



The Immense Joy Experienced by the Holy Entourage Associated with Parshas Kedoshim

Next Shabbas, we read the double parshiyos of Acharei Mot and Kedoshim. We are, of course, in the midst of the weeks of the Sefirah, which prepare us to receive the Torah on Chag HaShavuos. During this period, on the special, sacred day of **Lag BaOmer**, we celebrate the passing of the divine Tanna Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. Hence, it is fitting that we discuss the immense joy his sacred entourage experienced in association with parshas Kedoshim. Here is a pertinent statement from the Zohar hakadosh (Kedoshim 81a): **תנא רבי אבא, פרשה זו היא כללות כל התורה וחותם האמת. בפרשה זו נתחדשו סודות עליונים, בעשרה מאמרות וגזירות ועונשים ומצוות עליונות, שכאשר תנא** **This parsha encompasses the general principles of the entire Torah and the seal of truth—"emes." Exalted secrets are revealed in this parsha related to the ten utterances, decrees and punishments, and heavenly mitzvos. When the colleagues reached this parsha, they were elated.**

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by referring to the opening passuk of parshas Kedoshim (Vayikra 19, 1): **וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר, דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם, קדושים תהיו כי קדוש אני ה' אלקיכם—Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying, "Speak to the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael and say to them: You shall be holy, for I, Hashem, your G-d, am holy."** We find the following exposition in the Midrash (V.R. 24, 9): **קדושים תהיו, יכול: "You shall be holy." כמוני, תלמוד לומר כי קדוש אני, קדושתני למעלה מקדושתכם." Lest this be taken to mean your holiness is on a par with Mine, the passuk says: "For I am holy," indicating that My holiness is superior to your holiness.**

Three Categories of Kedushah

To clarify the matter, we will refer to an intriguing passage in that Midrash (ibid. 8). Our sages explain that this passuk refers to the three expressions of holiness—"kedushah"—uttered by Yisrael daily praising HKB"H: **קדוש קדוש קדוש ה'—holy, holy, holy is Hashem, Master of Legions; the whole world is filled with His glory.** Here is the passage from the Midrash:

"משל לבני מדינה שעשו ג' עטרות למלך, מה עשה המלך נתן בראשו אחת ושתים בראשם של בניו, כך בכל יום ויום העליונים מכתירים להקב"ה ג' קדושות, מה הקב"ה עושה, נתן בראשו אחת ושתים בראשן של ישראל, הדא הוא דכתיב דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל קדושים תהיו, והתקדשתם והייתם קדושים."

It is analogous to the people of a country who made three crowns for the king. What did the king do? He placed one on his own head and two on the heads of his children. Similarly, every, single day, the heavenly beings coronate HKB"H with three sanctities. What does HKB"H do? He places one on His own head and two on the heads of Yisrael. As it is written: "Speak to the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael and say to them: You shall be holy, for I, Hashem, your G-d, am holy."

Now, when referring to Yisrael, the passuk employs the term **"קדושים"** in the plural, which indicates a minimum of at least two. This alludes to the two sanctities that HKB"H placed on the heads of Yisrael. Then, the passuk employs the singular term **"קדוש"** when referring to Hashem: **"כי קדוש אני ה' אלקיכם"**—alluding to the one sanctity that He took for Himself, so to speak.

**Of the 72 Lights Equaling חס"ד
HKB"H Sequestered 17 Lights Equaling טו"ב**

To explain the matter, we will introduce an illuminating teaching from the incredible teachings of our master, the Arizal, in Sha'ar HaKavanos (Kavanat HaAmidah, Drush 2). He addresses the formula instituted by the Anshei Kenesses HaGedolah in the first berachah of Shemoneh Esrei: **גומל "חס"ד—Who bestows beneficial kindnesses and creates everything.** Even though his sacred words are steeped in mysticism, we will endeavor to explain the matter in a manner that can be understood by everyone based on the teachings of chassidut.

We know that HKB"H sustains the universe with the attribute of "chesed"—divine favor and kindness—as it is written (Tehillim 89, 3): **"כי אמרתי עולם חסד יבנה"—for I said, "The world is built on kindness."** Thus, the Arizal teaches us that the entirety of the abundant bounty emanating from the attribute of "chesed" is comprised of 72 lights, the numerical equivalent of חס"ד; however, HKB"H only illuminates the world with 55 of them—the numerical equivalent of הכ"ל. The remaining 17 heavenly lights, the numerical equivalent of טו"ב, remain stored in the heavens.

With this understanding, the Arizal interprets the following teaching in the Gemara (Chagigah 12a): **"אור שברא הקב"ה ביום ראשון אדם צופה בו מסוף העולם ועד סופו, כיון שנסתכל הקב"ה בדור המבול ובדור הפלגה, וראה שמעשיהם מקולקלים עמד וגנזו מוהן, שנאמר וימנע מרשעים אורם, ולמי גנזו, לצדיקים לעתיד לבוא, שנאמר וירא אלקים את האור כי טוב."** **Regarding the light that HKB"H created on the first day, Adam could survey with it from one end of the world to the other end; however, when HKB"H looked at the generation of the mabul and the generation of the dispersion, and He saw that their deeds were perverse, He proceeded to conceal it from them, as it says (Iyov 38, 15): "And light was withheld from the wicked." And for whom did he conceal it (the light)? For tzaddikim in the future, as it says (Bereishis 1, 4): "G-d saw that the light was good."**

According to the Arizal, the original light created by HKB"H on the first day of creation was comprised of 72 lights, the numerical value of חס"ד. He foresaw, however, that the resham of the world were not worthy and did not deserve

to benefit from this light of "chesed." Therefore, 17 of these heavenly lights were sequestered, the equivalent of טו"ב. This is the implication of the passuk (ibid.): **"וירא אלקים את האור כי טוב, ...ויבדל—G-d separated 17 (טו"ב) lights from the rest and set them aside for the tzaddikim.** This then is the interpretation of the berachah under discussion: **"גומל חסדים טובים"**—from the 72 (חס"ד) lights HKB"H originally illuminated the universe with on the first day of creation, 17 (טו"ב) of them remained with Him to ultimately be bestowed upon the tzaddikim. Thus: **ויקונה"—He only left 55 (הכ"ל) lights to illuminate the world.**

Now, let us introduce what the esteemed Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kosov, zy"a, writes in Ahavas Shalom (Ki Sisa), regarding the magnificent teaching of the Arizal. He explains why HKB"H revealed only 55 lights and opted to sequester 17 lights:

"דהנה ידוע שהשם הוי"ה הוא חיות כל העולמות, והנה בבריאת העולם היה מואיר שם הוי"ה במילוי יודין [יו"ד ה"י וי"ו ה"י] שהוא בגימטריא ע"ב וגימטריא חס"ד, והנה השם הזה נחלק לד' חלקים נגד ד' העולמות, היינו אצילות, בריאה, יצירה, עשיה, כנודע, נמצא שכל חלק הוא י"ח אורות.

והנה חלק הראשון שהוא נגד עולם האצילות עמד וגנזו, על דרך אמרם ז"ל (חגיגה יב.) ראה שאין העולם כדאי עמד וגנזו, ואין נתגלה מחלק הראשון שהוא נגד עולם האצילות רק נקודה אחת, בכדי להחיות העולמות, וי"ז נקודות שהם בגימטריא טו"ב נשארו חתימין בגניזו עד לעתיד, והוא הטו"ב הגנוז לצדיקים, על דרך הכתוב (תהלים לא-כ) מה רב טובך אשר צפנת ליראך, וזהו וירא אלקים את האור כי טוב"ב, עמד וגנזו לצדיקים."

We know that the name **Havaya** sustains all of the worlds. During the creation, the full spelling of the name **Havaya** using the letters **"yud"** (יו"ד ה"י וי"ו ה"י) was in force illuminating the world. Its gematria equals 72, the gematria of חס"ד. The four parts of this name correspond to the four worlds—Atzilus, Bria, Yetzirah, and Asiyah. Thus, each of them is associated with 18 lights.

Now, the first part corresponding to the world of Atzilus (the highest world) was set aside and sequestered. Only one of the lights of Atzilus was revealed to sustain the other worlds, while 17 of them, the gematria of טו"ב, remained in storage for the future. They constitute the טו"ב reserved for the tzaddikim. This is the implication of that which is written (Tehillim 31, 20): **"How abundant is Your טו"ב that You have stored away for those who revere You!"** This is also the

message inherent in the passuk: **“G-d saw the light that it was טוֹב.”** He set it aside and stored it for the tzaddikim.

In the Merit of Torah Study We Earn the 17 Lights

We will now return to the remarks of the Arizal. He applies this teaching to interpret the tefilah of David HaMelech (ibid. 23, 6): **“אך טוב וחסד ירדפוני כל ימי חיי”**—**may only “tov” and “chesed” pursue me all the days of my life.** David HaMelech prayed to HKB”H that he be privileged to receive the illumination of all **72 (חס”ד)** lights, including the **17 (טו”ב)** lights that had been sequestered. This is the gist of his sacred remarks.

As a loyal servant in the presence of his master, I would like to embellish the remarks of the Arizal by interpreting the continuation of the passuk: **“אך טוב וחסד ירדפוני כל ימי חיי”**—**and I shall dwell in the House of Hashem for long days.** I will refer to a statement in the Gemara (Berachos 5a): **“אין טוב אלא תורה, שנאמר כי לקח טוב נתתי”**—**there is no “tov” other than Torah, as it states (Mishlei 4, 2): “For I have given you a good teaching (‘lekach tov’), do not abandon My Torah.”** Now, the Ba’al Shem Tov hakadosh, zy”a, teaches us that the light sequestered for the tzaddikim is actually sequestered inside the Torah. Thus, when the Gemara asserts that it is stored for **“the tzaddikim le’asid la’vo,”** it means that is being saved for the tzaddikim that are destined to come into this world. In Degel Machaneh Ephraim (Bereishis), his grandson writes that this is what he heard from his illustrious grandfather:

Where is that light stored? He said that the Blessed One stored it in the Torah. Therefore, the tzaddikim of every generation utilize that light. They do so by means of the Torah which contains that light, which allows them to see from one end of the world to the other—just as my eyes have actually seen on numerous occasions.

This explains magnificently why **“there is no “tov” other than Torah.”** It is because HKB”H stored the **17** lights, equivalent to **טוֹב**, inside the Torah to illuminate it for those who dedicate themselves to the study of Torah. He proves his point from the fact that HKB”H says: **“For I have given you a ‘lekach tov.’”** In other words, I have even given you the **טוֹב** lights that I sequestered. The key to accessing them is: **“Do**

not abandon My Torah”—study My Torah, which is called **“tov”** on account of the **טוֹב (17)** lights stored within it.

This then is what David HaMelech prayed for: **“אך טוב וחסד ירדפוני כל ימי חיי”**—in keeping with the interpretation of the Arizal, David beseeched Hashem to be worthy to receive even the **טוֹב (17)** lights that He had stored in the Torah, so that he (David) would be privileged to receive illumination from all **חס”ד (72)** lights that HKB”H created. Hence, he goes on to explain that he hoped to merit that privilege by studying Torah diligently in the house of Hashem for the duration of his life: **“ושבתי בבית ה' לאורך ימים”**.

“She opens her mouth with chochmah and the Torah of chesed is on her tongue”

Based on what we have learned, we can begin to understand what our blessed sages have expounded in the Gemara (Succah 49b):

“מאי דכתיב פיה פתחה בחכמה ותורת חסד על לשונה, וכי יש תורה של חסד ויש תורה שאינה של חסד, אלא תורה לשמה זו היא תורה של חסד, שלא לשמה זו היא תורה שאינה של חסד, איכא דאמרי תורה ללמודה זו היא תורה של חסד, שלא ללמודה זו היא תורה שאינה של חסד.”

The passuk in Mishlei (31, 26) employs the expression **“Toras chesed”**—literally: **“Torah of kindness.”** The Gemara questions the meaning and significance of this phrase. The first opinion defines **“Toras chesed”** as Torah that is pure in purpose—l’shma; a second opinion suggests that **“Toras chesed”** refers to Torah that is learned with the intention of passing it on to others.

In light of what we have learned, if a person learns Torah l’shma, only for the sake of Hashem, HKB”H illuminates it for him even with the **“tov”** lights sequestered in the Torah, in keeping with the notion of: **“For I have given you a ‘lekach tov.’”** Thus, he has access to all **חס”ד (72)** lights. This situation is aptly described as: **“The Torah of chesed is on her lips.”** In contrast, if a person does not learn Torah l’shma, he will lack the component of **“tov.”** Consequently, his Torah cannot be described as **“Toras chesed,”** because he does not have access to all **72** lights; he lacks the **17** sequestered lights.

To which the second opinion in the Gemara adds: **“Torah that is learned to be passed on to others is the Torah of**

chesed. For, when a person teaches Torah to his fellow Jew, he reveals to him the light of Torah that was sequestered and that he was lacking. Therefore, “midah k’neged midah,” HKB”H also reveals to him the **טו”ב (17)** lights hidden in the Torah. Thus, he is privileged to benefit from all **חס”ד (72)** lights, fulfilling the condition of **“The Torah of chesed is on her lips.”**

We can now better appreciate an exposition in the Midrash (V.R. 13, 3) related to a statement in the Navi (Yeshayah 51, 4): **“כי תורה מאתי תצא, אמר הקב”ה תורה חדשה מאתי תצא.”** **“For Torah will come forth from Me.”** HKB”H said: **“A new Torah will come forth from Me.”** What does it mean that HKB”H will reveal a **new Torah** to us le’asid la’vo? After all, this seems to contradict one of the thirteen principles of emunah: **“שזאת”** **“התורה לא תהא מוחלפת ולא תהיה תורה אחרת מאת הבורא יתברך שמו”**—**this Torah will not be replaced and there will not be another Torah from the Creator, blessed is His name.**

Based on what we have learned, we can suggest that the Navi is informing us that in the future, HKB”H will reveal to Yisrael the **טו”ב (17)** lights sequestered in the Torah in the merit of the Torah they studied in galus l’shma and which they shared with others. Their revelation will constitute **“a new Torah.”** In reality, they were already given at the time of Matan Torah; however, they have not been revealed entirely in this world; that will only happen le’asid la’vo.

**“She saw that he was ‘tov’”
that He Was Privileged to Receive
All of the Lights Contained in the Torah**

This explains fantastically a passuk related to Moshe Rabeinu, the deliverer of the Torah. Regarding his birth, it is written (Shemos 2, 2): **“ותרא אותו כי טוב הוא”**—**she saw that he was good (tov).** Rashi comments: **When he was born the entire house filled with light.** According to the Ma’or Einayim, this implies that their house became illuminated with the light that had been sequestered from the six days of creation—the **“ohr haganuz”**—that the Torah refers to as **“tov.”** This assertion is substantiated by the Gemara which is the basis for Rashi’s comment (Sotah 12a): **“בשעה שנולד”** **“משה נתמלא הבית כולו אור, כתיב הכא ותרא אותו כי טוב הוא, וכתיב התם וירא אלקים את האור כי טוב.”** **When Moshe was born the entire house filled with light; here it is written: “She saw that he was good (‘ki tov’)”; and there, it is written** (Bereishis 1, 3):

“G-d saw that the light was good (‘ki tov’).” In other words, the original light of creation, including the **“ohr haganuz,”** was revealed to him.

In light of our current discussion, we can suggest the reason for this phenomenon related to Moshe’s birth. His sacred mission in Olam HaZeh was to teach the Torah to all of Yisrael throughout the generations. As it is written (Devarim 33, 4): **“תורה צוה לנו משה מורשה קהלת יעקב”**—**the Torah which Moshe commanded us is the heritage of the congregation of Yaakov.** Now, we have learned that Torah that is taught to others is defined as **“Toras chesed.”** Therefore, when Moshe was born, **the entire house** became illuminated with light, with the **entire** original light of creation—all **חס”ד (72)** lights, including the **טו”ב (17)** lights sequestered in the Torah. Hence, his mother **saw that he was “tov.”**

This explains very nicely the explanation of the Bnei Yissaschar concerning the incredible simchah associated with Lag BaOmer. The 49 days of the counting of the Omer are divided into two parts. The first **ל”ב (32)** days correspond to the revealed part of the Torah. This is alluded to by the fact that the Torah opens with the letter **“beis”** of **בִּיראשית** and concludes with the letter **“lamed”** of **“לעיני כל ישראל”**. The two letters together are **ל”ב**. After Lag BaOmer, **17** days of the Sefirah remain, equivalent to **טו”ב**. They allude to the Torah of mysticism revealed by Rashbi, which comes from the **“ohr haganuz”** referred to as **“tov,”** in keeping with the passuk: **“G-d saw that the light was ‘tov.’”**

Let us combine this with what we learned above from the teachings of the Arizal regarding the interpretation of the phrase we recite in Shemoneh Esrei: **“גומל חסדים טובים וקונה”** **“הכל”**. This phrase alludes to the fact that from the **72** lights of **חס”ד** G-d created, He sequestered **17** of them, equivalent to **טו”ב**. Thus, we learn that Rashbi was privileged to reveal to the world the hidden, secrets of the Torah—Toras hanistar—that come from the **“ohr haganuz”**—the **טו”ב (17)** lights that HKB”H sequestered during the six days of creation. As mentioned above, this is part of the new Torah that HKB”H will reveal to us in the future, at the time of the future geulah.

Let us embellish this thought. Why did Rashbi merit this privilege? In Likutei Shas (Maseches Shabbas 33b), the Arizal

teaches us: **Know that Rashbi, a”h, was a nitzotz of Moshe Rabeinu, a”h. Just as Moshe fled from Pharaoh’s sword and attained his perfection in the desert wilderness; so, too, Rashbi fled from Caesar and attained his perfection in the wilderness cave in Lod.** In similar fashion, just as Moshe merited having his house illuminated with the טו”ב lights of the “ohr haganuz” when he was born; so, too, Rashbi, a nitzotz—a spark from the neshamah—of Moshe Rabeinu merited revealing the Toras hanistar to the world, which comes from those same טו”ב lights of the “ohr haganuz.”

The Torah which Is the Chochmah of HKB”H Is Infinite

Following this line of reasoning, we will now proceed to explain the three crowns with which we adorn HKB”H. We will focus on what Chazal teach us with regards to the gates of the Torah. For example, they said (R.H. 21b): **”החמישים שערי בינה—fifty gates (levels) of “binah” were created in the universe.** In the Midrash, they said (Bamidbar Rabbah 13, 15): **”שבעים פנים בתורה”—there are seventy faces to the Torah** (ways in which it can be expounded). Similarly, we speak of the 17 lights that will be revealed le’asid la’vo. All of these numbers relate to the portions of the Torah that HKB”H reveals to Yisrael; they all have limits and specific purposes. This is in contrast to the Torah itself, representing the chochmah of HKB”H, which is infinite and limitless like HKB”H Himself.

We will now introduce the fascinating words of the Arizal in Likutei HaShas (end of Maseches Berachos) regarding the following teaching in the Gemara (Berachos 64a):

”תלמידי חכמים אין להם מנוחה לא בעולם הזה ולא בעולם הבא. הענין, כי בעולם שלאחר המיתה תלמידי חכמים עוסקים בתורה, ועולין ממדרגה למדרגה ומישיבה לשיבה, כי אפילו משה רבנו ע”ה בכל יום ויום עולה ומשיג יותר, כי כמו שהשי”ת אין לו סוף, כך תורתו אין לה סוף.”

”Talmidei-chachamim (Torah scholars) have no rest, neither in Olam HaZeh nor in Olam HaBa.” It is because in the world after death, talmidei-chachamim continue learning Torah, and ascending from level to level, and from yeshivah to yeshivah. Even Moshe Rabeinu, a”h, ascends every single day and attains more. For, just as the Blessed One is infinite, so, too, His Torah is infinite.

This illuminates for us the exposition in the Midrash related to the passuk: **”קדושים תהיו כי קדוש אני ה’ אלקיכם**”. This alludes to the three crowns—the three utterances of **”קדוש”**—with which we adorn HKB”H. The first **”kadosh”** corresponds to the Torah that we were privileged to receive at Har Sinai. The second **”kadosh”** corresponds to the new Torah that HKB”H will reveal at the time of the future geulah. The third **”kadosh”** corresponds to the part of the Torah that is infinite, which remains with HKB”H.

Hence, the Midrash says: **What does HKB”H do? He places one on His own head and two on the heads of Yisrael.** He places, so to speak, the crown of the Torah that is infinite on His own head. Whereas the crowns of the Torah that we received at Sinai and the new Torah that He will reveal in the future, HKB”H places on the heads of Yisrael. Therefore, the passuk says **”קדושים תהיו”** in the plural. It is referring to two distinct sanctities with which we are to sanctify ourselves—the kedushah of the Torah we received at Matan Torah and the kedushah of the Torah we will receive at the time of the future geulah.

Notwithstanding, despite all of the gains we achieve with the crowns of the past and the future, it is essential for us to realize that we have yet to attain the entire Torah. HKB”H emphasizes this point with the proclamation: **”כי קדוש אני ה’—אלקיכם—for I, Hashem, your G-d, am holy.** There is one kedushah associated with the infinite part of the Torah that I keep for Myself and place on My own head, so to speak. Yet, in the merit of studying the two parts of the Torah that I have given you, you will merit receiving an incredible illumination of kedushah from the source of the Torah that is infinite and rests on My head. Regarding these three Kedushos that bind us together, we praise HKB”H daily by uttering: **”קדוש קדוש קדוש”** קדוש ה’ צבאות מלא כל הארץ כבודו.

With this understanding, we can also appreciate what they expounded in the Midrash afterwards: **”קדושים תהיו, יכול, כמוני—**you might think erroneously that having received the kedushah of the two other crowns—from Har Sinai and from the new Torah of the future—that you will be on My level and will be able to attain all of the portions of the Torah that remain with Me. Hence, to allay any misconceptions, the Torah states explicitly: **”כי קדוש אני, קדושתי למעלה מקדושתכם—”for I**

am kadosh,” indicating emphatically **that My kedushah is superior to your kedushah**. In other words, just as HKB”H is infinite, so, too, His chochmah is infinite. As such, it is beyond your grasp.

At this point, we can begin to comprehend to some degree the immense simchah experienced by Rashbi’s disciples with the arrival of parshas Kedoshim. As pointed out, there are precisely טו”ב—17—days from Lag BaOmer until the end of the Sefirah. This indicates that Rashbi was privileged to reveal to the world the secrets of Toras HaNistar that emanate from the טו”ב lights of the “ohr haganuz” that HKB”H sequestered during the six days of creation. It is part of the new Torah that HKB”H will reveal at the time of the future geulah.

Therefore, when the holy entourage of Rashbi reached parshas Kedoshim that opens with the command from HKB”H for Yisrael to be kadosh— “קדושים תהיו” –sanctifying themselves with the kedushah of the Torah that they received in the past at Har Sinai and the kedushah of the new Torah that HKB”H will reveal in the future—they were elated. After all, since Rashbi had taught them Toras HaNistar, they had been privileged to already taste from the new Torah of the future geulah. In the merit of indulging in that portion of the Torah, we will merit the future geulah. Then, HKB”H will finish revealing to us the entire new Torah that includes the טו”ב lights that were sequestered during the six days of creation—shortly, in our times! Amen.



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