

Discourse 31

*“V’La’Achoto HaBetulah... –
And to his virgin sister...”*

Shabbat Parshat Emor, 20th of Iyyar, 5724

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

1.

The verse states,¹⁶⁶³ “For his virgin sister who is close to him, who was not [married] to a man; for her he will defile himself.” It is stated in Zohar,¹⁶⁶⁴ [and explained in various Chassidic discourses, amongst them the discourse entitled “*v’La’Achoto HaBetulah*” 5629,¹⁶⁶⁵ as well as the discourse by the same title in the booklet [of manuscripts] of the discourses of the Tzemach Tzedek that was recently redeemed and freed from captivity, the matter of which will soon be explained], “Rabbi Abba began, the verse states,¹⁶⁶⁶ ‘Who is this coming from Edom, with sullied garments from Botzrah etc.?’”

He explains that this verse refers to the coming redemption from Edom, this being the fourth exile, at which time “the Holy One, blessed is He, is destined to don garments of vengeance against Edom etc., until they become soiled , as the verse states,¹⁶⁶⁷ ‘I soiled all My garments.’” He concludes

¹⁶⁶³ Leviticus 21:3

¹⁶⁶⁴ Zohar III 89a

¹⁶⁶⁵ Sefer HaMaamarim 5629 p. 186 and on; Also see the citations there.

¹⁶⁶⁶ Isaiah 63:1

¹⁶⁶⁷ Isaiah 63:3

stating, “Why will this be to such an extent? Because it is written, ‘For his virgin sister who is close to him etc., for her he will defile himself,’ that is, for her sake... to raise her up etc.”

2.

Now, to understand this, we must preface¹⁶⁶⁸ with the well-known matter,¹⁶⁶⁹ that the external forces derive no vitality from the *Sefirot* themselves, Heaven forbid. That is, they derive no vitality from the aspects of the lights (*Orot*) and vessels (*Keilim*) (bodies-*Gufim*) [of the *Sefirot*], but only from the aspect of their garments (*Levushim*).

Moreover, they do not even [derive vitality] from the inner aspect (*Pnimiyyut*) of the garments (*Levushim*), but only from the externality (*Chitzoniyyut*) of the garments (*Levushim*). This is because the verse states,¹⁶⁷⁰ “I shall not give My glory to another,” and the garments (*Levushim*) are called “glory-*Kavod*-כבוד,” as we find [in Talmud] that¹⁶⁷¹ “Rabbi Yochanan called his garments ‘my glory-*Mechabdotai*-מכבודתי.” This being so, it is not understood how the forces of externality can receive from the aspect of the garments (*Levushim*) at all.

However, the explanation is that they derive [their vitality] specifically from the garments (*Levushim*) of the *Sefirah* of Kindness-*Chessed*. For, since *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה

¹⁶⁶⁸ See the discourse by the same title as this in Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5568 Vol. 1, p. 209 and on.

¹⁶⁶⁹ See Etz Chayim, Shaar 42 (Shaar Drushei ABY”A) Ch. 3; Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5563 Vol. 1, p. 248 and on, and with the glosses in Ohr HaTorah, Shir HaShirim Vol. 3, p. 973 and on.

¹⁶⁷⁰ Isaiah 42:8

¹⁶⁷¹ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 113a

Supernal Kindness-*Chessed* is in a way of limitless bestowal, it therefore is possible that even the forces of externality can receive and derive [vitality] from the garments (*Levushim*) of Kindness-*Chessed*, as we find with Avraham, who said,¹⁶⁷² “O’ that Yishmael might live before You.”

In other words, since Avraham is the matter of the *Sefirah* of Kindness-*Chessed*, room was granted even for Yishmael etc., and as a result, it became possible for the external husks (*Kelipot*) - that is, those who oppose *HaShem*-יהוה and His anointed one and oppose His people Israel - to derive vitality, such that the matter of exile is caused etc.

Therefore, for the redemption from exile and the nullification of vitality to the forces of externality to be, the Holy One, blessed is He, must don His garment of Victory-*Netzach*, that stems from the quality of Judgment-*Din* and Might-*Gevurah*, to rise and stand against the enemy, to wage war with him and vanquish him etc., as the verse states,¹⁶⁷³ “Why is Your garment red?” That is, the Holy One, blessed is He, will don the garments of Judgment-*Din* and Might-*Gevurah* (which are red) and are garments of vengeance. Through this, there will be the nullification of the forces of externality deriving any vitality.

This is also the meaning of the verse,¹⁶⁷⁴ “Their lifeblood spurted out on My garments, so I soiled all My garments.” “Their lifeblood-*Nitzcham*-נִצָּחַם” refers to the vitality they derived until now from the aspect of the garments

¹⁶⁷² Genesis 17:18

¹⁶⁷³ Isaiah 63:2

¹⁶⁷⁴ Isaiah 63:3

of Kindness-*Chessed*, which is the matter of the quality of Victory-*Netzach*-נצח, which is an offshoot of Kindness-*Chessed*.

However, through being victorious-*Nitzu'ach*-ניצוח in the war, which stems from Victory-*Netzach* of Judgment-*Din*, that which the forces of externality received from the aspect of Victory-*Netzach* of Kindness-*Chessed* is withdrawn from them. This then, is the meaning of, “Their lifeblood (*Nitzcham*-נצחם) spurted out on My garments, so I soiled all My garments,” this being the matter of donning the garments of vengeance to nullify and extract the vitality derived by the forces of externality from them.

More particularly, the word “I soiled-*Egaltee*-אגאלתי” has two meanings. The first is that it is a term of “revulsion-*Gee'ool*-גיעול” and “disgust-*Mee'oos*-מיאוס.” The second is that it is a term of “redemption-*Ge'ulah*-גאולה” and emancipation. In other words, the fact that “I soiled (*Egaltee*-אגאלתי) all my garments,” as a term of “revulsion” (*Gee'ool*-גיעול) and disgust, this causes the donning of the garments of vengeance, to nullify any derivation of vitality by the forces of externality, thereby causing the “redemption” (*Ge'ulah*-גאולה) and emancipation of the garments of Kindness-*Chessed* from the forces of externality, which until now had derived vitality from them. That is, whatever was drawn to them from the aspect of the garments of Kindness-*Chessed*, will return, ascend, and be subsumed in its root and source.

This is also the meaning of the words “with sullied (*Chamutz*-חמוץ) garments.”¹⁶⁷⁵ For, it is explained

¹⁶⁷⁵ See Ohr HaTorah, Emor p. 151 and on.

elsewhere¹⁶⁷⁶ on the words,¹⁶⁷⁷ “And the assembly (*Yikhat*-יקהת) of nations is his,” that the word “*Yikhat*-יקהת” means “a gathering-*Asifah*-אסיפה” or an assembly-*Kibutz*-קיבוץ.”¹⁶⁷⁸ However, the verse uses the word “*Yikhat*-יקהת,” which is also of the same root as “*Kiyuha*-קיוהא,” which means “spicy-*Charif*-חרירף” and “sour-*Chamutz*-חמוץ”¹⁶⁷⁹

By way of analogy, this is like someone who cooks things that are spicy and sour etc., in which their bitterness is transformed to sweetness. This likewise is the meaning of the words, “With sullied (*Chamutz*-חמוץ) garments,” meaning, the spiciness and sourness (*Chamutz*) brought about by the refinement and ascent of the vitality that at first was drawn down and derived by the forces of externality. This is comparable to things that are spicy and sour, that then are refined and transformed into good. In other words, through this, elevation and ascent is caused to the aspect of the garments of holiness, to a greater extent than it even was before.

About this the verse states,¹⁶⁸⁰ “I alone have trodden a winepress etc.” That is, the Holy One, blessed is He, Himself, in His glory, must manifest in the garments of vengeance to wage war against the external husks (*Kelipot*) etc. This is similar to what took place in the exodus from Egypt, that the redemption was brought about by the Holy One, blessed is He, Himself, in His glory, as our sages, of blessed memory,

¹⁶⁷⁶ See Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar 1c; Naso 22c, 24d

¹⁶⁷⁷ Genesis 49:10

¹⁶⁷⁸ See Rashi to Genesis 49:10

¹⁶⁷⁹ See Talmud Bavli, Ketubot 61a and elsewhere.

¹⁶⁸⁰ Isaiah 63:3

stated,¹⁶⁸¹ “I and not an angel; I and not a *Seraph*; I and not an emissary; I am He, and no other.” This is because all these aspects (the angel, the *Seraph*, the emissary, and the other) can be swallowed by the external husks (*Kelipot*), Heaven forbid,¹⁶⁸² and therefore the exodus from Egypt had to be brought about by the Holy One, blessed is He, Himself, in His glory.

3.

The Zohar continues, “Why will this be to such an extent? Because it is written, ‘for his virgin sister who is close to him etc., for her he will defile himself’ in those garments of vengeance that are destined to be defiled... for her sake... to raise her up etc.” In other words,¹⁶⁸³ the reason that the Holy One, blessed is He, lowers Himself to don the garments of vengeance, to descend to the place of impurity and of the external husks (*Kelipot*) and to nullify the derivation of vitality by the forces of externality etc., even though the Holy One, blessed is He, is called a “Priest” (*Kohen*-כהן), as our sages, of blessed memory, taught,¹⁶⁸⁴ “Your God is a Priest (*Kohen*-כהן)” – this is for the sake of the congregation of Israel, in order to redeem the Jewish people from the exile.

¹⁶⁸¹ Passover Haggadah, section beginning “*Vayotzi’ einu*”

¹⁶⁸² See Siddur of the Arizal to Haggadah there; Likkutei Torah, Tzav 12c, 16a, and elsewhere.

¹⁶⁸³ Also see Sefer HaMaamarim 5629 p. 193; Ohr HaTorah, Emor p. 153.

¹⁶⁸⁴ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 39a

This is as stated in Midrash,¹⁶⁸⁵ “Great is the love for Israel, that the Holy One, blessed is He, revealed Himself... in a place of impurity, in order to redeem them. This is analogous to a priest (*Kohen*) whose Terumah fell into a cemetery. He says [to himself], ‘What shall I do? To defile myself [by entering the cemetery] is not possible, and to leave my Terumah there is not possible. Better that I render myself impure once and then purify myself etc., and not lose my Terumah. So likewise, our forefathers were the Terumah of the Holy One, blessed is He, as the verse states,¹⁶⁸⁶ ‘Israel is holy to *HaShem*-יהוה, the first of His crop,’ but they are in exile in a graveyard. It therefore is preferable for Him to defile Himself, so to speak, in order to redeem the Jewish people.”

This then, is the meaning of “for her he will defile himself...that is, for her sake.” In other words, for the sake of the congregation of Israel, the Holy One, blessed is He, descends to the place of impurity, this being the aspect of “his virgin sister who is close to him, who has not been [married] to a man.”*

¹⁶⁸⁵ Midrash Shemot Rabba 15:5

¹⁶⁸⁶ Jeremiah 2:3

* Now, even though the Holy One, blessed is He, is a High Priest (*Kohen Gadol*) [see Zohar III 17b], for whom it is forbidden to become impure, even for his sister [see what is written by Rabbi Shimshon Ostropoli printed in Likkutei Shoshanim which is at the back of Sefer Karnayim], in regard to what is explained here, that the Holy One, blessed is He, descends to the place of the external husks and becomes “impure” etc., this is referring to the aspect of the ordinary Priest (*Kohen Hedyot*) Above, which is the aspect of *Zeir Anpin*, as it is in him that there is the matter of the war of (Isaiah 63:2) “your garments are red,” as understood from the Zohar. [See Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5568 p. 209, “In the coming future, the Holy One, blessed is He – referring to the aspect of *Zeir Anpin* about whom it states (Exodus 15:3), ‘*HaShem*-יהוה is a man of war etc.,’ – to don the garments of vengeance.”] In contrast, the aspect of the High Priest (*Kohen Gadol*) is the aspect of *Arich Anpin* or Wisdom-*Chochmah* etc. (See Biurei HaZohar, at the end of the

More specifically, (about the elevated level of the congregation of Israel (*Knesset Yisroel*), for which reason it states, “for her he will defile himself”), the verse enumerates three matters: “his sister,” “who is close to him,” “who has not been [married] to a man.”¹⁶⁸⁷

The explanation is that when it states, “who is close to him,” this is similar to what is stated earlier,¹⁶⁸⁸ “except for the relative who is closest to him,” which refers to his wife.¹⁶⁸⁹ Thus, the explanation of “his sister... who is close to him” is similar to the verse,¹⁶⁹⁰ “A man who shall take his sister... it is a disgrace (*Chessed*-חסד),” since as known¹⁶⁹¹ Above in Godliness there is a matter of union (*Yichud*) even with “His sister.” In other words, there is a level in the congregation of Israel (*Knesset Yisroel*) as they solely are the aspect of His

Torah portion of Lech Lecha and in Drushei Chanukah, and in various other places). That is, these aspects are above the order of the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), and are not in the matter of “your garments are red,” (which is the aspect of *Zeir Anpin*), and it automatically follows that there is no matter of impurity [in these aspects] in the first place etc. [See at length in Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 7, p. 153 and on (also from this discourse)]. The above also answers the question of the Maharsha (in Sanhedrin *ibid.*) [this is likewise the wording of Likkutei Shoshanim there, and it seems that his intention is that the Maharsha answers (the question of Tosefot, [as to why the question was not] ‘how did He become impure?’) with an alternate answer than Tosefot [who states] ‘because the Jewish people are called the children of the Ever Present One,’ since he finds difficulty in that a High Priest (*Kohen Gadol*) is forbidden from becoming impure for his children.] Namely, that is it not the case that the Holy One, blessed is He, is called a High Priest (*Kohen Gadol*), for whom it is forbidden to become impure, even for a son. For, the High Priest (*Kohen Gadol*) refers to the aspect of *Arich Anpin*.

¹⁶⁸⁷ Also see Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5568 *ibid.* p. 212 and on.

¹⁶⁸⁸ Leviticus 21:2; See Zohar III 89a (Emor) and the Mikdash Melech there, cited in Ohr HaTorah p. 150.

¹⁶⁸⁹ Talmud Bavli, Yevamot 22b cited in Rashi to Leviticus 21:2

¹⁶⁹⁰ Leviticus 20:17

¹⁶⁹¹ See Siddur Im DA”Ch 103b and on; 105d and on; Biurei HaZohar of the Mittler Rebbe, Terumah 50d; Sefer HaMitzvot of the Tzemach Tzedek 30b; Zohar III 77a-b, cited in Ohr HaTorah Emor *ibid.*

“sister.” However, there also is a level of the congregation of Israel (*Knesset Yisroel*) as they come to be the aspect of “closest to Him,” meaning, “His wife.”

The difference between them¹⁶⁹² is that “his sister” is indicative of a natural love, like a brother and sister, whose love for each other is natural on account of their birth, and it does not apply for it to undergo change or cessation. This refers to the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה of the righteous (*Tzaddikim*), who draw from the aspect of “I *HaShem*-יהו"ה have not changed.”¹⁶⁹³

In contrast, in regard to “the one closest to him,” which “is his wife,” this bond and closeness is not because of the nature of their birth, and it therefore is applicable for there to be change and cessation in this etc. However, there also is a superiority to novelty, in that the primary pleasure and delight is [in the novelty of it]. For, as known,¹⁶⁹⁴ a constant pleasure is not pleasurable, in comparison to a new pleasure. In the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, this refers to the service of those who return to Him in repentance (*Baalei Teshuvah*).

Now, since each of these two kinds of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, has an element of superiority to it that the other one does not have, so likewise there must be both the matter of “his sister” and the matter of “who is close to him.”

The verse continues, “who has not been [married] to a man (*Ish*-איש).” This refers to Esav, who is called the “man of

¹⁶⁹² Also see Likkutei Torah, Behar; Sefer HaMaamarim 5629 p. 186 and on; Ohr HaTorah, Emor p. 149 and on; Vol. 2, p. 578 and on.

¹⁶⁹³ Malachi 3:6

¹⁶⁹⁴ See Likkutei Amarim of the Rav, the Maggid of Mezhrich p. 41b; Maamarei Admor HaZaken, Inyanim p. 414 and elsewhere.

the field (*Ish Sadeh*-אִישׁ שָׂדֶה).¹⁶⁹⁵ In other words, even during the time of exile etc., she “has not been [married] to a man (*Ish*-אִישׁ),” being that even at the time of sinning she remained faithful to *HaShem*-יְהוָה, blessed is He, (as explained in Tanya).¹⁶⁹⁶

Thus, for the sake of these three matters that there are in the congregation of Israel (*Knesset Yisroel*) (“his sister,” referring to the superior quality of the Righteous (*Tzaddikim*), and “who is close to him,” referring to the superior quality of the Repentant (*Baalei Teshuvah*) and “who has not been [married] to a man (*Ish*-אִישׁ),” in that even at the time of sinning she remains faithful to Him, blessed is He), therefore “for her he will contaminate himself,” in that the Holy One, blessed is He, descends to the place of impurity to redeem the congregation of Israel (*Knesset Yisroel*).

Now, in the discourse he adds a wondrous matter, namely, that the descent of the Holy One, blessed is He, is specifically for the sake of redeeming the Jewish people, and not for the sake of affecting refinements (*Birurim*) and elevating the sparks of holiness.¹⁶⁹⁷ In other words, He would not descend to a place to affect the refinement of the sparks that fell into the external husks (*Kelipot*).¹⁶⁹⁸ Rather, it only is “for her [that] he will defile himself.” This is because the

¹⁶⁹⁵ Genesis 25:27

¹⁶⁹⁶ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 24

¹⁶⁹⁷ See Ohr HaTorah Emor p. 153

¹⁶⁹⁸ There is a small portion missing here with respect to the reason that he would not have descended for the sake of refining the 288-רפ"ח sparks that fell with the shattering of the vessels (*Shevirat HaKeilim*). See, however, Ohr HaTorah ibid., which states, “For, the shattering (*Shevirah*) was only in the aspect of the “Name-*Shem*-שם-340,” which is equal in numerical value to “The Name of *Ba”N*-ב"ן-52 [י"ד] “ה'ה ר"ו ה'ה” plus the 288-רפ"ח, this being only a radiance.

congregation of Israel (*Knesset Yisroel*) is called “His sister” and “who is close to Him,” as explained before. However, when He “defiles Himself for her,” by descending to redeem the Jewish people, through doing so the sparks are also caused to ascend.

This is like the analogy in the Midrash¹⁶⁹⁹ of a person who lost some copper coins, which, in and of themselves, are not worth the bother of looking for them. However, since he also lost pearls in the same place, which he must search for, he thereby also finds the copper coins.

4.

The Zohar there concludes, “The Jewish people said to Yishayahu, ‘Who is it that will do all this?’ He began and said,¹⁷⁰⁰ ‘It is I, who speaks with righteousness, with abundant power to save!’” The explanation is that “I-*Ani*-אני” refers to the aspect of *Zeir Anpin*. “I, who speaks with righteousness (*Tzedakah*-צדקה)” refers to the drawing down of the aspect of *Zeir Anpin* into the aspect of speech (*Dibur*) and into the aspect of “Righteousness-*Tzedakah*-צדקה,” which refers to the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut*.

This refers to the descent of the Holy One, blessed is He, (*Zeir Anpin*) into the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut* in order to descend below and redeem the Jewish people. The reason for this¹⁷⁰¹ is because the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut* herself is

¹⁶⁹⁹ See Midrash Devarim Rabba 2:9

¹⁷⁰⁰ Isaiah 63:1

¹⁷⁰¹ Also see Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5568 p. 211

filled with the powers of judgment (*Gevurot*). For, as known, her primary construct is from the powers of judgment (*Gevurot*), and therefore, the redemption by her hand alone is not possible, except specifically through a drawing down of *Zeir Anpin* into Kingship-*Malchut*. This is because the powers of kindness (*Chassadim*) of the male sweeten the judgments of the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut* [the female].

This then, is the matter of “righteousness-*Tzedakah*-צדקה.” For, in and of herself, Kingship-*Malchut*, is called “righteousness-*Tzedek*-צדק,”¹⁷⁰² (without the [final] letter *Hey*-ה). The matter of “righteousness-*Tzedakah*-צדקה” with the letter *Hey*-ה is brought about through the drawing down of the five [powers] of kindness (*Chassaadim*) of *Zeir Anpin* which sweeten the judgments of Kingship-*Malchut*.¹⁷⁰³

¹⁷⁰² See Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as Gates of Light, Gate One (*Malchut*), section on “Righteousness-*Tzedek*-צדק.”

¹⁷⁰³ The conclusion of this discourse is missing.