

Fascinating INSIGHTS

ד' תמוז תש"פ

June 26, 2020

פרשת חקת

7th year, edition 341

To join the thousands of recipients and receive these insights free on a weekly email, obtain previous articles, feedback, comments, suggestions (on how to spread the insights of this publication further, make it more appealing or anything else), to support or dedicate this publication which has been in six continents and over thirty-five countries, or if you know anyone who is interested in receiving these insights weekly, please contact the author, Rabbi Yehoshua Alt, at yalt3285@gmail.com. Thank you.

לעילוי נשמת שמואל אביגדור בן יצחק מאיר

This newsletter can also be viewed at <https://www.dirshu.co.il/category/הורדות-עלונים/fascinating-insights/> and <http://www.ladaat.info/showgil.aspx?par=20200425&gil=2725>

Archives: <https://parshasheets.com/?s=Rabbi+Yehoshua+Alt>

To view these essays in German, please visit <https://judentum.online/>

Please feel free to print some copies of this publication and distribute it in your local Shul for the public, having a hand in spreading Torah.

Exciting news: The newly released Sefer, Fascinating Insights, is now available for purchase at https://www.amazon.com/FascinatingInsightsTorahPerspectivesUnique/dp/B08929ZCNM/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=Yehoshua+Alt&qid=1592311799&s=books&sr=1-1 or by sending an email to yalt3285@gmail.com.

[History of the Daf](#)

In 1919, R' Alexander Zusha Friedman¹ (1899-1943), created and served as editor for the first Agudas Yisrael publication titled "Dagleinu" (our banner). The 1920, Av 5681, issue of Dagleinu² contained a proposal by R' Moshe Menachem

¹ He was born in Sochatchov, Poland. His father, R' Aharon Yehoshua Friedman, was a poor shamash (shul caretaker). His mother supplemented the family income by selling wares in various fairs and markets. R' Alexander Zusha, their only son, proved himself to be an Illui, exceptional student at a very young age. When he was 3, he knew the entire Sefer Breishis by heart. When he was 9, his teacher informed his father that he had nothing left to teach him. In 1919 he founded and edited Dagleinu (Our Banner). He visited Palestine in 1934. His sister, who had married R' Avraham Mokotowski, known by his pen name, Elyahu Kitov, immigrated to Palestine before World War II, as did his parents, but he opted to remain in Poland because of his communal responsibilities. He was one of the Torah leaders in the Warsaw Ghetto. He organized an underground network of religious schools, including a Yesodei HaTorah school for boys, a Beis Yaakov school for girls, a school for elementary Jewish instruction, and three institutions for advanced Jewish studies. On July 22nd, 1942 the Germans began mass deportations from the Warsaw Ghetto to the death camps. Among those deported were his wife and 13-year-old daughter, their only child, that had been born to them after 11 years of marriage, who were taken to Treblinka. He alerted world Jewry to the start of deportations in a coded message. His telegram read: "Mr. Amos kept his promise from the fifth-third." He was referring to the Sefer Amos 5:3, which reads: העיר היצאת אלף תשאר מאה והיוצאת מאה תשאר עשרה לבית ישראל, the city from which a thousand people go forth will be left with a hundred, and one from which a hundred people go forth will be left with ten to the House of Israel. Among his many works, is *Der Torah Kval* (1937), translated into Hebrew as *Maayanah shel Torah* and into English as *Wellsprings of Torah*, which combines insights from classic and Chassidish Torah commentators with his own *chiddushim* on the weekly Parsha and Haftarah. He wrote this work in Yiddish rather than Hebrew, and in a lighter, easy-to-understand style of short teachings, to appeal to the many Jews who were no longer versed in the difficult language and concepts of Hebrew Sefarim. He also published several textbooks for religious schools, including a Yiddish primer. He was incarcerated in the Warsaw Ghetto, deported to the Trawinki concentration camp and murdered.

² Volume I, Number 7.

Mendel Spivak³ to organize a worldwide "Chevra Shas," involving businessmen, laborers, and workers to study a Daf Gemara daily to finish⁴ Shas.⁵ So the idea of Jews in all parts of the world studying the same Daf each day, with the goal of completing Shas,⁶ was proposed by R' Spivak. When the idea didn't take hold that R' Spivak, then the rabbi of Krasnobrod near Lublin, felt it deserved, he approached R' Meir Shapiro (1887-1933).⁷ R' Spivak's idea was for R' Shapiro to speak about the Daf Yomi plan⁸ at the May, 1924, cornerstone-laying ceremony for the construction of the Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin

³ R' Spivak was born in 1880 to a family of Kotzker and Gerrer Chassidim. He obtained Semicha from the Aruch Hashulchan, the Dayanim of Warsaw and other luminaries. In 1935 he published his work, the *Mateh Moshe*, containing Halachic novelle on Torah and Responsa, which has *haskamos* from the Ohr Someach, Aruch Hashulchan, R' Meir Arik and others. The Ohr Someach and Aruch Hashulchan state that his *Chiddushei Torah* should be widely disseminated because even Gedolai Yisrael can learn and derive great pleasure from his *Bekius* and *Charifus*, encyclopedic knowledge and brilliant insights. His life came to an end when he was murdered in Auschwitz.

⁴ He stated that in his opinion שיהיה חברה ש"ס כללית וכל חברינו... מהנכון שניסד חברה ש"ס כללית וכל חברינו... דף גמרא במידות כסדרן... לקבעו זמן בין תפלת מנחה למערב ללמוד בחברה דף גמרא במידות כסדרן... a Chevras Shas should be established in which all the participants would be charedi traders, workers, craftsmen or day laborers. They would fix a time daily between Mincha and Maariv to study a Daf of Gemara in the order that the *Dapim* appear in the Shas; it goes without saying, that every member was to be obligated to take upon himself to learn every day at the same time.

⁵ About ten years before R' Spivak made his proposal to study Daf Yomi, such a proposal was published by R' Yechezkel Fraser. R' Fraser was born in 1829 in the Mariampol district of Lithuania and later moved to New York. His proposal appeared in his sefer "Porachas Hagefen - Yom Yisrael" and was written in Yiddish. He suggested that all Shas groups should unite to be one company, and that each group should teach the same Daf in the same masechta at the same time in its own Shul. There are also (at least) four sources reporting Daf Yomi suggestions at earlier dates. They are: the Gerrer Rebbe, R' Yaakov Lorbeerbaum of Lissa, R' Akiva Eiger and the Jewish Community in Moravia (Rabbi Dr. Chaim Simons).

⁶ For the first cycle, there were only 2,702 pages of Talmud on the schedule; later leading Rabbis increased it to 2,711, changing the edition used for *Mesachta Shekalim*, taken from Talmud Yerushalmi, to one with more pages.

⁷ R' Shapiro, also known as the Lubliner Rav, was a descendant of R' Pinchas Koritzer, a student of the Baal Shem Tov. After cheder, he studied with his grandfather, the Baal Minchas Shai, R' Shmuel Yitzchak Schor. Another of his early teachers was the Shotzer Rebbe, R' Shulem Moshkovitz. From an early age, he was known as an outstanding leader and gifted speaker. He was soon ordained by many great scholars, including the Maharsham. His grandfather introduced him to the Chortkover Rebbe, and thus began his passion for Chassidus, and the beginning of his relationship with the Chortkover Rebbe. His first rabbinical posting came in 1911 when he was appointed Rav of Galina, spending ten years in the city, during which time he established a Yeshiva called Bnei Torah. During the years 1922 to 1927, R' Shapiro became the first Orthodox Jew to become a member in the Sejm (Parliament) of the Second Polish Republic representing the Jewish minority of the country. He established the Chachmei Lublin Yeshiva in 1930. Over one hundred thousand Jews took part in the celebration of its opening. The students in the Yeshiva were of the highest caliber, many of them were of genius quality and the Yeshiva produced many great leaders among the Jewish people until its tragic end in the Second World War. In 1931, he was appointed rabbi of Lublin in the old shul of the Maharshal. R' Shapiro died without children. His death was mourned in both Jewish and non-Jewish Poland. Countless newspapers across the entire political spectrum, from Orthodox to Yiddishist to socialist, featured front-page biographies of R' Shapiro.

⁸ In those years, only some Gemaras of Shas were being learned regularly, such as *Brachos*, *Shabbos*, and *Eruvin*, which deal with practical laws, while others were hardly studied.

building.⁹ Feeling that this wasn't the right forum to introduce the concept, R' Shapiro, instead chose to speak about it at the first Knessia Gedola, held in Vienna in August 1923, which would be attended by the greatest rabbis of the generation.¹⁰ According to reports, R' Shapiro had second thoughts about introducing the concept as he was concerned that the idea was controversial. Before speaking, he approached the Chofetz Chaim about the idea who advised R' Shapiro to come late to the stage. When he entered the Chofetz Chaim rose and greeted him and ushered him to the podium. This gave R' Shapiro the support he needed.¹¹ The idea quickly took hold.

R' Meir Shapiro introduced the idea of Daf Yomi¹² at the Knessia Gedola in 1923 at age 35, in front of many Gedolim who were much older than him, like this: The Gemara¹³ relates that Rabban Gamliel said that he was once on a ship when the ship was sinking and he was pained by the thought of R' Akiva who had been on that ship since he was now surely lost. When he came up to dry land, R' Akiva came and deliberated before Rabban Gamliel in a matter of law. Rabban Gamliel asked him, "Who raised you out of the water." The reply: I took hold of a ךָ, board from the ship and before every wave that came, I bowed my head and it passed over me. R' Shapiro said there are so many waves—secularism, immorality, materialism...These need to be fought with a Daf of Gemara daily.

R' Shapiro also viewed the program as a way to unify the Jewish people. As he explained to the Congress delegates: What a great thing! A Jew travels by boat and takes Gemara Brachos under his arm. He travels for 15 days from Eretz Yisrael to America, and each day he learns the Daf. When he arrives in America, he enters a Beis Midrash in New York and finds Jews learning the very same Daf that he studied on that

⁹ The Gemara (Baba Basra 21a) says remember that man—R' Yehoshua Ben Gamla—in a favorable way. If not for him, the Torah would have been forgotten... This was because R' Yehoshua Ben Gamla established a school system for Jewish children to be educated. R' Yehoshua Boymel, a student of Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin (He was born in 1913. After Chachmei Lublin, he succeeded his father as rabbi of Kroszken-Szczawnica Nizna and then of Opoczno. He authored a Yiddish-language biography of R' Meir Shapiro that survived the war and came into the hands of his brother R' Yosef in Brooklyn, who published it. He also helped found the Organization of Chachmei Lublin Yeshiva Graduates (Igud Chanichei Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin) to restore the Yeshiva after R' Meir Shapiro's death in October 1933. Most of his writings were destroyed in the Holocaust, but some of his studies in Halacha and Aggadah were published in "Hatalmid Hagadol: Sefer Zikaron L'Harav Hagaon R' Yehoshua Boymel." He was killed at the age of 29 with his wife, two children, and mother in Treblinka.), wrote the following in his memoir: R' Meir Shapiro traveled to America to raise money for Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin but was unsuccessful in raising funds (When R' Meir Shapiro was in Montreal, the Gabai asked if he was a Levi to see if he can give him the second Aliya, which is Levi. R' Meir Shapiro said I'm not a Levi, I'm a Loveh, borrower, as he was in so much debt.). In his time there he gave 242 Drashos. The Gemara we mentioned introduces the narrative with the word ברם, indeed. This has a Gematria of 242. R' Meir Shapiro who gave of himself and gave 242 Drashos, remember him for good (like R' Yehoshua Ben Gamla) because he tried to build a place of Torah. If not for him the Torah would have been forgotten.

¹⁰ The Knessia Gedola lasted for 10 days. The Knessia introduced two programs that would forever change education in the Jewish world. Formal schooling for girls under Sarah Schenirer's Beis Yaakov and the Daf Yomi.

¹¹ In his excitement forgot, R' Shapiro to credit R' Spivak with the idea. R' Shapiro later wrote R' Spivak a letter apologizing for the oversight. R' Spivak always resisted the wishes of his household and his relatives who wanted to publicize that it was his idea because he felt that it would result in damaging the name of R' Shapiro or of Agudas Yisrael.

¹² On Friday, December 13, 2013, the tenth of Teves, an extremely unusual occurrence continued to take place in Eretz Yisrael, as the tremendous snowstorm continued to hit Yerushalayim. The Daf Yomi of that day was Yoma 35 where it relates that one time Hillel didn't find the means to earn money and the guard of the Beis Midrash didn't let him enter. So he climbed up to the roof, suspended himself and sat at the edge of the skylight to hear words of Torah from Shemaya and Avtalyon. That day was Erev Shabbos, in the Teves season (תקופת טבת) and snow descended... Similarly, in 2013, on Erev Shabbos in Teves, an enormous amount of snow fell.

¹³ Yevamos 121a.

day, and he gladly joins them. Another Jew leaves the States and travels to Brazil or Japan, and he first goes to the Beis Midrash, where he finds everyone learning the same Daf that he himself learned that day.¹⁴ Could there be greater unity of hearts than this?¹⁵

R' Shmuel Vosner¹⁶ (1913-2015) was asked how R' Meir Shapiro merited the unparalleled public learning of Daf Yomi? He said that R' Meir Shapiro had an aspiration to exalt Torah and the Jews. He was a leader, great in Torah and Yirah and loved Jews. This was surely his purpose.

Rock Hitter

The Gemara¹⁷ tells us מלה בסלע משתוקא בתרין, if a word is worth a Sela (currency) then silence is worth two. The Iturai Torah tells us that if Moshe would have spoken to the rock (מלה בסלע as סלע also means a rock), water would have come out. However, he was silent and instead hit the rock—twice that is—משתוקא בתרין. After hitting it twice water came out.¹⁸ The Be'er Mayim Chaim tells us a fascinating hint to this. Spelling out the word סלע we get סמך למד עין. If we "hit" these letters twice (removing the first and last letters of each) our result is מים—סמך למד עין.

If Moshe would have spoken to the rock then he wouldn't have been punished by not going into Eretz Yisrael. Eldad and Meidad prophesized that Moshe will die and Yehoshua will bring the Jews into Eretz Yisrael.¹⁹ Indeed, it says Eldad and Meidad were prophesizing—מתנבאים—in the camp. The Baal Haturim²⁰ points out that that the word מתנבאים is a contraction of מתביאים. The Apta Rav shows us an allusion to this. מלה בסלע—if Moshe would have spoken to the rock, then משתוקא בתרין—Eldad and Meidad (two) would have been silent as they wouldn't have said that prophesy.

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 and is the author of the Sefer, Fascinating Insights: Torah Perspectives On Unique Topics. His writings inspire people across the spectrum of Jewish observance to live with the vibrancy and beauty of Torah. 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.

¹⁴ Among the expected places a Daf shiur takes place in, such as Shuls and Yeshivos, it also takes place in some unusual places. These include in the United States Senate, Wall Street board rooms, and on the Long Island Rail Road, in the last car of two commuter trains departing Far Rockaway at 7:51 am and 8:15 am, respectively, for Manhattan. Daf Yomi shiurim are also piped into the in-flight sound system of all El-Al flights.

¹⁵ Soon after its introduction, Daf Yomi inspired the founding of other Yomi (Daily) study programs for key texts of Judaism. These include Mishna Yomis, the daily study of Mishna; Nach Yomi, the daily study of Neviim and Kesuvim; and Mussar Yomi, the daily study of Mussar. In 1980, the Gerrer Rebbe introduced Yerushalmi Yomi, a daily schedule for completing Talmud Yerushalmi. In 1984, the Lubavitcher Rebbe introduced Mishna Torah Yomi, a daily study schedule to finish the Rambam's Mishna Torah in a year. Dirshu has introduced Mishna Brura Yomi, a daily learning plan which finishes the Mishna Brura in seven years.

¹⁶ Shevet Halevi, 10:13. R' Vosner studied in the Chachmei Lublin Yeshiva. He married and immigrated to Palestine before the Holocaust, settling in Yerushalayim where he studied at the Dushinsky Yeshiva. It was in that time that, despite his young age, he became a member of the Eidah HaChareidis. He served as an illustrious posek for seven decades. At the behest of the Chazon Ish, he was appointed as Rav of Zichron Meir in Bnei Brak in addition to his position as Rosh Yeshiva of the newly re-established Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin. His sons include R' Chaim Vosner, formerly Dayan of London's Satmar community, who moved to Bnei Brak to assist his father in the management of the Yeshiva. R' Ben Zion Vosner of Monsey, New York is the Av Beis Din of the Shevet Halevi Beis Din. Another son, R' Yosef Vosner, is a businessman in Brooklyn, New York.

¹⁷ Megila 18a.

¹⁸ Bamidbar 20:11.

¹⁹ Sanhedrin 17a.

²⁰ Bamidbar 11:27.

²¹ Additionally, it stands for משה תנוח נפשו בגן אלהים יהושע מכניסם.