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לקוטי תורה

חג השבועות - Shavuos



מאמר

ענין התורה שניתנה על הר סיני

“The Lesson of the Humble Mount Sinai”

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Likutay Torah

לקוטי תורה

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מאמר

ענין התורה שניתנה על הר סיני

פְּרַשְׁת בַּמִּדְבָּר דָּף ט"ו, ב - ט"ו, ג

“The Lesson of the Humble Mount Sinai”

The question asked in this maamar: Why was Mount Sinai chosen as the mountain on which to give the Torah?

ענין שניתנה התורה על הר סיני דוקא,

We need to understand **the idea that the Torah was given specifically on Mount Sinai,**

ולא על הר תבור וחרמון וכרמל, שבאו גם כן שתנתן התורה עליהם,

and not on the mountains of Tavor, Chermon, or Karmel, which also came to ask Hashem to have the Torah given on them,

וכמו שכתוב בתרגום יונתן, בשופטים סימן ה', על פסוק (ה) "הרים נזלו [מפני ה' ז'ה סיני מפני ה' אלקי ישראל]"¹.

as it is written in the translation and commentary on the Tanach of Rabbi Yonasan ben Uziel on the verse, in the book of Shoftim, (5:5) “The mountains trembled before Hashem, this is [a reference to what happened] with Mount Sinai, [which was humble] before Hashem, G-d of the Jewish People.”

¹ (ושם: "טוריא זעו מן קדם ה'. טורא דתבור, טורא דחרמון וטורא דכרמלא מתרגשין דין עם דין ואמרין דין לדיון, דין אמר: עלי תשרי שכנתיה ולי חזיא! ודין לדיון אמר: עלי תשרי שכנתיה ולי חזיא! אשרי שכנתיה על טורא דסיני, דהוא חלש וזעיר מכל טוריא").

(וְשָׁם: "טוֹרַיָא זְעוּ מִן קְדָם ה'. טוֹרַיָא דְתְבוֹר, טוֹרַיָא דְחַרְמוֹן וְטוֹרַיָא דְכַרְמֵלָא מִתְרַגְּשִׁין דִּין עִם דִּין וְאֶמְרִין דִּין לְדִין, דִּין אָמַר: עָלַי תְּשָׁרֵי שְׁכִנְתֵּיהּ וְלִי חֲזִיא! וְדִין לְדִין אָמַר: עָלַי תְּשָׁרֵי שְׁכִנְתֵּיהּ וְלִי חֲזִיא!

This is what is written **there** in his commentary: What is the meaning of: **"The mountains trembled before Hashem?"** That the mountains of Tavor, Chermon, and Karmel fought with each other, and each one said to the other: **"Upon me should Hashem reveal His Divine Presence, since I am worthy of it!"** And the other mountain replied the same, **"Upon me should Hashem reveal His Divine Presence, since I am worthy of it!"**

אֲשֶׁרֵי שְׁכִנְתֵּיהּ עַל טוֹרַיָא דְסִינַי, דְּהוּא חֵלְשׁ וְזֵעִיר מִכָּל טוֹרַיָא." (

Hashem said: **"I will reveal My Divine Presence on the Mountain of Sinai since it is the weakest and smallest of all the mountains."**

וּבִתְלִים סִימָן ס"ח, עַל פְּסוּק (יז) "לָמָּה תִרְצְדוּן [הָרִים גְּבֻנִים הָהָר חָמַד אֱלֹהִים לְשִׁבְתוֹ אָף ה' יִשְׁכֵן לְנֶצַח].":

And in his commentary on the verse in Tehillim (68:17), "Why do those tall mountains dance around haughtily?" The mountain [of Sinai is the one] that Hashem has chosen to rest [his Divine Presence on by giving the Torah], [through this] Hashem will also dwell eternally [in this world]."

לִית רַעוּוֹתַי לְמִיתָן אֹרִייתָא עַל טוֹרַיָא גִּוְתָנִין מִבְּסִרְנַיָא,² הָא טוֹר סִינַי דְּמַכִּיר [רַגַּג מִימְרָא דִּי לְאִשְׁרָאָה עֲלוּי שְׁכִינְתֵּיהּ] כו'.³

In his commentary, Yonasan ben Uziel explains the verse as follows: **"Hashem says: It is not my desire to give the Torah on haughty and arrogant mountains, it is on this humble mountain of Sinai that Hashem desires to make His Divine Presence dwell on."**

² [תְּרַגְּוֹם 'הַבּוֹ לְגַאֵי יוֹנִים' (תְּהִלִּים קכג, ד) - מִבְּסִרְנַיָא וְגִוְתָנִין] ³ [תְּרַגְּוֹם: אֵין רַצוֹנֵי לִיתֵן הַתּוֹרָה עַל הָרִים גְּאִים וְאִוְתָנִים, הָרִי הַר סִינַי הַנְּמוּךְ].

וְהֵינּוּ, שְׁעֵנֵן הַגְּבוּהוֹת שֶׁל תְּבוּר וְחֶרְמוֹן
 זֶהוּ עֵנֵן הַגְּדֻלוֹת, שְׁמִגְבִּיהָ אֶת עֶצְמוֹ
 בְּגִסוֹת, וְהִגְסוֹת הוּא שֶׁרֶשׁ כָּל הָרָע.

Meaning, that the idea of the tallness of the mountains of Tavor and Chermon (and Karmel) is the concept of greatness. Each one raises himself up with haughtiness, and haughtiness is the source of all evil.

וְכַנּוּדַע מֵעֵנֵן שְׁבִירַת הַכֵּלִים כו'.

This is like it is known regarding the concept of the “shattering of the Keilim-Vessels.”

To explain this concept, we need a brief review of the idea that Hashem creates everything using His “Light-Aurora” and “Keilim-Keilim:”

The term “Light” refers to the revelation of Hashem, which reveals Hashem’s limitlessness, how Hashem is beyond the limitations of time, space, spiritual levels, and any possible definition.

The word “Keilim” literally means “vessels,” “garments,” or “instruments.” In this context, it refers to Hashem’s ability to contain His limitless revelation in specific parameters and attributes, such as wisdom and kindness. These vessels are then able to be a source for the creation of limited creations. They also become the ways through which Hashem interacts with His creations. Thus, when His Light becomes invested in the Keilim and expressed through them, the creations can receive His Light in a manner that they can contain, thus enabling them to receive their life force from Hashem and interact with Him.

The analogy for this process is as follows: The soul is a spiritual entity that cannot be divided into parts. It is one simple essence. When it gives life to the body, it expresses itself differently in each part of the body; the power to see is expressed in the eye; the power to hear is expressed in the ear, etc. Thus, the simple, indivisible life power of the soul becomes limited by being “invested” in the organs of the body. This life force takes on the property and is expressed differently according to the nature of each organ. Similarly, Hashem’s simple, infinite and indivisible Light becomes invested and expressed through the Keilim.

Now, when Hashem decided to create the world using His “Light” and “Keilim,” He first created a system of Keilim called “Tohu,” where each vessel strove to be infinite, just like the Light is infinite. The attribute of Kindness wanted to be infinite Kindness, not leaving room for the opposing attribute of Severity to exist or find any expression. Similarly, Severity wanted to be infinite Severity, without any room for Kindness at all.

Even though, in theory, the desire to be infinite corresponds to the character of the Light, which is infinite, in actuality, it was a disaster. Since all of the attributes wanted to be infinite at the same time, none of them were able to co-exist, and they all broke apart and shattered. This is like a team of workers on which each individual wants to be the boss, to the point that the whole enterprise falls apart and no one gets anything done.

Thus, the “shattering of the Keilim-Vessels” of the system of Tohu was a direct result of the fact that each attribute only felt its own need to be infinite. This idea is the spiritual source of the ego that we, created beings, have, where we feel our own spiritual or physical needs more than those of others.

After the “shattering of the Keilim” of Tohu, Hashem made a new system of Keilim, called Tikun. In the system of Tikun, each attribute is not only nullified to the Light, but also to all the other attributes. Since the Keilim of Tikun are more “selfless” and “humble,” they are able to work together to reveal Hashem.

The lesson of this story is that in order to reveal Hashem, one needs to be humble and selfless (just like the Keilim of Tikun) and not self-absorbed (like the Keilim of Tohu). (Obviously, the Keilim of Tohu weren't selfish in a physical sense, G-d forbid. Each one wanted to be infinite because it felt that this is what Hashem wants. This is the spiritual source for the ego, as it exists down here, where the ego wants to expand itself continuously, but has completely lost track of its original goal of expanding itself for Hashem's sake).

This is the meaning of what it says in the *maamar*: “Haughtiness is the source of all evil, as it is known regarding the concept of the ‘shattering of the Keilim.’” The source of all unholiness derives from the “shattering of the Keilim” of Tohu, and the cause of that “shattering” was from the aspect of spiritual “ego” that existed in that system. Thus, the ultimate source of all unholiness is ego.

וְעִקַּר הַתּוֹרָה הוּא לְהִיּוֹת בְּבַחֲיִנַת בֵּיטוּל,
 "וְלֹא תַחֲלָלוּ [אֶת־שֵׁם קְדָשִׁי וְנִקְדַּשְׁתִּי בְּתוֹךְ
 בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי ה' מְקַדְּשְׁכֶם]:"⁴ (אָמֹר כֹּה, לֵב)
 וּכְמוֹ שֶׁנִּתְבָּאָר בְּכַמָּה דּוּכָתֵי.

The main idea of the Torah is to nullify one's ego to Hashem, as this concept is explained in connection with the verse (Vayikra 22:32), “And you should not make yourself into a place devoid of My holy Name (through your ego), and I will be sanctified in the midst of the Jewish People, I am Hashem Who makes you

⁴ וְעִיּוֹן בְּבִיאָוֹר עַל פְּסוּק "וְלֹא תַשְׁבִּית מְלַח" (לְעִיל וְיִקְרָא ד, ד וְאֵילָךְ).

holy.” This concept is explained in many places.

The word “תְּחַלְּלוּ,” which literally means, “desecrate,” comes from the word חָלַל and could also be translated as “make an empty space,” from the word חֶלֶל-A gap. Thus, the simple meaning of וְלֹא תְחַלְּלוּ אֶת־שֵׁם קְדוֹשִׁי is that you should not desecrate Hashem’s name. Since His Name is placed upon the Jewish People, when we do something improper it reflects badly on Hashem.

However, the interpretation used here of וְלֹא תְחַלְּלוּ אֶת־שֵׁם קְדוֹשִׁי is as follows:

“Hashem’s Name-שֵׁם קְדוֹשִׁי” refers to a revelation of Hashem. The verse is telling us that we must allow Hashem to be revealed through us, just like a window allows light to be revealed through it, and “וְלֹא תְחַלְּלוּ” devoid of Hashem’s revelation. How is such a vacuum created? Through our ego. Like it says in the Talmud (Sotah 5a), Hashem says about someone who is haughty that “there isn’t enough room for both of us to dwell together.” Meaning that one’s inflated ego blocks out Hashem’s revelation, creating a void, a חֶלֶל, where Hashem cannot be felt or perceived. Thus, the verse is telling us to nullify our ego enough that we don’t create a vacuum, a space devoid of Hashem’s revelation. This, then, is the main idea of the Torah: To reveal Hashem in the world. This is only possible when we nullify our egos to Him.⁵

וְזֶהוּ שֶׁאָמְרוּ (עירובין, נ"ד, א'): "אִם מְשִׁים אָדָם עֲצָמוֹ כְּמִדְבָּר שֶׁהַכֹּל דָּשִׁין בוֹ - וּפִירֵשׁ רַש"י: "שְׂאִין לוֹ גִּסוּת" - תּוֹרָה נִיתְּנָה לוֹ בְּמִתְנָה."

And this is also the idea of what our Sages say (Eiruvim 54a), “If a person makes himself like a desert that everyone steps on – Rashi on that passage explains that this means that he has no ego – then the Torah will be given to him as a gift.”

וּבְמֵאמְרָם: "וְנִפְשִׁי כְּעֹפֶר לְכֹל תְּהִיָּה", וְאַזְוִי דְוָקָא - "פְּתַח לְבִי בְּתוֹרַתְךָ."

And like we say at the end of the Shemona Esrai prayer, “And let my soul be like dust to all,” and only afterward do we ask in the next verse, “Open my heart in the study of your Torah.”

⁵ See Likutay Torah on Vayikra ע'ד ע'ד, דף ד' ע'ד, where the Alter Rebbe explains the concept of וְלֹא תְחַלְּלוּ to mean to not make a place devoid of Hashem’s revelation due to one’s ego.

⁶ (וְנִפְשִׁי . . . בְּתוֹרַתְךָ - תְּפִלַּת "אֶלְקֵי נְצוּר". בְּרִכּוֹת יז, א).

⁷ (וּכְמוֹ שֶׁנִּתְבָּאָר מִזֶּה סוּף דְבוּר הַמִּתְחִיל "וְשִׂאבְתֶּם מִיָּם בְּשִׁשּׁוֹן" (לְקַמֵּן סוּבוֹת עַת סוּף עֲמוּד ג)).

וְלָכֵן נִתְּנָה עַל הַר סִינַי - "דְּמֻכְיָה", שֶׁהוּא
עֲנִין הַשְּׁפָלוּת, שְׂאִינוּ מַגְבִּייה אֶת עַצְמוֹ
כּו'.⁸

Therefore, the Torah was given on a mountain, which is "low," which is representative of humility, meaning that he doesn't lift himself up above others.

The first question of why Mount Sinai specifically was chosen over other mountains is answered: It is because of Mount Sinai's "lowness" and humility, which is needed in order to receive the Torah.

The Alter Rebbe now asks the main question of the maamar: If the ego is a contradiction to Torah, then why give the Torah on a mountain at all?

אָךְ צָרִיךְ לְהִבִּין, אִם כֵּן לָמָּה הָיָה "שׂוּם
הָר"?

However, we need to understand: If it is true that having ego and "tallness" is the opposite of being able to receive the Torah, then why was it given on any mountain at all?

שֶׁהָרִי גַם הַר סִינַי הוּא הָר עַל כָּל פְּנִים,
שֶׁהוּא עֲנִין הַגְּבֹהָה רַק שְׂאִינוּ גְבוּהָ כָּל
כֵּן.

Indeed, Mount Sinai is also still a mountain, which is the idea of "tallness" and ego. It just isn't as tall compared to other mountains, but it is a high place relative to a plain or valley. So why was the Torah given on a mountain and not in a low place, like a valley?

The Alter Rebbe will now begin the answer to the main question of the maamar:

אֲבָל הָעֲנִין, כִּי בְּאִמּוּת, עִם הַיּוֹת שֶׁצָּרִיךְ
כָּל הָאָדָם לְהִיּוֹת שְׂפָל בְּמֵאד, מִכָּל מְקוֹם
צָרִיךְ הַתְּחַזְּקוֹת וּקְצַת הַגְּבֹהָה,

However, the idea that will answer this question is as follows: In truth, even though every person needs to be very humble, nonetheless, one needs to be strong and courageous and needs the self-worth to raise himself up to some extent,

⁸ ראה באוה"ת מג"א (תש"נ) ע' נה שמציין לכאן ומוסיף: "ולכן מ"ת ניתנה על ה"ס הר התנשאות ומ"מ הר קטן ע"ד שמינית שבשמינית". וראה תו"א צא, ב, קיט, ג ואילך.

כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב (דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים ב' יז, ו): "וַיִּגְבַּה לְבוֹ
בְּדַרְכֵי ה'".⁹

כִּי אִם לֹא יִהְיֶה בְּבַחֲיֵינָת הַגְּבֻהָה כָּלָל, לֹא
יַעֲרַב לְבוֹ לַגִּשְׁת אֶל הָעֲבוּדָה בְּאִמְרוֹ: "מִי
אַנְכִי וּמָה עֲבוּדָתִי".

לִכְךָ צָרִיךְ לוֹ הַגְּבֻהָת הַלֵּב, בְּתַשׁוּקָה
וְהִצְמָאוֹן שָׁבוּ כו', אֲלֵא שֶׁהֵבִיטוּל צָרִיךְ
לִהְיוֹת יוֹתֵר הַרְבֵּה כו'.¹⁰

As it is written regarding King David (Divrei Hayamim II 17:6), "And he lifted up his self-esteem (lit. "his heart") so he can go in the ways of Hashem."

For if he doesn't pick up his self-esteem at all, then he won't have the courage to approach the service of Hashem, since he will ask himself, "Who am I anyway, and what is my service worth?"

Therefore, he needs to raise his heart in yearning and longing to come close to Hashem and have his own feeling that he wants to come close to Hashem because this is best

⁹ (וּכְמוֹ שֶׁנִּתְבָּאָר מִזֶּה בְּדַבּוּר הַמִּתְחִיל "יִבְיֵאוּ לְבוֹשׁ מַלְכוּת" (תּוֹרָה אֹר צֵא, ב)).

(אך להבין מ"ש ויקח המן את הלבוש ואת הסוס כו' מאין זכה המן לבחי' ה'ללו. הנה ארו"ל המן מן התורה מנין דכתיב המן העץ כו'. והענין דכתיב ראשית גוים עמלק שכל העכו"ם הן מבחי' עה"ד טו"ר ועמלק הוא למעלה מהן. וזהו המן העץ בתמיהה שהוא למעלה מבחי' העץ. ומ"מ מאחר דכתיב המן העץ אפי' בלשון תמיהה הרי יש לו עב"פ קצת שייכות אל העץ. שאל"כ למה מזכירו אצל העץ. אך הענין שהוא בבחי' מקיף להעץ נוגע ואינו נוגע והוא בחי' חוצפה וגסות הרוח. והנה לעומת זה יש בקדושה ונק' ג"כ בחי' המן לאחר הבירור. כי מבני בניו של המן למדו תורה בריבים. הרי שיש בחי' המן לאחר הבירור שנכלל בקדושה והוא יוגבה לבו בדרכי ה' וכמארו"ל שצ"ל עיניו למטה ולבו למעלה. עינים הם בחי' חכמה כח מ"ה בחי' משה שהיה ענו מכל האדם בחינת בטול. ובחי' הלב צ"ל למעלה ששם יסוד האש והצמאון וטבע האש להגביה ולעלות למעלה. והאדם צ"ל כולו משניהם. כי אם לא יהיה בבחי' הגבהה כלל לא יערב לבו לגשת אל העבודה באמרו מי אנכי ומה עבודתי. לכך צריך לו הגבהת הלב בתשוקה והצמאון שבו. וגם בחי' עינים למטה להיות בחי' בטול ממש באוא"ס ב"ה בהמשכת ח"ע כח מ"ה בעסק התורה דאורייתא מחכמה נפקת וכמ"ש ודברי אשר שמתו בפוך כו'. וזהו ענין שהת"ח צריך להיות בו שמינית שבשמינית. כי הנה בבחי' חכמה יש ל"ב נתיבות החכמה וגם לב בגימטריא ל"ב וכללות שניהם עולה ס"ד. ושמינית שבשמינית הוא חלק א' מס"ד והיינו הגבהת הלב המחובר אל מוח החכמה כי העיקר היא החכמה המשכת בחי' הבטול אלא שצריכה העלאה תחלה בבחינת הגבהת הלב כדי להמשיך אח"כ שאם אין העלאה אין המשכה. והגבהה והעלאה זו הוא בחי' התנשאות דקדושה בחי' המן לאחר הבירור ומקורה ושרשה למעלה באורות עליונים הם בחינת לבוש וסוס. כי הלבוש הוא ה' מלך גאות לבש בבחי' גאות והתנשאות. וסוס בגימטריא ב"פ ס"ג. משא"כ בחי' כתר מלכות הוא בחינת בעטרה שעטרה לו אמו דוקא שאין בולעו"ו בבחי' המן בחי' זו כלל אלא היא בחי' בטול רצון ממש נעשה קודם לנשמע כו' וד"ל)

¹⁰ עיין שם. וּבְדַבּוּר הַמִּתְחִיל "הַחֲלָצוֹ מֵאִתְּכֶם" (לִקְטָן מִטּוֹת כו, ג), גְּבִי עֲנִין "שְׁלוֹם בְּפִמְלִיא שֶׁל מַעְלָה", שְׁבַנְפָּשׁ - מוֹחַ נֶלֶב כו'.

for *him*. **But, at the same time, he needs to have much more selfless dedication and commitment** to fulfilling Hashem's will than to his own personal interests.

The Alter Rebbe has given one answer as to why the Torah was given on a mountain: The idea of a mountain is ego, and a person needs some ego, some self-esteem and pride, in order to have the motivation to connect to Hashem through learning, prayer, and mitzvos. However, even this pride in holiness needs to be kept in check so that it shouldn't get out of hand. This is the idea of a "small mountain," a well-balanced ego that is just big enough to motivate the person to move forward, but not so big as to get him to think that he is better than others.¹¹

¹¹ The idea of Mount Sinai being a "mountain" but also "small" will be understood by the Alter Rebbe's explanation of the following concept mentioned in the Gemara (Torah Or on Megilas Ester 91b):

"A Torah scholar needs to have an "ego" consisting of one eighth of one eighth, and that small amount of ego (1/64) he needs to wear like a kernel of grain is encompassed by the chaff."

The Alter Rebbe explains that in the mind, the main component is Chochma-wisdom, which is said to have 32 paths, and the heart is called \aleph which is the numerical equivalent of 32. Thus, 1/64 of ego means that out of all of his combined intellect and emotion, only one single aspect should be in a mode of "ego." There needs to be a yearning in the heart that he should want to have Chochma, that he should want to achieve nullification to Hashem and a connection to Hashem. For if there is no yearning to strive higher, then he will never achieve the true nullification and true connection to Hashem.

Why is it compared to a kernel of wheat wearing chaff?

The Mittler Rebbe explains in Hosafos on Torah Or (119c-120b), as follows:

When wheat starts to grow from the ground, the chaff protects the kernels from the wind and the heat of the sun while the grain is growing. But once it is fully developed, the chaff is no longer needed and should be discarded so that the person can eat just the kernels (after being ground into flour and made into bread, etc.).

So too, when a person starts to serve Hashem, he needs that "ego," meaning the yearning and striving for more that he feels he is missing and he wants to grow spiritually to become something much greater. Only after years of spiritual growth can he come to a level that he is so nullified to Hashem that he doesn't feel himself at all, and he doesn't feel he as any spiritual agenda. He only feels Hashem and His mission. At that point, he can discard his "ego" for spiritual growth, just like the chaff is discarded.

However, until he reaches that level, he needs the "ego" to protect him from the "wind and heat," meaning from the feelings of inferiority asking him, "Who am I to grow spiritually and want closeness to Hashem? I'm a nobody, I'll never accomplish it," or

*Now the Alter Rebbe will give another answer of the meaning of a
"small mountain:"*

וְזָהוּ עֵנָן "וַיִּסְפוּ עַנְוִים בְּה' שְׂמֵחָה" (ישעיה
כט, יט):

And this is also the idea of what it says (Yeshayahu 29:19), "And the humble will increase in their joy in Hashem."

כִּי הִנֵּה הַשְּׂמֵחָה הִיא הַתְּחַזְקוֹת וְהַגְבָּהַת
הַנֶּפֶשׁ,

Now, usually, the idea of joy is that the person feels himself strongly and picks his ego up, which is the opposite attitude of total surrender to Hashem's Will with dedication and selflessness,

אֲלָא שְׂשֻׂמְחָה וְהַגְבָּהָה זֶה נִמְשָׁךְ מִן
הָעֲנָוָה וְהַשְּׂפִלוּת דְּרוּקָא.

However, this type of joy and uplifted feeling comes specifically from his humility and selflessness,

וּכְמוֹ שְׂכַתוּב בְּ"סֵפֶר שֶׁל בִּינוּנִים" סוּף פָּרָק
ל"ד: שֶׁמִּצַּד הַגּוּף וְנִפְשֵׁי הַבְּהֵמִית הוּא
נִבְזֶה בְּעֵינָיו מְאֹד,

as it is written in Tanya at the end of chapter 34, that because of one's body and animal soul he feels very bad about himself, since they are constantly pushing him after physicality instead of striving to connect to Hashem,

וְהַיּוֹתוּ בְּשִׂמְחָה הוּא מִצַּד נֶפֶשׁ-הָאֱלֹקִית
וְנִיצוּץ אֱלֹהוֹת הַמְּלוּבָשׁ בָּהּ לְהַחְיּוֹתָהּ
כו'. עֵינֵי שָׁם,

Whereas, his joy comes from his G-dly soul and the spark of Hashem that is invested in his soul to enliven it. (See there where this concept is explained at length).

וּבִמְהַ שְׂכַתוּב (לְקַמֵּן תְּבוּא מַג, סוּף עֲמוּד א) סוּף
דְּבוּר הַמִּתְחִיל "תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא עֲבַדְתָּ בְּשִׂמְחָה"
(תְּבוּא כח, מז):

See also what is explained in a different place in Likutay Torah:

דְּאִדְרָבָה,

There is something that seems contrary to what would be expected:

similar feelings. To protect him from that, he needs a minute ego (1/64) to keep him going.

כָּל מֵה שֵׁיעֵמִיק בְּעֵינָי פְּחִיתוֹת עֲצֻמוֹ,
וְיִהְיֶה נְבוֹזָה בְּעֵינָיו נִמְאָס,

The more that a person will think deeply into how lowly his animal soul is, to the point of being disgusted by it,

אֲזַי יִהְיֶה שְׂמֵחַת נַפְשׁוֹ בְּעֶסֶק הַתּוֹרָה
כְּפֹלֶה וּמְכֻפָּלֶת כּו'.¹²

Then, not only will it not stop him from having joy, but, just the opposite, it will enable him to have true joy, **for then his G-dly soul's joy in the study of the Torah will be doubled and redoubled.**

וְזֶהוּ "וַיִּסְפוּ עֲנוּיִם" דְּוָקָא - "בְּה'
שְׂמֵחָה".¹²

This is the meaning of what the verse says, "And -specifically- the humble will increase in their joy in Hashem."

In Tanya, (Chapter 34) the Alter Rebbe concludes a lengthy explanation on how to serve Hashem with joy. In chapters 26-27, he explains that we should be joyful in the service of Hashem at all times, since only with the energy of joy will one be able to overcome the yetzer hara and serve Hashem with the proper vigor.

In chapters 28-31, the Alter Rebbe explains how to deal with the fact that the ego and coarseness of the animal soul encompass the G-dly soul and prevent the person from experiencing the joy hidden within his soul. He explains that the person needs to refine the ego and coarseness by having a system of making a proper accounting

¹² ראה תו"מ ח"א ע' 88-90:

א. במאמר דחג השבועות, ד"ה ויספו ענויים בה' שמחה (קונטרס חג השבועות סה"מ תש"י), מבאר כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר הכ"מ השייכות שבין ענוה לשמחה, שלא זו בלבד שאינם הפכיים זמ"ז, אלא אדרבה, שהם מסייעים זל"ז.

ונקודת הביאור בזה - ש"בעצם מהותו הנה העניו הוא תקיף בדעתו וכל מה שהוא עושה הכל הוא בדעת חזקה", כי, "שפלות העניו אינה ענין הכנעה וביטול מצד שהוא שפל בעצם, דהעניו יודע מעלת עצמו, ויודע דמעלות הללו הם חשובים ביותר, אבל להיותו מכיר את האמת אינם חושבם למעלה ומדריגה שלו", ש"מכיר את האמת דכל ענין הטוב שיש לו אינו מצ"ע כ"א מה שבא בירושה מאבותינו, ומשו"ז הוא הביטול, אבל ביטול זה אינו ענין השפלות כ"א הנחת עצמותו מהכרת האמת", ועד ש"אינו מתחשב עם עצמו כלל", לפי שנחשב בעיני עצמו לאין, וביטול זה (ענוה) הוא כלי לשמחה העליונה.

וההוראה מזה בנוגע אלינו: צריכים אנו לידע שהמעלות והכחות שיש לנו אינם אלא מה שניתן לנו ע"י כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר, ובמילא, צריכים אנו להיות בתכלית הביטול, למלא את השליחות של הרבי בכל התוקף, כאמור, שהעניו בעצם מהותו הוא תקיף בדעתו, מבלי להתחשב בשום הפרעה, העלם והסתר.

of where he is holding in the service of Hashem, and just how far off course he is from the proper path that Hashem wants.

A person should sometimes think about how lowly and coarse the ego and desires of his animal soul are and question himself about how much he works on himself to become refined and sensitive. When he does this, then his ego will be exposed and will begin to loosen up and allow some expression of his G-dly soul to enter his consciousness.

Now, we come full circle - if the goal of this entire process is that one should experience the joy of his G-dly soul, then how can one do that if he is focused on how unhappy he should be about his spiritual situation? How can he be expected to be happy about Hashem and sad about his spiritual exile at the same time?

The answer to this is in chapter 34, where the Alter Rebbe explains that this is possible since the joy in Hashem is from the G-dly soul and the sadness in his own shortcoming is from the animal soul, and each soul is separate. Therefore, it is possible to have both feelings be expressed in his consciousness at the same time. Not only are they not a contradiction, but actually the very brokenness of the animal soul's ego is what allows the person to experience the joy of the G-dly soul.

This, then, is the idea of, "The humble will increase in their joy in Hashem." This means that because of the person's humility and selflessness, he can increase in experiencing the joy of the G-dly soul.¹³

¹³ On Shavuos 5710 (Toras Menachem vol.1 pp. 88-90) the Rebbe quoted the Frierdiker Rebbe's maamar on this verse, "וְיִתְּפוּ עֲנָוִים בְּה' שְׂמֵחָה"-The humble will increase in their joy in Hashem," and explained the idea briefly: A humble person is someone who is very strong in his opinions and he does everything with a great conviction. The fact that he is humble isn't because he thinks he is nothing. Rather, he knows his own capabilities and strengths and knows that they are very important, but since he recognizes the truth, that everything he has is only from Hashem and what he inherited from the forefathers Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov, he doesn't attribute any greatness to himself. Therefore, he doesn't feel himself. However, the fact that he doesn't feel himself isn't because he puts himself down, but because he totally puts himself aside, since he recognizes the truth that his achievements and abilities are not from his own effort and accomplishment. This type of selflessness and humility, which comes from recognizing the truth, is what allows him to experience the joy of the G-dly soul.

The Rebbe concludes by teaching that the same idea applies to a chasid and Rebbe: A chasid needs to know that the Rebbe has given him power and capability to fulfill his shlichus. As long as he knows that it's not his power and accomplishments, but that he is just using what was given to him, then he will have the strength to accomplish whatever the Rebbe wants from him, regardless of any opposition from his own animal soul or someone else's animal soul, since he is just going with the Rebbe's power.

וְזֶהוּ עֲנָן הַר סִינַי - שְׂרָדָה שְׂנֵאָה¹⁴ עַל
מַדּוֹת הָרָעוֹת,

And this is also the idea of the name of the mountain "הַר סִינַי-Mount Sinai," since the word "סִינַי" is related to the word "שְׂנֵאָה-Hatred," meaning that through the study of the Torah there comes down, from Hashem to the person, the power to hate the negative attributes of his animal soul.

עַל דֶּרֶךְ "לְעוֹלָם יִרְגִּזוּ אָדָם יִצְרָ-טוֹב עַל
יִצְרָ-הָרָע" (בְּרַכּוֹת ה', רִישׁ עַמּוּד א'),

Just like it says in the Gemara (Brachos 5a), "A person should always arouse his good inclination stemming from his G-dly soul to be angry at the evil inclination stemming from the animal soul."

וְרוּגּוֹ זֶה הוּא גַם-כֵּן הַגְּבָהָה וְהַתְנַשְּׂאוֹת
עַל הַיִּצְרָ-הָרָע כּו'.¹⁵

And this anger against his own animal soul is also an expression of the uplifted feeling and supremacy of the G-dly soul over the animal soul's evil inclination. Thus, this anger is a "הַר-הַר" of self-esteem and pride of the G-dly soul that is expressed in giving the person the strength to "סִינַי-hate" his evil inclination and overcome it.

אֲךָ שְׂהוּא עֵיקָר הַבִּיטוּל לַהֲיוֹת אֶת-כַּפִּיָּא
כּו'¹⁵.

However, specifically, this type of "pride" in serving Hashem and overcoming the evil inclination is the main selfless dedication to Hashem, that one pushes himself to do what Hashem wants, against his own animal soul's nature.

¹⁴ (סִינַי שְׂרָדָה שְׂנֵאָה [לְאִמּוֹת הָעוֹלָם] - שְׁבַת פֹּט, א').

¹⁵ וְעֵינַי מֵה שְׁנֵתְבָאָר עוֹד מֵעֲנָן הַר" - בְּדַבּוּר הַמִּתְחִיל "שִׁמְנֵי כַחוֹתֶם" (לְקַמֵּן שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים מֵה, ב').
וְעֵינַי מֵה שְׁנֵתְבָאָר בְּדַבּוּר הַמִּתְחִיל "קוֹל דּוּדִי", בְּעֲנָן "מְדַלֵּג עַל הָהָרִים", "יִשְׂאוּ הָרִים שְׁלוֹם לְעַם" (לְקַמֵּן שִׁיר
הַשִּׁירִים טו, ד'). וְעֵינַי מֵה שְׁנֵתְבָאָר סוֹף דְּבוּר הַמִּתְחִיל "שׁוּבָה יִשְׂרָאֵל" (לְקַמֵּן שְׁבַת שׁוּבָה סה, ג').

We thus have another explanation of the idea of a “small mountain:” A mountain represents ego, and there are two types of ego: The ego of the G-dly soul, and that of the animal soul. The ego of the animal soul is called a “tall mountain,” since it wants everyone to look at it and only cares about itself. The ego of the G-dly soul is called a “small mountain,” since its whole ego is just that it wants to fulfill Hashem’s will and connect to Hashem. Thus, even its “pride” and “ego” are really selfless dedication to Hashem. In other words, it doesn’t take pride in itself, but in making Hashem happy. Since the whole Torah was given in order to reveal this strength and pride of the G-dly soul and give it the power to overcome the animal soul, the Torah was, therefore, given on a “small mountain.”



Summary of the Maamar

Question 1: Why was the Torah given specifically on Mount Sinai, as opposed to another mountain?

Answer 1: Because Mount Sinai was the “lowest” and “most humble” of all the mountains, and in order to receive the Torah one needs humility.

Question 2: If the ego is a contradiction to receiving the Torah, and the tallness of the mountain represents ego, then why was the Torah given on a mountain and not in a plain or a valley?

Answer 2a: Some ego is needed in order for a person to have the motivation to push himself forward in learning Torah and coming close to Hashem. He needs to feel that he wants to come close and that he has a yearning to progress spiritually. However, he needs to keep that small amount of ego in check, so that he shouldn't think that he is better than others. His “mountain” of yearning for closeness to Hashem needs to be “small,” so he won't think his greatness makes him more important than others. He needs to maintain in his awareness that it is just a gift from Hashem.

Answer 2b: The idea of the Torah is to bring out the pride and power, the “mountain” of the G-dly soul, and how it overpowers and transforms the animal soul. However, even this holy “pride” needs to be “small,” since the G-dly soul's pride is only in making Hashem happy, and not for itself. Thus, if someone feels his own ego too much, he can know that it isn't the legitimate “pride” of the G-dly soul.

Lessons from the Maamar in the Service of Hashem

1. A Jew needs to have a balance between selfless dedication to Hashem and having a personal feeling of yearning to accomplish and grow in his service of Hashem. He should truly want to learn how to daven with excitement and passion, how to truly understand Chassidus and Gemara etc. and he should feel driven to accomplish. At the same time, he should be humble and not think that he is better than others. It is only Hashem's help and what he inherited from our Forefathers in his soul that enables him to accomplish. It is not his own personal greatness.
2. A Jew needs to reveal the joy, the power, and the pride of his G-dly soul by refining himself and removing the coarseness and ego of his animal soul. The more he can overcome the desires of his animal soul, the more he can experience the true joy and strength of his G-dly soul.

Likutay Torah English translation project:

The original text of the maamarim with נקודות and punctuation is presented side by side with a phrase-by-phrase translation and explanation. The translation of the text is in **bold** whereas the commentary is in regular font. The explanations of general concepts that are not directly relevant to understanding the flow of the maamar are in footnotes.

All of the commentary of the Tzemach Tzedek printed with brackets in the original Likutay Torah have been moved to the Hebrew footnotes and left untranslated.

The Goal

The main purpose of this project is to enable the reader to learn the Likutay Torah in the original. By learning the words, structure, and concepts of the maamarim, eventually they should be able to learn it by themselves in the original.

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לזכות כל ילדי החסידים שיתנו חסידישע נחת
לכ"ק אדמו"ר ולהוריהם שיחיו
ולזכות יוסף יצחק בן ביילא איטא ולאה בת
חנה דבורה רייזל וכל יוצאי חלציהם שיחיו,
שיזכו ללמוד חסידות וליליך בדרכי החסידות,
ויפוצו מעיינות אור החסידות

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