

Discourse 36

*“Yehiy HaShem Elokeinu Imanu... -
May HaShem our God be with us...”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Balak,
14th of Tammuz, 5726
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,²²⁹⁶ “May *HaShem*-יהו"ה our God be with us, as He was with our forefathers etc.” The words of his honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rebbe, said on the 3rd day of Tammuz, 5687, are well known. [At that time his redemption was not yet complete, for although he had left prison, he was not yet free, but was required to travel to the city where he was to be exiled. He therefore did not yet say the discourse [on the blessing], “Blessed are You who bestows goodness upon the guilty.”

However, after only spending a short time in the city where he was exiled and then being freed completely, it became clear that this marked the beginning of his redemption, and is therefore a day of joy.] (As recorded by one who [was present] and heard it),²²⁹⁷ he said: “We ask of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, ‘May *HaShem*-יהו"ה our God be with us, as He was with our forefathers, may He not forsake us or cast us off.’ *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, should be with us, and He **will** be with us, as He was with our forefathers.” He concluded, “And it will be fulfilled that ‘*HaShem*-יהו"ה our God, will be with us as He was with our

²²⁹⁶ Kings I 8:57

²²⁹⁷ Published in Sefer HaSichot 5687 p. 169 and on.

forefathers, He will not forsake us or cast us off,' and 'there shall be light for all of the children of Israel,'²²⁹⁸ both spiritually and physically."

2.

Now, there is another explanation of the verse, "May *HaShem*-יהו"ה our God be with us, as He was with our forefathers etc."²²⁹⁹ Namely, "our forefathers" refers to the *Wisdom-Chochmah* and *Understanding-Binah* in the soul. (This is as explained in Tanya,²³⁰⁰ that *Wisdom-Chochmah* and *Understanding-Binah* are the "father" and "mother" that give birth to love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, and fear and dread of Him etc.)

This refers to the fact that every Jew, because of the essential self of his soul, is bound to the Essential Self of the limitless light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Unlimited One, blessed is He. About this there is the request, "May *HaShem*-יהו"ה our God be with us," in our toil and labor of affecting refinements (*Birurim*), "as He was with our forefathers," the aspects of *Wisdom-Chochmah* and *Understanding-Binah* as they are [unto themselves]. That is, there should be a drawing down from the intellect (*Mochin*) to the emotions (*Midot*), so that the emotions (*Midot*) will also be like the intellect (*Mochin*).

3.

All this may be connected to the short discourse of the Alter Rebbe (found in a booklet of manuscripts that recently arrived) on the verse, "May *HaShem*-יהו"ה our God be with us, as

²²⁹⁸ See Exodus 10:23

²²⁹⁹ See the discourse by this title 5710 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5710 p. 57); Also see the (second) discourse by this title of the year 5724 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5724, p. 261 and on, translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe 5724, Discourse 40).

²³⁰⁰ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 3

He was with our forefathers, may He not forsake us or cast us off.”²³⁰¹ There he brings the verse that follows it,²³⁰² “To turn our hearts to Him, to walk in all His ways and to observe His commandments, decrees and statutes, that He commanded our forefathers.”

He begins by explaining the verse,²³⁰³ “Why should the nations say, ‘Where now is their God?’ Our God is in the heavens; whatever He desires He does etc.” To explain, it is written,²³⁰⁴ “High above all nations is *HaShem*-יהוה, above the heavens is His glory.” That is, the nations say that the glory of *HaShem*-יהוה is above the heavens, and that He [therefore] is exalted and distant from them.

In truth, He indeed is very distant from the nations, [especially considering that, as known, they are rooted in His title God-*Elohi*”מ-אלהי, ²³⁰⁵ whereas about His Name *HaShem*-יהוה, Pharaoh said,²³⁰⁶ “I do not know *HaShem*-יהוה,” and only, “God-*Elohi*”מ-אלהי will respond with Pharaoh’s welfare.”²³⁰⁷ They are called “other gods-*elohim acheirim*-אלהים אחרים” because they only are sustained from the aspect of the “back-*Achorayim*-אחוריים” of His holiness, not by *HaShem*’s-יהוה desire, but like someone who casts something over his shoulders.

This is analogous to a person who hates his fellow, and when he gives him to eat, he casts it over his shoulders etc.”²³⁰⁸

²³⁰¹ Subsequently printed in Maamarei Admor HaZaken, HaKetzarim p. 132 and on; Also see the discourse entitled “*Yehiy HaShem Elokeinu Imanu*” 5658 & 5685 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5658 p. 1 and on; 5685 p. 308 and on); Discourse by the same title of Simchat Torah 5745; 16th of Tammuz 5746.

²³⁰² Kings I 8:58

²³⁰³ Psalms 115:2-3

²³⁰⁴ Psalms 113:4

²³⁰⁵ See Torah Ohr, Hosafot 109d and elsewhere.

²³⁰⁶ Exodus 5:2; See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, beginning of Vol. 2 (The Letters of Creation, Part 1); Likkutei Torah, Emor 35c; Sefer HaMaamarim 5679 p. 360, and elsewhere.

²³⁰⁷ Genesis 41:16; See Torah Ohr, Yitro 71d

²³⁰⁸ Also see Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 22.

They therefore also say of the Jewish people, “Where now is their God?” That is, “How is He your God, that you should draw Him down below etc.?”

Now, the truth of the matter is that even the nations acknowledge that it is possible to draw Godliness down through love and fear, which are matters of spirituality. This is as the verse states about Avraham,²³⁰⁹ “For I have made you the father of many nations.” That is, even the nations acknowledge that through love [this being the primary matter of Avraham, who is called,²³¹⁰ “Avraham who loved Me”] and fear, Avraham was able to grasp and draw *HaShem*’s-יהוה Godliness down.

Rather, their only argument is that it is not possible to draw Him down in physical things below, since “His glory is above the heavens” only, in which the aspect of “the heavens” (*Shamayim*-שמים) means love and fear of *HaShem*-יהוה,²³¹¹ these being matters of spirituality.

However, the Jewish people know that this is totally false. That in truth, it is possible to draw *HaShem*’s-יהוה Godliness below, in physical things. About this we say to the nations,²³¹² “Who is like *HaShem*-יהוה our God, who is enthroned on high – yet lowers Himself to look upon the heavens and the earth.”

That is, the opposite [of what they think] is true, that though *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, “is enthroned on high,” and is so high and exalted, that to Him, even the heavens are a matter of lowering, He nonetheless “lowers Himself to look upon the heavens and the earth” equally. It therefore is possible for us to draw Him down, blessed is He, below to the earth, through [doing His *mitzvot* with] physical things.

²³⁰⁹ Genesis 17:5

²³¹⁰ Isaiah 41:8

²³¹¹ See Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 2 & Ch. 33, and the notes and citations there.

²³¹² Psalms 113:5-6

This then, is the meaning of [the verse], “Our God is in the heavens, (but even so), whatever He desires He does.” The word “desire-*Chafetz*” [in this verse]²³¹³ refers to *HaShem*’s יהו"ה Supernal will, this being the aspect of the Crown-*Keter*. The word Crown-*Keter* כתר has a numerical value of 620-תר"ך,²³¹⁴ which is the number of the 613 *mitzvot* and the 7 Rabbinic *mitzvot*, these being the 620-תר"ך “pillars of light.”

These are analogous to the pillars in a large hall, which stand upon the earth and their heads are connected to the roof. In the same way, the *mitzvot* are analogous to pillars that are positioned in the highest of heights, this being the Supernal will of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, [as it is] all the way to this material earth etc.²³¹⁵ This is why it is possible to draw Him down, blessed is He, through the physical action [of doing a *mitzvah*], since “whatever He desires, He does (*Asah*-עשה),” [specifying the word] “does-*Asah*,” indicating the matter of drawing down His Supernal will (“*Chafetz*”) into Action (*Asiyah*-עשיה), through doing the *mitzvot*, which we do in action, even by giving an inanimate (*Domem*) physical coin to charity.

This is likewise the meaning of what the next verse states,²³¹⁶ “Their idols are silver and gold, the handiwork of man.” In other words, for the nations of the world, their lust for silver and gold brings them to “depression-*Atzvut*-עצבות,” which is the meaning of “their idols-*Atzabehem*-עצביהם,” and is of the root *Etzev*-עצב, meaning “sadness-*Atzvut*-עצבות.” This is because they think silver and gold are the handiwork of man.²³¹⁷ However, we

²³¹³ In another transcript of this discourse it adds that the aspect of desire called “*Chafetz*” relates exclusively to the Jewish people who are rooted in the inner aspect (*Pnimitiyut*) of the desire (*Ratzon*), which is the aspect of desire called “*Chafetz*.” [Also see the prior discourse of this year, 5726, entitled “*VaYolech HaShem et HaYam – HaShem moved the sea*,” Discourse 16.]

²³¹⁴ See Etz Chayim, Shaar 17 (Shaar Zeir Anpin), Ch. 1.

²³¹⁵ Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 29

²³¹⁶ Psalms 115:4

²³¹⁷ Also see Likkutei Dibburim, Vol. 1, p. 170b and on.

the Jewish people, have no sadness over silver and gold, because we know that everything that comes about is by *HaShem* 's-יהו"ה providence, blessed is He, and that through giving charity (*Tzedakah*) with silver and gold, we can draw Him down.

This then, is the meaning of [the verse], "May *HaShem*-יהו"ה our God, be with us as He was with our forefathers." That is, **just** as He was with our forefathers, for as mentioned above, even the nations acknowledged that Avraham was able to grasp and draw *HaShem* 's-יהו"ה Godliness down, blessed is He, through love and fear of Him, "so may He be with us," that the nations of the world should know that we can draw Him down to below etc.

However, for this to happen the [next verse] must be fulfilled, "To turn our hearts to Him," that we have a full desire "to walk in all His ways and to observe his commandments." The verse concludes, "that He commanded our forefathers," meaning that when we are bound to our forefathers, so shall it be for us.

4.

With the above in mind we can add to the explanation (in chapter two) that "our forefathers" refers to Wisdom-*Chochmah* and Understanding-*Binah*, and that, "May *HaShem*-יהו"ה our God be with us, as He was with our forefathers" means that there should be the drawing down of the intellect (*Mochin*) to the emotions (*Midot*), such that the emotions (*Midot*) will be like the intellect (*Mochin*).

That is, the request and promise is not just that there should be a drawing down into the aspect of the emotions (*Midot*), but that there also should be a drawing down into action (*Asiyah*) through the *mitzvot*, which are done in action. This is as explained in Tanya,²³¹⁸ that even the limbs of the body of a person who

²³¹⁸ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 23

fulfills the *mitzvot* literally become the Chariot (*Merkavah*) for *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Supernal will, blessed is He, such as the hand which distributes charity to the poor or performs another *mitzvah* etc.

Now, based on what is written in the transcript mentioned (in chapter one), which concludes [with the words], “and ‘there shall be light for all the children of Israel,’ both spiritually and physically,” we can state an additional matter beyond this. Namely, that the drawing down should not only be in the deed of the *mitzvot*, but even during the preparation to fulfill the *mitzvah*, such as when traveling to do a *mitzvah*, [as in the verse],²³¹⁹ “when you walk on the way.” Indeed, this was the state and standing of the Rebbe whose joyous day and redemption we are celebrating, in that he was on his way to the city to which he was exiled, [traveling] between one mission and another mission.

To preface, the words of the verse are,²³²⁰ “For all the children of Israel there was light in their dwellings.” The word “their dwellings-*Moshvotam*-מושבותם” is a word that indicates being “settled-*Hityashvut*-התיישבות,” this being the state of the Jewish people while they are engaged in serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, by fulfilling Torah and *mitzvot*. Then, even a labor and mission that only is for a short period is considered to be [the fulfillment of] His *mitzvot*,²³²¹ such that it is in a way of permanence and settlement (*Hityashvut*).

This is as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,²³²² “Since it is written of them,²³²³ ‘According to the word of *HaShem*-יהו"ה they would encamp, and according to the word of *HaShem*-יהו"ה they would journey,’ it was considered as a permanent [residence]

²³¹⁹ Deuteronomy 6:7

²³²⁰ Exodus 10:23

²³²¹ See Talmud Bavli, Bechorot 10a; Rashi to Beitza 27b entitled “*Chalah*”; Also see Encyclopedia Talmudit, section on “*Issuro Chashuvo*.”

²³²² Talmud Bavli, Erubin 55b

²³²³ Numbers 9:20

for them.” In other words, since the encampment was according to the word of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, therefore even when it was temporary, it was considered as being permanent.

As in the words of his honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rebbe,²³²⁴ in every place that the children of Israel encamped in the wilderness, not only in those places that they encamped for lengthy periods, such as Kadesh where they dwelt for nineteen years,²³²⁵ but even in places where they only camped for a short period, [as in the verse],²³²⁶ “For a day and a night... and they would journey,” it was necessary to fully construct the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) in all its particulars, just as in a place where they encamped for a lengthy period of time.

However, the above-mentioned transcript is precise in its wording, stating “there shall be light for all the children of Israel,” (without including the word “in their dwellings-*b'Moshvotam* במושבותם”). That is, not only “in their dwellings,” meaning when they fulfill the *mitzvah* and mission, but even “when you walk on the way”²³²⁷ from one mission to another mission, then too there should be a state and standing of light, both spiritually and physically.

“So shall it be for us.”²³²⁸ For, as stated in the above-mentioned transcript, this [verse] is not just in the form of a prayer, but is also in the form of a promise. That is, it certainly is so that *HaShem*-יהו"ה our God will be for us as He was with our forefathers, even though we cannot compare to our forefathers. (This is as he continues there, “Even though we are not equal to our forefathers, who had self-sacrifice (*Mesirat Nefesh*) in actuality etc.”)²³²⁹ This will be so until we merit the true and

²³²⁴ Sefer HaSichot 5701 p. 162

²³²⁵ Rashi to Deuteronomy 1:46

²³²⁶ Numbers 9:21

²³²⁷ Deuteronomy 6:7

²³²⁸ The liturgy of the Havdalah blessing.

²³²⁹ There is a small portion of the discourse missing here.

complete redemption through our righteous Moshiach, may he come and redeem us and lead us upright to our land, in the near future and in the most literal sense!