

Fascinating INSIGHTS

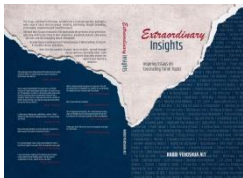
כ"ט כסלו תשפ"ב

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[A Junior Senior](#)

For many, as they reach old age, they wither. Others, however, just get better with age. They fulfill עוד ווד, however, just get better with age. They fulfill עוד ווד ניבוך, they will still be fruitful in old

age, vigorous and fresh they will be.¹ It has been said, "You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream." In this way we can interpret אל תשליכני לעת זקנתי, do not cast me off in old age.²

If you keep an active life, you stay young. Someone once said, "Staying young means being willing to learn, evolve and be open to life."

After Rosh Hashanah in 1988, at the age of 86, the Lubavitcher Rebbe launched another major initiative. Noting his advanced age,³ the Rebbe quipped, "I am not as old as it says on my passport. If you will carry out what I am requesting now, it will be a sign that you do not perceive me as an old Jew, but as a young man with young ideas."

Ever since the 1960s, R' Dovid Kviat's⁴ (1920–2009) hands would shake. Yet, he overcame this physical impediment and continued to write his own *chidushim*. However, very few people were able to decipher his handwriting, and therefore were unable to type them up. Undeterred, R' Kviat was able to locate someone in Yerushalayim who could still read his writing. However, a few years before he died, R' Kviat's handwriting deteriorated further. Now, no one could decipher his handwriting—not even R' Kviat himself. Undaunted, he continued to write, because writing helped him crystallize his Torah thoughts. It helped him further his understanding of the *sugya*. Then, someone suggested that he learn how to type on a computer. His initial reaction was that he was too old to learn a new skill. He was almost eighty and the shaking in his hands was significant, not to mention his eyesight was now quite poor. Nevertheless, he tried his hand at typing, and in a matter of a few days, he was typing a few thousand words per day. A few months and a few *sefarim* later, he called the person who taught him how to type and said, "I want a laptop!"

[Killer Kohen](#)

The Shulchan Aruch⁵ states that a kohen who killed a person even accidentally כפיו את כפיו, is disqualified from reciting *Birchas Kohanim* ("the priestly blessing").

There were soldiers in the IDF that were kohanim who fought in battles against the armies of Egypt, Jordan and Syria when they battled Israel. In the course of the battles they

¹ Tehillim 92:15.

² Tehillim 71:9.

³ When the Lubavitcher Rebbe suffered a heart attack in 1977, R' Moshe Feinstein penned a letter to his rabbinic colleagues asking them to make a public appeal for congregants to involve themselves in the mitzvah campaigns of Chabad such as tefillin, mezuzah and Shabbos candles arguing that "since it is into this that the tzadik and genius of Lubavitch puts his entire soul... certainly every activity in these campaigns will strengthen his health."

⁴ He was a rosh yeshiva at the Mirrer Yeshiva in Brooklyn and the rabbi of the Agudas Yisrael Synagogue of 18th Avenue. His most famous for his works on Gemara entitled Succas Dovid.

⁵ Orach Chaim 128:35.

injured and killed enemy soldiers. R' Ovadia Yosef⁶ was asked if these kohanim have the status of a kohen that killed someone where they would be unable to bless the Jewish People with Birchas Kohanim.⁷ R' Ovadia said that it is fitting to encourage such kohanim and praise them for the act and allowed them to give the priestly blessing without a doubt.⁸

Elsewhere, R' Ovadia was asked⁹ by a soldier who was a kohen that was standing at his post protecting against dangerous Arabs when he realized some of them approaching closer to his post. He then initiated a battle that killed several of them. He asked R' Ovadia if he can continue to fulfill the mitzva of Birchas Kohanim. After saying that he can continue blessing the Jewish People with Birchas Kohanim, he writes that the soldiers that protect Israel are worthy of praise. Their reward is doubled in heaven and they will be blessed with all the blessings in the Torah... The soldiers that put their life on the line to save Jewish lives deserve honor and respect.

There was a charitable man that was meticulous in fulfilling mitzvos who davened with R' Oshry and attended his daf yomi shiur. On Yom Tov, this man who was a kohen, performed Birchas Kohanim. During one of the Yomim Tovim, a man who returned from Kovno told R' Oshry that this kohen shouldn't bless the people because he once killed someone. After Yom Tov, R' Oshry visited the kohen to hear the story. The man recounted: "I used to peddle merchandise from village to village through back roads and forests and carried a loaded revolver for self-protection. A widow, who was robbed of the last remnants of her property by a Lithuanian non-Jew, requested from me 'you know my bitter situation and that I am without any support. Please go and threaten him with your gun and tell him to return the poor widow's property, and that if he refuses, you will shoot him.' Since I felt I may be able to help her, I went to this person's house and withdrew my revolver. The man was unimpressed and even got angry that he tried to grab the revolver." They wrestled, each trying to get his hand on the revolver, and in the struggle, there was a gunshot that killed the Lithuanian. "I still don't know how the trigger was pulled or who pulled it. I have no recollection of pulling the trigger since the revolver wasn't in my hand." R' Oshry ruled that this death not be considered an accidental murder but manslaughter because he never intended to kill this non-Jew but rather just to intimidate him. Also, even if his finger was on the trigger, he was in danger for his own life. Furthermore, even if the kohen killed him deliberately in the course of the fight, he wouldn't be liable since it had been done in self-defense. Since the kohen regretted his action and accepted penance for having indirectly killed a man, all the views in halacha concur that he is allowed to raise his hands in Birchas Kohanim.¹⁰

[Pinnacle for the Prophet](#)

The Tur¹¹ writes that on Motzai Shabbos it is customary to mention Eliyahu Hanavi.¹² The Baal Hamanhig¹³

explains the reason: because he will be the one to herald the geula ("redemption"), and the Gemara¹⁴ says that Eliyahu will not arrive on Erev Shabbos or Erev Yom Tov. Therefore we daven, now that Shabbos has passed and he is able to come,¹⁵ that he should come and herald the redemption.¹⁶

The Aruch Hashulchan suggests that because Shabbos is עין עולם הבא, a semblance of the Next World,¹⁷ it brings us great joy. The sadness we feel when it departs needs to be blunted. Singing songs with inspiring words filled with hope for the redemption achieves that goal.¹⁸

The Avudraham says the reason Eliyahu is associated with Motzai Shabbos is because chazal¹⁹ connect the proper observance of Shabbos with freedom from subjugation with geula. We therefore wait until after we have concluded a proper day of rest to beseech Hashem—"we have just faithfully observed Your Shabbos as You have commanded us. Now please, in that merit, send us Eliyahu Hanavi."

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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 three books including the recently released *Extraordinary Insights*, in addition to being the host of *The Fascinating Insights Podcast*. His writings, some of which have been translated into Hebrew, German and French, 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.

is this bone that one will be revived with at תחית המתים, the resurrection of the dead (See Mishna Brava 300:2).

B) A bris is performed on the 8th day and we know that Eliyahu is the malach ha'bris (Malachi 3:1). The start of the 8th day from the beginning of creation (which began on Sunday) is Motzai Shabbos (because Sunday begins on Motzai Shabbos)!

C) Eliyahu lived in this world and he becomes a malach. He lives here in this world but also never dies. It therefore is no coincidence that he is the one who comes to a bris mila, which is when a child is transformed, as we remove the child's impurity and make him pure. This connects with Motzai Shabbos as it is an intermediate stage because it is not weekday and also not Shabbos, although it is connected to Shabbos (especially through Melave Malka). Eliyahu elevates the person after Shabbos when he descends spiritually lower.

D) Eliyahu relates good news (As we say in Birchas Hamazon הרחמן הוא ישלח לנו את אליהו הנביא זכור לטוב ויבשר לנו בשרות טובות ונחמות טובות, May Hashem send us Eliyahu Hanavi—he is remembered for good—to proclaim to us good tidings, salvations and consolations. Also, in the zemer Eliyahu Hanavi which we sing at a Melave Malka, we say איש פקיד עיל כל בשרות טובות, the man appointed over all good tidings.), which can take a person from despondency to ecstasy. On Motzai Shabbos, many people feel despondent because Shabbos is over but through Melave Malka—which is connected to Eliyahu—they get uplifted.

¹³ Hilchos Shabbos 71. The Maharil (end of Hilchos Shabbos) quotes a Tosefta that every Motzai Shabbos Eliyahu sits under the Eitz Hachaim, the tree of life in Gan Eden, and records the merits of all those who observe Shabbos.

¹⁴ Eruvin 43b.

¹⁵ The Drisha (295:2 in Orach Chaim) is bothered that according to this, he can come on Shabbos because the issue was Erev Shabbos. He explains that there is a doubt whether he can come on Shabbos (See Eruvin 43b). On the other hand, Motzai Shabbos is a time when he surely can come.

¹⁶ As to why we don't mention Eliyahu on Motzai Yom Tov, see the Prisha 295:5 in Orach Chaim and the Bach 295:3.

¹⁷ Brachos 57b.

¹⁸ In the first chapter of R' Yaakov Emden's *Toras Ha'kanaus*, a work he wrote to condemn the followers of the false messiah Shabtai Tzvi, he relates that when word of Shabtai Tzvi's self-proclaimed messiahship reached the community of Izmir, Turkey, the rabbis who believed his claims instructed the people to clean their homes and rid them of all non-kosher animals including dogs and cats. They felt that Eliyahu would soon be arriving, and he wouldn't enter homes with non-kosher animals.

¹⁹ Shabbos 118b.

⁶ Yechaveh Daas, volume 2, siman 14. In the view of R'Ovadia, the wars of the country of Israel were a *milchemes mitzva*, wars of mitzva.

⁷ There are exceptions to this (see Mishna Brura 128:128).

⁸ See also Igros Moshe, Yoreh Deah 2:158.

⁹ Meor, Yisrael, Tabaas Hamelech, pp. 53-54.

¹⁰ Responsa from the Holocaust pp. 215-7.

¹¹ Orach Chaim 295.

¹² The following are connections between Eliyahu Hanavi and Motzai Shabbos.

A) Motzai Shabbos is a time of death as our *neshama yesaira* leaves us (Beitzta 16a). Eliyahu is the one who ushers in the redemption, a time of eternity, which revives us from death. This fits with who he is because he never died, as we say (in the Melave Malka zemer Eliyahu Hanavi) איש פקיד עיל כל בשרות טובות, שלא טעם טעם מיתה וקבורה (See Melachim 2, 2:11). This connects with Motzai Shabbos because this is when we feed the Luz bone—which never rots—and it