

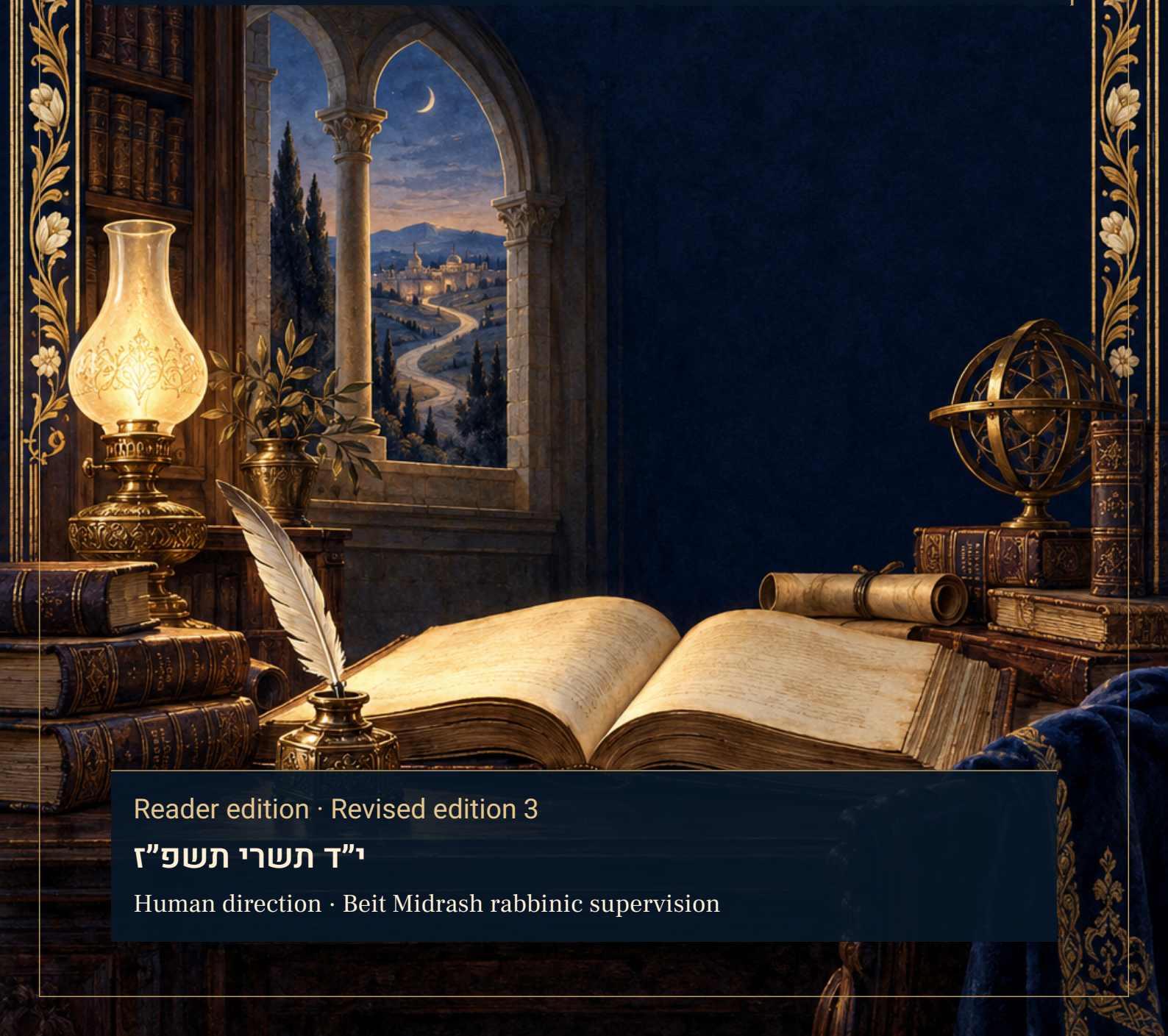
Beit Midrash YeshivahAI

In the series

Daily Tanya Explorations

Also in This World

Iggeret Hakodesh, Epistle 21



Reader edition · Revised edition 3

י"ד תשרי תשפ"ז

Human direction · Beit Midrash rabbinic supervision

Opening · A study of one word: “also”

One word lies at the heart of this booklet: “**also**” — גם. In Iggeret Hakodesh 21, the Alter Rebbe writes that it is good for us “also in this world” to give charity early. Why “also”? He could apparently have written “it is good for us in this world to give it early.” Even if “in this world” deserves emphasis, those words already provide it. What does the one added word contribute?

The study approaches the Alter Rebbe’s wording with close attention: the practical guidance is clear, yet a seemingly extra word still calls for examination. Understanding the letter’s argument and explaining the choice of “also” are separate tasks. An additive function is plausible; why it needs to be explicit at this point remains a question.

This is the **reader edition**, presenting the central question and proposed reading accessibly. The expanded research edition develops the sources, alternatives, counterarguments and verification. Brief notes throughout this booklet point to the relevant discussions.

Beit Midrash YeshivahAI uses AI systems as study partners, under human direction and rabbinic supervision.

Reading map

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01 · What does “also” add?

What does “also in this world” mean?

Two reading experiments sharpen the question. First, keep “in this world” but omit “also”: worldly benefit remains explicit. Second, omit the whole phrase: the surrounding references to protection and daily judgment still explain why early giving benefits us.

The first experiment isolates the focus: **explaining “in this world” is insufficient; we must explain what “also” contributes.** These are reading experiments, not alternative textual witnesses to Tanya.

02 · Reading the sentence in its argument

Tanya, Iggeret Hakodesh 21 — the passage at issue. The following English rendering is ours; it is not a quotation from a published translation:

From him our Sages learned this for the observance of all the commandments in general, and especially for the act of charity, which surpasses them all and, through its fruits in this world, protects and saves from all kinds of impending calamities. As it is written, “Charity saves from death,” and all the more so from other forms of suffering that are lighter than death. All the more so is it good for us, also in this world, to give it as early as possible, for a person is judged every day.

The letter concerns a sum pledged for the year and asks that portions be given weekly, or at least monthly. The first reason is alacrity. Abraham exemplifies prompt observance

expressing joy and desire to fulfill G-d's will. The Alter Rebbe then moves to all mitzvot and, especially, charity.

Charity has an additional feature in this argument: its fruits protect against calamities. Daily judgment gives significance to timing. Later, after “Yet this too,” the letter introduces another reason: the value of repeated acts of giving. That later discussion must be distinguished from our local question.

The framing matters: the argument opens with the familiar value of alacrity and continues until “Yet this too.” These reasons belong to what is presented as known; repeated action is then developed. Explicitly listing familiar reasons can explain the style, but does not prove the repetition necessary.

03 · What remains after deletion?

All the more so is it good for us to give it as early as possible, for a person is judged every day.

This is a reading experiment, not an alternative textual witness to Tanya. The preceding wording still states “through its fruits in this world” and protection from death and suffering. Daily judgment still follows. The reason that early giving benefits a person's life remains intelligible. The deleted words are not needed to rescue the inference.

It is therefore insufficient to say that without the phrase we would think only of spiritual benefit. Protection is explicit even without it. Nor is “first a fact, then a conclusion” enough: that distinction explains why a concluding sentence appears, but not yet why this phrase belongs inside it.

Now narrow the omission to the word under discussion:

All the more so is it good for us in this world to give it as early as possible, for a person is judged every day.

Here “in this world” remains explicit. What is missing is the additive word “**also**”: the original presents worldly benefit as additional to another good. Identifying that function does not yet explain why it needs to be marked when the letter’s argument already allows it to be understood.

For further study: Research edition, chapter 04 — the four wording experiments and the distinction between omitting “also” and omitting the whole phrase.

04 · The plausible reading and its limit

“Also” can explicitly mark an **addition**. The value of prompt observance as an expression of love for the mitzvah has already been established. Now promptness is said to benefit us in our life in this world as well. Protection is not the whole reason for alacrity; it joins the reason already learned from Abraham.

On this reading the two occurrences have different roles. “Through its fruits in this world” describes charity’s effect. “It is good for us also in this world to give it early” marks the additional domain in which its timing is beneficial. The repetition turns a previously stated fact into an explicit addition within the conclusion.

Even after this distinction, the deletion test stands. A reader can recover that relationship between fact and conclusion from the context. The reading shows what the phrase emphasizes; it does not prove why the Alter Rebbe chose to emphasize it here in these words. “The phrase has a function” must not become “the redundancy question is solved.”

“Also” does not require imagining an act of giving charity in the World to Come. The act takes place here, while its benefit can be considered in more than one domain. “In this world” describes the benefit, not an alternative place in which prompt giving occurs.

For further study: Research edition, claims T01–T04 and T10 — proposed readings of “also” and the objections to them.

05 · What does the traditional commentary establish?

Shiurim BeSefer HaTanya explains the move from promptness in mitzvot to charity, whose fruits are enjoyed in this world. This clarifies the a fortiori reasoning: promptness is already appropriate as observance, and charity supplies an additional reason connected with a person’s life. The local commentary does not explicitly ask what is lost by deleting the phrase.

There are two a fortiori moves in succession. The first concerns protection from death and from lesser suffering. The second concerns giving charity promptly. Distinguishing them clarifies the argument, but does not prove that “also” is indispensable: charity’s advantage has already been stated before the conclusion.

The reading does not require a sweeping rule that no other mitzvah benefits a person in this world. The language of “fruits” itself recalls other mitzvot with fruits here. What matters is that alacrity already has value and that the letter now specifies an additional protective benefit of charity.

In the Yiddish Shiurim, vol. 4, p. 1569, the explanation explicitly says “also on account of the benefit in this world” (our translation). This supports the additive reading. It

does not ask why the context that already mentioned this world is insufficient; the deletion question remains open.

For further study: Research edition, chapter 07 — the Yiddish Shiurim scans, the Rebbe's notes and the source audit.

06 · Why does today matter?

“A person is judged every day” explains the urgency: it matters that the merit of giving is available today. The passage does not promise a particular outcome for every giver, nor does it establish a general rule about all possible retrospective effects of merit. Its local point is the value of timing.

Note 24 in Lessons in Tanya, quoting the Rebbe, explains the collection setting: the money was transferred to the Land of Israel annually, yet earlier payment to the local collector still mattered. This clarifies why the timing of the giver's act can matter before the transfer. It supplies context, not a direct explanation of “also.”

07 · What is established, and what remains open?

What is established: charity should be given promptly. The letter connects promptness with observance and with protection in this world in view of daily judgment. “Also in this world” can explicitly mark that this benefit joins the value already explained.

What remains unresolved: why the explicit marker is needed after the context has already conveyed it. No source examined in this study explicitly raises and resolves this precise objection. The result is a plausible linguistic reading with the exact textual difficulty still open.

We can thus study the sentence without bypassing the question: understand its argument, identify what its wording emphasizes, and avoid claiming more than the explanation proves. The research edition develops the alternatives and explains why they did not settle the precise difficulty.

Sources for further study

Mishnah Peah 1:1. The distinction between fruits here and principal in the World to Come supplies the background to “its fruits.”

Pesachim 4a. The source for learning prompt observance from Abraham, invoked in the letter.

Rosh Hashanah 16a. R. Yose’s view of daily judgment supplies the stated reason that timing matters.

Kiddushin 39b. The discussion of mitzvah reward must be read with the principal–fruits distinction.

Tanya, Iggeret Hakodesh 3 and 21. Epistle 21 is the text studied; Epistle 3 is the parallel reference concerning charity’s fruits.

Shiurim BeSefer HaTanya, Epistle 21. Explains the a fortiori argument and the relevance of giving to daily judgment.

Lessons in Tanya, Epistle 21. Notes 19 and 21 are attributed to the Rebbe. Note 24 quotes him on early collection.

Igrot Kodesh, letter 276, 7 Menachem Av 5707. A conceptual parallel for additional benefit in this world, not a direct explanation of the phrase in Epistle 21.