

The Rebbe's Discourses

Summaries of points from the Rebbe's Chassidic Discourses בלי אחריות כלל וכלל
שבת פרשת בשלח ד"ה באתי לגני תשמ"ה בלתי מוגה
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HIGHER AND HIGHER

SONG OF SONGS STATES: 'I HAVE COME INTO MY GARDEN, MY SISTER, MY BRIDE'². The Previous Rebbe in his discourse³ quotes the Midrash which explains that the 'Garden' is the place where the Shechinah was originally. However, due to negative events (such as eating from the Tree of Knowledge, and Cain killing Abel), the Shechinah withdrew from the world, ascending to the seventh Firmament.

Then came seven Tzaddikim⁴, who one by one drew the Shechinah back to the world. Moses who was the seventh – and all sevenths are precious – succeeded in the final step, and drew the Shechinah into our physical world, in that he built the Sanctuary and there the Shechinah was revealed in the Holy of Holies.

In general, this is the task of Tzaddikim: to draw the Shechinah into the world. And this is actually the task of every single Jew, since 'Your people are all Tzaddikim'⁵. Each individual is empowered to do this by Moses: the original Moses, who succeeded in revealing the Shechinah in the Sanctuary; and also the

¹ Maamar Bati Legani 5745 (1985). It was printed in Dvar Malchut Bo 5785. It was not edited by the Rebbe.

² Song of Songs 5:1.

³ The Previous Rebbe wrote a discourse beginning with this verse, and in 1950 he had it published and asked that it should be studied on 10 Shevat, the Yahrzeit of his grandmother. But that day he himself passed away. From 1951, each year his successor, the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe would say a discourse on Tenth Shevat expounding the earlier discourse by Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak. Each year the Rebbe would focus on a specific chapter, going in order discussing the twenty chapters of the original. The chapter for 1985 (and also for 2025) is chapter 15.

⁴ Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Levi, Kehot, Amram, Moses.

⁵ Is. 60:21.

‘Moses who is in every generation’⁶, and also the Moses who is within every single Jew⁷.

Therefore the task of each individual is to create a Sanctuary for the Divine, a concept which includes the idea that the Divine dwells within each person, as it says ‘Make for Me a Sanctuary, and I will dwell in *them*’⁸, not in it, the Sanctuary alone, but in them, also in each individual.

This is achieved by transforming darkness to light, meaning the darkness and negativity of the world, which is transformed to light by the individual dedicatedly observing the laws of the Torah, which often needs great self-restraint.

This is also hinted at in the word for the planks of the Sanctuary. Kereshe שִׁקְרָה is a plank, but a word with the same letters, sheker שִׁקְרָה means falsehood. One’s task is to transform the falsehood of the world into the planks of the sacred Sanctuary. For ‘world’, עולם (olam) relates to the concept העלם (he-elem), concealment. Each person should strive to take the falsehood of the world which conceals the Divine, and transform it into a Sanctuary for the Divine.

The Previous Rebbe’s discourse continues⁹ with the idea that the Jewish people who have this task are called ‘Tzivot Hashem’, the ‘armies of the Divine’¹⁰. This term implies that they are dedicated servants of G-d, ready to sacrifice their lives for Him. The Jewish people are also called ‘children of G-d’, and the Zohar (quoted in Tanya¹¹) describes a child as totally dedicated to his parents, and ready to give up his life for them. Indeed, the idea of readiness for self-sacrifice is integral to the concept of an ‘army’.

The Previous Rebbe’s discourse¹² then presents the image of a King who is fighting a desperate battle, which is so vitally important that the King opens his most private treasure store and squanders its precious contents, which have been gathered by generations of his ancestors, and have never been used or revealed before. He gives these precious treasures, by means of the officers, to the ordinary soldiers, to help them in their task.

⁶ Tikkunei Zohar sec.69.

⁷ See Tanya ch.42.

⁸ Exodus 25:8, Sedra Terumah

⁹ Ch.10 ff., also chs. 17 and 19.

¹⁰ The Jewish people are called ‘armies of the Divine’ in Exodus 12:41, Sedra Bo.

¹¹ Tanya I, chs. 10, 44.

¹² Ch. 11.

The discourse explains that this hidden treasure is what the Sages term ‘the treasure of Fear of Heaven’¹³ of which it is said ‘all is in the hands of Heaven, except for Fear of Heaven’¹⁴.

All this applies particularly to the generation at the ‘heels of the Messiah’, when readiness for self-sacrifice is particularly strong. The self-sacrifice in that (or this) generation is not only in the face of physical threat, but also in facing mockery and scorn.¹⁵ Chassidic teachings state that when Moses saw into the future, to the generation of the ‘heels of the Messiah’, and he saw this readiness for self-sacrifice, he felt humble¹⁶. Because the Mesirat Nefesh of that generation is so intense, the Redemption which they will bring about, and the third Temple which will be built, will be permanent, unlike the previous Temples.

Now, in order to explain the nature of the supernal ‘Treasure’ which is uniquely being revealed and given over by the officers¹⁷ to the soldiers, the original discourse in Chapter 15¹⁸ quotes the Tikkunei Zohar¹⁹, which states that ‘the radiance of the Ein Sof extends higher and higher without end, and lower and lower without limit’.

This upper dimension, higher and higher without end, is the ‘Treasure’. The discourse explains that while the famous kabbalistic book Tree of Life²⁰ begins with depicting the Tzimtzum, the contraction or veiling of the Divine radiance so as to give room, so to speak, for the worlds to be created, in fact there were several levels of Tzimtzum prior to that. All this explains how utterly exalted the ‘Treasure’ is, which is given into the hands of each individual Jew, to help him or her to fulfil their task.

The discourse goes into great detail explaining the different levels of Tzimtzum, from the very highest level, and then down, down, concealing the Divine radiance, which enables our world to exist as a material world. And then the discourse declares that this veiling should not be thought of as a ‘lack’, or deficiency. On the contrary: it has a positive purpose to create our physical world. And this world itself is real, as the beginning of the Torah states: In the

¹³ See Isaiah 33:6 ‘fear of G-d is His treasure’. Berachot 33b.

¹⁴ Berachot 33b. The implication is that even G-d has not ‘used’ this treasure (see the commentary in Dvar Malchut). Another explanation of the ‘treasure’ is that it refers to the Chasidic teachings. One could say that the Chasidic teachings reveal the hidden treasure of Fear of G-d within the person.

¹⁵ See the beginning of the Tur and the Shulhan Arukh. The mockery is directed against those who faithfully keep the Torah.

¹⁶ Torah Or Shemot 52b.

¹⁷ The ‘officers’ can be understood as the Rebbeim, and the soldiers are the Chassidim, or every Jew.

¹⁸ See note 3 above.

¹⁹ End of Tikkun 57.

²⁰ By Rabbi Chaim Vital, the close disciple of Rabbi Isaac Luria (d.1572).

beginning G-d created Heaven and Earth, yet at the same time the very Essence of the Divine is revealed in our world, even at its very lowest level.

That is why a simple person, or a child, can be aware of G-d, not just as an idea, but truly aware of the Essence of the Divine, beyond all the subtle teachings of the Kabbalah.

And it is in this world, with all its darkness and concealment of the Divine, that we are able to draw the Essence of the Divine Presence back into the world. We do this, in particular, through our service of G-d in daily life, keeping the laws of the Torah which often involves self-restraint and self control, refining our inner selves.

Through this we tangibly reveal the Essence of the Divine Presence in the world, with the true and complete Redemption by Moshiach, swiftly in our days.

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