

INSIGHTS IN THE PARSHA

כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל לפקדיהם ונתנו איש כפר נפשו
 "When you take the sum of the children of Israel according to their numbers, let each one give to the Lord an atonement for his soul"

The holy Alshich ob"m explained this Passuk as follows: ראש could also mean a leader. Therefore by allusion the Passuk is saying that when you come to appoint a leader. (The words לפקדיהם also means to direct them) You should pick a man you will give כופר נפשו, meaning, someone who is willing to devote himself entirely to the community, who is willing to be מוסר נפש for the community. This is an essential quality in a leader.

THEY SHALL GIVE KAPARA FOR THEIR SOULS

כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל לפקדיהם ונתנו איש כפר נפשו
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The word ונתנו in the Torah is unique because it is the only word that is read backwards and forward the exact same way ונתנו. This alludes to the fact that he who gives to charitable causes will always receive what he has given in return. This is to say, that when one gives, he does so for his own good as well as the good of others. Similarly, the word צדקה has a similar effect. Read backwards, צדקה is הקדצ, and astonishingly, the gimatria of צדקה IS צדקה. Watch: צדקה - קדצ - דקצ - קדצ - דקצ - קדצ. So the gimatria of צדקה IS also צדקה spelled backward. Because every action of צדקה promises an equally great return.

THE RAM AND THE CALF

Chachamim teach us that Avraham Avinu saw in Ruach Hakodesh - divine knowledge, that bnei yisrael would eventually sin at Har Sinai and build a golden calf. Therefore, when he stood at the place of the Akeidah, he asked that Hashem remember the merit of the Akeida in those days, and forgive bney yisrael by that merit. Because of this, every year on Rosh Hashana, and even every during Tachanun, we request that the Akeidat Yitzchak should serve as a merit toward us, and assist us in being judged favorably before G-d in our judgement.

THE LIGHT OF HASHEM ON MOSHE'S FACE

ויכל משה מדבר אתם ויתן על פניו מסוה
 "When Moses had finished speaking with them, he placed a covering over his face"

I believe that what is meant in this passuk is that the light of Hashem's presence is what was glowing on Moshe's face. It had been there all along, but before bney yisrael sinned, they were on the spiritual level to see it. Now that they sinned, the intense spirituality was too much for them to handle, so they could not look at his face any more. Therefore he covered his face. What was the nature of this cover? Moshe reduced/contracted the light, and hid the power of the letter ה - י, leaving behind only the letters ה - ו. These two letters are found in the word מסוה. What is the symbolism of the letter מ - ו with which he replaced the letters ה - י? Its an allusion to them that they should do Teshuva for having brought the מ"ס - or the Satan/Yetzer Harah upon themselves with the sin of

the golden calf, and suppressed the spiritual presence of Hashem.

WORKING ON ONE'S MIDOT

כי תשא

"When you take the sum"

The acronym for the word כי תשא carries the message of how we are to change our Midot for the better:

- כ - כנות - Sincerity
- י - יראת שמים - Fear of Heaven
- ת - תמימות - Humble Devotion
- ש - שמחה - Joy and Happiness
- א - אהבת ה' - Loving Hashem

THE POWER OF SHABBAT

ושמרו בני ישראל את השבת

"Thus shall the children of Israel observe the Sabbath"

I heard a wonderful Dvar Torah from Rav Benayahu Shmueli. Its is well known that Shabbat serves as the wellsprings of blessing that pour into the following week. The Zohar writes that physical blessing comes down from Heaven, first, through the Beit HaMikdash, then Yerushalayim, then Eretz Israel, and then to the entire world. But now that we have no Mikdash, most of the שפע - blessing, that comes down to the world, goes to the Goyim.

An allusion to all of this: material blessing is referred to often as מזון - Mazone, which equals 103 in Gimatria. Additionally, when Avraham prayed at the Mikdash, he called it הר. (With the א כולל) It equals 206, twice the value of Mazone. Yitzchak referred to the Mikdash as שדה, equaling 309, three times the value of מזון, and Yaacov called it בית, i.e. 412, four times the value of מזון. Include תפילה to enter Israel, and תפילה equals 515, five times the value of מזון.

Now, if we take the first letters of all of those words we get the word השבת - and this alludes to what the Zohar was saying that Shabbat serves as a channel which provides the entire week with its blessings of sustenance.

TORAH FROM SINAI

ואחרי כן נגשו כל בני ישראל ויצום את כל אשר דבר יהוה אתו בהר סיני

"Afterwards all the children of Israel would draw near, and he would command them everything that the Lord had spoken with him on Mount Sinai"

If one were to count all of the Daphim (2-sided pages) of the whole Talmud, one would find that there are altogether 2683 pages. The gimatria of the words בני ישראל ויצום את כל אשר דבר יהוה אתו בהר סיני is exactly 2683. This is to teach us that every page of the Talmud was taught to Moshe at Har Sinai!

THE DEATH OF A TZADDIK - A STORY

In the winter of 1919, the evil Muslim leader, Mulai Mohammed of Tafilalet, Morocco, decided to execute the entire Jewish community, accusing them of having conspired with the French, who were waging war in Morocco at the time. On the night of Shabbat, Jews of Tafilalet were sitting down to their Shabbat meal, yet their hearts were not in it. The future

was clouded with total darkness. All this and worse upheaval permeated the home of the community leader, *Rabenu David Abubatzera*. Seeing him emerge from his room for his Shabbat meal wearing black weekday clothing added to the tension, yet no one dared to express his shock aloud. Everyone kept his eyes on the ground. They were afraid to look at this strange and painful sight, as if avoiding looking at it would change the picture. Rabenu David did not behave as usual on Shabbat. The Shabbat meal was over quickly. He hurried to finish it and retreated to his attic. He took one of his closest students with him and gave him the book which had been lying on the table, "Shaar HaKavanot" "Gates of Intentions" of the Arizal. He instructed him to open the book at random and read. The book opened to the section discussing Kriyar Shma and its hidden meanings and the two sat involved in this topic the entire night. Morning arrived and the Jews of Tafilalet hurried to the synagogue. In Rabenu David's beit midrash in Risani. people caught their breath as they saw their Rabbi entering the sanctuary dressed in his ordinary weekday clothing, in contrast with his customary angelic appearance on Shabbat. Before the end of the prayer service. Rabenu David retreated to his room, oblivious to the bewildered looks of all those present. Within a few hours the fate of the Jewish community of Risani in Tafilalet was in the balance. With tumultuous noise, hundreds of Moulay Muhammad's soldiers surrounded the Jewish quarter. When the siege was complete, the command came for all the Jews to go at once to the center of Risani, where they were to be executed. Families gathered together before their final journey, tears streaming down their faces. They attempted to whisper parting words to each other. but could not utter a sound. As they passed the house of Rabenu David, the Rav came out to offer words of encouragement, telling them: "Even if a sharp sword rests upon a person's neck, he should not refrain from praying for mercy". As his people gathered around him, he explained that he had been aware for a very long time of this decree to wipe out the Jews of Tafilalet. He told them that he had channeled all his strength and energy into nullifying the decree, by pleading with Hashem to take his life to atone for the community. Many who had stood still in shock until this point, suddenly burst into tears. Surely there was not a single person among them who would have been willing to give up their crowned leader in order to save even his whole family. However, it was clear that he was telling them not only what he had requested from Hashem, but that the request had already been accepted. The wicked soldiers herded the Jewish community of Risani into the city square to await the arrival of their leader Moulay Muhammad. A sadistic smile spread across his satisfied lips. Noticing Rabenu David's absence from the group, the dictator changed his tone. He asked some of the leaders where their Rabbi was. He dispatched a delegation of soldiers with a young Jewish man to bring him from his home. When they arrived, they found Rabenu David engrossed in learning the daily complement of 18 chapters of mishnayot that he customarily studied. He completed his mishnayot with the words of R' Yehoshua ben Levi: "The Holy One Blessed is He will in the future cause every righteous one to inherit three hundred and ten worlds (Uktzin 3:12)". The saintly Rav was brought before the evil tyrant. All eyes turned towards them. When Moulay Muhammad saw Rabenu David for the first

time, he was unable to contain his hatred and revulsion. He exploded in fierce anger: "Why do you write letters to those infidel apostate Christians, encouraging them to return to Tafilalet?" Rabenu David responded calmly in the manner of Torah scholars: "G-d forbid that I should do such a thing, sir"! Clearly the tyrant did not accept this answer, but Rabenu David's erect posture and serenely confident manner of speaking shook his equilibrium. Abruptly, he ordered that Rabenu David be put to death with two of the wealthy townspeople, R' Yitzchak ben Simchon and his son R' David. The rebel soldiers seized Rabenu David, R' Yitzchak, and his son, and led them to the place of execution. The rest of the community could barely contain their flow of tears. The cries of the people filled the streets. While Rabenu David was being taken to the killing grounds, an amazing thing happened. From Heaven, it entered the heads of some of Muhammad's advisors that since the Grand Rabbi of the Jews was equivalent in stature to the whole congregation, the decree to kill the entire nation should be rescinded. The tyrant accepted their words and agreed to free the remaining members of the community. As Rabenu David had predicted, his death atoned for the Jews of Tafilalet. Although the Jews were told to return to their homes, they found themselves as if rooted to the ground. The Jews watched as Rabenu David's figure moved towards the place of his execution. In the courtyard stood a cannon and the holy and pure body of Rabenu David was placed in its mouth. One lone shot was all it took for the saintly soul of Rabenu David to separate from his holy body. The people saw that immediately after the cannon killed Rabenu David, three doves pure as snow were seen emerging from the mouth of the cannon. The Jews of Tafilalet, whose own lives had been saved, had been left orphaned by the terrible and cruel murder of their crowned leader. Rabenu David was the loving father who had carried them on his wings during his lifetime and death. Immediately thereafter a clear directive was issued forbidding lamenting the death of Rabenu David; anyone caught crying or mourning would be put to death. They were even forbidden to cry. This was the tragic death of Rabenu David. Seven years had passed, and the Baba Sali continued to mourn the loss of Rabenu David as if it were within the first year. One night, he had a dream, and Rabenu David appeared to him with the seven Shepherds of Israel. Baba Sali wanted to approach them but was prevented from it, because he was still among the living. But Rabenu David told him, "My death was painless. Within a second I was in Shamayim. I have greater pain from the fact that you are still mourning my death. If you wish to give me Nachat Ruach, please end this mourning." When he woke up, he performed Hatarat Nedarim over his mourning practices, told the city of his dream, and from that day on, the day of Rabenu David's passing was celebrated in the city.

רציתי לברך אתכם ביום שמה, שפרנסתכם
 פורח. בריאותינו תתמיד ולא כאורח. חיוך על תצמח כעציץ
 לא יתאדה כריח שפתינו כאור זורח, וכספנו
 ונזכה לראות בביאת משיח.
 אמן ושבת שלום
 Shabat Shalom!!! - Rav David Yaacov