

Discourse 21

“Ki Tisa et Rosh Bnei Yisroel - When you take a census of the children of Israel”

Shabbat Parshat Ki Tisa, 16th of Adar, 5724
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,¹⁰⁵⁸ “When you take a census of the children of Israel... This shall they give – everyone who passes through the census – a half *shekel* of the sacred *shekel*, the *shekel* is twenty *gera*, half a *shekel* as a portion to *HaShem*-יהויה.” The question about this is well known.¹⁰⁵⁹ Namely, being that they must only give a half *shekel*, of what relevance is the value is of a whole *shekel*, since the verse could have simply stated, “This shall they give... ten *gera*.”

About this it is explained in the teachings of Chassidus¹⁰⁶⁰ that when a person serves *HaShem*-יהויה, blessed is He, with the ten powers of his soul, this being the matter of the lower ten *gera*, he then is also granted the ten *gera* from Above, and thereby [the matter of], “the *shekel* is twenty *gera*,” is caused. That is, even the “ten *gera*” given from Above, are

¹⁰⁵⁸ Exodus 30:12-13

¹⁰⁵⁹ See the beginning of the discourse entitled “*Ki Tisah*” 5679 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5679 p. 267). Also see the preceding discourse of this year, 5724, entitled “*Zeh Yitnu* – This shall they give,” Discourse 19.

¹⁰⁶⁰ See Ohr HaTorah, Tisa p. 1,848; Discourse entitled “*Ki Tisa*” 5679 *ibid*. (Sefer HaMaamarim 5679 p. 277).

connected and relate to him, being that this is brought about by him preceding it with his work in the “ten *gera*” below.

This also explains why the verse at the beginning of the Torah portion (which comes to introduce the command of giving the half *shekel*), states, “When you take a census-Ki *Tisa* תשא,” using the word “*Tisa*-תשא” which means “when you elevate” and “uplift” (rather than a term of “counting”).

That is, there must be an ascent and elevation to a level that is higher than what a person can attain by himself, through his own toil. This is the matter of the “ten *gera*” drawn down from Above, through and after completing his toil with the “ten *gera*” that he gives by his own strength.

This also explains the specific wording, “The head of the children of Israel-*Rosh Bnei Yisroel* ראש בני ישראל.” That is, the ascent and elevation (*Tisa*-תשא) must be to the aspect of the “head,” since this is what is drawn down from Above. In regard to the fact that it states, “Uplift the head-*Tisa et Rosh* תשא את ראש,” this means that it is necessary to elevate the aspect of the head (*Rosh*-ראש), referring to the aspect of the “heads” of the Jewish people, meaning, as the souls are in body. This is because relative to their roots Above, [the soul that is in the body] is the aspect of the “foot” [of the soul], only that within this itself, there are various levels, from the aspect of the “feet” to the aspect of the “head” [of the soul in the body].

This is as explained in Torah Ohr¹⁰⁶¹ about the matter of [the name] Yaakov-יעקב, which spells “the *Yod*-י in the heel-

¹⁰⁶¹ Likkutei Torah, Veyeishev 27b

Eikev-עקב,”¹⁰⁶² (the “foot”). That is, in each particular world there is the aspect of the “head” and the “foot” according to its level. About this the verse states, “When you elevate the head of the children of Israel,” that even in the aspect of the “head (*Rosh*-ראש) of the children of Israel,” which is the highest level of the Jewish people as they are below, there must be a matter of ascent and elevation to a higher level drawn down from Above, which is the **true** matter of the “head” (*Rosh*-ראש).

2.

This is as explained before¹⁰⁶³ about the matter of the “head” and “foot” of the soul,¹⁰⁶⁴ that the whole soul does not manifest in the body. Rather, only a glimmer of a tiny portion of the soul manifests in the body, whereas the primary and essential self of the soul, is above. [As explained there] this is the difference between the “head” and “foot” of the soul. That is, the aspect of “foot” of the soul is the glimmer of radiance and tiny portion of the soul that manifests in the body, whereas the aspect of the “head” of the soul is the primary and essential self of the soul, which transcends manifestation in the body.

Now, as this matter relates to our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, the aspect of the “foot” of the soul refers to serving Him stemming from the inner manifest powers (*Kochot*

¹⁰⁶² Pardes Rimonim, Shaar 23 (Shaar Erchei HaKinuyim), section on “Yaakov-יעקב”; Etz Chayim, Shaar 3 (Shaar Sefer HaAtzilut), Ch. 2; Torah Ohr, Vayeitzei 21a; Likkutei Torah, Balak 70b, and elsewhere.

¹⁰⁶³ In the discourse entitled “*Vayehi Omain* – And he reared Esther,” of Purim of this year, 5724, Discourse 20, Ch. 6 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5724 p. 133 and on).

¹⁰⁶⁴ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5679 p. 310 and on; Also see Sefer HaMaamarim 5678 p. 214 and on; 5705 p. 57 and on.

Pnimiyyim) [of the soul]. This refers to loving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, “with all your heart and with all your soul,”¹⁰⁶⁵ which comes about through contemplating (*Hitbonenut*) *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה light and Godly vitality that relates to the worlds.

In contrast, the aspect of the “head” of the soul is service of Him stemming from the transcendent encompassing powers (*Kochot Makifim*) [of the soul], in the manner [indicated by the words] “with all your being” (*Bechol Me’odecha*-בכל מאדך),¹⁰⁶⁶ and comes about through contemplating the astounding wondrousness of the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

More specifically, even in regard to the aspect of the “foot” of the soul, which is service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה stemming from the inner manifest powers (*Kochot Pnimiyyim*) [of the soul], there is a difference between service stemming from the inner manifest powers (*Pnimiyyim*) as they come by way of inner manifestation (*Hitlabshut*), which is service of Him “with all your heart,” brought about through contemplating the Godly light that manifests in the worlds to enliven them, and service of Him stemming from the [close] transcendent encompassing powers (*Makifim*), which although are higher than inner manifestation, nevertheless relate to the inner manifestation (*Hitlabshut*). This refers to serving Him “with all your soul,” brought about through contemplating how the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is wondrously beyond the worlds, being that the Godly vitality that manifests

¹⁰⁶⁵ Deuteronomy 6:5

¹⁰⁶⁶ Deuteronomy 6:5 *ibid.*

in the worlds to enliven them, is just a glimmer of His radiance, that utterly cannot compare. That is, even though this contemplation is into the wondrousness of the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, it nonetheless is a wondrousness that has some relationship to the worlds, and relates to them.

In contrast, the aspect of the “head” of the soul is service of Him stemming from the [distant] transcendent encompassing powers (*Kochot Makifim*) that have no relation to inner manifestation (*Hitlabshut*) at all. This is the matter of loving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, “with all your being” (*Bechol Me'odecha*), brought about through contemplating the astounding wondrousness of the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, as He is, wondrous and exalted, in and of Himself. (That is, this is not how He is wondrous in relation to the worlds, but He rather is essentially wondrous etc.)

Through this we reach that aspect which altogether transcends the chaining down of the worlds and is truly without limitation (*Bli Gvul*), this being the matter of the “ten *gera*” drawn down from Above after one completes and perfects his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with the “ten *gera*” [given] by his own strength.

3.

It should be added that the meaning of “uplift the head of the children of Israel” is that not only is it, that in addition to the toil with the aspect of the “foot” of the soul (the “ten *gera*”

that man gives of his own strength) there must also be the ascent and elevation of the aspect of the “head” of the soul, (which is the matter of the “ten *gera*” granted from Above), but beyond this, the toil with the aspect of the “foot” of the soul must also be in a loftier way, by which it becomes possible for us to reach the aspect of the “head” of the soul.

The same is so in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, “with all your heart and with all your soul,” that it must be in a lofty way, such that it thereby will be possible to reach the aspect of “with all your being.” This likewise is hinted in the fact that the first paragraph of the *Shema* recital (not only states “with all your being,” but also) states, “with all your heart and with all your soul.” In other words, the elevation of the first paragraph of the *Shema* recital, is not just the addition of “with all your being,” which is not mentioned in the second paragraph of the *Shema* recital, but rather here, even serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, “with all your heart and with all your soul” is in a much loftier way than the love of Him, “with all your heart and with all your soul,”¹⁰⁶⁷ mentioned in the second paragraph. Thus, through serving Him “with all your heart and with all your soul” mentioned in the first paragraph, we thereby come to the elevation of “with all your being.” In contrast, through the service of Him “with all your heart and with all your soul” of the second paragraph of *Shema*, we do not come to the elevation of “with all your being.”

The explanation is that service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, “with all your heart and with all your soul,” must penetrate the matter of accepting the yoke (*Kabbalat Ol*). This

¹⁰⁶⁷ Deuteronomy 11:13

is because the matter of accepting the yoke (*Kabbalat Ol*) is bound to the elevation that transcends measure and limitation, which is serving Him “with all your being.” This is why through this we thereby reach serving Him “with all your being” (*Bechol Me’odecha*-בכל מאדך).

This is hinted in the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,¹⁰⁶⁸ that the paragraph of the *Shema*, which states “with all your being,” refers to a state and standing in which “the Jewish people do the will of the Ever Present One,” in which the word “do-*Oseen*-עושי” is specifically used. This is because this term indicates the beginning of service of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, in the matter of literally “doing-*Ma’aseh*-מעשה.” It also refers to toil in a way of self-restraint (*Itkafiya*) beyond one’s nature and habit.¹⁰⁶⁹ This because the word “Action-*Ma’aseh*-מעשה” also indicates “force,”¹⁰⁷⁰ as in,¹⁰⁷¹ “Charity may be extracted by force-*Ma’asin*-מעשי.” Through this we reach the loftiest level, this being the revelation of the aspect of desire (*Ratzon*) (which is without limit – *Bli Gvul*), and is brought about through serving *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, “with all your being” (*Bechol Me’odecha*-בכל מאדך).

¹⁰⁶⁸ See Chiddushei Aggadot of the Maharsha to Talmud Bavli, Brachot 35b; Ohr Torah of the Rav, the Maggid of Mezhritch, 53d; Likkutei Torah, Shlach 42c.

¹⁰⁶⁹ See Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 15

¹⁰⁷⁰ See Maamarei Admor HaEmtza’ee, Vayikra Vol. 2 p. 761 and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5678 p. 121; p. 124 and on, and elsewhere.

¹⁰⁷¹ Mordechai to Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 8b; Beit Yosef to Tur, Yoreh De’ah 248 (section beginning “vKhol Adam”).

The same is so of the matter of the half *shekel*. That is, man's service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה with the "ten *gera*" that he gives of himself, must be in such a way that by means of it, he will be able to reach the "ten *gera*" drawn down from Above. This is brought about specifically through serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way of accepting the yoke (*Kabbalat Ol*). This is hinted in the giving of the half *shekel*, in that one who has not given is forced until he gives.¹⁰⁷² As this relates to service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, these are the matters of self-restraint (*Itkafiya*) and acceptance of the yoke (*Kabbalat Ol*).

Beyond this, the giving of the half *shekel* was for the sake of [making] the base-sockets (*Adanim*-אדנים) of the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*), as well as for the congregational sacrificial offerings throughout each year.¹⁰⁷³ Now, as these matters relate to service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is that the base-sockets (*Adanim*-אדנים) are the foundation (*Yesod*) of the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*), indicating the beginning and foundation of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, this being the matter of accepting His yoke (*Kabbalat Ol*). The matter of the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*) indicates the revelation of His Supernal desire (*Ratzon HaElyon*) which transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*). This is why about the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*) the verse states, "It is a

¹⁰⁷² Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Shekalim 1:9

¹⁰⁷³ Rashi to Exodus 30:15 and elsewhere.

pleasing aroma-*Rei'ach Nicho'ach* ריח ניחוח,¹⁰⁷⁴ meaning, “It brings Me satisfaction of spirit-*Nachat Ru'ach* נחת רוח that I spoke and My will was done.”¹⁰⁷⁵

These two matters, (the sockets (*Adanim*) and the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*)) are related to each other, (since both are brought about through the half-*shekel*). That is, through accepting the yoke (*Kabbalat Ol*) (the base-sockets), this causes the perfection and wholeness of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way that affects the revelation of the Supernal desire (*Ratzon HaElyon*) which transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshehut*) (the matter of the “ten *gera*” granted from Above).

It should be added that even in regard to the revelation of the Supernal desire (*Ratzon HaElyon*) brought about through the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*), it specifically uses a term of “action-*Asiyah* עשייה,” stating “My will was done-*Na'aseh* נעשה.” This hints at the matter of self-restraint (*Itkafiya*) and accepting the yoke (*Kabbalat Ol*), through which we reach the revelation of the Supernal desire (*Ratzon HaElyon*) (similar to the explanation above (in chapter three) about the precise wording, “They do-*Oseen* עושין the will of the Ever Present One”).

5.

Based on this, we should add by explaining the relationship between the giving of the half *shekel* and Purim.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Leviticus 1:9 and elsewhere

¹⁰⁷⁵ Torat Kohanim and Rashi to Leviticus 1:9 and elsewhere.

That is, before Purim a person should give a half coin [of the realm] established in that place and in that time, to commemorate the half *shekel*.¹⁰⁷⁶

The explanation is that in the days of Purim [the Jewish people] fulfilled and accepted of the totality of Torah and *mitzvot*, as the verse states,¹⁰⁷⁷ “the Jews confirmed and undertook upon themselves,” in that “they fulfilled that which they already undertook [at Sinai].”¹⁰⁷⁸ Therefore, preparation for this is through giving the half *shekel*, which hints at the general matter of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way of accepting the yoke (*Kabbalat Ol*).

Through this there is caused to be wholeness and perfection in service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way that affects the revelation of His Supernal desire (*Ratzon HaElyon*) that transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), until we come to the ultimate elevation of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, through which the revelation of the **completion** of the Supernal desire is caused, which is how service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, will be in the coming future, as explained in *Hemshech* “*v’Kachah*”¹⁰⁷⁹ about the matter of [our recital],¹⁰⁸⁰ “There we will actualize (*Na’aseh*-נעשה) before you... in accordance with the command of Your desire (*Retzonecha*-רצונך).”¹⁰⁸¹

¹⁰⁷⁶ Rama to Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 694:1

¹⁰⁷⁷ Esther 9:27

¹⁰⁷⁸ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 88a

¹⁰⁷⁹ *Hemshech* “*v’Kachah*” 5637, Ch. 17 and on (Sefer HaMaamarim 5637 Vol. 2, p. 420 and on).

¹⁰⁸⁰ In the liturgy of the *Musaf* prayers.

¹⁰⁸¹ This concludes the available transcript of this discourse.