

Discourse 37

“Ishah Ki Tazriya v’Yaldah Zachar - When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male”

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Tazriya,
Rosh Chodesh Nissan, 5725²⁸³
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,²⁸⁴ “When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male.” About this, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,²⁸⁵ “If the woman emits seed first, she gives birth to a male, and if the man emits seed first, she gives birth to a female.” About this, the Alter Rebbe (in *Likkutei Torah*, in the discourse by the same title)²⁸⁶ brings the explanation of the philosophers, that the reason that if the woman emits seed first she gives birth to a male, is because when the woman emits seed first, the seminal drop of the man comes last and the upper dominates.

However, the Alter Rebbe states that their explanation is very forced. Rather, he explains that it is proven by the simple wording that the birth of a male is caused by the seed of the female (not because the seed of the male comes afterwards).

²⁸³ The original discourse was edited by the Rebbe Shlita and published as a pamphlet for the 2nd of Nissan 5749.

²⁸⁴ Leviticus 12:2

²⁸⁵ Talmud Bavli, Niddah 31a

²⁸⁶ *Likkutei Torah*, beginning of Tazriya (19c)

Now, it can be said that the fact that in Likkutei Torah he also mentions the explanation that the birth of a male is caused by the seminal drop of the man (which comes last, and the upper is dominant) and beyond this, that he precedes with this explanation before explaining that the birth of a male is from the seed of the woman, is because²⁸⁷ (as they are spiritually) the man and woman are the Holy One, blessed is He, and the ingathering of Israel. That is, the Holy One, blessed is He, is called the “man-*Ish*-יִשׂא,” and the ingathering of Israel (*Kneset Yisroel*) are called the “woman-*Ishah*-יִשָּׁא.”²⁸⁸

Now, as known about the matter of the arousal from Above and the arousal from below,²⁸⁹ there is an advantage to each of them. The advantage of the arousal from below is that the drawing forth brought about through it comes from the inner aspect of the light (*Pnimitiyut HaOhr*).²⁹⁰ The advantage that

²⁸⁷ At first glance it seems plausible to say that the fact he brings this first explanation, is like the statement (Eduyot 1:6) “If so, why do they record the opinion of a single person with the [opinion of] many only **to nullify it**?” However, in addition to the fact that this is extremely uncommon in the teachings of Chassidus (the inner aspects of the Torah) the main point of difference between the two explanations is that according to the view of the philosophers, the substance matter of the first [in order] (*Rishon*) is in order to strengthen that which comes after it, whereas according to the explanation of the Alter Rebbe, the superiority is in the first (*Rishon*) himself. We thus find that in the discourse itself, [which concludes according to the second explanation, that the superiority is in the first (*Rishon*) himself], this proves that his intention in bringing the first explanation (the explanation of the philosophers) is not (in order to nullify it and thereby) strengthen the explanation that follows it, but is rather due to the substance matter and elevation of this explanation itself.

²⁸⁸ Also see Likkutei Torah, Tazriya (20a) and elsewhere, that the explanation of the words “When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male,” that this refers to the arousal from below that precedes the arousal from Above.

²⁸⁹ Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim 23d and on.

²⁹⁰ Also see Likkutei Torah, Tazriya 20b. There it states that this is the reason that when a woman emits seed first, she gives birth to a male, since the drawing forth

comes from the arousal from Above, which comes in and of itself, is that the drawing forth is from a much higher place which the arousal from below cannot reach (except that the drawing forth is from the external aspect (*Chitzoniyut*)).

It can be said that from this there is the chaining down of the two explanations of [the verse] “When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male” in the literal sense. That is, the explanation that the birth of a male is from the seed of the man, in that the upper dominates, chains down from the advantage of the arousal from Above.²⁹¹ The explanation that the birth of a male is from the seed of the woman, chains down from the advantage of the arousal from below. This is why he also brings the explanation that the birth of a male is from the seed of the man (even though physically, this explanation is not according to his conclusion) in order to hint that there also is an advantage to the arousal from Above.

2.

Now, we can add that (in some years) the Torah portion of Tazriya is read during the month of Nissan,²⁹² the substance of which is arousal from Above.²⁹³ This is why he brings this

brought about through the arousal from below is from the inner aspect of the light (*Pnimiyyut HaOhr*).

²⁹¹ Only that even according to this explanation, the primary element of superiority of the arousal from Above is when it comes after being preceded by an arousal from below, as will be explained in chapter four.

²⁹² Even on those years that the Shabbat of the Torah portion of Tazriya is in the month of Iyyar, the reading of the beginning of the Torah portion during Minchah of Shabbat, as well as the study of the portions of ChiTa”T (Chumash, Tehillim, and Tanya), is during the month of Nissan (in some years).

²⁹³ See the citations in Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 17 p. 148 note 5.

explanation (that the birth of a male is from the seed of the man) **before** explaining that the birth of a male is from the seed of the woman. This is because in the month of Nissan the emphasis is on the superiority of arousal from Above.

The fact that he concludes that the birth of a male is from the seed of the woman, is because after the giving of the Torah, even in the month of Nissan the emphasis is on man's toil (the arousal from below). This is as also understood from the discourse entitled "*HaChodesh*" of the Rebbe Rashab, whose soul is in Eden,²⁹⁴ and whose Hillulah is celebrated on the 2nd of Nissan. There (at the beginning of the discourse) he asks,²⁹⁵ "Why is it specifically necessary for there to be service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, through one's own strength, and what is the advantage in this? Is it not so that love and fear of Him coming from Above is much loftier?" The fact that he asks ("What is the advantage in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, through one's own strength?") even though in many other discourses the advantage of arousal from below is explained (as mentioned before) (this being toil through one's own strength), it can be said that in the discourse entitled "*HaChodesh*" there is emphasis of the advantage of arousal from Above, and because of this there is room to ask what is the advantage of the toil [from below].

Nevertheless, from the fact that this matter ("What is the advantage in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, through one's own strength?") is only a question, it is understood that even when it comes to the month of Nissan (the [month referred

²⁹⁴ Of the year 5666.

²⁹⁵ *Hemshech* 5666, beginning of p. 157.

to in the] discourse entitled “*HaChodesh*”) in which there is emphasis of the superiority of the drawing forth that comes from Above, the conclusion is that there (also) is an advantage to serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, through one's own strength (arousal from below) over and above love and fear of Him coming from Above (arousal from Above).

Beyond this, this matter (of the advantage of arousal from below) is the **primary** element of superiority, and this is why the **conclusion** (in Likkutei Torah) is that the birth of a male is from the seed of the woman, this being the advantage of arousal from below.

3.

The explanation is that the advantage of arousal from Above (which comes in and of itself) is that the drawing forth is from a place that arousal from below does not reach, and the drawing forth is because²⁹⁶ “He desires kindness.”²⁹⁷ Now, based on what is known²⁹⁸ about the matter of “in whom did He consult? In the souls of the righteous *Tzaddikim*”²⁹⁹ (and “Your nation is all righteous *Tzaddikim*”)³⁰⁰ the fact that, so to speak, He is roused to desire kindness, is because it arose in His thought (in His essential thought, which transcends the revelation of His desire for kindness) that the Jewish people are

²⁹⁶ See Micah 7:18

²⁹⁷ Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim ibid.

²⁹⁸ See at length in the discourse entitled “*Zeh HaYom*” 5742 Ch. 5-6 (Torat Menachem, Tishrei p. 44 and on) and the citations there.

²⁹⁹ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 8:7; Ruth Rabba 2:1 (3)

³⁰⁰ Isaiah 60:21

destined to fulfill Torah and *mitzvot* and make the world into a dwelling place for Him in the lower worlds.

From this it is understood that the root of the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה of the Jewish people, is much loftier than even the matter of the desire for kindness. Thus, it is through the fact that the revelation of the desire for kindness is roused and drawn forth because of man's service of Him, that it is caused to have an added superiority and elevation (relative to how it is, in and of itself, as stemming from Above), namely, that in it there is a drawing forth of the essential thought that transcends revelation.

With the above in mind, we can explain that the fact that in the month of Nissan (the substance of which is the matter of drawing forth from Above) we read [the Torah portion of] "When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male," (which emphasizes the advantage of arousal from below) is because the primary advantage in drawing forth from Above (and the revelation of the [Supernal] desire for kindness) is when it is drawn forth through [man's] toil [from below].

4.

Now, this matter (that when a woman emits seed first she gives birth to a male [indicating] the advantage of arousal from below) is also according to the explanation that the birth of a male comes from the seed of the man, which comes last and in which the upper is dominant, only that according to this explanation, the advantage of arousal from below (the seed of the woman) is that it is the cause for the arousal from Above,

which is drawn forth because of it from a much loftier aspect³⁰¹ (“the upper is dominant”). In contrast, according to the explanation that the birth of the male is from the seed of the woman, the advantage of arousal from below is (also) as it is, in and of itself.

Based on this, we can say that in the order of the two explanations there is a hint. That is, the fact that he starts with the explanation that the birth of a male is from the seed of the man, even though he concludes that it is from the seed of the woman, is because at the beginning of one’s service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, the advantage of arousal from below is that the arousal from Above drawn forth from it is much loftier, and through this there subsequently is the revelation of the advantage of arousal from below, in and of itself.

This may be understood based on the explanation in Likkutei Torah,³⁰² that there is a third aspect to the arousal from Above, this being in the way of a gift. This arousal from Above also is drawn forth from a place that arousal from below does not at all reach, only that for there to be the revelation of this arousal from Above, it first is necessary for there to be the perfection of the deeds of the lower one, this being arousal from below and the arousal from Above is drawn forth by it.

³⁰¹ Seemingly it can be said that this is similar to what is explained in Likkutei Torah on our Torah portion (Tazriya), in the discourse entitled “*Sos Tasees*,” that the birth of the love (*Ahavah*) of the aspect of the “male” (the Abundant Love-*Ahavah Rabba*) in actuality comes from the arousal **from Above**. Nevertheless, the fact that the arousal from Above is drawn forth from the inner aspect of the light (*Pnimitut HaOhr*) (for which reason it is Abundant Love-*Ahavah Rabba* that is born of it), is because it comes forth by being preceded by the arousal from below.

³⁰² Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim ibid. (24a)

Now, this must be better understood. For, *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Supernal intention, that “the Holy One, blessed is He, desired a dwelling place for Himself in the lower worlds,”³⁰³ is that the making of the dwelling place should be done through man’s toil, from which it is understood that even the loftiest revelations and even the light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that transcends relation to the creations (in that it is not in the power of arousal from below to reach there) up to and including the revelation of the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He,³⁰⁴ is drawn forth through man’s toil.³⁰⁵ [This being so], how does this align with what was previously cited from Likkutei Torah that through the toil there only is a drawing forth from the aspect that arousal from below reaches, whereas the drawings from aspects that transcend this, are by way of a gift from Above?

Now, it can be said that the explanation is that [when it is stated] that the arousal from below only reaches the light that relates to the worlds, this is from the perspective of the creations [such that the arousal from below is as there is an aspect of the “lower one” which is separate from the “upper one”]. However,

³⁰³ See Midrash Tanchuma, Naso 16; Bechukotai 3; Bereishit Rabba, end of Ch. 3; Bamidbar Rabba 13:6; Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, beginning of Ch. 36.

³⁰⁴ Since the matter of the “dwelling place in the lower worlds” is the dwelling place for His Essential Self (*Hemshech* 5666 p. 3 and elsewhere. See the citations in Torat Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Shvat p. 308).

³⁰⁵ This is as is also understood from what is explained in Tanya, beginning of Ch. 37, that the revelations of the coming future “is dependent upon our actions and service... for it is the *mitzvah* itself that causes its reward, in that **by performing the *mitzvah* man draws down** etc.” In other words, the act is not only preparatory and a cause for the drawing forth that stems from Above, but rather, it is the act itself which is what affects the drawing forth.

from the power of the Essential Self of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, which is present in the toil of the Jewish people [as explained before (in chapter three) regarding the matter of, "In whom did He consult? In the souls of the righteous *Tzaddikim*," in that the root of the toil of the Jewish people is in the essential thought in His Essential Self, blessed is He, which transcends all revelations, including even the loftiest revelations], it does not apply to differentiate between "lower" and "upper," and the Jewish people and the Holy One, blessed is He, are entirely one.

It is only that the revelation of this matter (of the root of the toil of the Jewish people as it is in the essential thought) is specifically after the completion of everything that relates to man's toil, the toil itself (this being arousal from below) and the drawing forth from Above (this being arousal from Above) which is brought about thereby.

Therefore, the beginning of the drawing forth which comes by way of the toil (before the revelation of the power of His Essential Self within it) is solely from the light that relates to the worlds, the place where the arousal **from below** reaches. However, after the completion of the toil (both the toil as it is, in and of itself, as well as the drawing forth from Above brought about through it) at which point there is a revelation of its "inner aspect" (*Pnimitiyut*), this being *HaShem's*-יהו"ה Supernal satisfaction of spirit and delight in the toil of the Jewish people, [as it states], "It brings satisfaction of spirit before Me that I spoke and My will was done,"³⁰⁶ this satisfaction of spirit and delight (that "My will was done" by the Jewish people), is in

³⁰⁶ Torat Kohanim (cited in Rashi) to Leviticus 1:9; Sifri (cited in Rashi) to Numbers 28:8.

His Essential Self, blessed is He (“It brings satisfaction of spirit **before Me**”),³⁰⁷ such that through their toil there also is a drawing forth of His light that transcends relation to the worlds,³⁰⁸ up to and including the drawing forth of His Essential Self, blessed is He.

5.

With the above in mind, we can explain the order of the two explanations of [the verse], “When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male.” At first, (before the revelation of the “inner aspect” of the service of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, of the Jewish people), the toil of the ingathering of Israel (*Knesset Yisroel*) and the drawing forth from Above are two [separate] things. It thus follows automatically that the drawing forth

³⁰⁷ Also see the discourse entitled “*Zeh HaYom*” [5742] cited in the prior note [15 in the original discourse].

³⁰⁸ To elucidate based on what is explained in *Hemshech* 5666 p. 131 and Sefer HaMaamarim 5705 p. 53, that the reason that the drawing forth of the light that transcends the chaining down of the worlds (even though it is by way of a gift from Above) is specifically after the completion of the labor, is* because the granting of a gift is specifically when “one does something that is of benefit to him,” (see Talmud Bavli, Megillah 26b; Gitting 50b; Bava Metziya 16a; Bava Batra 156a). It can be said that the intention in this is that through the completion of man’s toil there is caused to be the revelation of the satisfaction of spirit and essential pleasure that there is in the service of Him by the Jewish people, as mentioned above in the discourse. [*In Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim ibid. (24a and on) [it states], “This only dwells and is revealed when there is a perfection of the deeds of the lower beings.” In other words, the perfection of the deeds of the lower beings is in order that the **lower** be like a receptacle for the **dwelling and revelation** of the light. [This is like [the teaching], “The Holy One, blessed is He, only dwells upon a place that is whole” (see Zohar III 90b)]; However, in *Hemshech* 5666 and in Sefer HaMaamarim 5705 ibid., [it states] that the perfection of the deeds of the lower is (also) for the **drawing forth from Above**, meaning, the granting of the gift that stems from **the Giver**.]

brought about by it is from a light that relates to the worlds (where the arousal from below reaches).

The advantage of the toil of the Jewish people then is that their toil is the cause for the arousal from Above to be drawn forth through from the inner aspect of the light (*Pnimiyyut HaOhr*). This is the first explanation, that the seed of the woman is the cause for the dominance of the seed of the man, (“the upper is dominant”). Through this there is the revelation of the inner aspect of the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the Jewish people, this being the power of His Essential Self within it (as a result of which the Jewish people and the Holy One, blessed is He, are entirely one) in which case, all the drawings forth are brought about through the toil itself (not that the toil is merely the cause for the drawing forth) this being the second explanation that the birth of a male is from the seed of the woman.

[In this case] the advantage of the drawing forth from above (the birth of a male) is (not just a drawing forth of the inner aspect of the light (*Pnimiyyut HaOhr*) that relates to the worlds, but also) a drawing forth of His light that transcends relation to the worlds, to the point that there is a drawing forth of His Essential Self.

6.

Now, we should connect this with the 2nd day of Nissan. For, according to the view³⁰⁹ that the world was created in Nissan, this means that the creation of man was on Rosh

³⁰⁹ Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 10b and on.

Chodesh Nissan, whereas the creation of the world was on the 25th of Adar.³¹⁰ This being so, the first Shabbat was on the 2nd day of Nissan.

Now, based on what is known³¹¹ regarding the alignment of the two views about the time of the creation,³¹² namely, that in actuality the creation was in Tishrei (the 25th of Elul),³¹³ whereas the thought to create the world was in Nissan (the 25th of Adar), it can be said that in the actual creation which took place in Tishrei, there also was the inclusion of the revelation that He desires kindness.³¹⁴

In regard to fact that on Nissan there was the thought to create, it can be said that this thought is similar to the thought of “In whom did He consult,” this being the intent and ultimate purpose of the creation, which was not drawn forth into revelation in the creation.³¹⁵ [However], it is on the day of Shabbat, which is the 2nd day of Nissan, that there was the completion and fulfillment of the thought.

Now, we also can connect this to the fact that the 2nd day of Nissan is the day of the Hillulah of the Rebbe Rashab, whose soul is in Eden, this being the day that his honorable holiness,

³¹⁰ Tosefot entitled “*L’Tekufot*” in Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 8a

³¹¹ Also see the discourse entitled “*HaChodesh*” of the 25th of Adar 5739, Ch. 8 (Torat Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Adar p. 108).

³¹² Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 10b and on.

³¹³ Tosefot to Rosh HaShanah 8a *ibid.*, and elsewhere. See the citations in Torat Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim *ibid.*, note 40.

³¹⁴ Also see Likkutei Torah, Nitzavim 47b, 58b, and elsewhere.

³¹⁵ See the above-mentioned discourse entitled “*HaChodesh*” *ibid.* In the discourse entitled “*Zeh HaYom*” 5742, Ch. 6 (Torat Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Tishrei p. 45) [it states] that this thought was not drawn forth (in a revealed manner) in the matter of the desire for kindness.

my father-in-law, the Rebbe (the only son of the Rebbe whose Hillulah it is) was crowned with the crown of leadership.³¹⁶

This is because *HaShem* יהו"ה's Supernal intent and ultimate purpose of the creation was for there to be a revelation in the world of the limitless light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, the Unlimited One, blessed is He, which transcends relation to the worlds (as mentioned before) and this revelation is (primarily) [brought about] through the study and dissemination of the inner aspects (*Pnimiyut*) of Torah. For, in and of itself, the inner aspect (*Pnimiyut*) of Torah, transcends revelation (and is the concealed (*Sateem*) aspect of Torah). However, through studying the inner aspects (*Pnimiyut*) of Torah in a way of understanding and comprehension, and especially through **disseminating** these teachings to the outside (up to and including the ultimate [aspect indicated by the word] “outside-*Chutzah*-חוצה”), we draw forth the light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that transcends relation to the worlds, up to and including the essence of His light which transcends revelation, so that it will be revealed in the world.

This then, is the relation to the 2nd of Nissan, the first Shabbat of the act of creation as it was in thought (in which there was the completion and fulfillment of the thought) for the one whose Hillulah it is, and his only son who filled his place.³¹⁷ This is because it is through the Chassidic discourses of the one

³¹⁶ This may be elucidated by (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Melachim 1:12), “A son who succeeds his father as king is not anointed unless he assumes his position amid a dispute,” which is not applicable in the case of an only son.

³¹⁷ Also see Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 4, p. 1,293, only that the explanation there stems from the superiority of the first Shabbat, a matter that is also present on the 2nd of Tishrei, which is not so of the explanation given above.

whose Hillulah we are celebrating, who was “the Rambam of the teachings of Chassidus,”³¹⁸ (“Matters that are elucidated to the point that they can be ordered and organized in everyone’s mouths”),³¹⁹ and especially through the founding of Yeshivat Tomchei Temimim, at which point there began to be a new phase in the dissemination of the wellsprings [of Chassidus].

This was then followed by his honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rebbe, who engaged in the dissemination [of these teachings] with even greater strength and might. This (dissemination of the wellsprings [of Chassidus] to the outside) is **the** preparation and vessel for the coming of our Master, King Moshiach³²⁰ (at which time *HaShem*’s יהוה”ה Supernal intent will be fulfilled³²¹ this being a dwelling place for Him in the lower worlds)³²² in the near future and in the most literal sense.

³¹⁸ Likkutei Dibburim Vol. 2, p. 296a; Also see Sefer HaSichot 5701 p. 160.

³¹⁹ See the introduction of the Rambam to his book; Also see at length in Likkutei Sichot Vol. 7 p. 209 regarding the discourses of the one whose Hillulah is being celebrated, [the Rebbe Rashab, whose soul is in Eden].

³²⁰ See the well-known letter of the Baal Shem Tov, also printed at the beginning of Keter Shem Tov and elsewhere [also translated at the beginning of The Way of The Baal Shem Tov, a translation of Tzavaat HaRivash].

³²¹ It can be suggested that this was the thought (to create) which took place in Nissan, as explained in the discourse above. It can also be suggested that this is also the connection between the month of Nissan and the coming redemption – “they are destined to be redeemed in Nissan” (Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 11a; Shemot Rabba 15:11), since there will then be the fulfillment of the intention of this thought.

³²² Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 36.