

The Rebbe's Discourses

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

ד"ה וישכם לבן בבוקר פרשת ויצא תשמ"ה בלתי מוגה

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THE MORNING BURST OF LIGHT

LABAN GOT UP EARLY IN THE MORNING AND KISSED HIS SONS AND DAUGHTERS... then Laban returned home, and Jacob went on his way (Gen.32:1-2). It explains in Torah Or (by Rabbi Shneur Zalman), and Torat Chaim (by his son the Mitteler Rebbe²), following the idea that 'The Torah speaks of upper worlds, and hints at lower worlds'³ that 'Laban' here means the 'upper brightness'⁴, related to the Sefirah Keter and extending higher and higher to the Divine Essence.

When it says Laban 'kissed' his sons and daughters (the wives and children of Jacob) it means that this burst of radiance flowed through the realm of the downchaining of worlds, which at every level is comprised of aspects which give flow (sons, male) and aspects which receive flow (daughters, female). This radiance was transmitted as a 'kiss', which indicates utter dedication and a focused kind of flow.

This happens in the morning of every day. Every morning there is a flow of the burst of light, and empowerment to the individual from the Essence of the Divine, with the quality of a 'kiss'.

בברכת רפואה שלמה וקרובה בשביל האשה העניא בת ברכה דבורה לאה תחי'
Wishing a Refuah Shelemah for Henya bas Brochah Devorah Leah 'תחי'

¹ Maamar Vayashkem Lavan Baboker 5748 (1987). Printed in Dvar Malchut for Sedra Vayetze 5778. It was not edited by the Rebbe.

² Rabbi Dov Ber Shneuri, the second Lubavitcher Rebbe (1773-1827). Both his birthday and Yahrzeit are this Shabbat, 9 Kislev.

³ This means the Torah actually speaks of exalted spiritual realities, and the 'story' we read, taking place on the physical plane, can be considered no more than a hint.

⁴ Note that the word Laban means 'white'.

Since every Divine gift requires a human effort, as it says ‘you should yearn for the work of your hands’ (Job 14:15). That is why every day, in the morning, is a time for intense service of prayer, as it says ‘and Abraham got up in the morning and saddled his donkey’ (Gen.22:3). Saddling the donkey hints at the service of prayer, the battle with the materiality of the body and its concerns, seeking to divert its focus to the Divine.

The verse continues ‘then Laban returned home, and Jacob went on his way’. The above mentioned discourses explain that the upper brightness recedes and is absorbed in the essence of the Divine, but Jacob goes on his way. Jacob, meaning the individual Jew, goes on his or her way of Torah study and Mitzvot, because it is when the great illumination recedes that it is possible for there to be the service of study of Torah and observance of Mitzvot.

For in order for the individual to serve G-d in the world, there has to be the ‘existence’ of the person and the existence of the world. For example in studying Torah, especially the Oral Torah⁵: there has to be intellectual grasp and understanding. First one understands with the Divine Soul, which brings about the goal that one’s Animal Soul should also understand, in concrete terms. And this study of Torah with rational understanding achieves a wonderful unity between the individual and the Divine⁶.

Similarly, one’s involvement with the physical world, through one’s fulfilling the practical Mitzvot, purifies, transforms and elevates the physicality of the world. But for this both the individual and the physical aspect of life need to ‘exist’ in a tangible, physical way. When the great radiance of the Upper Brightness shines, one cannot act. All is suspended, so to speak, in the presence of the King⁷. Hence Laban has to return home, the upper radiance has to recede upwards, and then Jacob is able to go on his way, the Jewish people are able to carry out their service properly.

Now the idea that the Torah is speaking initially about spiritual realities relates also to the earlier part of the Sedra, which tells us about Jacob’s work with the sheep. It was agreed between him and Laban that the spotted sheep which would be born would belong to Jacob. Three terms are used for ‘spotted’, *akudim*, *nekudim*, *berudim*. The Kabbalah explains that these represent three stages of spiritual creation before the formation of the universe. The first is a realm in which all the radiance is undifferentiated, before the emergence of individual Sefirot, the second is the World of Tohu (Chaos), where there are Sefirot but they are like points (*nekudim*) and do not interconnect. Hence they

⁵ The Sages tell us there is a virtue in reading the Written Torah (eg Psalms) even if one does not understand. But in the case of the Oral Torah (Mishnah and Talmud, and the various Codes of Law) there must be understanding.

⁶ As explained in Tanya Part 1, ch.5, the Divine is expressed in the Torah teaching, which, through the process of understanding, is enveloped by the mind, and at the same time, the mind is enveloped by the Torah teaching with which it is absorbed.

⁷ See Talmud Hagigah 5b.

cannot properly absorb the light and the Breaking of the Vessels took place at that level. The third is the realm of Atzilut, Emanation, the highest of the Four Worlds.

The Torah tells us that Jacob achieved a change in the sheep, by putting speckled sticks in their water troughs. While Laban was trying to cheat him, having removed all the speckled sheep so that none would be born, Jacob was able to ensure that many speckled lambs *were* born, after all. In the same way the Jew, representative of Jacob, goes beyond all odds. Laban tried to change their agreement ten times ten, a hundred times, meaning in total and utter terms. Similarly, through keeping the laws of the Torah, the Jew succeeds in totally transforming existence.

The Jewish task is to draw the infinite radiance from the World of Chaos, and higher and higher, from the Divine Essence, into this physical world. This ‘cheats’ the initial limitations of existence, according to which the Divine is beyond the world, and physicality is a total concealment of holiness.

Now the upper brightness is signified by Laban, an evil man. Yet the power of the Jew is to transform evil people, and evil situations, to change darkness into light and bitterness into sweetness. That is, of course, the service of Teshuvah, ‘Return’. The service of Teshuvah is of such great significance that we learn that those who have never sinned crave for it, and they will be enabled to achieve Teshuvah through the advent of the Messiah.

This is also hinted at in Jacob’s words at the beginning of the Sedra: I will return in peace *beshalom* to my father’s house... (Gen.28:21). ‘In peace’ has the prefix *beit* - *beshalom*. *Beit* means ‘two’, two kinds of peace: peace to the one who is far, and also to the one who is near⁸, and especially to the one who was far and has become near.

The power of Teshuvah expresses the revelation of the Upper Brightness in the daily world, the revelation of the Essence in the physical realm. This is a remarkable unity, going beyond all definable spiritual levels, and emphasising the power of the physical body and of the power of practical action. For ‘action is the main thing’⁹, and all was created for the sake of the revelation of the Essence in the physical world and the physical world.

This will all be revealed with the Redemption, here in this tangible world, with all its interpretations....

Torah teachings are holy – please treat these pages with care

⁸ Isaiah 57:19.

⁹ Ethics 1:17.