

Discourse 19

*“Vayikra Yaakov... -
Then Yaakov called for his sons...”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Vayechi,
14th of Tevet, 5725
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,⁹²⁸ “Then Yaakov called for his sons and said, ‘Gather together and I will tell you what will befall you in the end of days.’” Our sages, of blessed memory, explained,⁹²⁹ “Yaakov wished to revealed to his sons [when the complete redemption would arrive] at the end of days, but the *Shechinah* departed from him.” This likewise is Rashi’s explanation, [that in addition to what he states at the beginning of the Torah portion, “Why is this section closed...? Because he desired to reveal to his sons the date of the end of days, but [the vision] was closed from him,” which here is mentioned incidentally, he adds in explanation in greater detail in its more primary place, in explanation of the words “I will tell you,”] stating, “Yaakov wished to revealed the time of the conclusion

⁹²⁸ Genesis 49:1

⁹²⁹ Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 56a; See Midrash Bereishit Rabba 98b; Zohar I (Vayechi) 234b

of the exile, but the *Shechinah* withdrew from him, and he began to speak of other things.⁹³⁰

Now, it can be said that this matter (that Yaakov desired to reveal the time of the conclusion of the exile) is derived from the verse's specific use of the word "telling-*Haggadah*-הגדה" ("I will tell you-*Agidah Lachem*-לכם-אגידה").

2.

Now, we will preface with the explanation in one of the booklets [of manuscripts] that recently was freed from captivity, (and it appears that it is upon this discourse that the Rebbe Maharash's discourse entitled "*Nachamu*"⁹³¹ is based), that in the matter of speech (*Dibur*), three terms are used, "speech-*Dibur*-דבור," "saying-*Amirah*-אמירה," and "telling-*Haggadah*-הגדה."⁹³²

The Zohar⁹³³ states that the general principle is that wherever the word "telling-*Haggadah*-הגדה" is used, it is "words of wisdom." [To further explain, the word "telling-*Haggadah*-הגדה" also means "to draw down," as in the verse,⁹³⁴ "A river of fire was drawn forth (*Nageid*-נגד) etc.," indicating the matter being drawn forth from its root and source. Thus, this is the meaning of [the principle] that wherever the word

⁹³⁰ The particular variations and differences between Rashi's explanation and the words of the Talmud are explained in the Sichot (Likkutei Sichot Vol. 18, p. 167 and on).

⁹³¹ Of the year 5626 (printed in Sefer HaMaamarim 5626 p. 195 and on); Also see the discourse entitled "*Meihechan Zachu*" 5627 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5627 p. 383 and on); *Hemshech* "*Matzah Zu*" 5640 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5640, Vol. 1, p. 255).

⁹³² Also see Likkutei Levi Yitzchak, Igrot Kodesh p. 343.

⁹³³ Zohar I (Vayechi) 249a; Zohar III 50b; 161a; See Ohr HaTorah ibid. 383a

⁹³⁴ Daniel 7:10

“telling-*Haggadah*-הגדה” is used, it is “words of wisdom,” thus indicating the drawing forth of Wisdom-*Chochmah* from its root and source etc. This is likewise the meaning of the verse,⁹³⁵ “From the beginning I foretell (*Magid*-מגיד) the outcome,” this being the matter of the drawing forth (“foretelling-*Magid*-מגיד”) from the aspect of Wisdom-*Chochmah* (“the beginning-*Reishit*-ראשית”) to the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut* (“the outcome-*Acharit*-אחרית”).]⁹³⁶

Proof for this is from Yaakov, who said to his sons, “I will tell (*Agidah*-אגידה) you etc.,” about which our sages, of blessed memory, stated, “He wished to revealed to his sons [when the complete redemption would arrive] at the end of days,” and the word “telling-*Haggadah*-הגדה” is used, and the word “telling-*Haggadah*-הגדה” indicates words of wisdom-*Chochmah*.

Now, in Zohar they stated⁹³⁷ that the reason it specifically is the word “telling-*Haggadah*-הגדה” that indicates words of Wisdom-*Chochmah*, is because the word “I will tell-*Agidah*-אגידה” has the letters *Gimmel*-גימ"ל and *Dalet*-דל"ת, which mean, “give to the poor-*Gomel Dalim*-גומל דלים,” thus indicating a bestowal. This is why [the phrase] “acts of kindness-*Gemilut Chassadim*-חסדיות” begins with the letter *Gimmel*-ג, since it indicates the matter of bestowal. Likewise, the term “redemption-*Ge'ulah*-גאולה,” which also is an aspect of bestowal, begins with the letter *Gimmel*-ג. Additionally, the verse states,⁹³⁸ “*HaShem*’s-יהו"ה kindnesses...

⁹³⁵ Isaiah 46:10

⁹³⁶ Ohr HaTorah ibid.

⁹³⁷ Zohar I (Vayechi) ibid.

⁹³⁸ Isaiah 63:7

with all that *HaShem*-יהו"ה has bestowed upon us (*Gemalanu*-גמלנו etc.), indicating that the *Gimmel*-ג is the aspect of bestowal.

[On the other hand] the letter *Dalet*-דל"ת is the matter of the recipient. This is why Dovid said,⁹³⁹ "I was impoverished (*Dalotee*-דלוחי), but He saved me," and as the verse states,⁹⁴⁰ "For I am poor and destitute." For, the moon (which is the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut* - the level of Dovid), "has nothing of her own."⁹⁴¹

Now, the *Yod*-י of the word "I will tell-*Agidah*-אגידה" is the aspect of the Foundation-*Yesod* of the bestower etc. This is why the word "I will tell-*Agidah*-אגידה" indicates words of Wisdom-*Chochmah*, and this is the meaning of Yaakov stating, "I will tell-*Agidah*-אגידה you," indicating words of Wisdom-*Chochmah*.

He continues to explain that there are words of "Aggadah-אגדה" in the Torah, which are the greatest words of Wisdom-*Chochmah*. That is, they are the inner aspect (*Pnimiyyut*) of the Torah (up to the secrets of the secrets [of the Torah], which are the aspect of the Concealed of the most concealed (*Steema d'Kol Steemeen*)). About this our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁹⁴² "Do you want to recognize the One who spoke and brought the world into being? Learn *Haggadah*-הגדה. For, if you do so, you will come to recognize the Holy

⁹³⁹ Psalms 116:6

⁹⁴⁰ Psalms 109:22

⁹⁴¹ Zohar I 181a; See Sefer HaMitzvot of the Tzemach Tzeddek, Mitzvat Minuy Melech, Ch. 2.

⁹⁴² Sifri Eikev 11:22; Hilchot Talmud Torah of the Alter Rebbe 2:2; Ramban, Minyan HaMitzvot, section 7; Also see Chinuch, Parshat Eikev 434; Avot d'Rabbi Nathan, Ch. 29; Shulchan Aruch of the Alter Rebbe, 156:4.

One, blessed is He etc.” In other words, “telling-*Haggadah*-הגדה” is the inner aspect (*Pnimiyut*) of the Torah.⁹⁴³

The explanation is that amongst the differences between “speech-*Dibur*-דבור,” “saying-*Amirah*-אמירה,” and “telling-*Haggadah*-הגדה,” is that “speech-*Dibur*-דבור” and “saying-*Amirah*-אמירה” can possibly come from the externality of the soul. This is because speech (*Dibur*), which is with the mouth, can be in such a way that “he says one thing with his mouth and [thinks] another [thing] in his heart.”⁹⁴⁴

Even “saying-*Amirah*-אמירה,” which takes place in the heart, can be in a way that is the opposite of the innerness (*Pnimiyut*) of one’s soul, meaning, the opposite of his true desire. [This is as Rambam⁹⁴⁵ explains, that the law that, “they [the court] compel him by force, until he says ‘I want it,’” is because, though his [evil] inclination has overcome him (which is why he wants the sin and lusts for it), nonetheless, since the true inner (*Pnimiyut*) desire of the soul of every single Jew [in his inner self] is to act according to *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Supernal will, blessed is He, therefore through forcing him, they nullify the dominance [of his evil inclination over him] and the [negative] desire brought about by it, and he then does what he truly desires in the innerness (*Pnimiyut*) of his soul.

However, we clearly see that when he said “I do **not** want” (before being compelled by force) it is not in a way that “he says one thing with his mouth and another in his heart,” but rather, even in his heart he did not desire to do so. (For, as in

⁹⁴³ Also see Ohr HaTorah ibid. p. 383aa

⁹⁴⁴ Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 113b; Bava Metziya 49a

⁹⁴⁵ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Geirushin, Ch. 2

the words of our sages, of blessed memory,⁹⁴⁶ “The eye sees and the heart lusts.”) Rather, how it is, is that this “saying-*Amirah*-אמירה” comes from the externality (*Chitzoniyyut*) of the heart, whereas the inner aspect (*Pnimiyyut*) of the heart always wants to fulfill the will of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.]

In contrast, this is not so of “telling-*Haggadah*-הגדה,” which comes from the innerness (*Pnimiyyut*) of the heart. Thus, about this Zohar states that “telling-*Haggadah*-הגדה” is words of Wisdom-*Chochmah*. For, the substance matter of words of Wisdom-*Chochmah* – the inner aspect (*Pnimiyyut*) (and concealed aspect) of the Torah – is that they arise from and reveal the innerness (*Pnimiyyut*) (and concealed aspect) of the soul.⁹⁴⁷

The same is so of the matter of the Holy One, blessed is He, “telling-*Haggadah*-הגדה,” the meaning of which is the drawing forth of the inner aspect of the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, into revelation. This is as in the above-mentioned teaching of our sages, of blessed memory, that through the study of *Aggadah*-אגדה, (which is a term of “telling-*Haggadah*-הגדה”) “you will recognize the Holy One, blessed is He etc.” For, in the *Aggadah*-אגדה, (which is the inner aspect (*Pnimiyyut*) of the Torah) there is an illumination of the innerness (*Pnimiyyut*) (and the concealed aspect) of the Holy One, blessed is He.

With this in mind, we can understand that the word “I will tell-*Agidah*-אגידה” itself hints that Yaakov wanted “**to tell-*Lehageed*-להגיד**,” meaning, to reveal a more inner matter to his

⁹⁴⁶ Rashi to Numbers 15:39 and Ibn Ezra there

⁹⁴⁷ Likkutei Torah, Vayikra 5c

sons - “the end of days” (*Keitz HaYamin*) - the matter of which is the revelation of the most concealed and most inner – this being the revelation of the concealed aspect of the soul and the concealed aspect of the Holy One, blessed is He, through the concealed aspect of the Torah.

3.

However, all this is according to the vision of the eyes of Yaakov. That is, when he saw his sons as they were positioned in his world, he thought that (with certain preparations) they were fitting for him to reveal the end of days to them. [This is understood from the fact that even with regard to Esav, he thought that he already had completed his refinement,⁹⁴⁸ and he therefore thought that it already was possible for the [final] redemption to come about. It is for this reason that he said,⁹⁴⁹ “I have acquired... donkey (*Chamor*-חמור),” which “refers to King Moshiach.”]⁹⁵⁰ It is in this regard that he said to them, “Gather yourselves together and I will tell you.” That is, “when you gather (*Hei’asfu*-האספו)” (which includes the matter of gathering and refining the sparks),⁹⁵¹ and become unified, then “I will tell you (*Agidah*-אגידה)” (meaning, “I will reveal”) “to you” the end of the exile (“what will befall you in the end of days”).

⁹⁴⁸ Torah Ohr, beginning of Vayishlach.

⁹⁴⁹ Genesis 32:6

⁹⁵⁰ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 75:6; See Likkutei Sichot Vol. 1, p. 70 and on.

⁹⁵¹ See Ohr HaTorah, Vayechi p. 358; Biurei HaZohar of the Tzemach Tzedek, Vayechi p. 165.

However, because of the state and standing of Yaakov's sons themselves, they were unbefitting of this, being that their level was lower than Yaakov. This is as understood from the continuation of the above-mentioned teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,⁹⁵² that when the *Shechinah* departed from him he said, "Perhaps, Heaven forbid, one of my offspring is unfit etc.? His sons said to him, "Listen Israel, *HaShem* יהו"ה is our God, *HaShem* is One-*HaShem Echad* יהו"ה אחד,' thus saying, 'Just as in your heart there is only One, so likewise in our hearts, there is only One.'"

However, from the very fact that they said, "Just as... so likewise (*Kach* כך)," with the [prefix letter] *Khaf* כ which [only] indicates similarity (*Khaf HaDimyon*),⁹⁵³ it is understood that they were on a lower level than Yaakov.

With the above in mind, we can understand the specific wording of the Talmud,⁹⁵⁴ that "the *Shechinah* departed from him," (and not that the end of days was concealed from him⁹⁵⁵ or hidden from him).⁹⁵⁶ For, the term "*Shechinah* שכינה" is called such, in that it "dwells (*Shochenet* שוכנת) and manifests (*Mitlabeshet* מתלבשת),"⁹⁵⁷ indicating a drawing down to below. This is the meaning of "departed **from him**," (meaning, that which he desires to reveal at that time, this being the time of the

⁹⁵² Talmud Bavli, Pesachim ibid. See Midrash Bereishit Rabba 98c

⁹⁵³ See Torah Ohr, Tetzaveh 84d; Vayakhel 87c; Siddur Im Divrei Elohi'm Chayim, 168a-b; Discourse entitled "*Meiheichan Zachu Yisroel*" mentioned before (Sefer HaMaamarim 5627 p. 384).

⁹⁵⁴ Talmud Bavli, Pesachim [56a] ibid.

⁹⁵⁵ As per the language of Midrash Bereishit Rabba ibid.

⁹⁵⁶ As per the language of Rashi at the beginning of the Torah portion, where he brings this matter incidentally (as mentioned before in chapter one), for which reason it is not appropriate there to elucidate the particular details of the matter.

⁹⁵⁷ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 41 (57b)

conclusion of the exile to his sons),⁹⁵⁸ that is, the ability to cause this – the revelation of the end of the exile - to [be drawn down and] dwell (*Lehashkeen*-להשכיין) below [departed from him].

That is, in regard to Yaakov himself, His *Shechinah*, blessed is He, (which is the revelation of the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He), dwelt upon him even afterwards. (For, immediately after this, he told them various prophetic matters, for which the dwelling and presence of the *Shechinah* is necessary).

Moreover, even the end of the exile was not concealed from him.⁹⁵⁹ Rather, all that was withdrawn from him was “the *Shechinah*” (meaning, the matter of revelation to below) of the matter of the end of the exile (*Keitz*-קץ), this being the power to draw down the revelation of the end of the exile and cause it to dwell below.

Nonetheless, even so, our sages, of blessed memory, relate this about Yaakov [himself], in stating that “the *Shechinah* departed **from him**” (even though, at first glance, this matter only relates to the tribes, and therefore, the sages should instead have stated that his sons were not deserving of it⁹⁶⁰ or the like). Now, the reason [that they stated “from him”] is because the very fact that his sons were not worthy of the revelation of the end of the exile, caused a descent in him as well.

⁹⁵⁸ As this verse is elucidated in Torah Temimah.

⁹⁵⁹ This is further emphasized by the difference [between the text of the Talmud cited above and] the text of Bereishit Rabba [which states], “the end of the exile, but it was concealed from him.”

⁹⁶⁰ Similar to Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 11a

This is similar to what we find about our teacher Moshe, that the Holy One, blessed is He, told him,⁹⁶¹ “Go descend – (descend from your greatness), since it is only for the sake of the Jewish people that I have granted you greatness.” Thus, since the Jewish people are not as they should be, this also causes a descent in Moshe.

However, this descent of the departure of the *Shechinah* from him was only after he sought to reveal the time of the redemption to them, even though before this, they also were in a state and standing of being unbefitting of the revelation of the time of the redemption. The reason for this is because, when he was divested of any relation to or thought of their state and standing, their state and standing did not have any bearing or effect on him. It only was when he sought to reveal the time of the redemption to them, that he then came to have relation and bond with them, and thus, their state also had an effect on him, causing the *Shechinah* to depart from him.

This is similar to what we find about our teacher Moshe, that upon his ascending the mountain he was divested of all matters below, and had no bond with the world and its matters. This is why the matter of the golden calf had no effect on him or his level, even though he knew about it, by hearing about it from the Holy One, blessed is He,⁹⁶² who informed him that “they have made themselves a molten calf etc.”⁹⁶³ However,

⁹⁶¹ Exodus 32:7; Talmud Bavli, Brachot 32a and Rashi to Exodus there.

⁹⁶² For, even gazing through an unclear lens is not comparable whatsoever to gazing through a clear lens (Vayikra Rabba 1:14) and how much more so through hearing. This is similar to the superior quality of the prophet over and above the wise sage (see Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 19, and elsewhere).

⁹⁶³ Exodus 32:8

upon his descent from the mountain, and afterwards, upon seeing the calf, the matter then affected him, to the point that “his hands became heavy,”⁹⁶⁴ and,⁹⁶⁵ “Moshe’s anger flared, and he threw down the tablets from his hands.”⁹⁶⁶

4.

However, since the matter of “Gather yourselves together and I will tell you etc.,” was written in the Torah (which was given to all of the Jewish people), it is understood that Yaakov’s desire to reveal the end of the exile also had its effect below, to the point that it is a matter of Torah ([which is a term of “instruction-*Hora’ah* הוראה)] which is eternal. In any event, this is understood from the fact that the requests of the righteous *Tzaddikim* never return emptyhanded.⁹⁶⁷

This may be better understood from what we find about our teacher Moshe. (In that Moshe and Yaakov are one and the same matter, except that “Yaakov is outside and Moshe is inside.”)⁹⁶⁸ That is, through his prayer,⁹⁶⁹ “I implored *HaShem*-

⁹⁶⁴ Talmud Yerushalmi, Taanit 4:5

⁹⁶⁵ Exodus 32:19

⁹⁶⁶ It can be said that this is similarly so of the matter of “Go descend – from your greatness,” that the descent from his greatness in actuality (for which reason his hands became heavy etc.) was after the descent from the mountain. (Based on this the word “go-*Leich*-לך” (descend) is made sweeter, in that the “descend-*Reid*-רד” only occurred after his “going” (from the level he was on while) on the mountain. This also sweetens the alignment of this teaching with the simple meaning of the verse, that the intention is to his descent of the [actual] mountain.)

⁹⁶⁷ Zohar I 43a

⁹⁶⁸ Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 13 (29a), explained in Likkutei Torah, Pinchas, in the (second) discourse entitled “*Tzav et Bnei Yisroel*,” Ch. 4. [Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 35.]

⁹⁶⁹ Deuteronomy 3:23-25

יהו"ה... Let me now cross [the river Jordan] and see the good Land etc.,” he thereby caused the matter of the sight of *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Godliness within the Jewish people to be. That is, even though he himself did not enter the Land, nevertheless, he affected a drawing down of the sight in the Jewish people in a transcendent encompassing way (*Makif*) (so that in an inner manifest way (*b’Pnimityut*) they [at least] had the aspect of hearing (*Shmiyah*-שמיעה). This is as the verse continues,⁹⁷⁰ “Now, Israel, listen (*Shma*-שמע) to the decrees etc.” However, in an encompassing and transcendent way (*Makif*) he also drew the aspect of sight (*Re’iyah*-ראיה) to them.)⁹⁷¹

The same is so of Yaakov (before his passing),⁹⁷² that even though the *Shechinah* departed from him, which is why he then said,⁹⁷³ “Gather yourselves and listen (*Sheemoo*-שמעו), O’ sons of Yaakov,” nevertheless, through his saying, “Gather yourselves together and I will tell you (*Agidah*-אגידה),” he empowered his sons (and their children after them, until the end of days) that through their service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, they would reach the revelation of the end of the exile in a transcendent way (*Makif*) (serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way of freedom⁹⁷⁴ from the nations of the world and the evil inclination).

⁹⁷⁰ Deuteronomy 4:1

⁹⁷¹ Likkutei Torah, beginning of Va’etchanan; Ohr HaTorah there; Also see Shaarei Teshuvah (of the Mittler Rebbe), Vol. 2, discourse entitled “*Lehavin HaHefresh Bein Tefilah L’Torah*.”

⁹⁷² Similar to the drawing forth affected by Moshe, which was close to his passing, specifically, (see Ohr HaTorah ibid. p. 78).

⁹⁷³ Genesis 49:2

⁹⁷⁴ As explained in another manner, see the letter of the daughter of the Alter Rebbe [to the Mittler Rebbe] (printed in Sefer Chochmei Yisroel Baal Shem Tov, p. 61).

It can be said that this is the meaning of what Rashi wrote, that “he began to speak of other things,” which is a matter that comes in continuation to the fact that he desired to reveal the time of the redemption. In other words,⁹⁷⁵ that which he desired to revealed, he manifested within the “other things,” with the words, “Gather yourselves and listen (*Sheemoo*-שמעו) etc.,” through which they would thereby come to the revelation of the time of the redemption.⁹⁷⁶

⁹⁷⁵ Also see Zohar I (Vayechi) 235a

⁹⁷⁶ It is with this in mind that we can also explain why the Torah portion is open (even though the beginning of the Torah portion is closed, due to the fact that “he desired to reveal the time of the redemption but it was closed from him,”) because through this Torah portion he did indeed draw down the time of the redemption to below (in a transcendent encompassing (*Makif*) manner, at the very least).