

# The Rebbe's Discourses

Free Summaries of the Rebbe's Chassidic Discourses בלי אחריות כלל וכלל  
ד"ה וידבר אלוקים תשכ"ט מוגה

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## THREE ASPECTS OF 'SAYING'

**T**HE TEN COMMANDMENTS ARE INTRODUCED WITH THE WORDS 'AND G-D SAID ALL THESE WORDS, SAYING'<sup>2</sup>. Rabbi Shneur Zalman asks<sup>3</sup>: what is meant by 'saying'? That word is often used in the Torah when G-d speaks to Moses, implying that he should tell the Israelites what G-d has told him. But at the Giving of the Torah, the entire Jewish people were present and could hear, including all Jewish souls which would be born in the future, as well as proselytes. So, what does 'saying' mean?

The discourse states that this issue highlights the difference in level between the Torah given at Sinai, and the Torah as it had existed for the Patriarchs. As the Talmud says 'Abraham our father was a scholar studying in Yeshivah' (Yoma 28b) and similarly Isaac and Jacob, and they performed Mitzvot, for which they had to know the Torah. But the word 'saying' explains what is different after Sinai.

The discourse three aspects of the meaning of the word 'saying' in this context. The first is that G-d gave the power to the Jewish people that when a person says words of Torah, G-d says it with him or her. The Midrash says: 'if a person reads Scripture or Mishnah, the Holy One reads it with him'<sup>4</sup>. It is as if the Jew studying Torah - so to speak - 'tells' G-d to study the same Torah.

The second meaning of 'saying' is that when the Jew studies Torah, it is as if he is *repeating* what G-d has just told him: 'let my tongue repeat Your statements'

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<sup>1</sup> *Vayedaber Elokim 5729* published in Dvormalchut Shavuot 5780. The Hebrew text was edited by the Rebbe in 1990 and published as *Kuntres Chag HaShavuot*.

<sup>2</sup> Ex.20:1.

<sup>3</sup> *Torah Or*, Yitro, 67b.

<sup>4</sup> Yalkut Shimoni Eichah sec.1034.

(Ps.119:172). Here the word ‘saying’ refers to the Jew studying, and this expresses his or her selflessness in relation to the Divine when reading and studying Torah.

The third aspect of ‘saying’ refers to the relationship between the Ten Commandments revealing giving the Torah and the Ten Utterances creating the world. The goal is that the Torah teachings should feed into the world and transform it.

To explain these three aspects of ‘saying’, the discourse quotes a further teaching from the Midrash. The Ten Commandments begin ‘I am the L-rd thy G-d’ - in the singular. Each person felt ‘G-d is speaking directly to *me*’<sup>5</sup>. The Midrash goes on to say that each person received the Divine teaching in the appropriate measure, depending on whether they were a youth, an old man, or a child.

Further, a discourse by the Rebbe Maharash<sup>6</sup> states that at Sinai the Divine Name was imparted to each Jew: in the soul, the Yud is wisdom, the Heh is Understanding, the power to understand one thing from another, meaning to be able to look at the universe and understand the presence of the Divine, the Vav means the feelings of love and awe of the Divine which result, and then the second Heh which is the sense of surrender to G-d, Kabbalat ‘Ol (the Acceptance of the Yoke of Heaven).

The Divine Name was also imparted to the body. We see the significance of the body in the Midrash about each person receiving the Divine teaching in the way appropriate to them, whether as youth, old man or child. These terms relate primarily to the physical body. How does the Divine Name relate to the body? The Yud is the head, the first Heh the hands with five fingers each, the Vav the body, the second Heh the feet, each with five toes<sup>7</sup>.

How can the exalted Divine Name relate to the physical body which is seemingly so low? Through the power of Anochi, ‘I’, the first word of the Ten Commandments. Anochi relates to the Essence, beyond the distinction between the physical and the spiritual.

We now come back to the three aspects of ‘saying’.

The first is, as explained above, when a Jew studies Torah, G-d studies with him or her, and when he or she does a Mitzvah, G-d does it together with the person<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Yalkut Shimoni Yitro 20:2.

<sup>6</sup> Shavuot, 1869.

<sup>7</sup> The letter Heh can be written as two letters heh, which is called ‘in full’. Hence there are twice five fingers and twice five toes. The angels also have the Divine Name in them (usually expressed by the last two letters E-I of the name of the angel, Raziel, Refael, Michael etc) but the Divine Name in the Jew is higher, not E-I but the Tetragrammaton.

<sup>8</sup> The latter idea is expressed in the verse ‘He tells His words to Jacob, His statutes and laws to Israel, (Ps.147:19), which is explained to mean that G-d keeps His own Mitzvot (Shemot Rabbah ch.30). See *Torat*

Through the fact that the Jew is aware of the Divine Name within him or her, the individual is filled with a sense of bitul, selflessness before the Divine. Hence when the Jew studies Torah, it is as if repeating the words which G-d is saying at that moment, the second meaning of ‘saying’.

Finally the third meaning: having an effect on the world. The Laws of the Torah are Commands and also *promises*. They are imperatives and also statements in the future. ‘Thou shalt not murder’ means both the command ‘do not murder’ and the promise ‘you will not murder’. Because the laws of the Torah change a person’s nature.

Similarly when one studies a halachic teaching in the Torah, such as what inner features of an animal render it kosher or not kosher, one is changing the spiritual balance of the world at that moment and dividing the kosher from the non-kosher.

Further, the keeping of the Mitzvot refines and purifies the world.

This is the third aspect of ‘saying’, which will come to completion with the coming of the Messiah.

Ethics of the Fathers (6:2) states ‘the only free person is one who studies Torah’. Torah grants each of us a private Redemption; may this lead to the general Redemption for the whole Jewish people and all humanity.

Torah teachings are holy – please treat this page with care