

Discourse 42

*“Gedolah Hachnasat Orchim MeiHakbalat Pnei
HaShechinah - Hospitality to guests is greater than
receiving the Shechinah”*

29th of Elul, the eve before Rosh HaShanah, 5723

By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

It states in Talmud,¹⁴⁸⁸ “Hospitality to guests is greater than receiving the *Shechinah*, as the verse states,¹⁴⁸⁹ ‘And he said: ‘My Lord-*Adona*’יְהוָה, if I now have found favor in Your eyes, please do not pass [from upon Your servant] etc.’” That is, even though he had the matter of receiving the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יְהוָה, the *Shechinah*, as the Torah portion opens,¹⁴⁹⁰ “*HaShem*-יְהוָה appeared to him,” nonetheless, he set (the Holy One, blessed is He) aside and went to receive guests,¹⁴⁹¹ being that “hospitality to guests is greater than receiving the *Shechinah*.”

Now, to understand the greatness of hospitality to guests (*Hachnasat Orchim*), we first must explain the greatness of receiving the face of Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*’s-יְהוָה,

¹⁴⁸⁸ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 127a; Also see Shevuot 35b; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Eivel 14:2; Also see at length in Likkutei Sichot Vol. 3, p. 765 and on; Vol. 25 p. 70 and on (from the Sichah talk of this Farbrengen gathering).

¹⁴⁸⁹ Genesis 18:3

¹⁴⁹⁰ Genesis 18:1

¹⁴⁹¹ See Rashi to Shabbat 127a *ibid*.

the *Shechinah*, [indicated by the verse], “*HaShem*-יהו"ה appeared to him.” Through this we will understand the greatness of hospitality to guests (*Hachnasat Orchim*), which is even greater than receiving the face of the *Shechinah*.

2.

This is explained by his honorable holiness, the Tzemach Tzedek (whose birthday we are celebrating)¹⁴⁹² in the discourse entitled “*Vayera Eilav HaShem*” printed in Ohr HaTorah.¹⁴⁹³ There he explains the words of the Talmud,¹⁴⁹⁴ “The Holy One, blessed is He, visited the sick, as the verse states,¹⁴⁹⁵ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה appeared to him in the plains of Mamre etc.” (That is, on the third day after his circumcision, the Holy One, blessed is He, came and inquired about his well-being.)¹⁴⁹⁶

Now, in the upper worlds, the matter of sickness¹⁴⁹⁷ is as the verse,¹⁴⁹⁸ “Sustain me with flagons... for I am sick with love.” The matter of lovesickness (*Cholat Ahavah*) is that love for the Holy One, blessed is He, penetrates him so much that he becomes ill. This matter is applicable in the loftiest of levels.

¹⁴⁹² See the Sichah talk that preceded the discourse (*Maamar*), that the Tzemach Tzedek was accustomed to saying Chassidus on his birthday, Erev Rosh HaShanah (Sefer HaSichot 5704 p. 162).

¹⁴⁹³ Ohr HaTorah, Vayera 88b and on.

¹⁴⁹⁴ Talmud Bavli, Sotah 14a

¹⁴⁹⁵ Genesis 18:1

¹⁴⁹⁶ Rashi to Genesis 18:1; Talmud Bavli, Bava Metziya 86b

¹⁴⁹⁷ Also see Torah Ohr Yitro, discourse entitled “*Moshe Yedaber*” (68a)

¹⁴⁹⁸ Song of Songs 2:5

For, as known¹⁴⁹⁹ in the writings of the Arizal¹⁵⁰⁰ it is written that the word “sick-*Cholah*-חולה” has the numerical value of טמ”ט-49, indicating a level in which all forty-nine gates of Understanding-*Binah* are present in completeness. Now, even though this is the highest level attainable, as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹⁵⁰¹ “Fifty gates of Understanding-*Binah* were created in the world, and all were given to Moshe, except for one (that is, טמ”ט-49), as the verse states,¹⁵⁰² ‘And You have made him a little less than God,’” nevertheless, this still is the matter of sickness-*Choleh*-חולה (the numerical value of טמ”ט-49), since it lacks the Fiftieth Gate.

Actually, the opposite is true. It [specifically] on this level, in which one’s Understanding-*Binah* is whole, with all forty-nine gates of Understanding-*Binah*, he understands to a much greater degree that there is a higher matter - this being the Fiftieth Gate - that he has not grasped, thus causing his lovesickness (*Cholat Ahavah*) to be all the greater.

This is also what the Tzemach Tzeddek explains in Shoresch Mitzvat HaTefillah¹⁵⁰³ on the matter of abundant love (*Ahavah Rabba*) for *HaShem*-יהו”ה, blessed is He, this being the aspect indicated by the verse,¹⁵⁰⁴ “Who have I in the heavens [but You], and but for You, I desire nothing on earth.” He

¹⁴⁹⁹ See Likkutei Torah, Zot HaBrachah 97b; Also see the discourse entitled “v’Heisir Mimcha – *HaShem* will remove every sickness from you” 5721, Discourse 31, Ch. 4 and on.

¹⁵⁰⁰ Likkutei Torah of the Arizal, Parshat Vayera; Me’orei Ohr, Ma’arechet Chet, Section 35; Also see the discourse entitled “*Kara Shachav K’Ari* – He crouched and lay down like a lion,” 5716, Discourse 24, Ch. 3

¹⁵⁰¹ Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 21b

¹⁵⁰² Psalms 8:6

¹⁵⁰³ Derech Mitzvotcha, Shoresch Mitzvat HaTefillah, Ch. 40 (138a)

¹⁵⁰⁴ Psalms 73:25

explains that a person should desire nothing but *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, not even the heavens or the earth, these being the upper Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) and lower Gardens of Eden (*Gan Eden*). Rather, one's love should be for *HaShem*-יהו"ה alone, blessed is He, meaning for the Essential Self and Being of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, literally.

This is as the Tzemach Tzedek adds there, "As in the words of our master and teacher, whose soul is in Eden,¹⁵⁰⁵ when he was in a state of adhesion (*Dveikut*), during which he would say, 'I want nothing at all! I do not want Your Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*)! I do not want Your coming world (*Olam HaBa*)! I want nothing but You alone!'"

In other words, the Alter Rebbe's adhesion (*Dveikut*) was in the way indicated by the verse, "Who have I in the heavens [but You], and but for You, I desire nothing on earth." That is, he did not desire the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) and the Coming World (*Olam HaBa*) - this being the matter of the forty-nine gates of Understanding-*Binah* - but only desired the Essential Self and Being of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, literally, this being the matter of the Fiftieth Gate. This is the matter of lovesickness (*Cholat Ahavah*).

About this the verse states,¹⁵⁰⁶ "Sustain me with flagons... for I am sick with love." In other words, when there is the matter of lovesickness (*Cholat Ahavah*), the matter of "Sustain me with flagons," is then necessary, referring to the

¹⁵⁰⁵ The Alter Rebbe

¹⁵⁰⁶ Song of Songs 2:5

revelation of the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, from a higher level than the forty-nine gates of Understanding-*Binah* (which have the same numerical value as "sickness-*Choleh*-חולה-49"). This revelation is the remedy for this lovesickness (*Cholat Ahavah*).

This then, is the meaning of the verse, "*HaShem*-יהו"ה appeared to him," to visit the sick (*Choleh*-חולה), referring to revelation of the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, which transcends the forty-nine gates of Understanding-*Binah*, in order to heal the lovesickness.

This is also the meaning of the words,¹⁵⁰⁷ "In the heat of the day," in that, "the Holy One, blessed is He, took the sun out of its sheath,"¹⁵⁰⁸ this being the matter [expressed in the verse],¹⁵⁰⁹ "A sun of righteousness will shine for you who fear My Name, with healing in its rays etc." This indicates the revelation of the aspect of the Healing Countenance-*Arich Anpin*-אנפין אריך from which the cure-*Aruchah*-ארוכה and healing is drawn etc.,¹⁵¹⁰ this being the remedy for the lovesickness.

This matter ("a sun of righteousness") is similar to the revelations of the coming future, as our sages, of blessed memory, taught,¹⁵¹¹ "In the coming future, the Holy One, blessed is He, will remove the sun from its sheath and the righteous will be healed by it, as the verse states, 'A sun of

¹⁵⁰⁷ Genesis 18:1 *ibid*.

¹⁵⁰⁸ See Rashi to Genesis 18:1 *ibid*.

¹⁵⁰⁹ Malachi 3:20

¹⁵¹⁰ See the "Refa'einu" blessing in the Sefardic version of the Amidah liturgy; Also see the discourse entitled "*Refa'eini HaShem* – Heal me, *HaShem*, and I will be healed," 5721, Discourse 21, Ch. 6.

¹⁵¹¹ Talmud Bavli, Nedarim 8b

righteousness will shine for you who fear My Name, with healing in its rays,” and as explained in the Midrash,¹⁵¹² the “sun of righteousness” is Moshiach.

3.

Now, from the above, we can understand the greatness of hospitality to guests (*Hachnasat Orchim*), which is even “greater than welcoming the face of the *Shechinah*.” For, even though Avraham certainly welcomed the face of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, the *Shechinah*, in the highest way, [as it states], “*HaShem*-יהו"ה appeared to Him” to visit the sick (*Choleh*-חולה), this being the matter of the revelation of the Fiftieth Gate in order to heal the lovesickness (*Cholat Ahavah*), nevertheless, “He lifted his eyes and saw, and behold, three men were standing over him... so he ran to greet them etc.,”¹⁵¹³ that is, he set aside the Holy One, blessed is He, and went to welcome the guests.

The essential point of the explanation is that a person’s primary service is in tangible action and deed. This is as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹⁵¹⁴ “Study is not the most important thing, but action is (*Ma’aseh*-מעשה).” That is, this matter is even higher than the adhesion indicated by the verse,¹⁵¹⁵ “Who have I in the heavens [but You], and but for You, I desire nothing on earth.”

¹⁵¹² Midrash Shemot Rabba 31:10

¹⁵¹³ Genesis 18:20 *ibid*.

¹⁵¹⁴ Mishnah Avot 1:17

¹⁵¹⁵ Psalms 73:25

This is as brought¹⁵¹⁶ by his honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rebbe, on to the teaching of the Tzemach Tzeddek, that all the Alter Rebbe's self-sacrifice is like nothing compared to the self-sacrifice of separating himself from the adhesion of "besides You I desire nothing," in order to completely invest himself into doing a favor for another Jew, this being the general matter of hospitality to guests (*Hachnasat Orchim*), which "is the statute instituted by our forefather Avraham and the path of kindness by which he conducted himself."¹⁵¹⁷

4.

Now, it can be said that this likewise is the matter of Rosh HaShanah, at which time "all things revert to their original state,"¹⁵¹⁸ and are subsequently renewed and drawn down through the sounding of the Shofar, [as it states],¹⁵¹⁹ "The *mitzvah* of the day is with the Shofar."

In the teachings of Chassidus¹⁵²⁰ it is explained that the voice of the Shofar is not like speech, which is ordered according to intellect, understanding, and comprehension, nor is it the simple [cry of the] human voice. It rather is the sounding of the horn of an animal. However, even so,

¹⁵¹⁶ Likkutei Dibburim Vol. 1, p. 45a

¹⁵¹⁷ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Eivel 14:2

¹⁵¹⁸ See Pri Etz Chayim, Shaar Rosh HaShanah, Ch. 1 and on; Likkutei Torah, Netzavim 51b and elsewhere.

¹⁵¹⁹ Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 26b (in the Mishnah) and 27a there.

¹⁵²⁰ See Likkutei Torah, Netzavim 44b; Siddur Im Da"Ch, Shaar HaTekiyot 246a and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5651 p. 47 and on.

specifically through this we reach even higher to renew and draw down all matters etc.

That is, even though there is great elevation in the voice and speech of man [which is ordered] according to intellect, understanding, and comprehension, to the point of ultimate understanding and comprehension through the Fiftieth Gate of Understanding-*Binah* which quenches the thirst of the lovesickness, nonetheless, it is this very matter itself that must be returned and renewed from its source with renewed vitality.

Now, to bring this about, it is necessary to reach an even deeper level that cannot be reached through man's voice and speech, [which is ordered] according to intellect, understanding, and comprehension. This is brought about through the voice of the Shofar, the horn of an animal, (similar to what was explained above about the superiority of tangible deed and action, over and above the adhesion (*Dveikut*) indicated by the verse, "Who have I in the heavens [but You] etc.").

This matter is drawn down throughout the duration of the year in our general service of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, in tangible action, in the most literal sense. For, through this we gather, return, and bring in, the sparks of holiness that became lost and "dispersed to the ends of the heavens."¹⁵²¹ This is as the verse states,¹⁵²² "It shall be on that day that a great Shofar will be sounded, and those who are lost in the land of

¹⁵²¹ See Deuteronomy 30:4; Likkutei Torah, Teitzei 36a; Sefer HaMaamarim 5634 p. 146; Also see the previous discourses of this year, 5722, entitled "*Vayeishev Yaakov* – Yaakov settled" (Discourse 13) and "*Atem Nitzavim* – You are standing this day, all of you, before *HaShem*" (Discourse 41).

¹⁵²² Isaiah 27:13

Assyria and those cast away in the land of Egypt will come and prostrate themselves to *HaShem*-יהו"ה on the holy mountain in Yerushalayim." May this be so for us, with the fulfillment of the prayer,¹⁵²³ "Sound the great Shofar for our freedom," with the coming of Moshiach, our righteous redeemer, in the near future, in the most literal sense, in a way that "they will immediately be redeemed!"¹⁵²⁴

¹⁵²³ See the "*Teka b'Shofar Gadol*" blessing in the Amidah prayer.

¹⁵²⁴ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah 7:5; Also see Tanya, Iggeret HaTeshuvah, Ch. 11.