

# The Rebbe's Discourses

Summaries of points from the Rebbe's Chassidic Discourses בלי אחריות כלל וכלל  
פרשת נח תשכ"ב ד"ה לעושה נפלאות בלתי מוגה  
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## GREAT WONDERS

**A** VERSE CHANTED ON SIMCHAT TORAH BEFORE DANCING WITH THE TORAH SCROLLS IS: 'G-D WORKS GREAT WONDERS - *NIFLAOT* – ALONE, for His Kindness is for ever'.

(Ps.136:4). Rabbi Shneur Zalman<sup>2</sup> comments on the word Niflaot, wonders, which has a letter Nun. It relates to the word Pele, which also means wonder, but does not have the Nun. He explains that the fact that it has a letter Nun puts it on a higher level.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman begins his explanation with the verse 'Your kindness is greater than life'<sup>3</sup>. This means that G-d's kindness, which gives us life, comes from a higher level than life itself. This is like human affection between two people. Because of this affection and love, one gives something good to the other, such as money, or food, for example. But the love is greater and more precious than the money or food.

Similarly, G-d's Kindness is greater than the life He bestows because of it. Rabbi Shneur Zalman explains that there are several levels of Divine Kindness, Chesed. There is 'Chesed Olam', Kindness of the World, linking with the verse 'the world is built through Chesed'<sup>4</sup>. Higher there is Rav Chesed, Great Kindness. Higher still is Chafetz Chesed, desiring Kindness. These are successively higher levels of G-d's Kindness, but they all share the feature that they can be triggered by the service of the individual. A person's service to G-d can elicit higher and higher levels of Chesed in response.

<sup>1</sup> Maamar LeOseh Niflaot 5722 (1962). Printed in Dvar Malchut of Noach 5777. It was not edited by the Rebbe.

<sup>2</sup> In his discourse beginning with this verse, in his *Discourses of the Alter Rebbe, Ketuvim*, vol.1 p.125 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Psalms 63:4.

<sup>4</sup> Psalms 59:3.

But there is a much higher level of Divine Kindness. This comes from ‘the essence of the radiance’ of the Divine Kindness, and is beyond our human level of service. It is independent of our ‘good deeds’ and positive qualities.

An image to help explain this is of the way a father deals with his two children. One child is very wise and good. The father rewards him for his wisdom and goodness. Sometimes, if he does not achieve or behave so well, the response from the father is less. All is commensurate with his achievements and behaviour.

The second child understands nothing and achieves nothing. Nonetheless the father cares for him, and gives him abundant love, quite independent of his understanding or attainment.

In the same way for us in relation to G-d. There is a completely higher level of Kindness which is independent of our behaviour. But we can ask - how do we access this?

This is the theme of our opening verse: G-d works great wonders - *niflaot* - alone. Indeed G-d gives us abundant wonders, even on a lower level, when the operative word is *Pele* (wonder), without a Nun. That is like the lower level of Divine Kindness, which is a response to our service. The higher level, *Niflaot* with a Nun, expresses the way G-d’s Kindness is independent of our behaviour.

In Hebrew grammar, the Nun shows the passive tense. The wonders of this higher kind come to us without us doing anything to earn them. They come from an exalted level, beyond the source of existence. Hence the word ‘alone’, ‘G-d works great wonders *alone*’.

This discourse by Rabbi Shneur Zalman clearly links to the theme of Simchat Torah<sup>5</sup>. Indeed its opening verse is from the Simchat Torah liturgy. The point about Simchat Torah is that its joy and sense of spiritual revelation should be drawn into the ensuing weeks and months of the year.

This means that however much G-d positively might respond to our service, and however great our service of G-d might be, there is always the feeling that there is a step higher, beyond the reach of our service. G-d can relate to us from that much higher level, not dependent on what we may or may not have achieved.

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<sup>5</sup> The editors point out that one manuscript of this discourse states that it was taught by Rabbi Shneur Zalman on the day after Simchat Torah.

This reflects the saying of Rabbi Shneur Zalman, recorded by his grandson the Tzemach Tzedek in his tract on 'The Root of the Mitzvah of Prayer': "I do not want them at all, I do not want Your Garden of Eden, I do not want Your World to Come, I want only You alone..."<sup>6</sup>

Of course, this yearning is very exalted. But since it is in the tract 'The Root of the Mitzvah of Prayer' and it is studied by Chassidim, in order to deepen their own contemplation in prayer, and it is also shared by them with other Jews, it means that at least at some level it is relevant to each individual. And this idea gives added life to the person's service, in such a way that it indeed leads to the revelation of great Divine wonders, during the year ahead<sup>7</sup>.

This also links with a teaching of the Baal Shem Tov<sup>8</sup>, commenting on this verse, that G-d works great wonders, but He works them 'alone', for although the world, the Jewish people and each person benefits, only G-d knows about these wonders.

The discourse then explains that the continuation of the verse: 'for His Kindness is for ever', hints at the drawing down of this exalted spiritual flow, into the downchaining of the worlds, reaching right down to our physical world.

May it bring revealed blessing and Kindness on the physical plane, for each individual and for the entire Jewish people...

[Torah teachings are holy – please treat these pages with care](#)

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<sup>6</sup> Sefer Hamitzvot, Derech Mitzvotcha, 138a. This passage is also found in *Hayom Yom*, 18 Kislev.

<sup>7</sup> The implication is that although, in general, one's service cannot reach or elicit the level of 'G-d works great wonders - *niflaot* - alone', through an added sense of 'life' in one's service, this exalted level is indeed revealed.

<sup>8</sup> See Rabbi Yosef Yitzhak Schneersohn's *Book of Discourses 5704*, p.49.