

# Fascinating INSIGHTS

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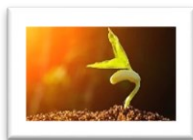
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### Eternal Human Beings

Why do we bury the dead? Is burial more than just a means of disposing human remains?

Burial is an act of concealment in anticipation. Specifically, burial places something out of sight with the expectation that it will later germinate, take root and eventually emerge renewed. Burial is not an act of disposal that once was but it is an act of planting.



It is noteworthy that Chazal refer to the womb as the grave.<sup>1</sup> The Gemara<sup>2</sup> says that since the womb receives in silence and then gives birth to new life accompanied by great cries, it should follow that the grave that receives with great cries should certainly also give rise to new life.

Hashem created man to live forever.<sup>3</sup> Although Adam's sin brought physical mortality, his potential for eternal life remains.<sup>4</sup> Techias Hamaisim realizes that potential. At the moment of Techias Hamaisim man will emerge as a living human being from the grave in which he was concealed. Through death man awaits his own rebirth. When a person passes away, he hasn't disappeared. Instead, he has continued on into the next phase of his eternal existence.

The Torah mandates that his remains be hidden away in a place that is a fitting environment to anticipate his re-emergence. The earth represents potential in the sense that although it amounts to nothing on its own, it actually exists in a latent state with the power to grow things and bear fruit. When a person dies, he reverts to his being a world of potential and he is buried in the earth that originally gave rise to him because that earth itself represents potential. As a wholesome entity that transcends all division, man is buried in the ground until the time that his potential will once again be revealed and realized—this time through Techias Hamaisim.<sup>5</sup>

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### Deeper than Technicalities

The following shows that which is deeper although it may seem technical.

<sup>1</sup> Krisus 10a.

<sup>2</sup> Brachos 15b.

<sup>3</sup> Ramban to Breishis 2:17.

<sup>4</sup> See Maharal in Tiferes Yisrael, Chapter 13.

<sup>5</sup> See Gur Aryeh Breishis 2:7.

1) The nekuda of קמץ, kamatz represents din, as it is closed to abundance (קמץ means close, shut<sup>6</sup>) whereas a פתח symbolizes chessed, as it is opened (פתח means to open) to bounty. For this reason, we don't say משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם, He makes the wind blow and the rain descend,<sup>7</sup> with a kamatz<sup>8</sup> since it is Hashem's nature to do good, and not to be closed, stingy and parsimonious (קמץ)! Instead we say הגשם, with a segol (אָ), which alludes to chessed, as is shown in the nekudos under the word הקד which are both segols. We want it to be ברכה, rains of blessing.<sup>9</sup> In fact, after משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם we say מכלכל חיים בתוכו, He sustains the living with kindness.



2) If the letters בג"ד כפ"ת begin a word they have a dagesh (dot in the letter, as in בן) unless it follows the letters אהו"י (as in בן יגה<sup>10</sup>, אָן, where there is no dagesh in the ב).<sup>11</sup> There are letters missing from different words due to our many sins which caused galus. They are the ה and ו from ו-ה-ו-ה, the א from כסא (as it says כס י-ה, throne of Hashem), י from ירושלים and the ו from אליה.<sup>12</sup> These missing letters are אהו"י. The Bnei Yissaschar<sup>13</sup> tells us that after these letters we don't have letters with a dagesh because a dagesh symbolizes strength, strict justice (din) as is represented by its strong pronunciation. This is in contrast to that which has a soft pronunciation. Once we get these missing letters back, there won't be any more strength of din (חוק הדין) in the world. These letters—אהו"י—have a gematria of 22, the same number of days in the Three Weeks, the time we mourn the Beis Hamikdash (which caused us to be in galus).

3) To make a word into future tense, there are four letters we use (אשמור, I will guard. תשמור, you, she will guard. ישמור, he will guard. נשמור, we will guard.). These four letters are י, ת, ג, א, which spell the word תנאי, condition, because this is what it does, as you stipulate for the future.

4) When the letter א is placed at the beginning of a verb, it provides the subject. For example, an א at the beginning of the verb שמר, to guard, converts the word אשמור, I will guard. As the letter א represents Hashem's unique power, its placement at the beginning of a verb provides the subject responsible for carrying out this specific action. The letter א was chosen to represent the "א," to stress that the subject performing this action obtains his power only from Hashem, as without Hashem's wish no one can perform any action.

5) The letter ת in dikduk means "you" as well as "she" (as in תרד, she/you [masculine] will go down). What is the reason for this? It is quoted from the brother of the Maharal that this is because כל כבודה בת מלך פנימה, every honorable princess dwelling within<sup>14</sup> (a woman's tznius, modesty). So that which is the relationship of a man — "you" which is direct — is also that of a woman — "she" which is indirect.

6) The first set of three different vowels are the cholam (וּ), shuruk (וּ) and chirik (וּ). Each of these vowels represent different aspects associated with one of the three spheres of creation. The highest sphere occupied by Divine angels

corresponds to the cholam. The cholam occupies the highest position of all the vowels and is placed above the letter. This represents the formation of the Divine and angelic sphere. Additionally, the letters that comprise the word חלום spell חלום, a dream, a state in which one may experience lofty Divine disclosures.

The next lower sphere, which is occupied by the planetary orbits, corresponds to the shuruk. The shuruk is placed in a central position, just like the middle celestial spheres of the planets. This sphere connects the upper and lower sphere. Consequently, when we reorder the letters of the word שרק we get קשר, a knot, alluding to the fact that its positioning ties together the cholam and chirik. This is just like the sphere occupied by the planetary orbits that connects the spheres above and below it.

The lowest sphere, our physical world, corresponds to the chirik, which is below the letter (the lowest). Shuffling the letters of the word חרק, we get to the name קרה — who was buried alive underground, the lowest point, just like the chirik which is placed at the lowest point. Rearranging this word again, we get the word רחק, distance, as what the chirik vowel represents — this world — is the furthest away from the upper worlds. The word חרק also spells חקר, to investigate and question. In this physical world, the human mind continuously explores new frontiers of knowledge.

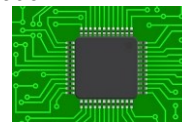
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### Crowns on the Letters

There are certain letters in the Sefer Torah adorned with tagin, crowns, placed atop the letter. Each crown takes the form of a thin vertical line similar to the letter zayin. The Magen Dovid elucidates that the use of crowns on these letters serve the same function as the roots of a plant. Roots extract nourishment from the soil enabling them to grow. In the reverse order, these crowns act as filters through which spirituality descends, via the ten sefiros, into the body of the letters themselves.



Although the crowns may appear to be insignificant, they contain a massive amount of Torah. This is made explicitly obvious from the gemara<sup>15</sup> that tells us about R' Akiva that he will expound upon each crown mounds of halachos. To understand this let us make a comparison to what we have nowadays. A tiny chip can contain an enormous amount of information. In a similar sense, the tiny crowns on the letters of a Sefer Torah contain a vast amount of information.



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. 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>6</sup> A קמץן is one who is a miser, stingy.

<sup>7</sup> We know that at times the weather forecasters are mistaken with their prediction. R' Yaakov Kamenetsky commented that the weather bureau is accurate in their prediction as that is what they see. However, Hashem is משנה עתים ומחליף את הזמנים, Hashem alters periods and changes the seasons. Consequently, one moment it appears that it will rain and then it changes.

<sup>8</sup> See however Igros Moshe, Orach Chaim 4:40:15, אשרי האיש, volume 1, chapters 20 and 30, שו"ת אבן ישראל, 2:58, שו"ת תשובות והנהגות, 8,9. Also see שו"ת תשובות והנהגות 1:81 and 2:58.

<sup>9</sup> As we say in Tefilas Geshem ולא לברכה, for blessing and not for curse. See Minhag Yisrael Torah, 1, p. 210. Also שו"ת חמדת שאול 19, s.v. אודשה"ט.

<sup>10</sup> Shemos 21:31.

<sup>11</sup> There are exceptions to all of this.

<sup>12</sup> Shemos 17:16. Tzefanya 1:4. Malachi 3:23.

<sup>13</sup> Tamuz Av 2:8 s.v. והנה כעת.

<sup>14</sup> Tehillim 45:14.

<sup>15</sup> Menachos 29b.