

Fascinating INSIGHTS

יא' אייר תשפ"א
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EXCITING NEWS: I am happy to announce that the book **Incredible Insights** is available for purchase and delivery at <https://www.amazon.com/dp/Bo8VCH8Z7T> where you can also see the reviews. It can also be bought from the author by sending an email to yalt3285@gmail.com. The essays contained in this book, written from a Torah outlook, deal with a wide array of assorted topics that are unique, inspiring, interesting, thought-provoking, encouraging, enlightening, and transformational. The book includes Haskamos from R' Shmuel Kamenetsky, R' Yisroel Reisman, R' Moshe Wolfson, R' Yitzchak Breitowitz, R' Zev Leff and R' Yitzchak Scheiner. Over the last number of years these insights have inspired thousands around the world, in more than forty countries. This read is for all ages. It has something for everyone, for beginners and scholars, and students and teachers. It makes a great gift for friends, relatives, business associates, and learning partners. Please spread the word about it.

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לעילוי נשמת שמואל אביגדור בן יצחק מאיר

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Israel and Israeli Soldiers

R' Yaakov Kamenetsky¹ (1891-1986) remarked that Hashem arranged the establishment of the country of Israel after the great destruction and despair that gripped the remaining Jews after the Holocaust, as well as in light of the despairing situation of Russian Jewry, in order to strengthen the identity of the Jews and maintain the connection between the Jews in exile and Klal Yisrael.

How did the State of Israel come about? Obvious miracles! In his book "A History of the Jews," Paul Johnson wrote: "On May 14, 1948, the state of Israel was declared. The next day, five mechanized armies attacked... sizably larger than the small band of Holocaust survivors defending Israel. The entire armament of the Israeli forces consisted of 17,600 rifles, 2,700 sten guns, 1,000 machine guns and 45,000 soldiers." In 1948, the land ratio of Arab land to Jewish land was 640 to 1. For

every acre of land that Jews possessed, the Arab nations had 640. Also, fewer than 5% of Jews alive at that time lived in Israel. A total of 650,000 Jews were surrounded and attacked by nations populated by 50 million Arabs. We were outnumbered 75 to 1.

In addition to this, let's recall that before the United Nations declared Israel an independent state, Palestine was ruled by the British. They had very strict rules against Jews owning guns. Consequently, there was surely no Israeli army. No military drills, no armaments, none of the normal exercises of military units. All of this continued until May 14, 1948. And on May 15, five Arab nations attacked Israel, one day after they were granted official statehood. Furthermore, for decades the Arabs were constantly at war with each other. As a result, they had practice with war. On the other hand, we had no air force, army or navy. Moreover, many times a nation has lost a war because the defending nation had to fight on more than one war front. In 1948, Israel wasn't fighting on one front because there was no front as they were attacked from every side.

Let's remember that between 1948 and 1973, the Arab nations declared war four times on tiny, frail Israel. Yet they didn't have one victory.

The secular Israeli newspaper *Maariv* had the following article on April 17, 1983: ... By all logic and by all human reasoning, everything that happened in 1948 is in the category of the impossible. It was impossible, with the limited arms that the Jews possessed, with the rudimentary international support they managed to garner, with the limited resources that were available to them, to do all that they did. To bring a system of public services into operation from nothing. To establish a military from its beginning. To sustain supplies and minimal services, and to run a war that had no clear delineated front or rear lines, no organized defense, no organized reserves of ammunition, and no expert commanders to lead its battalions!²

Military analysts are still stunned when they study the sweeping military victories against all odds in

² A French author from the latter part of the 19th century, Jon DeBileda wrote the following before the Russian Revolution, the rise of Nazi Germany, and prior to the ingathering of millions of Jews to Israel: "In essence, the Jewish people chuckle at all forms of anti-Semitism. Think all you want and you will not be able to find one form of brutality or strategy that has not been used in warfare against the Jewish People. I cannot be defeated says Judaism. All that you attempt to do to me today has been attempted 3,200 years prior in Egypt. Then tried the Babylonians and the Persians. Afterward tried the Romans and then others and others. There is no question that the Jew will outlive us all. This is an eternal people. They cannot be defeated. Understand this! Every war with them is a vain waste of time and manpower. Conversely, it is wise to sign a mutual covenant with them. How trustworthy and profitable they are as allies! Be their friends and they will pay you back in friendship one-hundred fold! This is an exalted and chosen people!"

¹ אמת ליעקב, Bo, 12:2, footnote 17.

Israeli wars, as it defies explanation. A cadet at West Point asked why the Six-Day War was not part of the curriculum. The general explained that Israel's victory in the Six-Day War wasn't studied because at West Point they study strategy and tactics, not miracles.³ In fact, R' Asher Wade related that when he was a chaplain on an army base in Berlin in 1974 there was a Jewish American officer named Stuart that started wearing a *kippa* although he wasn't particularly religious because of this incident at West Point.

About The Six-Day War in 1967, a German journalist summarized: "Nothing like this has happened in history. A force including 1,000 tanks, hundreds of artillery cannons, many rockets and fighter jets, and 100,000 soldiers armed from head to toe was destroyed in two days in an area covering hundreds of kilometers filled with reinforced outposts and installations. And this victory was carried out by a force that lost many soldiers and much equipment, positions, and vehicles. No military logic or natural cause can explain this monumental occurrence."⁴

Many open miracles have occurred throughout the existence of the state of Israel. In 1991, 39 scud missiles were shot at Israel. Although houses were destroyed, no one was killed (In contrast to a scud missile from Saudi Arabia that killed 28 Americans.). After this happened, a secular Israeli woman said this wasn't a miracle because things like this happen in Israel all the time.

How should we view those Israeli soldiers that have been killed? A student in the Kol Torah yeshiva in Yerushalayim, approached his Rosh Yeshiva, R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, and asked him if he may leave his Torah studies in the yeshiva to travel to the North of Eretz Yisrael for a short visit in order to daven at the graves of tzadikim in the Galil. R' Auerbach answered, "It is better to say in yeshiva, and study Torah." The student replied, "Isn't there a time I could go to visit the graves of tzadikim?" R' Auerbach answered, "In order to daven at the graves of tzadikim, one doesn't have to travel up to the Galil. Whenever I feel the need to daven at the graves of tzadikim, I go to Mount Herzl, [the national cemetery for fallen IDF soldiers in Yerushalayim], to the graves of the soldiers...who fell "*Al Kidush Hashem*" for the sanctification of G-d."⁵

³ In The Six-Day War, there was a tank that fired 100 shots without missing its target. Afterwards they sighted what appeared to be a troop carrier and they fired four shots without one hit. One of the soldiers shouted to the others in the tank, "Maybe it's ours?" They waited long enough to discover that it was an Israeli troop carrier that was in the wrong area!

⁴ No other country has faced such overwhelming odds against its very survival or experienced the same degree of endless international demonization or confronted the same relentless challenges to its very right to exist.

⁵ Sefer Oro Shel Olam, p. 380. When the members of the Mir Yeshiva fled Europe due to the Holocaust winding up in Shanghai, China, they were treated well by the local Chinese. Yet, there was a group of Chinese people that hated these Jews and plotted against them. They secretly arranged to kill these Jews of the Mir. However, a Chinese man, who had an affinity

Deeper Than Oil

The Gemara⁶ relates that the Romans once instituted three decrees against us: not to observe Shabbos, not to circumcise our sons and to have relations with Nidos. Who was the one that had these decrees ultimately abolished? R' Shimon Bar Yochai. With this the Imrei Chaim explains the term שמן in relation to R' Shimon Bar Yochai—שמון ששון מהבריד, שמן משחת קדש in the Zemer Bar Yochai—as שמן is an acronym for נדה, מילה, שבת, the three decrees he eliminated.

Simultaneous Love and Rejection

The Gemara⁷ says לעולם תהא שמאל דוחה וימין מקרבת, the left hand should push away but the right hand should draw close. That is to say, whenever one must rebuke another, he shouldn't reject the other completely, but should hold out warmly the possibility of reconciliation. R' Simcha Wasserman is bothered why it doesn't use the same hand. It should say the left hand or the right hand should push away and draw close. Why does it say the left hand should push away and the right hand to draw close? He explained that if one hand does both tasks then there is a separation between the pushing away and the drawing close. However, if both hands are involved then the pushing away and drawing close are simultaneous. This is the proper conduct when rebuking someone. A student may require rebuke but at the same time he should never feel banished.

When R' Dr. Abraham Twerski was a child he once played chess on Rosh Hashana. His rebbe called him to his office and expressed his disappointment with the young boy. After a few moments, the silence broke with the rebbe saying "Did you at least win the chess game?" Only then, did the young R' Twerski leave the office. The rebuke was given with the message of love and that you are not rejected.

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 books, *Fascinating Insights and Incredible Insights*. 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 Kiryat Yearim (where the Aron was for 20 years [Shmuel 1, 7:1,2]) where he studies, writes and teaches. The author is passionate about teaching Jews of all levels of observance.

for these Jews, found out about this plot, and informed the authorities, resulting in a foiled plot. This Chinese man was discovered by the group that planned the attack and had him killed. This incident troubled the boys in the Mir yeshiva immensely because this Chinese man saved many Jews from a horrific death, not for his honor or money but because it was the right thing to do. So why did Hashem punish him like this? They took their question to R' Chatzkel Levenstein. When they approached the door to his office, they heard him crying, "Hashem, this non-Jew was a wonderful man but he was not Jewish. This was the only time he helped boys in yeshiva, and yet You gave him a gift—to die *Al Kiddush Hashem*. I, Chatzkel, have served You faithfully my entire life and have helped boys many times. Why didn't You give me this present to be *Mekadesh Shem Shamayim* like this Chinese person?"

⁶ Meila 17.

⁷ Sanhedrin 107b.