



# The Wondrous Jews

Looking at Jewish history, we notice that Jewish existence is obviously not in accordance with nature. We have been persecuted (See Vayikra 26:36) through pogroms, the Spanish Inquisition, Holocaust, blood libels, terrorists, mass murders, and so on. Incidentally, a fascinating explanation is said in the name of the Abarbenel וועבר עליך וואראך וואער ער איז דערמאנט אין תנ"ך, מתבוססת בדמיוך ואמר לך בדמיוך חיי I passed you and saw you wallowing in your blood, and I said to you that in your blood shall you live (Yechezkel 16:6). וואער ער איז דערמאנט אין תנ"ך, Hashem, look and pass through the pages of history, וואראך מתבוססת בדמיוך, I see that it is soaked in blood—the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, the massacres of 1648-49, pogroms, Siberia, Russia, the Holocaust, and so on. וואער ער איז דערמאנט אין תנ"ך, it is because of that blood that you lived, since these events brought you to teshuva, arousing people enemies without whom the Jewish people could not exist.

We have been exiled, oppressed, forced to convert, assimilated, intermarried, scattered throughout the world (Vayikra 26:33, Devarim 28:64), and reduced in number (Devarim 4:27, 28:62). Nevertheless, we continue to exist while those nations who once ruled the world—such as the Babylonians, Romans, and ancient Egyptians—are long gone. Our survival is amazing for many reasons. Among them are the global antisemitism, the intensity of it—Crusades, Arabs, Nazis, massacres in 1648-49, and so on—which defies description, as well as the great longevity of antisemitism. It has also been so irrational—blood libels where we are accused of using non-Jewish blood for our matzos; claims that we killed their god; and assertions that Jews control the world. Even those who have survived for thousands of

years, such as the Chinese, have done so because they are geographically isolated. This is in contrast to Israel, which is located among three continents—Europe, Asia and Africa! Paul Johnson, a non-Jewish historian and former writer for the New York Times, once wrote, “All peoples pass in and out of existence, but the Jew defies history.”

R' Shmshon Raphael Hirsch remarked that in truth we should say Hallel every day just for the miracle of Jewish existence (We don't because then it would become rote.). Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, once conducted a debate with the French Prince John Bathis de Baya, and asked, “Can you give me proof of the existence of G-d?” The prince answered, “The Jews.” R' Yaakov Emden (1697-1776) writes that the eternity of the Jewish nation with exile and persecutions over the years is a bigger miracle than Yetzias Mitzrayim and Krias Yam Suf (Hakdama to the Siddur of the Yaavetz, which was written close to 300 years ago. What would he say today?). In the words of the Aruch Hashulchan (Orach Chaim 1:10. See also Devarim 28:37, Rashi.): אין לך אות ומופת גדול מזה, there is no wonder greater than this.

We see this idea in the beginning of the Torah.

1) Avraham was 100 and Sarah was 90 when Yitzchak was born. This is in contrast to Yishmael, who was born to Hagar when she was young. Sarah didn't even have a womb but still had a child. The first child of the Jewish people was born in a miraculous fashion.

2) Avraham took Yitzchak to the עקידה, which appeared to be the end of his life (and consequently the end of the Jewish nation). He not only survived, but got married and began the Jewish existence

(Yevamos 64). It shouldn't be surprising that the name יצחק consists of the same letters as חץ חיי—what seemed like the end was just the beginning. To take this a step farther, the numerical value of יצחק is 208. This is the same as 26 (yud-hey-vav-hey) multiplied by eight (supernatural).

3) The number seven represents the natural world, whereas the number eight symbolizes transcendence. Examples of this are the following: There are seven days in the week, seven days of shiva, Sheva Brachos, seven notes in the musical scale, seven colors in the rainbow, seven continents, sheva mitzvos Bnei Noach, shemita in every seven years, seven shemita cycles in Yovel, and so on. The number eight is above that, beyond nature. In fact, the form of the number eight (8) is never-ending, unlike other numbers. Additionally, the symbol of infinity is the number eight on its side ( $\infty$ ). Because eight is above nature, it comes up in a number of different ways. For example, Chanukah is comprised of eight days, the גדול כהן wears eight garments, and Yom Kippur is the eighth day after the Kohen's seclusion (Yoma 2a).

A bris is performed on the eighth day, since the bris is on the part of the body from which the future progeny of the Jewish people come. Avraham, who had the first bris, begot Yitzchak and Yishmael. However, only יצחק was born after אברהם had his bris. Additionally, Yitzchak is the first one to have had a bris on the eighth day. Moreover, Yishmael had his bris at 13, when he possessed understanding (בר דעת), whereas with Yitzchak it was performed when he was eight days old and didn't possess any knowledge. It was beyond intellect, transcending nature. This signifies our supernatural existence.

## Rabbi Yehoshua Alt

*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](mailto:yalt3285@gmail.com). Thank you.*

*לעילוי נשמת שמואל אביגדור בן יצחק מאיר*

Coming Soon Bez"H

Incredible Insights—  
The Sefer (in English).

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