

The Rebbe's Discourses

Summaries of points from the Rebbe's Chassidic Discourses בלי אחריות כלל וכלל
פרשת ויחי תשכ"ה ד"ה ויקרא יעקב על בניו בלתי מוגה
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COMMUNICATING THE REDEMPTION

AT THE END OF HIS LIFE, JACOB CALLED HIS SONS TO HIM AND SAID ‘GATHER together, and I will tell you what will happen to you at the end of days’. After this he gave blessings to each of his sons. Rashi explains² that Jacob wanted to reveal the Messianic ‘End’, but the Shechina departed from him, and so he said other things [namely the blessings to his children]³.

The Rebbe comments that the fact that he wanted to reveal the Messianic End is suggested by the fact that the Torah uses the word *agidah* ‘I will tell’ relating to the concept ‘haggadah’. The source for this idea is a discourse by the Tzemah Tzedek, where we learn the significance of three Hebrew words for verbal communication: speaking, saying, telling⁴. The Zohar says that in general, whenever the word ‘tell’ is employed, it means words of particular wisdom. This is indicated also by the fact that the word *haggadah* links to an Aramaic word meaning to flow. *Haggadah*, telling, means drawing a flow of wisdom from its source.

Further, the term used is *va-agidah*, וואגידה ‘and I will tell’. The Zohar comments that this word includes Gimmel and Daled, like the phrase *gomel dalim*, giving benefit to the needy, an expression of *giving*. Various terms which express the giving of a positive flow begin with Gimmel, like *gemilut hasadim*, giving

¹ Maamar Vayechi Vayikra Yaakov el Banav 5725 (1964). It was printed in Dvar Malchut Vayechi 5779. It was not edited by the Rebbe.

² Based on the Talmud: Pesachim 56a.

³ The beginning of this Sedra Vayechi follows immediately from the end of the previous Sedra, without the usual spacing. This is called *stumah*, ‘closed’, or ‘hidden’. Rashi comments, citing the Midrash, that this is because Jacob wished to reveal the End of Days, but was unable to do so, as it was hidden from him.

⁴ *Dibbur, amirah, hagadah*.

kindness, and Geulah, the Redemption, which is an ultimate giving of benefit. While the Gimmel represents giving a positive flow, the Daled expresses receiving a flow: *dal* means ‘poor’, the one who receives beneficence. Further, the Yud between the Gimmel and Daled in the word *va-agidah* וַאֲגִידָה signifies Yesod, the Attribute which draws the flow from upper (male) Sefirot into Malchut, the receptive (feminine) Sefirah.

Another aspect of the word Haggadah or (in Aramaic) Aggada is that this refers to an aspect of the Talmud, the stories and explanations of verses, distinct from the discussion of the Halachah, Jewish Law. The Aggadic aspect of the Talmud is very profound, as the Sages say: ‘if you want to get to know the one who spoke and the world came into being, study haggadah, for through that you will come to know the Holy One blessed be He⁵. For haggadah reveals the inner dimension of the Torah.

The Tzemah Tzedek explains the difference between the terms speaking, saying, and telling. ‘Speaking’ can be deliberately false. The person might speak quite at variance to the feelings in his or her heart. ‘Saying’ can be in tune with one’s heart, but this might not be for one’s own benefit nor that of anyone else. Such words come from the external part of the heart, which is subject to inappropriate desires, as expressed by the Sages: ‘the eye sees, and the heart desires’⁶. But ‘telling’, haggadah, comes from the inner aspect of the heart, which only desires to fulfil the Divine will. This explains why the Zohar tells us that telling, haggadah, expresses words of wisdom, for it draws from the inner part of the heart and the inner aspect of the Divine. And this is why Jacob wanted to tell of the end of days, to reveal the inwardness and hidden aspect of the Neshama and of the Divine.

But this was from Jacob’s point of view. He thought his sons were ready to receive this communication. Earlier, when he met his brother Esau after many years absence, he told him ‘I have oxen and donkeys’ which is a hint to the Messiah, of whom it is said that he will come on a donkey⁷. This was an optimistic message from Jacob to Esau, because he thought that his brother was ready for the Redemption, and he was telling him that he too was ready. In our Sedra, many years later, Jacob again was optimistic and thought that his sons were ready to receive the communication of the redemption.

However, they were not ready. As a result, ‘the Shechina departed from him’, and the Sages tell us⁸ he became anxious that one or other of his offspring had gone on a false path. His sons had to convince him that all of them were still

⁵ Sifrei Ekev 11:22, cited in Rabbi Shneur Zalman’s Laws of Torah Study, 2:2.

⁶ See Rashi to Shelach, Num. 15:39.

⁷ Zach. 9:9.

⁸ Pesachim 56a.

dedicated to G-d, by saying ‘Hear o Israel (ie: Jacob himself), Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is one’!

But what is meant by the words ‘the Shechinah departed from him’? The Rebbe explains that this means that he lost the ability to *communicate* the Redemption. The word Shechinah relates to the word ‘dwelling’ and drawing something below in this world. Jacob lost the ability to communicate the Redemption to his sons. However, for himself, he retained his awareness of the radiance of the Infinite, and indeed his following words of blessing to his sons all expressed prophecies.

The fact that his sons were on a lower spiritual level, and were not able to receive the communication of the Redemption, affected Jacob himself, just as later Moses would be affected spiritually by the fact that his people, the Jewish people, had made the Golden Calf⁹. But despite this, he retained his own awareness of the Redemption and his power of prophecy.

The Rebbe adds a further point. Since the Torah tells us that Jacob wanted to communicate the Redemption, his desire must have had an effect below in this world, for the Torah is eternal and relevant to every Jew. Further, if a Tzaddik wishes to do something, his or her wish is - at least in some way - granted¹⁰.

Hence, says the Rebbe, when Jacob called his sons and said ‘gather and I will tell you’ he was actually imparting to them and to all their descendants the power to achieve a certain level of the revelation of the Redemption, such as being able to serve G-d in freedom, free from the nations of the world and free from the evil desire.

Further, when Rashi says that he said ‘other things’, what is really meant is that Jacob expressed the Redemption in those ‘other things’, which were his subsequent blessings to his children for all generations ahead. Through those blessings and teachings, the Jewish people are always able to achieve certain levels of the Redemption, until finally the ultimate Redemption will be revealed.

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

⁹ Rashi to Ki Tisa, Ex.32:7.

¹⁰ See Zohar I 43a.