

# Fascinating INSIGHTS

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## Taking Tishrei

Looking closely at the Yomim Noraim and the days that follow, we notice how they parallel a proposal followed by a marriage.<sup>1</sup> Rosh Hashanah seems as if it is Hashem's proposal to us as we happily give our consent and choose Him as our King. The cry of the Shofar then announces our commitment to Hashem. Then comes Yom Kippur in which we fast as it is a day of סליחה and מחילה. This is just as we find with a Chassan and Kallah on their wedding day who fast and have their sins forgiven.<sup>2</sup> נעילה of Yom Kippur is comparable to יהוד with ה'. The word נעילה is from the word בעל, locked since this is when the judgment of Rosh Hashana becomes sealed.<sup>3</sup> This resembles the idea of a Yichud room, the couple is now locked into marriage. Indeed, Yom Kippur is referred to as יום התונתו.<sup>4</sup>

After Yom Kippur, we have Succos which is labeled as זמן שמחתנו. The 7 days of Succos correspond to the 7 days of Sheva Brachos.<sup>5</sup> Sheva Brachos is the time when the Chassan is משמח his Kallah. This is reminiscent of

<sup>1</sup> One way this has been explained is that Rosh Hashana is committing ourselves in our relationship with Hashem. The עשרת ימי תשובה is a time we fix up the relationship. Then comes Yom Kippur, the time of forgiveness. Finally, comes Succos, the honeymoon with Hashem as we remove ourselves from the world to the Succa.

<sup>2</sup> See Yerushalmi Bikurim 3:3. The Baal Haturim (Ki Seitzei 24:5) interprets נקי יהיה לביתו שנה ... that he is clean in the sense that his sins are forgiven. It is for this reason that Succos is זמן שמחתנו since our sins are forgiven. Consequently, the initials of ויאמר ה' spell סלחתי כדברך.

<sup>3</sup> See Yerushalmi Brachos 4:1. See Zera Kodesh to Erev Yom Kippur that the letters of נעילה spell נעל-יה as this is when we become locked in with Hashem.

<sup>4</sup> Taanis 26b, Rashi s.v. זה.

<sup>5</sup> Additionally, Succos is in the seventh month, it is seven days long, we have seven אושפזין that come to the Succa in addition to that we take seven items on Succos (one לולב, one אתרוג, two ערבות, three הדסים) [Also see Taamai Minhagim, Lulav 804].

Succos. The eighth day—Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah—signifies intimacy since on שמיני עצרת there is only one קרבן brought whereas the first seven days of Succos 70 קרבנות are brought. The 70 קרבנות represent the 70 nations.<sup>6</sup> On the eighth day, one קרבן is brought representing the Jews alone with Hashem.<sup>7</sup> This is the meaning in רגל בפני עצמו,<sup>8</sup> it is a day of just us and Hashem.

Just as the Chassan impregnates his Kallah after they get married, similarly Hashem “impregnates” the earth with rain.<sup>9</sup> Through rain the earth sprouts forth vegetation just as a woman sprouts forth a child. Indeed, we begin to say תפילת גשם on Shemini Atzeres. Furthermore, water is something that we cannot perform any השתדלות (effort) for unlike Parnassa, raising children, and so on. Likewise, the Gemara tells us childbirth is only brought about through Hashem without a Shaliach (messenger).<sup>10</sup>

After the חתונה, the excitement fades and the newlywed couple then builds their relationship. This is similar to the month of Cheshvan where there is no Yomim Tovim causing the excitement to diminish. In fact, the name מרחשון is rooted in the phrase מרחשין שפוותיה,<sup>11</sup> lips are whispering. Our lips are still moving since we are still coming down from the high of the Yomim Tovim<sup>12</sup> (This is similar to what we see by the Chassidim Rishonim.<sup>13</sup>) Indeed, the word חשון is comprised as the same letters as נחוש<sup>14</sup> since we still feel the effects from Tishrei.<sup>15</sup> The Beis Ahron says that the Parshiyos after the Yomim Noraim correspond to those days. Breishis lines up with Rosh Hashana as is indicated in the word Breishis, beginning. Noach matches up with Yom Kippur as it says in that Parsha מבית ומחוץ בכפר<sup>16</sup> which refers to Kapara.

<sup>6</sup> R' Bachaye points out that the wall of a Succa is 7 Tefachim and its height is 10. 10 multiplied by 7 is 70 (Kad Hakemach, 60).

<sup>7</sup> Succah 55b. Shavuos also comes out on the eighth week. Simchas Torah and Shavuos, both days of celebration of the Torah, come out on the eighth because Torah is הטבע מן המעלה (symbolized by the number 8).

<sup>8</sup> Yoma 3a.

<sup>9</sup> See Yerushalmi Brachos end of 9:2.

<sup>10</sup> Taanis 2a. See Breishis 1:16, Rashi.

<sup>11</sup> Chagiga 3. See Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 92:8. Another reason for the name מרחשון is because of its bountiful rains that the world thirsts for. So, מר means drop of water as in כמר מדלי, drop from a bucket (Yeshaya 40:15).

<sup>12</sup> Chidushei Harim in the name of R' Simcha Bunim, Inyanei Sukkos s.v. איתא. Sefer Yetzira informs us that the Mazel of Cheshvan is the עקרב. The Magid of Trisk tells us these are the initials of א-ל אדון on Shabbos) since Cheshvan is followed by Tishrei which contains the Yomim Noraim.

<sup>13</sup> Brachos 30b.

<sup>14</sup> As in Breishis 44:5.

<sup>15</sup> Breishis is rooted in שרתי, dwell since it is filled with such holiness—Rosh Hashana, עשרת ימי תשובה, Yom Kippur, and so on. Additionally, שרתי forms an acronym for שמהה, (זמן שמחתנו) תשובה, בראש השנה, יום כפור.

<sup>16</sup> Breishis 6:14.

Lech Lecha corresponds with Succos as the Mishna states go from a permanent dwelling to a temporary one.

The Chidushai Harim also tells us מרחשון is related to אמר מר that we find in the Gemara, going back on a previous topic as this is what Cheshvan is about. Cheshvan is referred to as חודש בול.<sup>17</sup> בול means confusion, mix up (as in מבול) since this is a month devoid of the Kedusha of Tishrei.<sup>18</sup> This is also the month when the leaves begin to turn brown in contrast to nature blossoming and fresh greenery. That represents the lack of this month. In addition to there not being any Yom Tov in this month, suffering also befell us. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of Cheshvan, Yeravam contrived a new festival and aroused Divine wrath against the Jewish people. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of Cheshvan, the Chaldeans slaughtered the sons of King Tzidkiyahu in his presence and blinded his eyes before putting him in chains and bringing him to Bavel. During this month Hashem exacted retribution from the generation of the Mabul and He inundated the entire world. So it is called מרחשון, R' Eliyahu Kitov<sup>19</sup> (1912-1976) explains, since it is a month that is bitter (מר).

We need to take the high from the Yomim Noraim and carry it over into this month. With this we can grasp... אשרי,<sup>20</sup> תמך supporting my strides in your pathways, my footsteps did not falter as תמך is an acronym for מרחשון, כסלו since we must take the energy from Tishrei through the dry, dark months. This is how we can understand יהא רעוא קמיה דתשרי על עמיה<sup>21</sup> let the השפעה, influence of Tishrei stay with us throughout the year. In this light we can comprehend מי יעלה בהר ה'—who can go up on ה' referring to the Yomim Noraim. ומי יקום במקום קדשו—and who can maintain it after the Yomim Noraim, after the excitement has declined.<sup>22</sup> This is what

<sup>17</sup> Melachim 1 6:38.

<sup>18</sup> There were Tzadikim that after Succos they would involve themselves in Chanuka so that they shouldn't be depressed that we are devoid of Yom Tov until Chanuka after we just had Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, and Succos.

<sup>19</sup> Sefer Hatodaah, chapter 6. He was one of at least ten children. Most of his education was from his father, R' Michel, who was a chassid of R' Tzadok Hakohen. After moving back to Warsaw at age 17, R' Eliyahu Kitov studied in a *beis midrash*, worked at backbreaking jobs, while also doing public work for the Agudas Yisrael of Poland. He also worked on a volunteer basis in secular Jewish schools for abandoned children, until moving to Eretz Yisrael in 1936. He married a sister of R' Alexander Zusia Friedman (author of *Mayana Shel Torah*), a top activist for the Agudas Yisrael of Poland. Upon his immigration to Israel, he worked in construction. In 1941, he established a school for *Chareidi* children, where he served as principal for about eight years. At the same time, he became very involved with public affairs, editing the *Poalei Agudat Yisrael* newspaper, *HaKol*. In this journal, he published hundreds of articles, under various names, on a wide variety of subjects. In 1954, he began to write full-time. Despite a lack of funds, he established a small publishing house called *Aleph Institute Publications*, through which he published his various *sefarim*. From then until the end of his life, some twenty years, his main activity was writing and editing. However, at times he would get involved in education: giving guidance to teachers, lectures and publishing articles, mostly in The United States. R' Kitov had four sons and three daughters.

<sup>20</sup> Tehillim 17:5.

<sup>21</sup> In אתקינו סעודתא Friday night.

<sup>22</sup> Tehillim 24:3. See Sefas Emes, Chayei Sara, תרנב, s.v. במדרש and the Ohaiv Yisrael, Yisro, s.v. אנכי. The Arugas Habosem (Vzos Habracha, s.v. וישכון) enlightens us with the following. When a Yom Tov comes to an end one may think how did these holy days pass and I didn't take advantage of it or get inspiration!

we ask for in משיבני אחריו<sup>23</sup>—after the Yomim Tovim of Tishrei (אחריו) we ask to take it with us (משיבני).<sup>24</sup>

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### Lonely Learning

The Pasuk states ללא טוב היות האדם לבדו<sup>25</sup>, it is not good for man to be alone. The 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of Pirkei Avos teaches the 48 ways to acquire Torah. These deal with other people such as דקדוק חברים, דקדוק התלמידים, and so on. The term או חברותא או מיתותא<sup>26</sup> is not for naught. This is a deeper meaning in ללא טוב היות האדם לבדו: it is not good for man to learn alone.<sup>27</sup> ללא טוב refers to Torah as אין טוב אלא תורה.<sup>28</sup> What is the numerical value of ללא טוב 48!

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### Minimal Pleasure

It has been said, “The sizzle is better than the steak.” The anticipated pleasure is much greater than the actual pleasure. We may imagine how great a food tastes but the actual pleasure while it is in our mouth is very minimal. In this way, the Beis Halevi<sup>29</sup> interpreted סרנו ממצותיך...ולא שוה לנו<sup>30</sup> after we sinned, we realized that it wasn't worth it since we didn't attain in the sin the pleasure that we imagined (ולא שוה לנו).

This was caused by the first sin where the snake said והייתם כאלה-ים ידעי טוב ורע<sup>31</sup>, you will be like God knowing good and bad—that which was false. So, it was put into man a mistaken yearning—to yearn for that which is in the imagination which is a false pleasure. Even for that which is bad, man can think it is good and yearn for it.

Every pleasure is over-promised and under-delivered. Every pleasure has a limit whether it lasts for ten minutes or an hour. With pleasure, the first time is the best time and there is only one first time.

When people comment on their pleasurable experience, for example a vacation, they say, “It was amazing,” “I had a good time,” “I enjoyed it immensely.” Notice it is all in past tense. Once the pleasure is had, it is gone! This applies in every culture and every time period. All pleasures are limited and passing.

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.

What can I do as the time already passed?! He writes that even when such holy days pass if we want, Hashem will still send those lights from Yom Tov.

<sup>23</sup> Shir Hashirim 1:4.

<sup>24</sup> Divrei Chizuk, Breishis.

<sup>25</sup> Breishis 2:18.

<sup>26</sup> Taanis 23a. Also see Brachos 63b and Nedarim 81a with the Ran and Rosh.

<sup>27</sup> Writing notes, giving a Shiur and the like are not considered learning alone.

<sup>28</sup> Avoda Zara 19b.

<sup>29</sup> Breishis, s.v. במסכת.

<sup>30</sup> We say this in ורוי. The simple meaning is that we have turned away from Your commandments and Your good laws but to no avail.

<sup>31</sup> Breishis 3:5.