

for they are actually the same thing. Likewise, at the end of the paragraph referring to the Exodus from Egypt, it is concluded also, "I am the Lord your G-d."¹² This also accords with what has been explained earlier.

us His Torah and has clothed in it His blessed will and wisdom, which are united with His blessed Essence and Being in perfect unity; and surely this is as if He gave us His very self, as it were. In this sense the Zohar⁶ commented on the verse: "That they bring Me an offering," (For the expression 'בְּךָ' [to Me'] has the same meaning as 'מִךָּ' [Me']); and hence the text should have read "Me and an offering," except that both are one and the same. Study it well there.)

Contemplating on the greatness of the blessed *En Sof*, the intelligent person [will realise] that as His name indicates, so is He—there is no end or limit or finitude at all to the light and vitality that diffuse from Him, may He be blessed, by His simple¹ will, and which is united with His blessed essence and being in perfect unity. Had the worlds descended from the light of the blessed *En Sof*, without “contractions,”² but according to a gradual descent, from grade to grade by means of cause and effect—this world would not, in such case, have ever been created in its present form, in a finite and limited order, [viz.] “From the earth to heaven there being a journey of five hundred years,”³ and similarly between heaven and heaven, and so also the diameter of each heaven. Even the World to Come and the Supreme Garden of Eden—the habitation of the souls of the great *tzaddikim*—and the souls themselves and, needless to add, the angels—are all in the realm of bounds and limitation, for

This is the interpretation of “And Thou hast given to us, O Lord, our G-d, in love, . . . [and] ‘For by the light of Thy countenance hast Thou given us, O Lord our G-d.’”⁸ Therefore the only thing that precludes us from the attachment of the soul to His blessed Unity and light is the will, that is, if the human being does not will it at all, G-d forbid, to cleave to Him. . . . But immediately he does so desire, and he accepts and draws upon himself His blessed G-dliness and declares: “The Lord is our G-d, the Lord is One.” Then surely is his soul spontaneously absorbed into His blessed Unity, for “Spirit evokes spirit, and draws forth spirit.”⁹ This is a form of “Exodus from Egypt.” Therefore it was ordained that the paragraph concerning the Exodus from Egypt be read specifically during the recital of the *Shema*,¹⁰ although it is a commandment by itself, and not appertaining to the commandment of the recital of the *Shema*, as is stated in the Talmud and Codes;¹¹

[6] II, 14 ob [7] Literally "... take Me and offering." [8] Liturgy. The emphasis is on "Thou hast given us." [9] I.e. bestows an extra measure of merit. Zohar II, 162b. [10] Cf. Berachot, 136; Raibbi Schnur Zalman of Liadi, Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 58:1. [11] Berachot 21a; Ibid. 67:1-2. [12] Num. and in the next chapter, it is further expounded. [13] Chagigah 13a.