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LESSONS IN  
**THE ALTER REBBE'S**  
❧ **MAAMARIM** ❧

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PRECIOUS TEACHINGS THAT AWAKEN THE HEART  
TO DIVINE SERVICE FROM THE HOLY MASTER  
❧ **RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN OF LIADI** ❧  
TRANSLATED AND EXPLAINED

**מאמר אדמו"ר הזקן**

**נדפס בספר תורת חיים שמות**

**ל"ג בעומר**

דבור המתחיל

**להבין ענין ל"ג בעומר**

**"The Hilula of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai"**



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ב"ה

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ב"ה

מאמר אדמו"ר הזקן

ל"ג בעומר תקס"ב

הנחת אדמו"ר האמצעי

נדפס בספר תורת חיים שמות ע' רו, ב

ד"ה לְהַבִּין עֵינַי ל"ג בְּעוֹמֵר<sup>1</sup>

"The Hilula of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai"

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai requested that everyone celebrate Lag BaOmer as his wedding-like day of celebration, called in Aramaic a "Hilula." This is very puzzling: Isn't the passing of a Tzaddik a sad day? And why is he comparing the celebration of his yahrtzeit to a wedding celebration?

This is what the Alter Rebbe will explain in this maamar:

לְהַבִּין עֵינַי ל"ג בְּעוֹמֵר, **To understand the meaning of Lag BaOmer:**

הֵנָּה בְּל"ג בְּעוֹמֵר הָיָה הַלּוּלָא דְרַשְׁבִּי בְּנוּדָע.<sup>2</sup> **It is known that on Lag BaOmer was the Hilula (wedding-style celebration) of Rashbi.**

וְלְהַבִּין עֵינַי צְרִיךְ לִידַע תְּחִלָּה עֵינַי **To understand what this means, why the day he passed**

1 מאמר זה הוא הנחת כ"ק אדה"א ממאמר אביו כ"ק אדה"ו משנת תקס"ב. והנחת הר"מ בן כ"ק אדה"ו נדפסה במאמרי אדה"ו תקס"ב ח"ב ע' תל [ושם ההתחלה: להבין היטב ענין הילולא דרשב"י]. (וחלק בשינויים נמצא באוה"ת שה"ש (כרך ב) ע' תו). ראה לקו"ש ל"ג בעומר (כרך ג) ע' 1002 הערה 3. (כרך ז) ע' 337. (כרך יז) ע' 511

<sup>2</sup> ראה זהר (אד"ו) (האזינו רצו, ב. רצא, סע"א. ויחי ריח, סע"א. ראה פע"ח) שער ספה"ע (שכ"ב, פ"ו). מאמרי אדה"א ויקרא ח"ב ע' ו' תרסו.

מתן תורה שבשבועות,<sup>3</sup> away is like a wedding, **we first need to understand the meaning of Matan Torah on Shavuos**, why it is compared to a wedding:

דכתיב "[צאנה וראינה בנות ציון במלך שלמה בעטרה שעטרה-לו אמו] ביום חתנתו וביום שמחת לבו כו"<sup>4</sup>, as it is written (Shir Hashirim 3:11), "[Go out daughters of Tzion and see Hashem, the King of peace, wearing the crown of pride created by the mother-like devotion of His people,] on the day of His wedding and on the day of the joy of His heart."

In the last Mishna of Maseches Taanis, it explains: The two parts of this verse refer to two different occasions when the Yidden's devotion to Him, like a mother's devotion to care for her children, brought Hashem to descend to reveal Himself to us: "The day of His wedding" refers to Matan Torah, which the Yidden's mesirus nefesh in Mitzrayim allowed them to experience. "The day of the joy of His heart" refers to the day of the building of the Beis Hamikdash, especially the third Beis Hamikdash, built on our mesirus nefesh in Galus. At that time, Hashem will reveal the deepest secrets of the Torah to us, as with Lag BaOmer.

בהיות כי הלא ידוע שכנסת ישראל נקראת כלה והתורה נקראת חתן,<sup>5</sup> **Since it is known that Knesses Yisrael is called the kallah, and Hashem, as He is invested in the Torah, is called the chassan,**

כמו שכתוב תורה צוה לנו משה [מורשה קהלת יעקב — אל תקרי] as it is written (Devarim 33:4), "The Torah that Moshe commanded to us is our

<sup>3</sup>. ראה לקו"ש חה"ש) ברך ח (ע' 21' ובהנסמן שם

<sup>4</sup>. נסמן לעיל פ' בא קיח, ב

<sup>5</sup>. ראה מאמרי אדה"א קונטרסים ע' רעג ובהנסמן שם

מורשה אלא [מאורשה כו,<sup>6</sup>

["morasha-inheritance" for the congregation of Yaakov. But the word "morasha-inheritance" can also be read as] "**me'orasa-bride.**"

וידוע שיש בתורה ב' מדרגות הנגלה  
והנסתר,

**And it is known that there are two levels in the Torah: the revealed and the hidden,**

כמו שכתוב בזהר הקדוש: "[תלת דרגין אינון מתקשרין דא בדא, קודשא בריך הוא, אורייתא, וישראל וכל חד... סתים וגליא. דקודשא בריך הוא... סתים וגליא. אורייתא הכי נמי סתים וגליא. ישראל הכי נמי דרגא על דרגא... חד גליא, וחד סתים]."<sup>7</sup>

**as it is written in the Zohar** (vol. III, 73a): "[There are three levels bound to each other: **The Holy One Blessed is He**, the Torah, and the Yidden, and each one] **has a hidden and revealed level**, [Hashem has a hidden and revealed level, the Torah has a hidden and revealed level, and the Yidden also have a revealed and hidden level]."

ובשבועות ה'יה התגלות התורה  
הנגלית בעשרת הדברות כו,

**And on Shavuos the Nigleh of Torah was revealed in the Aseres HaDibros.**

ובל"ג בעומר שהוא תחלה ה'יה  
התגלות רזין דאורייתא שהם על דרך  
סתרי הזהר כידוע,

**And on Lag BaOmer** of the first year when the Yidden left Mitzrayim, **which came first** (about two and a half weeks before Matan Torah), **was the revelation of the secrets of the Torah, which are like the secrets of the Zohar, as is known,**

<sup>6</sup> ברכה לג, ד. ברכות נו, א. ראה סידור דרושים לחתונה קכח, א. שה"א ס, א. לקו"ת ברכה צג, סע"ד

<sup>7</sup> ראה זהר אחרי עא, ב, עג, א.

מפני שבחינת הסתימה שבתורה ירד תחלה מלמעלה ואחר כך הגליא כו'.

because the aspect of the hidden level of the Torah came down from above first, and afterwards the revealed level.

וזהו מלמעלה למטה שאז היותר נעלה במדרגות השפע יורד תחלה,

This is because when Hashem Above comes down to us below, He first gives us the deepest part of His Light and Truth, before the simple and basic teachings of the Torah.

אבל מלמטה למעלה, דהינו כשאדם [התלמיד חכם] מקבל שפע התורה [בתוכו] כו',

But when we come up from below to Hashem Above, meaning, when a person really cares about studying Hashem's Wisdom, the order is reversed,

לא יוכל להגיע לבחינת הסתימה שבתורה עד שימלא נפשו בגליא שבה תחלה בידיע, ודי למבין.

that he cannot reach the level of the hidden dimension of the Torah until he first fills his mind, heart, and lifestyle with the revealed level of Torah wisdom.

Meaning, Hashem first gives us the main points: the purpose of Torah and Mitzvos, that we are here to bring Hashem into the world, the meaning of being a Yid connecting to Hashem, His true Oneness, and so on. These are understood and felt specifically in Penimiyus HaTorah. Only afterwards does He teach the details of how to do the Mitzvos.

This is similar to how the Rambam structures his Mishneh Torah: he opens the entire work with Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah, which lay out the five Mitzvos that he himself calls Pardes — “The matters discussed in these four chapters concerning these five Mitzvos are what the Sages termed the Pardes” (Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah 4:13) — and only then does he move on to the halachos of the rest of the Mitzvos.

But in that very same halacha, the Rambam adds: "It is not proper for a person to stroll in the Pardes unless he has filled his belly with bread and meat. 'Bread and meat' refer to the knowledge of what is permitted and what is forbidden," meaning, to truly grasp Pardes, you need a lot of halacha learning and practical application first. That is why Lag Ba'Omer comes before Shavuos, even though it is hardest to grasp Penimiyus HaTorah from below to above.

וְהִנֵּה עֵינֵי הַחַתָּנָה שֶׁבְּשָׁבוּעוֹת יֵשׁ  
לוֹמֵר עֵינֵיהָ,

**Now we can explain the meaning of the wedding on Shavuos:**

שֶׁהוּא עַל דֶּרֶךְ מַשָּׁל הַחַתָּנָה שֶׁל זְוֹג  
נְשָׁמוֹת שֶׁבְּגוֹפִים בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה

**It can be understood through the mashal of a wedding, the union of neshamos that are in bodies in this world,**

שֶׁעַל הַחֲתָן לַעֲשׂוֹת סְעוּדָה בְּיוֹם  
הַחֲפָה בְּבֵית הַכֶּלֶה דְּוָקָא,<sup>8</sup>

**where the chassan must make a celebration on the day of the chuppah specifically in the house of the kallah,**

וְאַחַר כֵּן בְּשִׁמְבִיאָה לְבֵיתוֹ עוֹשֶׂה  
סְעוּדָה לְבָנֵי עִירוֹ מִחֲדָשׁ,

**and afterwards, when he brings her home with him, he makes a new celebration for the people of his city, for those who weren't able to attend the wedding in the kallah's hometown,**

וְזֶהוּ הַנִּקְרָא סְעוּדַת חֲתָן,

**and this is what is called the celebration of the chassan, named after him because it takes place in his hometown,**

וּסְעוּדָה שְׁבִיּוֹם הַחֲפָה הִיא סְעוּדַת  
הַכֶּלֶה כּו'.<sup>8</sup>

**while the celebration on the day of the chuppah itself is called the celebration of the**

<sup>8</sup> ראה גם לקמן רח, רע"ג ובהנסמן שם.

**kallah**, named after her because it takes place in her hometown.

וְאִם כֵּן הַשְּׂמִחָה שְׂבִיּוֹם הַחֲפָה הִיא  
שְׂמִחַת הַכֶּלֶה,

**If so, the joy on the day of the chuppah is primarily the joy of the kallah,**

וְהַשְּׂמִחָה שְׁלֵאֲחַר הַחֲפָה בְּסַעֲוֹדַת  
הַחֲתָן בְּבֵיתוֹ הוּא שְׂמִחַת הַחֲתָן וְעַל  
שְׁמוֹ תִּקְרָא כּו',

**and the joy after the chuppah, in the chassan's celebration at his home, is primarily the joy of the chassan, and is called by his name.**

וְזֶהוּ הַלְּשׁוֹן בְּיוֹם חֲתֻנָּתוֹ וּבְיוֹם  
שְׂמִחַת לְבוֹ דְּוִקָא, וְדִי לְמִבֵּין.

**And this is the precise wording of the pasuk: “on the day of his wedding” and “on the day of the joy of his heart” specifically** — referring to two different joys, one of the day itself, and one of the chassan's heart later on at home.

וְהִנֵּה לְהַבִּין כְּדוּגְמַת זֶה לְמַעֲלָה  
[יִוָּבֵן] עַל דְּרָךְ מְשַׁל מֶלֶךְ בְּשָׂר וְדָם  
כְּשֶׁעוֹשֶׂה חֲתָנָה לְעַצְמוֹ עִם בַּת  
זוֹלָתוֹ,

**Now, to understand the equivalent of this on High,** the difference between these two celebrations as it applies to Hashem's “wedding” with the Yidden, **[it can be understood] through the mashal of a human king when he makes a wedding for his son with the daughter of a regular citizen:**

הִנֵּה יוֹצֵא הוּא מֵעִיר הַמְּלוּכָה עִם כָּל  
בְּנֵי בֵיתוֹ וְכָל הַשָּׂרִים [לְ]בֵית הַכֶּלֶה  
לְעִשׂוֹת שָׁם הַסַּעֲוֹדָה בְּבֵית הַחֲפָה,

**He goes out from the royal city with all his household and all the officers, to the house of the kallah, to make the celebration there, in the place of the chuppah.**

וְאָבִי הַכֹּהֵן אֵינוֹ מֶלֶךְ שִׁיעֶשֶׂה סְעוּדָה  
גְּדוּלָה לְפָנָיו כְּבוֹד הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַשָּׂרִים כו',

And the father of the kallah is not a king, so he doesn't have the means to make a great celebration befitting the honor of the king and the officers,

וְגַם אֵין לוֹ מְקוֹם מְכַבֵּד כָּלֵל כְּמוֹ  
פְּלָטְרִין הַנָּאִים כו',

and also, he has no honorable place at all, a place worthy of receiving the king, like a beautiful palace and the like,

לְהִיּוֹת כִּי הוּא דָר בְּכִפּוּר מִן הַכִּפּוּרִים  
[כו'].

because he lives in one of the small villages.

וְאִזֵּי עֵקֶר הַכְּבוֹד בְּהִרְאוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ  
גֹּדֵל עֲשָׂרוֹ בְּזָהָב וּבְכֶסֶף כְּלִים מְכֻלִּים  
שֶׁבֶן,

And so, the main honor at the wedding comes from the king showing the greatness of his wealth — gold and silver, vessels of all kinds —

[ו]אֲנָשָׁיו הַשָּׂרִים הַגְּדוּלִים כָּל אֶחָד  
מֵרְאֵה כְבוֹד עֲשָׂרוֹ לְפָנָיו הַמֶּלֶךְ  
וְהַכֹּהֵן בְּשִׁבִיל כְּבוֹד הַמֶּלֶךְ כו',

and his men, the great officers — each one shows the honor of his own wealth before the king and the kallah, all of this for the honor of the king,

וְהַכֹּל מֵתַפְעֵלִים מְאֹד מֵעֵצֶם גְּדֻלַּת  
הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּעֵשֶׂר מִפְּלֶג כְּזֶה כו'.

And everyone is greatly impressed — the villagers, the kallah's family, all the locals — by the greatness of the king and his tremendous wealth.

זֶה אֵינוֹ אֶלָּא מִפְּנֵי שֶׁבְּכִפּוּר לֹא רָאוּ  
מֵעוֹלָם אוֹצְרוֹת חֲמוּדִים וְגַנְיֵי  
מְלָכִים,

And this is only because in the village they had never seen precious treasures and the storehouses of kings,

וְתַהֵי בְּעֵינֵיהֶם לְפָלֵא גְדוֹל כו'.

and so, it is in their eyes a great wonder.

וְאַמָּנָם לְאַחַר הַחֲפָה כְּשֶׁבֵּא הַמֶּלֶךְ  
לְעִיר הַמְּלוּכָה וְעוֹשֶׂה סְעוּדָה לְ[כָל]  
בְּנֵי עִירוֹ וְכָל שָׂרָיו

However, after the chuppah, when the king comes back to the royal city and makes a celebration for all the people of his city and all his officers,

שֶׁהֵמָּה כְּבָר רְגִילִים בְּאוֹצְרֵי חַמּוּדוֹת  
הַמֶּלֶךְ וְלֹא יִהְיֶה בְּעֵינֵיהֶם לְפָלֵא כָּלֵל  
כּו',

they are already used to the king's storehouses of treasures, and so the wealth will not be a wonder in their eyes at all,

אֲזַי לֹא יִהְיֶה הַשְּׂמֵחָה בַּהֲרָאוֹת  
הָעֶשֶׂר וְהַכְּבוֹד וְלֹא יִהְיֶה בְּרַעַם  
וְרַעַשׁ כָּלֵל,

at that point the joy will not come from showing off the wealth and honor, and there will be no loud display at all,

כִּי אִם שְׂמֵחַת הַמֶּלֶךְ תִּהְיֶה בְּחֻשָּׁאֵי  
בְּעֶצְמוֹתָיו עִם הַשָּׂרִים וְכו',

rather, the joy of the king will be quiet, internal, a deep joy within himself as he celebrates with his officers,

וְגַם הַשָּׂרִים לֹא יִרְאוּ עֲשָׂרִים וְכַבּוֹדָם  
מֵאַחַר שֶׁהוּא כָּלֵל חָשִׁיב לְגַבֵּי עֶשֶׂר  
הַמֶּלֶךְ כּו',

and also, the officers won't show off their own wealth and honor, since their wealth is like nothing compared to the king's wealth,

אֶךְ בְּכִפּוּר בְּבֵית הַכֹּלֶה הָיוּ צְרִיכִים  
לְכַן בְּשִׁבִיל כְּבוֹד הַמֶּלֶךְ לְבַד, וְדִי  
לְמִבֵּין.

but in the village, in the house of the kallah, they had to do **this** — show off all the splendor and wealth — **only for the honor of the king**, because there was no other way to give the king the honor he deserved in such a place.

וְעַתָּה עַל דְּרָךְ כָּל זֶה יוֹבֵן גַּם כֵּן  
לְמַעֲלָה,

Now, by way of all this mashal, we can also understand what happens **on High**:

שְׁכַנְסַת יִשְׂרָאֵל הֵם נִשְׁמוֹת שֶׁהֵמָּה  
נוֹלְדִים בְּבְחִינַת אֲצִילוֹת הַנִּקְרָא  
מַלְכוּת דְּאֲצִילוֹת,

**that Knesses Yisrael — the source-Neshamos of all of Yidden — are neshamos that are born from the World of Atzilus, from the level called Malchus of Atzilus,**

וְהִיא בְּרַתָּא דְּמַלְכָּא עֲלָאָה,

**which is “the Daughter (as it were) of the Higher Level in Atzilus called King,”** meaning the extension of (the “daughter”) of Chochma of Atzilus, which is higher than Z’eir Anpin, that’s also called the King, but on a lower level.

שֶׁהוּא עֲנֵן מֵאֲמַר רַז"ל בַּת הַיְתָה  
לְאַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ וּבְכַל שְׁמָה כּו'  
בִּידוּעִי.

**which is the meaning of what the Chachamim say in the Gemara: "Avraham Avinu had a daughter, and her name was Bakol" —**

The term Bakol means "in everything," a name that hints at the level of Malchus, which receives from all the higher Sefiros, but is the “daughter” of Chochmah represented by Avraham, who was known to have שְׁכַל הַנֶּעְלָם מִכָּל רְעִיּוֹן — an intellect beyond any else’s comprehension,

וְהַחֲטָן הוּא בְּחִינַת חַב"ד דְּזו"א  
דְּאֲצִילוֹת שֶׁהִיא אוֹרֵיָתָא מִחֻכְמָה  
נִפְקֵת כּו'.<sup>10</sup>

**And the chassan — Hashem in His role of giving the Torah — is the level of Chabad (Chochmah, Binah, Daas) of Z"A (Z’eir Anpin) of Atzilus, the higher emotional Sefiros, for the Torah, as the Zohar says, "the Torah (at the level of**

<sup>9</sup>ראה בבא בתרא טז, ב. רמב"ן ח"ש כד, א. אוה"ת ח"ש קכה, ב. ואילך.

<sup>10</sup>נסמן לעיל פ' שמות יא, א.

Chabad of Z" A) comes out from Chochmah to a lower level than in its original state in Chochmah."

וְהִנֵּה בְּשַׁעַה שִׁירַד ה' עַל הַר סִינַי,

**Now, at the time when Hashem came down on Har Sinai,**

הֵינּוּ עַל דֶּרֶךְ מְשַׁל יְצִיאת הַחֲתָן מִמְּקוֹמוֹ שְׂבָאֲצִילוֹת בְּפָנִימִיּוֹת הָאוֹרוֹת דו"א כו'

**that is, in the mashal, this descent of Hashem corresponds to the chassan going out from his place in Atzilus, from the pnimiyus — the inner core — of the Lights of Z" A,**

וְלִהְיוֹת מִתְגַּלֶּה בְּדַבַּר ה' דְּבוּר הָעֲלִיּוֹן שֶׁהוּא מְחִיָּה עוֹלָמוֹת עַד עוֹלָם הָעֲשִׂיָּה הַשְּׁפָל כו',

**to be revealed in Malchus as it functions on the level of being dvar Hashem — the word of Hashem — Hashem's Power of Speech, as it gives life to all the worlds (Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah) down to the lowly Olam HaAsiyah — this physical world.**

וְזֶהוּ יִרְדָּה גְּדוּלָּה וְעֲצוּמָה כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב וַיִּרַד ה' כו',<sup>11</sup>

**This is a great and tremendous descent, as it is written (Shemos 19:20), "And Hashem descended on Har Sinai."**

כִּידוּעַ שֶׁהַמְּלָכוֹת הֵיא הַדְּבוּר הוּא רֹאשׁ לְשׁוּעָלִים כו',<sup>12</sup>

**As is known, that Malchus, which is the level of Hashem's Speech, when it creates and animates all the worlds, is then called "the head of the 'foxes'"**

<sup>11</sup>. יתרו יט, ב.

<sup>12</sup>. נסמן לעיל פ' שמות לד, א, ופ' וארא נד, ב.

This refers to the verse (Shir Hashirim 2:15) “אֶחָזוּ לָנוּ שְׁעָלִים” — let us seize and destroy the forces of kelipa that are like foxes destroying the vineyard of kedusha,” meaning, Malchus descends to also give life to the source of kelipos that are like foxes damaging the vineyard. Because it gives life to the “head,” meaning the source, of kelipah, it is called “the head of the foxes.”

הַפּוֹעֵל בְּמַגְבָּלִים שְׂאִין עֲרוֹךְ לַנְּבִיאָה  
עִם הַבּוֹרָא,

[Malchus] then needs to interact with the limited beings of the lower worlds, where there is no comparison between the created being and the Creator,

וְזֶהוּ כְּמַשָּׁל הַכֶּפֶר לְגִבֵי עִיר הַמְּלוּכָה  
כּו', וְדִי לְמַבִּין.

and this — the gap between Malchus acting in the lower worlds and the level of the Creator — is like the mashal of the village compared to the royal city.

אֲךָ עֲנִין יְרִידָה זֶה הִיָּה לַעֲשׂוֹת סְעוּדַת  
הַחֲתָן בְּבֵית הַכֶּלֶה הָעֲלִיוֹנָה דְּוָקָא  
כּו',

However, the purpose of this descent was specifically to make the chassan's celebration of Matan Torah in the house of the supernal kallah, Knesses Yisrael as it exists in Malchus d'Atzilus, which descends into our physical world,

וְלִכְךָ הִיָּה הָרַעַשׁ הַגָּדוֹל בְּקוֹלוֹת  
וּבְרָקִים כּו'

and that is why there was the great loud display, with thunder and lightning at Matan Torah —

מִפְּנֵי שֶׁבְּכֶפֶר לֹא רָאוּ מַעֲוֹלָם נִימוּסֵי  
הַמְּלוּכָה הָרַעַשׁ גָּדוֹל כּו',

because in the village — in our physical world — they had never seen the customs of royalty, the customs of the World of Atzilus, the loud display,

וְגַם צְרִיכִים לְהִרְאוֹת כְּבוֹד הַמֶּלֶךְ  
בְּנוֹכַח לְעֵיל.

and also, they had to show the honor of the king, as mentioned above in the mashal.

וּכְמוֹ כֵּן הָאוֹרוֹת עֲלִיוֹנִים דּו"א  
דְּאֲצִילוֹת הַנִּקְרָא מֶלֶךְ שֶׁהֵמָּה הָיוּ  
גְנוּזִים בְּאוֹצְרוֹתָיו הֶרְאָם לְכְבוֹד  
הַכֹּלֵה בְּבֵיתָהּ שֶׁהוּא דְבוּר הָעֲלִיוֹן  
כו'.

And similarly to the mashal, the Lights of Z"A of Atzilus Above, which is called King, were stored away in His treasures. He revealed them at Matan Torah for the honor of the kallah in her house, which is the level of Hashem's Speech of Malchus.

וּלְפִי שְׂאִין עֲרוֹךְ לְבַחֲנֵת אֲצִילוֹת  
עֲצֻמָּה עִם הָאֲרֵת אֲצִילוֹת בְּבִי"ע,

And since there is no comparison between the level of Atzilus itself and the mere illumination of Atzilus as it descends down into the worlds of BIY"A (Beriah, Yetzirah, Asiyah)

לְכַךְ מְאֹד נִתְפַּעְלוּ מִן הַקּוֹלוֹת  
וּפְרָחָה נִשְׁמָתָן עַל כָּל דְּבוּר וְדְבוּר,  
וְדִי לְמַבִּין.<sup>13</sup>

that is why the Yidden were so greatly affected by the voices and sounds of Matan Torah, and their neshamah flew out at every single one of the Aseres HaDibros, since they couldn't bear the spiritual intensity.

וּמִטַּעַם זֶה הָיָה הַגְּלוּי כָּל כָּךְ,

And it is for this reason, meaning, to compensate for the gap between Atzilus and our world, that the revelation was so great,

בְּהִיּוֹת שֶׁצְרִיךְ לְהִרְאוֹת כְּבוֹד עֲשֵׂרוֹ

because Hashem had to show the honor of His wealth to the

<sup>13</sup> נסמן לעיל פ' וארא סט, א.

בְּנוֹכַר לְעֵיל, kallah's village, as mentioned above in the mashal,

וְלִכְךָ כָּל אֶחָד מִהָעוֹמְדִים לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ שֶׁבְּחֵינֵת אֲצִילוֹת הָרָאָה כְּבוֹד עֲשָׂרוֹ גַּם בֵּן כו', and that is why each one of those (Sefiros and Neshamos) standing before the King, on the level of Atzilus, also showed the honor of his own wealth,

וְזֶהוּ כָּל הַכְּתָרִים עֲלִיוֹנִים שֶׁנִּמְשְׁכוּ בְּשַׁעַת יו"ד הַדְּבָרוֹת כו', וְדִי לְמַבִּין.<sup>14</sup> and this is the meaning of all the great Transcendent Lights of Hashem that were drawn down at the time of the Aseres HaDibros, as the Gemara in Shabbos 88b describes how every Yid received two "crowns" of Hashem's Light at Matan Torah.

אֲמַנָּם לְאַחַר הַחֻפָּה כְּתִיב בַּיּוֹם חֲתַנְתּוֹ וְשִׂמְחַת לְבוֹ דְּוִקָּא, However, after the chuppah, it is written specifically, "the day of his wedding" and "the joy of his heart," meaning two distinct joys,

וְהוּא שֶׁכָּבַר קִבְלוֹ הַתּוֹרָה וְנַעֲשָׂה יְחִיד זו"נ דְּאֲצִילוֹת כו', this is referring to the time when the Yidden had already received the Torah, and the yichud of Z"A and Malchus of Atzilus had already taken place,

אֲזִי עָשָׂה הַחֲתָן הָעֲלִיּוֹן סְעוּדָה לְבָנָי עִירוֹ בְּלֹא רַעַם וְרַעַשׁ כָּלֵל, at that point the Chassan (Hashem) Above made a celebration for the "people of His own city" as it were, meaning the Neshamos and

<sup>14</sup> שבת פח, ב.

Sefiros of Atzilus, **with no loud display at all,**

כִּי הֲלֹא נִגְדַּב בְּחִינַת פְּנִימְיוֹת הָאֹרוֹת  
דְּז"א דְּאֲצִילוֹת כֹּלֵא חֲשִׁיבָא כֹּל  
הָאֹרוֹת הַמִּתְפַּשְׁטִים בְּשָׂרְיוֹ וְעַבְדָּיו  
כו',

**because compared to the level of pnimiyus — the inner core — of the Lights of Z" A of Atzilus, all the Lights that spread out into His officers and servants are like nothing,**

הַנִּקְרָא ז' הַסְּרִיסִים הַמְּשָׁרְתִים אֶת  
פְּנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּידוּעַ, וְדִי לְמַבִּין.<sup>15</sup>

**meaning, the Lights referred to as the seven servants who serve before the king, as is known, the seven lower aspects of the Sefiros that are the "servants" of the higher Sefiros, like the seven officers in Megillas Esther who served before the king, all of these are like nothing compared to the essential Lights of Chabad of Z" A.**

וְעַל כֵּן אֵינָם צְרִיכִים לְהַרְאוֹת כְּבוֹד  
עֶשֶׂר כו', וְדִי לְמַבִּין.

**And therefore, they have no need to show forth the honor of wealth,** because everyone present already understands the king's true greatness from within.

וְאִין הַשְּׂמֻחָה אֶלֶּא בְּבְחִינַת (ה)עֲצָמִי,  
וְזֶהוּ בְּיוֹם שְׂמֻחַת לְבוֹ, וְדִי לְמַבִּין.

**And Hashem's joy is entirely in Himself, a deep, inward joy, and this is what is meant by "on the day of the joy of his heart."**

וְהִנֵּה כְּמוֹ שֶׁבְּשָׂבוּעוֹת הָיוּ ב' מִיָּנִי  
שְׂמֻחוֹת הַנּוֹכְרוֹת לְעִיל בְּסֵעוּדַת  
הַכֹּלֵה וְסֵעוּדַת הַחֲתָן הַנּוֹכְרוֹת לְעִיל,

**Now, just as on Shavuos, there were the two kinds of joy mentioned above, the celebration of the kallah and the celebration of the chassan,**

<sup>15</sup> אסתר א, י. ראה ע"ח (שער כסה"כ (שמ"ו, פ"ו

כְּמוֹ כֵּן בִּלְגַבְעוֹמֵר בְּסִתְיֵים שְׁבִתוֹרָה  
הָיָה ב' מִיָּנִי שְׁמֵחוֹת,

so too on Lag BaOmer, in the “wedding” between Hashem and Yidden through the **hidden dimension of the Torah**, there are two kinds of joy:

א' בְּבֵית הַכֶּלֶה וְהַב' בְּבֵית הַחָתָן כּו',  
וְדִי לְמִבֵּין.

**The first in the house of the kallah** — the celebration of Penimiyus HaTorah as it was revealed in this world during Rashbi's lifetime — **and the second in the house of the chassan** — the celebration of Penimiyus HaTorah as it exists in Atzilus, which Rashbi entered at his histalkus.

וּבְאוֹר הַדְּבָר, הִנֵּה רִשְׁב"י הֵיטָה  
נִשְׁמָתוֹ מִבְּחִינַת אֲצִילוֹת עֲצָמוֹ מִבְּלִי  
הַסֵּתֵר בְּכֵלִים דְּבְרִיאָה,<sup>16</sup>

**The explanation** of this is as follows: **Rashbi's neshamah itself was from the level of Atzilus, without any concealment in the kelim (vessels) of Beriah**, unlike most neshamos, which descend through Beriah and pick up its limitations.

וְכֵן תַּלְמִידֵי רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא כָּלָם הָיוּ  
בָּהֶם עֶקֶר מְקוֹר הַתּוֹרָה,

**And similarly, the talmidim of Rabbi Akiva — all of them had within themselves the main source of the Torah**, meaning, the spiritual root of Torah itself.

כִּידוּעַ שְׁהַתּוֹרָה נִשְׁתַּכְּחָה וְעַל יָדֵי  
תַּלְמִידֵי רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא הוּחָזְרָה

**As is known: During a difficult period the Torah was forgotten, and through the**

<sup>16</sup> ראה גם מאמרי אדה"ז תקס"ב כאן) ע' תלא. (לקמן פ' משפטים רפ, א. שער  
האמונה פה, ב. שערי אורה) שער הפורים (עג, ב.

לְיִשְׂרָאֵל,<sup>17</sup> talmidim of Rabbi Akiva, it was returned to the Yidden, so they were the channel through which the Torah re-entered the world.

וְעַל כֵּן הֵם ב' בְּחִינַת הַחֶתֶן שֶׁהִמָּה הַמְשֻׁפְּעִים תּוֹרָה לְכָל־לֹת נְשָׁמוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל כּו'. **And therefore both** — Rashbi and the talmidim of Rabbi Akiva — **are on the level of the chassan, since they are the ones who gave over the Torah to all of the Neshmos of the Jewish People.**

אָךְ הֵם הַמְשֻׁפְּעִים בְּחִינַת גְּלִיָּא שְׁבַת־תּוֹרָה, **However, the talmidim of Rabbi Akiva were the ones who gave over the revealed level of the Torah (Nigleh) —**

וְרַשְׁבִּי הָיָה הַמְשֻׁפְּעֵה הַנְּסֻתָּר, **while Rashbi was the one who gave over the hidden dimension (Nistar), the inner level of the Torah,**

כִּי כָּל יְמֵי חַיָּיו בְּאָמְרוֹ רְזִין דְּאֻרִיָּתָא הָיָה מְמַשְׁיָךְ בְּחִינַת הַסְּתוּם דְּבְּאֻרוֹת דְּאֻצִּילוֹת שְׁ[נ]גְנוּ בְּתוֹרָה הַנְּגַלִּית בְּזֵה הָעוֹלָם. **because all the days of his life, by saying the secrets of the Torah he was drawing down the hidden dimension of the Lights of Atzilus that are stored away inside the revealed Torah as it appears in this world.**

וְנִמְצָא שְׁכָל יְחוּדִים שֶׁהָיָה מֵיחָד הָיָה בְּבֵית הַכְּלָה דְּוָקָא בְּכָל יְמֵי חַיָּיו כְּנֻזָּר לְעֵיל, וְדִי לְמַבִּין. **And so, it comes out that all the times he brought down Hashem's Inner Light during his lifetime were specifically in the “house of the kallah,”**

<sup>17</sup> ראה יבמות סב, ב וברש"י שם

drawing the secrets of Atzilus down into this physical world **all the days of his life, as mentioned above** in the mashal of the chassan making the celebration in the kallah's hometown.

אָמַנְם לְאַחַר הַסְתַּלְקוֹתוֹ עָשָׂה  
סְעוּדָה בְּבֵיתוֹ בְּהַיְנֵת אֲצִילוֹת  
עֲצָמוֹ,

**However, after his histalkus, he made the second celebration in his own home, in the level of Atzilus** as it exists in itself, no longer drawing it down into this world but uniting with it on its own terms,

וְהֵינּוּ הַלּוּלָא דְרַשְׁבִּי, וְדֵי לִמְבִּין.

**And this is the meaning of the Hilula of Rashbi** — the wedding-style celebration of Rashbi on the day of his histalkus.

In the maamar Gal Einei said on Lag BaOmer 5737, the Rebbe explains (see there chapter 3 and footnote 19):

On the day of the histalkus (passing away), Rashbi was already beyond the limitations of the physical body even while he was still physically alive in his body, since he was already in “histalkus-mode.”

Therefore, he was able to accomplish two things:

First, he accessed the deepest possible secrets of the Torah as they are found in Atzilus, without any limitation from the body.

Second, he was able to reveal and bring down these deepest secrets of the Torah, called רִזְוִין רִזְוִין—most hidden of secrets, corresponding to the חֵיהַ יְחִידָה of the Torah, into this physical world.

In other words, even though the Alter Rebbe seems to say that the “Chassan’s Seuda” in Atzilus occurred only after his histalkus, in reality, the Chassan’s Seuda began the day before he physically left the world. And he was able to share with us down here from that Chassan Seuda of

Penimiyus HaTorah, and open the door for us to access it on our own level every year on his yahrtzeit.

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### Summary and explanation of the Maamar:

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, known as Rashbi, asked something unusual. He asked that the day of his histalkus, the 18th of Iyar, the 33rd (ל"ג-Lag) day of the Omer, be celebrated like a wedding.

Two questions on this: First, what does a tzaddik's passing, which is a very sad occasion, have to do with something joyous like a wedding? Second, why specifically a wedding, and not some other simcha?

To answer, we need a few pieces of background.

#### Who Rashbi really was.

Rashbi was a nitzutz, a direct extension, of Moshe Rabbeinu himself<sup>18</sup>. Moshe gave us the entire Torah, but the פְּנִימִיּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה stayed concealed inside that Torah. Rashbi's job, as Moshe's extension, was to reveal that פְּנִימִיּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה into this world.

#### Lag BaOmer is a secret Yom Tov from Moshe Rabbeinu's times.

Think about how Shavuot works. We count 49 days of Sefira, and that work we do "from below to Above" draws down Hashem's revelation "from Above to below" on the 50th day, when the Torah shines into the world in a deeper and more powerful way than the year before.

Lag BaOmer works the same way on a smaller scale. Counting 32 days of Sefiras HaOmer is also work we do "from below to Above" that brings down Hashem's revelation "from Above to below" on the 33rd day. Except that this revelation is specifically of פְּנִימִיּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה, the inner dimension of the Torah. It's a preparation, a taste, of the complete revelation that comes on the 50th day.

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<sup>18</sup> ראה כתבי האריז"ל, שער הגלגולים הקדמה לו; ספר הליקוטים שמואל פרק יב; ובב"מ.

The Frierdiker Rebbe explains it like this<sup>19</sup>: When Hashem gave us the Torah, that was Hashem's wedding with the Yidden. Lag BaOmer was the תְּנָאִים, the engagement, the preparation for the marriage. The תְּנָאִים brought a giluy of התּוֹרָה as a taste before complete Matan Torah<sup>20</sup>. Every year since, on Lag BaOmer there is a giluy of התּוֹרָה.

### Why did Hashem choose this day for Rashbi's histalkus?

Because Rashbi's mission was to reveal התּוֹרָה, Hashem arranged for his complete ascent to Atzilus to occur specifically on Lag BaOmer. The day of a tzaddik's histalkus is the day he can reveal more than ever before, because he is no longer bound by the limitations of the body. Putting his histalkus on Lag BaOmer meant he could reveal the deepest possible secrets of התּוֹרָה into this world, without any limitations whatsoever.

### What is a Wedding celebrating?

According to Kabbalah and Chassidus, there are two main reasons for a Jewish wedding celebration: 1- Because of the tremendous opportunity to fulfill the mitzvah of having children, which is the greatest mitzvah possible. 2- Because the chassan and kallah's neshamos were originally one complete Neshama before descending into this world. As part of the descent, the Neshama splits into two halves, one male and the other female<sup>21</sup>, and these

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<sup>19</sup> ד"ה שיר המעלות לדוד הנה מה טוב — ל"ג בעומר תרצ"ב) ספר המאמרים תרצ"ב ע' שנה ואילך. (וראה גם ד"ה הנ"ל ל"ג בעומר תשכ"ב) ספר המאמרים תשכ"ב ע' רמז ואילך; ספר המאמרים מלוקט ח"ג ע' ער ואילך. (המאמר 'מיוסד על ד"ה להבין ענין הילולא דרשב"י תרע"ח) ספר המאמרים תרע"ח ע' רצא ואילך.

<sup>20</sup> ראה תענית כו, ב, וירושלמי שם פ"ד ה"ז": (ביום חתונתו זה מתן תורה וביום שמחת לבו זה בנין בית המקדש. "ובד"ה שיר המעלות לדוד תרצ"ב הנ"ל: דמ"ת הוא בחג השבועות ונק' חתונה, וקודם לזה הוא הקשורי תנאים שהוא ביום הל"ג בעומר, ומאז עד חג השבועות הם מועדי שילוח סבלונות מהחתן לכלה.

<sup>21</sup> ראה זהר ח"ג ז, ב, מג, ב. וראה ע"ח שער א ענף ה. ספר הליקוטים להאריז"ל פרשת בראשית.

two halves of the same Neshama come into different bodies and into different families in different places. Only by the Wedding do these two half Neshamos reunite to become one complete Neshama. It's a spiritual reunion of the deepest and highest form. Like a parent and a child that were separated for many years, not knowing how to find each other, and now find each other again.

### Why is Shavuos like a Wedding:

Based on this analogy, we understand why Shavuos is like a wedding:

- 1- Through Hashem giving us the Torah, we have the power to fulfill Mitzvos in the physical world and bring His Essence into this world, fulfilling the purpose of creation. These Mitzvos are like spiritual children, like the Gemara says: What is a person's living legacy in — מאי פירות! מצות<sup>22</sup> — this world? The Mitzvos he fulfilled.
- 2- Our Neshamos are originally a part of Hashem Himself<sup>23</sup>, that descended into the body in the physical world. Through Torah and Mitzvos, we reunite our Neshamos with Hashem, just like the Neshamos of the chassan and kallah reuniting at the wedding.

### Two Types of "Wedding" with Hashem:

Even though Lag BaOmer was originally like an engagement celebration, a preparation for the great wedding with Hashem on Shavuos, after the Torah was given, it took on a new meaning. Now, Lag BaOmer has two dimensions:

- 1) It's the preparation for the upcoming Shavuos.
- 2) It's the mini Matan Torah, as it were, of פְּנִימִיּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה.

Meaning, although everything in the Torah, including פְּנִימִיּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה, was given to us through Moshe at Matan Torah on Shavuos, nonetheless, the revelation, the unpacking of those teachings,

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<sup>22</sup>ראה קידושין מ, א: "איזהו פירותיהן? מצות. וראה תניא פל"ו

<sup>23</sup>תניא פרק ב': חלק אלוקה ממעל ממש. וראה איוב לא, ב,

happens in many stages. The “unpacking” of פְּנִימִיּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה happens in a very strong way on the day of Lag Ba'Omer.

Because of this, Lag Ba'Omer isn't just an engagement celebration; it's also a mini wedding celebration, similar to the greater wedding celebration on Shavuos for receiving the new Light of the revealed part – Nigleh – of the Torah. In that sense, Lag Ba'Omer is like a spiritual wedding in its own right, besides just being a preparation for Shavuos.

### **Two celebrations in a Wedding:**

Now, since a wedding means two people from different families coming together, it's not possible to make a single celebration that both families will enjoy equally. Because the chassan makes the wedding in the city of the Kallah, the celebration that happens at the actual Wedding itself will be enjoyed more by the kallah and her family, since she is in her hometown with all of her friends, unlike the chassan, who is in a strange city with only a few of his friends. Therefore, when the chassan and kallah go back to the chassan's hometown, they make another celebration for all of the chassan's friends and family who weren't at the wedding, so that the chassan can enjoy celebrating in his own hometown. So, every wedding actually has two celebrations: One mainly for the kallah, the actual wedding day celebration, and one mainly for the chassan, after the wedding, when he goes back home.

### **Hashem's Celebrations with us: Shavuos and Lag Ba'Omer**

Back to what this represents spiritually: At Matan Torah on Shavuos, Hashem's main celebration was “in the kallah's hometown,” meaning the Yidden's place of residence – the physical world. Hashem “descended” to reveal Himself in this world, so that Yidden, as they live in a physical body, saw His Glory, Majesty, and Oneness. But after Matan Torah, Hashem told Moshe to go up to learn with Him in Shamayim for 40 days and nights, to learn the Torah as it is understood in Shamayim, and then bring it back to earth. This celebration of Torah revelation was in “the Chassan's place,” meaning Hashem's “place,” as it were, the Torah as taught in Atzilus. So, the only person who participated in “the Chassan's

celebration" that followed "the Kallah's celebration" was Moshe Rabbeinu himself.

Similarly, Rashbi revealed Hashem's פְּנִימִיּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה into this world his entire life. Meaning, he created a Torah-wedding celebration "for the Kallah" for Yidden, in the "kallah's hometown" in this physical world. But on the day of his histalkus, he was able to experience the Torah-wedding celebration of פְּנִימִיּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה on the Chassan's side – as Hashem celebrates it in Atzilus, the celebration of פְּנִימִיּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה in its loftiest, purest, and most powerful form. But he was able to share that lofty celebration in Atzilus with us down here in this world, by revealing the deepest secrets of פְּנִימִיּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה known as רֶזֶן דְּרֶזֶן. He opened the door for us to experience some of Hashem's own celebration of His connection with us through פְּנִימִיּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה.

### **The Reason for the Simcha:**

Now we can answer the question of why the simcha and why it's like a wedding:

The simcha is because Rashbi had a Neshama of Atzilus itself. Even though he was in the physical world, he didn't regard it as his natural home. His bond with Hashem at Atzilus was powerful and burning in him throughout his life. On the day of his histalkus, he wasn't "dying," chas veshalom; he was reuniting with Hashem at the highest level, like two halves of the chassan and kallah's neshamos reuniting. He felt no pain or discomfort whatsoever, only the joy of reuniting with Hashem, the Source of all life.

And like a wedding that empowers the mitzvah of having children: On that day, Rashbi revealed the most powerful secrets of the Torah, which flow into the teachings of Chassidus and inspire us to fulfill mitzvos and bring Hashem into this world. Therefore, Rashbi only felt simcha. But more importantly, He opened the door for every Jew for all time to rejoice with him, and rejoice with Hashem in His celebration of the connection with us that פְּנִימִיּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה establishes. In effect, Rashbi turned Lag BaOmer from a secret Yom Tov into a public Yom Tov for all time.

## Lessons in the Service of Hashem from the Maamar:

### **Lesson One: Every Yid has access to the Atzilus-level wedding through our connection to the Rebbe.**

The Atzilus-level wedding celebration that this maamar describes – uniting with Hashem in His own "palace" through פְּיִמְיוֹת הַתּוֹרָה – would normally be reserved only for the greatest tzaddikim. A regular Yid, on his own, has no way of getting there. But Rashbi opened a channel. He took that ascent, that ultimate reuniting with Hashem in Atzilus, and made it shareable, for every Yid, for all time.

Practically, that channel runs through Rashbi's successors. Most directly, for us, through all the Rebbeim of Chabad, and especially the Rebbe, Nasi Doreinu. They are the ones who teach us what Rashbi's teachings mean and how to apply them in our own lives. Through our connection to them, and through our effort in learning their teachings, we get to take part in that Atzilus-level celebration. The same celebration that, on our own, we could never reach.

This is something to keep in mind whenever we sit down to learn Chassidus, or to listen to a sicha, or even just when we strengthen our personal hiskashrus to the Rebbe. It is not a side activity. It is the practical way an ordinary Yid plugs into the same simcha that this maamar is describing.

### **Lesson Two: Nigleh and Penimiyus are two different ways Hashem connects with us – and both are needed.**

The Alter Rebbe explains that we have two types of “wedding celebrations” with Hashem, one on Shavuot for Nigleh, the revealed dimension of Torah, and one on Lag BaOmer for Nistar, the inner dimension of the Torah.

Then he continues, explaining that the celebration Hashem makes for us on Shavuot is like the one the Chassan makes for the Kallah in her hometown to make her comfortable. Hashem came down to us in the physical world to give us the Torah. But on Lag Ba'Omer, the wedding celebration is like the kind the Chassan makes for his family and friends in his own hometown. Hashem is making this celebration of Penimiyus HaTorah in Atzilus, Hashem's "hometown" as it were. Perhaps we can learn from this as follows: Hashem connects with us in Torah in two very different ways.

In Nigleh – Chumash, Tanach, Mishnayos, Gemara – Hashem comes down to our level. He lets His Torah be dressed in stories, in cases of an ox goring a cow, in the give-and-take of a sugya. He rejoices with us as we live in the physical world and use our normal human mind to figure out what the Torah is teaching us. That is the wedding in the kallah's hometown. Hashem is leaving His palace and coming to us.

But in פְּנִימִיּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה – the Zohar, Pardes, Eitz Chayim, Chassidus – Hashem's wisdom stays close to its original form, the way it looks in Atzilus. It does not come down to us. Instead, it asks us to pick ourselves up and connect with Hashem at His level.

And the maamar is teaching that this second way is an even deeper simcha for Hashem. It is one thing to open the door of our mind and let Hashem in at our hometown level. It is something else entirely to pick ourselves up and follow Him back to His royal palace, into His Atzilus wisdom, into פְּנִימִיּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה. The first is a beautiful wedding. The second is the wedding where Hashem is finally home, and we came along.

This is why a Yid cannot be satisfied with only learning Nigleh, no matter how much. Both ways of connecting are needed. One is Hashem coming to us. The other is us going to Him.

**Lesson Three: Let the Torah change how you see reality, not the other way around.**

In the maamar Padah BeShalom 5741<sup>24</sup>, the Rebbe explains that just as the Yidden are in galus, and the Shechinah is in galus, the Torah itself is in galus. What kind of galus?

It works like this. Each one of us comes to the sefer carrying our own picture of reality. The way we already understand life, what's important, what's possible, what makes sense, and what doesn't. That picture is shaped by our nefesh habahamis, our nefesh hasichlis, the world we live in. It's there before we open the sefer, and it stays with us while we learn. And what tends to happen, almost without us noticing, is that we squeeze the Torah to fit inside that picture. The Torah arrives in our mind already pre-trimmed to match the box we brought with us. That, the Rebbe is teaching, is the Torah's galus.

The Mishna in Avos has a sharp term for this tendency:

מְגַלָּה פְּנִים בְּתוֹרָה שְׁלֹא כְּהִלְכָהּ<sup>25</sup>

— interpreting the Torah differently from what the Torah actually means.

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<sup>24</sup> ד"ה פדה בשלום נפשי תשמ"א — נאמר בהתוועדות י"ט כסלו ה'תשמ"א לפני תפלת מנחה ביום ג, ט"ו (ט"ו) ט"ו"ב (כסלו תשמ"א. נדפס בקונטרס "סיום והכנסת ספר תורה) "קה"ת תשמ"א, (ובס'המאמרים מלוקט

<sup>25</sup> אבות פ"ג מ"יא (במשניות שלפנינו - מ"יא, ובחלק מהדפוסים מ"יב. (ראה רמב"ם פיהמ"ש שם, ופירוש רע"ב ופירוש המשנה לרמב"ם. וראה ריטב"א סנהדרין צט, ב.

The simple pshat of the Mishna is the loud, extreme version. Someone takes the Torah's halachic words, twists them to say the opposite, or something different, from what the Torah really intended – in order to make the Torah permit something he wants – and then blames the Torah for the answer he himself manufactured. That is the dramatic, severe form, and anyone reading this maamar would never go anywhere near that, chas veshalom.

But in a much subtler way, the same idea also applies any time we learn something in Torah and explain it through a set of assumptions that actually run opposite to the assumptions on which the Torah is built. We aren't twisting halacha. But quietly, gently, we're still putting a face on the Torah that's a little more ours than the Torah's. That, too, is a soft, everyday form of *מְגַלָּה פְּנִים בְּתוֹרָה*. The Mishna's strong language is there to remind us how seriously the Torah takes the direction this tendency runs in, even in its gentlest forms.

Here is a concrete example. A person opens a Torah source and learns that a wife is asked to respect her husband and, when she can, follow his guidance. Now, suppose this person already carries, from the world around him, a strong assumption that any teaching of that kind has to reflect male bias. If he then concludes that the Torah itself is "male-biased," he has – quietly, almost without realizing it – been *מְגַלָּה פְּנִים בְּתוֹרָה שֶׁלֹּא כְּהִלְכָהּ*. What he has done is project onto Hashem the kinds of biases a human being might have, as though the Author of the Torah Himself could fall prey to gender bias, chas veshalom. He's measuring Hashem's words against his own framework instead of letting Hashem's words reshape it.

The right move in that moment is the opposite: to open up. To accept that whatever Hashem says is absolute emes, and that if I

don't yet understand it, the limitation is on my side, not in the Torah. Chazal teach this directly on the pasuk **כִּי לֹא דָבָר רַק הוּא מִכֶּם**. The Torah never says anything empty or silly, *chas* **כִּי הוּא תַיִיכֶם**<sup>26</sup> veshalom. And if a Torah teaching ever sounds empty or silly to you — the pasuk's own word for that is **מִכֶּם**. The silliness is coming from you. From a part of you that hasn't yet opened up wide enough to hear what Hashem is actually saying.

The avodah is to do the opposite. To let the Torah be the one doing the squeezing — squeezing us, gently, out of our own box. Hashem gave us the Torah

לְצַרְרֵי בְּהוֹן אֶת הַבְּרִיּוֹת,<sup>27</sup>

to refine us, to slowly reshape our assumptions about reality so they begin to match Hashem's. The Torah is meant to change the shape of our box, not the other way around.

This maamar is making the same point in a different way. Hashem makes Himself "uncomfortable," as it were by descending to our level no matter what situation we are in. He's willing to do that for us. But the deeper avodah is on our side: that we be the ones who stretch, the ones who step a little outside where we're comfortable, and pick ourselves up to start seeing things from Hashem's vantage point.

So when we sit down with a sefer, it's worth pausing before deciding we've fully grasped what we just learned. Of course, we

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<sup>26</sup> האזינו לב, מזו. ירושלמי פאה פ"א ה"א: "אם רק הוא — מכם, למה? שאין אתם יגעין בתורה." "ראה גם בראשית רבה פא, א. ובמדרש תנחומא וזאת הברכה ג.

<sup>27</sup> בראשית רבה פמ"ד, א. ויקרא רבה פי"ג, ג. תנחומא שמיני ח. וראה תניא פ"ד; אגרת הקודש סי' כ"ו (קמד, ב).

have to start at the level we're on — there's no other place to start from. But the level we're on now isn't the ultimate level the Torah is trying to bring us to. The goal is to let the learning slowly do its work on us. Change our perspective. Adjust our assumptions. Quietly stretch our mental box so that it's closer to the Torah's perspective.

That is when the wedding becomes a two-way street. If Hashem is coming down to our level but we aren't also picking ourselves up to His level, even a little bit, then yes, Hashem is married to us — but we aren't yet showing up as a real partner. We aren't fully invested in the relationship.

For Hashem's wedding with us to be complete, it isn't enough to learn only the revealed Torah. And it isn't enough to learn even Torah itself only through the lens of our own human mind that we already have before we sat down. We also need to learn פְּנִימִיּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה. And alongside that, we need to gently open our mind and heart and let ourselves be stretched — to begin seeing things from Hashem's perspective and to let His way of looking at reality slowly become ours through our learning



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