

Weekly shiur

6 Tishrei 5774

(Notes taken during class, not reviewed nor edited by Harav Ginsburgh)

Lechaim lechaim. We wish a good and sweet year for everyone, for the entire Jewish people.

1. Conception on Rosh Hashanah

There are three women who were remembered by God and who conceived on Rosh Hashanah. One of them was Channah (also the name of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's mother), which is why we read about her in the haftorah (the reading from the Prophets) on the first day of Rosh Hashanah. We read how God answered her prayer for a son. We read in length about how she prayed, and many of the laws of prayer are learnt from this description. But, before Channah, there were two other women, Sarah and Rachel our Matriarchs, who also were remembered and conceived on Rosh Hashanah. Given that there were three such women in the Tanach, this is a sign that Rosh Hashanah is the best day of the year to conceive. The initials of their names (שָׂרָה רַחֵל חַנָּה) spell Serach (שֵׁרָח), the daughter of Asher, a great woman who according to the sages, lives forever. The initials are even more exact since the first letter is the left-shin (ש) of Sarah (שָׂרָה) which is also the exact form of the shin that Serach begins with.

Moreover, these three women's names form a progression. The second letter of Sarah (שָׂרָה) is reish (ר), which leads to Rachel (רַחֵל), and the second letter of Rachel is Chet (ח), which is the first letter of Channah (חַנָּה). So they are clearly related.

2. Rachel as the matriarch of the Jewish people

Of these three women, we will now focus on Rachel. Rachel is mentioned in the *haftorah* of the second day of Rosh Hashanah in the verses,

A voice in Ramah is heard, Rachel is weeping for her children, she will not be comforted for her children for they are gone. So says God, "Halt your voice from crying, and your eyes from tearing, because there is a reward for your acts" this is God's vow—they will return from their enemies' country. There is hope for your destiny, this is God's vow, and sons will return to their borders.

כֹּה אָמַר ה' קוֹל בְּרָמָה נִשְׁמָע נְהִי בְּכִי תִמְרוּרִים רַחֵל מִבְּכָה עַל בְּנֵיהָ מֵאַנָּה לְהַנְחִים עַל בְּנֵיהָ כִּי אֵינָנִי:
כֹּה אָמַר ה' מִנְעֵי קוֹלָךְ מִבְּכִי וְעֵינַיִךְ מִדְּמָעָה כִּי יֵשׁ שָׂכָר לְפַעֲלֹתֶיךָ נָאָם ה' וְשָׁבוּ מֵאֶרֶץ אוֹיֵב:
וְיֵשׁ תִּקְוָה לְאַחֲרִיתֶיךָ נָאָם ה' וְשָׁבוּ בָנִים לְגִבּוֹלָם:

Seemingly, Rachel is the mother of only two of the 12 Tribes—Yosef and Benjamin—and Yosef himself became two tribes. But, here in these verses, we see that she is considered the mother of the entire Jewish people. Indeed, the sages identify Rachel's

figure with Knesset Yisrael, "the congregation of Israel." Because she represents the entire Jewish people, we go to her tomb—Rachel's tomb—whenever we have something we need, we beseech God there, and are answered. The verse says Rachel cries for her children, and then God promises her that there is hope for her and that her children will return from the land of their enemies, and return to the land of Israel. So the *haftorah* of the second day is connected with the return to the land of Israel, from the exile among the nations. They are all her children. So God promises her. Right now they are in enemy lands, but they will return to their own borders.

The sages say that just as the entire Jewish people are referred to as Rachel's children, so they are all also referred to as the children of Yosef. There is a verse in Amos that reads, "Hate evil and love good and establish justice in the gate, perhaps Havayah, God of the Hosts of the remnant of Yosef will be gracious" (שָׁנְאוּ רָע וְאָהְבוּ טוֹב וְהִצִּיגוּ בְּשַׁעַר מִשְׁפָּט) (אֹלֵי יַחֲנֵן ה' אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת שְׂאֲרֵי־יֹסֵף). In this verse, the entire Jewish people are referred to as "the remnant of Yosef" (שְׂאֲרֵי־יֹסֵף). From this verse, the sages learn that we are all called after Yosef, since he is Rachel's firstborn son. So not only are we all named as Rachel's children we are also the remnant of her firstborn son, Yosef.

Today, in the vernacular, when we want to identify with someone, we say, "We are all someone..." בְּלִנּוּ מִיִּשְׁהוּ. We are all Rachel and then we are also Yosef, and her power is so great that the entire Jewish people are named after her grandson, Ephraim. Where is this learnt from? From the final verse of the second day of Rosh Hashanah's *haftorah*, and everything follows the seal. This is also the final verse of the verses of "Zichronot." It is a verse that is very much loved by all Jewish, הַבֵּן יָקִיר לִי אֶפְרַיִם אִם יֶלֶד שְׁעֵשׂוּעִים כִּי מִדֵּי דַבְרֵי בּוֹ זָכוֹר, אִזְכְּרֶנּוּ עוֹד עַל כֵּן הִמּוּ מַעֲי לֹא רַחֵם אֲרַחֲמֶנּוּ נַעֲם ה'.

In the Talmud, when the sages want to identify the verses read in the Prophets for the *haftorah*, they identify the *hatofrah* of the second day as הַבֵּן יָקִיר לִי אֶפְרַיִם. Even though the reading contains many other famous verses, including the one we mentioned earlier, the entire reading is called הַבֵּן יָקִיר לִי אֶפְרַיִם. Meaning that in the same saying where the mother, her son, and her grandson are the namesake of the entire Jewish people, the mother and the grandson appear in the same *haftorah* reading. First Rachel, and then at the end Ephraim.

Since this is the final verse of the reading of the *haftorah* on the second day of RH it implies that this verse accompanies us, in our mind and heart, throughout the ten days of repentance, including Shabbat Shuva (the Shabbat between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur) all the way to Yom Kippur, הַבֵּן יָקִיר לִי אֶפְרַיִם. So at this time of the year, we are all Ephraim.

Why specifically mentioned Shabbat *Shuva* because the *haftorah* read begins with the verse, "Return Israel unto *Havayah* your God, for you have transgressed with your sin" (שׁוּבוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם כִּי כִשַּׁלְתֶּם בְּעוֹנֵיכֶם). This verse from the prophet Hosea has a parallel verse in the Pentateuch, which reads, "You shall return unto *Havayah* your God" (וּשְׁבַתְתֶּם עַד ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם). Why the turn of the phrase, "unto *Havayah* your God," in these two verses? The Magid of Mezritch explains that when we return to God it should be to the point that *Havayah*, God's Name that represents His supernatural and transcendent aspect, becomes "your God," God's immanent and natural aspect. Meaning, that to truly return

to God, we must experience God's essence that is above nature within nature itself—experience the supernatural within the natural.

3. Hosea and Ephraim

Hosea is the first among the Minor Prophets, *Trei Asar* (the Twelve). The final prophecy in his book is what we read on Shabbat *Shuva*, it begins as we said, "Return Israel unto *Havayah* your God" but its ending, the very conclusion and seal of his prophecy, and everything follows the conclusion reads, "Ephraim [says], 'I have nothing more to do with idols'" (אפרים מה לי עוד לעצבים). Today, the word for "idols" in this verse, עצבים, is used to designate nerves, or even having a nervous tendency, like anxiety. From this we can learn that whoever has false beliefs, similar to what idolatry was, is prone to suffer from anxiety, from nervous tension. In any case, Ephraim does *teshuvah* and says he has nothing more to do with false idols, from now on. The end of the verse reads, "I am like a leafy cypress tree, from Me your fruit will come." Leafy in Hebrew is רענן, similar to Ra'ananah, our host city tonight, so we are also mentioning this in honor of our hosts. *Rashi* explains that God is saying that once Ephraim does *teshuvah* and leaves his idols behind, He, God, will be like a cypress tree that can easily be bent over. Meaning, that God is expressing his willingness to bend over so that anyone can grab onto Him, anyone that wants to return to Him, and this is especially true right now, during the 10 days of repentance. God then adds that should you think that a leafy tree does not bear fruit (Ephraim also stems from the same root as "fruit"), know that this is usually the case, but I am also your fruit. From these verses it is clear that Ephraim refers to the entire Jewish people, even though Hosea's prophecy is directed specifically at the Northern kingdom, the kingdom of Ephraim.

The prophet Hosea addresses Ephraim more than any other prophet in the Tanach and we want to understand how this is relevant today. In his book, Hosea mentions the name Ephraim 37 times, the most out of any book in the Tanach. In the entire Tanach, Ephraim is mentioned 180 times. So this is the highest concentration out of all the other books. In the large prophets, like Isaiah, he is mentioned only a few times. But, again Hosea is full of mention of Ephraim.

4. Ephraim is addicted

The first verse where Hosea mentions Ephraim is also quite well known. It reads, "Ephraim is connected to idols, leave him be" (חִבּוּר עֲצָבִים אִפְרַיִם הִנָּח לוֹ). Hosea is saying that Ephraim is so addicted to idolatry, that there is nothing you can say to him about it. He is addicted and can't be redeemed from it. Likewise, if rebuke does not help, then just leave the person alone. This is very relevant to us today. Ephraim represents a type of mindset, a conceptual scheme held by an entire community. In the time of the Tanach, the Northern kingdom was known as Ephraim and it held the opposite mindset from the Southern Kingdom, known as the kingdom of Judah. Ephraim's mindset was idolatrous, and they were so addicted to their way of thinking that the prophet's conclusion is that there is nothing that can be done about it. This is what there is and leave him alone. This

is the first prophecy Hosea gives about Ephraim. And yet, as we saw, the final prophecy Hosea has regarding Ephraim (also his concluding prophecy) is that Ephraim will himself say that he wants nothing more to do with idolatry. We see here a very interesting phenomenon of the end being enwedged in the beginning and the beginning in the end. At the inception, there is nothing that can be done, but the end is that Ephraim (the 37th time he is mentioned) says himself that he has had enough with idolatry. He does this by himself, on his own.

Returning to the first prophecy about Ephraim, "Ephraim is connected to idols, leave him be" (הַבּוֹר עֲצָבִים אֶפְרַיִם הִנָּח לוֹ), there is a vort from the Radak who likens Hosea to a father that has despaired and given up on his son. When the son has veered of the path, and the father wants to bring him back, but the son is addicted to his ways, then the father says to his son, I won't speak to you any more about this. I can't influence you, and so I won't mention the topic anymore. But, says the Radak that even after the father says this—he has despaired and announced his despair to his son—still the next day, he mentions it again. He rebukes him once again. This is regarding the first verse. So at first it really doesn't help to speak about the problem again and again, but then maybe the point is that like drops of water falling upon a rock, slowly they have an effect, and then suddenly out of nowhere seemingly, at the end of the book, Ephraim himself says, I won't have anything more to do with idolatry.

We are beginning to enter the mindset of Ephraim. There is even a phrase in the Tanach "the mind of Ephraim" (רֵאשׁ אֶפְרַיִם). Again the entire Jewish people are called Ephraim, even though he is just one of the 12 tribes and even though he only represents the Northern kingdom (half the Jewish people at the time). Where else do we see that the sages refer to him in this way? The sages say that there are 10 things called precious in the Tanach. One of them is Israel, the Jewish people. But, where do they learn that the Jewish people are "precious?" From the verse, הַבֵּן יָקִיר לִי אֶפְרַיִם. This is even the first one they mention, the most important one. It is thus given to the sages that Ephraim refers to the entire Jewish people.

There is another very beautiful point, in the small word that is written right next of יָקִיר, the word, לִי, "to me," the sages say that whatever is called "mine," or "to me" is something eternal, neverchanging neither in this world nor in the world to come. There is an important לִי that is related to these days of repentance, אֲנִי לְדוּדֵי וְדוּדֵי לִי. The final word לִי refers to the 10 days of repentance. In these final 10 days, the beloved becomes "mine" (לִי). The remez for this is that the final letters are ם״י which together equal 40. The first 30 days comprise the 30 days of Elul (from the 30th of Av to the 29th of Elul), while the final 10 days are the 10 days of repentance that we are in right now. Not only that, but the final word, לִי itself equals 40, to suggest that they contain a concentrated form of the entire 40 days from Rosh Chodesh Elul to Yom Kippur. Just as there is love between us and the Almighty in this verse, Ani ledodi vedodi li, so there is a special type of love between a father and son. Our relationship with the Almighty is described with 3 different parables, that of a man and woman (רַעִיָה וְדוּד), like in the Song of Songs (the apex of this relationship is בַּתֵּנוּגִים), that of a father and son, and that of a master and servant. The relationship of father and son is most strongly depicted

in this verse, **אם ילד שעשועים** (it says that the reason that children enjoy playing with their children because unconsciously it is related to the pleasure of procreation, the playfulness in it). So this son, Ephraim represents the connection between us as God's bride, and God as our beloved husband.

5. How can God love Ephraim?

Now let's notice that in this verse, "Is my precious son Ephraim..." (**הבן יקיר לי אפרים**), the word **הבן** is not "the son" (**הבן** with a definitive article—**ה הידיעה**), rather it is a question: "Is my son Ephraim?" Since it is a question, there is no *dagesh* in the *bet*. But, nowhere in the sages do we see that they interpret this phrase as a question that ends with just a question mark, without a response. Rather, they explain that in the end, God really does love Ephraim. Yet, as we said, the phrase is grammatically a question. So what is going on here? There are a number of different explanations given by the *pashtanim*.

On the one hand they say, this is indeed a question, a question about this son who is addicted to idolatry, he is the worst son of all. That's why in the end the Ten Tribes had to be sent into exile. Therefore, it is a question: how can there be such a bad son who is so beloved to God? How can such a child be God's source of pleasure? Again the meaning of **אם ... הבן** is a question meaning "If there is someone like Ephraim, how can he be a source of pleasure?" But, according to all the commentaries this is a rhetorical question, because in truth he is the son that gives God the most pleasure. In Hebrew this is called **שאלה המתקיימת**. What does this add to our understanding? Not everyone can stand this statement, that the worst son is the one that gives the most pleasure, it is even hard for the holiness mindset to understand how this might be. Yet, still, this is indeed the case, as God says elsewhere, in a different prophecy (from Zacharia 8:6), "Even in My eyes it is wondrous" (**גם בעיני יפלא**). It is a wonder that in spite of Ephraim's history, he is still the most cherished and enjoyed by God.

The initials of the phrase, "is he is a darling child?" (**אם ילד שעשועים**) spell "man" (**איש**). Of the 4 synonyms for "man" in Hebrew, this is the highest. **Ish** (**איש**) always refers to an adult individual. So what this is saying is that the pleasure received from a child is subconsciously a reminder of the pleasure between the parents. Even when the child grows up and becomes an adult, this subconscious memory remains.

Now the *pashtanim* (those commentaries based on the Tanach's literal reading) do not all understand this as a rhetorical question, or a standing question (**שאלה המתקיימת**), like the sages do. The Malbim reads this verse as indeed a question, saying that Ephraim is not beloved, he is undeserving of God's compassion and so on, a truly *misnagdish* explanation, again all because the phrase begins with a question.

But, when we read all the commentaries on this verse, we find that each places the end of the question after a different word in this verse and then the rest of the verse is like a retraction from the initial stance. One interpretation places the end of the question after the words, "Is he a darling son," and then, the rest of the verse states, "Yet, nonetheless, "Whenever I speak of him...." Another interpretation places the end of the

question with the verse's *etnachta* cantillation mark, meaning that until the middle of the verse—"Is Ephraim a precious son, is he a darling son that whenever I speak of him, I should remember him earnestly?"—it is all a question and then comes the response—"Despite this, my inward parts are moved for him; I will surely have mercy on him."

6. *Relating to a problem from the perspective of the Four Worlds*

So, one first point to note is that the fact that the question can turn into an answer at every stage (it can go through an *ithapcha*—a transformation), then we should look at the different options in this sense and how they create a model of the Four Worlds. Let's say in short, that if the entire verse is a rhetorical question (the way the sages understand it) then that is the mindset of Atzilut. In Atzilut, the World of Emanation, everything is just a rhetorical question, but in reality God loves Ephraim and takes pleasure in him. Seeing that even something that seems negative is all Divine, that is possible only in the mindset of the World of Atzilut (Emanation).

The next option is that only the first few words, "Is Ephraim a precious son?" are in question form and the transformation occurs right after that. This is already the mindset of the World of Creation. If the switch occurs after a few more words, "Is Ephraim a precious son, is he a darling son?" then this is the mindset of Formation, because the answer then becomes, "Whenever I speak of him..." and Formation is the world of speech. We are saying this in very short form, with Kabbalistic terminology. Finally, if you have to wait to almost the very end of the verse to experience the transformation, with only the words "therefore my inward parts are moved for him" being positive, then that is already a mindset of the World of Action. What we are left with is the Malbim's reading, where the whole question is real, it is not rhetorical, and there is nothing positive at all. That is already an even lower mindset. What we see from all of this is that every father must be able to switch his view of his son, at least at some stage.

Let's say another *vort*. First it says that Rachel is crying for her son, for he is gone, and then Ephraim is precious to God. In the middle it says, "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning" (שָׁמוֹעַ שְׁמַעְתִּי אֶפְרַיִם מְתַנַּדֵּד). The prophet says, he is speaking to Ephraim, Rachel's grandson, I have heard that Ephraim is bemoaning, which means that he is beginning to have second thoughts. These verses as we said are from the prophet Jeremiah. We said that the greatest concentration of Ephraim is in Hosea, where he begins absolutely addicted to idolatry, but then at the end he himself regrets his behavior and throws his idols away. This verse in Jeremiah is about the return to Zion, a return from exile. In many verses in the *Tanach*, *teshuva* means returning from exile, leaving America or Russia and returning to Zion. So what does this mean that Ephraim is having second thoughts about his behavior, "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus: You have chastised me and I was chastised." It means that Ephraim has heard God's rebuke, and has accepted it, since the end of this verse reads, "bring me back, and I will return, for You are Havayah my God" (הֲשִׁבֵנִי וְאָשׁוּבָה בְּי אֱתָהּ ה' אֱלֹהֵי). After the two verses of regret on the part of Ephraim, and after the return to Zion, there are

two more verses about *teshuvah*, and they are what is known as, *teshuvah* upon *teshuvah* (תשובה על התשובה). This is very relevant to our own generation. After the physical *teshuvah*, the return to Zion, there comes the time that Ephraim must regret what he has done. Now that Ephraim is in the land of Israel, he prays to God, "For after my return, I have regretted" (בִּי אַחֲרֵי שׁוּבִי נַחַמְתִּי). This is a source for the basic notion in Chassidut that after doing *teshuvah*, *teshuvah* has to be done again. After my first *teshuvah* I have received some new consciousness, אַחֲרֵי הוֹדְעִי, and then out of regret, I do *teshuvah* once again, I have struck my thigh, I am ashamed and embarrassed (בְּשִׁתִּי וְגַם נִבְלַמְתִּי) whose initials spell בָּן, like the next verse, (הֲבֵן יִקִּיר לִי אֶפְרַיִם). All this is dependent on Ephraim beginning to move, beginning to regret his actions, which leads him to after returning from exile, to regret his actions, causing him to strike his thigh and be embarrassed. One who feels this, this level of *teshuvah*, about him we can certainly say that the verse, "Is Ephraim a precious son," is a rhetorical question.

7. Teetering as a foundation for *teshuvah*

In Chassidut, someone who is מתנודד (which we translated as "bemoan") is one who has found in his psyche, two opposite affinities. The simplest such affinities are known as the good and evil inclinations. Even when one learns *Tanya* and reads about the fact that one has both a Divine soul and an animal soul, he may not realize that this is really how his psyche is (not just some theoretical description)—that he really does have a split personality. But, as a person matures in his understanding of Chassidut, he sees more and more that he is on a psychological see-saw, on a swing. Understanding this point is the foundation of *teshuvah*. One of the explanations for why the verse says, "Heard, I have heard" (שָׁמוֹעַ שָׁמַעְתִּי) is that Jeremiah at times hears the Ephraim is going in one direction, and at times he hears that Ephraim is going in the opposite direction. This is the prelude to his *teshuvah*. Why is Ephraim that best example of someone who is teetering between two extremes?

8. The individual and society

One explanation that appears in Kabbalah is that Ephraim is from the phrase, אֶפְרַיִם מִי אֶפְרַיִם. The two-letter root of אפרים is פר and its most literal meaning is crumbs, based on the verse, פֹּדֵר הַתְּפוֹרָרָה אֶרֶץ (which appears in a series of four similar sequential phrases in Isaiah, רָעָה הַתְּרַעְעָה הָאֶרֶץ פֹּדֵר הַתְּפוֹרָרָה אֶרֶץ מוֹט הַתְּמוֹטָטָה אֶרֶץ. נוֹעַ תְּנוּעַ אֶרֶץ—note that the final letters of the 4 verbs—רָעָה פֹדֵר מוֹט נוֹעַ—in these phrases spell "crown," עטרה; this is not the same as *keter* which also means crown). In addition, Ephraim when permuted becomes ביפורים, except for the *alef* which becomes a *kaf* (*alef* and *kaf* interchange in the *Achbi* transformation). Likewise the main two-letter root of Kipur (as in Yom Kipur) is פר. How does the crown figure into *teshuvah*? The consummate form of *teshuvah* is when God circumcises our hearts from above and then the crown (עטרה) is revealed and the crown that is revealed is the soul of Ephraim. All of Yom Kippur is thus Ephraim, and the crown of malchut. Judah is the king, but the crown on his head is Ephraim. As we will explain there are two Mashiachs, that of David and that of Ephraim.

Again, what this means is that there is a scenario where the Jewish people return to the land of Israel, create a state, and then they feel that it is crumbling. This is how the word מתנווד was explained in Chassidut, over a 100 years before the return to the land of Israel, yet in spite of this, it is because this regret, מתנווד that the Mashiach will come.

What else does פר relate to? It relates to the word "individual" (פֶּרֵט). What are the two forces that pull Ephraim in two different directions? They are the two parts of his name. The letters פר (again indicating the individual) are pulled towards his first letter, א (symbolizing the One, the Almighty, the *aluf shel olam*). This symbolizes how all the individualistic members of the Jewish people are drawn to God's unity and oneness. And there is another pull, towards the two final letters in his name, *yud mem* (ים), which in Hebrew indicate plurality. This represents the individual being drawn towards individualistic expression, with every individual power being expressed fully, with each receiving the highest level of life. This is one possible explanation of why Ephraim is מתנווד, why he is being torn between two extremes.

Incidentally, the second movement in our description—of the individual being drawn to express his uniqueness—what we call, "the individual that requires the general" (פֶּרֵט הַצָּרִיךְ לְכֹלֵל). The individual wants to reveal the powers inherent in him, a feeling similar to what parents feel and one of the reasons for why they want to have children, because they want to reveal the powers inherent in them by having offspring (and again, Ephraim literally means "being fruitful," פֶּרוּ).

So again, when we want Mashiach to come now, we have to enter a new stage of thought where Ephraim is teetering (אפרים מתנווד), and then the good end will be, הֵבֵן יָקִיר לִי אֶפְרַיִם.

Let's have a short musical intermission.

9. An end to the hatred between Ephraim and Yehudah

We said that the entire Jewish people are called Ephraim, but throughout the *Tanach* the people are divided among Yehudah and Ephraim, like the Southern kingdom Yehudah, and the Northern kingdom (the left) that are Ephraim. This also fits our modern nomenclature for left and right on the political map. The political right includes 2 tribes and the left, Ephraim includes 10 tribes. But, the kingdom that God promises will be eternal is promised by God to the right, to the House of David. And given that the main kingdom is given to the right, and so the Temple, therefore the left, whether consciously or unconsciously (then it was very conscious, today it is not clear) envies the right. Therefore the heralding of redemption in the prophets is וְסָרָה קִנְאֵת אֶפְרַיִם, that the envy of Ephraim for Yehudah will end. In addition, וְצֹרְרֵי יְהוּדָה יִכְרְתוּ. Even though this verse seems to be saying that those that hate Yehudah will be cut-off, another variant is those in Yehudah who hate Ephraim will be cut-off. In any case, throughout Jewish history there is a lot of tension between Ephraim and Yehudah. On the one hand, Ephraim represents the entire Jewish people, and on the other, there is tension between

words are learnt in depth by the sages and from it they learn many laws regarding damages and giving testimony in court.

There are exactly 74, עד, letters in this verse.

From this verse, the sages learn that whenever the Torah refers to “one witness” it is actually referring to at least two. So what this teaches us about our year is that there must be at least two. There can’t be just one here, there must be two and indeed this year is a pregnant year, a year with two months of Adar. Adar’s sign is itself double: fish (Pisces). Now why do we need to witnesses to uphold a reality? Because it is not enough to look at reality from one point of view. You need at least two points of view. Even the fact that every human has 2 eyes is to balance his point of view. But, to uphold a reality, two people need to see an event from two different perspectives. עד, witness written in reverse is “know” דע.

Even about God it says, "God is a God of knowledge" (in the plural) because even God has more than one knowledge, more than one perspective on reality (אל דעות הוי). In Kabbalah these two points of view are referred to as higher knowledge and lower knowledge, referring to whether reality is something or whether it is nothing. Only if there are two points of view can a reality be upheld and the guilty party be found guilty. From each of the superfluous words in this verse, the sages learn another punishment.

13. Three testimonials about reality

The most obvious questions about the verse is that since 2 witnesses are enough, why does it mention three witnesses. In any case, just as God has two points of view, so every reality has to have two points of view. This is to explain why in the Jewish people there must be two different points of view on reality. Even though the Rebbe didn’t like the word not-frum (חלוני) we will use it to make sure that everyone understands what we are saying. So the way that the non-frum Jew sees reality is one point of view, and the way the frum Jew sees reality, is the other. There must be two points of view, or “three points of view” now means that the best is if there is a third point of view which comes to decide between the first two. This third point of view is the Mahsiach’s point of view. The Mashiach is neither frum nor non-frum. He is a third thing. When do we have this in mind? When we say, שמע ישראל, when we say אהד, the *dalet* stands for *dati*, someone who is frum (דתי), and the *chet* stands for *chiloni* (חלוני). What does the alef stand for? The alef is the third point of view, and it stands for *emuni* (אמיני), a believer, and as the BST explains, the belief is that every Jew has a part of God above in him, and for this reason he is beloved by God. The third point of view doesn’t ascribe to either point of view of the frum or the non-frum Jews, but believes that there is something Divine in all of them. Only then can the Jewish people be “one” (אהד), combining all three points of view. In any case, the acronym for תשע"ד is עד, תהא שנת עד, "It will be a year of witness," which, as we saw, actually means that there must be two and even three points of view.

14. The need for perspectives on reality

When we reverse the letters it becomes, תהא שנת דע, meaning דע is the initials of, "supernal knowledge" (דעת עליון). Meaning that it is not enough for us to even see things from God's perspective, from supernal consciousness, we need a witness from below, one who is not from at all. The one who sees things from above is a very from witness. But, you need the non-from point of view to see things from below.

If just דע is דעת עליון and that is not enough, then we need דעת which stands for both supernal consciousness (דעת עליון) and lower, mundane consciousness (דעת תחתון). Indeed, the word "knowledge" (דעת) serves as an acronym for both supernal and lower knowledge. We said that עד also means "until." We can connect this with what we mentioned before regarding the two verses, ושבת עד הוי אלקיך, and שובה ישראל עד הוי אלקיך.

15. Reaching our goals

The word עד in the sense of "until" can also refer to the verse, בטחו בה' עדי עד. So we can even call this year, עד, תהא שנת (עדי עד), means "until and including." When there is just one עד, one witness, that means approaching a goal asymptotically, but not being able to reach it fully. That is called, until but not including (that is just one עד). But, the Torah says, that there cannot be just one witness as we saw, and therefore there must be two witnesses, like in the phrase "until and including" (עדי עד), meaning that the goal can and should be reached.

How many times does the phrase "up to and including" (עדי עד) appear in the *Tanach*? We find that it appears 6 times. Every 3 instances of "up to and including" (עדי עד) equal one instance of "knowledge" (דעת), 474. Every knowledge includes 6 times the word "opinion" (דעה). That is why in the *Zohar*, knowledge is called, "the key that opens six" (מפתחא דכּליל שית). In the Rambam a דעה is not an opinion but rather a character trait. So "up to and including" (עדי עד) is two times "character trait" (דעה). So if there are 6 עד in the *Tanach*, they equal two times "knowledge" (דעת). As we said, דעת by itself refers to the two forms of knowledge, supernal and lower, all the more so when there are 6 עד. The verses that contain עד are יבושו ויבהלו עדי עד and להשמדם עדי עד. These are two verses of submission, and they are followed by 2 verses of separation and 2 verses of sweetening, the model of transformation that we know so well from the Ba'al Shem Tov. The two verses of separation are זאת מנוחתי עדי עד פה אשב כי and גם בניהם עדי עד ישבו לכסא לך אויתיה. These four are all from Psalms. The two verses of sweetening are בטחו בה' עדי עד כי and שישו וגילו עדי עד בי-ה הוי צור עולמים.

We said that all this is before we add new acronyms for עד. Let's connect this all with Ephraim. We are talking this evening mostly about the precious value of Ephraim learnt from the verse, הבן יקיר לי אפרים, the rhetorical question.

16. Submission, separation, and sweetening in testimonials

In the verse with 74 letters we saw earlier, "One witness shall not rise up against a man for an iniquity, or for any sin, that he may commit; by the testimony of two witnesses or by that of three witnesses shall a matter be established" (לא יקום עד אחד באיש) (לכל עון ולכל חטאת בכל חטא אשר יחטא על פי שני עדים או על פי שלשה עדים יקום דבר). One witness is negative and 2 or 3 witnesses are ok. This too is an order of submission (1 witness is not acceptable), separation (2 witnesses are acceptable) and sweetening (3 witnesses are acceptable). The one witness is so high because in the end he is disconnected from reality. Like God's essence that is very high, but it is not in a position to describe reality. The second word in the verse is יקום which equals Yosef (יוסף). The second to last word is also יקום. They are symmetric in the verse. The יקום at the end is dependent on the first.

All this is so that we can justify combining the three levels of witnesses together. The verse mentions "one witness" (עד אחד) then "two witnesses" (שני עדים) and then "three witnesses" (שלשה עדים). We would like to argue that together these three phrases equal Ephraim (אפרים). How can this equality work? If the *alef* of אפרים is set equal to 1000, the literal meaning of the letter *alef*, or *elef*. And then Ephraim is equal not to 331, but 1330.

Someone who is only frum would not think that if there is a singular opinion and many who think differently, the halachah follows the many. But, this is exactly the rule that, יחיד ורבים הלכה כרבים. For instance, if our frum person is a Lubavitcher and the singular opinion is the Lubavitcher Rebbe's, then the Lubavitcher would of course feel that the Rebbe was correct, even if the many other Torah sages oppose him. But, the Torah says differently. Even if the singular opinion is Moshe Rabbeinu's, and the majority of the sages rule otherwise, we follow the majority. All this is to enter the mindset of the new year, where a single testimony is not enough, where you need at least two, and actually even three in order to decide correctly about reality.

If there are two witnesses what can עד stand for. There are two worlds: the world of thought and the world of speech, which are called the concealed world (עלמא דאתכסייא) and there is the revealed world (עלמא דאתגליא). These are also referred to as the world of the soul (the concealed world) and the world of the body (the revealed world, or reality). So if two עד are needed, then both worlds are needed. God created both worlds, He placed the inner within the external. When God creates this reality of one within the other He is referred to as צור. So two witnesses, two עד, means to meditate that everything has two dimensions, and inner and an external, and one is not enough without the other. Like in the Torah, where it is not enough to learn just halachah or to learn just the concealed dimension, they both have to be learnt, both in order to act. This is if there are two witnesses. But, what about if there are three witnesses? Before we explain this, we have to explain how there can be three opinions, three forms of consciousness. Supernal consciousness says that reality is nothing, while the higher reality of the spiritual worlds, God's perspective, that is what exists. The lower consciousness experiences the opposite, that what is below exists, while what is above is nothingness. There is something hiding inside, but I can only believe in it, I cannot be

conscious of it. What then can three forms of consciousness refer to? Again, we usually speak of only 2 forms of consciousness.

Not long ago, we learnt in the daily Tanya, in the 19th epistle, the explanation the Alter Rebbe gives for the two forms of knowledge. They are called the "hidden da'at" (דעת הנעלם) which connects the sefirot of wisdom and understanding (the lightning strike of insight from wisdom, together with the constructive understanding of binah). And the second form is called דעת המתפשט (the extensive knowledge) and it is what connects the intellect with the emotions, this is also called the power of the soul to conceive feeling based on understanding. Again the first is a connection between the insight and the ability to explain it (between wisdom and understanding), while the second is the connection between the comprehensions one has and the feelings that it should give birth to. This requires a great deal of concentration upon one's comprehension. This is a different way of explaining the difference between the two forms of knowledge we mentioned earlier. What then is the third form of knowledge? It is the normal mindset, the normal consciousness that a person has when he concludes praying and goes out into the world. Even then a person should know God in everything that he does or sees. This is based on the verse, "Know Him in all your ways" (בְּכֹל דְרָכָיךָ דַּעְהוּ). You have to connect reality with what is above reality, to connect nature, to elevate nature, with the Divine. This is a special power that a Jew has to walk through this world and to constantly know God. When he eats something he connects it with the Divine.

So the three forms of knowledge, ג דעות, is the power to connect the intellect, to connect the intellect to the emotions and when you go outside, to connect reality with God. This is the perfect form of על פי שלשה עדים יקום דבר.

17. *Da'at in the holidays of Tishrei*

Let's use this to explain something more. The seventh month, *Tishrei* is also described as being full of all good things, מושבע. There are 2 days of RH, there is Yom Kippur which in Ezekiel is also called Rosh Hashanah. Then there are the 7 days between RH and YK. Then 4 more days between YK and *Sukot*. Then 7 days of *Sukot*, and then one day of *Shemini Atzeret*. Finally, when *Shemini Atzeret* is over there is a Chassidic custom to announce ויעקב הלך לדרכו. To which path did he go? He went on the path of "all your ways should be to know God." The third form of knowledge we mentioned. Again, this refers not to Torah and *mitzvot*, but rather to know God in all your way. The Ba'al Shem Tov said that the main revelation of Divinity is after you've finished the mitzvah. You've finished the holiday and done *havdalah*, then if you merit, you will then see the revelation of the final purpose. So the 2 days of RH stand for *keter* and *chochmah* (כתר, חכמה, since both are called ראשית). Yom Kippur stands for understanding. So what then are the 7 days between them? They correspond to the supernal knowledge, דעת הנעלם. So these 7 days between RH and YK are all to connect with the concealed knowledge. Then the 7 days of *Sukot* correspond to the 7 emotive characteristics, and then the 4 days between YK and *Sukot* correspond to the extensive knowledge. *Da'at* has no vessel of its own, it is a connecting force, and here we see that it is not a holiday, it is the days

connecting between the holidays. The 7th day of *Sukot* is not *malchut*, it is called the crown of foundation, עטרת היסוד, which corresponds to Ephraim (likewise the *etrog* among the 4 species corresponds to the crown of foundation, not to *malchut*). While the 8th day, *Shemini Atzeret* corresponds to the true kingdom, *malchut*. *Atzeret* itself is a synonym for king in Hebrew. Finally, the days after *Sukot* are the third form of knowledge, the ויעקב הלך לדרכו.

So we have explained how the whole month of Tishrei corresponds to these three forms of knowledge.

18. Phrases for the new year

Now let's look at three phrases whose initials spell עד.

The first is "the depth of the heart" (עומקא דלבא), so 5774 is the year of the depth of the heart.

BTW, these *simanim* that I am not explaining were all said by other people, not by myself.

Another one is, "sacred boldness" (עזת דקדשה).

The third is "a time of lovers" (עת דודים), which refers to the time of the redemption, the time of love between the Jewish people and the Almighty.

In any case, each of these *simanim* is a world unto itself. Still, we can order them. The depth of the heart is related to the toil of prayer, when we pray to God from the depths of our hearts. This is also related to *teshuvah*. So the first thing this year is to devote it to prayer, to ask for Mashiach wholeheartedly. The Rebbe too said that the Mashiach has not come because nobody has yet called out to God from the depth of his heart. Each of these three *simanim* is a form of knowledge, or consciousness. There is a particular form of knowledge, a particular talent for praying and, like Yitzchak, digging wells in reality.

After a person has prayed from the depth of his heart, he has to make sure to pursue what he has prayed for. Every novel act in the world has to follow the principle that action is more important than everything else. Even when the Rebbe talked for many hours, in the end the point was that people go and do something. There will be many people who will envy you for it, but in the end to do something in life, especially changing things, requires boldness of character. When a person seeks the *teshuvah* of the community, public *teshuvah*, he has to be bold. So the depth of character is just an introduction, and the most important thing to do is to connect in order to bring Mashiach. Again for this we need sacred boldness (עזת דקדשה).

If we merit connecting the two factions in the Jewish people, the non-frum and the frum, then we arrive at עת דודים a time of lovers. The people have to fall in love with one another; they have to understand that they are both needed. Ephraim should reach this form of *teshuvah* until in the end he is found to be the precious son that God has. And *Rashi* explains that this means that Mashiach ben David will not find Mashiach ben Yosef to be his archenemy. All this is to give a few nice *remazim* for the year 5774.

19. Conclusion

May we merit to pray from the depth of our heart and then merit to much sacred boldness. Thanks to this God will smile and bring the Mashiach. His smile is already the coming of Mashiach, but we have to do something to merit it.

The Rambam writes that during these 10 days of *teshuvah*, repentance, the *teshuvah* is very fitting, *יפה ביותר*. This is the only time this phrase appears in the Rambam and its value is exactly *teshuvah*, *תשובה*. The *teshuvah* that is very beautiful, very fitting can awaken our Beloved above, to do *teshuvah* upon our *teshuvah* and this is the best time to do so.