

PARSHAS KORACH: ON A WEDDING

by Rabbi Dr. Meir Tamari

Why is the bracha 'She hakol bara lichodo' the first of the shevah berachot?

Now, all the other berachot refer to material and bodily matters in addition to the spiritual ones (Rashi, Ketubot 8a). Since these berachot deal with sublime and elevated concepts, the very number itself alluding to the 7 days of binyan, the references in them to mundane and material things, seem very strange. Therefore, we preface them by stating that Hashem created everything for His honor, including the mundane and material. This knowledge makes it possible for every Jewish person to elevate and transform even the material and bodily to the honor of Hashem. The gashmiut [literally geshem] assists us to achieve the completeness- shleimut, for which we are created; the beracha hakol barah itself initiates strength to do so.

In the marriage ceremony there are 3 components- kiddushin, chupah and biah-and they each can serve as a prototype for the relationship between each individual and Hashem as well as the relationship between G-d and Yisrael.

We see from Rashi that mekudeshet li means 'invites me' and makes me forbidden to others even as hekdeshe. So Kiddushin occurs when people separate themselves from their lusts and devote themselves to the service of G-d. To the same extent that people do this, Hashem invites them to Him and makes them impervious to harmful and external forces, even as it is written, ' Yisrael is the Lord's holy and sanctified portion, His first fruits; all that devour him shall be held guilty, evil shall come upon them' (Yirmiyahu, 2:3). In the same way, when one makes themselves holy, those that destroy them shall be punished. The chupah signifies a higher level of human spirituality since thereby the Holy Radiance envelopes him constantly. Hashem, as it were, brings him to His House, to the same extent that he exerts himself to shelter himself in the shadow of the Kodsh Baruch Hu and His Torah. With regard these two, kiddushin and chupah, we read (Tehillim, 65:5): 'Praiseworthy is the one whom You choose and whom You draw close to [kiddushin], dwell in Your courts [chupah]. May we be sated with the goodness of Your House, the holiest part of Your Sanctuary [this refers to biah, that is the ultimate union as we know from Melakhim Alef 7:28 that the word 'meichil-heichal' means completely encompass] '.

Regarding the relationship between Yisrael and Hashem, we see that kiddushin, chupah and biah also serve as examples of the development of this relationship. By the Exodus from Egypt Yisrael separated them-selves from the Tumah of Mitzraim and were invited to become the Nation of G-d. Then when they came to Eitam at the edge of the desert, He spread the Clouds of His Glory over

them (Tehillim105:39); this was as a chupah wherein He brought them to His House even as does the chatan. Matan Torah was the ultimate union as we read: 'May He kiss me with the kisses of His mouth' (Shir Hashirim, 1:2). Then when everything was disrupted by the Eigel and the first tablets were cast down and broken, the process had to be recommenced. Giving and receiving the 2nd tablets signified kiddushin; the wanderings in the desert were their irusin, whereby they separated themselves from Tumah [signified in kabbalah by nachash, seraf and akra] and as it were, were invited by Hashem to serve Him. We learn from Chazal that in the desert Yisrael were preparing them-selves like a bride while she is still in her father 's house (Yoma, 54a). The building of the Bet Hamikdash was their chupah wherein they were brought into the house of their groom. In the future there will be biah, the ultimate union even as it is written: 'Your husband will be your creator' (Yeshayahu 54:5).

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