

Discourse 14

*“HaBa'im Yashreish Yaakov... -
[Days] are coming when Yaakov will take root...”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Shemot,
25th of Teivet, Shabbat Mevarchim Shvat, 5730
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,¹⁰⁵⁶ “[Days] are coming when Yaakov will take root; Yisroel will bud and blossom and fill the face of the earth with fruit,” (as stated at the beginning of [this week’s] Haftorah for the Torah portion of Shemot, which relates to the statement at the beginning of the Torah portion (for, as known,¹⁰⁵⁷ the substance of the Haftorah is related to the Torah portion),¹⁰⁵⁸ “And these are the names of the children of Yisroel who were coming to Egypt.”) In Torah Ohr,¹⁰⁵⁹ the Alter Rebbe (whose Hilulah on the 24th of Tevet, fell out before Shabbat), points out that we must better understand the relationship between “taking root” and “coming to Egypt.”

To point out, the simple meaning is that through the exile in Egypt, the Jewish people greatly multiplied (this being the meaning of “Yisroel will bud and blossom,” which came

¹⁰⁵⁶ Isaiah 27:6

¹⁰⁵⁷ See Tur, Orach Chayim 428 toward the end.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Exodus 1:1; See Rashi to Isaiah 27:6 *ibid.*, and elsewhere.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Torah Ohr, Shemot 53c and on, in the discourse entitled “*HaBa'im Yashreish Yaakov.*”

about through “taking root” in Egypt). This is as the verse states,¹⁰⁶⁰ “With seventy souls your ancestors descended to Egypt, and now *HaShem*-יהוה your God has made you like the stars of heaven for abundance” (as we recite in the Haggadah).¹⁰⁶¹ This is also as stated at the beginning of the Torah portion. (Immediately following [the passage] “who are coming to Egypt”) [it states],¹⁰⁶² “the children of Israel were fruitful, teemed, increased, and became strong – very very much.

Nonetheless, this itself requires explanation. That is, why is it that the matter of “Yisroel will bud and blossom” specifically, was brought about through the exile in Egypt (“who were coming to Egypt”)? We also must understand why it states, “[Days] are coming when Yaakov will take root,” specifically using the name Yaakov [rather than the name Yisroel (as stated at the beginning of the Torah portion, “These are the names of the children of Yisroel etc.”)] Only at the end of the verse, about the matter of “budding and blossoming,” which refers to the time of redemption, is the name Yisroel used.] From this it is understood that specifically Yaakov has a unique superiority here.

This is as also cited in Torah Ohr,¹⁰⁶³ that the verse states,¹⁰⁶⁴ “Your Creator, O’ Yaakov, the One who formed you, O’ Yisroel.” That is, about Yaakov a term of “creation” (*Briyah*-בריאה) is used, whereas about Yisroel a term of

¹⁰⁶⁰ Deuteronomy 10:22

¹⁰⁶¹ Haggadah Shel Pesach, section entitled “*BiMetei Me’at*”

¹⁰⁶² Exodus 1:7

¹⁰⁶³ Torah Ohr 53c and on *ibid*.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Isaiah 43:1

“formation” (*Yetzira*-יצירה) is used, even though, at first glance, it seems that the opposite should have been said, being that Yisroel is greater than Yaakov.

This is because Yaakov-יעקב is a low level, in that he is named this because “his hand was grasping onto the heel-*Akeiv*-עקב of Esav.”¹⁰⁶⁵ That is, not only does Esav exist, but his hand is grasping the heel (*Akeiv*-עקב) of Esav, such that there can be [the matter of] “he outwitted me (*Vaya’akveini*-ויעקבני) these two times.”¹⁰⁶⁶ In contrast, the name Yisroel-ישראל is “because you have striven-*Sarita*-שרית with God-*Elohi*”-אלהים and with man and have overcome.”¹⁰⁶⁷ That is, he is higher (not only than Esav, but is even higher than) the ministering angel of Esav.

However, the world of Creation (*Briyah*-בריאה) is higher than the world of Formation (*Yetzira*-יצירה). This is because the matter of formation (*Yetzira*) is only that one makes a form in something, or changes something from one form to another form, which also is in the ability of the creatures to do.

In contrast, creation (*Briyah*) indicates the coming into being of something from nothing (as stated by Ramban in his Torah commentary,¹⁰⁶⁸ “We have no expression in the Holy Language for bringing something out of nothing, except for the word ‘created-*Bara*-ברא””).

This is something that is not in the ability of the creatures to do, but is solely [in the power] of the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהוה

¹⁰⁶⁵ Genesis 25:26

¹⁰⁶⁶ Genesis 27:36

¹⁰⁶⁷ Genesis 32:29

¹⁰⁶⁸ Ramban to Genesis 1:1

Himself, blessed is He, whose existence is intrinsic to Him etc. He alone has the power and ability to create something from nothing.¹⁰⁶⁹

This is especially so considering the order of the worlds, in that the world of Creation (*Briyah*) is higher than the world of Formation (*Yetzirah*) in a way that is beyond any relative comparison. This is as stated,¹⁰⁷⁰ “He forms light and creates darkness.” That is, the world of Formation (*Yetzirah*), which is the revealed world (*Alma d’Itgaliya*), is called “light-*Ohr*-אור,” whereas the world of Creation (*Briyah*), which is the concealed world (*Alma d’Itkasiya*), is called “darkness-*Choshech*-חושך,”¹⁰⁷¹ in that it is the matter of concealment (*He’elem*) that transcends revelation (*Gilyu*).¹⁰⁷² However, even so, the verse states, “Your Creator, Yaakov,” and as it states here, “[Days] are coming when Yaakov will take root,” specifically Yaakov-יעקב.

2.

Now, we should first explain the matter of “taking root” (“[Days] are coming when Yaakov will take root”) this being the matter of sowing, through which there then is caused to be the sprouting (“will bud and blossom”) in a way that is beyond any relative comparison.¹⁰⁷³

¹⁰⁶⁹ Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 20

¹⁰⁷⁰ In the *Yotzer* blessing of the *Shema* recital.

¹⁰⁷¹ Pri Etz Chayim, Shaar HaKriyat Shema, Ch. 1 and elsewhere.

¹⁰⁷² See Likkutei Torah, Drushim L’Yom HaKippurim 69b; Shir HaShirim 4c,

¹⁰⁷³ Also see Torah Ohr, beginning of Parshat Beshalach.

This is because¹⁰⁷⁴ most seeds that are sown are inedible garden seeds, in that they only are a seed, which has neither the flavor (nor the scent) of food. However, when the seed is sown in the earth, edible fruits sprout from it, even though, in essence, the seed was not at all in the aspect of food. (This is not so of the [edible] flesh of the fruit, which if planted, will not cause anything to sprout at all.)

Even regarding the seed of grains which are eaten, in addition to the fact that through planting them, an increase is caused in the crop in a manifold way etc., (in that through planting a single seed many seeds will grow) moreover, the sprouting only occurs once the seed has been in the earth for three days, causing it to decompose¹⁰⁷⁵ and be completely nullified of its existence as a seed, and only then can the sprouting take place. This being so, it is a matter that is beyond any relative comparison. How much more is this so of a tree, that through planting a seed that has no flavor at all, a big tree bearing [many] fruits grows. This certainly is a matter that is beyond all relative comparison.

Now, the matter of sowing also is present in the Jewish people, who are called “the first of His crop.”¹⁰⁷⁶ [To point out, in some communities, the Haftorah read for the Torah portion of Shemot is, “The words of Yirmiyahu,”¹⁰⁷⁷ which concludes with the verse,¹⁰⁷⁸ “Israel is holy to *HaShem*-יהוה, the first of His crop.”] That is [the matter of sowing is present] in their

¹⁰⁷⁴ See Torah Ohr, Shemot ibid. 53d

¹⁰⁷⁵ See Mishnah Kilayim 2:3

¹⁰⁷⁶ Jeremiah 2:3

¹⁰⁷⁷ Jeremiah 1:1 and on

¹⁰⁷⁸ Jeremiah 2:3 ibid.

service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in fulfilling Torah and *mitzvot*. (This is because everything that exists in the world is because this is also how it is in Torah, as in the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,¹⁰⁷⁹ "He gazed into the Torah and created the world.")

The explanation is that as it is in the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, the sowing of a seed which has no flavor, is the matter of accepting the yoke (*Kabbalat Ol*) [of Heaven], which is the matter of serving Him with simplicity.

In general, this is the difference between [studying] the Torah and [fulfilling] the *mitzvot*. This is because Torah is the matter of understanding and comprehension, and thus, if one's study is such that he does not know what is being said (in the Oral Torah) he has not fulfilled his obligation to study Torah, and cannot make the blessing over the Torah (as Magen Avraham writes).¹⁰⁸⁰

In contrast, this is not so of the *mitzvot*, the fulfillment of which must specifically be through accepting the yoke (*Kabbalat Ol*), as in the words of the blessing over the *mitzvot*, "Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us etc." This is such that even those *mitzvot* that are intellectually understood, called "ordinances" (*Mishpatim*), must be fulfilled only out of accepting the yoke (*Kabbalat Ol*).¹⁰⁸¹ This is as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹⁰⁸² "One who says [in prayer], 'Just as Your mercies extend to a

¹⁰⁷⁹ Zohar II 161a and on.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Magen Avraham to Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim, Siman 50, cited in Hilchot Talmud Torah of the Alter Rebbe, end of Ch. 2.

¹⁰⁸¹ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5692 p. 187.

¹⁰⁸² Mishnah Brachot 5:3; Talmud Bavli, Brachot 33b and Rashi there.

bird's nest [in that You commanded to send the mother bird away, so too extend Your mercies to us'], they silence him, because he transforms the attributes of the Holy One, blessed is He, into [expressions of] mercy, when they are nothing but decrees."

In other words, when fulfilling the *mitzvot* stems from reason, this is an unbefitting way to fulfill the *mitzvah*, since fulfilling the *mitzvah* must only be because "He sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us," which is the matter of accepting the yoke (*Kabbalat Ol*).

More specifically, in Torah itself there (not only is the matter of understanding and comprehension, but) also the matter of accepting the yoke (*Kabbalat Ol*). This is because the study of Torah¹⁰⁸³ must specifically be with the fear of Heaven and the acceptance of the yoke.

This is also the general matter of according precedence to "we will do" (*Na'aseh*) over "we will listen" (*Nishma*), in that specifically through this, we reach the true matter of Torah. (This is similar to the growth that comes through sowing the seed which has no flavor. This is as the verse states,¹⁰⁸⁴ "The innocence of the upright will guide them," as explained in the Talmudic passage on the giving of the Torah.¹⁰⁸⁵

This then, is also the meaning of "Yaakov will take root," specifically Yaakov-עקב. For, the matter of accepting the yoke (which is indicated by the rooting and sowing of a seed

¹⁰⁸³ To point out, in the blessing over the Torah we recite "who chose us from amongst all the nations," this being free choice (*Bechirah Chafsheet*) absent of reason.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Proverbs 11:3

¹⁰⁸⁵ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 88b

that has no flavor) in the form of man, is in the heel (*Eikev*-עֵקֶב) of the foot, this being the matter of [the name] Yaakov-יעקב, [which divides into] “the *Yod* in the heel-*Yod Eikev*-יֵי עֵקֶב,” as explained in Torah Ohr.¹⁰⁸⁶ (In contrast, this is not so of Yisroel-יִשְׂרָאֵל the matter of which is, “a head for Me-*Li Rosh*-לִי רֹאשׁ”)

Now, just as in the general matter of sowing (“will take root”), the matter of growth is specifically brought about through it, the same is so regarding the general matter of the descent to Egypt, “[They] were coming (to Egypt) [where] Yaakov will take root,” through which the matter of growth is brought about, “Yisroel will bud and blossom.” This is like how it is, that specifically through the descent into exile in Egypt there was caused to be the elevation of the giving of the Torah, as the verse states,¹⁰⁸⁷ “When you take the people out of Egypt, you will serve God on this mountain.”

3.

Now, to understand with additional explanation why it specifically is through “Yaakov will take root” that we come to “Yisroel will bud and blossom,” we must preface with the explanation in Sefer HaMaamarim 5562 [Sefer Maamarei Admor HaZaken, which is in the handwriting of the Mittler Rebbe, with the glosses and notes of the Tzemach Tzeddek],¹⁰⁸⁸ in the discourse that begins with the words, “*Lehavin Shorshan*

¹⁰⁸⁶ Torah Ohr Shemot 53d

¹⁰⁸⁷ Exodus 3:12

¹⁰⁸⁸ See the “*Petach-Davar*” to the book.

Shel HaDevarim,”¹⁰⁸⁹ [which is a wondrous explanation of the discourse of the Torah portion of Vayechi,¹⁰⁹⁰ and which appears to be a discourse of the Torah portion of Shemot, since the discourse that follows it is of the Torah portion of Va’era.]¹⁰⁹¹ There is a very deep and sweet explanation there of the statement at the beginning of Tanya¹⁰⁹² in the name of the Zohar¹⁰⁹³ on the verse,¹⁰⁹⁴ “He blew into his nostrils the soul of life,” that “He who blows, blows from within himself, from his inwardness and his innermost being,” which is in reference to the souls of the Jewish people.

There he explains that the level of “He blows from within himself” transcends the entire matter of refinements (*Birurim*). For, even though the matter of refinements (*Birurim*) is also a very high level, [as it states],¹⁰⁹⁵ “They are refined with Wisdom-*Chochmah*,” this being the aspect of the Concealed Wisdom (*Chochmah Stima’ah*) of the Long Patient One-*Arich Anpin*, nevertheless, this is connected to the aspect of the desire (*Ratzon*), which is of no comparison to the

¹⁰⁸⁹ Maamarei Admor HaZkane 5562 Vol. 1 p. 128 and on; Also see the above-mentioned discourse by the same title with the glosses in Ohr HaTorah, Vayechi, Vol. 6 p. 1,117a and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5652 p. 16 and on.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Sefer HaMaamarim *ibid.* p. 125.

¹⁰⁹¹ The same is likewise so regarding various discourses that begin “*Lehavin Shorshan Shel HaDevarim HaNizkarim Le’eil*” in the above-mentioned Sefer HaMaamarim.

¹⁰⁹² Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, beginning of Ch. 2

¹⁰⁹³ See Marei Mekomot Hagahot v’Ha’arot Ktzarot to Tanya *ibid.*; Also see Igrot Kodesh, Vol. 20 p. 131 (that this is not found in our editions of Zohar, but is found in other early works of Kabbalah, amongst them: Emek HaMelech 127c; Introduction to Shefa Tal; Also see Ramban to Genesis 2:7; Rabbeinu Bachaye to Exodus 20:7.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Genesis 2:7

¹⁰⁹⁵ See Zohar II 254b (Heichalot); Etz Chayim, Shaar 8 (Shaar Drushei Nekudot) Ch. 6; Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 26 (144b); Epistle 28.

Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited One, *HaShem* יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, (relative to whom the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) and the world of Action (*Asiyah*) are utterly equal). Thus, for there to be the matter of desire (*Ratzon*), there had to be a constriction-*Tzimtzum* of His Essential Self etc.

This matter (that the desire is of no comparison to His Essential Self) is also understood intellectually (and not just out of simple faith). To explain, the question posed by the Jewish philosophers is well known.¹⁰⁹⁶ That is, how does it apply for there to be such a prayer as, "May it be Your will (*Yehi Ratzon*-יהי רצון) etc." For, at first glance, this would imply the matter of change [in Him], Heaven forbid to think so. That is, before the prayer His desire is one way, and through our prayer [being accepted] we cause it to be a different way [thus implying change in Him].

Furthermore, we also must understand the matter of desire (*Ratzon*) Above in general, such that "it brings satisfaction of spirit before Me that I spoke and My will was done."¹⁰⁹⁷ For, at first glance, desire (*Ratzon*) [that is, wanting] is a matter that only applies in man below, whose want for something is because he lacks it, and the satisfaction of the want is what makes him whole, all of which does not apply to say about *HaShem* יהו"ה's Essential Self, blessed is He.

The explanation¹⁰⁹⁸ is that the matter of desire (*Ratzon*) is that there was an emanation from the Essential Self of the

¹⁰⁹⁶ Also see Maamarei Admor HaZaken *ibid.* p. 73.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Sifri and Rashi to Numbers 28:8 and elsewhere.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Maamarei Admor HaZaken *ibid.* p. 126

Emanator of the light of the desire (*Ohr HaRatzon*), just as He emanated the light of wisdom (*Ohr HaChochmah*) etc. (Only that after the desire (*Ratzon*) was emanated, it is such that it is completely unified to the One who desires, and is unlike the other emanated *Sefirot* that do not have this union). Thus, since this is what was emanated from the Essential Self of the One who emanated it, it is of no comparison to His Essential Self, and it comes by way of the constriction-*Tzimtzum* of His Essential Self etc.

However, the root of the souls of the Jewish people that “He blew from within Himself, from His inwardness and His innermost being,” is higher than the aspect of the desire (*Ratzon*). This is why the level of the souls of the Jewish people is even higher than Torah and *mitzvot*.

This is as stated in Midrash,¹⁰⁹⁹ “Seven things preceded the world: The Torah, the Jewish people etc.,” and amongst the seven themselves, the Jewish people preceded the Torah, since it states in Torah, “Command the children of Israel,” and “Speak to the children of Israel.” That is, only once there are the souls of the Jewish people is it possible for there to be the matter of Torah.

This is because Torah and *mitzvot* relate to the desire (*Ratzon*), being that the entire matter of Torah is “to distinguish between the impure and the pure, and between that creature which may be eaten and that creature which may not be

¹⁰⁹⁹ This is as stated (“seven things”) in Torah Ohr, Megillat Esther 122a and elsewhere. In our edition of Midrash Bereishit Rabbah it states “six things preceded.” See Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 54a; Midrash Tanchuma Naso 11, and elsewhere; Also see the long commentary of the Maharzu to Bereishit Rabba there (Vilna 5615).

eaten,”¹¹⁰⁰ this being the matter of refinements (*Birurim*), which depend on the matter of desire (*Ratzon*). In contrast, the souls of the Jewish people are higher than the desire (*Ratzon*), since they come from “His inwardness and His innermost being.”

Now, the matter of “He blew into his nostrils,” meaning, “He blew from His inwardness,” is specifically stated in relation to the souls of the Jewish people as they descended below to manifest in the body. This is because for there to be the descent to below there must be the matter of a leap (*Dilug*) with great strength etc.

This is as in the analogy that he brings¹¹⁰¹ about the matter of the rebounding light (*Ohr Chozer*), that it is like one who throws a stone with strength against a wall, that the stone bounces back to the one who threw it, and this rebound is due to it striking the wall with force, in that commensurate to the strength of the throw will be the strength of its rebounding from the wall to its source etc.

The same is so of the souls of the Jewish people, that the matter of “He blew into his nostrils,” which is the strongest power that comes from “His inwardness and His innermost being,” is specifically when the soul descends below to manifest in the physical body in this lowest world of which there is no lower (in which there specifically is caused to be a dwelling place for Him, blessed is He).¹¹⁰² It is specifically through this that the soul returns to the Essential Self of the

¹¹⁰⁰ Leviticus 11:47

¹¹⁰¹ Sefer HaMaamarim ibid. p. 127; p. 31

¹¹⁰² Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 36

Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited One, *HaShem*-ה' blessed is He, from which she came.

4.

This is also why the matter of “Yisroel will bud and blossom” is brought about specifically through “[Days] are coming when Yaakov will take root,” which refers to the matter of the descent into exile in Egypt, which is called “the iron crucible.”¹¹⁰³ The same is so of all constraints (*Meitzarim*-מִצְרִים) and oppression etc., that are called by the name “Egypt-*Mitzrayim*-מִצְרַיִם,” in which there is hiddenness and concealment on the outside, and there similarly is hiddenness and concealment on the inside, stemming from “the foreign God within you.”¹¹⁰⁴

The general totality of this service is like the sowing of a seed which has no flavor, in that it is solely out of accepting the yoke (*Kabbalat Ol*), “Yaakov will take root” (as explained above). However, it specifically is through overcoming all the obstacles, impediments, concealment, and hiddenness, without being moved by all the tests etc., that we reach [the point that] “Yisroel will bud and blossom,” this being the general matter of the redemption (*Geulah*), not just the four terms of redemption,¹¹⁰⁵ “I shall take you out-*v’Hotzeiti*-וְהוֹצֵאתִי,” “I shall rescue you-*v’Heetzalti*-וְהִצַּלְתִּי,” “I shall redeem you-

¹¹⁰³ See Deuteronomy 4:2; Kings I 8:51; Jeremiah 11:4; Also see Torah Ohr, Yitro 74a and on.

¹¹⁰⁴ See Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 105a

¹¹⁰⁵ Talmud Yerushalmi, Pesachim 10:1; Shulchan Aruch of the Alter Rebbe, Orach Chayim 472:14.

ו'Ga'alti-וּגַאֲלֹתִי," "I shall take you-v'Lakachti-וְלִקַּחְתִּי [to Me],"¹¹⁰⁶ but also the fifth term,¹¹⁰⁷ "I shall bring you-v'Heiveiti-וְהִבֵּאתִי to the Land etc.," which hints at the coming redemption,¹¹⁰⁸ at which time there will be the revelation of Godliness.

This is as stated by Rambam (in Hilchot Teshuvah¹¹⁰⁹ and at the end of Hilchot Melachim) in explanation of why the sages and prophets yearned for the days of Moshiach etc., since there then will be the fulfillment of the prophecy,¹¹¹⁰ "The earth will be filled with the knowledge of HaShem-יְהוָה" (similar to the verse,¹¹¹¹ "the face of the earth will be filled with fruit") (and concludes in Hilchot Melachim), "as the waters cover the ocean floor" with the coming of our righteous Moshiach, speedily and in the most literal sense!

¹¹⁰⁶ Exodus 6:6-7

¹¹⁰⁷ Exodus 6:8

¹¹⁰⁸ See Drashot Rabbi Yehoshua Ibn Shuaib, end of Parshat Va'era; Torah Sheleimah Va'era p. 111.

¹¹⁰⁹ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah 9:2

¹¹¹⁰ Isaiah 11:9

¹¹¹¹ Isaiah 27:6