

By Rabbi Avrohom Lipszyc

**Getting G-d To Answer You**

In this week's *parsha*, Eliezer, the servant of Abraham prays to G-d for the success of his mission in finding a wife for his master's son. The verse states (-Genesis 24:15), "Now he had not yet finished speaking, and behold..." Upon this verse our Sages teach (-Bereishis Rabba 60:4), "Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai taught: There are three people who were answered [in their prayers] as soon as they spoke: Abraham's servant Eliezer, Moses, and Solomon. Eliezer: 'it was before he concluded to speak, and behold, Rebecca was coming out.' Moses, as it is written (Numbers 16:31): 'It was, as he concluded to speak all these words, the ground that was beneath them split.' Solomon, as it is written (-Chronicles II 7:1): 'When Solomon had concluded praying [to the L-rd], fire descended from the heavens....'" Simply speaking, the Sages are connecting this concept of, "who were answered as soon as they spoke," with the three individuals to whom it happened. And with the Sages beginning this teaching with, "There are three people," it is clear that they are finding an identical virtue by these three people.

**Question:** How can we compare, in any faction or manner, Eliezer the servant of Abraham to Moses, and Solomon?! Greater is yet the question, in this concept of, "who were answered as soon as they spoke," we find that it was in greater measure by Eliezer the servant of Abraham than by Moses and Solomon?! By Eliezer the verse states, "it was before he concluded to speak," while by Moses and by Solomon, the verse only states that, "It was, as he concluded to speak," and "When Solomon had concluded praying"?!

**Question:** If we are to say that the, "who were answered as soon as they spoke," is because of the virtue of the people who prayed, then why don't we find this by any of the other righteous people? Hence, we must conclude that the, "who were answered as soon as they spoke," isn't in connection with the people praying, but with the "what" that was being prayed for. Thus, we need to understand, what is the specific virtue of these specific three prayers that merited the, "who were answered as soon as they spoke."

**Explanation:** In order to understand this we will need to first understand and explain the concept of, "who were answered as soon as they spoke." For this, the Rebbe is going to "borrow" what Maimonides explains (-Laws of Teshuvah 7:6-7) concerning G-d's answering the prayers of one who does *teshuvah*, one who repents and returns to G-d:

Law 6: "Teshuvah brings near those who were far removed. Previously, this person was hated by G-d, disgusting, far removed, and abominable. Now, he is beloved and desirable, close, and dear."

Law 7: "How exalted is the level of Teshuvah! Previously, the [transgressor] was separate from G-d, the L-rd of Israel... Even if you pray many times, I will not hear... Now, he is clinging to the Shechinah... He calls out [to G-d] and is answered immediately."

**Question:** Now, seemingly, that which Law 7 states, "He calls out [to G-d] and is answered immediately," is a direct outcome of what Law 6 states, "Now, he is beloved and desirable, close, and dear." Hence, why did Maimonides separate these two concepts into two separate laws?

**Answer:** This two laws are not explaining the same concept. Rather, Maimonides is speaking of two different levels of *teshuvah*. In Law 6 Maimonides speaks of, "Teshuvah is great," and here Maimonides speaks of, "Teshuvah brings near." And this expresses itself in, "Previously, this person was hated by G-d, disgusting, far removed, and abominable. Now, he is beloved and desirable, close, and dear." However, in Law 7 Maimonides speaks of, "How exalted (higher than "great") is the level of Teshuvah!," in which Maimonides speaks of, not only is the one doing *teshuvah*, "Now, he is beloved and desirable, close, and dear," but rather, he is also, "Now, he is clinging to the Shechinah." an absolute oneness with G-d.

Thus, it is specifically in the latter law that Maimonides introduces the concept of, "He calls out [to G-d] and is answered immediately," being that this is a product of, "clinging to the Shechinah."

There is a footnote here which are important and rich to mention here:

Footnote 20: The "Great is Teshuvah" of Law 6 is, "The level of Baalei Teshuvah transcends the level of those who never sinned at all," and thus, he is now at the level of a Tzaddik," one who has never sinned. While, the "How exalted is the level of teshuvah," of Law 7 is that of, "clinging to the Shechinah," which is the level of a Baal Teshuvah, of which Maimonides states (-ibid Law 4), "In the place where Baalei Teshuvah stand, even the completely righteous are not able to stand. The level of Baalei Teshuvah transcends the level of those who never sinned at all."

Now according to this, it depends upon the levels of *Teshuvah from Love*: (i) If it is just, (-Rashi, Yoma 86a) "his sins are uprooted from their very beginning," which placed him in the level of a Tzaddik, or (ii) a higher level of *Teshuvah* in which his sins are transformed into merits (-ibid 86b), which supersedes the level of a complete Tzaddik.

In any fashion, there are numerous levels of clinging to G-d, for everyone (not just the *Baal Teshuvah*) is commanded (-Deuteronomy 13:5), "*And in Him you shall cling,*" and as the entire generation entering Israel was told by Moses (-ibid 4:4), "*And you who cleave to the L-rd your G-d.*"

And with this (that we find that the righteous have the level of cleaving to G-d) we understand how we find by the *Tzaddik* (as that of Moses and Solomon stated in the Midrash) that they have, "*were answered* [in their prayers] *as soon as they spoke.*" As we find in Kabbalah (AMH"m, Shaar Kiryat Arba, end of chapter 126), "And upon those Tzaddikim that are always cleaving spirit in spirit it is stated upon them (-Isaiah 65:24), '*Before, you will call out, I will answer,*' and it is stated (-Malachi 3:4), '*Then, shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasing to G-d as in days of old and as in the former years.*'"

Let us better understand why the concept of, "*He calls out* [to G-d] *and is answered immediately,*" is specifically when there is the cleaving to G-d. A duration of time in the the transfer from the *Giver* to the *Receiver* points out that the *receiver* is not one with the *Giver*, and that they are rather two separate existences. However, when the two, the *Giver* and the *Receiver* are cleaved together as one, there is no duration of time in the transmission from the *giver* to the *receiver*. Therefore, when the person is only, "*beloved and desirable, close, and dear,*" however, he is not cleaved to G-d, then, being, "*beloved...*" G-d will answer him, however, not necessarily will it be, "*answered immediately.*" Only when he is, "*clinging to G-d,*" when the one praying is clinging and one with He Who answers him, is the answer in the fashion of "*clinging*" in its timeliness, and he is, "*answered immediately.*"

Note (Footnote 21): This is why Maimonides quotes the verse of, "*before you will call out, I will answer,*" including to there being numerous levels of, "*clinging to G-d,*" and thus, numerous levels of, "*answered immediately,*" "*before you will call out, I will answer,*" and in between the two there is the, "*They are still speaking and I will hear.*"

So too, we are taught (-Ohr HaTorah, Na"CH Vol II, page 874, on the verse, "*before you will call out*"), "*When a person, with Higher Teshuvah bonds with his 'mazal' then, 'before you will call out.*'"

This is the explanation concerning the person praying, in which the, "*prays and is answered immediately,*" is in response to his, "*clinging to G-d.*" So too, it is concerning the "object" being prayed for. The three prayers, that of Eliezer, Moses, and of Solomon, were each connected with the concept of cleaving to G-d. Which is why the Sages speak specifically of these three prayers: (i) Solomon's prayer was concerning the G-d's revelation of (-Exodus 25:8), "*I shall dwell among them*" in the Holy Temple. (ii) Moses' prayer was concerning (-Numbers 16:28 and 30), "*And with this it will be known that G-d had sent me... If a creation G-d will create...*" (iii) Eliezer's prayer was concerning the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca. And within these three prayers are included the primary fashions of oneness and cleaving to G-d that exist within creation: In *World*, *Person*, and *Torah*.

*World*: The revelation of G-d in the world, in a manner that divinity becomes one with the world, took place in the Holy Temple. This is where one saw openly and physically that the physical space of the Holy Temple was nullified to the divinity that rested within it. As we find concerning the *Holy Ark*, that on one hand, its length was specifically 2.5 cubits. The room was wide 10 cubits. When you measured from each end of the *Holy Ark* to the wall of the *Holy of Holies*, there was 5 cubits. Thus, the total measurement was 12.5 cubits. Yet, when you measured from wall to wall of the *Holy of Holies* it was only 10 cubits. Thus, on the one hand, there was the dimension of *world* and its definition of *space* (the ark was 2.5 cubits) and nevertheless, this *space* was nullified and transparent to the divinity that rested upon the *Holy Ark*, and thus, the 2.5 cubits took up no *space* in the 10 cubits of the room. (so too, with the width of the *Holy Ark* and the length of the *Holy of Holies*.) This was the prayer of King Solomon (-Kings I 8:13) "*I have surely built You a house to dwell in; a settled place for You to dwell in forever,*" (-ibid, verse 27), "*Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You; much less this temple that I have erected,*" and immediately (-Chronicles II, 7:1), "*And when Solomon finished praying, and the fire descended from heaven... and the glory of the L-rd filled the House.*" And it was from that moment on that G-d rests permanently in the space of the Holy Temple, as Maimonides rules (-Laws of Beit HaBechira 6:15-16), "*Therefore, we may offer all the sacrifices [on the Temple site], even though the Temple itself is not built... Because the sanctity of the Temple and Jerusalem stems from the Shechinah, and the Shechinah can never be nullified.80 Therefore, the verse states* (-Leviticus 26:31), '*I will lay waste to your Sanctuaries.*'" *The Sages declared* (-Megillah 28a), '*Even though they have been devastated, their sanctity remains.*'"

*Person*: The revelation of G-d in a person, in a manner that divinity becomes one with the person, is within prophesy. For prophesy is (-Amos 3:7), "*He has revealed His secret to His servants, the prophets,*" which is (-Mishneh Torah, Laws of Yesodei HaTorah 7:1), "*It is of the foundations of (our) faith that G-d conveys prophecy to man.*" And the revelation of prophesy is in a manner that the word of G-d becomes one with the prophet (-ibid: "*and he will be transformed into a different person...*" (-Samuel I 10:6), '(The spirit of G-d will descend upon you) *and you shall prophesy with them. And you will be transformed into a different person.*'"), to the point that the words of G-d (-Shaar HaYichud V'HaEmunah, Chapter 2), "*are clothed in the intellect and*

*comprehension which is to be found in their prophetic vision (and are clothed) as well in their thought and speech."* And this was Moses' prayer that (-Numbers 16:28 and 30), "*With this you shall know that the L-rd sent me to do all these deeds, for I did not devise them myself... if the L-rd creates a creation... you will know.*" Meaning that this wasn't about believing in the *Torah* that Moses brought from Heaven, but in the *prophecy* of Moses (-ibid, verse 28; Rashi ibid), "*to do all these deeds...: To give Aaron the High Priesthood, his sons the Deputy Priesthood, and Elizaphan the chieftainship of the Kohathites.*" In other words, in addition to being of the *Torah*, this is of the *prophecy* of Moses, and thus, brought about a *new* revelation of G-d, "*if the L-rd creates a creation.*"

*Torah*: The revelation of G-d in His *Torah*, in a manner of (-Tanya, Chapter 4, in the name of the Zohar (-see Zohar Vol I 24a)), "*The Torah and the Holy One, blessed be He, are all one,*" is connecting to the prayer of Eliezer, servant of Abraham, for the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, as we will now explain.

*Explanation*: Regarding the *Torah* telling the events, and then *retelling* the events as Eliezer is telling them to Rebecca's family, our sages state (-Bereishis Rabba 60:8), "*the conversation of the servants of the patriarch's household are more significant than the Torah laws of the descendants. (The passage about Eliezer is two or three columns long, it states it and repeats it. The [law of impurity of] creeping animals is one of the fundamental laws of the Torah, but the fact that its blood imparts ritual impurity, like its flesh, is learned only from a derivation based on an extra letter in a verse.)*" Chassidus explains (-Maamorie ADH"Z 5563 Vol I p. 36) the concept of, "*the conversation of the servants of the patriarch,*" specifically that of the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca to be bring forth the all-encompassing concept of *Torah* and *Mitzvot*. It is for this reason that the *Torah* tells of this in great elaboration, for this is a primary and all-encompassing concept that brought about the giving of the *Torah*. Therefore this action concerning our patriarchs is a primary embodiment of (-Bereishis Rabba 70:6), "*The actions of our patriarchs are signs for their offspring.*"

Meaning, the novelty of *Torah* is the the bonding between the *Supernal* (spiritual) and the *Inferior* (physical). Thus, we find the concept of a "*Mitzvah Object*" in which the object itself becomes holy, being that the object became one with the divinity within the *mitzvah*, which is the will of G-d (for example, the physical *tefillin* themselves become holy), began from when G-d gave us the *Torah* at Mt. Sinai, in the year 2448. Before we received the *Torah*, there was no such thing of a physical object bonding with the divinity within the *mitzvah* for which it was used.

Now, the first time time that we find a bonding into oneness between the "*supernal*" and the "*inferior*" was by the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca. *Isaac*, beyond (i) being the son of Abraham, (ii) being the first to be circumcised at the age of 8 days old, (iii) and all the other virtues concepts that he received from Abraham, in addition to all of the above, at the time of his marriage, he was after the great self-sacrifice of the *Akeida*, through which he obtained the holy status of a "*Burnt Offering*". *Rebecca*, on the other-hand, was the daughter of Bethuel, the brother of Laban, and lived outside of Israel, of which G-d told Isaac (-Genesis 25:20), "*Outside of the land (of Israel) is not befitting for you.*" Thus, it is understood that Eliezer's being sent on the mission to bring Rebecca from her place in *Padan Aram*, outside of Israel, to become the wife of Isaac, the "*Burnt Offering*" for Isaac to (-ibid 2:24), "*cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh,*" was of an extreme elevation. Thus, the, "*Actions of our patriarchs are signs for their children,*" concerning the "*sign*" of empowerment to bond into a oneness the "*supernal*" spiritual and the *Inferior* physical at the giving of the *Torah* flows forth from the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca.

Note: The marriage of Abraham and Sarah took place (i) before Abraham was circumcised through which Abraham had become (-ibid 17:1), "*be perfect,*" (ii) before Abraham had (-ibid 12:5), "*the souls which he had made in Haran,*" bringing them under the wings of monotheism, (iii) Abraham, like Sarah, lived in *Ur Kasdim*, outside of Israel, (iv) with his father (her grandfather) Terach, who at the time was an idol-worshipper. Thus, it was the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca that embodied the "*sign*" of empowerment for their children to receive the *Torah* and with it the power to bond into one the "*Supernal*" and the "*Inferior*".

*Answer*: Now we can understand the answer as to how the prayer of Eliezer the servant of Abraham is not only within the category of those of Moses and Solomon, but even superior to theirs, in that, "*Now he had not yet finished speaking, and behold...*"

The revelation of divinity within a prophet and within the Holy Temple remain as a revelation between two things. Thus, we find in *prophecy* different levels, before one prophesizes, during one prophesizing, and post his prophesying. So too, *prophecy* in general came to an end. So too, concerning the Holy Tempe, we find that there were five objects of holiness (*Holy Ark*, *Urim V'Tumim*, the heavenly fire on the altar, the Divine Presence, and the spirit of prophecy) that were in the first Temple that were missing in the second Temple. Albeit that the holiness of the place of the Holy Temple upon Temple Mount remains holy, nevertheless, there was the destruction of the Temples, and presently we do not see the revelation of divinity (through the miracles that took place there) with out eyes of flesh. The reason for this is that concerning the Holy Temple and the Prophet, the revelation of divinity within them is a novelty, and not within their very original genetics. Thus, there could be an end to the the divine revelation within *prophecy* and the Holy Temple.

The Torah, however, from its very being-ness is, "*The Torah and G-d is entirely one.*" Therefore, concerning the Torah there is never any changes, as (-Mishneh Torah, Laws of Yesodei HaTorah 9:1), "*remaining forever without change, addition, or diminishment.*" And being that the unity between the Torah and G-d is, "*entirely one,*" therefore, the unity of Israel and the world with G-d brought about through the Torah is that in the same manner, that through the Torah, Israel and G-d are all entirely one. So too in the relationship between the Torah and the world, that not only was the world created (-Rashi Genesis 1:1), "*for the sake of the (observance of the) Torah,*" rather, more so, the very existence of the world depends upon the Torah, as our Sages taught (-Avoda Zarah 3a), "*the Holy One, Blessed be He, established a condition with the acts of Creation, and said: If the Jewish people accept My Torah (at the revelation at Sinai), all is well, but if not, I will return you to (the primordial state of) chaos and disorder.*"

Thus the difference in how Eliezer's prayer, and that of Moses and Solomon were answered. When there is the "*clinging to G-d,*" however, it is the clinging of *two* objects, as that of the prophet and the Holy Temple, the prayer is answered immediately, however, *after* the prayer is finished. While, when the "*clinging to G-d,*" is of that which in itself is "*entirely one*" as the prayer for the oneness of Torah (for which the "action" of the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca is a "sign" of empowerment for) then the prayer is answered in a manner of, "*Now he had not yet finished speaking, and behold....*"

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Upon the verse, "*Now he had not yet finished speaking, and behold....*," Chassidus explains (-Sefer HaMaamorim 5659 p. 114) that in the drawing of divinity into the world there are two manners, which are both hinted within the verse (\*-Psalms 147:15), "(i) *He sends His commandment to the earth;* (ii) *His word runs swiftly.*" "*He sends His commandment to the earth,*" is the drawing down and the descent of "*slowly by little,*" as it passes through the *Chain of Evolution of the Worlds*, from one level to the lower level, and in each level, the divinity bonds with that world, until it reaches to the lowest of worlds, our physical world. However, the, "*His word runs swiftly,*" is when it divinity is drawn speedily, in a manner of "*jumping over*" the entire *Chain of Evolution of the Worlds*, descending immediately into to our physical world.

The cause for the difference between these two forms of divinity's descent into our world is the place from which the divinity is originally drawn forth from.

Note: To understand this, let us explain that within the *Light of G-d* there is the *Finite Linear Permeating Light*, which in its origin already has a relationship to the *Chain of Evolution of the Worlds*, and there is the *Infinite Circular Encompassing Light*, which within its own is above and beyond creation, with no relational connection to the *Chain of Evolution of the Worlds*.

When the divinity being drawn into the world originates from the *Finite Linear Permeating Light*, then it is drawn down in a manner that it must "*cloth*" itself within the *Chain of Evolution of the Worlds*. However, when the divinity being drawn into the world originates from the *Infinite Circular Encompassing Light*, then it is drawn down "*swiftly*" does not need to "*cloth*" itself within the *Chain of Evolution of the Worlds*.

Thus, chassidus explains the three who were, "*answered immediately*" being that through their prayers, Eliezer, Moses and Solomon reached into the *Infinite Circular Encompassing Light*, and thus, "*His word runs swiftly.*" Thus we will also mystically understand why Eliezer's prayer superseded that of Moses and Solomon, being that Eliezer's prayer was for Isaac, who embodies the attribute of "*Strength*" and thus, there is the "*Powerful Reinforcing of Vitality,*" therefore, the prayer on his behalf had the, "*Powerful Reinforcing*" in the "*swiftness*" of his prayer being answered, "*Now he had not yet finished speaking, and behold....*"

And this aligns with the concept explained above. From the aspect of the *Chain of Evolution of the Worlds*, the oneness between the Torah and G-d is, so to speak, as that in which the Torah bonded with G-d later on. It is specifically from the perspective of the *Infinite Circular Encompassing Light*, which within its own is above and beyond creation, with no relational connection to the *Chain of Evolution of the Worlds*, and specifically from the perspective of the *essence of G-d*, that the *oneness* of the world with G-d is from the world's very inception, in which the "*Existence of Creation,*" is bond, so to speak, with the "*True Existence,*" the *Essence of G-d*.