

Discourse 9

“Vayomer HaShem El Avram Lech Lecha - HaShem said to Avram, ‘Go for yourself’”

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Lech Lecha,

11th of Marcheshvan, 5725

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

1.

The verse states,⁵³⁵ “*HaShem*-יהוה said to Avram, ‘Go for yourself from your land, from your relatives, and from your father’s house to the land that I will show you.’” Rashi comments on the words, “Go for yourself” stating, “For your own benefit and for your own good.” Now, the question regarding this is well known. Namely, why was it necessary for the Holy One, blessed is He, to say to Avraham, “Go for yourself, for your own benefit and for your own good?” Why was it not enough for him to go just because the Holy One, blessed is He, commanded it?

Now, in a discourse of the Tzemach Tzeddek (in one of the booklets of manuscripts recently released from exile and captivity)⁵³⁶ it states that in explanation of the words “Go for yourself-*Lech Lecha* לך לך, the Alshich wrote,⁵³⁷ “Go, and it is to your essential self (*L’Atzmecha*-לעצמך) that you go,”

⁵³⁵ Genesis 12:1

⁵³⁶ In the discourse entitled “*Lech Lecha*” which was subsequently printed in *Ohr HaTorah, Bereishit* (Vol. 4) 675a and on; Also see p. 680b there.

⁵³⁷ Alshich to Genesis 12:1

meaning that through this he will reach the root and source of his soul, as it is Above.

For,⁵³⁸ as known,⁵³⁹ the entire soul is not drawn down into the body below, but only a glimmer is drawn from it to below. However, the primary root of the soul remains Above. This is because, in holiness it is not possible for all of it be drawn down without leaving some impression [above] etc. in that whatever is on the side of holiness is never completely uprooted from its place.⁵⁴⁰

Thus, the primary root of the soul remains above in the Upper Land, called “the desirable land,”⁵⁴¹ and only a glimmer of it spreads forth to descend below and manifest in the body. Thus, reaching the root of the soul, is specifically brought about by going to the Land of Israel (*Eretz Yisroel*), which is aligned with the Upper Land.

This then, is the meaning of “Go for yourself (meaning, “Go, and it is to your essential self (*L’Atzmecha*-לְעִצְמְךָ) that you go”) etc., to the land.” For, as long as he was outside the land, he was separate from his primary root and source, and going to the land was like going and bonding himself to his essential self and root.

The explanation is⁵⁴² that the primary root of the soul is as it is above, in the World of Oneness (*Olam HaAchdut*), which

⁵³⁸ Also see the discourse entitled “*Vayomer... Lech Lecha*” 5655 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5655 p. 18); 5705 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5705 p. 89).

⁵³⁹ See Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim 16d; Haazinu 71d.

⁵⁴⁰ See Pardes Rimmonim, Shaar HaMetziyut, Ch. 1; Also see Etz Chayim, Shaar 4, Ch. 3; Shaar 34, Ch. 3; Shaar 35, Ch. 1; Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, p. 147a.

⁵⁴¹ Malachi 3:12; See Torah Ohr, beginning of Vayeishev, and elsewhere.

⁵⁴² Also see the discourse entitled “*Vayomer... Lech Lecha*” 5654 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5654 p. 48 and on).

in Kabbalah is called the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*). This is as the Tzemach Tzeddek adds in the note, that even though, generally, most souls are from the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*), nonetheless, all the souls are rooted in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*).⁵⁴³

This also is as explained in Likkutei Torah⁵⁴⁴ on [the verse],⁵⁴⁵ “I am black, but beautiful,” that to reach the root and source of the soul as it is above in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), this comes about through going to the Land of Israel (*Eretz Yisroel*).

2.

The Tzemach Tzeddek continues to explain (why in order to reach one’s root in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) he specifically must go to the Land of Israel-*Eretz Yisroel*), and that this may be understood by first explaining the matter of the second day of festivals celebrated in the exiles, in which there is a drawing down of Supernal bestowal from the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) into the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut* of the worlds of Formation (*Yetzirah*) and Action (*Asiyah*), which manifests in the seventy ministering angels of the nations, and through them, bestowal is drawn to those Jews living outside the Land [of Israel].

⁵⁴³ Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim 19c

⁵⁴⁴ Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim, discourse entitled “*Biur Inyan Shechorah Ani v’Na’avah*” (7b and on).

⁵⁴⁵ Song of Songs 1:5

The explanation is that, as known⁵⁴⁶ the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut* of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) does not descend below to manifest in the seventy ministering angels of the nations. Moreover, even Kingship-*Malchut* of the world of Creation (*Briyah*) does not manifest in these seventy ministering angels. Rather, only Kingship-*Malchut* of the worlds of Formation and Action (*Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*) manifest in the seventy ministering angels of the nations to draw down the appropriate bestowal granted them.

About this our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁵⁴⁷ “They were exiled to Edom, and the *Shechinah* was with them.” That is, when there must be bestowal of beneficence to the Jewish people during exile, when they dwell under the dominion of the seventy ministering angels of the nations, then the *Shechinah*, referring to the aspects of Kingship-*Malchut* of the worlds of Formation and Action (*Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*), is forced to manifest in those seventy ministering angels under whose dominion the Jewish people dwell. For, through them, bestowal passes to the Jews who dwell in the land that is the portion of the earth of that [particular] ministering angel. This then, is the meaning of, “They were exiled to Edom, and the *Shechinah* was with them,” meaning, literally with them, through her manifestation in the seventy ministers, literally.

Now, the reason only Kingship-*Malchut* of the worlds of Formation and Action (*Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*) manifests in the seventy ministers, rather than Kingship-*Malchut* of the world of

⁵⁴⁶ See Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5564 p. 245 and on; Ohr HaTorah, Shemini Atzeret p. 1,828 and on.

⁵⁴⁷ Sifrei end of Masei; Midrash Bamidbar Rabba 7:10

Emanation (*Atzilut*), or even Kingship-*Malchut* of the world of Creation (*Briyah*), is in accord to the well-known matter that the Upper Father-*Abba Ila'ah* (Wisdom-*Chochmah*) dwells in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*),⁵⁴⁸ Understanding-*Binah* dwells in the world of Creation (*Briyah*) and the six *Sefirot* dwell in the world of Formation (*Yetzirah*).⁵⁴⁹

Moreover, as known,⁵⁵⁰ the forces of externality only derive vitality from the seven lower *Sefirot*, whereas they derive no vitality from Wisdom-*Chochmah* and Understanding-*Binah*. Therefore, Kingship-*Malchut* of the world of Creation (*Briyah*) does not descend to manifest in the seventy ministering angels of the nations, since in the world of Creation (*Briyah*) there is an illumination of the *Sefirah* of Understanding-*Binah*, from which no vitality is derived by the forces of externality.⁵⁵¹

There is another reason for this, based on the well-known matter,⁵⁵² that the world of Creation (*Briyah*) is mostly good, with a minority of evil, whereas the world of Formation (*Yetzirah*) is half good and half evil, and the world of Action (*Asiyah*) is mostly evil. Therefore, the beginning of the lodging of the forces of externality is from the world of Formation (*Yetzirah*) and on, being that it is half good and half evil. In contrast, being that it is mostly good, this is not so of the world of Creation (*Briyah*). Because of this, specifically Kingship-

⁵⁴⁸ Ramaz to Zohar II 220b; Torah Ohr, Mishpatim 75a

⁵⁴⁹ Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 6 (23a)

⁵⁵⁰ See Siddur Im Da"Ch 56c

⁵⁵¹ Also see Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as Gates of Light, Gate Five (*Tiferet*).

⁵⁵² See Etz Chayim, Shaar 43 (Shaar Tziyur Olamot), introduction to the Drush; Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 54, and elsewhere.

Malchut of the worlds of Formation (*Yetzirah*) and Action (*Asiyah*) manifest in the seventy ministering angels of the nations.

With the above in mind, we can understand the greatness and novelty of the second day of the holiday celebrated in the exiles, on which there is a revelation of bestowal of the light of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) in Kingship-*Malchut* of the worlds of Formation and Action (*Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*) which manifests in the seventy ministering angels of the nation, even though generally, the drawing forth to them is from the aspects of Kingship-*Malchut* of the worlds of Formation and Action (*Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*).

More specifically, in this matter the Kabbalah of the Ramak (Rabbi Moshe Cordovero) and the Kabbalah of Arizal (Rabbi Yitzchak Luria) diverge.⁵⁵³ According to the view of the Ramak,⁵⁵⁴ the revelation of beneficence from the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) is in the seventy ministering angels themselves. In contrast, according to the view of the Arizal, the revelation of bestowal from the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) is only within Kingship-*Malchut* of the worlds of Formation (*Yetzirah*) and Action (*Asiyah*) which manifests in the seventy ministering angels.

With the above in mind, we can understand the great joy of the second day of the holiday celebrated by the exiles, over and above the joy in the Land of Israel (*Eretz Yisrael*).⁵⁵⁵ This

⁵⁵³ See Maamarei Admor HaZaken and Ohr HaTorah in note 12.

⁵⁵⁴ In his book *Ohr Ne'erav* (cited in Maamarei Admor HaZaken and Ohr HaTorah *ibid.*, and elsewhere); Also see Tuv HaAretz (of Rabbi Nathan Shapiro) 22b and on (Jerusalem 5651), in the name of the Ramak.

⁵⁵⁵ Also see Likkutei Torah, Shmini Atzeret 91c and on.

is analogous to a prince who was taken captive and imprisoned in iron chains. When he then is emancipated and goes free, returning to his father the king, and delighting in the royal delights etc., his joy is all the greater, much more than had he never been taken captive and been imprisoned in the first place, but had spent all his days at the table of the king.

The same is so above in *HaShem*'s יהו"ה Godliness, that Kingship-*Malchut* of the world of Formation and Action (*Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*) manifests in a state of exile in the seventy ministering angels of the nations. However, when there is a revelation there of the light and Supernal bestowal of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), the joy is then much greater than joy stemming from revelation as it is in Kingship-*Malchut* of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) itself, which never descended from level to level to manifest in the seventy minister of the nations [in the first place].

This then, is the superiority of the joy of the second day of the festival celebrated by the exiles, in comparison to the first day of the holiday celebrated in the Land of Israel (*Eretz Yisroel*). For, on the first day of the holiday celebrated in the Land of Israel (*Eretz Yisroel*), there only is a revelation of the bestowal of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) within Kingship-*Malchut* of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*). However, on the second day of the holiday celebrated by the exiles, there is a drawing down and revelation of the bestowal of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) within Kingship-*Malchut* of the worlds of Formation and Action (*Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*), which manifest in the seventy ministering angels of the nations.

3.

With the above in mind, we can also understand the matter of “Go for yourself etc.,” that to reach the root and source of the soul in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), one specifically must go from outside of the Land of Israel to inside the Land of Israel (*Eretz Yisrael*). This is because as long as he is outside the Land, under the dominion of the seventy ministering angels of the nations, where there only is an illumination from the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut* of the world of Formation and Action (*Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*), the source of his soul is not revealed, except as it is in Kingship-*Malchut* of the world of Formation (*Yetzirah*).

However, through ascending to the Holy Land, which is aligned with Kingship-*Malchut* of the worlds of Creation and Emanation (*Briyah* and *Atzilut*), there then is an illumination within him of the aspect of the root of his soul in Kingship-*Malchut* of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*). This concludes the substance of the Tzemach Tzeddek’s discourse.

4.

However, the above explanation that “Go for yourself” refers to the matter of going to his root and source, is according to the simple meaning, that this refers to going from below to Above, from outside the Land of Israel to [inside] the Land of Israel (*Eretz Yisrael*), by which the source of his soul will be revealed in him etc. However, we still must understand how

this aligns with the explanation that “Go for yourself” refers to the matter of going from Above to below.

For, as explained in Torah Ohr,⁵⁵⁶ [the name] Avram-אברם is a composite word, “exalted father-Av Ram-רם-אב,” referring to the aspect of the Concealed Intellect that is Hidden from all conceptualization (*Sechel HaNe’elam MiKol Ra’ayon*),⁵⁵⁷ and about this, “HaShem-יהי” said to Avram-אברם, ‘Go for yourself etc.,’” meaning, that his light should go from its concealment into revelation and should be drawn from Above to below, to the earth (*Aretz-ארץ*), which is the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut*.

However, the explanation is that for the matter of descent to below to be possible, there first must be the additional revelation of a much loftier light. This is why he first was called Avram-אברם, this being the Concealed Intellect that is Hidden from all conceptualization (*Sechel HaNe’elam MiKol Ra’ayon*), and the letter *Hey-ה* was then added to him, this being the matter⁵⁵⁸ drawing down the aspect of the Ancient One-*Atik*, which is revealed in the Understanding-*Binah*.⁵⁵⁹ Through this, the matter of descent to below was possible for him.

With the above in mind, it becomes clear that even according to the explanation that “Go for yourself” refers to going from Above to below, it is specifically through this that he reaches his root and source etc. This is also as stated in

⁵⁵⁶ Torah Ohr, Lech Lecha 11a

⁵⁵⁷ Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 25 & Ch. 40 and elsewhere.

⁵⁵⁸ Also see Torah Ohr, Lech Lecha ibid. 11b.

⁵⁵⁹ See Zohar III 178b; Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 40 and the notes and citations there.

Torah Ohr⁵⁶⁰ in explanation of the words, “[to the land] that I will show you.” [For, at first glance, it is not understood⁵⁶¹ why the verse states, “that I will show you,” rather than “that I will tell you,” similar to the command given about going to the binding [of Yitzchak] (the *Akeida*).⁵⁶² About this, he explains that “I will show you” refers (not only to the land, but also) to Avraham himself], that I will show and reveal you to yourself. For, even according to the explanation that it refers to going from Above to below, it specifically is through this that the matter of “Go for yourself,” meaning “for yourself, and to your essential self,” is caused, in that he thereby reaches his root and source etc.⁵⁶³

⁵⁶⁰ Torah Ohr, Lech Lecha *ibid.*; Also see Torat Chayim *ibid.* 81a; Ohr HaTorah *ibid.* (Vol. 6) p. 1,073a.

⁵⁶¹ See Alshich to Genesis 12:1 *ibid.*

⁵⁶² Genesis 22:2

⁵⁶³ The conclusion of this discourse is missing.