

Discourse 16

*“Yafeh Sha’ah Achat B’Teshuvah... -
More precious is one hour in repentance...”*

Delivered on the 10th of Shvat, 5723

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

1.

It states in Mishnah,⁶⁵⁸ “One hour in repentance and good deeds in this world is more precious than all the life of the coming world (*Olam HaBa*).” About this, it is explained in a discourse⁶⁵⁹ of the Alter Rebbe,⁶⁶⁰ that this is because the life of the coming world (*Olam HaBa*) comes from the *Yod-* of the *Yod-Hey-והי*”, whereas the light of the Unlimited One Himself is holy and transcendently removed even from wondrous acts of wisdom-*Chochmah* etc.

However, it is through good deeds that there comes to be a drawing down of the holiness of His Essential Self etc. It therefore is more precious than all the life of the coming world (*Olam HaBa*), since these are the roots and sources of the coming world (*Olam HaBa*) which is drawn from the letter *Yod-*

⁶⁵⁸ Mishnah Avot 4:17

⁶⁵⁹ In the middle of the discourse there is a short section consisting of several lines which begins with the line “*u’B’Khol Zeh Yuvan Yoter HaTaam Yafeh Sha’ah Achat* etc.”

⁶⁶⁰ In the discourse entitled “*Osree LaGefen*” in manuscript booklet #1239, 31b (in the library of Agudat Chassidei Chabad), upon which there is a handwritten note from the Rebbe “5563?” (printed with minor variations in *Torat Chayim*, Vayechi 95d [236d] and on).

י, and is that which “no eye has seen etc.”⁶⁶¹ This will suffice for the understanding.

Now, in regard to the statement that “the life of the coming world (*Olam HaBa*) comes from the letter *Yod*-י of the *Yod-Hey*-יהי,” this is based on the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory, in Tractate Menachot,⁶⁶² that the coming world (*Olam HaBa*) was created with the letter *Yod*-י and this world (*Olam HaZeh*) was created with the letter *Hey*-ה.

From this is understood that the life of the coming world (*Chayei Olam HaBa*) is drawn from the letter *Yod*-י of the Name *HaShem*-יהוה. However, it is explained that repentance (*Teshuvah*) and good deeds are even higher than this, (since through them, there is a drawing down of the holiness of His Essential Self).

However, at first glance, this is not understood, being that the Name *HaShem*-יהוה is higher than all names, (whether the ten holy names,⁶⁶³ or the seven names that are not to be erased),⁶⁶⁴ and is called the Name of His Essential Self (*Shem HaEtzem*),⁶⁶⁵ the Explicit Name (*Shem HaMeforash*),⁶⁶⁶ and the Singular Name (*Shem HaMeyuchad*).⁶⁶⁷ This being so, how is it possible that repentance (*Teshuvah*), and more specifically,

⁶⁶¹ Isaiah 64:3

⁶⁶² Talmud Bavli, Menachot 29b

⁶⁶³ Zohar III 11a

⁶⁶⁴ Talmud Bavli, Shevuot 35a

⁶⁶⁵ Kessef Mishneh, Hilchot Avodah Zarah 2:7; Pardes Rimmonim, Shaar 19 (Shaar Shem Ben Dalet); Moreh Nevuchim, Vol. 1, Ch. 61 and on; Ikkarim, Maamar 2, Ch. 28.

⁶⁶⁶ Talmud Bavli, Sotah 38a; Sanhedrin 60a; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 6:2; Hilchot Nesiyat Kapayim 14:10

⁶⁶⁷ Talmud Bavli, Sotah *ibid.*; Sanhedrin *ibid.*; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah *ibid.*; Hilchot Shevuot 2:2

good deeds, could be even higher than the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, and even higher than the letter *Yod*-י, which is the first letter of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה?

2.

This may be understood by prefacing that the giving of the Torah with the ten commandments, begins with the words “I am *HaShem* your God-*Anochi HaShem Elohe*”*cha*-אנכי יהו"ה-אלהיך.”⁶⁶⁸ That is, it does not begin with the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, but with the word “I am-*Anochi*,” which precedes and transcends the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, and is the aspect of “I am who I am-*Anochi Mi SheAnochi*”*אנכי מי שאנכי*,” that “is not hinted at in any letter or in any thorn [of a letter] etc.”⁶⁶⁹

The matter of this in Torah, is that it refers to the primary and innermost essence of the Torah, which transcends all division. This is as we find in Zohar⁶⁷⁰ (in the passage recited when prostrating on the resting place [of righteous *Tzaddikim*], especially on the day of their *Hilula*), about the Torah scroll that was unfit because there was an extra letter *Vav*-ו in the verse,⁶⁷¹ “That is completely separated into two hooves,” [even though technically, according to Torah law, it is difficult to say that this would render the Torah scroll to be unfit,⁶⁷² and moreover, the simple meaning of the verse is

⁶⁶⁸ Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 5:6

⁶⁶⁹ See Likkutei Torah, Pinchas 80b; Zohar III 11a

⁶⁷⁰ Zohar III 71a

⁶⁷¹ Deuteronomy 14:6 – The word “*v'Shosa*’*at*”*ושסעת*” was written with an extra *Vav*-ו as “*ישוסעת*” (see Zohar III 71a *ibid*).

⁶⁷² See Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 143:4 and the surrounding commentaries there.

unaltered by it etc.], that this is due to the inner essential matter of the Torah, in which there is no difference between one letter and another, since all the letters together are a single letter – the first letter of “I am *HaShem*, your God-*Anochi HaShem Elohe”cha*” אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ.”

This is likewise what we find in Tosefta⁶⁷³ regarding one who asks a question that is not on the subject matter, that “All of Torah is one subject matter.” In other words, even though the Torah is divided into the six orders [of the Mishnah], and more particularly,⁶⁷⁴ “The words,⁶⁷⁵ ‘There are sixty queens,’ refer to the sixty tractates; ‘Eighty concubines’ refers to the eighty portions in *Torat Kohanim*; and ‘Maidens without number’ refers to the *Halachot*,” nevertheless, it all is one matter.⁶⁷⁶ For, since this is the primary aspect, innerness, and essence of the Torah, which is something that is indivisible, [therefore] in a single point all of Torah is present.

This is also the general matter of the blessings of the Torah, about which our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁶⁷⁷ “‘Why did the land perish etc.’?”⁶⁷⁸ Because they did not recite a blessing over the Torah before [studying].” From this we can understand the great elevation of the blessings of Torah, over and above the study of Torah itself, since it was specifically in the matter of making the blessings over the Torah first, that they could have caused the Holy Temple to remain standing until

⁶⁷³ Tosefta Sanhedrin 7:5

⁶⁷⁴ See Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabba 6:9 (2); Torah Ohr, Shemot 49b

⁶⁷⁵ Song of Songs 6:8

⁶⁷⁶ See the Sichah talk of the 2nd day of Shavuot 5721, and the 20th of Av 5721 (Torat Menachem, Vol. 31 p. 50, p. 173).

⁶⁷⁷ Talmud Bavli, Bava Metziya 85a and on

⁶⁷⁸ Jeremiah 9:11

today. In contrast, when there is the lacking in the matter of reciting a blessing over the Torah before its study, then even though they studied much Torah, they were incapable of affecting this.

The explanation is that even though Torah is a very deep wisdom, whereas to have any great depth of understanding and comprehension in the blessings of the Torah is inapplicable, one must nevertheless specifically begin with the blessings of the Torah. This is because (even without understanding and comprehension) this is the essential point of the Torah, this being the matter of bonding with the Giver of the Torah, which must be drawn down in a way that it spreads through the entirety of Torah.

3.

However, even though the level of the aspect indicated by [the word] “I am-*Anochi*-אני” is very high and great, in Midrash⁶⁷⁹ we also find the opposite, that [the word] “I am-*Anochi*-אני” is in the Egyptian language. Now, at first glance, being that the matter of Egypt (*Mitzrayim*-מצרים) is the ultimate descent to below, this is astonishing. That is, how can it be that when discussing the giving of the Torah, and in the ten commandments themselves, the very first commandment, and in the first commandment itself, the very first word, that this word should be in the Egyptian language?

⁶⁷⁹ See Midrash Tanchuma (Buber) Yitro 16; Yalkut Shimoni, Yitro, Remez 286; Explained at length in the Sichah talk of Shabbat Parshat Va’era, Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan 5722 (Torat Menachem, Vol. 32 p. 390 and on).

However, this may be understood based on the explanation in the discourse of the day of the *Hilulah*, in the chapter corresponding to this year,⁶⁸⁰ about “the spreading forth of the limitless light of the Unlimited One far below to no conclusion,” that it is drawn down and spreads forth even to the lowest level, so much so, that something that is the complete opposite of Godliness can come from it.

That is, [it is possible] for a person to forget *HaShem*-יהוה and “be audacious in his own existence.”⁶⁸¹ This is to such an extent, that as it is in the external husks (*Kelipah*) and the side opposite holiness, [Pharaoh] said “My river is mine and I have made myself [powerful],” this being literally the diametric opposite of the truth.

For, the truth is as the verse states,⁶⁸² “Yaakov blessed Pharaoh,” in that “he blessed him that the Nile should rise at his approach,”⁶⁸³ this being the bestowal of Supernal goodness etc.⁶⁸⁴ Nevertheless, Pharaoh, the king of Egypt-*Mitzrayim*-מצרים, meaning constraints-*Meitzarim*-מצרים and limitations, was also an ingrate, and said “My river is mine and I have made myself [powerful] etc.”

From this it is understood that for there to be repair “all the way below to no conclusion,” this is drawn specifically from that which transcends the entire chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), even higher than the Name *HaShem*-יהוה. This

⁶⁸⁰ The discourse entitled “*Bati LeGani*” 5710, Ch. 13 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5710, p. 133 and on).

⁶⁸¹ See Psalms 52:9

⁶⁸² Genesis 47:10

⁶⁸³ Midrash Tanchuma to Genesis 47:10 cited in Rashi there.

⁶⁸⁴ See the preceding discourse of this year, 5723, entitled “*Bati LeGani* – I have come to My garden,” Discourse 16.

specifically is the aspect of “I am-*Anochi*-אנכי.” This is because the created something (*Yesh HaNivra*) is taken from the True Something (*Yesh HaAmeete*),⁶⁸⁵ and therefore, when we affect “the transformation of darkness into light,”⁶⁸⁶ there is a revelation of that which even transcends the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה in it, this being the aspect of “I am-*Anochi*-אנכי.”

4.

The explanation as it relates to our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is that in regard to the greatness of the word “I am-*Anochi*-אנכי” etc., being that is not one of the ten holy names, it can be said even before washing one’s hands, such as in the recital of “I gratefully submit before You-*Modeh Ani*-מודה אני.”⁶⁸⁷

That is, even when a Jew is in a state and standing that it is forbidden for him to pronounce a holy name, (and how much more so, it is forbidden for him to study Torah), nevertheless, even in such a state and standing, he already is commanded in regard to the matter of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He,⁶⁸⁸ by reciting “I gratefully submit before You-*Modeh Ani*-מודה אני.” Moreover, the recital of “I gratefully submit before You-*Modeh Ani*-מודה אני” is itself the [essential]

⁶⁸⁵ See Biurei HaZohar of the Mittler Rebbe, Beshalach 43c and elsewhere.

⁶⁸⁶ See Zohar I 4a; Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 10

⁶⁸⁷ Also see the Sichot that precede the discourse, Ch. 17 (Torat Menachem, Vol. 36, p. 117 and on).

⁶⁸⁸ [Also see the discourse entitled “*Shiviti* – I have set *HaShem* before me” of Shabbat Parshat Naso, 9th of Sivan, 5720, translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe 5720, Discourse 21, Ch. 6.]

“point” (*Nekudah*) that precedes studying Torah and fulfilling the *mitzvot*.

[This is similar to the blessings of Torah, which precede the study of Torah, for even an ignoramus who does not know what he is saying,⁶⁸⁹ when he ascends to the Torah [during the congregational reading of the Torah]⁶⁹⁰ he is obligated to make the blessings on the Torah. Moreover, even though he does not know what he is saying, it is not a wasteful blessing (*Brachah Levatalah*), Heaven forbid.]

This “point” (*Nekudah*) must spread through the entire being of a Jew, [brought about] through toiling in prayer (*Tefillah*).⁶⁹¹ That is, on the one hand, not mentioning a holy name when reciting “I gratefully submit before You-*Modeh Ani*-מודה אני” indicates that the person is in a lowly state, in that since he has not yet washed his hands, it is forbidden for him to pronounce a holy name.

On the other hand, since the matter of serving *HaShem*-יהוה (*Avodah*) in prayer (“Which is the service (*Avodah*) of the heart, the prayer”)⁶⁹² is to affect the spreading forth of the [essential] “point” (*Nekudah*) of “I gratefully submit before You-*Modeh Ani*-מודה אני,” it therefore is understood that it is specifically upon reciting “I gratefully submit before You-

⁶⁸⁹ And not solely like the words of the Talmud in Tractate Avodah Zarah (19a) “A person should always generally review (*Ligris*-ליגרס) the words of Torah... even though he does not know what he is saying,” since that is nevertheless referring to some element of understanding and comprehension in a manner of expanding [one’s knowledge] to some degree. Rather, what is meant here is that he literally does not know what is being read [when ascending to the Torah].

⁶⁹⁰ And is obligated in this at least once per year, on Simchat Torah (see Me’or Eynayim, Parshat Emor; Also see Nitei Gavriel, Hilchot Chag HaSukkot, Ch. 98:5).

⁶⁹¹ Also see Kuntres Inyana Shel Torat HaChassidus, Ch. 11.

⁶⁹² Talmud Bavli, Taanit 2a

Modeh Ani מודה אני,” without mentioning a holy name, that the revelation of the [essential] “point” (*Nekudah*) is present within him, which then becomes concealed, since it must spread forth throughout his entire being.

This can be explained by prefacing with the explanation of the Alter Rebbe⁶⁹³ on the verse,⁶⁹⁴ “Now, the man Moshe was exceedingly humble, more than any person on the face of the earth.” That is, Moshe’s humility primarily was when he beheld the generation of the “footsteps of Moshiach (*Ikveta d’Meshicha* עקבתא דמשיחא),” who only are the aspect of the feet and “heel-*Eikev* עקב.”

That is, this is the ultimate negation of the matter of intellect in the head, and how much more so, [the negation] of the intellect of our teacher Moshe, who was the first to receive the Torah, and whose matter was the inner essence of Wisdom-*Chochmah*. This is because he saw that specifically and especially they have the matter of self-sacrifice, to an even greater degree than previous generations.

The analogy given to explain this⁶⁹⁵ is that it is easier to put one’s foot than one’s head into hot water. In other words, though we know that [bathing in hot water] is beneficial to health, nonetheless, when one must do so, it is easier for him to put his foot into [the hot water] rather than his head.

⁶⁹³ See *Torat Chayim*, Shemot 64b (46d in the new edition); *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5679 p. 464; 5689 p. 69; Also see the Sichah talk of the 10th of Shevat 5722 (*Torat Menachem*, Vol. 33 p. 28).

⁶⁹⁴ Numbers 12:3

⁶⁹⁵ See *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5648 p. 187 and on, and the citations in *Torat Menachem*, *Sefer HaMaamarim* Adar, p. 77.

In the analogue, the likeness to this is that for a person who is steeped in intellect, it is more difficult to have self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) than it is for simple people. This is because, in the first place, their existence is such that they have no relation to understanding and comprehension, and all they must do is obey.

The same is understood about reciting “I gratefully submit before You-*Modeh Ani* מודה אני,” that together with the lack that he has not yet studied Torah, and is still only holding at “I gratefully submit before You-*Modeh Ani* מודה אני” and nothing more, nonetheless, there is an element of superiority in this. That is, it is easier to affect a greater degree of the matter of self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) in him, than a person who has questions stemming from the side of holiness, from which there can be a chaining down of questions stemming from the side opposite holiness.

This also explains the fact that the beginning, foundation and root of service of *HaShem* יהו"ה, blessed is He, (is not a matter of understanding and comprehension, which only comes afterwards, but) is the matter of accepting the yoke (*Kabbalat Ol*), as the verse states,⁶⁹⁶ “You shall surely set a king over yourselves.” This is the reason for reciting “I gratefully submit before You, living and eternal **King**,” while he still is in a state in which it is not yet applicable for him to even mention the Name *HaShem* יהו"ה, which is why it is forbidden for him to mention it.

⁶⁹⁶ Deuteronomy 17:15

Based on this we can understand why, “One hour of repentance and good deeds in this world is more precious than all the life of the coming world (*Olam HaBa*).” This is because there are matters that are drawn down from the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, this being the totality of the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), up to and including the coming world (*Olam HaBa*) which is created with the letter *Yod*-י of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, which also includes the life of the coming world (*Chayei Olam HaBa*).

However, there is something that transcends this, and is “more precious than all the life of the coming world.” This refers to the matter of action (*Ma'aseh*), (“repentance and good **deeds**”), which specifically takes place in the world of Action (*Asiyah*), which is called “Egypt” (*Mitzrayim*-מצרים). This is as in the teaching of the Midrash,⁶⁹⁷ (cited and explained in various discourses),⁶⁹⁸ that all the kingdoms are named after Egypt (*Mitzrayim*-מצרים).

The likeness to this as it is in the study of Torah itself, is when one's study is out of constraint and tribulation. That is, he does not study Torah for any possible reason, such as to receive ordination (*Semichah*) or the like, but to bond with the Giver of the Torah. About this they stated,⁶⁹⁹ “Torah study is greater, in that it brings to action.” In other words, the study of Torah transcends all the *mitzvot*, being that “all desirables of the

⁶⁹⁷ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 16:4

⁶⁹⁸ Sefer HaMaamarim 5709 p. 107 and elsewhere.

⁶⁹⁹ Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 40b

heavens do not equal it,”⁷⁰⁰ such that one hour of Torah study is more precious than all that is desirable in the heavens. It is this study that brings to action, being that “action is the most important thing,”⁷⁰¹ and even transcends the life of the coming world (*Chayei Olam HaBa*).

This matter will be revealed with the fulfillment of the prophecy,⁷⁰² “The glory of *HaShem*-יהו"ה will be revealed and all flesh together will see,” in which the verse specifies “flesh-*Bassar*-בשר.” This is similar to the explanation above (in chapter three) that “I am-*Anochi*-אנכי” is in the Egyptian language, but even so, at the beginning of the ten commandments it states “I am-*Anochi*-אנכי”, even before stating *HaShem*-יהו"ה.

Nonetheless, after this, one should not remain in [the aspect indicated by] “I am-*Anochi*-אנכי,” but must draw this forth in *HaShem*-יהו"ה, in a way that *HaShem*-יהו"ה should be your God-*Elohe*”*cha*-אלהיך, meaning, your strength and vitality,⁷⁰³ until this is drawn into all ten commandments, and into all six-hundred and thirteen *mitzvot*, even including a minor precision instituted by our sages and everything that a seasoned Torah scholar is destined to introduce. All this is [in order to] affect oneness and union, in a way that the Jewish people, the Torah, and the Holy One, blessed is He, come to be entirely one.⁷⁰⁴

⁷⁰⁰ Talmud Yerushlami, Pe’ah 1:1

⁷⁰¹ Mishnah Avot 1:17

⁷⁰² Isaiah 40:5

⁷⁰³ See Tur and Shulchan Aruch of the Alter Rebbe, Orach Chayim 5; Likkutei Torah, Balak 73c; Pinchas 80a, and elsewhere.

⁷⁰⁴ See Zohar III 73a