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PARSHA INSIGHTS

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

Hit By an Angel

"These are the words..." (1:1)

The Midrash says, "There is no blade of grass in the field that grows unless a *malach* (spiritual messenger/angel) stands over it, hits it, and says 'Grow!' "

Why does the *malach* need to hit the blade of grass? Wouldn't some less violent form of encouragement suffice?

In Hebrew the word for "earth" is *Eretz*. *Eretz* can be read as *arutz* – "I will run." This world is always running forward. Running to a place beyond this world. *Eretz* is also related to *ratzon*, meaning "will" or "desire." What a person desires, what he wills, he "runs" toward.

This world is a world of trying, of striving to reach beyond this world. The word for "heaven" in Hebrew is *Shamayim*, from the root *sham*, which means "there." Literally, *Shamayim* means "theres," in the plural. *Sham-im*. Heaven is the sum total of all the "theres" that we can ever run to.

In other words, *Shamayim* is the ideal, the perfect form of everything in this world. Things in this world are not in a perfected state – they are still in their inchoate form.

One of the most difficult things in this world is to change. To become more than we are. To realize our true potential. We don't want to change. We'd rather sit by the pool and watch the water-lilies float to-and-fro. Any true change is painful.

The realization of the discrepancy between what we are and what we could be is like being hit by a *malach*.

Rashi and Onkelos both teach that the place names in verses one and two of this week's Torah portion are "code words" for the sins that took place at those places. Direct rebuke is rarely effective. It is much better to hint at the problem and let the listener feel the angel hitting him.

Q & A

Questions -

1. How do we see from the beginning of *Parshat Devarim* that Moshe was concerned for the Jewish People's honor?
2. How much time elapsed between leaving Mt. Sinai and sending the spies?
3. Moshe rebuked the Jewish People shortly before his death. From whom did he learn this?
4. Why did Moshe wait until he had smitten the Amorite kings before rebuking the Jewish People?
5. What were some of the achievements that resulted from the Jewish People "dwelling" at Mt. Sinai?
6. Why does the Torah single out the names of the *avot* in connection with the giving of the Land?
7. What did Moshe convey to the Jewish People by saying: "You today are like the stars of the Heavens"?
8. "*Apikorsim*" (those who denigrate Talmud scholars) observed Moshe's every move in order to accuse him. What did they observe, and what did they accuse him of?
9. Moshe was looking for several qualities in the judges he chose. Which quality couldn't he find?
10. Moshe told the judges, "The case that is too hard for you, bring it to me." How was he punished for this statement?
11. Why did Moshe describe the desert as great and frightful?
12. Which tribe was not represented among the spies?
13. Which city did Calev inherit?
14. How many kingdoms was Avraham promised? How many were conquered by Yehoshua?
15. Why were the Jewish People forbidden to provoke Ammon?
16. Why were the Jewish People not permitted to conquer the Philistines?
17. How did Hashem instill the dread of the Jewish People into the nations of the world?
18. Why did Moshe fear Og?
19. Who was instrumental in destroying the Refaim?
20. What was the advantage of Reuven and Gad leading the way into battle?

Answers

1. 1:1 Moshe mentions only the names of the places where the Jewish People sinned, but does not mention the sins themselves.
2. 1:2 - 40 days.
3. 1:3 - From Yaakov, who rebuked his sons shortly before his death.
4. 1:4 So that no one could say, "What right has he to rebuke us; has he brought us into any part of the Land as he promised?"
5. 1:6 - They received the Torah, built *themishkan* and all its vessels, appointed a Sanhedrin, and appointed officers.
6. 1:8 - Each of the *avot* possessed sufficient merit for the Jewish People to inherit the Land.
7. 1:10 - They are an eternal people, just as the sun, moon and stars are eternal.
8. 1:13 They observed the time he left home in the morning. If Moshe left early, they accused him of having family problems (which drove him from his home). If he left late, they accused him of staying home in order to plot evil against them.
9. 1:15 - Men of understanding.
10. 1:17 - When the daughters of Tzelofchad asked him a *halachic* question, the law was concealed from him.
11. 1:19 - Because the Jewish People saw huge, frightening snakes and scorpions in the desert.
12. 1:23 - Levi.
13. 1:36 - Hebron.
14. 2:5 - Avraham was promised the land of ten kingdoms. Yehoshua conquered seven. The lands of Moav, Ammon and Esav will be received in the time of the *mashiach*.
15. 2:9 - This was a reward for Lot's younger daughter, the mother of Ammon, for concealing her father's improper conduct.
16. 2:23 - Because Avraham had made a peace treaty with Avimelech, King of the Philistines.
17. 2:25 - During the battle against Og, the sun stood still for the sake of the Jewish People, and the whole world saw this.
18. 3:2 - Og possessed merit for having once helped Avraham.
19. 3:11 - Amrafel.
20. 3:18 - They were mighty men, and the enemy would succumb to them.

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

by Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein

Anger Issues

Biblical Hebrew has many different words for “anger.” While Rabbeinu Efrayim counts only eight such words, Rabbi Avraham Bedersi HaPenini counts ten, and Rabbi Shlomo of Urbino manages to find fifteen! In this essay we will unpack the list of words for “anger” and show how they are not all truly synonymous. As we will see in this essay, some of the words in question refer to different points on the wide spectrum that spans from “annoyed” to “incensed,” while others hone in on the object of one’s wrathful outrage. Still, some words emphasize the *effects* of one’s ire, while other words focus on the *cause* of one’s temper. All in all, we will see that exploring the etymologies and polysemous usages of these words will shed light on the nuanced differences between the various words for “anger” in our list.

1. *Ka’as* (I Shmuel 1:6, Iyov 6:2) – This is the most common and generic word for “anger.” Rabbeinu Efrayim explains that this word is a metathesis of the Hebrew word *eches* (“poison”), because anger puts a sort of poison in a person’s heart. The Malbim writes that *ka’as* refers to specifically to a form of anger that remains pent up in one’s heart but is never brought out in the open through action.
2. *Cheimah* (Isa. 27:4, Esther 7:10) – Rabbeinu Efrayim relates this word to the Hebrew word *cham* (“hot”), as an angry person gets “heated up” (or, “gas-lighted” in contemporary terms). Rabbi Bedersi supports this position by noting that we find the verb “burning” in regard to *cheimah* (Esther 1:12). He also notes that all the different terms for “anger” in the Bible only apply to human anger, except for the word *cheimah*, which is used also to

denote an animal’s anger (Deut. 32:33, Ps. 140:4, 58:5). The Malbim specifies that *cheimah* is a form of “anger” that is held in one’s heart for a long time, even without committing any specific acts of rage.

3. *Charon* (Yechezkel 7:12, Zech. 10:3) – Rabbeinu Efrayim relates this word to the Hebrew word *chor* (“hole”), as the heat of one’s burning anger pierces through one’s body. Rabbi Bedersi explains that *charon* denotes a greater wrath than *cheimah* because *cheimah* just means “hot,” while *charon* means “burnt” (see Yechezkel 24:10). Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim (1740-1814) departs from this trend, instead explaining *charon* as related to *nechirim* (“nostrils”), in reference to the angry person’s heightened exhaling of hot air. Fascinatingly, *Peirush HaRokeach* explains that the word *charon* on its own means “upset,” while *charon-af* refers to “anger.”
4. *Rogez* (Iyov 3:17, II Kings 19:27) – In some places in the Bible the word *rogez* refers to “shaking,” while in other places it refers to “fear.” Rabbeinu Efrayim explains the connection to “anger,” in that an angry person’s entire body is aroused by his anger, just like shaking and fear can consume an individual’s entire person. Rabbi Bedersi clarifies that *rogez* is not always associated with “anger,” as sometimes it refers to “shaking” out of *fear* rather than out of *anger*. *Peirush HaRokeach* writes that *rogez* implies a form of “anger” whereby a person who was previously tranquil suddenly bursts into anger. The Malbim similarly writes that *rogez* refers to a sort of anger which harries the angry person and does not allow him respite to live in tranquility. Interestingly, the Yiddish term *b’rogez*, in reference to two

people who are in a fight, is derived from this Hebrew word.

5. *Evrah* (Ps. 78:49, Deut. 3:26) – Rabbeinu Efrayim relates this word to the Hebrew word *oveir* (“pass” / “violate”), because anger causes a person to violate his own expectations of himself, as well as his Creator’s. Likewise, Malbim explains that through *evrah* the angry person goes beyond the apparent boundaries or limitations of his own anger to pour his wrath even on those who did not act against him. *Peirush HaRokeach* explains that *evrah* is related to the word *me’uberet* (“pregnant”), but the connection to “anger” remains unclear. Perhaps he means that the angry person’s body swells up like a bloated pregnant lady, or perhaps the angry person’s wrath remains with him for a long time like a pregnant woman is with child for nine months.
6. *Za’am* (Jer. 15:17, Zech. 1:12) – Rabbeinu Efrayim relates this word to the root ZAYIN-AYIN (“shaking,” “moving”), because when a person is especially angry, he violently trembles and shakes, which also causes him to emit sweat (*zei’ah*, another word derived from this root). Ibn Janach and Rabbi Bedersi explain *za’am* as “anger” that stems from disgust or contempt of another. The Malbim explains that this word does not primarily refer to “anger.” Rather, its literal meaning is “to curse.” As the Malbim explains, in the context of anger *za’am* refers to one of the effects of rage, in that the angry person will curse at the object of his anger as long as he remains angry. Finally, the Vilna Gaon explains that *za’am* refers to “suppressed anger” that one holds back from showing outwardly.
7. *Za’af* (Michah 7:9, II Chron 26:19) – Rabbi Pappenehim understands this root as a portmanteau of the two roots ZAYIN-AYIN (“shaking,” “moving”) and ALEPH-PEH (“face”), in reference to a level of anger that brings about a furious facial twitch.
8. *Ketzef* (Num. 17:11, Zech. 1:2) – This word refers to a very intense form of “anger,” whereby the angry person has reached a certain boiling point. In fact, Ibn Ezra (to Esther 1:12) and Radak (*Sefer HaShorashim*, entry *ketzef*) note that the word *ketzef* also refers to the “bubbles” that arise from boiling water (Hoshea 10:7), and the Aramaic word for “boiling” – *ritcha* – is also used in Rabbinic Hebrew as a synonym for “anger” (see *Berachot* 7a, *Rosh Hashanah* 32b, and *Sanhedrin* 48b). *Peirush HaRokeach* (to Ex. 16:20) adds that this type of anger is also visible through the sweat on the angry person’s face, just like bubbles in boiling water come up to the surface and are plainly visible. *Eitz Yosef* (to *Eicha Rabbah* 2:3) writes that *ketzef* is the most extreme and dangerous form of “anger,” associating that word with the archangel Gabriel (who represents G-d’s Trait of Justice). On the other hand, Rabbeinu Efrayim seems to relate *ketzef* to the scum/froth that floats atop water, an allusion to the invariably unimportant thing that set off the angry person’s fury. The Malbim explains *ketzef* as anger that is manifest outwardly, yet was coolly formulated by one’s intellect and mental reflections (as opposed to a fit of emotional rage). This type of anger can even be a response to something that the object of one’s anger did against somebody else, rather than just to the angry person himself. In Modern Hebrew, *katzefet* refers to “whipped cream.”
9. *Ashan* (II Shmuel 22:9, Ps. 18:9, 80:5, Deut. 29:19) – This word literally means “smoke.” Radak explains that this is a borrowed term that came to mean “anger” because smoke is a byproduct of a burning fire, while different words for “anger” can metaphorically be related to “boiling,” “heat” and “fire” (as we saw above).
10. *Af* (Ex. 34:6, Deut. 6:15) – Besides meaning “anger,” in other contexts this word means “nose” and/or “face.” Rabbeinu Efrayim understands this word to relate to “anger” because the angry person’s nose emits proverbial “smoke” that exemplifies his

wrath. The Malbim similarly writes that *af* refers to anger that is physically "visible" on the face of the angry person (i.e., through his facial countenance, disposition, or other expressions). The fact that the angry person is incensed is "in your face." *Af* typically comes about through one's emotion, not one's intellect, and this type of anger can sometimes be roused spontaneously. The Vilna Gaon offers three ways of differentiating between *af* and *cheimah*: First, *af* implies the beginning stages of "anger," while *cheimah* implies an anger that has already blown up into something more developed. Second, *af* refers to anger in thought, while *cheimah* implies anger in actions. Third, *cheimah* implies a more exclusive anger reserved for just one's enemies and those who seek to harm him, while *af* implies a more expansive anger that applies even to those who simply do not follow one's wishes.

11. *Anaf* (Deut. 1:37, Isa. 12:1, Ps. 2:12) – Rabbeinu Efrayim explains that this word is actually the same as *af*, except that it has an extra NUN. Radak writes the exact opposite, arguing that the root of *af* ("nose," "anger") is really ALEPH-NUN-PEH, but sometimes the NUN disappears. *Peirush HaRokeach* explains *anaf* as anger that spurs one into taking immediate revenge or retribution against another. The Bible lists a bird known as an *anafah* (Lev. 11:19, Duet. 14:18) as non-kosher, and the Talmud (*Chullin* 63a) explains that this refers to a specific type of "angry bird" (*dayah ragzanit*). As an aside, Rabbi Pappenheim traces the word *anaf* to the biliteral root NUN-PEH ("movement"), explaining that this refers to when one's body starts twitching and convulsing out of sheer anger.

12. *Panim* (Yirmiyahu 3:12, Gen. 32:21) – This word literally means "face" in most contexts, but is borrowed to mean "anger," because often times one's emotional state can be readily seen on one's face, especially when it comes to anger.

13. *Na'atz* (Num. 14:11, 14:23, 16:30) – Rabbi Pappenheim traces the root of *na'atz* to the monoliteral root represented by the letter TZADI ("goes out"). Accordingly, this term refers to the fact that a person can only tolerate something that he holds in contempt for a limited amount of time until his annoyance develops into an *outwardly expressed* "anger." The Malbim takes the opposite approach, explaining that *na'atz* refers to a sort of anger that leads to one's rejecting and pushing away another as though he were "disgusting."

14. *Atzvut* (I Kings 1:6, Isa. 63:10, Ps. 78:40) – In many cases this word means "upset" or "disappointed," which are negative feelings that can lead to "anger," but are not identical to the concept of "anger." Rabbi Avraham Maimuni cites his father Maimonides as explaining that the difference between *charon* and *atzvut* is that the former arouses one's thirst for vengeance and revenge, while the latter does not. In other cases, *atzvut* came to mean "sadness/melancholy," which is a slightly different concept.

15. *Ra'am* (Yechezkel 27:35, I Shmuel 1:6) – This word also means "noise" or "roar" (for examples, see Ps. 77:19, 81:8, Iyov 26:14, 39:25). This is because the angrier a person is, the more likely he or she will verbally lash out at others by yelling at them. Rashi (to Ex. 15:24, Yechezkel 27:35) connects the Mishnaic Hebrew (*Bava Meztia* 4:6, 6:1) term *taromet* (often mispronounced as *taarumot*), which means "complaint" or "grievance," to the same root as *ra'am*, because both are verbal expressions of dissatisfaction.

16. *Shetzef* (Isa. 54:8) – This word appears only once in the Bible and its meaning is not completely clear. Because of this it makes sense that *shetzef* does not make it to Rabbi Shlomo of Urbino's list of fifteen Hebrew words for "anger." In the one place that this word appears in the Bible, it is paired with the word *ketzef* ("anger"). According to Menachem and Rabbeinu Tam, just as *ketzef* means "anger," so too does *shetzef* mean

“anger.” However, Targum Yonatan (there), Donash, Ibn Janach, Rabbi Yosef Kimchi, and Radak all argue that *shetzef* means “a little bit of.” (Rashi to Isa. 54:8 cites both of these possibilities.) Donash also suggests that *shetzef* means the same thing as *rega* (“a fleeting moment”). *Peirush HaRokeach* similarly interprets *shetzef* as an expression of “speed,” probably recalling the fact that when people “blow their fuse,” they act in haste.

In summation, we close with Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim (1740-1814), who ranks seven different words for “anger” in terms of how intensely angry one becomes: The simplest form of anger is called

ka’as. If one’s anger reaches a point where his body starts shaking because of his fury, this is called *za’am*. When one’s anger causes his body to start heating up, this is called *cheimah*, and when one’s anger brings his blood to a boil, this is called *charon*. When a person’s fury has reached the boiling point and is even visible on his facial expression, this is called *charon-af* (because he exhales hot air through his nose). When one becomes so rabidly angry that a sort of white foam forms around his lips, this is called *ketzef*. When a person becomes so angry that his body puffs up and becomes distended, this is called *evrah* (because this engorgement resembles a pregnant woman’s swelling).

COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

by Rabbi Reuven Lauffer

BLESSINGS OVER TEFILLIN: TO SIT OR TO STAND?

(PART 3)

“I am not emotional about being the oldest man in the world; but it does mean something to me that I have donned tefillin for longer than anyone else.”

Yisrael Kristal, 1903-2017, was officially recognized as the oldest living Holocaust survivor in 2014. In January 2016 he was recognized by the Guinness World Records as the world’s oldest man.

There is a fascinating difference of opinion about how to put on the arm *tefillin*. The Sephardic and Chassidic custom is to put the arm *tefillin* on while sitting, and to stand when putting on the head *tefillin*. The Ashkenazic practice is to put on both the arm *tefillin* and the head *tefillin* while standing. The source of the Sephardic and Chassidic custom is found in the Zohar HaKadosh (Parshat Chayei Sarah and Parshat Bamidbar).

The Zohar makes a connection between the arm *tefillin* and the head *tefillin* and two different types of prayers – those that are recited sitting down and those that are said standing up. Each category of prayer generates a different form of spiritual energy, an energy that corresponds to the same form of spiritual energy created by

tefillin. The arm *tefillin* are compatible to those prayers that are said sitting down and the head *tefillin* to prayers that are recited standing up. Rabbi Yitzchak Luria was a famed sixteenth century Kabbalist, known as the Ari Zal (often written as Arizal). According to some opinions, the letters of Ari are an acronym for the Hebrew phrase “*Adoneinu Rabbeinu Yitzchak – Our Master, Rabbi Yitzchak.*” According to others, the word Ari in Hebrew means a lion and is a term of deference, attesting to the fact that his mastery over the esoteric dimensions of the Torah was unparalleled. Rabbi Luria ruled that the correct way to put on *tefillin* is according to the Zohar HaKadosh.

Rabbi Yaakov Chaim Sofer (1870-1939) was a dazzlingly brilliant scholar from Baghdad and Jerusalem, universally recognized and acknowledged as one of the experts in Jewish Law in his generation. He wrote in his monumental work called *Kaf HaChaim* that the Sephardic custom is to put on the arm *tefillin* while seated, and the head *tefillin* while standing, and then to remain standing while wrapping the straps of the arm *tefillin* around the hand.

In the Shulchan Aruch, Rabbi Moshe Isserles (Orach Chaim 25) cites the opinion of the Zohar, but, as previously mentioned, he rules that the correct approach for the Ashkenazic communities is to stand up while putting on both the arm *tefillin* and the head *tefillin*.

The basic difference of opinion derives from differing views as to whether the Zohar can be relied upon for deriving practical Jewish Law or not. The opinion of the Sephardic authorities and the Ari Zal is that the Zohar can be used for practical application (although not always), whereas the Ashkenazic viewpoint is to use the Zohar only very rarely as a source for practical Law.

Regardless of *how* one puts on *tefillin* – sitting or standing – *where* the *tefillin* are placed is always the same. The box of the arm *tefillin* is positioned so that it points towards the heart, and the head *tefillin* sit on the fontanelle. The fontanelle represents our intellect and our intelligence, which is found in the brain, and the heart is the center of our emotions. Rabbeinu Bachya (Kad Hakemach) writes that one of the underlying lessons that *tefillin* portray is that we need both our heart and our intellect to serve G-d properly. Our heart to love Him, and our intellect to recognize Him.

To be continued...

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TALMUD TIPS

by Rabbi Moshe Newman

Devarim: Yoma 86 - Succah 5

How Great Is Teshuva?

Rabbi Levi said, "How great is teshuva! For it reaches unto (Hashem's) Throne of Glory..."

Rav Yonasan said, "How great is teshuva! For it brings the redemption closer..."

Reish Lakish said, "How great is teshuva! It turns his intentional sins into unintentional sins..." Gemara: Did not Reish Lakish say, "How great is teshuva! For it turns his sins into merits..."? The first statement of Reish Lakish refers to teshuva motivated by fear of Hashem; the second statement refers to teshuva motivated by the love of Hashem."

Rabbi Meir said, "How great is teshuva! The entire world is forgiven because of one person who has repented..."

These teachings about the greatness of *teshuva* are taught on our *daf* by these great Torah sages. As Rabbeinu Yonah of Gerona writes in explaining the great essence and importance of *teshuva*: "One of the great kindnesses that Hashem bestowed upon His creations is that He prepared a way for them to ascend from the baseness of their deeds, and to flee from the pitfalls of their inequities, to save their souls from destruction and to turn His wrath away from them. He taught them and exhorted them to return to Him if they sinned against Him, because of His abundance of kindness and righteousness, for He is aware of their desires, as it says, 'Hashem is good and righteous and therefore He guides sinners in the way (of repentance).'" (*Sha'arei Teshuva* 1:1)

Teshuva is vital for our existence, an indispensable factor in the final redemption, and it is one of the greatest kindnesses that Hashem has bestowed upon mankind. Many important works have been written throughout history to guide us in the way of *teshuva*, perhaps most notable of which are *The Gates of Teshuva* by Rabbeinu Yonah and *The Laws of Teshuva* by Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (the Rambam). They both list three essential components necessary for *teshuva*: regret, confession and abandonment of sin. (In Hebrew, these requirements are called *charata*, *vidui* and *azivat ha'chet*.)

In this Talmud Tip, I would like to briefly address the topic of regret – in particular the practical aspect of "regret" when the sinner did not realize at the time that what he did was wrong. This is especially relevant to a person who grew up in a secular environment and only later on began to observe the Torah and its mitzvahs and return to the way of Hashem. This person is widely referred to as a *ba'al teshuva* – literally "a master of teshuva", a person who has decided to embrace Torah Judaism, but was not aware of the sin (or the seriousness of the sin) at the time he transgressed beforehand. How can this person truly regret his sins, since he clearly did not know he was doing anything wrong at the time of the sin? How can there be regret without a sense of guilt?

My revered teacher, Rabbi Moshe Shapiro, *zatzal*, taught me one answer to this question (although other answers can be found in the teachings of the classical Torah commentaries, and are compiled in "After the Return" from Feldheim Publishers.)

Rabbi Shapiro taught me that the mere fact that a person wants to change his ways and return to observe the pleasant ways of the Torah shows that he regrets the sins of his previous way of life. His desire to live in a different way now is a clear indication that he regrets at least certain parts of his past. A person who has abandoned his secular lifestyle, and has accepted the Torah and mitzvahs, has shown a "de facto" regret for his past transgressions. The very

act of return to Judaism is a fulfillment of the requirement of “regret”.

Rabbi Shapiro also explained that despite a person’s innocence with regard to transgression, he should nevertheless regret his lost opportunities to fulfill the precepts of the Torah. A person who had a lottery

ticket and lost it would certainly feel regret upon discovering that his ticket had the winning number, despite the fact that his loss was not necessarily the result of negligence. If the person however, was negligent, then merely regretting the loss without taking responsibility for his negligence would be insufficient.

• Yoma 86b

PARSHA OVERVIEW

This Torah portion begins the last of the Five Books of The Torah, *Sefer Devarim*. This Book is also called *Mishneh Torah*, "Repetition of the Torah" (hence the Greek/English title “Deuteronomy”). *Sefer Devarim* relates what Moshe told the Jewish People during the last five weeks of his life, as they prepared to cross the Jordan River into the Land of Israel. Moshe reviews the mitzvahs with the people, stressing the change of lifestyle they are about to undergo – from the supernatural existence of the desert under Moshe’s guidance, to the apparently natural life they will experience under Yehoshua’s leadership in the Land.

The central theme this week is the sin of the spies, the *meraglim*. This Torah portion opens with Moshe alluding to the sins of the previous generation who died in the desert. He describes what would have happened if they had not sinned by sending spies into Eretz Yisrael. Hashem would have given them, without a fight, all the land from the Mediterranean

to the Euphrates, including the lands of Ammon, Moav and Edom.

Moshe details the subtle sins that culminate in the sin of the spies, and reviews at length this incident and its results. The entire generation would die in the desert and Moshe would not enter Eretz Yisrael. He reminds them that their immediate reaction to Hashem’s decree was to want to "go up and fight" to redress the sin. He recounts how they would not listen when he told them not to go, and that they no longer merited vanquishing their enemies miraculously. They had ignored him and suffered a massive defeat. They were not allowed to fight with the kingdoms of Esav, Moav or Ammon. These lands were not to be part of the map of Eretz Yisrael in the meantime. When the conquest of Canaan will begin with Sichon and Og, it will be via natural warfare.

LETTER AND SPIRIT

Insights based on the writings of Rav S.R. Hirsch by Rabbi Yosef Herschman

Written in the Stars

When the Jewish nation was still but a thought in G-d's mind, Avraham is told of the great nation that will emerge from him: "Look, please, heavenward, and count the stars, if you are able to count them...So shall your seed be." And when the Jewish people are a fully formed nation, preparing to enter the Promised Land, Moshe opens his final address with words that echo this first prophecy: "G-d has multiplied you, and you are now like the stars of heaven in multitude." The repeated comparison to the stars – prior to the birth of the first Jew, and, again, as the entire nation prepares to set foot on the very land promised to Avraham – warrants some attention.

Just before this prophecy, Avraham was told that his seed would be like the dust of the earth – but there, the dust was not shown to him. In contrast, before his offspring are compared to the stars, Avraham is instructed to look heavenward and *behold* the stars. Avraham was seventy years old, and Sarah was sixty. He had all but given up hope of having a child in the natural course of events. From the vantage point of earth, his loss of hope was logical. Therefore, G-d bade him to look up toward heaven. There, in heaven, a different order is apparent – the great cosmos, created directly by G-d, beckoned Avraham to desist from his natural, earthbound speculation and instead open his mind to this starry world. So

shall your offspring be! They will not be the product of natural conditions. Indeed, Avraham would wait another 30 years for Yitzchak to be born. This people that would emanate from him would find their beginnings and their continued existence in a world beyond nature, and would depend directly on G-d's Providence.

Now that the dream of the people of Avraham is a reality – in its full multitude of more than three million souls – Moshe again reflects on the miracle of their existence.

But there is also an additional significance to this comparison. By comparing them to the hosts of heaven – each one proclaiming itself to be the Handiwork of the Creator – Moshe seeks to negate the erroneous notion that the nation in its totality is just a numberless mass in which the individual has no importance. Rather, the people's multitudes are like the stars of heaven: Although they are countless, there is independent significance to each individual. Each one is a "world until himself," each one has his own value and is under G-d's direct Providence.

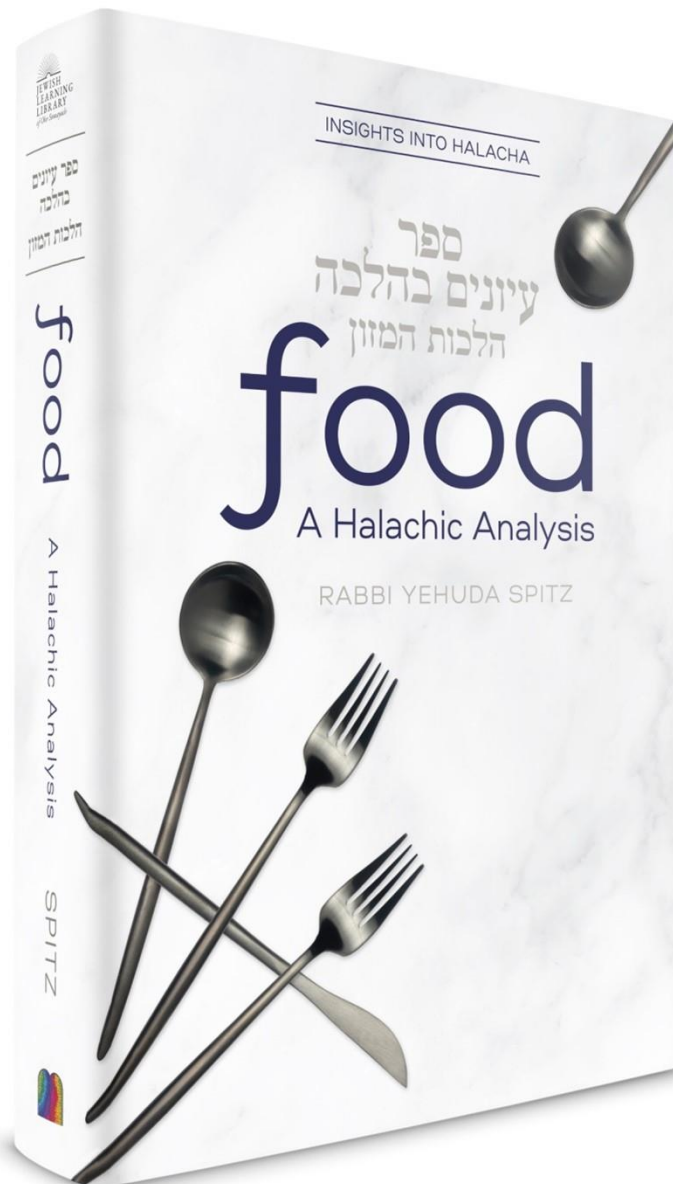
- Sources: *Commentary, Devarim 1:10 and Bereishet 15:5*

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Tisha B'Av Program

At Ohr Somayach

All day seminar Sunday, July 18

09:20 am Special Kinot Reading & Explanation

Rav Yitzchak Breitowitz

Rav Kehillas Ohr Somayach

12:45 pm Rav Yitzchak Breitowitz,

Rav Kehillas Ohr Somayach

1:45 pm Rav Nota Schiller, Rosh Hayeshiva

2:45 pm Rabbi Dovid Kaplan

3:35 pm Rabbi Avraham Rockmill

4:25 pm Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb

5:15 pm Rabbi Reuven Lauffer

6:05 pm Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

7:45 pm Rabbi Yehuda Samet

07:55 am Shacharis

08:50 am Eicha Reading

7:00 pm Mincha

8:09 pm Maariv

8:14 pm

End of Fast

Ohr Somayach Campus 22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, Maalot Daphna, Jerusalem
Buses 25, 34 & 45 and the Light Rail to Shimon Hatzadik

Extras nashim will be open throughout the day.

