

מאמר
בחדש השלישי

BaChodesh
HaShlishi

– TORAH OR –

A Chassidic Discourse by
Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi

Translated by Rabbi B. Bell



בס"ד

BaChodesh HaShlishi

- TORAH OR —

A Chassidic Discourse by
Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi

Translated by Rabbi B. Bell



Sichos In English
788 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, New York 11213
718-778-5436 • www.sie.org

PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

It is with a profound sense of gratitude to *HaShem* that we present an English translation of the first chapter of the *ma'amar*, *BaChodesh HaShlishi*. This *ma'amar* appears in *Torah Or* (*parshas Yisro* p. 66c), by the Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe *shlita* stressed the importance of studying this *ma'amar* and making it available to men, women, and children. He discussed this during several *sichos* in the month of Sivan, 5748 (immediately following Rosh Chodesh Sivan and the second of Sivan).

A note about the translation: Items appearing within brackets are by the translator. The bracketed text was added to help elucidate the text.

Although every effort was made to assure the accuracy of translation, errors may have arisen, for which the translator assumes full responsibility.

It is our prayerful wish that the publication of this *ma'amar*, serving as yet another step in disseminating the wellsprings of Chassidus, will hasten the speedy coming of Moshiach.

Sichos In English

4th Day of Sivan, 5748

CHAPTER ONE

“In the third month after the Exodus of the children of Israel from the land of Egypt, on this day, they came to the wilderness of Sinai.”¹

The verse merely states, “on this day,” without explaining which day in particular. Our Sages² are the ones to explain that the Jewish people came on Rosh Chodesh [Sivan. The Sages derive this by comparing this verse with another which uses the same expression, “this.”] “Here the verse says ‘on this day,’ and there,³ it says ‘this month shall be for you.’ [Just as there it refers to Rosh Chodesh, so too here.]” We must understand, however, why does the verse refer to Rosh Chodesh in such a way, merely saying “this day,” [rather than stating explicitly “the first day”]?⁴

To understand this, we must first explain the importance of the Jewish people having received the Torah, for even before the Torah was given, there were also many *tzaddikim*. The Patriarchs also existed before the Torah was given, and they are described as “Chariots”. [Just as a chariot has no will of its own, and goes wherever the driver wishes, so too, they had no personal desires — only those of *HaShem*. If they could reach such a level even without the Torah, why, then, did we need to be given the Torah?]⁵

This can be understood by first analyzing the special quality of Avraham, who “went and traveled to the South.”⁶ The phrase “went and traveled” refers to his continuous advance from one level to another [in love of *HaShem*]. “To the South” refers to the level of Supernal love, [because south corresponds to *chesed* and love⁷]. Avraham eventually reached the level of being a ‘chariot’ to this Supernal love, which became fully revealed in his soul.

1. *Shmos* 19:1.

2. *Shabbos* 86b.

3. *Shmos* 12:2.

4. This question is answered in the 5th chapter of the *ma'amar*.

5. This question is answered in the 3rd chapter of the *ma'amar*.

6. *Bereishis* 12:9.

7. See references in *Sefer Ha'Orachim Chabad*, Vol. I, p. 66, note 35.

His advances can be categorized as an ascent from the spiritual quality referred to as *Mitzraim* (Egypt), as the verse states, “Avraham came up from *Mitzraim*.”⁸ *Mitzraim* is derived from the word *metzar*, or limitation, [which, in a spiritual sense,] refers to the body and animal soul, which constrain and enclothe the person’s G-dly soul.

The person’s G-dly soul might understand and meditate on the greatness of The Infinite, *Ein Sof Boruch Hu*, how it reaches all created beings and is the source of all life, how “You give life to them all,”⁹ “I [*HaShem*] fill the heavens and the earth,”¹⁰ and “The whole earth is full of His glory.”¹¹

Nevertheless, the G-dly soul cannot escape its being imprisoned within the body. It cannot subjugate the body and transform it; rather, the body remains in its previous state, totally unaffected. This is similar to the Talmudic statement,¹² “a thief on the threshold [first prays to *HaShem*” that his theft will be successful. His faith in *HaShem* is intact, and he therefore prays to Him. However, since his body is coarse and unaffected by his faith, he still carries out the theft. Similarly, the G-dly soul senses the greatness of *HaShem*, but is limited and trapped by the body and animal soul.]

The special accomplishment of Avraham was that he rose above this limitation. He cleaved to the aspect of Supernal love, to the extent that his G-dly soul actually desired to rid itself of any connection with the physical body and animal soul — which are garments of *kelipas nogah* — and be totally nullified to *HaShem*, i.e. that his soul leave the body altogether.

[How does a person reach such a high level of love for *HaShem*?] Such love is achieved by meditating upon the *Ein Sof*-light itself, which “surrounds all worlds” [i.e. it is too high for the worlds to internalize] and “is totally beyond the realm of comprehension.”¹³

8. Bereishis 13:1.

9. Nechemiah 9:6.

10. Yermiyahu 23:24.

11. Yechezkel 3:12.

12. End of *Berachos*.

13. Introduction to *Tikkunei Zohar*.

[We can understand this idea — of how *HaShem* is totally beyond our comprehension — by examining the verse.] “Your Kingship (*Malchus*) is a Kingship over all worlds.”¹⁴ The aspect of *HaShem* which relates to the worlds is only as He is a King, a *melech*. [This refers to the *sefirah* of *malchus*, which is the lowest of the ten *sefiros*. The other nine *sefiros* which are so high that they are completely beyond the worlds. Certainly *HaShem*’s Essence, which is higher than the concept of *sefiros*, is far beyond our grasp.]

[This aspect of *malchus*, by which *HaShem* creates the universe,] is also referred to as *HaShem*’s “speech,” as in the expression, “the king rules by his word.”¹⁵ Similarly the saying, “Blessed is He who spoke, and the world came into being”¹⁶: *HaShem*’s “speech” is sufficient to provide the life-force and sustenance for all the worlds, and their creation *Yesh M’Ayin*. [The faculty of speech is not part of a person’s essence — for example, he can say things he does not really mean. Since the power of speech is far removed from the person’s essence, and the G-dly force which creates the worlds is referred to as ‘speech,’ we see that *HaShem* Himself is far above and beyond the worlds.]

This [aspect which comes to give the worlds their life] is a mere glimmer of the Infinite light, as seen from the phrase, “Be blessed...in the heavens above and on the earth below, for all Your praiseworthy handiwork.”¹⁷ The entire scheme of creation, the heavens and earth [is so awesome in size that] one would have to walk for 500 years in order to travel from the earth to the *rakia* (heaven). Nevertheless, they are still merely “handiworks” in comparison with *HaShem*.

[Since the creation is referred to as the work of *HaShem*’s hands, so to speak, we see that this life-force is a mere ray.] When a person, for example, does something with his hands, then only his faculty of action, the most external expression of the soul, is involved. Similarly, the life-force which comes to all the worlds is compared to a person’s “action,” i.e. an external expression, a mere glimmer which is unrelated to the essence of his soul.

14. *Tehillim* 145:13.

15. *Koheles* 8:4.

16. *Siddur, Shacharis, Pesukei D’zimra*, p. 30.

17. *Siddur, Shacharis, Yotzer Or*, p. 43.

[Even the highest beings cannot reach *HaShem's* essential light, as written in the *Siddur*.] “The One Who creates holy beings, praised be Your Name forever.”¹⁸ Even these holy beings — i.e. angels and souls — are mentioned in context with *HaShem's* “name,” which is also a mere ray and glimmer. [A person's name is not part of his essence, but an external reflection of his body. We see, for example, that a person does not need a name for himself, but in order that others be able to call him. So too, G-d's “name,” refers to a superficial reflection of Him. Since these beings do not praise Him, but only His name, we see that even they cannot reach His Essence.]

[Although in general, both “action” and “name” — which correspond to the world and the celestial beings — refer to aspects which are not connected with the person's essence, there is still a great difference between them.] These celestial beings are higher than the worlds themselves, which are referred to as “Your handiwork.” The explanation of this is as follows: when a person's action is encloded in an object, etc., it is no longer connected with his essence. The person's faculty of action has become separated from him, and when the object is grasped (together with the faculty of action which is encloded within), the person's essence is unaffected.

[This is true only of a person's actions.] When you call someone's name, however, the person himself responds. Although a name is also a mere ray of the essence, it nevertheless is still bound to and united with the essence. [A name, therefore, is closer to the essence than is action.] Nevertheless, a name is still no more than a reflection [of the essence].

HaShem Himself, however, is lofty and exalted, etc. He “surrounds all worlds,” and before Him, both high and low are equivalent, as it is written, “I, *HaShem*, do not change,”¹⁹ [i.e., both high and low are equally insignificant before Him].

[Meditating on these ideas should naturally lead one to have a tremendous love for *HaShem*. Since *HaShem* is so far above the boundaries of the world,] the soul should “pour out for its father,” to

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Malachi* 3:6.

long for *HaShem*, to the extent that it is ready to leave the body. One is in a state of absolute *bitul* to *HaShem*, as the verse states, “What do I want with the heavens?”²⁰ [i.e., I want only *HaShem* Himself, not any lower forms of holy revelation.]

[This idea — that such meditation leads one’s soul to want to leave the world — is also conveyed by the end of the verse mentioned above.] The verse states, “I, *HaShem*, do not change, and you, *b’nei Yaakov*, do not expire.” The prophet is expressing amazement at the Jewish people: “since you realize that, ‘I, *HaShem*, do not change,’ how could it be that, ‘You, *b’nei Yaakov*, do not expire?’” [After realizing the greatness of *HaShem*, that He is beyond the creation, etc., how could] your souls not expire?

The verse can also be read as a statement of fact — that, “You, *b’nei Yaakov*, do not expire.” Although one might meditate on the greatness of the Infinite, of how *HaShem* does not change, etc., one might still be unable to reach the level of Avraham — to become a totally nullified “chariot” and that his meditation lead to such an intense love.

[This is the special quality of Avraham, that his soul was able to escape the constraints of his body and animal soul.] Why is every Jew not able to reach this level of *bitul*? The cause is the weakness of the soul; it is powerless to escape its imprisonment in the body.

This is the meaning of the verse, “My strength has been weakened by my sins”²¹ — through sins, the soul becomes weakened. This is also the meaning of the verse, “Your sins are dividing between you and your G-d.”²² [Here too, we see that sins prevent the soul from uniting with *HaShem*.]

The verse refers not [only] to actual sins, but to the physicality and coarseness of the body, which becomes like a curtain of separation. This limits the soul and drags it down, causing it to be drawn after the physical. The soul is therefore unable to escape and rise above [these physical constraints].

20. *Tehillim* 73:25.

21. *Tehillim* 31:11.

22. *Yeshayahu* 59:2.

Regarding this [inability of the soul, due to the forces of *kelipah*, to achieve total love for *HaShem*], it is written, “You saw the affliction of our fathers.”²³ [“Fathers”] refers to the qualities of love and fear, etc. of *HaShem*: Avraham representing *chesed*, etc. [Therefore, the “affliction of our fathers” refers to the inability of our G-dly emotions — “fathers” — to escape the confines of the physical body and the animal soul.]

CHAPTER TWO

It is for this purpose [to help the G-dly soul overpower the body and the animal soul] that the Jewish people were given the Torah. The Torah is called “strength”²⁴ — it gives strength to the G-dly soul, enabling it to overpower the coarseness of the body and the animal soul, and to escape its “imprisonment.”

This can be seen from examining the verse,²⁵ “G-d will give strength to His people, G-d will bless His people with peace.” Torah (referred to in the verse as “strength”), brings about peace, as the verse puts it, *bashalom*. [This word can be read as having two parts:] the letter *beis* and the word *shalom*. Our Sages²⁶ explain that the word refers to two types of peace: “creating peace in the upper *palmalia* and in the lower *palmalia*.” [The “upper *palmalia*” and “lower *palmalia*” are two levels of the G-dly soul. One level is the G-dly soul itself, as it transcends the body. The other is the “ray” of the G-dly soul which comes into the body, and contains the faculties of intellect and emotion.]

“Peace” refers to binding two things together. “Peace in the upper *palmalia*,” is the revelation of *Or Ein Sof BorcuH Hu* to the G-dly soul, binding, uniting and nullifying it to its source. “Peace in the lower *palmalia*” [is the revelation to] the “ray” of the G-dly soul, the soul’s faculties, which are encloded in the body and animal soul. This revelation eliminates the obstruction of the body and animal soul,

23. *Nechemiah* 9:9.

24. See *Sifri, Berachah*, 33:2. *Vayikra Rabbah* 31:5.

25. *Tehillim* 29:11.

26. *Sanhedrin* 99b.

causing them to willingly accept this unity [with G-dliness], subjugating the “darkness” and converting it to light.

[The Torah has the ability to accomplish, not just a strengthening of G-dliness, but a transformation of darkness] because in addition to being called “strength,” it is also called *toshiah*,²⁷ because it weakens (*mateshes*) the power of *sitra achra* present in the body. This happens because, “one nation overpowers the other,”²⁸ and “when one rises, the other falls.”²⁹ [The verse refers to the struggle between Yaakov and Esav. Our Sages explain that when Yaakov is strong, then Esav is automatically weak. In spiritual terms, when holiness is strong, then *kelipah* is automatically weak. So too, when “strength” comes to the G-dly soul, the animal soul and body are automatically weakened. Therefore the Torah is both “strength” and *toshiah*.]

We must understand, however, how the Torah has this ability to strengthen the G-dly soul and weaken the body’s coarseness. The Torah itself deals with physical things, such as *Terumah*, *Ma’aser*, etc. [which are taken from physical food. Itself bound to the physical, how can the Torah help the G-dly soul overpower the body?]

The explanation of this lies in the well-known fact that the source of the Torah is [extremely lofty. The supernal source of the Torah is variously described as] the “holy mountains”; Or *Ein Sof Boruch Hu* itself, *Hasovev Kol Almin*; as “I, G-d, have not changed”; and as “G-d and the Torah are united.”³⁰

[This tremendous holiness is present even when a Jew learns Torah down here in the physical world, as can be seen by analyzing the following verse.] The giving of the Torah is described at the beginning of the Ten Commandments, “And G-d spoke all these words, saying: I am [the L-rd, your G-d.]”³¹ The word “saying” seems difficult to understand in this context. In general, when the Torah uses this word, it indicates that the statement must be repeated to someone else. [For example, when the Torah writes, “And G-d spoke to Moshe,

27. See *Sanhedrin* 26b. *Iggeres HaKodesh* end of Ch. 22.

28. *Bereishis* 25:23.

29. See *Rashi*, *ibid.*; *Pesachim* 42b; *Megillah* 6a.

30. See *Zohar* I, 24a; *Tanya* Ch. 4, Ch. 23.

31. *Shmos* 20:1ff.

saying,” it means that Moshe should tell other people what G-d told him.]

The Ten Commandments, however, cannot be interpreted in this way, because all Jews themselves heard them directly from G-d, as the verse puts it, “G-d spoke to you face to face,”³² and “those who are present and those who are not present”³³ [even the souls of later generations, all experienced the giving of Torah on Mt. Sinai. Since everyone already personally heard the Ten Commandments, what, then, is the meaning of the word, “saying?”]

In this instance, however, the word “saying” has a different meaning — to say over the words of Torah which were already said to Moshe on Mt. Sinai. [Whatever words of Torah we say now were already said there.] because all of Scripture, *Mishnah*, *Halachos*, and *Haggados* were already said to Moshe at Mt. Sinai.³⁴

The Talmud does mention particular laws in the names of the *Tannaim* and *Amoraim* who said them, such as “Beis Shammai said.” [How, then, can we say that everything was given at Sinai, if these Sages are given as the source?

This can be explained according to the Talmudic statement,³⁵ “The word of G-d’ — this refers to *halachah*.” It was actually the “word of G-d” which had already been said to Moshe on Mt. Sinai coming through the mouth of that particular Talmudic Sage. This is similar to the concept expressed in the verse,³⁶ “My words, that I [G-d] have placed in your mouth.” [We see from this verse that the words of Torah spoken by the person are really those of G-d.]

This is the special ability which was given at Mt. Sinai to every Jew — that when he says a *halachah*, he is actually uttering G-d’s words which were said to Moshe.

[When learning Torah,] the person is *botul* to G-d; his words are not his own personal statement, but as the verse³⁷ expresses it, “My

32. *Devarim* 5:4.

33. *Devarim* 29:14. See *Pirkei d’R. Eliezer* Ch. 41; *Shmos Rabbah* end of Ch. 28.

34. See *Yerushalmi, Peah* 2:6.

35. *Shabbos* 138b.

36. *Yeshayahu* 59:21.

37. *Tehillim* 119:172.

tongue answers Your sayings.” The Torah is called, “Your sayings” [i.e. G-d’s words], and the tongue “answers,” just as a person who repeats something he has just heard. [So too, it is as if G-d has already spoken the words of Torah, and the person is merely repeating what he has heard.]

Although the word “saying” is written in the Ten Commandments, the same ability mentioned above exists whenever a Jew learns Torah, because] the Ten Commandments actually include the entire Torah.³⁸ By receiving these commandments directly from G-d, we received the entire Torah, enabling us to be *botul* to the Torah, G-d’s word. Therefore, a person who speaks words of Torah is similar to someone who answers after hearing someone else speak [in this case, after hearing G-d’s words].

This [i.e. G-d speaking through the person when he speaks words of Torah] reveals *Or Ein Sof* down here in the world in the same manner as it is revealed above — with absolute *bittul*. [This answers the question mentioned above, regarding how Torah has such a power if it too is involved with physical things. The holiness of the Torah is so great that even down here, the Torah is revealed exactly as it is above.]

If a thinking person meditates about this, he will feel a great fear and awe when he learns Torah — realizing that G-d’s words [i.e. the Torah he learns] are literally those which were spoken at Mt. Sinai.

This also explains the Talmudic statement³⁹ which comments on the proximity of the two verses,⁴⁰ “Make known to your children and to your children’s children” and “The day you stood [before G-d at Chorev].” It states, “just as there [when the Torah was given], there was fear, awe ... so too here [whenever one learns Torah] there should be fear, awe...” The comparison seems difficult to understand, because at Mt. Sinai “All the people saw the sounds,”⁴¹ etc. and “G-d spoke with you face to face.” This is not the case when an individual learns Torah, [there is not such open G-dly revelation. How, then, can these two

38. *Rashi, Shmos 24:12.*

39. *Berachos 22a.*

40. *Devarim 4:9-10.*

41. *Shmos 20:18.*

cases be compared, telling the individual that he must learn with such great awe?] However, according to the explanation given above, this is well understood. Every person who learns Torah, at any time, is literally saying over G-d's words that were said to Moshe on Mt. Sinai. Therefore he feels fear and awe just as he received the Torah today on Mt. Sinai.

CHAPTER THREE

Learning Torah with the kind of *bittul* mentioned above gives strength to the G-dly soul and weakens the *sitra achra*.

This can be seen in [the wording of the First of the Ten Commandments,] "I am the L-rd, your G-d, (*Anochi Havayah Elokecha*) Who took you out of the land of Mitzraim."⁴² When the Torah was given, there was a revelation of *Anochi*, i.e. the essence of G-d, as He transcends all the worlds. [We also see that Torah is a revelation of *Anochi* from the verse,⁴³] "These words [i.e. of Torah] which I (*Anochi*) command you today."

This aspect of *Anochi* is internalized by the Jew through the process of contraction, expansion, etc. indicated by the name *Havayah*. [This name of G-d has four Hebrew letters: a *yud*, a *hei*, a *vov*, and another *hei*. Since the essence of G-d, represented by *Anochi*, is too high to be internalized, it must first be contracted. This is represented by the letter *yud*, the shape of which indicates contraction. This "point" is then expanded, as indicated by the letter *hei*. The four stages, corresponding to these four letters,] enable the G-dly revelation to be internalized as *Elokecha*, [which can be translated "Your G-d" or "your power and life," i.e. to become an integral part of the individual.

After completing the process of *Anochi*, then *Havayah*, then *Elokecha*,] then comes "Who took you out of the land of Mitzraim," i.e. the boundaries and constraints (*metzarim*) of the body and animal soul, which enwrap the G-dly soul and prevent it from freeing itself. Similarly, G-d promised, "I will bring you out of the Egyptian

42. *Shmos* 20:2.

43. *Devarim* 6:6.

bondage,⁴⁴ “to a wide and good land.”⁴⁵ This means that learning Torah with *bittul* and receiving this revelation of *Anochi* (i.e. *sovev kol almin*, as “I, G-d, do not change,”) gives power to the G-dly soul and weakens the body, etc.

This also explains the Talmudic statement⁴⁶ that “People from Jericho would ‘bind together’ the *Shema*, by going directly from *Shema* to *V’Ahavta*” [without saying *Boruch Shem*]. When they said *Shema*, they reached the level of *yichuda ila’ah*, which is absolute *bittul* to *Or Ein Sof Boruch Hu, Hasovev Kol Almin*, as mentioned above [regarding learning Torah]. This increased their love for G-d, reaching the level of *b’chol l’vavcha*⁴⁷ (“with all your heart,” or, “both your hearts”), i.e. loving G-d with both the *yetzer tov* and the *yetzer hora*,⁴⁸ subduing *sitra achra* and converting darkness to light. As mentioned above, [regarding Torah study], this kind of *bittul* brings “strength” [to the G-dly soul] and *toshiah* [“weakening” of the *sitra achra* — here, its conversion to good].

This is not accomplished by saying *Boruch Shem Kavod Malchuso L’olam Va’ed*, which represents the level of G-dliness expressed in the verse,⁴⁹ “*Elokim* rules over the nations.” This name of G-d represents the life-force of all the worlds, and even reaches non-Jews. This is similar to the statement of our Sages,⁵⁰ that [Yaakov was] “not like Avraham, who came out from him Yishmael.” [We see, then, that on the level of *Boruch Shem*, non-Jews and *sitra achra* can exist. Therefore, after saying *Shema*, which is the revelation of *echad*, and which does not tolerate *sitra achra*, people from Jericho went straight to *V’Ahavta*. If *Boruch Shem* was said in between, they decided, strength would be added to *sitra achra*.

Although their reasoning seems sound, the law is not in accordance with the people of Jericho, and *Boruch Shem* is said in between. How can this be explained? We do say *Boruch Shem* quietly, because the word, *Va’ed*, is the same as *Echad* if the letters are

44. *Shmos* 3:17.

45. *Shmos* 3:8.

46. *Pesachim* 56a. See *Kuntres Eitz Chaim*, p. 34. *Derech Mitzvosecha* 139a.

47. *Devarim* 6:5.

48. *Berachos* 54a.

49. *Tehillim* 47:9.

50. *Sifri* on *Devarim* 32:9.

exchanged, as the *Zohar*⁵¹ explains. [Therefore, we preserve this same idea of *Echad* even when saying *Boruch Shem*.]

CHAPTER FOUR

This helps us explain why “Jews count according to the moon.”⁵² The moon has no light of its own,⁵³ but shines only upon receiving light from the sun. Therefore, every month before the new moon, the moon gets smaller and smaller until it is reduced to a mere “point” — since it is directly in line with the sun, it does not shine on the earth. Afterwards, it grows until it appears in its fullness. What is seen is actually the light of the sun, however, since the moon has no light of its own. After that it subsides once again until it becomes a mere point, and so on.

The Jewish people precisely match this pattern of the moon. They are *botul* to *Or Ein Sof Boruch Hu, Hasovev Kol Almin*. They study Torah and serve G-d as if they are non-existent as individuals — there is no separate existence of one who is learning Torah or loving G-d. The individual is nullified to *Or Ein Sof Boruch Hu*, which dwells within his study of Torah and service of G-d — “The word of G-d, which is *halachah*,” comes from his mouth.

This [G-dly light] is compared to the sun, as the verse⁵⁴ expresses it, “The sun and its shield are [compared to the two names for G-d] *Havayeh* and *Elokim*.” *Havayeh* is therefore alluded to by the sun, and *Elokim* is called the “shield,” as explained elsewhere.⁵⁵ [So too,] the Torah comes from G-d’s name *Havayeh*. [Since both the Torah and the sun are on the level of G-d’s name *Havayeh*, the moon, which is *botul* and receives light from the sun, is comparable to the Jew, who is *botul* and receives G-d’s Torah.

51. *Zohar* II, 134a. *Or Hachama* *ibid*. See *Teshuvos U'biyurim*, the Lubavitcher Rebbe Shlita, Ch. 13 (p.62).

52. *Sukkah* 29a.

53. *Zohar* I, 135b; II, 215a.

54. *Tehillim* 84:12.

55. See *Tanya*, *Shaar HaYichud V'Ha'emunah*, Ch. 4ff.

This relationship of the sun and the moon helps us understand the concept of “Torah, *avodah*, and *gemilas chassodim*”⁵⁶ — that all three are necessary. *Gemilas chassodim* refers to *tzedakah*. The Torah in general,⁵⁷ and an actual act of charity in particular, is called *tzedakah*, because *tzedakah* is “giving life to the lowly.”⁵⁸ In this respect, *tzedakah* is also like the sun, as the verse⁵⁹ says, “*Shemesh* (literally, “the sun”) *tzedakah* will shine to you, who fear My Name.” Just as the sun’s light can illuminate even a place of darkness, completely devoid of light, so too *tzedakah* “gives life to the lowly,” in a flow that starts from above and goes down towards the world.

This flow is elicited through *avodah* — the person below nullifies himself to *Or Ein Sof Boruch Hu, Hasovev Kol Almin*, which is above. Through this, *Or Ein Sof Boruch Hu* is drawn down and revealed down here in the world just as it is above. This [revelation which comes through *bittul*] is just like the *bittul* of the moon to the light of the sun. [Therefore, all three are necessary — Torah and *gemilas chassodim* correspond to the sun, the revelation from above, and *avodah* corresponds to the moon, the *bittul* from below.⁶⁰]

CHAPTER FIVE

This is the meaning of the verse, “In the third month after the Exodus of the children of Israel from the land of Egypt, on this day....” [As asked at the beginning of the *maamar*, why doesn’t the verse say explicitly which day it was?]

When the Jewish people left Egypt, they began to count the *Omer*, as the verse⁶¹ commands, “You shall count for seven weeks.” These days were the preparation for receiving the Torah on Shavuot, at which time *Or Ein Sof Boruch Hu* was revealed down here exactly as it is

56. *Avos* 1:2.

57. See also *Torah Or*, 27c, 42c; *Likkutei Torah, Devarim* 23c, *Shir HaShirim* 16c, 38a.

58. See also *Torah Or*, 63c; *Or HaTorah, Noach*, III, p. 5971; *Yisro* p. 722.

59. *Malachi* 3:20.

60. See *Bachodesh HaShlishi*, 5748.

61. *Devarim* 16:9.

above. We became *botul* to G-d, as if our speech merely followed His. G-d's word is actually revealed in our midst when we learn Torah.

On the third day of the seventh week [Rosh Chodesh Sivan], it is as if the entire week has come. [This is because the third day corresponds to *tiferes sheb'malchus*. *Tiferes* includes all expressions of the *middos*: right (*chesed*), left (*gevurah*), and middle (*tiferes*, stemming from *keser*). Therefore, on this day, it is as if the counting of *malchus*, and with it, the entire seven weeks, is complete.⁶²] The Jewish people are then standing prepared to receive this level of *bittul* mentioned above. At that point the moon reappears, signifying the revelation of *Or Ein Sof Boruch Hu* following the previous *bittul* of the moon [i.e. of the recipient].

Therefore it is referred to simply as "this day." This is because *day* signifies light and revelation, as in the verse,⁶³ "G-d called the light, 'day.'" This is the revelation and love connected with complete *bittul* to G-d, because [the numerical value of] *v'ahavta*, "you shall love," is twice that of the word "light."⁶⁴ [The "light" referred to by "day" represents "love" for G-d. Therefore, the word "day" in the verse refers to the love which came to them at that time.]

(The love is called *this day*, because *this* indicates *yichuda ila'ah*. It is for this reason that Moshe Rabbeinu [who was on the level of *yichuda ila'ah*] prophesized using the expression *this*.⁶⁵ On Rosh Chodesh, *Knesses Yisrael* receives a revelation from *mochin* of *chochmah* — see the maamar *V'haya Midei Chodesh*⁶⁶ — and therefore [since *chochmah* is so much higher than *malchus*, or *Knesses Yisrael*,] their love is with *bittul*.)

At that time "they came to the wilderness of Sinai" [which is called Sinai because Mt. Sinai is where] "hatred (*sinah*) descended."⁶⁷ [The simple meaning of this Talmudic saying is that G-d despised the non-Jewish nations due to their refusal to accept the Torah. Here the saying

62. See *Toras Chaim* p. 373a.

63. *Bereishis* 1:5.

64. *Pri Eitz Chaim, Shaar HaKriyas Shema*, Ch. 23. *Tanya*, end of Ch. 43.

65. *Sifri*, beg. of *Mattos*.

66. *Siddur Im Dach*, 212a ff.

67. *Shabbos* 89a.

receives an additional interpretation, that *sinah* refers to the aspect of *toshiah* in Torah, which weakens the *sitra achra*.]

The word “wilderness” (*midbar*) is related to the word *dibbur*, or speech, as in the verse,⁶⁸ “and your speech is beautiful.” Here, the word *dibbur* is spelled with an additional letter *mem*, because *mem* is one of the group of letters indicated by the acronym *he'emantiv*, which effect a reduction in the topic at hand. Here, it means that it is not the person's own speech, but rather the words of G-d within him as a result of his *bittul*.

Afterwards, “they traveled from Refidim.”⁶⁹ This is so named because there was *rifion yadayim*, a weakening of the hands, as our Sages explained,⁷⁰ “Why is it called Refidim? [because at that place there was a weakness — *rifion* — in Torah study.]” This is the weakened state of the G-dly soul described previously.

At that point, however, the souls of the Jewish people were given special power, the *sitra achra* weakened, etc. [Therefore the verse says that they *left* Refidim, i.e. this weakness was taken away.]

68. *Shir HaShirim* 4:3.

69. *Shmos* 19:2.

70. *Sanhedrin* 106a.

