



Delving into the Words of the Maggid of Kozhnitz zy" a

Using the 21 "Tagin" to Transform the 21 Days of Bein HaMetzarim from "Din" to "Rachamim"

We have entered the three weeks of **Bein HaMetzarim** extending from Shivah Asar B'Tammuz to Tishah B'Av. The source for this name is the passuk in Eichah (1, 3): "כל רודפיה: **all her pursuers overtook her** "bein hametzarim" (literally: "between the narrow straits," referring to times of trouble, dire straits). Citing a Midrash Aggadah, Rashi explains that this is a reference to the period **between Shivah Asar B'Tammuz to Tishah B'Av**. In this essay, we wish to focus on an important, basic concept: These three weeks are an integral part of the sacred ten-week journey extending from Shivah Asar B'Tammuz until the upcoming, auspicious Rosh HaShanah.

This is evident from what the Tur writes (O.C. 428) in the name of the Pesikta and is brought down by the author of the Shulchan Aruch (ibid. 8) describing the order of the Haftarot that are read on these ten Shabbasos: **From Shivah Asar B'Tammuz and onward, we read the Haftarot of ג' דפורענותא followed by the ד' דנחמתא**. The three Haftarot of ג' דפורענותא—**three of suffering**—contain the admonitions of the neviim concerning the suffering and punishments that will ensue during the times of the churban. They are: "דברי ירמיהו", "שמעו דבר ה'", "חזון ישעיהו". In contrast, the seven Haftarot of ד' דנחמתא—**seven of consolation**—that follow Tishah B'Av, are words of consolation delivered to the people through the neviim. They are: "נחמו, ותאמר ציון", "ענייה סוערה, אנכי, רני עקרה, קומי אורי, שוש אשיש". Thus, there are precisely ten Shabbasos from the beginning of the **"three weeks"** until Rosh HaShanah.

Ten Weeks Designed to Reestablish the Ten Utterances of Creation

In Pri Tzaddik (Matos 9, Masei 11), the brilliant Rav Tzaddok HaKohen, zy" a, asserts that these ten Shabbasos correspond to the ten utterances with which the world was created, which correspond to the ten attributes with which HKB" H created the universe. Thus, the first three Haftarot correspond to the first three attributes associated with the intellect and brain: **דעת, בינה, חכמה**—literally translated as Wisdom, Intuition and Knowledge. The subsequent seven Haftarot correspond to the seven character traits associated with the heart: **חסד, גבורה, תפארת, נצה, הוד, יסוד, מלכות**—Love, Restraint, Beauty, Dominance, Empathy, Foundation and Kingship. [Translator's note: These traits are translated into English in many different ways, most of which do not do them justice.]

To achieve a better understanding of the practical significance of these ten Shabbasos, let us refer to a teaching in the Mishnah (Avos 5, 1): **"בעשרה מאמרות נברא העולם, ומה תלמוד לומר, והלא במאמר אחד יכול להיבראות, אלא להיפרע מן הרשעים שמאבדין את העולם שנברא בעשרה מאמרות, וליתן שכר טוב לצדיקים שמקיימין את העולם שנברא בעשרה מאמרות."** **The world was created by means of "ten utterances."** What does this come to teach us? Indeed, it could have been created with a single utterance; but this way allows for retribution from the wicked—who destroy the world that was created with ten utterances—and the bestowal

of ample reward to the righteous—who sustain the world that was created with ten utterances.

We are taught in our sacred sefarim—based on a teaching of the Arizal’s in Sha’ar HaKavanos (Rosh HaShanah 3)—that HKB”H renews the creation on every Rosh HaShanah based on the avodah of Yisrael. Here is what the Zera Kodesh writes on the subject (Rosh HaShanah):

Similarly, this is the function of the tzaddikim on Rosh HaShanah—to create a new world through their deeds. In this manner, they seal and write all of Yisrael for the good in all matters. This is the meaning of what we recite (Mussaf Rosh HaShanah) “היום הרת עולם”—today is the birth of the world. For, in reality, the world is created anew annually on Rosh HaShanah, returning to the situation that existed at the beginning of creation; and Yisrael create the heavens and the earth anew according to their will.

This teaches us that just as HKB”H created the world initially with the “ten utterances”; so, too, on every Rosh HaShanah, HKB”H reestablishes the creation with the “ten utterances.” This is the implication of the Mishnah (R.H. 32a): **“אין פוחתין מעשרה מלכויות, מעשרה זכרונות, מעשרה—שופרות—we recite (in Mussaf on Rosh HaShanah) no less than ten (pesukim) of Malchiyos, ten of Zichronos, and ten of Shofaros.** The Gemara provides clarification: **הני עשרה מלכויות כנגד מי... רבי יוחנן אמר כנגד עשרה מאמרות שבהן נברא העולם—to what do these ten pesukim of Malchiyos correspond? Rabbi Yochanan said: They correspond to the “ten utterances” with which the world was created.** We can posit based on our current discussion that the reason for this practice is because HKB”H renews the creation on every Rosh HaShanah with the “ten utterances.”

Ten Miracles Were Performed in the Beis HaMikdash

Accordingly, we can establish a connection between the period of Bein HaMetzarim and Rosh HaShanah. In the Midrash Tanchuma (Pekudei 2), our sages expounded on the passuk (Shemos 38, 21): **“אלה פקודי המשכן”—these are the accountings of the Mishkan. This is the significance**

of the passuk (Tehillim 26, 8): “Hashem, I love the shelter of Your house.” This refers to the Heichal that is aligned with the “place of Your glory’s dwelling.” Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai said: This implies that the Heichal down below is aligned with the Heichal up above, as it states (Shemos 15, 17): “Your dwelling-place that You, Hashem, have made; a Mikdash, my Lord, that Your hands established.” . . . Because it (the Mishkan/Mikdash) is equivalent to the creation of the world. The Midrash elaborates on how every part of the creation of the world was duplicated in the Beis HaMikdash (Mishkan).

This explains what we have learned in the Gemara (Berachos 55a): **“אמר רב יהודה אמר רב יודע היה בצלאל לצרף אותיות שנבראו בהן שמים וארץ, כתיב הכא וימלא אותו רוח אלקים בחכמה ובתבונה ובדעת, וכתיב התם ה’ בחכמה יסד ארץ כונן שמים בתבונה, וכתיב Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: Betzalel knew how to join the letters with which heaven and earth were created. From where do we derive this? It is written here in praise of Bezalel (Shemos 31, 3): “And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship”; and it is written there (with regard to creation of heaven and earth in Mishlei 3, 19): “The Lord, by wisdom, founded the earth; by understanding He established the heavens,” and it is written (ibid. 20): “By His knowledge the depths were broken up.” In other words, the construction of the Mishkan paralleled the creation of the heavens and the earth.**

This correlates beautifully with what the Gemara teaches regarding the inauguration of the Mishkan (Megillah 10b): **“תניא אותו היום היתה שמחה לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא כיום שנבראו בו שמים וארץ, כתיב הכא ויהי ביום השמיני, וכתיב התם ויהי כיום שנבראו בו שמים וארץ, ערב ויהי בוקר יום אחד.” It was taught in a Baraisa: That day there was as much happiness for HKB”H as on the day the heavens and the earth were created. Here it is written (Vayikra 9, 1): “And it was on the eighth day,” and there it is written (Bereishis 1, 5): “And it was evening, and it was morning, one day.” We can suggest that it was for this reason that they taught in the Mishnah (Avos 5, 5): **“עשרה נסים נעשו לאבותינו בבית המקדש”—ten miracles were performed for our ancestors in the****

Beis HaMikdash. They relate to the “**ten utterances**” with which the world was created.

Now, while it is true that the tzaddikim sustain the world that was created with “ten utterances” with their Torah-study and performance of mitzvos; conversely, the reshaim destroy the world that was created with “ten utterances.” We see that at the time of the churban, the damage to the “ten utterances” caused the destruction of our Batei Mikdash. Had HKB”H not displayed His wrath to incite Yisrael to perform teshuvah and make amends for what they had damaged, the entire world would have been destroyed.

Therefore, in His infinite mercy and kindness, HKB”H gave us ten Shabbasos from the beginning of Bein HaMetzarim until Rosh HaShanah to remedy the damage Yisrael has caused to the “ten utterances” by means of teshuvah and good deeds. In the merit of this tikun, HKB”H will renew the creation on Rosh HaShanah with the “ten utterances.” We will also merit building the Beis HaMikdash which is equated with the creation of the world.

Let us digress to explain why these ten Shabbasos are divided into two parts. As explained, on the first three Shabbasos of Bein HaMetzarim, we read disheartening Haftarot about suffering and punishment; they correspond to the first three sefirot of **chochmah, binah, and da’as**. On the following seven Shabbasos, we read the Haftarot of consolation; they correspond to the lower seven sefirot of **chesed, gevurah, Tiferes, netzach, hod, yesod, and malchus**.

We will begin with what the author of the Tanya writes in Likutei Amarim (Chapter 3). He explains that the ten faculties operative in the human soul are divided into intellect and midos (emotional attributes). The intellect in a person’s head is comprised of the first three—chochmah, binah, and da’as. They represent three levels of contemplating the greatness of Hashem. As a result of this intellectual investigation, the heart is influenced to serve Hashem with the seven midos. Chesed is characterized by love of Hashem; gevurah is related to fear and reverence (awe) of Hashem; Tiferes involves glorifying Hashem;

netzach focuses on defeating the yetzer hara; hod inspires a person to express gratitude to Hashem for all that He does; yesod enables a person to connect and attach to Hashem; the goal of malchus is to establish the dominion of HKB”H over all 248 limbs and 365 sinews in the human body.

We will now extend this classification to the ten Shabbasos. The first three Shabbasos align with **chochmah, binah, and da’as**. They enable us to contemplate how much distress we have caused the holy Shechinah as a consequence of the churban Beis HaMikdash and our galus from our land. By awakening to make amends for all of our wrongdoings, we will merit receiving an abundance of kedushah during the following seven weeks and Shabbasos leading up to Rosh HaShanah. This will inspire us to serve Hashem with the seven midos and to be deserving of the consolation proffered by the neviim in the seven Haftarot of consolation. In the merit of this teshuvah, HKB”H will renew creation with the “ten utterances”—that were rectified on the previous ten Shabbasos—on Rosh HaShanah. Ultimately, in keeping with the prophecies of the neviim, we will be privileged to exit galus, experience the complete geulah and the building of the third Beis HaMikdash, swiftly, in our times.

Focusing on the 21 Extensions on the Letters ג”ז ג”ג שעת”ז

I had a wonderful idea concerning our task and focus during the 21 days of Bein HaMetzarim and our sacred ten-week journey to Rosh HaShanah. We have learned in the Mishnah (Avos 4, 5): **”וכך היה הלל אומר ודאשתמש בתגא” חלף—so too, Hillel used to say: He who exploits the crown (of Torah for personal use) shall fade away.** The Bartenura provides us with the simple, straightforward interpretation of Hillel’s statement: **If a person uses the crown of Torah like instruments (for profit), he will pass away from the world (forfeiting what he would have earned with a life of Torah).**

Notwithstanding, in Avos Yisrael (Avos ibid.), the holy Maggid of Kozhnitz, zy”a, relates Hillel’s statement to the avodah required of us during the three weeks of Bein

HaMetzarim. He stresses the vital importance of focusing “בתגא”—on the extension adorning the tops of letters in a sefer Torah. In the merit of serving Hashem in this manner, “חלה”—we will merit transforming these days from a period of “hester panim”—divine concealment—into a period of revelation of the brilliant divine illumination. [Translator’s note: In the plain interpretation of the Bartenura, the term “חלה” means dying; in the interpretation of the Avodas Yisrael, it means changing and transforming.]

To fully understand his intriguing interpretation, we will refer to a passage in the Gemara (Menachos 29b): אמר רבא—**Rava said: Seven letters require three tagin** (adornments on top of the letters resembling miniatures of the letter “zayin”) **each. They are the “shin,” “ayin,” “tet,” “nun,” “gimel,” and (both forms of the) “tzadi.”** Rashi provides the following clarification: **One leans to the right; one leans to the left; one faces straight up.** In total, we have 21 “tagin”—adornments—on these seven letters corresponding to the 21 days of Bein HaMetzarim.

Based on this, here is what Hillel is saying: **ודאשתמש בתגא**—a person who possesses the knowledge to utilize these **21** “tagin” to enhance his efforts to combat and overcome the yetzer, in order to serve Hashem, “חלה”—he will succeed in transforming these **21** days of “hester panim” into days of “divine revelation” characterized by a brilliant illumination.

Clearly, this suggestion of the Avodas Yisrael requires further clarification. Without a doubt, it is vital to serve Hashem with increased intensity and devotion especially during this period of “hester panim.” This is emphasized in many of our sacred sefarim and is alluded to by the pronouncement of Shlomo HaMelech (Koheles 2, 13): **“וראיתי אני שיש יתרון לחכמה מן הסכלות כיתרון האור מן החושך”**—**and I perceived that wisdom exceeds folly as does the light exceed the darkness**—i.e., one cannot fully appreciate the light until one has been stuck in the darkness. Yet, this does not explain the connection with the “tagin” that adorn the letters **שעטנ”ז**, and how we are supposed to use them to intensify our service of Hashem.

The Letters **שעטנ”ז** Allude to Three Klipos that Wreak Havoc during the Three Weeks of Bein HaMetzarim

As a loyal servant in the presence of his master, I would like to clarify the assertion of the righteous Maggid of Kozhnitz, zy”a. In the sefer Igeres HaTiyul, Rabeinu Chaim, the brother of the Maharal of Prague, ztz”l, explains why the letters **שעטנ”ז** specifically require “tagin”: It is because they are an anagram for three powerful prosecutors named **שט”ן ע”ז ג”ץ**. The “tagin” are like swords and spears to protect us from those harmful forces.

In the gloss of Tiyul BaPardes, the esteemed Rabbi of Shimluya, ztz”l, provides a wonderful rationale for this tradition. Since the “tagin” are miniatures of the letter “zayin,” they function as **“כלי זיין”**—weapons that defend and protect Yisrael against the three klipos **שט”ן ע”ז ג”ץ**. The source for this idea is the Rambam (Hilchos Tefillin 2, 8).

We find support for this explanation in the Smag (Mitzvas Asei 25). He cites a handwritten version of Rashi stating that the seven letters **שעטנ”ז** represent a man holding his weapon in his hand and waving it to the right, to the left, and in front of him to combat his enemies. In keeping with our current discussion, these letters are battling the three klipos of **שט”ן ע”ז ג”ץ** with their “tagin.”

The Wonderful Explanation of the Ohev Yisrael concerning the Crowns HKB”H Ties for Ba’alei Teshuvah

I would now like to introduce a precious, illuminating teaching from the sefer Ohev Yisrael authored by the great Rabbi of Apta, zy”a. He addresses an intriguing statement in the Gemara (Menachos 29b): **“When Moshe ascended to the heavens, he found HKB”H attaching crowns to the letters.”** Clearly, this deserves further explanation. What was the nature of these crowns? He identifies these crowns as the “tagin” that adorn the letters **שעטנ”ז**. He refers to them as the “crown of ba’alei teshuvah,” and quotes the statement of Chazal (Berachos 34b): **“במקום שבעלי תשובה עומדים צדיקים גמורים אינם יכולים לעמוד שם”**—**in the place where ba’alei teshuvah stand, complete tzaddikim cannot**

stand there. This is a tremendous benefit and chesed that HKB”H provides for ba’alei teshuvah. This provides them with sustenance (life support) from the higher spheres where the “chitzonim”—external, evil forces—have no power or control. Until now, their sustenance came from the source of tumah, heaven forbid. However, when this person committed himself to perform true teshuvah with self-sacrifice, his sustenance from the klipos was discontinued immediately. For this purpose, HKB”H prepared the “tagin” for them to draw sustenance from the higher spheres of influence.

We can now better appreciate the remarks of the Avodas Yisrael regarding the fascinating relationship between the 21 “tagin” on the letters **שעטני”ז ג”ץ** and the 21 days of Bein HaMetzarim. He is teaching us that the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed during the three weeks of Bein HaMetzarim because of the powerful accusations of the three klipos associated with the seven letters **שט”ן ע”ז ג”ץ**.

Therefore, HKB”H instructed us to adorn each of these seven letters with three “tagin.” These 21 “tagin” are designed to protect Yisrael from these three klipos during these 21 days during which they prevail. Thus, it behooves us to take advantage of these 21 “tagin” during the days of Bein HaMetzarim to bolster ourselves against these three dangerous klipos. Furthermore, as per the interpretation of the Maggid of Mezritch, ztz”l, the following will be true: **“כל רודפיה השיגוה בין המצרים”—all those who pursue her—**i.e., kedushah and service of Hashem—can achieve his goals to a higher degree during the **Bein HaMetzarim**.

Let us add an important point. If we succeed in achieving these goals, we are actually adorning HKB”H with 21 **crowns**, which are called **“tagin”** in Aramaic. This is a special opportunity that is within our reach—more so than during times not associated with “hester panim.” This is all due to the 21 “tagin” inscribed in a sefer Torah atop the letters **שעטני”ז ג”ץ**.

This coincides with the teaching in the Zohar hakadosh (Tetzaveh 184a): **There is no light like the light that emerges from the darkness . . . and there is no service of HKB”H other than that coming from darkness . . . and**

there is no good other than that which comes from evil. This explains Chazal’s statement beautifully: **“In the place where ba’alei teshuvah stand, complete tzaddikim cannot stand there.”** It is because ba’alei teshuvah are besieged and harassed by the yetzer; it does not let up. By resisting and overcoming the yetzer to perform teshuvah and serve Hashem, they are rewarded with an incredible revelation of light.

The 21 Days of Bein HaMetzarim in Contrast to the 21 Days from Rosh HaShanah thru Hoshana Rabbah

Proceeding along this enlightening path, we will now explain the vital relationship of the ten Shabbasos between the beginning of the Bein HaMetzarim and Rosh HaShanah. We will begin by introducing a precious insight from the Maharsha in Chiddushei Aggados (Berachos 8b). There are two 21-day periods in the Jewish calendar aimed at atoning for our sins and cleansing us of all iniquities. They are the 21 days from Shivah Asar B’Tammuz until Tishah B’Av—during which the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed—and the 21 days of teshuvah extending from Rosh HaShanah thru Hoshana Rabbah. They differ in that the former are days of grief related to the churban of the Beis HaMikdash; whereas the latter are days of teshuvah associated with simchah.

The Maharsha draws an analogy between these two periods of time and the two he-goats of Yom Kippur. The 21 days of teshuvah and simchah from Rosh HaShanah thru Hoshana Rabbah are comparable to the **he-goat offered to Hashem**; whereas the 21 days of sadness and mourning are comparable to the **he-goat sent to Azazel**.

Let us elaborate. Had Yisrael performed proper teshuvah during the 21 days of joy and Yom Tov from Rosh HaShanah thru Hoshana Rabbah, those days would have sufficed to cleanse their iniquities; this is the parallel of the **he-goat to Hashem**; they would not have required the 21 days of grief related to the churban and galus of Bein HaMetzarim. Since they did not perform appropriate teshuvah during those 21 days, they forced HKB”H, so to speak, to cleanse their iniquities via the second set of 21

days of Bein HaMetzarim; this is the parallel of the **he-goat to Azazel**.

This explains magnificently the relationship between the 21 days of Bein HaMetzarim and the 21 days from Rosh HaShanah thru Hoshana Rabbah. With the Bein HaMetzarim, we begin a crucial journey of ten Shabbasos culminating in Rosh HaShanah. As explained, the period of Bein HaMetzarim is characterized by “hester panim” and resembles the **he-goat to Azazel**. During these 21 days, it is our sacred duty to adorn HKB”H with the 21 crowns of the

“tagin.” After all, there is no greater honor for HKB”H than our intense efforts to draw closer to Him, especially during times of divine concealment. This process constitutes a vital preparation for Rosh HaShanah and the ensuing 21 days of teshuvah that are akin to the **he-goat to Hashem**. In this manner, we will succeed in renewing the creation of the world with the “ten utterances,” and witnessing the building of the third Beis HaMikdash and the arrival of the complete geulah with the coming of our righteous Mashiach—swiftly, in our times! Amen.



Our thanks and blessings are given to those who donated for the publication of our weekly dvar Torah for the merit of **אחינו בני ישראל**

לעילוי נשמת -
Yoselovsky Family -
his father Reb Shabsy
Ben Yitzchok Isaac ע"ה

לעילוי נשמת -
Family Madeb -
their dear mother
Lea bat Virgini ע"ה

לזכות
Arthur & Randi Luxenberg
of their wonderfull parents, children and grandchildren
לעילוי נשמת His Father ר' יצחק יהודה בן ר' אברהם ע"ה

To receive the mamarim by email: mamarim@shvileipinchas.com