

Discourse 62

*“V’Hayah Eikev Tishme’un... -
It shall be that because you listen...”*

Shabbat Parshat Eikev,
Shabbat Mevarchim Elul, 5725
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,¹³³⁵ “It shall be that because (*Eikev*-עֵקֶב) you listen etc.” Rashi explains that this refers to “light commandments that one tramples with his heels (*Akavav*-עֲקָבִי).” Midrash Tanchuma states,¹³³⁶ “This verse relates to the verse,¹³³⁷ ‘Why will I be fearful in the days of evil, [because] the iniquities of my heels (*Avon Akeivai*-עֲוֹן עֲקָבִי) will surround me.’ The Holy One, blessed is He, gave the Torah to the Jewish people, in which there are six-hundred and thirteen *mitzvot*, some of which are light and some of which are severe. However, because some commandments are light, people pay no heed to them, but instead cast them under their heels. Because of this, Dovid was fearful of the Day of Judgment and said, ‘Master of the world, I am not fearful because of the severe *mitzvot* of the Torah. What am I fearful of? Of the light *mitzvot*, for perhaps I transgressed one of them because it was light. For,

¹³³⁵ Deuteronomy 7:12

¹³³⁶ Midrash Tanchuma, Eikev 1

¹³³⁷ Psalms 49:6

You said,¹³³⁸ “Be as scrupulous with a light *mitzvah* as with a severe *mitzvah*.’ He therefore said, ‘Why will I be fearful in the days of evil, [because] the iniquities of my heels will surround me.’”

2.

Now, it is explained in Likkutei Torah, in the Chassidic discourses of Rosh HaShanah,¹³³⁹ in explanation of the verse, “the iniquities of my heels will surround me (*Avon Akeivai Yesubeini*-עון עקבי יסובני),” that even though the sin is in the aspect of the “heel-*Eikev*-עקב” and “feet” of the soul, nevertheless, this causes that the encompassing transcendent (*Sovev*-סובב) aspect of the soul also does not illuminate. This is the matter of the verse,¹³⁴⁰ “For, my iniquities have gone over my head.”

Based on this, he also explains¹³⁴¹ the verse,¹³⁴² “Return Yisroel until *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God.” However, at first glance, there is cause for question in this verse. For, in regard to Yisroel-ישראל, what has he sinned? Is it not so (that the aspect of Yisroel-ישראל) never becomes separated? This being so, what need is there for repentance (*Teshuvah*) here?

However, about this [the verse continues], “for you have stumbled in your iniquity.” This is analogous to a person whose foot stumbles on a stone and receives a small blow, but as a

¹³³⁸ Mishnah Avot 2:1

¹³³⁹ Likkutei Torah, Rosh HaShanah 62d

¹³⁴⁰ Psalms 38:5

¹³⁴¹ Likkutei Torah ibid. 62c and on.

¹³⁴² Hosea 14:2

result his body falls to the floor, and his head hits the floor with a major blow, being that his head is highest. [That is, his body falls, but does not receive a major blow, whereas it specifically is because of its height that the head receives a major blow.]

The same is so in the analogue, that when a person stumbles in a minor sin etc., even though to him it seems to be minor, it is like when one's foot is dislodged and slips to the side from its proper position. The same is so when a person stumbles in the above-mentioned [minor] sins, [which are like] the “feet” of *HaShem*'s יהו"ה Indwelling Presence, the *Shechinah*, this being the aspect of Yaakov יעקב (the aspect that illuminates and enlivens the body, which only is the “heel” of the soul and is the aspect of the “feet” of the soul).¹³⁴³

Because of this, the soul is caused to fall, this being the aspect of Yisroel ישראל, ([that shares the same letters as], “a head to Me-*Lee Rosh*-לי ראש”¹³⁴⁴ which is the aspect of the soul that transcends the body and intellect). [It falls] to the other side, and does not illuminate in his “heel,” so that the aspect of the soul that is in the body does not have an illumination of the aspect of Yisroel ישראל within it etc. This is why he must repent, thus removing the darkness and revealing his hidden treasures. This is the meaning of “Return Yisroel ישראל.”

Now, Likkutei Torah continues [and explains] that the advice for revealing the hidden recesses of one's heart and removing the darkness is as follows: There are two kinds of

¹³⁴³ See Likkutei Torah 62c *ibid*.

¹³⁴⁴ Shaar HaPesukim of the Arizal, to Genesis (Vayishlach) 32:29; Sefer HaLikkutim of the Arizal to Genesis (Vayechi) 47:28; Likkutei Torah, Shlach 48b and on; Sefer HaMitzvot of the Tzemach Tzedek 15b – citing Zohar; Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 34-35.

compassion, “the Merciful Father” (*Av HaRachaman*-אב הרחמן), and “the Father of Mercies” (*Av HaRachamim*-אב הרחמים) etc.¹³⁴⁵ In explanation of the continuation of the matter, it can be said that it makes sense that if a person only caused blemish in the aspect of the “heel” (*Eikev*-עקב), we can know the manner of repentance required to rectify the blemish according to that particular limb.

However, based on the statement above, that when one sins in the aspect of the “heel” and “foot” of the soul, this also causes that the surrounding (*Sovev*) and encompassing (*Makif*) aspect of his soul will not illuminate, it is understood that to rectify this, it is necessary to cause a drawing forth that even transcends the surrounding (*Sovev*) and encompassing (*Makif*) aspect of the soul.

He explains that this comes about through awakening the abundant mercies (*Rachamim Rabim*) from the aspect of the “Father of Mercies” (*Av HaRachamim*-אב הרחמים). Through this, there also is caused to be a revelation of the surrounding (*Sovev*) and encompassing (*Makif*) aspect of the soul, so that there specifically is [the matter of] “Return Yisroel-ישראל.” That is, this refers the bond of the concealed aspect of the soul with the concealed aspect of the Holy One, blessed is He, so to speak, meaning, the light of *HaShem*-יהוה that surrounds and transcends all worlds (*Sovev Kol Almin*).

He continues and explains that “the Merciful Father” (*Av HaRachaman*-אב הרחמן) is [the quality by which] one has compassion on someone in accordance with what the intellect necessitates that he should have mercy upon him etc. This

¹³⁴⁵ See Likkutei Torah *ibid.* 62d.

likewise is the aspect of “the Merciful Father” (*Av HaRachaman*-אב הרחמן) as it is in *HaShem*-יהו"ה Godliness, so to speak. In contrast, the quality of “the Father of Mercies” (*Av HaRachamim*-אב הרחמים) is great mercies without measure, even when intellect does not necessitate that He forgive him and have mercy upon him etc. It is this great mercy that we must awaken etc.

This then, is the meaning of the verse,¹³⁴⁶ “Though my father and mother have forsaken me,” referring to the aspect of “the Merciful Father” (*Av HaRachaman*-אב הרחמן), but notwithstanding this [the verse continues], “*HaShem*-יהו"ה will gather me in,” this being the aspect of “the Father of Mercies” (*Av HaRachamim*-אב הרחמים).

He continues by explaining how we awaken the great mercies (*Rachamim Gedolim*), this being by contemplating (*Hitbonenut*) one’s current position, and his root as it previously was, which has now left him. That is, he currently is in a lowly position within his body and animalistic soul. Through [contemplating] this, he awakens great mercy upon the portion of God that he has, which is unified with *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, which fell and became very far “from the high peak,” the place of his vitality etc. As a result, great mercy is awakened from Above etc.

Now, we should add to this based on the explanation elsewhere,¹³⁴⁷ in elucidation of the words,¹³⁴⁸ “In Your abundant mercies, have mercy upon us,” that “**Your** mercies-

¹³⁴⁶ Psalms 27:10

¹³⁴⁷ Likkutei Torah, Drushei Shabbat Shuvah 65a

¹³⁴⁸ Of the “*Yotzer*” blessing on the *Shema*.

Rachamecha-רחמיך” are specified here, meaning that “You know how great and beyond measure the mercies are,” and that it is not in the capacity of our souls to grasp the measure of the greatness and strength of the mercies in the great descent from the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

This is because our souls are something limited, created from nothing, and thus we do not sense the great descent from the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. On the contrary,¹³⁴⁹ because we do not sense the greatness of the mercies etc., even greater mercies are aroused. That is, being that one has no sense of the mercies that there are upon him, the compassion toward him is even greater.

Now, it can be said that this also explains the verse, “Though my father and mother have forsaken me, *HaShem*-יהו"ה will gather me in.” That is, “my father and mother” refer to the intellectual qualities (*Mochin*) of Wisdom-*Chochmah* and Understanding-*Binah*, which is the matter of grasp and comprehension. Thus, the meaning of “my father and mother have forsaken me,” that even when one contemplates the great compassion with his intellect, this causes no feeling in his heart of the greatness of the compassion, and being that because he feels no compassion for himself, the compassion [toward him] will be all the greater, it follows that therefore “*HaShem*-יהו"ה will gather me in,” which is the arousal of the higher mercies etc.

¹³⁴⁹ See Likkutei Torah, Re'eh 32c

3.

Now, all this can be connected to the explanation in Likkutei Torah at the beginning of this week's Torah portion, in the discourse entitled "*VaYa'acheelcha et HaMan*," [found in some of the booklets of manuscripts that indicate that it is from Shabbat Mevarchim Elul of the year 5556,¹³⁵⁰ and this being so, is from before [his imprisonment] in Petersburg, whereas one of the manuscripts indicates that it is from the year 5559, and this being so, it is from after [his imprisonment] in Petersburg],¹³⁵¹ in explanation of the verse,¹³⁵² "And He fed you the Manna that you did not know of, nor did your forefathers know of, so that you will know etc."

(Now, at first glance, it is not understood why the verse states, "nor did your forefathers know of.")¹³⁵³ He explains that Manna is the aspect of the "dew-*Tal*," as the verse states [about the Manna],¹³⁵⁴ "the layer of dew (*Tal*) ascended." It is with the "dew-*Tal*-39" that *HaShem* is destined to resurrect the dead and it is the aspect of abundant mercies (*Rachamim Rabim*), as it states,¹³⁵⁵ "He resurrects the dead with abundant mercies (*Rachamim Rabim*)."

¹³⁵⁰ See Ohr HaTorah, Eikev p. 530; Also see Reshimot HaMaamarim at the end of Maamarei Admor Hazaken, HaKtzarim, p. 616 and note 64.

¹³⁵¹ See Sefer HaSichot, Torat Shalom, p. 26; Igrot Kodesh of the Rebbe Rayatz, Vol. 3, p. 340.

¹³⁵² Deuteronomy 8:3

¹³⁵³ See later in this discourse in chapter five.

¹³⁵⁴ Exodus 16:14

¹³⁵⁵ In the Amidah prayer.

He continues there [stating] that to understand what the aspect of the abundant mercies (*Rachamim Rabim*) are Above, [we must preface with] the verse [that] states,¹³⁵⁶ “I shall sow the house of Israel – the seed of man and the seed of animal.” The explanation is that there are two kinds of souls, these being the aspect of man and the aspect of animal.

He explains that the aspect of the animal refers to the matter of the “worldly love” (*Ahavat Olam*) that is received from the face of the ox on the left [of the Supernal Chariot], this being the aspect of Might-*Gevurah* that hides and conceals the Godly vitality in the worlds. This is why it is called an “animal-*Beheimah*-בהמה,” in the feminine, being that it receives from the above-mentioned face of the ox.

The aspect of man is as the verse states,¹³⁵⁷ “upon the likeness of the throne there was the likeness of the appearance of a man upon it etc.” This refers to the masters of the Torah. This is analogous to a human being, who has 248-רמ"ח organs and 365-שס"ה sinews. In the same way, the Torah consists of 248-רמ"ח positive *mitzvot*, and 365-שס"ה prohibitive *mitzvot* etc.

He continues and explains that there is another aspect of “animal-*Beheimah*-בהמה” which transcends the aspect of “man-*Adam*-אדם,” and is called “the great beast-*Beheimah Rabba*-בהמה רבה.” This is the aspect of abundant love (*Ahava Rabbah*) that transcends the grasped knowledge that manifests within the worlds, but is rather from the aspect of *HaShem*’s-

¹³⁵⁶ Jeremiah 31:26; See Likkutei Torah *ibid.* p. 8b

¹³⁵⁷ The Haftorah of the first day of the holiday of Shavuot – Ezekiel 1:26

יהו"ה light which surrounds and transcends all worlds (*Sovev Kol Almin*), before whom all is literally as nothing. He continues and explains that from there the aspect of the abundant mercies (*Rachamim Rabim*) is drawn.

This is analogous to a king of flesh and blood, who because of his elevation and exaltation over the ministers and the people, has the quality of compassion to an even greater extent, in that he is compassionate to all of them. This is because they all are lowly and lesser than him. Therefore, because of their lowliness, his compassion for them is much greater in his eyes.

It is literally in this way, so to speak, with the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in that everything is utterly nullified of its existence in comparison to Him, and everything literally as nothing before Him, even the upper worlds. This is as the verse states,¹³⁵⁸ "The hosts of the heavens are not pure in His eyes." Therefore, his compassion toward them is very great, due to their ultimate lowliness and deficiency relative to Him, blessed is He.

He continues and explains that even in regard to the upper Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden HaElyon*) the above-mentioned compassion is applicable.¹³⁵⁹ For, the matter of the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) is that "the righteous *Tzaddikim* sit and delight in the ray of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Indwelling Presence, the *Shechinah* etc."¹³⁶⁰ In other words, this is merely a ray and radiance that spreads forth from Him, blessed is He, whereas in

¹³⁵⁸ Job 15:15

¹³⁵⁹ Also see Likkutei Torah, Ki Teitzei 41a

¹³⁶⁰ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 17a

and of Himself, as He is in His glory, He has no relation to this whatsoever, since they all are utterly nullified of their existence relative to Him and are subsumed in His unity and oneness, within which there is nothing separate from Him that it could have a name or an existence unto itself, such as the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) etc.

Beyond this, even about the aspect of Eden (עֵדֶן), which transcends the aspect of the Garden (*Gan*-גן), this being the aspect of Wisdom-*Chochmah*, the verse states, “You actualized them all with Wisdom-*Chochmah*,”¹³⁶¹ in that it is like a physical action relative to the Holy One, blessed is He. The compassion is therefore very great due to the fact that they descended so far below, to be considered as literally nothing before Him, as mentioned above. Whosoever is wise will contemplate this and awaken abundant mercies (*Rachamim Rabim*) upon his soul etc.

Based on this, there is further explanation of the general matter of awakening the abundant mercies (*Rachamim Rabim*). That is, this does not only apply to a state in which there is sin, transgression, or a lack in one’s service of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, etc. Rather, it also applies when one’s service of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, is in a state of perfection, whether it is service of Him stemming from the aspect of the “animal-*Beheimah*-בהמה,” or whether it is service of Him stemming from the aspect of “man-*Adam*-אדם.”

Even then, there is the matter of rousing the abundant mercies (*Rachamim Rabim*). This is derived a priori from the fact that compassion even applies to the Garden of Eden (*Gan*

¹³⁶¹ Psalms 104:24

Eden), the matter of which is the reward for the *mitzvot*, this being true pleasure, in that they sit and delight in the ray of *HaShem*'s יהו"ה Indwelling Presence, the *Shechinah*.

Moreover, it even applies to the aspect of Eden (עֵדֶן), which transcends the Garden (*Gan-גן*) (as the verse states,¹³⁶² "A river goes forth from Eden to water the Garden), about which our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹³⁶³ "All the prophets only prophesied about the days of Moshiach. However, about the Coming World (*Olam HaBa*) the verse states,¹³⁶⁴ "No eye has seen it, God, besides You." However, even about this, the aspect of compassion applies etc.

5.

He continues and explains that through the above-mentioned contemplation to awaken the abundant mercies (*Rachamim Rabim*) upon one's soul etc., through this his soul will be revived, literally like the resurrection of the dead. This is because the resurrection of the dead (*Techiyat HaMeitim*) comes about through the "dew-*Tal*-טל," as the verse states,¹³⁶⁵ "For Your dew is like the dew that revives vegetation," this being "the dew that drips from the mouth of the Ancient One-*Atik* etc."¹³⁶⁶ This is likewise the matter of the Manna, as the verse states,¹³⁶⁷ "Its color was like the color of *bedolach*

¹³⁶² Genesis 2:10

¹³⁶³ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 34b

¹³⁶⁴ Isaiah 64:3

¹³⁶⁵ Isaiah 26:19

¹³⁶⁶ Zohar II 61b; Zohar III 128b, and elsewhere.

¹³⁶⁷ Numbers 11:7

(crystal),” referring to “the crystal dew (*Tala d’Bedolach*-טלא דבדולה) that drips from the mouth of the Ancient One-*Atik*.”

Based on this, we can explain why about the Manna the verse states, “that your fathers did not know of,” meaning that our forefathers did not have knowledge of it. This is because the Manna is the aspect of the “dew-*Tal*-טל-39,”¹³⁶⁸ which is the aspect of the abundant mercies (*Rachamim Rabim*), about which the verse states,¹³⁶⁹ “Your mercies are abundant, *HaShem*-יהו"ה etc.”

However, the verse states,¹³⁷⁰ “Though Avraham may not know us, and Israel may not recognize us, You *HaShem*-יהו"ה are our Father,” and it is written,¹³⁷¹ “With My Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה I did not make Myself known to them.” That is, they did not have a knowledge and bond to the name “*HaShem*-יהו"ה, our Father,” which is the aspect of the abundant mercies (*Rachamim Rabim*) mentioned above. About this the verse concludes, “to make you know,” meaning that through the Manna it will become known to you that it is the aspect of the dew-*Tal*-טל-39 “that your fathers did not know of,” as explained above.

¹³⁶⁸ The numerical value of the “dew-*Tal*-טל-39” is the same as “*HaShem* is One-*HaShem Echad*-אחד יהו"ה-39.” See at greater length in *Ginat Egoz* of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, *The Gate of Intrinsic Being (Shaar HaHavayah)* and on.

¹³⁶⁹ Psalms 119:156

¹³⁷⁰ Isaiah 63:16

¹³⁷¹ Exodus 6:3

He concludes the discourse [stating] that “even so, it states, ‘Then He fed you,’ meaning that it became physical to the point that ‘they would pound it in a mortar.’”¹³⁷²

Now, we must explain the precision of the Alter Rebbe’s words in stating “to the point that ‘they would pound it in a mortar.’” For, at first glance, what difference does this make here? Is it not so that even without stating this we know that the Manna became physical, from the very fact that the verse states, “Then He fed you the Manna”? That is, the Manna was their food and sustenance and became part and parcel of their flesh and blood, from which it is understood that it became physical etc.

However, the explanation is that it states in Talmud¹³⁷³ that in the descent of the Manna there were different levels, according to the differing levels of Jewish people. For, the verse states,¹³⁷⁴ “When the dew descended **upon the camp** at night, the manna would descend upon it,” (indicating that it descended within the camp). Yet, another verse states,¹³⁷⁵ “Let the people **go out** and pick each day’s portion,” (indicating that they would go outside the camp), and it is written,¹³⁷⁶ “The people would walk about and gather it,” (indicating that it was at a distance). How is this so? For the righteous (*Tzaddikim*), it would descend at the entrance of their tents. For the

¹³⁷² Numbers 11:8

¹³⁷³ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 75a (and Rashi there)

¹³⁷⁴ Numbers 11:9

¹³⁷⁵ Exodus 16:4

¹³⁷⁶ Numbers 11:8

intermediates (*Beinonim*) they would go out and gather it. For the wicked (*Resha'im*) they would walk about and gather it.

The same is so of the Manna itself, in that one verse calls it “bread-*Lechem*-לֶחֶם,”¹³⁷⁷ and another verse calls it “cakes-*Ugot*-עֲגוֹת”¹³⁷⁸ and it also is written, “they [would] grind it-*v'Tachanu*-וַתַּחֲנוּ.” How is this so? For the righteous (*Tzaddikim*) it was “bread-*Lechem*-לֶחֶם,” for the intermediates (*Beinonim*) it was “cakes-*Ugot*-עֲגוֹת,” whereas the wicked (*Resha'im*) would “grind it in a mill or pound it in a mortar.”

With the above in mind, we can explain the precise wording of the Alter Rebbe in stating, “it became physical to the point that ‘they would pound it in a mortar.’” This is because those who pounded it in a mortar were the wicked (*Resha'im*) (so much so, that amongst them was also the one who carried the idol of Michah),¹³⁷⁹ but even so, for them too there was the matter of, “Then He fed you,” and by means of it, “to make you know.” This is because even as it descended below and became physical etc., the Manna remained in its essential being as it is Above,¹³⁸⁰ this being the aspect of the “dew-*Tal*-טל-39,” which is the aspect of the abundant mercies (*Rachamim Rabim*) etc.

7.

This matter is also related to the month of Elul, (and, as mentioned (in chapter three), the Alter Rebbe said this

¹³⁷⁷ Exodus 16:4

¹³⁷⁸ Exodus 16:4

¹³⁷⁹ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 101b; 103b

¹³⁸⁰ Torah Ohr *ibid*.

discourse on Shabbat Mevarchim of the month of Elul). This is as explained in Likkutei Torah,¹³⁸¹ that the drawing forth of the above-mentioned aspect of abundant mercies (*Rachamim Rabbim*) comes about through the thirteen attributes (of mercy-*Rachamim*). This is because they are abundant mercies (*Rachamim Rabbim*) without limitation, and it is impossible for them to manifest in the worlds, except by way of constriction, by way of the thirteen attributes, which bring limit and measure, so that the worlds will be capable of receiving etc.

He concludes that this is why we recite the *Selichot* and the thirteen attributes of mercy from Rosh Chodesh Elul and on. For, that is the time of awakening the above-mentioned aspect of abundant mercies (*Rachamim Rabbim*) drawn forth through the thirteen attributes of mercy that are revealed and illuminate during the month of Elul.¹³⁸²

All this is increased to an even greater extent through studying these matters in the teachings of Chassidus. For example, through the Alter Rebbe reciting the discourse, he thereby affected (and brought about) that both Above and below there indeed is a drawing forth of all the above-mentioned matters during the month of Elul, and in a way of granting empowerment for all the years that follow after it.¹³⁸³

¹³⁸¹ Likkutei Torah, Eikev 14a

¹³⁸² Also see Likkutei Torah, Re'eh 32a and on

¹³⁸³ The conclusion of this discourse is missing.