

The Rebbe's Discourses

Free Summaries of the Rebbe's Chassidic Discourses בלי אחריות כלל וכלל
ד"ה ציון במשפט תפדה פ' דברים ה'תשמ"ד בלתי מוגה

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DIMENSIONS OF REDEMPTION

ZION WILL BE REDEEMED THROUGH JUSTICE AND HER CAPTIVES THROUGH TZEDAKA... These words conclude the Haftorah² for the Shabbat before the Ninth of Av, the fast commemorating the destruction of both Temples. In Likkutei Torah, Sedra Devarim, there is a famous Maamar³ on this verse, which explains a basic teaching about Judaism and life. This teaching is relevant throughout the year, not only on the Shabbat before the Ninth of Av, just as teachings about going out of Egypt are always relevant, not only on the night of Pesach.

This verse presents two dimensions of the person which need to be 'redeemed'. One is Zion, which represents the Divine Soul. The word Zion, which, in the Hebrew Scriptures, means Jerusalem or the site of the Temple, literally means 'sign'. Hence the word 'zion' is used also for a gravestone, a sign that a person is buried at that spot.

The Maamar explains that in our case, the verse at the end of the Haftorah, the term Zion means the Divine Soul, which is termed in Tanya 'an integral portion of G-d above'⁴. Now, in general, a 'sign' has two contrary qualities: on the one hand, it is *not* the thing it indicates, but is only a sign; on the other, it actually expresses something of that which it indicates.

Thus the Divine Soul is termed a 'portion' of G-d above, and thus it indicates the Divine, but is not itself the Divine, it is only the soul of a person. Further,

¹ Maamar *Tzion beMishpat Tipadeh* – *Devarim* 5744 (1984), published in Dvar Malchus Pinchas 5774. The Hebrew text was not edited by the Rebbe.

² This is Isaiah 1:1-27, beginning with the words 'The Vision of Isaiah'. Consequently this Shabbat is termed 'The Shabbat of the Vision' (Shabbat Chazon).

³ Likkutei Torah, Devarim, 1a.

⁴ Tanya beginning of ch.2.

the Animal Soul of a person seems to be more substantially their ‘self’, hence Rabbi Shneur Zalman, in his book Tanya, explaining the battle of the two souls within the individual, terms the Divine Soul ‘the second soul’. But at the same time, the Divine Soul is called ‘an integral [mamash] portion of G-d above’, which indicates a deep level of relationship with the Divine. In fact ‘the essence, when you grasp but a portion of it, you grasp the whole of it’⁵.

The implication of this verse is that the Divine Soul needs to be redeemed. This is because at this moment, it does not control the life of the person. It might even be relatively insignificant in his or her life. It is therefore suffering a form of Exile, and below we discuss how it is redeemed from that Exile.

Another aspect of the person which needs redemption are the ‘captives’. The Maamar in Likkutei Torah explains that these captives are the thought, speech and action of the person. These should express the holiness of the Divine Soul⁶; but they are captured by the Animal Soul and become the means whereby it achieves its own expression and gratification. They merge with the physical and more grossly material aspects of the person.

Now this indeed is the plane of service of G-d, being a soul in a physical body, here in this world. The account of the Giving of the Torah emphasises this aspect of the tension between the spiritual and the physical. The Torah states that the Divine Presence ‘descended’ on the mountain⁷. The Torah also states⁸ that the mountain was belching smoke, which indicates the violent effect of the spiritual indwelling within the physical mountain. The concept of physicality itself was being transformed⁹. Further, the Sages tell us that, in general, ‘the Torah comes to make peace in the world’¹⁰, which implies that the world is a realm of strife and war, which Torah seeks to change and pacify.

Hence there is the sense of displacement and alienation for both the soul, Zion, and its ‘captives’, one’s thought, speech and action, indeed, in general, the way one uses one’s body. How can they be redeemed?

‘Zion will be redeemed through justice’. The term justice, Mishpat, occurs in another verse, where Targum Onkelos translates it as ‘hilcheta’ ie halachah, law¹¹. This means: Zion will be redeemed through Torah study, while the ‘captives’, thought, speech and action, and in general, the physical body, will be redeemed through Tzedaka, Charity.

⁵ See Keter Shem Tov (Hosafot) 116.

⁶ They can be considered the ‘garments’ of the Divine Soul, as explained in Tanya ch. 4. However they are captured by the Animal Soul. Hence both the Divine Soul and its own ‘garments’, the thought speech and action of sacred matters, are in Exile and require redemption.

⁷ Exodus (Yitro) 19:20.

⁸ Exodus 19:18.

⁹ See Likkutei Sichot vol.16 p. 280.

¹⁰ Rambam Mishneh Torah, end of Laws of Chanukah.

¹¹ Genesis, Vayeshev 40:13.

These are two different kinds of movement: Torah is from above to below, as is implicit in the idea that Torah is ‘from Heaven’¹², while Tzedaka is from below to above: the person carrying out a practical Mitzva is elevating the world towards G-d.

The Torah is termed a Torah of fire¹³. It has this quality even when it descends below, to be studied in this world. So when a person studies Torah they become aware of the Divine aspect of Torah, for even in this world it is fire, just as it is fire in its source. This awareness brings redemption to the Soul, which likewise has a Divine source and is also an expression of the Divine in this world.

Then through Tzedaka, which includes all the Mitzvot, one elevates the world. Indeed, physical existence, and particularly the physical body, conceals an intense level of spirituality, which is utterly hidden. But the fact that it is hidden, expresses its exalted source, even higher than that of the soul. For ‘that which is higher, falls lower’¹⁴. By carrying out Mitzvot with the material world, and especially with the physical body, this exalted level of spirituality is revealed and connected to its source. Through these two dimensions of redemption, from above to below and from below to above, we reveal the Divine in this world. Indeed there is a verse about G-d, stating ‘I will walk among you’¹⁵, which Chassidic teachings explain¹⁶ as two kinds of movement: from above to below, and from below to above.

This double ‘walking’ by the Divine can further be understood as including two dimensions: first, from above to below, G-d helps the person. Then, from below to above, the person makes his or her own effort, with every limb of the body. There is actually a Kabbalistic book, *Sefer Haredim*, which links each of the Commandments to a specific limb. Then again, from above to below, there is a tremendous Divine response, granting the person further aspects of spiritual empowerment.

Through these ‘spiritual’ dimensions of Redemption, we pray to G-d we will attain the literal redemption in which Zion and its captives, Jerusalem and the Jewish people, will be redeemed in literal terms, with the coming of Moshiach, swiftly in our days.

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

¹² Devarim Va-etchanan 4:36 “from Heaven G-d made His voice heard to you”.

¹³ “My words are like fire” Jeremiah 23:29.

¹⁴ See the Mitteler Rebbe’s Shaarei Orach ‘Yaviu levush Malchut’ ch.12 onwards.

¹⁵ Leviticus Bechukotai 26:12.

¹⁶ See Likkutei Sichot vol.20 p.299.