

The Rebbe's Discourses

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

ד"ה ואתה תצוה תשמ"א מוגה

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MOSHE CONNECTS THE JEWISH PEOPLE TO G-D

SEDRA TETZAVEH BEGINS 'AND YOU' - MEANING MOSHE - 'SHOULD COMMAND THE JEWISH PEOPLE'². The discourse asks: why does it say this? Surely, it is G-d who gives the commands. Moshe's role is to transmit the commands to the Jewish people. So the discourse explains – based on an earlier discourse by the Previous Rebbe – that in this case 'tetzaveh' does not mean 'command' but 'connect'³. G-d is telling Moshe that his role is to connect the Jewish people with G-d.

Thus Moshe should connect the Jewish people to radiance of the Infinite. This is why Moshe is called 'Ra'aya Mehemna'⁴, which is generally translated 'Faithful Shepherd'. There are two ways of explaining this concept. One, that Moshe was a faithful and reliable leader. The second way, which is the focus here, is that Moshe pastured, ie fed, Faith, Emunah, to the Jewish people.

¹ Maamar VeAtah Tetzaveh 5741, edited by the Rebbe and published as Kuntres Purim Katan 5752 (1992). Printed annually in the Dvar Malchus for the week before Gimmel Tammuz. This discourse was edited by the Rebbe shortly before his stroke on 27 Adar Rishon 1992. It was the last discourse he fully edited before he passed away in 1994. It is generally studied in Chabad-Lubavitch communities on 3rd Tammuz, the Rebbe's Yahrzeit. A full translation of this long and complex discourse is available at https://www.chabad.org/therebbe/article_cdo/aid/145191/jewish/Maamar-Veatah-Tetzaveh.htm. This summary tries to present a single thread of the discourse.

² Exodus 27:20.

³ See the Previous Rebbe's discourse 'Vekibel Hayehudim 5687 (1927)'. Tetzaveh relates to the Aramaic word tzavta, 'connection'.

⁴ Part of the Zohar is called Ra'aya Mehmna and is attributed to Moses.

Why did they need this? The Talmud says that the Jewish people are ‘believers the children of believers’⁵, meaning they naturally have Faith in G-d. But the problem is that this natural Faith may be ‘makif’, meaning superficial, not really affecting the behaviour of the person. The role of Moshe is to draw Emunah, Faith, into the inwardness of the Jewish people, that it should be internalised and really affect their personal lives.

This responsibility of Moshe is also the responsibility of what the Zohar calls ‘the spreading forth of Moshe through the generations’⁶, meaning the Jewish leaders, generation by generation, who each have the quality of being the ‘Moses’ of their generation. Their task is to help the Jewish people internalise Emunah, Jewish belief, so that it truly governs their lives.

This can be understood further by considering the nature of Emunah. Chassidic teaching explains that there are two reasons for strong Emunah. One is that one’s soul above in higher worlds⁷ sees G-dliness. Another reason might be that the Emunah stems from an even higher level, from the essence of one’s soul.

The Emunah on account of the first reason can lead to intense Faith in certain circumstances; but it can also be forgotten in the hurly burly of life. This kind of Emunah has a ‘spiritual’ source, and the person might lose touch with the spiritual aspects of life.

By contrast the Emunah which comes from the Essence of one’s soul is of a more permanent quality. The ‘essence’ is beyond the question of ‘spiritual’ or ‘non-spiritual’. The Essence pervades and relates to everything, at every level. It is this deeper level of Emunah which might lead a person to true self-sacrifice when there is persecution of the Jews and of Judaism, as we have seen many times in our history.

Sometimes the deep essence of one’s soul is revealed through harsh conditions such as persecution. But it can also be revealed – and on an even deeper level – in a different way. Not through persecution, but through yearning for Moshiach.

Why should a Jew yearn for Moshiach when he or she is in a comfortable situation in life, comfortable in physical terms and even also in spiritual terms?

Because the deepest desire of every Jew is that G-dliness should be revealed, as in the time of the Temple. Further, the deepest desire is not just that G-dliness

⁵ Shabbat 97a.

⁶ Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 69 (112a, 114a).

⁷ This is part of one’s soul, but it is above, beyond the limitations of one’s body. In the Talmud Megila 3a it is termed ‘mazal’.

should be revealed for them personally, but *everywhere*. It might be that an individual Jew is so spiritual and holy that, for that person, it is as if the Temple were never destroyed. But if other people are not on that level, if there is someone even in a remote corner of the world who does not feel that revelation, then on the deepest level the Jewish person is distressed.

As a result he or she yearns for Moshiach, when G-dliness will truly be revealed to all, everywhere.

It is thus the task of the Moshe of the generation to reveal this depth of Emunah within each Jew, the readiness for self-sacrifice, and even more, the yearning for Moshiach, from the deepest level of the essence of the soul, at the point where it is rooted in the Divine.

But his true goal is that each individual will continue with this yearning, dedication and Faith with their *own* power. Through this we will achieve very soon, the ultimate Redemption, when G-dliness will be revealed everywhere not only on account of inspiration from above, but also because of each person's personal inner bond with the Divine.

Torah teachings are holy – please treat these pages with care