

Fascinating INSIGHTS

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Stars, Russians and Yemenites

When Paroh's daughter opened the basket and saw Moshe it says והנה נער בכה, behold, a youth was crying—referring to Moshe.¹ The Gemara² questions these words והנה נער בכה, since the Torah called him a child (ילד)³ which could mean an infant and then it calls him a youth implying an older person. The Gemara explains הוא ילד וקולו הוא ילד וקולו, he was an infant but his voice was like that of a youth (i.e. much deeper). R' Meir Shapiro⁴ gave the following explanation: People cry, whether they are babies or adults. What is the difference between a baby crying and a mature person crying? A baby cries for selfish reasons—because he is hungry, needs a diaper change and the like. A baby is unable to cry for others, in contrast to a mature person. הוא ילד וקולו כנער means that although he was a child, his voice was like that of one who was older. That is to say, although he was saved by Basya, he still felt the pain of his brethren in the enslavement.⁵ This is why he was crying!⁶

In 2021, there was a father, who was religious on a basic level, whose daughter became ill, sending her to the hospital. He said that from the moment his daughter arrived at the hospital he came to the realization that

being born Jewish is equivalent to winning the lottery. He explained that the patients in hospital beds near where his daughter was were for the most part alone. One child nearby had a visit from her mother every other day because she was busy taking care of the other children since she was unable to find someone to babysit. This is in contrast to his situation where once it became known in the Jewish community that this daughter was in the hospital, many people began to act. This included babysitters that were arranged, health advisors offering their advice, food coming in bulk and people that came to visit his daughter. He remarked, "I didn't do anything to deserve it. I was just simply born Jewish."

The Jewish people are compared to stars as it says ... וספר הכוכבים... so shall your offspring be.⁷ Why are we compared to the stars? R' Leib Bakst explains that originally the sun and moon were equal in size. However, the moon was reduced when it complained and said, "It is impossible for two kings to use the same crown." Since the moon was reduced in size, Hashem created the stars to conciliate it.⁸ So the purpose of creating the stars was to remove pain from another part

¹ Shemos 2:6.

² Sota 12b.

³ The Pasuk (Shemos 2:6) reads ותראהו את הילד והנה נער בכה, she saw the boy and behold a youth was crying.

⁴ Imrei Daas, Parshas Shemos.

⁵ Upon hearing the pain of one of his Chassidim, the Rebbe said "What a great tragedy. I don't have answers for you but I can cry with you."

⁶ This is just as it says וירא בסבלתם, he saw the burden of his brethren (Shemos 2:11). We also see this idea when he saved the daughters of Yisro from an encounter at the well (Shemos 2:17).

⁷ Breishis 15:5.

⁸ Breishis 1:16, Rashi.

of creation. This is why we are compared to the stars since this is what a Jew does. He feels the pain of another Jew and does what he can to remove that pain.⁹

On a particular Shabbos in the year 1885, R' Simcha Zissel of Kelm was noticeable sad. When he was questioned about this, he related that there was a self-hating wicked Jew that had just died. He said, "I'm just thinking about this person who destroyed his soul and the *דין והשבוך*, judgement, he will receive. I can't bear the pain his soul will endure."

R' Yechiel Michel Chill of Monsey, who was an 11th-grade rebbe in R' Samson Raphael Hirsch High School for Boys, was one of the emissaries sent by the Vaad L'Hatzolas Nidchei Yisroel to the Former Soviet Union (FSU). While in Moscow, he met a student named Moshe and spent many hours discussing with him the basics of Judaism. As they parted, R' Chill told Moshe to call him if he was ever in the States. About six months later, R' Chill received a call from Moshe, who told him that he had been granted an exit visa and was now an exchange student at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Moshe related how his *tefillin* had been confiscated by a border guard as he left the FSU, and that, in addition, he was without any kosher food and had no clue how to find it. R' Chill called his friend R' Tzvi Goodman and together they purchased a new set of *tefillin* for Moshe, a Russian-language *siddur* and other reading material, and loaded a car with enough kosher food for a month, before embarking on the four-hour drive to Ithaca. After two hours of seeing what they could do to help orient Moshe, the two men traveled back for Monsey, arriving late at night. The next day R' Chill explained to his shiur why he might be a bit exhausted in the hope that his story might someday be an example for one of his students in how far we should go to help a fellow Jew. A year later, Jeremy Strauss, who had been in R' Chill's the shiur preceding year, rushed into Rabbi Chill's class one Sunday morning and told him the following story. His father and he had noticed an unfamiliar young man in their shul in Englewood and invited him home for the Shabbos meal. At the meal, he told them he was a recent *ba'al teshuva*. And what had triggered his sudden interest in Judaism? At the end of the spring semester the previous year at Cornell, he had been given a newly arrived Russian roommate for two nights. The new roommate had seemed totally lost and out of place, until two rabbis came loaded with food and books. "I kept thinking all night that I had never seen anything like this. I must find out about the religion that creates such love for a fellow Jew.¹⁰ I began looking into what Judaism was all about and that's where the road to being observant began."

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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 three books including the recently released *Extraordinary Insights*, in addition to being the host of *The Fascinating Insights Podcast*. His writings, some of which have been translated into Yiddish, Hebrew, 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.

⁹ It has been said that sometimes the best way to take care of our problems is to take care of others.

¹⁰ The Tiferes Shlomo writes that he heard from R' Dovid Lelover that "How can you call me a tzadik if I still feel love of my children more than for a fellow Jew?"

¹¹ A Catholic cleric from 15th century Spain relates what occurred during the Spanish expulsion in 1492: Wealthy Jews spent their last coin to secure passage on the final ships leaving Spain for poorer Jews who were in danger of being left behind to forced baptism.

¹² Midbar Kedaimos מג ארות מג מערכת.

¹³ Pikudei 240b.

¹⁴ The Rema Mipano (עשרה מאמרות, חקור הדין, 1:26) writes even the keys of the Beis Hamikdash, a palm of a hand emerged from heaven to take them... (see Taanis 29a). He also writes that שדים, demons, brought other stones and those were burned in order to satisfy Titus (הוצר פלאות התורה) אוצר, brought other stones and those were burned in order to satisfy Titus (הוצר פלאות התורה), Vayikra, p. 845).

In the early 1950s, a large group of Yemenite Jews left their native land and immigrated to Israel. Since this took place shortly after the establishment of the state of Israel, there was little money available. As a result, the Israeli government erected rows of tents for the new immigrants. This is where they lived in the harsh winter doing their best to avoid the ubiquitous thick mud. Hearing about the newcomers' dire situation, R' Yitzchak Dovid Grossman's parents—R' Yisrael Grossman and his wife—traveled to Rosh Ha'ayin where these immigrants were and went from tent to tent introducing themselves to every family. They offered to take care of their children in Yerushalayim (where the Grossman's lived) for as long as they need if the families didn't feel capable of caring for them at that time. This offer was despite the fact that the Grossman's had ten kids of their own in a small apartment. Fifteen Yemenite children came with the Grossmans to Yerushalayim. Two slept in the Grossman house while the rest were divided among the neighbors. R' Yitzchak Dovid Grossman recalled that for the next few years, he slept in the same bed as two Yemenite boys!¹¹

[The Mosque and The Kosel](#)

The Chida¹² writes from the sefer עמודיה שבעה that the Beis Hamikdash really wasn't destroyed, just that Hashem sent malachim who brought bricks and dirt...to satisfy the eyes of the rasha who wanted to destroy the Beis Hamikdash. However, the Mikdash itself is in the ground (נבלע בארץ).

The Zohar¹³ tells us that no nation ruled over the stones of the Beis Hamikdash (Tzion and Yerushalayim) and its foundation, and they didn't burn it. Rather it is all stored away.¹⁴ When Yerushalayim and the Third Beis Hamikdash is built, these stones will return to their place.

Now let us take a look at the astounding words of R' Shlomo Kluger (1785-1869).¹⁵ He writes that it was revealed to him in a dream that the truth is the future Beis Hamikdash is already built on the Har Habayis, just that it is stored away¹⁶ and hidden.¹⁷

He also writes he was shown in a dream that the mountain the Beis Hamikdash is built on is stored away, just that there is another mountain in its place. And that which we see as the Kosel HaMaaravi is just an illusion (מראית עין), but the truth is that it is all stored away... Therefore, it is no Chidush that the Yishmaeilim built a mosque there, because the truth is that that area is not holy, since it is all stored away. Thus, heaven (שמים) lets the Yishmaeilim do as they please regarding this.

¹⁵ Sefer Chochmas Hatorah, Yisro, on לא יוכל העם לעלת... 19:23-24.

¹⁶ A proof to this is the Gemara that says a person saw ministering angels sitting and sawing precious stones and pearls... that Hashem will put at the gates of Yerushalayim (Baba Basra 75a). If Hashem saw that the Galus would be so long, then what is this rush? It must be that it is already built, just that it is not visible.

¹⁷ In the dream, they explained to him a unique meaning in באי קומי אורי כי בא אור, arise, shine for your light has arrived... darkness may cover the earth and a thick cloud may cover the kingdoms, but upon you Hashem will shine, and His glory will be seen upon you (Yeshaya 60:1-2): The Beis Hamikdash is referred to as אור של עולם, the light of the world (Baba Basra 4a). קומי אורי כי בא אור—the Beis Hamikdash is already built and that which it is not visible is because of the אור and עפר לאמים יכסה ארץ ועליו יורה ה'. But when the time of 'לה' and it will be visible because it is already prepared.