

Fascinating INSIGHTS

ב' ניסן תש"פ

March 27, 2020

פרשת ויקרא

7th year, edition 329

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COMING SOON Bez"H

Fascinating Insights—The Sefer (in English)

[A Viral Virus](#)

The situation that the world is in can certainly increase our Emuna. How a world in this day and age with all its advances can be paralyzed in such a short time with a small invisible force clearly points to Hashem. Many of the things we took for granted—including schools, Shuls, shopping, celebrating together, food, jobs, global stability—were suddenly interrupted.

This should push us to connect with Hashem. Indeed, it has been pointed out that קוראנא can be a contraction of קורא נא, Hashem is saying please call out to me. We must daven and come closer to Hashem through this. We must daven for the coronavirus to end and the sick to be healed.

There are many that are in isolation. Although this may be very difficult, one must serve Hashem even in such a situation. In fact, בודד,¹ alone, isolation is an acronym for דרכיך דעהו,² in all your ways know Him, as we must serve Hashem to the best of our ability in the situation we find ourselves in.

Many people have been stricken with fear and panic³ over the coronavirus.⁴ To remove the worry and panic we must believe in Hashem. This is hinted to in the word דאגה, worry which has the first five letters of the Alef-Beis except for a ב—בטחון. One who trusts in Hashem doesn't worry.⁵ We also must realize that no one can get sick if Hashem doesn't will it. Of course one must take the proper health precautions, but one must also put his efforts into davening and asking assistance from Hashem,

¹ This term is found in the Torah as in *הן עם לבדד ישכון*, a nation that will dwell in solitude (Bamidbar 23:9).

² Mishlei 3:6. Someone jokingly pointed out that the modern Hebrew word for isolation is *בידוד*. This has a Gematria of 26, the same as *יה-יה-יה*, indicating to connect to Hashem.

³ We must realize that panic and fear are also contagious.

⁴ Many have said that the media has made the situation worse than it actually is. As one person put it, "The media is the virus."

⁵ It is therefore a great idea to learn a Sefer that will increase our trust in Hashem.

as in *אם ה' לא ישמר עיר שוא שקד שומר*, if Hashem will not guard the city, in vain is the watchman vigilant.⁶

The truth is that fear can actually bring the object of the fear upon the person. The Arvei Nachal⁷ (1755-1813) remarks that fear is like a magnet that attracts metal. It has the ability to direct the object of a person's fear toward that person. That is the nature of fear: it draws forth the object of a person's dread and makes it real. A 52-year-old woman complained of ankle pain from which she had been suffering for two years. When she was 19, she broke her ankle and required open-reduction and internal-fixation surgery. The orthopedic surgeon told her that when she will be 50, she would probably have arthritis. She spent the middle years of her life expecting to get arthritis when she was 50, and sure enough, as soon as she reached that age, she experienced the ankle pains!

The Ben Yehoyada⁸ tells of a parable told by doctors of an epidemic in a large town where before the virus spread, a man met the Malach in charge of the epidemic and asked how many people he wants to take? The Malach answered 5,000. In the end 15,000 people died. When the man met the Malach again, he asked him why he lied since 15,000 died and not 5,000. The Malach explained that he didn't lie as he took 5,000 people. The remaining 10,000 that died brought the sickness upon themselves because of their fear and panic of the sickness going around.

The Pasuk says *רוח איש יכלכל מחלהו*... a man's spirit will sustain him in his sickness but who can support a broken spirit.⁹ Rashi¹⁰ explains that one who accepts what comes upon him with happiness and love and doesn't put worry in his heart, his body will be able to overcome the illness. It has been pointed out that the Targum on *מחלהו*, sickness is *כרהניה*, which sounds eerily similar to the word Corona.

One who thinks positive thoughts can be affected in a positive way. Late one Friday night a woman was walking home from the hospital after visiting her ill sister. The area was deserted and far from any main thoroughfare, causing her to experience a sense of fear. She began to recite *מימיני מיכאל ומשמאלי גבריאל ומלפני אוריאל*...¹¹ may Michael be at my right, Gavriel at my left, Uriel before me, and Rafael behind me (different Malachim). She continued to say this again and again until she was calm and secure, feeling that nothing would happen to her. After she had been walking for about half

⁶ Tehillim 127:1.

⁷ Vayeitzei, s.v. והנה מדת. See also the Maharal in Chidushai Agados, Baba Metzlia 33a, s.v. כל.

⁸ Baba Kamma 60b, s.v. דבר בעיר.

⁹ Mishlei 18:14.

¹⁰ See also the Metzudas Dovid.

¹¹ We say this at *Krias Shema Al Hamita* (the bedtime Shema).

an hour, two police officers exited a van and rushed to a nearby bush, dragging the man behind it to their vehicle. The man was an escaped convict for whom the police had been searching. Apparently this convict had been following her for a while and was noticed by someone who called the police. When asked why he hadn't assaulted the woman he was following, he replied that suddenly there were four men walking with her, and he was waiting for them to leave. By reminding herself that protective angels were watching over her, the woman was saved. So we should have thoughts that Hashem is protecting us from the coronavirus and for those who are infected they should have thoughts that Hashem will heal them.

One piece of advice given to help with this situation is not to follow the news too much. To be up to date on how many more people died or are infected just increases the fear and panic. We should also surround ourselves and talk to those who will make us feel good and not live with fear since we are affected by those whom we are in contact with. One who lives in an environment where fear permeates the air can easily be "infected" by that.

We should also find comfort in the tremendous greatness of our people. So much Chessed has been performed. One example is the many separate Megila readings that were arranged on Purim so that the people in isolation could fulfill this Mitzva. Another example is weddings that suddenly could only have minimal attendance have had Simcha with such a higher quality where people truly gave of their "soul."

Rabbi Alt merited to learn under the tutelage of R' Mordechai Friedlander Ztz"l for close to five years. He received Semicha from R' Zalman Nechemia Goldberg. Rabbi Alt has written on numerous topics for various websites and publications. He lives with his wife and family in a suburb of Yerushalayim where he studies, writes and teaches. The author is passionate about teaching Jews of all levels of observance.