

Fascinating INSIGHTS

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[Inconceivable Inspiration](#)

One can be living his routine life and yet others could be so inspired by observing him to the extent that it changes their lives. The following are some stories that illustrate this.

In 1997, a man named Lenny called the rabbi of a Shul in Dallas, Texas expressing to him that he wanted to make a donation to his shul. When Lenny was asked why he wanted to donate money to a shul that he had no affiliation with, he explained that he just returned from a tour in Israel. He said in Jerusalem, "I was amazed by the intensity of a man dressed in a long black frock with ringlets of hair by his ears (a chasid) whom I saw praying at the Western Wall (the Kosel).¹ I was so moved by the depth of fervor (*hislahavus*) he displayed that I wanted to do something for him. Feeling uncomfortable to approach him, I decided when I return to Dallas, I'll find a temple where this man would be likely to pray at and make a contribution in his merit. When I arrived home I went to the kosher bakery where the owner told me that a chasid like that would pray in this type of shul. As a result, I want to donate to your shul." As his connection with the rabbi grew he gave more money and raised even more from his friends. When Lenny passed away his mother gave tens of thousands of dollars in his memory.

¹ Incidentally, the Minchas Elazar (Masaos Yerushalayim, מאמר יום ב) said he has a tradition from his Rabbaim that the Ohr Hachaim gave a note to someone to put between the stones of the Kosel.

A yeshiva student who was in Tel Aviv taking care of some task was very careful to protect his eyes from seeing the improper. A storeowner there noticed this and was amazed at how someone could have such self-control. This spurred him on his journey back to Judaism. This boy, who never knew about what he accomplished, dramatically changed another's life just by living his regular normal life.

At the shiva for R' Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz (1913-2011),² R' Chaim Kanievsky related the following story: R' Michel Yehuda once came to R' Chaim Kanievsky's house to borrow a sefer he had. He explained that his father was a *yerei shamayim* (G-d fearing) but he wasn't a rav or rosh yeshiva. When he would take walks with his father, his father pointed out a certain Jew named Yosef they would pass who was a shoemaker. His father would say, "he is like me in that he is not a Torah scholar but he has a son who is one. So you can also become a Torah scholar." This inspired him greatly. Because of this, out of Hakaros Hatov, he borrowed the sefer that Yosef's son authored, titled *Bris Eisan*, in order to learn it. R' Chaim Kanievsky said that since he was a student of R' Michel Yehuda, he also learned from that sefer out of Hakaras Hatov, because this person Yosef had such an impact on his rebbi that it thereby affected R' Chiam in that he has such a rebbi now.

[External Evil](#)

The Satan rules over that which is ראשית, beginning. This is just as there is a peel—which is the ראשית of the fruit—before the fruit. Likewise, the world

² R' Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz was born in Volozhin to Mr. Moshe Dovid and Chaya Lefkowitz which was the second marriage for both of them. His father was almost 80 years old when he was born. The family lived in great poverty. Moshe Dovid had children from a previous marriage who lived in America; they would send their father three rubles (the equivalent of one dollar) each month. Moshe Dovid would use two of the rubles to pay for a melamed for R' Michel Yehuda, and the other ruble to support the family. Chaya Lefkowitz's son and daughter from a previous marriage lived in Palestine. In 1936, R' Michel Yehuda and his mother (his father died in 1932) immigrated to Palestine. At the same time, R' Michel Yehuda's rebbi, R' Shlomo Heiman immigrated to America, where he became rosh yeshiva of Yeshiva Torah V'daas. On Lag Ba'omer 1940, the Chazon Ish, who was R' Michel Yehuda's shadchan, walked him to his chupa. R' Michel Yehuda was a maggid shiur at Yeshivas Tiferes Tzion from 1940 until 2011 and rosh yeshiva of Yeshivas Ponovitch L'Tzeirim from 1954 until 2009. In Yeshivas Ponovitch, he eventually taught the grandchildren of his original students. In the first and second years of this yeshiva, R' Nissim Karelitz and R' Chaim Kanievsky were his students. He also taught R' Meir Tzvi Bergman (born in 1930), the son-in-law of R' Shach. R' Michel Yehuda was a member of the Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah of Degel Hatorah, a member of Mifal Hashas, and *nasi* (president) of the Acheinu kiruv organization. In addition to his own Torah works, he published the teachings of his rebbi, R' Shlomo Heiman, in the two-volume Chiddushei Shlomo.

was first empty followed by creation. Similarly, Kayin is born before Hevel, Yishmael precedes Yitzchak as does Esav to Yaakov.³ Following this theme, night—which is the domain of the ⁴Satan—comes before morning. This also explains ⁵כל התחלות קשות, all beginnings are hard, as this is where the Yetzer Hara takes hold.

With this in mind, we can grasp why we bring Bikurim—first fruits—to Hashem since otherwise the “outside forces” would take control of it⁶ as in **ימי בכורי** ⁷ענבים. For the same reason, we sanctify the firstborn—⁸קדש לי כל בכור, sanctify to Hashem the firstborn of man and animal—as this removes it from the domain of the Yetzer Hara.⁹

Major Majority

If we were supposed to be in Mitzrayim for 400 years why were we there for only 210?

One of the answers given is that the embitterment was so difficult that the 210 were like 400. The Gra points out that the trop on **וימררו את חייהם**, they embittered their lives¹⁰ is a קדמא ואולא. This can be understood that we went out early from Mitzrayim as this is the translation of קדמא ואולא in Aramaic. In fact, the sum of קדמא ואולא is 190¹¹ as is also the word קץ, end.¹² In the

order of the Seder Matzah comes before Marror although chronologically it was first Marror and then Matzah. This is because Marror is part of the Geula since we were so embittered in Mitzrayim that the 210 years were like 400.

There is a concept called רובו ככולו, the majority is equivalent to all of it.¹³ Since 201 is a majority of 400 let it be 201 and not 210? The Midrash¹⁴ says Moshe saw they didn't have rest so he went to Paroh and said if a slave doesn't rest one day a week, he will die. The same will happen to your servants. Paroh then told him to go and do as you said. Moshe then gave them Shabbos as a rest day. This is how we can explain ¹⁵ישמה משה במתנת חלקו Moshe was happy as he was the one who got the day off.¹⁶ Moshe was 17 when he gave the Jews Shabbos as a day off. The enslavement came to an end when Moshe was 80. This gives us a total of 63 years off on Shabbos. 63 years of Shabbos is 9 years.¹⁷ Subtracting 9 from 210 our result is indeed 201. Consequently, it is רובו ככולו. This is alluded to in **וארא** which is the beginning of the redemption from the enslavement. **ו** equals 6, referring to the six days of the week they worked. **א** refers to Shabbos, the day they had off. **א, ר** has a Gematria of 201.¹⁸

Rabbi Alt merited to learn under the tutelage of R' Mordechai Friedlander ztz"l for close to five years. He received Semicha from R' Zalman Nechemia Goldberg ztz"l. 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.

³ This theme is also seen where the destruction of the world began. That is with Adam, the first man.

⁴ Nighttime is when it is dark symbolizing the dark times. Also, **לילה** is related to **יללה**, wailing. This is in contrast to the morning which is daylight representing light and the good times.

⁵ Shemos 19:5, Rashi.

⁶ The 365 sinews are sustained from the 365 **ללא תעשה** whereas the 248 limbs are sustained from the 248 **עשה** (see Zohar, ח"א, 170b). Since there is no Beis Hamikdash today, some of the Mitzvos don't apply. So how are these sinews and limbs nourished? It is from the Mitzva being done in another way. For example, Bikurim can be done through sanctifying the beginning of one's **מעשה** דבור, מחשבה, thought, speech and action. That is, by reciting **מודה אני** in the morning (see the Toldos Yaakov Yosef in **Ki Savo** and the **Baal Shem Tov** in **Chukas** as well as the **Sefer Sichos B'Avodas Hashem**, יתגבר כארי).

⁷ Bamidbar 13:20. If we take these words literally and take the preceding—**בכורי**—letters from **ענבים** (ע is before ס, מ is before ו, א is before ב and ל is before מ), we get **ל-מא-ס**, the Satan.

⁸ Shemos 13:2.

⁹ This is one reason given why we cut off the ends of the bread as it nullifies their power. A hint to this is found in **לא יאכל** כל ערל לא יאכל (ממ צדי הא) **מצה**—that which is not cut, don't eat from it (Taamim Haminhagim, p. 77).

¹⁰ Pninin Mishulchan Hagra, Shemos 1:14. See Breishis 15:13 and Rashi there.

¹¹ We say in Hallel **מעפר** **דל** מקימי, he raises the needy from the dust (Tehillim 113). **מעפר** is equivalent to 200 and **מקימי** means subtract (as in Sanhedrin 4a). Subtracting 200 from 390 we arrive at 190. These are referring to the 190 years we left early in which He lifted us out of the impurity we were steeped in. This is the meaning in **מקימי מעפר** **דל** מאשפת ירים אביון, He raises the needy from the dust, from the trash heaps he lifts the destitute.

¹² The word **קץ** has a Gematria of 190, the number of years they went out early as we say in the Haggada **את הקץ**. Similarly, spelling out the word **מצה** (ממ צדי הא) we get a numerical value of 190 (See Shemos, 12:40, Rashi). In the Haggada, Magid begins with **לחמא עניא** has a Gematria of 210, the number of

years we were in Mitzrayim. The Haggada begins and ends in Aramaic as it starts with **לחמא עניא** and culminates with **גדיא**. **א,ר,מ**, Aramaic can be broken up into **צ,ה,ר,ן**, **משה** (the ones involved in taking the Jews out of Mitzrayim) and **ב** which has a sum of 210. Another allusion: **הרב** is also called **סיני**. **הרב** has a numerical value of 210.

¹³ Chullin 19a, Nazir 42a. An example of this is one who shaves the corner of his beard is liable even if he shaves a majority of it. The idea behind this concept can be expressed with the following: If a person is 51% off a cliff, he falls off it (the majority is like all of it).

¹⁴ Shemos Rabba 1:28.

¹⁵ In Shabbos Shacharis Shmoneh Esrei.

¹⁶ Tur, Orach Chaim, 281.

¹⁷ 63 divided by 7 (Shabbos is once every 7 days) is 9. **בריכות**, **ב,ח,ש,ב,ן**, Haggada, s.v. **וויציאנו**.

¹⁸ We know everything is hinted to in **בראשית** (Pri Tzadik, Breishis, 1). This is also: **ב** also means with. The next 2 letters are **א,ר** which is 201 in Gematria. **ש** symbolizes **שבת**. **י** signifies **יהיה**. Finally, **ת** has a numerical value of 400. In short: with the 201 years and Shabbos we get to 400 years. Now we can understand a deeper meaning in (Shemos 21:2) **עבד עברי**, when you will buy a Hebrew servant, as we are referred to as **עבדים**, slaves to Hashem. We were chosen as **עבדים** through the years in Mitzrayim (see Shemos Rabba 30:5). **תקנה** is a contraction of **תקנה** (400)—with the 400 years, Hashem acquired us as his **עבדים**.