

Discourse 21

*“HaChodesh HaZeh Lachem... -
This month shall be for you...”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Vayakhel-Pekudei,
Parshat HaChodesh, 25th of Adar, 5729
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,¹³⁵⁰ “This month shall be for you the beginning of the months, it shall be for you the first of the months of the year.” This verse is at the beginning of the Torah reading of Parshat HaChodesh, the primary matter of which is the commandment about bringing the Passover (*Pesach*) offering. This is as stated in the continuation of the portion,¹³⁵¹ “An unblemished lamb or kid, a male, within its first year... from the sheep and goats you shall take it.”

Now, in his discourse from the year 5629,¹³⁵² (this year being the hundredth year from when it was said), the Rebbe Maharash explains that the Passover (*Pesach*) offering is the only sacrifice that can equally be brought from sheep or goats. That is, there are sacrifices that are from goats but not sheep, and there are sacrifices that are from sheep but not goats. This is as Rambam states,¹³⁵³ “All the communal sin offerings come

¹³⁵⁰ Exodus 12:2

¹³⁵¹ Exodus 12:5

¹³⁵² Sefer HaMaamarim 5629 p. 105

¹³⁵³ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Ma’aseh HaKorbanot 1:15

from goats or cattle, none are brought from sheep. All the communal burnt-offerings are from sheep or cattle, there are no burnt-offerings brought from goats.”

Then there are sacrifices that primarily are brought from sheep, meaning that most sacrificial burnt-offerings are from sheep. This is as stated about the daily *Tamid* offering (which is the head of all the sacrifices, for which reason it is called¹³⁵⁴ “the continual burnt-offering (*Olat Tamid* עֹלֹת תָּמִיד-*Olat Tamid*),¹³⁵⁵ “The one lamb you shall make in the morning and the second lamb you shall you make in the afternoon.” Then there are sacrifices that primarily are brought from goats, such as the sin offering, which mostly is brought from goats, as the verse states,¹³⁵⁶ “He goats for a sin offering.”

In contrast, about the Passover (*Pesach*) offering the verse states, “from the sheep and goats you shall take it,” in that it comes equally from both. We should point out another matter regarding this, that there are sacrifices about which the verse states,¹³⁵⁷ “from the sheep **or** from the goats,” (such as the verse,¹³⁵⁸ “When an ox **or** a sheep **or** a goat is born, it shall remain under its mother for seven days; and from the eighth day forward, it is acceptable etc.”) this language indicating that the first [category] takes precedence over the second.

In contrast, about the Passover (*Pesach*) offering it states, “from the sheep and from the goats (*Meen HeKevashim u’Meen Ha’Ezeem* מֵעַן הַכֶּבֶשִׁים וּמֵעַן הָעִזִּים-*Meen HeKevashim u’Meen Ha’Ezeem*) you shall take it.” This

¹³⁵⁴ Numbers 28:6

¹³⁵⁵ Numbers 28:4

¹³⁵⁶ Leviticus 16:5; Numbers 7:87 and elsewhere.

¹³⁵⁷ See Numbers 15:11

¹³⁵⁸ Leviticus 22:27

proves that both are equal, and that additionally, every Passover (*Pesach*) offering is inclusive of “from the sheep and the goats.”

2.

The discourse continues and states that to understand why the burn-offerings were primarily of sheep and the sin-offerings were primarily of goats (based on which we will understand why the Passover (*Pesach*) offering was both of sheep and goats equally) we first must preface with the root of the matter of sacrifices. For, at first glance, it is astonishing that the sinner is atoned for the sin that he sinned through bringing a sacrifice and offering it upon the altar.¹³⁵⁹

We should add that this question is not only about the sin-offering, but even about the burnt-offering sacrifice. For, although the burnt-offering is a matter of a gift (as mentioned in *Iggeret HaTeshuvah*),¹³⁶⁰ nevertheless, through it, added perfection is caused in man, as explained¹³⁶¹ about the verse,¹³⁶² “When a man brings an offering to *HaShem*-יהוה from [amongst] you etc.”

At first glance, it is not understood how it can be that a sacrifice from an animal, should cause perfection in man. However, regarding the burn-offering the question is not as great, whereas the primary emphasis of this question is in regard to the sin-offering. For, since its matter is to affect atonement

¹³⁵⁹ Also see Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5567 p. 289; Ohr HaTorah, Matot p. 1,255; Sefer HaMaamarim 5629 p. 358.

¹³⁶⁰ Tanya, *Iggeret HaTeshuvah*, Ch. 2

¹³⁶¹ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5696 p. 117

¹³⁶² Leviticus 1:2

for one who has sinned, blemished, and left the path, meaning that there is a deficiency in this person, this being so, it is not understood how the sacrifice of an animal should perfect a deficiency in the person.

To explain this, the discourse prefaces with an explanation of the root and source of the [class of] vegetative (*Tzome'ach*) beings. For, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹³⁶³ “There is no plant that grows below that does not have a constellation (*Mazal*) above that strikes it and tells it to grow.”

That is, each individual plant has a root and source above that bestows vitality to it to enliven it and make it grow. This is as known from the statement in Zohar¹³⁶⁴ on the verse,¹³⁶⁵ “He causes vegetation to sprout for the animal, and plants for the labor of man,” that “vegetation-*Chatzeer*-חציר” and “plants-*Eisev*-עשב” are two classes of angels etc.

Then, after giving a lengthy explanation of the two above-mentioned classes of angels, he continues and explains that just as it is with the class of vegetative (*Tzome'ach*) beings, this likewise is so of animals. That is, animals also have a root and source Above, and through offering the animal upon the altar it's soul ascends to its root and source.

Now, since the root of the animal is from the aspect of the world of Chaos-*Tohu* which precedes the world of Repair-*Tikkun*, which is the root of man, it therefore is through offering the sacrifice that an ascent is caused to the aspect of the world

¹³⁶³ See Midrash Bereishit Rabba 10:6; Zohar I 251a (Hashmatot); Zohar II 171b.

¹³⁶⁴ Zohar I 18b

¹³⁶⁵ Psalms 104:14

of Chaos-*Tohu* which precedes the world of Repair-*Tikkun*, and there is a drawing down of bestowal from there to make all the blemishes whole and repair the soul of the sinner etc.

3.

However, we must understand the statement in the discourse that the root and source of the vegetative (*Tzome'ach*) are those angels called “vegetation-*Chatzeer*-חציר” and “plants-*Eisev*-עשב.” For, at first glance, that which is relevant to explain here is only that the vegetative class (*Tzome'ach*) has a root and source Above (from which this is also understood about the root of the animal, in that it is rooted in the aspect of the world of Chaos-*Tohu* which preceded the world of Repair-*Tikkun*, and from there is a drawing down of bestowal to repair the soul of the sinner etc.). Therefore, what difference does it make that the root and source of this are the angels etc.?

It can be said that through this, emphasis is made about the relationship [of this] to man's service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. In other words, even the bestowal drawn to man through offering the animal as a sacrifice is specifically through man's service. For example, about the angels, even though they are the emissaries who transmit the bestowal, in that through them the bestowal is drawn from Above to below, nevertheless, this matter is specifically brought about after being preceded by man's work.

This is as explained about the matter of grass and vegetation,¹³⁶⁶ that they are the refinements that we refine

¹³⁶⁶ Mikdash Melech to Zohar I ibid., cited in Sefer HaMaamarim ibid. p. 108.

through, or work in the secret of the ascent of the feminine waters (*Ha'ala'at Mayim Nukvin*) to the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut*, from which the angels are brought about, only that in this itself, there are angels called “grass-*Deshe*-דשא” and “vegetation-*Chatzeer*-חציר” which are nullified and renewed daily, in that Kingship-*Malchut* returns and eats them, and influence is not drawn from them to below. This is because they remain in the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut*, to become part of her essence and part of her. Then there are angels called “plants-*Eisev*-עשב” which are eternally sustaining and through whom beneficence comes to us.

On a deeper level, the difference between the angels called “grass-*Deshe*-דשא” and “vegetation-*Chatzeer*-חציר” and those called “plants-*Eisev*-עשב” is also in relation to man’s service, through whom the angels are brought about. For, the difference between “grass-*Deshe*-דשא” and “vegetation-*Chatzeer*-חציר” and the “plants-*Eisev*-עשב,” is that “grass-*Deshe*-דשא” and “vegetation-*Chatzeer*-חציר” are animal fodder which grows in and of itself, without plowing, sowing, and all the other forms of labor that “the Tanna enumerates according to the order of making bread.”¹³⁶⁷

In contrast, “plants-*Eisev*-עשב” refers to that which specifically grows through sowing. About this, it is explained in Iggeret HaKodesh¹³⁶⁸ that fruits that grow through sowing and planting are far superior (both in the abundance of quantity as well as in superiority of quality) relative to those that grow in and of themselves, from the power of growth of the earth.

¹³⁶⁷ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 74b

¹³⁶⁸ Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, end of Epistle 20 (132b)

From this we may also understand the matter regarding the two classes of angels mentioned above. That is, even though it was explained that both are brought about through man's labor, nevertheless, the labor that brings about the angels called "plants-*Eisev*-עֵשֶׁב" is much loftier in comparison to the labor that brings about the angels called "grass-*Deshe*-דֶּשֶׁא" and "vegetation-*Chatzeer*-חֲצִיר."¹³⁶⁹ This is like the superiority of growth that comes through sowing and planting compared to that which grows on its own. It thus is due to the superiority of the labor that brings about the angels called "plants-*Eisev*-עֵשֶׁב" that there specifically is a drawing down of bestowal through them to below.

4.

Now, after having explained the general matter of the sacrifices, the discourse continues to explain the difference between the burnt-offerings, which were specifically of sheep, and the sin-offerings, which were specifically of goats.

To explain, the difference between a sin-offering and a burnt-offering is that the sacrifice of the sin-offering is the matter of atonement for sin. In contrast, this is not so of the burnt-offering, for although it atones for [not having fulfilled] a positive *mitzvah*, this is not the true matter of atonement, but is rather like a gift that [is given] after he repented and was forgiven of [having to undergoing] punishment.¹³⁷⁰

¹³⁶⁹ See Sefer HaMaamarim ibid. p. 109 and on.

¹³⁷⁰ See Talmud Bavli, Zevachim 7b and Rashi there, cited in Iggeret HaTeshuvah ibid.

This is why it is possible to bring a burnt-offering in the form of a gift, which one cannot do with a sin-offering. For, being that it comes to atone for a sin, it thus is only if he sinned that he is obligated to bring the sacrifice, and if he did not sin, it is forbidden to bring the sacrifice.

Additionally, as indicated in various places, the burnt-offering is not so critical to affect atonement for a positive *mitzvah* [that was not fulfilled] (as it is of the sin-offering to atone for sin). For, as stated in the Baraita¹³⁷¹ (brought at the beginning of Iggeret HaTeshuvah), “If one violates a positive *mitzvah* and repents, he is forgiven even before he moves from his place.” We thus find that offering of a sacrifice is not so necessary for the matter of atonement, and “he is forgiven even before he moves from his place,” even though he did not bring a sacrifice. From this it is understood that the sacrifice of the burnt-offering also relates to the Righteous (*Tzaddikim*) in whom the matter of sin does not apply.

This then, is the general difference between the sacrifice of the burnt-offering and the sacrifice of the sin-offering. That is, the sacrifice of the burnt-offering is the matter of the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the righteous (*Tzaddikim*), whereas the sacrifice of the sin-offering is the matter of the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה of those who return in repentance (*Baalei Teshuvah*).

With the above in mind, we can understand why the sacrifice of the burnt-offering comes from the sheep, whereas the sacrifice of the sin-offering comes from the goats. This is because the difference between goats and sheep can be

¹³⁷¹ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 86a

understood according to what our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹³⁷² “What is the reason that goats walk in front, and then the ewes follow? It is like the creation of the world, that at first there was darkness and then light followed.” Rashi there explains that “goats are usually black (darkness), and sheep are usually white (light).”

In the analogue (meaning, in the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה) the matter is that the difference between night and day is that day is the matter of light, since there then is the illumination of “the sun of *HaShem*-יהו"ה.”¹³⁷³ In contrast, the matter of night is darkness, when the light of “the sun of *HaShem*-יהו"ה” does not illuminate.

This refers to the general matter of exile, both exile in the literal sense, as well as the exile of the soul within the body and animalistic soul,¹³⁷⁴ which is what creates room for the matter of sin etc. This is why the sin-offering, the matter of which is atonement for sin, which comes about because of the darkness, is specifically from the goats, this being the matter of “first it was dark.”

This is similar to the fact that repentance must be, “with the same woman, in the same time period, and in the same place.”¹³⁷⁵ In contrast, this is not so of the sacrifice of the burnt-offering, the matter of which is the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the Righteous (*Tzaddikim*), which comes from the sheep, this being the matter of “then light followed.”

¹³⁷² Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 77b

¹³⁷³ See Psalms 84:12; Also see Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah, translated as The Gate of Unity and Faith, Ch. 4.

¹³⁷⁴ See Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 37

¹³⁷⁵ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 86b

We now can understand why the Passover (*Pesach*) offering came both from sheep and goats equally. For, it was previously explained¹³⁷⁶ about the matter of the Red Heifer (*Parah Adumah*), that those who eat the Passover (*Pesach*) offering require it. That is, those who were impure require that it be sprinkled on the third day and on the seventh day.

[This also is the relationship between Parshat Parah and Parshat HaChodesh, and why there is no separation between them. The sign for this is from the fact that between the third cup and the fourth cup one is not to make a pause.]¹³⁷⁷ This is why the Passover (*Pesach*) offering came from the goats, like the sin-offering which comes from the goats, this being the aspect of those who return in repentance (*Baalei Teshuvah*). However, there also are those who eat the Passover (*Pesach*) offering and do not require the Red Heifer (*Parah Adumah*), in that they were not impure, this being the matter of the service of Him of the Righteous (*Tzaddikim*).

This then, is the meaning of [the verse], “An unblemished lamb... from the sheep and goats you shall take it.” In other words, the Passover (*Pesach*) sacrifice has both aspects, that of the Righteous (*Tzaddikim*) as well as that of those who return in repentance (*Baalei Teshuvah*).

¹³⁷⁶ In the discourse entitled “*Zot Chukat HaTorah* – This is the decree of the Torah,” of Shabbat Parshat Tisa, Parshat Parah of earlier this year, 5729, Discourse 20, (Sefer HaMaamarim 5729 p. 147 and on).

¹³⁷⁷ Talmud Yerushalmi, Megillah 3:5

Now, we should add that as known about the exile in Egypt, the generation of the exile in Egypt were reincarnations of the generation of the dispersion, about which the verse states,¹³⁷⁸ “And the bricks served them as stone, and the clay served them as mortar,” the root of this being from the sin of Adam, the first man, (as explained at length in Kabbalah, and explained in Chassidus in short and by way of hint).¹³⁷⁹ It was through the labor in Egypt with bricks and mortar etc.,¹³⁸⁰ that they brought about the repair of the sin,¹³⁸¹ this being the matter of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in repentance (*Teshuvah*).

However, when they left Egypt they then became like “converts who converted,”¹³⁸² in that “a proselyte is like a newborn baby,”¹³⁸³ this being something novel, such that there altogether is no impression left of what preceded this.

Additionally, as known, the general mode of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, during the month of Nissan is the matter of the service of Him of the Righteous (*Tzaddikim*).¹³⁸⁴ Thus, since the Passover (*Pesach*) offering is connected to the exile in Egypt and the exodus from Egypt, this being the matter

¹³⁷⁸ Genesis 11:3

¹³⁷⁹ Pri Etz Chayim, Shaar Chag HaMatzot, Ch. 1, cited in Ohr HaTorah, Bo Vol. 7, p. 2,552 and on.

¹³⁸⁰ Exodus 1:14

¹³⁸¹ Pri Etz Chayim and Ohr HaTorah *ibid*. Also see Torat Chayim, Vayakhel, p. 620a (Vol. 2, p. 414b and on in the new edition).

¹³⁸² See Talmud Bavli, Yevamot 46b; Keritot 9a; See Likkutei Sichot Vol. 18 p. 119.

¹³⁸³ Talmud Bavli, Yevamot 22a

¹³⁸⁴ Sefer HaMaamarim 5636 Vol. 2, p. 360 and elsewhere.

of [both] the service of those who return in repentance (*Baalei Teshuvah*) and the service of the Righteous (*Tzaddikim*), it therefore comes both from sheep and from goats, corresponding to the two modes of service, that of the Righteous (*Tzaddikim*) and that of those who return in repentance (*Baalei Teshuvah*).

The same is so in the introduction to the commandment about the Passover (*Pesach*) offering. This is the meaning of the statement at the beginning of the Torah portion of, “This month shall be for you the beginning of the months, it shall be for you the first of the months of the year.” That is, in this too there are the two matters - the service of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, of the Righteous (*Tzaddikim*), as well as the service of Him of those who return in repentance (*Baalei Teshuvah*).

To explain, the birth of the moon comes specifically after its concealment and hiddenness, this being the matter of serving *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, with Repentance (*Teshuvah*). The birth [of the moon] itself, this being the matter of novelty and renewal, is generally the matter of the service of Him of the Righteous (*Tzaddikim*).

Likewise, when it comes to taking the Passover (*Pesach*) offering, there were two modes of service, that of the Righteous (*Tzaddikim*) and that of those who returned in repentance (*Baalei Teshuvah*). This is the meaning of the verse,¹³⁸⁵ “Draw and take for yourselves,” meaning,¹³⁸⁶ “Draw your hands away from idolatry,” this being the matter of serving Him with repentance (*Teshuvah*), “and take for yourselves the

¹³⁸⁵ Exodus 12:21

¹³⁸⁶ Midrash Shemot Rabba 16:2; Rashit to Exodus 12:21

sheep of a *mitzvah*,”¹³⁸⁷ this being the matter of the service of Him of the Righteous (*Tzaddikim*).

6.

The same is so of the general matter of serving *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, in that there must be the two modes of service, that of the Righteous (*Tzaddikim*) and that of those who return in repentance (*Baalei Teshuvah*), “the continual (*Tamid*) burnt-offering that was done at Mount Sinai,”¹³⁸⁸ “the constant daily offerings (*Temidin*) according to their order,”¹³⁸⁹ this being the mode of service of the Righteous (*Tzaddikim*), and together with this, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹³⁹⁰ “One must spend all his days in repentance (*Teshuvah*).”

However, even so, the service of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, throughout the day, must be an ordered service through the fulfillment of Torah and *mitzvot*. This is especially emphasized during the times of “the footsteps of Moshiach.” This is because “Moshiach is destined to bring the Righteous (*Tzaddikim*) to repentance (*Teshuvah*).”¹³⁹¹ In other words, even the Righteous (*Tzaddikim*) will have the mode of service of repentance (*Teshuvah*).

Now, since all the revelations of the coming future depend on our deeds and service of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is

¹³⁸⁷ Midrash Shemot Rabba 16:2; Rashit to Exodus 12:21

¹³⁸⁸ Numbers 28:6

¹³⁸⁹ See the liturgy of the Musaf prayer of the holidays.

¹³⁹⁰ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 153a

¹³⁹¹ See Likkutei Torah, Drushim L'Shemini Atzeret 92b; Shir HaShirim 50b; Also see Zohar III 153b

He, throughout the time of exile,¹³⁹² therefore, during the time of exile there also must be both modes of service, that of the Righteous (*Tzaddikim*) and that of those who return in repentance (*Baalei Teshuvah*).

Likewise, in the coming future there will be both modes of service. For, as known, there is a superiority to the service of self-restraint (*Itkafiya*), this being the mode of service of those who return in repentance (*Baalei Teshuvah*). Likewise, there is a superiority to the service of self-transformation (*It'hapcha*), this being the mode of service of the Righteous (*Tzaddikim*).

That is, at the time of the exodus from Egypt the service was in the mode of self-restraint (*Itkafiya*), as the verse states,¹³⁹³ “The people fled.” However, this will not be so of the coming future. For, even though the verse states,¹³⁹⁴ “As in the days when you left the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders,” nonetheless, the coming redemption will be as the verse states,¹³⁹⁵ “You will not leave in haste, [nor will you go in flight],” but rather,¹³⁹⁶ “In stillness and peacefulness will you be saved,” and together with this, “Moshiach is destined to bring the Righteous (*Tzaddikim*) to repentance (*Teshuvah*).”

¹³⁹² Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 37

¹³⁹³ Exodus 14:5; Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 31

¹³⁹⁴ Micah 7:15

¹³⁹⁵ Isaiah 52:12

¹³⁹⁶ Isaiah 30:15