

The Rebbe's Discourses

Free Summaries of the Rebbe's Chassidic Discourses בלי אחריות כלל וכלל
ד"ה ובשנה החמישית תשכ"ה בלתי מוגה

Published for Sedra Kedoshim (Diaspora)
6 Iyyar 5782, 7 May 2022¹

SACRED AND MUNDANE

THE LAW OF 'ORLAH' IN THE SEDRA CONCERNS FRUIT TREES. FOR THE FIRST THREE YEARS after planting, the fruit is forbidden. In the fourth year it is holy, and in Temple times had to be taken to Jerusalem and eaten there, in a state of ritual purity; if this was not convenient it could be redeemed by a sum of money which would then have to be spent on food in Jerusalem. Only in the fifth year can the fruit be treated as ordinary mundane fruit: it can be eaten anywhere, and it makes no difference whether or not the person is pure².

The Torah states that there will be an increase in the produce in the fifth year, which the Sages explain as a reward for one's restraint in the earlier years, when the fruit was either completely forbidden or subject to special laws as sacred produce. However, when we consider this 'increase' in an inward way, we see that there is something special about the fruit of the fifth year.

Hence when we consider a discourse on this theme in *Likkutei Torah*³ by Rabbi Shneur Zalman, we see that he explains that the fruit of the first three years corresponds to the three lower worlds of the Kabbalah: Creation, Formation and

¹ *Uvashana hahamishit* 5725, published in Dvormalchut Kedoshim (Diaspora) 5782. The Hebrew text was not edited by the Rebbe.

² The prohibition of eating the fruit in the first three years does apply outside the Land of Israel but only if one definitely knows that this fruit is from a tree or cutting less than three years old. Hence one can buy fruit from a greengrocer without worrying. If one definitely knows the fruit is from the fourth year, it should be redeemed on a small coin which should later be destroyed.

³ *Kedoshim*, 30d.

Action. In these lower worlds there is a possibility of evil, hence they correspond to the the three years of forbidden fruit.

The fourth year is like the sacred realm of Atzilut (Emanation). As mentioned above, the fruit of the fourth year is holy. So too is the highest world of the Kabbalah, Emanation (Atzilut). The Four Worlds correspond to the Four Letters of the Divine Name, and as we see, these represent the first four years of produce of the fruit tree.

But what about the produce of the fifth year?

Rabbi Shneur Zalman tells us that this corresponds to the ‘kotzo shel Yud’, the upward reaching spire of the letter Yud, which relates to the exalted Sefirah Keter, ‘Crown’, beyond the other letters and all the worlds.

But if that is the case, asks the Rebbe in the discourse, how is it that the fruit of the fifth year is just ordinary fruit? If it represents such an exalted level as the realm of Keter higher than the four letters of the Tetragrammaton, surely it should be something special?

The answer to this, as explained earlier in *Likkutei Torah*⁴, is in a verse from Psalms: And You are holy, dwelling among the praises of Israel (Ps.22:4). This means that G-d in Himself is utterly exalted, but through ‘the praises of Israel’ His Presence is drawn down into the world, so that it ‘dwells’ there.

The Chassidic meaning of this is that the radiance of *Ein Sof*, the Infinite, is utterly beyond the realm of the worlds, which are to be kept in existence through His Divine Names, His attributes (Sefirot). Through the fact that the Jewish people praise G-d in their prayers, the Divine radiance is drawn into His attributes, His Names, giving life to the worlds.

This is illustrated by a story about the Baal Shem Tov told in a Yiddish discourse by Rabbi Yoseph Yitzhak. The Baal Shem Tov in the period before he was revealed as a great teacher, would travel from place to place asking people, men and women, old and young, how they were in their physical and material affairs: their health and making a living. They would generally answer ‘thank G-d!’. This drew G-dliness into the mundane world...

⁴ Ibid. 29b.

Once the Baal Shem Tov came to a synagogue where an ascetic scholar sat in Talit and Tefilin in a secluded room, devotedly studying Torah continuously, eating only some bread and water after the evening prayer. The Baal Shem Tov asked him ‘How are you?’, ‘How is your health?’, ‘do you have everything you need?’. The Baal Shem Tov wore the clothes of an ordinary villager, and the ascetic scholar refused to reply to him and just pointed to the door, indicating that he should leave.

The Baal Shem Tov said to him ‘why do you deny G-d His ‘parnasa’?’ and proceeded to explain the above idea that ‘And You are holy, dwelling among the praises of Israel’, that through praising G-d for His material blessings, we reveal G-dliness in the world.

The Rebbe asks about this: but surely Torah study also draws G-dliness into the world?! The Torah is very exalted, beyond existence, and by the fact that a Jew of flesh and blood studies Torah, the highest levels of holiness are being drawn into the world.

The answer to this focuses on the ultimate purpose of existence: to make a ‘dwelling’ for G-d in the lower world. Torah is indeed holy, and study of Torah is like the fourth year of the fruit of the tree, sacred and necessarily pure. Further we study Torah primarily with our Divine Soul, the more sacred part of our being.

But the goal is to draw and express G-dliness in the physical and material aspects of life: health, parnasa, involving our Animal Souls and physical bodies. This was sought by the Baal Shem Tov in the praises of G-d expressed by men and women, young and old, for their physical and material benefits. This level is expressed by the fruit of the fifth year, the mundane dimension, which goes beyond the limitations of the sacred (the sacred fruit of the fourth year, which has to be consumed in Jerusalem in a state of purity).

The fruit of the fifth year, the mundane level, reaches the Essence of the Divine, which has no limitations, and is revealed in the simplicities of daily life, in physical health and wellbeing.

Torah teachings are holy – please treat these pages with care