

INSIGHTS INTO THE PARSHA

ולא שמעו אל משה מקצרו רוח ומעבדה קשה
"But they did not hearken to Moses because of [their] shortness of breath and because of [their] hard labor"

We can read in this passuk a pleasant and relevant idea, that when/if a person attends a local Shiur Torah from a Rav and **משה אל שמעו** – fails to comprehend the message, it must be because of two possible things:

מקוצר רוח – shortness of spirituality. That person might still be lacking in his spiritual pursuit to understand the message of the Shiur. But if the person is an otherwise learned person and he still isn't understanding, it must be **מעבודה קשה** – he is working too hard and his distractions in the workplace are interfering with his Talmud Torah.

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The **ריב"א** – one of the Rishonim, comments that there were three Makkot in Egypt that actually accompanied one another. They are **שחין**, **כינים**, **חושך** – Lice, Boils and darkness. He says that during the Makah of lice, it was also *dark* and there were also *boils* that came along. So too in the other two makkot, all three were present to a lesser degree. In fact, in the order that we say at the seder **באח"ב**, those three Makkot are each the third letter in their abbreviation. How does **ריב"א** know this? It is not mentioned in any midrashim. It is alluded to in the following way:

כ	ש	ח
נ	ח	ש
מ	נ	כ

Whether you read it horizontally, or you read it vertically, all three makkot are spelled. This shows that they are intertwined with one another. Each Makkah was accompanied by characteristics of the two others.

THE VALUE OF A GOOD NAME

ובני יצהר קרח ונפג זכרי
And the sons of Izhar were Korah and Nepheg and Zichri

The Gemara teaches us that Olive oil is good for memory. In fact it can maintain good memory for 70 years. Elsewhere the Gemara teaches us that good wine, and pleasant smells are equally good for memory and peace of mind. It could be that there three names in the

passuk symbolize these three things: **יצהר** – This is actually another word for oil in the Torah (from **דגן יצהר**, **תירוש ויצהר**), and **קרח** is the same letters as **רקח** – also a word for pleasant smell. Finally, **נפג** has the same letters as **גפן** – or wine, which is mentioned in the Gemara as well.

THE MERIT OF TZADDIKIM

ויאמרו החרטמים אל פרעה אצבע אלקים הוא
So the sorcerers said to Pharaoh, "It is the finger of God"

During the plague of Lice, the sorcerers of Pharaoh were so stunned by the irreplicability of the plague, that they understood that this was Hashem's hand and that they would not be able to defeat it. Pharaoh failed to understand this message. When the first plague struck, Moshe was 80 years old, Aharon was 83 and Miriam was 86. I have found relevance to these numbers in Gimatria. The sum of these ages is 80+83+86=163. This is also the Gimatria of **אצבע** – the term used to relate to Hashem's miraculous hand. It is in the merit of these Tzaddikim that Hashem sent his miraculous hand to save the Jewish people and bring them out of Egypt. .

TWO LEADERS

הוא משה ואהרן
They are Moses and Aaron

There are two very eye-opening gimatriot with regards to Moshe and Aharon that shed light into their mission in the world. The two together formed the leadership of Bnei Yisrael, in its departure from Egypt and receiving of the Torah. The Gimatria of Moshe is 345. That of Aharon is 256. The sum of these two, plus 10, corresponding to the 10 plagues, equals 345+256+10=610. This is the gimatria of the word **הוא משה ואהרון**. The gimatria of the word **הוא** is 12, add that to Moshe and Aharon and you get (**משה ואהרון**, as written in the passuk) 256+346+12=613. This is the number of Mitzvot in the Torah. This was the ultimate mission of these two leaders, to bring down the Torah and to teach it to the people of Israel.

HASHEM IS RIGHTEOUS

ה הצדיק ואני ועמי הרשעים
The Lord is the righteous One, and I and my people are the guilty ones

In this Passuk of apparent Teshuva, Paraoth's evil intnt is still apparent. Had the word **ואני** not been present in the passuk, the first letters of the words **הצדיק ועמי**

הרשעים would have spelled י'ה'ו'ה. He intentionally added the word **ואני** to disrupt that. His intent is to "Split apart" the name of Hashem. We know that Pharaoh didn't actually do teshuva in this passuk.

Rav Tzdaka Chotzen was born in the late 1800s in Baghdad and lived to be about 90 years old. He was among the Gedolim of Babel and a student of the Ben Ish Chai. He was also a Mohel and a known Tzedaka personality. Many people in his day came to him for Berachot. In 1904 he immigrated to Eretz Yisrael from Baghdad, in a group of 10 men, all of them Rabanim. On their way, one of the men became ill and had to be hospitalized, and would only continue on the journey to Eretz Yisrael when he had the strength. The other people traveling had to continue on without him for the remainder of the trip. The problem was that they were now only nine men, and they were traveling through a desert, far from any Jewish community. When the time came to pray Mincha, the other Rabanim present all agreed that it was permissible for each of them to pray without minyan and to each pray on their own. But Chacham Tzdaka did not agree with them. "We must play our part before we resort to this. We must announce loudly that we are seeking a 10th person to complete our Minyan." Of course in the desert it was highly unlikely that they would find anyone, but he was the Gadol among them and his word was respected. So indeed before anyone set out to pray on his own, they shouted, "10th person for a Minyan! 10th person for a Minyan!" but no one responded; all they heard was the echoes of their voices in the hills and dunes of the desert. Then Chacham Tzdaka turned to his group and said, "Now we can start Mincha, because we did our Hishtadlut – our effort for Hashem." As they began reciting Korbanot, a beduin looking man appeared in the horizon waiving and shouting at them as he came closer. The Group was not able to discern if he was a Jew responding to their call or an angry Beduin who was interrupted by the noise. They decided that they would not address him in Arabic or in Hebrew, but in Aramaic, so see if he is Jewish. In that region, the Jews spoke Aramaic more than Hebrew. They said **דין או לא דין** – Are you one of us or not one of us? He responded **דין** – I am one of us! They had their Minyan. Chacham Tzedaka turned to them and said, "You see, if we do our part, even in the most unlikely circumstances, Hashem will come through for us."

After having arrived in Eretz Yisrael, Chacham Tzdaka settled in Jerusalem, and built a Shul on Chaggai street – the **שמש צדקה** synagogue. His desire was that their be a Vatikin minyan there every morning, with the sunrise. There was a large Arab population in the neighborhood, and they were not keen on allowing new Jewish construction.

Part of the Rav's plan for the shul was that the Aron Kodesh be built as per the minhag of the Mekubalim, with seven steps leading up to it. This was a time consuming task. And for fear that the Arab locals would oppose the building, they would have to complete the whole shul very very quickly. At the time the Ottoman Empire governed Eretz Yisrael. Legally, they would need a permit from the Ottomans to build. Without a permit, the police force could destroy the building. However, if they managed to build the roof before the police took notice of the building, they could not dismantle it without a specific court order. On the night of Purim, everyone got together with whatever building materials they had, and build the shul as quickly as they could. By sunrise the roof was already installed. A miracle. That day, the police force came by and was shocked to see a new building fully built in one day. They fined the Rav and demanded that he appear before a court of law. On the day of the trial, the Rav came to the court, and the three judges constituted one Arab, one English man and one Jew. The Arab and the Jew both spoke Ottoman Arabic and the English man had a translator. The Jewish judge opened with the first question: "Describe what you did before the Judges." But Chacham Tzdaka responded, "What I did? You saw with your own eyes that an entire building was built in one day! I did not do this alone. G-d sent angels who completed this building. Don't charge me. Charge them." There was silence. The Arab judge first spoke. "I would not press charges." The Jewish judge agreed, and the English judge said, "They did not teach me in law school to deal with angels." He was innocent.

THE MITZVAH OF INVITING FOR MEALS

A short anecdote from Rav Yisrael Salanter: Many times I have passed by shuls during prayer time, and people by the windows would announce to passerby – **קדושה קדושה**, inviting them to participate in the **קדושה** prayer, which is very important, but I have passed by many homes during meal time and I have never heard anyone announce **סעודה סעודה**, inviting outsiders without a meal to join them in their own meal. This too, in an important Mitzvah worthy of announcing.

רציתי לברך אתכם ביום שמה, שפרנסתכם פורח. בריאותינו תתמיד ולא כאורח. חיוך על תצמח כעציץ לא יתאדה כריח שפתינו כאור זורת, וכספנו ונזכה לראות בביאת משיח.

Shabat Shalom!!! - Rav David Yaacov