

## During the Three Weeks of “Bein HaMetzorum” We Finish the Four Books Corresponding to the Four “Goluyos” and Begin the Fifth Book Corresponding to the Future “Geulah”

This coming Shabbes we will read from the Torah the two portions of Mattos and Masei. Thus, we will conclude the fourth of the five books of the Torah, “sefer Bamidbor”. On the following Shabbes kodesh, Shabbes Chazon, which always falls before Tishah B’Av, we begin reading the fifth book, “sefer Devorim”. This pattern is repeated year after year - the only difference occurs during a leap year when Mattos and Masei are not combined but are read separately, each on its own Shabbes.

As a result, every year during the three Shabboses of “Bein HaMetzorum”, we conclude the first four seforim - Bereishis, Shemos, Vayikro and Bamidbor - and begin the fifth sefer - Devorim. Now, we know from the Gemoreh (Megillah 31b) that Ezra HaSofer arranged the weekly Torah readings for the entire year with specific intent. It is worthwhile analyzing, therefore, why he arranged for us to connect the first four seforim of the Torah with the fifth sefer specifically during the period of “Bein HaMetzorum”.

### The Words **אֵלֶּה מִסְעֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** Allude to the Four Exiles

Let us begin our journey by introducing the words of the Megaleh Amukos which appear at the beginning of Mattos-Masei and also in his sefer on Voeschanon (240). He finds an allusion in the very first possuk of parshas Masei to all four exiles experienced by Yisroel after the exile and redemption from Mitzrayim. The first letters of the words **אֵלֶּה מִסְעֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** - these are the journeys of Bnei Yisroel - represent **יִוֹן אֲדוֹם מִדֵּי בַבֶּל יוֹן** - Edom (Eisav and the Roman Empire), Modai (Persia and Media), Bovel (Babylonia), and Yovon (Greece). It is logical that the first possuk describing Bnei Yisroel’s journeys after Mitzrayim would allude to their future exiles.

Let us suggest that the reason that the Torah alluded to the four “Goluyos” with the words: **אֵלֶּה מִסְעֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** - these

are the journeys of Bnei Yisroel - is meant to teach us that exile is not a permanent state of affairs for Yisroel, chas v’shalom, but rather is merely a “journey”. It is akin to a person who travels from place to place to correct some wrong that he has done in each place; however, once he completes his task, he returns home. This, indeed, is the nature and purpose of the “Goluyos”: **“אֵלֶּה מִסְעֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל”** - Yisroel journey from one exile to another to clarify and remedy certain wrongs. Once they fulfill this task, HKB”H will redeem them from slavery, persecution and physical and spiritual darkness and reveal His magnificent light.

The Megaleh Amukos’s rationale for not including the golus in Mitzrayim along with the other four “Goluyos” accords with a teaching of the Arizal’s in Likutei Torah (Ki Seitzei). Each of these four exiles possesses its own particular aspect and characteristic; the exile in Egypt, however, was a general exile incorporating all of the four other future “Goluyos”. A wonderful allusion to this fact is provided by the gaon Chida in Simchat HaRegel. The opening possuk of sefer Shemos describing the descent of Bnei Yisroel to Mitzrayim employs the word **בְּאֵי”ם** - meaning “that came”. This word is an abbreviation for **בְּבֵל מִדֵּי יוֹן אֲדוֹם** - indicating that aspects of all four of these “Goluyos” were contained in the experience of the exile in Mitzrayim.

Let us address the reason that the journey to the four exiles is alluded to specifically at the conclusion of sefer Bamidbor, in parshas Masei, in the first letters of the possuk: **“אֵלֶּה מִסְעֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל”**. First, let us note that we find in the Gemoreh on several occasions (Megillah 15a, Nedorim 22b, Sanhedrin 44a) that the Written Torah, Torah she’b’chsav is comprised of five separate books, “Chamishah Chumshei Torah” - **“חֲמִשָּׁה חֻמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה”** - Bereishis, Shemos, Vayikro, Bamidbor and Devorim. This requires further explanation.

Additionally, there is a secondary division among these five seforim. The first four seforim possess a different status

than the fifth sefer, sefer Devorim, which is referred to in the Gemoreh (Berachos 21b, Megillah 7a, etc.) as "Mishneh Torah" - "משנה תורה". According to Rashi's commentary (Zevachim 115b) Mishneh Torah represents a review of prior events as presented and arranged by Moshe.

### Sefer Devorim Was Uttered by Moshe through Divine Inspiration

Concerning these matters, let us introduce the fascinating commentary of the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh (Devorim 1, 1) at the beginning of sefer Devorim:

**"אלה הדברים אשר דיבר משה אל כל ישראל וגו', אלה מייעט הקודם, פירוש לפי שאמר אשר דיבר משה שהם דברי עצמו, שכל הספר תוכחות ומוסר ממשה לעובר פי ה', ואמרו ז"ל (מגילה לא:): קללות שבמשנה תורה משה מפי עצמו אמרן, ואפילו מה שחזר ופירש מאמרי ה' הקודמים, לא נצטוו עשות כן אלא מעצמו חזר הדברים... לזה אמר אלה הדברים, פירוש אלה לבד הם הדברים אשר דיבר משה דברי עצמו, אבל כל הקודם בד' חומשים לא אמר אפילו אות אחת מעצמו, אלא הדברים שיצאו מפי המצווה כצורתן בלא שום שינוי אפילו אות אחת יתירה או חסרה."**

The sefer begins with the word **אלה** which comes to exclude what came prior to it. The possuk specifically states: **אשר דיבר משה** - indicating that these are Moshe's own words rebuking all that choose to violate Hashem's commands. The entire sefer is "mussar" and "tochachot" from Moshe himself. This is reflected by Chazal's statement (Megillah 31b) that the curses in sefer Devorim originated from Moshe himself. Everything stated by Moshe in the previous four seforim was precisely as he was commanded to do - without changing one iota.

Now, this Ohr HaChaim presents an obvious difficulty which is addressed by the Shu"t Maharsham (3, 290) and the Klei Chemdah (Devorim) at length. How can he assert that sefer Devorim represents Moshe's own words? After all, the Gemoreh (Sanhedrin 99a), elucidating the possuk (Bamidbor 15, 1), states explicitly:

**"כי דבר ה' בזה, זה האומר אין תורה מן השמים, ואפילו אמר כל התורה כולה מן השמים חוץ מפסוק זה, שלא אמרו הקב"ה אלא משה מפי עצמו, זהו כי דבר ה' בזה."**

It is heresy to suggest that even one single possuk from the Torah was not uttered by HKB"H but rather was uttered by Moshe of his own volition.

It is apparent, however, that the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh had in mind the same thing as Tosafos (Megillah 31a; D"H Moshe), who clarify the following statement in the Gemoreh

**"קללות שבמשנה תורה משה מפי עצמו אמרן - וברוח (ibid.): הקודם - Moshe uttered the curses recorded in Mishneh Torah on his own through divine inspiration. In other words, Moshe ascertained by divine inspiration - by "ruach hakodesh" - that it was incumbent upon him to utter and record all of sefer Devorim and to include its contents with the rest of Torah she'b'chsav. Regarding the Gemoreh's statement that Moshe uttered the curses in Mishneh Torah on his own simply emphasizes the fact that the entire sefer was uttered by Moshe of his own accord through "ruach hakodesh".**

This obliges us to explain the division of the five seforim. We must explain why the first four seforim - Bereishis, Shemos, Vayikro and Bamidbor - were uttered directly by HKB"H, while the fifth sefer - Devorim - was uttered by Moshe with "ruach hakodesh". In the final analysis, all five seforim possess the same level of kedushah, and anyone who denies even a single possuk is considered a heretic and as if he is denying the legitimacy of the entire Torah.

### The Five Books of the Torah Correspond to the Four "Goluyos" and the Final "Geulah"

I have been inspired to propose a novel idea in honor of the Torah. We find five distinct periods in the history of the people of Yisroel. There are the four periods of "golus": **בבל, מדי, יון**, - which were all included in the exile in Mitzrayim - and the fifth period, which is the time of the future "geulah" and the times of the mashiach - which we anxiously await especially during these three weeks.

It appears as if the first four seforim of the Torah correspond to the four "Goluyos". In other words, the light from each one of these four seforim is aimed at shattering the forces of "tumah" of one of the four "Goluyos". Each light is designed to protect Yisroel from being engulfed by the profane, impure forces of one of the four exiles. The survival and sustenance of Yisroel during the times of the "geulah", however, is in the merit of sefer Devorim - which Moshe Rabeinu revealed to us through "ruach hakodesh". Now, let us itemize and align the seforim with the "Goluyos".

Sefer Bereishis corresponds to "golus Bavel". The unique light of sefer Bereishis shattered the force of "tumah" that prevailed during the Babylonian exile. Support for this contention can be found in sefer Bereishis, in parshas Noach. There the episode involving the generation of the dispersion is depicted. They rebelled against Hashem in Bavel forcing HKB"H, as it were, to descend and scatter them to the four corners of the earth. The Torah explains that this is the significance of the

name Bovel (Bereishis 11, 8): **“ויפיץ ה' אותם משם על פני כל הארץ: ויחדלו לבנות העיר, על כן קרא שמה בכל כי שם בלל ה' שפת כל הארץ”** - and Hashem dispersed them from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Bovel, because it was there that Hashem confused the language of the whole earth, and from there Hashem scattered them over the face of the whole earth. (Note that the word Bovel is related to the Hebrew word “bolal” meaning to confuse and mix up.)

Sefer Shemos corresponds to “golus Modai”. The unique light that illuminates throughout sefer Shemos shattered the force of tumah that prevailed during the Median exile. Support for this assertion can be found in sefer Shemos, parshas Yisro. At the revelation of Matan Torah at Har Sinai, it is written (Shemos 19, 17): **“ויתיצבו בתחתית ההר”** - they stood under the mountain. The Gemoreh elucidates the possuk as follows (Shabbos 88a): **“מלמד שכפה הקב”ה עליהם את ההר כגיגית ואמר: להם, אם אתם מקבלים התורה מוטב, ואם לאו שם תהא קבורתכם... אף על פי כן הדור קבלוה בימי אחשוורוש, דכתיב (אסתר ט כז) קימו וקבלו היהודים, קיימו מה שקיבלו כבר”** - we learn that HKB”H held the mountain threateningly over their heads to persuade them to accept the Torah; nevertheless, they accepted it again willingly during the times of Achashveirosh. We see that in the merit of receiving the Torah in sefer Shemos - a process which was completed during the rule of Achashveirosh - the negative force of Modai was ultimately vanquished.

### Sefer Vayikro Corresponds to “Golus Yovon”

Sefer Vayikro corresponds to “golus Yovon”. The unique light that pervades sefer Vayikro crushed the force of tumah that prevailed during the Greek exile as demonstrated during the miracle of Chanukah. Just as the service involving the korbanot, described in sefer Vayikro, is performed by the Kohanim, so, too, the military victory and the miracle of Chanukah were facilitated by the Kohanim.

This coincides wonderfully with what the author of HaRokeach HaGadol” (225), one of the Tosafists, writes. He remarks that the miracle of Chanukah is alluded to in sefer Vayikro in parshas Emor among the other holidays and festivals. The Bnei Yissaschar writes in his name (Kislev-Teves 2, 2):

**“כתב הרב עיר וקדיש אשר דבריו דברי קבלה וקיבל מאליהו ז”ל הלא הוא בעל הרוקח וזה לשונו, בפרשת אמור אל הכהנים התחיל שבת ורגלים, פסח ועצרת, ראש השנה ויום הכפורים, סוכות (ויקרא כג מד) וידבר משה את מועדי ה' אל בני ישראל, וסמיך ליה (ויקרא כד ב) ויקחו אליך שמן זית זך כתית למאור, רמז לחנוכה (שבת כג.) שמן זית מצוה מן המובחר.”**

In parshas Emor which addresses the Kohanim, all of the holidays of the year are enumerated. After concluding the passage mentioning all of the festivals, the Torah immediately juxtaposes the passage describing the taking of pure olive oil which alludes to Chanukah.

### Sefer Bamidbor Corresponds to “Golus Edom”

Sefer Bamidbor corresponds to “golus Edom”. The unique light that shines throughout sefer Bamidbor shatters the force of tumah of the current exile, attributed to the descendants of Eisav - preventing Yisroel from drowning in it. Support for this notion can be found in parshas Chukas (Bamidbor 20, 14):

**“וישלח משה מלאכים מקדש אל מלך אדום... נעברה נא בארץ לא נעבור בשדה ובכרם ולא נשתה מי באר, דרך המלך נלך לא נטה ימין ושמאול עד אשר נעבר גבולך, ויאמר אליו אדום לא תעבור בי פן בחרב אצא לקראתך... וימאן אדום נתון את ישראל עבור בגבולו ויט ישראל מעליו.”**

Moshe sends messengers to the king of Edom requesting permission to pass through his territory. His request is denied. To understand this matter, let us refer to Rashi’s commentary in parshas Vayishlach (Bereishis 33, 4): **“אמר רבי שמעון בן יוחאי, - הלכה היא בידוע שעשו שונא ליעקב”** - it is an established fact that Eisav hates Yaakov. We can suggest that HKB”H inculcated this extreme hatred for Yaakov and his descendants in Eisav and his descendants, so that Yaakov’s descendants would remain steadfast and maintain their level of kedushah throughout this lengthy “golus”. This intense hatred would prevent them from intermingling and assimilating with non-Jews and adopting their ways and habits.

This helps us better understand why HKB”H arranged for the king of Edom to refuse to allow Yisroel to pass through his territory. His refusal was truly for Yisroel’s benefit - to protect them from the negative influence of Edom. Accordingly, HKB”H saw fit to write these pesukim specifically in sefer Bamidbor - corresponding to “golus Edom”. For, as we have suggested, the light of sefer Bamidbor serves to destroy the negative force of Edom and to protect Yisroel from being overwhelmed by its tumah.

### The Word **בשו”ב** Is an Abbreviation for **ב’ראשית ש’מות ו’יקרא ב’מדבר**

In summary, the force insuring Yisroel’s survival during each of the four “Goluyos” - Bovel, Modai, Yovon and Edom - is the merit of the corresponding light of each of the four seforim - Bereishis, Shemos, Vayikro and Bamidbor. Hashem has allowed me to find an amazing allusion related to this idea

in the words of Yisroel's sweet psalmist (Tehillim 126, 1): **שיר**: "ה' את שיבת ציון היינו כחולמים" - Shir HaMaalot - המעלות בשוב ה' את שיבת ציון היינו כחולמים: When Hashem will return the captivity of Tziyon, we will be like dreamers. What is the meaning of the phrase: "we will be like dreamers"?

We can interpret the phrase as follows: when Hashem will return us to Tziyon at the time of the future redemption, Yisroel will look back upon the hardships that they endured during the four "Goluyos", and will be amazed that they were capable of remaining steadfast in their kedushah and withstanding those powerful forces of tumah. In the words of David HaMelech: **בשוב ה' את שיבת ציון היינו כחולמים** - it will seem so unbelievable that it will seem as if it must have been a dream; for there is no way we could have actually endured all of that suffering and adversity.

Yet, David HaMelech cleverly provided us with an answer to our bewilderment in this possuk. The word **בשוב** in this possuk is an abbreviation for **ב'ראשית ש'מות ו'יקרא ב'מדבר** - the names of the first four books of the Torah. In other words, we owe our survival to the light of Torah contained in these four seforim. The light of these four seforim shattered the forces of tumah of the four "Goluyos" - Bovel, Modai, Yovon and Edom - allowing us to persevere and to exit them intact and in peace.

Alas, we can appreciate why the Torah chose to allude to the four "Goluyos" in the final parsha of sefer Bamidbor, at the beginning of parshas Masei, with the words: **א'לה מ'סעי** - **ב'ני י'שראל** - where each of the first letters represents one of the "Goluyos" - **א'דום מ'די ב'בל י'ון**. It teaches us that the light of Torah contained in the first four seforim - that we finish reading this Shabbes - is what sustained us in the past and present and allowed us to maintain our kedushah throughout these four "Goluyos".

### Sefer Devorim Corresponds to the Future "Geulah"

Continuing on along this exalted path, let us rise to the occasion and explain the matter of the fifth sefer - sefer Devorim - corresponding to the new yet unrealized period of the future "geulah". Concerning the words of the prophet (Yeshayah 51, 4), the Midrash states (V.R. 13, 3): **כי תורה** "מאתי תצא" - **אמר הקב"ה תורה חדשה מאתי תצא**, חידוש תורה - in other words, in the Future to Come, HKB"H will reveal to us a new Torah.

Seemingly, this is difficult to understand, because it directly contradicts one of the Rambam's thirteen principles of faith: **שזאת התורה לא תהא מוחלפת ולא תהא תורה אחרת מאת הבורא יתברך שמו** - that this Torah will not be exchanged nor

will there be another Torah from the Creator - blessed be His name. In fact, the explanation is quite simple. The Midrash is not suggesting that HKB"H will give us an entirely new Torah. Rather, it is teaching us that in the future, HKB"H will reveal to us new insights and interpretations of the Torah that were beyond our comprehension in this world. For, at the time of the future "geulah", Yisroel will achieve new spiritual heights - previously unattainable - allowing them to fathom and appreciate these new insights and interpretations.

Now, the Midrash clearly states (Yalkut Shimoni Yeshayah 26, Remez 429): **ועתיד הקב"ה להיות יושב בגן עדן ודורש, וכל הצדיקים יושבים לפניו, וכל פמליא של מעלה עומדים על רגליהם, וחמה ומזלות מימינו של הקב"ה, ולבנה וכוכבים משמאלו, והקב"ה יושב ודורש תורה חדשה שעתיד ליתן על ידי משיח** The Midrash portrays a futuristic scenario where HKB"H will be sitting in Gan Eden and elucidating the Torah. It depicts where the tzaddikim and all of the various groups will be positioned around HKB"H. It concludes by stating that this new Torah will ultimately be delivered by the Mashiach.

Furthermore, the Zohar hakadosh explains (Bereishis 25b) that Moshe Rabeinu, the first redeemer during the departure from Mitzrayim, will be the Melech HaMashiach in the future. This fact is alluded to by the possuk (Bereishis 49, 10): **לא יסור שבט מיהודה, דא משיח בן דוד, ומחוקק מבין רגליו, דא משיח בן יוסף, עד כי יבא שיל"ה דא משה, חושבן דא כדא**. The possuk concludes: **עד כי יבא שיל"ה** - until **שיל"ה** comes. The name **שיל"ה** possesses the same numerical value as the name **משה** - 345.

Similarly, the Zohar hakadosh (Mishpotim 120a) draws an allusion from the possuk in Koheles (1, 9): **מה שהיה הוא** - **שהיה** - that that was, he shall be. The first letters of the words **מה שהיה הוא** spell out the name **משה**. Now, we can interpret the possuk as follows: he that was the first redeemer from Mitzrayim, namely **משה**, he will also be the redeemer for the final "geulah" in the future. The Ohr HaChaim hakadosh (Bereishis 49, 11) explains that the neshamah of Mashiach will come from both Moshe Rabeinu and a descendant of Dovid HaMelech.

Thus we see that just as Moshe was the redeemer for the first "geulah" from Mitzrayim, he is also destined to be the final redeemer for the future "geulah". Regarding receiving the Torah, Moshe received the Torah on Har Sinai and taught it to Yisroel - as it is written (Devorim 33, 4): **תורה צוה לנו משה** - the Torah that Moshe commanded us. Similarly, at the time of the future "geulah", he will once again be delegated to teach Yisroel the Torah with its new insights and interpretations. This same arrangement is depicted by the Tikunei Zohar (Tikun 21, 51a).

## Moshe Rabeinu Concealed in Sefer Devorim: "A new Torah will come from Me"

After much deliberation, I would like to provide my own explanation concerning the fundamental nature of sefer Devorim. As we learned above, the Ohr HaChaim points out that sefer Devorim opens with the word "אלה" and not "ואלה". Hence, rather than being an addition it is a form of exclusion. This exclusion teaches us that this sefer is different from the previous four seforim. The first four seforim were uttered directly by HKB"H; whereas this sefer consists of Moshe's own utterances. We explained, based on Tosafot and Rabeinu Bachayei that he means that these are words of mussar and tochachah that came to Moshe by means of "ruach hakodesh". Thus, their kedushah is inseparable and no different than the remainder of Torah she'b'chsav.

Yet, the matter can be explained in greater depth. Moshe Rabeinu - who is destined to be the future Melech HaMashiach and will teach Yisroel the new Torah - realized before his passing from this world, through divine inspiration, that the insights of the new Torah must be stored in the form of allusions within the body of sefer Devorim. Thus, these novel insights and interpretations would be part and parcel of the Torah fulfilling the principle of faith: **שזאת התורה לא תהא מוחלפת** "שזאת התורה לא תהא מוחלפת" - **ולא תהא תורה אחרת** - that this Torah will not be exchanged nor will there be another Torah. This is why sefer Devorim is known as "Mishneh Torah". This name indicates that the novel interpretations contained within sefer Devorim in the form of allusions are not really an entirely new Torah but are actually "Mishneh Torah" - a review of the rest of the Torah in greater depth.

For this reason, Moshe Rabeinu, imbued with "ruach hakodesh", began sefer Devorim with the possuk: **אלה הדברים** "אלה הדברים" - **אשר דיבר משה אל כל ישראל** - these are the words that Moshe spoke to all of Yisroel. As mentioned, he specifically employs the word "אלה" indicating a disconnect from the previous seforim. Whereas the first four seforim represent the four "Goluyos", sefer Devorim represents the period of the "geulah". That will be the time when Moshe Rabeinu is destined to be the Melech HaMashiach and deliver these words to all of Yisroel with new insights and nuances.

This also explains why the first four seforim - Bereishis, Shemos, Vayikro and Bamidbor - were uttered directly by Hashem, while sefer Devorim was uttered by Moshe as he was inspired to do so by "ruach hakodesh". Seeing as the time to reveal this newer updated version of the Torah had not yet arrived, sefer Devorim - which contained these new insights - could not be recorded directly from HKB"H.

Notwithstanding, so that these teachings would not represent an entirely new version of the Torah, HKB"H inspired Moshe to include them within the existing Torah. The result was sefer Devorim which Moshe was destined to convey to Yisroel in the future. Thus, these new revelations and insights concealed within sefer Devorim possessed the unmitigated kedushah of Torah she'b'chsav. As such, if even the tip of a letter "yud" would be missing from sefer Devorim, the entire sefer Torah would be invalidated; for, it is an inseparable part of the Torah.

## 995 Pesukim in Sefer Devorim Corresponding to 995 Firmaments

Support for this concept that sefer Devorim corresponds to the future "geulah", can be found in Maaseh Rokeach (Voeschanon). There he provides us with a wonderful interpretation of the possuk in parshas Ha'azinu (Devorim 32, 39): **ראו עתה כי אני הוא ואין אלהים עמדי אני אחיה ואחיה** "ראו עתה כי אני הוא ואין אלהים עמדי אני אחיה ואחיה" - see, now, that I, I am He; and no god is with Me. I put to death and I bring life; I struck down and I will heal; and there is no one who rescues from My hand. What is the meaning of the statement: **ראו עתה כי אני הוא** - see, now, that I, I am He? How were they able to suddenly see at that moment?

An answer can be provided based on the Midrash. The Midrash states (D.R. 11, 8): **בשעה שהגיעו ימי משה ליפטר מן העולם... אמר משה, רבונו של עולם דבר אחד אני מבקש ממך לפני מותי, שאכנס ויבקעו כל השערים שבשמים ותהומות, ויראו שאין מותי, - זולתך** - when it came time for Moshe to depart from the world. . . Moshe said, "Master of the Universe, I have a single request of You before my death - that I shall enter and all the gates of heaven and the abysses shall split open, so that all may see that there is none other than You". Where in the Torah do we find any indication that HKB"H granted Moshe's request that the gates of heaven shall split open?

The Maaseh Rokeach explains based on the writings of Rabbi Avraham Galanti in Kol Bochim (Eichah 2, 21) that there are 995 firmaments. This number corresponds to the numerical value of the word **השמים**, meaning the heavens. (Note: this calculation is based on a system that values a final letter "mem" as 600.) The angel Matat utilizes these firmaments to elevate Yisroel's prayers. Nevertheless, he is only allowed to ascend through 900 of the firmaments. He is not permitted to enter the highest firmaments - the upper 55 firmaments. This phenomenon is alluded to in the possuk (Devorim 10, 14): **הן לה' אלקיך השמים ושמי השמים הארץ וכל אשר בה** "הן לה' אלקיך השמים ושמי השמים הארץ וכל אשר בה" - "hen" to Hashem, your G-d, are the heavens and the highest heavens,

the earth and everything that is in it. The word "hen" is spelled "hei" "nun" - possessing a numerical value of 5+50=55. Thus, the possuk teaches us that 55 of the heavenly firmaments are reserved for Hashem, your G-d, alone; none of the categories of angels are allowed beyond the initial 900 firmaments; they may not enter the top 55 firmaments.

The Gemoreh (Chagigah 15a) teaches us that when Elisha ben Avuyah entered the spiritual realm, the heavenly "Orchard", he became irreligious and adopted heretical beliefs. He saw that the angel Matat was given permission to sit down and record in writing the merits of Yisroel. This violated his understanding that among angels there was no sitting. This led him to the false belief of dualism - a perception that, chas v'shalom, there is more than one god. So, within the 900 firmaments that the angel Matat is permitted to go, there is a risk that a person could be misled into believing falsely in dualism. In the 55 upper firmaments, however, he is not permitted to go. Therefore, it is specifically in that realm that Hashem's oneness is revealed and confirmed as reflected by the possuk: **"הן לה' אלקיך השמים"** - "hen" to Hashem, your G-d, are the heavens and the highest heavens.

### "See now" at the Beginning of the 55 Firmaments

Incredibly, in Mishneh Torah there are precisely 955 pesukim. The Maaseh Rokeach postulates that with every single possuk that Moshe Rabeinu uttered in sefer Devorim, he opened up a firmament. Hence, he uttered precisely 955 pesukim in order to split open all 955 firmaments and to demonstrate to everyone that there is only one Almighty G-d. This also explains why sefer Devorim contains so many admonitions against "avodah zarah".

Now, up until the possuk: **"ראו עתה כי אני הוא"** - see, now, that I, I am He - there are 900 pesukim. From that possuk until the end of the Torah, there are 55 pesukim - corresponding to the uppermost 55 firmaments. Now, it is known that the angel Matat is occasionally referred to as "Elokim". So, we can interpret the possuk as follows: **"ראו עתה"** - now that we have reached the possuk that corresponds to the first of the uppermost 55 firmaments, you can all see; **"כי אני הוא"** - I

am here alone in these firmaments; **"ואין אלקים עמדי"** - and there are no other gods, not even the angel Matat, who is sometimes referred to as "Elokim"; he is not permitted to be here with Me in these 55 firmaments. This is the interpretation of the Maaseh Rokeach.

In truth, it is well-known that the ultimate revelation of Hashem's oneness will not occur until the Future to Come. This fact is stated innumerable times in the words of the prophets. For example (Zechariah 14, 9): **"והיה ה' למלך על כל הארץ ביום"** - Hashem will be the King over all the land; on that day Hashem will be One and His Name will be One. Rashi explains: **"שכל העכו"ם יעזבו את אלהיהם"** - all of the idol-worshippers will abandon their gods and the name of Hashem will be known and mentioned by all. Thus we see clearly that the revelation of sefer Devorim - which contains 955 pesukim designed to open up all 955 heavenly firmaments so that all of creation will know that HKB"H is the one and only One - will take place in the Future to Come.

We now stand enlightened and can understand Ezra HaSofer's reasoning. He arranged that we would conclude the reading of sefer Bamidbor and begin the reading of sefer Devorim specifically during the three weeks of Bein HaMetzorim - during which we mourn the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash. This institution is based on the Ramban's concept of "poel dimyon" (Bereishis 12, 6). According to this concept, before a miracle can be initiated above in the heavens, a symbolic gesture must first be performed down on earth.

Hence, during the three weeks of Bein HaMetzorim, we conclude the reading of the four seforim: Bereishis, Shemos, Vayikro and Bamidbor - which correspond to the four "Goluyos". During the third week of Bein HaMetzorim, we begin reading from sefer Devorim which corresponds to the future "geulah". We do so as a symbolic gesture to rid ourselves of the four "Goluyos" and to merit the future "geulah". At that time, HKB"H will open all 955 firmaments - corresponding to the number of pesukim in sefer Devorim - to show all of creation that Hashem is the Almighty and there is no other. May this happen swiftly, in our times. Amen.

