

# Fascinating INSIGHTS

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## [A Human Torah Scroll](#)

R' Elchonon Wasserman would relate that, once, when the Netziv<sup>1</sup> (1816-1893) was carrying a Sefer Torah to the Bima, the Netziv slipped and fell along with the Sefer Torah. While everyone ran to pick up the Sefer Torah first, R' Itzele of Volozhin<sup>2</sup> yelled that the Netziv must be picked up first because he is a living Sefer Torah.<sup>3</sup>

The Sefer Be'er Moshe tells of a story with the great R' Dovid Deutsch<sup>4</sup> (1756-1831). He once came to the city of Pressburg late at night and didn't have a place to lodge in. He therefore went to the Beis Midrash and rested on the floor. Early the next morning when the Chassam Sofer arrived and saw R' Deutsch on the floor, he decreed a fast, saying that a Sefer Torah is on the floor!<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> נפתלי צבי יהודה ברלין—His first wife was the daughter of R' Yitzchak of Volozhin (R' Itzele), the son of R' Chaim Volozhin. His second wife was his niece, a daughter of R' Yechiel Michel Epstein, the author of the Aruch Hashulchan. A son from his first marriage, R' Chaim Berlin, became the rabbi of Moscow. His son from his second marriage was R' Meir Berlin (later Bar-Ilan). The Netziv led the yeshiva in Volozhin from 1854 to its closure in 1892. During the Netziv's time in Volozhin, the yeshiva produced many greats, including R' Issur Zalman Meltzer and R' Zelig Bengis. His Sefarim include Ha'amek She'eila, Meishiv Davar (a collection of his responsa), Ha'amek Davar (a Torah commentary) and Meromei Sadeh.

<sup>2</sup> R' Chaim Volozhin headed the yeshiva in Volozhin until 1825. When R' Chaim died, his son, R' Yitzchak, who was called Reb Itzele, became the head of the yeshiva and the chief rabbi in Volozhin. R' Itzele often took an active role in lobbying the Russian government on behalf of the Jewish people.

<sup>3</sup> The Gemara says מגברא רבה קיימי...ולא קיימי מגברא רבה, how foolish are those that they rise before a Sefer Torah but not before a great man—Torah sage (Makkos 22b).

<sup>4</sup> He was a student of the Noda B'yehuda and became a Rav in several cities.

<sup>5</sup> See Shu"t Chassam Sofer, Orach Chaim 124 where the Chassam Sofer gives R' Dovid Deutsch a title of honor. In the Haskama for the sefer of R' Dovid Deutsch, the Chassam Sofer wrote "that Tzadik, holy Jew, genius... I have seen in it [the sefer] wonderful things. We are privileged

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## [The Day of Tu B'Av](#)

The Mishna<sup>6</sup> tells us that we have no festive days like the 15<sup>th</sup> of Av (ט"ו באב) and Yom Kippur. Let us take a look at why the 15<sup>th</sup> of Av is so significant. Each month receives its vitality from a formation of Hashem's name. This affects the climate, occurrences and everything else in the month.<sup>7</sup> There are twelve formations of Hashem's name, י-ה-ו-ה, corresponding to the twelve months. In fact, if we multiply י-ה-ו-ה (26) by twelve (months of the year) we get 312, the same sum as חודש, month.<sup>8</sup>

Tamuz is a month entirely dominated with דין, strict judgement<sup>9</sup> whereas the month of Av is divided as it is half דין and half רחמים, mercy. The formation of Hashem's name for Tamuz is based on the Pasuk זנה לך איננו שוה לך.<sup>10</sup> It comes from the end letters which symbolize דין.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, being that הוהי is the reverse order of י-ה-ו-ה (which signifies רחמים), it represents דין.<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, the formation of Hashem's name for Av is הויה. The first two letters of הויה are not in the order of י-ה-ו-ה, whereas the last two are (הויה). This is expressing that the first half of Av is dominated with דין in contrast to the second half where רחמים is aroused. The reason: it was on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Av when those destined to die in the desert for the sin of the Meraglim finished dying.<sup>13</sup> The Kedushas Levi<sup>14</sup> shows us an allusion to this idea in the word צור, ברור, אב as it is an acronym for צור, cursed and blessed, since it is a month that is divided from Rosh Chodesh Av until באב ט"ו.

The Pasuk states וילכו בלא כח לפני רודף,<sup>15</sup> walked on without strength before the pursuer. The Bnei Yissoschar<sup>16</sup> tells us there are letters missing in the Torah due to Galus. They are the א from כסא and ה from י-ה-ו-ה, ו from אלהים and י from ירושלם.<sup>17</sup> Adding the numerical

to merit his words and his light... His merit should protect us from all harm."

<sup>6</sup> Taanis 26b.

<sup>7</sup> When the Baal Hatanya was imprisoned, he was able to tell the time from feeling the formation of Hashem's name at any given time. This was in spite of the fact he had no watch or windows in his cell to have any indication of the time.

<sup>8</sup> Bnei Yissoschar Nissan 1:1.

<sup>9</sup> The Meraglim were in Eretz Yisrael the entire month of Tamuz, in which they sinned.

<sup>10</sup> Esther 5:13.

<sup>11</sup> Roshai Teivos (initials of words) symbolize Chessed since it is the beginning of the word. After a beginning it continues, which is like Chessed—giving more and more. This is different than end letters which signify דין because it is the end of the word. When the end of something is reached, it can't continue anymore, it is now limited. That is what דין is. Indeed, די דין is from the word די, limit.

<sup>12</sup> Bnei Yissoschar Tamuz Av 1:1.

<sup>13</sup> Taanis 30b, Baba Basra 121a. See Bamidbar 14:26-38.

<sup>14</sup> לשבת נחמו, s.v. חודש אב. The Sandek at the Bris of R' Levi Yitzchak of Barditchiv (the Kedushas Levi) was the Baal Shem Tov while the Mohel was the Maggid of Mezerich, whom he later became a student of.

<sup>15</sup> Eicha 1:6.

<sup>16</sup> Bnei Yissoschar Tamuz Av 3:6.

<sup>17</sup> See Shemos 17:16, Vayikra 26:42 Rashi, Eicha 1:7.

value of these, we reach a total of 28, identical to כח, strength. This is the number of days from the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tamuz until the 15<sup>th</sup> of Av, where we lack strength. The day of ט"ו באב is when we get our strength back. With this we can grasp ג' אדנ-י כח אדנ-י<sup>18</sup> Hashem gives us our strength on ט"ו באב.<sup>19</sup>

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### [A Royal Residue](#)

In 1924, at the laying of the cornerstone of Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, R' Meir Shapiro said, "Our great Rebbes of Chachmei Lublin—the Maharshal, R' Shalom Shachna,<sup>20</sup> Maharsha, Maharam Lublin<sup>21</sup>... You Gedolei Hador spread Torah here in Lublin before me. It is your light and power that gave me inspiration to establish a Yeshiva that will continue the light of the Torah that you transplanted in Lublin. I invite you to come and be part of our cornerstone laying. I am sure that in your merit and in the merit of your Torah we will be successful." Then he commented קדושה ראשונה קידשה לשעתה וקידשה לעתיד לבוא<sup>22</sup> The Kedusha from the great Achronim whose Torah we learn to this day, that Kedusha remains.

Rashi<sup>23</sup> says יציאת צדיק מן המקום עושה רושם, the departure of a Tzadik from a place makes an impression. R' Menachem Mendel of Kassov<sup>24</sup> remarks that even after the Tzadik leaves, an impression of Kedusha remains, which is recognizable that in that place, a Tzadik was there.

R' Tzvi Hirsch Chayus, known as the Maharatz Chayus<sup>25</sup> (1805-1855), once had the great Tzadik, R' Zelig Shrintzker, as a guest. After the Friday night davening, R'

Zelig was walking to the house of the Maharatz Chayus when at a certain corner he suddenly rested. He then commented, "It smells like Gan Eden here." Puzzled, the Maharatz Chayus called the elders of the city to find out what occurred at this corner. He was told that it was at this corner where R' Avraham Gombiner wrote his famous commentary called Magen Avraham (on the Orach Chaim section of Shulchan Aruch).

The reverse is also true. R' Baruch Mezbitzer was once in a house and wanted to say some words of Torah but was unable to. He then commented that there must have been a Rasha who once lived there. In this way he explained דרוש נוי ואולמי<sup>26</sup> seek out (דרוש) who was in this dwelling (נוי) and then you will know why you are an אדם, mute (ואולמי), meaning that you are unable to say words of Torah.<sup>27</sup>

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### [Bounty Of Yirah](#)

The שבועה דנחמתא, the seven weeks of consolation which follow the Three Weeks, correspond to the seven Sefiros—Chessed, Gevura, Tiferes and so on. The first of these Parshiyos is ואתחנן. Rashi<sup>28</sup> tells us ואתחנן is a term used in conjunction with מתנת חנם: a gift for free—that which is rooted in the trait of Chessed.

Following this pattern, Parshas Eikev is lined up with<sup>29</sup> גבורה, יראה.<sup>30</sup> We therefore see that the Parsha of ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלהיך (יראה) which we say after Shacharis (יראה) is contained in Parshas Eikev. This is also shown to us in עקב ענוה יראת ה' as עקב and יראה are grouped together.<sup>32</sup>

The Mishnah states הסתכל בשלשה דברים ואין אתה בא לידי עברה, consider three things and you won't come into the grip of sin.<sup>33</sup> The Rav of Biksad interpreted this as follows: בשלשה דברים refers to the third Parsha in Sefer Devarim. That is, Parshas Eikev. Study (הסתכל) Parshas Eikev and you won't come into the grip of sin since this Parsha deals with יראת שמים. Let us take advantage of the השפעה, bounty of יראה that is contained in this Parsha.

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

<sup>18</sup> Bamidbar 14:17.

<sup>19</sup> Another allusion is that the 15<sup>th</sup> of Av is when the moon is full, indicating renewal, as we say in Kiddush Levana שהם עתידים להתחדש כמותה כמותה, those who are destined to renew themselves like it.

<sup>20</sup> He lived from 1490 until 1558. He was the Rebbe and father-in-law of R' Moshe Isserles, known as the Rema. In 1515, he established the Yeshiva in Lublin, which became a center of learning of both Gemara and Kabbalah.

<sup>21</sup> The Maharam Lublin (1558-1616) studied Torah in his youth with the Rosh Yeshiva of Krakow, R' Yitzchak Hakohen Shapira, who later became his father-in-law. He was a Rosh Yeshiva, Rav and Av Beis Din in Lublin in addition to being a Dayan and head of the Yeshiva in Krakow (1587-1595) and Rav in Lemberg (c. 1595-1613). He had many students, including individuals who became great Torah figures in their own right, such as the Shelah and the Megale Amukos.

<sup>22</sup> Megila 10a. The simple meaning of this is that the initial sanctification of Yerushalayim and the Beis Hamikdash sanctified for its time and for all future time, meaning that the sacred status is retained even after the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash and the walls.

<sup>23</sup> Breishis 28:10.

<sup>24</sup> Mayana Shel Torah, Breishis 28:10.

<sup>25</sup> He was an only son, and his father, who was wealthy and educated, taught him the ways of Torah and wisdom. In addition to his traditional Talmudic education, he was educated in modern and classical languages and literature, as well as geography, history and philosophy. By the age of 11 he was studying with the greatest rabbis of his generation. At the age of 22 he received semicha from R' Efraim Zalman Margolis. When R' Tzvi Hirsch became the Rav of Zolkiew, there were 17 communities under his jurisdiction. He published his Sefarim from the age of 29 to 43, which include Toras HaNeviim (where he shows that Hashem's Torah is perfect, eternal, and immutable), Ateres Tzvi, Mishpat HaHora'ah, Tiferes L'Moshe and Darchei Moshe. He also wrote the Responsum of the Maharatz, and in his answers we see that he was in contact with the greatest of his generation, such as the Chassam Sofer and R' Shlomo Kluger. In 1852, he was appointed as Rabbi of the large city of Kalish, during which time he suffered greatly from the Russian authorities.

<sup>26</sup> In the Zemer of Shabbos day Dror Yikra. The simple meaning of this is, "Seek out my Temple and my Sanctuary."

<sup>27</sup> In a similar vein, we can explain לצים לא ישב ובמושב לצים, didn't sit in the session of scorners (Tehillim 1:1). That is to say, in a place where scorners once were. This can be compared to a disease that has gone away but the germs remain there.

<sup>28</sup> Devarim 3:23.

<sup>29</sup> Indeed, עקב means a heel—a very hard, tough part of the body. This is the idea of גבורה.

<sup>30</sup> Incidentally, יראה shares the same Gematria as גבורה, 216.

<sup>31</sup> Devarim 10:12.

<sup>32</sup> Mishlei 22:4. Here is another explanation in these words: יראה is in Parshas Eikev. ענוה refers to Moshe, the most humble man. It therefore can be translated that Moshe speaks of יראה in Parshas Eikev.

<sup>33</sup> Avos 3:1.