

B”H

Summaries of Harav Ginsburgh’s Lectures

Dedicated in memory of the holy Gavriel Noach and Rivkah Holtzberg Hy”d

## 4 Shevat 5769 – Vort of Gilad Herman and Elital Bornstein

from Harav Yitzchak Ginsburgh

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### 1. Uniting Worlds

We just heard from Gilad's father that he hopes that Gilad, our *chassan* (groom-to-be), will be successful in his endeavors in two worlds—the world of Torah and the secular world. So we’ll begin with something similar but expressed in a different way.

We also recognize Gilad’s many talents, and we wish that he succeeds in connecting worlds together. There are many models of worlds. So which worlds should Gilad together with his wife aspire to unite? One possibility is that they unite the four worlds discussed in Kabbalah, from the World of Emanation through the World of Action. Another possibility is based on a saying of the sages, that from the time that a person is born until he passes away, he sees 7 worlds. Of course, the simplest blessing is that they merit to connect this world and the World to Come.

But the two worlds that were referred to are the world of Torah and the world of science. It is the right thing to want to join these two worlds, but unlike other possibilities entertained in the past and in the present, our understanding is that these two worlds have to be unified totally. Just as science today is seeking its own understanding of unity, so we as Jews who say the *Shema* – “God is one” – twice a day, our final goal is to unite things entirely, in the absolute unity of God. The bottom line should be that after the unification, a person should not walk around feeling that his life is divided between different worlds.



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2 Hausner St. • Jerusalem 96431 • tel.: 972.547.533770 • [gps@inner.org](mailto:gps@inner.org)

There is the talent innate in every Jew to unite worlds. They should not be two different things, Torah and science. They have to become one thing. Unfortunately, even a *chareidi* Rabbi today would agree that these are two separate worlds, but our goal is higher. We are seeking to unite them completely. And we hope that indeed Gilad will be able to make a serious contribution to this unification.

## 2. A Partzuf of 419

We will begin with a few *gematriot* on the names of the *chassan* and the *kallah*. This is not very complex mathematics. After that we will turn to a more serious topic which is what they received in an answer from the Rebbe. They got a response that has to do with the unification of Torah and science.

Their full names are גִּלְעָד רִוּד and אֵלִיָּטֵל רוּזָה. So their full gematria is 419, which is the value of the word “unity” (אַחְדוּת). So their goal should indeed be to seek this unity. Just as the Torah says that the goal of every couple should be to become one. Love (אַהֲבָה) in *gematria* is equal to “one” (אֶחָד) and through love, unity can be attained. But, the unity at home should not stop there, it should reflect externally, to their community and to the entire world.

Many words can equal the same value. But, the idea is to look at all the words or phrases that are equal and see how they relate to one another. Then by corresponding them to some model that provides them with an underlying relationship, they become a model, a *partzuf*, themselves. Just to notice that two words or two phrases have the same numerical value does not yet reflect the underlying wisdom and teaching intended by this equation. But, once words and phrases that have the same value are ordered in a *partzuf*, that is already an example of wisdom, as the sages say, “It requires wisdom, not just [tedious] labor” (חכמה היא ולא מלאכה). So in this case, we will see 7 things that equal 419, and how the seven words and phrases correspond to the seven measures of the heart, the *sefirot* from loving-kindness to kingdom.

**Loving-kindness:** “Unity” (אַחְדוּת). The means to unity is love.<sup>1</sup> The prophet tells us that “One was Abraham.” Abraham reflected love and unity. He was the first person to strive to unify the heavens and the earth. As the verse in Genesis says, “He called out in the Name of God-world,” meaning that he believed and experienced that the world is not outside God, it is one thing with the Almighty.

**Might:** “The source of wisdom” (מְקוֹר חִכְמָה). Let us begin explaining this with a technical Kabbalistic statement, one that those who are well versed in Kabbalah will understand. The source of the 7 emotional *sefirot* is in the part of the crown known as *Atik Yomin*, in the Seven *Tikunei Galgalta*, each of which is the source for a particular type of intelligence.<sup>2</sup> The Arizal explains that the *sefirah* of might of *Atik*, enclothes itself into the wisdom of *Arich*. The result is known as the concealed brain (מוֹחַ סְתוּמָא), the true source of wisdom in the human being. In Chassidut, the *sefirah* of wisdom is the power of contraction. That its first source is in the might of *Atik* means that wisdom is sharp.

An example would be someone who is talented in mathematics, and it follows that such a person should also be mighty and strong in other areas.

**Beauty:** “His friend will speak of him”<sup>3</sup> (יגיד עלי רעו). This is the most interesting phrase, and we will expand upon it last.

**Victory:** “music-dance” (נגון רקוד). There is a special unification between dance and music. One way to relate to this from a more spiritual aspect is by thinking of the dance of the flame on a candle. Many times we explain that the Chanukah candles suggest the word for “violin” (בנור), which permutes to the equivalent phrase “candle of *Havayah*” (נר יהוה). These are the active *sefirot*, and this implies that the house of this young couple should be full of a lot of dancing and melodies. One of the meanings of the *sefirah* of victory is orchestration.

**Acknowledgment:** “slice of a pomegranate” (פֶּלַח הָרְמוֹן). This phrase appears in the Song of Songs in the verse that reads, “Your forehead is like a slice of a pomegranate.” The pomegranate is one of the seven species with which the Land of Israel is blessed. These seven species grain and fruit correspond with the seven emotive *sefirot* as well. The pomegranate corresponds to the *sefirah* of acknowledgment. The sages tell us that every single Jew is related to the pomegranate for there is no Jew that is not full of good deeds and *mitzvot* like the pomegranate is full of seeds. In Chassidut, this is the name of the books written by Rebbe Hilel of Paritsch, so it is a good idea that the *chassan* and *kallah* set aside time to learn these books together (united).

**Foundation:** “the *tzadik* of the generation” (צַדִּיק הַדּוֹר). In every generation, there is one particular *tzadik* that is the leader of all the other *tzadikim*. He is the *tzadik* who best knows how to serve God in his generation. Indeed, every *tzadik*, but all the more so the *tzadik* of the generation is a true match-maker. The initials of the phrase, “For the lips of the priest will guard knowledge and Torah” (שִׁפְתֵי כֹהֵן יִשְׁמְרוּ דָעַת וְתוֹרָה) spell “match” (שִׁידוּךְ).

**Kingdom:** “my sister” (אָחֵתִי). Together the *chassan* and *kallah* are “my sister.” This is the most general noun used in the Song of Songs to describe how the Almighty sees and relates to the Jewish people. Indeed, even without the numerical value, the meaning of the word, אָח, “brother,” means “one,” as explained elsewhere.

So these are our seven phrases that equal the full names of the *chassan* and *kallah*. There is a lot to meditate upon in these words.

### 3. Heralding Children

We said that the phrase that we want to focus on is “His friend will speak of him” (יגיד עלי רעו). The literal meaning of this phrase in context of the verse from where it is taken in the book of Job is that before the rain comes there is thunder, which itself comes after lightning. If there is thunder then certainly rain is about to fall. According to the sages, rainfall is like redemption (גְּאוּלָּה). So lightning and thunder are like Elijah who comes to

tell us of the impending redemption. Thunder then is the friend that testifies about the coming rain.

The first letter of “lightning” (ברק) is ב, the first letter of “thunder” (רעם) is ר, and the *gematria* of the two words together is “covenant” (ברית). The thunder and the lightning are likened to two companions that never part. They correspond in Kabbalah to the father and mother principle. The *chassan*, and the father will surely agree with this statement, truly shines (like lightning). About the thunder and lightning, the *Zohar* says that, “they emanate together and dwell together” (this is exactly what modern science holds today – the lightning and the thunder originate as one, although in general we hear the thunder after seeing the lightning because the speed of light is much greater than the speed of sound).

If lightning is the ability to innovate new understanding in Torah, then the thunder is the ability to publish these new ideas, to spread them. So if the *chassan* is like lightning, then all of the *chassan's* innovations will be heard and published thanks to the *kallah*.

The ensuing rain is in Hebrew the same word as “matter” (גשמיית), which includes three blessings, children, life (health), and sustenance. We said that rain is like a small redemption in the world, and it in a sense is a harbinger of the complete and final redemption. For this reason there were people who saw the material affluence of the Land of Israel a sign of the coming redemption. It is not enough, but it is definitely a sign that God wants to give us the gift of the final redemption.

So the order here is lightning, thunder, rain, and then the redemption. All these words together equal 1000, alluding to the 1000 lights that Moshe received at Mt. Sinai. To herald (להשר) is cognate in Hebrew to the word for “flesh” (בשר). The *chassan* and *kallah* are to become one flesh. So we can now understand that “his friend tells about him,” means that the friend heralds the coming of his friend. In our case, this means that the *chassan* heralds the *kallah* and together they herald their children who then herald the redemption. To herald means to reveal a concealed reality. All of this heralding means that they become one, בשר אחד. Each stage heralds the coming stage (and due to the phenomenon of reflected or returning light as taught in Kabbalah, each stage also heralds or reveals the previous stage to its fullest). And everything begins with unity and results in unity. This interplay of heralding and manifesting one another (and thereby becoming one flesh, one body) is the secret of the *sefirah* of beauty, the perfect blend of hues to form a beautiful picture.

So this is the first part of what we want to talk about. Out of unity all the other blessings come.

#### 4. Geocentrism, Heliocentrism, and Couplehood

When the *chassan* and *kallah* decided to marry, they wrote, as is customary, a letter to the Lubavitcher Rebbe asking him for a blessing. The response that they received included

two letters, both of them with an important scientific discussion. Obviously, this was another sign that indeed this couple will have tremendous potential to contribute in this area.

The first letter was addressed to a group of students from a certain university that asked that the Rebbe provide them with proofs that the Creator exists. The second letter<sup>4</sup> addressed the question of what revolves around what, the sun around the earth, or the earth around the sun. Let us look at this letter first.

The Rebbe answered that because of general relativity, there is no essential difference between the two viewpoints. He says that every serious scientist would admit that it is simpler to write the equations with the earth revolving around the sun. But, that both ways of looking at reality are equally correct.

Actually, the Rebbe wrote that there are three options. The third option (which would make the equations describing their motion even more complex) is that the sun and the earth both revolve around each another simultaneously. This possibility is the one that is most related to the fact that a *chassan* and *kallah* wrote a letter to the Rebbe and got this letter as their response, because a man and woman are likened to the sun and the earth. It is common knowledge that there are verses in the Bible that state that the earth is stationary and therefore imply that it is the sun that revolves around the earth. But, there are other verses that would seem to imply the opposite. In any case, armed with the correspondence between a man and woman and the sun and the earth, we can look at another very interesting verse in Jeremiah. Jeremiah states that in the future, God will create a new reality in which, "the female will encircle [or rotate around] the male."<sup>5</sup> But, if the female is the earth and the male is the sun, then this verse is an allusion to the current heliocentric view of the solar system.

In any case, the point of the first letter is that in a Jewish home, both the husband and the wife need to revolve around one another and in this way to herald one another as discussed above (in Kabbalah we are taught that it is indeed the power of the *sefirah* of beauty, the heralding principle, that brings the sun and the earth together through a process of revolution). This is the highest possible form of marital harmony.

## 5. Proving the Existence of the Creator

Returning to the first letter, which asked for proofs of the existence of the Creator, the Rebbe replied with a long letter,<sup>6</sup> giving 3 different proofs. Historically, the first two proofs are well known and have been given in the past. But, the third is an innovation of the Rebbe.

The first proof comes from Maimonides who states that the difference between Judaism and every other religion is that our tradition begins with a revelation of the Creator that was witnessed by 600,000 people at the same time, and that the testimony of this was passed down from generation to generation (of at least 600,000 people each) without any interruption until the present day. Every other religion began with the

testimony of a single person or several individuals. We have here a unique historical fact that the Creator revealed himself to an entire nation simultaneously and that this revelation was passed down until reaching us. This is simply historical proof.

The second proof that the Lubavitcher Rebbe writes is what today would be called the proof from design. The data that this proof rests on is the subject of the hottest contemporary debates between science and religion and it provides some of the most important questions in the philosophy of science. Simply put, the proof from design states that it is clear to us that the natural world is orderly. Even more than in previous generations and even more than when the Rebbe wrote this letter, today it is clear that if the earth was just a fraction of a percent closer or farther from the sun, life on earth could not exist. In fact, if any of the physical constants was just a fraction of a percent off, then even matter could not exist. The point is that the current state of nature is such that the chances for it to have arrived at this state by a random process are so small that it is practically impossible. There are still some scientists who reject this. But, certainly the incredible order and exactness in nature that make life possible is the apex of the religion and science interface and debate. A simple analogy that is brought many times for understanding this proof is that nature arriving in its present state is far less probable than ink spilling on a piece of paper in such a way that the result is a written copy of Beethoven's Fifth on the paper. Indeed, this proof is one of the most ancient. The sages tell us that Abraham too searched for the Creator. His inquisitive nature led him to seek an answer to whether or not there is a Creator to all this. The sages say that in the end Abraham found his proof by looking in nature, and when he became convinced of the Creator's existence, the Almighty revealed Himself to him.<sup>7</sup>

The third proof the Rebbe offers is based on modern physics. More specifically, it is a result obtained from quantum mechanics, but the Rebbe does not mention these words. This final proof, which is not exactly a logical proof, but does appeal to our inner sense of what constitutes truth, is an innovation of the Rebbe's. He begins by asking, how do I even know that reality exists. According to physics, all matter is composed of sub-atomic particles. But, these basic building blocks of nature are not objects in the usual sense. Dirac, one of the most important physicists that developed quantum mechanics stated once that, "an electron is not a thing." There are various interpretations of how to understand what these particles might be, they might be fields, or wave equations, or statistical realities, but the bottom line is that they are ghostly and therefore it is quite clear that the world is not at all what it seems to our senses. In fact, in many ways, the reality that our senses pick up on is entirely virtual, the product of the interaction of ghostly particles that are not at all objects. So, says the Rebbe, if reality is virtual, it may very well be that my subjective view of the world is incredibly wrong. Quantum mechanics has provided strong foundation for the type of radical skepticism that began with the ancient Greeks and is most famously used by Descartes. And if my subjective view of reality is wrong because reality does not exist at all as I experience it, then it is

very difficult to place one's trust in such a reality. In fact, knowing what we know about reality, it is easier, says the Rebbe to believe that God exists than to believe that reality exists.

The idea that the Rebbe is proposing is that God is more a reality than is reality itself. This is Chassidic thought is known as "Divinity is a given, reality is a novelty" (אלקות (בפשיטות, עולמות בהתחדשות). This is the truly deep innovation of Chassidut when it comes to our image of ourselves. Normally, from the time that we become conscious of the reality around us, we begin to accept it as a static given—reality is real, the physical world is real, all this is real! On top of the concept of reality as a given, many of us have a concept that there also exists a Creator of this reality. But, the notion of a Creator is then an innovation, relative to the permanence and foundational nature of reality. In other words, psychologically, reality precedes the Creator for most people. Came the Ba'al Shem Tov and reversed the order. He argued that the Torah advocates exactly the opposite, that God is the given and the possibility that there exists a physical reality that is real, that is the real innovation. The existence of the Creator is then permanent and foundational, while the possibility of a real reality is up for questioning.

The Ba'al Shem Tov's change in approach requires a quantum leap in our consciousness. And the necessity of making this leap, says the Rebbe, is today more than ever prescribed by science.

In passing, we may note that in this proof the Rebbe is also making use of an idiom used by Rebbe Isaac of Homil, the deepest intellectual thinker in Chabad (not in his language, but the same idea) אין דבר עושה את עצמו. Nothing that I can sense, makes itself. You could argue, who says this is true? There is indeed a bit of quantum leap in this statement too. But, modern science, more than the science of previous generations, is ready to accept such a statement. A lot of times scientists are not willing to accept an idea that is too simple. But, modern science is ready to accept this one.

## 6. The Creator and His Will

Now, we have to ask why does the Rebbe give three different proofs? Clearly it is because proofs that were acceptable in previous generations no longer carry the same weight in later generations because there are changes in people's natures and their attitudes.

For example, the first point that the Rebbe makes, in the past it was very simple. And it was a real proof. But, today, unfortunately the poison of disbelief is so strong that people who have been educated secularly—it is hard to say this—but they may well tell you that the whole Torah was invented in the time of the second Temple. We have to understand what happened here.

The second proof is the same. There are a lot of scientists who agree that this is a good proof, but there are a lot of Nobel prize winners that will shy away from treating design as a proof. It may be a political thing, meaning that if they would accept the

conclusion of intelligent design their status would be hurt, but it is not only that. So, this point is still debatable.

But, the third proof that the Rebbe gives, which is new is specific for our generation. Stated in the proper manner, it is specifically this argument that can make real inroads with today's modern person. If our reality is indeed virtual then we do indeed have to make a leap toward Divinity as a given!

Now, surveying these proofs from above, it is clear that they correspond to the Worlds of Action, Formation, and Creation. Someone with the consciousness of the World of Action would accept the first one, etc. Why is there no proof for someone with the consciousness of Emanation? Simply, because the consciousness of the World of Emanation does not need any proofs for the Creator's existence. The World of Emanation precedes creation and the only thing that is palpable there is the Creator Himself. Let us explain this correspondence

**Action**—the revelation at Mt. Sinai is simply an event in history, an event in the World of Action.

**Formation**—The idea is that the order and design in nature could not have created themselves. Not only did matter not create itself but the laws of nature also did not create themselves. If you were presented with a computer program would you think that the program wrote itself? Order and design imply that there must have been some programmer who programmed this in the first place. This of course belongs to the World of Formation, which is the world of forms, of orderly shapes that imbue matter. Now indeed, the argument from design is not the epitome of intellect, because that would be the World of Creation. This is the deep reason that someone who is a strong intellectual will not accept it as a solid proof of the Creator.

**Creation**—In Kabbalah, the World of Creation is described as the possibility of reality. In other words, reality as it stands in the context of Creation is not yet fully and 100% real. When a person's consciousness is at this level, reality is only a possibility. It is not a given yet. Indeed, for reality, as grasped in the World of Creation to become real, it has to undergo a creation process. The parallels with the mindset of quantum physics are strong and from the point of view of quantum mechanics, there is indeed a discussion of continuous creation and an underlying supposition that the reality that we are experiencing is entirely virtual.

Now, let us say something about the scope of these proofs. We said that in the World of Action the proof is historical. There the proof is so good that in one swoop you have proved both that God exists and that the Torah—God's will—is true. At once you got everything you wanted.

In Formation, the proof is more technical, more scientific, and therefore stronger. But, surprisingly, it does not include the Torah in its scope. Among those accepting the argument by design, you find that there are those who are creationists who do believe in the Bible and creation as described there. But, you also find others who accept intelligent

design as a proof of the Creator, but do not at all accept the Biblical account of creation. So though the proof is a lot better its treatment of God's will is much weaker.

Let's make another short point about the argument for design. Even though it does not include the Torah as God's will in its scope, it does inform us of some very important things about the Creator and His will. First, it proves that the Creator likes order and that He intended to create human beings, so He likes life and He likes human beings. The argument from design is a basis for a naturalistic form of ethics. Indeed, most of the ethics that people accept today throughout the Western world is based on the notion that though there is no basis for Judaism as God's will, the way that God created nature teaches us that we should respect life. Indeed the Ba'al Shem Tov was careful to never even take a leaf off a tree. He taught that if there is no higher reason to do so, then we should be careful not to hurt nature. The current interest in ecology, in the environment is very much fueled by the argument from design, which is something that most people feel and accept to be true. From the Torah's perspective, there is a lot of truth in these conclusions, but they are of course partial in that they do not and cannot recognize that the Torah is God's ultimate will. There are particular cases where the Torah—God's revealed will—explains a higher rationale for why God created the world as He did, and why His will demands therefore that we do something that does not follow the conclusions of naturalistic ethics.

But, when we come to the argument that corresponds to Creation, we can no longer offer a definition of God based on the nature of reality. This makes it the most intellectual argument, that is to say the most abstract argument, and therefore it is the most appealing to the modern mindset. What we learn from this is that the only thing that God enjoys and wants is some kind of advanced calculus, some kind of advanced mathematics that can describe the virtual nature of reality.<sup>8</sup>

Now let us see the source of each. In action the source is in Mt. Sinai. In Formation the source of the design is in the Big Bang. In Creation the source is even earlier.

Now all of this connects beautifully with Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, which states that there are certain qualities of particles that are epistemically coupled and cannot both be known at the same time. Here we see such a relationship between God and His will (the Torah). As we proceed through the Worlds, the lower the world the more defined God's will is, but the weaker the proof (at least to the modern mind). The strongest proof for the Creator's existence is offered in the World of Creation, but at the same time, knowledge of God's will is completely lost and it is impossible at all to say what He wants. In the World of Formation, we know a lot more about what He wants (life, humans, nature, etc.) but, the proof is not as strong and argument from design can be rejected by some. Finally, in the World of Action, the Creator's will and purpose for creating reality is perfectly defined—the Torah and the revelation at Mt. Sinai—but the proof is considered by most modern people weaker.

We might think that because it discounts the Torah entirely, we should not pursue the argument in the World of Creation. But, actually, this argument is the only open gate through which modern people can pass on their way to Torah. This is the way to explain things to our generation. By coming to terms with the fact that reality is uncertain and virtual, a person can come to a realization that the Creator is real. From there, the person will come to sense the origin of the Torah, God's will, in the Divine World of Emanation (above and beyond the abstract intelligence of the World of Creation), and then continue to descend through the worlds until eventually coming to accept the entire Torah in the context of the World of Action.

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1. As will be explained in length in an upcoming article on unity.
  2. As explained in length in an upcoming article on multiple types of intelligence.
  3. Job 36:33.
  4. *Igrot Kodesh* v. 18, letter number 6877. You can read the original Hebrew version [here](#).
  5. Jeremiah 31:21.
  6. *Igrot Kodesh* v. 18, letter number 6876. You can read the original Hebrew version [here](#).
  7. Interestingly, in the words used by the sages, "there is a master to this palace" (יש בעל הבית) (לְבִירָהּ זֶה) we can find illusions to the names of the *chassan* and the *kallah*.
  8. It is interesting to note that amongst our sages, Maimonides straddles the World of Creation and the World of Action. On the one hand, he would have been quite content with the World of Creation's lack of a definition of the Creator, because he negates the possibility of defining God in positive terms. But, on the other, he advocates the proof of the World of Action, the truth of Jewish tradition and absolute truth of the Torah as it has been handed down to us from generation to generation.