

Weekly shiur

28 Sivan 5773

(Notes taken during class, not reviewed nor edited by Harav Ginsburgh)

We are now on the eve of Rosh Chodesh Tamuz, so we will sing the nigun of the 12th and 13th of Tamuz, from the friederger Rebbe.

This Shabbat we will be reading parashat Korach. Korach was sanguine (קרח פקח היה). The parashah begins with the words, “Korach took” (ויקח קרח), the word for “took” is ויקח, which has the same two-letter root as “sanguine” (פקח). The BST taught that there are three things that a Jew must be and one of them is sanguine (פקח). The literal translation of this term is “eyes wide open,” being very aware and smart about what is happening around you. But, of course, since Korach was sanguine, everyone should strive to be more sanguine than Korach.

The Sefat Emet explains that with his wisdom, Korach reached all the way to the firmament. What he means is that at the end of last week’s parashah, we read about the mitzvah of tzitzit. The tzitzit requires one thread of *techelet*, a blue thread. The sages explain that Korach’s challenge to Moshe Rabbeinu was based on a question on the blue thread. So what Korach saw was what the sages reveal, that the techelet color of the blue thread is similar to the sea and the sea is similar to the firmament and the firmament is similar to the Throne of Glory. Korach reached the firmament, which is a high level of understanding, as it says, והמשכילים ישבילו כזהר הרקיע. There are sages that understand, that shine with the brilliance of the firmament. But, of all the levels connected by the color of the blue thread, Korach didn’t reach all the way up to the Throne of Glory. To make it all the way up to the Throne of Glory you have to follow a single thread of blue color (but Korach asked Moshe Rabbeinu about a garment—a garment symbolizes an area-consciousness—entirely made of blue thread). The single thread is like the line and the thread in the Kabbalistic account of creation. The Talit, the garment that is all blue (the question that Korach asked of Moshe, whether such a garment requires a blue thread) is not enough to ascend there, you have to ascend through the line and thread. That is what it means to be more sanguine than Korach.

When you ascend with the single blue thread, you reach a place that is all white, called the עתיקא, which is the white before the contraction. And all this, Korach did not know.

In the continuation of the parshah we read of Aharon’s staff. This is the sign that the priesthood belongs to Aharon and his children after him. There it says, “The one whom I choose, his staff will flower.” The person that I choose for the priesthood, his staff will flower, these final words, משהו יפרח, משיח, Mashiach. There is the Mashiach Priest (the anointed priest, הכהן המשיח) and there is the Mashich himself. There is a distinction between being a king and being a priest. Uziyahu the king thought that not only could he be a king, he could also be a priest, but he was afflicted with leprosy on his forehead

for claiming the priesthood. The priests also tried being kings. At first it was good, with the Hasmonean Kings, but later it fell apart.

In any case, Aharon's staff, flowered with almonds creates a connection between the Mashiach, the anointed priest and the Mashiach himself. They have some similar qualities. Why indeed did God choose Aharon, more than Korach, who was wise, wealthy, of pedigree? It says that Aharon is the escort of the queen. Two weeks ago we read parsahat Behalotcha, and there we learnt that the role Aharon plays is to light the candles in the Menorah in a way that the flame rises by itself. This is his role as the queen's escort. Flame in gematria, שלהבת, is equal to ובכל נפשך ובכל מארך. The one who is able to light the flame of love in us, love for God, all the way to "with all of your might," that is the one that God chooses for the priesthood. Apparently, Korach with all his sanguinity and all his wealth is not enough to kindle the light of love in the Jewish people. There is a lot to do with his wealth, and a lot to do with his wisdom, but something else is needed to do this.

The Mashiach too, even though he is not a priest, he is from the house of David, has to have this ability. Not just to reveal new Torah, but with the power of this Torah to kindle the love in the people's hearts, love for God which rises of itself, meaning that every person serves God from his own power. This is the meaning of the verse, כי כולם ידעו אותי למקטנם ולגדלם, from small to big, all will know me. There are a number of meanings for the mitzvah to be fruitful and multiply. One of them is to add new Torah wisdom, but another is to kindle within people the love for God, service of God. The one who can do this, he is the one who is worthy of being chosen, and his staff will flower.

Afterwards the Torah relates that "Behold, Aharon's staff, flowered, it budded and grew almonds." It would have been enough if it just had flowers, but it went further, the flowers turned into buds and then into fruit. There are a number of levels of priesthood. The flowers suggest the special quality of the young priests, called "flower priests" (פרחי). These are young men, warm-hearted, strong, mighty, who do special things that others are not willing to. This is the sign of the priesthood, since there is no separate tribe of priests. This is the foundation of the priesthood, first of all that there are flowers, whom the high priest awakens also.

Then come the buds, which alludes to the High Priest himself. The High Priests most sacred special garment is the tzitz (ציץ), the head-plate, the gold plate adorning his forehead. This was the place that Uziyahu's leprosy shone through, on his forehead. He, like Nadav and Avihu wanted to bring incense into the Holy chamber. But, they did so from a very high level. After some generations, there high level (which was not warranted by God) became Uziyahu's act that was completely forbidden.

Just as there is Korach, all that is recounted in the parsahah is related to Korach, so there is Perach (פרח), which is similar to Korach (קרח). Words from the verb to flower (פרח) appear three times here. Zerach is also similar to קרח. We are also all the descendants of Terach (Abraham's father), תרח. There is a place called Terach among the 42 journeys the Jewish people made in the wilderness. They came there from Tachath (which is submission), so Terach is separation, and from Terach they went to Mitkah, which is of course sweetening.

So the head-plate is alluded to in the buds that Aharon's staff gave. But, before there can be buds, there have to be flowers. Before there is a High Priest there have to be the young priests, the flowers of priesthood. What can be higher than the buds? What could the fruit, the almonds allude to? One explanation is that the almonds which in Hebrew are שקדים, are those who are committed—in this case alluding to the Levites, who were committed to guarding the holiness of the Temple and Tabernacle. There is also commitment to Torah, as in the verse, אשרי אדם שקד על דלתותי יום יום. There are two meanings to the letter דלת, like דלתותי here—two doors. There is the dalet that means lowliness, like a poor man (דל) and there is the dalet of being exalted, as in the verse ארוממך ה' כי דליתני. The BST explains that when one walks into a beit midrash, one should feel that there are two doorways there, one doorway is love and the other fear of heaven. The middle axis of the sefirot is thus connected by these two doors, which extend from the exaltedness of the crown to the lowliness of malchut, and it also connects the axis between love and fear (between loving-kindness and might). These are two בריחים, from right to left and from top to bottom.

Since we've come to this let's calculate the sum of כתר מלכות and חסד גבורה: Just חסד גבורה is פרח, 288. Together, all four words equal 1404, which is twice the value of Shabbat, 702. The sages say that if the Jewish people would keep two shabbatot, they would immediately be redeemed. So these two shabbatot allude to the commitment to the doorways appearing in this verse.

In any case, it's not very clear how these three levels, from the flower, to the bud, to the fruit is an ascent in the priesthood: from the flowers (young) priests, to the High Priest, to the Levites. The explanation for this is that in the future the Levites will ascend to become a higher level than even the priests today. For this to happen a lot of commitment is needed. Then the priest will be included in the future Levite. This is the right being included within the left. Today our task is to include the left in the right, but in the future the left will ascend so high that the right will be included in the left.

The main word here is flower, פרח, that Aharon's staff flowered, the young priests, who have a lot of might. There is a closed cycle here: from the priest who come before the High Priest, that prepares the High Priest and all the other priests so that eventually they are able to give fruit and become Levites. The Talmud says that once Ben Azai passed away there were no longer any shakdanim, committed individuals. He represents them all, and his name means "might" (בן עזאי), holy might and courage. It is known that every Chassid has to have three qualities, the first is holy courage and might (עזות דקדושה). This is also the first halachah in the Shulchan Aruch, that one should be as fierce as a leopard. How did Ben Azai die? He died when he entered the Pardes (בן עזאי) (הציץ ומת). The Arizal explains that Ben Azai entered the Pardes through the sefirah of wisdom, in order to rectify Adam's sin. Ben Zoma, about whom it says that when he died there were no longer any homiletic speakers (דרשנים), he glanced and was hurt—meaning he lost his mind (הציץ ונפגע). He tried to enter the Pardes through the sefirah of understanding (corresponding to the Drush of Pardes), to rectify Adam's sin. But, Ben Azai was about wisdom and shaked (שקד) corresponds to wisdom. The almond, the shaked is quick to blossom and bear fruit. Thus this commitment we are talking about is

about being quick and steadfast in what you do. The highest speed in our reality is light. Light and the speed of light are related to wisdom, as explained elsewhere. The person like Ben Azai who is committed learns quickly because of the self-nullification of his wisdom. He is quick because of his selflessness. This is *החכמה תעוז לחכם*, wisdom makes the wise man fierce and mighty. The Priests are considered to be quick at their work. Wisdom is the source of loving-kindness, *חסדים*. So when Ben Azai passed away, there were no more shakdanim, people with commitment in this sense.

With all this we can come to the first point we'd like to make, that as we said the almond tree is the quickest to flower, grow buds, and bear fruit. It takes the almond tree 21 days to do this. Thus, parashat Korach, which is always proximal to Rosh Chodesh Tammuz, is a preparation already for the 3 weeks that begin in the month of Tamuz. If we don't count the first or last days of the 3 weeks, they consist of 21 days, exactly the amount of time it takes the almond, the quickest of all trees to bear fruit. Therefore we find the verse at the end of Ecclesiastes, *ויניץ שקר*, which literally refers to the deterioration a person experiences at the end of life, but also alludes to the destruction of the Temple. Rashi brings two literal explanations. The first is that the shaken, the almond here is the Luz bone. At the bottom of the spinal column, the final bone, when a person grows old, begins to protrude. But, this is the same bone from which the entire body will be rebuilt after the resurrection of the dead. So that is one explanation, that this bone protrudes. The second explanation Rashi gives is that just as the almond tree gives fruit quickly, so the deterioration at the end of one's life is very quick. It happens quickly and "old age jumps on the person," as it were. The third, non-literal explanation is that this alludes to the 3 weeks.

Let's just see the gematria of "bore almonds" (*ויגמל שקדים*) which is 543, the value of the holy Name God revealed to Moshe Rabbeinu at the burning bush, I will be what I will be (*אֲהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר אֲהִיָּה*). Just the Name Ekyeh (*אֲהִיָּה*) is equal to 21, again the 21 days of the almond tree and the 3 weeks. While in nature the process of giving fruit takes the almond three weeks, here in our parashah it took a single night. Why did God reveal this Name to Moshe? To tell him, that just as I am with them in this exile, I will be with them in the coming exiles. The Name Ekyeh repeats one more time at the end of that verse, so the Name appears only 3 times in the entire Tanach.

The sages say something important that connects Torah and science, Torah and nature in this regard. There is an issue (*סוגיה*) of Torah and science in the tractate of Bechorot. The sages say that the chicken takes 21 days and corresponding to it is the Luz among the trees. The sages want to teach us something about nature, something that should be taught in every school: that there is a parallel between the vegetable kingdom and the animal kingdom. This is similar to how for every land animal there is a marine animal that is its parallel form of life, so there is this kind of parallel between plants and animals. This is a connection between zoology and botany and they are all connected to the time taken to bear fruit. The most important characteristic of every form of life is how long it takes to bear fruit, this is the *tachlis*, the purpose of all life, the blue thread in the *tzitzit*. So the shortest time span is 21 days, and the longest is 70 years, with the

snake (of a particular kind) giving birth after 70 years, and among the plants it is the Carob tree.

The beginning is again 21 days with the chicked (and its royal egg, that we learnt about last week and many times). Let us just note that Rebbe Nosson of Breslov in Likutei Halachot notes this connection between an egg and kingdom (malchut). So the egg is born after 21 days, and paralleling the chicken and its egg is the Luz tree. In another place it says that it's the almond tree that bears fruit after 21 days. Luz is a different type of tree seemingly. But, in the Tanach there are two different translations offered for the word שקד, almond. The first is שגדין (there are many words where the letters gimel and kuf transpose). But the second is that the almonds are luzim. So when the sages talk of the Luz tree, there is reason to argue that they mean the almond tree. So there is indeed, as we explained before a strong connection between the almond tree and the Luz bone (עצם הלז), all connected with commitment, שקדנות. On the one hand the Luz bone is the most steadfast, מתינות. It waits quietly until the resurrection of the dead. When that moment comes, it quickly, with the greatest speed (even faster than Aharon's staff bore fruit) it rebuilds the body, at the speed of light. Luz (לז) equals 43, the value of challah that we talked about last week. Apart from there being a special segulah in Melaveh Malkah to strengthen the Luz bone, we also now learn that there is a segulah in taking challah for strengthening the Luz bone, i.e. resurrecting the dead. Taking challah is one of the three special mitzvot given to women.

All this was so that we could understand why ויגמל שקדים it bore almonds is equal to אהיה אשר אהיה. So the two Ekyeh's, each equaling 21, alludes to the chicken and the almond tree. So to be with them in this exile, the first Ekyeh suggests the chicken's egg that it bears after 21 days (the beginning of life now), and the second Ekyeh suggests the almond tree's 21 days of bearing fruit, the future life after the resurrection. This is the vegetable and animal kingdom's example of "the speed of light" the fastest speed in these two kingdoms.

Let's look at these verses about Aharon's staff more closely: והנה פרח מטה אהרן לבית לוי. And behold Aharon from the house of Levite's staff flowered. The 6 words in Hebrew divide into 3 sections, with 7 in each part. So altogether there are 21 letters in this phrase, again alluding to the Three Weeks. As a figurate number, 21 can be drawn as the triangle of 6. The continuation is ויצא פרח ויעץ ציץ. Again, two groups of two words, with 7 letters in each. At the end there is a resolution. After 5 groups of 7 letters (and within each group, the letters divide into 3 and 4), we find ויגמל שקדים, two words with 5 letters each. We say that this is a mathematical resolution in the verse, because we have here a Pythagorean triplet of 3, 4, and 5 (3 squared plus 4 squared is equal to 5 squared).

The egg and the almond are similar in shape. For an egg to be kosher it has to be slightly convex on one end and strongly convex on the other. Being so, it is considered to be an average between a triangle and an ellipse. (If it is strongly convex on both sides, or slightly convex on both, it is not kosher). Rebbe Nosson says that the reason we eat an egg before the fast of Tisha B'av is indeed that the egg was born after 21 days, just as Tisha B'av comes at the end of the 3 Weeks. In addition, he adds that to come to the Temple now, one has to pass through the Luz (as Yaakov called the place of the Temple,

the Temple mount). The Luz is the partzuf of Leah. There are two opinions where the Luz is located on the spinal column. Before we said that it is the final bone in the spinal column, but another opinion is that it is the highest bone, and thus it corresponds to partzuf Leah. This is a secret and hidden pathway to the Temple. Rebbe Nosson explains the special shape needed for the kosher egg is that it alludes to the special paradox every Jew carries in his heart. The slightly convex end is the joy in a Jew's heart, even when in exile (חדוה תקיעא בליבאי מסטרא דא) and the sharply convex end is the weeping in our heart, even when close to God (בכיה תקיעא בליבאי מסטרא דא). The Mashiach too is described as חר וכר (sharp and soft). These two words have a 1:2 ration between them (12:24). But, there is another stipulation for an egg to be kosher. The person who found the egg has to tell us the name of the fowl from which he took the egg, and we have to recognize this type of bird as kosher, by tradition. There is another condition, and for this you have to crack the egg: the yellow has to be inside and the white on the outside. Surprisingly, there are eggs that are indeed not kosher, where the location of the yolk and the white are reversed. The egg has to be like our eye. The white has to surround the color in the eye. The white represents the infinite light that surrounds all worlds, and the color represents the light that fills all worlds.

Rebbe Nosson explains why these conditions are signs of being kosher. A Jew has to be both sharp and soft at the same time. But, we also need to know the bird's name, because there might be a fraudulent example of the joy and weeping in a person. One might be full of sorrow with the hope that this will win him favor in God's eyes. In addition, the yolk must be on the inside.

The white part of the egg in Hebrew is חלבון, which is cognate with milk, which is white. While the yolk is called חלמון, which is like a colorful dream. Almonds can also be used to make milk, very nutritious.

Now, we said that during the Three Weeks there are 21 days, but actually, when we add the first and last days, we have 22 days. Therefore, these 22 days, we meditate on the 22 letters that are the initials of אשמנו בגדנו, because these are special days to rectify these. In addition, Lamentations is the only book in the entire Tanach that is entirely based on alphabetically ordered verses. Therefore, when we count letter skipping in the Torah, we sometimes count the first and last letters too, and then call it an inclusive skip (דילוג כולל). So the inclusive number of days in the Three Weeks is 22.

How do almonds connect with 22? In another place in the Talmud it says that the almond takes 22 days to bear fruit.

How many times does the root שקד appear in the Tanach? 22 times! So there are 22 almonds (שקדים) in the Tanach corresponding to the 22 inclusive days of the Three Weeks. Of these 22 only 4 refer to the actual almonds. The Ibn Ezra explains in length in Shemot on the words Ekyeh asher Ekyeh (איהיה אשר איהיה) that all 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet actually stem from the 4 letters אהוי. These four letters as a group are symmetrical, א and ו are consonants and ה and י are syllables. In addition, all of God's Names in the Torah are made of these 4 letters. The first Name in the Torah (the Pentateuch) is Yud-hei (י-ה). Then there is Ekyeh (איהיה), 3 instances, all in one verse. In any case, all the proper Names of God are made of these 4 letters. In the early Kabbalah,

אֱהוּי itself is considered a holy Name. It is the light in the vessels. We said and we'll continue to explain that almonds are like lights, the speed of light, but the 22 letters are the vessels. It says in the Tanya that we read a few days ago that the letters are the source of the vessels, letters are contracted light. But the almond is the light. Yet, as much as the vessel conceals the light in it, there is still light in the vessels themselves, in and of themselves. This is similar to how we say that in the keter there are no vessels, but we learn that there are "fine" vessels (כלים דקים). These fine vessels which are more like light, are called almonds, שקדים. There are 22 appearances of the verb שקד in the Tanach, of which only 4 are almonds. The first instance appears when Yaakov sends Yosef a tribute from the produce of the land (זמרת הארץ), whose initials spell זה, what is needed to merit seeing through a clear glass). Once the Rebbe asked to hear a song from the land of Israel (the Chassidim sang הושיעה את עמך), that is the "produce" of the land of Israel, זמרת הארץ. What did the tribute consist of? מעט צרי ומעט דבש נבאת ולט בטנים ושקדים. Out of these words, there comes a holy Kabbalistic Name. In many שיתיי plaques in shul's this holy Name appears. All these holy Names are an aspect of wisdom. How many letters in these 6 elements: צרי דבש נבאת לט בטנים שקדים? Once again the final two elements have 5 letters each. Returning to the verse on Aharon's staff, there are altogether 45 letters, which is the triangle of 9. Returning to the 4 almonds, the actual almonds, again we asked how many letters in the six elements of the tribute? 22 letters! With all the secrets that Yaakov had in mind when he sent this to Yosef, these words are the secret of the Name of 22 letters, why are there 6 elements? We are told that these 6 correspond to the six extremes the ו"ק of Abba. The almonds are the yesod of Abba (the foundation of Abba, the father principle), and it is what strikes the mind like lightning, it is the יסוד אבא ארוך, what extends all the way down to the end of tiferet, and what we call the 32nd pathway of wisdom. The second almond in the Tanach is in our parashah, with Aharon's staff. The fourth is at the end of Ecclesiastes. But, the third is Yirmiyahu's first prophecy (the second prophecy he sees is a bulging pot—there is a connection between them, but we'll leave it for another time). So these are the four almonds in the Tanach.

How do we know that Aharon's staff's almonds correspond to understanding? Because all that happened there is like a quick pregnancy. Like we said, the almonds in Yaakov's tribute correspond to wisdom. Again, it all begins with the chicken who lays an egg after 21 days (corresponding to Aharon's staff and understanding, the mother principle). In a chicken first there is an egg (an almond), then there is a chick, and finally the chick (אפרוח) flies off, a reverse order from the almond tree. Returning to the four instances of almonds in the Tanach, the third is the almond branch that Yirmiyahu sees, which of course corresponds to tiferet, to the staff (the vav in Havayah too). And then the final almond is the end of life, malchut, the end of the tree of life.

If there are 4 actual almonds, what are the other 18 instances of the verb שקד? There are 6 in the Pentateuch, which is the greatest number of times that the same meaning of this verb appears together, where it is not clear if the meaning is to commit or to an actual almond. These 6 instances appear in relation to the menorah, whose parts are described as משוקדים. So we see that there is something very essential connecting the Menorah with the shaken, שקד. Altogether then the verb שקד appears 8 times in the

Pentateuch. 1-6-1, the way that the Arizal explains the secret of the interpolation of Havayah and Adni (יאדהוניה), a yud at the start, then 6 letters, and then another yud. And apart from the 8 in the Pentateuch, there are 12 more, which gives us a series, 4-6-12.

Let's look at this special word, משקדים (the way the Menorah is described). This word is שקד (almond) and מים (water). We put almonds in water in order to help us remove the last peel. According to Botany, an almond is not actually a nut, because a nut has to have both the fruit and the seed. But, the almond, the white of the almond, which is both very delicious and very healthy, is just the seed. BTW, all 6 ingredients that made up Yaakov's tribute are all healthy, since they begin with צרי, which also means "health." Even though the almond is very healthy, it also contains poison, if it is bitter. Therefore it is important to immerse them in water, to get rid of the poison. The white again is the seed. It is encased in a brown skin, which is its garment. They are like father and mother. Then there is a shell (קליפה). The mishnah distinguishes between the bitter almonds and the sweet almonds (you can't take ma'aser from one on the other). The midrash notes that there was a miracle with Aharon's staff. First of all the speed was a unification between the supernatural and the natural, but apart from this "natural" miracle there were three completely supernatural miracles. [There is a connection between the holy of holies and the almond, and Aharon's staff. The cherubim and Aharon's staff were both placed in the holy of holies]. In Aharon's staff the left side grew bitter almonds and the right side grew sweet almonds. This was actually the second miracle according to the sages, but the first was that the flowers remained even after the buds grew (even though in nature, they fall off). So there were flowers on both sides of the staff. Like with the Cherubim, when the Jewish people served God properly, the left side's flowers looked dry, while when they did not, the right side's flowers looked dry. The third miracle was that normally, when you cut a branch off a tree, for a time there is some life in it, and something can still grow. But, the almond tree is unique in that it is not only the quickest to bear fruit, it is also the quickest to dry up.

So these 3 miracles come on top of the quick process the staff went through. The Rebbe adds that the process' unification of nature and the supernatural indicates that the fruit were real. If it would have been entirely supernatural, it is not at all clear that the fruit would have been real. Now let's add פרח ציץ שקדים, flower, bud, and almonds. We get 932, which is equal to "the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil" (עץ הדעת טוב ורע). There are many opinions in the sages what tree the Tree of Knowledge was. But, here we have something new, that altogether it was these three aspects of the almond. Good and evil alludes to nature. The word "nature" (טבע) does not appear in the Tanach at all, certainly the famous gematria that Elokim equals "nature" (הטבע) is not there, not even from the sages of the Talmud. In the Tanya it says that good and evil is the kelipat nogah, nature. But, above the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil lies the almond. The supernatural itself is the Tree of Life. God places the Cherubim to guard the path of the Tree of Life. These Cherubim are angels that speak so quickly that in the books of Kabbalah are described as standing at the entrance of the Garden of Eden, they speak to you very quickly, and if you can't answer them, they are very quick (like the speed of light) they don't let you pass. So the almond tree, being an intermediate between the

Tree of Life (the supernatural) and the Tree of Knowledge (nature), can connect them. But, there is another option that appears in the Binding of Isaac, which is called being “above the trees,” above both the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life. How many letters in the two trees? עץ החיים has 7 letters and עץ הדעת טוב ורע has 12 letters, this is part of the Book of Formation’s well-known division of the letters into 3, 7, and 12. What then is the 3 letters, that is what is above the two trees, the “light” (אור), which has 3 letters. In our case this is the almond tree, because in order to connect the natural and the supernatural, it has to be higher than both of them. There are many types and levels of miracles. But, to actually make the natural and the supernatural one, that requires being above both aspects.

Now returning to the types of almond, the bitter and the sweet. We said that the Mishnah distinguishes between them, because the bitter almonds are not good for eating. They are only good for the first 50 days. After that they are poisonous. The sweet almonds are good only after 50 days. And therefore if you want to give a tithe, you can’t do so on both together. They are like two separate species. The bitter almonds are like the slightly convex side of the egg. Just as there are the flowers of priesthood, there is such a thing in every kingdom. Who are these? These are the 400 people who were of a bitter spirit (these were the first two join David when he fled from Saul). They gathered together, a kibbutz, at the cave of Adulam. These bitter men are like the flowers, the young members of the kingdom, who build the kingdom, and they are only good when they are small. But, the sweet ones, the sweet members of the kingdom are only good when they grow old.

So we said the almond has the white seed and the brown peel around it. When you eat the bitter almonds you don’t eat the seed at all. You actually eat the second garment (which we are not even familiar with when it comes to the sweet almonds). Today, when you buy an almond, it is almost always the sweet type. But, it used to be that the type of almonds sold were the bitter. Slowly, the almond was domesticated, their chaotic lights were put into rectified vessels. This is considered one of civilizations wonders. So again, we have the seed, its skin, what we call its shell. These are the first three levels corresponding to the Abba, Ima, and Vak. With the sweet almonds we eat the Abba, the yud.

Why are their 6 Meshukadim (משקדים) in the description of the Menorah? And, why is one of these instances, one of the 5 verses whose literal meaning cannot be known, משקדים כפתריה ופרחיה. We see that there is a special connection between Aharon’s staff and the Menorah: both have שקדים and פרחים: shekedim and flowers. And about the side parts of the Menorah it is not clear if it the גביעים that are משוקדים or the buttons כפתריה are משוקדים. All the גביעים, the ornament on the Menorah that are like a grail. What does it mean that this ornament would be משוקדים? The Targum says it means that they are graphical. But, the graphic looks like an almond. We said that the almond is like the egg, כד וחד. Because in every instance the word משקדים describes the גביעים, this implies that there is a special connection between them. Altogether, the Menorah has 42 ornaments, out of which 22 are גביעים. And they are all משוקדים. And then it says that there are 4 גביעים in the Menorah that are משוקדים. There are 22 gevi’im, 11 buttons (כפתורים – 1 on each

branch, 3 on the middle branch, one on the very top of the central branch, and the final one on the very bottom of the central branch; this lowest one is like the Ikvata demeshichah, the foot of the Mashiach, like the Rebbe has to be in the same place, able to descend down to the place of the simple Jews), and like we said the verb שקד appears 22 times in the Tanach—another beautiful connection between the גביעים and the משוקדים. The Rambam writes that in the form of the Menorah, all 42 ornaments were all משוקדים. The commentaries ask, where he got this from? Even if we say that both the buttons and the flowers should be meshukadim, almond-like, this only applies to those on the central branch. How did the Rambam learn that all the ornaments on all the branches should be almond-like. From the fact that the almond is the form drawn on the ornaments, we learn that this is the perfect form, an inclusion between an ellipse and a triangle.

Let's see the gematria of this entire verse (that has no literal understanding, which means that it is one of the five doubts in Radla, since there are 5 such verses, where we don't know how to interpret the meaning literally. We can say that these 5 verses are the source in the Torah for the 5 doubts the Arizal's describes in Radla. This one if the most important, since it is the only one that Rashi notes is one of the 5 in his commentary): ובמנרה ארבעה גביעים משקדים כפתריה ופרחיה. The sum is a multiple of one of the words in the verse (we call this self-reference), the word ארבעה, 278, the value of אור הגנוז. The entire verse is equal to 8 times 278, or 2284. About this verse we said that the sages say that זה אחד מחמש מקראות שאין להם הכרע, which itself is equal to 7 times 278!

This all takes us back to the sign that God gave for whom He chose to be the priest. We said that the sign God gave is that his staff would flower. We also said that the priest and the Mashiach have the ability to ignite the flame in every Jew's heart. All plantlife is phototrophic, it transforms light into food, into matter. That is why photosynthesis is a model for understanding how life will be sustained after the resurrection of the dead. Adding light to almond, אור שקד, we get 611, or Torah (תורה). The entire Torah is the light of almonds. The quickness of light. On the verse in ecclesiastes, ויניח השקד, the Malbim writes that השקד is not the almond, but the committed, and thus it is a participle, a verb.

Now let's add Menorah to Aharon's staff, מנורה מטה אהרן, we get 301 plus 310 so together they equal 611, as before. Aharon loves the Jewish people, and thanks to his love he is able to ignite their hearts with love.

The word light is equal to "secret" (רז), which if we write backwards, we get זר, which means a crown. There were 3 crowns encircling vessels in the Temple: around the ark, around the Table of the Showbread and around the golden altar. There was no crown around the Menorah. We said that Aharon's staff alludes to the priesthood. There is something about the Menorah which makes it not need a crown, a laurel around it. It itself is a laurel. It is Aharon's laurel. If we think about the Menorah for a moment, what is its symbol of Torah? That is simple, the light that it illuminates. The priesthood in the Menorah is its candles and especially the flames lit by the priest. There is a priest who fixes the candles and causes the flames to rise. The candles with their flames are the secret of the priesthood, the light that comes out represents the Torah (just as the priest's role is to teach Torah, יורו משפטך ליעקב, a verse referring to the priests). Finally, the malchut, the kingdom in the Menorah, what is that? The collective congregation of Israel

is the malchut. The clearest symbol of this collectivity is found in the Menorah, because it is made out of one piece of gold, just like the Jewish people are one body. This is the Menorah's most important and essential characteristic. This explains why the Menorah for many Jews is a symbol for the kingdom of Israel, even though at present it is not truly yet that kingdom—still this is how the state of Israel represents itself. When they draw their symbol, it does not include the flames, the light that comes out of the Menorah—meaning there is no Torah there—a serious problem. Still, the most essential characteristic in the Menorah is its being made of a single piece of gold. From top to bottom, from the highest Jew to the lowest, it is all one piece, one people. **עד ירכה עד פרוחה** equals 676 (Havayah squared), also the value of the Book of Kings first verse, something we can't get into right now.

Now, many times, we choose a certain tzadik who we designate as the hero of our shiur. Today we choose **רב אדא בר אהבה**, Rav Ada bar Ahavah. The topic requires a class unto itself, but let's just note the connection. The sages ask in Berachot why the early generations experienced miracles from heaven and we, the later generations (say the Amora'im in the generation of Abaye and Rava) do not. Why is this so? For we know more tractates of Mishnah than they did?

The answer is that the early sages sacrificed themselves to sanctify God's Name, and we the later sages do not. To illustrate this, the Talmud gives an example. Who among the early sages sacrificed himself to sanctify God's Name? Rav Ada bar Ahavah. His father's name is Ahavah, meaning "love." How did he sacrifice himself? Once he was walking in the marketplace and saw a woman, who he thought was not Jewish, and she was wearing a garment called a karbalta (which was either made of wool and flax together, or was red and not modest). If a person suddenly notes that he has a garment that has wool and flax mixed, he has to remove it immediately, even if in the middle of the street. When Rav Ada saw this woman and her garment, he tore her garment off. He undressed her in the middle of the marketplace. Now this is the example, of all the examples that could have been given, that the Talmud chooses to illustrate what it means to sacrifice yourself in God's Name. In the end it turns out she wasn't Jewish. The woman took him to court and he was fined 400 zuz, coins. In the end, before he leaves the court paying his fine, he asks the woman, What's your name? She replies **מתון**, Matun, which equals malchut (**מלכות**). He asks, that is your name? And he says, **מתון מתון שויה** – **ארבע מאות זוזי שויה** – Matun matun is worth 400 zuz.

This story may very well be the BST's source for **זריזות במתינות**. Rav Ada is the shaked, the quick almond, because he acts quickly, but he lacks composure, **מתינות**. There are two explanations given by Rashi, one that **מתון** indeed means composure, **מתינות**.

So who is this sage, Rav Ada bar Ahavah? The sages say that once Rebbi (Rabbi Yehudah the Prince) passed away, Rav Ada bar Ahavah was born. There is a long list of the tzadik of each generation. When Rabbi Akiva passed, Rebbi was born. When Rebbi passed, Rav Ada was born. When Rav Ada passed, Rav Himnuna was born, etc. etc. Rav Ada bar Ahavah is the intermediate between the souls of the sages of the Mishnah and the souls of the sages of the Talmud, between the Tana'im and the Amora'im, and

therefore he is to a degree greater than both. He is the one who sacrifices himself for God's Name. The value of the verse, *משמת רבי נולד רב אדא בר אהבה*, is 39 squared, or 1521, the value of *טל* (dew) squared. The verse is in Ecclesiastes: *וירח השמש ובא השמש* (And the sun will rise and the sun will set), exactly describing the changing of the guard between the tzadikim of the generations. Actually the verse equals 1520, but with the kollel it is equal to 1521. Just *Ada bar Ahavah אדא בר אהבה* is equal to the first word, *וירח* (And [the sun] will rise).

Something more about him. It says that he lived a very long life. But, incredibly every time he is mentioned, even at age 120 or 160, he is young. Not only is he a quick person, he is also composed, he lives a long life. Later he appears as one of Rava's students, and then a translator, a student of Rav Papa. It says that he passed away in Rava's time, but then he suddenly reappears in the time of Rav Papa. Because of this, the Seder Hadorot goes into great length about whether there might be two, or even three people with this same name.

If we meditate on his character we see that he is eternally young. If indeed we would like to find him a shidduch, then it would be best to set him up with Serach the daughter of Asher, whom we talked about last week—a match truly from heaven. She is eternally young, and every time she appears as a young woman. She doesn't grow old. Eternal and young. Someone like Rav Ada who lives for a long time, and even after he dies, he comes back again, only someone like this can tear a carbalta off of a woman in the marketplace. How much do they equal together *אדא שרה*? 514. Let's add to this the names of their fathers: Asher and Ahavah, which also equal 514, *אשר אהבה*. 514 is the value of the phrase we learnt last week, *רזי לי רזי לי*, alluding to the yesod of Abba and the yesod of Ima (foundations of the mother and father principles). In the yesod there is an illumination from the inner partzuf, like we say that in the inner aspect of Ima there is the yesod of Abba.

So the point was that *Ada bar Ahavah* is the almond. It doesn't say that he is the committed one, the shakdan. But, he is certainly committed in his quick reaction and willingness to sanctify God's Name.

Let's end with the sages' saying from Chagigah. The sages ask in the third chapter: in one place it says that God has black hair, and another time it says that he has white hair. How is this possible? The sages answer that white hair is fitting for a man sitting in judgment, but black hair is fitting for a man of war. When going to battle the Egyptians, God appeared with black hair. When sitting in the Giving of the Torah, as the head of a yeshivah, or sitting in judgment, God revealed Himself with white hair.

When one goes to battle, one should be young. It says that what is kosher by a priest is the opposite by the Levites, and vice versa. By the Levites it is age that makes them not kosher for serving in the Temple, but that has not relevance to Priests, but by Priests what disqualifies them is a blemish in their body, something not relevant for priests. Why so? Because a Levite should be young, and what we learn from this is that you can be young until you are 50 years old. [When Rechavam took the advice of children, the sages say they were 41, his age. Until 41 you are a child, and until 50 you are a young man]. These are the bitter almonds, that are good until 50 days, these are the Levites. It

says that by the midot, the 7 lower sefirot, the left awakens, and the right toils. In the mind, it is the opposite, the father awakens and the left toils. The Sefat Emet explains that in the body, it is more important to be young, like the Levites, it is not whole, this left that awakens, but it is full of energy. Composure is learnt from experience, from the age of 50 and on. Then you learn to be a sweet almond. But, the first nature is a bitter almond. It has a very important role.

Is Mashiach a bitter almond or a sweet one? About the Mashiach it says, **וברוח שפתיי**, **ימית רשע**, with the spirit of his lips, he will kill the wicked (without bloodshed, just the breath of his lips). We said that to connect two opposites, you have to be higher than both. But, the real secret is that the staff has both bitter and sweet almonds—both are holy souls of the Jewish people. When Korach said, **וְאַתֶּם הַמֵּתִים אֶת עַם ה'**, you have killed God's people, meaning that Moshe and Aharon as it were only want the sweet Jews. But, in fact, the kingdom of David rises specifically from the bitter almonds. Therefore we have to say that the Mashiach will reveal a new character that we have not seen to this day: he will be fitting for judgment (white) and fitting for battle (black) at the same time. His beard will be both all white and all black at the same time. The Lubavitcher Rebbe describes this special trait as being able to fight his wars, in a complacent manner, in an acceptable manner (**בְּדַרְכֵי נַעַם וּבְאוֹפֵן הַמֵּתְקָבֵל**). This whole shiur was to say that it is possible to fight the wars of God in a nice way (**דְּרַכֵי נַעַם**), in a way that is acceptable to all. You can be both young and old at the same time, all one and all the other.

This is the morale behind Aharon's staff.

Lechaim lechaim.

Supplemental material (after class)

If Rav Ada bar Ahavah thought she was Jewish, and he is a tzadik then there must be something about her that was worthy of being a convert. Like we explain in the book for the nations, that in someone who is worthy of conversion, the soul is hovering around the body.

The fact that he belong to the Talmudic sages, but on the other hand he is always young, that turns out to be a special characteristic of the Rishonim, the Tannaim (and all young flowers like the young of the priesthood), that they are always young.

We also wanted to connect more between Torah and science. Someone who is like the flowers of priesthood knows how to connect them well. The illustration of this point is that Rav Ada bar Ahavah is who we count on for our calculation of the seasons (**תְּקוּפוֹת**). He invented the idea of a "moment" (**רִגְעָה**) which is $1/76^{\text{th}}$ of a cheilek (there are 18 chalakim in a minute). While Shmuel who is the greatest of the astronomers among the sages only calculates up to a minute. What this allows Rav Ada bar Ahavah is to calculate the 28 year cycle of the sun, to exactly the moment when the moon and the sun meet. What this means is that he has the ability to go down to the span of time that is so short, that the eye cannot see it. Indeed, the $1/76^{\text{th}}$ of a minute, the "moment" is about $1/24^{\text{th}}$ of a second, which is the timing used today in creating motion pictures.

Now, to expand more on what we said last week about the women's 10 chambers in the heavens. Some people asked that we explain how every woman can recognize her chamber. Sarah who is in the crown, she is faith. It is like we said, that every woman who is connected to Sarah (Sarah converts the women, she brings those women who are far closer to faith) is someone who engages in kiruv work. (Abraham is pleasure, and Sarah is faith, she is higher than Abraham, because as the Talmud relates, she is constantly cleaning Abraham's head from lice, meaning from those converts who are not worthy of converting).

All the wise women are connected to Rivkah. To identify your chamber, the point is that each soul root is somehow connected to what you are willing to sacrifice yourself for. All the years that Sarah was without child, she converted women to monotheism. Rivkah too, as we said many times, her self-sacrifice is about "I will go" (אלך). Every woman who is willing to go for something, "just do it," is connected with her. This can be either in relation to who her husband is (like Rivkah), or it can be in relation to living in the land of Israel. So like Menuchah Rachel Schneersohn, the Mittler Rebbe's daughter, who moved to the land of Israel amid great difficulty, if a woman is strongly connected to the land of Israel, she is in Rivkah's chamber. Speaking of marriage, the man who fell in love at first sight was Yaakov (with Rachel). But, the woman who fell in love at first sight with her husband was Rivkah (with Yitzchak). Love at first sight is different for a man and a woman. Rivkah fell off her camel when she first saw Yitzchak. To be a true Zionist willing to move to the land of Israel, requires a certain sense, an ability to feel who your true mate is. This is Rivkah's wisdom, to see what will come to pass, even though Yitzchak wasn't able to see this until he married her.

Regarding Leah, she is the mother of many children. So every woman that has many children or takes care of many children, the archetype of a Yiddishe Mame. This is what Leah sacrificed herself, to have another child and another child. This is her purpose in life. This also includes any woman who is involved with increasing the Jewish birthrate, for instance by engaging in the Rebbe's Mikveh and Tahoros Hamishpachah campaigns.

Rachel is the archetype of a beautiful woman (beyond what we explained about the difference between *יפת תאר ויפת מראה*). Of course she is modest and guards herself. What then is what she sacrifices herself for? Because she is beautiful (and obviously every beautiful girl identifies with Rachel), she has to nullify herself; she has to forego her beauty in her own eyes. This we see when she gave the marital signs to her sister Leah. It is specifically a beautiful girl that has to know how to not take advantage of her beauty and not use it. Da'at, knowledge (Rachel's chamber) is connected with mercy, compassion, because they originate in knowledge. This is Rachel's special quality. It says that by men (males) compassion is a kingly, a royal characteristic. But, by women, we have a new understanding here, that compassion is the result of beauty. That is why we go to cry on her tomb. So all beautiful women who give up their arrogance, their special place, they identify with Rachel. This was the reason that Yaakov cried when he first saw her, because she awakened his compassion for her, his mercy. When he kissed her, that is when she caused him to awaken in his compassion for her.

Then we have Sarah again in loving-kindness, chesed. This includes every woman that is involved in chesed, taking care of other people's physical needs.

Apart from Devorah being a mighty warrior, and we said that this relates to all the "fighter-type" women that we know, Devorah is connected with wisdom, because might is the inner aspect of wisdom. But, we also correspond might with law. So any woman who has a legalistic type of thought is connected with her. Devorah is also a poetess, so this is what poetesses identify with.

We said that a Yiddishe Mame in general is Leah, but Yocheved is special because she has 3 very talented children. When you have child prodigies, you have to exercise a very different form of chinuch, of education. Most women work with children in education, teaching, kindergarden, etc. Likewise, Yocheved was a midwife taking care of other's children. She merited having child prodigies because of this. Here she is called the "mother of Moshe."

Channah also has a special thing with children. She too was childless and conceived on Rosh Hashanah. There are 3 such women whose acronym is שרה, Sarah, Rachel, and Channah. About Rivkah it says that she prayed for children. The Torah doesn't tell us about Sarah's prayers. But, the one who really prayed and from whom we learn all the laws regarding prayer is Channah. So every woman who is engaged primarily in prayer, praying for other Jews, but most importantly praying for children, is connected with Channah's chamber. Yocheved is an educator, but Channah, once the child is 2 years old, she dedicates the child to God. She is the model for what the sages say that women merit the World to Come by sending their children to learn Torah and sending their husbands to learn. A woman who has self-sacrifice to pray and then send her husband and children off to learn belongs to Channah's chamber. That she is in yesod, foundation, means that this whole topic of sending one's children and husband to learn is connected with the rectification of the covenant.

Wisdom and understanding here are Rivkah and Leah. רבקה לאה = 307 plus 36 = 343. Now let's take the women in da'at, tiferet, and yesod: they are רחל יוכבד חנה = 238 plus 42 plus 63 equals 343. So the two axes left-to-right in the intellectual sefirot and up-down along the middle axis, both equal the same number.

Now we come to Serach, who symbolizes a woman involved in art. All art is connected with imagination, and Serach is a woman from the Aggadic literature. There are women whose entire thing is fantasy. If she uses this sense well, in the right way, she can create art with it. This is netzach. What is most similar to this is in our model of the colors, where netzach is violet, which is actually not in the spectrum of colors, it is like an imaginary color.

Bityah is in hod, acknowledgment. She is a convert. So all the women who identify themselves as ba'alot teshuvah or converts, connect with her chamber.

Esther we explained already in the class.