

The Rebbe's Discourses

Free Summaries of the Rebbe's Chassidic Discourses בלי אחריות כלל וכלל
ד"ה אם בחוקותי תלכו תשד"מ בלתי מוגה

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ENDS AND MEANS

THE BEGINNING OF THE SEDRA DEFINES BOTH THE GOAL OF EXISTENCE AND THE WAY TO achieve it. It starts with the method: 'if you walk in My statutes (*bechukotai*), guard My Mitzvot, and do them....' In Rabbi Shneur Zalman's *Likkutei Torah* it explains that these define three aspects of the Mitzvot: *bechukotai* relates to *chakikah*, engraving. This means keeping the Mitzvot in one's thought, where they are engraved in our being. 'Guarding' My Mitzvot means keeping them in speech, such as by vocally studying the Torah laws about them, and 'do them' means just that, practical action.

A further explanation of the word *Bechukotai*, 'My statutes', is from the Midrash, quoted in Rashi on this verse². This term means, not just ordinary Torah study and observance of the Mitzvot, but 'you should make an effort in Torah', an extra effort. This leads directly to the following concepts 'guard My Mitzvot and do them', the actual observance of Mitzvot, in thought, speech and action.

This defines the means. What is the goal? The following verses in the Torah which describe idyllic existence in the Holy Land. The discourse explains this as referring to the time of Moshiach. Further, G-d says 'and I will walk among you'³, implying the kind of revelation of the Divine which will pertain in the time of Moshiach. The Hebrew word which translates as 'and I will walk among you' is in the reflexive form, implying something double: two kinds of movement, from above to below, revelation from G-d to the individual, and

¹ *Im Bechukotai Telechu 5744*, published in *Dvormalchut Bechukotai 5774*. The Hebrew text was not edited by the Rebbe.

² Lev. 26:3.

³ Lev.26:12.

from below to above, the individual reaching towards the Divine. In the Messianic future both will be achieved simultaneously.

The discourse now explains the role of Moshiach in relation to the totality of existence. In the account of Creation in Genesis there is a verse ‘these are the generations, (*toledot* תולדות) of the heavens and the earth’⁴. The word *toledot* is written ‘full’ with two letters Vav. Only one other instance is found of this in the Tanach, in the words in the Book of Ruth ‘these are the generations תולדות of Peretz’⁵ giving the genealogy of King David, the first ‘anointed one’, ‘Moshiach’, and the ancestor of the ultimate Moshiach who will bring the Redemption.

The word *toledot* תולדות, generations, written ‘in full’ with two vavs, indicates fullness and completion. This is explained to mean that the advent of Moshiach (hinted in the Book of Ruth) elevates the entire Creation (presented in Genesis). Like the two kinds of movement expressed in the reflexive verb ‘I will walk among you’ this too combines two different kinds of movement. Creation is a movement from G-d above to the world, from above to below. By contrast, the coming of Moshiach depends on the service of the Jewish people, which is a movement from below to above. The elevation of Creation, through the coming of Moshiach is therefore a combination of both movements.

The discourse thus explains that the concept of the Messiah relates to the fundamental condition of existence. We can understand that by considering the Midrash which says⁶ that the reason for Creation is that ‘G-d desired to have a dwelling in the lower world’. The task of the Jewish people is to draw the ‘desire’ from an abstraction to a potential, and from potential to actuality...

The fundamental role of Moshiach is also expressed by a comment in the Midrash⁷ on the second verse of the Torah: ‘and the spirit of Elokim hovered over the face of the deep’. The Midrash says ‘this is the spirit of Moshiach’. Then, when the world had not yet been formed, and was still ‘water in water’, the spirit of Moshiach was apparent.

But in fact Moshiach goes back even earlier. It is taught⁸ that the thought of the Jewish people, preceded the Torah – as is evidenced by the fact that the Torah refers to them. But it is also taught⁹ that the Torah precedes the world by ‘two thousand years’! The ‘two thousand years’ signify some level of spiritual precedence and exaltation. Thus, based on these teachings, one can say that there is the beginning of the world, and before that the Torah, and before that – the thought of the Jewish people.

⁴ Gen. 2:4

⁵ Ruth 4:18. See Bereishit Rabbah 12:6.

⁶ Tanchuma Naso, sec.16; Bemidbar Rabbah 13:6.

⁷ Bereishit Rabbah 2:4.

⁸ Ibid. 1:4.

⁹ Ibid. 8:2

Included in the Jewish people at that first stage, is also Moshiach, for Moshiach is the Yechidah, the innermost point of the soul, of the entire Jewish people.

The fact that the spirit of Moshiach hovers over the waters empowers the Jewish people to achieve their goal of revealing G-dliness in the world, through their observance of Torah and Mitzvot, which will lead to the actual advent of the Messiah.

The idea that the Jewish people have to act on the world is expressed in the account of Creation: G-d created it 'to do'¹⁰, meaning that the Jewish people should do, should put it right, should perfect it.

Through their keeping the Mitzvot, with extra effort, they will bring the world to its original conception, that it should be a dwelling for the Divine, with the revelation of G-d 'walking' among us, and being revealed to us as our G-d.

May this goal be achieved and revealed quickly in our days.

Torah teachings are holy – please treat this page with care

¹⁰ Genesis 2:3. See Bereishit Rabbah 11:6.