

Fascinating INSIGHTS

י"ז טבת תשפ"א

January 1, 2021

פרישת ירח

9th year, edition 367

COMING SOON Bez"H

Incredible Insights—The Sefer (in English)

To purchase the sefer, Fascinating Insights, send an email to yalt3285@gmail.com or visit <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08929ZCNM>.

To join the thousands of recipients and receive these insights free on a weekly email, obtain previous articles, feedback, comments, suggestions (on how to spread the insights of this publication further, make it more appealing or anything else), to support or dedicate this publication which has been in six continents and more than forty countries, or if you know anyone who is interested in receiving these insights weekly, please contact the author, Rabbi Yehoshua Alt, at yalt3285@gmail.com. Thank you.

לעילוי נשמת שלמה יהודה בן אברהם יעקב

This newsletter can also be viewed at <https://www.dirshu.co.il/category/הורדות-עלוניים/fascinating-insights/> and <http://www.ladaat.info/showgil.aspx?par=20200425&gil=2725>.

Archives: <https://parshasheets.com/?s=Rabbi+Yehoshua+Alt>

To view these essays in German, please visit <https://judentum.online/>

Please feel free to print some copies of this publication and distribute it in your local Shul for the public, having a hand in spreading Torah.

Relating Good News

The Pele Yoatz¹ tells us that if a person has good news for someone, he should quickly inform him. This gives life to the recipient of the news. Quickly informing the other person is considered a mitzva.² He writes further that this is included in Gemilus Chasadim.

The Meor Einayim³ tells us that one who relates good news has a spark of Eliyahu Hanavi because Eliyahu relates all good news in the world.⁴ For this reason, when the opportunity arises to say over good news, everyone wants to run and tell it over since his Neshama feels Eliyahu. One can use such a time to ascend spiritual heights. Additionally, a spark of Eliyahu enters the one whom the news is being said to and he is more easily able to connect to Hashem!

Man and Animal

R' Mordechai Yosef Izbitzer⁵ (1801-1854) comments on **נעשה אדם**, let us make man, that Hashem

¹ א.ם. בשורה, s.v.

² Serach the daughter of Asher informed Yaakov that Yosef was alive and thus she merited to enter Gan Eden alive (See Targum Yonasan, Breishis 46:17 and Derech Eretz Zuta, chapter 1).

³ Vayeitzei, s.v. וישא יעקב.

⁴ In Birchas Hamazon we say **אלהינו הנביא** זכור לטוב ויבשר לנו בשורות **ישועות ונחמות**, **ויובות**, May He send us Eliyahu—he is remembered for good—to proclaim to us good tidings, salvations and consolations. In the Zemer of **אלהינו הנביא** which we sing on Motzai Shabbos, it says **איש** אִישׁ פָּקִיד על כל בשורות טובות, the man appointed over all good tidings.

⁵ ויאמר...נעשה, Breishis, s.v. מי השלוח חלק שני. He became orphaned from his father. He became a student of R' Simcha Bunim where he joined R' Menachem Mendel of Kotzk. When R' Menachem Mendel became the Rebbe of Kotzk, R' Mordechai Yosef became his student there. In 1839, he became rebbe in Tomaszow, subsequently moving to Izbitz. His leading disciple was R' Yehuda Leib Eiger (1816-1888), grandson of R' Akiva Eiger. The Izbitzer's grandson was R' Gershon Henoch Ridziner. The Izbitzer was also the rebbe of R'

was consulting the creatures in regard to them becoming part of man. The creatures, that granted permission are now within man. As a result, man is able to use these qualities that were endowed to the creatures, as we shall explain.

Included in this, is that man contains the different characteristics of animals. For example, one animal may be sly while another is brazen. Some are lazy while others are quick. We too have these qualities and are able to use them in positive—or negative—ways. Procrastination and laziness can be used negatively to avoid doing a task, or positively to avoid sin. The trait of cunningness can be used to cheat or to defeat the evil inclination, as in **באין תחבולות יפל עם**, without strategies, people fail.⁶ In this light we can comprehend **עז כנמר, רץ** as an eagle, swift as a deer...to be bold as a leopard, light as an eagle, swift as a deer...to do the will of Hashem.⁷ How does the Shulchan Aruch begin? **יתגבר כארי**, one should be strong as a lion in awakening in the morning to serve Hashem.

This explains why some people have names of animals. These include **צבי**, deer; **דוב**, bear; **זאב**, wolf; **אריה**, lion; **יונה**, dove; **צפורה**, bird. It comes as no surprise that when Yaakov and Moshe blessed the shevatim, different animals are mentioned—**גור אריה יהודה**, a lion cub is Yehuda; **יששכר חמר גרם**, Yissaschar is a strong-boned donkey; **יה דן נחש...שפיפן עלי ארה**, Don will be a snake... a viper by the path; **נפתלי אילה שלהה**, Naftali is a hind; **ולגד...כלביא שכן**, Gad dwells like a lion.⁸

Since we have all these qualities, we have free choice⁹ as well as being subjected to **שכר ועונש**, reward and punishment. Animals, on the other hand, have their own unique attributes and consequently don't have free choice.¹⁰ As a result, animals don't have **שכר ועונש**. Hashem

Tzadok Hakohen. This came as a result of R' Tzadok needing a **היתר** from 100 rabbanim. Along this path he met the Divrei Chaim of Sanz, R' Shalom Belzer, and others. However, it was the Izbitzer who caught the attention of R' Tzadok when he was giving a Gemara shiur. From that time onward, he never left the Izbitzer. When R' Tzadok moved to Lublin, the **רַב—R' Berish Ashkenazi**—author of **נודע בשערים**, was opposed to Chassidus, especially against the path of the Izbitzer. When R' Berish saw R' Tzadok escorting the Izbitzer, he asked him how a great gaon such as R' Tzadok could subdue himself to someone like the Izbitzer, whom he said was on a lower level as he told R' Tzadok that he heard him say **פלפול** that the Izbitzer couldn't say. R' Tzadok retorted that many times the Gemara says **אבאי ורבא דאמרי תרויהו**, Abaye and Rava both said... On that one line, there is a six-page essay from R' Yehonoson Eibshitz. Who is greater—Abaye and Rava or R' Yehonoson Eibshitz? Certainly Abaye and Rava. R' Tzadok says the same applies to him and his rebbe.

⁶ Mishlei 11:14. See Tanya, Chapter 26.

⁷ Avos 5:23.

⁸ Breishis 49:9, 14, 17, 21. Devarim 33:20. In the time of Gideon we captured two leaders of Midian—**עַרְב** and **נָאָב** (Sefer Shoftim 7:25). These names are also those of harsh animals—the raven and wolf. Is it any surprise that their initials spell **עז**, bold-faced? Incidentally, **מדין** is rooted in the word **דין**, representing harshness.

⁹ See Rambam, Hilchos Teshuva, Chapter 5.

¹⁰ R' Yaakov Izbitzer (died in 1878), the eldest son and successor of R' Mordechai Yosef Izbitzer, points out in his sefer **Beis Yaakov** that the

therefore first consulted with the creatures before creating man, because they may lose out if man uses their qualities for evil.

The word בחירה is sourced in בחר, to choose. This is composed of the same letters as חרב (sword, also as in חורבן, destruction) since one can destroy by using his free will negatively. Rearranging these letters, we also get the word חבר, to connect,¹¹ since by using his free choice properly, one can connect to Hashem.¹²

It is no coincidence that the Beis Hamikdash is called בית הבחירה, since through utilizing our free choice we can either build it or destroy it. Through our daily actions we build or destroy the Beis Hamikdash, although we may not actually see this with our physical eyes. In fact, this is why the phrase בונה ירושלים is in the present tense, since through our current actions we build the Beis Hamikdash. Each mitzva is another brick in the wall.

It is because man has free choice that Reuven said to throw Yosef into the pit, since man can choose to kill someone who is not sentenced to death.¹³ Animals, however, would not touch a person if he were not liable to death according to Heaven. This is what is meant in ויצלהו מידם,¹⁴ he rescued them from their hand, which means from the hand of the one who has free choice that could alter the situation. With this, we can grasp a deeper meaning in מה יהיו חלומותיו... we will see what will become of his dreams... as free choice can cancel it.

Aging Advice

When Yaakov was blessing the sons of Yosef, he put his right hand on Ephraim and the left on Menashe. Yosef reacts and says לא כן אבי, not so father for this is the Bechor, put your right hand on his head. Yaakov responds ... ידעתי... I know...¹⁵ This alludes to the fact that the younger generation thinks they know better than those older. However, the older generation knows better (in general).¹⁶

head is above the body since we should aspire for spirituality. This is in contrast to animals, whose heads face downward to the ground, since they are all about the physical. This is consistent with בשמים ממעל ועל (Devarim 4:39), as ארץ represents spirituality and ארץ physicality. When we go to bed, our head is aligned with the rest of our body. Consequently, we recite קריאת שמע על המטה, so that we accept the sovereignty of Hashem even in such a situation.

¹¹ Rearranging the letters of בחירה, we get בחר-יה, to choose Hashem, as this is what one should use his free choice for. It therefore is no wonder that the letters of בחר also spell חרב, another name for Har Sinai (as in Devarim 4:10), as we choose Hashem through the Torah.

¹² "An animal has needs. Humans have a need to be needed." Otherwise, humans feel what is the purpose of their existence. Connecting to Hashem fills this void.

¹³ Breishis 37:20. Ohr Hachaim, 37:21.

¹⁴ Breishis 37:21.

¹⁵ Breishis 48:17-9.

¹⁶ At times the older generation can't relate to those younger because of a generation gap. What should be done in this situation? The Pasuk (48:10) tells us ויעני ישראל כבוד מוקן לא יוכל לראות—when there is a generation gap between the older and the younger generations and the elders can't understand those younger, then as the Pasuk there concludes וישק להם ויחבק להם—give them hugs and kisses, meaning show love to them.

It is a good idea to ask those older than us for advice before we act and as it says שאל אביך ויגידך זקניך לך, ask your father¹⁷ and he will relate it to you, your elders and they will tell you.¹⁸ R' Isser Zalman Meltzer¹⁹ (1870-1953) once told a Bar Mitzva boy who later became a Gadol, "I will give you a gift that will last you all your life. Many old people say had they known when they were young what they know now, they would have acted differently. Therefore, my advice to you is to always ask older people for their advice. Then you will have no regret. This is my gift of a lifetime to you."

To help understand this, let us present the following analogy: two people climb a mountain. One reaches the top while the other is only halfway up the mountain. The one who is already at the top can now guide the other person to the top as well as telling him the stumbling blocks that lie ahead and how to overcome them.²⁰

Rabbi Alt merited to learn under the tutelage of R' Mordechai Friedlander ztz"l for close to five years. He received Semicha from R' Zalman Nechemia Goldberg ztz"l. Rabbi Alt has written on numerous topics for various websites and publications and is the author of the Sefer, Fascinating Insights: Torah Perspectives on Unique Topics. His writings inspire people across the spectrum of Jewish observance to live with the vibrancy and beauty of Torah. He lives with his wife and family in a suburb of Yerushalayim where he studies, writes, and teaches. The author is passionate about teaching Jews of all levels of observance.

¹⁷ A famous writer once authored the following:

My father when I was...

4 years old- my daddy can do anything.

5- My daddy knows a whole lot.

6- My dad is smarter than your dad.

8- My dad doesn't know exactly everything.

10- In the olden days when my dad grew up, things were sure different.

12- Oh, well naturally, father doesn't know anything about that. He is too old to remember his childhood.

14- Don't pay attention to my father. He is so old-fashioned.

21- Him? My lord, he's hopelessly out-of-date.

25- Dad knows a little bit about it, but then he should because he has been around for so long.

30- Maybe we should ask dad what he thinks. After all, he's had a lot of experience.

35- I'm not doing a single thing until I talk to my dad.

40- I wonder how dad would have handled it. He was so wise and had a world of experience.

50- I'd give anything if dad were here now so I could talk this over with him. Too bad I didn't appreciate how smart he was. I could have learned a lot from him.

¹⁸ Devarim 32:7. The Pasuk there also says בינו שנות דר ודר, understand the years of generation after generation. A deeper meaning is that each generation needs to be taught (שנות) according to its שינוי, its unique challenges. One generation may have a problem with Avoda Zara while another with technology.

¹⁹ At the age of 10, he learned at the Mir Yeshiva. At 14, he began studying at the Yeshiva in Volozhin under the Netziv and R' Chaim Soleveitchik where he remained for 7 years. His son-in-law was the famed R' Aharon Kotler. R' Meltzer was the Rosh Hayeshiva of the Yeshiva in Slutzk from 1903. In 1917, the Yeshiva moved to Kletzk, Poland. In his later years, he served as the Rosh Hayeshiva of Eitz Chaim in Yerushalayim. He is the author of the Sefer האזול, a commentary on the Rambam.

²⁰ Tangentially, there is another lesson here. One reaches the top and sees a most outstanding breathtaking view. The other is only halfway up the mountain and is so impressed with the view. The one who is already at the top says that is nothing, come to the top. Then you will really see an amazing view! This applies to life as at times those who are at a lower level of spirituality think they have attained a most amazing level. Those who are on a higher stature tell him, go further and you will see it gets even greater.