

Discourse 14

“*Vayigash Eilav Yehudah... -
Yehudah approach him...*”

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Vayigash,
7th of Tevet, 5729
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,⁸²⁸ “Yehudah approached him.” About this [verse] it states in the discourse said one-hundred years ago,⁸²⁹ [which although is only a concise version of the discourse entitled “*Vayigash Eilav Yehudah*,”⁸³⁰ nevertheless, the summary includes the entire lengthiness in it, especially considering that the concise version itself is lengthy], that in *Zohar*⁸³¹ it is explained that this is the matter of the juxtaposition of redemption (*Ge’ulah*) to prayer (*Tefilah*) (as will be explained).

To preface, this verse comes after the entire lengthy story about the chaining down of events that brought Yaakov to go down to Egypt. This is as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁸³² “Our father Yaakov should have gone down to Egypt

⁸²⁸ Genesis 44:18

⁸²⁹ Discourse entitled “*Inyan Hagashat Yehudah L’Yosef*” 5629 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5629 p. 16)

⁸³⁰ As per the header of the discourse.

⁸³¹ *Zohar* I 205b

⁸³² Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 89b

in iron chains,” but because of the kindness of the Holy One, blessed is He, his descent came about through the chaining down of the above-mentioned events. The same is so of Yosef, in that his sale and descent to Egypt was in the way [expressed in the verse],⁸³³ “It was to be a provider that God sent me ahead of you.”

Now, although Scripture does not depart from its simple meaning,⁸³⁴ nevertheless, Heaven forbid to say that the Torah is simply a book of stories! Zohar states⁸³⁵ awesomely negative descriptions about a person who says that the substance of Torah is that of relating stories.

Rather, Torah is eternal,⁸³⁶ and its name “Torah-תורה” is of the same root as “instruction-*Hora’ah*-הוראה.”⁸³⁷ Similarly, as in the words of his honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rabbe,⁸³⁸ the [Aramaic] name for “Torah-*Oraytah*-אורייתא” is a composite of “Light comes-*Ohr Yeita*-יתא,” in that Torah draws light into man’s conduct, such that it comes to instruct every single person. For, as known,⁸³⁹ “the deeds of the fathers are a sign for the children.”

The explanation of this is not just as Ramban states in his commentary on Torah,⁸⁴⁰ that it is a general sign for the

⁸³³ Genesis 45:5

⁸³⁴ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 63a

⁸³⁵ Zohar III 152a

⁸³⁶ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 17

⁸³⁷ See Radak to Psalms 19:8; Sefer HaShoroshim of the Radak, section on the root “*Yarah*-ירה”; Gur Aryeh to beginning of Bereishit citing Radak; Also see Zohar III 53b.

⁸³⁸ Sefer HaSichot 5704 p. 116; Also see Likkutei Sichot Vol. 20, p. 271 and on.

⁸³⁹ See Midrash Tanchuma, Lech Lecha 9; Midrash Bereishit Rabba 40:6

⁸⁴⁰ Ramban to Genesis 12:6; 12:10; 14:1; 26:1; 26:20; 34:4 and elsewhere.

Jewish people in each and every generation, but it also is a sign for every single individual as to how he is to serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, even when he is outside the Holy Land and during the time of exile, except that presently these matters are only spiritually [present], whereas when Moshiach will come and the exile will come to its conclusion and the redemption will be, as in the ruling of the Rambam⁸⁴¹ that Moshiach will gather the dispersed of Israel, then these matters will also be drawn forth physically.

Now, based on all the above, we must understand the matter of Yehudah approaching Yosef as it is in man's service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, within the soul of man. It is in this regard that the discourse brings the explanation in Zohar, that it refers to the matter of the juxtaposition of redemption (*Ge'ulah*) to prayer (*Tefillah*).

2.

The explanation is that Yosef is the matter of redemption (*Ge'ulah*). This is because the redemption from the famine was by his hand, as the verse states, "It was to be a provider that God sent me ahead of you." This is especially so as it is according to Kabbalah.⁸⁴² For, as explained in the discourse, Yosef is the aspect of the Upper Righteous One (*Tzaddik Elyon*) who is called "the Redeemer" (*Go'el*-גואל), as

⁸⁴¹ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Melachim 11:1; 11:4

⁸⁴² See Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as Gates of Light, Gate Two (*Yesod*); Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 36, and elsewhere.

the verse states,⁸⁴³ “If he will redeem you, good (*Tov*-טוב),” in which the word “good-*Tov*-טוב” has the numerical value of 17 and refers to Yosef, as the verse states,⁸⁴⁴ “Yosef was seventeen years old.”

[In contrast], Yehudah is the aspect of the Amidah prayer. This is because [the name] “Yehudah-יהודה” is of the root,⁸⁴⁵ “This time I will gratefully submit-*Odeh*-אודה to *HaShem*-יהו”ה,” and “thankful submission-*Hoda’ah*-הודאה” is the aspect of nullification (*Bittul*),⁸⁴⁶ which itself is the matter of the prostrations of the Amidah prayer.

Moreover, about the birth of Yehudah the verse states,⁸⁴⁷ “She stopped (*VaTa’amod*-ותעמוד) giving birth,” [which is of the same root as “the standing prayer-*Amidah*-עמידה”], and “standing-*Amidah*-עמידה” (about which it states,⁸⁴⁸ “standing-*Amidah*-עמידה” means nothing other than prayer (*Tefillah*))” is the aspect of nullification (*Bittul*).⁸⁴⁹

The explanation of this is that at the beginning of prayer we recite, “Submit to *HaShem*-יהו”ה etc.,” and then recite the verses of song (*Pesukei d’Zimra*), the blessings of the *Shema* and the *Shema* recital, until we arrive at the Amidah prayer. Now, the matter of the verses of song (*Pesukei d’Zimra*) is contemplation (*Hitbonenut*) into the particulars of the matter [expressed in the verse],⁸⁵⁰ “How abundant are Your works,

⁸⁴³ Ruth 3:13

⁸⁴⁴ Genesis 37:2

⁸⁴⁵ Genesis 29:35

⁸⁴⁶ See Torah Ohr, Vayeitzei 23a; Vayechei 45a, and elsewhere.

⁸⁴⁷ Genesis 29:35

⁸⁴⁸ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 6b; 26b

⁸⁴⁹ See Torah Ohr, Vayeishev 29b; Likkutei Torah, Naso 20c, and elsewhere.

⁸⁵⁰ Psalms 104:24

HaShem-יהו"ה," and,⁸⁵¹ "How great are Your works, *HaShem*-יהו"ה," by which we are brought to [emotional] arousal etc.

In the blessings of the *Shema* recital, the contemplation is into the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the angels, the fiery-*Seraphim* [angels] and the holy animal-*Chayot* [angels], which is with great commotion etc. Then, in the *Shema* recital the matter of, "You shall love [*HaShem*-יהו"ה your God]... and guard yourselves etc.," is caused to be, this being the matters of love and fear of Him. All this is in a way of the arousal of the heart stemming from the grasp etc., which is the matter of "Understanding-*Binah* is the heart."⁸⁵²

We then come to the Amidah prayer, which is the matter of standing with great self-nullification (*Bittul*), "like a servant before his Master,"⁸⁵³ such that he is utterly nullified of his [independent] existence, this being the matter of Yehudah.

Now, since Yosef is the matter of redemption (*Ge'ulah*) and Yehudah is the matter of prayer (the Amidah), therefore the matter of Yehudah approaching Yosef is the matter of the juxtaposition of redemption (*Ge'ulah*) to prayer (*Tefillah*). This is as stated in Midrash⁸⁵⁴ about the matter of the approach of Yehudah to Yosef, that about this the verse states,⁸⁵⁵ "One approaches the other one, not even a breath comes between them." The same is so with redemption (*Ge'ulah*) and prayer (*Tefillah*), that we do not pause between [mentioning] redemption (*Ge'ulah*) and [the Amidah] prayer (*Tefillah*).

⁸⁵¹ Psalms 92:6

⁸⁵² Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 17a

⁸⁵³ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 10a

⁸⁵⁴ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 93:2

⁸⁵⁵ Job 41:8

3.

However, this must be better understood. For, in redemption (*Ge'ulah*) and prayer (*Tefillah*), the order is that redemption (*Ge'ulah*) [precedes and] is juxtaposed to prayer (*Tefillah*) (and not that prayer (*Tefillah*) [precedes] redemption (*Ge'ulah*)). Thus, since Yosef is the matter of redemption (*Ge'ulah*) and Yehudah is the matter of prayer (*Tefillah*), [the order should have been reversed] in that Yosef should have approached Yehudah, similar to juxtaposing redemption (*Ge'ulah*) to prayer (*Tefillah*). This being so, why did Yehudah approach Yosef, which is like [preceding with] juxtaposing prayer (*Tefillah*) to redemption (*Ge'ulah*)?

4.

Now, to understand this, we first must preface with the matter of [the words],⁸⁵⁶ “Come, my Beloved, to greet the bride, let us welcome the face of Shabbat”⁸⁵⁷ (as in the Jewish custom to recite this every Friday night).⁸⁵⁸ To explain, as known,⁸⁵⁹ the Shabbat is the matter of the prayer of all the days of the week. That is, just as the matter of prayer is ascent from below to Above, as the verse states,⁸⁶⁰ “A ladder was set earthward and its top reached heavenward,” about which Zohar states,⁸⁶¹

⁸⁵⁶ Of the Friday evening prayers – *Lecha Dodi*.

⁸⁵⁷ In regard to the coming section see Sefer HaMaamarim 5629 p. 28 and on.

⁸⁵⁸ See Shaar HaKollel 17:7.

⁸⁵⁹ See Likkutei Torah, Behar 41a

⁸⁶⁰ Genesis 28:12

⁸⁶¹ Zohar I 266b; Zohar III 306b; Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 45 (83a)

“The ladder (*Sulam*-סלם) refers to prayer,” the same is so of Shabbat, that it is the matter of the ascent of the worlds from below to Above.

Now, just as prayer (*Tefillah*) is the matter of self-nullification (*Bittul*) (as mentioned above), the same is so of Shabbat. This is because the word “Shabbat-שבת” is of the same root as “rest-*Shevitah*-שביתה,” in that it is forbidden to do acts of labor, this being the matter of nullification (*Bittul*).⁸⁶²

However, for the ascent from below to Above to be possible, there must be a drawing down of empowerment for this from Above. This then, is why the Ingathering of the souls of Israel (*Knesset Yisroel*) say to the Holy One, blessed is He, “Come, my Beloved, to greet the bride, let us welcome the face of Shabbat.” That is, for the matter of “the bride-*Kalah*-כלה” to be possible, which is the matter of the “expiry-*Kilayon*-כליון” and ascent from below to Above, for this to be possible there must be the matter of “Come, my Beloved, to greet the bride,” this being the matter of drawing down from Above to the Ingathering of the souls of Israel (*Knesset Yisroel*) who are called “the bride-*Kalah*-כלה.” Through this the “expiry-*Kilayon*-כליון” and ascent from below to Above is possible, as explained at length in Likkutei Torah⁸⁶³ and in the discourses of the Mittler Rebbe⁸⁶⁴ and in Ohr HaTorah.⁸⁶⁵

⁸⁶² See Torah Ohr, Lech Lecha 12b; Likkutei Torah *ibid.* 22d, and elsewhere.

⁸⁶³ Likkutei Torah, discourse entitled “*VeHayah Midei Chodesh b'Chodsho*” (Zot HaBrachah 97a).

⁸⁶⁴ Siddur Im Da”Ch 211c

⁸⁶⁵ See the summaries (*Kitzurim*) to the discourse entitled “*VeHayah Midei Chodesh b'Chodsho*” *ibid.* in Ohr HaTorah, Bereishit Vol. 1 25a; Zot HaBrachah p. 1,899; See Ohr HaTorah, Balak p. 550(2); Sukkot p. 1,741.

This is also the meaning of juxtaposing redemption (*Ge'ulah*) to prayer (*Tefillah*). This is because for the matter of the ascent of prayer to be possible, there must be a drawing down of empowerment for this from Above, which is the matter of [first] juxtaposing redemption (*Ge'ulah*). The same is likewise so of Yosef and Yehudah, (whose matters are redemption (*Ge'ulah*) and prayer (*Tefillah*)), that there first must be the granting of empowerment from Above. This is the matter of [first] drawing down from Yosef, (whose matter is redemption (*Ge'ulah*)).

This is the meaning of the statement at the end of the preceding Torah portion⁸⁶⁶ about the silver goblet that Yosef hid in Binyomin's bag. For, Binyomin is the lower Righteous One (*Tzaddik Tachton*),⁸⁶⁷ and the silver goblet is the matter of love (*Ahavah*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה. For, as known, silver (*Kesef*-כסף) is the matter of love (*Ahavah*).

This is as stated in Tanya,⁸⁶⁸ that the word “silver-*Kesef*-כסף” is of the same root as in the verse,⁸⁶⁹ “You surely yearned (*Nikhsaf Nikhsafta*-נכסף נכספת) for your father's house.” That is, Yosef drew down and affected the matter of love (*Ahavah*) for Godliness in Binyomin.⁸⁷⁰

This is the matter of the hidden love (*Ahavah Mesuteret*) present in each and every Jew, which is the matter of Yosef **hiding** the silver goblet. That is, the love is not openly revealed,

⁸⁶⁶ Genesis 44:2 and on

⁸⁶⁷ See Zohar I 153b; Torah Ohr, Terumah 80d

⁸⁶⁸ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 50

⁸⁶⁹ Genesis 31:30

⁸⁷⁰ See the discourse entitled “*v'Et Gevee'ee, Gevia HaKesef*” in Maamarei Admor HaEmtza'ee, Mikeitz p. 295 and on; Ohr HaTorah Mikeitz p. 343a

in that one does not sense the love, but it rather is a hidden love (*Ahavah Mesuteret*). The reason for this⁸⁷¹ is because in the souls of intermediates (*Beinonim*) and those below them, this love cannot be revealed, lest there be a derivation of vitality from it to the side opposite holiness, Heaven forbid. That is, since the evil still is openly revealed in them, the love can possibly come to manifest in matters that are alien [to Godliness], Heaven forbid, and therefore the love must specifically be concealed, this being the matter of the hidden love (*Ahavah Mesuteret*). However, once the love is drawn down from Above, the ascent from below to Above in prayer then becomes possible.

5.

This then, is the meaning of “Yehudah approached him.” That is, Yehudah approaching Yosef is the matter of the Amidah prayer itself, which comes after the juxtaposition of redemption (*Ge’ulah*) to prayer (*Tefillah*), this being the matter of drawing down the hidden love (*Ahavah Mesuteret*) from Above, (the silver (*Kesef*) goblet that Yosef hid, his matter being redemption (*Ge’ulah*)). In this, all levels are included etc., except that they still are concealed. Through this there subsequently is caused to be the matter of ascent from below to Above, which is the matter of “Yehudah approached him,” this being the matter of the ascent of Yehudah until he ascends to the level of Yosef.

⁸⁷¹ See Likkutei Torah, Masei p. 90a and on.

This is also the meaning of the statement in the Haftorah of this Torah portion,⁸⁷² “Now you... take for yourself one piece of wood and write upon it, ‘For Yehudah...’ and take one piece of wood and write upon it, ‘For Yosef...’ then bring them close to yourself, one to the other, like one piece of wood, and they will become united in your hand.”

Beyond this, Yehudah elevates and ascends to an even higher level than the level of Yosef, as it concludes there,⁸⁷³ “My servant Dovid will be a leader for them forever.” This likewise is the matter of “deed is greater”⁸⁷⁴ which will take place in the coming future,⁸⁷⁵ when “My servant Dovid will be a leader for them forever,” with the coming of our righteous Moshiach, may he come and redeem us and take us upright to our land, with the true and complete redemption, in the near future!

⁸⁷² Ezekiel 37:16-17

⁸⁷³ Ezekiel 37:25

⁸⁷⁴ Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 40b

⁸⁷⁵ Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5567 p. 309; p. 317; Ohr HaTorah, beginning of Vayigash, and elsewhere.