

PARSHA WITH

Rabbi Shmuel Brazil



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RAV BRAZIL PARSHAS MATOS UMASAI תשפ"ה (revised)

DECIPHERING THE CODE OF THE 42 JOURNEYS

The *parsha* Masai begins by enumerating the itinerary of *Am Yisrael* in the Desert for 42 years and the encampments that they made. The *meforshim* explain this is not just a stroll through Memory Lane but rather a spiritual journey corresponding to the Name of Hashem which possesses 42 letters. It also reflects the Written Torah and the Oral Torah hinted in the *passuk* **וּדְבַרְתָּ בָּם**. For the first letter of the Written Torah is the letter ב of the word **בְּרֵאשִׁית**, and the first letter of *Shas* is the letter מ from the word **מֵאִמְתִּי**.

Let us decipher the code alluded to in some of the journeys and the message it delivers to strengthen us during our personal spiritual journeys throughout life and its challenges.

הר ההר is the partial list which we will expound on which alludes to the battle between the *yetzer hara* and *yetzer tov*.

הר ההר

It was Aron Hakohen who died on this mountain. With his death came the disappearance of the *Annenai Hakavod* the Clouds of Glory. Aron himself brought light to *Am Yisrael* with his *middos*, wisdom and shalom, as the first two letters of his name spell אור. There are times when a Yid feels that Hashem's guiding light and His protection have disappeared from his life. This can take place when a *tzaddik* like Aron passes away. It could also happen when one has a big *nefilah* or unchecked small *nefilos* without self - introspection. It is then that one begins to feel down and slowly loses the oomph in the fulfillment of Torah *Tefillah*, *Limud Hatorah*, Shabbos etc. He feels that he is slipping in his previous enthusiasm in his love of Hashem.

צלמונה

This is the opportune state and mood that the *yetzer hara* has been waiting for in order to pour salt on the Yid's fresh spiritual wounds. The *yetzer* becomes a **צלמונה** which consists of two words **צל** shade, and **מנה** to count. The *yetzer hara* begins to count and remind the Yid of all the forgotten *aveiros* that he did in the past thereby removing him from any positive light to look upon himself as a good person. By counting his *aveiros* he brings upon the Yid a **צל** a heavier darkness who feels now even worse than before.

פונן

This advanced stage is rooted in the word "perhaps" as we find in the *passuk* **פֶּן יִפְתָּה לְבַבְכֶּם**. The Yid begins to doubt himself if he is still connected to Hashem after all his rebellions against Him many of which he had already forgotten.

This is followed by a state of **אבות**

The root word is **אב** which means desire – תאוה. When one feels he might have a disconnect with Hashem the *yetzer hara* tells him that if you are not going to get *Olam Habah* anyway

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for all of your *aveiros* you might as well enjoy at least *Olam Hazei* and fulfill all your cravings especially the ones that you held back from up until now.

עיי העברים

The next strategy of the *yetzer harah* is to enforce the doom in his relationship with Hashem. Rashi explains that the word עיי means חרב. A sword brings death to a person. עברים is from the *lashon* עבר the past. Your past of *aveiros* has severed you from Hashem and your relationship with Hashem is destroyed and unfixable.

However, there is yet a ray of hope and that is the thought that he might still be connected through his *Pinteleh Yid*. Rabbe Meir says כן וכן כן נקראו בנינו no matter how much we fall from Hashem we nevertheless possess the relationship of בנינו which is spiritual DNA material, so therefore I can still do *teshuvah* and reconnect to Hashem. To this thought the *Yetzer Harah* replies דיבון this that you fantasize דיבון which is two words די בן there is still enough of connection left because we are called בנינו to Hashem, is a false. Even that has been taken and removed from you (בראשית ל יא ברש"י) being that the word גד means to cut off. The words דיבון גד is *gematriah* (with the two words) 81 וחרה אף ה'. The wrath of Hashem is upon you, the relationship is over.

How can this Yid in this predicament save himself when he is so entangled in the web of the *yetzer harah*. The last code that we will explain will give us our unbelievable answer ויחננו. בעלמן דבלתימה

עלמן דבלתימה

This last encampment in our list is a last resort with which to fight the *yetzer harah* and restart again *avodas* Hashem with renewal. ויחננו which is also from the word חן to find favor in the eyes of Hashem. This is especially true on Shabbos *Kodesh* even if in the past he has been rebellious. As the *passuk* in Shir Hashirim says שחורה אני ונאווה I am black and beautiful. Isn't this a contradiction? The Medrash answers I am black during the week but beautiful on Shabbos. A hint to this interpretation is that the *gematriah* of ויחננו בעלמן דבלתימה is the same *gematriah* of השבת. יום. On Shabbos we find חן in the eyes of Hashem. The word נאווה with the *kollel* equals החן. Let us understand why is Shabbos called by this name and how is it a solution for the Yid who is being suffocating and falling in despair because of his *yetzer harah*?

In *Mizmor Shir Leyom HaShabbos* we say איש בער לא ידע ובסיל לא יבין את זאת בפרוח רשעים. One has to be a fool if he fails to understand why it is that רשעים flourish in this world and *tzadikim* suffer. However, right before this statement we say מה עמקו מחשבותיך ה' how deep are your thoughts Hashem! In that case, why then are you called a fool if you fail to understand such a very deep question? The answer is that on Shabbos with the *nesamah yesairah* residing in our bodies we experience deep enlightenment and *emunah* to the point that we have no questions of רשע וטוב לו רע לו צדיק You who have questions even on Shabbos, must be fool because you do not realize what is obvious.

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This is hinted in the name דבלתימה **עלמין** a world that **בלי תימה** without questions and complaints. It is a world of Shabbos when we can glean pleasure and understanding from *Olam Haba*. It is a day of *neshama* as the Zohar calls it יומא דנשמתא. It is the body that arouses questions in contrast to the *neshamah* which needs no answers.

This is also hinted in the encampment following דבלתימה **עלמן** which is **הרי העברים לפני נבו**. When Shabbos comes the day of *neshama* one can experience that even if his past created mountains of *aveiros* **הרי העברים** nevertheless on Shabbos *kodesh* one is blessed with **נבו** which is *gematriah* **חן**.

Rav Brazil,

Gut Shabbos