



LIKKUTEI TORAH • PARSHAS BAMIDBAR • MAAMAR 17

ענין שניתנה התורה על הר סיני דוקא ולא...

The Torah Was Given on Mount Sinai



The Torah was given on Sinai, the lowest of the mountains, because the Torah rests on self-nullification (bittul) and pride is the root of all evil; yet it was given on a mountain, because a person also needs a measure of holy elevation, a heart “lifted up in the ways of Havayah,” to dare to serve G-d at all, provided his bittul remains far greater. In the same way, joy grows out of humility, and the “hatred” of evil that descended at Sinai lifts a person above his evil inclination while remaining, at its core, bittul.

DEDICATED IN HONOR OF

מוקדש לכבוד הגאון המקובל רבי לוי יצחק שניאורסאהן זצ”ל

Dedicated in honor of the Rebbe’s father, Reb Levi Yitzchok



LikuteiTorah.com

THE CHASSIDISHE PARSHA

likuteitorah.com/likutei-torah/bamidbar/17/

THE BIG IDEA

The Torah was given on Sinai, the lowest of the mountains, because the Torah rests on self-nullification (bittul) and pride is the root of all evil; yet it was given on a mountain, because a person also needs a measure of holy elevation, a heart “lifted up in the ways of Havayah,” to dare to serve G-d at all, provided his bittul remains far greater. In the same way, joy grows out of humility, and the “hatred” of evil that descended at Sinai lifts a person above his evil inclination while remaining, at its core, bittul.

Each section: the Hebrew, then the translation, then a short explanation under a gold rule. Small numbers in the Hebrew are the notes at the end.

THE MAAMAR IN BRIEF

The maamar asks why the Torah was given on Mount Sinai and not on the taller mountains Tabor, Hermon and Carmel, which also came forward. The Targum answers: not on haughty mountains, but on Sinai, which is low. Height stands for self-importance, and coarse pride is the root of all evil, as the shattering of the vessels shows; the Torah is received through bittul, by one who makes himself “like a wilderness” that all tread upon, and whose soul is “like dust to all.” Yet Sinai is still a mountain. A person who is utterly lowly would not dare to approach G-d’s service, saying “Who am I?”; he needs strength and an elevation of the heart in his longing and thirst for G-d, but the bittul must be much greater. So too “the humble shall increase joy in Havayah”: joy, an elevation of the soul, comes from humility, and the deeper one’s sense of one’s own lowliness, the more one’s joy in the Torah is redoubled. Finally, Sinai is where hatred descended upon the evil traits: rousing the good inclination against the evil is an elevation, but in essence it is bittul, the subjugation (iskafya) of evil.

OUTLINE

1 Why a low mountain, and why a mountain at all

¶1

The proud mountains were passed over because pride is the root of evil and the Torah rests on bittul, as in “like a wilderness” and “like dust to all”; yet Sinai is a mountain, since a person needs some elevation of the heart to dare to serve, so long as his bittul is far greater.

2 Joy that grows from humility

¶2

“The humble shall increase joy in Havayah”: lowliness comes from the side of the body and animal soul, joy from the G-dly soul, and the deeper the sense of one’s own inferiority, the more the joy in the Torah is redoubled.

At Sinai hatred descended upon the evil traits; making the good inclination rage against the evil inclination is an elevation, yet in essence it is bittul, the subjugation of evil; references to further discourses on mountains.

KEY CONCEPTS

Self-nullification (bittul) ביטול

Setting aside one's own sense of self before G-d. The maamar calls it the essence of the Torah: the Torah is given to one who makes himself like a wilderness, without pride.

Haughtiness (gasus) גסות

Coarse pride, raising oneself up in self-importance, symbolized by the towering mountains Tabor and Hermon. The maamar calls it the root of all evil, as is known from the shattering of the vessels.

Lowliness (shiflus) שפלות

Not raising oneself up, symbolized by Sinai, the low mountain. It is the condition for receiving the Torah, as in "may my soul be like dust to all," and then "open my heart to Your Torah."

Elevation of the heart הגבהת הלב

The holy strength and longing that give a person the courage to approach G-d's service instead of saying "Who am I?", as in "his heart was lifted up in the ways of Havayah." It must always remain much smaller than the bittul.

Joy from humility ויספו ענוים בה' שמחה

Joy is an elevation of the soul, yet it flows from humility: one is lowly in one's own eyes from the side of the body and animal soul and joyful from the side of the G-dly soul, and deeper lowliness brings redoubled joy in the Torah.

Subjugation (iskafya) אתכפייא

Subduing the evil inclination. The "hatred" that descended at Sinai upon the evil traits, the good inclination's rage against the evil, is an elevation above evil, yet in essence it is bittul.

SECTION 1 • 11

Why a low mountain, and why a mountain at all

1 ענין שניתנה התורה על הר סיני דוקא ולא על הר תבור וחרמון וכרמל¹ שבאו ג"כ שתנתן התורה עליהם.

The matter of the Torah's having been given on Mount Sinai specifically, and not on Mount Tabor, Hermon and Carmel, which also came [asking] that the Torah be given upon them.

The maamar opens with a question: why was the Torah given on Mount Sinai in particular, when the taller mountains Tabor, Hermon and Carmel also came forward, each asking to be chosen? The answer will show what kind of person is fit to receive the Torah.

וכמ"ש בתרגום יונתן בשופטים סי' ה' ע"פ הרים נזלו² ובתלים סי' ס"ח ע"פ למה תרצדון^{3,4} לית רעוותי למיתן אורייתא על טוריא גיותנין מבסרניא⁵ (תרגום הבז לגאי יונים⁶ מבסרניא וגיותניא)⁷ הא טור סיני דמכיך כו',

As is written in Targum Yonasan on Judges, chapter 5, on the verse "The mountains flowed," and on Psalms, chapter 68, on the verse "Why do you leap": "It is not My will to give the Torah upon haughty (gaivsanin), scornful (mevasranya) mountains" (the Targum of "the contempt of the proud" is mevasranya vegavsananya), "behold, Mount Sinai, which is low," etc.

The Aramaic translations (Targum) of two verses about the mountains at the Giving of the Torah tell the story: G-d did not want to give the Torah on proud, towering mountains, but on Sinai, which is low. The parenthesis explains the two Aramaic words for "haughty" and "scornful" from the Targum of another verse, "the contempt of the proud," which renders it with the same pair.

והיינו שענין הגבהות של תבור וחרמון זהו ענין הגדלות שמגביה א"ע [את עצמו] בגסות והגסות הוא שרש כל הרע וכנודע מענין שבה"כ [שכירת הכלים] כו'

That is to say: the loftiness of Tabor and Hermon is the matter of self-aggrandizement (gadlus), raising oneself up with haughtiness (gasus); and haughtiness is the root of all evil, as is known from the matter of the shattering of the vessels (sheviras hakeilim), etc.

A mountain's height stands for a person's self-importance: raising oneself up with coarse pride (gasus). Such pride is the root of all evil, as Chassidus teaches about the "shattering of the vessels," the primordial vessels that broke because each stood as a separate, self-asserting existence.

ועיקר התורה הוא להיות בבחינת ביטול ולא תחללו⁸ כו' וכמ"ש בכמה דוכתי. ועיין בביאור ע"פ ולא תשבית מלח⁹.¹⁰

And the essence of the Torah is to be at the level of self-nullification (bittul), and “you shall not profane,” etc., as is written in several places. And see the explanation on the verse “And you shall not omit the salt.”

Receiving the Torah requires the opposite of pride: self-nullification (bittul), setting oneself aside before G-d. In the explanation of “And you shall not omit the salt” (Likkutei Torah, Vayikra), to which the Alter Rebbe refers here, he reads “you shall not profane” (techalelu) as “you shall not make a void (chalal)”: one who stands as a separate “something” makes a void from which the Infinite Light withdraws, for G-d does not rest on him.

וזהו שאמרו (עירובין נ"ד א') אם משים אדם עצמו כמדבר שהכל דשין בו ופרש"י [ופירש רש"י / ופירוש רש"י] שאין לו גסות¹¹ תורה ניתנה לו כמתנה¹²

And this is what [our Sages] said (Eruvin 54a): “If a person makes himself like a wilderness, upon which everyone treads” — and Rashi explains: that he has no haughtiness — “the Torah is given to him as a gift,”

The Talmud states the same idea, expounding the verse “and from the wilderness, Mattanah (a gift)”: one who makes himself like a wilderness that everyone treads upon receives the Torah as a gift. Rashi explains the image: such a person has no haughtiness.

וכמאמר ונפשי כעפר לכל¹³ תהיה ואזי דוקא פתח לבי בתורתך (וכמ"ש מזה סד"ה ושאתם מים בששון). ולכן ניתנה על הר סיני דמכ"ך שהוא ענין השפלות שאינו מגביה א"ע [את עצמו]¹⁴ כו'.

as it is said, “And may my soul be like dust to all,” and then, specifically, “Open my heart to Your Torah” (as is written on this at the end of the discourse beginning “And you shall draw water with joy”). Therefore it was given on Mount Sinai, which is low, which is the matter of lowliness (shiflus): not raising oneself up, etc.

The prayer at the close of the Amidah follows the same order: first “may my soul be like dust to all,” and only then “open my heart to Your Torah.” This is why the Torah was given on Sinai, a low mountain, which stands for lowliness, not raising oneself up; for more on this the Alter Rebbe refers to the end of his discourse on “And you shall draw water with joy.”

אך צ"ל א"כ למה היה שום הר שהרי גם הר סיני הוא הר עכ"פ [על כל פנים] שהוא ענין הגבהה רק שאינו גבוה כ"כ [כל כך].

But we need to understand: if so, why was there any mountain at all? For Mount Sinai, too, is at any rate a mountain, which is the matter of elevation; only it is not so high.

This raises a difficulty: if lowliness is the point, why was the Torah given on a mountain at all? Sinai, however low, is still a mountain, and a mountain stands for elevation. The Tzemach Tzedek, citing this passage in Or HaTorah (Megillas Esther, p. 55), answers in the Sages' terms: Sinai is a mountain of self-elevation, yet a small one, like the "eighth of an eighth" of pride a Torah scholar should have.

אבל הענין כי באמת עם היות שצריך כל האדם להיות שפל במאד מ"מ צריך התחזקות וקצת הגבהה כמ"ש ויגבה לבו בדרכי¹⁵ ה' (וכמ"ש מזה בד"ה יביאו לבוש¹⁶ מלכות)¹⁷

But the explanation is that, in truth, although every person must be exceedingly lowly, nevertheless he needs self-strengthening and some elevation, as it is written, "And his heart was lifted up in the ways of Havayah" (and as is written on this in the discourse beginning "Let them bring royal apparel");

The answer: even a person who must be utterly lowly needs inner strength and some measure of elevation in his service of G-d, as Scripture praises King Yehoshafat: "his heart was lifted up in the ways of Havayah." In Torah Ohr (Megillas Esther, "Let them bring royal apparel"), the Alter Rebbe calls this the holy counterpart of Haman's pride: as the Sages say, one's eyes should be downward, in bittul, and one's heart upward, in the fire of longing.

כי אם לא יהיה בבחינת הגבהה כלל לא יערב לבו לגשת אל העבודה באמרו מי אנכי ומה עבודתי.

for if he will not be at the level of elevation at all, his heart will not venture to approach the service, as he says, "Who am I, and what is my service?"

Without any sense of elevation, a person would not dare even to begin serving G-d; he would tell himself, "Who am I, and what is my service?" This sentence and the opening words of the next are taken almost word for word from that Torah Ohr discourse.

לכך צריך לו הגבהת הלב בתשוקה והצמאון שבו כו' אלא שהביטול צ"ל יותר הרבה כו' ע"ש, ובד"ה החלצו מאתכם¹⁸ גבי ענין שלום בפשמ"ע [בפמליא של מעלה] שבנפש מוח ולב כו'.¹⁹

Therefore he needs an elevation of the heart, in the longing and the thirst that is within it, etc.; only, the self-nullification must be much greater, etc. See there; and [see] in the discourse beginning "Arm [men] from among you," regarding the matter of peace in the household above (pamalya shel maalah) that is in the soul: mind and heart, etc.

So the heart must be lifted up, in its longing and thirst for G-d, but the self-nullification must remain much greater than this elevation. In the Torah Ohr discourse this is the Sages' "eighth of an eighth": one part in sixty-four is the heart's elevation, joined to Chochmah, whose bittul is the main thing. The Alter Rebbe also refers to his discourse "Arm [men] from among you," where the Sages' phrase "peace in the household above" (pamalya shel maalah) is applied to the soul, to its mind and its heart.

SECTION 2 • 12

Joy that grows from humility

2 וזהו ענין ויספו ענוים בה' שמחה²⁰ כי הנה השמחה היא התחזקות והגבהת הנפש, אלא ששמחה והגבהה זו נמשך מן הענוה והשפלות דוקא

And this is the matter of "And the humble shall increase joy in Havayah." For joy is a strengthening and elevation of the soul; only, this joy and elevation is drawn specifically from humility and lowliness.

Isaiah's verse "And the humble shall increase joy in Havayah" shows the same pattern. Joy strengthens and lifts up the soul, yet this joy and elevation grow specifically out of humility and lowliness. In Likkutei Sichos (vol. 28, p. 257, note 32), the Kehot note says, this passage is explained as the inter-inclusion of the two movements, bittul and elevation.

וכמ"ש בסש"ב [בספר של בינונים] ס"פ ל"ד שמצד הגוף ונפש הבהמית הוא נבזה בעיניו מאד והיותו בשמחה הוא מצד נפש האלקי וניצוץ אלהות המלוכש בה להחיותה²¹ כו' ע"ש

And as is written in Sefer Shel Beinonim (Tanya), at the end of chapter 34: that from the side of the body and the animal soul he is very despised in his own eyes, and his being in joy is from the side of the G-dly soul and the spark of G-dliness that is encloded in it to give it life, etc. See there.

The Tanya (end of chapter 34) explains how both can live in one person at the same moment: he is despised in his own eyes from the side of his body and animal soul, and joyful from the side of his G-dly soul and the spark of G-dliness that gives it life. The two feelings do not cancel each other, because they come from two different sources within him.

ובמ"ש סד"ה תחת אשר לא עבדת²² בשמחה דאדרבה כל מה שיעמיק בענין פחיתות עצמו ויהיה נבזה בעיניו נמאס²³ אזי יהיה שמחת נפשו בעסק התורה כפולה ומכופלת²⁴ כו'.

And [see] what is written at the end of the discourse beginning "Because you did not serve with joy": that, on the contrary, the more he delves into the matter of his own inferiority and becomes despised in his own eyes, repugnant, then the joy of his soul in occupying himself with the Torah will be doubled and redoubled, etc.

At the end of the discourse on "Because you did not serve with joy," the Alter Rebbe goes further: the deeper a person's sense of his own inferiority, the more his joy in Torah study is doubled and redoubled. Humility does not reduce the joy; it multiplies it.

SECTION 3 • 13

Sinai: hatred of evil as bittul

3 וזהו ויספו ענוים²⁵ דוקא בה' שמחה. וזהו ענין הר סיני שירדה שנאה²⁶ על מדות הרעות ע"ד לעולם ירגיז אדם²⁷ יצר טוב על יצר הרע²⁸ ורוגז זה הוא ג"כ הגבהה והתנשאות על היצה"ר [היצר הרע] כו'. אך שהוא עיקר הביטול להיות אתכפייא כו'.

And this is [the meaning of] "And the humble," specifically, "shall increase joy in Havayah." And this is the matter of Mount Sinai: that hatred (sin'ah) descended upon the evil traits (middos), along the lines of "A person should always make the good inclination rage against the evil inclination"; and this rage, too, is an elevation and a rising above the evil inclination, etc. Only, it is chiefly self-nullification (bittul): to be [a state of] subjugation (iskafya), etc.

This is why the verse says that the humble, specifically, will increase joy. The Sages read the name Sinai as sin'ah (hatred), the mountain on which hatred descended, and here it is hatred of one's own evil traits, like the Talmud's advice to make the good inclination rage against the evil inclination. That rage is a rising above the evil inclination, yet at its core it is self-nullification: iskafya, the subjugation of evil, and not self-assertion.

ועיין מ"ש עוד מענין הר בד"ה שימני כחותם.²⁹

And see what is written further on the matter of a mountain in the discourse beginning "Set me as a seal."

For more on what a mountain stands for in the service of G-d, the Alter Rebbe refers to his discourse "Set me as a seal."

ועמ"ש בד"ה קול דודי בענין מדלג על ההרים³⁰ ישאו הרים שלום לעם³¹ ועמ"ש סד"ה שובה ישראל:³²

And see what is written in the discourse beginning “The voice of my beloved,” on the matter of “leaping over the mountains,” [and] “May the mountains bear peace to the people”; and see what is written at the end of the discourse beginning “Return, O Israel.”

The maamar closes with further references: the discourse “The voice of my beloved,” on G-d “leaping over the mountains” and the verse “May the mountains bear peace to the people,” and the end of the discourse “Return, O Israel.”

IN ONE'S AVODAH

A person should make himself like a wilderness that all tread upon, without coarse pride, so that the Torah is given to him as a gift. Yet he must not let lowliness hold him back from serving G-d with “Who am I, and what is my service?”: he should strengthen himself and lift up his heart in longing and thirst for G-d, in the ways of Havayah, while his bittul remains much greater. The deeper his sense of his own inferiority, the greater should be his joy in the Torah, which comes from his G-dly soul. And he should rouse his good inclination to rage against his evil inclination, as a rising above evil that is itself bittul.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why did G-d pass over Tabor, Hermon and Carmel, and what do their height and Sinai's lowness represent in a person?
2. If lowliness is the vessel for the Torah, why was it given on a mountain at all? What would happen to a person who had no elevation whatsoever?
3. How can a person be despised in his own eyes and joyful at the same moment, according to the Tanya passage the maamar cites?
4. In what sense is the rage of the good inclination against the evil inclination both an elevation and an act of bittul?
5. How does the maamar's reading of the prayer “may my soul be like dust to all; open my heart to Your Torah” apply to the way one approaches Torah study?

SOURCES AND REFERENCES

Notes

PARAGRAPH 1

1 תבור וחרמון וכרמל

The Targum expands the verse: Tabor, Hermon and Carmel quarreled, each saying, “Let His Shechinah rest on me,” and G-d rested His Shechinah on Mount Sinai, the weakest and smallest of all the mountains. This is the background of the maamar’s opening question.

Targum Jonathan on Judges 5:5:ה' שופטים על שופטים

טורא וזעו מן קדם יי טורא דתבור טורא דחרמון וטורא דכרמל מתרגשין דין עם דין ואמרין דין לדין דין אמר עלי תשרי שכנתיה ולי חזיא ודין לדין אמר עלי תשרי שכנתיה ולי חזיא אשרי שכנתיה על טורא דסיני דהוא חלש וזעיר מכל טורא דין סיני מתרגיף ומתרגיש וסליק תנניה כתננא דאתונא מן קדם דאתגלי עלוהי יקרא דיי אלקא דישאל:

Mikraot Gedolot (Public Domain)

2 הרים נולו

From the song of Devorah and Barak after their victory, recalling the revelation at Sinai: “The mountains flowed before Havayah, this Sinai, before Havayah, the G-d of Israel”; even the mountains streamed like water before G-d. The Alter Rebbe cites the Targum on this verse, which tells of the mountains’ contest at the Giving of the Torah.

Judges 5:5:ה' שופטים

הרים נולו מפני ה' זה סיני מפני ה' אלקי ישראל:

The mountains quaked at the presence of the L-RD, Even yon Sinai at the presence of the L-RD, the G-d of Israel.

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)

3 למה תרצדון

The psalmist addresses the high, many-peaked mountains: “Why do you leap, you peaked mountains? The mountain G-d desired for His dwelling.” The rare verb is taken as leaping, or as quaking with envy that another mountain was chosen (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh); the Alter Rebbe cites the Targum’s reading of it.

Psalms 68:17:תהילים ס"ח

למה תרצדון הרים גבננים הדר חמד אלקים לשבתו איהי ישכן לנצח:

Why look ye askance, ye mountains of peaks, At the mountain which G-d hath desired for His abode? Yea, the L-RD will dwell therein for ever.

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)

4 למה תרצדון

Bar Kappara reads the same verse as a heavenly voice rebuking the mountains: “Why do you seek to contend with Sinai? You are all blemished beside Sinai,” taking gav-nunim (“peaked”) as “hunchbacked”; Rav Ashi learns that

one who is proud is blemished. It is the Talmud’s form of the teaching the maamar brings from the Targum.

Megillah 29a:10:מגילה כ"ט א

דרש בר קפרא, מאי דכתיב: “למה תרצדון הרים גבננים”, יצתה בת קול ואמרה להם: למה תרצו דין עם סיני? כולכם בעלי מומים אתם אצל סיני. כתיב הכא: “גבננים”, וכתיב התם: “או גבן או דק”. אמר רב אשי: שמע מינה האי מאן דיחיר — בעל מום הוא.

Bar Kappara gave the following exposition: What is the meaning of the verse, “Why do you look askance [terazedun], mountains of peaks (gavnunim)” (Psalms 68:18). A bat kol (heavenly voice) went forth and said to them: Why do ye desire litigation [tirzu din] with Sinai? You are all full of blemishes as compared with Sinai. It is written here “gavnunim,” and it is written elsewhere “or hump-backed [gibben] or a dwarf” (Leviticus 21:20). Ashi observed: You can learn from this that if a man is arrogant, this is a blemish ...

William Davidson, Vocalized Aramaic (CC-BY-NC) • Daf Shevui (CCO)

5 לית רעוותי למיתן אורייתא על טוריא גיותנן מבסרניא

The Targum makes G-d the speaker: “Why do you leap, mountains? It is not My will to give the Torah upon haughty, scornful mountains; behold, Mount Sinai, which is low.” The Alter Rebbe quotes these words as the reason Sinai was chosen.

Aramaic Targum to Psalms 68:17:תרגום ארמי

אמר אלקא למה אתון טפזין טוריא לית רענותי למיתן אורייתא על טוריא גיותנן מבסרניא הא טור סיני דמכיה רגג מימרא דיי לאשראא עלוי שכינתיה לחוד בשמי שמיא יי ישרי לעלמא:

Mikraot Gedolot (Public Domain)

6 הבו לגאי יונים

A Song of Ascents in which Israel asks G-d for grace: “Our soul is more than sated with the mockery of the complacent, the contempt of the proud.” The last word is written as two (לגאי יונים) and read as one, “the proud.” The Alter Rebbe cites the verse for its Targum, which explains the Aramaic words he quoted.

Psalms 123:4:תהילים קכ"ג

רבת שקבעה ליה נפשנו הלעג השאננים הבו לגאי יונים:

Our soul is full sated With the scorning of those that are at ease, And with the contempt of the proud oppressors.

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)

7 מבסרניא וגיותניא

The Targum renders “the contempt of the proud” with the pair mevasranya vegaivsanya, “the scornful and the

haughty”: the same two words the Targum on Psalms 68 uses of the haughty, scornful mountains.

Aramaic Targum to Psalms 123:4 ד"ג:ד' תרגום תהלים קכ"ג:ד'

סוגעת שבעת לה נפשנא תלעובא דשלוין מבסרניא וגיותניא:

Mikraot Gedolot (Public Domain)

8 ולא תחללו

G-d's command at the close of the laws of the holy offerings: "And you shall not profane My holy Name, and I shall be sanctified among the children of Israel." In the Biur on "And you shall not omit the salt," to which the maamar refers here, the Alter Rebbe reads techalelu as "do not make a void (chahal)": pride leaves a void from which the Infinite Light withdraws.

ויקרא כ"ב:ל"ב Leviticus 22:32

ולא תחללו את-שם קדשי ונגדשתי בתוך בני ישראל אני ה' מקדשכם:

And ye shall not profane My holy name; but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel: I am the L-RD who hal-low you,

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)

KEHOT'S NOTE

ויקרא כב, לב.

- 9 From the laws of the meal-offering: "And you shall not omit the salt of the covenant of your G-d from your meal-offering." Its explanation (Biur) in Likkutei Torah, Parshas Vayikra, is the discourse the Alter Rebbe refers to here.

ויקרא ב':י"ג Leviticus 2:13

וכל-קרבן מנחתך במלח תמלח ולא תשבית מלח ברית אלקיך מעל מנחתך על כל-קרבנך תקריב מלח:

And every meal-offering of thine shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy G-d to be lacking from thy meal-offering; with all thy offerings thou shalt offer salt.

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)

10 בביאור ע"פ ולא תשבית מלח

The explanation on "And you shall not omit the salt" teaches, from 4c on, that even Chochmah is only a vessel for the Infinite Light, and that through the study of Torah the soul itself is included in that Light.

KEHOT'S NOTE

לעיל פי ויקרא ד, ג ואילך.

11 שאין לו גסות

On the parallel teaching on the same page, of one who makes himself like a garden bed that everyone treads upon, Rashi explains "that everyone treads upon him" as "that he has no haughtiness." The Alter Rebbe quotes Rashi to tie the image of the wilderness to the absence of coarse pride.

רש"י על עירובין נ"ד א:י"ז א"א:17:1 Eruvin 54a:17

שהכל דשין אותו - שאין לו גסות:

Vilna Edition (Public Domain)

- 12 Asked by Rav Yosef to explain the verse "and from the wilderness, Mattanah (a gift)," Rava answers: "If a person makes himself like this wilderness, which everyone treads upon, the Torah is given to him as a gift." The Alter Rebbe brings it as the Talmud's statement that the Torah comes to the one who is without pride.

עירובין נ"ד א:כ"ד Eruvin 54a:24

אמר לקה: אם אדם משים עצמו כמדבר זה שהכל דשין בו — תורה ניתנה לו במתנה. וכיון שניתנה לו במתנה — נחלו אל, שנאמר: "וממתנה נחליאל". וכיון שנחלו אל — עולה לגדולה, שנאמר: "ומנח ליאל כמות".

William Davidson, Vocalized Aramaic (CC-BY-NC)

13 ונפשי כעפר לכל תהי

The prayer known as "Elokai netzor," which Mar the son of Ravina said on finishing his prayer: "And may my soul be like dust to all; open my heart to Your Torah." The Alter Rebbe reads its order: only when the soul is like dust is the heart opened to the Torah.

ברכות י"ז א:ד' Berachot 17a:4

מר בריה דרבנא כי הוה מסיים צלותיה אמר הכי: "אלקי, נצור לשוני מרע ושפתותי מדבר מרמה, ולמקללי נפשי תדום, ונפשי כעפר לכל תהיה. פתח לבי בתורתך, ובמצותיך תרדוף נפשי. ותצילני מפגע רע, מיצר הרע, ומאשה רעה, ומכל רעות המתרגשות לבא בעולם. וכל החושבים עלי רעה מהרה הפך עצתם וקלקל מחשבותם. יהיו לרצון אמרי פי והגיון לבי לפניך ה' צורי וגואלי".

Mar b. Kabina used to add at the conclusion of his prayer : O my G-d ! (Guard my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking guile ; and to such as curse me let my soul be dumb, yea, let my soul be unto all as the dust. Open my heart to Thy Torah, and let my soul pursue Thy commandments. And do Thou deliver me from mishap, from the evil impulse, and from an evil woman and all evil which breaks forth to come upon the world. ...

William Davidson, Vocalized Aramaic (CC-BY-NC) • Tractate Berakot by A. Cohen, Cambridge University Press, 1921 (Public Domain)

KEHOT'S NOTE

תפלת אלקי נצור. ברכות יז, א.

- 14 ולכן ניתנה על הר סיני דמכיר שהוא ענין השפלות שאינו מגבי א"ע

According to the note, Or HaTorah refers to this passage and adds: "Therefore the Giving of the Torah was on Mount Sinai, a mountain of self-elevation, and nevertheless a small mountain, in the manner of 'an eighth of an eighth.'" That is the Sages' measure for the very slight pride fitting for a Torah scholar, which matches the maamar's answer.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה באוה"ת מג"א (תש"ג) ע' נה שמציין לכאן ומוסיף "ולכן מ"ת ניתנה על ה"ס הר התנשאות ומ"מ הר קטן ע"ד שמינית שבשמינית".

15 ייגבה לבו בדרכי ה'

Said of King Yehoshafat, once G-d had established his kingdom: "And his heart was lifted up in the ways of

Havayah,” and he went on to remove the high places of idol worship. His boldness served G-d’s ways; the Alter Rebbe brings it as proof that holy service needs some elevation of the heart.

II Chronicles 17:6:וַיִּזְכֹּר הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּיָמָיו

וַיִּגְבֶּה לְבֹבוֹ בְּדַרְכֵי ה' וַעֲזָב הַסִּיר אֶת־הַקְּבָמוֹת וְאֶת־הָאֲשֵׁרִים מִיְּהוּדָה:

And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the L-RD; and furthermore he took away the high places and the Asherim out of Judah.

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)

KEHOT'S NOTE

ד"ה ב' יז, ו.

16

בד"ה יביאו לבוש מל'

In the discourse “Let them bring royal apparel,” “And his heart was lifted up in the ways of Havayah” is the level of Haman after refinement, included in holiness, as the Sages said that one’s eyes should be downward and one’s heart upward.

KEHOT'S NOTE

תו"א צא, ב. וראה בפירוש המילות לאדה"א פרק קמז.

17

יביאו לבוש מלכות

Haman’s advice to King Achashverosh, thinking the honor was meant for himself: “Let them bring royal apparel that the king has worn.” These words open the Torah Ohr discourse to which the Alter Rebbe refers here.

Esther 6:8:וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ

וַיִּבְיֵאוּ לְבוֹשׁ מַלְכוּת אֲשֶׁר לְבָשׁוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְסוּס אֲשֶׁר רָכַב עָלָיו הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֲשֶׁר יִתֵּן כְּתֹר מַלְכוּת בְּרֹאשׁוֹ:

let royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and on whose head a crown royal is set;

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)

18

Moshe’s call to the people before the war against Midian: “Arm men from among you for the army.” These words open the discourse the Alter Rebbe cites on peace in the soul’s “household above,” mind and heart.

Numbers 31:3:וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה

וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר הִקְלָצוּ מֵאִתְּכֶם אָנָשִׁים לְצָבָא וַיְהִיו עֲלֵי־מִדְיָן לְתֵת נִקְמַת־ה' בְּמִדְיָן:

And Moses spoke unto the people, saying: ‘Arm ye men from among you for the war, that they may go against Midian, to execute the L-RD’S vengeance on Midian.

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)

19

From Isaiah’s song for the day of redemption: “And you shall draw water with joy from the wellsprings of salvation.” Its opening words name the discourse to whose end the Alter Rebbe refers here.

Isaiah 12:3:וַיִּשְׁעִי

וְשִׁאֲבֵתֶם־מִים בְּשִׂשׂוֹן מִמְעֵינֵי הַיְּשׁוּעָה:

Therefore with joy shall ye draw water Out of the wells of salvation.

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)

PARAGRAPH 2

20

ויספו ענוים בה' שמחה

Isaiah foretells the time when the tyrant and the scoffer are gone: “The humble shall increase joy in Havayah, and the neediest of men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.” The Alter Rebbe reads it as teaching that joy, an elevation of the soul, belongs to the humble specifically.

Isaiah 29:19:וְיִשְׁפּוּ עֲנוּיִם בְּה' שְׂמֵחָה

וְאֶבְיוֹנֵי אָדָם בְּקֹדֶשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל יִגְלוּ:

The humble also shall increase their joy in the L-RD, and the neediest among men shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)

KEHOT'S NOTE

ישעי' כט, יט.

21

שמצד הגוף ונפש הבהמית הוא נבזה בעיניו מאד והיותו בשמחה הוא מצד נפש האלקי וניצוץ אלהות המלוכב בה להחיותה

The Tanya teaches that the soul’s joys do not prevent one from being “despised in his own eyes” at the very time of joy, since the lowliness is from the side of the body and the animal soul and the joy from the side of the G-dly soul. The Alter Rebbe cites it to show how joy and humility live together.

Tanya, Likkutei Amarim 34:8:תניא, חלק ראשון; ליקוטי אמרים

והנה, בכל פרטי מיני שמחות הנפש הנזכרים לעיל - אין מהן מניעה להיות נבזה בעיניו נמאס, ו"לב נשבר", ורוח נמוכה - בשעת השמחה ממש, מאחר כי היותו נבזה בעיניו וכו' - הוא מצד הגוף ונפש הבהמית, והיותו בשמחה - הוא מצד נפש האלקית וניצוץ אלהות המלוכב בה להחיותה, כנזכר לעיל [בפרק ל"א].

Kehot Publication Society (CC-BY-NC)

22

תחת אשר לא עבדת

From Moshe’s warning of the curses, which will come “because you did not serve Havayah your G-d with joy and with gladness of heart.” Its opening words name the discourse to whose end the Alter Rebbe refers.

Deuteronomy 28:47:דברים כ"ח מ"ז

תחת אשר לא עבדת את־ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְטוֹב לֵב מְרֹב כָּל:

because thou didst not serve the L-RD thy G-d with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things;

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)

23

נבזה בעיניו נמאס

From David’s psalm on who may dwell on G-d’s holy mountain. The words can be read “in his own eyes he is despised and repugnant,” a mark of humility, or “in his eyes a vile person is despised” (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh); the Tanya and this maamar take the first reading.

Psalms 15:4:תהילים ט"ו ד'

נבזה בעיניו נמאס ואת־יְרֵאָה ה' יִכְבֹּד נִשְׁבַּע לְהָרַע וְלֹא יִמָּר:

In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honoureth them that fear the L-RD; He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not;

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)

KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים טו, ד.

24 דשמחה והגבהה זו נמשך מן הענוה והשפלות . . כפולה ומכופלת

According to the note, this passage, from “this joy and elevation is drawn from humility” to “doubled and redoubled,” is explained there in connection with the inter-inclusion of the two movements, bittul and elevation.

KEHOT'S NOTE

נתבאר בלקו"ש חכ"ח ע' 257 הערה 32 בענין התכללות דב' התנועות ביטול והגבהה.

PARAGRAPH 3

25 ויספו ענוים

“The humble shall increase joy in Havayah.” The Alter Rebbe repeats the verse to stress that it is the humble specifically whose joy increases.

Isaiah 29:19 ט"ט:י"ט

וְיִסְפוּ עֲנוּיִם בְּה' שְׂמֵחָה וְאֶבְיוֹנֵי אֲדָם בְּקֹדֶשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל יִגְדְּלוּ:

The humble also shall increase their joy in the L-RD, and the neediest among men shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)

26 סיני שירדה שנאה

Rav Chisda and Rabbah the son of Rav Huna explain the name Sinai by a play on sin'ah (hatred): it is the mountain on which hatred descended toward the nations of the world, because, Rashi explains, they did not accept the Torah there. The Alter Rebbe reads it inwardly: at Sinai hatred descended upon the evil traits.

Shabbat 89a:7 ט"ז:א

... דְּרַב חֲסִידָא וְרַבָּה בְּרִיהּ דְּרַב הוּנָא דְּאָמְרֵי תְרוּוּיָהּ: מַאי “הַר סִינַי”? הַר שִׁירְדָה שְׁנָאָה לְאַמּוֹת הָעוֹלָם עָלָיו. וְהִינּוּ דְאָמַר רַבִּי יוֹסִי בְּרַבִּי חֲנִינָא: חֲמִשָּׁה שְׁמוֹת שֶׁ לוֹ: מִדְּבַר צִין — שֶׁנִּצְטָווּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עָלָיו; מִדְּבַר קָדֵשׁ — שֶׁנִּתְקַדְּשׁוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עָלָיו; מִדְּבַר קְדָמוֹת — שֶׁנִּתְּנָה קְדוּמָה עָלָיו; מִדְּבַר פֶּאֶרֶן —

William Davidson, Vocalized Aramaic (CC-BY-NC)

KEHOT'S NOTE

שבת פט, א.

27 לעולם ירגיז אדם

KeHOT's marei makom for these words (its note is below).

KEHOT'S NOTE

ברכות ה, רע"א.

28 לעולם ירגיז אדם יצר טוב על יצר הרע

Rabbi Levi bar Chama in the name of Reish Lakish: “A person should always make the good inclination rage against the evil inclination,” as it says, “Tremble (rigzu),

...ענין שניתנה התורה על הר סיני דוקא ולא

and do not sin.” The Alter Rebbe uses it to describe the holy elevation of rising above evil.

Berachot 5a:2 ברכות ה' א:ב

אָמַר רַבִּי לִוִּי בַר חֲמָא, אָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן לֵקִישׁ: לְעוֹלָם יִרְגִּזוּ אָדָם יֵצֶר טוֹב עַל יֵצֶר הָרָע, שְׁנֵאֲמַר: “רִגְזוּ וְאַל תַּחֲטְאוּ” אִם נִצָּחוּ — מוֹטֵב, וְאִם לֹאוּ — יַעֲסוֹק בַּתּוֹרָה, שְׁנֵאֲמַר: “אֲמַרו בְּלִבְכֶּם.” אִם נִצָּחוּ — מוֹטֵב, וְאִם לֹאוּ — יַעֲסוֹק בְּרִיאַת שְׁמַע, שְׁנֵאֲמַר: “עַל מִשְׁכַּבְכֶּם.” אִם נִצָּחוּ — מוֹטֵב, וְאִם לֹאוּ — יִזְכּוֹר לוֹ יוֹם הַמִּיתָה, שְׁנֵאֲמַר: “וְדַמוּ סָלָה.”

R. Levi b. Hama said in the name of R. Simeon b. Lakish: A man should always oppose [yargiz] the good impulse to the evil impulse ; as it is said : “Tremble [rigzu] and sin not” (ibid. iv. 5). If he conquer it, well and good ; but if not, let him occupy himself with Torah ; as it is said, “Commune with your own heart” (ibid.). Should this gain him the victory, well and good; but if not, let him read the Shema' ; as it is said, ...

William Davidson, Vocalized Aramaic (CC-BY-NC) • Tractate Berakot by A. Cohen, Cambridge University Press, 1921 (Public Domain)

29 שימיני כחותם

The beloved asks her lover, as Israel asks G-d: “Set me as a seal upon your heart.” Its opening words name the discourse to which the Alter Rebbe refers for more on the meaning of a mountain.

Song of Songs 8:6 ו'ח:ו

שִׁימֵנִי כַחוֹתֶם עַל־לִבְךָ כַחוֹתֶם עַל־זְרוֹעֶךָ כִּי־עֵזָה כְּמוֹת אֶהְיֶה קֶשֶׁה כְּשֹׂאֵל קִנְיָה רִשְׁפִּיהָ רִשְׁפִּיהָ אֵשׁ שֶׁלִּבְתֶּיהָ:

Set me as a seal upon thy heart, As a seal upon thine arm; For love is strong as death, Jealousy is cruel as the grave; The flashes thereof are flashes of fire, A very flame of the L-RD.

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)

30 מדלג על ההרים

The beloved hears her lover approaching: “The voice of my beloved; behold, he comes, leaping over the mountains, skipping over the hills.” The discourse beginning “The voice of my beloved” is cited on this phrase.

Song of Songs 2:8 ח"ב:ח

קוֹל דּוֹדִי הִנֵּה־זֶה בָּא מְדַלֵּג עַל־הַהָרִים מְקַפֵּץ עַל־הַגְּבָעוֹת:

Hark! my beloved! behold, he cometh, Leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)

31 ישאו הרים שלום לעם

From the psalm for Shlomo, a prayer that the king's reign bring justice: “May the mountains bear peace to the people, and the hills, through righteousness.” It is cited with “leaping over the mountains” as part of the discussion in that discourse.

Psalms 72:3 ג'ב:ג

יִשְׂאוּ הָרִים שְׁלוֹם לְעָם וּגְבָעוֹת בְּצִדְקָה:

Let the mountains bear peace to the people, and the hills, through righteousness.

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)

32

שובה ישראל

The prophet's call: "Return, O Israel, to Havayah your G-d, for you have stumbled in your iniquity." Its opening words name the discourse to whose end the Alter Rebbe refers.

Hosea 14:2: הוֹשֵׁעַ יִיד: ב'

שׁוֹבֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד הִ' אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי כָשַׁלְתָּ בְּעֹנֶךָ:

Return, O Israel, unto the L-RD thy G-d; For thou hast stumbled in thine iniquity.

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)



LikuteiTorah.com
THE CHASSIDISHE PARSHA

About this edition

This edition contains the Hebrew text, the English translation, our explanations, and the notes.

The Hebrew text of Likkutei Torah: © Kehot Publication Society, via Sefaria, CC BY-NC 4.0; formatting adapted.

Our English translation, made from the Hebrew without Kehot's notes: CC BY-NC 4.0.

Our explanations, with the overview, the questions and the page for children: CC BY-NC 4.0.

The notes: Kehot's marei mekomos ("Sources and References", including the Rebbe's notes) © Kehot Publication Society, via Sefaria, CC BY-NC 4.0; formatting adapted; our notes on them: CC BY-NC 4.0.

Quoted sources, via Sefaria: Mikraot Gedolot (Public Domain); Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA); The Holy Scriptures: A New Translation (JPS 1917) (Public Domain); William Davidson Edition - Vocalized Aramaic (CC-BY-NC); Daf Shevui (CC0); Vilna Edition (Public Domain); Tractate Berakot by A. Cohen, Cambridge University Press, 1921 (Public Domain); Kehot Publication Society (CC-BY-NC).

This edition as a whole: CC BY-NC 4.0. Shuls, schools and non-profit projects may copy, print and share it freely, and may ask for donations to cover the cost of printing; it may never be sold. Credit Kehot Publication Society and likuteitorah.com. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

English translation and explanations: prepared for likuteitorah.com with AI assistance (claude-code/opus-5.5) and checked against the Hebrew and against Sefaria; not yet reviewed by a human editor. Please check anything important against the Hebrew.

The Rebbe asked that the maamarim of the week's parsha, the "Chassidishe Parsha," be learned during that week, spread over its seven days (Sichah of Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel 5725 · Toras Menachem vol. 42, pp. 306-309). Why learn it, and the Rebbe's brachos: likuteitorah.com/about/the-chassidishe-parsha/

A free, non-commercial project; nothing here is sold. Not affiliated with Kehot, Sefaria or the Lubavitch Library. © likuteitorah.com

From likuteitorah.com/likkutei-torah/bamidbar/17/

DEDICATED IN HONOR OF

מוקדש לכבוד הגאון המקובל רבי לוי יצחק שניאורסאהן זצ"ל

Dedicated in honor of the Rebbe's father, Reb Levi Yitzchok