

Discourse 8

*“V’Avraham Zaken... -
Now, Avraham was old...”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Chayei Sarah,
Shabbat Mevarchim Kislev, 5729⁴⁹¹
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,⁴⁹² “Now, Avraham was old, coming on in days.” Torah Ohr⁴⁹³ cites the teaching of the Zohar⁴⁹⁴ in explanation of the words, “Coming on in days-*Ba BaYamim*- בא בימים,” that [it refers to], “those Upper days... woe to a person whose has caused his days to be deficient Above. For, when they wish to garb him in those days, the days that he blemished are lacking from that garment etc.”

He points out⁴⁹⁵ that based on this [teaching], we must understand the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,⁴⁹⁶ “One hour of repentance and good deeds in this world is more precious than all the life of the coming world.” For, is it not so that the ultimate intent of repentance and good deeds is that from them the garments are made for the soul, through which it

⁴⁹¹ This discourse only includes a summary of the content of the original discourse.

⁴⁹² Genesis 24:1

⁴⁹³ Torah Ohr, Chayei Sarah 16a

⁴⁹⁴ Zohar I 129a, 224a

⁴⁹⁵ Also see Sefer HaMaamarim 5628 p. 50 and on

⁴⁹⁶ Mishnah Avot 4:17

can delight in the ray of the *Shechinah* in the coming world, (as stated in Zohar)?⁴⁹⁷

He explains that the matter of the coming world (*Olam HaBa*) in which there is delight in the ray of the *Shechinah*, is the grasp of the essential being and essentiality of the spreading forth of the Godly vitality in a state of revelation. This being so, we must understand how the soul, which is the aspect of a creation, a something that is independent unto itself, can grasp the essential being and essentiality of Godliness, which is not in the aspect of grasp and limitation.

However, this matter is brought about through Torah and *mitzvot*. For, since their root is in the Supernal desire etc., they therefore are loftier than the ray of the *Shechinah*, which is only the spreading forth of the vitality etc. It only is that they chained down and manifested within matters of this physical world.

However, when man engages in Torah and *mitzvot*, there are made to be garments for his soul, within which he is garbed in the upper Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden HaElyon*), and it is through them that his soul, which is the aspect of a creation, can grasp the ray of the *Shechinah*. Therefore, “one hour of repentance and good deeds is more precious,” since their root is in the desire of the Supernal One, blessed is He, “than all the life of the coming world,” which only is a ray of the *Shechinah*. Yet, even so, they are called “garments” (*Levushim*) through which the soul can grasp the ray of the *Shechinah*.

⁴⁹⁷ Zohar I 226b; Zohar II 210a; 247a; Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 29.

2.

Now, we should add [in explanation] of the precise wording of our sages, of blessed memory, in stating, “One hour of **repentance** (*Teshuvah*) and good deeds in this world is more precious than all the life of the coming world,” in which they specified repentance (*Teshuvah*). This is because the entire novelty of the toil in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in this world, is that through it we attain the level of repentance (*Teshuvah*).⁴⁹⁸

For, as known, as the soul is above before its descent to below, it is in a state of being a Righteous *Tzaddik*, whereas the ultimate descent of the soul to below is so that through its service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, it comes to be in the aspect of one who returns in repentance (*Baal Teshuvah*).⁴⁹⁹

Now, since the toil of the soul below is to come to the elevated level of repentance (*Teshuvah*), it is understood that as long as the soul has not yet completed its work in this world, it has not yet reached the wholeness and perfection of repentance. Thus, it specifically was when⁵⁰⁰ “Sarah died in Kiryat Arba etc.,”⁵⁰¹ when the soul separates from the body upon conclusion of its work in “the land of Canaan-כנען,”⁵⁰² which is a word

⁴⁹⁸ I regard to the coming section of the discourse, see Likkutei Sichot Vol. 5, p. 110 and on (from this discourse).

⁴⁹⁹ Likkutei Torah, Balak 73a (there it states “the **true** answer” as to why the soul descended to below).

⁵⁰⁰ Genesis 23:2

⁵⁰¹ See Zohar I 122b (Midrash HaNe’elam) that “Sarah died – this is the body, in Kiryat Arba [“the town of the four”] – this refers to the four foundational elements etc.”

⁵⁰² Genesis 23:2 *ibid*.

meaning “commerce-*Mischar*-מסחר,”⁵⁰³ referring to this world,⁵⁰⁴ the land of commerce in which the soul profits with the loftiest elevations,⁵⁰⁵ that it then comes to the wholeness and perfection of returning in repentance (*Teshuvah*).⁵⁰⁶

3.

Now, we should connect this to the explanation in Ohr HaTorah⁵⁰⁷ about [the name] “Ma’arat HaMachpela” [lit. “the cave of the doubled”] (the place that our patriarchs and matriarchs came to upon the completion of their work,⁵⁰⁸ when they attained the perfection of repentance (*Teshuvah*)).⁵⁰⁹ That is, it is explained in Zohar,⁵¹⁰ “Which [letter of the Holy Name is] ‘doubled-*Machpeilah*-מכפלה’? The [letter] *Hey*-ה of the

⁵⁰³ Midrash Tanchuma Masei 9; Tanchuma Buber 7; Midrash Bamidbar Rabba 23:10

⁵⁰⁴ See Zohar I 122b *ibid*.

⁵⁰⁵ See Torah Ohr, beginning of Vayeishev; Sefer HaMaamarim Yiddish p. 91 to the verse (Genesis 23:2 *ibid*.), “Sarah died in Kiryat Arba... in the land of Canaan.”

⁵⁰⁶ See Likkutei Torah, Drushei Shemini Atzeret 92b that our teacher Moshe, peace be upon him, merited repentance and return (*Teshuvah*) before his death, specifically.

⁵⁰⁷ Ohr HaTorah, Chayei Sarah 118a; Also see 114b there.

⁵⁰⁸ Also see Ohr HaTorah *ibid*. (118b) that the explanation of the term “doubled-*Machpelah*-מכפלה” is that “the reward of all who are buried in it is **doubled and quadrupled-Kaful u’Mekufal**-כפול ומכופל” (Bereishit Rabba 58:8) which refers to the two aspects of the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*), the lower Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden HaTachton*) and the upper Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden HaElyon*), (the upper *Hey*-ה and the lower *Hey*-ה of the Name *HaShem*-יהוה), in each of which there is an aspect that is doubled, i.e., from below to above and from above to below.

⁵⁰⁹ As well as “the rise [in elevation and importance]” that the field received when it came into the possession of Avraham (Rashi to Genesis 23:17). For, through it first being in the possession of Ephron, there was [subsequently] caused to be even greater elevation in it (Ohr HaTorah, Chayei Sarah 115b) – similar to the elevation in the soul specifically upon the conclusion of its work in this world.

⁵¹⁰ Zohar I *ibid*. 129a

Holy Name is doubled (*Machpeilah*-מכפלה).” That is, the aspect of the *Hey*-ה is doubled in the Name *HaShem*-יהוה, and it therefore is called “doubled-*Machpeilah*-מכפלה.”

Based on this he elucidates the explanation [of the name “doubled-*Machpeilah*-מכפלה”],⁵¹¹ “It had a lower chamber (*Bayit*-בית) and an upper chamber (*Aliyah*-עליה) above it.” That is, the lower chamber (*Bayit*-בית) refers to the aspect of the lower *Hey*-ה, and the upper chamber (*Aliyah*-עליה) refers to the aspect of the upper *Hey*-ה, these being the two aspects present in the general matter of repentance (*Teshuvah*-תשובה).

That is, there is the lower repentance (*Teshuvah Tata’ah*), which refers to the return of the lower *Hey-Tashuv Hey*-ה-תשוב, and there is the upper repentance (*Teshuvah Ila’ah*), which refers to the return of the upper *Hey-Tashuv Hey*-ה-תשוב.⁵¹²

To explain, all this also relates to the matter of “Sarah died in Kiryat Arba etc.,” as it is in each and every person,⁵¹³ even including those who repent (only in close proximity to their death) with the lower repentance (*Teshuvah Tata’ah*). For, as explained elsewhere⁵¹⁴ even when it comes to the lower repentance (*Teshuvah Tata’ah*) and even when it only is out of fear of punishment, its innerness and truth is the matter [expressed in the verse],⁵¹⁵ “The spirit returns to God who gave

⁵¹¹ Rashi to Genesis 23:9 from Talmud Bavli, Eruvin 53a

⁵¹² Tanya, Iggeret HaTeshuvah, Ch. 4 and on

⁵¹³ See Midrash HaNe’elem ibid. 122a-b ibid.

⁵¹⁴ Biurim L’Iggeret HaTeshuvah, Section 52, (Likkutei Sichot Vol. 39 p. 202 and on), see there at length. Also see Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 5 (107b) “Now, though this is the [lower *Hey*-ה] etc.”

⁵¹⁵ Ecclesiastes 7:12; See Likkutei Torah, beginning of Ha’azinu

it,” this being the aspect of the upper repentance (*Teshuvah Ila'ah*).

We can add that even though, in general, there only are two aspects of repentance, the lower repentance (*Teshuvah Tata'ah*) and the upper repentance (*Teshuvah Ila'ah*), in Likkutei Torah⁵¹⁶ it is explained that more specifically, there are four aspects of repentance (*Teshuvah*). For, in each of the two aspects, the lower repentance (*Teshuvah Tata'ah*) and the upper repentance (*Teshuvah Ila'ah*), there are two ways, that of ascent (*Ha'ala'ah*) and that of drawing down (*Hamshachah*).⁵¹⁷

That is, in the lower repentance (*Teshuvah Tata'ah*) there is the ascent of the lower *Hey*-ה to the *Vav*-ו and the drawing down from the *Vav*-ו to the *Hey*-ה. Likewise, in the upper repentance (*Teshuvah Ila'ah*) there is the ascent of the upper *Hey*-ה to the *Yod*-י and the drawing down of the *Yod*-י to the *Hey*-ה.

⁵¹⁶ Likkutei Torah, end of Parshat Balak; Also see Biurim L'Iggeret HaTeshuvah, Section 14 (Likkutei Sichot ibid. p. 173), that every aspect of repentance (*Teshuvah*), including even the lowest aspect, includes all four aspects. See there.

⁵¹⁷ See Ohr HaTorah ibid. (118b) that the explanation of the term “doubled-*Machpelah*-מכפלה” is that “the reward of all who are buried in it is **doubled and quadrupled-Kaful u'Mekufal**-כפול ומכופל” (Bereishit Rabba 58:8) which refers to the two aspects of the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*), the lower Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden HaTachton*) and the upper Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden HaElyon*), (the upper *Hey*-ה and the lower *Hey*-ה of the Name *HaShem*-יהוה), in each of which there is an aspect that is doubled, i.e., from below to above and from above to below. It is with this in mind that we can explain what is stated in Iggeret HaTeshuvah, Ch. 9 about the matter of repentance (*Teshuvah*), that “the place of the knot is twofold and fourfold (*Kaful u'Mekufal*-כפול ומכופל) thicker.” For, the general matter of repentance (*Teshuvah*) is the “doubling-*Kaful*-כפול,” – i.e., the lower repentance (*Teshuvah Tata'ah*) and the upper repentance (*Teshuvah Ila'ah*), and in each of them there are the two manners of ascent (*Ha'ala'ah*) and drawing down (*Hamshachah*) – [thus], “quadrupled-*Mekufal*-מכופל.”

With this in mind we can understand the two explanations of “doubled-*Machpeilah*-מכפלה,” (“It had a lower chamber (*Bayit*-בית) and an upper chamber (*Aliyah*-עליה) above it,” and that “it is called such because of the doubled couples [buried there]”),⁵¹⁸ as they are in the inner aspect of matters.

The first explanation hints at the general matter of the two aspects of repentance (*Teshuvah*), the lower chamber (*Bayit*-בית) referring to the lower repentance (*Teshuvah Tata'ah*), and “the upper chamber (*Aliyah*-עליה) above it” referring to the upper repentance (*Teshuvah Ila'ah*). [The specific wording is “upon it-*Al Gabav*-על גביו,” indicating that the “the upper chamber (*Aliyah*-עליה)” is specifically founded upon “the lower chamber (*Bayit*-בית).” This is because the order in one’s service of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, is that first there must be the lower repentance (*Teshuvah Tata'ah*) and only afterwards can one come to the upper repentance (*Teshuvah Ila'ah*).⁵¹⁹ Moreover, even when one comes to the state of the upper repentance (*Teshuvah Ila'ah*), it must be [in a way that] “my sin is always before me.”]⁵²⁰

In the second explanation (that it is called thus because of the couples [buried there] man and wife), there is a hint to

⁵¹⁸ Rashi to Genesis 23:9 *ibid*.

⁵¹⁹ Iggeret HaTeshuvah, end of Ch. 8. The lower repentance (*Teshuvah Tata'ah*) prepares **and ultimately brings** one to the upper repentance (*Teshuvah Ila'ah*). This is as in the explanation of “doubled-*Machpeilah*-מכפלה,” “that it doubles etc.,” (as in the explanation of Rashi in Likkutei Sichot *ibid*. [Vol. 5, p. 110 and on]). Additionally, based on what is written in Iggeret HaKodesh *ibid*. the first *Hey*-ה “doubles” the final *Hey*-ה. This is as explained in various places about the matter of the letter *Hey*-ה that fills the first letter *Hey*-ה [when expanded as *Hey*-הה], (Torah Ohr, beginning of Chayei Sarah; Likkutei Torah, Shemini Atzeret 92c; Ohr HaTorah, Chayei Sarah 118a).

⁵²⁰ Psalms 55:5; See Iggeret HaTeshuvah, end of Ch. 11

the two ways of ascent (*Ha'ala'ah*) and drawing down (*Hamshachah*) present in “the lower chamber (*Bayit*-בית)” (the lower repentance – *Teshuvah Tata'ah*) as well as in “the upper chamber (*Aliyah*-עליה)” (the upper repentance – *Teshuvah Ila'ah*). For, as known, woman indicates the work of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way that is from below to Above, and man indicates a drawing down from Above to below.