

Discourse 23

*“Avadim Hayinu... -
We were slaves...”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Tzav,
Shabbat HaGadol, 10th of Nissan, 5729
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

We recite,³³ “We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and *HaShem*-יהו"ה our God took us out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm,” (as established by his honorable holiness, my father-in-law, the Rebbe, whose custom was to recite [this passage], “We were slaves” (*Avadim HaYinu*) on Shabbat HaGadol).³⁴

About this it is explained in the discourses of the Siddur³⁵ (which are the Alter Rebbe’s discourses with the explanations of the Mittler Rebbe and the notes of the Tzemach Tzeddek), that at first glance, it is not understood how this existence that “we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt” could be.

[As explained] this may be understood from the continuation of the matter, in that “*HaShem*-יהו"ה our God took us out of there with a strong hand etc.” In other words, when *HaShem*-יהו"ה is our God, then the matter of “[He] took us out

³³ In the Pesach Haggadah

³⁴ See Haggadah Shel Pesach Eem Likkutei Ta’amim uMinhagim p. 1; Also see Otzar Minhagei Chabad (Kehot 5756), Nissan p. 4-5.

³⁵ Siddur Im Da”Ch, discourse entitled “*Avadim HaYinu*” p. 293c and on.

etc.,” comes about. However, when there is a lacking in the matter of *HaShem*-יהו"ה being our God, then “we were slaves etc.,” becomes possible, as in the particulars explained about this in that discourse.

2.

This may be understood with greater elucidation based on the explanation in the Rebbe Maharash's³⁶ discourse said one-hundred years ago, on the verse,³⁷ “And this (*v'Zot*-וזאת) is the law of the feast peace offering (*Zevach Shelamim*-זבח שלמים).” That is, we must understand why about the peace-offering (*Shelamim*) the verse states “**and** this-*v'Zot*-וזאת” with the prefix letter *Vav*-ו, whereas about the burnt-offering and the sin-offering the verse states “This-*Zot*-זאת” (“This (*Zot*-זאת) is the law of the burnt-offering,”³⁸ and, “This (*Zot*-זאת) is the law of the sin-offering”),³⁹ without the prefix letter *Vav*-ו.

In the continuation of the discourse,⁴⁰ [after pointing out that the burnt-offering was specifically male and not female, and that the sin-offering was specifically female and not male, and that the peace-offering was either male or female, in which he brings the words of Rabbeinu Bachaye⁴¹ on this, and gives a lengthy explanation of it], he then brings the words of the

³⁶ The discourse entitled “*v'Zot Torat Zevach Shelamim*” 5629 (*Sefer HaMaamarim* 5629 p. 122 and on).

³⁷ Leviticus 7:11

³⁸ Leviticus 6:2

³⁹ Leviticus 6:18

⁴⁰ *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5629 *ibid.* p. 131.

⁴¹ Rabbeinu Bachaye to Leviticus 1:9 (toward the end).

Midrash,⁴² that the superiority of the peace-offering (*Shelamim*) is “because it has many types: blood and fats to the altar, the breast and the thigh to the priest, the hide and the flesh to the owners,” (unlike the burnt-offering which is [burnt] completely upon the altar, and the sin-offering of which a portion is [burnt] upon the altar and a portion is given to the priests, but none to the owners).

3.

The explanation is that the blood and fats [being burnt] on the altar is the matter of ascent from below to Above. This [aspect] is like the burnt-offering which is entirely for *HaShem*-יהוה, which is why it is called an “*Olah*-עולה,”⁴³ indicating Ascent-*Aliyah*-עליה to above.

Now, although it states about the burnt-offering (*Olah*),⁴⁴ “A satisfying aroma (*Rei'ach Nicho'ach*-ריח ניחוח) to *HaShem*-יהוה,” [about which it states],⁴⁵ “It brings satisfaction of spirit (*Nachat Ru'ach*-נחת רוח) before Me that I spoke and My will was done,” this being the matter of drawing down from Above to below,⁴⁶ nevertheless, this comes **after** the offering and is not the offering itself, in that the primary matter of bringing the burnt-offering is the ascent from below to Above.⁴⁷

⁴² Midrash Vayikra Rabbah 9:8

⁴³ Shnei Luchot HaBrit 156a

⁴⁴ Leviticus 1:9

⁴⁵ Torat Kohanim and Rashi to Leviticus 1:9

⁴⁶ See Likkutei Torah, Pinchas 76a

⁴⁷ Also see the discourse entitled “*Seh Tamim*” 5629 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5629 p. 112).

Now, in the sin-offering, in addition to the blood and fats [burnt] on the altar, this being the matter of the ascent, there also is the consumption of the flesh of the sacrifice by the priests (this also being primary to the sacrifice, as our sages, of blessed memory, taught,⁴⁸ “[When] the priests eat, the owners are atoned for”), this being the matter of drawing down from Above to below in a revealed way, to the point of eating it, which a drawing down in an inner way (*b’Pnimiyut*), such that it becomes the blood and flesh of his own flesh.

However, even though in the sin-offering there also is the matter of drawing down to below in a revealed way, up to and including the matter of being consumed, nonetheless, this consumption is by the priests alone. The matter of a priest is as stated by Rambam,⁴⁹ “Anyone⁵⁰ whose spirit generously motivates him, and his knowledge brought him to understand, to set himself aside to stand before *HaShem*-יהו"ה, to serve Him and minister to Him [and to know *HaShem*-יהו"ה, proceeding justly as God made him, removing from his neck the yoke of the many reckonings that people seek], he is sanctified [as holy of holies] and *HaShem*-יהו"ה will be His portion and heritage forever [and will provide that which is sufficient for him in this world] etc.” Therefore, for them, even the matter of eating is in a way that “they eat from an exalted table.”⁵¹

⁴⁸ Torat Kohanim and Rashi to Leviticus 10:17; Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 59b

⁴⁹ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Shemita v’Yovel 13:13

⁵⁰ “Not only the tribe of Levi, but any one of the inhabitants of the world” – see Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Shemita v’Yovel *ibid*.

⁵¹ See Zohar II 124a (Terumah); Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5562 Vol. 1, p. 157 and on.

In this matter there is a superiority to the peace-offering (*Shelamim*), for in addition to the matter of ascent brought about through the offering of the blood and fats, and in addition to the matter of the drawing down brought about by the priests eating the breast and the thigh, there also is a drawing even further down, in that not only is it drawn to the priests, but also to the owners, being that the hide and flesh is given to the owners. This is the matter of drawing down Godliness all the way down below.

Now, the explanation of the difference between the sin-offering that was only eaten by the priests, and the peace-offering which also was eaten by the owners, as Kabbalah and Chassidus express it, this is like the difference between the drawing down in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), and also drawing down into the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*).

To explain, the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) is the World of Oneness (*Olam HaAchdut*).⁵² This is because in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), “He and His life force are one, He and His organs are one.”⁵³ That is, even though it is explained in various places⁵⁴ about the precise wording “He-*Eehoo*-אֵיְהוּ” which is mentioned twice, in that there is a difference between the oneness of “He and His life force,” and the oneness of “He and His organs,” being that the oneness of “He and His organs” is dissimilar to the level of oneness of “He and His life force,” nevertheless, “He-*Eehoo*-אֵיְהוּ” also is one with “His organs,”

⁵² See Likkutei HaShas of the Arizal, beginning of Mesechet Shabbat.

⁵³ Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 3b

⁵⁴ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5629 p. 204 and elsewhere.

and it therefore is called “the World of Oneness” (*Olam HaAchdut*). In other words, even though the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) is also called a “world-*Olam*-עולם,”⁵⁵ it nevertheless is the “World of Oneness” (*Olam HaAchdut*).

This also the matter of the priests. That is, even though their souls descended below, nonetheless, being that “his spirit generously motivates him and brought him to set himself aside” from worldly matters etc., they therefore are on the level of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) as it is below. Therefore, just as the revelation of the Godly light that illuminates in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) causes that even the **world** (*Olam*) of Emanation (*Atzilut*) becomes the world of **Oneness** (*Achdut*), the same is so of the priests, that the matter of “*HaShem*-יהוה” will be His portion and heritage forever” is also drawn down and has an effect on all their matters, including the matter of eating. This is to such an extent that there are sacrifices that the portion is also eaten “by their wives, their children, and their slaves.”⁵⁶ All this is the matter of drawing down as it is in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*).

However, in addition to this, there also must be the drawing down into the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Asiyah*), about which the verse states,⁵⁷ “From there it divided,” meaning that there is a cessation of the bestowal from Above etc. This is why about the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Asiyah*) it states,⁵⁸ “He and His organs are **not** one,”

⁵⁵ See Sefer HaMaamarim 5633 Vol. 2, p. 506.

⁵⁶ Mishnah Zevachim 5:6-7

⁵⁷ Genesis 2:10; Torah Ohr 3a, and elsewhere.

⁵⁸ Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 3b.

and moreover, as stated in various places,⁵⁹ even “He and His life force are not one.”

This then, is the superiority of the peace-offering (*Shelamim*) over and above the sin-offering. For, in regard to the sin-offering, the consumption is only by the Priests, and the drawing down is only in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*). [Moreover, even when it is drawn into their matters in the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*), this only is as they are included in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*). For, as known, the matters of the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*) also are subsumed in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), which is especially so in the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut*, and is why it has seventy names.]⁶⁰

In contrast, the peace-offering is eaten (not only by the priests, but) also by the owners, and then the drawing down is (not only in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), but) also in the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*) below.

4.

He continues and explains how it is possible that the consumption by the owners could be part of the matter of the sacrifice. To explain, the consumption by the owners, in that the owners eat the meat of the peace-offering, certainly is not a physical pleasure, but rather their consumption is “before

⁵⁹ Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 3b *ibid*.

⁶⁰ See Biurei HaZohar of the Tzemach Tzedek, Vol. 1, p. 288; p. 544

HaShem-יהו"ה." This is as it states,⁶¹ "Israel shall rejoice in **You**." About this joy, our sages, of blessed memory, said,⁶² "Rejoicing is only through eating the [sacrificial] meat."

He continues and explains that this is analogous to someone who makes a wedding for his son or daughter, or for any good tiding from which he derives pleasure. He then makes a banquet and feast for his friends, and he greatly desires that they enjoy the banquet, and from their pleasure in his banquet and their joy in his joy, he derives great pleasure. The cause of all this is the essential pleasure from the good tiding or the wedding of his son etc.

The same is so of the pleasure of the righteous in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*), which is like the analogy of the feast that a person makes for his friends at his joyous occasion. That is, it comes about because of the Supernal pleasure that He, blessed is He, delights in, as it were, from the true nullification of the "somethingness" (*Yesh*) of the righteous *Tzaddikim*, and from the joy of "His daughter," which is the Torah etc. On account of this He makes a "feast," which is the matter of the pleasure of the righteous *Tzaddikim* in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*), whereupon the Holy One, blessed is He, delights in the pleasure of the righteous *Tzaddikim* in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*).⁶³

The same is understood about the matter of the peace-offering. That is, every person, even those who altogether are not priests, benefit, rejoice, and derive pleasure from the

⁶¹ In the Amidah prayer of the holidays.

⁶² Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 109a

⁶³ Zohar II 127a

sacrifice, not only the priests and the altar. All this is drawn to them from the sacrifice, which is of the Supernal One, indicating the greatness of *HaShem's* יהו"ה Supernal pleasure Above, whereupon He makes a feast for His friends etc.

It should be pointed out that although from the above-mentioned analogy it is understood that the primary aspect is *HaShem's* יהו"ה Supernal pleasure Above, due to which He makes a feast for His friends and delights in their pleasure, nonetheless, together with this, it is explained in the discourse that the cause of *HaShem's* יהו"ה Supernal pleasure itself, comes from the service of Him by the righteous *Tzaddikim*. It thus follows automatically that even the pleasure that the righteous (*Tzaddikim*) derive from the feast of the King, and their rejoicing in His joy, is connected to their service.

This is the matter of “the reward of a *mitzvah* is the *mitzvah*,”⁶⁴ in that the reward of the *mitzvah* is the *mitzvah* itself,⁶⁵ since this is what brings *HaShem's* יהו"ה Supernal pleasure about, and thus also brings the pleasure of the righteous (*Tzaddikim*) about.

5.

However, we still must understand why the drawing down to below is specifically brought about by the peace-offering, and not by the sin-offering. For, at first glance, even though the consumption by the priests alone indicates the drawing down as it is in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*),

⁶⁴ Avot 4:2

⁶⁵ See Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 39

nevertheless, the drawing down to the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*) is in a way of “From there it divided,” specifying “from there-*MiSham*-מִשָּׁם,” meaning that the drawing down is from the emotions (*Midot*) of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*),⁶⁶ and as the verse states,⁶⁷ “For six days *HaShem*-יהו"ה made etc.,” in that the [six] emotions (*Midot*) themselves are drawn below into the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*). This being so, why is it not possible that the drawing down to the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*) be brought about through the sin-offering?

This may be understood according to the second analogy of the matter of the feast, brought in the Siddur, in the discourse entitled “*Avadim Hayinu L’Pharaoh b’Mitzrayim*.”⁶⁸ Namely, that when a king makes a feast, the leftovers of the feast are given to those of lesser stature, such as the servants and maids [who work] “behind the millstones,”⁶⁹ such that even the dogs eat the bones that are thrown under the king’s table. At first glance, it is not understood how this aligns with the explanation in the above-mentioned discourse, that only the righteous can benefit from the feast.

However, the explanation is that in the discourse, the analogy is that of a person who makes a feast for the wedding of his son or daughter. The substance of this in the analogue is that “His son” refers to the souls of the Jewish people, and “His daughter” refers to the Torah. In contrast, in the discourse in

⁶⁶ See *Torat Chayim*, Vayishlach 196d

⁶⁷ Exodus 20:11; 31:17

⁶⁸ Siddur Im Da”Ch 293d and on

⁶⁹ See Exodus 11:5

the Siddur, the analogy is that of a king who makes a regular feast.

The difference between the wedding feast of his son and daughter and a regular feast, is that a regular feast is the matter of drawing down only from the externality (*Chitzoniyut*) of the desire, and it therefore is possible for the forces of externality to derive vitality from this, which is likened to the dogs eating the crumbs under the king's table. As understood, even the crumbs under the king's table are a precious treasure, and this is what the dogs gather etc. In contrast, the wedding feast of his son or daughter indicates the drawing down from the innerness (*Pnimiyut*) of the desire, and as known, the forces of externality cannot derive vitality from the innerness of the desire (*Pnimiyut HaRatzon*).⁷⁰

With the above in mind, we can understand that since the sin-offering is only the matter of drawing down from the externality of the desire (*Chitzoniyut HaRatzon*), therefore, so that the external forces will not derive any vitality from this, it is not drawn down into the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*).

Only the peace-offering, in which the drawing down is from the innerness of the desire (*Pnimiyut HaRatzon*), there is caused to be a drawing down into the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*) such that the forces of externality will not derive any vitality.

⁷⁰ Siddur Im Da"Ch p. 293d and on *ibid*.

Based on the above, we can understand why the verse states, “And this (v’Zot-זאת) is the law of the feast peace offering,” in which the word “And this-v’Zot-זאת” is spelled with the prefix letter *Vav*-ו. To clarify, [the word] “This-Zot-זאת,” without the prefix *Vav*-ו, is the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut*⁷¹ as she is unto herself. However, “And this-v’Zot-זאת” with the prefix letter *Vav*-ו, refers to when the letter *Vav*-ו-6, which refers to *Zeir Anpin*, unifies and bonds with Kingship-*Malchut*, which is called “This-Zot-זאת.”⁷²

Now, since it is through the peace-offering (*Shlamim*) that there also is caused to be a drawing down into the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*), this being through drawing down from *Zeir Anpin* to Kingship-*Malchut*, the verse therefore states, “And this (v’Zot-זאת) is the law of the feast peace offering,” [specifying] “And this-v’Zot-זאת,” with the prefix letter *Vav*-ו, indicating the bonding of *Zeir Anpin* and Kingship-*Malchut*.

In addition, as he explains at the conclusion of the discourse,⁷³ the matter of [the name] “peace-offering-*Shlamim*-שלמים” [in the plural] is that it indicates two times “peace-*Shalom*-שלום,” that is, “peace (*Shalom*-שלום) below and peace (*Shalom*-שלום) above.”⁷⁴ The peace (*Shalom*-שלום) below refers to the drawing down of the revelation of the light even in

⁷¹ See Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as Gates of Light, Gate One (*Malchut*), and elsewhere.

⁷² Zohar I 260b and on; Also see Zohar III 179b

⁷³ Sefer HaMaamarim 5629 *ibid.* p. 132.

⁷⁴ Also see Likkutei Torah, Tzav 15b and on.

the worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action (*Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*), and the peace (*Shalom*-שלום) above refers to the bonding of the *Yod-Hey*-יה"י with the *Vav-Hey*-ו"ה [of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה].

This is because during the exile, the Name is not whole (*Shaleim*-שלם) etc. However, when the Holy Temple was standing, through the peace-offerings (*Shlamim*-שלמים) the Name was made whole (*Shaleim*-שלם), this being the bonding of the *Yod-Hey*-יה"י with the *Vav-Hey*-ו"ה.

Now, we should explain the connection of the matters. For, in regard to the sacrifices, the blood and fats would be offered upon the altar. The explanation is that the offering of the blood to *HaShem*-יהו"ה refers to the matter of the “blood boiling” as it is on the side of holiness, this being the opposite of the matter of Amalek, which is the matter of the coldness.

The same is so of the offering of the fat, the fat being the matter of pleasure, meaning offering up the pleasure to *HaShem*-יהו"ה. This too is the opposite of the matter of Amalek, being that the matter of Amalek is that he instills doubt,⁷⁵ whereas pleasure only comes when something is certain. This is why through the offering of the sacrifices the seed of Amalek is wiped out, and the Name is made whole (*Shaleim*-שלם) and the Throne is made whole (*Shaleim*-שלם).⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Sefer HaMaamarim 5679 p. 294; Pelach HaRimon, Shemot p. 355, and elsewhere.

⁷⁶ See Midrash Tanchuma, end of Parshat Teitzei; Rashi to Exodus 17:16

This then, is the meaning of [the words], “We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and *HaShem*-יהו"ה our God took us out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm.” This is because “Egypt-*Mitzrayim*-מצרים” refers to the matter of constraints-*Meitzarim*-מיצרים and limitations, meaning that the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is not in a way of offering up the fat and blood.

This is because the difference between the fat and blood and all the other limbs, is that blood is equally present throughout the entire body, and similarly, the fat indicates the power of pleasure, which is unlimited.

In contrast, this is not so of all the limbs, in that each limb is limited to its place and its unique matter. Therefore, the matter of “Egypt-*Mitzrayim*-מצרים,” [meaning] constraints-*Meitzarim*-מיצרים and limitations, is that the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה is not in a way of offering the fat and the blood.

In such a case, the drawing down is only from the externality of the desire (*Chitzoniyut HaRatzon*) and we thus find ourselves in a state of “we were slaves to Pharaoh.” The [name] “Pharaoh-פרעה” is the same letters as “the neck-*HaOreph*-הערה,”⁷⁷ this being when “they faced their necks (*Oreph*-עורה) to Me, and not their faces (*Panim*-פנים),”⁷⁸ in which case there is the matter of “we were slaves to Pharaoh.”

However, through the fact that “*HaShem*-יהו"ה [is] our God,” meaning that we sense that *HaShem*-יהו"ה is our strength

⁷⁷ Likkutei Torah of the Arizal, beginning of the Torah portion of Shemot.

⁷⁸ Jeremiah 2:27

and vitality, there then is caused to be [the continuation of the verse] that He “took us out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm,” this being the matter of drawing down to below, in Kindness-*Chessed* and Might-*Gevurah*, in a way of a chaining down of cause and effect.

In other words, this is not that he “suckles from the *Mazla*,”⁷⁹ but is rather in a way of actual inner manifestation (*Hitlabshut*),⁸⁰ through which the exodus from Egypt-*Mitzrayim*-מצרים is caused to be, and⁸¹ “As in the days when you left the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders,” with the true and complete redemption through our righteous Moshiach, speedily and in the most literal sense!

⁷⁹ See Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 25 (and the notes and citations there).

⁸⁰ See Siddur Im Da”ch 295c and on; Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity, Ch. 25 *ibid*.

⁸¹ Micah 7:15