

# Fascinating INSIGHTS

כא' אדר א' 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/B0C9NDCMNC> 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?

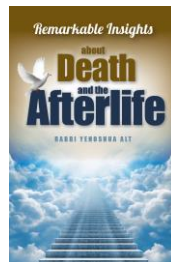
How does the death process rectify a person's soul?

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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### Hindsight

The pasuk states <sup>1</sup>Hashem וראית את אחורי לפני לא יראו, and told Moshe... you will see my back but my face may not be seen. The Chassam Sofer<sup>2</sup> looks at these words deeper: At times in our lives, it may be difficult for us to feel Hashem since we are caught up in a frustrating situation in which we are subjective — לפני לא יראו. At these times it would be beneficial to let the situation pass. Once it passes, we can

see more clearly in retrospect. This is what is meant in וראית את אחורי, as only in retrospect does it make sense.<sup>3</sup>

This can be understood through an analogy: when a person is in a car he is unable to see what is happening around the corner. However, when he is on a plane, he can see everything (objective). Similarly, when we are caught up in a situation and are at ground level we are unable to see objectively. Wait for it to pass and then you can see it all clearly.

<sup>1</sup> Shemos 33:23.

<sup>2</sup> Toras Moshe, Shemos 33:23.

<sup>3</sup> A common saying goes, "Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards!"

Sometimes we may see the full picture the next day. But at other times it may take longer — a week, a month or even years later. And sometimes only after this world.<sup>4</sup> This is analogous to a person reading a book. No questions may be asked until the book is read from beginning to end, since otherwise, he is still in middle of the story. Similarly, in life we come in middle of the story as we are over 5,700 years into existence. We are still in middle of the book. Consequently, we cannot ask any questions.

After the tragic events at Meron in 2021 on Lag Ba'omer, R' Yaakov Shayish visited the home of Moshe ben Shalom of Bnei Brak, one of the victims and shared this insight. "The names of the parshiyos of these weeks reveal a secret to acceptance and the consolation. The sequence of these parshiyos are Acharei-Mos, Kedoshim, Emor, Behar and Becukosai. It can be interpreted to mean as following the death (Acharei-Mos) of these holy people (Kedoshim), we should say (Emor) that regarding those who lost their lives on the mountain (Behar) [Mount Meron], it was a *chok* (Bechoksai), something beyond our comprehension. And finally, as we say at the conclusion of Bechoksai, *chazak chazak V'nischazek*, let's be strong and then we will strengthen one another."



R' Tzvi Hirsch Meisels recounted<sup>5</sup> the poignant tale of his tallis, adorned with an *atarah* (ornament) gifted by his father-in-law, once belonging to the author of Yitav Lev. In 1944, when the Nazis came to take him to Auschwitz, he wore the tallis with the *atarah* until it was forcibly taken away from him at Auschwitz. Determined, he managed to locate where the stolen belongings were stored, recovering his tallis. Aware that openly wearing it could lead to dire consequences, he cut it so he could conceal it beneath his clothing without the Nazis knowing. One day, R' Meisels was leaving the bathroom when a guard decided to inspect him and discovered the garment. When the guard asked R' Meisels about the garment's nature, he answered that it was a "Godly garment." Enraged, the guard subjected him to merciless beatings, and said: How can you mention God amidst the atrocities befalling his people including his own family members being killed? Threatening death unless a satisfactory explanation was given, the guard received a profound response. R' Meisels answered him with the following

analogy. In a critical operation to cure a severe illness, a world-famous surgeon performed it on a distinguished person. He began to making a large incision as well as some smaller incisions as were necessary. A shoemaker watching from the side who was unaware of the medical intricacies questions the seemingly unnecessary pain. He thinks, "When I fix shoes, I would never cut the leather in a place that looks nice!" Would we expect the surgeon to stop his surgery because the shoemaker, who doesn't understand what the surgeon is doing? R' Meisels continued that the same applies to the actions of the Creator. The truth is that we don't understand all of His actions and why He makes a cut at the finest part from within the Jewish people. Nevertheless, we should know that the fact that, we, who have limited minds, cannot understand His ways, doesn't minimize His greatness. The guard was impressed with R' Meisels' response and not only spared R' Meisels but told him that he should visit the guard's block whenever he needed some extra food.



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### Golden Connection

The pasuk says **שאו מרום עיניכם וראו מי ברא אלה**,<sup>6</sup> lift up your eyes and see who created these. The Vilna Gaon writes that our purpose is to look at אלה, these, and be cognizant of what is around you and what you have, and recognize מי, from whom it all comes. When we do this, we will realize that it's all from Hashem. Combining the word אלה-ים with the word מי, we get to Hashem's name



אלה-ים. At the sin of the golden calf, where the Jews disconnected from Hashem, they separated the מי and אלה. They said אלה אלהיך ישראל, this is your god.<sup>7</sup> Aharon's response was למי זהב, who has gold.<sup>8</sup> He was referring to the fact that the Jews were demonstrating that they no longer lived with the vision that it is all from Hashem — the מי was disconnected from אלה but connected to זהב.<sup>9</sup>

Moshe said למי ליהוה אלי, whoever is for Hashem join me, and only the Leviyim responded.<sup>10</sup> That is to say, disconnect the מי from זהב and connect it to Hashem (להוה).

Rabbi Alt merited to learn under the tutelage of R' Mordechai Friedlander tztz"l for close to five years. He received semicha from R' Zalman Nechemia Goldberg tztz"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.

<sup>4</sup> In this way we can grasp **ולא נתן ה' לכם לב לדעת...עד היום הזה** (Devarim 29:3): we don't understand Hashem's ways until a certain time.

<sup>5</sup> In his sefer, Mekadshei Hashem p. 19. R' Meisels was the Rav of Vac, Hungary.

<sup>6</sup> Yeshaya 40:26.

<sup>7</sup> Shemos 32:4.

<sup>8</sup> Shemos 32:24.

<sup>9</sup> Esav similarly didn't combine the מי and אלה. When he saw Yaakov's family, he said מי אלה לך, who are these to you (Breishis 33:5). Esav lived in the physical world where he noticed the אלה, but was unable to connect it to the source i.e., Hashem. On the other hand, Yaakov's response was את עבדך את אלה-ים, the children whom Hashem has graciously given your servant — Yaakov recognized it was from Hashem (אלה-ים).

<sup>10</sup> Shemos 32:26.