

The Rebbe's Discourses

Summaries of points from the Rebbe's Chassidic Discourses בלי אחריות כלל וכלל
פרשת וארא תשל"ד ד"ה וארא אל אברהם בלתי מוגה
Published for Shabbat Sedra Vaera
25 Tevet 5785, 25 January 2025¹

THE REVELATION TO THE PATRIARCHS

THE SEDRA VA'ERA BEGINS WITH WORDS WHICH ARE GENERALLY translated in the past tense: 'And I [G-d] appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...'². Rabbi Shneur Zalman points out in a discourse discussing this verse in *Torah Or*³ that these words can also be understood in the future, or the continual present. Taken in this way, they mean that this spiritual aspect, G-d's revelation to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, did not only take place for the Patriarchs themselves, but also is in some way experienced by every Jew in every epoch.

What does this mean? The special quality of the Patriarchs was that they are termed a 'Mekavah', a 'chariot' for G-d⁴. Just as a chariot being driven by a driver will go wherever the driver wants, so the Patriarchs and their wives lived as a total expression of the Divine Will.

The Rebbe states in this discourse that this idea can apply to each of us. It is not so difficult to understand when applied to a person fulfilling a Mitzvah. His or her energy and thought is invested in, let's say, creating and enjoying a Shabbat atmosphere, keeping the laws of Shabbat, serving the Shabbat food at the table, and also with extra prayers and Torah study.

But the Rebbe goes further, and explains that the illumination of the Patriarchs' devotion to G-d can be within us even when we are simply living daily life, on an ordinary day. The discourse states that this applies not only to scholarly,

¹ Maamar Va'era 5734 (1974). It was printed in Dvar Malchut Va'era 5785. It was not edited by the Rebbe.

² Ex.6:3, Sedra Va'era.

³ Torah Or, beginning of Vaera, 55a.

⁴ This concept relates to the Chariot described in Ezekiel ch.1. See Tanya Part 1 ch.18.

distinguished Jews, but to every member of the Jewish people, great and small, and at all times.

Now the point of this spiritual revelation, as described in the Sedra, is as part of the process to leave the Exile in Egypt. The verses continue with G-d saying 'I will take you out of Egypt.. I will save you.. I will redeem you.. I will take you to Me as a people..' ⁵, the famous 'four expressions of Redemption'. The Egyptian Exile included all future Exiles, and so these words also apply to our present Exile: even in the double and redoubled darkness of our difficult times, we have the special revelation of the Divine as it was to the Patriarchs, which will lead to the Redemption.

How do we set this process in motion? As is well known, the 'arousal from above', from G-d, depends on our personal 'arousal from below'. In order to manifest the Redemption, with its 'four expressions of Redemption' mentioned above, we have to find the dimension of Redemption in our own service of G-d.

This is achieved through Teshuvah, Repentance. Corresponding to the four expressions of Redemption in our Sedra, there are four aspects of Repentance. For through Teshuvah the individual redeems himself or herself from inner Exile.

The differing aspects of Teshuvah are explained by Rabbi Shneur Zalman in Likkutei Torah⁶. The essence of Teshuvah is the bonding of the soul with G-d. The four aspects, based on the verse 'turn aside from evil and do good, seek peace'⁷ are 'turn aside from evil', ceasing negative behaviour; 'do good', meaning undertaking positive good behavior. Then comes 'seek peace' which, the Rebbe explains elsewhere⁸, is a higher level of Teshuvah expressed through learning Torah and has two aspects: revealed Torah (Halachah, Mishnah, Talmud) and Chassidic teachings.

Through these four aspects of Teshuvah, Repentance, one attains the four expressions of Redemption, as they relate to each of us as an individual. And through this we each have, in some sense, the revelation of the Divine as He was revealed to the Patriarchs.

The four expressions of Redemption from Egypt relate to the four cups of wine we drink at the Pesach Seder. But there is also a fifth expression of

⁵ Exodus 6:6-7.

⁶ Likkutei Torah, Haazinu, 71c. This book, first printed in 1848, and Torah Or, first printed in 1837, constitute a large collection of Rabbi Shneur Zalman's discourses, edited by his grandson and successor, Rabbi Menachem Mendel the Tzemach Tzedek, third Lubavitcher Rebbe.

⁷ Ps.34:15.

⁸ Likkutei Sichot vol.11 p.21.

Redemption, 'I will bring you to the land which I promised to give Abraham, Isaac and Jacob'⁹. This corresponds to the 'Fifth Cup', or Cup of Elijah, at the Seder, signifying the ultimate Redemption.

The way that our personal service can activate this fifth dimension is by spreading the wellsprings of Chassidic teaching. This concept emerged in our period of Exile¹⁰. This can mean not only spreading the water of the wellspring, but the wellspring itself, the deepest level. And through that we will merit the ultimate Redemption and the building of the Temple in Jerusalem, with the coming of Moshiach.

Torah teachings are holy – please treat these pages with care

⁹ Exodus 6:8.

¹⁰ A famous letter written by the Baal Shem Tov states that in a mystical ascent of his soul to upper worlds, the Messiah revealed to him that through 'spreading the wellsprings' of Chassidic teachings, the Messiah will come.