

Fascinating INSIGHTS

י' טבת תשפ"ד

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פרשת ויגש

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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/B0C9NDCMNC> 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?

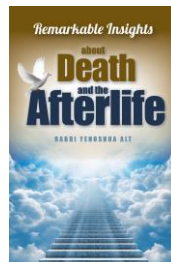
How does the death process rectify a person's soul?

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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High Hopes

Although Moshiach hasn't come yet,¹ there is no need to despair. This can be compared to one who flips a coin: there still remains a 50/50 chance that it will land on heads or tails. The same can be said regarding Moshiach —

although he hasn't come yet, it doesn't decrease the chances of his arrival now.

R' Chatzkel Levenstein explained that when a person is waiting for a bus and many busses already passed that weren't the bus he needs, he will still look up in

¹ At the third meal of a particular Shabbos in the Plaszow concentration camp, the Zaloshitzer Rebbe quoted the pasuk עד אבוא אל מקדשי א-ל אבינה. לאחריתם, until I came to the sanctuaries of Hashem, I contemplated their end (Tehillim 73:17). He explained this to mean, "Only when Moshiach comes will I understand the secret of the divine conduct of these times (referring to the Holocaust). Only then will I comprehend the mystery of the killings and carnage." (Ohalei Shem pp. 17-18)



anticipation the next time another bus approaches. This is because this may be the bus he has been waiting for. The same applies with Moshiach. Even though he didn't come until now when it seemed that current events would dictate his coming, we still should anticipate him anytime something happens that can lead to his arrival.



Unbreakable

For one to live authentically, he must be connected to the creator, as it says ואתם הדבקים בה' אלהיכם, you who cling to Hashem are living.² There was a tzadik from Brisk, R' Nachum Eliyahu, whose profession was selling women's jewelry. To protect himself spiritually, when he recited in קריאת שמע על המטה the words בידך אפקיד (אדון עולם), in Hashem's hand do I entrust my spirit (in Your hand), he would say: "Hashem, if you know I will act properly tomorrow, then return my neshama to me. Otherwise, keep it with you."

The Sefas Emes³ is bothered about why Hashem arranged the information regarding the whereabouts of Yosef to be kept hidden from Yaakov. He explains that **although Yaakov was terribly pained that his בן זקונים was taken from him, his ignorance of Yosef's location was a kindness from Hashem. This is because it would have been even more painful for Yaakov to have known that Yosef was sold to Mitzrayim—ערות הארץ, a place of impurity**—as he had no greater desire than to raise his children as servants of Hashem. When the shevatim said עוד יוסף חי וכי הוא משל בכל ארץ מצרים⁴ Yosef is still alive, he is the ruler in Mitzrayim, they also meant that Yosef was alive spiritually, despite being in Mitzrayim. "He ruled in Mitzrayim" means that he ruled over his evil inclination, despite being in such an impure place.

From Yaakov's view, a life of impurity as the King of Mitzrayim would be worse than death! The pasuk continues ויפג לבו כי לא האמין להם, Yaakov didn't believe them. What Yaakov didn't believe was that Yosef was spiritually alive, although he may have been physically alive, since being a king, Yosef could have any desire fulfilled. When did Yaakov believe them? When he was shown the wagons,⁵ which were a sign of the Torah topic he and Yosef had been studying when they were separated—עגלה ערופה. Because this showed Yosef was alive spiritually, ותחי רוח יעקב אביהם, the spirit of Yaakov was revived.

In Czarist Russia children as young as eight were forcefully inducted into the army for service of up to 25 years. A woman once came to R' Yisrael of Rizhin to bemoan the fact that her son had been abducted by the

Russian army. She said, "If only I would see the grave instead of knowing that he is alive but transgressing Torah commandments!"⁶

Jews throughout history remained connected to Hashem—whether in the enslavement in Mitzrayim, the crusades, the Holocaust, or in other devastating circumstances.

Not too long ago, a container was discovered with a paper inside in the ruins of the Warsaw Ghetto, on which were written these remarkable words:

My name is Yossel ben Yossel Rockover from Tarnipol and I am a chassid of the Gerrer Rebbe. I am here in the Warsaw Ghetto as it is going up in flames. My wife and child—a 7-month-old baby—were hiding in the woods and were murdered. Two other children of mine, I don't know where they are. The three children who were with me were murdered yesterday. I am left with nothing and these are my final hours on this world. I am 40 years old today and I served Hashem with התלהבות, passion. My request is that I should be able to serve Hashem with ובכל נפשך ובכל מאדך. I can testify with full emuna that my trust in Hashem hasn't changed an inch (כמלא נימא) and I completely believe in each of the thirteen principles of faith.

I remember what my rebbe told me many times about a man who fled the Spanish Inquisition and arrived in Amsterdam. After escaping with his family and coming off the ship, a bolt of lightning hit, which killed his wife. Later a wave came and took away his two children. The man then stood on the deck of the ship and said the following: "Hashem, you did many things to make me turn away from you. I am informing you that I believe in you no matter what you do. Nothing can make me stop believing in you, and being an honest Jew and a servant of Hashem."

I feel now like that Jew who escaped the Spanish Inquisition...⁷

In a similar vein, on a wall in Cologne, Germany, where Jews had hidden from the Nazis, an inscription was found that read: "I believe in the sun even when it's not shining. I believe in love even when not feeling it. I believe in God even when He is silent."

After such astounding words, we can understand Rashi's comment⁸ that in the future the non-Jews will praise us by saying, "See the excellent feature of the Jewish people. They cleaved to Hashem through all the travails and didn't abandon Him..."

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.

buried while having been a frum Jew (היספר בקבר חסדך) rather than being alive but living with his belief in Hashem cast into oblivion (אמונתך באבדון).

⁷ He signed off by writing שמע ישראל ה' אלהינו ה' אחד followed by the words בידך אפקיד רוחי, in Your hand I entrust my spirit (Tehillim 31:6).

⁸ Devarim 32:43.

² Devarim 4:4.

³ Vayeshev, תרלו, s.v.

⁴ Breishis 45:26.

⁵ Breishis 45:27, Rashi.

⁶ With this the Rebbe understood באבדון אמונתך חסדך (Tehillim 88:12), as it is worthy to sing praise of Hashem's kindness that a person is