

Discourse 15

*“Hoo Aharon u’Moshe... -
He was Aharon and Moshe...”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Va’era,
3rd of Shvat, 5730
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,¹¹¹² “He was Aharon and Moshe to whom *HaShem*-יהוה said, ‘Take the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt... They were the ones who spoke to Pharaoh, king of Egypt... He was Moshe and Aharon.’” The question about this (in *Torat Chayim*¹¹¹³ and *Ohr HaTorah*) is well known.¹¹¹⁴ That is, why is it that about the matter of taking the children of Israel out of Egypt, the verse states, “He was Aharon and Moshe,” (with Aharon preceding Moshe), but about the matter of speaking to Pharaoh the verse states, “He was Moshe and Aharon,” (with Moshe preceding Aharon)?

We should add to the question here, that at first glance, it should have been the opposite. For, about the children of

¹¹¹² Exodus 6:26-27

¹¹¹³ *Torat Chayim*, Va’era 72c and on.

¹¹¹⁴ *Ohr HaTorah*, Va’era Vol. 1, p. 225; Vol. 8 p. 2,894 and on; Also see the discourse entitled “*Hoo Aharon u’Moshe*” in *Maamarei Admor HaZaken* 5563 Vol. 1, p. 122 and on; Discourse by the same title of the years 5641, 5655 & 5680 (*Sefer HaMaamarim* 5641 p. 37 and on; 5655 p. 62 and on; 5680 p. 231 and on); 5744; Also see *Sefer HaArachim Chabad*, Vol. 2, section on “*Aharon – b’Yachas l’Moshe*” p. 174 and on.

Israel (“Take the children of Israel out etc.”) the matter was primary done by Moshe. For, it was Moshe who spoke to the children of Israel (both before and after) even without Aharon, and “Moshe received the Torah from Sinai and transmitted it”¹¹¹⁵ to the children of Israel.

Moreover, even in regard to taking the children of Israel out of Egypt, this was specifically done by Moshe, and it is he who is called “the first redeemer” (and he is also “the final redeemer”).¹¹¹⁶ Likewise, the end of the exodus from Egypt, which was the matter of the splitting of the sea,¹¹¹⁷ was specifically done by Moshe, as the verse states,¹¹¹⁸ “And you – lift up your staff [and stretch out your arm over the sea and split it] etc.,” specifically with the staff of Moshe. In contrast, Aharon did not have such a relation to the matter of the exodus from Egypt. This being so, about taking of the children of Israel out of Egypt the verse should have said, “He was Moshe and Aharon.”

In contrast, regarding the matter of speaking to Pharaoh, the speech was primary through Aharon, being that Moshe was “heavy of mouth [and heavy of speech] etc.”¹¹¹⁹ This being so, in the verse that states, “They were the ones who spoke to Pharaoh,” it should have said, “He was Aharon and Moshe.”

¹¹¹⁵ Mishnah Avot 1:1

¹¹¹⁶ See Midrash Shemot Rabbah 2:4; Zohar I 253a; Shaar HaPesukim of the Arizal, Genesis 49:10 (Vayechi); Torah Ohr, beginning of Mishpatim (75b).

¹¹¹⁷ See Tosefta Brachot, beginning of Ch. 2 (cited in Torah Ohr, Beshalach 62b) and Chasdei Dovid there; Likkutei Sichot Vol. 3, p. 878 and on; p. 968 and on.

¹¹¹⁸ Exodus 14:16

¹¹¹⁹ Exodus 4:10

[Now, at first glance, it seems possible to explain this similar to Rashi's statement on the verse,¹¹²⁰ "Every man: Your mother and father you shall fear," that, "here the Torah gave precedence to the mother before the father, since it is revealed before Him that a child fears his father more than his mother, whereas when it comes to honor, the verse gave precedence to the father over the mother ("honor your father and your mother")¹¹²¹ since it is revealed before Him that a child honors his mother more than his father."

The same can be suggested about our subject here, that in regard to the exodus from Egypt, in which Moshe was primary, the Torah had to give precedence to Aharon over Moshe, whereas in the matter of speaking to Pharaoh, in which Aharon was primary, it had to give precedence to Moshe over Aharon.

However, this explanation is insufficient, since in the first place, we do not find [anywhere] that the exodus from Egypt is attributed to Aharon as well (such as it is in regard to the awe and respect one must have for his father and mother, in which there also is an obligation to fear one's mother and there also is an obligation to honor one's father). This being so, it is not understood why the Torah had to give precedence to Aharon over Moshe.]

We also must understand why the verse states, "He was Aharon and Moshe... He was Moshe and Aharon" (in which the word "He-*Hoo*-הוא" is in the singular) as in the question in

¹¹²⁰ Leviticus 19:3

¹¹²¹ Exodus 20:12

Zohar,¹¹²² “At first glance, it should have said ‘They-*Heim*-הם’” (in the plural), as in the continuation of the verse, “They (*Heim*-הם) were the ones who spoke etc.” This is especially so considering that this verse itself emphasizes that Moshe and Aharon are two different levels. This is as understood from Rashi statement,¹¹²³ “There are some passages where the Torah mentions Aharon before Moshe etc., to indicate that they were equated as one.” Thus, since the Torah had to emphasize that they were equated as one, it is understood that they are two different levels, and this being so, it should have stated “they-*Heim*-הם” in the plural.

2.

Now, to understand this, we first must preface with an explanation of this matter as it is in our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.¹¹²⁴ For, as known, all matters in Torah are instructional to the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה in the human soul of each and every Jew.

The same applies to the matter of the exodus from Egypt, that in each and every generation¹¹²⁵ and each and every day¹¹²⁶ a person is obligated to view himself as if he has come

¹¹²² Zohar II 26b, cited in Ohr HaTorah Va'era Vol. 1 ibid. (p. 226); Sefer HaMaamarim 5641, 5655 & 5680 ibid.

¹¹²³ Rashi to Exodus 6:26

¹¹²⁴ See Torat Chayim ibid.

¹¹²⁵ Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 116b (in the Mishnah)

¹¹²⁶ The addition (and explanation) of the Alter Rebbe in Tanya, beginning of Ch. 47; Also see Maamarei Admor HaZaken ibid. p. 124.

out of Egypt today.¹¹²⁷ That is, there is the matter of the exodus from Egypt in every generation, at every time and in every Jew.

Likewise, presently there also are the aspects of Moshe and Aharon who take the children of Israel out of Egypt, and it is they who speak etc. This refers to two ways in the work of Moshe and Aharon, except that there is a difference in the order of the work. That is, precedence is given to Aharon over Moshe when it comes to the exodus from Egypt, and precedence is given to Moshe over Aharon when it comes to speaking to Pharaoh.

3.

The explanation¹¹²⁸ is that the difference between Moshe and Aharon as they are in our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is that Moshe is the matter of Torah. This is as stated,¹¹²⁹ "Remember the Torah of My servant Moshe." That is, [the Torah] is named for him.¹¹³⁰ The matter of Torah is that it is in a way of drawing down from Above to below.

In contrast, the matter of Aharon is the ascent from below to Above, this being the meaning of the verse,¹¹³¹ "When you uplift (*b'Ha'alotcha*-בהעלותך) the flames (*Neirot*) etc." That is, the seven flames [of the menorah] are the seven categories and paths in the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is

¹¹²⁷ See Tanya and Sefer HaMaamarim ibid.

¹¹²⁸ In regard to the coming section see the discourses cited in the 2nd and 3rd notes of the discourse.

¹¹²⁹ Malachi 3:22

¹¹³⁰ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 89a; Midrash Tanchuma Beshalach 10

¹¹³¹ Numbers 8:2

He, of the Jewish people (as explained in Likkutei Torah on the Torah portion of Beha'alotcha).¹¹³²

Additionally, Aharon is called “the agent of the bride,”¹¹³³ who elevates them from below to Above. In our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, this is the matter of prayer, which is in a way of ascent from below to Above, “a ladder set earthward whose head reaches heavenward.”¹¹³⁴

Now, the general matter of the exodus from Egypt was brought about through Moshe and Aharon. This is because the matter of the exodus from Egypt is as the verse states,¹¹³⁵ “**I am HaShem**-יהו"ה **your God** who took you out of the land of Egypt,” this being the revelation of the aspect of “I-*Anochi*-אנכי” as it is drawn down through the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה into His title God-*Elohi*”מ-אלהי (which is the matter of drawing down to below, in that this is what is indicated by His title God-*Elohi*”מ-אלהי, which is in the plural,¹¹³⁶ as in the teaching,¹¹³⁷ “Write it (“Let Us make [man]”)¹¹³⁸ and let whosoever wishes to err, err.”) [This is drawn down] to be “**your God-Elo**”*hecha-*

¹¹³² Likkutei Torah, Beha'alotcha 29c and on.

¹¹³³ See Zohar I 266b; Zohar II 49b; Zohar III 20a (Ra'aya Mehemna), 53b, 275b.

¹¹³⁴ Genesis 28:12; Zohar I 266b *ibid.*; Zohar III 306b; Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 45 (83a).

¹¹³⁵ Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 5:6; Also see the discourse entitled “*Vayedaber Elokim*” of the 20th of Shvat and the discourse by the same title of Shabbat Parshat Yitro of this year (Sefer HaMaamarim 5730 p. 168 and on; p. 178 and on – Discourse 20 and Discourse 21 of this year, 5730).

¹¹³⁶ See Rashi to Genesis 35:7; Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of His Title (*Shaar HaKinuy*); Torah Ohr, Va'era 56b.

¹¹³⁷ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 8:8

¹¹³⁸ Genesis 1:26

אלהי"ך,"¹¹³⁹ meaning, "your strength and your vitality,"¹¹⁴⁰ and to reach the aspect of "I-*Anochi*-אנכי," this is through Moshe and Aharon, meaning, the two matters of Torah and prayer.

Now, the order in this, is that there first must be the matter of prayer, this being the ascent from below to Above, the arousal from below that awakens the arousal from Above. Then comes the matter of Torah, which is the drawing down from Above to below.

That is, even though there is the matter of the inter-inclusion of Torah and prayer (like all matters in holiness, which are in a way of inter-inclusion one with the other) since in Torah there also is the matter of prayer, especially in the book of Psalms, and likewise, in prayer there also is the matter of Torah, both in the verses of Torah that are in our prayers, as well as the orders of Mishnah and Baraitot that precede prayer (such as [the Mishnah],¹¹⁴¹ "What is the location of the offerings") nonetheless, in the actual toil below (where it is necessary to bring the exodus from Egypt about) they are two matters, and their order is that there first must be the matter of prayer. This is like the teaching of Abba Binyamin,¹¹⁴² "Let my prayer be adjacent to my bed." Then, afterwards, there is the study of Torah, "from the synagogue to the study hall."¹¹⁴³ For, as known,¹¹⁴⁴ the study of Torah that follows prayer is higher than the study of Torah that precedes prayer.

¹¹³⁹ See Torah Ohr, Yitro 67b; Likkutei Torah, Balak 74b; Ha'azinu 72d and elsewhere.

¹¹⁴⁰ See Likkutei Torah, Shlach 40c; Balak 73c and elsewhere.

¹¹⁴¹ Mishnah Zevachim 5:1

¹¹⁴² Talmud Bavli, Brachot 5b

¹¹⁴³ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 64a

¹¹⁴⁴ See Likkutei Torah, Zot HaBrachah 96b and elsewhere.

However, all the above is in regard to the redemption of the Jewish people from Egypt, but in regard to the matter of breaking Pharaoh, there first must be the drawing down from Above to below, this being the matter of Moshe, which is the matter of the Torah, about which the verse states,¹¹⁴⁵ “Behold My word is like fire,” since [the words of Torah] do not contract ritual impurity etc.¹¹⁴⁶ Therefore through it, the breaking of the external husk (*Kelipah*) of Pharaoh, “the great serpent who crouches within his rivers etc.,” is possible.¹¹⁴⁷

This is to such an extent that [even] Moshe feared to go to Pharaoh, and a special command was necessary,¹¹⁴⁸ “Come to Pharaoh,” this being the matter of granting empowerment and drawing down from Above to below, so that that he will be capable of bringing about the shattering of the external husk (*Kelipah*) of Pharaoh. Only after this was it possible for there to be the matter of ascent from below to Above, the refinement (*Birur*) of the sparks that are found below, through Aharon.

With the above in mind, we can also understand why when it comes to the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt, the Torah gives precedence to Aharon over Moshe, since there first must be the matter of serving Him in prayer, which is the matter of Aharon. Then, afterwards, there is the study of Torah, which is the matter of Moshe.

In contrast, when it comes to the matter of speaking to Pharaoh, the Torah gives precedence to Moshe over Aharon.

¹¹⁴⁵ Jeremiah 23:29

¹¹⁴⁶ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 22a

¹¹⁴⁷ Ezekiel 29:3; Also see Torah Ohr, Va’era 57a; Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 21 p. 40 and on.

¹¹⁴⁸ Exodus 10:1; See Zohar II 34a

This is because to affect the breaking of the external husk (*Kelipah*) of Pharaoh, the drawing down must first be from Above, this being the matter of Moshe, and only afterwards is the ascent of the sparks caused, this being the matter of Aharon.

4.

Now, even though Torah study and prayer, the matter of Moshe and Aharon, are different from each other, the verse nevertheless states, “He is Aharon and Moshe... He is Moshe and Aharon,” stating “He-*Hoo*-הוא” in the singular. This refers to He who transcends both of them, and therefore has the power to bond and unify them.

The explanation is that Torah and prayer are [the aspects of] drawing down (*Hamshachah*) and ascending up (*Ha’ala’ah*). This is because prayer brings about the elevation of the lower one, in that there is the sense of the existence of the lower one. That is, one’s thoughts during prayer are about the soul as it manifests in the body. This is especially so according to Rambam who wrote,¹¹⁴⁹ that prayer is the matter of pleading for one’s needs. That is, one senses that he is lacking etc., and only then does the matter of prayer apply.

In contrast, when it comes to the matter of Torah, which is the drawing down from Above, one’s existence is not at all sensed, for there is nothing here but the Torah of the Holy One, blessed is He. This is as in the words of the blessing over the Torah, “Who has chosen us from amongst all the nations and given us His Torah.” Even though the study of Torah must be

¹¹⁴⁹ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Tefilah 1:1-2

in a way that it is understood in one's intellect, nonetheless, it is in a way that the existence of the world is of utterly no consequence at all, since he is engaged in the study of the Torah of the Holy One, blessed is He, and "He and His wisdom are One."¹¹⁵⁰

However, this distinction only applies in a place and level that has the distinctions of ascent (*Ha'ala'ah*) and drawing down (*Hamshachah*), which is so on all levels of the order of the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*), including even before the restraint of the *Tzimtzum*. For, there too, there is the matter of "coming and not coming" (*Mati v'Lo Mati*),¹¹⁵¹ which is a matter of change. Thus, this only is applicable in the level of the light (*Ohr*).

In contrast, it is not applicable in the aspect of the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited One, *HaShem* יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He, where the matter of change is utterly inapplicable, and thus there is no difference between the ascent (*Ha'ala'ah*) and the drawing down (*Hamshachah*). This is what the aspect of "He-*Hoo* הוּא," refers to, in that it indicates the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited One, *HaShem* יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He.¹¹⁵²

This is the difference between the word "You-*Atah* אתה" and the word "He-*Hoo* הוּא." That is, "You-*Atah* אתה" is in the second person, and indicates revelation (light-*Ohr* אור).

¹¹⁵⁰ See Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 2:10; Tanya, Ch. 2.

¹¹⁵¹ See Imrei Binah, Shaar HaKriyat Shema, Ch. 38 (64d).

¹¹⁵² See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 2 (The Letters of Creation, Part 1), The gate entitled, "The drawing forth of Action from the letters to *Elohi* מ"ם-אלהי."

In contrast, the word “He-*Hoo*-הוא” is in the third person and indicates concealment. In general, this is the difference between the order of the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*) and that which transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*).

This likewise is the meaning of “He (*Hoo*-הוא) is Aharon and Moshe... He (*Hoo*-הוא) is Moshe and Aharon.” That is, “He-*Hoo*-הוא” refers to the aspect of the Crown-*Keter* which transcends Moshe and Aharon who are the aspects of Wisdom-*Chochmah* and Understanding-*Binah*,¹¹⁵³ [or] Victory-*Netzach* and Majesty-*Hod*,¹¹⁵⁴ or *Zeir Anpin* and Kingship-*Malchut*.¹¹⁵⁵

(That is, Torah is in the aspect of *Zeir Anpin*, and prayer is in Kingship-*Malchut*, as in the words of [king] Dovid,¹¹⁵⁶ “and I am prayer.”) Through the aspect of “He-*Hoo*-הוא,” the aspect of the Crown-*Keter*, their bond is caused, “He (*Hoo*-הוא) is Aharon and Moshe... He (*Hoo*-הוא) is Moshe and Aharon.” That is, through the aspect of “He-*Hoo*-הוא” there is caused to be “Aharon **and** Moshe-וּמֹשֶׁה,” [and] “Moshe **and** Aharon-וְאַהֲרֹן,” with the additional letter *Vav*-ו, this being the *Vav*-ו that connects (not the *Vav*-ו that adds, and certainly not the *Vav*-ו that separates [between two things]).

¹¹⁵³ See Ohr HaTorah, Va’era Vol. 1 *ibid.* (p. 226 and on); Also see the end of the discourse entitled “*Hoo Aharon u’Moshe*” 5641, 5655, and 5680 *ibid.* Sefer HaArachim Chabad *ibid.* p. 149 and on.

¹¹⁵⁴ See Ohr HaTorah, Balak p. 903; Sefer HaArachim Chabad *ibid.* (p. 154 and on).

¹¹⁵⁵ See Ohr HaTorah, Va’era *ibid.*; Sefer HaArachim *ibid.*

¹¹⁵⁶ Psalms 109:4; See Zohar III 49b; Pri Etz Chayim, introduction to Shaar HaTefilah; Also see the later discourse of this year, 5730, entitled “*Az Yasheer*,” (Sefer HaMaamarim 5730, p. 159 and on), Discourse 19.

This then, is the meaning of [the verse], “He was Aharon and Moshe to whom *HaShem*-יהו"ה said, ‘Take the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.’ That is, this refers to one’s general service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in the two matters of prayer (Aharon) and Torah (Moshe).

The matter of prayer is the nullification and ascent from below to Above, beginning with the recitation of “I thankfully submit before You” (*Modeh Ani*), and subsequently, the morning blessings and the general order of the prayers. This is then followed by drawing down from Above to below through the study of the Torah, which brings about the refinement of the world etc., through the world being conducted according to the instructions of Shulchan Aruch [the Code of Torah Law] etc. (This is such that it also has an effect on the matter of prayer, and therefore, all the particulars regarding prayer are stated in Torah, in the laws of prayer of the Shulchan Aruch.)

Through this there is caused to be the matter of [the Torah portion of] “Come to Pharaoh etc.,”¹¹⁵⁷ and then [the Torah portion of],¹¹⁵⁸ “It happened when Pharaoh sent the people,” this being the general matter of the exodus from Egypt, beginning with the individual redemption of each Jew in particular,¹¹⁵⁹ and thereby, also the general redemption, and in a way that “He redeemed my soul in peace,”¹¹⁶⁰ “He redeemed

¹¹⁵⁷ Exodus 10:1

¹¹⁵⁸ Exodus 13:17

¹¹⁵⁹ See Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 4

¹¹⁶⁰ Psalms 55:19

Me and My children from amongst the nations of the world,”¹¹⁶¹
with the coming of our righteous Moshiach, speedily and in the
most literal sense!

¹¹⁶¹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 8a