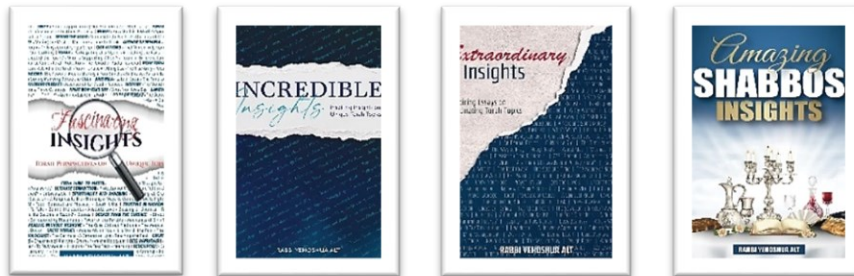


# Fascinating INSIGHTS

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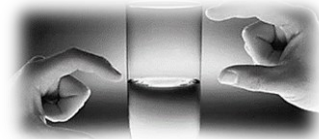
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### A Life That Matters

When a person says that he is making a living, he means that he is making an existence. Earning money is merely surviving. No matter how much money a person earns, it does not make his life meaningful. Making a living means making meaningful contributions to the world. How is the world now a better place because of you? How will the world look differently by the time you exit it?

A Chassid asked his Rebbe his thoughts on the age-old quandary as to whether the cup half-empty or half-full. The Rebbe said that the answer is obvious — the cup is completely full. It is half full of water and half full of air. People can live without water for a while but it is not possible for a person to live without air for more than a few minutes. People look at their lives and see that it is half empty but that's insignificant compared to how full it is with what matters. The air of life is your contributions to the world, the meaning you add to the world. Will anyone miss you when you leave this world? Why will they miss

you? What have you achieved? What significant contributions will you leave behind in this world?



At the funeral of a very successful millionaire named David, the eulogizer, Jay, mentioned the wealthy man's accomplishments. He praised David's many great business dealings, the real estate he acquired throughout his life, the immense amount of luxury cars he owned and his brand-name watch collection.<sup>1</sup> Jay suddenly realized that David's family felt embarrassed. They request that Jay make the focus on his accomplishments in meaningful arenas such as the charity he gave and the Torah he learned.

Why did those present feel awkward when David's material achievements were mentioned? The answer is because everyone wants to leave this world

<sup>1</sup> A Chassid once asked the Lubavitcher Rebbe his opinion of him choosing to become a typist. The Rebbe retorted, "you can make a living typing, but don't become a typist."

being remembered for their meaningful, deeper, spiritual accomplishments. Most people spend the majority of their time chasing physical matters even though they know internally that this is not the legacy they want to leave behind. Who wants to be remembered for their muscles, nice appearance or wealth? We must ask ourselves: **“What do you want people to remember about you after you leave this world?”** Once we obtain the answer to this, we can dedicate the rest of our days pursuing those things.

Make the world a bit better  
or more beautiful because  
you have lived in it.

\*\*\*\*\*

Extended Blessing

The Zaloshitzer Rebbe<sup>2</sup> is bothered why Yaakov crossed his hands<sup>3</sup> and didn't just tell Efraim and Menashe to simply change positions?



The gemara<sup>4</sup> tells us that the diagonal of a square is 1/3 times the size of the square. Consequently, Yaakov crossed his hands diagonally so that the bracha he was about to give would be increased by 1/3.<sup>5</sup>

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Chirping of Birds

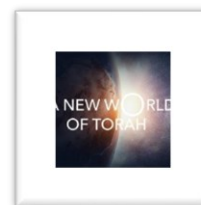
R' Avraham, the son of the Vilna Gaon, tells us that Hashem created the phenomenon of birds' chirping to provide us with a built-in natural reservoir of music so that it will be readily available to draw its listeners to joyousness. He writes,<sup>6</sup> “The birds sing before us on the

<sup>2</sup> R' Shem Klinberg of Zaloshitz was the Zaloshitzer Rebbe (1870-1943), who was a scion of the Zidichov-Karmarna lineage and one of the greatest mekubalim before the Holocaust. After his father's death in 1918, he became the Zaloshitzer Rebbe in Krakow. When the Germans captured Krakow, he was on the list of rabbis they sought to arrest, in accordance with their policy of arresting the Jewish spiritual elite in order to destroy the leadership. The Zaloshitzer Rebbe succeeded in escaping arrest and hid for two years in one of the nearby towns. In hiding he continued to study and teach as much as possible and to give encouragement to all those who were with him. When the Krakow ghetto was established in March 1941, he was forced to leave his hiding place and was smuggled into the ghetto. From the Krakow ghetto he was transferred to the Plaszow concentration camp. On April 3, 1943 (28<sup>th</sup> of Nissan) the Germans combed the barracks of the Plaszow concentration camp in search of ten prominent Rabbanim whom they would execute publicly. When the Zaloshitzer Rebbe was led to the execution site, thousands of Jews, observant and non-observant broke into bitter tears but the Rebbe begged them to accept the divine decree with love and joy. The Rebbe was ordered to remove his clothes but his request to be allowed to keep his shirt and tallis katan while reciting vidui was granted. He absorbed himself in lofty thoughts as his face radiated an otherworldly glow. After briefly glancing at the Jews who were forced to witness the execution, he lifted his eyes upward crying out “הרני

face of the heavens *l'dashein es nafsheinu l'orair es levavainu l'simcha*, to saturate our souls, to arouse our hearts to joy.”



Now, listen to these words on this subject. R' Chaim Vital writes<sup>7</sup> that the Arizal was able to understand the chirping of birds. He explains that on the day the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed the secrets of Torah were captured by the *klipos*. All creatures, even unclean animals, birds and creeping things have a guardian angel above. Ever since the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, the guardian angels of unclean animals know the mysteries of the Torah and they infuse profound secrets of the Torah into the chirpings of the birds. A person who understands bird chirpings can gather many secrets of the Torah by listening to their songs. He concludes, “In fact, I personally saw my master the Arizal do that.”



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.

כפרתם של ישראל, let me be an atonement for the Jewish people.” He recited *vidui*, covered his face with his tallis katan and cried Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad and was then shot to death (see *Ohalei Shem*, p. 18). The Zaloshitzer Rebbe wrote a commentary on the Zohar called *Ohalei shem*. His library contained 800 volumes on kabbala and chassidus and 1,500 volumes of shailos teshuvos and chidushim on gemara, all inscribed with his marginal notes (*Ohalei Shem* p. 15). The many sefarim written by the Zaloshitzer Rebbe were all destroyed by the Nazis except for a few scattered manuscripts that survived the Holocaust. His son, R' Moshe Klinberg, collected these writings and published them under the title *Ohalei Shem*.

<sup>3</sup> Breishis 48:14.

<sup>4</sup> Succa 8a.

<sup>5</sup> *Ohalei Shem*, p. 37.

<sup>6</sup> Be'er Avraham, Tehillim 33.

<sup>7</sup> Eitz Chaim, Shaar Ruach Hakodesh, 5b-6a. R' Chaim Vital writes, “I once asked the Arizal how he attained his phenomenal kabbalistic wisdom. He replied that he had worked very hard at it. I retorted, ‘but the Remak and I myself have toiled very hard as well but we haven't achieved your level of perfection.’ The Arizal answered: ‘true, you studied harder than anyone else in our time, but not as hard as I did... Sometimes I would seclude myself for six consecutive nights without sleep and immerse myself in one saying of the Zohar.’” (*Shaar Hagilgulim*, Shaar Ruach Hakodesh 11b)