

Discourse 43

*“Lo Tacharosh b'Shor u'vChamor Yachdav -
You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Ki Teitzei,

11th of Elul, 5727

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

1.

The verse states,¹³⁵⁸ “You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.” The Rebbe Maharash (in his discourse by this title of the year 5627)¹³⁵⁹ brings several explanations on this verse. The first explanation is based on the statement in Midrash,¹³⁶⁰ “When Chamor came to request Dinah of Yaakov, he said to him, ‘I know that her grandfather Avraham was a prince, but I too am a prince.’ Yaakov replied, ‘He was not called a prince (*Nasi*-נשיא) but an ox (*Shor*-שור), as the verse states,¹³⁶¹ ‘Avraham ran to the oxen,’ and it is written,¹³⁶² ‘Many crops come through the power of the ox.’ You, however, are a donkey (*Chamor*-חמור) and an ox and a donkey cannot plow together.”

¹³⁵⁸ Deuteronomy 22:10

¹³⁵⁹ Sefer HaMaamarim 5627 p. 398 and on.

¹³⁶⁰ Midrash Tanchuma Vayishlach 7, brought in Yalkut Reuveni Katan, section on “*Nesiyut*.”

¹³⁶¹ Genesis 18:7

¹³⁶² Proverbs 14:4

In other words, the matter of the ox (*Shor*-שור) is in the aspect of holiness and is the aspect of Kindness-*Chessed* of Might-*Gevurah*.¹³⁶³ In contrast, the donkey (*Chamor*-חמור) is the external husk (*Kelipah*) that opposes the right [side], and is the dross of the powers of Kindness-*Chassadim*.¹³⁶⁴ This is why Chamor wanted to adhere to Dinah. The prohibition, “You shall not plow with an ox and donkey together,” is the matter of distancing the external husk (*Kelipah*) of the donkey (*Chamor*-חמור) so that it will not receive from the aspect of holiness.

In the discourse he explains that this is why the sons of Yaakov told Chamor that he should circumcise himself, for through circumcising the foreskin, the external husk (*Kelipah*) is removed, and it then is possible to adhere to the powers of Kindness-*Chassadim*.

In the continuation of the discourse¹³⁶⁵ he explains that the sons of Yaakov deceived him (for as known,¹³⁶⁶ the refinement of the external husks (*Kelipah*) is through deception etc.) in that they promised the essential matter to him, but made it conditional on him circumcising himself. However, he did not know that when he would circumcise himself, through the removal of the foreskin the external husk (*Kelipah*) is separated from holiness, and he thus would not adhere to Dinah.

The second explanation is that both the ox (*Shor*-שור) and the donkey (*Chamor*-חמור) are external husks (*Kelipot*).¹³⁶⁷

¹³⁶³ Me'orei Ohr, Ot Shin 19.

¹³⁶⁴ See Me'orei Ohr, Ot Chet 88

¹³⁶⁵ Sefer HaMaamarim *ibid.* p. 403

¹³⁶⁶ See Pirush HaMilot of the Mittler Rebbe 22c-d; Torat Chayim, end of Parshat Toldot; Ohr HaTorah, Matot p. 1,343; Sefer HaMaamarim 5633 Vol. 1 p. 44 and on; 5668 p. 57 and on.

¹³⁶⁷ Also see Ohr HaTorah, Na"Ch Vol. 2 p. 758

That is, the matter of the ox (*Shor*-שור) is also present in the external husks (*Kelipot*). (For, just as on the side of holiness there is the aspect of the ox (*Shor*-שור), “the face of the ox to the left,”¹³⁶⁸ so likewise on the side opposite holiness, there also is the aspect of the ox (*Shor*-שור).) This is the aspect of *Might-Gevurah* of the external husks (*Kelipah*). In contrast, the donkey (*Chamor*-חמור) is the aspect of *Kindness-Chessed* of the external husks (*Kelipah*) (as mentioned above). These are the opposites of love and fear that stem from *Kindness-Chessed* and *Might-Gevurah* of holiness.

The commandment, “You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together,” is that there should not be a union of these two external husks (*Kelipot*). For, through the union of these two external husks (*Kelipot*) “a dog comes out from between them,”¹³⁶⁹ this being Amalek,¹³⁷⁰ who we are commanded to obliterate etc., (as stated at the end of this week’s Torah portion).¹³⁷¹

This is also why the middle letters of the word “donkey-*Chamor*-חמור,” which are the letters *Mem-Vav*-מ"ו-46, and the middle letter of “ox-*Shor*-שור,” which is the letter *Vav*-ו-6, total כ"ב-52 which is the same numerical value of the word “dog-*Kelev*-כלב-52.”¹³⁷² The first letters (*Roshei Teivot*) of the words “donkey-*Chamor*-חמור,” “ox-*Shor*-שור” and “dog-*Kelev*-כלב” are the word “darkness-*Choshech*-חשך,”¹³⁷³ which is the

¹³⁶⁸ Ezekiel 1:10

¹³⁶⁹ Zohar II 65a

¹³⁷⁰ Zohar II 65a *ibid.*

¹³⁷¹ Deuteronomy 25:19

¹³⁷² Hagahot HaRav Chayim Vital and Mikdash Melech to Zohar II *ibid.*

¹³⁷³ Mikdash Melech *ibid.*; Me’orei Ohr, Ot Chet 61

opposite of light (*Ohr*-אור) and indicates the external husks (*Kelipot*).

In the discourse he explains¹³⁷⁴ that because Avraham begot Yishmael before being circumcised, Yishmael being the aspect of the external husk (*Kelipah*) of the donkey (*Chamor*-חמור), the sons of Yaakov therefore told Chamor and his son Shechem that they should circumcise themselves, thereby refining the external husk of the donkey (*Chamor*-חמור). It is in this regard that the sons of Yaakov said that an ox and a donkey cannot plow together, but “only on this condition will we acquiesce to you: if you become circumcised like us.”¹³⁷⁵ For, through the removal of the foreskin (*Orlah*) they remove the external husk (*Kelipah*) of the donkey (*Chamor*-חמור) from them.

2.

The explanation of the matter as it relates to our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is that our sages, of blessed memory, stated in Talmud,¹³⁷⁶ “In all my days I never called my ox, ‘my ox-*Shoree*-שורי,’ but only called my ox, ‘my field-*Sadee*-שדי.’” Rashi explains that, “this is because it is the primary [force] in the field, as the verse states, ‘Many crops come through the power of the ox.’”

The explanation is that the ox (*Shor*-שור) refers to the animalistic soul, which is rooted in the aspect of “the face of the

¹³⁷⁴ Sefer HaMaamarim ibid. p. 404

¹³⁷⁵ See Genesis 34:14s

¹³⁷⁶ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 118b

ox to the left.” It is called a “field-*Sadeh*-שדה” because the Godly soul is sown within it and is analogous to the seed that is sown in the field. (This is as known¹³⁷⁷ about the explanation of the verse,¹³⁷⁸ “[Days] are coming when Yaakov will take root, Yisroel will bud and blossom.”)

However, for there to be the sowing and sprouting, there first must be the plowing (this being the primary work of the ox in the field) in the animalistic soul. About this our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹³⁷⁹ “One should always incite his good inclination against his evil inclination.” This is why the plowing is through the ox (*Shor*-שור), the aspect of “the face of the ox on the left,” from where there is a drawing down of “the left pushes away,”¹³⁸⁰ to humble himself etc., as it states,¹³⁸¹ “His left hand was under my head.” This is like plowing, the matter of which is to break the hardness of the earth into small parts. Similarly, it first is necessary to break one’s body and animalistic soul, which is the matter of the field (*Sadeh*-שדה), as mentioned above.

In addition, there also is the matter of the field (*Sadeh*-שדה) as it refers to the Godly soul.¹³⁸² (As known, the ingathering of the souls of Israel (*Knesset Yisroel*) is called “a desirable land.”)¹³⁸³ That is, the matter of nullification (*Bittul*) must be affected in it as well etc.

¹³⁷⁷ See Torah Ohr, Shemot 53c and on.

¹³⁷⁸ Isaiah 27:6

¹³⁷⁹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 5a

¹³⁸⁰ See Talmud Bavli, Sotah 47a

¹³⁸¹ Song of Songs 2:6

¹³⁸² See at length in Sefer HaMaamarim 5627 *ibid.* (p. 401 and on); Also see Ohr HaTorah, Na”Ch Vol. 1 p. 599.

¹³⁸³ Malachi 3:12; See Keter Shem Tov (5764), Hosafot Section 57.

Now, all the above is in regard to the aspect of the ox (*Shor*-שׁוֹר), which relates to the general matter of toiling in service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, on the side of holiness etc. However, the aspect of the donkey (*Chamor*-חֲמוֹר) indicates the external husks (*Kelipah*). This is because a donkey (*Chamor*-חֲמוֹר) is an impure animal (unlike the ox (*Shor*-שׁוֹר) which is a pure animal), and it has a cold nature. This is as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹³⁸⁴ “A donkey is cold even in the season of Tammuz” (unlike an ox which has the strength and dominance of vitality etc.) and coldness is the opposite of holiness, the matter of which is vitality (*Chayut*).¹³⁸⁵

Now, all the above is according to the first explanation, that the matter of the prohibition “you shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together” is to distance the external husk of the donkey (*Chamor*-חֲמוֹר) so that it will not receive from holiness. That is, the aspect of the ox (*Shor*-שׁוֹר) relates to the general matter of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, on the side of holiness, such that through it the refinement and purification of the external husk of the donkey (*Chamor*-חֲמוֹר) etc., is also caused.

However, according to the second explanation, that the command “you shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together” is that there should not be a union of the two external husks (*Kelipot*) of the ox (*Shor*-שׁוֹר) and the donkey (*Chamor*-חֲמוֹר), these being Kindness-*Chessed* and Might-*Gevurah* of the external husks (*Kelipah*), in which even the ox (*Shor*-שׁוֹר) is indicative of the external husks (*Kelipah*).

¹³⁸⁴ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 53a; See Likkutei Torah, Shemini Atzeret 87c

¹³⁸⁵ Also see Likkutei Dibburim Vol. 4, p. 789b and on.

This is the aspect of the “forewarned ox” (*Shor Mu’ad*-שור מועד) from which one must distance himself beyond its eye sight.¹³⁸⁶ This is because it is an ox that gores, whose intention is [only] to cause damage, even though it derives no benefit by causing the damage,¹³⁸⁷ meaning that it does not do so for any benefit, but is destructive in the very essence of its being.

To explain, this matter does not apply to the nature of a Jew as he is in and of himself, except that it nonetheless is possible for him to accustom himself to this, Heaven forbid, until he comes to the aspect of a “forewarned ox” (*Shor Mu’ad*-שור מועד). It therefore is necessary to affect his refinement and purification etc.

This is also connected to Amalek, the dog (*Kelev*-כלב) that emerges from the union of the two external husks (*Kelipot*), the ox (*Shor*-שור) and the donkey (*Chamor*-חמור), these being Kindness-*Chessed* and Might-*Gevurah* of the external husks (*Kelipah*) (as mentioned above). This is because in the external husk of Amalek there also are these two matters. For, even though the matter of Amalek is [as the verse states],¹³⁸⁸ “He happened upon you (*Asher Karcha*-אשר קרך),” this being the matter of “coldness-*Kerirut*-קרירות,”¹³⁸⁹ nevertheless, the act of Amalek in affecting this (in that out of all the other nations who feared to wage war against the Jewish people, it is he who came to wage war against the Jewish people),¹³⁹⁰ is because of the dominance of vitality [and determination] not be moved and

¹³⁸⁶ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 33a

¹³⁸⁷ Talmud Bavli, Bava Kamma 3b and on

¹³⁸⁸ Deuteronomy 25:18

¹³⁸⁹ Rashi to Deuteronomy 25:18 *ibid.*; Sefer HaMaamarim 5679 p. 294.

¹³⁹⁰ Rashi *ibid.*

roused etc., which itself is a matter of passion and heat (*Chamimut*-חמימות) etc.

3.

This then, is the matter of Avraham, who is called an “ox” (*Shor*-שור) (as mentioned above). That is, not only is it that through him the toil of the aspect of the ox (*Shor*-שור) of the side of holiness is caused, but beyond this, through him the refinement of the aspect of the ox (*Shor*-שור) of the external husks (*Kelipah*) is also caused, to the point of refining the aspect of the donkey (*Chamor*-חמור) of the external husks (*Kelipah*), until it is transformed to be the aspect [indicated by the verse],¹³⁹¹ “Yissachar is a strong boned donkey etc.”

This matter comes about through circumcision. This is why before being circumcised Avraham’s name was Avram-אברם, which equals 243-רמג, the numerical value of “strong-boned-*Garem*-גרם-243,” and through the circumcision the letter *Hey*-ה was added to his name, equaling 248-רמ"ה,¹³⁹² which is the numerical value of the word “donkey-*Chamor*-חמר-248” minus the letter *Vav*-ו. This also is the meaning of Yaakov’s statement,¹³⁹³ “I have acquired oxen and donkeys,” in that he was born circumcised,¹³⁹⁴ and therefore refined both these external husks (*Kelipot*).

¹³⁹¹ Genesis 49:14

¹³⁹² See Talmud Bavli, Nedarim 32b

¹³⁹³ Genesis 32:5

¹³⁹⁴ Midrash Tanchuma Bereishit 5

Now, we can connect all the above to the month of Elul. For, as explained before (in chapter two) the matter of plowing is through the ox (*Shor*-שׁוֹר), “the face of the ox to the left,” from which there is a drawing down of “the left pushes away,” to humble himself etc., as the verse states, “His left hand was under my head.”

As known, on Rosh HaShanah there begins to be the aspect of “His left hand was under my head (*L'Roshi*-לְרֹאשִׁי).” This is because from Rosh HaShanah until Yom HaKippurim is the aspect of the left, in that there then is a drawing down and revelation from Above of the aspect of fear (*Yirah*) etc.¹³⁹⁵

This also relates to the month of Elul, as hinted in the word, “my head-*L'Roshi*-לְרֹאשִׁי.” That is, the letter *Lamed*-ל-30 hints at the thirty days of Elul, and “my head-*Roshi*-רֹאשִׁי” refers to “the head of the year-Rosh HaShanah-הַשָּׁנָה.” Even the second verse that states,¹³⁹⁶ “His left hand was under my head (*Roshi*-רֹאשִׁי),” (without the *Lamed*-ל-), is divided into “*Rosh Yod*-יֹדֶה,” in which “head-*Rosh*-רֹאשׁ” refers to Rosh HaShanah, and the *Yod*-י-10 refers to the ten days of repentance.

That is, the drawing down from Above, (“My Beloved is to me”) on Rosh HaShanah and the ten days of repentance, comes about through the toil from below to Above (“I am to my Beloved”) during the month of Elul. This is why, “My Beloved is to me-*v'Dodee Lee*-וְדוּדִי לִי” is included in the acronym of Elul-אֵלּוּל. The final letters of [the words], “I am to my Beloved

¹³⁹⁵ Likkutei Torah, Re'eh 32a

¹³⁹⁶ Song of Songs 8:3

and my Beloved is to me-*Ani LeDodee v'Dodee Lee*-אני לדודי ודודי לי are four letters *Yod*-י-10,¹³⁹⁷ corresponding to the forty days from Rosh Chodesh Elul until Yom HaKippurim.¹³⁹⁸

Additionally, the matter of the circumcision (through which we refine the external husks of the ox (*Shor*) and donkey (*Chamor*)) is connected with the month of Elul. This is because one of the acronyms (*Roshei Teivot*) that hints at the month of Elul is the verse,¹³⁹⁹ “יהו"ה-*HaShem* your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring-*et Levavecha v'et Levav Zarecha*-זרעך ואת לבבך ואת לבבך,”¹⁴⁰⁰ which is the matter of circumcision (*Milah*-מילה). In this itself, it does not refer only to the removal of the coarse foreskin (*Orlah*), (about which it states,¹⁴⁰¹ “**You** shall circumcise the foreskin (*Orlah*) of your heart,” meaning, you yourselves, this being the matter of repentance (*Teshuvah*)),¹⁴⁰² but it also refers to the removal of the refined husk (*Kelipah Dakah*) (about which it states, “יהו"ה-*HaShem* your God will circumcise your heart,” being that this is something difficult for man to do).¹⁴⁰³

The general matter of the circumcision (*Milah*-מילה) of the month of Elul is that of revelation (in that the word “*Mal-*מל” is a word that indicates “revelation”)¹⁴⁰⁴ and a granting of empowerment from Above (similar to what is stated in this

¹³⁹⁷ Avudraham Seder Tefillat Rosh HaShanah uPirushah, Ch. 1; Reishit Chochmah, Shaar HaTeshuvah, Ch. 4 (section beginning “*Od Yeish*”); Bayit Chadash (Ba”Ch) to Orach Chayim 581 (section beginning “*v’He’eveeroo*”).

¹³⁹⁸ Avudraham, Reishit Chochmah, and Bayit Chadash *ibid*.

¹³⁹⁹ Deuteronomy 30:6

¹⁴⁰⁰ Baal HaTurim to Deuteronomy 30:6; Avudraham and Ba”Ch *ibid*.

¹⁴⁰¹ Deuteronomy 10:16

¹⁴⁰² Torah Ohr, Lech Lecha 13b

¹⁴⁰³ See Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 4

¹⁴⁰⁴ Torah Ohr *ibid*. 12b

week's Torah portion, "When you will go out to war... and *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God will deliver him into your hand etc.," this being the matter of the granting of empowerment from Above) for the general toil of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, during the month of Elul, in a way of "I am to my Beloved-*Anee Ledodee*-אני לדודי," which causes that "My Beloved is to me-*Dodee Lee*-לִי-דודי" on Rosh HaShanah and Yom HaKippurim, at which time there is the inclusion of all the drawings down throughout the entire year, up to and including physical drawings down in [matters pertaining to] one's children, health, and livelihood etc.¹⁴⁰⁵

¹⁴⁰⁵ The conclusion of this discourse is missing.