

## Discourse 9

“*v’Atah b’Rachamecha HaRabim... -  
You, in Your abundant mercies...*”

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Vayeishev,  
1<sup>st</sup> night of Chanukah, Shabbat Chanukah,  
Shabbat Mevarchim Tevet, 5723  
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

### 1.

We recite,<sup>487</sup> “You, in Your abundant mercies, stood for them in the time of their distress. You waged their battles, defended their rights, and avenged the wrong done to them etc.” Now, we must understand the meaning of, “You stood for them in the time of their distress.” For, at first glance, the matter of distress was already clearly expressed in the words preceding this, (“When the wicked Hellenic government rose up against Your people Israel”). Thus, when it begins to explain how they were saved by the Holy One, blessed is He, (“You, in Your abundant mercies etc.”), it should simply have stated, “You, in Your abundant mercies, waged their battles etc.,” which comes and explains that the salvation came from the aspect of *HaShem*’s יהוה’s abundant mercies (*Rachamim Rabim*). For, as known,<sup>488</sup> there is a difference between the drawing down of the aspect of mercies (*Rachamim*-רחמים) and the drawing down

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<sup>487</sup> In the “*Al HaNissim*” prayer that is added to the Amidah on Chanukah.

<sup>488</sup> See Torah Ohr, Beshalach 63b and elsewhere.

of the aspect of His abundant mercies (*Rachamim Rabim*-רחמים רבים).

About this it states, “You, in Your abundant mercies (*Rachamim Rabim*-רחמים רבים) etc.,” indicating that the salvation of Chanukah came through the drawing down of His abundant mercies (*Rachamim Rabim*-רחמים רבים), and from there, there was a drawing down in that “You waged their battles etc.” This being so, why is it necessary to repeat the matter of their distress, stating, “You stood for them in the time of their distress”?<sup>489</sup>

## 2.

This can be understood by prefacing with the explanation in the discourse of the Alter Rebbe, of Shabbat Chanukah of the year 5562, entitled “*Ki Ner Mitzvah v’Torah Ohr, Derech Chayim Tochachat Musar*.”<sup>490</sup> [It states there] that we must understand the matter of love of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, “with all your more-*Bechol Me’odecha*-בכל מאדך.”<sup>491</sup> That is, the word “*Me’od*-מאד” means in a limitlessness way (*Bli Gvul*).<sup>492</sup>

However, at first glance, this is not understood. For, how does the matter of limitlessness (*Bli Gvul*) apply in the

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<sup>489</sup> Also see Maamarei Admor HaEmtza’ee, Kuntreisim p. 338; *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 3 p. 1,291; Discourse entitled “*v’Atah b’Rachamecha HaRabim*” of Shabbat Chanukah 5717, translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe 5717, Vol. 1, Discourse 10 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5717, p. 88 and on).

<sup>490</sup> Subsequently printed in Sefer Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5562 Vol. 1 p. 116 and on; Also see the above-mentioned discourse with additions etc., in Ohr HaTorah, Na”Ch Vol. 3 p. 1,339 and on.

<sup>491</sup> Deuteronomy 6:5

<sup>492</sup> See Torah Ohr, Mikeitz 39d and elsewhere.

human soul? That is, even the angels in the upper worlds are limited beings who have an end. How much more so man below, who certainly is limited. This being so, how can limitless love apply to him?

We also must understand the specific wording, “with all **your** more-*Bechol Me’odecha*-מאדך,” rather than simply saying “more-*Me’od*-מאד.” This is because the word “*Me’od*-מאד” itself already means without limit or measure. In contrast, the word “**your** more-*Me’odecha*-מאדך,” only means “[according to] **your** more-*Me’od Shelcha*-שלך,”<sup>493</sup> this being a matter of measure and limitation, rather than limitlessness (*Bli Gvul*).

However, the explanation is that the second question answers the first. In other words, it is not demanded of a person (who is measured and limited) to do a labor that actually is limitless (*Bli Gvul*), but only “[according to] your more-*Me’od Shelcha*-שלך,” meaning that one’s service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, should go beyond his own measures and limitations.

### 3.

The explanation is that there are two levels of love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. In the first level, the love enters and manifests in the receptacle of the soul and body, especially in the vessel of the heart, in that they have the capacity to bear the love that manifests within them. On the other hand, in the second level, the love is so great, that it cannot enter and

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<sup>493</sup> See Torah Ohr, Mikeitz 39d and elsewhere.

manifest in the vessels (*Keilim*). This is the matter of love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, "with all your more-*Bechol Me'odecha*-בכל מאדך."

The difference is that in the first level, a person can love *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, but even so, this will not change the nature of his character traits (*Midot*). Rather, his character traits (*Midot*) remain as they are, according to the nature he was born with, whether he is cruel by nature, or whether he has a [fine and] elevated heart etc.

This is so, even if he serves *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, all day long by fulfilling His Torah and *mitzvot*, and even if at times of repentance (*Teshuvah*) his heart will be embittered etc., and he will be roused with abundant love for *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

The reason is because since the love fills the vessel of his heart and manifests within it, it therefore is surrounded and covered by the vessel of his heart, which encompasses and covers over it, and as a result, this love cannot affect change in the vessel of his heart. This is similar to the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,<sup>494</sup> "The sinners of the Jewish people are filled with *mitzvot* like a pomegranate [is filled with seeds]," specifying that they are "filled-*Melei'im*-מלאים." In other words, they are filled with *mitzvot* that come in a way of inner manifestation in them, and they thus surround and cover over the *mitzvot* that are in them. Therefore, the *mitzvot* do not affect any change of being in them.

In contrast, this is not so of the second level of love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. For, since this love does not enter

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<sup>494</sup> Talmud Bavli, Eruvin 19a

and manifest in the vessel of the heart, it therefore remains transcendent and encompassing over them, and as known, the encompassing light (*Ohr Makif*) refines the outer part of the vessel (*Kli*). In other words, this love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, does not manifest inwardly in the vessel of the heart, but remains encompassing over them. This affects the refinement of the vessel of the heart, thus causing change in the nature of one's character traits (*Midot*) etc.

This can be understood based on the analogy of a teacher who bestows intellect to his student. To explain, the intellect of the teacher, including the intellect that he bestows to the student, is separately transcendent beyond the capacities of the student. This is why when the teacher constricts the intellect that he bestows to his student, by making it commensurate to the capacities of the student's intellect, the bestowal of intellect thereby enters the student in a way that is inwardly manifest (*b'Pnimityut*). That is, the student grasps and surrounds [the intellect] in the vessel of his own intellect. However, through this, according to the coarseness of the student's grasp, a change is caused in the refined intellect of the teacher.

In contrast, when the bestowal of intellect is in a way that transcends the capacity of the vessel of intellect of the student, such that it is neither grasped nor inwardly manifest in the vessel of his intellect, but remains transcendent and encompassing over him, therefore because it is in a transcendent encompassing state, it affects the refinement of the vessel of the intellect, just like every encompassing light (*Ohr Makif*) refines the vessel from its exterior.

The comparison to this from the two levels of love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is that when the love is manifest in the vessel of the heart, it does not affect a change in the nature of one's character traits (*Midot*). Only when one's love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is "with all your more-*Bechol Me'odecha*-בכל מאדך," in that it transcends inward manifestation in the vessel of the heart, but remains transcendent and encompassing over the vessels (*Keilim*), is change affected in the nature of the character traits (*Midot*).

4.

Now, there is an additional difference between the two above-mentioned levels of love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. That is, when the love enters and manifests within the vessel of the heart, meaning that the love is limited, then even after the passage of many days and years, the love remains the same as it was at first. Even if changes and ascents are caused in it, they all are changes and ascents of relative comparison to the level that preceded them, and nothing more.

In contrast, when the love transcends inner manifestation in the vessel of the heart, but is "with all your more-*Bechol Me'odecha*-בכל מאדך," and remains in a transcendent encompassing state (*Makif*), the transcendent encompassing light (*Makif*) then has an effect on the inner manifest aspect, causing him to ascend in elevation after elevation, to the point that from year to year, from day to day and from moment to moment, he continues to add to the level of his love, in elevation after elevation, and in a way that is

beyond comparison. For, the entirety and primary aspect of this love is that it is beyond measure and limitation.

## 5.

There is another difference between the two above-mentioned levels of love. That is, when it comes to love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that is limited and enters and manifests inwardly within the vessel of the heart, this being love that accords to reason and intellect, through it, a person can only reach its source and root, and nothing more, this being the ray of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, the *Shechinah*, which is merely a ray and radiance.

In contrast, this is not so of love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that transcends measure and limitation and is not grasped in the vessel of the heart, but remains in an encompassing state (*Makif*). In this case, the encompassing light (*Makif*) has an effect on the inwardly manifest aspect (*Pnimi*), to remove it from its state of limitation.

In other words, one's entire being is in a way that he leaves his limitations, to the point that through this, it also is in his ability to reach the matter of the true Limitlessness of the One Above, all the way to the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He.

Now, there is another matter in this. That is, that when one's service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is in a way that he leaves his limitations, to the point that he reaches the true reality of the Limitless One Above, he thereby affects the

drawing down and revelation of the true reality of the limitlessness of the One Above to below.

6.

Now, when the love that transcends the measure and limitations of the vessel of the heart - [that is] love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, "with all your more-*Bechol Me'odecha*-בכל מאדך" - reaches the true reality of the Limitless One, as He is Above, and affects that the true reality of the limitlessness of the One Above is drawn down below, just as He is above in *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness Above, this state is called "standing-*Amidah*-עמידה." This is the opposite of the matter of "sitting-*Yeshivah*-ישיבה," as in the verse,<sup>495</sup> "*HaShem*-יהו"ה sat [enthroned] at the flood."

The explanation<sup>496</sup> is that Above in *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness, in which it is inapplicable to use bodily descriptions in that His holiness is beyond comparison,<sup>497</sup> the difference between sitting (*Yeshivah*-ישיבה) and standing (*Amidah*-עמידה) may be understood from how they are in man below. That is, when sitting, the height of one's head is lowered and his feet are elevated from the earth. In contrast, when standing, it is the

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<sup>495</sup> Psalms 29:10

<sup>496</sup> See Maamarei Admor HaEmtza'ee, Kuntreisim p. 338; *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 3 p. 1,291; Discourse entitled "*v'Atah b'Rachamecha HaRabim*" of Shabbat Chanukah 5717, translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe 5717, Vol. 1, Discourse 10 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5717, p. 88 and on); Also see the discourse entitled "*v'Atah b'Rachamecha HaRabim*" in Ohr HaTorah, Bereishit Vol. 7, p. 1,256b and on; Sefer HaChakirah of the Tzemach Tzedek p. 273; Ohr HaTorah, BeHa'alotcha p. 362 and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5654 p. 162 and on.

<sup>497</sup> See the liturgical poem "Yigdal."

very opposite, that his head is elevated and his feet are lowered, to below.

Now, as this is Above in *HaShem's* יהו"ה Godliness, the matter of sitting indicates the lowering and descent of the aspect of intellect for the sake of bestowing to the worlds. To explain, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,<sup>498</sup> "There are twelve hours in the day. During the first three, the Holy One, blessed is He, sits and engages in the study of Torah. During the second three [hours], He sits and judges the whole world... During the third three [hours], He sits and sustains the entire world etc."

The explanation is that the drawing down of vitality to the worlds (and the general matter of the existence of the worlds), this being the matter of "He sits and sustains the whole world etc.," is a descent and lowering relative to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. About this, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,<sup>499</sup> "In the place that you find His greatness, there you will find His humility." In other words, relative to Himself, the entire matter of *HaShem's* יהו"ה praises, blessed is He, (in that we praise His greatness etc.,) all is a lowering and descent relative to Himself, blessed is He.

This is unlike the matter of praises as they are below [in man], in that when we praise someone, the praises elevate his importance. This is because the human soul is limited, and its strengths and powers are what complete and perfect him, in that without them, there actually is lacking in the soul. In contrast, this is not so Above in *HaShem's* יהו"ה Godliness, in which the

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<sup>498</sup> Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zarah 3b

<sup>499</sup> Talmud Bavli, Megillah 31a; See the note of the Rebbe to Sefer HaMaamarim 5700 p. 40.

praises affect no perfection in Him at all. On the contrary, that is where you will find His humility, in that this matter is a descent and lowering relative to Himself. This is the matter of Him “sitting and sustaining etc.,” in that the bestowal of vitality to the worlds, (and the matter of the existence of the worlds in general) is analogous to a person who sits down, causing his head to be lowered down.

Now, Above in *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Godliness, this refers to the descent and lowering of the intellectual aspects (*Mochin*) to the aspects of Victory-*Netzach*, Majesty-*Hod*, and Foundation-*Yesod*, which even relative to the aspect of intellect (*Mochin*) that manifests in the emotions (*Midot*) is a lowering. Thus, how much more so is this a descent relative to the intellectual aspects (*Mochin*) as they are, in and of themselves.

In the same way, “He sits and judges etc.,” this being the matter of judgment and justice as to whether sustaining the world is appropriate etc. This refers to the manifestation of the intellectual aspects (*Mochin*) of Wisdom-*Chochmah*, Understanding-*Binah* and Knowledge-*Da’at*, in the emotional aspects (*Midot*) of Kindness-*Chessed*, Might-*Gevurah*, and Splendor-*Tiferet*, to either judge towards merit or the opposite thereof, which relative to the intellectual aspects (*Mochin*) as they are, in and of themselves, is a descent and lowering, which is why it is called “sitting” (*Yeshivah*-ישיבה).

Now, another aspect of “sitting” (*Yeshivah*-ישיבה) is that the feet are elevated from the earth. For, during the descent of the intellectual aspects (*Mochin*) to the emotional aspects (*Midot*), in order to [render] judgment and justice regarding the bestowal to below through the aspects of Victory-*Netzach*,

Majesty-*Hod*, and Foundation-*Yesod*, (as to whether it is appropriate to sustain them etc.), there then is a temporary withdrawal of bestowal from the aspects of Victory-*Netzach*, Majesty-*Hod*, and Foundation-*Yesod*. This is the meaning of the elevation of the feet when “sitting” (*Yeshivah*), so that there will not be bestowal to below from the aspects of Victory-*Netzach*, Majesty-*Hod*, and Foundation-*Yesod*.

This then, is the meaning of the verse,<sup>500</sup> “*HaShem*-יהו"ה sat [enthroned] at the flood.” This refers to the lowering and descent of the intellectual aspects (*Mochin*) to sit and judge the generation of the flood, causing the elevation of the “feet,” these being the aspects of Victory-*Netzach*, Majesty-*Hod*, and Foundation-*Yesod*, so that there will not be bestowal of beneficence to below.

All this took place in the generation of the flood before the Torah was given, before the revelation of the intellectual aspects (*Mochin*) themselves. For [the intellectual aspects (*Mochin*) themselves] transcend intellect that manifests in the emotions (*Midot*) to judge the world, and certainly transcend intellect that manifests in the aspects of Victory-*Netzach*, Majesty-*Hod*, and Foundation-*Yesod* to sustain the world.

Rather, when the Torah was given, there was a drawing down of the revelation of the intellectual aspects (*Mochin*) themselves. Therefore, through the toil in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, by the Jewish people after the Torah was given, we can even affect the intellectual aspects (*Mochin*) themselves, (as they transcend intellect that manifests in the aspects of *ChaGa* "T and *NeHi* "Y), to be drawn down to below.

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<sup>500</sup> Psalms 29:10

This is the matter of “standing” (*Amidah*), in which the head is elevated above and the feet are lowered below. (This is the opposite of sitting in which the head is lowered below and the feet are elevated above.) In other words, here the intellectual aspects (*Mochin*) are not in a state of descent and lowering to manifest in the aspects of *ChaGa”T* and *NeHi”Y*, but are rather in a state of elevation to above. This matter is the revelation of the intellectual aspects (*Mochin*) as they are, in and of themselves.

In addition – that the head is elevated to above – and the feet are lowered below to stand upon the earth, indicates bestowal to below in the earth, which comes from the aspect of the head as it is above. In other words, that light itself - that is in the intellectual aspects (*Mochin*) themselves - is drawn down and revealed in the earth below.

## 7.

However, for the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה of the Jewish people to bring about the matter of “standing” (*Amidah*) Above in His Godliness, (so that even the intellectual aspects (*Mochin*) as they are in and of themselves, should be drawn down and revealed in the earth below), there must be service of Him that transcends measure and limitation, this being the matter of “with all your more-*Bechol Me'odecha*-בכל מאדך.” For, through this we reach the aspect of the truly Unlimited One, and cause even that aspect to be drawn down and revealed below.

This matter primarily is present in serving Him with repentance and return (*Teshuvah*), in which because of the

concealment and hiddenness of the darkness of the body, the arousal of love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is caused to be with much greater yearning, in a way that cannot manifest [and be constrained] in the vessel of the heart etc. It is in this regard that the repentant (*Baalei Teshuvah*) draw Him with much greater strength etc.<sup>501</sup>

As he concludes the discourse there,<sup>502</sup> he gives a wondrous analogy of a person who knocks on the door of the king's court. That is, if they would permit him to enter, he would not knock on the door to such a degree, with self-abandon etc. However, when they do not let him in, because of his bitterness, he bangs on the door until the king stands up to open it for him, in that he cannot bear the banging on the door. This will suffice for the understanding.

## 8.

This then, is the meaning of the words, "You, in Your abundant mercies, stood for them in the time of their distress." The explanation is that specifically in the time of their distress, during a state of constraint etc., their service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, was in a way of self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) that transcends measure and limitation. (This is like the service of Him of the repentant (*Baalei Teshuvah*), which is with even greater strength.) Through this they brought about the matter of "standing" Above in *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness, that "You stood for them," specifying "You stood-*Amadeta*-עמדת," in

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<sup>501</sup> Zohar I 129b

<sup>502</sup> Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5562 p. 120

which the head is elevated above and the feet are on the earth below.

In other words, below on the earth there is a drawing down and revelation of the same light that is in the aspect of the essence of the intellect (*Etzem HaMochin*) itself. This light is in a state of limitlessness (*Bli Gvul*), and it therefore sustains with eternal sustainment. This too is included in the matter of “standing” (“You stood for them”). This is as the Tzemach Tzedek explained,<sup>503</sup> that [the term] “standing-*Amidah*-עמידה” indicates eternal sustainment.

However, it first begins by stating, “You, in Your abundant mercies,” in that all this is drawn down from the aspect of *HaShem*’s יהו"ה abundant mercies (*Rachamim Rabim*) that transcends the chaining down of the worlds (*Hishtalshelut*), and is absent of limitation (*Bli Gvul*). It is to this aspect that the service of *HaShem* יהו"ה with self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) of the Jewish people reached. This is the aspect of “with all your more-*Bechol Me’odecha*-בכל מאדך,” brought about by the constraint, “in the time of their distress” etc.

The same applies to the general totality of our deeds and service of *HaShem* יהו"ה, blessed is He, throughout the time of exile. That is, it is because of the constraint of the exile that the service of *HaShem* יהו"ה of the Jewish people is caused to be in a way that transcends measure and limitation, by which we reach the aspect of the Limitlessness of the One Above, and affect that the Limitless of the One Above be drawn down and revealed below, this being the matter of “standing” (*Amidah*-

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<sup>503</sup> See Sefer HaChakirah p. 272

(עמידה). This is as stated,<sup>504</sup> “His feet will stand, on that day, on the Mount of Olives,” specifying, “will stand-*v’Amdu*-ועמדו,”<sup>505</sup> with the true and complete redemption through our righteous Moshiach, in the near future, in actuality!

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<sup>504</sup> Zachariah 14:4

<sup>505</sup> See Sefer HaChakirah p. 272 *ibid.*