

Discourse 14

*“Vayikach Min HaBa BeYado... -
He took from that which had come in his hand...”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Vayishlach,

16th of Kislev, 5725⁷⁴⁵

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

1.

The verse states,⁷⁴⁶ “He took from whatever came to his hand, as a tribute etc.” About this, it is explained at length in published Chassidic discourses,⁷⁴⁷ as well as in one of the booklets [of manuscripts] recently revealed,⁷⁴⁸ that all the sacrifices and prayers (established in place of the sacrifices)⁷⁴⁹ are called a “tribute-*Minchah*-מנחה.”

The reason is because the toil of the sacrificial service (*Avodat HaKorbanot*), as well as the toil of the service of prayer (*Avodat HaTefillah*), are toil from below to Above. As known, [this is] the element of superiority in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, through prayer, over and above serving of Him through [studying] Torah and [doing] *mitzvot*.

⁷⁴⁵ Based on Likkutei Sichot Vol. 5, p. 400 and on.

⁷⁴⁶ Genesis 32:14

⁷⁴⁷ See the discourse by this title in Torah Ohr, Torat Chayim, and Ohr HaTorah; Also see the discourse entitled “*Re'eh Rei'ach Bni*” (there).

⁷⁴⁸ In Av. Booklet (31) 12, ([subsequently] printed in Ohr HaTorah, Bereishit (Vol. 2), p. 239a and on).

⁷⁴⁹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 26b

This is because Torah is the matter of drawing down from Above to below, being that Torah is the Wisdom-*Chochmah* of the Holy One, blessed is He, and ultimately, man's study of Torah is in a way that,⁷⁵⁰ "My tongue shall respond with Your word," meaning that he responds and repeats the words of the Holy One, blessed is He.

Even in regard to the *mitzvot*, the primary matter of which is for **man** to fulfill them, nonetheless, the toil in this is to fulfill that which **the Holy One, blessed is He** commanded. In contrast, if by his own volition someone does that which was not commanded by the Holy One, blessed is He, and he thereby thinks to fulfill the commands of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, he actually is transgressing the [prohibitive *mitzvah*] against adding to the *mitzvot*.⁷⁵¹

In contrast, the matter of prayer (and likewise the matter of the sacrificial offerings) constitutes the prayer and supplication of **man** and concerns matters that **he** is lacking. Now, even though prayer (*Tefillah*) is also a *mitzvah*,⁷⁵² nevertheless, the substance of this *mitzvah* is that man should plead for **his** needs. Thus, since prayer is service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, from below to Above, it therefore has an element of superiority to it, [as expressed in the verse],⁷⁵³ "[He] cherishes the work of your hands." This is why it reaches even

⁷⁵⁰ Psalms 119:172; See Talmud Bavli, Brachot 22a that even when one speaks words of Torah it says about them, "Is not **My word** like fire," to the point that this is something that is relevant to actual Halachic rulings.

⁷⁵¹ [See Deuteronomy 13:1]

⁷⁵² "Prayer is [supplication] for mercy" (Talmud Bavli, Brachot 20b); See Misheh Torah of the Rambam, beginning of Hilchot Tefillah: "Prayer... that man should supplicate and pray etc." (This is to a greater degree in Rambam there, that it is a Biblical *mitzvah* to pray at times of (**man's**) distress.)

⁷⁵³ Job 14:15; See Shnei Luchot HaBrit, Shaar HaGadol (29b and on).

higher than the toil of affecting drawings down from Above to below.

This is why all the prayers are called, “tribute-*Minchah*-מנחה,” which is an acronym for “*Ma*”N-מ”ן *Chet*-ח *Hey*-ה.”⁷⁵⁴ The explanation is that “*Ma*”N-מ”ן” refers to the ascent of the “feminine waters-*Mayin Nukvin*-מַיִן נוֹקְבִין” from below to Above. The *Chet*-ח means that it reaches the eighth *Mazal* that transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshehut*), and from there is a drawing down into the lower *Hey*-ה, the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut*, the root and source of the creations. Through her there is a drawing down into the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Asiyah*), until this physical world of Action (*Asiyah*),⁷⁵⁵ so that He heals the sick and blesses the years etc.

2.

Now, even though all prayers are called a “tribute-*Minchah*-מנחה,” nonetheless, from the fact that specifically the [afternoon] *Minchah* prayer is called a “tribute-*Minchah*-מנחה”⁷⁵⁶ it is understood that the primary matter of the “tribute-*Minchah*-מנחה” [this being the ascent from below to Above, and thereby automatically also [includes] the drawing down of the light of *HaShem*-יהו”ה, blessed is He, that transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshehut*), all the way down],

⁷⁵⁴ Torah Ohr, Vayishlach 25d

⁷⁵⁵ To affect physical changes (see Tanya, Kuntres Acharon, beginning of the discourse entitled “*Lehavin Mah SheKatuv b’Pri Etz Chayim*”).

⁷⁵⁶ Also see the beginning of the discourse entitled “*v’Hoo Oveir Lifneihem*” 5627.

is specifically in the [afternoon] Minchah prayer. This is why our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁷⁵⁷ “A person should always be vigilant in regard to the afternoon Minchah prayer, being that Eliyahu’s prayer was only answered in the afternoon Minchah prayer.”⁷⁵⁸

The explanation is that the morning Shacharit prayer is at the beginning of the day, before one becomes preoccupied and busy with worldly matters. The evening Arvit prayer is at the end of the day, after he already has finished [being occupied in] worldly matters. However, the afternoon Minchah prayer comes in the middle of the passion [of engaging] in worldly matters.⁷⁵⁹ However, even so, without taking his engagement and preoccupation etc. into account, he tears himself away from them and prays the afternoon Minchah prayer.⁷⁶⁰ This is why this [particular] service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is primary in elevating the feminine waters (*Mayin Nukvin*-מֵיִן נוֹקְבִין).

This is also why about the afternoon Minchah prayer, there are opinions (to the point that this is relevant to practical

⁷⁵⁷ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 6b

⁷⁵⁸ “Even though in the Talmud there, Rabbi Yochanan and Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak are of the view that this likewise applies to the evening prayer (*Arvit*) and the morning prayer (*Shacharit*), nevertheless, Eliyahu was answered in the afternoon Minchah prayer, from which it is understood that the Minchah prayer is loftier in elevation and level, over and above the morning *Shacharit* prayer and the evening *Arvit* prayer.” (See the beginning of the discourse entitled “*LeOlam Yehei Adam*” 5691 – Kuntres 15 (subsequently printed in Sefer HaMaamarim 5691 p. 345)). Also see the later note [regarding this, note 24 in the original discourse].

⁷⁵⁹ Even in the [aspect of the] world (*Olam*), the afternoon Minchah prayer comes at a time that the sun is already descending, this being indicative of greater concealment (Ohr HaTorah, Vayishlach p. 235a).

⁷⁶⁰ Ohr HaTorah *ibid*. Also see the end of the discourse entitled “*LeOlam Yehei*” 5691 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5691 p. 352).

Halachic rulings) that (it does not correspond to the sacrificial offerings, as the morning Shacharit prayer and the evening Arvit prayer do, but rather) corresponds to the [offering of the] incense (*Ketoret*), as the verse states,⁷⁶¹ “Let my prayer stand as incense before You; the lifting of my hands as an afternoon offering (*Minchat Erev* מנחת ערב).”⁷⁶²

The explanation is that there are several differences between the sacrifices (*Korbanot*) and the incense (*Ketoret*). Amongst these,⁷⁶³ is that all sacrifices may only be brought from things that are pure and that are refined through them, whereas the incense also included impure substances,⁷⁶⁴ this

⁷⁶¹ Psalms 141:2

⁷⁶² The view of Rabbi Yossi in Talmud Yerushalmi, Brachot 4:1; Also see Hagahot Maymoni, Hilchot Tefillah 3:3, and one should either act in accordance with one master (or) in accordance with the other master (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 233:1), since the Minchah [prayer] possesses both aspects (see the discourse entitled “*v’Hoo Oveir*” ibid. Ch. 4).

⁷⁶³ Regarding all of this, see Ateret Rosh, Shaar Yom HaKippurim toward the end; Ohr HaTorah, Toldot p. 152b; Ohr HaTorah, Vayishlach p. 237b; Discourse entitled “*v’Hoo k’Chatan*” 5657, Ch. 11 and on.

⁷⁶⁴ The spice called “Musk-*Mor* מור” refers to the blood contained within a certain wild animal. Mishneh Torah of the Rambam, Hilchot Klei HaMikdash 1:3 (and 2:4 there); Also see Tur, Orach Chayim 216; Torah Ohr, Megillat Esther 99a; Likkutei Torah Naso 21a, 22d; Shir HaShirim 32a, and elsewhere. [The Rambam (Maimonides) explains that the spice called “Musk-*Mor* מור” refers to the blood contained within a wild animal from India, that is of universal renown and is used by peoples everywhere for fragrance. This refers to the secretion of the abdominal gland of the male musk deer, an animal that roams the mountains of Nepal and Tibet. The secretion is reddish-brown, with a honeylike consistency and a strong fragrance. After the gland is cut open, the secretion hardens, assuming a blackish-brown color, and when dried, it becomes granular. The Ra’avad objects to the Rambam’s definition, stating that it is improper for the blood of an animal, and certainly of a non-kosher animal, to be used in the Sanctuary. Instead, he interprets the term “*Mor* מור” as referring to the fragrant herb Myrrh. The Kesef Mishneh, however, supports the Rambam’s view, and explains that the loathsome quality one would associate with the blood of an animal, departs from it when the secretion dries up and becomes granular. Also see the commentary of Ramban (Nachmanides) to Exodus 30:23 where he discusses both positions.]

being the matter of refining the three completely impure husks (*Kelipot*).⁷⁶⁵ This is why the incense (*Ketoret*) reaches higher than even the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*), (for, as explained before, the two are inter-dependent one upon the other).⁷⁶⁶

This is why the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*) are called “eating” (*Achilah*), as the verse states,⁷⁶⁷ “My offering, **My food** (*Lachmee*-לחמי) for My fires,” whereas the incense (*Ketoret*) is (**only**) a scent (*Rei'ach*-ריח). This is because scent is higher than eating, in that it reaches the soul.⁷⁶⁸ This same is so Above, as explained in various places.

The superiority of scent over eating is also understood from the fact that eating is done with the mouth, which is the gateway to the externality of the brains (*Chitzoniyyut HaMochin*), whereas scent is with the nose, which is the gateway to the inner aspect of the brains (*Pnimiyyut HaMochin*).⁷⁶⁹

⁷⁶⁵ As stated in the discourse entitled “*v'Hoo K'Chatan*” 5657, Ch. 15 (also see Ohr HaTorah, Toldot ibid.)

⁷⁶⁶ For, since the arousal of the feminine waters (*Ha'ala'at Mayin Nukvin*) within it, is from the three completely impure husks (*Kelipot*) that are lower than Nogah, it affects a drawing down from the aspect of the eight Mazal “*v'Notzer*-נוצר.” This is similar to what is explained in Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 28, in regard to the matter of the superiority of the Red Heifer (*Parah Adumah*), over and above the sacrifices (*Korbanot*). This is also the relationship between the afternoon prayer, Minchah, (the arousal of the feminine waters (*Mayim Nukvin*) to the eighth Mazal, as mentioned before) and the incense (*Ketoret*). See Ohr HaTorah, Vayishlach 235b.

⁷⁶⁷ Numbers 28:2

⁷⁶⁸ This is as in the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory (Talmud Bavli, Brachot 43b), that fragrance is something that **the soul** derives benefit from. This refers to the aspect of the essence of the soul which transcends manifestation in the body. (See the discourse entitled “*v'Hoo k'Chatan*” [ibid.], end of Ch. 11; Also see Shaarei Orah [of the Mittler Rebbe], discourse entitled “*b'Khaf Hei b'Kislev*,” Ch. 13 and Ch. 25.)

⁷⁶⁹ See *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 1, p. 448 and on; Discourse entitled “*v'Heinif Yado*” 5711 and “*Vayomer Lo Yehonatan*” 5711 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5711, p. 58 and on, p. 66 [translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe 5711, Discourse 7 &

Now, although it is true that about the sacrifices (*Korbanot*) the verse also states,⁷⁷⁰ “My satisfying aroma (*Rei’ach*-ריח),” [for since the general matter of the sacrifices (*Korbanot*) also is the ascent of the feminine waters (*Ha’ala’at Mayim Nukvin*) and they too are called a “tribute-*Minchah*-מנחה,” they therefore [also] have the matter of scent (*Rei’ach*-ריח)],⁷⁷¹ nonetheless, within scent (*Re’iach*-ריח) itself, there are various levels.

That is, there is the aroma (*Re’iach*-ריח) of the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*),⁷⁷² there is the scent (*Re’iach*-ריח) of the incense (*Ketoret*) (of the entire year, which was in the Sanctuary (*Heichal*)), which relates to the right nostril of the nose, and there is the scent (*Re’iach*-ריח) of the incense (*Ketoret*) (of Yom HaKippurim in the Holy of Holies), which relates to the left nostril.⁷⁷³

Discourse 8]); Discourse entitled “*v’Hayah BaYom HaHoo*” 5722 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5722 p. 229 [translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe 5722 Vol. 2, Discourse 27])).

⁷⁷⁰ Numbers 28:2

⁷⁷¹ It can be suggested that this is the meaning of what they stated in Tractate Brachot *ibid.*, “**Even so** of the evening (*Arvit*) prayer,” and “**Even so** of the morning (*Shacharit*) prayer,” (even though they are derived from a different verse), since they too (generally) possess the elevated quality of “scent” (*Re’iach*-ריח) (of the afternoon *Minchah* prayer). This is as mentioned before that all the prayers are called a “tribute-*Minchah*-מנחה.”

⁷⁷² See Ateret Rosh and Shaarei Orah, in the discourse entitled “*b’Khaf Hei b’Kislev*,” and in the discourse entitled “*v’Hoo k’Chatan*” Ch. 11, that the aroma of the sacrifices (*Korbanot*) is similar to the aroma of food.

⁷⁷³ See Zohar III 130b, “From one nostril is life, and from one nostril is the life of life.” In regard to what is stated above, see at length in the discourse entitled “*VaYarach HaShem*” and the discourses following it of the year 5674 (*Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 1, p. 436 and on). There it explains that the aroma of food strengthens the vitality of the soul (the encompassing light (*Ohr Makif*) which adds strengthening to the inner manifest light (*Ohr Pnimi*), which is the matter of self-restraint (*Itkafiya*)), whereas the scent of a perfume that restores the vitality and draws down new vitality (is the revelation of the encompassing light (*Ohr Makif*), either the *Chayah* or even

3.

This then, is the meaning of the verse, “He took from whatever came to his hand, as **a tribute** (*Minchah*-מנחה) to his brother Esav.” For, the matter of the offering (*Minchah*-מנחה) Yaakov sent to Esav was the ascent of the feminine waters (*Ha’ala’at Mayim Nukvin*) to the aspect of the world of Chaos-*Tohu*, (that is, to Esav as he is in his root). This is why this offering also included impure animals, (unlike the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*) of the world of Repair-*Tikkun*) which were specifically of pure animals).⁷⁷⁴

This is why it is called a “tribute-*Minchah*-מנחה,” being that it was like the superiority of the afternoon *Minchah* prayer, over and above the morning *Shacharit* prayer and the evening *Arvit* prayer, and like the superiority of the incense (*Ketoret*) over and above the sacrifices (*Korbanot*).

4.

Now, in this there is another matter. To preface, as known, the fact that Esav (the world of Chaos-*Tohu*) was the firstborn was only externally (*b’Chitzoniyut*), whereas

the *Yechidah*, and is the matter of self-transformation (*It’hapcha*)), which is in the desire of the heart (*Re’uta d’Leeba*) and (on Yom HaKippurim is) the matter of repentance (*Teshuvah*). Based on this we can seemingly state that, in general, the difference between the aroma of the sacrifices (*Korbanot*) (which also must go through the nose) and the scent of the incense (*Ketoret*), is that one is in the right nostril and one is in the left nostril. There is more discussion regarding the matter of scent (*Rei’ach*-ריח) in the discourse entitled “*v’Haricho*” 5562 (Maamarei Admor HaZaken Vol. 1 p. 62 and on).

⁷⁷⁴ Torah Ohr, Vayishlach 25a, 26a

internally (*b'Pnimityut*) Yaakov was the firstborn.⁷⁷⁵ With this in mind, we can explain the precise wording in Torah Ohr⁷⁷⁶ on the verse,⁷⁷⁷ “Then Yaakov sent angels before him,” – “Before him – **literally** (*Lefanav Mamash-לפניו ממש*) – to that which is higher in level than him etc., this being the primordial kings of the world of Chaos-*Tohu*.”

On a simple level, the intention of the Alter Rebbe words in stating, “Before him – literally (*Lefanav Mamash-לפניו ממש*),” is in praise, meaning that Yaakov did not send angels to the same level as himself, but he rather sent them “**before** him-*Lefanav-לפניו*,” to that which is higher than himself.

However, based on the known explanation of Rashi [on the words] “Yaakov sent angels,” – “**actual** angels-*Malachim Mamash-מלאכים ממש*,” in that Yaakov only sent the “somethingness-*Mamash-ממש*” of the angels to Esav, whereas the spirituality of the angels remained with Yaakov,⁷⁷⁸ the intention in the word “somethingness-*Mamash-ממש*” is to belittle. It thus is understood that when it states, “Before him – literally (*Lefanav Mamash-לפניו ממש*),” this too is in a way of belittlement. In other words, the fact that Esav (the world of Chaos-*Tohu*) is “before him,” meaning, higher than Yaakov, is only the “somethingness-*Mamash-ממש*” in the externality

⁷⁷⁵ Torat Chayim, Vayishlach 43d and on; Ohr HaTorah 231b and on; Kitzurim v’Ha’arot L’Tanya p. 49; Discourse entitled “*BaYom HaShemini Atzeret*” 5670.

⁷⁷⁶ Torah Ohr, Vayishlach 24c

⁷⁷⁷ Genesis 32:4

⁷⁷⁸ Sefer HaSichot 5703 p. 155 – in the name of the Rav, the Maggid of Mezhritch.

(*Chitzoniyyut*). However, internally (*b'Pnimityut*) Yaakov is much higher.

Now, through Yaakov, the master of the world of Repair-*Tikkun*, affecting the refinement of the sparks of the world of Chaos-*Tohu* that fell in the shattering of the vessels (*Shevirat HaKeilim*), he thereby not only drew from the aspect of Chaos-*Tohu* that precedes the world of Repair-*Tikkun*, but even from the aspect in which the world of Repair-*Tikkun* is much higher.⁷⁷⁹

Through this that he affected that “Esav ran to greet him and hugged him... and kissed him,”⁷⁸⁰ so that even now, as Esav is before refinement, and in a state and standing in which “it is a well-known rule that Esav hates Yaakov,”⁷⁸¹ nonetheless, Esav became nullified to Yaakov and “kissed him with his whole heart.”⁷⁸²

⁷⁷⁹ For, since the construct and destruction of the world of Chaos-*Tohu* was not accidental, Heaven forbid to think so, therefore, it is through the refinements (*Birurim*) that there is the fulfillment of the Supernal intent of the aspect of the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, who transcends both the world of Chaos-*Tohu* and the world of Repair-*Tikkun*, and the ascent is to there. (See the discourse entitled “*Tikoo*” 5667 toward the end.)

⁷⁸⁰ Genesis 33:4

⁷⁸¹ Sifri to Numbers (Beha'alotcha) 9:10 cited in Rashi to Genesis 33:4

⁷⁸² Sifri and Rashi *ibid*.