

WIPING OF THE DA'AS

by Rabbi Pinchas Winston

FRIDAY NIGHT:

This is the accounting of the Tabernacle (the Tabernacle of Testimony) as requested by Moshe of the Levites, under the guidance of Itamar, the son of Aharon the priest. (Shemos 38:21)

It is a leap year, once again. And being a leap year, Vayakhel and Pekudai are allowed to stand on their own, causing Sefer Shemos to be read over ELEVEN separate Shabbatot as opposed to only ten, as is the case in most years when the two parshios are read together on a single Shabbos.

Ten is a perfect number, just as the letter Yud to which it corresponds is a perfect letter. That is why it is the basis of the World-to-Come (Menachos 9b), for it is the only letter from the Aleph-Bais that is not a combination of other letters, making it the symbol of Divine simplicity. (Maharal, Haggadah)

However, eleven is the perfect number for this discussion, as we are using these parshios about the Mishkan as a pathway to the holiday of Purim. For, as we mentioned last week, Purim is the holiday of Da'as - specifically that of Torah Sh'b'al Peh (Pri Tzaddik, Purim 2), and Da'as is called the ELEVENTH sefirah. (Biur HaGra, Safra D'Zniusa)

There are really only ten sefiros. However, when the light of the first sefirah, Keser, descends and is filtered through the two sefiros that follow it, Chochmah and Binah, it becomes a pseudo-sefirah called Da'as. Thus, for the most part, when we include Da'as in the picture, Keser is usually omitted and vice-versa. Nevertheless, it is referred to as the "Eleventh Sefirah" and not just a lower down version of the first one.

We live to gain Da'as, as we should:

If you request it like money and pursue it like buried treasures, then you will understand fear of G-d and you will find Da'as Elokim. (Mishlei 2:4-5)

However, there is good Da'as and there is bad Da'as, as the Aitz HaDa'as Tov v'Rah taught us. There is knowledge that builds and there is knowledge that destroys, and the trick in life is to know which is which. Of course, that will all depend upon what one wishes to build and what one wishes to destroy.

It took knowledge to build both the Mishkan and the golden calf, and the construction of one was predicated on the destruction of the other. However, whereas the Mishkan facilitated a closer relationship to G-d and a greater revelation of the Divine Presence in Creation, the golden calf had

just the opposite effect. As a result, not only was it consumed within Creation, but those responsible for it were also destroyed.

Thus, the Arizal explains, the incident of the golden calf was just a replay of the sin of eating from the Aitz HaDa'as Tov v'Rah in a later generation. And, we already know why man ate from the tree in the first place:

The woman saw that the tree was good for food, appealing to the eyes, and an attractive means for gaining understanding. (Bereishis 3:6)

It was Da'as they were after, but instead of building a Mishkan they ended up with a golden calf. No wonder the Talmud states:

Where is there an allusion to Haman in the Torah? In the verse, "Did you eat from (hamin: Heh-Mem-Nun) the tree?" (Bereishis 3:11). (Chullin 139b)

And no wonder Haman's attack was against the Nun Sha'arei Binah (the Fifty Gates of Understanding) and Torah Sh'b'al Peh (the Oral Law) (Pri Tzaddik, Purim 2). The former is the conduit through which Da'as Elokim flows downward to man, and the latter is the expression of it through man (Ner Mitzvah). And thus it was Mordechai who did him in, for he fought with the power of ELEVEN:

G-d told Moshe, "Take the finest fragrances: 500 (shekels) of myrrh (mar dror)Š" (Shemos 30:22-23)

Where is Mordechai alluded to in the Torah? "IG-d told Moshe, 'Take the finest fragrances: 500 of] myrrh (mar dror)' " (Shemos 30:22-23). (Chullin 139b)

He is called the "head" (finest) of the spices, the righteous, and one of the Men of the Great Assembly, (Rashi) - one of ELEVEN spices that made up the Incense Offering.

SHABBOS DAY:

Then Haman said to King Achashveros, "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your realm. Their laws (Dalet-Tav) are different from every other people's and they do not observe the king's laws; therefore it is not befitting the king to tolerate them." (Esther 3:8)

The Talmud explains Haman's reference to a different das to mean that the Jewish people would not eat with the Persians or intermarry with them (Megillah 13b). It is the same word that is used for religion, and it differs from Da'as (Dalet-AYIN-Tav) by one letter: AYIN.

Interesting. The whole story of Purim is about Ayin, as in the number seventy:

So says G-d: After SEVENTY years of Bavel are completed, I will remember you and fulfill My good word concerning you, to return you to this place. (Yirmiyahu 29:10)

I, Daniel, pondered in the books the number of years of the word of G-d that came to Yirmiyahu the prophet regarding the completion of the destruction of Yerushalayim: SEVENTY years. (Daniel 9:2)

This is the reason why Achashveros made his great feast. He had made the (incorrect) calculation through which his predecessors had failed and died, and had determined that the seventy years had come and gone, and yet G-d had not redeemed His people from exile. The feast was to celebrate the Jewish people's new allegiance to the throne of Persia, an excuse to eat like Persians.

Without the Ayin, Da'as becomes only das, and there are plenty of those around throughout history. "Jewish, Persian, what difference does it make in the end?" said Achashveros to the Jewish people after the Ayin had come to an end, "So leave yours behind and join our das once and for all."

Thus, Haman refers to it only as das, for Amalek from which he descended has the same gematria as the Hebrew word suffek, which means doubt - incomplete Da'as. Indeed, the very letters of his name, Ayin-Mem-Lamed- Kuf, reveal his modus operandi against the Jewish people, for Amalek can be read: Ayin-malak - the severed Ayin. It is Amalek's desire to remove the Ayin from Da'as Elokim and reduce it to merely a das (a religion).

Thus, Purim is a holiday of wine:

Anyone who becomes settled through wine has the da'as of his Creator . . . the da'as of the Seventy Elders. Wine was given with seventy letters (Rashi: the gematria of yai'in - wine - is 70), and the mystery (of Torah) was given with seventy letters (Sod - mystery - also equals 70). Thus, when wine goes in, secrets go out. (Eiruvim 65a)

Ahah! Our first clue: Sod and seventy are identical, and imbibing Sod means inserting an Ayin between the Dalet and the Tav, thereby transforming Judaism from a simple das (religion) to Da'as Elokim. And, as if to emphasize this revelation, one had to walk SEVENTY amos from the Veil of the Courtyard to reach the Paroches, the Curtain in front of the Kodesh Kodashim (the Holy of Holies) that housed the Aron HaKodesh (the Holy Ark), which existed outside the realm of the natural. (Megillah 10b)

Thus, the number of pesukim from the time Haman was elevated to his powerful position (3:1) until the posuk that records his downfall, the king's order to hang him on his own gallows (7:10), total SEVENTY! Apparently, that is one posuk for each of the SEVENTY days Haman ruled! And, how much of mar dror was included in the mixture of eleven spices? SEVENTY manehs, to be exact.

Can it get more obvious? Yes:

G-d, Who has seventy Names, gave the Torah, which has seventy names, to Yisroel, which has seventy names, which originated from the seventy souls that went down to Egypt with Ya'akov, and were chosen from among the seventy nations, to celebrate seventy holy days in the year (52 of Shabbos and 18 of Yom Tovim, including Chol HaMoed); the Torah was transmitted to seventy Elders. (Midrash Yelamdeinu)

There are seventy facets to Torah. (Zohar, Bereishis 36)

Indeed, eleven is the source of seventy, which is the source of redemption. Hence, says the Vilna Gaon, this is why we recite Tehillim 20 just prior to "And a redeemer will come to Tzion" on weekday mornings: it has SEVENTY words.

If we need redemption, then we need seventy, and if we need seventy, then we need eleven, and that is why the final redemption begins with Ya'akov's ELEVENTH son, Yosef HaTzaddik.

SEUDOS SHLISHIS:

And it was, when Rachel had given birth to Yosef, Ya'akov said to Lavan, "Grant me leave that I may go to my place and to my land." (Bereishis 30:25)

Once the adversary of Eisav was born, as it says, "The house of Ya'akov will be fire, the house of Yosef a flame, and the house of Eisav straw; and they will ignite them and devour them. (Ovadia 1:18). Fire without a flame is powerless from a distance, and thus once Yosef was born, Ya'akov trusted in The Holy One, Blessed is He, and desired to return. (Rashi)

For, it also says:

"Eleven days journey from Chorev to Kadesh Barnea by way of Mt. Seir" (Devarim 1:2). It says in the Sifri: Had Israel merited the ELEVEN days, they would have entered the Land, because the eleven days would have overcome the ELEVEN Klipos, which are the ELEVEN chieftains of Eisav. (Sha'arei Leshem, p. 421)

Thus, the eleven of Eisav is the mirror of the eleven of Yosef, except that Yosef's is on the side of holiness and Eisav's is on the side of spiritual impurity - positive Da'as and negative Da'as, Yosef and Eisav, Mordechai and Haman.

In fact, the Talmud has another interesting discussion:

"There was a certain Jew in Shushan the capital, whose name was Mordechai son of Yair, son of Shimi ben Kish, a Benjamite" (Esther 2:5). What is meant by "a Benjamite?" If it means his genealogy, it would have been traced back to the tribe of Benjamin. Why were the first three of his ancestors mentioned? In a Boraitha it is explained that all three names are not those of his ancestors, but are his own . . . Rabbah bar bar Hana in the name of Rebi Yehoshua ben Levi, "His father was a Benjamite and his mother was from Yehudah." The rabbis, however, said, "The tribes disputed with each other. Yehudah said, "Through me Mordechai was born, for if David had killed Shimi ben Gera, he could not have been born." Binyomin said, "He belongs to me, because he is of my tribe" . . . Rebi Yochanan said, "Actually, he came from Binyomin, and he was called Yehudi because he rejected idol worship . . . (Megillah 12a)

And, as Chazal point out many times, Yosef and Binyomin, born of the same mother, function in very much the same way. In fact, the Talmud later points out:

It is written, "To all of them he gave to each changes of clothing; but to Binyomin he gave . . . five changes of clothing" (Bereishis 45:22). Is it possible that what gave trouble to that righteous man he himself should do? . . . Said Rebi Binyomin bar Yafes, "It was a hint that from him would descend a man who would wear five royal garments, as it is written, "And Mordechai went out in a royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a cloak of fine linen and purple" (Esther 8:15). (Megillah 16a)

And, according to the Vilna Gaon, it is the role of Moshiach Ben Yosef, in any generation to reveal Sod:

Pharaoh said to Yosef, "I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no man may lift his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt." Pharaoh called Yosef "Tzafnas Pa'nayach" . . . (Bereishis 41:44-45)

Said the Gaon:

TZAFNAS PA'NAYACH: At the beginning of the redemption, that is, "the time to favor her" (Tehillim 102:14), which is through the 'Moshiach of the Beginning,' mysteries of the Torah and Chazal will begin to be revealed, and as a result understanding of the ways of the 'beginning' and the 'footprints' of Moshiach - the 'designated times' (ye'udim), the 'appointed times' (moadim), and the 'intended times' (me'ye'udim) are alluded to by the possukim, "The righteous blossoms are seen in the land, the time of the song has arrived, and the voice of your guide (kol hator) is heard in the land" (Shir HaShirim 2:12), and "Make a straight path in the desert, a road for G-d" (Yeshayahu 40:3). Rabbeinu was permitted by Heaven to reveal secrets of the Torah regarding the footprints of Moshiach, b'sod 'Tzafnas Pa'nayach,' and to teach us according to their words the events of the period of the 'Footprints of Moshiach.' (Kol HaTor, Chapter 1)

(Regarding the controversy about Kol HaTor, I posted an essay on my site www.thirtysix.org called, "Kol HaTor, Controversy, and the Opposer of Redemption." A couple of weeks ago the following quote appeared in the English version of "Mishpacha": ". . . Rav Yitzchak Shlomo and other rabbanim in the Zilberman community intensively researched the history of the manuscript of the sefer and found uncontested proof of its authenticity. The manuscript was kept by R' Yosef Rivlin, a descendant of Rav Hillel. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, ztz"l, once said of Rav Hillel: "No falsehood ever emanated from him.")

In fact, according to the GR"A, Sod is our most potent weapon against our most formidable foe:

G-d told Moshe, "Write this as a memorial in the Book, and repeat it carefully (literally, b'aznei - in the ears) to Yehoshua. I will completely eradicate the memory of Amalek from under heaven." (Shemos 17:14)

The gematria of b'aznei is that of Sod, because the way of war against Amalek begins in the way of Sod, for as was already explained previously that the work of Kibbutz Golios is the battle against Amalek in order to overcome the Sitra Achra in the gates of Jerusalem. (Kol HaTor, p. 75)

When Sod goes in, secrets come out . . . about how to overcome and eliminate the Hamans of history.

MELAVE MALKAH:

Thus has G-d said to His anointed one, to Koresh, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him . . . " (Yeshayhu 45:1)

Speaking of doubt and Moshiach, there is a well-known historical discrepancy between the Jewish counting of history and that of the Western world. And, as is usually the case in the minds of the masses when it comes to Judaism versus the Western world, the Torah viewpoint is considered secondary to Western opinion - and in this case, even according to some Orthodox Jews.

We are talking about a discrepancy of 167 years to be exact, which in the course of 6,000 years is not that much time. However, when it comes to placing key historical dates in their proper historical context, it is a huge amount of time with which to err. However, I have already dealt with this issue at length in my book, "Talking About The End of Days," showing why the Torah dating is more reliable.

What I want to share here is an interesting insight. One of the central points of the argument is when Koresh, or Cyrus as he is known in the Western world, lived and ruled. The following provides some Western background:

Cyrus (580-529 BC) was the first Achaemenian Emperor. He founded Persia by uniting the two original Iranian Tribes - the Medes and the Persians. Although he was known to be a great conqueror that, for a certain time, controlled one of the greatest Empires ever seen. He is best remembered for his unprecedented tolerance and magnanimous attitude towards those he defeated. Upon his victory over the Medes, he founded a government for his new kingdom, incorporating both Median and Persian nobles as civilian officials. With the conquest of Asia Minor completed, he led his armies to the eastern frontiers. Hyrcania and Parthia were already part of the Median Kingdom. Further east, he conquered Drangiana, Arachosia, Margiana and Bactria. After crossing the Oxus, he reached the Jaxartes, where he built fortified towns with the object of defending the farthest frontier of his kingdom against the nomadic tribes of Central Asia. The victories to the east led him again to the west and sounded the hour for attack on Babylon and Egypt. When he conquered Babylon, he did so to the cheers from the Jewish Community, who welcomed him as a liberator; he allowed the Jews to return to the promised Land. He showed great forbearance and respect towards the religious beliefs and cultural traditions of other races. These qualities earned him the respect and homage of all the people over whom he ruled. (<http://www.oznet.net/cyrus/cyframe.htm>)

According to Western dating, Koresh conquered Babylonia in 538 BCE, whereas according to Jewish history he did so in the year 371 BCE, a difference of 167 years. However, regarding Koresh there is the following account in the Talmud:

Rav Nachman bar Rav Hisda lectured: It is written, "Thus has G-d said to His anointed one, to Koresh,

whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him . . ." (Yeshayhu 45:1). Does this mean that Koresh was Moshiach? It means that G-d had said to Moshiach, "I complain about Koresh; I thought he would build My House and gather all My people that were in exile, and he only says, 'Whoever among you that is of all His people, may his G-d be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem' " (Ezra 1:3). (Megillah 12a)

In other words, Koresh allowed the Jewish people of his empire to return to Eretz Yisroel rather than make them all return. As always, Jews need prompting to come home after spending long periods of time in exile, and apparently Koresh's success in building his empire was for this purpose. Had he done this, he would have made the arrival of Moshiach possible and history would have ended at that time.

But was he the Moshiach? No, says the Talmud. On the other hand, he would have had a major role to play in bringing Moshiach, because, as the GR"A explains, one of the main roles of Moshiach Ben Yosef is to facilitate Kibbutz Golios, the ingathering of the exiles. There was a big difference between Koresh and Moshiach, 168 years to be exact.

In other words, the gematria of Moshiach (Mem-Shin-Yud-Ches) is 358. The gematria of Koresh (Chof-Vav-Raish-Shin) is 526, and the difference between the two is 168, only ONE more year than the number considered to be the difference between the Koresh we write about, and the one the Western world has studied. What does this mean?

Well, according to the Talmud, Koresh was not all that he should have been. According to the Talmud, Koresh, Daryavesh and Artachshasta were all one in the same person; he was named Koresh because he was a kosher king, Artachshasta was the name of his kingdom, and Daryavesh was his name. However, concludes the Talmud, at some point he turned evil and lost his "Koresh" status.

Perhaps, from a Hashgochah Pratis point of view, that is what the "missing" 167/168 alludes to - not to missing years, but to the missing intellectual and spiritual clarity he had within himself to open the door for Moshiach, and lost that chance. May that door open quickly and soon in our time.

Chazak!

Have a great Shabbos,
PW

Text

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