

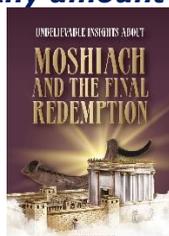
Fascinating INSIGHTS

כו' אדר ב' תשפ"ד
April 5, 2024

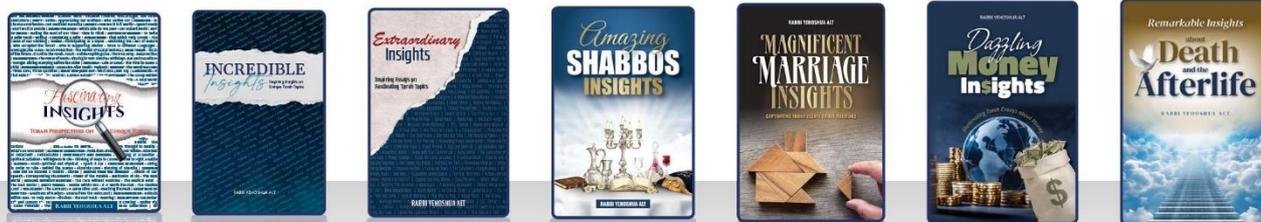
פרשת שמיני
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לעילוי נשמת הירש בן שלמה
ומנחם מענדיל בן יוסף מאיר

Butterflies

With the butterflies already beginning to appear, let's present different Torah insights connected to this unique creature.

R' Yisrael Pesach Feinhandler¹ was asked concerning a butterfly that got caught in a spider web, if it was a Mitzva to take the butterfly out because of Tzaar Baalei Chaim? He answered for various reasons that there was no Mitzva to save the butterfly. Among the reasons is that the nature of animals is that there are predators and prey. So just as if a lion attacks a deer, Tzaar Baalei Chaim

¹ Shu"t Avnei Yashfei. He was originally from Cleveland and learned in Telz. A renowned Posek, he was a Rav in Romema in Yerushalayim. He published eleven Sefarim.

doesn't mandate a person to save the deer, so too one doesn't need to save the butterfly in this case, since it is the nature of the world.



What are some lessons we can learn from butterflies? We know that a caterpillar begins its existence on the ground with its feet, incapable of flying, but later transforms into a flying butterfly, after undergoing a series of natural events where it decomposes completely and then regenerates itself. This metamorphosis hints to what will transpire at Techias Hamaisim where a decayed and decomposed body will spring back to life in a more glorious form.²

Another lesson from butterflies can be drawn from the following account. A man who saw a cocoon noticed the butterfly inside trying to make its way out of the tiny hole. The butterfly struggled and tinkered, to no avail. Feeling sorry for the butterfly, the man cut a large opening through which the butterfly could leave. The butterfly exited but the man noticed that his body was contorted and its wings were shriveled. This is how the butterfly lived its entire life — small, shriveled and unable to fly. It is the struggle to exit the cocoon that has the effect of transforming fluid from the butterfly's body to its wings which is how they develop. Although he thought he was doing a favor by ending the struggle, really he thwarted its growth. Struggles we go through can enable us to develop wings so that we have the ability to reach great heights.³ We must realize that just over the hill is a beautiful valley, but we must climb the hill to see it.⁴

Growing in the Gulag

One night in one of the barracks in the Siberian gulag where R' Mendel Futerfass was, the people were lamenting their lives (their successful jobs, their families, etc.) that were taken away from them by the Communists. R' Mendel was the only one there not complaining about his situation. As a result, the people present expressed that he probably didn't have much before he was exiled to the gulag and consequently he didn't have much to whine about. R' Mendel responded that quite to the contrary, he did have a successful life prior. He had a good job, a wife and children. However, he said, "I am not crying about my lost career because my primary work is to be a servant of G-d, and that wasn't taken from me. I used to serve him

with my job I had before and today I am His ambassador here in Siberia."



עבד ה'

This idea is shown to us with Yosef⁵ Hatzadik, by whom it says ויהי שם בבית הסהר,⁶ Yosef was there in prison. That is to say, he was the same Yosef Hatzadik in prison as he was before he was sold. He did the will of Hashem regardless of where he was.⁷

Attending Sports Games

In today's society, many people are fans of various sports teams, whether in baseball, basketball, football, or other sports. The question has been raised if it is permitted to attend such events as a spectator.



In a letter dated the 14th of Sivan in 1981 (5741), R' Moshe⁸ Feinstein addressed this matter. He writes that attendance at such events is prohibited based on *Bitul Torah* and *Moshav Leitzim*, wasting one's time from Torah study and engaging in frivolity. We must also keep in mind that nowadays, at many sporting events, there are major issues of immodesty⁹ as well either from the crowd or from secondary forms of entertainment.



Some halachic authorities opine that when there is no problem of *Bitul Torah* as the person needs some recreation in any case, and the environment is clean of inappropriate images, foul language and the like, attendance would then be permitted.

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 seven books including the recently released "Remarkable Insights about Death and the Afterlife." 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 See the Tiferes Yisrael in his Drush Ohr Hachaim.

³ We should internalize that no one worth admiring succeeded without many failures along the way. The great poets wrote bad poems and the great artists drew unpleasant paintings.

⁴ In the words of a similar saying: "No one has ever climbed a hill by just looking at it."

⁵ We know that the name Joe originates from Joseph, which refers to Yosef. But what you may not know is that the name Jose

is a Spanish form of the name Joseph and the Italian Giuseppe is the Italian version of Joseph.

⁶ Breishis 39:20.

⁷ Likewise, Rashi (Shemos 1:5) comments that whether Yosef was his father's shepherd or the viceroy of Mitzrayim, he retained his righteousness.

⁸ Igros Moshe Yoreh Deah 4:11:1.

⁹ See the end of R' Moshe's teshuva there.