

Discourse 3

*“Lehavin... Shedorot HaRishonim...
To understand... that the earlier generations...”*

Delivered upon the conclusion of Yom HaKippurim, 5724¹⁷⁷

By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

To understand what we find in the words of our sages, of blessed memory,¹⁷⁸ that the earlier generations from Adam, the first man, until the giving of the Torah, did not merit [receiving] the Torah even though there were perfectly righteous *Tzaddikim* [amongst them], such as Metushelach,

¹⁷⁷ Sometime after the Rebbe returned to his room from the meal in the apartment of the Rebbe Rayatz upon the conclusion of Yom HaKippurim, he suddenly emerged from his room (at approximately 11pm) and went into the small study hall (in which there were only a few individuals). He looked around to all sides and then went to the southern wall and sat down on a chair. The onlookers immediately brought a table and set it before him, and he then began to say this discourse for approximately 14 minutes. Also see “HaMelech b’Mesibo” Vol. 1, p. 95. Before beginning the discourse, the Rebbe said that this discourse was said by the Alter Rebbe upon the conclusion of Yom HaKippurim 5562 and it is found in the booklet of manuscripts of the year 5562 which recently arrived.* [*It was subsequently printed (around 5724) in Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5662 (Vol. 1) p. 11 and on, (and another version is printed in Maamarei Admor HaZaken, Al Maamarei Razal p. 107 and on). Also see the first part of this discourse, with the glosses etc., in Ohr HaTorah, Tisa p. 1,966 and on (entitled “*Drush Admo”r Nishmato Eden 5562, Motza’ei Yom HaKippurim*”); Also see p. 1,969 there where it states, “This concludes his holy words of the conclusion of Yom HaKippurim 5562”). Also see Re’eh p. 754 and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5679 p. 259 and on; Discourse entitled “*v’Asita Chag Shavuot*” 5731 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5731 p. 220 and on); For the second portion of the discourse, see Ohr HaTorah, Drushim L’Yom HaKippurim p. 2,137.

¹⁷⁸ See Ohr HaTorah and Sefer HaMaamarim 5679 in the preceding note.

Noach, and Avraham etc. This seems to indicate that our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in fulfilling Torah and *mitzvot* (after the Torah was given) is loftier than their service of Him. However, by the fact that our sages, of blessed memory, stated¹⁷⁹ that our forefather Avraham fulfilled all of Torah, even before it was given, in that he grasped the totality of Torah and *mitzvot* spiritually, it must be that the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה of our forefathers was loftier.

However, the explanation is that they both are true. That is, [though on the one hand] there is very great superiority [to our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה] after the Torah was given, over and above that of the previous [generations] who did not merit [to be given] the Torah, even so, [on the other hand] there also is a superiority to the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה of our forefathers, over and above our service of Him.

The primary difference is that our forefathers grasped Torah through their service from below to Above, and because of this their service was greater. In contrast, the service of later generations (after the giving of the Torah), is in a way of drawing from Above to below, in that the Torah was given from Above. Because of this, that which is drawn down through our service is superior.

¹⁷⁹ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 28b; Mishnah Kiddushin 4:14 and Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 82a.

2.

This may be better understood through the analogy of “a student who makes his teacher wise,”¹⁸⁰ which does not reach the level of revelation of deep intellect of the teacher stemming from his own desire, without the arousal brought about by the student. The explanation is that the meaning of “a student who makes his teacher wise” is that through the student awakening questions and contradictions in the words of the teacher, the teacher is caused to delve into his own intellect, in order to explain it to him with greater understanding and intellect.

Now, this is not something that the teacher previously thought of, but is in addition to it, since he only has become wise in it now, through the questions of the student. Now, even though this additional explanation comes from the intellect of the teacher himself, nonetheless, since the teacher’s explanation is born out of the student’s question, therefore what is drawn down through this from the teacher’s intellect, is only a drawing down that is constricted commensurate to the capacity of the student [to receive].

In contrast, when within himself, the teacher awakens [with desire] to bestow and reveal a deep intellect, (which he did not desire to reveal before), this is the teacher’s intellect as it is, in and of himself, literally within his own power of conceptualization. [That is], it is not commensurate to the

¹⁸⁰ See Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 14a

capacities of the student. Moreover, even when the teacher reveals a deep intellect just by way of a riddle or a hint, this too is the intellect of the teacher, as it is to himself, and is not according to the capacity of the student.

With the above in mind, we can understand the difference between the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of our forefathers and the Torah given to us at the giving of the Torah. That is, the Torah given to us at the giving of the Torah is like the revelation of the teacher's intellect as it is to Himself.

For example, in the Torah portion of "*Kadesh*-קדש"¹⁸¹ of the Tefillin, there is a manifestation of the essence of the power of the Wisdom-*Chochmah* of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He,¹⁸² this being the aspect of the upper wisdom (*Chochmah Ila'ah*) of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*).

In contrast, this was not so of the service of Him of our forefathers, such as Yaakov's service in making the sticks,¹⁸³ through which he only drew down a likeness of what is brought about through the *mitzvah* of Tefillin.¹⁸⁴ This is because [at that point] it was not a commandment from Above, but was done by Yaakov solely through preparing himself with self-sacrifice and affecting supernal unifications (*Yichudim*) etc. Therefore, the actual essence of the upper wisdom (*Chochmah Ila'ah*) of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) was not drawn down as it is, in

¹⁸¹ Exodus 13:1-10

¹⁸² See Zohar III 262a; Biurei HaZohar of the Mittler Rebbe, Va'etchanan 150a and on; Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 41 (56b).

¹⁸³ Genesis 30:37 and on

¹⁸⁴ Zohar I 162a (Sitrei Torah); Also see Torat Chayim, Bereishit 45d; Vayishlach 192a.

and of itself, but was only commensurate to his service, similar to the analogy of “a student who makes his teacher wise.”

It thus is in this that there is a superiority to the level of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, following the giving of the Torah, in comparison to the service of Him of our forefathers. That is, because of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה kindness toward us, He gave us the merit of attaching our souls to His Essential Being, blessed is He, by way of ritual, through doing simple deeds, such as writing the Torah portion of “*Kadesh-קדש*” in the *Tefillin*, which causes a drawing down of the aspect of the upper wisdom (*Chochmah Ila'ah*) of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*).

However, there also is an element of superiority to the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of our forefathers in comparison to our service of Him. For, even though by our deeds and service (after the giving of the Torah) we cause a drawing down of the aspect of the upper wisdom (*Chochmah Ila'ah*) of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), nonetheless, in our souls we have no grasp or recognition of this drawing down at all, nor can we grasp it etc.

This is because it only is possible to grasp the self-nullification (*Bittul*) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, of the world one is in. Therefore, in the world of Action (*Asiyah*), which only is from the garments of *Nogah*, even a radiance of a radiance of the Wisdom-*Chochmah* of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) cannot be grasped.

Moreover, even in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*), where one receives the reward for having fulfilled the *mitzvot*,

there only is a drawing down of a ray and glimmer of the Wisdom-*Chochmah* of Kingship-*Malchut* of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), (within which the Wisdom-*Chochmah* of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) is vested).¹⁸⁵

It thus is in this regard that there is greater superiority in our forefathers, whose souls were from the world of Creation (*Briyah*), in that through their service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) and with the supernal unifications (*Yichudim*) that they affected, they thereby grasped the lights of Kingship-*Malchut* of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), (within which Wisdom-*Chochmah* of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) is also vested). Except that the grasp of our forefathers was only of the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut* of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) as it comes to be manifest and vested in the world of Creation (*Briyah*), but [their grasp was] not of the source of Torah, which is the aspect of Wisdom-*Chochmah* of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) itself.

About this the verse states,¹⁸⁶ “My Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה I did not make known through them.” This was specifically introduced with the giving of the Torah, at which time we were granted the power to draw from the Source of the Torah, this being the upper wisdom (*Chochmah Ila'ah*) of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), through simply writing the Torah portion of “*Kadesh*-קדש” in the Tefillin, as mentioned above. And

¹⁸⁵ See Biurei HaZohar of the Mittler Rebbe, Acharei 75a; Ohr HaTorah, Bereishit Vol. 3, p. 529b and on, and elsewhere.

¹⁸⁶ Exodus 6:3; See Torah Ohr, Va'era 56a; Also see Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, The Gate of The Name (*Shaar HaShem*).

though we have no grasp of this drawing down, it nevertheless is analogous to the depths of a very deep intellect conveyed by way of a riddle and a hint. That is, even though the intellect is not openly revealed, nonetheless, the essential power of the wisdom is present in this etc. This should suffice for the understanding.

3.

Now, similar and comparable to the level of the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, as it is after the giving of the Torah, through which we draw down the source itself, we likewise find that in the service that follows after the giving of the Torah, there is a great superiority to the repentance (*Teshuvah*) of Rabbi Elazar ben Dordaya,¹⁸⁷ who wept and moaned until his soul left him.¹⁸⁸ About this Rebbi¹⁸⁹ wept and said,¹⁹⁰ "There is one who acquires his [share in the coming] world in a moment."

In contrast, this was not so of the other righteous *Tzaddikim*. That is, even though the service of the other righteous *Tzaddikim* was very great, and they had self-sacrifice in reciting the *Shema*, to the point of the expiry of the soul etc., (similar to his soul leaving him etc.), nevertheless, they did not reach the level of Rabbi Elazar ben Dordaya.

¹⁸⁷ Also see Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5562 ibid. p. 7; Likkutei Torah, Acharei 26c

¹⁸⁸ Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zarah 17a

¹⁸⁹ Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi

¹⁹⁰ Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zarah 17a ibid.

By way of analogy, the difference between them may be understood from a flame that is so great that a person cannot approach it. Only when a small part of the flame is separated from it and comes into a vessel can it then be handled by means of the vessel. Another analogy for this is the great ocean, which is so deep at its center that it is impossible to stand there without drowning. Only in those places where parts of the ocean are separated to its perimeter, is it possible to stand there.

Now, the analogue, this being the greatness of Rabbi Elazar ben Dordaya who wept and moaned until his soul left him, is that through this he reached the flame itself, or the depth of the ocean at its center. In contrast, in regard to the service and self-sacrifice of the other righteous *Tzaddikim*, in reciting the *Shema* and making supernal unifications (*Yichudim*), they did not reach the depth of the ocean as it is at its center, nor did they grasp the flame as it is, in and of itself, not even by way of vessels (*Keilim*).

The explanation is as explained in Etz Chayim¹⁹¹ about the greatness of the ten martyrs, of whom there are none greater.¹⁹² That is, this is impossible to bring about through deep intentions (*Kavanot*) and unifications (*Yichudim*) etc., even when they are done in the truest manner. The reason is because the martyrs had **actual** self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*

¹⁹¹ See Etz Chayim, Shaar HaKlallim, Ch. 1; Shaar 39 (Shaar Ma" N uMa"D), Drush 1.

¹⁹² See Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 50a; Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar (10b)

b'Po'el),¹⁹³ in that even their bodies were nullified of their existence and were given over to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

In contrast, with other righteous *Tzaddikim*, their self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) is in the matter of intentions (*Kavanot*) etc. Now, in regard to the intention (*Kavanah*) to have self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*), this stems from grasp and light, and therefore it is not possible to come to the “center of ocean” through them, or “to grasp the flame as it is, in and of itself,” not even by way of vessels (*Keilim*).

This also is the superiority of the repentance (*Teshuvah*) of Rabbi Elazar ben Dordaya, who wept and moaned until his soul left him. This was similar to actual self-sacrifice for the sanctification of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה (*Mesirat Nefesh al Kiddush HaShem*), (with the nullification of the body) in actuality and in the most literal sense. This is what Rabbi wept about and said, “There is one who acquires his [share in the coming] world in one moment.”

In other words, everything that Rabbi Elazar ben Dordaya would have been able to actualize, even in the course of a hundred years, through studying Torah, fulfilling the *mitzvot*, and serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה with his heart, this being the service of prayer,¹⁹⁴ through his tears to the point that his soul left him, he grasped and actualized this in a single moment. This is because of the greatness of actual self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh B'Po'el*). This also explains the tidings that the Maggid

¹⁹³ See at length in *Shaarei Teshuvah* (of the Mittler Rebbe), Vol. 1, discourse entitled “*Acharei HaShem Elohei"chem"*” Ch. 37-38, and elsewhere.

¹⁹⁴ Talmud Bavli, Taanit 2a

angel told the Beit Yosef,¹⁹⁵ that he would merit to give up his life for the sanctification of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה (*Al Kiddush HaShem*).¹⁹⁶ This should suffice for the understanding.

4.

However, the superiority of Rabbi Elazar ben Dordaya's repentance (*Teshuvah*), who reached the source etc., (the flame itself, or the center of the ocean), was (not to the general source etc., which is like what was explained above about our service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, after the giving of the Torah, by which we draw down the Source of the Torah, but it was rather) only in regard to **his** source. This is why Rebbe was precise in stating, "There is one who acquires **his** [share in the coming] world (*Olamo*-עולמו)," meaning, specifically the [coming] world of Rabbi Elazar ben Dordaya alone.

The explanation is that each and every soul has a source (*Makor*) and there then is a lesser aspect which is separated to the perimeter, like what we explained in the analogies (in chapter three). It is this aspect that Rabbi Elazar acquired in a single moment. That is, through his self-sacrifice (with his soul leaving him) he reached his source (*Makor*), meaning the source of **his** soul, this being the source of the lesser aspects that

¹⁹⁵ Rabbi Yosef Karo, the author of *Shulchan Aruch* (The Code of Torah Law).

¹⁹⁶ See *Maggid Meisharim*, beginning of *Bereishit*, end of the section beginning "*HaLo Lecha LeMinda*"; Also see *Parshat Emor*, section beginning "*Achar Kach Amar Li*"; *Bechukotai*, section beginning "*BaYom HaNizkar*" and elsewhere. See the note of the Rebbe to *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5562 *ibid.* p. 313.

are separated to the perimeter, specifically relative to his particular soul.

With the above in mind, it makes sense that there were various righteous *Tzaddikim* who even grasped higher than what Rabbi Elazar ben Dordaya grasped, even though their service was in a way of lights (*Orot*) within vessels (*Keilim*) and with various different vessels (*Keilim*). This is because the source of their souls was so high that even their service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in a way of lights (*Orot*) within vessels (*Keilim*), was loftier than the service of Rabbi Elazar ben Dordiya and his actual self-sacrifice for the sanctification of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, (*Mesirut Nefesh Al Kiddush HaShem*).

This similarly is so of Rabbi Akiva, who said,¹⁹⁷ “All my days I have been troubled by the verse,¹⁹⁸ ‘With all your soul-*Bechol Nafshecha* בכל נפשך,’ meaning, ‘Even if He takes your soul,’ and I said [to myself], ‘When will the opportunity for me to fulfill this verse be given?’” The precise word “for me to fulfill-*Akaymenu* אקיימנו” also means “to uphold” (meaning that through this he would uphold the self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) that he had throughout the days of his life). For, the difference between the self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) of the *Shema* recital, in comparison to actual self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh b’Po’el*), is like the difference between the small part that spreads to the perimeter, in comparison to the source (*Makor*). However, [this too] only relates to the service

¹⁹⁷ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 61b

¹⁹⁸ Deuteronomy 6:5

of *HaShem*-יהו"ה of Rabbi Akiva, as it relates to the source of his own soul.

5.

Now, the general explanation of the difference between service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, through Torah and *mitzvot*, and the sanctification of His Name (*Kiddush HaShem*), is that, as known, the aspects of father-*Abba* (Wisdom-*Chochmah*) and mother-*Imma* (Understanding-*Binah*) of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) are the source of all the lights (*Orot*) and emanations (*Ne'etzelim*).

In contrast, the aspects of *Zeir Anpin* and *Nukva* of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) are as they are separate from the source, into various details. Therefore, through serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with the sanctification of His Name (*Kiddush HaShem*), (through which we come to the source etc.) we affect the ascent of the feminine waters (*Ha'ala'at Mayim Nukvin*) to the father-*Abba* (Wisdom-*Chochmah*) and mother-*Imma* (Understanding-*Binah*).¹⁹⁹

In contrast, through service of Him by the righteous in fulfilling Torah and *mitzvot* and with the devotional intent (*Kavanah*) to have self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) during the recital of *Shema*, (which is similar to the small parts that are separated to the perimeter), the ascent of the feminine waters

¹⁹⁹ See Etz Chayim, Shaar HaKlallim, Ch. 1; Shaar 39 (Shaar Ma"N uMa"D), Drush 1.

(*Ha'ala'at Mayim Nukvin*) is to the aspects of *Zeir Anpin* and *Nukva*. This will suffice for the understanding.²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ See Etz Chayim *ibid*.