

# Fascinating INSIGHTS

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לעילוי נשמת שמואל אביגדור בן יצחק מאיר

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**COMING SOON Bez"H**

**Fascinating Insights—The Sefer (in English)**

[The Time To Ask](#)

When things are going well, we should take advantage of the opportunity to ask Hashem for more. This is just as the Gemara says ...הוא יל ועת רצון, since it is a time of Divine favor, let us also daven for...<sup>1</sup> We can compare this to a wealthy man or one with power that is in a good mood, as that is the time to ask.

We see this by Moshe where he requests הראני נא את כבודך, please show me Your glory, as once Moshe saw it was a time of favorable disposition and that his words were accepted, he went on to request that the vision of His glory be shown to him.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, we say the four Brachos of Birchas Hamazon, as it is a favorable time.

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[Two Long!](#)

Observing the length of the Aliyos in Parshios we notice that the first two Aliyos of this week's Parsha are excessively long, unparalleled anywhere else. What is the reason for this?

Moshe said מי לה אלי, whoever is for Hashem join me in which only the Levites responded.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps they had second thoughts on this and wanted to act like everyone else. So, it says רבות מחשבות בלב איש, many thoughts are in man's heart.<sup>4</sup> Let us go into the לב, the center of the letters of איש. Spelling out איש—that is אלפ לוי—we notice the middle letters spell לוי. Now it can be understood in the following way: There were many thoughts in the mind of the Levites—should they have the same response as the people or go after Hashem. How does the Pasuk there finish off? ועצת ה' היא תקום—they followed מי לה אלי. The sin of the עגל is in the second Aliya, which is the Levi's, of this week's Parsha. This is because

they were not involved in the עגל.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, there is no embarrassment.

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[The Chosen City](#)

The Maharal<sup>6</sup> tells us that the middle is chosen. For this reason, Eretz Yisrael—the chosen land for Kedusha—is in the center of the world. In the center of Eretz Yisrael is Yerushalayim. In the center of Yerushalayim is the Beis Hamikdash.<sup>7</sup>

In a Teshuva the Chassam Sofer<sup>8</sup> (1762-1839) wrote to the great R' Amram Chasida (1790-1830),<sup>9</sup> he expresses his astonishment that R' Amram decided to settle in Tzefas and not Yerushalayim.<sup>10</sup> In the Chassam Sofer's opinion, settling in Yerushalayim is a bigger Mitzva than settling elsewhere in Eretz Yisrael,<sup>11</sup> even

<sup>5</sup> Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 78:4.

<sup>6</sup> Tiferes Yisrael, chapter 22.

<sup>7</sup> Likewise, we see by Aharon who was the Kohen Gadol, the head of all the Kohanim. א is the head of all the letters. In math, there are ones, tens and hundreds. ה, which has Gematria of 5, is the middle of the ones. Next is כ, 200, the middle of the hundreds, as ת, 400, is the highest letter. Last is ה, 50, the middle of the tens.

<sup>8</sup> שו"ת חתם סופר, Yoreh Deah, 233.

<sup>9</sup> R' Amram Chasida was a Rav in Hungary and was known for his piety and righteousness, earning him the title 'Chassida.' At the age of 36 he settled in Tzefas where he lived for four years until his death. He devoted himself to developing the community there, which had 1,000 Jews. R' Amram's daughter was one of the casualties in the earthquake in Tzefas. The Rabbis of Eretz Yisrael wrote that he literally died from grief over the exile of the Shechina. In his eulogy for R' Amram, the Chassam Sofer said not only was he a great person, a Torah sage and a Tzadik even when he was in the Diaspora, but in Eretz Yisrael he became as great as two of us.

<sup>10</sup> In the eulogy the Chassam Sofer (Drashos Chassam Sofer, p. שצ, s.v. אך) gave on those that died in the earthquake in Tzefas on the second of Iyar in the year תקצ"ז (1837), he writes the reason for the earthquake was because of the jealousy of Yerushalayim (מקנאת ירושלים) since there is the gate to heaven (Breishis 28:17), it is עיר שחברה לה יהודיו, a city that is united together (Tehillim 122:3), there was Har Hamoriya where עקידת Yaakov was (Breishis 22:14), there Yaakov slept and had his dream (28:11-12), there is the mountain of Hashem and a hill towards which all mouths turn (Brachos 30a) and the Shechina doesn't move from the Kosel (Shemos Rabba 2:2). And behold Yerushalayim was completely forgotten for nearly 100 years as people put their faces towards (שמו פניהם) Tzefas because R' Shimon Bar Yochai is buried in Meiron and the Arizal in Tzefas and those who go to Eretz Yisrael just pay attention to Tzefas and Tevarya while Yerushalayim is forgotten completely.

<sup>11</sup> Let us cite the incredible words of the Chassam Sofer elsewhere (Chidushai Chassam Sofer, Succa in Perek הגוול לולב, s.v. דומה and Toras Moshe, Parshas Shoftim, s.v. מי): The Gemara (Brachos 35b) relates that R' Yishmael teaches that the study of Torah is to be accompanied by earning a livelihood, as it says ויאספת דגנך, you will gather in your grain (Devarim 11:14). R' Shimon bar Yochai says that one should devote himself to Torah, and Hashem will make certain that his needs are provided for. Abaye remarked that many followed the R' Yishmael approach and succeeded in both working and learning, while others who followed R' Shimon bar Yochai's way

<sup>1</sup> Yoma 69b. The Gemara there relates that the Men of the Great Assembly said since it is a time of Divine favor as Hashem granted our request to remove the urge of idolatry, let us also daven for the evil inclination for immorality to be subdued before us. After they davened, that too was delivered into their hands.

<sup>2</sup> Shemos 33:18, Rashi.

<sup>3</sup> Shemos 32:26.

<sup>4</sup> Tehillim 19:21.

nowadays when it is in ruins.<sup>12</sup> In this letter, he writes that the Kedusha of the place where the Beis Hamikdash was is still there even though its walls don't exist there now and those who live in that area are holier and closer to Hashem.<sup>13</sup> This is where the שער השמים, gates to heaven are. Even before Yehoshua and Ezra sanctified Eretz Yisrael, many occurrences took place there: Adam and Noach brought a Karbon, Akeidas Yitzchak, and Yaakov's dream.<sup>14</sup> So there is an inherent Kedusha there.

One may be wondering why many sages didn't make their way to Yerushalayim such as the Sanhedrin being in Yavneh and Tzipori as well as those in the time of the Beis Yosef and Arizal. The Chassam Sofer<sup>15</sup> explains that in the times of the sages of the Gemara there were killings and forced conversions in Yerushalayim and the Sanhedrin was exiled. Once they settled in other places and had places for Torah, unlike Yerushalayim, there was no Mitzva to go to Yerushalayim. Similarly, in the days of the Beis Yosef and Arizal, most of the sages were in Tzefas. Once they came and found most of the sages in Tzefas, they joined them.

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### Textually Perfect

The Gemara at times comments חסורי מיחסרה והכי קתני<sup>16</sup>, the text of the Mishna is deficient and this is what it should say. Why was it written this way? Why didn't the Tanna just express it explicitly?

were not successful. The Chassam Sofer says that one should ideally follow R' Shimon bar Yochai, dedicating himself solely to Torah. When Abaye commented that people didn't succeed following that path, that was because they didn't devote themselves properly. However, one who is truly dedicated to Torah will succeed in this way. The Chassam Sofer says that we follow R' Nehorai (Kidushin 82a) who said, "I put aside every trade and I only teach my son Torah." This is only true in the Diaspora where there is no reason to work at a trade except to earn a living. If one can truly dedicate himself to Torah and succeed that way, there is no reason to work. This is what R' Shimon bar Yochai was referring to and even R' Yishmael would agree. In Eretz Yisrael, however, one doesn't only work the fields in order to make a living, as there is also the Mitzva of ישוב הארץ, settling the land. Just as one stops learning Torah to put on Tefillin, one stops learning Torah to farm the land, which is the Mitzva of ישוב הארץ (ישוב הארץ doesn't just mean living in Eretz Yisrael; it means developing it). This doesn't just apply to farming, but to all industries and professions as this is part of ישוב הארץ and giving it honor. It would be a deficiency in the honor of Eretz Yisrael if a certain profession doesn't exist there, requiring products to be imported from abroad.

<sup>12</sup> R' Amram's opinion was that Yerushalayim is greater only when there is a Beis Hamikdash.

<sup>13</sup> This can be compared to one who sits closer to the radiator in that he is warmer.

<sup>14</sup> In the next Teshuva (Yoreh Deah, 234, s.v. והנה), the Chassam Sofer writes that Yerushalayim, which is where the gates to heaven are, has supreme Kedusha—even when the different nations lived there. The Shechina never moved and never will move from the Kosel—even when Yerushalayim is in ruins.

<sup>15</sup> Yoreh Deah, 234, s.v. ומה.

<sup>16</sup> As in Pesachim 75a. When the Abarbanel stopped being finance minister in Spain, he remarked חסורי מיחסרה והכי קתני: Now that I stopped being busy with that (חסורי מיחסרה), I can learn (והכי קתני).

1) The Gemara<sup>17</sup> says teachings that were given orally are not permitted to be transmitted in writing. That which we are permitted to do so nowadays is because of עת לעשות ה' הפרו תורתך, it is a time to act for Hashem, they have voided Your Torah.<sup>18</sup> Therefore it's only permitted to write down the Mishna in an extremely restrictive way—just in order to grasp the Halacha and not more. So where we can learn a Halacha through מִיְחִסְרָא, we are not allowed to explain it more.<sup>19</sup>

2) The Tiferes Yisrael<sup>20</sup> explains through ניגון one can remember the Mishnayos better.<sup>21</sup> Songs were arranged according to the words and sections of the Mishna. So, the Tanna of the Mishna chose a certain word over others at times in order to fit the song for that Mishna. This explains why sometimes it seems there are extra words in a Mishna as in זו ואין צריך לומר זו, that which was unnecessary was also taught.<sup>22</sup> This explains the meaning behind חסורי מיחסרה והכי קתני.

3) The Gemara says when one departs from his friend he should do so with a דבר הלכה, discussion of a matter of Halacha.<sup>23</sup> When the Gra would depart he would say יחיד ורבים הלכה כרבים<sup>24</sup>, in a dispute between an individual and a majority the Halacha accords with the majority. This contains the initials יוהד—the Malach that watches over someone when he sets out on the road.<sup>25</sup> חסורי מיחסרה that although it is lacking but והכי קתני—it still has to be read that way. This is because it is written precisely in order to bring out all סודות, secrets of Torah.<sup>26</sup>

4) Rabbeinu Bachaye<sup>27</sup> explains חסורי מיחסרה והכי קתני that it is not that the Mishna is lacking. Rather to us it's missing because we are lacking the intellect as we can't reach the depth of wisdom of those from the time of the Mishna.<sup>28</sup>

Rabbi Alt merited to learn under the tutelage of R' Mordechai Friedlander Tzt"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.

<sup>17</sup> Gittin 60b.

<sup>18</sup> Tehillim 119:126. When the time comes to act for the sake of Hashem, they are permitted to violate a law of the Torah in order to do so (See Brachos 54a, 63a and Yoma 69a).

<sup>19</sup> Hamaor Hagadol, p. 683.

<sup>20</sup> Eruchin chapter 4, Boaz, Os 1.

<sup>21</sup> Mishnayos were learned orally even in the days of Rabbi (see Baba Metzia 33a, Rashi).

<sup>22</sup> As in Eruvin 76a.

<sup>23</sup> Brachos 31a.

<sup>24</sup> Brachos 9a.

<sup>25</sup> This is in accordance with כי מלאכיו יצוה לך לשמרך בכל דרכיך, He will charge His angels for you, to protect you in all your ways (Tehillim 91, 11), as the end letters spell יוהד (see Breishis Rabba 75:8). R' Chaim Volozhiner remarks on וילך חרנה, he went to Charan (Breishis 28:10) that it should just say להרין. As a result, the וילך of וילך and ה of חרנה are extra. This spells יוהד, since this Malach was now guarding Yaakov as he set out to travel.

<sup>26</sup> Nitzotzei Shimshon, Shir Hashirim 7:2.

<sup>27</sup> To Shemos 34:27.

<sup>28</sup> This is why the Gemara—commentary on the Mishna—was written.