

Fascinating INSIGHTS

כב' כסלו תשפ"ב

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פרשת וישב

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AN EXCITING NEW BOOK! I am happy to announce the release of the book *Extraordinary Insights*, which is available for purchase and delivery at <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B09KDW6QVX>. 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 more than 70 topics contained in this book include the greatness of our generation, educating children according to their uniqueness, passionate Judaism, overcoming our fears and the astounding future redemption. The book features *haskamos* from R' Yisroel Reisman, R' Moshe Wolfson, R' Zev Leff, R' Yitzchak Scheiner and others. 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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[Historical Hijackings](#)

R' Ovadia Yosef¹ wrote a long response about Operation Entebbe in Uganda caused by the flight from Tel Aviv to Paris in 1976 that was hijacked diverting it to Entebbe, Uganda: Would the government have been allowed to release the 40 terrorists demanded in return for the lives of the Jewish passengers? This may be problematic because if there would be this exchange then it may lead to another kidnapping so that they can free even more terrorists. Another concern was that almost certainly the terrorists that would be released would attempt to kill more Jews. After a lengthy discussion R' Ovadia concludes that *gedolai Torah* were discussing this from a halachic standpoint when suddenly the Prime Minister, Yitzchak Rabin, came to them to inform them that the Israeli army was successful in killing the hijackers and their cohorts in Uganda and releasing the Jewish hostages who were now on their way to Israel.

An Israeli soldier involved in Operation Entebbe related to a high school class that he was speaking to that Havdala was recited on the Entebbe airfield's runway. He then said that he made the *bracha* of *Meorei Ha'aish* on the burning wreckage of the Ugandan air force which supported the terrorists.

Another hijacking that targeted Jews took place in 1970. On September 6, 1970, R' Yitzchak Hutner, his daughter, and son-in-law R' Yonasan David were on a flight from Eretz Yisrael to New York that was hijacked by Palestinian terrorists. The terrorists freed the non-Jewish passengers and held the Jewish passengers hostage. R' Hutner was held alone in an isolated location while Jews around the world prayed for his safe release.² In the United States, there was talk about raising money to ransom R' Hutner, but R' Yaakov Kamenetsky ruled against the move. Although there is a halachic basis³ for paying an exorbitant sum to save a great Torah leader, R' Yaakov ruled that this applies only during peacetime, and Israel's ongoing struggle with terrorism constitutes war.⁴

There were young children traveling alone on this flight—ten-year-old Yosef Trachtman and eight-year-old Tziporah Moran. As soon as passengers realized the plane was being hijacked, R' Hutner's two students on the flight—Yaakov Drillman who later became the Rosh

¹ Yabia Omer, volume 10, Choshen Mishpat 6.

² While the remaining passengers were being held, the hijackers realized that R' Hutner was a leader of the Jewish world. Although they generally treated him with respect, they did confiscate a bag in which he kept his precious writings of *chiddushei Torah* that he had accumulated over his lifetime, and they did not return it upon his release. His close followers went to great lengths to retrieve the *chiddushim*, offering financial rewards for their return. Even though there were several instances when the intermediaries thought they might be successful, nothing materialized and the writings remain lost to this day.

³ Gittin 58a, Tosafos.

⁴ *B'ikvei Hatzon*, pp. 206-207. R' Yaakov maintained that Israel has been in a constant state of war (from a halachic perspective) since the establishment of the state.

Yeshiva of Beis Yosef Navordok and Meir Fund who later became the Rav of Beis Medrash Sheves Achim—moved from their own seats to sit next to the two unaccompanied children. Eight-year-old Tziporah was carrying documents from both the United States and Israel. Yaakov Drillman knew that signs of Israeli citizenship would put the girl in danger. He therefore ripped her Israeli documents into tiny shreds and swallowed them.

Here is one last anecdote. When Chacham Yosef Harari-Rafal, *Rosh Yeshiva* of Ateret Torah, was given a cup of water on Erev Shabbos, on this hijacked flight, he dipped his shirt into it to cleanse his clothing, in order to do something *l'kavod* Shabbos, for the honor of Shabbos!

Ubiquitously Upeat

Yosef was in such pain as he was exiled among Egyptians and away from his father's house and his brothers. Still, he sought ways to keep the sadness away. The Meor V'shemesh⁵ tells us that he diverted his mind from his worry and pain and was constantly happy in order to serve Hashem with happiness.⁶ In order to be upbeat, he ate, drank and curled his hair,⁷ as he wanted to remain happy despite all that befell him.⁸

The Mishna says משוכנס אב ממעטין בשמחה (“when the month of Av begins, we curtail joy”).⁹ These words can also be understood that through happiness, one can diminish worry and pain. In this light, we can understand the words of the Midrash גבר קפיו, that Yosef was happy¹⁰ although he was in pain. With this, we can comprehend the words ויהי איש מצליח¹¹. Although he was in pain, as ויהי is an expression of pain,¹² nevertheless איש מצליח, he became a successful man because of his happiness and alacrity.¹³

Advice given to lift us up is to hear something like a joke which can cheer us up and as the gemara tells us Rabba would begin his Shiur with מילתא דבדיחותא, something humorous and the students would laugh.¹⁴ Eating delicious food or drink can also put us in good

spirits. Another option is taking care of ourselves and the like. Being in a neat and clean environment may also help. Music is another thing that lifts people up when they are feeling down.¹⁵ In fact, the Shevet Halevi writes regarding one who listens to music to get rid of his depression that it can be considered a mitzva.¹⁶

The Sefer Maharil¹⁷ tells us that they testify about Rabbeinu Tam¹⁸ that when he wanted to learn the main point (תמצית) of a Halacha Chamura he would put a pile of gold to make him happy and his mind would be expanded. He would then learn with strength.

At times we may be in need of a vacation.¹⁹ This is not a waste of time as it can help us grow further. We must realize that doing kindness to ourselves is also kindness. With this we can fulfill חסד איש חסד, a man of kindness brings good upon himself.²⁰

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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.

¹⁵ The Rambam (Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah 7:4) writes that prophets do not prophesize whenever they desire. Rather they must concentrate their attention upon spiritual concepts and seclude themselves, waiting in a happy, joyous mood because prophecy can't rest on a person when he is sad or lazy rather only when he is happy. Therefore, the prophets' disciples would always have a harp, drum, flute, and lyre when they were seeking prophecy. We see this in ובל ותף והליל וכנור... ופגעת חבל נביאים... נבל ותף והליל וכנור, you will encounter a band of prophets... and before them players of lyre, drum, flute, and harp and they will be prophesying (Shmuel 1, 10:5).

¹⁶ Shevet Halevi, Orach Chaim, 6:69, s.v. ולמעשה. The Meiri (Gittin 7a, s.v. שמחת הוללות) says that all types of music that are made for שמחת הוללות (debauchery) and there is no intention in them to praise Hashem rather it's about base pleasures is forbidden to listen to and enjoy (See Sota 48a). That which has praise to Hashem such as *Piyutim* is permitted.

¹⁷ Minhagim, Likutim, 83. See Tanya, chapter 7.

¹⁸ Rabbeinu Tam (1100-1171) was a grandson of Rashi and the Rivam and Rashbam (whom he learned under) were his brothers. As a financier and wine merchant, Rabbeinu Tam became wealthy. His business loans brought him to constant nobility and thus didn't have enough time to answer halacha questions at length. In 1147, the Crusaders forced their way into town and pillaged and massacred many Jews. They invaded Rabbeinu Tam's house, plundered all his wealth, and wounded him. After his father's death, he became the head of a great Yeshiva in his native town. He had numerous students, and at one time his Yeshiva included 80 of the authors of the Tosafos, noted Talmudists and Rabbis of large communities.

¹⁹ We must also keep in mind, “Leisure is a beautiful garment but it will not do for constant wear.”

²⁰ Mishlei 11:17. See פלא יועץ, אהבת עצמו. Having outlets is very important. It is shown to us from just being alive as when we breathe we inhale and exhale. Although we may inhale an abundance of Torah and avoda, we also need to exhale with the proper outlets. Similarly, rest is needed after a workout. Likewise after a day's work, one goes to sleep at night. In Yeshiva, there is בין הזמנים and בין הסדרים.

⁵ Vayeshev, s.v. ויהי ה'.

⁶ Around 100 years ago, a Sefardi girl from the country of Libya named Simcha married a man whose last name was Rabba. As a result, her name after marriage was Simcha Rabba!

⁷ Breishis 39:6, Rashi.

⁸ Moreover, Yosef took an interest in the well-being of others which is something that only someone who feels good about himself would do. Because of this, he got prophetic messages and was able to interpret Paroh's dreams.

⁹ Taanis 26b. The gemara (Taanis 29a) says that just as when the month of Av begins we curtail joy, so too when Adar begins we increase joy. Why can't it just say that we increase joy when Adar begins without making a comparison to the month of Av where we decrease in joy? If someone saw another religious Jew hosting a party in the month of Av, he surely would protest. Similarly, if someone is sad in Adar, then protesting that is appropriate (This would at least apply for a person to himself.).

¹⁰ Breishis Rabba 86:4. Matnas Kehuna on the Midrash, s.v. גבר.

¹¹ Breishis 39:2.

¹² See Megila 10b.

¹³ See אשד הנחלים on the Midrash, s.v. גבר.

¹⁴ Shabbos 30b. The gemara records that R' Beroka asked those destined for the World to Come, what they did to get that. They responded that they cheer up the depressed (Taanis 22a).