

Amazing
SHABBOS
INSIGHTS



RABBI YEHOSHUA ALT

Amazing Shabbos Insights

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בס"ד

לכבוד הרה"ג ר' יהושע אלט שליט"א חתן ידידי היקר ש"ב הרה"ג ר'
ברוך בער אונגרישר שליט"א.

שמחתי לראות שאתה כותב דברי תורה ומאמרים בעניני עבודת ה'
בנושאים חשובים שיכולים לעורר את הלב, ואף שקשה לי לעיין בהם
נראה שהדברים מסודרים יפה עם מקורות מחז"ל ומהמפרשים,

ועכשיו שאתה עומד להוציא הכל בספר אבא בברכה שתזכה בספרך
לעורר לבבות ישראל ולהגדיל תורה ולהוסיף קידוש שם שמים בעולם,
ותצליח להוסיף עוד וללמוד ולכתוב לזכות הרבים, ותצליח בכל מעשי
ידיך.



כ' אב תשע"ה

כבוד ידידי הרב יהושע נ"י

במכתב מאליהו ח"ג במאמר "כבוד ה' האמיתי" מצייר לך שעיקר בקידוש ה' הוא בנוי על מה שעשה בפנימיותו, בינו לבין עצמו לקדש שמו יתברך, בדברים שאינם נראין לחוץ. ורק אח"כ יכול לבא לקדש קידוש ה' ברבים לפני עשרה מישראל ורק אח"כ לדרגת קידוש ה' לפני העולם.

ברמב"ם בפירוש המשניות מצייר לך שקידוש ה' היינו מעשה יוסף בברחו מפני אשת פוטיפר.

הגם שלא אמר על זה שום אדם "ברוך אלקא דיוסף" ולא יצא קידוש ה' בפומבי, מ"מ הא עיקור קידוש ה' הוא בפנימיותו של האדם, שממליך הרבש"ע על כל עניניו.

ומילים "חילול ה'" היינו שעושה ההיפוך, חי ב"חלל", כאילו פנוי מכבודו יתברך.

ידידי ר' יהושע - זה עשרות בשנים שהכירתיך, ובאותם שנים שהתקרבת מאוד להרבש"ע זכיתי להכיר אותך באופן שלא נראה לחוץ ואין עוד איש שיבין עומק התקרבות להרבש"ע שפעלת בפנים, בעומק הנשמה, ובחיבתך לתורת ארץ ישראל. זהו "קידוש ה' אמיתי".

ולכן באתי בברכת אוהב, בברכה מתוך אהבה, ובתפלה שתצליח להוציא דברי תורה חוצה, ומתוך קידוש ה' בעומק פנימית נפשך, יצא לחוץ ריבוי כבוד שמים בדברי תורה שסידרת להוציא לרבים.

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הנני למנות עם עושי מצות
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R' Yehoshua Alt is a committed Ben Torah who is personally known to me as a Yarei Shamayim. He has shown me a number of essays he has written on the selected parsiyos which he hopes will become part of a sefer on the entire Chumash. The essays are written in English, are well organized and clear, and address important and meaningful themes in Emunah and Avodas Hashem. What is especially impressive is R' Alt's ability to draw on works and authors like the Arizal, the Shelah HaKadosh, the Bnei Yissoscher, R' Tzadok and many others and to make their often-esoteric wisdom at least partially accessible to the general reader. R' Alt's project is a worthy endeavor and deserves the support of the Klal.

May he be zoche to complete his work and other sefarim as well and to spread his Torah to ever-widening circles.

Yitzchak A. Breitowitz

Magid Shiur, Yeshivas Ohr Somayach

Rav, Kehillas or Somayach

Rabbi Zev Leff

Rabbi of Moshav Matityahu
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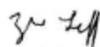
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Dear Friends,

I have read samples of the Parsha sheets produced by Rabbi Yehoshua Alt. Rabbi Alt presents topics related to the Torah portions that contain commentaries and insights that are informative, interesting and inspiring. The ideas are culled from variety of Torah true sources as documented in the footnotes. I am pleased to hear that Rabbi Alt plans to publish these Parsha sheets in a book to make them available to a larger public. I recommend this work as worthwhile reading and true Torah learning.

I commend Rabbi Alt for a quality work and pray that Hashem enables him to continue to merit the community with further works.

Sincerely,
With Torah blessings,



Rabbi Zev Leff

dedications

dedications

Could be more pages
of dedications

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Introduction/ Acknowledgments

I feel honored to present another book, having the privilege to share Hashem's Torah with the world. I am especially grateful to have authored a book about the holy day of Shabbos, the day we receive an additional soul, the day which is called "a wonderful gift from Hashem's treasure house,"¹ the day which is the *mekor ha'bracha*, source of blessing. It is my hope that this book will enhance the Shabbos of many.

I begin my list of thank yous to all the publications and websites that have hosted my weekly Fascinating Insights sheet. I am happy to know that they have been in places that I never imagined. I received a message from a recipient of the Insights who is an Orthodox Jew that lives in some barren wasteland in Texas. She drives 220 miles for kosher meat and dairy products. Other unexpected places where messages have come from are Milan, Melbourne and Me'ah Shearim.

Recently, a resident of Cape Town, South Africa gave my previous book to his rav, who is also an author. I was told that the rav quoted from the book at his shalosh seudos speech to his congregation.

I am appreciative of all those that spread the Torah Insights. A congregant of a shul, just outside Yerushalayim, related that after the shul's 6:15 Shacharis, the gabbai consistently shares the Insights from the weekly Fascinating Insights sheet to members of the *kehillah*.

I am grateful to those that have printed and distributed the weekly Divrei Torah for their shuls. There are times when I have

1. See Beitza 16a.

suddenly discovered this. For example, a rabbi in Los Angeles emailed me that he prints them for his congregants. Several times, I entered a shul, about 15 minutes from where I live, and discovered the Fascinating Insights sheet there.

Then there is the email I received from someone in Paris asking me to send him the Fascinating Insights sheet in French and Hebrew so that he can print and distribute them to his shul. He then informed me that he discovered the weekly *Divrei Torah* in another shul that he attended one Shabbos where he saw it in French available for the public.

I am indebted to Rafael Ancel of France for translating the weekly Insights into French on a weekly basis. The fruits of his work are apparent by the number of people who download the French edition.

I have immense gratitude to Meir Kermaier for his help with translating the weekly Insights into Hebrew. Soon after the initiation of the Hebrew translation, I received quite a few emails from Hebrew speakers expressing their gratitude and requesting to be added to the email distribution list.

A huge thank you is also owed to Mrs. Faigy Horowitz for the translation of the Insights into Yiddish. Surprisingly, it has many downloads, presumably from people to whom Yiddish is their native language.

Because of these translations, besides receiving emails in English, I have also received emails in French, Hebrew and Yiddish — all foreign languages to me when I was growing up in New York.

I appreciate those who shared their input which helped make this book what it is. A big thank you to Mrs. Judith Weil for her superb job editing this book. I am very grateful for the graphic designer, Mrs. Michal Emanuel, who did an exceptional job with the cover design and typesetting.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to those who kindly sponsored the book. I am appreciative of the rabbanim who provided

haskamos. Although they were given for my previous books, I included them because they were also written for these essays.

A huge but inadequate thank you to my parents who have always believed in me. I am also indebted as well to my special in-laws for all their dedication over the years. Finally, and mostly, I want to thank my wife who wonderfully shoulders the myriad of responsibilities of the household and children. I am grateful for all her input and support.

Readers are encouraged to share their thoughts with me at yalt3285@gmail.com. This is also the email address to subscribe to the weekly Fascinating Insights Torah sheet.

—Yehoshua Alt
Iyar 5782/ May 2022

Pre-Shabbos



The Heart of the Week

Did you know that Shabbos isn't just a day in its own right but a day that is related to the other days of the week? The three days prior to Shabbos and the three days after Shabbos are connected to² Shabbos.³ This is just as it says *yemina usmala u'veinaihu kallah*, three preceding days to the right, three succeeding days to the left and amid them, the Shabbos Kallah.⁴ In a similar vein, this is what is meant by *k'kallah bein raioseha meshubatzah*, like a bride bedecked among her companions,⁵ referring to the Shabbos Kallah amid the weekdays.

Based on this, we can understand why in the Shir Shel Yom of Wednesday, three days prior to Shabbos, we say *Lechu Niraninah* (the opening piece of Kabbalas Shabbos), although it is not in that chapter of Tehillim.⁶ It is included because from Wednesday on,

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2. There are three parts of the soul that we can relate to: nefesh, ruach and neshama. For Shabbos we get an additional one of each of these. The Arizal tells us that on Wednesday, the nefesh enters a person. On Thursday his ruach enters and on Friday his neshama. When do they leave? On Sunday, his neshama leaves. On Monday his ruach leaves and on Tuesday, his nefesh leaves. This is the meaning of three days prior to Shabbos and the three days that follow it are connected to Shabbos.
 3. Pesachim 106a. See Pri Eitz Chaim, Shaar Hashabbos 1. For this reason, one may recite Havdala up until Tuesday, the third day after Shabbos (Tur, Orach Chaim, 299:6. see Mishna Brura 299:16).
 4. Askinu Seudasa of Shabbos morning.
 5. Friday night zemer Kol Mekadeish. A kallah is adorned with 24 ornaments (called *kishutei kallah*) and Mesachta Shabbos has 24 chapters.
 6. The Shir Shel Yom of Wednesday is from Tehillim, chapter 94 whereas *Lechu Niraninah* is from chapter 95. The Shir Shel Yom of all the other days of the week is exclusively from one chapter of Tehillim.

the days are connected to the upcoming Shabbos. This is why there is an opinion that one can read *shtayim mikra v'echad targum* until the following Wednesday.⁷

The pasuk says that on Shabbos *b'charish u'va'katzir tishbos*, you should desist from plowing and harvesting.⁸ The word *charish*, plowing, is an acronym for **chamishi**, **revii**, **shishi**, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday — the three days we prepare ground for Shabbos, as this is what plowing is. The three days after Shabbos are harvesting (*katzir*), because if one observes Shabbos, he will reap the benefits.

Shabbos is compared to the heart.⁹ Just as the heart is in the center of the body, Shabbos is the center of the week, as it is surrounded by the three days prior to it and the three days that follow it. Additionally, just as the heart gives life and sustenance to the entire body, so too does Shabbos sustain the entire week. This is just as we say in Lecha Dodi, that Shabbos is the *mekor ha'bracha*, source of blessing.

7. Mishna Brura 285:11.

8. Shemos 34:21.

9. In the Hakdama to the third volume of the Mishna Brura, he writes the following: There are different punishments for sins. There is a punishment for that which is an *isur ase* as well as that which is a *lav* (prohibition) which is even more stringent. More severe is that which is punishable by *misah bidei shamayim*, death by the hands of heaven. More severe still is *kareis* (spiritual excision) followed by that which is *misah bidei adam*, death by the hands of man (court-imposed capital punishment). Within *misah bidei adam* there is *chenek*, strangulation, *hereg*, execution by the sword, *seraifah*, burning with hot lead and then *sekila*, stoning. The punishment for Shabbos desecration is stoning. The mitzvos parallel the limbs of the body. Just as there are limbs of the body that one can live without although he will be blemished, so too the same applies to the mitzvos. Thus it says *asher yaaseh osam ha'adam va'chai bahem*, which man shall carry out and by which he shall live (Vayikra 18:5), and *ki hu chayecha v'orech yamecha*, for He is your life and the length of your days (Devarim 30:20). Shabbos is like a limb on which life depends — like the heart.

There are those who don't work on Friday so that they can prepare for Shabbos. In this light, we can explain the Chazal that says *meis b'Erev Shabbos siman yafeh lo*, one who dies on Erev Shabbos, it is a good sign for him.¹⁰ A deeper explanation is that on Friday we should make ourselves as if we are dead to everything else in that we are dedicated to preparing for Shabbos.¹¹

10. Kesubos 103b.

11. See Nesivos Shalom, Emor, s.v. *mikra'ei kodesh*.

Preparation Period

The outcome is in proportion to the investment. This can be compared to an archer. The more power he puts behind his bow and arrow, and the more carefully he takes aim, the more efficient it will be. The same applies to spirituality, whether it be preparing for tefilla, Shabbos and the like.¹² The more one prepares, the more will be produced.¹³ In fact, the word *hachanah*, preparation, is related to the word *kano*, base,¹⁴ because preparation is the base for that which everything stands. In light of this we can comprehend why the early pious ones would prepare an hour before tefilla,¹⁵ as their preparation was the impetus for their great tefillos.

To attain the kedusha of Shabbos, we need *hachanah*, preparation, for Shabbos. Although preparation for all Avodas Hashem is important, the only time it is stated explicitly is in connection with Shabbos: *v'hayah ba'yom ha'shishi v'haichinu es asher yaviu*, it shall be on the sixth day when they prepare what they bring.¹⁶

Of all of the days of the week, Friday is the day that represents preparation as we will now demonstrate. The seven days of the week are connected to the seven shepherds — Avraham, Yitzchak,

12. Prior to Baruch She'amar we say *hareini mizamein es pi*, I now prepare my mouth. In a similar vein, prior to performing mitzvos, such as with sefira, we recite *hinini muchan u'mezuman...*, I am prepared and ready to perform the commandment of...

13. Ohr Hachaim, Shemos 33:11.

14. Shemos 30:18. There is a saying, "Today's preparation determines tomorrow's achievement."

15. Brachos 30b.

16. Shemos 16:5.

Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef and Dovid. So Friday, the sixth day, matches up with Yosef, the sixth shepherd.¹⁷ One way we see this is that Yosef exemplifies purity because he overcame the test with the wife of Potifar in the area of circumcision¹⁸ and on Friday we purify ourselves in preparation for Shabbos by going to the mikva.¹⁹

Friday is the day of preparation for Shabbos as the gemara says *mi she'tarach b'Erev Shabbos yochal b'Shabbos*,²⁰ whoever toiled on Friday will eat on Shabbos. Additionally, it says *v'hayah ba'yom ha'shishi v'haichinu es asher yaviu v'hayah mishneh al asher yilkitu yom yom*, it shall be on the sixth day when they prepare what they bring it will be double what they pick every day.²¹ Yosef represents the idea of preparing for Shabbos because Yosef told Paroh to prepare for the years of famine by preparing in the years of plenty.²² Also, he said *u'tvoach tevach v'hachain*, have meat slaughtered and prepare it.²³

In Lecha Dodi we say *mai'rosh mikedem nesuchah*, from the beginning, from antiquity she was honored. The words *mai'rosh* and *mikedem* both mean “from the beginning,” so what is the difference between them? In the six days of the week, we have 144

17. Dovid **Hamelech** corresponds to Shabbos. On this day, we say in Shemoneh Esrei, *yismichu v'malchuscha shomrei Shabbos*, they shall rejoice in Your kingship, those who observe Shabbos. Additionally, Shabbos is associated with royalty as it is called Shabbos Malkisa, the *Shabbos* queen.

18. Breishis 39.

19. The six orders of Mishnayos (See Shabbos 31a) parallel these six shepherds. Yosef who is the sixth shepherd corresponds to *Seder Taharos*, the sixth order of Mishnayos. When there was a famine in Mitzrayim there were nevertheless provisions (*shever*), because of Yosef. R' Moshe Wolfson notes that the words *shever b'Mitzrayim* (Breishis 42:1) shares the same numerical value as *Seder Taharos*, 884.

20. Avoda Zara 3a.

21. Shemos 16:5. On Friday, the Jews in the desert received a double portion of *munn*, just like Yosef received a double portion in Eretz Yisrael as his two sons become two shevatim.

22. Breishis 41:34-35. See 41:48-49.

23. Breishis 43:16.

hours. 144 is the gematria of *kedem*. The more we invest in Shabbos from the 144 hours from the onset of the week — the hours in the week prior to Shabbos — then *nesuchah*, the more we will feel the queenliness of Shabbos. The more we prepare for Shabbos, the more we will feel Shabbos. May we all merit to prepare properly for Shabbos during the week so that we will enjoy it so much more.

Erev Shabbos

R' Pam²⁴ once remarked that what he missed from Europe was the Erev Shabbos. "Chatzos came and people stopped their activities, focusing entirely on the holy Shabbos. People would come to shul early and say Shir Hashirim, learn a sefer on the parsha and so on. You felt Shabbos entering." R' Yaakov Kamenetzky expressed it in this way: "At the beginning of the 1900s, there was Chillul Shabbos in America. Over the years we recaptured the Shabbos. However, we have yet to reclaim the Erev Shabbos."

24. In 1993, a Sefer Torah was written to coincide with R' Pam's 80th birthday. Posters with R' Pam's picture were posted informing people of the event. Rebbetzin Pam noticed a poster with her husbands' picture on their block and she felt it violated the privacy of her neighbors, most of whom were non-Jewish. Since it was late at night, she decided that in the morning she would remove the poster, but the next day she noticed that the sign was gone. Nevertheless, she still felt an apology was due at least to the neighbor whose house was closest to the sign. She went to apologize to the neighbor (Just to get a picture of who these neighbors were: They were Italian and owned a huge German Shepherd dog. Their son who also lived there was a lieutenant in the police force.) explaining that she didn't post the sign but she felt it was a violation of their privacy. Rebbetzin Pam said that the sign was gone although she was unaware of who removed it. Her neighbor interjected and said, "We live next to R' Pam all these years and are so enamored with him, as we never met anyone like him. We admire him! All this time we wanted a picture of him in our house and now the opportunity arrived when we saw that poster. We are the ones who removed it from the outside to have it in our dining room!" And so it was: This Italian family with their big dog and lieutenant son had a picture of R' Pam hanging in their dining room!

Preparing for Shabbos is biblical²⁵ as it says *v'hayah ba'yom ha'shishi v'haichinu es asher yaviu*,²⁶ on the sixth day when they prepare what they bring.²⁷ The importance of preparing for Shabbos is shown in the gemara²⁸ that says Eliyahu will not come on Erev Shabbos²⁹ because of the difficulties this would impose on those who would need to interrupt their Shabbos preparations to greet him.

We know that there is a distinct Yetzer Hara for arguing and getting angry on Erev Shabbos. This is portrayed in the story related in the gemara³⁰ of two people whom the Satan regularly incited so that during every twilight period on Erev Shabbos they fought with one another... What is the origin of this Yetzer Hara? Because the first sin occurred on Erev Shabbos, the Yetzer Hara has dominance then. We can be in such a rush on Erev Shabbos that it can lead to quarreling. Indeed, the word *nachash*, the snake who was the instigator of the first sin, is rooted in *chish*, to act quickly, rush.³¹ To counter this, we need to be ready early.

Erev Shabbos should be peaceful and not rushed. Then we can live up to *v'zakeinu l'kabel Shabbasos mitoch rov simcha*, to receive

25. See Biur Halacha 250, s.v. *yashkim*. See there regarding one going shopping prior to Shacharis on Friday because preparing for Shabbos is biblical in contrast to tefilla which is Rabbinical.

26. Shemos 16:5. So, we should bake and cook what we wish to: *es asher tofu eifu v'es asher tevashlu ba'sheilu* (Shemos 16:23).

27. The holy Amoraim would prepare for Shabbos in their way. To name just a couple: Rava would salt fish for Shabbos whereas R' Huna would light lamps (Shabbos 119a. See the Rambam, Hilchos Shabbos 30:6). This shows happiness and anticipation for Shabbos. This isn't just for Friday but the entire week like we see with Shamai. Beis Shamai said from Sunday, one should prepare for Shabbos (Beitza 16a).

28. Pesachim 13a, Eruvin 43b.

29. or Erev Yom Tov.

30. Gittin 52a.

31. As in *ki gaz chish va'naufah*, for it is cut off swiftly and we fly away (Tehillim 90:10).

Shabbos amid abundant gladness.³² This can be attained by following a unique interpretation of *meis b'Erev Shabbos siman yafeh lo*:³³ make yourself like you are dead on Erev Shabbos. Meaning, that you only deal with matters of Shabbos so that Shabbos can be brought in early and without tension.

We say in Kabbalas Shabbos *pnei Shabbos nekablah*, let us welcome the Shabbos presence.³⁴ Another explanation is to put on your Shabbos face (*pnei Shabbos*). All week a person walks around with expressions of anxiety, tension and the like. But on Shabbos we should feel as if all our work is done and that our worries are gone. Our faces should radiate tranquility. This is how we should welcome (*nekablah*) Shabbos.³⁵

We need to be ready with time to greet Shabbos. We should live up to the words *likros Shabbos lechu v'nalchah*, let us go welcome Shabbos.³⁶ The Rambam³⁷ writes that ... a person should wrap himself in tzitzis and sit with proper respect, waiting to receive

32. Ribon Kol Ha'olamim on Friday night. When this is done, one can fulfill showing special warmth and love to his wife on Erev Shabbos (Mishna Brura 280:3).

33. Kesubos 103b. The simple meaning is that if one dies on Erev Shabbos it is a good omen for him. Another explanation is that he truly lived his life and fulfilled his purpose and then died (*meis b'Erev Shabbos*), so that is a good omen as he is prepared for the next world, the world of Shabbos. This is similar to the idea of *mi she'tarach b'Erev Shabbos yochal b'Shabbos*, whoever toiled on Erev Shabbos will eat on Shabbos, meaning one who labored to perform mitzvos in this world will be rewarded in the next world (Avoda Zara 3a).

34. The question has been raised as to why we only have Kabbalas Shabbos and not Kabbalas Yom Tov. This is because on Yom Tov, the mitzvah is to go to the house of Hashem as we are *oleh l'regel*. As a result, we go to Hashem. On the other hand, Shabbos is Hashem coming to us. Consequently, we go out to greet Hashem with Kabbalas Shabbos.

35. See R' Menachem Bentzion Zaks, the son-in-law of R' Tzvi Pesach Frank, in his sefer Menachem Tzion.

36. Lecha Dodi.

37. Hilchos Shabbos 30:2.

Shabbos as one goes out to greet a king. R' Chanina would wrap himself in finery and stand towards evening on Friday and say *bo'u v'naitzei likros Shabbos hamalka*, come, let us go out to greet Shabbos the queen. R' Yanai would put on his Shabbos clothes on Friday and say *boi kallah boi kallah*.³⁸

One can already feel Shabbos on Erev Shabbos. Indeed, the word *Erev* (Shabbos) means mixture like *ta'aroves* since Erev Shabbos has the kedusha of Shabbos mixed into it and one can already feel it on Erev Shabbos.³⁹ The Meor Einayim would actually feel Shabbos through his Shabbos preparations such as the Mikva and the like. Once, on Erev Shabbos after his preparations, he still felt some kedusha lacking. He then realized he was wearing his weekday socks!

38. Shabbos 119a. The gemara says that one is permitted to run through the public domain just prior to Shabbos so that he can greet the incoming Shabbos and wouldn't be liable to pay for damages (Baba Kamma 32, See the Rambam, Chovel Umazik 6:9).

39. See Sichos Hischazkus, Chanuka, 5758, 1.