

# The Rebbe's Discourses

Summaries of points from the Rebbe's Chassidic Discourses בלי אחריות כלל וכלל  
פרשת ראה תשל"ב ד"ה ראה אנכי בלתי מוגה  
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## ASPECTS OF ANOCHI ('I')

**S**EE THAT I (*ANOCHI*) AM GIVING YOU (*LIFNEICHEM*) TODAY A BLESSING AND A CURSE...<sup>2</sup> the blessing is promised as the reward for obeying G-d's laws, and the curse is threatened for disobedience. Earlier Chassidic teachings discussing this verse ask several questions. First, the Sages tell us that when the Torah uses the word *Hayom*, 'today', it means something eternal. Further, what is the significance of the word *lifneichem*, **לפניכם** which means before you or within you...? Wouldn't the word **לכם** *lachem* which simply means 'to you' have been more appropriate? And why is the word *Anochi*, 'I', used instead of a more usual Name of G-d such as the Tetragrammaton or *Elokim*?

Chassidic teachings tell us that *Anochi* denotes a very exalted level, like the word *Anochi* in the Ten Commandments, which begin 'I (*Anochi*) am the L-rd your G-d...' <sup>3</sup> The word *Anochi* is understood as expressing a level beyond the Names of G-d, rather 'I Who I am', the Divine Essence beyond.

Another question is about the term *noten* meaning that I am *giving* you - this word in Hebrew suggests giving a gift, something very positive. So why does the verse continue and say that the Jewish people were being given not only a blessing, but also a curse? How can that be positive?

The key point in elucidating this verse is the word *Anochi* which, as mentioned, expresses a very exalted aspect of the Divine. This was being imparted to the very

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<sup>1</sup> Maamar Re'eh *Anochi* 5732 (1972). It was printed in *Dvar Malchut Reeh* 5783. It was not edited by the Rebbe.

<sup>2</sup> Re'eh Deut 11:26.

<sup>3</sup> *Yitro*, Exodus 20:2, *Va'etchanan* Deut 5:6.

inwardness of each Jew: hence the word *lifneichem* is used, לפניכם relating to the word *panim* פנים, ‘face’, as described in the verse ‘face to face G-d spoke to you’<sup>4</sup>, which explains that at Sinai, G-d spoke to the very inwardness of each individual, reaching his or her Anochi, the deepest part of the soul.

Thus the Anochi in our Sedra links with the Anochi of the Ten Commandments, in which, due to the revelation of Anochi, the Essence of the Divine, the Tetragrammaton was imparted to each individual among the Jewish people, so that it could be considered that person’s G-d, as the Ten Commandments begin ‘I am the L-rd thy G-d’. [We say the G-d of Abraham to emphasise the closeness of G-d to Abraham. In the same way, says the discourse, the opening words of the Ten Commandments stress G-d’s closeness to each individual Jew<sup>5</sup>.]

Further, because of the supreme quality of Anochi, it is able to reveal the Tetragrammaton which is inside each person, including the peak of the top of the Yud, as is explained in Likkutei Torah on this Sedra<sup>6</sup>. [This explains that the *Yud* represents Wisdom, *bitul*, selflessness; *Heh* expresses Understanding, the power to contemplate an idea and explore it thoroughly, *Vav* represents the flow downwards from the mind, activating the emotions of love and awe of the Divine, and the second *Heh* represents thought, speech and positive action, which are the three lines of the letter Heh<sup>7</sup>. Further, the peak at the top of the *Yud* expresses an exalted love of the Divine which resides in the essence of the Soul<sup>8</sup>.]

The Rebbe explains that through the revelation of Anochi in the Torah, ie the Anochi at the beginning of the Ten Commandments, which is the general summary of the Torah, the highest aspect of the Divine – ‘I am Who I am’ – connects with the deepest level of the individual, the Anochi of each Jew, expressed by the word *lifneichem*, your inwardness.

In fact the inwardness of G-d, of the Jewish people and of the Torah, are all united as one. But since G-d wants us to have the virtue of service with our own effort, it seems as if they are three different aspects, and by our effort in study of Torah and revealing its Anochi we also reveal the deepest level of G-d, Anochi, which joins with our own deepest level, our inwardness (*lifneichem*).

The power of the Anochi in the Ten Commandments, states the Rebbe, is concerned particularly with the study of Torah. [The Ten Commandments are the general summary of the whole Torah, and therefore represent Torah study in general.] However the verse in our Sedra adds the idea that the Anochi, the

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<sup>4</sup> Va’etchanan Deut 5:4

<sup>5</sup> See Tanya Part 1 ch. 47.

<sup>6</sup> See Likkutei Torah, Re’eh, 18a-c.

<sup>7</sup> See also Tanya Part 1 ch.3, Part 3 ch.4.

<sup>8</sup> See Likkutei Torah *Ki Tetze* 38c.

Divine Essence, is also imparted as regards the observance of the Mitzvot. Because, as the verse says clearly, the blessing which is mentioned at the beginning of the Sedra is a response to the Jewish people keeping the Mitzvot.

The Rebbe now asks: This can readily be understood as regards the blessing for observing the Mitzvot. But what about the continuation of the verse, regarding the curse for *not* keeping them?

The Rebbe explains that the blessing and the curse simply means the two kinds of Mitzvot, the positive and the negative. The positive Mitzvot mean those we positively do which draw blessing to us. The real meaning of the negative Mitzvot – ‘do not do such and such an action’ - is to avoid evil, termed a ‘curse’.

In fact, the negative Mitzvot not only avoid evil, they transform it into good. They do this by reaching to the most exalted levels, beyond those reached by the positive Mitzvot. This is the point of the existence of evil: so that it can be transformed to good, by drawing down the highest level of G-dliness.

This is why the text of the Shema states that we should serve G-d *bechol levavecha* בְּכֹל לִבְבְּךָ ‘with all your heart’ and the word heart is written in a double form, *levavacha* instead of *libcha* לִבְךָ, to teach us that we should serve G-d not only with our Good Desire but also with our Bad Desire<sup>9</sup> – by transforming it to good.

This is the meaning of the continuation of the verse: that G-d is giving us the blessing and the curse, so that, through keeping the Mitzvot, we draw blessing upon ourselves, and through keeping the negative Mitzvot, we reach even higher levels of the Divine, the ultimate Anochi, and transform the ‘curse’, the possible negativity of existence, into goodness and blessing.

[Torah teachings are holy – please treat these pages with care](#)

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<sup>9</sup> See Va’etchanan Deut. 5:6, and Rashi on the verse.