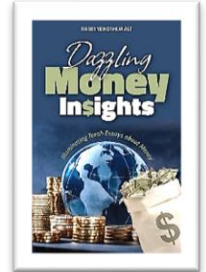
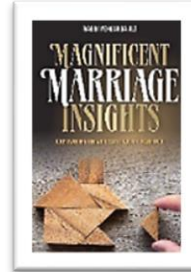
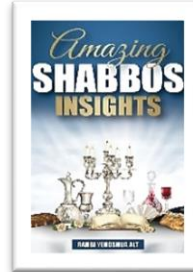
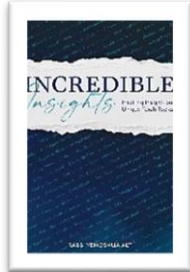


Fascinating INSIGHTS

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Dreams and Holy Names

On Monday night, the 29th of Tishrei in the year 1825 near the border of Poland and Prussia, R' Yitzchak Katz, R' Chaim Yudel Segel and R' Avraham Bar R' Meir set out together on a boat. Tragically, the boat sank after getting hit by a storm. The next day one of them appeared in a dream to his mother and told her that the bodies of these three people who drowned could be found under a rock in a tunnel on the seabed and they all already passed away.

The gedolim debated whether it was possible to rely on the dreamer's testimony or if it was considered

prophecy which the Torah says היא בשמים היא, it is not in heaven,¹ and you cannot decide halacha based on it. R' Aryeh Leib Tzintz² (1768-1833) was asked this question and he was *matir*. As partial support, he cited the testimony from the dream. R' Tuvya Guttentag³ (1882-1953) strongly opposed this ruling predicated on the fact that you cannot be *matir* an aguna through prophecy like the Torah says לא בשמים היא.

In a different episode discussing the same principle, R' Akiva Yosef Schlesinger⁴ (1836-1922) writes that R' Naftali Katz, author of the sefer Semichas Chachamim, was *matir* an aguna through one of the

¹ Devarim 30:12. See Gittin 52a.

² In his sefer Shu"t Meshivas Nafesh, Volume 1, Siman 35. He is also known as the Maharal Tzintz and the Plotzker Gaon. His father was R' Moshe Eibshitz, who was the nephew of R' Yehonasan Eibshitz.

³ Ateres Tuvya in the Hashmata on the Rambam, Hilchos Gerushin, 13:23. Later, R' Guttentag Hebraicized his last name to Tavyumi. R' Guttentag was a student of the Avnei Nazer and moved to Tel Aviv in 1935. In one of his many writings, he writes: "These comments were written in the city of Kolshek, in 1903, in my stay there for a few days while in hiding from the ambushing Russians who were searching for me to conscript me to the army."

⁴ In his sefer Beis Yosef Chadash p. 77b. Otzar Ploas Hatorah, Devarim, pp. 879-880. As a child, R' Schlesinger was awakened by

his grandfather at midnight to mourn the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. He attended four years of elementary school, learning to read and write German and mastering mathematics. In 1857, the Kesav Sofer gave him semicha, noting that "his fear of G-d precedes his wisdom," and entrusted him with tutoring his own son and future successor, R' Simcha Bunim. In 1870, R' Schlesinger moved to Eretz Yisrael. He rebukes his former countrymen on their aversion to move to Eretz Yisrael, by mentioning the fact that the Shelah, hundreds of years earlier, moved to Eretz Yisrael although it took him a year to. "Today it is easy. The government gives anyone who wants a pass and on the fast ships and rail it takes a mere ten days." In his sefer, Beis Yosef Chadash, which is on the Beis Yosef, he discusses an enormous problem and attempts to find a satisfactory answer. At that time in Russia there was forced conscription for a 25-year

Sheimos of the Sheimos Hakedoshim, Holy names of Hashem, which he threw into the sea and dry land, where if the husband was living, he would need to come. The gedolim protested this because how is it possible to clarify such a thing through Sheimos Hakedoshim. It is similar to prophecy about which it says לא בשמים היא, like R' Dovid Tevel,⁵ the famed student of R' Chaim Volozhiner, discussed at length about, among other Achronim.



R' Schlesinger disagrees and says that that which the gedolim protested about using the Sheimos Hakedoshim is specifically to rely on Divrei Nevius (words of prophecy) without clarifying the reality. However, where there is knowledge lacking and through the Sheimos, the reality is clarified that the husband did indeed die, that's not called words of prophecy and has no connection to לא בשמים היא.



Cope and Scope

We say to a mourner the consoling phrase, *Hamakom yenachem eschem b'soch she'ar aveilei Tzion v'Yerushalayim*, May the Omnipresent console you among the other mourners of Zion and Yerushalayim. A pertinent question arises: Why do we invoke Hashem to provide comfort to the mourner instead of focusing on the role of the visitor, who is typically the one offering solace?

The answer is that our ability to truly understand and internalize the depth of the mourner's grief is often constrained. Genuine comfort stems from a profound comprehension of the bereaved individual's anguish. For instance, how can an individual truly fathom the emotions of someone who spent the past year watching over an ailing parent in a hospital or the pain of someone who has suddenly lost a child? These situations are deeply personal, and entering the shoes of such a mourner is often beyond our human capacity. Only Hashem can truly empathize and console in a manner that acknowledges the full scope of their loss.

Trajectory Turn

The gemara⁶ says יש קונה עולמו בשעה אחת, some acquire the next world in one moment. The word שעה has an additional meaning — to turn, as in ואל קין ואל מנחתו לא

period, where some people were taken as young as 8. Consequently, some would flee Russia and move to Eretz Yisrael to avoid this. At times, their wives refused to come. R' Schlesinger, therefore, discusses the possibility of getting around the ban of Rabbeinu Gershon of not marrying more than one wife. Another matter R' Schlesinger advocated for was the revival of the Karbon Pesach on the Har Habayis. One of the sefarim R' Schlesinger is known for is the Lev Haivri (עיברי is an

שעה, to Kayin and to his sacrifice He didn't turn.⁷ Therefore the phrase יש קונה עולמו בשעה אחת can be understood to mean that one can acquire the next world with one turn. That is to say, one turn for the good that a person makes can change the trajectory of his life, leading him to become truly great. Consequently, with one turn he can acquire the next world.

The story is related of a boy named Naftali who was struggling in his younger years. One evening he overheard his parents discussing his future, suggesting that he should possibly become a shoemaker. Crushed, he went to *shul* that night, opened the Aron and began to cry. He eventually fell asleep and had a dream of what it would look like after he passed away. He witnessed people being judged in heaven and he figured that when his turn to be judged arrives, he will be judged favorably as he was a "good Jew." He was shocked when he was judged unfavorably. They even called him a killer as they explained, "You killed Naftali Tzvi Yehuda of Berlin." He was then shown all the sefarim he could have authored. He then woke up from his dream and made a firm decision to dedicate the remainder of his life to learning Torah. This person became the famous Netziv — the gadol hador, Rosh Yeshiva of the Volozhin Yeshiva and author of many sefarim including the Haamik Davar, Meishiv Davar and Meromei Sadeh. With that one turn, the Netziv changed the trajectory of his life.



The one who personifies this is R' Akiva. That one turn for the good that he initiated when he saw the drops of water landing on the rock eventually piercing it changed his life. This galvanized him to start learning after not learning for the first 40 years of his life.⁸ It therefore comes as no surprise that the first letters of the words יש קונה עולמו בשעה אחת spell עקיבא.

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 six books including the recently released *Dazzling Money 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.

acronym for his name יהיאל בן ר' יהואל (עקיבא יוסף בן ר' יהואל), a commentary on the last will and testament of the Chassam Sofer (His father, R' Yecheiel, was a student of the Chassam Sofer).

⁵ In his sefer *Beis Dovid*, 23.

⁶ *Avoda Zara* 17a.

⁷ *Breishis* 4:5.

⁸ *Avos Drebi Nosson* 6:2.