

The Rebbe's Discourses

Summaries of points of the Rebbe's Chassidic Discourses בלי אחריות כלל וכלל

פרשת קדושים תשכ"ז בלתי מוגה

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THE ESSENCE AND THE WORLD

THE SEDRA TELLS US TO BE HOLY, BECAUSE I G-D AM HOLY. One of the ideas we learn from this is the concept 'sanctify yourself in that which is permitted'. This means exercising restraint and self-control also in activities which the Torah permits. For example, the food is kosher, but the person still strives not to eat like a glutton. This idea functions as the background to the Maamar.

The Maamar starts with the theme of holiness, citing a Midrash² which tells us about a kingdom in which the subjects made three crowns which they presented to the king. The King kept one crown for himself and gave two crowns back to his subjects. Thus of the three times Holy, Holy, Holy (in the *Kedusha* prayer), which are the three 'Crowns', two are given to the Jewish people, as it states in our Sedra 'Be holy', while G-d keeps one as it says 'for I G-d am holy'.

The word Holy used applying to G-d is spelled Kadosh with a letter Vav, and the letter Vav indicates a flow downwards. One would expect the term Holy applying to G-d to remain above, beyond the worlds. It would then be spelled Kodesh, which does not have a Vav (only the Cholem vowel). This word indicates Holiness in itself. Why does the term Holy applied to G-d in this image have a Vav which expresses a flow downwards?

To understand this point, the Maamar brings another question. Tanya³ explains that Hashem's life-force creates all existence. Why then do we not perceive this

¹ Maamar Kedoshim 5727 (1967). Printed in Dvar Malchut of Kedoshim 5774. It was not edited by the Rebbe.

² Vayikra Rabba 24:8.

³ Part 2, Gate of Unity and Faith, chs.1, 3, 4.

life-force? Or, one might express the question in a deeper way: Hashem's life-force is infinite, and existence is finite. What prevents finite existence from dissolving away in the infinite Divine life-force?

The answer given in Tanya is that that Hashem's quality of Severity is able to conceal the life-force to such an extent that it seems to us that the world exists independently of any Divine flow making it exist.

Our Maamar now asks a subtle question: why does the attribute Severity create a *false* impression? The idea that the world has independent existence is false. Why does it even *seem* to have an independent existence? The Maamar answers that in fact there is a deeper truth hidden here. The apparent 'independent' existence of the universe stems from *yesh ha-amiti*, the true 'being' of the Essence of the Divine. The apparent 'independent existence' of the universe stems from the Essence of the Divine, which is ultimate being.

Our task in life is to draw from that Essence into our world and into our lives. We do this through observance of Torah and Mitzvot. The Mitzvot grant genuine reality to our world by drawing from the Divine Essence. This explains why the term Holy used for G-d is *Kadosh*, with a Vav denoting a flow downwards. Our task as Jews is to set in motion this flow from the Essence into the world.

One can suggest that our souls provide a kind of bridge between the higher realm, the 'sea', and the lower realms 'dry land'. This is because the soul is intimately part of the higher level, yet at the same time it descends below and inhabits a physical body.

At any stage of existence, there are many levels. The lower is 'dry land' compared with the upper 'sea', and then one can ascend yet higher; and then again, there is the contrast of 'dry land' and 'sea' and the need to reveal the hiddenness of the sea as dry land. But in the World to Come, *all* levels will be opened, and the ultimate Essence of all, the Divine Essence, will be revealed at every level, even the lowest.

Our observance of Torah and Mitzvot now, which itself is part of this process of revelation of the Essence, helps to trigger it off. But there are two aspects to observance of Mitzvot: one is the laws which we are commanded, and a second, higher level is that of 'sanctify yourself in that which you are permitted'. This latter aspect reaches beyond the specific limits of the halachic definition of the Mitzvot, and therefore has particular power to reach the Divine Essence and reveal it here in our world.

The fulfilment of this process will be with the coming of Moshiach, when there will be a dwelling of the Essence of the Divine here in this world, and the inner Divine quality of all existence and, in particular, of the Jewish people⁴ will be revealed.

Torah teachings are holy – please treat these pages with care

⁴ See Bava Batra 78b