"Open my eyes so that I may see the **wonders** of Your Torah"

בס"ד

Wonders

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of HaRav **Yitzchak Ginsburgh**

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שַׁבָּת וַיֵּשֶׁב ❁ כב-כג כִּסְלֵו תשפ"ו



Every husband should know that his wife might annul his will; she might take what he wants and sculpt it into something different. This is one of the goals of marriage according to the Chasidic interpretation that, "A good wife performs her husband's will" should be understood as, "A good wife sculpts her husband's will."

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The Lubavitcher Rebbe to Rav Ginsburgh, Elul 5741

"…It would be proper to publish your classes in book form. With blessings for success…"



Wonders

An anthology from the shiurim and farbrengens
of Harav **Yitzchak Ginsburgh**

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FARBRENGEN EXCERPT
AND YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR WIFE WITH ALL OF YOUR HEART

This excerpt goes together with the review of HaRav Ginsburgh's foundational book Shechinah Beineihem also in this issue. The cornerstone of every marriage is the love and respect between husband and wife. In many ways, the Torah focuses on the husband's role in marriage because he is the one who bears the obligatory responsibility to wed and to take care of his wife's needs.

Continuing his ever inspiring and demanding teachings on the topic of marriage, Rav Ginsburgh here argues that one should extend the example of love for God to love of one's wife.

This is an excerpt from another Sheva Berachot farbrengen held in honor of a granddaughter's marriage on the 6th of Cheshvan 5786 and first published in the Vayeira 5786 edition of Nifla'ot.

In the Book of Malachi, the prophet uses three connotations for the bride that every husband should think about:

> You ask, "Because of what?" Because God is a witness between you and the wife of your youth with whom you have broken faith, though she is your friend and your wife in covenant.[1]

The three connotations are: the wife of your youth, your friend, and your wife in covenant.

The middle connotation, she is your friend follows the idiom we like to quote that "a good wife is a good friend,"[2] with all the implications that friendship has, including being a *chavruta*—someone you learn with.

The third connotation, your wife in covenant, implies that the connection goes well beyond friendship. It is based on a covenant, on a bond, on a pledge to always remain faithful to one another. It is the type of connection that two people who share an intimate secret have.

The *Tzemach Tzedek* said that there are three types of confidants, three types of people who keep a secret. There is the type whom you can tell knows the secret. There is a type that shows nothing outwardly, but internally, knows he is keeping a secret. And then there is the type of person who keeps the secret so hidden that even inwardly, they themselves do not know they are keeping a secret. This third type is a description of true female modesty—she herself does not know she is keeping a secret. Only when the time comes to reveal it, is it revealed.

1. Malachi 2:14
2. *Mishlei Yisrael* 588 based on *Midrash Shmuel* and Rabbeinu Yitzchak of Toledo on *Avot* 1:6.

What we want to do now is to correspond these three connotations, which describe the love a man should have for his wife, with the three types of love that one should have for God, "And you shall love *Havayah* your God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, and with all of your might."[3]

LOVE BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE

Before we start looking at this correspondence, let us add that the Ba'al Shem Tov is reported to have said that a man should love his wife like he loves his *tefillin*. This saying is not meant to belittle the love between husband and wife, as a fool might think. On the contrary, it is meant to encourage a husband to love his wife even more than he does now. To understand this point, let us turn to the *Tanya*. The Alter Rebbe writes to his followers[4] that they should always remember that a Jew does not love his wife (only) because of natural love, i.e., natural attraction. Not because she may cook for him and take care of the home and the children. Rather, a Jew should love his wife (and his children) because of the Divine in them and because it is a *mitzvah* to love them.

At first, it may seem that love should be natural, especially between husband and wife and between parents and their children. However, experience shows that though natural love can be an ingredient in a relationship, it cannot form its foundation because it is usually temporary as well as conditional.[5] When love for one's wife is based on love of her Divine soul, it is a formula for lasting respect and interest. Since "commandment" in Hebrew (מִצְוָה), *mitzvah* is cognate with "together" (צַוותָא),[6] when love of one's wife is based on the love of the commandment to be married, it leads to a feeling of togetherness. Since the woman represents the Divine Presence, it also fills the home with the *Shechinah*.

The most important thing between a husband and wife is love. The invitation to the Lubavitcher Rebbe's wedding with the Rebbe Rayatz's daughter included four paragraphs whose initials spell the word "love." The Alter Rebbe explained that the *mitzvah* to love your fellow as you love yourself is greater than the *mitzvah* to love God,[7] and one begins to truly fulfill love for others by loving his wife.

LOVE OF GOD, LOVE OF ONE'S WIFE

We repeat daily, "And you shall love *Havayah* your God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, and with all of your might" (וְאָהַבְתָּ אֵת יי־הוה אֱ־לֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל מְאֹדֶךָ) The original Hebrew words contain the untranslatable word אֵת. The sages considered this word normally superfluous, so when it appears, the accepted principle is that its purpose is to include something more that the verse does not state explicitly. The sages identified fear as the inclusion, meaning

3. Deuteronomy 6:5.
4. *Iggeret HaKodesh* 9.
5. Think of what happens to natural love for one's child that is supposedly eternal and unbreakable when the child reaches adulthood and does not live up to his or her parents' expectation, or even worse, disgraces them. As it turns out, natural love is conditional, more often than not. Likewise, the natural love that brings a couple together to wed is in most cases unrecognizable after a few years of marriage, forcing couples to base their relationship on mutual responsibilities like raising children, another temporary solution.
6. *HaYom Yom* for 8th of *Cheshvan*.
7. *HaTamim* vol. 4, p. 45.

that the verse is telling us to both love and fear God, "with all of…." However, because the word אֵת appears before "*Havayah* your God, the inclusion should be related to the subject and it follows that its purpose here is to include one's wife, whom you should love with all of your heart, etc." A similar exegesis can be found regarding the verse, "*Havayah* your God you shall fear"[8] (אֶת יְ־הוה אֱ־לֹהֶיךָ תִּירָא), where the sages learn[9] that the אֵת teaches the inclusion of scholars of Torah (*talmidei chachamim*). The connection between אֵת and one's wife is further strengthened by the fact that the word אֵת can also be read as the feminine you (אַתְּ).[10]

If we would rewrite the verse with one's wife as the subject, it would read, "You shall love the wife of your youth, your friend, and your wife in covenant." Its meaning would be that first you should love your wife with both your inclinations. That is easy to understand, since without sanctifying the evil inclination and its attractive force, there could be no marital union and no offspring from marriage. This stage only requires a transformation or sweetening of our inclination—taking the evil inclination and using it for good.

Then you should "love your wife with all of your soul," which requires self-coercion since regarding God, it means "even if He takes your soul." Likewise, a husband should love his wife even if she seems to be taking his soul. The Hebrew word appearing in the verse (נַפְשְׁךָ) does not literally mean "soul" (נְשָׁמָה), but rather "your will."[11] Every husband should know that his wife might annul his will; she might take what he wants and sculpt it into something different. This is one of the goals of marriage according to the Chasidic interpretation[12] that, "A good wife performs her husband's will"[13] should be understood as, "A good wife sculpts her husband's will."

Finally, you should "love your wife with all of your might," which the sages interpret as "with all of your possessions." Clearly, this means that whatever is mine is also my wife's. Before the exile, one was obliged to use all his money to perform a commandment (later, this was limited to up to one-fifth of one's possessions). The same applies to one's wife. One should be willing to feel that (and be willing to give) all his possessions for her needs. The sages' second interpretation is that one should be thankful to God, regardless of what measure one receives. Likewise, one should voice one's thanks to his wife in all circumstances.

This is how we could follow the sages' lead and reinterpret the verse as applied to a husband's love for his wife.

YOUTHFUL ENERGY, LEARNING, AND PARTNERSHIP

Now, we would like to use our observations so far to delve a bit deeper into the correspondence. When the prophet describes a wife as "the wife of one's youth,"

8. Deuteronomy 6:13.

9. *Pesachim* 22b.

10. In the past, we have applied this principle to the second half of the Torah's first verse, which then reads, "you are the heavens you are the earth" (אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ), meaning "you [my wife] are both my spiritual and my physical, and I love you with both my spirituality and my physicality."

11. As in the verse (Genesis 23:8), "If you are willing" (אִם יֶשׁ אֵת נַפְשְׁכֶם).

12. *Likkutei Sichot* vol. 4, *Balak* §4. *Sichah* from Purim 5743, §25.

13. *Tanna DeBei Eliyahu Rabbah*, ch. 9.

he means to stress the youthful energy and love that includes both inclinations. That is why he also warns against being unfaithful to her, because it is the same youthful energy (today, we would say hormones) that could bring about infidelity, God forbid. Youthful love is still immature and therefore requires that the man indeed feel attracted to the woman he will marry, he cannot yet count on having a mature love that is based only on the love of the Divine soul in his wife.[14]

The connotation, your friend, refers to the connection between husband and wife. This connection can be at multiple levels. At the intellectual level it manifests when the couple learn Torah together as a *chavruta*—literally, a friendship—but even more so, when they act to bring others close to Torah. The Torah relates that this is what Abraham and Sarah did—make a soul or make someone else's will.

Finally, the highest level—your wife in covenant—is associated as we saw with possessions. The sages say that we find people who are more attached to their possessions than to their life—they would rather give up their life than their possessions. How is this possible? The explanation in Kabbalah is that though both life and possessions are emanations from one's super-consciousness, from the *sefirah* of crown, life emanates from the crown's will while possessions emanate from its pleasure. For this reason, sometimes, one cannot feel pleasure in life, but one constantly wants to continue living. Possessions, however, are strongly associated with pleasure and therefore are always experienced as such.[15] The point is that the relationship between a husband and wife is immutable like the pleasure received from possessions; it is a covenantal relationship. Even if husband or wife do things that would God forbid hurt their relationship, they will not act to end it, because they feel that it is not just the product of a choice (of will), it is a product of that which is beyond will.

14. Traditionally, this is the difference between marrying one's pre-ordained spouse—designated as בַּת זִוּגוֹ in traditional wedding announcements—and marrying the love of one's life—designated as בְּחִירַת לִבּוֹ—wording used in less traditional wedding announcements. The former means that the couple are pre-ordained to marry, the latter means that they have chosen to do so, not because of some pre-ordination.

15. This is also one of the reasons why we base marriage on an acquisition in the same way that we would acquire a possession, with either money or objects that have the equivalent value of money.

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CONCLUSION

Shechinah Beineihem is a work that is best studied in conjunction with the recordings and transcripts of the many classes Rav Ginsburgh has given on it over the years. It is one of his fundamental works, capturing the essence of his thoughts on Chasidic psychology and relationships, which are mentioned time and again in almost every one of his teachings since then. It is not for the beginner and cannot be learnt without an expert knowledge of Hebrew and Torah. However, anyone seeking a Torah outlook on these topics, would do well to learn this volume seriously or undertake the systematic study of the many volumes on marriage and relationships that have since been published by Gal Einai, both in Hebrew and in English.

MAIN ARTICLE

THE SONG OF THE TORAH

In the previous issue of Wonders, we briefly mentioned the model of the four levels of Torah understanding based on the Hebrew letters. This model is referred to by the acronym: *TaNTA* (טנת"א). The *Ta* is for *ta'amim*, the musical cantillation marks that describe the way the Torah text is meant to be sung—the song of the Torah. The *N* stands for *nekudot*, the vowel signs which tell us how to pronounce each word. The *T* is for *tagin*, the calligraphic crowns inked on the top of some of the letters. Finally, the *A* stands for the *otiyot*, the letters themselves.

For everyday use, we now use printed volumes of the Torah text. In the typical printed volume, only three of these levels appear: the letters, the vowels and the cantillation marks. In an actual handwritten Torah scroll from which we can read publicly, only the letters and crowns appear. The vowels and music cantillation marks, handed down to us through the Oral tradition, do not appear but the person reading the Torah in public memorizes the vowels and cantillation marks so that they can properly read the text.

CROWNS ON THE LETTERS

There are various traditions regarding the inking of crowns on letters in a Torah scroll, but generally six letters receive a single tag or crown and seven letters in principle have three tags or crowns. This leaves nine letters which usually do not have a crown:

no crowns	א ו כ (ך) ל מ (ם) ס פ (ף) ר ת	
1 crown	ב ד ק ז י ה	*bedek chayah*
3 crowns	ש ע ט נ (ן) ז ג צ (ץ)	*sha'atnez getz*

A highly symbolic Talmudic passage[1] recounts an episode that occurred when Moses was learning the Torah from the Almighty at the top of Mount Sinai. Moses was surprised to see that God was placing crowns on some of the Torah's letters. He asked God what the purpose of these crowns was, and God responded that in the future a man named Akiva, the son of Joseph, will derive mounds of practical Torah laws from these crowns. We learn from this that every element of the Torah text holds infinite layers of meaning and mystery to be accessed and activated through inspired exegesis.

MODELS OF FOUR AND GOD'S NAME

In this model, the letters of God's name correspond to the four levels of the Torah's text from above to below:

letter of *Havayah*	part of Torah	Hebrew name
yud	cantillation marks	טְעָמִים
hei	vowels	נְקֻדּוֹת
vav	crowns	תָּגִין
hei	letters	אוֹתִיּוֹת

1. *Menachot* 29b.

Since the Torah is the manifestation of God's will and God's essential Name, *Havayah* has four letters, it is not surprising that this model of the Torah text's components parallels what is perhaps the most famous four-part model of the Torah. This model is known by the acronym PaRDeS referring to four different interpretative modes that can be applied to every word, verse, story, and *mitzvah* in the Torah, simultaneously.

The *P* stands for *Peshat* and refers to the plain, or literal meaning of the text. The *R* stands for the *Remez* mode of interpretation, which employs what are usually technical linguistic tools such as *gematria* (numerical values), letter substitutions, shorthand analysis (*notarikon*), and many others, which are all usually categorized as allusions. The *D* stands for *Derash*, which seeks the homiletic, allegorical, metaphorical, or symbolic meaning of the text. Finally, the *S* stands for *Sod*, the mystical or secret meaning, revealed by the Torah's concealed tradition documented in various Kabbalistic works.

When we place these two models, side by side, we get the following correspondence:

letter of *Havayah*	part of Torah	mode of interpretation
yud	cantillation marks	*Sod*
hei	vowels	*Derash*
vav	crowns	*Remez*
hei	letters	*Peshat*

The letters are considered the lowest and most basic level of the text and are connected to the *peshat*, the literal meaning of the text. The crowns (*tagin*) which were described above, correspond to the *remez*, the allusions in Torah interpretation. The vowels (*nekudot*) are the mobilizing, moving force in the text. Without the vowels we would not know how to articulate the letters and words. The dynamism of the vowels corresponds to the *drash*, the allegorical, metaphoric and symbolic understanding of the Torah.[2] The musical cantillation marks (*ta'amei hamikra*) are considered the highest level of understanding the text. Though they reveal an element of song, they are strictly bound to the text and thus reveal its secrets. This level of exegesis corresponds to the *sod*, the secret, mystical, Kabbalistic expounding of Torah text.

Ta'amei hamikra have three basic functions: they provide the Torah's text with punctuation, they denote proper intonation and emphasis within a verse, and they serve as musical notes to indicate how the text should be chanted or sung.

If one were to compare a Torah text to food, the letters would correspond to the color and shape of the food, the crowns of the letters would correspond to the source of the food, whether from mineral, vegetable, or animal.[3] The vowels would correspond to the texture of the food and the musical cantillation marks would relate to the taste of the food. The root of the word for the cantillation marks, *ta'amim*, means both "taste," i.e., the flavor of the food and "reason," the rationale as it were behind the

2. For more on above section, see *Sod HaShem Li'Yereiav*, ch. 24.

3. The source of the letters is from above, hence the reason for the crowns always being drawn on top of the letters, as if they were connecting the letter above to its source.

text. But there is one level even higher than the cantillation marks, which are connected and bound by the text. This fifth level is the music the cantillation carries independently of the words. This music, which is the most hidden level of the Torah, can be compared to the aroma of the food.[4]

letter of *Havayah*	part of Torah	mode of interpretation	Hebrew name
tip of yud	wordless music	*Sha'ashu'im*	שַׁעֲשׁוּעִים
yud	cantillation marks	*Sod*	טְעָמִים
hei	vowels	*Derash*	נְקֻדּוֹת
vav	crowns	*Remez*	תָּגִין
hei	letters	*Peshat*	אוֹתִיּוֹת

The fifth level is known as the recreation or amusement level of Torah. The first four levels of Torah interpretation follow known rules of reasoning. At the fifth level, these rules are superseded in a certain sense by an amused creativity in learning Torah. This is the type of learning that only those who have achieved a mastery of Torah at the highest levels can engage in. The analogy to music is quite powerful. Though playing existing pieces of music is rewarding and enjoyable, it is only when one strikes out to create new music that expresses one's essence that the true joy of music is felt. In the Midrash, this type of Torah interpretation is described as "a novel Torah will emerge from Me"[5] (חִדּוּשׁ תּוֹרָה מֵאִתִּי יֵצֵא). The "me" in this phrase carries two meanings. On the one hand it refers to Torah that comes from "Me," i.e., the Almighty, as it is a perfect extension of the Torah given at Sinai and does not in any way contradict anything already established, on the other hand it refers to "me," i.e., to the individual, because the feeling is that this revelation of the Torah's wordless song is a perfect reflection of my deepest most inner core. Rebbe Hillel of Paritch referred to it as the melody that every soul heard in the Garden of Eden, before being born into a physical body, and which it searches and yearns to find again all its days on earth.

TORAH AS SONG

The Torah's song, its wordless music, constitutes a fifth level that is currently mostly inaccessible to us and reaches beyond the four revealed levels of the Torah text. This fifth level is alluded to in various places in the Torah, one of which is in the famous statement from the *Zohar* that there are three knots that are tied to one another: Torah, the Jewish people, and the Almighty.[6] This well-known statement from the *Zohar* continues, "and each of them has a hidden and a revealed level. This hidden dimension is the musical dimension of Torah, of the Jewish people, and of God. The hidden musical dimension in Torah is the Song of Torah.

Significantly, in the Book of Deuteronomy, the Almighty Himself refers to the Torah as a song, "And now write this song for yourselves and teach it to the Israelites."[7] The sages explain that even though this is ostensibly referring to the Song of *Ha'azinu*, in practice we learn from these words that every person

4. See *Music: The Quill of the Soul*, pp. 35-40.
5. *Vayikra Rabbah* 13:3.
6. *Zohar* 3:73a.
7. Deuteronomy 31:19.

is commanded to write themselves a complete Torah, for the entire Torah is considered a song![8]

WINE AND KISSES

In our previous article about *Perek Shirah*, we discussed the idea of the highest levels of Torah understanding relating symbolically to "kissing" and drinking wine, both of which are mentioned together at the very beginning of the Song of Songs: "The Song of Songs which is Solomon's. He will kiss me from the kisses of His mouth; because Your love is better than wine."[9] The word for wine in Hebrew (יין) equals 70, the same as the word for "secret," (סוד). The sages teach: "When wine enters, a secret exudes."[10] This teaching expresses Israel's longing for closeness with God, to receive His deepest Torah secrets. This experience is greater than any physical gratification or stimulation the world can offer.

The Torah's song, revealed to us through the cantillation marks, includes both the musical notes by which we sing the Torah text and the and the fifth level of Torah interpretation that the cantillation marks can only hint at and which includes the underlying reasons for the *mitzvot* as well as a completely different level of known God. The latter at present cannot be fully revealed but will be by the Mashiach.[11]

To translate this into King Solomon's parable, the wine of the Torah relates to its intellectual level, as manifest in the *sefirot* of wisdom (*chochmah*), understanding (*binah*), and knowledge (*da'at*). But the Torah's wordless song is the kisses of God whose origin is even higher than the intellect. These kisses come from the *sefirah* of crown (*keter*), the superconscious level of soul that hovers above the intellect—the kiss surpasses the taste of wine. It is the kisses that God kisses us through the Torah that testify to His infinite love for us: "He shall kiss me from the kisses of His mouth; because Your love is better than wine."

8. *Hilchot Tefillin Mezuzah veSefer Torah* 7:1.
9. Song of Songs 1:1-2.
10. *Eiruvin* 65a.
11. *Rashi* on Song of Songs *loc. cit.* Midrash *Otiyot DeRabbi Akiva* §7. *Yalkut Shimoni*, Isaiah 429.

STORY

REBBE CHAIM OF CHERNOWITZ: THE STORY THAT SAVED

Rabbi Chaim Tirer, know eponymously by his work, Be'er Mayim Chaim, was one of the great figures of Chasidut and the disciple of Rabbi Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov. He was born in 5506 (1746) to his father Rabbi Shlomo, a disciple of Rabbi Nachman of Horodenka. In 5565 (1805), as a young man, the Be'er Mayim Chaim was asked to serve as rabbi in Czernowitz, where he continued to serve for many years thereafter. After the annexation

of Bukovina by the Austrian Empire and following his struggle with the Austrian authorities on behalf of the Jews of Vienna who were then expelled, the tzaddik left his position in Czernowitz to ascend to the Land of Israel. After crossing the border into the Principality of Moldova, he served as rabbi in Botoșani and later in Kishinev, only reaching the Land of Israel in 5573 (1813), where he settled in Tzfat. He passed away on the 27th of Kislev 5578 (1817), the third night of Chanukah, and was buried in the ancient cemetery in Tzfat.

Once, Rabbi Chaim fell very ill and the doctors despaired of him. For three days he lay as if inanimate, not opening his eyes or speaking a word, and they only poured soup and medicines into his mouth. Suddenly, the *tzaddik* sat up in his bed, placed his hands on his head and cried out loudly: "Oy! Oy!" Those standing around him were greatly alarmed, and one of his attendants approached him and asked: "Rebbe, why are you crying 'oy oy'?" He replied: "Don't you see that the Ba'al Shem Tov is standing next to me?" The attendant became even more frightened than Rebbe Chaim, but immediately the *tzaddik's* illness departed and he began to return to health.

Afterwards, the *tzaddik* recounted the awesome event, saying that his soul had almost departed from him and only a trace of life remained. He saw himself walking in the upper worlds and saw the Ba'al Shem Tov, of blessed memory, and said to him: "Our teacher, do me a kindness that the Holy Blessed One should heal me!" He replied: "What merit do you have that I should intercede for you?" Rabbi Chaim said: "Was it not the holy way of Rebbe Michel of Zlotchov, of blessed memory, that he would not recite the Grace After Meals at the third Sabbath meal until he spoke of some deed relating to you, our master? Once, he sat at the third meal until the entire night had passed and they saw the light of day in the house, and he ordered that water be brought for the final hand-washing. When they brought it before him, I reminded him: 'My master, you have not yet spoken of the Ba'al Shem Tov!' He told me: 'Well said!' and ordered to remove the water for the final hand-washing and spoke of some matter concerning your honor, and only afterwards did he recite the Grace After Meals."

The Ba'al Shem Tov answered him: "You are right, and this I will do for you: I will bless you, and I trust that my blessing will not return empty."

"And behold," Rebbe Chaim continued, "when he began to bless me, I was not yet afraid, for my soul was barely within my body. But with each moment my strength increased, and with it, I saw him standing opposite me, with his holy hands on my head and blessing me! I became very frightened. And afterwards, I returned to my strength and health."

This story, which vividly illustrates the great virtue of stories about *tzaddikim*, is very fitting for the date of Rebbe Chaim's passing. On Chanukah, we light one candle

on the first night, two on the second, and so on. In total 36 candles, corresponding to the number of *tzaddikim* in every generation. The *tzaddikim* are connected to the candles because, like a candle, they illuminate our eyes with their Torah and righteousness, which is why the *tzaddikim* are called "the eyes of the congregation." What is the significance of this parallel?

The holy Arizal, and similarly it is told about the Ba'al Shem Tov, knew how to communicate and converse with all of reality around him: living beings, plants, and inanimate objects. In everything there is Divine vitality and a living soul, and every spark of Divinity is a conversational partner for the *tzaddik*. Among other things, a place of honor was reserved for conversation with the flame of a candle. Candles told hidden things to the Arizal and revealed to the Ba'al Shem Tov the deeds of people in his vicinity. For us too, the Chanukah candles tell stories. Each candle tells us about a particular *tzaddik*, about his *mitzvot*—"for a *mitzvah* is a candle and Torah is light"[1]—and about his guarding of the covenant, which is hinted to by the oil in the candle, since the Hebrew word for "oil" (שֶׁמֶן), when transposed using the *Atbash* letter-mapping, becomes ביט, the holy Name associated with the rectification of the procreative covenant.

In general, in Chasidut, a story is associated with light. The Hebrew word for "story" (סִפּוּר) is related to the precious and illuminating "sapphire" (סַפִּיר) stone, which reveals to us a bit of the essence of the *tzaddik*. Indeed, the connection between a candle and the revelation and illumination of the *tzaddik's* figure is hinted to in the words "Chanukah candle" (**נֵר חֲנֻכָּה**), whose value is the same as the pinnacle of Joseph's revelation to his brothers when he said to them, "I am Joseph, is my father still alive?" (אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הַעוֹד אָבִי חָי).

Unpacking this identity a bit more, we note that the Torah portions that focus on Joseph the *Tzaddik*, the first and foremost of the *tzaddikim* who guard the covenant, are always read around Chanukah. Each Chanukah candle that we kindle is thus a revelation of another *tzaddik*—another aspect of Joseph the *Tzaddik*. Like Joseph, who seemed to his brothers to be an Egyptian royal who had become their enemy and then suddenly revealed himself as a loving and compassionate brother, the *tzaddikim* are revealed to us from their concealment through the light of the candles and their stories. The revelation of the tzaddik's soul is also connected to the custom of some *tzaddikim* to play the violin while lighting the candles, since "violin" (**כִּנּוֹר**) has the same value as the words "the candle of *Havayah*" (**נֵר י-הוה**), taken from the verse, "the candle of God is the soul of man."[2]

The three *tzaddikim* who are the heroes of the story belong to the first three generations of Chasidut. Their first names are: "Yisrael" (יִשְׂרָאֵל), Yechiel Michel (יְחִיאֵל מִיכֵל), and "Chaim" (חַיִּים). The initials spell "Chaim" (**חַיִּים**). The sum of their first names is 768, or 3 times 256, which is the value of "Aaron" (**אַהֲרֹן**), meaning that 256 is their average value. 256 is also 4 to the 4th power and 2 to the 8th. The letters of Aaron (**אַהֲרֹן**) can be permuted to form the word meaning, "we will see" (**נִרְאֶה**), the secret of the verse, "For with You is the source of life, in Your light we will see light"[3] alluding to the Chanukah candles.

1. Proverbs 6:23.

2. Proverbs 20:27.

3. Psalms 36:10.

The phrase "source of life" (**מְקוֹר חַיִים**) can also be translated as "Chaim's source," referring to Chaim of Chernowitz. His source in the story is in both the Ba'al Shem Tov and Rebbe Michel. The value of this phrase is equal to 2 times the value of "light" (**אוֹר**), 207, or 414 thereby alluding to the Alter Rebbe, whose name "Schneur" (שְׁנֵיאוֹר) literally means "two lights," the two lights alluded to in the words, "in Your *light*, we will see *light*." 414 is also the value of "You shall love [*Havayah* your God]" (**וְאָהַבְתָּ**). Furthermore, the 8 days of Chanukah correspond to the first 8 generations of Chasidut. The first candle corresponds to the Ba'al Shem Tov, the second candle to the Maggid of Mezritch and Rebbe Michel, the third candle to the Alter Rebbe, the *Me'or Einayim*, and the *Noam Elimelech*, and so on.

When we light the candles and tell stories about the *tzaddikim*, those of days past and those in our time, we become connected and bound to them just as Rebbe Chaim was with the Ba'al Shem Tov. This connection gives us the strength to fight the Greeks of our generation and to bring the revelation of the Mashiach closer.

THE RAV GINSBURGH LIBRARY

SHECHINAH BEINEIHEM: PEACE IN THE HOME

One of the few books written entirely by HaRav Ginsburgh is his masterwork on the relationship between husband and wife in light of Torah and its inner dimension. It is a dense and rich book that has spawned a vast literature on marriage written by many of the Rav's students. Still, this original remains a breakthrough volume that rewards the effort needed to learn it.

HaRav Ginsburgh's output in all areas of Torah as well as in original Chasidic music is extraordinary by any standard. Gal Einai, the non-profit organization founded with the purpose of preparing his teachings for publication and distributing them has to date published over 200 full-length works in Hebrew. Most of his books were transcribed and edited by the Rav's close students, but a few of them were written by the Rav himself.

HISTORY

The second volume written by the Rav himself, also known as "the brown books" because of their traditional brown cover, was published in 5747 (1987) and is titled, Shechinah Beineihem (שְׁכִינָה בֵּינֵיהֶם) meaning, "the Divine Presence is between them," making reference to the famous statement by Rabbi Akiva: "When a husband and wife merit, the Divine Presence is between them."[1]

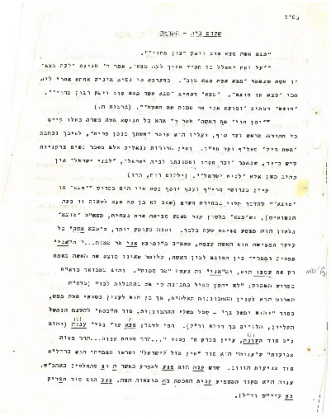
The book started out as a single article titled Shalom Bayit (שָׁלוֹם בַּיִת) that the Rav wrote in 5743 (1983). The article was divided into an introduction and 8 chapters printed by stencil on 22 A4 pages. He taught this article that

1. Sotah 17a.

year to his students at his *yeshivah—Shuvah Yisrael*—located in the *Anshei Ma'amad* building on Yoel Street in Jerusalem.[2] As noted in the *Rosh Hashanah* 5786 issue of *Wonders*, this was one of the first *yeshivot* dedicated to *ba'alei teshuvah*. When the article was published, the Rav added many pages of handwritten footnotes to it, creating the final product with 207 pages.

OVERVIEW

HaRav Ginsburgh's contribution to Torah learning can be divided into two main areas: method and content. *Shechinah Beineihem* uses his signature method of constructing *partzufim* or models that organize complex topics, but its main contribution is its content. Over the years, the relationship between husband and wife—from the *shidduch*/dating process to marriage and raising children—has been at the heart of the Rav's interest. This volume offers what are perhaps the deepest insights ever written regarding the spiritual meaning of the second most significant relationship each of us strives to develop and sustain throughout our lives (the first being our relationship with the Creator[3]). The depth of the Rav's writing in this book, as in other "brown books," can only be fully appreciated when listening to the classes he himself gave on it.



One of the original stenciled pages

The introduction in its final form is based on the verse, "One who has found a wife has found good and has won the goodwill of *Havayah*."[4] Its initial focus is on the negative effect of the ego on the connection between husband and wife, by developing what is usually overlooked in the verse describing Adam and Eve's first encounter. Upon seeing Eve, Adam has three separate reactions, each expressing a different level of spiritual and psychological bond between husband and wife, which themselves correspond to the three archetypes in the *Tanya*: the *tzaddik*, the *beinoni*, and the *rasha*.

At first glance one might be tempted to argue that the book is written from the male perspective, that would be misleading. Though the Torah usually reads like a masculine-centered text,[5] Rav Ginsburgh applies the important teaching from the Ba'al Shem Tov that every word in the Torah can be interpreted either from the masculine-right perspective or from the feminine-left perspective. In keeping with this principle, almost every idea is analyzed from both the husband's perspective and responsibilities as well as from the wife's perspective and responsibilities.

The notion that the relationship between married couples divides into three types is a powerful motif throughout the introduction.

2. Recordings of these classes (in Hebrew) are available in our repository at www.galeinai.org.il.

3. See the Farbrengen Excerpt in this issue for a novel take on the correspondence between these two relationships.

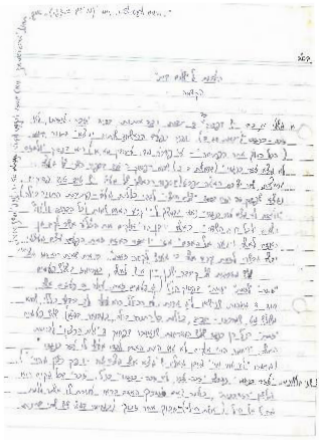
4. Proverbs 18:22.

5. See *Wonders*, Issue 172 "Male and Female in Every Word of the Torah" for how the masculine/feminine perspectives are found in the Torah's every word according to the Ba'al Shem Tov.

Incredibly, wherever the Torah speaks about marital relations, HaRav Ginsburgh reveals a tripartite structure that was hiding beneath the surface (or sometimes, in plain sight). In fact, almost every word in the introduction's seminal verse is analyzed and revealed to contain three facets. The three-facet motif that repeats is based on the sages' saying that "there are three partners in a person: the Holy Blessed One, his father, and his mother."[6]

IMPACT

Over the years since *Shechinah Beineihem* was published, there have been numerous offshoots from the book. The most well-known to the English-speaking audience is *The Mystery of Marriage*, edited by Gal Einai USA's founder and legendary editor, Rabbi Moshe Wisnefsky. We will cover this work in a future column. In Hebrew, the book spawned a series known as *Yayin Mesame'ach*. We will go deeper into this series in a future column as well but let us mention that this series has become one of the bestsellers in Hebrew because of its approachable language, style, and format. Each volume contains about 30 short articles, which in simple language expand on one of the concepts already elucidated in terse and difficult language in *Shechinah Beineihem*. Another successful and popular offshoot is another Hebrew volume titled, *Brit HaNissu'in* (The Covenant of Marriage), which expands on the spiritual meaning of the laws of marital purity that were covered in *Shechinah Beineihem*.



Page of the Rav's handwritten notes on the original article

Another interesting expansion is a series of mid-sized pamphlets titled *BeOhalei Tzaddikim*. Each installment was written in honor of notable weddings, usually as a gift to the participants, and covers the ideas regarding marriage and its covenant in some of the central works of Chasidut outside of Chabad. So far, the series has delved into the teachings of the *No'am Elimelech*, Rebbe Chaim of Amdur, the *Bat Ayin*, and Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Riminov. A fifth pamphlet focuses on marriage and matrimony in the Lubavitcher Rebbe's *Hayom Yom*.

CONTENTS

Returning to *Shechinah Beineihem*, here is a summary of its eight chapters and their main topic:

Chapter 1: If They Merit—the Shechinah Resides Between Them. The first chapter focuses on the fire between a husband and wife, being that the letters of "fire" are shared by the words "husband" and "wife" in Hebrew. Though in the context of Rabbi Akiva's famous saying, the fire is viewed negatively, Rav Ginsburgh reveals that since it is shared, it also has a positive dimension to it, which he ties to God's Name, *Kel Shakai*—the Name with which the Patriarchs and Matriarchs knew God. He then ties it to the light of the mind, whose initials also spell "fire." After analyzing each part of this Name (*Kel* and *Shakai*) separately, the chapter continues with a deep dive into their connection with the seed of life. The

6. *Niddah* 31a.

chapter then ends with a long excursion into the two letters that are not shared by husband and wife, *yud* and *hei*, which are one of the most important allusions to the marital relationship known as "a whole and a half" (*yud* is equal to 10, which is a "whole" relative to the *hei* that equals 5).

Chapter 2: Words of Love and Kindness. This chapter starts out with a seminal *gematria*—the value of "love" (אַהֲבָה) and "kindness" (חֶסֶד) is "mouth" (פֶּה)—arguing that this is the true purpose of our speech. The Rav then goes on to enumerate and explore five types of speech between a couple that must be spoken with love and kindness.

Chapter 3: I will Be Lowly in My Own Eyes. The title is one of the central verses in HaRav Ginsburgh's approach to the psyche, specifically, to the ego. He writes that the only true way to guard against anger and frustration, which more than anything else derails and destroys relationships, is to feel that one does not deserve anything in life and that all that one receives (especially through one's spouse) is a gift from God.

Chapter 4: Trusted Friends. This chapter is based on the idiom, "a good wife is a good friend," and like good friends, couples should be able to share everything with one another, including their faults. However, they need to be aware that a woman cannot share all that she feels because of her inner modesty. They must also be careful not to complain about their faults, always cognizant that all that God does is for the best.

Chapter 5: Patience. Husband and wife need to demand change from themselves, not from their spouse. When it comes to one's spouse, one should strive to mimic God, "Just as He is patient, you shall be patient." Patience goes together with humility, the two qualities of Moses, and they are the keys to domestic peace and harmony. Patience towards others is the key to the rectification of all our character traits.

Chapter 6: His Home is His Wife. This chapter focuses on beautifying the home with *mitzvot*, particularly the *mitzvah* of "a house full of books." It also stresses the need to rid the home of any books that challenge faith and conceal Godliness in life. The most beautiful aspect of a home is *hachnasat orchim*, i.e., hospitality, which takes precedence over privacy, so long as one's wife feels capable of having guests.

Chapter 7: The Israelites Will Safeguard the Shabbat. The initials of the words, "Israelites… the Shabbat" (בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת) spell the word for intimacy in Hebrew, thus this chapter deals with issues of procreative intimacy between the couple.

Chapter 8: The Beauty of a Mitzvah is Modesty. Perhaps the most comprehensive chapter in the whole volume, this final chapter brings everything together. The focus is on how natural modesty between the couple is what holds a relationship together. Parts of this chapter were greatly expanded and improved upon in the English volume, The Mystery of Marriage, mentioned earlier.

continued on page 6

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