

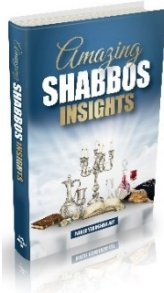
Fascinating INSIGHTS

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Tearing Tunes

With all those zemiros that we sing, what do we accomplish?

The word זמירות means to prune as in תזמור.¹ As a gardener prunes his trees, thereby removing the inferior branches for the purpose of improving the fruit-bearing ability of the superior ones, so too our emotional, joyous

recitation of the zemiros is designed to remove the impure barriers separating us and Hashem and liberate the soul from the weekday to its Shabbos dimension.²

Now let's listen to the amazing words of R' Yaakov Emden:³ "The words of Shabbos zemiros are culled from pesukim of Tanach, Halachos, Shas, Zohar and Midrashim which pertain to Shabbos. One who says them

¹ Vayikra 25:4. See the Menoras Hamaor (Ha'neir Hashlishi, Klal 3, Volume 1, Chapter 3) explains songs are called זמירות because it is related to תזמור, לא תזמור, don't prune, since the zemiros we say prior to davening removes the stumbling blocks and sins. When our tefillos come before Hashem, it can be heard and accepted.

² On Shabbos we sing additional zemiros, both as part of the extra pesukei d'zimrah and the songs that we sing during Shabbos meals. We are commanded זכור את יום השבת לקדשו, remember the Shabbos day to sanctify it (Shemos 20:8). The

middle two letters of the word זכור are a כ and ו. These two letters are what comprise the letter ז, as the shape of the letter ז is formed when you put a כ and ו together. By combining them into a ז, the word זכור becomes זמר, song. By singing these extra zemiros on Shabbos, we fulfill the command of זכור את יום השבת לקדשו.

³ Siddur Yaavetz, Seuda Rishona, s.v. kol. See Shir Hashirim Rabba 8.

brings good to the world. Hashem attaches Himself to him and listens to his voice. He is pleased and sustains the world so that it doesn't become destroyed."

Studying History

Studying history can be highly significant. A hint to studying history is found in the words **זכור ימות עולם**,⁴ remember the days of yore.

In 1997, R' Berel Wein moved to Israel and went to get an Israeli driver's license. During the driving test, the examiner blurted, "Rabbi, you are a good driver." R' Wein inquired as to what prompted the comment. The examiner explained, "Before you pulled out of the parking space, you first looked in the rearview mirror to make sure that there was no oncoming traffic. No one here does that." R' Wein observed that this encapsulates a problem in contemporary society. We fail to look in the rearview mirror of Jewish history. We focus only on what is ahead of us and do not pay sufficient attention to the events of the past. Many people think that the Jewish world began when they were born in the city they were born in. We pull out of our parking spaces and drive forward into the traffic of our present and future circumstances with hardly a glance over our shoulders, which at times can have cataclysmic results. We can proceed successfully with our lives if we have a clear unobstructed view of the rearview mirror, of our history as a nation. By understanding where we originate and what we have collectively endured in the past, we can hope to comprehend what our role is in today's world and what it is that we need to be doing.

Synergistic Symbiosis

Authentic living with Hashem means living with Him each moment of one's life.⁵ In this way we can interpret **לפני ה' תמיד**:⁶ we should always feel Hashem in front of us just as it says **שוייתי ה' לנגדי תמיד**, I have set Hashem before me always.⁷ This is typified with our living on Shabbos, as we shall illustrate below.

Our *avos* and *imahos* epitomized this category of living. If we add up the number of letters in their names, we come to a fascinating discovery. In the names of **אברהם**, **שרה**, **רבקה**, **רחל**, there are 13 letters. Likewise, in **יצחק**, **יעקב** there are 13 letters. The number 13 is the numerical value of the word **אחד**. When we combine 13 and 13 we get 26, the gematria of **י-ה-ו-ה**. As a result, this alludes to the

fact that the *avos* and *imahos* were always connected⁸ to **י-ה-ו-ה**:⁹ **אחד**.

In light of what we said, we can grasp a novel meaning in the words **צדיק ה' בכל דרכיו**:¹⁰ Who is a Tzadik? One who is cognizant of Hashem in all that he does.

We need to observe the Torah and mitzvos 24 hours daily.¹¹ Delving into the phrase **והי בהם**,¹² live by Hashem's decrees and judgements, we notice this idea, as **והי** yields a gematria of 24. The lesson: we must live with Hashem 24 hours a day through the Torah and mitzvos.

This concept is demonstrated in many places as we will now see.

1) Tanach consists of the five books of Chumash and 19 of Nach. This gives us a total of 24, hinting that we should live with Hashem's Torah the entire day.

2) There are 24 *tachshitei kallah*, adornments of a kallah.¹³ We, the kallah of Hashem, should be loyal to Him 24 hours daily.¹⁴

3) In which perek and pasuk are our famous words **נשמע ונשמע** recorded? None other than (perek) 24, (pasuk) 7! These words are found in Parshas Mishpatim, as we should live by the Mishpatim of the Torah 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.¹⁵

Shabbos is a day of just us and Hashem, as we see in the fact that we are prohibited from performing the 39 melachos. In fact, **י-ה-ו-ה** (spelled **אחד**) has a gematria of 39, because since it is a day of exclusively us and Hashem we refrain from performing the 39 melachos.

How many chapters are there in Mesachta Shabbos? **24!** Additionally, the collective first letters of **בני ישראל** shall observe Shabbos, have a sum of 24.

Listen to the short Fascinating Insights podcast at <https://jewishpodcasts.fm/fascinating-insights>, where it can also be downloaded!

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.

⁴ Devarim 32:7.

⁵ One who observes halacha properly with the proper intentions is partially there as halacha dictates every detail of our lives (how to put our shoes on, wash our hands before bread and so on).

⁶ Shemos 28:29.

⁷ Tehillim 16:8. See She'arim B'tefilla, p. 38.

⁸ In a similar vein, this also explains why the initials of **עול מלכות** hint to **שהרית**, since during all parts of the day we should accept the sovereignty of Hashem. Of course we realize that the *avos* are the ones instituted these three tefillos.

⁹ Breishis 14:22. With this we can grasp a deeper meaning in **יד י אל ה'**, I lift up my hand to Hashem, as Avraham's every movement was dedicated to Avodas Hashem.

¹⁰ Tehillim 145:17.

¹¹ See Chagiga 12a, Rashi s.v. *midas*.

¹² Vayikra 18:5.

¹³ Yeshaya 3:18-24.

¹⁴ Also, a *teraifa* cannot live for 24 hours (Baba Kamma 50b) and a *teraifa* is a prototype to the opposite of kedusha.

¹⁵ Here are some other examples:

1) There are 24 *matnos kehuna* alluding to this idea as the kohen is the one who is especially close to Hashem.

2) In the Beis Hamikdash there were 24 *mishmaros*.

3) When Shlomo Hamelech built the Beis Hamikdash, he sought to bring the *aron* to the holy of holies. Upon the gates clinging to each other being unable to open them, he recited **24** songs of tefilla (Shabbos 30a, See Melachim 1, chapter 8).

¹⁶ Shemos 31:16. We can now understand the depth of why the curtains of the Mishkan were comprised of **24** strands per thread (Shemos 26:1, Rashi). True living (as **משכן** is rooted in **שוכן**, to dwell) with Hashem is 24 hours daily.