

Discourse 26

*“Vechi Tavo ’u el HaAretz... -
When you shall come to the land...”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Acharei-Kedoshim,

13th of Iyyar, 5728

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

1.

The verse states,¹⁵⁹⁷ “When you shall come to the land and you shall plant any food tree, you shall treat its fruit as forbidden; for three years they shall be forbidden to you, they shall not be eaten. In the fourth year, all its fruit shall be sanctified in praise of *HaShem*-יהו"ה. And in the fifth year you may eat its fruit – so that it will increase its produce for you – I am *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God.”

Now, the indication of the Torah is that the entrance into the land (“When you shall come to the land”) is so that there should specifically be the matter of planting fruit trees (“and you **shall** plant”). According to this, the continuation of the verse is not understood, “for three years they shall be forbidden for you,” in that during the first three years it is forbidden to eat of its fruits.

Additionally, even in the fourth year it is forbidden to eat them in their place, but “all its fruit shall be sanctified in

¹⁵⁹⁷ Leviticus 19:23-25

praise of *HaShem*-יהו"ה," meaning that they must be brought up to Yerushalayim, and only in the fifth year is it permissible to eat of its fruit.

We must also understand why the verse states, "And in the fifth year etc." For, at first glance, since permission is not just granted to eat its fruits in the fifth year, but even afterwards, the verse should have said, "From the fifth year and onward you may eat its fruit," similar to the verse,¹⁵⁹⁸ "From the eighth day and onward etc.," and other such verses.

We also must understand the meaning of the words, "so that it will increase its produce for you," in that what is meant by this is an increase that is beyond commensurate measure. That is, it is unlike the reward of all other *mitzvot* which is commensurate to the *mitzvah*. [For, as known, according to the Rishonim,¹⁵⁹⁹ there are two views regarding the matter of the reward of a *mitzvah*, whether it is in a way of cause and effect, or whether it is invoked by fulfilling the *mitzvah* in an automatic way (called a *Segulah*). Nevertheless, according to both views, the reward [for the *mitzvah* is commensurate to the *mitzvah*.]

However, here it is a matter of an increase beyond commensurate measure [to the *mitzvah*]. We therefore must understand the difference there is in the *mitzvah* of *Orlah*, such that its reward is beyond commensurate measure, which is why the verse had to expressly state, "so that it will **increase** its produce for you." That is, in regard to all other *mitzvot*, it is

¹⁵⁹⁸ Leviticus 22:27

¹⁵⁹⁹ Brought in Shnei Luchot HaBrit, Bayit Acharon (12a-b; 15a-b); Also see Igrot Kodesh of the Rebbe Rashab, Vol. 1 p. 395 and elsewhere.

self-understood that reward is received for the fulfillment of the *mitzvah*, but here it had to be expressly stated, being that it is a reward that is beyond commensurate measure [to the *mitzvah*].

We also must understand why the verse concludes stating, “I am *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God,” which we do not find with all the *mitzvot*.

2.

This may be understood according to the explanation of the Tzemach Tzedek in the discourse on this verse.¹⁶⁰⁰ He brings the words of Rabbeinu Bachaye, who provides several explanations of this passage, and [he] then brings¹⁶⁰¹ [an additional explanation in the] words of Rabbeinu Bachaye [who states], “According to Kabbalah, the *mitzvah* of *Orlah* is that Torah distances us from plantings that are in their first three years, corresponding to the three upper [*Sefirot*] in which we have no grasp, and to which the [three aspects of] ‘chaos (*Tohu*), void (*Vohu*), and darkness (*Choshech*)’¹⁶⁰² also correspond.”

The Tzemach Tzedek then explains, “It seems from his words that this refers to the Crown-*Keter*, Wisdom-*Chochmah*, and Understanding-*Binah*.” He then brings¹⁶⁰³ the continuation of the words of Rabbeinu Bachaye, “The fourth [year] also corresponds to it, to [the words], ‘The spirit of God hovered

¹⁶⁰⁰ Ohr HaTorah, Kedoshim p. 144 and on.

¹⁶⁰¹ Ohr HaTorah, Kedoshim ibid. p. 146.

¹⁶⁰² Genesis 1:2

¹⁶⁰³ Ohr HaTorah, Kedoshim ibid. p. 147

over the face of the water,’¹⁶⁰⁴ this being neither complete concealment nor complete grasp. Therefore, the fourth year is also not completely permissible, but is permissible through being redeemed,¹⁶⁰⁵ and forbidden if it has not been redeemed.”

The Tzemach Tzeddek explains, “At first glance, it must be said that this refers to Knowledge-*Da’at*, since the ‘spirit-*Ru’ach*’ is the middle line, and it ‘hovers over the face of the waters,’ which refers to Kindness-*Chessed* etc.”

The explanation is that since the [first] three years correspond to the three upper *Sefirot* of the Crown-*Keter*, Wisdom-*Chochmah*, and Understanding-*Binah*, in which we have no grasp, the fruits are therefore prohibited from being eaten. However, the fourth year is the aspect of Knowledge-*Da’at*, which already has a relation to the emotions (*Midot*), being that it is “the key that includes six.”¹⁶⁰⁶

That is, even though the aspect of Knowledge-*Da’at* is the intermediary between the Crown-*Keter*, and Wisdom-*Chochmah* and Understanding-*Binah*,¹⁶⁰⁷ (between that which transcends the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) and the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*)), nevertheless, since it is in the middle line (*Kav HaEmtza’ee*), which is the aspect of Truth (*Emet*-אמת) in which there are no changes, such that it is the same below as it is above,¹⁶⁰⁸ it therefore is understood that even as it is above

¹⁶⁰⁴ Genesis 1:3

¹⁶⁰⁵ Torat Kohanim and Rashi to Leviticus 19:23-25 *ibid.*; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Ma’aser Sheni 9:2

¹⁶⁰⁶ See Zohar II 177b; Likkutei Torah, Va’etchanan 6d and elsewhere.

¹⁶⁰⁷ See Torah Ohr, Toldot 19a; Sefer HaMaamarim 5660 p. 51; Discourse entitled “*u’Moshe Hayah Ro’eh*” 5694.

¹⁶⁰⁸ See Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 35 and elsewhere.

between the Crown-*Keter* and Wisdom-*Chochmah* and Understanding-*Binah*, it also relates to below, which is why it becomes the intermediary between the intellect (*Sechel*) and the emotions (*Midot*). Therefore, “In the fourth year, all its fruit shall be sanctified in praise of *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” and it requires redemption, but [once it is redeemed it] is permissible to eat.

3.

The Tzemach Tzeddek continues [and states],¹⁶⁰⁹ “However, the relationship between these aspects and the three years of *Orlah* etc.” That is, at first glance, it is not understood what the relationship is between the three upper *Sefirot* of the Crown-*Keter*, Wisdom-*Chochmah*, and Understanding-*Binah* and the three years of *Orlah*, which correspond to the three completely impure husks (*Shalosh Kelipot HaTmei'ot*), as explained in Likkutei Torah,¹⁶¹⁰ citing Zohar.¹⁶¹¹

The Tzemach Tzeddek [then] explains, “It can be said that this is similar to the explanation in the name of Ohr HaChayim¹⁶¹² about the matter of the lion and the ox [of the Supernal Chariot (*Merkavah*)]. That is, the lion is higher in its root than the ox, being that “the face of the lion is to the right etc.”¹⁶¹³ This being so, why are they reversed below, in that the ox is a pure animal, whereas the lion is an impure animal?

¹⁶⁰⁹ Ohr HaTorah Kedoshim *ibid.*, bottom of p. 146 and on.

¹⁶¹⁰ Likkutei Torah, Kedoshim 29c

¹⁶¹¹ Zohar II 244b; Pardes Rimonim, end of Shaar 24, cited in Likkutei Torah *ibid.*; Also see Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as Gates of Light, Gate Five (*Tiferet*).

¹⁶¹² Ohr HaChayim to Leviticus 17:14

¹⁶¹³ Ezekiel 1:10

Rather, this itself is the reason, that because it is higher, therefore, upon the shattering of the vessels (*Shevirat HaKeilim*) when it fell below, it was lowered down further etc. [This is like the known matter,¹⁶¹⁴ that whatever is higher above falls lower below. Therefore,¹⁶¹⁵ since the lion is higher in its root, therefore in its fall it became an impure animal below.

In contrast, this is not so of the ox. For although it too is rooted in the face of the ox of the Supernal Chariot (*Merkavah*), nevertheless, since it is lower the face of the lion, therefore, even after the shattering it did not become separated from holiness, but remained a pure animal.]

Thus, the little that fell below from the three upper *Sefirot* of the Crown-*Keter*, Wisdom-*Chochmah*, and Understanding-*Binah*, fell further below, meaning, into the three completely impure husks (*Shalosh Kelipot HaTmei'ot*). This then, is the matter of the forbidden fruits (*Orlah*) that are from the three completely impure husks (*Shalosh Kelipot HaTmei'ot*). [It should be pointed out, that the example brought in Tanya¹⁶¹⁶ of forbidden foods from the three completely impure husks (*Shalosh Kelipot HaTmei'ot*) is specifically the example of the *Orlah*.]

He concludes [stating], “This then, is the matter of the three years of *Orlah* etc., which are [the three aspects of] ‘chaos (*Tohu*), void (*Vohu*), and darkness (*Choshech*).’¹⁶¹⁷ That is, they are rooted in that which fell upon the shattering of the

¹⁶¹⁴ See Likkutei Torah, Emor 34c; Shaarei Orah, Shaar HaPurim 58a and on; 65a and on.

¹⁶¹⁵ See Torah Ohr, Megillat Esther 93c; Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim 9d

¹⁶¹⁶ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 6 and Ch. 37 (in the note).

¹⁶¹⁷ Genesis 1:2 *ibid*.

vessels (*Shevirat HaKeilim*) from the Supernal [aspects of] chaos (*Tohu*), void (*Vohu*), and darkness (*Choshech*)' etc.

4.

However, we still must understand this better. For, “He also placed the world in their hearts,”¹⁶¹⁸ in that all worldly matters are for the purpose of man’s service of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, for him to refine them etc. However, at first glance, how is it possible to bring about the refinement (*Birur*) during the three years of *Orlah*, given that they are of the three completely impure husks (*Shalosh Kelipot HaTmei’ot*) which have no ascent?

The explanation is that the refinement (*Birur*) of the three completely impure husks (*Shalosh Kelipot HaTmei’ot*) is by way of repelling them. This is the general difference between the refinement (*Birur*) brought about through [fulfilling] the 248-רמ"ח positive action *mitzvot* and the refinement brought about through [desisting from transgressing] the 365-שס"ה negative prohibitive *mitzvot*.

That is, the refinement brought about through the 248-רמ"ח positive action *mitzvot* is by way of closeness, whereas the refinement brought about through [desisting from transgressing] the 365-שס"ה negative prohibitive *mitzvot* is by repelling them, especially when one is pained by this etc. (This

¹⁶¹⁸ Ecclesiastes 3:11; See Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar 5b

is as explained in *Hemshech* 5666,¹⁶¹⁹ that through pain we reach much higher than through pleasure).

This is as explained in the discourses that explain the difference between the toil of affecting refinements (*Avodat HaBirurim*) and the toil of withstanding tests (*Avodat HaNisyonot*).¹⁶²⁰ (This is likewise so of the passing of the righteous *Tzaddikim*, that this causes the refinement of the three completely impure husks (*Shalosh Kelipot HaTmei'ot*)).¹⁶²¹

5.

Now, it is through this that “in the fifth year... it will increase its produce for you etc.” In other words, after the refinement of the three years of *Orlah* by way of repulsion etc., we then reach their root in holiness, in the aspect of the three upper [*Sefirot*], the Crown-*Keter*, Wisdom-*Chochmah*, and Understanding-*Binah*. This is the meaning of, “And in the fifth year... it will increase [its produce] for you etc.” This refers to the matter of the additional light drawn from the thorn of the letter *Yod*-י of the Name *HaShem*-יהוה, which is the aspect of the Crown-*Keter*. That is, it is specifically from there that there is the drawing down of the additional light to “increase for you etc.”¹⁶²²

With the above in mind, it is understood that the reward here is much higher than the reward for all other *mitzvot*. For,

¹⁶¹⁹ *Hemshech* 5666 p. 106 and on.

¹⁶²⁰ See *Sefer HaMitzvot* of the Tzemach Tzedek 186a and on, and elsewhere.

¹⁶²¹ See *Sefer HaMitzvot* *ibid.* p. 191b in the glosses.

¹⁶²² *Likkutei Torah*, Kedoshim 30d; *Ohr HaTorah*, Kedoshim p. 143

as known, Zohar states¹⁶²³ that the *mitzvot* depend on the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה "like grapes hanging in a cluster." That is, there are *mitzvot* that depend on the letter *Yod*-י of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, there are *mitzvot* that depend on the first letter *Hey*-ה, *mitzvot* that depend on the letter *Vav*-ו and *mitzvot* that depend on the final letter *Hey*-ה.

Thus, through fulfilling the *mitzvot* we draw down a revelation of light from the aspect of the four letters of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה. This is why the reward of the *mitzvot*, (whether it is in a way of cause and effect, or whether it is automatically invoked through fulfilling the *mitzvah* (called a *Segulah*)) is commensurate [to the *mitzvah*].

This is because the drawing down is only from the four letters of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, which correspond to the ten *Sefirot*.¹⁶²⁴ That is, the *Yod*-י corresponds to Wisdom-*Chochmah*, the first *Hey*-ה corresponds to Understanding-*Binah*, the *Vav*-ו corresponds to the emotions (*Midot*), and the final *Hey*-ה corresponds to Kingship-*Malchut*, and they also correspond to the four worlds.¹⁶²⁵

However, through fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *Orlah*, there is a drawing down of the fifth aspect, this being the thorn of the letter *Yod*-י, which transcends the four letters of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה (as explained in Iggeret HaTeshuvah).¹⁶²⁶ This

¹⁶²³ See Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar (2a); Tikkun 41 (81b); Also see Likkutei Torah, Pekudei 3b and on.

¹⁶²⁴ See Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as Gates of Light, Gate Five (*Tiferet*); Etz Chayim, Shaar 3 (Shaar Seder Atzilut of Rabbi Chayim Vital); Shaar 42 (Shaar Drushei ABY" A), Ch. 1-2; Shaarei Kedushah of Rabbi Chayim Vital, translated as Gates of Holiness, Part Three, Gate One.

¹⁶²⁵ Etz Chayim, Shaar 42 *ibid.*; Shaar 47 (Shaar Seder ABY" A) Ch. 2; Shaarei Kedushah, translated as Gates of Holiness, Part Three, Gate One *ibid.*

¹⁶²⁶ Tanya, Iggeret HaTeshuvah, Ch. 4

is the matter of the increase that is beyond commensurate measure from the aspect of the three upper *Sefirot* that transcend the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*). This is why the verse concludes stating, “I am *HaShem*-יהוה your God.” For, since this is a matter that transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), it therefore requires a special guarantee that it will be drawn down into the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*).

Now, all this comes about through refinement (*Birur*) by way of repulsion, in that specifically through this there is a drawing down of the lights that transcend the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*). However, for there be the drawing down to below, it specifically must be prefaced with the toil of the world of Repair-*Tikkun*.

In other words, the thorn of the letter *Yod*-י, which is the aspect of the Crown-*Keter*, is the *Sefirot* of the world of Chaos-*Tohu*, and is drawn down and revealed through the toil of the world of Repair-*Tikkun*, this being the matter of the four letters of the Name *HaShem*-יהוה, up to and including the final letter *Hey*-ה, which is the aspect of a plane, which is in a way of the greatest possible spreading forth, this being the matter of the fourth year. Through this we reach the fifth year, this being the aspect of the thorn of the letter *Yod*-י.

This likewise is the general matter of the descent of the soul into the body, in which there are four levels, as we recite,¹⁶²⁷ “The soul that You have given into me, she is pure. You created her, You formed her, You blew her into me.” That

¹⁶²⁷ In the “*Elo”hai Neshamah*” passage of the morning blessings.

is, this descent is for the sake of ascent,¹⁶²⁸ to even higher than the aspect of “she is pure,” to the aspect of the fifth level that transcends the four levels. This ascent specifically comes about through the descent into the body, because of the superiority of the root of the body, similar to the superiority of the root of the vessels (*Keilim*), as explained before at length in the preceding discourses.¹⁶²⁹

6.

This then, is the meaning of the verse, “When you shall come to the land etc.” That is, the beginning of this as it is in the service of *HaShem* יהו"ה of every single Jew, is with the descent of the soul into one's body, and into the Jewish people as a whole, is upon the entry into the land in the literal sense (after the preparation throughout the time that they were in the desert), at which time they began their work of being engaged in worldly matters, plowing, sowing etc.,¹⁶³⁰ until “you shall plant any food tree,” such that it is drawn down inwardly, until it becomes the blood and flesh of his own flesh, through which the refinement of the world is caused, and is thus made into a dwelling place for the Holy One, blessed is He.¹⁶³¹

¹⁶²⁸ See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 2 (The Letters of Creation, Part 1), section entitled “The twelve letters ה"ו ז"ח correspond to the twelve tribes of Israel.”

¹⁶²⁹ See the discourse of Acharon Shel Pesach of this year, 5728, entitled “*KiYemei Tzeitcha* – As in the days when you left the land of Egypt,” Discourse 24, Ch. 9, and the discourse entitled “*Vayomer Lo Yehonatan* – Yehonatan said to him,” Discourse 25, Ch. 8 and on (Sefer HaMaamarim 5728 p. 171 and on; p. 181 and on).

¹⁶³⁰ See Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 73a

¹⁶³¹ See Midrash Tanchuma, Bechukotai 3; Naso 16; Midrash Bereishit Rabba 3; Bamidbar Rabba 13:6; Tanya, Ch. 36, and elsewhere.

Now, although this is a matter of a descent, and as known, this was the argument of the spies who did not want to enter the land, being that they did not want to descend from their [spiritual] level to engage in refining matters of the world,¹⁶³² nonetheless, in truth, this descent is for the sake of ascent, and as the verse states,¹⁶³³ “The land is very, very good,” stating “very-*Me’od*-מאד” twice.¹⁶³⁴ This is because, the ultimate toil is specifically upon entering the land to engage in refining matters of the world, and through this the true ascent of the soul is caused, in that it reaches the fifth level, as mentioned above.

7.

This is also the general toil of counting of the Omer, the matter of which is to refine the animalistic soul. This is why the Omer [offering] was specifically of barley, which is animal fodder.¹⁶³⁵ About this the verse states,¹⁶³⁶ “Draw me, after you we will run.” That is, it first states, “Draw me,” in the singular, referring to the drawing down of the Godly soul from Above. Through this the Godly soul affects the refinement of the animalistic soul, which is the meaning of “after you we will run,” in the plural, in that even the animalistic soul is

¹⁶³² See Likkutei Torah, beginning of the Torah portion of Shlach (36c and on, 37b and on), and elsewhere.

¹⁶³³ Numbers 14:7

¹⁶³⁴ See Likkutei Torah, Shlach ibid. (37a-b)

¹⁶³⁵ Talmud Bavli, Sotah 14a in the Mishnah; Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 3b; Also see Likkutei Torah, Emor 35d, 36d and on, and the discourses in the next note.

¹⁶³⁶ Song of Songs 1:4; Discourse entitled “*Mashchein*” in Maamarei Admor HaZaken, Ketuvim Vol. 2 p. 29; Ohr HaTorah, Shir HaShirim Vol. 1, p. 75 and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5655 p. 172 and on.

transformed to Godliness. This causes an even greater increase of elevation in the Godly soul.

This is why on holiday of Shavuot we offer the two breads made of wheat,¹⁶³⁷ which is human food, [as it states],¹⁶³⁸ “You are called ‘man-*Adam*-אדם.’” Through this [as the verse continues], “The King has brought me to His chambers,” in that he is found with the King alone, referring to the giving of the Torah, and since there will not be another giving of the Torah,¹⁶³⁹ this also includes the revelation of the Torah teachings of Moshiach that will be [revealed] in the coming future.

All this comes about specifically through refining the animalistic soul. That is, it is by way of “when you shall come to the land,” that thereby “the King brought me to His chambers,” that there is caused to be the revelation of the giving of the Torah, including the revelation of the secrets of the secrets, and in a way that the Torah is caused to be received with joy and in an inner way.¹⁶⁴⁰

¹⁶³⁷ Leviticus 23:17; Talmud Bavli, Menachot 52b in the Mishnah; Also see Torah Ohr, Vayakhel 116b; Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar 10d; 16d; Sefer HaMitzvot of the Tzemach Tzedek 27b; Also see Igrot Kodesh, Vol. 13, p. 5.

¹⁶³⁸ Talmud Bavli, Yevamot 61a

¹⁶³⁹ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5647 p. 87; 5679 p. 291; 5709 p. 57 (b) and elsewhere.

¹⁶⁴⁰ As in the language of the blessing that our Rebbes and leaders gave in connection with the holiday of Shavuot – explained in Likkutei Sichot Vol. 4, p. 1307; Vol. 8 p. 272; Vol. 13 p. 158 and elsewhere.