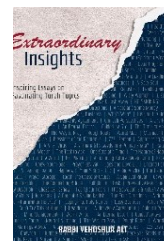
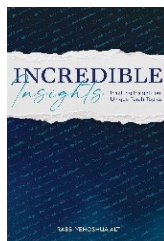


# Fascinating INSIGHTS

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### Birth of a New Type of Child

In Loshon Hakodesh we generally refer to Hashem as male.<sup>1</sup> We see this clearly in Loshon Hakodesh where there is a distinction between male and female not only in the third person but also in the second person. For example, in a bracha we say ברוך אתה ה' and we don't say אתה. Why is this the way we refer to Hashem when he is neither male or female?

The answer is because in most of our interactions with Him, we are female in relation to Him. The man gives the woman unactualized potential for life and she takes that potential and actualizes it over nine months, birthing a child that is the outcome of both the initial potential and the process. In a similar vein, Hashem gives us our life and circumstances (our potential) and our task is to take what He gives and go through the long process to produce new life. Our lifetime here is a pregnancy, death is the labor process, and what is birthed into the world to come is our

spiritual self that we created through our choices here in this world.

Hashem gives us the raw wheat and we bake the bread. He gives us the gift of our bodies and through the defining limiting and painful process of "circumcision," we create a Jew.<sup>2</sup> He gives us our life—our health, families, environment, genetic makeup—and through our choices, we create a human being. Our whole lives are like an endless pregnancy, and it is only upon death that we give birth to the ultimate child—ourselves.

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### Affluent Advancement

Among the benefits of observing Tosefes Shabbos is that it has the ability to increase the money we earn from our livelihood.<sup>3</sup> This is measure for measure because when one extends the boundary of Shabbos and narrowed the boundary of the weekday, Hashem extends his boundary and gives him more parnassa, when he is in a narrow strait.

<sup>1</sup> Male and female encompass much more than a relationship between man and woman as the gemara tells us everything Hashem created was male and female (Baba Basra 74b). This concept is reflected in the Hebrew language where no word is neuter; each word either has a male or female essence. Indeed, the metaphor of male-female relationships has many different layers in Jewish thought with perhaps the most powerful one being the parable of male and female to the relationship between Hashem and the Jewish people like we see with Shir Hashirim.

<sup>2</sup> Circumcision is performed specifically in a place that symbolizes unlimited potential and unbridled strength and it is therefore the ideal expression of the covenant between man and Hashem, which has man defining and limiting himself in order to express the infinite potential granted him by Hashem. It has been suggested that this may be a reason that there is no parallel circumcision for women. Biologically, they embody the concept of channeling the infinite potential into actuality and therefore do not need to have this concept externally imposed.

<sup>3</sup> It has been said that "more than we keep Shabbos, Shabbos keeps us."

In this way, R' Menachem Mendel Riminover explained עשה שבתך חול ואל תצטרך לבריות לבריות we should make our Shabbos while it is still weekday, meaning Tosefes Shabbos. Then, as it continues לבריות לבריות, we won't need to come onto people to ask them for charity.

Likewise, R' Noach Lechivitzor would translate מלך, מאשר שמנה לחמו והוא יתן מעדני מלך, from Asher, his bread will have richness and he will provide kingly delicacies.<sup>5</sup> What are the letters that are above the letters that comprise the name אשר? Above an א is a ב,<sup>6</sup> above a ש is a ת and above a ר is a ש. These letters spell שבת. This refers to Tosefes Shabbos. From this, as the pasuk continues, one earns fat parnassa, לחמו. שמנה לחמו refers to Shabbos itself where he will be rewarded in Gan Eden—יתן מעדני מלך.<sup>7</sup>

Every moment of Tosefes Shabbos is valued by Hashem. To fulfill Tosefes Shabbos, as the gemara says מוסיפין מחול על הקודש,<sup>8</sup> add from the weekday onto the holy, it has been recommended to accept Shabbos at least ten minutes earlier than we normally would. In this way we can merit the many blessings this affords.<sup>9</sup>

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#### Audacious and Voracious

The following are some accounts of great people about their wives. The Piasetzna Rebbe, R' Klonimus Kalman Shapira (1889-1943), wrote<sup>10</sup> in a letter to a student after his wife's passing something interesting. Aside from her extreme piety in other areas he writes: "...A day almost did not go by without her studying Torah. She would wake up at 6 and until 10 she would daven and study. She would study with pure intention in order to connect herself to the holy Torah. If one day for whatever reason she was unable to study, she would be regretful all day and say that it was a dark day for her. Her studies were in Tanach, Midrash, Zohar, works of kabbala and chassidus. She had a wide knowledge in kabbala and chassidus and many times I was amazed at her vast knowledge of these things..."

While the Chida (1724-1806) was in Livorno, he received a letter informing him of his wife's passing (which he found out more than 30 days after his wife's passing, known as a שמועה רחוקה). He writes:<sup>11</sup> "After Havdala I went into my room, opened the letter which mentioned the passing of my wife, who was pious, intelligent, G-d fearing, kind, modest, the love of my eye and head of my house. My world turned dark." He didn't want to reveal this news to anyone because then they would force him to marry. The Chida continues, "I lit a candle, went to shul and cried there for about an hour and then I washed my face. I went back to my lodging... I sat on the ground to recite Tikun Chatzos and I took off my shoes. I mourned my wife as is

done for a שמועה רחוקה as she died on Friday, the 20<sup>th</sup> of Sivan in the year 1773. I did it all quietly. I got sick from the news of my wife's passing... I was in pain and eulogized on losing a special pearl like this as she was nearly singularly unique in the generation..."

In a letter dated Wednesday, the 6<sup>th</sup> of Adar Sheini 1796, R' Akiva Eiger (1761-1837) wrote<sup>12</sup> that after his wife died he was overwhelmed by pain and sorrow. "I became dangerously weak. I couldn't eat or drink. My stomach couldn't hold anything for long and I could barely retain enough food to be required to recite a *bracha achrona*. I couldn't sleep and I had to seek medical care. I am thankful to Hashem for healing me slightly, but I still can't daven without my thoughts being disturbed and confused. I can't learn even a simple *sugya* in depth."

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#### Limited Lexicon

The Midrash<sup>13</sup> relates that when R' Shimon Bar Yochai's mother would talk excessively on Shabbos he would say to her: it is Shabbos today. She would then be quiet. It is especially on Shabbos that we need to be careful with our speech. The gemara tells us that one's speech on Shabbos should be different than that of during the week.<sup>14</sup>

In this light we can grasp the explanation given in the name of the Baal Shem Tov on the pasuk about Shabbos, בחריש ובקציר תשבת,<sup>15</sup> You shall desist from plowing and harvesting: חריש can mean to be quiet<sup>16</sup> and קציר to shorten. It can therefore be understood that one shouldn't talk unnecessarily on Shabbos and when one does need to talk, it shouldn't be done without an excess of words.

Upon seeing two boys in his yeshiva talking on Shabbos, R' Chaim Volozhiner commented that they should be learning Torah, as שונה forms an acronym of שונה, learning on Shabbos is a delight. The boys responded that it is also an acronym for בשבת תענוג, speaking on Shabbos is a delight. R' Chaim then remarked this is the meaning in לב חכם לימינו ולב כסיל לשמאלו, the mind of a wise man is to the right and the fool's is to the left.<sup>17</sup> The wise man puts the dot to the right on the ש making it שונה, whereas the fool puts the dot on the left side of the ש making it שיחה!

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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.

<sup>4</sup> Shabbos 118a. The simple translation is treat your Shabbos as a weekday rather than depend on people for aid.

<sup>5</sup> Breishis 49:20.

<sup>6</sup> The numerical value of the letter א is 1 while ב is 2. Therefore, ב is above an א, meaning it has a higher numerical value.

<sup>7</sup> This idea is also reflected in ביימו תתן שכרו, on that day shall you pay his hire (Devarim 24:15), as its initials spell שבת.

<sup>8</sup> Yoma 81b. See Orach Chaim 261:2. Incidentally, Shabbos is the holiest day, more than Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. Just take a look at the punishments. For desecrating Yom Tov, one receives *malkus*, lashes. For desecrating Yom Kippur, one receives *kareis* (spiritual excision).

However, for Shabbos desecration, one receives *kareis* and *sekila* (death by stoning).

<sup>9</sup> We should also keep in mind that no one ever lost out from keeping the Torah or performing a mitzvah.

<sup>10</sup> Derech Hamelech, 445.

<sup>11</sup> Magal Tov, p. 61.

<sup>12</sup> Igros R' Akiva Eiger, 109, s.v. אולם.

<sup>13</sup> Vayikra Rabba 34:16. Also Yerushalmi Shabbos 15:3.

<sup>14</sup> Shabbos 113b.

<sup>15</sup> Shemos 34:21.

<sup>16</sup> As in Vayikra 19:14.

<sup>17</sup> Koheles 10:2.