

The Rebbe's Discourses

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

בלתי מוגה ד"ה ובני ישראל הלכו ביבשה ש"פ בשלה תשל"ג

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BETWEEN THE WALLS OF THE SEA

THE SEDRA TELLS US THAT IN THE SPLITTING OF THE SEA, THE JEWISH PEOPLE WALKED ON THE DRY LAND ‘and the water formed walls for them, on their right and their left’². The Midrash Mechilta comments that at this dangerous moment, the Jewish people were saved by the two walls of water which expressed their merit: the right hand expressed the merit of the Torah they would soon be receiving, which is a flow from above, Chesed, Kindness, the right, and the left hand the merit of prayer. Because prayer ascends from below upwards, the quality of Gevurah, severity. Another explanation is: the right hand wall expressed the merit of the Mezuzah they would put on their doors, on the right hand doorpost, and the left hand the Mitzva of Tefilin, which are worn on the left arm.

This relates to the idea expressed in the Rebbe's previous discourse that year (Yud Shevat, 1973³), that in everything there are the two aspects of ‘right’ and ‘left’, going all the way back to the beginning of the downchaining of the worlds.

Because at the beginning of existence are the Ten Utterances with which the world was created, and the first Utterance is ‘And G-d [Elokim] said Let there be light’⁴. The Baal Shem Tov explained⁵ that the fact that the light (which

¹ Maamar Uvnei Yisrael Halchu Bayabasha 5733, printed in Dvar Malchut Beshalach 5784, and was not edited by the Rebbe..

² Exodus, Beshalach, 14:29.

³ That discourse had particularly focused on Chapter 3 of the original Bati LeGani discourse.

⁴ Genesis, Bereishit 1:3.

⁵ Keter Shem Tov sec.247.

signifies the attribute Kindness, Chesed, on the right) came from the Name Elokim, signifying the attribute of Severity, meant that the intensity of the light was veiled, and because of this, the light could be accepted by the finite world. Thus both the right and the left aspects, Kindness and Severity, are expressed at the very beginning of existence.

The second leader of the Chassidic movement, the Maggid of Mezeritch, explains further that it says in the Zohar that ‘let there be light’ signifies Chesed, Kindness, and ‘and there was light’ signifies Gevurah, Severity⁶. Here again we see the two aspects Right and Left at the beginning of Creation.

These two aspects are also present in the Jewish people, in Torah and Mitzvot, in the world, and also lower than the world, as was explained in that earlier discourse by the Rebbe. And here too in our Sedra, with the concept of the Splitting of the Sea, which is a central theme in Judaism, there are the two aspects Right and Left. And that is why the Mechilta emphasizes the various aspects of service of G-d in terms of the walls of water on the right and the left: Torah on the right and prayer on the left, Mezuzah on the right and Tefilin on the left.

Now the Rebbe asks: how does this duality of Right and Left relate to the Future, when there will be total revealed unity? Will there still be the two aspects of Right and Left, but then they will be unified?

This actually raises a question about the idea that Right and Left pertain to the whole downchaining of the worlds: the source of all the worlds is from an exalted level which is beyond division into two different aspects. As it says in the kabbalistic book *Tree of Life* that ‘at the beginning there was a pure exalted radiance filling everything’, which was clearly beyond division into Right and Left.

This same concept is seen in the verse quoted earlier ויאמר אלוקים יהי אור ‘And G-d said, let there be light’. Although the word Elokim is Severity, the Left, and ‘Light’ is Kindness, the Right, the initial word ויאמר ‘and He said’ refers to the infinite Divine beyond the division into two aspects, the unity of the radiance of the Ein Sof, the Infinite.

This means that since the source of the division into two aspects is the ultimate unity beyond, in all aspects of existence where there is that division there also has to be felt the ultimate oneness. Hence we can understand concerning our service of G-d in this world, that in every aspect – albeit designated ‘right’ or ‘left’ - we should try to act in such a way that one can feel the ultimate oneness

⁶ See the Maggid's *Or HaTorah* sec.4, and Zohar II 167a.

in a revealed way. The service of each individual, and of the Jewish people as a whole, brings about an elevation of the worlds, to a level even higher than they were before Creation.

The effect of Creation was to bring about a flow of Divine radiance ‘upwards without end’ and at the same time ‘downwards without limit’ as explained in the Bati LeGani discourses. The goal is to be able to see the absolute unity at all levels, both reaching to the highest levels and to the lowest. But in order to achieve this we need the service in the two aspects of Right and Left, through which we are then able to achieve – and feel – the ultimate unity.

A hint to this is seen in a teaching from *Pri Etz Chaim* that in the Future there will a revelation of the radiance of the inner aspect of *Atik*⁷. *Atik* is the inwardness of the Sefirah Keter, the highest level of the system of Sefirot. During our time of Exile, the highest level revealed is from the external aspect of *Atik* but in the future, the inwardness of *Atik* will be revealed.

Concerning the inwardness of *Atik* it is said: there is no ‘left’ at the level of *Atik*⁸. So that means, that although now there are the two aspects of Right and Left, in the future there will only be ‘Right’. [Does that mean there will only be one aspect, the Right, and the Left will somehow disappear?]

In fact the idea about there being no ‘Left’ at the level of the inwardness of *Atik* is learned from a verse in our Sedra: ‘Your right hand o G-d, is mighty in strength, your right hand, o G-d, crushes the enemy’⁹. This means that when we say there is no ‘Left’ in *Atik* we mean that there are still two aspects – but they are both ‘Right’.

Our service now in the time of Exile concerns positive action in relation to G-d, the positive Commandments, drawing Hashem’s light into the world, ‘Right’, and also the negative Commandments, avoiding evil, the service of ‘sifting’, transforming bad into good. But in the Future bad will indeed have been transformed, and our service will focus on the positive in every way. The two aspects of existence, the radiance reaching upwards without end and downwards without limit will both be an expression of ‘Right’, Chesed, Kindness, the ultimate expression of Unity.

Torah teachings are holy – please treat these pages with care

⁷ The full term is ‘atik yomin’, ‘Ancient of days’ a term for G-d found in the Book of Daniel (7:9, 13, 22).

⁸ See Torat Haim, Vayera, 114a.

⁹ Exodus, Beshalach 15:6.