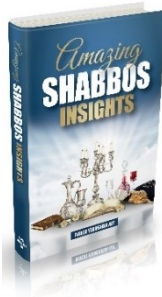


Fascinating INSIGHTS

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Sufficient Sleep

It is related that the Chozeh of Lublin would instruct his students not to sleep too little. R' Yitzchak Isaac of Kamarna would say that it is better to add an hour of sleep and the rest of the day be a *mentch* than to limit your sleep by an hour and the rest of the day be a *chaya ra'ah*.

What would the Chofetz Chaim do to ensure that his students get an adequate amount of sleep? He himself, occasionally, would actually close all the lights in his yeshiva late at night to make certain that his students get sufficient sleep.¹

The gemara² says that the one who rolls the Sefer Torah (הגולל ספר תורה) together to close it (known as *gelilah*) receives a reward equal to the reward of all the other participants.³ R' Yaakov of Pshevorsk was once asked to explain this enigmatic statement. Because someone rolled the Sefer Torah he receives so much more reward? There can be a person that wants to continue learning until the wee hours. However, if he does this, how will his next day look? ספר תורה means that one is wise enough to close the sefer when it is time for sleep. This is so that the next day he will wake up with vigor, with a clear mind and serve Hashem with freshness and passion. For such a person it is fitting that he receive such reward.

¹ Tenuas Hamussar, volume 3, p. 172.

² Megila 32a.

³ This is referring to where a minyan got together to read from the Sefer Torah.

Magnanimous Minds

R' Mordechai Twersky of Chernobyl (1770-1837), who was the son of R' Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl (1730-1797), known for his sefer the Meor Einayim, once made a *seudas hoda'ah*. At the *seuda*, he mentioned that his deceased father, the Meor Einayim, didn't appear to him in a while. As a result, he summoned his father to ask him about this. His father asked him, "Do you remember there was a Jew suffering from troubles that approached you with his problems? And do you recall your response to him?" R' Mordechai Twersky's response to this man was *ה' יוכיח*, Hashem admonishes the one He loves.⁴ Meaning to say, Hashem clearly loves you if He has given you such circumstances. The Meor Einayim then told his son, "In Heaven, we explain this pasuk differently *ה' יוכיח* אשר: those who love Hashem give Hashem rebuke. They say, 'Hashem, how can You possibly make this Jew suffer so much?'" Let us ask ourselves how much we care about the plight of others.

The Jewish people are compared to stars as it says *וּסְפַר הַכּוֹכָבִים...כִּי יִהְיֶה זֶרַעְךָ*, count the stars...so shall your offspring be.⁵ Why are we compared to the stars? R' Leib Bakst explains that originally the sun and moon were equal in size. However, the moon was reduced when it complained and said, "It is impossible for two kings to use the same crown." Since the moon was reduced in size, Hashem created the stars to conciliate it.⁶ So the purpose of creating the stars was to remove pain from another part of creation. This is why we are compared to the stars since this is what a Jew does. He feels the pain of another Jew and does what he can to remove that pain.⁷



A Heartless Heart

About the day of Moshiach's coming it says *בְּיוֹם* ביום, on that day the mourning will become intense in Yerushalayim.⁸ We would expect that day to be the most euphoric day. But from this description, it sounds like it will be a very morbid day.

The pasuk⁹ says *וְנָתַתִּי לָכֶם לֵב חָדָשׁ וְרוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה אֶתֶן* ונתתי לכם לב חדש ורוח חדשה אתן, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. R' Simcha Wasserman explains that while we are in exile, Hashem has given us a heart of stone, not a soft sensitive heart. This gives us the ability to survive the exile. How else have we been able to make it through the horrific events of our history? The many cruel murders that

we have witnessed in our history along with the overwhelming amount of suffering. Hashem provided us with a heart of stone in order that we don't go insane. The stone heart is unfeeling and therefore the pain is not fully experienced. We are not completely sensitive to the raw and agonizing pain of the enormous tragedies that have befallen our people. This preserves our sanity and allows us to proceed with some sense of normalcy. Of course a heart of stone is not the ideal but it is necessary to have this to survive the exile.



When Moshiach comes, Hashem will remove our hearts of stone and provide us with new hearts. We will then reflect on the tragedies that we have been subject to. All the suffering and brutality that we have endured. The accumulated suffering throughout our history will penetrate our raw hearts.

This answers the question we began with. On that great day when Moshiach arrives, the mourning will be overwhelming, as we will be crying for thousands of years of repressed tears.

Eating or Being Eaten

There are four levels to creation – *דומם*, inanimate objects, *צומח*, plant life, *חי*, animals and *מדבר*, humans. We know that earth itself is lifeless. This is the level of *דומם*, that which is inanimate. When we put in a seed, life sprouts. This is the category of *צומח*. So this elevates the level of *דומם*. When animals eat plants, those plants now become part of the animal world, which makes it into the higher level of *חי*. When humans eat animals in the proper way, it becomes part of the highest level, *מדבר*. Consequently, when man eats an animal, he elevates all four levels of creation.

This act of completion is done through the act of *אכילה*, eating. This explains why the term *אכילה* is rooted in the word *כל*, all, as it can elevate all categories of existence. The word *אכילה* is also rooted in the word *כלה*, to complete, as in *ויכלו השמים והארץ*, the heaven and earth were completed.¹⁰ This is because it elevates and completes on a spiritual plane the various levels of existence.

The above applies if a person eats properly (with *brachos*, the proper intent, etc.). On the other hand, if a person eats solely for desire and selfish reasons, then the eating is an act of destruction, the opposite of elevating the different levels of creation.¹¹ For this reason, *אכילה* also means to destroy as in *ואכלה* *ואתם כרגע*, I shall destroy them in an instant.¹²

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 four books including the recently released *Amazing Shabbos 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 Mishlei 3:12.

⁵ Breishis 15:5.

⁶ Breishis 1:16, Rashi.

⁷ It has been said that sometimes the best way to take care of our problems is to take care of others.

⁸ Zecharya 12:11-12.

⁹ Yechezkel 36:26.

¹⁰ Breishis 2:1.

¹¹ The gemara (Pesachim 49b) says that an *am ha'aretz* is forbidden to eat meat. One explanation is because since he abandons his superior status as a human, he relinquishes his right to consume creatures of a lower order (See the Maharal, *Nesivos Olam*, 15, pp. 63-64). If a person won't elevate creation through his eating, what right does he have to eat?

¹² Bamidbar 16:21.