be told Bereishit bechochma (In the beginning with wisdom).

This is the secret, because chalchala nafshach (your soul trembles) — if you're not there, what are you talking about? And if you are there, you don't need it. Ela mai (rather what)? This is the chesed (kindness). It's the place where one tells you, I know you're not there, but I know you can get there; I'm a translator, I teach you translation. When you'll be a father, you won't need the translation anymore — he already knows that Bereishit means Bereishit, he doesn't need a translator. A true mekubal is not mechaven kavanot (intending intentions), he says the words as they are, but he's already in olam ha'atzilut. A talmid hakabala (student of Kabbalah) needs both things.

Applying This to Zachor and Shamor

If zechira (remembrance) is the translation when it's only a zecher be'alma (mere remembrance): zachor et yom haShabbat lekadsho (remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it) — says Moshe Rabbeinu, remember that there is a thing called Shabbat lekadsho, a holy thing. Shabbat means tiferet hamalchut (the beauty of kingship), Kudsha Brich Hu. Leil Shabbat shamor — the Shechina; zachor — the zeir anpin (small face). This is the translation that one learns in olam ha'atzilut, which the Ramban learned al derech ha'emet (according to the way of truth). But what do I tell you? Zachor — remember! Why must one remember Shabbat? Why shouldn't one do Shabbat? Because you're not there. The same thing, ushmarten va'asitem (you shall keep and do) — do the part of keeping, do the part of doing. If you're in olam hazeh, it means this way; if you're in olam ha'atzilut, it means that way.

Parshat tzitzit sticks out from the corner of the garment, from the end of the Torah of parshat Shelach, and says: I know you don't yet have the spiritual quality of such a kind of person who cares about the Torah — but remember it. The entire Torah has a true meaning, the action above that accomplishes the supernal unifications. But you who live in olam ha'asiya, I tell you zachor, it's a remembrance.

Ein Olam Ela Echad — From World to World

That one or two times one can call it zechira, this is a secret. Secret doesn't mean it's not written at all — in the entire Torah the secret stands after what is the simple plain meaning. But that it should stand hinted that there are both worlds, both Torah and secrets of Torah — this appears very rarely, as the Gemara says in Berachot. Once they used to say **baruch Hashem Elokei Yisrael me'olam** (blessed is Hashem, God of Israel, from the world), from forever. Shiklelu haminim ve'amru ein olam ela echad (the heretics corrupted and said there is only one world), they established that one should say **min ha'olam ve'ad ha'olam** (from world to world) (Berachot 54a). What made us think that there is indeed one world? Why must one wait for the heretics to corrupt?

The truth is that ein olam ela echad — there is one God and He made one world. The question is only which world. It appears that there are two worlds, olam hazeh ve'olam haba (this world and the world to come), olam ha'atzilut and olam ha'asiya — only because we made ourselves a delusion that the two things are external. Like, how many masechet Berachot are there? How many Tanyas are there? In the back of the Tanya stands a list of ten thousand times it was printed. Are there ten thousand Tanyas? No, there's only one Tanya — from the form, from the idea. If you have such a materialistic view of the pieces on paper, someone will ask a question, ah, are there many masechet Berachot? One must say, min haBerachot ve'ad haBerachot (from the Berachot to the Berachot) there is only one, because the meaning is only one.

The same thing, there is only one world — the true world. The zecher of the things and the thing itself are not two things; a picture of me and me is not two things. If one separates the picture and says, there are pictures and there is you, one must write on the picture a note that this is a picture that is of me. Then one must say min ha'olam ve'ad ha'olam. But the normal situation is that there is only one, and the one is the correct one.

The Practical Difference of Zachor: A Mere Remembrance

Now we understand what is the meaning that zachor ve'shamor bedibur echad ne'emru (zachor and shamor were said in one utterance). Normally it says shamor ve'ase (keep and do) — you have a spiritual quality, a soul that takes care of the mitzvot and does them. Why must one write zachor? According to what we're learning here, it's not lower, but it indicates that the mitzvot are only a zecher be'alma to the upper world, to what the mitzvot truly are. Why? Because one must remind that there is such a thing as Torah, such a thing as the true world. But if it's Shabbat, if he already thinks from the true point of view of the idea, one doesn't need to remind him. Zachor ve'shamor bedibur echad — it's the same thing.

Positive and Negative Commandments: Which Mitzvot Make Unifications

One can connect to the topic of positive and negative commandments. One must ask a question al pi kabala: which mitzvot make unifications? In the Toldot he brings that someone asked, it's known that every mitzva is a unification — in which unification is the mitzva of giving a get (divorce)? A get is the opposite of a unification, it's a separation. How can

one say that a get is a unification? There must be some connection with the plain meaning, one can't just say a unification.

One can ask the same question about negative commandments in general. There is a siddur of mekubalim for the mitzva of Shabbat, for the mitzva of shofar — what truly means a shofar, what one intends. But I haven't yet seen, not just any mekubal and certainly not any Chassidic young man, seeking to understand what are the kavanot of the mitzva of nidda (menstrual separation). The chatan rebbe (groom's teacher) teaches the young man the mitzvot of yichud (seclusion), the mitzvot of procreation, and the prohibition of nidda — but I haven't seen that one should teach which kavana there is in this. Although nidda is a great thing, and the mekubalim have many expositions about dam nidda (menstrual blood), it's something that the Arizal speaks about at length — but not like a Shaar HaKavanot (Gate of Intentions) of negative commandments, of the mitzva of nidda.

What kavana is there in not eating non-kosher food? There is a positive commandment that comes from a negative commandment, a positive commandment to eat kosher foods when one eats kosher willingly. There is kavana of eating, kavana of the unification, what the body is nourished from the eating. But why aren't there any kavanot of not eating non-kosher? The Gemara says in Kiddushin, if one comes to a negative commandment, he receives reward like one who does a mitzva — one must make a rectification, a kavana on it.

The Unification of Negative Commandments: The Keeping, Not the Doing

The Toldot's answer is approximately like this: the unification of a get, and of negative commandments in general, is the keeping in them, not the doing. No unification is made through taking a negative commandment. Negative commandments are in a list of three hundred and sixty-five things that can damage a unification — kelipot (husks), clarification of the kelipot.

The Rambam says that sometimes it says in the Torah "lo" (not), it doesn't mean that one shouldn't do something, but that one doesn't need to do something — he calls it a negation, different from a prohibition. A prohibition is a negative commandment, but a negation, for example **velana'ara lo ta'ase davar** (but to the girl you shall do nothing) (Deuteronomy 22:26), is only an exemption, that she is exempt, not a negative commandment. But think deeper and one will understand that all negative commandments are a negation: a Jew is such a kind of thing that he doesn't eat pork. When? Never. It's a law in the keeping — keeping is such a kind of person who doesn't eat pork, always.

When is there even a topic of negative commandments? A Jew who is in a rectified state would never need to remember negative commandments — he doesn't live in the world of negative commandments, he doesn't live with the kelipot. When must one speak of negative commandments? If one is already in a separation, in a state where perhaps he will indeed sin and go with some kelipa, one must tell him. About this there is also chanun verachum Hashem — the Almighty remembered every kind of kelipa that can be for a person, and He added a negative commandment for each kind, that one shouldn't go into it.

From our perspective there can be a state of negative commandments and then a state of positive commandments. From the perspective of the Almighty, from the truth, this is the same thing. What makes the good good is that it's not evil, it's not two laws, **sur mera va'ase tov** (turn from evil and do good) (Psalms 34:15). The evil doesn't truly exist; there only exists someone who is stuck in the evil state, one must speak about it.

Zachor and Shamor in One Utterance: Positive and Negative as One

Zachor ve'shamor bedibur echad means that according to the absolute truth it's not relevant to speak of negative commandments external to positive commandments — it's the same thing. One can say something deeper: by a person there is sometimes that he does yes and he doesn't do, because he is limited. But the Almighty is not limited — from the side of the Almighty, not doing is such a decision as doing. Both are equally easy, so to speak. If there is a negative commandment, it's only like the limit of what it is — there is a certain contraction, a boundary, each thing is what it is, it's not something else. This is the negative commandment in it — not some separate thing, but the boundary of the thing.

Regarding this, the places where they are united - positive commandments (mitzvos aseh) and negative commandments (mitzvos lo sa'aseh), such as Shabbos, such as Pesach, which is "kol she'yeshno b'zechira yeshno b'shmira" (whatever is included in remembering is included in guarding) — this is the practical difference (nafka mina) of "zachor v'shamor b'dibur echad ne'emru" (remember and guard were said in one utterance), therefore women are obligated in Shabbos. What does guarding Shabbos (shmiras Shabbos) mean? It means not doing work (melacha). But the not doing work, with the Rabbis, with the words of tradition (divrei kabbalah), there is delight of Shabbos (oneg Shabbos), things that one does do on Shabbos — one prays and one sings and one eats festive meals (seudos). In the Torah it appears to state only the guarding (shamor). Yes, there is a commandment to make kiddush, but the entire expansion is perhaps only from the words of the Scribes (midivrei sofrim). And yet everyone understands that "zachor v'shamor b'dibur echad ne'emru." A chassidic Jew who keeps Shabbos hardly needs to remember the thirty-nine labors (lamed-tes melachos) — only when a question arises. What does he do? He sanctifies the Shabbos (mekadesh es haShabbos). It's not two things. So too with a Jew who keeps Shabbos, one doesn't need to divide what is good and what is not good — it's the same thing, the good is also not bad.

The Foundation in the Month of Elul

I don't know if there is a time when one performs negative commandments (mitzvos lo sa'aseh), except in cases like "ha'ba'ah l'yado" (when it comes to his hand) — that the Arizal says that when one cuts one's hair, one should have in mind "bal takifu" (you shall not round off). But there is also a concept: a Jew cuts his hair with peyos (sidelocks), it already becomes from this an obligation (chiyuv). Jews understand that there is such a "zachor v'shamor b'dibur echad" on many commandments truly.

And one must explain: since it is now the month of Elul and one tries to be good and not be bad, it is the same thing. The wonderful inquiries (chakiros) whether one should be more engaged in "sur mei'ra" (turn from evil) or more in "va'aseh tov" (and do good), such as the Chiddushei HaRim spoke about whether one should say more "al chet" (for the sin) or more "v'simloch" (and You shall reign) — the entire question is

only when one is in the midst of sinning. When one is in the midst of Shabbos, in the midst of Yom Tov, or in the month of Elul where there is in this a holiness (kedusha), an illumination (ha'ara) — it is the same thing, "b'dibur echad ne'emru" (they were said in one utterance).

A gut Shabbos.

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