

The Rebbe's Discourses

Summaries of points from the Rebbe's Chassidic Discourses בלי אחריות כלל וכלל
פרשת ויצא תשי"ט ד"ה פדה בשלום בלתי מוגה
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ACHIEVING TRUE PEACE

PADA BESHALOM NAFSHI – HE REDEEMED IN PEACE MY SOUL, FOR MANY ARE NOW WITH ME... This verse² is associated with the way Rabbi Shneur Zalman gained freedom on 19 Kislev, 1798. He writes in a letter that as he was saying those words in Psalms he was informed that he was free; it also relates to the freedom of his son Rabbi Dov Ber, in 1826, on 10 Kislev.

Redeeming in peace means that there is no battle: the enemy has become a friend. The 'many' referred to in the verse represent the forces of negativity, like the Reshut HaRabim, literally the 'domain of the many', meaning the 'Public Domain', the street or public place in which there might be an enemy or an opposing force. Yet this verse tells us that this hostile force has been transformed, the 'many' are now with me (meaning with King David, the author of the Psalm), instead of being against me.

We can understand this in terms of our Sedra Vayetze which tells us that when Jacob was on his journey to Haran, on the way he lay down to sleep. He had a stirring dream of a ladder extending from earth to heaven. Angels were ascending and descending the ladder, and G-d spoke to him giving him a blessing.

When Jacob awoke he was filled with awe at the holiness of this spot and he said: "If G-d will be with me and will guard me, and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear, and I will return to my father's house.. then Hashem will be

¹ Maamar Pada BeShalom 5719 (1959). It was printed in Dvar Malchut Vayetze 5774. It was not edited by the Rebbe.

² Psalms 55:19

Elokim for me, and this stone [the stone on which he had laid his head] will be the House of G-d...”³

Chassidic teachings, based on the Zohar and other texts, explain his journey to Haran as representing both the journey of the Soul into the world, and also the ‘journey’ of the Jewish people into exile. Following either interpretation the key concept is the relationship of the Soul with G-d. In this there are two levels.

Sustaining the Soul with food and clothing represents the service of the Tzaddikim, righteous people. Chassidic teachings tell us that food represents Torah study (because one internalizes Torah like food), and clothing expresses the Mitzvot (which are like radiance surrounding the person who carries them out⁴).

But there is a further level, which is expressed by the phrase ‘I will return to my father’s house’. This means Teshuvah, return. The one who was remote, who was far from the practice of Torah and Mitzvot, comes close and ‘returns’. This reaches a higher level than does the Tzaddik who never sins. The Tzaddik never directly encounters bad, therefore he cannot elevate it. By contrast the sinner becomes entwined with bad; but when he or she repents, the bad is elevated and transformed. Jacob was asking G-d that he too should reach that special level of Repentance.

This higher level achieves a greater revelation of the Divine. We can understand this by considering that there are two Divine Names, Hashem and Elokim. The brightness of the Name Hashem is concealed by the lower Name Elokim. Hence one level of revelation is that the Name Elokim, instead of concealing, *reveals* Hashem. This is through the service of Torah study and Mitzvot by the righteous. Their service pierces the veil of material existence (Elokim), revealing the G-dliness within. Jacob referred to this level when he said that “Hashem shall be Elokim for me”, meaning that the veiling aspect termed Elokim will reveal the higher level termed Hashem.

But even more profound is the idea that beyond the level of the Divine Name Hashem, is a further aspect termed Elokim, the Higher Elokim, an infinitely more exalted level of the Divine. It is called Elokim because this exalted level relates to the ‘hiddenness’ of G-d, beyond ordinary revelation. This infinite level is revealed, not through the Torah and Mitzvot of the Righteous, but by the Teshuvah of the former sinner, which reaches the Divine Essence, redeeming the lower darkness of transgression.

³ Gen.29:20-22

⁴ See the end of Tanya Part I, ch.5, regarding Torah as food and Mitzvot as garments.

Jacob refers to this higher stage in his further statement that “this stone will be the House of G-d”. The goal is that the Essence should be revealed in the world, and that is the significance of the ‘stone’ which becomes the Altar in the Temple, for the Temple by its nature draws the Essence into daily reality.

Thus we come to G-d redeeming in peace our souls, in such a way that the ‘many’, those who might have opposed Jewish teaching, or even those who opposed the Jewish people, now try to support the Jewish people and their task to reveal goodness and holiness in the world. Through Jacob’s power of Repentance, we collectively ‘return to my father’s house’, signifying the Redemption, the rebuilding of the Temple, true peace, and the Revelation of the Essence of the Divine.

Torah teachings are holy – please treat these pages with care