

Fascinating INSIGHTS

יב' מרחשון תשפ"ו
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פרשת לך לך
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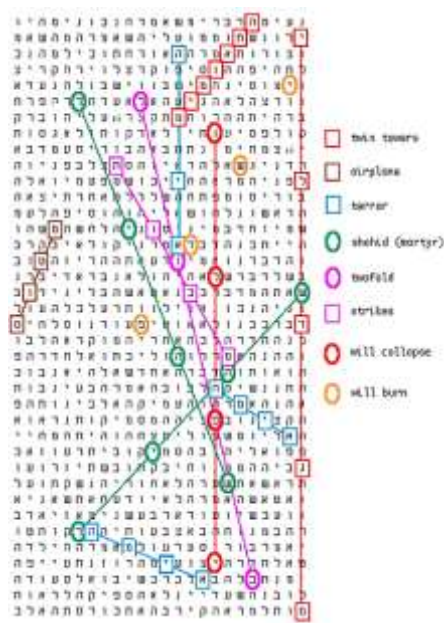
[September 11th in the Torah](#)

In his first address to the nation following the attacks of September 11, 2001, President

George W. Bush quoted the words of Tehillim, גם כי אֵלֶּךָ בְּגִיאַת צִלְמָנוֹת לֹא אֵירָא רָע כִּי אִתָּךְ עִמָּדִי, though I walk in the valley overshadowed by death, I don't fear because you are with me.¹

Now, September 11, 2001 fell on כ"ג אלול. Using a simplified form of the Bible-code method, we find astonishing letter patterns. If we take every second letter beginning with the word אֵלֶּךָ, we come to the date these tragedies took place, כ"ג אלול, in addition to the word מוֹת, death. That is, אֵלֶּךָ בְּגִיאַת צִלְמָנוֹת לֹא.

On the very day that America experienced this unprecedented tragedy, the words of David Hamelech, written thousands of years earlier, were being spoken to people plunged into fear: גם כי אֵלֶּךָ בְּגִיאַת צִלְמָנוֹת, לֹא אֵירָא רָע, כִּי אִתָּךְ עִמָּדִי.



The answer to fear is contained in the same pasuk. David Hamelech does not say that there will be no צִלְמָנוֹת, no valley of the shadow of death. He says that even when we enter that valley, לֹא אֵירָא רָע, I will not fear evil because כִּי אִתָּךְ עִמָּדִי, You are

with me. When a person realizes that Hashem is the one in charge, then there is nothing to fear.

We may not understand why something happens, and we certainly cannot control what happens, but we can remember that אִתָּךְ עִמָּדִי, Hashem is with us even there. The message: the valley may be frightening, but we never walk through it alone.

[The Ramchal's Mysterious Mission](#)

R' Yehuda Sheinfeld in his sefer Nofech Da'as Tikunei Zohar² writes that the Ramchal

said before his passing that he was a reincarnation of R' Akiva ben Yosef (i.e., R' Akiva),³ and therefore he was buried next to the grave of R' Akiva.⁴



With this he explains the reason that so many of the sages in that generation opposed the Ramchal.⁵ It was because he was a gilgul of R' Akiva and he came to rectify his early years when he was an *Am Haaretz* and hated Torah scholars.⁶ Now he would be pursued and hated by Torah scholars in order to be rectified.

The reason why his rebbe, R' Yeshaya Bassan, stood firmly on his side during the opposition was because he also was from the *neshama* of R' Akiva.⁷ Since they were both from the same source, they loved one another.

If R' Yeshaya Bassan was from the *neshama* of R' Akiva, then why wasn't he also persecuted like the Ramchal? The answer is because he was rooted in the later years of R' Akiva when he was already a Torah scholar.⁸

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[Bend to Blend](#)

The word עַם, meaning "nation" or "people," is related to the word עִם, meaning "with." This connection reflects a fundamental idea about what makes a nation: people living

¹ Tehillim 23:4.

² In the introduction, p. 118.

³ See Yarim Moshe, p. 91.

⁴ They are buried directly next to each other in the city of Tevarya.

⁵ The leading Italian rabbinical authorities threatened to excommunicate him. This was because the Jewish community was still reeling from the episode of the false Moshiah, Shabsai Tzvi, and the similarities between the Ramchal's writings and Shabsai Tzvi's were seen as being particularly dangerous and heretical. In 1735, the Ramchal left Italy to go to Amsterdam, with the belief that in the more liberal environment there, he would be able to pursue his mystical interests. When he passed through Germany, he appealed to the local rabbinical authorities to protect him

from the threats of the Italian rabbis. However, they refused and forced him to sign a document which said that all the teachings of the maggid (the malach whom the Ramchal would learn with) were false. Most of the Ramchal's writings were burned, though some did survive.

⁶ Pesachim 49b.

⁷ In a letter dated Sunday, the 18th of the month of Shevat in the year 1730, the Ramchal wrote to his Rebbe, R' Yeshaya Bassan, after he asked about the source of his soul: "I have already informed *l'kavod toraso* (referring to his Rebbe, R' Yeshaya Bassan) regarding your root soul is from Rabbi Akiva ben Yosef..." (Igros Ramchal U'bnei Doro, 86, Otzros Ramchal, p. 322 and Yarim Moshe, p. 137)

⁸ Otzar Hagilgulim, Rishonim and Achronim, pp. 222-223.

with one another, bound together by a sense of unity and fellowship.

True unity requires humility. If everyone insists on their firm position, being rigid and inflexible, there can be no genuine עם. To become part of a community, a person must sometimes dim his own prominence and make room for others.

This is alluded to in the word עם, as it is connected to the word עוממות, dimmed or subdued.⁹ An עם is created when individuals learn to live עם, with one another. That requires each person to לעמם, to step back and make room for others.

The Rabbi, the Reincarnation, and the Rift

How could it be that such a tzadik as R' Yehonasan Eibeschutz (1690-1764) had such machlokes against him to the extent that the Yaavetz, R' Yaakov Emden (1697-1776), suspected him of being from the sect of the followers of the false Moshiach Shabsai Tzvi, and R' Emden stirred up the whole world against him? Why was this decreed upon him?



This can be understood according to what R' Yitzchak Isaac of Komarna (1806-1874)¹⁰ wrote: at times, a tzadik stands embroiled in a controversy due to a previous incarnation, just as R' Yehonasan, who himself was an exceedingly lofty soul, had had in a previous lifetime. A great controversy was directed against him, in order to weaken his mind and break his heart, so as to refine and rectify him.

R' Yitzchak Isaac of Komarna further explains that R' **Yehonasan** Eibeschutz had been the reincarnation of someone else with the same name. And that is, **Yehonasan** ben Gershom,¹¹ who was a priest in the idolatrous episode of *Pesel Michah*. Due to this, he needed to undergo a rectification, and therefore R' Yehonasan Eibeschutz came in reincarnation. R' Yehonasan Eibeschutz spread Torah his entire life, but his days were full of pain and suffering, in order to atone for the sin of his previous incarnation.

Similarly, R' Akiva Yosef Schlesinger (1837-1922),¹² the son-in-law of R' Hillel Kolmaya, wrote before Pesach in the year 1860 that a great mekubal from Tibet came. Among the many things he said was about the great

dispute that occurred between R' Yehonasan Eibeschutz and R' Yaakov Emden. R' Yehonasan Eibeschutz had been a reincarnation of Yehonasan ben Gershom who had become a priest in the episode of *Pesel Michah*, and therefore was accused of being from the sect of Shabsai Tzvi and endured persecution throughout his life. This was in order to rectify that flaw.

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L'ilui Nishmas Netanel Yehonatan Shakroun Hy"d

Build With a Mission, Not Just an Addition

The Torah says, לא תשים דמים בביתך, so that you will not place blood in your house. Simply, this is referring to making a protective fence around your roof.¹³

However, there is a deeper meaning that lies here. The word דמים means blood, but it can also refer to money. The pasuk can be understood as a message that we should not put money into our homes just to make it bigger or nicer. The money should serve a mitzvah purpose, such as hachnasas orchim, having space for sefarim or other mitzvos. Money should not be an end in itself, but a means of serving Hashem. Construct more rooms in your house so you can host more guests. Have ample space in your house for sefarim. A wealthy man can also live simply and give away much of their money to charities. The true value of wealth is not how much we possess, but how much good we can accomplish with it.

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L'Refua Shleima Meir Shalom ben Nechama Aliza, Danielle bat Lucie,
Rafael ben Danielle and Naomi Devorah bas Daniel Noach

Rabbi Alt merited to learn under the tutelage of Rabbi Mordechai Friedlander ztz"l for close to five years and received semichah from Rabbi Zalman Nechemia Goldberg ztz"l. Rabbi Alt has written thousands of Torah articles on numerous topics for various websites and publications and is the author of fourteen fascinating and popular books. His writings, many of which have been translated into Yiddish, Hebrew, German, Spanish and French, inspire people across the spectrum of Jewish observance to live with the vibrancy and beauty of Torah. His shiurim can be found on various websites including Kol Halashon's. Rabbi Alt lectures, writes and teaches, and is passionate about inspiring Jews of all levels of observance. He can be reached at yalt3285@gmail.com or on WhatsApp at +972 54 849 5217.

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⁹ As in Pesachim 27a. See Rabbeinu Bachaye in Kad Hakemeh, Erech Rosh Hashana, p. 70.

¹⁰ Nesiv Mitzvosecha, Shvil Hatorah, Chapter 1.

¹¹ Sefer Shoftim 18:30.

¹² Shomru Mishpat, Volume 2, p. 72a.

¹³ Devarim 22:8.