

The Rebbe's Discourses

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

פרשת שמות תשי"ט ד"ה מי שם פה לאדם בלתי מוגה

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MOSES' QUESTION...

WE LEARN IN TORAH OR² THAT THE SOUL OF MOSES CAME FROM A HIGHER WORLD, and this is why he could not speak properly. He was from a realm of great spiritual radiance which could not fit into the limitations of Speech. Hence in his famous dialogue with G-d at the Burning Bush, when Moses protests that he cannot speak properly³, what he is really saying is that he does not see how the radiance of the Divine can be revealed in the limited physical world.

There are two aspects to the point that Moses was making. Intrinsically, how can the exalted Divine be revealed below? Surely the lower world, by definition, is a world of concealment of spirituality. Secondly, in addition to the concealment which is there in the world by virtue of it being a physical realm, the evil of the Egyptians in their enslavement of the Jews indicates a further level of *kelipah*, of hiding of the Divine. This makes the idea of revealing the Divine in the world even more remote.

Since this is the case, Moses was asking, how can he possibly fulfil the task which G-d is presenting to him?

G-d's response is to ask who gives a mouth to man, or makes a person dumb or deaf or seeing or blind? This power comes from Anochi, ('I'), from the highest level of the Divine⁴.

¹ Maamar Mi Sam Peh La-Adam 5719 (1959). It was printed in Dvar Malchut Vayechi 5779. It was not edited by the Rebbe.

² Rabbi Shneur Zalman's *Torah Or* Shemot 51d ff.

³ Exodus 4.10.

⁴ Exodus 4:11

The discourse explains this does not only mean that G-d enables people to speak, hear and see, which is obvious. Moses knew that very well. It means that G-d has the power to make an exalted level of Divine radiance pierce through into the lower worlds, that He makes a 'mouth', meaning the Sefirah⁵ Malchut (Kingship), in the 'man', the structure of the Sefirot of the highest realm, Atzilut (Emanation).

G-d is saying that Divine radiance and energy can flow through Malchut of Atzilut, the 'mouth', into the lower worlds of Creation (Beriah), Formation (Yetzirah) and Action (Assiyah). It can do this because of Anochi, 'I', representing Keter (Crown), the highest level of the Sefirot of Emanation (Atzilut). A flow of exalted radiance from Keter activates Malchut of Atzilut, the lowest level in the realm of Emanation, so that it functions also as the highest level of the next word down, as Keter of Creation (Beriah), and from there the revelation of G-dliness flows to the yet lower worlds of Formation (Yetzirah) and Action (Assiyah).

The structure of Sefirot is called 'man' as in the vision described in Ezekiel (1:26) which refers to 'an image of a man', meaning not the essence of the Divine, Who has no form, but the revelation of G-d in terms of the Sefirot.

The Sefirot are in a sense the reflections of the service of G-d by the Jewish people. The highest aspects of the Sefirot, the various dimensions of Keter, are Divine responses to Mesirut Nefesh, self sacrifice, as described in the Shema⁶, and what is called 'the yearning of the heart'. Then comes Divine Wisdom, Chochmah, which is embodied in the Torah and reflects our study of Torah. Kindness and charity generate the Sefirah Kindness, Chesed; severity with oneself, in self control, generates the attribute Severity, Gevurah; mercy for one's own and other people's souls, trapped in the Exile of the evil desire, is reflected by Tiferet, also called Mercy, Rachamim. Then comes Determination, Netzach, a quality one needs when the moments of inspiration evaporate, as they often do. Submission, Hod, expresses submission to G-d utterly beyond our understanding, and Dedication, Yesod, is a mirror of the individual's utter

⁵ Sefirah (plural Sefirot) means Divine Attribute, an aspect of G-d's interrelation with Existence. The Kabbalah speaks of Four Worlds: Atzilut (Emanation), Beriah (Creation), Yetzirah (Formation), Assiyah (Action). In each there are Ten Sefirot, Attributes: Keter (Crown), Chochmah (Wisdom), Binah (Understanding), Chesed (kindness), Gevurah (Severity), Tiferet or Rachamim (Mercy), Netzach (Determination), Hod (Submission), Yesod (Dedication) and finally Malchut (Kingship), which is often presented as expressing speech, as in a King commanding his servants. See Tanya Part IV, sec. 15, and the Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar in the Chabad Prayerbook, recited before Mincha on the eve of Shabbat. Note that in this latter text it states: 'Malchut is the mouth'.

⁶ Deut.6:5 'You should love the L-rd your G-d, with all your heart and with all your soul/life'. Rashi comments: 'even if He takes your life'. This includes a person sacrificing his or her life for Judaism, or for the protection of the Jewish people.

dedication to the Divine in every limb of his or her body. Finally Malchut (again meaning ‘mouth’ as we saw above) expresses the audible study of Torah⁷.

The Divine service of the Jewish people bring about the revelation of the Divine in the Sefirot of Atzilut, and ultimately in every level of existence. In addition, G-d has the power to eradicate evil, the *kelipot* which conceal the Divine, as was seen is G-d enabling Moses to escape from Egypt when Pharaoh first wanted to execute him – an escape which was really the beginning of the Exodus – and also in the miracles of the Exodus itself.

Further, Moses’s speech defect was cured at the Giving of the Torah at Sinai, because then, finally, the infinite aspects of G-dliness were revealed in the world so that by studying Torah and keeping the Mitzvot the individual joins with the essence of G-d.

But only the Revealed aspect of Torah was communicated at Sinai by Moses. He was the First Redeemer, and the final Redeemer, Moshiach, will communicate the inner dimension of Torah, revealing G-dliness to the Jewish people and all humanity, here in this lower world. With this Moses’ question will finally be answered.

Torah teachings are holy – please treat these pages with care

⁷ The Sages emphasise the importance of studying Torah audibly (Eruvin 54a).