

The Weekly Treasure

Weekly Parsha Shiur
of Maran, Rosh HaYeshiva, the righteous Kabbalist
Our Rabbi Benayahu Yissachar Shmueli Shlit"a

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THE MIGHTY HOLINESS OF THE HOLIDAY OF SHAVUOT AND THE PREPARATIONS FOR IT

Shabbat of the Bride and Shabbat of Derech Eretz (proper conduct) • The trait of Hishtavut (Unmindfulness) • That the vessel should be clean • the Torah needs to enter the body • Why it is called Atzeret • His wedding and the joy of His heart • The unfolding of the event of Mount Sinai from the 1st of Sivan • The true date on which the Torah was given • He overturned the mountain upon them like a cask • their souls fled • The reason for the custom of dairy foods • The arrangement of places at the event of Mount Sinai • Sixty ten-thousands (600,000) souls and letters • The virtue of staying awake on this night • The 24 ornaments of the bride • The intentions of study, prayer, and the festive meal • The practices of the holiday of Shavuot

Shabbat of Parshat Bamidbar - Like the Book of Genesis

Behold, we have merited a wonderful Shabbat, the **Shabbat of Parshat Bamidbar**, which is called "**Shabbat Kallah**" (Shabbat of the Bride) because **we are preparing ourselves for the great wedding** of the nation of Israel with the Holy One, Blessed be He. **With one heart as one man**, the People of Israel take the complete bride—the Holy Torah. What a betrothal! With what desire and love!

And the past Shabbat was also called "**Shabbat Derech Eretz**", why? Because "Derech Eretz preceded the Torah"—in order to merit the Torah, one needs good character traits. Because the Torah is a supreme, immense value like no other, and to be capable of clinging to the holiness of the Torah, a person must prepare himself to be a "receptacle." And what is a worthy receptacle for the Torah? **A person who has good character traits!**

And this is the reason why the Five Books of Torah begin first of all with the **Book of Genesis** (even though there are only 3 commandments in it), because before the Torah and the commandments, first of all one needs to know how to behave with good character traits, and in the Book of Genesis, we learn from the forefathers of the world how to

behave. Therefore, the Book of Genesis is called "**the Book of Derech Eretz**," and "Derech Eretz" preceded the Torah.

Precious perfume was poured on him...

And what is the character trait that is the **mother of all good traits**? **Humility!** Because a person who has humility has acquired everything. Therefore, we must work on this trait to the extreme, to know and internalize that we are worth nothing—"Man is like a breath; his days are like a passing shadow." And when a person knows this, he reaches the level of "let my soul be like dust to all."

And the highest level of humility is the "**trait of Hishtavut**" (Unmindfulness). What is a person who possesses the trait of Hishtavut? It is a person who merits to reach a state where, if they disgrace him or praise him, he feels the exact same thing! He reacts the exact same thing! It does not interest him!

There was a **certain Hasid who was traveling on a ship**, and on the ship was a group of mockers who do not like Torah scholars, do not like those who fear Heaven—the light did not shine upon them. These mockers saw this Hasid with a large beard and began to make fun of him, mock him, and disgrace him, to the extent that one of the mockers stood

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up—may it not happen to us or to you—and urinated on him in front of everyone; thus he disgraced him.

And that Hasid was greatly humble, and possessed the trait of Hishtavut. They asked him, "What did you feel when he urinated on you?" The Hasid said:

"I felt as if he poured perfumes with a good scent on me... and what joy I had, that I felt that I am meriting a little to come to the trait of Hishtavut; it did not bother me and did not move me at all, who am I and what is my life."

How great a merit this is! This is the peak of humility! This is the trait of Hishtavut! Where is our level? How will we reach this? But **one must strive for this**, strive for good character traits, and then the Torah will dwell within us with complete permanence.

The expert cook prepared spoiled food

How important and necessary it is to prepare ourselves to be worthy vessels for receiving the Torah! **To what can this matter be compared?** To a certain cook who is known for really knowing how to cook; his food is very special! What a "*Khoresh Sabzi*"... (a Persian dish) what a "*Kubba*"... (Iraqi) what a "*Yaprak*"... (Kurdish) what things he makes, things like no other! Many people tasted his food, and everyone says he is number one!

Once, before the holiday of Shavuot, they asked him to prepare wonderful dishes for the holiday of Shavuot. And he truly exerted much effort, brought the best ingredients, and prepared according to the good hand of Hashem upon him. **But what happened?** All the food smells bad, as if it is spoiled, something incomprehensible...

From here to there, they examined and checked what the reason was that it smelled bad, and **what turned out?** That they did not wash the pot and did not clean it from the remnants of the previous foods... Therefore, no matter how well the cook does, and brings the best things, the food spoils and gets a bad smell. What have we done?!

So it is with man in receiving the Torah: man is the vessel, and the vessel needs to be clean and ready for receiving the Torah. But if the vessel is not clean and ready—the character traits are not rectified—what will it help that we put the Holy Torah into it?!

The truck got stuck and a huge traffic jam started to form

Once I heard about someone who needed to transfer merchandise from place to place [for example, to Meron for Lag BaOmer... because all those who ascend the mountain, what will they eat? What will they drink? One needs to bring merchandise to Meron—drinks and food]. So that person took a good truck, filled it with everything needed, and drove [to Meron, he went near us where the parking lot is, you know there...].

And behold, in the middle of the way, the truck came to pass under a certain bridge, but what happened? The truck

was too high, and the truck got stuck at the bottom of the bridge, and as much as it wants to move, it doesn't go, and a large traffic jam formed and all the cars are honking, and they don't know what to do.

A wise man saw this, [let's say his name is a car appraiser...] and he came and said, "I will fix this in a moment." **What did he do?** He let a little air out of the tires, and the truck lowered slightly, and continued on its journey in peace...

What is the moral that is seen in this story? **That if you let out a little air, everything moves; if you lower a little of the pride, lower the head, everything moves!** How does the Gemara say: "Every wave that came upon me, I nodded my head to it"—let a little air out of the tires, everything will run! That's how it goes, this is "Derech Eretz preceded the Torah," and this is the power of humility, and thus, with G-d's help, the Torah will dwell within us.

The Muslim Convert from Yeshivat Ohr HaChaim

I heard an awesome story from Rabbi Meir Pinchasi: **Once, a Muslim gentile arrived at Yeshivat Ohr HaChaim** and said, "I love the Torah, love the nation of Israel, I want to convert and study in the Yeshiva." Rabbi Elbaz said to him: "Here we do not convert, go to the Rabbinat, undergo a proper conversion according to Halacha, and after you have passed conversion, *Ahlan wa Sahlan* (welcome), come."

This person had energy, he truly wanted to convert. He went, underwent conversion, and after two years came with a certificate that he converted—even though it is difficult to accept a Muslim because one needs to verify that he is not some spy and some mess..., and nevertheless, he passed all the matters and received the certificate.

He arrived again at Yeshivat Ohr HaChaim. And this time Rabbi Elbaz said to him: "Please, sit and study." And he was truly diligent, he would sleep on the *shtender* (study stand), studying day and night, like this for about two or three years. **After three years**, they matched him with a certain good girl, he got married, and two children were born to them.

One day, this convert husband says to his wife that he wants to go to the Arab village not far from here, to visit his parents and his brothers, and she says to him: "What do you have to do with that, how will we enter there," and he says: "I will call my father, he will come in his car and bring us in."

The couple arrived at the Arab village. And she sees that her husband is playing with his brothers and enters to wash there, and **suddenly he took a razor and shaved his beard**, and said to his wife: "**Yalla, barra (come on, out), I will come and give you a Get (divorce), we will release you, you are a good woman,**" and he told her that he is returning to being a Muslim. The woman was in shock: "But you have children, you are diligent..." but the husband remained obstinate: "That's it, you see? I shaved the beard, Judaism was not good for me."

For a month the antibiotics did not work

The students in Yeshivat Ohr HaChaim and also the wife **did not understand how such a thing happens**, that a person who studied so much Torah returned to his old ways. Until the Rabbis explained that this person, although he was here, **did not have good character traits so that the Torah would truly be engraved in him, and that the Jewish soul would remain in him.** He was always shouting, he was proud, angry, and therefore this is the result.

And they explained this by way of a parable: A certain man **had a very severe inflammation in his throat.** He went to the doctor, and the doctor gave him an antibiotic—a bacterium fights with a bacterium. **After a week** it hurt him more, and he returned to the doctor, and the doctor increased his dosage of the antibiotics. Another week passed and again it didn't help, and the situation only worsened... He came once more to the doctor, and the doctor changed it to a stronger antibiotic. And like this another week passed and another week until a whole month had already passed and nothing moved...

The doctor said: "Such a thing cannot be," and asked him: "Explain to me how you drink the pills?" The patient said: "I take the pill that you brought me, go 'Gargle...' gargle it in my mouth, and throw it away..." The doctor said to him:

"My dear friend, **you need to swallow it!** If you do not put it in the stomach, it will not help you, it will not heal you! One needs to fight inside with the bacteria!"

The exact same thing, this convert **would study Torah,** everything from the lips outward, jumbled gibberish... but it did not enter inside him... But a Jew who grew up in the halls of Torah, in the halls of holiness, absorbs good character traits, absorbs the Torah from the Rabbis, he knows how to behave, and then the Torah enters inside him.

One thousand will suffice and four thousand will not suffice

It is told about a certain young married man (*Avrech*) who came to Rav Shach and said to him, "I receive 1,000 NIS a month, they offered me a certain job to go work a few hours a day to receive 4,000 a month." Rav Shach says to him: "4,000 will not help you for your livelihood." The Avrech did not understand: "Here I receive a thousand, barely managing, there I will receive 4,000, it will go beautifully."

Rav Shach says to him:

"When you are within the walls of the Yeshiva, you have light, you have heavenly assistance (*Siyata DiShmaya*), the Yeshiva gives the strength and the blessing, and the thousand suffices for you—indeed barely, but suffices. But if you leave the Yeshiva, the moment you leave, you will not have the heavenly assistance for 1,000 NIS to suffice for you, and you will need 20-30 thousand, because when a person is in the greenhouse of the Yeshiva, the Torah helps him."

When is the betrothal and when is the wedding

And now, with G-d's help, we want to speak about the great event: what love the Holy One, Blessed be He, showed us, that He brought us out from slavery to freedom, from subjugation to redemption, from a deep pit—to the nakedness of the land—to a high roof, in that He chose us from all the nations and gave us His Holy Torah which is a hidden treasure 974 generations before the world was created, and brought us to the great wedding to this day, to bring forth the precious from the vile, what kindness He did with us to take us, the praised bride, His spouse, the Congregation of Israel.

How is it written, "On the day of His wedding and on the day of the joy of His heart," and **our Rabbis said,** "The day of His wedding"—this is the event of Mount Sinai, "The joy of His heart"—this is the giving of the Torah. And one must understand, why did it not say "On the day of His wedding and the joy of His heart," given that it was on the same day?

Rather, there are two aspects here: "On the day" of His wedding, and "On the day" of the joy of His heart. "On the day of His wedding" is the event of Mount Sinai—because the very closeness to Mount Sinai, that is the joy of the betrothal, and then their filth ceased, there is no *Sitra Achra*! The nation of Israel became clean. And only then "the day of the joy of His heart" which is "sanctify them today and tomorrow"—the giving of the Torah, this is the *Chuppah* (wedding canopy): mouth to mouth I speak to him, not through a messenger, rather by Hashem may He be Blessed!

On this day there are no sins!

The holiday of Shavuot is called "**Atzeret**" (Assembly/Restraint), and one must understand, why is only this holiday called "Atzeret" given that on all the holidays they restrain from work? Rather, our Rabbis say, that it is called Atzeret because the Torah stops (*Atzeret*) a person from bad character traits, from things that are not good. The Torah straightens and guides the person. And through the Torah, a person can stop his evil inclinations—"I created the Evil Inclination, I created the Torah as its antidote."

The Torah educates us and guides us so that we rule over the Evil Inclination, bend it to the service of Hashem; only through the Torah is it possible to bend the Evil Inclination. It is impossible to stop our inclinations except through the Torah, which is the global brake! There is no other brake!

The Zohar (*Raya Meheimna, Parshat Emor*) says that the holiday of Shavuot is also called by the name "Atzeret" because it is held back and prevented in the separation of the external forces from holiness, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, removes by it all the Evil Inclination.

And the Zohar continues and says a wondrous thing: In Parshat Pinchas, in which all the sacrifices of the festivals

are written, regarding the Musaf of Shavuot it is written "one male goat to make atonement for you" and "sin offering" (*Chatat*) is not written in it. But in the Musaf sacrifice of the rest of the holidays, it is written "one male goat for a **sin offering** to make atonement for you." And why on Shavuot is "sin offering" not written? **The Zohar explains** that on the holiday of Shavuot, the grip of the external forces is nullified! This is the nullification of the Evil Inclination! Atzeret nullifies everything! There is no sin offering!

Rosh Chodesh Sivan - A Day of Rest

Therefore, what a holy day! What a merit! "Before whom do you purify yourselves, and who purifies you" that the Holy One, Blessed be He, brought us out from slavery to freedom, and gave us **these days of this counting [the Omer]**—every day we acquire an aspect, illuminating the soul with a great light, and then comes the day of "Mi" [Who]—which has the numerical value (Gematria) of fifty, about which it is said: "before *Mi* [Who/50] you purify yourselves, and *Mi* [Who/50] purifies you." What purity! What holiness! What power! The Holy One, Blessed be He, purifies you.

Therefore, we must try very, very hard to root within us **how the order of receiving the Torah** from the mouth of the Almighty (*HaGevurah*) was, and this was the order of things: After the splitting of the Red Sea, the Children of Israel traveled until they encamped in "**Rephidim**," and then "And Amalek came," and our Rabbis say that "Rephidim" is from the expression that they weakened (*rafu*) their hands from the Torah, or from the expression of separation (*perud*), and therefore Amalek came upon them, oh no!

"In the third month of the Children of Israel's departure from the land of Egypt, on this day they came to the wilderness of Sinai"—we left the land of Egypt on the 15th of Nisan in the year 2448 from the creation of the world. And then on the 1st of Sivan in that same year, we arrived at the wilderness of Sinai.

In that year, **it was exactly like the days of this year**, for the 1st of Sivan was on Sunday, and also the Exodus from Egypt was this year just as it was in the year we left Egypt [and that is also how Lag BaOmer was this year], oh-ho, what a great joy!

And about this day it is written: "**And they journeyed from Rephidim**"—that they left the separation, and they left the weakness, and then—"And Israel encamped there before the mountain"—"**And he encamped" (Vayichan) is written in the singular form**, showing that everyone was in one unity—"as one man with one heart."

On that same day that they came to the wilderness of Sinai, even though they had already arrived at the place, the Holy One, Blessed be He, **still did not speak anything with them**. Why? It is written that the Holy One, Blessed be He, allowed them "to rest from the toil of the way," saying: "Today there are no words, no matters, tomorrow we will begin."

Two Holy Temples in the Future to Come

But the People of Israel could not sit at rest, because they were very excited; **the holy souls of the nation of Israel were jumping from excitement!** And the mountains Tabor and Hermon and all of them were circling around Mount Sinai and Mount Moriah, and everyone was saying, "Upon us the Torah shall be given," and the Holy One, Blessed be He, said: "Mount Sinai is the lowest, it is the humble one, I want good character traits."

But the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to the rest of the mountains: "You who came, and you had a desire to receive the Torah upon yourselves, therefore I will pay you your reward, and upon these four mountains in the future to come, the Holy Temple will descend built from Heaven." For in the future to come, the Holy One, Blessed be He, **will connect these mountains** and lower upon them the Holy Temple. The Holy One, Blessed be He, will refine them with such a refinement, and it will be two Holy Temples, one on top of the other—one that is seen, and the second is a spiritual Holy Temple that is not seen, a wonder of wonders what will be.

Yom Kippur Will Fall on the Distinguished Day

The next day, on Monday, the 2nd of Sivan, Moses our Teacher ascended early in the morning to the mountain, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, descended to him and said to him: "**Listen Moishe**, I want the People of Israel to accept upon themselves the Torah—248 positive commandments and 365 negative commandments—and engage in Torah, and be acquired—an acquisition of the Holy One, Blessed be He. And in reward for this, **I myself will watch over them**; they will not be like all seventy nations of the world who have ministering angels that watch over them. I will be their father; they are bound with Me and I am bound with them. Therefore it is called the **Holiday of Shavuot**—from the language of 'oath' (*shvua*) because I swore to them that I will not exchange them, and they swore to Me that they will not exchange Me. **We are together**, as one man with one heart!

And the Holy One, Blessed be He, said: **But what is My request? "And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests (kohanim) and a holy nation."** What are priests? Ministers (*sarim*)—everyone will be a minister. What is a minister? That he will rule over his Evil Inclination, rule over his spirit, his heart will be in his possession, he will not live in **lawlessness** and will not be sold to the Evil Inclination. **The Evil Inclination comes and shows him an 'iPhone'** and all kinds of desires, all kinds of terrible things, and wants, G-d forbid, to take his soul. [A person must say:] 'What do you mean, run away from here! Get out of here! I have nothing to do with these things, I am only with the Creator of the world.' This is how I want everyone to watch over themselves, to be a minister and ruler over his spirit, ruling over his Evil Inclination."

Thus the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to speak to Israel, and Moses descended from the mountain and said this to the nation of Israel, and they all answered with one voice: **"All that G-d has spoken we will do."** "We accept upon ourselves the Torah, all 248 positive commandments and 365 negative commandments, with great love. **Of course! It is a merit for us."**

And this day, the 2nd of Sivan, is called "**Yom HaMeyuchas**" (the Distinguished Day), for this is the day on which it was said: "And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests," and this is the day that the People of Israel said "We will do and we will hear," receiving from Him all 613 commandments. **And always, in every year, Yom Kippur will fall on the same day of the week** that the Distinguished Day falls. For example, this year [5786], the Distinguished Day falls on Monday, so also the upcoming Yom Kippur will fall on Monday—it has great holiness. The People of Israel sanctify and purify themselves on this day.

We Want to See Him

On Tuesday, the 3rd of Sivan, Moses our Teacher again ascends the mountain early in the morning (for all his ascents were early in the morning), and first of all, returns the words to the Holy One, Blessed be He, that Israel said with one voice all that G-d has spoken we will do and we will hear: "Your children believe in You, accepting everything You will say to them! And they said 'we will do' and afterwards 'we will hear'." And even though the Holy One, Blessed be He, already knows what they said, and if so, why does Moses need to say it? Rather, it is a **custom of proper conduct (*derech erez*)** that the messenger must return an answer, even though the sender already knows the answer.

The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him: "If so, inform them, **'Behold, I come to you in a thick cloud so that the people may hear when I speak with you, and also in you they will believe forever.'**" At this great assembly, all the nation of Israel will hear that I am speaking with you, and everyone will be elevated to the level of prophecy.

After Moses descended and said to the nation, "so that the nation may hear when I speak with you," **the Children of Israel said to Moses** that he should request from the Holy One, Blessed be He: "With all our heart and with all our soul, **our desire is to see our King,** our L-rd, the Holy One, Blessed be He," for one who hears from the mouth of a messenger is not similar to one who hears from the mouth of the King.

I Am Holding Back One More Day!

On Wednesday, the 4th of Sivan, Moses our Teacher ascended once more **and delivered the request** of Israel to the Holy One, Blessed be He. And the Holy One, Blessed be He, **responded to them:** "No problem, they will hear for themselves and see everything, **but what?** You must sanctify yourselves for three days from transgressions, you must be sanctified in holiness, in purity, from thought, and from marital relations."

And on that same day [the 4th of Sivan], **Moses descended again** and commanded the nation of Israel to sanctify themselves for three days, as the Holy One, Blessed be He, had said to him: "And sanctify them today and tomorrow." And indeed, the Holy One, Blessed be He, said "today" is Wednesday, "and tomorrow" is Thursday, and **then on Friday, the 6th of Sivan, I will appear.** But Moses our Teacher added one day on his own accord (for Moses expounded: just as "tomorrow"—Thursday—has its night with it, which includes the night before it, so also today—Wednesday—must have its night with it, and behold, the night of Wednesday had already passed; therefore he said there must be two complete full days, Thursday and Friday), and therefore he said they should sanctify themselves for three days: Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, **and on Shabbat the Torah will be given.**

And the Holy One, Blessed be He, agreed with the opinion of Moses, to come only on Shabbat, to show that whatever the Sages of Israel say, so it shall be—"A **righteous man rules, the fear of G-d.**" And this is what is written: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—for your love is better than wine," even though the Holy One, Blessed be He, wanted to kiss the People of Israel already by the giving of the Torah, He said "I am holding back one more day from kissing my children," He waited until the next day. Why? "For your love is better than wine"—sweet are the words of **your beloved ones,** these are Moses our Teacher and the Sages of Israel, more than wine—than the wine of Torah.

However, our Rabbis established always to make the Holiday of Shavuot **on the sixth day of Sivan,** just as the Holy One, Blessed be He, requested. But in practice, the nation of Israel received the Torah on the seventh day—on the Holy Shabbat day. And for us, the Shabbat day on which the Torah was given is "Isru Chag" [relative to the 6th of Sivan holiday], and even though all holidays have an "Isru Chag," the Isru Chag of Shavuot has the highest stature. There is nothing like the Isru Chag of Shavuot; it has a mighty stature and a great light (because in practice, the Torah was given on it).

The Talking Fence...

And Moses was **also** commanded to sanctify during these days **Mount Sinai** itself, which was chosen for the great role—that the Divine Presence (*Shechinah*) would descend upon it. And the Holy One, Blessed be He, commanded him to set a boundary around the mountain so that they would not approach it, for Heaven forbid, whoever touches it, even its edge, shall surely die, because the Divine Presence is descending upon it. And Moses our Teacher bounded the mountain at two thousand cubits [a kilometer]. And he arranged the order of the nation's standing: Aaron at the head, the priests according to their worth, the giants of Israel, the average ones, and women and children after them.

And he said to the nation of Israel: "You requested to see

the Divine Presence? There is a difference between a king of flesh and blood and the King of the most powerful of kings. A king of flesh and blood, when he arrives, everyone crowds together. But here, you will see the King from afar, because 'whoever touches the mountain shall surely die.'

And Rashi wrote that a miracle occurred, **for the fence was talking**: "Take heed to yourselves that you go not up into the mountain, or touch the border of it; whosoever touches the mount shall be surely put to death."

The Dirt Becomes an Ornament

On Thursday, the 5th of Sivan, Moses our Teacher wrote the Torah from Genesis until the giving of the Torah, and wrote the commandments that they were commanded at Marah. And he rose early in the morning and built an altar under the mountain, and made twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. And they offered upon it burnt offerings and peace offerings for the great gift, **and an angel came and divided** the blood exactly into two halves. Half of the blood he threw upon the altar, and the second half he placed in basins in order to sprinkle it upon the nation of Israel.

And on that day, Moses read before them the Book of the Covenant from Genesis until the giving of the Torah, and the commandments that they were commanded at Marah, and the nation answered and said: "All that Hashem has spoken **we will do and we will hear**." Immediately Moses sprinkled upon them the second half of the blood and said to them: "Behold the blood of the covenant which Hashem has made with you." And those "stains" that were upon them from the blood, this is called "Adi" [ornament]—this is the jewelry of the People of Israel that was shining like sapphires.

And the Gemara says that at the hour Israel said "We will do and we will hear," sixty ten-thousands (600,000) of ministering angels descended and tied to each one of them two crowns, one corresponding to *Na'aseh* (we will do) and one corresponding to *Nishma* (we will hear). **And a heavenly echo (Bat Kol) went forth from Heaven** and said: "Who revealed this secret to my children, which the ministering angels use?", as it is said: "Bless Hashem, you His angels, mighty in strength, **who do** His word, **to hear** the voice of His word"—first "who do His word," and afterwards "to hear."

And indeed, in all three days of the separation (*Yemei HaHagbalah*), Wednesday through Friday, the nation of Israel barely slept; they were in holiness and in purity, studying and hearing words of Musar [ethics/reproof], so that their thoughts would be on spiritual matters, and they would be ready to receive the Torah on the Holy Shabbat out of holiness and purity. **On Friday**, Moses our Teacher did not ascend, because he needed to prepare for Shabbat, and also he was busy sanctifying the people.

From a Mountain of Dust to a Mountain of Glass

On Shabbat night, the 7th of Sivan, the night before the

event of Mount Sinai, the People of Israel feared that they would not be able to receive the Torah with clarity of mind; **therefore they went to sleep a little to refresh themselves so that they would have strength**, but a deep sleep fell upon them, and the next morning, Moses had to **wake** them up.

And our Rabbis said that since the People of Israel went to sleep on that night **and needed to be woken up**, therefore on the night of Shavuot **we do not go to sleep**; we stay awake all night in order to rectify and to show the Holy One, Blessed be He, that we desire tomorrow the event of receiving the Torah.

"And it came to pass on the third day"—on Shabbat day, the 7th of Sivan, in the year 2448, when it was morning, the nation of Israel awoke to **the sound of the singing of the angels** praising the Holy One, Blessed be He, and a very strong shofar sound heralded that **immediately the Holy One, Blessed be He, appears**. And the people were afraid to approach the mountain and stood from afar, further than the boundary of Moses, and Moses strengthened their hearts and brought them near to the mountain up to the partition where it is permitted, and the sound of the shofar grew stronger and stronger.

And then all this holiness—the Divine Presence rested upon the mountain, and myriads of ministering angels **were dancing in the form of flags**, and the People of Israel were seeing this and they, their soul jumps, they jump.

And then in a miraculous way, the mountain began to receive a soul and life, and the mountain began to rise, **and the mountain detached from its place and the Divine Presence descends upon it**, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, lowered the heavens and the earth, and then the mountain turned from dust to a crystal like no other, glass. What lights! What flames! Flames—fire!

A Moment Before the Canopy, the Groom Astounded those Present

And the mountain was overturned upon them like a cask, which is the wedding canopy with the Holy One, Blessed be He, and the nation of Israel stand in trembling and shaking. **And then a heavenly echo [Bat Kol] goes forth and says to them**: "Listen, if you accept the Torah, it is well, and if not, **there shall be your burial place**." And the nation of Israel said: "Of course, we accept the Torah with our 248 limbs."

But one must understand, why did the Holy One, Blessed be He, overturn the mountain upon them? Behold, they already said "We will do and we will hear," they agreed and received everything **with love**, so why is it necessary to coerce them?

A parable, to what can this matter be compared? To a great millionaire who wanted to marry off his son; he took a good girl, G-d-fearing, possessing good traits, she too a daughter of one of the millionaires, and he prepared the wedding—what a wedding, each portion a thousand dollars... and what

expensive utensils **of a high standard**... good foods... and what orchestras, and what a hall.

The groom is happy, the bride is happy, everyone is happy, there is love and brotherhood between them. Everyone is standing, the Chief Rabbi comes to conduct the wedding canopy, stands on the stage, and behold, before **the canopy**, suddenly the groom comes, pulls out a gun, puts it to the head of the bride, and says to her: "**Do you want to marry me? Dir balak [you better watch out]**... if not, a bullet to the head..." and she says to him: "**Of course, behold, for what did they prepare all this?** Of course I want to with all my heart." Is this normal?

And behold, this is how the Holy One, Blessed be He, says to us: "If you accept the Torah, it is well, and if not, you see this mountain, there shall be your burial place." But behold, we said we will do and we will hear? And we agreed to everything?! **What is happening here?**

There are many interpretations about this, and when we studied Tractate Kiddushin at Yeshivat Porat Yosef, we would study Tractate Kiddushin with the book *Sefer ha-Makneh* which was authored by the author of *HaHafla'ah* [Rabbi Pinchas Horowitz]. And I remember that we **saw that the author of HaHafla'ah writes in his introduction to Sefer ha-Makneh, a mighty interpretation** on "He overturned the mountain upon them like a cask" **to answer this question:** that this is not a curse or a punishment. Rather, if you accept the Torah, then the mountain has a soul and vitality because of you, and it becomes pure and clear.

But if you do not want to receive the Torah, then the soul leaves the mountain, and the mountain turns into dust, and the moment it turns into dust, **automatically it falls upon you**—the dust, the clods—because the vitality departs from it. Just as the tablets were broken because the vitality that was in them departed from them, and then it will bury you there. They said to Him: "Do not fear, Master of the Universe (*Ribono shel Olam*), we are in full control, **we will never leave You.**"

And there is another wonderful interpretation of why He overturned the mountain like a cask: There is a law in the Torah, a man who took a woman—if he took her willingly and everything was by agreement, if tomorrow they don't get along, he gives her a *Get* (divorce document) and she goes. But if he took her by force, tomorrow he cannot give her a *Get*; "he may not put her away all his days." This is how the Holy One, Blessed be He, says: "I am taking them by force, so that tomorrow if there is a dispute between us, I will never leave the People of Israel! I am binding you with Me in a bond of such love, that I will never release them! You are My children!" **And the People of Israel said: "What a 'patent' [clever arrangement] You made, Master of the Universe!** How much good You do. You bind us with thick cords of love!"

They Could Not Speak for Several Hours

The People of Israel stood there in awe and fear, in trembling

and shaking, and the mountain trembled and leaped **like the leaping of kids and the dancing of rams**, and it wanted to ascend further, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to it, "Stop." And the mountain was burning until the heart of heaven, darkness, cloud, and thick darkness; seven partitions of fire were sparkling from one to another, and the People of Israel were seeing and not fearing because the Holy One, Blessed be He, gave them strength. **And the Holy One, Blessed be He, bent the heavens** and spread them over the mountain, and the Throne of Glory descended upon Mount Sinai, with sixty ten-thousands (600,000) of angels, corresponding to the camp of Israel, and myriads upon myriads of angels in the form of flags, everyone dancing.

And the Midrash says:

"The earth trembled [shook], the mountains quaked, and the hills collapsed, and the trees bowed, and the dead who were in the netherworld came to life."

Do you know what that is? All the dead of the nation of Israel, everyone stood up! The Holy One, Blessed be He, shook the world upon its inhabitants, **until all the nations were terrified**, afraid that the Holy One, Blessed be He, was bringing a flood; they did not know what was happening here.

The Holy One, Blessed be He, opened seven heavens before the eyes of the People of Israel, and they would see everything, as it is written: "You have been shown to know that Hashem He is L-rd in the heavens above."

And all of Israel sanctified themselves and became pure, **and everyone was healed from every blemish**, because when they were in Egypt, there were many blemished people—one missing an eye, one missing a leg, because of the hard labor—and now all the People of Israel became healthy and young, each one became very beautiful, what a beautiful human being! And they also **received new souls** so that their filth ceased, there is no Angel of Death, no subjugation to kingdoms; the Holy One, Blessed be He, removed everything.

And at that hour, the Holy One, Blessed be He, **silenced the world:** a bird did not chirp, a fowl did not fly, an ox did not bellow, and seraphim did not say song, the sea did not stir, there are no waves. All creatures fell silent, also the sun stopped from its path. The whole world is silent. All the nations of the world, even if they want to speak—nothing! Three hours, four hours, **everyone cannot speak!** In the whole world, no speaking! The whole world is quiet! No one speaks, not the birds, not the animals, **not the parrots...** nothing! Everything is silent!

Five Million Died...

And then the voice goes forth: "**I am Hashem your L-rd who brought you out of the land of Egypt,**" and immediately the souls of all the nation of Israel fled. Do you know what that is? There were **five million people** there, everyone's soul fled! And the Holy One, Blessed be He, brought **the dew of resurrection and revived them**, and slowly but

surely everyone stood back up. **And also after the second utterance:** "You shall have no other gods before Me," **once again their souls fled**, once again the Holy One, Blessed be He, revived them.

When the People of Israel saw what happens when hearing the Holy One, Blessed be He, Himself, they requested of Moses: "*Dachilak*" [colloquial Arabic meaning "please / I beg of you"]—"Speak you with us and we will hear, and let not G-d speak with us lest we die," **we have no strength!** And Moses did not want to, because of his humility, he would say: "I? What am I?" The Holy One, Blessed be He, sent Michael and Gabriel, they took Moses by his hand, brought him near to the thick cloud, a special path was made for him in the cloud and he entered inside to three partitions, and all of Israel heard the voice speaking: "**Moses, Moses, stand upon your feet**, say to Israel thus and so."

And the utterance would go forth from flames of fire from the right of the Holy One, Blessed be He, to the left of Israel, and each utterance was divided into 70 lights, and all 70 lights into 613 parts, and the utterance would go around to each one of Israel, and the voice says to him: "Do you accept this utterance upon yourself? Thus and so laws that are in it, and thus and so punishments," and he would say: "I accept upon myself with love and affection." And then the utterance goes forth, the Divine Presence (*Shechinah*) **kisses** him upon his mouth—this mouth that said "yes."

They Would Spit on Them

The nations of the world knew that the Holy One, Blessed be He, was giving the Torah to the nation of Israel, because behold, the whole world trembled and feared, for they knew that if they do not receive the Torah, there is no world. And they came and begged the nation of Israel to receive the Torah. The Holy One, Blessed be He, did everything with wisdom; they said to them, "fine," and then the Holy One, Blessed be He, distanced them. They are not able to see this spectacle (alt. trans. vision).

But what? At that hour, all the idols **in the entire world**, all the foreign worships [idolatrics], started talking—even though "they have a mouth and do not speak, eyes they have and do not see"—the Holy One, Blessed be He, gave them a mouth in order to humiliate and shame all the idolaters, and the idols would say to those who worship them: "**Stupid fools, madmen**, whom are you worshipping? Wood and stone? The handiwork of man who does not understand and does not hear? **Tfu [spit] on you!**"... They would disgrace the nations of the world and their kings, great disgraces.

And also the Holy One, Blessed be He, put foul water into their mouths, and they would spit it upon the worshippers of the idols of all kinds, and a great shame like no other seized them. **This was an event like no other in the world!** What a great merit that we merited this!

The Soul Flew and Did Not Return!

And behold, we said that with every utterance that the Holy

One, Blessed be He, spoke, their soul fled and the Holy One, Blessed be He, revived them, and one must understand, why was it necessary for their soul to flee and the Holy One, Blessed be He, to revive them? Behold, the Holy One, Blessed be He, could have made it so that from the beginning their soul would not flee?

Rather, **our Rabbis say** that the Holy One, Blessed be He, did not only give the Torah at this assembly, but "The Holy One, Blessed be He, and the Torah, and Israel are one," and when the People of Israel received the Torah, each one has a soul from the Torah, has a letter in the Torah scroll. Therefore, the moment the People of Israel received the Torah, first of all their soul fled, because the Holy One, Blessed be He, created new souls for them—the People of Israel were born anew. And if so, it is not that their soul fled and they returned to them the same soul, but rather their soul fled from them to bring them **a new and holy soul**, because the root of the souls of Israel is hidden in the letters of the Torah, and through the receiving of the Torah, new souls were given to the People of Israel.

Moses "Spoke" or Moses "Will Speak"

Now listen: **Our master the Arizal** says, do not think that every year, the Holiday of Shavuot is only in **memory of what was**, no! Rather, every year there is a receiving of the Torah anew! Every year a person is renewed, and every year a new soul comes to us! **What a stature the Holy One, Blessed be He, has merited us with!**

Let us read to you what **the Chida writes in the name of the Arizal:**

"In each and every year on the Holiday of Shavuot, those same supreme illuminations and aspects that were at the assembly of Mount Sinai return and are revealed!"

And the Rabbi says there, **just as the Torah is eternal, so the receiving of the Torah is eternal**, such that in each and every year on this day, there is a renewed receiving of the Torah.

And this is what we say in the prayer: "the day of the giving of our Torah" (*Yom Matan Toratenu*), we do not say "the day on which the Holy One, Blessed be He, gave us the Torah," but rather *the day of the giving of our Torah*—in each and every year it is the day of the giving of our Torah! And **therefore** it is not written "Moses **spoke**," but rather "Moses **will speak**" (*Moshe yedaber*) because each and every year the voice goes forth from the mouth of the Almighty, a brand, new renewal, a new soul!

How do we say on the High Holidays?

"You were revealed upon us in Your cloud of glory over Your holy people to speak with them from the heavens; You let them hear Your voice and You were revealed to them in thick clouds of purity, and also the entire world trembled before You and creatures from the beginning quaked before You when You were revealed, our King, upon Mount Sinai to teach Your nation Torah and

commandments, and You let them hear the majesty of Your voice and Your holy utterances from flames of fire, with voices [thunders] and lightnings You were revealed to them, a shofar voice appeared upon them," and this is every year! An assembly like no other!

How is it Permitted to Eat Milk?

According to this, there is a reason for the custom to eat dairy foods on the Holiday of Shavuot. And first of all, the reason is known that the Torah is compared to milk. And milk (*Chalav*) equals 40 in Gematria, corresponding to the 40 days that the Torah was given.

But according to what we said that we became a new creation, it should be added that milk equals 40 also corresponding to the 40 days of the formation of the fetus, and on Shavuot behold we were formed anew. And furthermore, that milk is the food of a baby, who is a new soul that came into the world, and therefore we eat milk to hint that now we were created anew, we are like a baby, and what do they give a baby to eat? What do they give him in a bottle? Milk, he cannot have anything else. How do they say? "The milk is still on the lips"...

Rabbi Shalom Shvadron of Brezan writes a wonderful reason for the custom of dairy foods—I always love to say this: Behold, the milk of a woman and likewise of an animal is fundamentally blood that turned into milk, as the Gemara says: "Blood is decomposed and becomes milk." And if so, in practice it is truly difficult: how are we permitted to drink the milk of the animal? Behold, a moment ago it was blood, and only now it turned into milk! And it is forbidden to eat blood!

Rather, we see that there is such a thing that in a single moment, a thing turns into a different creation! Until now it was blood and it was forbidden to drink, and now it became milk—and it is permitted to drink! And therefore we eat dairy foods on the Holiday of Shavuot, to hint to us that on Shavuot this is how it became for the nation of Israel: the moment we received the Torah, everything was overturned, the blood became milk! Now everything is new, there is nothing of what was before, now new life begins, everything anew. There is no past, there is only a future. Now you have accepted Torah upon yourself, you are turned from blood into milk. And if a person says, "how will I be new?"—eat dairy foods, it will hint to you and teach you that everything becomes literally brand new!

Who Stood in Front and Who Behind

And as we said, the nation of Israel received new souls at the assembly of Mount Sinai. And one needs to know, how was the order of the standing of the People of Israel at the assembly of Mount Sinai? How did they know where each one would stand? Who is first and who is last? The Chatam Sofer says: There are sixty ten-thousands (600,000) letters in the Torah, and there are sixty ten-thousands (600,000) souls. Y-S-R-A-L (Israel) is an acronym for: *Yesh Shishim*

Ribbo Otiot LaTorah (There are sixty ten-thousands of letters in the Torah), and Y-S-U-R-U-N (Yeshurun) is an acronym for *Yesh Shishim Ribbo Neshamot* (There are sixty ten-thousands of souls). Therefore they are called "Israel" and called "Yeshurun."

And every Jew has a letter in the Torah scroll. Every soul has a letter in the Torah scroll from where it draws its strength. And therefore, one must be very careful that a Jew does not harm his fellow, for behold, in a Torah scroll, if one letter touches its neighbor, the scroll is invalid, and how much more so if one letter is missing—meaning, if one soul is missing that does not draw sustenance from that letter—then the Torah scroll is not complete, because everyone needs to be inside a valid Torah scroll, under the wings of the Divine Presence. And it is necessary that every letter be surrounded by light, surrounded by parchment (*gvil*); we all need to be inside the Torah scroll.

According to this, says the Chatam Sofer, the People of Israel stood according to the order written in the Torah. For example, it is written in the Torah, "In the beginning (*Bereshit*) the L-rd created the heavens and the earth," if so, at the beginning stood that same one who corresponds to the letter *Bet* of *Bereshit*, afterwards next to him the letter *Resh* of *Bereshit*, and so on according to the order of the entire Torah—thus they stood, according to this order.

And each one knew what his letter was, by means of meriting to see a spiritual pipeline, like a thin thread, drawn from the Holy Torah in the upper worlds, entering into his head. And then he would see the pipeline, and he sees from which letter it is drawn, from where this light comes to him, and thus he knew where to stand according to the order of the letters.

The Letter That Fell From the Torah

And this is what is written: "And the nation saw—and they moved and stood from afar." What did they see? Why did they move? Where did they stand? Rather, "and the people saw"—they saw the letters, and understood from where each one draws sustenance; "and they moved"—each one would move according to his letters, and thus he had a small pipeline channeling the light and the abundance down to him, and thus they stood.

And whoever did not have the intellect to understand where his letter was, would ask Moses our Teacher. And Moses our Teacher knew all the letters by means of the Staff of G-d, and would arrange them according to this: "And this staff you shall take in your hand, with which you shall do the signs (*ha-otot*)"—do not read *ha-otot* (the signs) but rather *ha-otiot* (the letters). According to the order of the letters, thus they stood at the assembly of Mount Sinai in exemplary order; everything was wonderfully arranged, what a wonderful assembly!

King David says in Psalms: "Uncover my eyes and I will behold wonders (*niflaot*) from Your Torah." According to the plain meaning (*peshat*), the intention is: open my eyes

and I will see wonders in the Torah. But Rabbi Shlomo HaKohen of Radomsk, author of *Tiferet Shlomo*, says a beautiful interpretation: since every Jew has a letter in the Torah scroll, therefore King David prayed: "I want everyone to be inside a valid Torah scroll, that no one should fall out of the Torah scroll." And this is the meaning of "Uncover my eyes and I will behold"—show me, "wonders from Your Torah (*niflaot mi-Toratecha*)"—divide the word *niflaot* into two: *nafal ot* (a letter fell) *mi-Toratecha* (from Your Torah). Show me where this letter fell, so that I may take it and return it again inside the Torah under the wings of the Divine Presence, so that there will be a complete and beautiful Torah scroll.

Whoever is Awake on this Night

And therefore now on the Holiday of Shavuot, when the Torah is given anew and the souls are all completely new, this is the opportunity for us to enter into a beautiful Torah scroll. **And the main thing is to be awake on this holy night**, just as we learned that on the morning of the assembly of Mount Sinai on the Holy Shabbat, the nation of Israel fell asleep that night because they were very tired, for they had been studying the whole time and making full days—behold, they are human beings! And they slept, until the sound of the angels' singing woke them up; they woke up, immediately went straight once more to the Mikveh [ritual bath], got up, and came in great joy.

But they were ashamed: the Holy One, Blessed be He, is already descending upon Mount Sinai, and they are sleeping? Behold, they should have woken up early! Therefore, the rectification for this is that in each and every year, the nation of Israel must be awake on that night. **And whoever is awake on this night**, it is written in the Holy Zohar **that he will be recorded and written in the Book of Remembrance, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, blesses him with 70 blessings and crowns, and he acts righteously with the Divine Presence and with her precious children to bring them out of exile.** And Rashbi [Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai] also promises him that he will not die in that year and no harm will come to him!

"This Time It Will Be On My Account"

Before we begin the order of the night, I want to read to you from the Zohar: "**Rabbi Shimon hava yativ ve-la'ei be-oraita be-leilya de-kallah itchabrat be-ba'alah**"—Rabbi Shimon was sitting and laboring in the Torah on the night that the bride joins with her husband. Rashbi [Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai] was sitting and engaging in Torah on the night of Shavuot, and ornamenting the bride, who is the Divine Presence (*Shechinah*), with her 24 ornaments so that tomorrow, the bride will join with her husband.

What is the meaning of the 24 ornaments of the bride? Rather, the serpent, who could not tolerate that the nation of Israel receives the Torah, cast 24 kinds of filth [impurity]. And in order to nullify the 24 kinds of filth, there are 24 books—the

Five Books of Torah, and Prophets, and Writings, twenty-four books—and each book is an ornament for the complete bride.

And therefore on this holy night, we study the entire Tanakh [Hebrew Bible]—the first three verses, and the last three verses, and there are great secrets in this. From the last verse of each and every book of the entire Tanakh emerge holy names which are ornaments of the bride, with what jewelry she shines! [Because the Divine Presence is close to the husks (*kelipot*), sometimes they do not give her light, so that her blackness will not be seen; what do we do? There are 24 ornaments of the bride].

Therefore, the Ben Ish Chai brings down that every man needs to buy for his wife when he gets married 24 ornaments, just as they ornament the Divine Presence with 24 ornaments, ornamenting her with 24 ornaments. He needs to buy for his wife something every holiday—a ring like this, a ring like that, a bracelet like this, an earring like that, a necklace; every holiday he should buy her a beautiful piece of jewelry, not made of plastic... made of gold. The ornaments of the bride are spiritual jewelry, but a person needs to buy for his wife physical jewelry every holiday.

I got married in the month of Adar, and the month of Nisan came. On the eve of the holiday of Passover, the Rosh Yeshiva [head of the academy], Rabbi Yehuda Tzadka, may peace be upon him, asked me:

"Benayahu, did you buy your wife a piece of jewelry?"

I said to him: "Honorable Rabbi, I just got married, the clothes, the jewelry, everything is new." And he said to me: "No, no, every holiday you shall buy her a piece of jewelry," and he pulled out money for me and said to me:

"This time I will pay, the next times it will be on your account..."

And I fulfilled what the Rosh Yeshiva told me...

The Admor to the Rosh Yeshiva: "You will not receive a blessing unless you answer"

The Rabbi [author of] *Mizmor LeAsaf* [and] *Davar Be'ito*, Rabbi Sasson Mordechai: Every Shabbat we read 24 chapters of Mishnah to adorn the bride, corresponding to the 24 ornaments of the bride!

The Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Yehuda Tzadka, told us that when he was a small child of 10 years old, the Admor of Gur came from Poland to the Land [of Israel]. The Rosh Yeshiva was a small child, and he heard that the Admor of Gur had arrived, and he wanted to go receive a blessing from him. He stood in line—there was a massive crowd—and waited until 12 at night, and remained last. He entered to [the room of] the Admor. The Rebbe asks him: "Who are you?" And he answers: "My name is Yehuda Tzadka, I am a child in the Porat Yosef Yeshiva, I want a blessing." The Rebbe says to him: "For free one does not receive a blessing. I will ask

you a question: how many chapters are there in Tractate Shabbat?" The child says to him: "24 chapters." The Admor asks him: "Why specifically 24 chapters?" The child did not know. And the Admor says: "You don't know? You won't receive a blessing... Go, ask, and come [back]..."

The hour was 12 at night, whom would he ask? He knew the Rosh Yeshiva, the *Kaf HaChaim*, and he set his steps toward the house of the Kaf HaChaim, because after all, the Kaf HaChaim gets up at midnight. He knocked on the door, the Kaf HaChaim opened and said to him: "Ha, Yehuda, what do you need?" And the child says: "Honorable Rabbi, why are there 24 chapters in Tractate Shabbat?..." The Kaf HaChaim immediately answered him: "Corresponding to the bridal ornaments, to adorn her, 24 ornaments, to expel 24 types of impurity." The child kissed his hand... and ran to the Admor of Gur, and says to him: "Corresponding to the 24 bridal ornaments..." The Rebbe said to him: "You are quick and diligent," blessed him and gave him a coin, "This will be for your success," and the child went to his house happy.

He came home, and his mother, who is the daughter of the sister of Rabbi Yosef Chaim [the Ben Ish Chai], made a hole in the coin for him—a necklace on the spot, hung it for him right here, so it would be an amulet for him...

The child did not sleep all night... because at 4 o'clock he already needs to be at prayer, and it is forbidden to be late... and afterward he went to the Old City, arrived at the class of Rabbi Ezra Ades. In the middle of the class, he dozed off... The Rabbi says to him: "Hey, what is this?..." The child says to him: "I didn't sleep at night, I went to the Admor of Gur..." and Rabbi Ezra asks him: "What did he give you?" and the child shows him the coin... and Rabbi Ezra says to him: "Here there is no sleeping in the middle of a class... one must study Torah..." and he confiscated it from him... And we asked the Rosh Yeshiva if the Rabbi returned the coin to you, and he said to us: "No, it is confiscated"...

It is found in the second word from the beginning and second from the end

Let us return to the words of the Zohar: Rabbi Shimon havah yativ ve-la'ei be-oraita be-leilya de-khallah it-chabarat be-ba'alah - Rabbi Shimon [bar Yochai] was sitting and engaging in Torah on the night of Shavuot to adorn the bride with her 24 ornaments - *de-taninan, kol inun chavraya di-vnei heikhala de-khallah itzterikhu behahi leilya, de-khallah izdamanat le-mehavei le-yoma achara, go chuppah be-ba'alah le-mehavei imah kol hahu leilya* - because on that night, on the morrow of which the bride—which is the Shechinah [Divine Presence]—will be under the Chuppah [wedding canopy], all those companions who are members of the bride's palace need to be awake with the Shechinah all night - *u-le-mechdei imah be-tikkunaha* - and to rejoice with her in her corrections, in her ornaments - *de-ihit it-taknat le-mil'ei be-oraita* - that she is prepared to engage and study in the Written Torah and the Oral Torah - *mi-Torah li-Nvi'im* - first of all the

Five Books of Torah, and afterward Prophets - *u-mi-Nvi'im li-Khtuvim*, From Prophets to the writings *u-ve-midrashot di-kra'ei* - Midrashim - *u-ve-razei de-chokhmata* - and afterward Idra Rabba—the secrets of the Torah. *Be-gin de-lein inun tikkunin dila ve-tachshitaha* - because all of these are her corrections and her ornaments of the bride—the Holy Shechinah.

And the Zohar continues to state the virtue of whoever acts according to this order: *Ve-ihit ve-uleimtaha alat ve-kaymat al reisheihon ve-it-taknat behu ve-chadat behu kol hahu leilya* - and she, the Shechinah, all rises and stands over the heads of every place where they study the learning through which she is corrected, and she rejoices in the learners all that night.

If you come here to the Yeshiva, there is a special learning in the Yeshiva all night, no one speaks, there are *Kavanot* [mystical intentions], and at every end of a book we make this ornament, which is holy names. For example, the last verse of Genesis is: "**And Yosef died, and all his brothers, and all that generation etc. and he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.**" Our master the Arizal says, the second word from the beginning of the verse: *Yosef*—the first and last letters: Yod and Peh, that is a holy name, punctuated: *Yu Fa*. And afterward the second word from the end: *Baron* [in the coffin], the first and last letters: *Bu Na*. And so at the end of every book. And we extend it to the supernal countenance from the *Arich* above to the Shechinah. 12 ornaments we place on her head, 12 ornaments on the body. Like this we adorn her. So that tomorrow she will be able to unite with her husband, the Holy One, Blessed be He. This is something tremendous, a tremendous thing.

Our master the Arizal says, these names—whoever wants his prayer to be heard, should intend [meditate on] them always; whoever wants his prayer to be heard, whoever wants to remember so that he will have a memory, should intend them, and there are additional good things in them.

If you notice, in the prayerbooks of the literalists, there is on Yom Kippur, after you say "And as for me, may my prayer to You, Hashem" at the opening of the Ark, there is there, if you will notice, the letters *Yod Peh Bet Nun Ayin Nun Bet Nun יפ בנ ענ בנ*, this is part of it! This is the matter. Because they are holy names and they are effective for the prayer to be accepted. This is their power. And this is the ornaments.

When is the time of the Chuppah

Do you know when the Chuppah is? In the *Keter* [Kedushah] of *Musaf*, that is the main part of the Chuppah! **And I want to tell you a great thing about the Shacharit [morning] prayer of the festival of Shavuot:** everything that the Kabbalists intend from the Seder night, and all the days of the counting of the Omer with all the intentions of each and every day, and all this holy night—the night of Shavuot—the intentions of the study, and the immersion [in the Mikveh], until the prayer. **All of this is small**—it is called "**the Back**" (*Achor*) relative to the intentions that are in the prayer. And

only in the Amidah prayer of Shavuot, from the word "With love" (*Be-ahavah*) that is in the first blessing, once again they repeat all the intentions, and only then do they bring the "Face" (*Panim*).

And then in *Sim Shalom* there is a great unification (*Yichud*), once again during the Torah reading, something—a tremendous thing. **And the crowning glory** is in the *Keter* of *Musaf*, there is the awesome unification, the great mating of the Shechinah with the Holy One, Blessed be He—the greatest light. Therefore, it is forbidden to sleep until then, not even one slumber should you do!

After that, after all that we intended, there is a feast, and in this feast **we repeat all the intentions** from the Seder night, from the beginning of the Omer, and everything we did in the prayer, and all the holy night, *Kamil* [completely]! Once again! Because everything we did was in the interiority of the worlds, and now through eating we rectify in the exteriority of the worlds, we do everything once again in this feast. Look what things these are! What tremendous powers the Holy One, Blessed be He, gave to His nation Israel!

"I want them to come with me!"

The main thing is, that this bride, she does not enter, she says: "Master of the Universe, You see, those who studied here, they adorned me, I want them to come to be in the Chuppah." The Holy One, Blessed be He, says to her: "*Tafaddalun*" [Welcome / Please enter].

And we will see this in the Zohar: *Ve-havah Rabbi Shimon ve-khulhu chavraya meranin be-rinah de-oraita u-mechadshan* - Rabbi Shimon and all the companions were singing with the song of the Torah, meaning, not to say it quickly, but rather slowly, slowly: "In the beginning, created, the L-rd," with its cantillation marks, with its corrections, not like a person who is running away, no.

I read the continuation of the Zohar: *Tivu yakirin* - sit, dear ones - *tivu ve-nchadesh tikkun de-khallah be-hai leilya de-khol man de-ishataf bahadah be-hai leilya* - sit and let us renew the correction of the bride on this night, because anyone who participates with her on this night - listen to what it says - *yehei natir eila ve-tatta kol hahi chatta* - will be guarded in the upper realms and in the lower realms all that year - *ve-yafik chatta bi-shlam* - and will conclude the year in peace!

And **Rabbi Sasson Bakhar Persiado** says, that "all that year" does not mean until Rosh Hashanah, but rather until the next Shavuot—what promises! And the Zohar concludes: *Concerning them it is written: "The angel of Hashem encamps around those who fear Him, and He rescues them. Taste and see that Hashem is good."*

And the Zohar continues: *Kol bar nash de-la manei chushbana da lyt din mi-sitra de-tahor* - if he missed one day in the Omer it is worth nothing, woe and alas! He is not from the side of purity! The counting of the Omer is a tremendous power! We need to put this in our heads.

The Night of Shavuot with Rabbi Yosef Karo

Now I want to read to you an account, which the Kabbalist **Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz** writes, **the author of *Lecha Dodi*, who was in the house of Maran Rabbi Yosef Karo** in one year during the two nights of the festival of Shavuot [outside of Israel] **and recounts what happened there.**

Let us see the words of the awesome account as written by **Moharash Alkabetz**:

Know for yourselves that we agreed, the pious one, may his light shine [-this is Rabbi Yosef Karo, author of the *Shulchan Aruch*] **and I his servant and your servant** [-Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz] **to stand for our souls on the night of Shavuot and to banish sleep from upon us, and thanks to the Almighty, so it succeeded for us, and we did not stop for a moment, only as you will hear and your soul shall live, and this is the order that we arranged on that night: at first we read the portion of *Bereshit*** [Genesis] **with melody, and *Vaya'al Moshe*, the Scroll of Song of Songs, the Scroll of Ruth, and Mishnah etc., in dread, in fear.**

And he continues to recount what happened on that night: **In the middle of the study, our Creator merited us and we heard the voice of the speaker from the mouth of the pious one, may his light shine** [the Shechinah was speaking from the throat of Maran], **a great voice, with distinct pronunciation of letters, and all the neighbors were hearing but not understanding, and there was great pleasantness, the voice going and growing stronger. We fell upon our faces, and there was no spirit in any man to lift his eyes to see, only they were hearing the voice speaking, and the Shechinah was saying: "Hear My beloved ones, who are meticulous beyond meticulous, My friends, My loved ones, peace to you, fortunate are you and fortunate is she who bore you, fortunate are you in this world, fortunate are you in the World to Come, who placed your souls to crown Me on this night, for it has been several years since the crown of My head fell and there is no comforter for Me, and I am cast in the dust, embracing dunghills, and now you have returned the crown to its old state. Strengthen yourselves My beloved ones, take courage My loved ones, know that you are of the people of the upper chamber, you have merited to be of the members of the King's palace. All your Torah, the breath of your mouth, ascended before the Holy One, Blessed be He, and pierced several atmospheres, several firmaments, until it ascended, and angels grew silent, and Seraphim were still, and the Chayot stood, all the host of above hear your voice together with the Holy One, Blessed be He. And I, the Shechinah who chastises man, have come to speak to you, and if you were ten [they were not ten but rather seven], you would have ascended higher and higher, but even so you have ascended, fortunate are you, fortunate is she who bore you, that you banished sleep from your eyes and through you I have ascended this night. Therefore, My**

children, not like those who lounge upon their couches and do not cleave to Hashem, and therefore My children, strengthen yourselves and take courage and exult in My love and in My Torah, and if you were to estimate one out of a thousand thousands of thousands and the multitude of myriads of myriads of the pain in which I am situated, joy would not enter your heart, nor laughter into your mouth, when you remember that because of you I am cast in the dust. Please, strengthen yourselves and take courage and exult, My children, My beloved ones who are meticulous, do not stop the study, because a thread of kindness is drawn over you, your Torah is sweet before the Holy One, Blessed be He."

All this was on the first night of Shavuot, and afterward he recounts that in the morning the rest of the companions heard [who were not there at night] everything that happened at night, and that they were missing ten, and they struck themselves as to why they were not there yesterday, and all that day **Maran the Beit Yosef sat and lectured lectures**, he did not give sleep to his eyes, all day! **And on the next night** [which was also the night of Shavuot] ten gathered, **and the Shechinah came to them several times** on that night.

Did anyone ever hear of such a thing? A wonder of wonders! And behold, even without this, it is enough what we saw that the Rashbi says about what this holy night is, all the more so now after these things, and if so, who will not utilize this holy day, with all his heart and with all his soul?!

Reeds, roses, and milk

Therefore we will prepare ourselves toward this holy day—these days, every person needs to prepare himself with the study of Torah, and Mussar [ethics], how to behave, how to merit this great light, and then we have to arrive on Wednesday night, the last day of the counting, to count the Omer.

The Rosh Yeshiva with us in Porat Yosef used to say: "If we merited to pass the Omer which are days of judgment," he would give everyone a sweet Chalkum, Iraqis love Chalkum, so I too here distribute Chalkum like the Rosh Yeshiva.

And afterward on the next morning, he will pray well, prepares **himself to go get a haircut**, because according to **our master the Arizal** it is forbidden to touch the hair until after the Omer.

There are some of the Kabbalists who would get a haircut already after they counted the Omer at night—whoever wants at night, can, here Rabbi Mordechai Sharabi would say not at night, but rather only on Thursday morning, at night one does not get a haircut. In the morning we will go to the barber, we will use a razor for the head, but the beard we will leave beautiful, with the *Peyot* [sidelocks] everything beautiful... there are intentions to do in this, one needs to arrange it.

And afterward to go prepare to arrange the house, to arrange the Yeshiva, everything with flowers, why, "And the decree

was given in Shushan [also sounds like Shoshan - rose]" to prepare, this is Moshe Rabbeinu. Is it not one of the reasons we eat dairy foods because Moshe Rabbeinu was in the ark, Pharaoh's daughter drew him out, and went to call a wet-nurse to nurse him—this is from the Hebrew children, from where did she draw him out? From amidst the reeds (*Knei Suf*), therefore also we put roses, eat dairy...

It's worth coming from afar...

So therefore to prepare ourselves strongly, strongly with the study of Mussar (ethics) and then to sleep a little, so that at night there will be strength for this holy day, he will pray some Mincha, some Maariv of the holiday, everyone wears **special Yom Tov [holiday] garments**.

To come to the house at the emergence of the stars [dusk], not before, to make Kiddush, and not to be late, why, we want to be in the synagogue early. I, what do I do? I at the emergence of the stars pray here, intending that at the emergence of the stars I will already be at home. So that I can make Kiddush. Because there must be "wholeness" (*Tmimot*)—"seven weeks, whole they shall be," I make Kiddush at the emergence of the stars, and then we sing songs, I say some word of Torah to strengthen the guys toward the holy night. Also here I lecture before Maariv some few strong things to awaken us, and then we eat.

At nine-thirty I leave the house, an hour and a half I eat, from eight until nine-thirty, and not to eat heavy foods, to eat light, some pullet or stuffed [vegetables], with a bit of rice, light, light, not much, much, so that we can study at night. And then I set out on the way, come here, before ten I am already here, at ten we begin to study, **word by word, word by word**, the whole order of study, from Torah to Prophets, and from Prophets to Writings, afterward Midrash.

And then I finish the Midrash and then we have reached midnight, before that when we reached midnight I say the supplication that Rabbi Yosef Chaim arranged: "**Oraita Oraita**" [Torah, Torah], and I honor my brother so he will say some sermon of ten minutes to excite the congregation, and we recite some songs of praise and sing. **And then we continue with Idra Rabba**, in which there is a secret to studying it.

And then we go to the Mikveh, there is a great secret in this immersion, **that no one should forgo this Mikveh**, on this holy night, all must do it a half an hour before the dawn (Amud Hashachar). **First of all, one must be awake and not sleep** on this night, and not speak idle words Heaven forbid, and not sit like a dummy (*Golem*), but rather one needs to read the order of study, and not talk casually, Heaven protect us, certainly not.

A woman does not need to be awake at night, she will prepare for us everything we need for tomorrow. In the morning we pray as I said to you, in the morning prayer word by word. We finish the prayer here, we make a feast here. Here in the Yeshiva we make a morning feast, but it is dairy, afterward at home everyone makes a meat one.

Dairy is more expensive than meat... they bring dairy here, **but it's worth coming from afar...** it doesn't matter, there are tremendous things here. But the main thing is not that, I am only laughing with you, ["And she filled her pitcher and went up" (*Va-temale khadah va-ta'al*) there is a secret in this, the pitcher (*Kad of Hei*) of the Shechinah, this is the 24 (*Gematria value of the letters Kaf Daled, that spell Kad*) ornaments of the bride, no, I see that the Kurds call it "*Kadah*" [composed from the letters Kaf, Daled, Hei] so I say, look, it didn't just come out like that for them by accident...]

Twice Tehillim and we will have an Atonement

Afterward we go home, sleep a little, do not sleep all day, because if so, what did we achieve? We sleep an hour, two hours, two hours no more, after two hours we get up, make a meat feast, as is proper, *Mahshi* [stuffed vegetables]... and with everything that is needed, everything, and *Ghormeh Sabzi*, I don't know... the main thing is that everything will be prepared beautifully, beautifully.

And then we sing, do everything, and come to the Yeshiva, study the Daily Page (*Daf Yomi*), Zohar Ruth, everything that is needed, **and on the way everyone reads Tehillim [Psalms]**, going to David the King, the Messiah. This year, whoever has the strength should walk and return, because it is the eve of Shabbat, so one needs to walk also back, we will pray at the Western Wall the Mincha prayer at a quarter to six, six and a quarter is *Plag HaMincha*, we will recite Maariv, a sermon for Shabbat, and then let us say at a quarter to seven, we will leave toward the house, let's say seven we will leave toward the house, when we arrive home quarter to eight, eight, **even if a person walks like a tortoise**, he will arrive home like this at ease, we will make the Kiddush of the night of Shabbat; and one needs to read *Shnayim Mikra VeEchad Targum* [the weekly Torah portion twice in Hebrew and once in Aramaic translation] do not forget, Rabbi Sharabi would read on the eve of the holiday, we now do not have the custom to do so, we have the custom to read on the day of Shabbat, after we finished the prayer before we go home to make Kiddush, we read *Shnayim Mikra VeEchad Targum*, **pay attention this is the longest portion! Do not abandon it!**

Since Shavuot is the day of the passing of David the King, the Messiah, therefore finish the entire Tehillim on the day of Shavuot, and on the morrow on the day of Shabbat once again the entire Tehillim, we will have *atonement* [letters Kaf, Pei, Reish with a total Gematria value of 300]. It will be something tremendous. And the main thing is to study and to make an effort, and to do everything possible. Hashem is with us with Hashem's help!

I ask for forgiveness that I burdened you today, and with Hashem's help **may you merit many pleasant and good years**, I hope that we will do this with the Messiah of our righteousness and the Holy One, Blessed be He, will send us redemption soon, and at ease will raise the Shechinah from the dust, and we will merit good lives.

And also all those who hear us through the channels, through Moreshet, through Radio Darom, and through the satellite, and through the cellphones, and those who study in the pamphlet, **Hashem should bless them** with all the blessings and salvations, abundance of blessing, success, and may everyone have a happy holiday. **Do not forget to make flowers, and to prepare dairy foods**, the main thing is to prepare ourselves from a spiritual aspect with Hashem's help to be strong and courageous for this holy night, and Hashem will not withhold good from those who go with sincerity, **and so may it be His will, and let us say Amen.**

"ולקח.. הטנא מידך"

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