

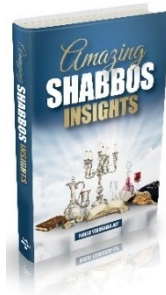
# Fascinating INSIGHTS

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### Visceral Voice

The gemara<sup>1</sup> says that Nachum Ish Gam Zu was called so because whatever would happen to him, even a seeming misfortune, he would say גם זו לטובה, this too is for the best. If this is so, then why was his name Nachum Ish Gam Zu and not Nachum Ish Gam Zu L'tova?

Moshe changed Yehoshua's name from הושע to יהושע. R' Shamshon Rafael Hirsch<sup>2</sup> comments that the change of name bears an implied message to him and also to his companions as each time they addressed him by his new name they, too, were to remember the message implied by this name and in carrying out their mission they were not to lose sight of this message. This name indicates to him and to them that יהושע is הושע: He who saved us in

the past (הושע is past tense) will also save us in the future (יהושע is in the future tense).

With this we can answer the question we began with. Nachum Ish Gam Zu was called so in order to put an emphasis on גם זו. That is to say, just like in the past Hashem was with you and you saw it was for the good, so too He will be with you in the future.

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### Punctilious Parents

There are two qualities that are represented by male and female: אמת and אמונה. אמת, which are the initial moments of clarity and vision, is male. This is because like the male contribution to the creation of a child, moments of truth are characterized by their short duration and ecstatic nature. In the human experience the revelation of

<sup>1</sup> Taanis 21a.

<sup>2</sup> Bamidbar 13:16.

truth is a flash of excitement and newness. However, that feeling of ecstasy doesn't last.

The quality of אמונה, faith, on the other hand, is female. The willingness to endure long months in which the birth seems far and impossible is the female trait.<sup>3</sup> After that ecstatic rush of revelation, all that is left is a tiny seed germinating in the dark, under the surface, where one can't be sure it exists. A fascinating allusion is found in the word אמונה which is rooted in the word אם, mother. אמונה enters when the journey gets rough. אמונה causes one to remain faithful to that seed of truth carrying it through nine months of pregnancy until the truth is finally birthed into its new evolved form.

The child that is born is a product of the marriage between that initial burst of ecstasy coupled with the willingness to face the darkness for many long months. The child is the outcome of the father, אמת, and the mother, אמונה, but it transcends the reality of both of them.

The paradigm for woman exemplifying faithfulness occurred after Sinai where Hashem spoke amidst the fire which was a short ecstatic moment of truth.<sup>4</sup> Moshe's delay in descending the mountain gave rise to a horde of questions: Will he return? What will be with us? When he was there with his miracles and the sea split it was impossible to ignore the bright light but now things were murky precipitated by Moshe's delay. There were those who succumbed to their lack of faith and built the golden calf, but the women refused to participate.<sup>5</sup> The women of that generation unlike those who participated in the golden calf and died in the desert merited redemption and lived to enter Eretz Yisrael. They held on through the darkness and they merited the birth of the "child."

Faith means being faithful to that original flash that we know to be true although it is presently just a memory<sup>6</sup> and our senses now belie it. אמונה is remembering that there is a child—a new entity hiding under the surface during the dark nights. If one can hold on through the darkness of night and seek to uncover the spark of life that was once so clear, he will come to a new expanded edition of himself.

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### Day of Deferring

There are days in the year that are not part of this world such as Shabbos.<sup>7</sup> As a result, there is no melacha performed then, because it is otherworldly, analogous to

before Adam's sin. Prior to Adam's sin, there was no melacha (melacha is synonymous with klalla, curse).

The holier the day is, the less melacha that is allowed to be performed. Shabbos is the holiest day followed by Yom Tov. Consequently, there is more that is permitted on Yom Tov as on Yom Tov *ochel nefesh*, work that is required for the preparation of food is permitted.<sup>8</sup> Then there is Chol Hamoed<sup>9</sup> and Rosh Chodesh.<sup>10</sup> Finally, there is the weekday where all work is done.

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### Needy and Necessary

The Midrash<sup>11</sup> says, "More than the rich person gives to the poor the poor gives to the rich."<sup>12</sup> The rich man has given money, something he has in abundance, but the poor person has given the rich man the opportunity to feel that he has impacted the world. He has allowed the rich man to release his potential and his bounty, validating him as someone who has something to give. When someone offers you a ride home you have received a ride but he has received a validation of his essence as a chip of the Divine.<sup>13</sup>

Making your existence meaningful is done by not being needy but by being needed. The world's resources weren't made available to us to solely maintain our existence but to be used to make this world. The more one focuses on existing, the less time for living. Empires have dreamed of existing forever, but they are gone. They focused on existing and not on living. On the other hand, the Jewish people are viable and thriving, because we don't try to exist. Existence is not a goal in and of itself. The Jewish people focus on what they can give to the world. What does the world need and how can we best fill that need, with Hashem's help? When an individual or community is focused on living, then they also get existence, because they are needed. This is the secret to the Jewish "existence"—not "existing" (being needy) but "living" (being needed). Of course, it's not a secret only for the Jewish people, as everyone can join the program.

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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.

<sup>3</sup> These two qualities are shown at shacharis and at maariv. At shacharis, which is said in the morning when it is bright and clear, we say ויציב ונכון, certain and established. This is the male quality. In contrast, in its counterpart at maariv which is when it is dark and unclear, we say ואמונה, כל זאת, being faithful. This is the female quality.

<sup>4</sup> See Shemos, 19-20. This is one of the explanations given for the Midrash that says that Hashem held the mountain over the Jewish people forcing them to accept the Torah (See Shemos 19:17 Rashi). The truth at Sinai was so blinding that it left no choice but to believe in Hashem and His Torah.

<sup>5</sup> Bamidbar Rabba 21:10.

<sup>6</sup> This explains why the word זכר, male is the same word as זכר, a memory, as the male quality is that original flash of excitement where one must remain faithful to that memory. One must not forget that initial flash.

<sup>7</sup> See Brachos 57b that Shabbos is a semblance of the world to come.

<sup>8</sup> Megilla 7b.

<sup>9</sup> See Orach Chaim 430.

<sup>10</sup> See Orach Chaim 417.

<sup>11</sup> Rus Rabba 5:9.

<sup>12</sup> While a rich man benefits a poor person by giving him money, the poor man benefits him much more since by accepting his charity, he causes the wealthy person to receive the many blessings that are bestowed upon those who give charity such as the benefit mentioned in the pasuk (Mishlei 10:2) צדקה תציל ממוות, charity rescues from death (Eitz Yosef, s.v. yoseir).

<sup>13</sup> We all need to be needed. Being needed is not a selfish feeling but rather a human feeling to give of oneself to others.