

The Rebbe

בס"ד. שַׁבַּת פְּרַשְׁת שְׁמוֹת, י"ט טֵבֵת ה'תשמ"ח

הַבָּאִים יִשְׂרָשׁ יַעֲקֹב גּוֹי

Shabbat Parashat Shemot, 19th of Tevet, 5748

"Those who come shall take root, Jacob shall blossom and flourish."

א) "Those who come shall take root, Jacob shall blossom and flourish."

Isaiah 27:6.

["הַבָּאִים יִשְׂרָשׁ יַעֲקֹב, יִצְיֵץ וּפְרַח יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּמְלֵאוּ פְּנֵי-תֵבֶל תְּנוּבָה."] "In days to come, Jacob shall take root; Israel shall blossom and bud, and the face of the world shall be filled with fruit."]

As explained by the Tzemach Tzedek in his discourse beginning with these words, it elaborates on the interpretation of Targum Yonatan ben Uziel on the verse, which refers to the Redemption. The Targum interprets "those who come" as "they shall be gathered from among their exiles and return to their land" [the term "those who come" refers to the arrival in the Land that will occur in the future Redemption, as it is written: "And the Lord your God will bring you to the land"]. Then, it states, "Jacob shall take root," meaning that there, in the Land, the House of Jacob will be born. The discourse explains that "taking root" refers to concealment (like the rooting of a tree, where the roots of the tree that are in the ground are concealed), whereas "birth" refers to revelation (for before birth, the child is concealed in the mother's womb, and upon birth, the child comes into revelation). Thus, the Targum's rendering of "take root" as "be born" indicates that the root of the soul (Jacob shall take root) will be revealed ("be born").

And it continues in the discourse, providing further explanation on the verse "Yaakov shall take root," which refers to the observance of mitzvot. Just as physical rooting occurs specifically in the ground, so too in the soul (Yaakov), rooting is achieved through the fulfillment of practical mitzvot. The connection between the two interpretations of "Yaakov shall take root" (the revelation of the soul's root and the observance of mitzvot) is that the revelation of the soul's root, which will occur in the future, comes about through the observance of mitzvot in the present. The idea is as follows: within the root of the soul, there are several levels, and the principal root of the soul is as it is rooted in the supernal light that is above the order of creation. This light is drawn down through the observance of mitzvot. The influence drawn through Torah study is from the level of Chochmah (wisdom), the beginning of creation, while the drawing down of the light that is above the order of creation is achieved through the practical fulfillment of mitzvot. This is the meaning of what the Sages said: "One whose deeds exceed his wisdom is likened to a tree whose roots are abundant and branches few." (Pirkei Avot Chapter 3, Mishnah 17) This is because the drawing down of the root

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of the soul is achieved through the performance of mitzvot. This is the connection between the two interpretations of "Yaakov shall take root," through the observance of mitzvot in the present (the second interpretation of "Yaakov shall take root"), the root of the soul is drawn forth. The revelation of this drawing down will occur in the future, with "the offspring of the house of Yaakov," when the root of the soul will shine openly (the first interpretation of "Yaakov shall take root").

Now, based on what is known about the precision in the words of our Rebbes, the leaders of Chabad, including the concepts of "order", we must understand: The revelation of the soul's root, which will occur in the future, comes after and through the fulfillment of mitzvot in the present. Yet, the order of the two interpretations in the discourse is such that the first explanation given is that "Yaakov shall take root" refers to the revelation of the soul's root in the future, and only afterward comes the interpretation that "Yaakov shall take root" refers to the fulfillment of mitzvot in the present. Additionally, we must understand why, in the first interpretation (that "Yaakov shall take root" refers to the redemption), the phrase "those who come" is also explained, while in the second interpretation (that "Yaakov shall take root" refers to the fulfillment of mitzvot in the present), the phrase "those who come" is not explained.

ב) Now, regarding the interpretation that "Yaakov shall take root" refers to the fulfillment of mitzvot, there are two approaches:

1. That the rooting of Yaakov is through the fulfillment of mitzvot (as mentioned above).
2. That the rooting of mitzvot occurs through Yaakov.

This is similar to what the Alter Rebbe (whose yahrzeit is the 24th of Tevet) explains in *Torah Or*, Just as physical planting must specifically take place in the ground, so too is it with the planting of mitzvot ("Light is sown for the righteous"); it must specifically occur within Israel, as it is written regarding them: "You shall be a desirable land for Me." This is the meaning of "Yaakov shall take root, he shall blossom and sprout forth," indicating that "Yaakov shall take root" refers to the fulfillment of mitzvot in the present, where the mitzvot are sown and take root in Yaakov. Through this, in the future, the growth will occur: "he shall blossom and sprout forth."

And it explains in *Torah Or*, that the interpretation of "those who come, Yaakov shall take root" is that in order for there to be the rooting of Yaakov—the rooting of Torah and

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mitzvot in Israel—it comes through "those who come," referring to the descent into Egypt. As is known, the exile in Egypt was a preparation for the giving of the Torah. It continues there that just as the exile in Egypt was a preparation for receiving the Torah, so too the current and final exile is a preparation for receiving the inner dimension of the Torah, which will be revealed in the future. And it may be said that the addition in *Torah Or* regarding this idea that the final exile is a preparation for receiving the inner dimension of the Torah that will be revealed in the future clarifies the connection of "those who come" to "Yaakov shall take root." The meaning of the verse implies that the rooting occurs within the exile itself. Regarding the exile in Egypt, "those who come" was only a prelude to "Yaakov shall take root."

Through the exile of Egypt, the iron crucible, [refers to a metaphor for a process of intense refinement and purification through hardship or suffering. It is drawn from Deuteronomy 4:20, where Egypt is described as "the iron furnace" (כּוּר הַבְּרִזָּל), symbolizing the harsh and oppressive conditions of slavery the Israelites endured.END] Israel was refined to become "a desirable land," and as a result, their observance of the Torah and mitzvot after their exodus from Egypt and after receiving the Torah was in a manner of "Yaakov shall take root." Therefore, it adds that the final exile is a preparation for the future revelation. According to this, "those who come" also refers to the exiles after the Egyptian exile, up to and including this final exile. According to this interpretation, "those who come" and "Yaakov shall take root" are a single concept: the rooting of mitzvot in Israel (through which the growth will occur in the future) primarily takes place through the mitzvot that Israel observes during the time of exile. As it is written in the *Tanya*, all the revelations of the future depend on our actions and service during the time of exile.

And it can be said that the reason this discourse of the קְדוּקָה דְּעֵינָם does not cite the interpretation of "those who come, Yaakov shall take root" as referring specifically to the observance of mitzvot during the time of exile is because the idea that the future revelations depend on our actions and service applies to all times—both during the time of the Temple and during the time of exile—since each of these periods has its own unique advantage (as will be explained below). Accordingly, "Yaakov shall take root" (according to the explanation in this *derush*) refers to the observance of mitzvot in all times.

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ג) The explanation is as follows: regarding the superiority of the fulfillment of mitzvot over Torah study, there are two aspects.

1) the drawing down [of divine energy] through the fulfillment of mitzvot is greater than the drawing down achieved through Torah study (as explained above in section 1).

2) the fulfillment of mitzvot contains the unique quality of *it'hapcha chashucha l'nehora* (transforming darkness into light), because the refinement of the body, the animal soul, and its portion in the world is primarily achieved through the practical performance of mitzvot. Among the distinctions between these two aspects is that the drawing down achieved through mitzvot is greater during the time of the Temple than during the time of exile. This is because the drawing down through the performance of mitzvot primarily occurs when the action is performed with *bitul* (self-nullification). And since the concept of *bitul* was primarily present during the time of the Temple—[in addition to the fact that during the time of exile it is impossible to achieve the *bitul* of bowing (inner *bitul*), which specifically arises from the experience of directly perceiving Divinity, as indicated by the phrase we recite, "And we cannot ascend and appear and bow before You"—since we cannot ascend and appear, we also cannot bow, to experience a state of inner *bitul*.]

Even the external *bitul* (self-nullification through bowing), which stems from an understanding of Divinity that exists, in general, even during the time of exile, is not as it should be, since even the understanding of Divinity during exile is not a true understanding. Therefore, the drawing down [of divine energy] through the fulfillment of mitzvot during the time of the Temple was of a higher level. The primary drawing down through mitzvot will occur in the future, as then the fulfillment of mitzvot will be in a state of absolute perfection, "as per Your will." The concept of *it'hapcha chashucha l'nehora* (transforming darkness into light) that occurs through the fulfillment of mitzvot is primarily associated with the time of exile. This is because the darkness of the body, the animal soul, and the world, as they exist in exile, is a much greater darkness than the intrinsic darkness of these entities as they are in their natural state. Through the fulfillment of mitzvot during the time of exile, which accomplishes the refinement of the body, animal soul, and the world as they are in exile, even this greater darkness is transformed into light.

ד) In the future, there will be a revelation of both aforementioned aspects of the fulfillment of mitzvot: the revelation of the drawing down that occurs through the mitzvah itself, and the revelation of the drawing down achieved through the refinement and transformation (*it'hapcha*) accomplished by the mitzvah. It can be said that what is

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written in the *Tanya*—that the revelations of the future depend on our actions and service during the time of exile—refers to the elevation brought about by *it'hapcha chashucha l'nehora* (transforming darkness into light), the advantage of light that comes from darkness. This revelation and light, which will exist in the future (the advantage of light that comes from darkness), depends primarily on our actions and service during the time of exile. On the other hand, the future revelation of the infinite light (*Or Ein Sof*) within the mitzvot themselves depends primarily on our actions and service during the time of the Temple.

And it can be said that the fact that even the revelation of the mitzvot themselves depends on our actions and service now, despite the reality that mitzvot will also be observed in the future—and indeed, the fulfillment of mitzvot in the future will be in ultimate perfection (and consequently, the drawing down through mitzvot at that time will also be in ultimate perfection)—is because, for there to be the perfection of the drawing down of mitzvot in the future, it requires the preceding drawing down through mitzvot as they are now. [This can be illustrated by the mitzvot of the Patriarchs, which served as a preparation for the mitzvot after the Giving of the Torah.] It can further be said that this matter is primarily achieved through the service of mitzvot during the time of the Temple. For during the Temple era, both man and the world were on a higher level than during the time of exile. Therefore, the fulfillment of mitzvot during the time of the Temple—when the person performing the mitzvah, as well as the physical object used for the mitzvah, were at a higher level—was akin to the perfection of the mitzvot that will exist in the future. Consequently, the mitzvot observed now serve as a preparation for the mitzvot of the future primarily through the mitzvot performed during the Temple era. [It can also be said that this explains why, during the time of exile, many additional elements were introduced into mitzvot (such as *hiddurim* [enhancements], customs, etc.), as well as into Torah. Not only were specific additions made, but also general ones—for instance, the Mishnah was compiled by Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi during the time of exile (though at that time the challenges of exile were less severe), and certainly the *Beraita* and the Gemara, which were compiled during exile. This was to ensure that there would be completeness even in the service of Torah and mitzvot during exile. Through this, even the service during exile contributes to the true perfection of Torah and mitzvot that will exist in the future.]

ה) The difference between the two aforementioned aspects of mitzvah observance (the drawing down that occurs through the mitzvah and the refinement that

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is accomplished through it) also relates to the connection between our service now and the revelation that will result from it in the future. Regarding the drawing down through mitzvot: since the perfection of this drawing down is that it becomes revealed, the nature of the service and the drawing down now is that it will lead to its revelation in the future. Regarding the refinement achieved through mitzvot: since this service involves refining darkness—meaning that in this service there is an awareness of darkness that needs to be refined—the service now and the future revelation that will result from it ("and I will remove the spirit of impurity from the earth") are two distinct aspects.

And according to this, it is understood why the above-mentioned discourse does not bring the interpretation that "those who come" refers to the descent into exile, as well as the order of the two interpretations presented in the discourse. From the fact that the fulfillment of mitzvot now is referred to in the verse as "rooting" (*hashrashah*), whose purpose (like planting) is to bring about growth, it is evident that the aspect of mitzvah observance described in this verse refers to the drawing down achieved through the mitzvah, rather than the refinement accomplished through it. Therefore, the interpretation that "those who come" refers to the descent into exile is not brought here, because the virtue of service during exile pertains to the refinement achieved through mitzvah observance, whereas the drawing down through mitzvah observance is more connected to the service during the time of the Temple (as explained above in section 3).

This also explains why the interpretation that "Yaakov shall take root" refers to mitzvah observance now follows and is connected to the interpretation that "Yaakov shall take root" refers to the revelation of the soul's root that will occur in the future. This is because the drawing down through mitzvah observance now (as described in the verse "Yaakov shall take root") is the drawing down of the soul's root (as explained above in section 1), whose purpose is that it will be revealed in the future. *Yit'yelidun* (they shall be born anew).

i) And it is necessary to understand: According to the above explanation, the connection between the observance of mitzvot now (the second interpretation) and the redemption (the first interpretation) lies in the idea of "Yaakov shall take root," where the concept of drawing down the root now is that the drawing down will eventually be revealed. From the fact that the discourse states (at its beginning, even before quoting Targum Yonatan) that Targum Yonatan interprets the verse as referring to the

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redemption, it is understood that this is the primary interpretation. From this, it is implied that the interpretation that "Yaakov shall take root" refers to the observance of mitzvot now comes after and is connected to the interpretation of Targum Yonatan. This is because the observance of mitzvot now follows and is an extension of the general concept of redemption.

And it can be said that the reason the discourse begins with the interpretation that refers to the redemption is because all matters are drawn from the Torah, as it is written, "He looked into the Torah and created the world." By prioritizing the theme of redemption in the Torah, it likewise brings about that the redemption will occur earlier in the world. Additionally, it can be noted that when a Jew (and all the more so a leader) thinks about something positive, their thought has an impact, causing it to be actualized. This is consistent with the well-known saying of the *Tzemach Tzedek*, publicized by my father-in-law, the Rebbe, "Think good, and it will be good." My father-in-law, the Rebbe, recounted that the *Tzemach Tzedek* said this phrase to one of his chassidim, and through the chassid's positive thoughts, the situation indeed became good in actuality. It can further be said that my father-in-law, the Rebbe, included this story because the fact that it came to pass in reality demonstrates how thought impacts the physical world. This is similar to the known idea that when the prophets performed physical actions corresponding to their prophecies, it created a connection between the prophecy and the physical world. It can be said that when thought is expressed in speech, and even more so in action, it has an even greater effect. How much more so in our case, where the thought of the *Tzemach Tzedek* (to prioritize the interpretation that "those who come, Yaakov shall take root" refers to the redemption) was written down (an action), making it a part of Torah itself.

ר) May it be G-d's will that through speaking about these matters, this will hasten and accelerate all of this even more, particularly through the work of spreading Judaism in general and disseminating the wellsprings [of Chassidic teachings] in particular. This is a close preparation for the fulfillment of the promise: "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the sea"—the conclusion and seal of the Rambam's work (whose *yahrzeit* is on the 20th of Tevet). This concept is also connected with the beginning of his work: "To know that there is a First Being." This is also connected with the holy book *Tanya*, the work of the Alter Rebbe (whose *yahrzeit* is on the 24th of Tevet), where these matters of the knowledge of G-d are explained. May

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it be G-d's will that the merit of these holy individuals, who gathered and compiled in their works all the matters of Torah, stand in our favor.

The Book of Mishneh Torah, which compiles all the laws revealed in the Torah, and the book *Likutei Amarim (Tanya)*, which gathers all the inner dimensions of the Torah, as well as the books *Torah Or* and *Likutei Torah*, in which the primary discourses of the Alter Rebbe were compiled as arranged by the Tzemach Tzedek, will further bring closer and hasten the fulfillment of the prophecy in the Haftarah: "And you will be gathered one by one, O children of Israel," by the Holy One, Blessed be He, Himself, Who will soon, truly, gather us all together and bring us all together to the Holy Land (as it will be in abundance, "The Lord your God will expand your boundaries"), and there specifically—to Jerusalem and to the Holy Temple, which will be rebuilt speedily in our days, truly.