

Discourse 57

*“Vayedaber HaShem... Pinchas ben Elazar -
HaShem spoke... Pinchas son of Elazar”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Pinchas,
Shabbat Mevarchim Menachem-Av, 5725
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,¹¹⁵⁴ “*HaShem*-יהוה spoke to Moshe, saying: Pinchas son of Elazar son of Aharon the Priest turned back My wrath from upon the children of Israel, when he zealously avenged My vengeance etc.” In his discourse by this title,¹¹⁵⁵ the Rebbe Maharash explains that we must understand the statement in holy books,¹¹⁵⁶ that Pinchas was a reincarnation of Nadav and Avihu, and that through him “zealously avenging My vengeance,” he rectified the sin of Nadav and Avihu.

To explain, the matter of the sin of Nadav and Avihu was that “they approached before *HaShem*-יהוה and they died.”¹¹⁵⁷ That is, they only had the aspect of the “running” (*Ratzo*) desire [to approach] without the “returning” (*Shov*), such that they came to a state of the actual expiry of the soul.

¹¹⁵⁴ Numbers 25:10-11

¹¹⁵⁵ Of the year 5629 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5629 p. 274 and on).

¹¹⁵⁶ See Zohar III 217a and Mikdash Melech there; Shaar HaGilgulim, Shaar 31 & 32.

¹¹⁵⁷ Leviticus 16:1

However, it is not understood how Pinchas rectified this sin through his zealousness in exacting vengeance against Zimri, which was a matter of self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*), similar to the matter of “running” (*Ratzo*) without “returning” (*Shov*).

We also must understand the sin of Nadav and Avihu in general, who had the matter of a “running” (*Ratzo*) desire and self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*). For, at first glance, this is astonishing. Why is this considered to be a sin and transgression? Is not the greatness of the matter of self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) well known, that [when reciting *Shma Yisroel*] one must give over his soul [to *HaShem*-יהו"ה] with the word One-*Echad*-אחד?¹¹⁵⁸ Moreover, [as known] this is the highest form of serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, even higher than all Torah and *mitzvot*.

This is as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,¹¹⁵⁹ “Why does the section, ‘Listen Israel’-*Shema Yisroel*-שמע ישראל’ (the matter of sacrificing oneself (*Mesirat Nefesh*) [to *HaShem*-יהו"ה] with the word One-*Echad*-אחד”) come before the section, ‘It shall be that if you listen-*VeHayah Im Shamo’a*-והיה אם שמוע’? So that one will first accept the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven upon himself, and only then accept the yoke of the *mitzvot* upon himself.”

Moreover, as known, in *Maggid Meisharim*,¹¹⁶⁰ it states that the *Maggid* angel promised the *Beit Yosef* that he would merit being burned [at the stake] for the sanctification of the

¹¹⁵⁸ Deuteronomy 6:4; See Zohar II 119a; Zohar III 33a

¹¹⁵⁹ Mishnah Brachot 2:2; (Talmud Bavli, Brachot 13a)

¹¹⁶⁰ *Maggid Meisharim*, beginning of Bereishit (end of the section entitled “*HaLo Lecha Leminda*”; See Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 21, p. 176.

Great Name (but in the end, due to a certain reason etc., he did not merit this). However, this matter of being burned [at the stake] for the sanctification of the Great Name is similar to what happened with Nadav and Avihu, in that “a fire came forth from before *HaShem*-יהו"ה [and consumed them].”¹¹⁶¹ This being so, why is it that for Nadav and Avihu the matter of “they approached before *HaShem*-יהו"ה” was considered to be a sin and transgression that needed rectification through Pinchas?

2.

However, the matter is understood from the precise wording of our sages, of blessed memory,¹¹⁶² “Why does the section, ‘Listen Israel]-*Shema Yisroel*-שמע ישראל’ come before the section, ‘It shall be that if you listen-*VeHayah Im Shamo*’a-והיה אם שמוע’? So that one will first accept the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven upon himself, and only then accept the yoke of the *mitzvot* upon himself.”

That is, *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Supernal intention is not just for a person to accept the yoke of Heaven upon himself, and remain in a state of “running” (*Ratzo*), but rather the matter of accepting the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven is introductory to accepting the yoke of the *mitzvot*, this being the aspect of “returning” (*Shov*).

In other words, *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה ultimate Supernal intent is for the *mitzvot* to be fulfilled, this being service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, stemming from the body. Except that for

¹¹⁶¹ Leviticus 10:2

¹¹⁶² Mishnah Brachot 2:2; (Talmud Bavli, Brachot 13a)

the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in fulfilling the *mitzvot* to be whole and perfect, it must be preceded by accepting the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven.

That is, the fulfillment of Torah and *mitzvot* must be permeated with the matter of self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*). However, "running" (*Ratzo*) and self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) alone, is not whole and perfect service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה at all, but is rather like "Ben Azai who gazed and died,"¹¹⁶³ which is not at all a whole and perfect service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה.

Rather, whole and perfect service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is like Rabbi Akiva, who "entered in peace and departed in peace."¹¹⁶⁴ In other words, his "running" (*Ratzo*) desire was not in a way of the light (*Ohr*) leaving its vessel (*Kli*), but was in a way that [the running itself] should bring to "returning" (*Shov*).

This happens when the "running" (*Ratzo*) is not a result of his own nature, but a result of his nullification of self (*Bittul*) to fulfill *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Supernal intent. In such a case the "running" (*Ratzo*), this being the matter of "he entered in peace," brings to returning (*Shov*). That is, because he entered in peace, therefore he also departed in peace.

With this in mind, we can understand the sin of Nadav and Avihu, in that they only had the aspect of "running" (*Ratzo*) without the matter of "returning" (*Shov*). Furthermore, even their "running" (*Ratzo*) itself, was not in a way of "running"

¹¹⁶³ Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 14b (as per the Ein Yaakov version of the text; Talmud Yerushalmi, Chagigah 2:1); See Torah Ohr, Vayishlach 25b; Torat Chayim, Vayishlach 194a and on; Sefer HaMaamarim 5649 p. 259 and on; Likkutei Sichot Vol. 3, p. 988 and on.

¹¹⁶⁴ See the citations in the preceding note.

(*Ratzo*) that precedes “returning” (*Shov*), since they only gave over their soul (*Mesirat Nefesh*), but not their body, in that their body remained whole and only their souls expired and left their bodies.

This is like the withdrawal of the lights (*Orot*) from the vessels (*Keilim*) of the world of Chaos-*Tohu* and cannot compare to self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) in a way of giving up the body so that the soul departs, such as what the Maggid angel promised the Beit Yosef, that he will come to be burned [at the stake] for the sake of sanctifying *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Name, blessed is He, this being the matter of sacrificing the body, by which the soul departs automatically.

This is also the meaning of Pinchas rectifying the sin of Nadav and Avihu. This is because Pinchas gave up his body. That is, the tribe of Shimon wanted to kill him, but he stood steadfastly and was willing to give up his body, and zealously avenged the vengeance of *HaShem* of Legions-*HaShem Tzva*’ot-צבאות-יהו"ה. Because of this his soul flew upward.

We thus find that he had the matter of “running” (*Ratzo*) in wholeness and perfection. Therefore, through this, there subsequently was a drawing down of the “returning” (*Shov*), which is the meaning of the verse,¹¹⁶⁵ “Behold! I give him My covenant of peace,” this being the aspect of drawing down, such that there will be the drawing down of peace and a bond stemming from the revelation of Godliness drawn down through his “running” (*Ratzo*).

Moreover, he also atoned for the people, this also being a matter of “returning” (*Shov*), in that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is

¹¹⁶⁵ Numbers 25:12

He, returned and caused His presence to dwell and be revealed [in them] etc.

3.

Now, this can be connected to the matter of the sacrificial offerings in the Torah portion of Pinchas. For, as known, the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*) have the two modes of “running” (*Ratzo*) and “returning” (*Shov*). (That is, in addition to the fact that every *mitzvah* has the matters of “running” (*Ratzo*) and “returning” (*Shov*),¹¹⁶⁶ in the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*) the matters of “running” (*Ratzo*) and “returning” (*Shov*) are more revealed.)

This is the meaning of what the verse states about the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*),¹¹⁶⁷ “My satisfying aroma-*Rei’ach Nichoci* נִיחֹחִי-רִיחַ,” which is of the same root as, “descending in level-*Nachit Darga* נַחִית דְּרָגָה,”¹¹⁶⁸ this being a matter of lowering (drawing down-*Hamshachah*) from Above to below, (which is the aspect of “returning” (*Shov*)).¹¹⁶⁹

More specifically, there are two matters in the drawing down (*Hamshachah*) of the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*). This is the meaning of what our sages, of blessed memory, stated¹¹⁷⁰ in explaining the words “A satisfying aroma-*Rei’ach Nicho’ach* נִיחֹחַ-רִיחַ,” that, “It brings satisfaction of spirit (*Nachat Ru’ach* נַחַת רוּחַ) before Me that I spoke, and My will

¹¹⁶⁶ See Likkutei Torah, Chukat 56b

¹¹⁶⁷ Numbers 28:2

¹¹⁶⁸ See Talmud Bavli, Yevamot 63a

¹¹⁶⁹ Likkutei Torah, Pinchas 76a

¹¹⁷⁰ Sifri and Rashi to Numbers 25:8 and elsewhere.

was done.” In other words, there first is the matter of “I spoke,” this being the arousal from Above that precedes the arousal from below. There then is the matter of the satisfaction of spirit (*Nachat Ru'ach*-נחת רוח) caused because “My will was done,” this being arousal from Above that follows arousal from below.

4.

The explanation is that in Likkutei Torah, at the beginning of this week's Torah portion,¹¹⁷¹ (and at greater length in the Siddur),¹¹⁷² the Alter Rebbe begins by explaining the verse,¹¹⁷³ “Command the children of Israel *and you shall say to them*: My offering, My food for My fires... *And you shall say to them*: This is the fire-offering etc.” Now, we must understand why it states twice, “And you shall say to them (*v'Amarta*-ואמרת)... And you shall say to them (*v'Amarta*-ואמרת).”

He explains that one must fulfill all the *mitzvot* in thought (*Machshavah*), speech (*Dibur*), and action (*Ma'aseh*), and that the same is true in regard to the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*). Thought (*Machshavah*) is prayer (*Tefillah*), which is “service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה in the heart,”¹¹⁷⁴ and corresponds to the sacrifices (*Korbanot*).¹¹⁷⁵ Speech (*Dibur*) is the study of

¹¹⁷¹ Likkutei Torah, Pinchas 75a

¹¹⁷² Siddur Im Da"Ch – 31c and on. To elucidate, since this was now recently reprinted in the Siddur, it has the greater endearment that is present in something new. It is certain that all the discourses in the Siddur will be studied, including this one.

¹¹⁷³ Numbers 28:2-3

¹¹⁷⁴ Sifri and Rashi to Deuteronomy 11:13; Talmud Bavli, Taanit 2a

¹¹⁷⁵ See Mishnah Avot 1:2 and the commentators there.

the teachings of Torah about the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*), [as it states],¹¹⁷⁶ “Whosoever engages in the study of the burnt offering (*Olah*) [it is as though he has brought a burnt offering] etc.” There then is the actual service of offering the sacrifices (*Korbanot*) themselves, “male lambs in their first year etc.,”¹¹⁷⁷ which is action in deed (*Ma’aseh*).

Now, the words, “And you shall say (*v’Amarta*-ואמרת) to them: This is the fire-offering etc.,” is said in regard to the actual deed (*Ma’aseh*) of bringing the sacrificial offering (*Korban*). In contrast, the first verse, “Command the children of Israel and you shall say (*v’Amarta*-ואמרת) to them,” refers to the aspects of thought (*Machshavah*) and speech (*Dibur*).¹¹⁷⁸

¹¹⁷⁶ See Talmud Bavli, Menachot 110a; Rabbeinu Bachaye to the end of the Torah portion of Vayakhel; Tzav 7:37; Shulchan Aruch of the Alter Rebbe, Orach Chayim, Mahadura Kamma, 1:11.

¹¹⁷⁷ Numbers 28:3

¹¹⁷⁸ This concludes the portion of this discourse that we have available to us.