

# The Rebbe's Discourses

Free Summaries of the Rebbe's Chassidic Discourses בלי אחריות כלל וכלל  
ד"ה מי מנה עפר יעקב ה'תשי"ח

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## UFARATZTA – BURSTING OUT ROUND THE WORLD

**ONE OF THE BLESSINGS WHICH G-D FORCED BALAAM TO GIVE THE JEWS ASKS the rhetorical question: 'Who can count the dust of Jacob, or give a number to a fourth<sup>2</sup> of Israel'. This comes after his declaration that this people, the Jewish people, dwells alone, and is not counted among nations. This is interpreted as being about the time of Moshiach, when the blessing of the great uncountable number of the Jewish people will also be fulfilled.**

Since these verses are talking about the future exalted quality of the Jewish people, why is their name 'Jacob' mentioned? Jacob was called this when he was born as the second twin, after Esau, clutching Esau's heel. It indicates his weaker position. Later in life he was given the new name Israel. When speaking of the future greatness of the Jewish people, one would expect only the name Israel to be mentioned.

The Midrash<sup>3</sup> points out that G-d told Abraham his progeny would be like the stars of the heavens, and He told Isaac that his children would be like the sand of the sea-shore. But in the case of Jacob, G-d said 'your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will burst out to the west and the east, and to the north and the south (Gen.28:14). The Midrash links this with Balaam's blessing 'who can count the dust of Jacob'.

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<sup>1</sup> Maamar *Mi Mana Afar Yakov* 5718, published in Dvar Malchus Balak 5778. The Hebrew text was not edited by the Rebbe. This was the Maamar with which the Rebbe launched the concept of 'uforatzta'. The first form of the Uforatzta song was to the tune of dayeinu, but the chassidim in Israel sang it to an old Chabad nigun. When some of them came to New York for the New Year festivals their nigun was adopted and is the one now current.

<sup>2</sup> The term translated 'fourth', following the Targum, has a variety of interpretations. See Rashi, and also the end of this summary of the discourse.

<sup>3</sup> Bemidbar Rabbah 2:12

Another Midrash<sup>4</sup> makes a further point: G-d told Jacob, when your descendants reach so low, like the dust of the earth - then they will burst forth in every direction. It links this with the verse '[G-d] raises the poor man from the dust' (I Sam.2:8).

This 'bursting forth' relates to Moshiach, who will be a descendant of the child Peretz, son of Judah, who burst out of the womb, overtaking his brother<sup>5</sup>. Moshiach himself is called 'Poretz', the one who bursts forth (Micah2:13).

Looking at this on a more inward level, Jacob and Israel are names of the Jewish soul. Initially it is called Jacob, and then, when it accomplishes its task in 'struggling with spiritual forces and with men' (Gen.32:29) it is called Israel. Hence the Torah's teaching about Jacob also concerns the soul of each individual.

We see Jacob's task in the verses 'And Jacob left Be'er Sheva and went to Haran. He came to the place and rested there for the sun had set'<sup>6</sup>.

The Zohar gives two interpretations to Jacob leaving Be'er Sheva and going to Haran. One is that this describes the descent of the soul from the level of Chochmah (Wisdom) to Kingship of the highest of the Four Worlds, Atzilut (Emanation). The other is that it moves from that level to the lowest levels of existence in our physical realm. The word Haran relates to a similar word meaning 'anger', representing the most challenging aspects of the world<sup>7</sup>.

This is expressed by Jacob's Hebrew name יַעֲקֹב. The Yud represents the Attribute Wisdom. A Yud is only a dot, for it comes after the Tzimtzum (veiling) of the infinity of the Divine. G-d's Oneness is expressed in the phrase from the Zohar 'You are One beyond Number'. Thus G-d is beyond all the Sefirot, the Divine Attributes. The Kabbalists explain that there is a process of veiling, called Tzimtzum, in order for the Sefirot to come into being. Then the soul emerges at the level of Wisdom, the first letter of Jacob's name.

The remainder of Jacob's name, *ekev*, means 'heel'. The soul emerges at the highest level and descends to the lowest, to the 'heel' of existence. This is the realm where 'the sun had set', where the radiance of the Divine is concealed. In this sense the soul goes down, down, to the very dust. But when it descends to the dust, then it is able to burst forth in all directions, west, east, north and south.

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<sup>4</sup> Shemot Rabbah 25:8. Note also that among the Patriarchs, Jacob has a unique position. Abraham gave birth to Isaac, but also to Ishmael. Isaac gave birth to Jacob, but also to Esau. By contrast, Jacob's descendants as a whole constitute the Jewish people.

<sup>5</sup> See Gen.38:27-29. King David, ancestor of Moshiach, was descended from Peretz. See Ruth 4:18-21.

<sup>6</sup> Gen.28:10-11. The Or HaHachaim applies these verses to the soul of each individual coming into the world.

<sup>7</sup> יַעֲקֹב Haran relates to אַף הָרָגָה, *haron af* 'anger'.

It has the power to do this because ‘he came to the place’. The ‘Place’ means G-d, the Place of the World. As Rashi points out, ‘he came to the Place’ means he bonded with G-d, through prayer<sup>8</sup>.

This means that Jacob, meaning the individual Jewish soul, and the totality of the Jewish people, by descending to the dust, to the lowest level, and at the same time bonding with G-d, is able to burst out in every direction and elevate the world and connect it with the Divine.

Balaam’s blessing hints at this too, with his words ‘give a number to a fourth of Israel’. The word ‘give a number’ *mispar*, relates to the word *mesaper*, to shine (like the English sapphire). Israel, the Jewish soul which is achieving its potential, makes the world shine, in all four<sup>9</sup> directions. This is our challenge and opportunity when we descend to the very dust. At that moment begins *ufaratzta*, bursting out round the world.

Torah teachings are holy – please treat these pages with care

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<sup>8</sup> The Sages tell us that Jacob instituted the Evening Prayer on that occasion.

<sup>9</sup> The word translated as ‘fourth’ is now reinterpreted as ‘four’.