

# Fascinating INSIGHTS

ז' תשרי תשפ"ז

September 18, 2026

יום כפור

14<sup>th</sup> year, edition 632

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## TRANSFORMING THE WORLD THROUGH FASCINATING TORAH INSIGHTS

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### Deeper Meaning of Modeh Ani

When we say "Modeh Ani," we often focus on the word "Modeh." thanking Hashem for returning our neshamah to us each morning.

However, we should also focus on the word "Ani," I. We are not merely thanking Hashem for giving us another day of life; we are thanking Him for making us the way He did. He gave each of us our unique personality, our individual character traits, our talents and abilities, and our particular strengths. He gave us our parents, our upbringing, our experiences and all the circumstances that shaped us into the people we have become.

"Modeh Ani" is therefore an expression of gratitude not only for what we have, but for who we are. Before we even begin the day, we recognize that the "Ani," the person standing here this morning, is itself a gift from Hashem.

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### Rabbi in Rare Places

R' Shaul Yedidya Shochet (1861-1925) spent part of his tenure in the rabbinate in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, Kansas City, Missouri, Louisville, Kentucky and lastly, in 1916, Chicago. Who was this great person who was a rabbi in these far-flung communities in the United States in the early 1900s?

He studied in Volozhin and authored several sefarim including Tiferes Yedidya on the four sections of Shulchan Aruch. He served as rabbi for 14 years in a number of Russian communities before immigrating in 1905 to Hull, England. After serving as a rabbi there for one year, he proceeded to America where he was a rabbi in the communities mentioned above.



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### The Six Cases

The gemara<sup>1</sup> tells us that wherever Abaye and Rava disagree, the halachah follows Rava, except in the six cases known by the mnemonic יע"ל קג"ם ("Ye'al Kegam"),<sup>2</sup> which are the signs of six laws in which the halachah follows Abaye instead. Why are these cases different?

The Arizal<sup>3</sup> says that within Lot's soul was contained Rus Ha'moaviyah and Naamah Ha'amonis who came about through his two daughters. The soul of Rava was contained within Naamah Ha'amonis. R' Yosef Greenwald of Papa<sup>4</sup> explained that the reason the halachah does not follow Rava in these cases is because that during the time Lot was held captive among the kelipos, they retained a slight hold over the soul of Rava, and therefore, in the six cases of Ye'al Kegam, the halachah does not follow him.



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### An End that is Unending

The sefer Shoshan Sodos<sup>5</sup> says that in the soul of Adam, the initial thought of Hashem that Adam will live forever was still there and also that which He said במרום מות תמות, on the day you eat from the *eitz hadaas* you will surely die.<sup>6</sup> How can these two coexist?

Adam would live 1,000 years which is a day by Hashem as it says כי אלף שנים בעיניך 1,000 years are like a day.<sup>7</sup> Therefore this fulfills "on the day you eat from the *eitz hadaas* you will surely die," as according to this, he died on the

day he ate from the *eitz hadaas*. That is a day in Hashem's eyes, not in what we call a day.

We know that Adam gave 70 of his 1,000 years to Dovid<sup>8</sup> and therefore he only lived until 930.<sup>9</sup> When Hashem said מות תמות a deeper explanation is that he will die twice and will not live 1,000 years uninterrupted. That is to say, Adam will die at 930 and then he will continue through Dovid who will die at 70. So מות תמות refers to the death of Adam and Dovid. In the future that same Neshama of Adam that continued with Dovid will then be in Moshiach and that will fulfill Hashem's initial thought of Adam living forever.

These three are hinted at in the name אדם which stands for אדם, דוד, משיח.

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### Mirror Meaning

When R' Shmelke of Nikolsburg came to Nikolburg, he was receiving compliments from people. He suddenly stopped and said, "Before we continue, I need some time." He went into another room, and those waiting outside could hear him praising himself: "You're so wise, R' Shmelke! You're a great tzaddik! You're a gadol hador!"

When he came back, they were puzzled. "Rebbe, what was that about?" R' Shmelke explained: "When someone gives himself kavod, it means nothing. Real kavod is when other people give you honor. I wanted to practice so that the kavod others were giving me would have no greater effect on me than the kavod I give myself, which is worth nothing."

This, he said, is the meaning of the Mishnah,<sup>10</sup> וְהָיָה כְבוֹד חֲבֵירוֹ קָרִיב עֲלֶיךָ כְּשֻׁלְךָ, let your friend's honor be as dear to you as your own. He explained it differently: the kavod your friend

<sup>1</sup> Baba Metzia 22b.

<sup>2</sup> This stands for נאוש שלא מדעת, abnovement without the owners awareness, עדים זוממין, false witnesses, לחי העומד, a lechi that stands by itself, קידושין שלא נמסרו לביאה, kiddushin that are not given to cohabitation, גלוי דעתא, clarification of intention regarding a get, מומר אוכל, a renegade who eats unkosher meat in defiance of the Torah.

<sup>3</sup> Shaar Hagilgulim, Hakdama 36, p. 48a.

<sup>4</sup> In his sefer *Vayechi Yosef*, Parashas Lech Lecha.

<sup>5</sup> *Sod ki byom*.

<sup>6</sup> Breishis 2:17.

<sup>7</sup> Tehillim 90:4.

<sup>8</sup> See Bamidbar Rabba 14:12, Zohar Vayishlach 168a, Pirkei Drebbe Eliezer, Chapter 19.

<sup>9</sup> We find a hint that Dovid rectified Adam with his 70 years. It says והמלך דוד זקן בא בימים (Melachim Alef, 1:1). The Chida (Chomas Anach, Melachim Alef, 1) points out that the end letters of דוד בא בימים spells אדם while the final letters of וזקן והמלך have a gematria of 70, the number of years Dovid lived, rectifying Adam.

<sup>10</sup> Avos 2:15.

gives you should be as dear to you as the honor you give yourself, meaning it's all meaningless.

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### Wine Removing Whine

Rava is found in many places in shas engaged in matters connected to wine drinking. Here are some of them:

1. Rava would drink wine all day long on Erev Pesach so that he would whet his appetite in order to eat matza with more relish.<sup>11</sup>

2. Rava said that a person is obligated to become intoxicated with wine on Purim until he cannot distinguish between ארור המן and ברוך מרדכי.<sup>12</sup>



3. Rava was an expert in the mixing of wine, as is explained in several places in the gemara. Rava said that any wine that does not contain three parts water for each one part wine is not good wine.<sup>13</sup>

What is the connection between Rava and wine?

R' Avraham Chizkuni in his sefer *Shtei Yados*<sup>14</sup> explains that since Lot's root caused damage through wine and sinning with his two daughters,<sup>15</sup> it was therefore necessary for Rava, whose root came from Lot,<sup>16</sup> to repair this. Therefore he was always occupied with matters of wine wherever possible, in order to elevate the idea of drinking wine to holiness, thereby bringing rectification for that flaw.

The Kabbalist R' Chai Taib<sup>17</sup> added that Lot's incident occurred during the days of Pesach.<sup>18</sup> Rava rectified this by making sure that on every Erev Pesach, he drank wine.

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### Impactful Writing

R' Moshe Feinstein<sup>19</sup> writes that if a person has the opportunity to publish his Torah insights but chooses not to, he has not fully fulfilled the mitzvah of teaching Torah.

He compares it to someone who has the ability to teach 100 students but decides to teach only 50. By publishing one's Torah, besides the fact that he preserves his Torah for himself that he may otherwise forget, its influence can extend far beyond the walls of the beis midrash, reaching countless people for generations to come, even after he passes away. People who would never have the opportunity to learn from him in person can now be impacted by his Torah.



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Rafael ben Danielle and Naomi Devorah bas Daniel Noach

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Rabbi Alt merited to learn under the tutelage of Rabbi Mordechai Friedlander ztz"l for close to five years and received semichah from Rabbi Zalman Nechemia Goldberg ztz"l. Rabbi Alt has written thousands of Torah articles on numerous topics for various websites and publications and is the author of thirteen fascinating and popular books. His writings, many of which have been translated into Yiddish, Hebrew, German, Spanish and French, inspire people across the spectrum of Jewish observance to live with the vibrancy and beauty of Torah. His shiurim can be found on various websites including Kol Halashon's. Rabbi Alt lectures, writes and teaches, and is passionate about inspiring Jews of all levels of observance. He can be reached at [yalt3285@gmail.com](mailto:yalt3285@gmail.com) or on WhatsApp at +972 54 849 5217.

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<sup>11</sup> Pesachim 107b.

<sup>12</sup> Megillah 7b.

<sup>13</sup> Shabbos 77a. Other places we see Rava connected to wine is Zevachim 96b and Yoma 76b.

<sup>14</sup> Vayera, p. 12a. The sefer *Shtei Yados* was brought to publication in the year 1726 by his son R' Yaakov.

<sup>15</sup> See Breishis 19:32-35.

<sup>16</sup> The Arizal (Shaar Hagilgulim, Hakdama 36, p. 48a) says that within Lot's soul was contained Rus Ha'moaviyah and Naamah Ha'amonis who came about through his two daughters. The soul of Rava was contained within Naamah Ha'amonis.

<sup>17</sup> In his sefer *Cheilev Chitim* Megillah 7b.

<sup>18</sup> see Breishis 19:3 and Midrash Seichel Tov there.

<sup>19</sup> Dibros Moshe, Baba Kamma, Me'ain Hakdama.