

# The Rebbe's Discourses

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

פרשת וישלח תשי"ח בלתי מוגה

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## PERSONAL PATH TO MOSHIACH

**A**FTER TWENTY YEARS IN A DISTANT LAND, JACOB WAS ABOUT TO MEET HIS BROTHER ESAU. HE SENT a message to him saying 'I have oxen and donkeys, flocks of sheep, servants and maid-servants'<sup>2</sup>. On this the Midrash<sup>3</sup> comments: 'Oxen - is a hint to the Priest Anointed for War', relating to another midrashic theme which links the Ox to Joseph, and Joseph represents the Anointed (Moshiach) son of Joseph. The Midrash continues: 'Donkeys - this refers to the King Messiah', meaning Moshiach the son of David, as it says of the Messiah 'riding on a donkey'<sup>4</sup>. 'Flocks - that means the Jewish people, as it says of them 'You are My flock'<sup>5</sup>. 'Servants and maidservants' - also refers to the Jewish people, who are often described as servants of the Divine<sup>6</sup>.

This means, that through service to G-d as 'sheep', 'servant' and 'maidservant', one reaches 'oxen and donkeys', meaning the revelation of Moshiach.

The service of the Jew to G-d in its basic and also highest form has the quality of kabbalat ol, the acceptance of the yoke of Heaven. The basis of service is to

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<sup>1</sup> Maamar Vayishlach 5718 (1958). It was printed in Dvar Malchut Vayishlach 5778. It was not edited by the Rebbe.

<sup>2</sup> Gen.30:4 (Vayishlach)

<sup>3</sup> Bereishit Rabbah 75:6.

<sup>4</sup> Zach.9:9

<sup>5</sup> Ezek.34:31

<sup>6</sup> Cf Psalms 123:2

be like a 'simple servant', who is obedient in all details. Then one reaches higher, to the 'faithful servant', who experiences the delight of his or her master.

In this mode of service there is also the distinction between those who give flow, or inspiration, who are termed 'male', the men-servants, and those who receive flow, and in that sense are female, the maid-servants<sup>7</sup>.

This is also the concept of 'sheep', which meekly submit to go wherever they are led. Further, sheep, *tzon* in Hebrew, can be seen as relating to *tz'i*, to go out, as in the verse 'go out in the paths of the sheep'<sup>8</sup>, or 'go out and see'<sup>9</sup>. This means going beyond every personal limit, with absolute dedication, *kabbalat ol*, the acceptance of the yoke, in a way which goes beyond the limitations of the structure of the down chaining of the worlds. Then one is able to 'see' - which means to see the revelation of Moshiach.

Now since the Torah is eternal, the above ideas apply to each individual. As Rabbi Shneur Zalman quotes in Tanya, 'the thing is very near to you'<sup>10</sup>, meaning that it is very easy to serve G-d, for every Jew, even for one who is seemingly on a very low level. Each individual is able to reach the level of 'sheep' and servants and maidservants, in the spiritual senses explained above, and through that he or she can reach the ox and the donkey, meaning the revelation of Moshiach.

How is it possible to achieve this? Especially in the darkness of the final years of Exile, which is darkest of all? The Sages tell us that if the Jewish people repent, at once they will be redeemed<sup>11</sup>. But this itself provokes a question. How can a person move from one extreme to the other, from the lowest level to the highest?

A hint is given by considering the text of one of the blessings said at a Jewish wedding: 'May the barren woman rejoice, when her children return to her with joy'. This provokes two questions: if the goal of marriage and of life is to have children, why does the barren woman rejoice? Secondly, if she is barren, why does the verse speak of her children?

This can be explained by considering a similar verse, referring to the future Redemption. 'Sing, barren woman, who has not given birth'<sup>12</sup>. The Talmud

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<sup>7</sup> Each of these concepts can apply to both men and women.

<sup>8</sup> Song of Songs 1:8

<sup>9</sup> Song of Songs 3:11

<sup>10</sup> Deut.30:14

<sup>11</sup> Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Repentance 7:5

<sup>12</sup> Isaiah 54:1

asks: does she sing because she has not given birth? It answers, she sings because she has not given birth to bad children<sup>13</sup>.

Explaining this in personal spiritual terms, the point is that one can have positive and negative ‘children’. The sacred children mean the positive emotions which are produced by one’s thinking and contemplation, as it says of Leah, wife of Jacob, that she bore six children. Chassidic teachings say that Leah represents Contemplation, the function of the Sefirah Binah, Understanding. Her six children are the six emotions of love, fear, mercy, endurance, submission, and dedication, all in relation to the Divine, which are the positive fruit of the contemplation.

By contrast the negative children are the inappropriate desires, about which a person ponders. One seeks to avoid giving birth to such children by connecting to the Divine with all one’s being. This especially takes place during prayer.

The problem is that Prayer can be without any vibrancy. One even forgets whether or not one said a certain passage. Or, it can be filled with life and meaning from beginning to end. In the *Pesukei DeZimra*<sup>14</sup>, the person cuts away the negative desires. Then come the Blessings on the Shema, and the Shema, which open one’s inner being so that one becomes a vessel for holiness. Then the Amidah follows, in which there is an outpouring of one’s soul through its eighteen/nineteen blessings. Through this one’s soul flows through one’s entire being.

In this way one reaches the service of the ‘donkey’, with its hint to Moshiach. But the donkey also represents materiality<sup>15</sup>. The goal is to purify one’s material aspect, through which one reaches the radiance beyond the downchaining of the worlds, and to draw it down into this world as healing, wellbeing, and healthy progeny, till and including the ultimate revelations of the future with the speedy advent of Moshiach.

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

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<sup>13</sup> Talmud Berachot 10a. This passage is in a repartee by Beruria, the wise and sharp-witted wife of Rabbi Meir, to a heretic, who had challenged her about the meaning of this verse. She responded that the barren woman rejoices that she did not have children like *you*.

<sup>14</sup> The Psalms between Baruch Sh’Amar and Yishtabach, in the first main section of the Morning Prayer.

<sup>15</sup> *Chamor* is donkey, *chomer* is material.