

# Fascinating INSIGHTS

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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/BOCNNDCMNC> or by sending an email to [yalt3285@gmail.com](mailto: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?

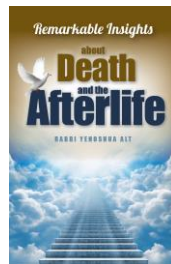
How does the death process rectify a person's soul?

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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### BirthDay Parties

We know many have a birthday party when that big day arrives.<sup>1</sup> What is the Jewish outlook on this?

<sup>1</sup> R' Tzadok Hakohen (Divrei Chalomos 20. This sefer is a diary of Torah revelations that came to R' tzadok in dreams, spanning nearly 40 years.) writes that a person is at the strength of his Mazel (בתוקף מזלו) on the day he is born and he shouldn't be afraid on his annual birthday that something bad will come (See also the Karbon Ha'eidah to Yerushalmi Rosh Hashana 3:8, s.v. ה'יה). A woman in need of surgery posed the following question to R' Chaim Kanievsky (Derech Sichah p. 174): Should

R' Yisrael Lipshitz (1782-1860), the author of the commentary Tiferes Yisrael on Mishnayos, told each of his family members, in his Tzavaa (ethical will), that all the siblings should send birthday greetings of Mazal Tov on the occasion of their birthdays. He writes further that this

the surgery be delayed in order that it be done on her birthday since the Mazel is strong on this day in addition to it being a day where tefillah is more accepted?

custom shouldn't be stopped, and only if there is an absolute emergency should it be shortened.

The Midrash Seichel Tov<sup>2</sup> says רוב בני אדם, מהבכים...ושמחים בו ועושין בו משתה, to most people, their birthday is beloved to them and they rejoice and make a party.

The Ben Ish Chai<sup>3</sup> remarks that there are those who are accustomed every year on their birthday to make it a festive day, and this is a good omen. This is what we are accustomed to doing in our house. R' Ovadia Yosef<sup>4</sup> writes that when there are Divrei Torah and songs and praises (שירות ותשבחות) to Hashem at a birthday meal, it is a Seudas Mitzva.



When the Chafetz Chaim turned 70 years old, he invited his students<sup>5</sup>—R' Elchonon Wasserman and R' Yosef Kahanamen (known as the Ponovezher Rav<sup>6</sup>)—and said the Bracha of Sheheciyanu<sup>7</sup> in their presence and gave them cake<sup>8</sup> and *schnapps*—שרך.<sup>9</sup> R' Dovid Chazzan would celebrate his birthday yearly after he reached the age of 70.<sup>10</sup>

R' Nosson Adler (1741-1800),<sup>11</sup> the Rebbe of the Chassam Sofer, held a birthday party on the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday<sup>12</sup> of his mother and invited the entire town. For R' Shmuel Salant's 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday, on Rosh Chodesh Shvat in 1909, a party took place at his house with cake.<sup>13</sup> Nearly all of Yerushalayim was there including the Chevra Kadisha, the staff of the Bikur Cholim hospital and the B'datz of Yerushalayim.

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### Time To Dream

<sup>2</sup> Breishis 40:20. This was authored by R' Menachem Ben Shlomo and written in 1139.

<sup>3</sup> Reeh, א', שנה א', 17. See Hoshea 7:5, Metzudas Dovid.

<sup>4</sup> יביע אומר, Orach Chaim, 6:29:4.

<sup>5</sup> We are guided to develop many students — העמידו תלמידים הרבה (Avos 1:1). This language of העמידו is uncanny as it literally means to stand. What does it mean to stand up students? The greatest teachers don't create dependent students rather they create independent thinkers, students who continue to grow and flourish long after they leave the teacher's classroom. The phrase העמידו תלמידים הרבה can be interpreted to mean to help your students develop their own legs to stand on (See also Tosafos Yom Tov there).

<sup>6</sup> The Ponovezh yeshiva flies an Israeli flag on Yom Ha'atzmaut, which was a condition of government funding. During the era of the Ponovezher Rav, the yeshiva didn't recite Tachanun but also didn't say Hallel on Yom Ha'atzmaut. As a result, a Zionist once asked the Ponovezher Rav, "If you are such a supporter of the State of Israel, why don't you say Hallel on this day?" He answered, "I follow Ben Gurion's custom: on Yom Ha'atzmaut Ben Gurion didn't say Tachanun or Hallel. And that is what I do."

<sup>7</sup> See Pischei Teshuva, Yoreh Deah, 217:16.

<sup>8</sup> See תשובת חות יאיר 70.

<sup>9</sup> Sefer Chafetz Chaim U'paalav, 40, Askan Tzibur, s.v. לכשמלאו. The Gemara (Moed Katan 28a) relates that when R' Yosef reached the age of 60, he made a festive day for the rabbinic students as he said that he left the range of כרת, kares (כרת is inflicted between the ages of 50 and 60).

<sup>10</sup> מע' ברכת שהחיינו, Yishrei Lev, 123; see שו"ת אפרקסתא דעניא 2b.

<sup>11</sup> See Igros Sofrim p. 83.

<sup>12</sup> See שו"ת בית ישראל 32.

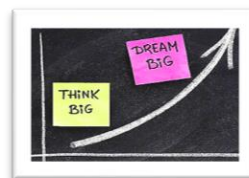
<sup>13</sup> The Sefer He'aruch (ערך קלר ג') writes, "We heard that there is a place where they call עוגה, cake, 'Kalir.' This is why they called him R Eliezer Ha'kalir (he was a famous poet), because he ate cake that had an amulet written inside some name of Hashem, and he thus became smart." (We see a custom like this in the Sefer Ha'rokeach, Hilchos Shavuos, 296)

The *neukdah* known as a *cholam* is the only *neukdah* that is in the air. This is because it represents a dream. As a result, the word חולם consists of the same letters as חלום, dream.

The light of נר חנוכה resembles a חולם, as the ו appears as the candle while the dot above the ו looks like a flame. This hints to the notion that we should dream by the נר חנוכה.<sup>14</sup> For this reason, Chanuka coincides annually with Parshas Miketz, the parsha about dreams.

Let us dream of the person we desire to become, the life we want to lead and the things we want to accomplish.

Incidentally, there is a saying, "If your dreams do not scare you, they are not big enough." Someone else said, "As long as you're going to be thinking anyway, think big."



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### At The Fourfront

Recently those learning Daf Yomi came upon the Mishna<sup>15</sup> that states that there are ארבעה אבות נויקין, four primary damagers. They are יצא, שור, בור, מבעה, הבער, ox, pit, Maveh and fire.

Here is another explanation, which connects to our parsha. These four damagers can also be referring to different events throughout history that have caused tremendous damage. The שור refers to the עגל, golden calf. The בור is a reference to Yosef who was catapulted into a pit and later sold.<sup>16</sup> The meaning of מבעה is either אדם, damage done by man, or שן, teeth<sup>17</sup> (Machlokes in the Gemara). So, this refers to Adam and Chava who partook of the forbidden fruit of the Eitz Hadaas.<sup>18</sup> הבער, fire refers to the fire of Machlokes<sup>19</sup> referring to the episode of Korach and his followers against Moshe. How did this incident end? With fire as it says וַאֲשֶׁר יֵצְאָה מֵאֵת ה'... a fire came forth from Hashem and consumed the 250 men...<sup>20</sup>



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]) where he studies, writes and teaches. The author is passionate about teaching Jews of all levels of observance.

<sup>14</sup> In the name of the Chida.

<sup>15</sup> Baba Kamma 2a.

<sup>16</sup> Breishis 37:24.

<sup>17</sup> Baba Kamma 3b. This refers to teeth of trespassing cattle which cause damage by their teeth through prohibited eating by grazing illegally.

<sup>18</sup> Incidentally, the Sichas Haran (29) informs us that learning Shulchan Aruch (Halacha) is a big *tikun*. This is because through sin, a person mixes good and bad. On the other hand, through learning Halacha we separate the good from bad since we clarify through Halacha what is kosher and pasul, permitted and forbidden and what is pure and impure (see Likutai Moharan 1:8).

<sup>19</sup> The Sar of Edom in heaven is appointed to create Machlokes. A Sar cannot be removed but his energy can be harnessed for good. So through *pilpul* of Torah, which is like fighting (Indeed, it is called *Milchamta Shel Torah*), other Machlokes (fighting, wars and the like) can be removed, thereby increasing peace in the world. With this we can explain the dictum that Torah scholars increase peace in the world. This is because there can be more peace in the world through the Machlokes of Torah, (Drashos Chassam Sofer, p. 806). Elsewhere, the Chassam Sofer (Chassam Sofer Al Hatorah, Lech Lecha, s.v. *vlo nasa*) tells us that when tzadikim are in unity, the wicked are in dispersion. However, when they are not in unity, then the wicked are in cohesion.

<sup>20</sup> Bamidbar 16:35. Bnei Yissaschar, Sivan, 5:12.