

Discourse 8

*“Ki BaYom HaZeh Yechaper Aleichem -
For on this day he shall atone for you”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Bereishit,
Shabbat Mevarchim Marcheshvan (2nd gathering), 5724
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,³⁰⁸ “For on this day he shall atone for you,” and,³⁰⁹ “You shall dwell in Sukkot for a period of seven days,” and,³¹⁰ “The eighth day shall be restricted (*Shemini Atzeret*) to you etc.” With these verses the Alter Rebbe [for whom this is the 150th year from the day of his passing and Hilulah] begins his discourse of Simchat Torah in the booklet of [manuscripts of] discourses from the year 5562,³¹¹ (which are in the handwriting of the Mittler Rebbe and contains glosses from the Tzemach Tzedek).

After he gives a lengthy explanation of the difference between the repentance (*Teshuvah*) during the rest of the year and the repentance (*Teshuvah*) of Yom HaKippurim, and explains the matter of the drawing down of the encompassing

³⁰⁸ Leviticus 16:30

³⁰⁹ Leviticus 23:42

³¹⁰ Numbers 29:35

³¹¹ Subsequently printed in Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5562 Vol. 1, p. 35 and on, and with additional glosses in Ohr HaTorah, Drushei Yom HaKippurim p. 1,561 and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5626 p. 256 and on.

lights (*Makifim*) during the seven days of Sukkot, he then explains the matter of Shemini Atzeret at the conclusion of the discourse.³¹² That is, he explains that the day of Shemini Atzeret corresponds to the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut*, and that this is the meaning of the words, “The eighth day (*Shemini Atzeret*) shall be restricted to you,” in that all the encompassing transcendent lights (*Makifim*) drawn down during the seven days of Sukkot are absorbed in the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut* as an inner manifest light (*Ohr Pnimi*).

2.

He adds and explains the matter of the joy (*Simchah*) of Shemini Atzeret, which specifically is through the Torah. For, it is written,³¹³ “On the eighth day [the king] sent the people, and they blessed the king.” This refers to the Supernal King whose appearance is “like the appearance of a man”³¹⁴ with 248-*ה* limbs, which are the 248-*ה* positive *mitzvot*.³¹⁵

About this the verse states, “they blessed the King,” meaning that they affected an additional drawing down of blessing and beneficence from the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-*יהוה*, blessed is He, into the matter of the *mitzvot*, (which are the 248-*ה* *mitzvot* that are the “248-*ה* limbs of the King). This blessing (*Brachah*) and drawing down is through the Torah, and is the matter of the joy (*Simchah*) of Shemini Atzeret, which is called Simchat Torah.

³¹² See Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5562 Vol. 1 *ibid.*, p. 39 and on.

³¹³ Kings I 8:66

³¹⁴ Ezekiel 1:26

³¹⁵ See Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 30 (74a)

3.

This may be better understood by prefacing with an explanation of the difference between Torah and *mitzvot*. For, it states in Talmud,³¹⁶ “It is written,³¹⁷ ‘She (the Torah) is more precious than pearls, and all your desires cannot compare to her,’ however, the desires of Heaven (*mitzvot*) cannot compare to her. Yet, another verse states,³¹⁸ ‘All desirable things cannot compare to her.’” The Talmud then answers, “Here (in the second verse) it discusses a *mitzvah* that can be done by others, and there (in the first verse) it discusses a *mitzvah* that cannot be done by others.”

The explanation is that Torah itself is much loftier than the action *mitzvot*. This is because the matter of the *mitzvot* is to affect a drawing down from the letters of the Name *HaShem*-יהוה, from the Emanator to the emanated, this being the aspect of *NeHi"Y*³¹⁹ of the Emanator. In contrast, Torah is the aspect of *ChaBa"D*³²⁰ of the *mitzvot*, and is a measure of the Wisdom-*Chochmah* of the Emanator (*Ma'atzil*), blessed is He, as to how the aspects of *NeHi"Y* in them should be drawn to the emanated.

For example, in the *mitzvah* of Sukkah, [this is] that the Sukkah must specifically be made with four walls and that [the walls must] not be higher than twenty cubits, and the like. This is because this is what He established in His Wisdom, blessed

³¹⁶ Talmud Bavli, Mo'ed Katan 9b

³¹⁷ Proverbs 3:15

³¹⁸ Proverbs 8:11

³¹⁹ An acronym for the *Sefirot* of Victory-*Netzach*, Majesty-*Hod*, and Foundation-*Yesod*.

³²⁰ An acronym for the *Sefirot* of Wisdom-*Chochmah*, Understanding-*Binah*, and Knowledge-*Da'at*.

is He, that specifically in this way the encompassing lights (*Makifim*) and supernal unifications (*Yichudim*) are drawn down etc.

Now, it is self-understood that the aspect of the Wisdom-*Chochmah* of the Master of the Wisdom (*Baal HaChochmah*) is loftier to no end, over and above that which is measured and limited by the wisdom. We thus find that just as there is no measure of comparison between the Emanator (*Ma'atzil*) and the emanated (*Ne'etzalim*), so likewise there is no measure of comparison between the Wisdom-*Chochmah* of the Torah and the *mitzvot* that are conveyed in it. This is because the *mitzvot* are drawn from the aspects of *NeHi"Y* of the Emanator (*Ma'atzil*) as they come into measure and limitation to the emanated (*Ne'etzalim*). In contrast, the Torah is the Wisdom-*Chochmah* of the Emanator (*Ma'atzil*) Himself.

Therefore, if the *mitzvah* can be done by others, when he learns about it in Torah, which is the Wisdom-*Chochmah* of the *mitzvah*, which transcends the *mitzvah* itself, he is exempt from fulfilling it. However, if the *mitzvah* cannot be done by others, he is obligated to fulfill it. For, even though Torah is the Wisdom-*Chochmah* of the Emanator (*Ma'atzil*), blessed is He, whereas the *mitzvot* are the aspects of *NeHi"Y* as they are drawn to the emanated (*Ne'etzalim*), nevertheless, being that the emanated were indeed emanated etc., the matter of fulfilling the *mitzvot* is necessary. This is because the aspects of *NeHi"Y* also are necessary. This will suffice for the understanding. (This concludes the substance of the discourse.)

4.

Now, from all the above, what arises is that even after [understanding] the great and wondrous level of the Torah in comparison to the *mitzvot*, so much so, that there is no comparison between the Wisdom-*Chochmah* of the Torah and the *mitzvot* conveyed in it, just as there is no comparison between the Emanator (*Ma'atzil*), blessed is He, and the emanated, meaning that this is not just like the lack of comparison as it is between created beings themselves, [for, as explained elsewhere, even though the true matter of lack of comparison, is the lack of comparison between the Emanator and the emanated, nonetheless, even in the creations themselves, there can be a matter of complete self-nullification (*Bittul*) in a way that there is no comparison (between one creation and a loftier creation)], but it rather is like the lack of **any** comparison between the Emanator and the emanated. Yet, after [stating] all this, the Alter Rebbe concludes that when it comes to *mitzvot* that cannot be fulfilled by others, one's Torah study is pushed to the side for the sake of fulfilling the *mitzvah*.

In other words, just as it is so that to one extreme, Torah is much greater than the *mitzvot*, so that in regard to a *mitzvah* that can be done by others, our sages, of blessed memory, applied the verse, "All desirable things cannot compare to her," nevertheless, on the other extreme, it also is so that Torah study is pushed to the side for the sake of a *mitzvah* that cannot be done by others.

Now, it should be added that the elevation of fulfilling action *mitzvot*, in comparison to Torah study, is also

emphasized in Talmud Yerushalmi. That is, in Talmud Yerushalmi³²¹ they also answered the contradiction between these two verses,³²² “All your desires cannot compare to her,” and,³²³ “All desirable things cannot compare to her.” However, they did not give the same answer as the Talmud Bavli, [which states], “Here (in the second verse) it discusses a *mitzvah* that can be done by others, and there (in the first verse) it discusses a *mitzvah* that cannot be done by others.”

Rather, the answer [in Talmud Yerushalmi is] that one verse (“All desirable things”) refers to precious stones and pearls, whereas the other verse (“All your desires”) refers to the *mitzvot* of the Torah.³²⁴ We thus find that the view of Talmud Yerushalmi is that **all** *mitzvot* cannot be compared to the aspect of Torah. This is as stated clearly in Talmud Yerushalmi there, “even **all** the *mitzvot* of Torah do not have the value of even one statement in Torah.”

The explanation is that, as known, Talmud Yerushalmi is unlike Talmud Bavli. That is, about Talmud Bavli they said,³²⁵ “[The verse],³²⁶ ‘He made me dwell in darkness’ refers to the Talmud of Babylonia (*Bavel*-בבל).” This is because [Talmud Yerushalmi] is not by way of analysis (*Pilpul*) with many questions and answers, (but there only is a very small amount of this). It rather is in a way of direct light (*Ohr Yashar*)

³²¹ Talmud Yerushalmi, Pe’ah 1:1

³²² Proverbs 3:15

³²³ Proverbs 8:11

³²⁴ See March Panim and Penei Moshe to Talmud Yerushalmi, Pe’ah 1:1 *ibid*.

³²⁵ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 24a

³²⁶ Lamentations 3:6

from Above to below, similar to “bread from Heaven,” (as explained at length in Shaarei Orah).³²⁷

Thus, since Talmud Yerushalmi is in a way of direct light (*Ohr Yashar*) from Above to below, therefore the superiority of Torah is emphasized in it, (the general matter of which is the revelation of light from Above to below), over and above the *mitzvot* (the general matter of which is refining the world from below to Above), **to a greater degree** than Talmud Bavli.

Now, even though Talmud Yerushalmi more greatly emphasizes the superiority of Torah, over and above the *mitzvot*, nonetheless, Talmud Yerushalmi states **as a simple matter**, “Would not Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai agree that one interrupts [his Torah studies] to make a Sukkah and a Lulav?” (in the form of a question). In other words, the imperative to fulfill *mitzvot* in action, is so even in the case of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, whose study of Torah was so great, that it was in a way that “His Torah study is his [sole] vocation.”³²⁸

Moreover, his toil in studying Torah was not as Torah transcends the world, without any connection or bond to the world, but it rather was as we find,³²⁹ that when he expounded Torah on the verse,³³⁰ “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is when brothers dwell, also in unity,” thereby causing rain to descend in the world. Moreover, this matter (that through saying Torah teachings on this verse, the rains were caused to

³²⁷ Shaarei Orah of the Mittler Rebbe 22b and on.

³²⁸ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 11a

³²⁹ Zohar III 59b; Also see the discourse entitled “*Hinei Mah Tov*” 5722, translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe 5722, Vol. 2, Discourse 29.

³³⁰ Psalms 133:1

descend) was not merely circumstantial, in that it was an auspicious time and the like, but it rather was with intent.

In other words, he expounded on the inner aspects (*Pnimiyyut*) of the Torah in a matter that was appropriate and related to the descent of rains in the world,³³¹ and nevertheless, the effect caused in the world through Torah study was not sufficient [in and of itself], but it specifically was necessary to pause from the study of Torah to fulfill the *mitzvot* in action.

5.

Now, we should add to the novelty emphasized in the discourse of the Alter Rebbe mentioned above, namely, that after giving a lengthy explanation of the greatness and wondrous elevation of the Torah, over and above action *mitzvot*, he then adds and concludes that when the *mitzvah* cannot be done by others, it is imperative to pause from studying Torah and fulfill the *mitzvah*.

Now, this discourse was said on the day of **Simchat Torah**, at which time there is a greater emphasis of the superiority of **Torah**, over and above the *mitzvot*.³³² Moreover, the discourse was said at **daytime**,³³³ when the joy (*Simchah*) connected to the level of Torah is in an even loftier state than

³³¹ See Maamarei Admor HaZaken, Et'halech Liozhna p. 210 and on; Ohr HaTorah, Vayikra Vol. 1, p. 254 and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5627 p. 291 and on.

³³² See Sefer HaMaamarim 5626 *ibid.*, “that because now is the time of Simchat Torah, we understand the view of the Talmud Yerushalmi that ‘All your desires’ refers to the *mitzvot* ‘are not comparable to her.’”

³³³ It was said in addition to the discourse that was said on the night of Simchat Torah, entitled “*Mashiv HaRu'ach u'Morid HaGeshelem*” (Sefer HaMaamarim 5562 p. 32 and on).

the previous night. This is because on the day of Simchat Torah there is added cause for joy (*Simchah*) in comparison to Simchat Torah night.

(For, in regard to the cause that preceded [on the previous night,] one already rejoiced and danced at night, and it therefore must be said that there is an additional cause and reason for adding to joy and dancing even during the day.) This also is as simply understood from the difference between day and night, that when the light of the sun shines, there is a revelation of new things that could not be seen at night.

The same is so of the matter of night and day as they are spiritually, in regard to the revelation of intellectual light. That is, during the “day” there is more revelation of intellectual light than at “night”. This also is understood in regard to dancing with one’s feet on Simchat Torah. This is because the vessel of the brain is incapable of containing the great joy. The primary novelty in this, is to a greater degree on the day of Simchat Torah than the night of Simchat Torah.

That is, even though it is the aspect of “day” in that the intellectual light shines in him in a revealed way, nonetheless, even then, the vessel of his brain is incapable of containing the great joy (*Simchah*) etc. (In contrast, when he is in the state of “night,” it could be that the reason and cause that the vessels of his intellect are incapable of containing the joy, is not just because of the greatness of the joy, but) because of **their own limitations**, in that the intellectual light does not illuminate in them etc.)

From this it is understood that the novelty in the above-mentioned discourse, is that even though the discourse was said

on the day of Simchat Torah, when there is an even greater emphasis on the superiority of Torah in comparison to the *mitzvot*, specifically at that time itself, the Alter Rebbe also emphasized the imperative to fulfill the action *mitzvot*. Through doing so he “opened the pipe”³³⁴ in regard to us too, that even when we are in the state and standing that comes in continuation to Simchat Torah, at which time there is greater emphasis on the superiority of Torah study, in comparison to action *mitzvot*, we specifically add and emphasis the imperative of fulfilling the action *mitzvot*.

6.

This matter is also emphasized in the service of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, of the day of Simchat Torah, which specifically is done through dancing with one’s feet. In this, all Jews are equal, in that the equality and oneness of all Jews primarily applies to fulfilling the *mitzvot* in action, which is the aspect of *NeHi”Y*.

For, in regard to the study of Torah, which is the aspect of *ChaBa”D*, there are a multitude of different levels, from “the heads of your tribes,”³³⁵ such as the Sanhedrin etc., “to the hewer of your wood and the drawer of your water.” (This is why in [*Halachah*-Torah Law] we find that there are Jews whose idle chatter is permissible, in that they are incapable of studying Torah.)³³⁶

³³⁴ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5678 p. 283

³³⁵ See Deuteronomy 29:9-10; Likkutei Torah, Nitzavim

³³⁶ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 8

In contrast, when it comes to fulfilling the *mitzvot*, all Jews are equal. Examples of this are the *mitzvot* of Sukkah and Lulav, about which our sages, of blessed memory, stated in Talmud Yerushalmi, that certainly Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai paused [from his Torah studies] to fulfill the *mitzvah* of Sukkah and the *mitzvah* of Lulav.

However these commandments were given equally to the simplest of simple Jews, just as it was given to the greatest of the greatest Jews, literally. Moreover, the equality of all Jews in the action *mitzvot* is primarily when their fulfillment is not (only) due to the drawing down and Supernal unifications (*Yichudim*) that are affected thereby, (the aspect of *ChaBa"D*), but is due (primarily) to accepting the yoke of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Kingship, (the aspect of *NeHi"Y*), that is, to do the will and command of the Holy One, blessed is He, in order to bring Him satisfaction of spirit, as in the teaching,³³⁷ "It brings satisfaction of spirit before Me that I spoke and My will was done."

7.

Now, because of the equality of all Jews emphasized in fulfilling the action *mitzvot*, therefore one literally must love every single Jew equally. This is as explained in chapter thirty-two of Tanya, and in the discourses of the Alter Rebbe entitled "*Heichaltzu*," published in Likkutei Torah,³³⁸ and of the Rebbe Rashab, whose soul is in Eden,³³⁹ (said in the year 5659, on

³³⁷ Torat Kohanim and Rashi to Leviticus 1:9

³³⁸ Likkutei Torah, Matot 85d and on

³³⁹ Sefer HaMaamarim 5659 p. 53 and on

Simchat Torah and Shabbat Parshat No'ach,³⁴⁰ (the Torah portion that we will begin reading today)), with added explanation by his honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rebbe³⁴¹ (which recently were published again),³⁴² and as his honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rebbe wrote in his letter,³⁴³ about the quality of loving another Jew (Ahavat Yisroel) by which the Baal Shem Tov guided the Jewish people, saying this in his famous and well known style: “One must love and cherish the simplest Jew as much as the greatest Torah genius, [simply] because he is a Jew and “we all have one father,”³⁴⁴ as the verse states,³⁴⁵ “You are children to *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God,” and it states,³⁴⁶ “I love you, says *HaShem*-יהו"ה.”

In other words, the reason for the love is not because he will grow up to be a great genius in Torah, but simply because he is a Jew, [as it states], “You are children to *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God,” in which all Jews are included as one, from the greatest of the great to the smallest of the small, who are all called Yisroel-ישראל, including “whoever is here and whoever is not here,”³⁴⁷ literally equally.

³⁴⁰ As it states at the heading of the discourse.

³⁴¹ Which are printed as additions to the discourse in Sefer HaMaamarim 5659 p. 211 and on.

³⁴² In the year 5723

³⁴³ From the day following the holiday of Sukkot 5708, subsequently printed in Sefer HaMaamarim 5708 p. 79 (and subsequently printed in his Igrot Kodesh, Vol. 9, p. 328 and on).

³⁴⁴ See Malachi 2:10

³⁴⁵ Deuteronomy 14:1

³⁴⁶ Malchi 1:2

³⁴⁷ Deuteronomy 29:14

Thus, since the emphasis on Simchat Torah is on the equality of all Jews, this gives added strength to fulfilling the *mitzvah* of “You shall love your fellow as yourself,”³⁴⁸ specifying, “as yourself.” Therefore, engaging in the wellbeing of one’s fellow Jew should not just be out of obligation, but just as he engages in his own wellbeing, in that he puts all his effort that all matters relating to himself should be in the optimal way possible, [he should act in the same way for his fellow Jew] .

Now, since the *mitzvah* of “You shall love your fellow as yourself” is a Torah *mitzvah*, it therefore is certain that every single Jew is capable of fulfilling it. This is as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,³⁴⁹ “The Holy One, blessed is He, only asks according to their ability.”

Now, when the Jewish people fulfill the *mitzvah* of “love your fellow as yourself,” they then are guaranteed that the love of the Holy One, blessed is He, for the Jewish people will also be revealed, as the verse states, “I love you, says *HaShem*-יהו"ה.” [This is as his honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rebbe, cites this verse in addition to the verse, “You are children to *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God.”

This is because it is possible for there to be a state and standing in which one’s love for his child does not come be openly revealed, and it therefore is necessary to add the verse, “I love you says *HaShem*-יהו"ה.”] This is a verse in Tanach, which is the Torah of Truth,³⁵⁰ and the matter of Truth-*Emet*-

³⁴⁸ Leviticus 19:18

³⁴⁹ Midrash Bamidbar Rabba 12:3

³⁵⁰ Malachi 2:6

אמת indicates the equal drawing forth from the beginning of the letters to their end.³⁵¹

In other words, *HaShem's* יהו"ה love for the Jewish people is drawn down and revealed in all the worlds, both the upper worlds and the lower worlds, all the way down without any change, just as His choosing the Jewish people out of free choice, without any preconditions. This matter is drawn down and revealed on Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah, and from there it is drawn throughout the rest of the year, in a way that is openly revealed to our eyes of flesh, in [blessings] relating to children, good health, and abundant sustenance, all in a way of abundance!

³⁵¹ See Talmud Yerushalmi, Sanhedrin 1:1; Also see Midrash Bereshit Rabba 81:2 – אֲבִיגַדְהוּיָהוּחֵסִיכִיכִלִּימִסְנִיחִסְעִפִּיחִצִּיקִרִשִׁית –