

Moishe Rabbenu and the significance of 21/42 – Choson Torah Dr J Freilich

כ תשרי תש"פ – 19th October 2019 – שבת חול המועד סוכות תש"פ

In the last verse of וזאת הברכה it says about Moshe Rabbenu that no other prophet arose like him in Israel .. ולכל המורא הגדולwhich most meforshim understand as referring to the visual or fearful experience of Matan Torah.

The Meshech Chochma (M.C.), author of the Or Someach on the Rambam explains it in a different connotation. Hashem revealed himself to Moishe Rabbenu at the סנה with the name אהיה אשר אהיה. The gematria of אהיה is 21 and twice that is 42. The Rambam, in Hilchos Tefillin Perek ד Halochah י"ד, says that Hashem's name appears 21 times in the 4 Parshas contained in the Tefillin Shel Rosh and similarly in the Shel Yod. Hence, when we wear both Tefillin, we are bearing Hashem's name 42 times. Now Chazal say in the fourth Perek of Gemara Kiddushin "One who knows Him, His fear will be on the people". Thus we can understand the Possuk in Devorim Chap. 28 v.10 "The people of the land shall see that the name of Hashem is upon you and shall fear you". Only the tefillin Shel Rosh are visible and are only worn after first putting on the Shel Yod. Consequently, it is the 42 occurrences of Hashem's name in the Tefillin that will instil the fear. The M. C. says we should interpret "the great fear" mentioned in our verse as a reference to the Shem of 42 which was revealed to Moishe R' and which is also alluded to in the Creation (cf Rabbenu Bachya). Continues the M.C., on Shabbos, when we do not don the Tefillin, we compensate by saying the 7 Brochos of the 4 Amidas and saying (at least) twice מזור שיר ליום השבת which also contains Hashem's name 7 times, making a total of 42 mentions of Hashem.

The Chasam Sofer in Toras Moishe says the following: The possuk וְהָיִיתָ אִךְ שְׁמַח is quoted as extending the mitzvah of Simchah to include the night (and day) of Shemini Atseres. How does this work? He notes that when it comes to serving Hashem, the night-time counts equally to the day-time. As we say, וְהָגִיתָ בּוֹ יוֹמָם וּלְיָלֵה. Therefore, even when we sleep at night, it should be with a view to giving us strength to study Torah and perform the mitzvos. In this way, each 24 hour period counts as double service to Hashem. When we left Mitzraim we had 42 journeys to extract ourselves from the Tumah of Eretz Mitzraim and be prepared for the Kedushah of Eretz Yisroel. We also had 42 days, after the 7 days of Pesach, to prepare ourselves for Matan Torah. However, in going from Rosh Hashonah to Shemini Atseres, where we are going from Kodesh to Kodesh, the nights are also taken into account. The 21 (gematria of אִךְ) days count as 42 and we rejoice at reaching this summit of Kedusha on Shemini Atseres.

In the last verses of the Torah, we read Moishe R' died עַל פִּי ה' and then it says וַיִּקְבֹּר אֹתוֹ בְּגִי. The Midrash explains that on account of the holiness of Moishe R', the Malach Hamovess was unable to convince Moishe's Neshama that it had to leave his body. Only Kavayochel Hashem Himself could entice the Neshama away. Rashi initially explains that Moishe R' was buried by Hashem Himself. This fits well with how the Torah describes Moshe R' as the ultimate עַבְד ה'. The Yalkut Shimoni explains that Hashem said that since Moishe R' alone occupied himself with taking out the coffin of Yosaif Hatzadik from Egypt, as his reward, He would bury him. This shows what a great Mitzva it is to bring a Jewish person to Kever Yisroel.

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