

# Fascinating INSIGHTS

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### Hitch to the Next World

An avreich named Yosef was once at Kever Rachel and was searching for a ride to his apartment in Maalot Dafna.<sup>1</sup> A man named Shmuel that was driving to his Har Nof home from Kever Rachel happily agreed to drive him.<sup>2</sup>



Yosef didn't want the man to go out of his way (Maalot Dafna is out of the way when driving to Har Nof

from Kever Rachel) so he told him to drop him off at a bus stop in Har Nof and he will take a bus to Maalot Dafna. Shmuel told him that Maalot Dafna is not out of the way. He explained, "If my destination would be Har Nof, then Maalot Dafna would be out of my way. But my destination is Olam Haba and therefore this is the way to get there."  
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### Sweet Scroll

The Torah is naturally sweet<sup>3</sup> and as we say ומללו כדובשא מלה, במתיקא כדובשא, the words of Torah are as sweet as

<sup>1</sup> It has been said that giving a ride to people falls under the category of the great mitzva אורחים, hospitality to guests.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter dated Monday, Parshas Vayeishev in the year 1988, R' Shmuel Wosner (Shevet Halevi 7:11) was asked for his opinion as to why there were an increase in car accidents during that period. One reason, he writes, is because of the sins that are committed on the road, as is known. These cause spiritual evil forces to be created that are now present on the road and they snatch people in the guise of car accidents. At times, even innocent people fall into their clutches (See Shemos 12:22, Rashi). Another reason, he writes, is that people don't perform the chessed of giving a ride to those who are waiting for a hitch. Many times, this falls under the category of חסר זה נהנה וזה לא חסר (Baba Kamma 20a), this one

benefits (hitchhiker in this case) and this one doesn't lose (the driver).

<sup>3</sup> In the year 1840 in the country of Syria, during a blood libel, an Italian priest went missing. The non-Jews there accused a certain Sefardi Rav of killing the priest. They tortured this Rav and at one point, forced him against the wall, pointing the back of a sword (not the sharp part) against his neck, asking, "Will you admit that you killed the priest?" After denying it, they placed the sharp part of the sword near his neck and asked the same question. Suddenly, the Rav has a thrilling feeling that is apparent on his face. Bewildered, the torturers ask him to explain. The Rav explains that the gemara (Brachos 10a) says אפילו הרב חדה מונחת על צווארו, even if a sharp sword is on a person's neck, he shouldn't refrain from praying for mercy. "I was always bothered why it

honey.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, the pasuk says מתוקים מדבש ונפת צופים, sweeter than honey and drippings from the combs.<sup>5</sup>

One year the fast of the 10<sup>th</sup> of Teves was over at 5 p.m. in New York. At midnight, the wife of R' Shmuel Birnbaum (1920-2008), Rosh Yeshiva of the Mir in Brooklyn, knocked on the door of his Shiur room and said, "You didn't break your fast yet, in addition to the fact that you have a heart condition!" He replied that he really was on his way home after the fast but then he thought of a question on the Gemara he was learning. As a result, he returned to his Shiur room and opened the Gemara thereby forgetting about the fast. Seven hours later he still hadn't broken his fast!



The Ohr Hachaim<sup>6</sup> tells us that if people would feel the sweetness of Torah, they would go crazy and run after it and not give any importance to gold and silver because the Torah includes every good<sup>7</sup> that there is in the world.<sup>8</sup>

says 'sharp sword,' because every sword is sharp. However, now predicated on what you did, I understand. You started off with the non-sharp side of the sword and then switched to the sharp part."

<sup>4</sup> Askinu Seudasa on Shabbos day.

<sup>5</sup> Tehillim 19. The Ohr Hachaim (Bamidbar 23:21, s.v. גם נתכוון לומר) comments on ולא ראה עמל בישראל that although Tzadikim perform mitzvos and their entire occupation is with Torah which requires great effort they don't feel that they experience burdensome toil. Rather it feels like a person who is earning a lot of money and like one who is amusing himself with enjoyable activities. Tzadikim work hard but don't feel burdened due to their great passion for Torah. The Ohr Hachaim also says there that when Tzadikim are occupied with Torah and are diligent in their study of it they don't experience toil in their occupation with the Torah but rather the Torah gives them strength.

<sup>6</sup> Devarim 26:11. The pasuk states ומצור דבש אשביעך, with honey from the rock I sate you (Tehillim 81) דבש are the first letters of מתוקות, שכל, בינה, ענה, as that is real sweetness, real honey — התורה. This, which was given from Hashem (who is called the rock — Devarim 32:4), is what sates spiritual people.

<sup>7</sup> Concerning Shavuos, the day of Torah, the Pele Yoatz (עצרת) writes how it is not possible not to be happy on this day as we have Torah and mitzvos which is better than all the good of this world and life of היום הבא.

<sup>8</sup> The השי"ת הכניס כל (וישם, Beshalach, s.v. חלק ב) מי השלוה תורה, Hashem put all delight in the words of Torah.

<sup>9</sup> Orach Chaim 554:1. There is though that which a person can learn on Tisha B'av such as Iyov and the like.

<sup>10</sup> The way to prepare for the next world, which is the greatest pleasure, is with pleasure — in this world. This is unlike the way many think that this world is just full of pain and suffering. If one puts his full effort to fulfill the mitzvos and abstain from sins, his life on this world will be elevated. Torah, mitzvos and connection with Hashem is the highest pleasure in this world and this won't mount to the pleasure of the next world. When one lives a life of



The sweetness and enjoyment of Torah is shown to us in Hilchos Tisha B'av as it is prohibited for a person to learn Torah then since it makes him happy.<sup>9</sup>

The Chazon Ish once remarked that if a non-Jew would know the felicity we have when we learn Torah before Shacharis on Shabbos morning, he would convert to Judaism.<sup>10</sup>



The four primary areas of Torah interpretation are פירוש, רמז, פשוט, רמז, known by the acronym פירוש פשוט. The word פירוש means an orchard. When we enter the פירוש, delicious fruits are waiting to be picked and eaten.<sup>11</sup>

Rabbi Alt mentored 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 Alt 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 Yearim (where the Aron was for 20 years [Shmuel 1, 7,12]) where he studies, writes and teaches. The author is passionate about teaching Jews of all levels of observance.

connection with Hashem, he gets a glimpse of the future pleasure. It says that (Avos 4:21) this world is like a hallway before the World to Come; prepare yourself in the hallway so that you may enter the banquet hall. If one builds a gorgeous mansion with beautiful, expensive material, then the hallway to the mansion wouldn't be built from cheap material, unattractive material. Similarly, we prepare for the next world with the same material that's there — connection with Hashem. We can enjoy the pleasures of the next world in this world. When we accustom ourselves with this pleasure in this world, then in the next world we can increase this endless pleasure (See Lev Eliyahu, Breishis p. 13).

<sup>11</sup> See the Shevet Hakhasi, Yoreh Deah, 321:4 and the Geshet Hachaim, p. 222, footnote 4. On September 29, 2021 in Bursa, Turkey, Beyhan Mutlu, 50, joined a search party for a missing person, not realizing the person everyone was looking for was him! He went drinking with a friend in a forest but didn't return home. As a result, his wife reported him missing. She heard he had walked away from his friend, drunk. While Mutlu was sleeping in a house in the forest, military forces and rescue teams were called in to search for him. He woke up in the morning and came across members of the search party. He decided to help them find the missing person. Once he heard them calling out his name, it dawned on him that he was the focus of the search. Mutlu told Turkish news that he told them he was in fact Beyhan Mutlu, the man they were looking for, but they continued to search. "They didn't believe me. The truth came out when my friend saw me." There are many people out in the forest, joining the party and searching for themselves, without stopping to realize: I'm right here. To find myself, I need to look within, not outside of myself. We hunger and yearn for connection, meaning and self-understanding. Driven to fill the void, we join the throngs of people, co-travelers who are also searching, and set our focus externally. We may try to fill that inner ache through artificial meaning such as approval from others, food, fun, external power and success.