

Fascinating INSIGHTS

כד' טבת תשפ"ד
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The newly released book "Remarkable Insights about Death and the Afterlife" is now available (as a paperback, hardcover and digitized version) for purchase and delivery on Amazon at <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0CNNDCMNC> or by sending an email to yalt3285@gmail.com. Alternatively, you can call 054 849 5217 or 917 732 2371. This extensive and thought-provoking book addresses these questions and many more, providing transformative insights. With a collection comprising over 70 meticulously crafted essays, it eloquently articulates the Torah's viewpoint regarding death and the afterlife. This work stands as an invaluable resource, facilitating readers in acquiring a deeper comprehension of this vital subject. 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.

What is the ultimate way to elevate the soul of one's parents?

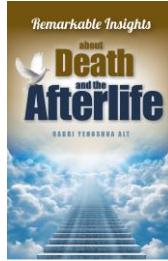
How does the death process rectify a person's soul?

What profound life lessons can we learn from gravestones?

In what ways can the concept of reincarnation help us better understand life?

What is the idea behind davening at gravesites?

What will happen at the Resurrection of the Dead?



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Spiritual Satiation

During the Holocaust, R' Yissachar Shlomo Teichtal¹ wrote: "When I fled the land of hell to save my bare soul, I was unable to take any personal belongings with me. I was even forced to leave my R' Tam tefillin. The only thing I rescued was my Rashi tefillin... I simply could not part with them because they are worth more to me than anything in the world, they are irreplaceable. I bought them when I was young before the First World War and gave them over to the famous, perfectly righteous scribe,

R' Chaim Sofer of Munkatch to have them rewritten. This is why they are so precious to me, and I do not make the slightest move without them. When I arrived here in the capital (Budapest), I was missing R' Tam tefillin as well as a tallis. I hereby express gratitude to my dear friend, the perfect Tzadik, son of saints, R' Yisrael Dovid Margolis Schlessinger, Rav of Linas Tzedek here (in Budapest). Through his efforts, R' Chaim Mordechai Stern gave me a very beautiful pair of R' Tam tefillin. **This truly gave me new life** because now I had two pairs of tefillin." He then

¹ Eim Habanim Semeicha, p. 412.

writes that he praises his affluent friend R' Wolf Reichman for giving him a tallis with which to daven.



On Purim 5702 (March 3, 1942), during the Holocaust, the Jews were given a few moments to eat toward nightfall and wanted to fulfill the mitzva of eating the Purim meal. However, the only food was black horse-bone soup, without any bread. R' Ephraim Oshry ruled that they could fulfill the mitzva of the Purim seuda with this soup, since even according to those who say that one should have bread at the Purim seuda, that is only where bread is available. When the Jews present there heard this, their eyes lit up at this opportunity.²



In regard to the enslavement in Mitzrayim, it says וַיֹּאמֶר בָּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן הַעֲבוֹדָה וַיַּזְעַק, they groaned because of the work and they cried out. R' Shmelki of Nikolsburg interprets this as groaning and crying out because of their inability to serve Hashem! That is despite the crushing labor they went through!

Time to Think

To think, reflect, and digest life is essential to living a proper life. Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski tells of a time when his father opted to take the train, which took many more hours to get to his destination than necessary. Why? So that he would have time to think.⁴ What would he say today about all the technology that keeps some of us so busy that we don't have time to think?

Throughout the enslavement in Mitzrayim the Jewish people were kept busy so that they wouldn't have time to think. Along comes Moshe and says to Paroh, שְׁלֹךْ אֶת עַמִּי, send out my nation. That is to say, stop keeping my people's thoughts, eyes, and hands too occupied to think, as is alluded to in עַמִּי — עֵינִים, מִחְשֻׁבָּה, יָדִים — עֵינִים, eyes, thoughts, and hands. What is Paroh's response? I will keep them even busier, as now they will also have to collect straw.⁶

The Gemara tells us that a פְּטִיעָה גָּסָה, large step, removes 1/500th of one's eyesight. However, it can be restored at Kiddush on Friday night.⁷ During the week we run to work, from one errand to another, and so on. As someone once remarked, "Many people are too busy with life to live it." This causes us to lose our vision of reality as we lose sight of life's priorities. Along comes Shabbos and it's time to stop our running, selling, buying... We think and reflect, thereby acquiring the proper view. We focus on Hashem and use this **שביתה** (stopping) for **תשובה**.⁸ Now that I have time to reflect, I can start to see reality again — my eyesight is restored.

It has been said that the entire week we are human doings. On Shabbos, we are human beings.

In preparing for Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol had seven days of solitude.⁹ Sometimes we need to do the same, each person according to what he needs, whether it is by being isolated at times from people, gadgets, and the like. In this way we can prepare ourselves properly for kedusha. Even just taking a few minutes before davening, learning, eating, or anything else to refocus our mind, get present, and realign our priorities is helpful. We can reflect on our day by writing and thinking about it. It isn't for nothing that our early ancestors, including Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov among many others, chose to spend their lives as shepherds. It afforded them plenty of time to be alone and to think.

In a Sefer Torah we find a space between each parsha. Rashi¹⁰ says this is telling us to reflect between each parsha and section. Sometimes we can be so busy running from shiur to shiur and sefer to sefer that we don't find time to let anything seep in internally and change us.

If a person puts a cup in water but doesn't submerge it, only the external part gets wet. For the internal part to be filled, total submersion is needed. To be changed internally, we too need to submerge ourselves, in that we think and reflect. This is just as it says, ובין בדבר ובהן, contemplate this matter and gain understanding.¹¹

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.

² Responsa from the Holocaust pp. 60-61. See Yam Shel Shlomo, 7:37, Baba Kamma.

³ Shemos 2:23.

⁴ See Mesilas Yesharim, Chapter 2.

⁵ Shemos 5:1. R' Shimon Sofer tells us that the word **נה** is rooted in **חַנָּה**, rush, as in **חַנָּה עַתָּה לְמוֹ**, future events are rushing at them (Devarim 32:35). This is because the Satan tries to rush us, not letting us think properly.

⁶ Shemos 5:7-9.

⁷ Brachos 43b.

⁸ To this we can apply (Megila 21b, Rashi) (The simple meaning is that two people may not read the Torah simultaneously for the congregation, because it is difficult to hear two speakers at the same time.) — we can't distinguish two voices at once. Much of the time we have much noise and many voices in our head. Being in solitude and reflecting can help us enormously in our Avodas Hashem.

⁹ Yoma 2a.

¹⁰ Vayikra 1:1.

¹¹ Daniel 9:23.