

The CHASSIDUS PERSPECTIVE with Reb Yoel Kahn



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In *Siddur Im Dach*, the Alter Rebbe writes that we can find an allusion to Lag BaOmer in the *possuk* עַד הַגֵּל הַזֶּה וְגוֹ' – “This mound is a witness,” referring to the pile of rocks built when Yaakov and Lavan made a treaty. This allusion is reflected in the fact that the word *gal* includes the same letters as *lag*.

The Rebbe Maharash cites this allusion in a *maamar*, and he continues that based on this, we can find a second allusion to Lag BaOmer in another *possuk* that contains the word *gal*: גַּל עֵינַי וְאֲבִיטָהּ – נִפְלְאוֹת מִתּוֹרַתְךָ – “Open my eyes, and that I will see wonders in Your Torah.” The connection to Lag BaOmer seems obvious: Lag BaOmer is the *hillula* of the Rashbi, who revealed the “wonders of Torah” through his work, the Zohar.

At first glance, it appears that the Rebbe Maharash did not want to create an original allusion without first finding an earlier precedent, so he based himself on the Alter Rebbe who found a similar allusion. However, since every detail in Torah is exact, we must say that this juxtaposition is much more profound: The Rebbe Maharash’s allusion, along with what it represents, can only be achieved once we have the allusion of the Alter Rebbe.

WHOSE PROBLEM IS IT?

To understand this, let’s first analyze the *possuk* in Tehillim quoted by the Rebbe Maharash: “Open my eyes, and that I will see wonders in Your Torah.”

The wonders of Torah mentioned in this *possuk* refer to the portion of Torah known as *sod*. These are the hidden parts of Torah that lie beyond human grasp, not only because we lack the ability to comprehend them, but more importantly, because they are inherently concealed. Since that is the case, why did Dovid Hamelech ask that Hashem open his eyes? Shouldn’t he have asked that Hashem reveal the wonders, since that is the primary cause for our lack of comprehension?

To explain this, the Rebbe quotes a famous Midrash:

“When Hashem created the world, he decreed that the Heavens are for Hashem, and the earth is for man. When he desired to give the Torah, he annulled the decree, saying: ‘Those below can rise Above, and what is Above can descend below. In fact, I will be the one to begin!’ Indeed, first Hashem descended on Har Sinai [on the 6th of Sivan], and only then [on the 7th of Sivan] did He command Moshe to ascend.”

“OPEN MY EYES”

Hashem’s wording when annulling the decree calls for attention. Why did He first say “Those below can rise Above,” and only then “what is Above can descend below”? Wasn’t the actual sequence of events the exact opposite (as the Midrash proceeds to state, that first Hashem descended and only then did Moshe ascend)?

The answer is that the ultimate goal is for those below to ascend Above. Sequentially, this was preceded by a revelation from Above, but the purpose of this revelation was that *we* should ultimately ascend.

TRANSFORMATION FROM BELOW

What does it mean to “ascend Above”? If a human being merits to experience a Divine revelation, isn’t that itself the greatest elevation possible?

This can be explained by means of an analogy. When the sun shines, although the world is illuminated, it has not actually changed. The earth is essentially a dark place by day just as it is at night; its present illuminated state is due to an outside influence—the sun’s rays.

Even something received internally will not necessarily change the recipient. Let’s take the example of a teacher presenting an intellectual idea to a student. Even if the student understands the idea well and can repeat it perfectly—seemingly, the idea has become part of him—it’s possible that when presented with a new topic, he will be unable to grasp it on his own. This shows that although the student has learned many ideas, his thought process has remained the same as before.

When we learn Torah and perform mitzvos, we are transforming ourselves and the world around us. This is a change initiated not from without but from within.

The revelation of Elokus at Mattan Torah penetrated the physical even more deeply than an intellectual idea grasped by a student. This is why the voice of the Aseres Hadibros did not produce an echo: the words became absorbed in the world’s physical matter and did not bounce back. Yet, the world itself did not inherently change; it merely took in the Divine revelation descending from Above.

The ultimate goal, however, is that *we* should elevate and refine ourselves. The purpose of the Divine revelation of Mattan Torah was to give us the ability to later change on our own accord. When we learn Torah and perform mitzvos, in addition to drawing down Elokus from Above, we are elevating and transforming ourselves and the world around us. This is a change initiated not from without but from within.

SUPER NATURAL

This idea—that the world itself will be elevated—will be the main achievement of the times of Moshiach.

When describing this period, the *possuk* states: “The glory of Hashem will be revealed, and all flesh will see that the mouth of Hashem has spoken.” Let’s analyze the two parts of the *possuk*. What is the second half adding to the first?

One might argue that the first half only tells us that those with spiritual perception will be able to see the glory of Hashem, and the second half adds that this will be seen even by those who only possess physical perception. However, this cannot be the correct explanation. If this Divine revelation would be limited to a certain group of people, it is not truly revealed. By stating “The glory of Hashem will be revealed,” the *possuk* is telling us that every person will be able to see it. If so, what is the second half of the *possuk* adding to the first?

The answer is that the second half of the *possuk* is describing *how* we will see Elokus. Yes, the glory of Hashem will be revealed to all, but perhaps our capacity to see it will be supernatural, a special ability granted to us from on High. The *possuk* therefore continues that this will not be the case: “all flesh will see.” Seeing Elokus will be a natural phenomenon; just as today, seeing physical objects doesn’t require any unique miracle or Divine intervention, so too in the times of Moshiach, our eyes will *naturally* perceive Elokus.

This, indeed, will be the primary accomplishment of that special era. Our efforts today in elevating ourselves and the world around us will result in the ability to perceive Elokus in a normal, natural way.

We can now return to the *possuk* in which the Rebbe Maharash finds an allusion to Lag BaOmer: “Open my eyes, and that I will see wonders in Your Torah.” As mentioned above, shouldn’t the request have been that Hashem reveal the wonders of Torah, and not that he open our eyes?

But now the *possuk* is clear: Yes, it is necessary for the wonders to be revealed, but our main request is that *our eyes* should be opened, that we should be transformed until we are able to grasp these wonders of *primiyus hatorah* on our own.

Just as today, seeing physical objects doesn’t require any unique miracle or Divine intervention, so too in the times of Moshiach, seeing Elokus will be a natural phenomenon.

A LESSON FROM A MOUND

How, indeed, is it possible for our physical eyes to naturally experience Elokus?

The Hebrew word for world, *olam*, shares the same root as *helem*, concealment. Since the name of an entity in Lashon Hakodesh expresses its content, this means that the idea of concealment is an intrinsic part of what the world is all about. The world was created with the name of Elokim, which indicates concealment: *Bereishis bara Elokim*. Concealment is thus not an added element; it was part and parcel of the world from the very beginning.

That being the case, how can it be that the world itself will be able to perceive Elokus? At the very most, a Divine revelation can be revealed from Above and permeate it from the outside. But how can seeing Elokus become a person’s very nature?

This is where the Alter Rebbe’s *possuk* comes in: “This mound is a witness.”

The purpose of the mound was to create a separation between Yaakov and Lavan. If so, why didn’t they build a wall?

A mound is a division, but one that can easily be surmounted. By erecting a mound and not a wall, they were making it clear from the very beginning that this was a division that was meant to be crossed. As Rashi explains, although each party was not to pass it with evil intents, they were able to pass it for business purposes.

This *possuk* sheds light on the concealment built into the world’s DNA. It, too, was placed there from the onset for the sake of being uncovered.

When Hashem created concealment, His inner intent was that it should ultimately be exposed. So while the world is inherently connected with concealment, concealment is inherently associated with revelation.

This is why the Rebbe Maharash bases his allusion on that of the Alter Rebbe. The *possuk* of *גל עיני* tells us that perceiving the wonders of the Torah will be as natural as physical sight, but for this to be possible, we must first have the *possuk* of *עד הגל הזה*. This *possuk* teaches us that the world and the *helem* it represents was created from the start with the goal of uncovering the *helem* and allowing the world itself to see Elokus.

For further study, see *ד"ה גל עיני תשל"ז - תו"מ סה"מ מלוקט ח"ג*.

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