



Lag B'Omer - 004 Secrets of Torah

Even The Past Is Hidden From Us

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai stated that for all of his life, he was utterly bound up with Hashem. This is the most perfected state of a human being – to be totally connected to Hashem.

It is well-known that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai had the same soul as Moshe Rabbeinu, for Rav Chaim Vital writes in the name of his Rebbi, the *Arizal*, that whatever Moshe Rabbeinu did not comprehend in his lifetime, he understood in his second lifetime, which was when he was reincarnated as Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

Moshe was the first redeemer of the Jewish people, and he will also be the final redeemer. It is written, **מה שיהיה, הוא שיהי** - “Whatever was, will be”^[1]. In this verse we see a great, hidden point: even something which “was” seemingly revealed to us in the past, is still unknown to us - because it “will be” [in other words, only in the future will we understand what we know].

The secrets of Torah are mainly revealed in the *Sefer Zohar* (authored by Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai). Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai wrote in the *Zohar* that he was given permission to reveal now what wasn't revealed in previous generations. In the future, when Moshiach comes, it will be revealed that what “was” is still hidden from us. The more secrets we reveal in Torah, the more we arrive at understanding Torah, until we come to the very limits of what can possibly be revealed. When we finally reach the limit of all that can be revealed, it is then that the apex of the “revealed Torah” is reached.

It is at that endpoint that we will reveal the true secret, which is the ultimate connection we will have with the *Ein Sof* (Endlessness) of Hashem.

The Endpoint Will Reveal The Endless Point

The *Zohar* states that when one studies its teachings, the Jewish people will merit to be redeemed from exile. The secrets of Torah are the root of all revelation; it is said that the more it is revealed until even children are fluent in it, the closer we come to the End of Days.

We are looking forward all this time to reach the End of Days, but when the end comes, a point in time will be revealed in which there will be no ‘end’.

When we are still in exile, we are limited; thus we look forward and hope for the end of our limited state. The exile and the End of Days are really one matter. The fact that there can be an end is actually what enables the exile. But in the future times of Moshiach, it will be revealed “endless worlds”, and then it will be revealed that the redemption is really a revelation of “endless” days [the end will reveal that there is no end, and that will be the “endless days” of the future era, where endlessness will be revealed].

That is why learning the *Zohar* will merit us to have the redemption: because it will reveal the end,

and when a person reaches the endpoint of all that can be revealed, he comes to the end of his limits – and he is then able to unify with the point that is above his limits [which is the state of the redemption, in which man will enter the unlimited].

This is the depth behind why Yaakov Avinu wanted to reveal the end, but it was concealed from him. Yaakov Avinu represents the time right before Moshiach comes, which is the revelation of the End of Days. He wanted to reveal where the limits will end. But, this was held back from him, because if he would have revealed the end, that means that he would have also revealed the point that is beyond the end, which is the point that is endless. The endless point has to be concealed and hidden from us, for the time being. It is a point which has no limits, and something which has no limits is essentially the point that must be hidden and concealed.

The secret that the *Zohar* comes to reveal is that it reveals all the secrets of the design of the human being, from the most perfected state of man until the lowliest level (actions). When we arrive at the ultimate secret, which is the complete revelation – it will then be revealed the ‘endless point’.

Revealing One's Unique Part In Torah

It is well-known that the *Arizal* revealed much detail about everything in the universe. The *Arizal* said that if he would live another two years, he would have finished revealing everything, and then Moshiach would have come.

The depth of this matter is that if he would have decided to reveal all of the secrets of Torah, he would have reached the end of all revelations, and then the endless point would have been revealed. This means that had he decided to complete all that is revealed in the Torah, the unlimited point would have been revealed, and this point is endless.

This is why throughout all the generations, a matter is only revealed in small amounts as time goes on. This is because ever since Moshe Rabbeinu hit the rock and made drops of water come out of it, we only understand something in small drops^[2].

If something would be entirely understood at once, then our exile would end immediately, because it would come to the ‘endless point’. But because we have not been worthy yet, the words of the *Zohar* and the *Arizal* are only revealed to us drop by drop. The ‘drops’ have to all be collected together until we reveal all the secrets of Torah, and this will be when even children can understand these matters.

In other words, when we will reach the very end of our limits, we will then be able to enter into the ‘endless worlds’.

At first, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai did not want to reveal what he revealed, but then he decided to reveal them. What is the meaning behind this? Before he revealed the secrets of the *Zohar*, the limits of the world had not yet reached its end. But when he revealed what was known to him, he essentially came out of his own limits by revealing these matters - and since he came out of his own limits, he was able to reveal hidden matters.

When he was alive, he was revealed. When he died, he became hidden. His death was essentially when he connected to the point that is above comprehension.

In every generation, our task is to utilize the potential power of the Torah and bring it out to a state of revelation. We have to reveal the written Torah into the Oral Torah, and when this is complete, a person reaches his soul's limit in the Torah, and he then enters the hidden point in it.

A person must learn all the parts of Torah, as the *Arizal* writes that one must know all of “*Pardes*”

(*Pshat, Derush, Remez and Sod*). The meaning of this is because when a person knows all of *Pardes*, he has revealed the potential of every matter, and he has revealed his end. When the end point of a person is revealed, he enters the endless.

This is the depth of how Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai was always close to Hashem, every day of his life. He learned Torah all his life and revealed every aspect of Torah of his soul, and through this he merited to reach the revelation of the endless. He brought out his end point from being hidden to being revealed.

A Way To Reach The Hidden Point

This is the secret behind the matter of one's personal redemption of the soul, and the general soul redemption of the Jewish people. Every soul, when it completes its part in Torah, comes to its end. The same goes for the world as a whole. When all the parts of Torah are revealed in this 6,000 year world, the Torah reaches the end, and then Moshiach comes.

This is why a person must exert himself in learning Torah and reveal more and more parts of Torah, so that he can complete the revelation process. Every person who reveals more and more parts of Torah is bringing the redemption closer, because he is revealing what is concealed. When all that is hidden becomes revealed, the most Hidden One of all is then revealed.

Thus, learning the secrets of Torah is not the goal. It is only a means to bring a person to the 'hidden point'.

That is why the secret areas of Torah are called "*sod*", "secret." The purpose of a secret is to bring a person to the root of the matter. When a person only has the first three parts of Torah - *pshat* (the simple meaning), *derush* (the expounded interpretation) and *remez* (the hinted meaning) - he has still not completed his revelations. But when a person learns the part of Torah that is "*sod*", the "*sod*" brings him to the hidden point, and this reveals all.

The secret parts of Torah are called "*sod*" not because they are concealed and they need to be revealed, but because they are only a path to get one to enter the hidden point. "*Sod*" is like the "entranceway" to get to the "palace." It is the secret of "*ra'ava d'raavon*" - "desire of desires".^[3] It is the secret of the 'hidden point'.

In the Future, The Voice of Hashem Will Be Heard

This is the meaning of the verse, "*What was, will be.*" What "*was*" is the Torah of Moshe Rabbeinu, who has revealed to us the Torah. But what "*will be*" is the hidden Torah, which we must come to.

At Har Sinai, the Jewish people wanted to speak with Moshe, not with Hashem. The meaning of this was that they wanted revelation, not hidden matters. Hashem is hidden, but Moshe was revealed, and they were only interested in what was revealed.

But the truth is that even what Moshe Rabbeinu said to us is hidden. When that will be revealed to all, there will be a return to the root - Hashem. Then, people will be able to hear the voice of Hashem. The voice of Hashem, which is hidden, will become revealed.

"*What was, will be.*" In the future, it will be revealed, *retroactively*, that whatever we thought we understood is really very hidden, because something that "*was*" is really "*what will be*", which is hidden.

This is the depth of why a secret is called "*sod*". When a person completes the secret - which is when

he completes all of the *pardes* - it is revealed to him that all of *pardes* is really a secret, and it isn't revealed. When a person doesn't learn *sod* and only learns *pshat*, *derush* and *remez*, he is only holding onto what is revealed. But when he enters *sod*, it appears that only *sod* is *sod*, while the other three parts are revealed and not a "*sod*". This is the perspective of one who hasn't completed "*sod*". But when one completes "*sod*", he sees that really all of *pardes* is actually "*sod*"!

Thus, the secrets of Torah are called "*sod*", because they show how everything is all really a secret. It doesn't only reveal that *sod* is a secret - it reveals that **all** of the *pardes* of Torah is a secret.

This is the depth of the redemption. It is to reveal the unknown. It will be a total revelation of "*What was, will be.*" It will show that really all is hidden, because ultimately, everything is unified with Hashem, Who is hidden.

[1] Koheles 1:9

[2] Also said in the name of the Vilna Gaon

[3] Editor's Note: The meal of *Shalosh Seudos* (the third meal of Shabbos) is called the time of *raava d'raavon*, "desire of desires", a time of great spiritual yearning of the soul and revelation for the soul.

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