

Fascinating INSIGHTS

א' תמוז תש"פ

July 3, 2020

פרשת בלק
7th year, edition 342

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Many Roads, One Destination

There is plenty of variety in Judaism that many take advantage of. These include attending a Chassidish Tisch, learning Chassidus, joining a Kabbalas Shabbos with lots of singing, the analytical Brisker way of learning and so on. How can we know for ourselves what to take part in?

The answer is that if something brings us close to Hashem, then we can pursue it. This is hinted to in **ואני קרבת אל-ים לי טוב**—if it brings us close to Hashem, then it is good.¹

There is no one way in Avodas Hashem. For this reason, there are so many different factions within Judaism—Sefardim, Chassidim, Litvaks and so on. Even within these, there are various groups. Within Sefardim there are Yemenites, Moroccans among many others. Likewise among Chassidim, there are many groups—Ger, Viznitz, Breslov and Skver to name just a few. Then there are those that comprise themselves from some or all of these.

One way is not more correct than the other rather one must choose that which brings him close to Hashem. A way to comprehend this is that just as there are many ways for example to get to the number 19—11 added to 8, 14 and 5, 10 and 9 and so on. Similarly, there are many paths in Avodas Hashem. Another way to understand this is when one drives for instance from New York to Los Angeles there are many different routes to take to reach the destination. Likewise, the same is with

Avodas Hashem. This idea is hinted to in ² זה שער השמים, this is the gate of the heavens, as זה has a Gematria of 12, alluding to the 12 Shevatim. Each Shevet as well as each person has their own path to reach the gates of heaven!³

Why is it that different people have different paths in serving Hashem? There are 600,000 letters in the Torah and 600,000 Neshamos in Klal Yisrael.⁴ The placement of where one's letter is in the Sefer Torah⁵ is why each person is attracted to different aspects—Chassidus, singing, Halacha and so on.⁶

When we look at a cake, we may not know the ingredients it consists of. However, upon tasting it, we realize how much flour is in it, the amount of sugar it contains and so on. The same applies to our Avodas Hashem as once we taste it, we can know what we need at which time (Tefila, Chassidus, Halacha, Gemara, a break), how much we need as well as what and how much is missing.

A Brainless Ruler

A person is comprised of three parts—**מוח**, intellect, **לב**, emotions (includes desires and urges)⁷ and **גוף**, physical material.⁸ The Chassam Sofer⁹ (1762–1839) illustrates it in this way: A wagon is comprised of a driver, horse, and wagon. The driver, in this case, represents the **מוח**, as he is the brains behind it. He tells the horse when and where to go. The horse characterizes the **לב** since animals follow their instincts. Finally, the wagon signifies the material aspect, **גוף**. The wagon follows the horse.

Concerning Tzadikim, the **מוח** rules and the **לב** follows followed by the **גוף**. Regarding the wicked, it is the opposite just as the horse that takes his owner to a ditch when the horse is in control. In relation to Paroh, it says ¹⁰ כבד לב פרעעה as his heart was run by his material aspect.

² Breishis 28:17. See Magen Avraham, Orach Chaim, 68.

³ Rashi comments on **זה טבו אלהיך** in Bamidbar 24:5) that Bilaam said this because he saw their entrances that they weren't aligned the one opposite the other. Elsewhere, the Gemara (Sanhedrin 105b) tells us that **אללהיך** in this Pasuk refers to Shuls and study halls (Beis Knesses and Beis Midrash), which can mean the ways we are different in our Avodas Hashem, as this is what the Beis Knesses and Beis Midrash allude to. There are Chassidim, Litvaks, Sefardim and so on. Not being aligned to each other can be understood that each Jew has their Avoda and still they live in peace and unity. This is what is meant in **רויה את ישראל שכן לשכטו...רוח אל-ים**, He saw the Jewish people dwelling according to its tribes and the spirit of Hashem was there (Bamidbar 24:2. See Rashi.)—each tribe has their way of serving Hashem, and still the whole of the Jewish people live in harmony with each other, which causes the spirit of Hashem to be there.

⁴ This is hinted to in **יש שםים רבו אותיות לתורה**—Israel, there are 600,000 letters in the Sefer Torah.

⁵ When Moshiach comes, we'll know which letter in the Torah we are.

⁶ This also explains why some people are zoned into a specific Mitzva. For example, one person can learn and live the mitzvah of Succa while another is obsessed with the mitzvah of Tefillin. This is because this is where their letter is placed in the Sefer Torah (See Shemen Rosh, Parshas Miketz).

⁷ See Tanya, chapter 9.

⁸ **כבד** means liver as well as heavy since the liver is the heaviest organ in the body. For this reason, **כבד** refers to materialism.

⁹ See Toras Moshe, Bo, s.v. **הנה**.

¹⁰ Shemos 7:14.

¹ Tehillim 73:28. We can also apply this to other aspects of life. Talking to a friend before one learns or eating good food to help one get into a better mood also may be the right thing to do. The way to determine this is to evaluate if it will bring us closer to Hashem. Will I be able to serve Hashem better if I do this?

