

KOL TODA



Gateways to Gratitude: Giving Thanks to Hashem

“HIS WEDDING DAY”

The day the Torah was given is referred to in Shir Hashirim (3,11) as "His Wedding Day". On that day we merited attaining a very special connection with Hashem, a relationship that resembles the beauty and closeness of marriage.

This wedding at Har Sinai forms the basis of the minhagim of our marriage ceremony. Maharam of Rothenberg disclosed that the customs we practice under the chuppa are derived from the giving of the Torah at Sinai, where Hashem appeared as a groom before His bride Yisrael (Tashbetz 465).

Every morning we thank Hashem for this special relationship when we recite the blessings over the Torah and say: "Who has chosen us from all nations and given us His Torah." The Bach writes that this blessing is an expression of praise and gratitude to Hashem for the very special connection to Hashem that we achieve through studying the Torah.

The Torah, when describing the momentous event of the giving of the Torah at Sinai, uses the term "kol" (normally translated as "voice" or "sound") five times. Chazal teach us that these were five aspects of revelation of the goodness of Hashem (Divine emanations) that were revealed to Klall Yisrael at that time.

The Gemara tells us (Brachos 6) that

these same five revelations are present – perhaps to a somewhat lesser extent – at a wedding celebration. This we learn from the words of Yirmiyahu (33:10-11), who when describing the



joy of a wedding also repeats the word "kol" five times. The Maharsha explains this parallel in the light of what was described previously, that the giving of the Torah was in fact a form of marriage with Yisrael.

These five "Divine emanations" will again be experienced in their full splendor at the final redemption, as Yirmiyahu prophesized: "So says Hashem: There will again be heard in this place... the kol of joy and the kol of gladness, the kol of a groom and the kol of a bride, the kol of those saying, 'Thank the Master of Legions, for He is good,

for His loving-kindness is forever'" (Yirmiyahu 33:10-11). This is understood, since the final redemption will also resemble a joyous wedding, as we are told in Midrash Zuta (Shir Hashirim, 3): "On His wedding day' – those are the days of Mashiach in which Hashem is likened to a groom as is written "As a bridegroom rejoices over a bride so shall your G-d rejoice over you" (Yeshaya 62:5).

The fifth "kol" heard at a wedding, and that will be heard at the time of redemption, is the voice of gratitude, the sound of those saying, "Thank the Master of Legions, for He is good, for His kindness is forever." This "kol" is a voice that we have already begun hearing. Just as it is praiseworthy to taste the Shabbos food before Shabbos, Hashem is giving us a taste of the delicacies of the redemption before it actually occurs: a sampling of the joy of gratitude and thankfulness. Many of us who have allowed the light of gratitude to shine in to their homes, have experienced this revelation. Their days are filled with light. This is a prelude to the resplendent light of Redemption. These people feel that they can't stop thanking Hashem for the privilege to thank Him and for being allowed to taste the sweetness of this gratitude.

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The Missing Fifth Voice

In the Sheva Brachot recited under the chuppa and during the following marital celebrations, there is an intriguing mystery. In the last bracha of the seven recited, four "voices" are mentioned as stated in the pasuk in Yirmyah: sasson, simcha, chatan, kallah. Whereas the last "voice", instead of continuing as written in the pasuk: "A voice saying: Thank the Master of Legions, for He is good, for His kindness is forever, " we say: "The sound of exultation of grooms from under their chuppah, and youths from their joyous banquets". Where did the original fifth voice - the voice of gratitude - disappear to?"

The newly published work "The Fifth Voice" explains that the fifth kol is not an independent voice. It does not stand alone, it is in fact the source and root of the other four voices. Where do the sounds of joy and happiness stem from? How do a bride and groom merit having the holy Shechina reside between them? What brings about the tremendous joy of the wedding and causes people to sing and dance? Gratitude to Hashem!! That is the key to all joy and happiness, the axis around which the wheels of joy revolve.

And so, this is the meaning of the words of the final blessing: "The sound of exaltation of grooms from under their chuppa" is the sound of elated exuberant thanks. The wedding banquet is really a thanksgiving meal for Hashem's incredible kindness revealed by the presence of a new bride and groom. All the participants break out in song and praise on seeing this revelation of His phenomenal goodness.

The Key to Our Blessings

The Gemara in Yevamot (62b) tells us that when a person marries he is blessed with many Heavenly gifts: joy, blessing, goodness, Torah, peace and more. The receptacle required to enable the receiving of all of these gifts, is gratitude, as the Sefer Hachinuch writes (mitzva 430): "For through connecting our thoughts to thank Hashem ... we merit to bring down His blessings." For this reason at a Jewish wedding, our sages instituted seven days of gratitude.

Similarly, during the Heavenly wedding at Sinai, we were granted many blessings: Torah, the Holy Land, the Next World and all the many spiritual blessings that come from adhering to the directives of the Torah. The agency required to be able to receive these blessings is gratitude.

This is the purpose of the festival of Shavuot, as the Yesod Veshoreh Ha'avoda describes: "How appropriate it is, on this holy day when we received the Torah, to rejoice even more than on other holidays. Every Jewish person should arouse himself to feel and express tremendous thanks to Hashem for the privilege of being part of the Jewish people and their mission in the world. He should feel gratitude to Hashem for the merit of being able to serve Him with Torah study and the performance of mitzvot that are rooted in the most elevated upper worlds. Let us rejoice in Hashem, His Godliness, His Torah and mitzvot!"

May we all experience the elevated joy of gratitude to Hashem and thereby merit rejoicing at the Ultimate Wedding, with the coming of the Redemption, speedily in our times. Amen.

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For more information about "The Fifth Voice" – a gratitude based commentary of the Sheva Brachot (in color) please call 972-55-6785647.

A Word of Gratitude

“ I thank you Hashem that You afflicted me and You became my salvation” (Tehillim 118). The Chasam Sofer explained this to mean: “As soon as you brought suffering upon me, I thanked You, because I knew that its ultimate purpose is to grant me a most valuable and desirable salvation.” (Drashot part I) “

Tzaddikim Thank Hashem

Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein told the following story:

"A few years ago, when visiting a hospital, I saw a prominent Rosh Yeshiva standing in the hallway. He was standing in front of the list of wards in the hospital and his lips were moving. I couldn't hear what he was saying, but the sight intrigued me.

I walked up to him, greeted him and asked why he spent so much time in front of the sign. Did he need anything? Was there anything I could do to help him?

At first the Rosh Yeshiva didn't answer and tried to change the subject, but I persisted. Then he said: "Look at the signs. First floor: hematology, cardiology. Second floor: oncology..." and so he went on pointing out all the floors and the different kinds of sicknesses that are treated there. I stood here reading through the list of the wards thanking Hashem that Baruch Hashem I

don't need any of them. My body is, thank G-d, functioning properly and I do not suffer from any of the diseases treated here. I was expressing heartfelt thanks to Hashem for my good health."

Rav Yitzchak continued: "How precious and cherished this outlook is in Heaven! How many people thank Hashem for their healthy body? They think it's natural. That's the way things are supposed to be: eyes - see, ears - hear and lips - speak. Only when something malfunctions do we realize how thankful we must be to Hashem when everything works and our bodies function properly."

When a healthy person, standing firmly on his own two feet, expresses wholehearted gratitude to Hashem for his health, he causes Hashem much nachas, and arouses His love and kindness. He merits to be blessed with a healthy body and a good life.

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