

Fascinating INSIGHTS

א' תמוז תשפ"א

June 11, 2021

פרשת קרח

9th year, edition 389

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Priceless Gift

When R' Meir Shapiro was a young boy, his family was so impoverished that they had no food. Yet, his mother paid lots of money for a מלמד, one to teach him Torah. R' Meir Shapiro complained to his mother as he felt it wasn't right to pay such an exorbitant amount of money when they had no food. His mother told him it is a small sacrifice for such a great, magnificent Torah. R' Meir Shapiro would repeat this to himself later in life when challenges would arise!

In the 1950s there was a Jew that lived in Eretz Yisrael known as R' Nesanel the milkman. This man was great in Torah as R' Aharon Kotler testified. R' Nesanel would review Torah in his head as he would deliver milk. If he had a question on what he was learning, he would stop someone on the street and ask them. Due to this, he wasn't good at his job because one receiving his milk was dependent on him understanding the piece of Torah he was thinking about. R' Shalom Schwadron decided that whenever anyone would see him, they should turn the other way in order that he deliver the milk on time because he needed a living. Once, when R' Shalom saw R' Nesanel, he turned the other way, although R' Nesanel repeatedly called him because he had difficulty understanding a piece of Torah.¹ When R' Nesanel asked

R' Shalom why he did this, R' Shalom answered, "You need to make a living so I turned away from you." R' Nesanel then said emotionally, "This is my living (Torah)!"²

The story is told of a husband that decided he was going to leave Kollel after many years in order to work so that he can support his family. His wife objected and was willing to sell her ring in order that he continue learning. She went to the jewelry store to sell it where she was given 10,000\$ for its value. She was then asked why she wanted to sell the ring. After explaining why, the owner returned the ring to her in addition to letting her keep the money!³

The Gemara⁴ tells us R' Yosef said that if it weren't for the day of Matan Torah, there would be many Yosefs in the marketplace!⁵ This can be explained as follows: The *eino-yehudim* act properly and respectfully in their house of worship while when they leave, they are different people. This is contrary to the Torah which teaches us how to act at every moment of life. Therefore, we are the same upright people in the Beis Midrash as at the workplace and home. This is what R' Yosef's meant: If it weren't for that day of Matan Torah, there would be many Yosefs. That is, there would be one Yosef in the market and an entirely different Yosef in Shul as his behaviors would vary. Since we have the Torah, R' Yosef said now there is only one R' Yosef as he is the same everywhere.

Supporting The Fallen

Analyzing the נשיאים, we notice that two of them caused turmoil: the Nasi of Reuven who was involved in the congregation of Korach and Shimon's Nasi who was Zimri, the one who caused the plague in which 24,000 people died.⁶ It therefore is no wonder that the Parshiyos of Korach, Balak and Pinchas are read this time of year (in the summer).

The Tur tells us that the twelve tribes correspond to the twelve months.⁷ Reuven who is fourth in the order of the Degalim corresponds to Tamuz, the fourth month whereas Shimon connects with Av as he was the fifth in

² There is an expression, "Stop making a living and start living."

³ The Chassam Sofer (Drashos Chassam Sofer p. שנג, s.v. ואמר) writes that if a wife supports her husband and children in learning Torah, although the husband and children have their reward diminished if they mess up and don't follow in the Torah path she supported, her reward is not reduced.

⁴ Pesachim 68b.

⁵ Chazal (Avos Drebi Nosson 21:2) relate a story about R' Akiva where he was once teaching his students and he remembered that which he did in his youth. He then said, "I thank You, Hashem, that you have established my portion with those who dwell in the study hall and not with idlers in the market."

⁶ Bamidbar 25:9, 25:14.

⁷ Tur, Hilchos Rosh Chodesh, 417.

¹ The Yerushalmi (Brachos 5:1. See also Eruvin 43b) records a story of Reish Lakish who was meditating so deeply upon Torah while walking that he went out of the Techum Shabbos without realizing it!

the Degalim, corresponding to the fifth month.⁸ When we combine the initials of **בְּאוֹבֵן** and **שְׁמֵעוֹן**, we get the word **רַשׁ**, impoverished, because these are the months of the year that are impoverished.⁹

These are high months that have fallen very low as in **מֵאִגְרָא רַם לְבִירָא עֲמִיקָתָא** from a high roof to a deep pit.¹⁰ This is just as the higher the place one drops an object from, the further down it will fall. These months are **נִפְלִיִּים**, fallen and **כְּפֻפִּים**, bent, but Hashem supports them as it says **לְכָל הַנּוֹפְלִים וְזוֹקֵף לְכָל הַכְּפֻפִּים**, Hashem supports all the fallen ones and straightens all the bent,¹¹ as in the future, these days will be happy days. It comes as no surprise that **סוֹמֵךְ יְיָ-ו-ה** לכל הנופלים has an identical Gematria to **תָּמוֹן** (453). How about the sum of **לְכָל הַכְּפֻפִּים**? It is the same as **חֹדֶשׁ אָב**, as this month is that of **כְּפֻפִּים**, since the beginning of the month until after Tisha B'Av is in the dominion of the Satan.¹²

Observing nature we notice that the darkest months are in the winter in contrast to the summer months which are filled with light. This is because in truth

⁸ Bamidbar 10. Bnei Yissaschar, Tamuz Av 1:3. Additionally, when the fourth brought the dedication offerings, Reuven's was the fourth and Shimon's was the fifth (Bamidbar 7:30, 36).

⁹ **שְׁמִיעָה** is from the term **רָאִיהָ**, to see while **שְׁמֵעוֹן** is rooted in **שָׁמַע**, to hear (Breishis 29:32,33). The Meraglim sinned with these two senses as they saw the land in a negative way—**וִירְאוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ** and **וַיִּנְאֻוּ**, they saw the land and dissuaded the heart of the Jewish people... (Bamidbar 32:9), as well as hearing and accepting the Lashon Hara—**וַיִּתְּנוּ אֶת קוֹלָם**, the entire assembly raised up and issued its voice... (Bamidbar 14:1). In Talmud Bavli, the terminology of **תָּא שְׁמַע**, come and hear is used, in contrast to Talmud Yerushalmi which uses the wording, 'come and see' (as in Yerushalmi Sheviis 2:4), as does the Zohar, **תָּא הוּי**, come and see (as in Vayeshev 189b). Additionally, R' Yosef Chaim Zonnenfeld points out on the Pasuk in our Haftarah that **צִיּוֹן** shall be redeemed with justice (Yeshaya 1:27) shares the same numerical value as **תְּלִמּוֹד יְרוּשָׁלַיִם** (1,076), whereas the continuation of the Pasuk—**וּשְׁבִיבָה בְּצִדְקָה**, her returnees with righteousness—is the same as **תְּלִמּוֹד בְּבָלִי** (524). It comes as no surprise that **תָּא** are the first letters of **אָב תָּמוֹן**. With this we can comprehend **וּרְצָה עֵינֶיךָ וּשְׁמַע פִּקְחָה עֵינֶיךָ וּרְצָה**, incline Your ear and listen, open Your eyes and see... (Daniel 9:18).

¹⁰ Chagiga 5b. Examples of **קְדוּשָׁה** mixed with **טוֹמָא** are the **כְּנַעֲנִים** living in Eretz Yisrael as well as the **עֶרְלָה** prior to a Bris. The same is with Tamuz and Av, that in essence it is filled with light.

¹¹ Tehillim 145:14. The Arizal teaches that each month corresponds to different limbs in the head (Bnei Yissaschar Tamuz Av 1:4). Tamuz corresponds to the right eye and Av to the left. It is written in the Pasuk **עַל אֱלֹהִים אֲנִי בֹכֶה עֵינַי עֵינַי יִרְדּוּ מִי**, over these do I weep, my eye continuously runs with water (Eicha 1:16). It states **עַל בְּנֵיהָ רָחֵל**, Rachel cries for her children—Yirmiya 31:14. Adding **דְּמָעָה**, tear and **דְּמָעָה**, since she had many tears, we come to a total of 238, the same as **רָחֵל**), as the destructions of the Batei Mikdash were in the months of Tamuz and Av which we cry over. Yitzchak possesses the attribute of **דִּין**, the idea of constriction. In the future, we will rule like Beis Shamai who also has this characteristic. Rearranging the name **יִצְחָק**, we get **חֵי**, he lives in the **קָדְשׁ**, future. **דִּין** is the idea of restraining and withholding which is in contrast to the future, where it is **יִמְלֵא שְׂחוֹק** **פִּינוּ**, then our mouth will be filled with laughter (Tehillim 126:2) and **וַתִּשְׂחַק לַיּוֹם אַחֲרָיו**, she joyfully awaits the last day (Mishlei 31:25). **יִצְחָק** is future tense as it translates "he will laugh," because now it is restrained (**צִמְצוּם**) in contrast to laughter of the future which is expressive—not held in. It is written **נִחְמוּ נִחְמוּ** (Yeheya 40:1). **נִחְמוּ**...**אֱלֹהֵיכֶם** (Yeheya 40:1). **נִחְמוּ** signifies the trait of **דִּין**—Yitzchak. It comes as no wonder that **נִחְמוּ נִחְמוּ** has a sum of 208, the same as **יִצְחָק** (208). Additionally, **נִחְמוּ נִחְמוּ** corresponds to what Yitzchak will say to Hashem in the future about our sins—**חַטֹּאתֵינוּ**, half should be on me and half on You (Shabbos 89b).

¹² Emunas Itecha, Shelach, s.v. **יָדוּעַ**.

these months are that of true light as it says **צוֹם הָרַבִּיעִי וְצוֹם הָחֲמִישִׁי...לְשָׁשׁוֹן וּלְשִׂמְחָה** and **לְמַעֲדִים טוֹבִים**, the fasts of the 17th of Tamuz and the 9th of Av will be to the house of Yehuda for joy, gladness and for happy festivals.¹³

In Lecha Dodi we say **רַב לָךְ שָׁבַת בְּעֵמֶק הַבְּכָה**, too long have you dwelled in the valley of weeping. Another interpretation given is that **רַב לָךְ שָׁבַת**¹⁴ the highest Shabbosim are **בְּעֵמֶק הַבְּכָה**, the ones that are in the valley of tears, the Shabbosim of the Three Weeks.¹⁵ As the Three Weeks progress, the mourning gets more intense. Parshas Devarim which coincides with Tisha B'Av makes it the most intense of the three. In fact, the Pasuk in Parshas Devarim states **אֵיכָה אֲשָׁא לְבָדִי**, which is read with the same trop (tune) as **אֵיכָה יֵשְׁבָה בְּדָד**.¹⁶ Additionally, Parshas Devarim begins **אֵלֹהֵי הַדְּבָרִים**. **אֵלֹהֵי** has a Gematria of 36, the same as **אֵיכָה**. Consequently, the Shabbos of Parshas Devarim is the highest Shabbos of the Three Weeks.¹⁷

The low months of Tamuz and Av came as a result of the sin of the Meraglim. Of the twelve Meraglim only two didn't sin, Yehoshua and Kalev. It therefore is no wonder that the two Moshiachs¹⁸ come from them: **מִשִּׁיחַ** from Efraim (Yehoshua) and **מִשִּׁיחַ** from Yehuda (Kalev).¹⁹ That is to say, being that the Meraglim caused us to be in Galus, the rectification—the ones to remove us from Galus—are from those that didn't sin. Then we will see **כִּי לֹא תִמְנָה**... **חֲסִדֵּי ה'**, Hashem's kindness surely has not ended and therefore will bring Moshiach, as **כִּי** is an acronym for **כָּל בְּיָהוֹשֻׁעַ**, since this is whom Moshiach comes from.²⁰

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 books, *Fascinating Insights and Incredible Insights* in addition to being the host of *The Fascinating Insights Podcast*. His writings, some of which have been translated into German and French, 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 Kiryat Yearim (where the Aron was for 20 years [Shmuel 1, 7:1,2]) where he studies, writes and teaches. The author is passionate about teaching Jews of all levels of observance.

¹³ Zecharya 8:19. This explains the sum of 17 (17th of Tamuz) and 9 (9th of Av) which totals 26, the sum of **יְיָ-ו-ה**, since these are the holiest of times, times filled with godliness.

¹⁴ A similar expression is found in Devarim 1:6.

¹⁵ See the Tiferes Shlomo to Shabbos Chazon s.v. **בְּפֶרֶשׁת בְּחֻקֵּי**. See the Koznitzer Magid in his Sefer Avodas Yisrael on (Eicha 1:3) **כָּל דְּרִפְיָה הַשִּׁיגוּהָ** **בֵּין הַמִּצְרִים**.

¹⁶ Devarim 1:12, Eicha 1:1.

¹⁷ Ohaiv Yisroel, Meor Vshemesh, Rimzei Bein Hamitzarim. Emunas Itecha, Devarim. Nesivos Shalom, Devarim, Shabbos Chazon. In fact, the Kedushas Levi tells us that on Shabbos Chazon every Jew is shown the third Beis Hamikdash.

¹⁸ Rambam Hilchos Melachim 11:1. See **מִדְרַשׁ וַיִּשְׁע** 22.

¹⁹ Bamidbar 13:6,8. Yehoshua is from Efraim who corresponds to the month of Tishrei. R' Eliezer says in Tishrei we will be redeemed (Rosh Hashana 10b). Kalev is from Yehuda who corresponds to Nissan, the month that R' Yehoshua says will be redeemed. It comes as no surprise that the ones who redeem us are from Kalev (Moshiach Ben Dovid who is from Yehuda) and Yehoshua (Moshiach Ben Yosef).

²⁰ The word **מִשִּׁיחַ** is an acronym for the different opinions of his name (Sanhedrin 98b): **מִנְחָם בֶּן חֻזְקִיָּה**, **שִׁלֵּה**, **יִנּוֹן**, **חֲנִינְהָ**, **חִזְקִיָּה דְּבִי רַבִּי** (Gra in Kol Eliyahu, p. 93).