

Discourse 22

“Lehavin Inyan Hilula d’Rashbi - To understand the matter of the Hilula of Rashbi”

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Behar, 16th of Iyyar, 5719

By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

We must better understand the matter of the “wedding celebration” (“*Hilula*”) of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, and why [the day of his passing] is called a “wedding celebration-*Hilula*-הילולא,”¹⁶⁷⁷ unlike other righteous-*Tzaddikim*, for whom a fast day is established on the day of their passing.¹⁶⁷⁸ About this, the Alter Rebbe explains¹⁶⁷⁹ that this may be understood by prefacing with an explanation of the difference between souls and angels. That is, angels are called “those who stand” (*Omdeem*-עומדים), whereas souls are called “those who stride” (*Mehalcheem*-מהלכים), as it states,¹⁶⁸⁰ “I will grant you to stride (*Mehalcheem*-מהלכים) amongst these [angels] who stand (*Omdeem*-עומדים) here.”

The reason angels are called “those who stand” (*Omdeem*-עומדים), is because “standing” indicates measure and

¹⁶⁷⁷ Zohar III (Idra Zuta) 291a, 296b; Zohar I 218a

¹⁶⁷⁸ Tur, Orach Chayim 580

¹⁶⁷⁹ See the discourse by the same title as this in Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5564 p. 101 and on, and with the glosses in Ohr HaTorah, Inyanim p. 218 and on; Also see Sefer HaMaamarim 5654 p. 261 and on, and elsewhere.

¹⁶⁸⁰ Zachariah 3:7

limitation. This is because angels are composed of matter (*Chomer*) and matter (*Chomer*) is measured and limited. For, as known,¹⁶⁸¹ “The ankles of the *Chayot* angels are equal to the [distance between] all [the firmaments] etc.” Thus, because their matter (*Chomer*) is measured and limited, their form (*Tzurah*) and soul are also measured and limited.

In addition, even the bestowal of *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Godliness drawn down to them from Above, which is the matter of their power to grasp *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Godliness, is measured and limited. That is, there is a particular Godly power measured for this particular angel and this particular grasp, and there is another Godly power measured for a different angel with a different grasp, to the point that they can be two opposites. For example, the angel Michael [serves *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He] with love (*Ahavah*), whereas the angel Gavriel [serves Him] with fear (*Yirah*),¹⁶⁸² which are two opposites.

Moreover, in addition to the limitation itself within the bestowal to them, even the manner of the bestowal is limited. That is, at no time will they be roused to a greater degree than when they first grasped, but they constantly remain in one equalized state of arousal. This is because their grasp is given to them in a way of measure and limitation, each one according to what *HaShem*-יהו"ה apportioned to him. This is as stated in *Zohar*¹⁶⁸³ on the verse,¹⁶⁸⁴ “Her Husband is known at the gates

¹⁶⁸¹ Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 13a; Also see Tanya, Ch. 13 and in “Marei Mekomot, Hagahot v’Ha’arot Ktzarot” to Tanya there, as well as in “Likkutei Pirushim” to Tanya (p. 98).

¹⁶⁸² See Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar, discourse entitled “*u’Sefartem*” and its explanation (10a and on).

¹⁶⁸³ *Zohar* I 103b

¹⁶⁸⁴ Proverbs 31:23

(*She'arim*-שערים),” meaning, “According to the upper measurements (*Shiurim*-שיעורים) of Kingship-*Malchut* of the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) etc.”

In contrast, the souls are called “those who stride” (*Mehalcheem*-מהלכים), since they are able to ascend in ascent after ascent to no end. This is the matter of “striding” (*Heeloach*-הילוך), which indicates ascents in a way of limitlessness (*Bli Gvul*).

In other words, even though, in and of itself, the soul is in a state of limitation and measure, [for although the soul is “part of God from on high,”¹⁶⁸⁵ and is called,¹⁶⁸⁶ “the soul of the Almighty (*Nishmat Shaday*-נשמת שדי),” it nevertheless is a separate “part” and is in a state of limitation that [literally] is brought into being (*Yesh*) from nothing (*Ayin*), nevertheless, its ascents are without end or measure.

This is why the souls are called “those who stride” (*Mehalcheem*-מהלכים), being that they can come to a level that is far beyond any comparison to their essential being, and ultimately can reach all the way to the highest of heights, meaning to the Essential Self of the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

¹⁶⁸⁵ Job 31:2; Pardes Rimonim of Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, Shaar 32, Ch. 1; Ohr Ne'erav by the same author, Chelek 1, Ch. 3; Likkutei Torah of the Arizal, Bereishit; Etz Chayim, Shaar 42, Ch. 1; Etz HaDa'at Tov of Rabbi Chayim Vital, VaEtchanan; Asis Rimonim v'Pelach HaRimon, Shaar 32, Ch. 1; Chessed L'Avraham, Maayan 3, Nahar 25; Introduction to Siddur HaArizal of Rabbi Yaakov Kopel of Mezhritch; Da'at Tevunot of the Ramchal, Section 158; Shefa Tal, Introduction; GR"A to Heichalot, Heichala Tinyana, Heichal 1; Nefesh HaChayim, Shaar 1, Ch 5, and elsewhere.

¹⁶⁸⁶ Job 32:8; 33:4

2.

Now, as the souls are before entering a body in this world, they are in the aspect of the level of angels, and also are called “those who stand” (*Omdeem*-עומדים), as the prophet Eliyahu stated,¹⁶⁸⁷ “As *HaShem*-יהו"ה, before Whom I **stood** (*Amadeti*-עמדתי), lives etc.” Only after the soul has come into the body and has served *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, through fulfilling Torah and *mitzvot*, does the soul merit to be in the aspect of “one who strides” (*Mehalech*-מהלך) in a way of ascent after ascent.

By way of analogy, the reason may be understood from this physical world, in what we observe in the cohabitation of physical souls. That is, before cohabitation, their state is that of limitation and measure, and thus what is bestowed to them is measured and limited, just like all other novel created beings. However, when they cohabit and produce offspring, the bestowal is utterly limitless, being that generations upon generations of descendants can now branch out from them without limit or measure. It therefore must be said that in the birth of children, there is a radiance of the light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, who transcends the created, and even transcends the emanated etc.

The same is understood about the Godly soul, that when it cohabits with the body, it gives birth to good deeds etc. There therefore is a radiance of the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in this. That is, the soul is thereby able to ascend to no end or measure. In contrast, before

¹⁶⁸⁷ Kings I 17:1; See Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 25, p. 147, note 53.

the soul came into the body, it did not have this power. This then, is why specifically after they come into this world the souls are called “those who stride” (*Mehalcheem*-מהלכים), but not before.

3.

However, if the soul does not toil in service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, by fulfilling His Torah and *mitzvot*, then even when it is in the body, it is not yet called “one who strides” (*Mehalech*-מהלך). About this the verse states [about Torah],¹⁶⁸⁸ “As you stride (*b'Heethalechecha*-בהתהלכך) it will guide you,” meaning that Torah is what guides the soul in ascent after ascent to the highest of heights.

This is because the soul is incapable of striding of its own accord, except specifically through Torah alone. This is because Torah is rooted in the aspect of the Supernal Crown-*Keter Elyon*-כת"ר עליון. This is why the *mitzvot* are called the 620-תרי"ך pillars of light (*Amudei Ohr*), which shares the same letters as the Crown-*Keter*-כת"ר-620.¹⁶⁸⁹ This is because they are like the pillars (*Amudim*-עמודים) of a house, which stand between the roof and the floor, and bind the roof to the floor, thus making them one.¹⁶⁹⁰

¹⁶⁸⁸ Proverbs 6:22

¹⁶⁸⁹ See the introduction to *Sefer HaTziruf* of Rabbi Avraham Abulafia; *Pardes Rimmonim*, Shaar 8 (Shaar Mehut v' Hanhagah), Ch. 3; *Tanya*, *Iggeret HaKodesh*, Epistle 29; Also see the discourse entitled “*Bati LeGani* – I have come to My garden,” of this year, 5719, Discourse 13, Ch. 2, and elsewhere.

¹⁶⁹⁰ See at greater length in the preceding discourse entitled “*Bati LeGani* – I have come to My garden,” of this year, 5719, Discourse 13, Ch. 2 and on.

Now, it should be said that because of their ability to bind them, the pillars (*Amudim*) are loftier than both [the roof and the floor]. The same is so of the 620-תר"ך pillars of light of Torah and *mitzvot*, which are the inner aspect (*Pnimiyut*) of the Holy One, blessed is He, and are also called “the 613-תר"ג pathways of the skull (*Gulgalta*),”¹⁶⁹¹ which is the inner aspect (*Pnimiyut*) of the Crown-*Keter*. That is, they guide and bind the soul from the lowest level to the highest of heights, with ascent after ascent.

4.

The explanation is that, as known, the ascent of the soul in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) on each Shabbat and new moon, is specifically by means of the pillar (*Amud*-עמוד) within the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*). To explain, the difference between the pillar (*Amud*-עמוד) and the hall of the sanctuary (*Heichal*-היכל), is like the difference between that which is inner (*Pnimiyut*) and that which is external (*Chitzoniyut*).

For example, in a physical hall (*Heichal*), its externality (*Chitzoniyut*) is where a person sits in a way that is openly revealed to all, but in its inner aspect (*Pnimiyut*) there is a hidden and concealed path, which is the path of ascent by way of the pillar (*Amud*), and this is the inner aspect (*Pnimiyut*) of the sanctuary (*Heichal*-היכל).

The same is so of the grasp and comprehension of the souls in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*). That is, throughout

¹⁶⁹¹ See Zohar III 129a, and the commentary of the Arizal there; Mishnat Chassidim, Mesechet Arich Anpin, Ch. 4; Likkutei Torah, Re'eh 21d.

the mundane days of the week (*Chol*), they are in the aspect of the sanctuary (*Heichal*) of the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*), which only is its externality (*Chitzoniyut*). However, on Shabbat and Yom Tov, they ascend to the inner aspect (*Pnimiyyut*) by way of the pillar (*Amud*), which is bound from the beginning of the sanctuary (*Heichal*) to its end and is rooted in a loftier level that transcends this sanctuary (*Heichal*).

That is, there is a radiance from the upper Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) of the world of Formation (*Yetzirah*) which radiates and illuminates in the pillar (*Amud*) of the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) of the world of Action (*Asiyah*). Therefore, the ascent from the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) of the world of Action (*Asiyah*) to the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*) of the world of Formation (*Yetzirah*), is by way of the pillar (*Amud*).

From this we can also understand the matter as it relates to the *mitzvot*, which [also] are called “pillars” (*Amudim*). That is, the primary aspect of the “pillar” (*Amud*) is the inner aspect (*Pnimiyyut*) of the *mitzvot*, which is the matter of the intention (*Kavanah*) of the *mitzvah*. For, it is through [the intention] that a person unifies the upper unifications (*Yichudim*), and draws down the limitless light of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, in fulfilling the *mitzvah* in action.

In contrast, as the *mitzvah* is on its own, without the intention (*Kavanah*), it only is the externality (*Chitzoniyut*). Therefore, a person who only fulfills the *mitzvot* in action, is positioned in the lower Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden HaTachton*), and will not ascend by way of the pillar (*Amud*) etc. Only a person who fulfills the *mitzvot* with their inner intent (*Kavanah*

Pnimit) will ascend by way of the pillar (*Amud*) in ascent after ascent and from strength to strength without measure or limit.

The same is so of Torah, in which there is the concealed aspect and the revealed aspect, the inner aspect (*Pnimiyut*) and the external aspect (*Chitzoniyut*). That is, the revealed parts of Torah, which relate to fulfilling the *mitzvot* in action, are only the aspect of the externality (*Chitzoniyut*) of Torah. However, the secrets and hidden reasons for the *mitzvot* are the inner aspect (*Pnimiyut*) of Torah.

5.

Based on this, it is understood that when Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai revealed the hidden parts of Torah, this caused an ascent to the inner aspect (*Pnimiyut*), (like the above-mentioned example of the pillar-*Amud*), to the point that there could be “strides” (*Heelooch*-הילוך) without measure at all. This is because by revealing the secrets of the Torah he gave “birth” to upper unifications (*Yichudim*).

However, this is not so of the externality (*Chitzoniyut*) of Torah, which relates only to action (*Ma'aseh*) and has measure and limitation, in which case a person is called “one who stands” (*Omed*-עומד), since he does not ascend by way of the “pillar” (*Amud*) in ascent after ascent etc.

This is why a fast is established upon the death of the righteous-*Tzaddikim*, because of the absence of their light in this world, given that the world even lacks in fulfilling the *mitzvot* in action, and even though high above, an impression remains of their actions, nevertheless, they are incapable of

ascending in ascent after ascent, since they are in a state of measure and limitation.

In contrast, with Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, who revealed the secrets and hidden aspects of Torah, the impression that remains above, is in a way of ascent after ascent without any measure or limit whatsoever. This is why the day of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's passing is called a "wedding celebration" (*Hilula*), indicating the revelation of light (*Ohr*) in a limitless way.

The indication of this is that the "striding" (*Heelooch-*הילוך) to no end and measure brought about through the inner aspects (*Pnimiyut*) of the Torah, is in a way that the light (*Ohr*) even illuminates below. In contrast, this is not so of other righteous-*Tzaddikim*, who only relate to the revealed parts of Torah. Even though, upon their passing there is an illumination of light above, nevertheless, there is a matter of concealment and fasting below.

6.

The [Alter Rebbe's] discourse concludes: With all the above, we can understand the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,¹⁶⁹² "This world from which we are departing is compared to a wedding celebration." That is,¹⁶⁹³ it is in "this world," specifically, where the Godly soul is manifest within the physical body and can give birth to good deeds etc. "From which we are departing," means that we depart from it, from the

¹⁶⁹² Talmud Bavli, Eruvin 54a (*Ein Yaakov*)

¹⁶⁹³ See Ohr HaTorah, Vayechi 416b, 419a; Teitzei 1,013.

state of “one who stands” (*Omed*-עומד) to the state of “one who strides” (*Mehelach*-מהלך). This is specifically because it is “from this world.” That is, this specifically comes about through the manifestation of the soul in a body in this world. This is because “it is compared to a wedding celebration,” meaning that it is like a wedding, which is the above-mentioned matter of cohabitation, by which power is granted for there to be ascents and strides to no end.¹⁶⁹⁴

7.

Now, at first glance, it is not understood why the Alter Rebbe added the explanation about the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory, that “this world, that we are departing from, is compared to a wedding celebration,” given that he already finished explaining the “wedding celebration” (*Hilula*) of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

Moreover, there also seems to be a contradiction between this teaching of our sages, of blessed memory, and what was explained before about the “wedding celebration” (*Hilula*) of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. Namely, the matter indicated by the teaching, “This world, from which we are departing etc.,” applies to every single Jew, and certainly to the righteous-*Tzaddikim*, including those righteous-*Tzaddikim* whose day of passing is a matter of fasting.

¹⁶⁹⁴ This concludes the discourse of the Alter Rebbe cited at the beginning of the discourse.

We therefore can propose that the explanation of this is based on the well-known matter that Torah is taught both in a general (*Klallut*) way and in a way of particulars (*Pratiyut*).¹⁶⁹⁵ In other words, the general and primary matter of “striding” (*Heelooch*-הילוך) was found in Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. However, more particularly (*Pratiyut*), this also is present in every single Jew, stemming from the general aspect of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

That is, there is a small element of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in each and every Jew.¹⁶⁹⁶ Moreover, this is not only specifically on the day of Lag BaOmer, but on each and every day of the year. In other words, the matter of “striding” (*Heelooch*-הילוך) comes about through every deed.

Now, although this matter is present throughout all the days of the year, it is understood that an even greater revelation of this takes place on the Shabbat preceding Lag BaOmer, being that “all the days of the week are blessed by Shabbat,”¹⁶⁹⁷ including Lag BaOmer, on which there is the illumination of the matter of “striding” (*Heelooch*-הילוך) in a limitless way, in a way of “You shall burst forth-*u’Faratzta*-נפרצת.”¹⁶⁹⁸

¹⁶⁹⁵ Rashi to Leviticus 25:1

¹⁶⁹⁶ Similar to what is stated regarding our teacher Moshe in Tanya, Ch. 44 (63a).

¹⁶⁹⁷ Zohar II 63b, 88a

¹⁶⁹⁸ See Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as Gates of Light, Gate Five (*Tiferet*) and Gate Nine (*Chochmah*); Also see the discourse entitled “*U’Faratzta* – You shall break forth,” of last year, 5718, translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe, 5718, Discourse 30.