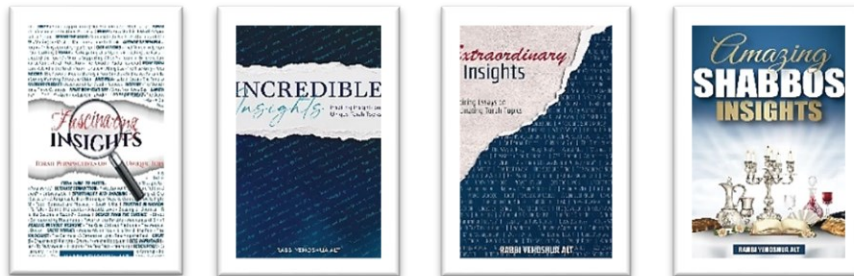


# Fascinating INSIGHTS

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### Kever Rochel

Kever Rochel is a special place of tefilla as the pasuk tells us that she cries for her children — רחל מבכה על בניה.<sup>1</sup> When one cries, tears (דמעה) stream forth. דמעה has a gematria of 119. דמעה two times (because she had many tears and the minimum plural is two) yields the number 238. What totals 238? None other than the numerical value of רחל.

Why is she buried in Beis Lechem, and not Chevron? Because Hashem commanded Yaakov to bury her there by the roadside so that she could help the Jewish people when Nevuzaradan would lead the Jews into captivity after the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdash. When the Jews were passing along the road to Beis

Lechem, tormented and exhausted, Rochel's soul came to her grave and cried, begging for Hashem's mercy upon them. Hashem heard her plea.<sup>2</sup>



In 2010, on Erev Rosh Chodesh Nissan, a woman named Batya traveled to Kever Rochel with some friends. Batya came to daven for children as she was already married for childless three and a half years. Exactly one year later, on Erev Rosh Chodesh Nissan, she gave birth to a baby girl.

<sup>1</sup> Yirmiya 31:14. During the Rabin administration, Kever Rochel was slated to fall under full Arab civil and military control. In response to this, Knesset Member Chanan Porat decided to speak with Rabin hoping to change his mind. As Porat was walking to Rabin's office, Rabbi Menachem Porush who was the head of Agudah at the time asked to join in the meeting. Many years earlier, right after the Six-Day War, when we regained access to Kever Rochel Rabbi Porush had been one of the first to arrive there. He came with R' Aryeh Levin and Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz. He marked the spot with a piece of cardboard that said: 'Here is the Kever of Rochel'. That was when R' Chaim Shmuelevitz

famously cried "Mama, Hashem told you to stop crying – but I say Keep on crying for your children." Now, several decades later, the two members of Knesset made strong arguments based on politics and security to preserve Jewish presence at Kever Rochel. Rabin was not convinced. Then Rabin noticed that Menachem Porush was crying. Porush held Rabin's hands and with tears streaming down his face, said: 'Yitzchak, it's Mamma Rochel, Mamma Rochel.' At that moment Rabin's heart opened, and he altered the map so that Rochel's Tomb would remain in Jewish hands."

<sup>2</sup> Breishis 48:7, Rashi.



A 28-year-old secular unmarried girl named Miriam came to Kever Rochel. She poured her heart out crying, “Ima Rochel: You were supposed to marry Yaakov but you didn’t want your older sister, Leah, to be shamed. So you gave her the signs that you and Yaakov knew so that she would marry him instead.<sup>3</sup> I, too, deeply desire to get married, but I am willing to forego that! Instead, I want you to intercede for my baalas teshuva sister, Tamar, who is married eight years without children.”<sup>4</sup> Soon after, Miriam found her soul mate and became engaged while her sister was expecting a baby!



The pasuk says רחל מבכה על בניה.<sup>5</sup> It doesn’t say רחל בוכה, Rochel is weeping [for her children] rather מבכה רחל. This can be understood to mean “Rochel is bringing others to tears.” You can go there and pour out your heart!

A boy named Yehuda was raised in a religious Jewish home but drifted from that path. He got a job and moved away from home. He eventually got so depressed that he decided to commit suicide. His plan was to jump from a high floor in a tall building in Tel Aviv. As he walked toward the elevator that would transport him to the high floor, he saw fliers, “The eleventh Day of Cheshvan, today, is the yahrtzeit of Rochel Imeinu. Buses from all parts of Israel will take you to the kever of Rochel Imeinu. Come talk to our mother, Rochel!” Yehuda had a change of heart and decided to travel to Kever Rochel. He arrived at the kever to daven and once inside he fainted. After they revived him, he explained what happened. While he davened at the kever, believing that he had no one in the world who cared about him, he suddenly heard a voice begging Mama Rochel to have compassion on her son, “Yehuda Menachem ben Chava.” He realized it was his mother’s voice and he felt her care. Those tears of love and longing brought Yehuda back on track until he returned to the fold.

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### [A Higher Calling](#)

<sup>3</sup> See Megila 13b.

<sup>4</sup> This is a great place to daven for a child because Rochel Imeinu was also barren for many years.

<sup>5</sup> Yirmiya 31:14.

<sup>6</sup> See the Rashba in Mishmeres Habayis, 7:2, p. 6b and the Tzemach Tzedek Yoreh Deah, 195:6.

<sup>7</sup> Pirkei D’Rebbe Eliezer, Chapter 16. It is customary to give gifts to the bridal couple (See Zohar in Vayetzei and in Emor). Why? The Sefer Matamim explains that since gifts were given to a king on the day of his

The Shabbos preceding the wedding is designated for joy and is observed in Ashkenazic communities as the *aufruf* Shabbos referring to the chosson being called up to the Torah for an aliya (*aufruf* literally means “calling up” in Yiddish).<sup>6</sup>

It says in reference to a king (which a chosson is compared to — *chosson domeh l’melech*<sup>7</sup>) that the Torah scroll should be with him and he will read it all the days of his life.<sup>8</sup> This has been homiletically interpreted that the king consult the Torah for guidance so that every action in his life coincides with what is written in the Torah.<sup>9</sup> Likewise a chosson should ensure that everything he does is infused with the principles of the Torah. Accordingly, when a chosson is called up to the Torah for an *aliya* on his *aufruf* Shabbos, he is reminded to build his home upon these foundations.



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### [Death and Techais Hamaisim](#)

After Adam sinned, as a result of the intensification of worldly defects, the neshama lacks the ability to purify the physical state of man completely and to attain the desired perfection. As a result, the neshama must separate from the body through the process of death — the body undergoes a process of decomposition. Afterwards it will be rebuilt and only then can the neshama enter the body and purify it completely. This procedure of the body being reconstructed in a new form and the neshama reentering it is referred to as *techias hamaisim*.<sup>10</sup>

Before Adam’s sin the neshama had the ability to purify the body and man would have then entered *olam haba*. However after Adam’s sin, as a result of an increasingly physical world, the neshama can no longer fulfill its purpose ideally without both body and soul undergoing the process of death through which they receive their appropriate *tikunim*. With the advent of *techias hamaisim*, after the neshama returns to the body and purifies it, man will then return to the state of Adam pre-sin, and all bodily, physical matters will then be filled with holiness and purity.

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.

coronation (see Shmuel 1, 10:27), it is appropriate to give presents to the bridal couple which is likened to royalty.

<sup>8</sup> Devarim 17:19.

<sup>9</sup> See Chassam Sofer, Shoftim.

<sup>10</sup> The Shaar Hagilgulim (5) teaches that at the time of *techias hamaisim*, all of the bodies through which *gilgulim* transpired will arise and each body will take its share from that *nitzotz* (spark of holiness — a euphemism for those dimensions of the neshama that have already undergone *gilgulim*), the *mitzvos* that it rectified and completed while it underwent the (specific) *gilgul* of that body.