

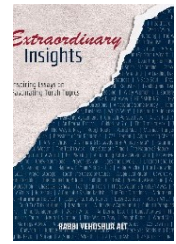
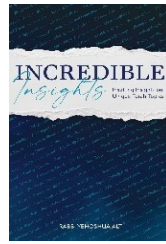
# Fascinating INSIGHTS

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**As we have arrived at the final stages before publication, this is the final opportunity for dedications for the book about our homeland, Eretz Yisrael, titled "Spectacular Insights about a Spectacular Land." Don't miss out on the Dedication Opportunities, which can be given from Maisei money. It can be L'ilui Nishmas, L'Refuah Shleima, an advertisement for a business, in honor of a special occasion or any other dedication that your heart desires. This is in addition to sharing in the merit of the Torah learned by each reader. For more information or if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at [yalt3285@gmail.com](mailto:yalt3285@gmail.com). Donations can also be given via credit card by clicking "Donate" at <https://bit.ly/32wISw3>. Any amount is welcome.**

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## Surreptitious and Delicious

It has been said, "The sizzle is better than the steak." The anticipated pleasure is much greater than the actual pleasure. We may imagine how great a particular food tastes but the actual pleasure, while it is in our mouth, is very minimal. In this way, the Beis Halevi<sup>1</sup> interpreted לנו שוה... ולא after we sinned, we realized that it wasn't worth it since we didn't attain in the sin the pleasure that we imagined (ולא שוה לנו).

This was caused by the first sin where the snake said טוב ורע ידעי כאלה-ים, you will be like God knowing good and bad—that which was false. So, it was put into man a mistaken yearning—to yearn for that which is in the imagination which is a false pleasure. Even for that which is bad, man can think it is good and yearn for it.

Every pleasure is overpromised and under-delivered. Every pleasure has a limit whether it lasts for ten minutes or an hour. With pleasure, the first time is the best time and there is only one first time.

When people comment on their pleasurable experience, for example, a vacation, they say, "It was amazing," "I had a good time," "I enjoyed it immensely." Notice it is all in the past tense. Once the pleasure is had, it is gone! This applies in every culture and every time period. All pleasures are limited and passing.

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## Pregnancy, Eternity and More

The number 10 is associated with completion. Examples of this include the fact that the world was created with 10 מאמרות, utterances, Avraham withstood 10 tests and that ten miracles were performed for our ancestors in the Beis Hamikdash.<sup>4</sup> We also see that 10 is connected to completion when we observe the human body. In the creation of a fully formed human there are 10 fingers and 10 toes.

The number 9, on the other hand, represents that which is on the way to completion. It symbolizes the act of turning towards. We see this hinted to in the word for the number 9, תשע, which is sourced in שעה, turn towards, as in

<sup>1</sup> Breishis, s.v. במסכת.

<sup>2</sup> We say this in ודוּי. The simple meaning is that we have turned away from Your commandments and Your good laws but to no avail.

<sup>3</sup> Breishis 3:5.

<sup>4</sup> Avos 5:1,4,7.

שעה, ואל קין ואל מנחתו לא שעה, to Kayin and to his sacrifice He didn't turn.<sup>5</sup>

This idea is demonstrated in pregnancy where the full term of a fetus' development lasts for 9 months. Gestation is a period of expectation (as in the expression of "expecting a baby"). It is a developmental process and involves turning toward delivery, which will be reached in the birth of a newborn.

Another area we see this concept is with time. The Jewish view of time is that it is a preparation for the future. It is about turning towards a designated objective. In fact, the word זמן, time relates to the concept of הזמנה, preparation. Time is the means that comes to determine man's ultimate future, a means for him to reach eternity. This idea of time turning toward the future is hinted to in the word שעה (another word for time), as שעה is related to תשע.

Each moment of time is an invitation to reach a state of completion and a life of eternity which is represented by the number 10. The connection of the letter י to eternity is shown in the following.

1) The gemara<sup>6</sup> teaches that the Next World was created with the letter י, which has the numerical value of 10.

2) The gemara<sup>7</sup> tells us that the harp of the Next World will be of 10 strings. Again, we see the number 10 representing the attainment of a complete state.

3) The letter י makes a word future tense.<sup>8</sup> This alludes to the fact that the Next World will be an everlasting state.

An application of this is found with Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. On Rosh Hashana we say היום הרת עולם, today the world was conceived. It was on Rosh Hashana that Hashem answered the tefillos of women.<sup>9</sup> The conception of Rosh Hashana turns toward Yom Kippur 9 days later with the rebirth of the penitent man as a pure innocent newborn.

The stirring call to move man to teshuva from his spiritual slumber is the mitzva of Tekias Shofar, the sounding of the shofar.<sup>10</sup> This also connects to the number 9, as the minimum requirement is to hear 9 shofar blasts with three sets of three sounds (Tekiah, Teruah, Tekiah).<sup>11</sup>

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### Contrived Copy

We must not perform actions by rote whether davening, learning or anything else. As someone once put it, "When it comes to that which is **spiritual**, it is all about putting spirit into your ritual!" There is a quote that reads,

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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 Yiddish, 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.

"The really dangerous thing about existence is that it is not a question of sink or swim but that it is possible to float."

When R' Shlomke Zvhiller donned tefillin each morning, he was extremely happy. He once remarked that the joy a wicked person has when he commits a sin can't compare to the joy he receives when he puts on tefillin.

The gemara tells us of the praiseworthy deed of R' Adda Bar Ahava who never slept in the house of study, *לא ישנתי בבית המדרש*.<sup>12</sup> This can also be understood as his Torah (בית המדרש) was learned with enthusiasm, not in a sleepy way (*לא ישנתי*).

After relating the disagreement where R' Yishmael says that one should work and learn whereas R' Shimon Bar Yochai says to only learn, the gemara states *הרבה עשו כר' שמעון בן יוחי ולא עלתה בידן*, many did like R' Shimon Bar Yochai and were not successful.<sup>13</sup> It is said from the Baal Shem Tov that it didn't work because *הרבה עשו כר' שמעון*, they merely copied<sup>14</sup> R' Shimon Bar Yochai and didn't do it from their own passion.<sup>15</sup>

A wise man remarked, "Man must guard himself and his uniqueness, and not imitate his fellow...for initially man was created in his own image, and only afterwards in the image of God." Another saying reads, "Your time in this world is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life."

R' Yitzchak Isaac Sher (1875-1952) once observed his student, R' Shlomo Hoffman (1922-2013), imitating a certain pious practice of his and rebuked him by asking why he was doing it? R' Hoffman replied that he saw the Rosh Yeshiva doing it, so he decided to do it as well. R' Sher responded, "Your Rosh Yeshiva is not a Shulchan Aruch. You don't have to do every thing you see him do." R' Sher then made him promise never to imitate his practice unless he knew why he did them and carefully considered whether they were appropriate for him also.

When the Beis Midrash of the Sefas Emes burned down, he inquired what the source of the fire was. When he was told it was ignited by a cigarette in the attic, he commented that if such a small fire can lead to much damage, imagine what a small fire of Torah and Mitzvos can cause.

By doing avodas Hashem with passion and fire we can rebuild the Beis Hamikdash. This is alluded to in the gemara<sup>16</sup> that says the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed with fire and will be rebuilt with fire. This can mean that it will be rebuilt with the fire, passion and fervor we put into our avodas Hashem.

<sup>5</sup> Breishis 4:5. Another instance of this is the word הטה, incline, whose basic consonant letter is ט, the 9<sup>th</sup> letter in the alef-beis.

<sup>6</sup> Menachos 29b.

<sup>7</sup> Eruchin 13b.

<sup>8</sup> See Shemos 15:1 Rashi. For example, יִדְבַר means "he will speak."

<sup>9</sup> Brachos 29a. The Krias Hatorah of Rosh Hashana is about Sarah conceiving Yitzchak and the Haftarah is about Chana conceiving Shmuel.

<sup>10</sup> Rambam in Hilchos Teshuva, 3:4.

<sup>11</sup> See Rosh Hashana 33b and Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 590:3.

<sup>12</sup> Taanis 20b.

<sup>13</sup> Berachos 35b.

<sup>14</sup> Someone once said, "Life is the most difficult exam. Most people fail because they are trying to copy others, not realizing that everyone has a different test."

<sup>15</sup> There is a saying, "Be yourself. Everybody else is taken."

<sup>16</sup> Baba Kamma 60b.