

# Fascinating INSIGHTS

י"ט שבט תשפ"ג  
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**Exciting News!** The newly released book "Magnificent Marriage Insights: Captivating Torah Essays about Marriage" is now available (as a paperback and Hardcover) for purchase and delivery on Amazon at <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0BRDH7WG7> or by sending an email to [yalt3285@gmail.com](mailto:yalt3285@gmail.com). This comprehensive book tackles many questions, with life-altering insights and practical approaches. The more than 60 essays found within can facilitate bringing your dating journey to a happy ending and enrich any marriage. It makes a great gift for friends, relatives, business associates and learning partners. Purchase it at <https://amzn.to/3eyh5xP>. Please spread the word about it.

Some of the questions discussed in this book are the following.

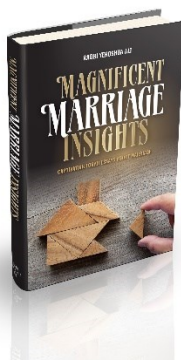
Why do some people have a quick and smooth dating journey while others must travel along a lengthy and arduous path?

What is the Torah prescription for working on a marriage?

How are miscarriages viewed through the prism of Torah?

What is the Torah perspective on changing diapers and taking out the garbage?

Does marriage terminate with the death of a spouse?



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### Igniting Inspiration

R' Avraham Twerski once visited a man named Avi in prison. Avi expressed his frustration about how low he had fallen as he was in prison for many years for stealing even small amounts.

R' Twerski told him that before a diamond is made beautiful, it is covered in dirt. With some work removing the dirt, the hidden exquisite diamond within the mud is revealed.

Likewise, we say נשמה שנחת בי טהורה היא, the soul you placed within me is pure. For many, this precious diamond was covered in the dirt of sin. This analogy invigorated Avi which spurred him to then go for therapy and later to a halfway house.



When he was released, he joined the moving business. One day he was asked to move furniture to the halfway house since an elderly woman had left an inheritance for them. As he began to move the couch, an envelope containing 10,000 Shekel fell out. Although he was alone, he didn't take the money.<sup>1</sup> R' Twerski later told Avi upon hearing what happened, "I know many respectable people that were never in prison, who would have pocketed the money in such a situation. Didn't I tell you that we would find a diamond?!"<sup>2</sup>

A mother whose son passed away at age 45 related the following to his fifth-grade teacher. The teacher once told his students to write a positive trait of each of the 25 boys in the class. After all the boys finished the assignment, the teacher configured the list of traits of each child as per what the other students wrote about him. He then proceeded to give it to each child. The mother said that since the day he received this paper, her son carried it around with him and looked at it countless times to inspire him.

After the Holocaust, the Satmar Rebbe, R' Yoel Teitelbaum (1887-1979), started a Gemara shiur for Holocaust survivors. At the onset of the shiur, the Rebbe inquired about each of their lives. By the time he was finished, there wasn't much time left to learn. The following week, the same thing took place. At the beginning of the shiur, the Rebbe asked each person, "How are you doing? Have you found a job? Is your apartment comfortable?" Again, not too much time for learning remained by the time he was done. This continued for a third week and then a fourth. Finally, an attendee said, "Rebbe, with all due respect, we came here to learn. When can we start learning?" The Rebbe replied that the Gemara begins on Daf Beis.<sup>3</sup> That was Daf Alef. That is, Daf Alef is happiness. The survivors were depressed and broken. The Satmar Rebbe's Daf Alef was to ensure that the attendees felt like someone cared about them."

<sup>1</sup> The children of the deceased decided to donate the money to the halfway house in memory of their mother. The story ends that when Avi went to the halfway house he put up a sign, "The center for polishing diamonds."

<sup>2</sup> To this we can apply "You don't have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great."

<sup>3</sup> Why does the Gemara begin with Daf Beis (page 2)? Prior to the printing of the Gemara (Talmud), manuscripts had no standard page division, and the Gemara text usually didn't appear on the same page as the commentaries, which were contained in separate manuscripts. The first complete edition of Gemara was finished in 1523 by Daniel Bomberg, a non-Jewish printer, who was the first Hebrew printer in Venice and the first non-Jewish printer of Hebrew books (His publishing house printed about 200 Hebrew books, including Siddurim, responsa, codes of law, works of philosophy and ethics, commentaries, and more.). When the Gemara was printed, it was decided to also include Rashi and Tosafos. Since the cover page was Alef—without writing this letter on that page—the first page of actual Gemara text was Beis. This is just as we see printed books today, Jewish and secular, which usually begin with page nine because of all the pages before the beginning of the actual book. Consequently, Gemaras begin with Daf Beis. The Bomberg edition of the Gemara established the standard both in terms of page layout as well as pagination. Someone put it, "he put the Daf in Daf Yomi."

<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, R' Nachman of Breslov (as well as the Baal Shem Tov) was a descendant of the Maharal. It is also interesting to note that at times R' Dessler, the Mashgiach of Ponovezh, quotes R' Nachman of Breslov (see for example Michtav M'Eliyahu 3:177).

<sup>5</sup> In 1979, former President Jimmy Carter saved R' Nachman Breslover's kever from being buried by a Soviet high-rise building project.

An old tzadik once told R' Nachman<sup>4</sup> of Breslov<sup>5</sup> (1772-1810) that in his younger years he was all alone with no one taking an interest in him. He said, "Had someone encouraged me during those years, I would have been a different person. I could have accomplished ten times more in my lifetime."



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### Concealed Countenance

Just after the passing of R' Shlomo Zalman Aurebach's wife, he met a student in the hospital whose wife just gave birth. Unaware of his Rebbe's wife's demise, he excitedly told his Rebbe the news of his newborn baby girl. R' Shlomo Zalman's response was full of joy and he happily gave him brachos, while at the same time didn't reveal the pain he was in due to the loss of his wife. The student later discovered the news of the demise and approached R' Shlomo Zalman with apologies. R' Shlomo Zalman responded, "my personal loss shouldn't interfere with another's simcha."



When Avraham went to speak with the children of Cheis after Sarah passed away, it says וַיָּקָם אַבְרָהָם מֵעַל פְּנֵי מָוֹ, Avraham rose up from the presence of his dead.<sup>6</sup> R' Yeruchem Levovitz<sup>7</sup> explicates that this can also be understood that although Avraham was consumed with the loss of his wife, he extricated himself from his own pain. וַיָּקָם אַבְרָהָם מֵעַל פְּנֵי מָוֹ — Avraham arose and removed himself from the personal pain of his wife's death. This was in order that he speak to the children of Cheis properly without the pain that he just underwent being externally visible. It wouldn't be dignified for Avraham to speak with them with externally visible pain. Avraham ruled over himself and his feelings and he spoke with them with an illuminating countenance. This is *kavod habriyos*.

Rabbi Axi mented to learn under the tutelage of R' Mordechai Friedlander זצ"ל for close to five years. He received semicha from R' Zalman Nechemia Goldberg זצ"ל. Rabbi Axi has written on numerous topics for various websites and publications and is the author of five books including the recently released *Magnificent Marriage 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 Yearam (where the Aron was for 30 years [Shemuel 1, 7:12]) where he studies, writes and teaches. The author is passionate about teaching Jews of all levels of observance.

R' Nosson Maimon, co-founder of the Breslov Research Institute and former head of the Breslov World Center, said that the story began when Mrs. Zabada, the woman in whose backyard the kever was located, told Breslovers of the Soviet plan to build high rise buildings over the mass grave of victims who died in a 1768 massacre where R' Nachman was buried. Maimon said, "She had been informed by the local authorities that all the houses there, including hers, were to be replaced by nine-story buildings. ... It was her concern for her garden and her chickens that really moved her and she used the importance of the shrine in her backyard." Israel based Breslov leader R' Michel Dorfman held an urgent meeting in Yerushalayim where he noted that since the building plan was not local but part of a Soviet five-year plan, the best course would be to have the American government intervene. Dorfman flew to the United States, where the Lubavitcher Rebbe instructed activists to enlist the help of R' Pinchas Teitz of Elizabeth, New Jersey, who had invited Carter to speak in Elizabeth during his election campaign. As a result, R' Teitz had a letter from Robert Lipshutz, Jimmy Carter's liaison to the Jewish community, stating, "Should you ever need to call on the White House, you are welcome." A detailed cover letter explaining the situation in Uman and the importance of the kever was submitted to Lipshutz at a meeting arranged by Rabbi Moshe Sherer of Agudas Israel. Shortly after the 1979 Vienna Summit, where President Carter and Russian President Leonid Brezhnev met, the Russian ambassador said that Brezhnev had personally received the request. The high-rise project was to go ahead with the exception of R' Nachman's plot at 1 Belinski Street on the corner of Pushkina Street, which was to be declared an international shrine.

<sup>6</sup> Breishis 23:3.

<sup>7</sup> Breishis, Daas Torah, p. 152.