

Fascinating INSIGHTS

ב' אלול תשפ"ו

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Letters of Loftiness

R' Simcha ben R' Gershon Hakohen¹ teaches that initially they were called Dovid and Yonasan. But after Dovid swore to Yonasan, Hashem's name of יה was added to their names. Dovid was given the yud making his name דויד and Yonasan had a hey added making it יהונתן.

In this way we can explain נפלאותה אהבתך לי², your love was more wonderful to me than the love of women: just like a man and woman who merits, the name of Hashem יה is

placed upon them,³ so too, Dovid and Yonasan merited and had added to their names Hashem's יה.

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¹ In his sefer Sheimos p 43a.

² Shmuel 2, 1:26.

³ Sota 17a. The name of Hashem, יה, is found in the words אשׁה and אשׁה, representing Hashem's presence. If they do not

merit, then Hashem withdraws His name from among them, leaving אשׁ and אשׁ, where the marriage is consumed by the fires of domestic discord.

New Book Offers Deeper Insights Into Lashon Hakodesh

Reviewing "Powerful Torah Insights about Languages (Insights Series)," by Rabbi Yehoshua Alt. Independently published. July 2026. 220 pages. Hardcover ISBN 13: 979-5186432357, Paperback ISBN 13: 979-5186432258

By Chaim Yehuda Meyer

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt, author of the weekly "Fascinating Insights" parsha sheet, became interested in languages as interest in his newsletter grew. As requests came in for his divrei Torah to be translated into Yiddish, Hebrew, German, Spanish and French, Rabbi Alt became interested in the role language plays in our everyday lives. What does the written language reveal about a people? Where can we find traces of lashon hakodesh in other languages? What hidden mysticism lies inside Hebrew grammar? Is it important to master a language? Rabbi Alt explores these questions and more in his new book, "Powerful Torah Insights about Languages."

Rabbi Alt merited to learn under the tutelage of Rabbi Mordechai Fried-

lander, zt"l, for close to five years and received semicha from Rabbi Zalman Nechemia Goldberg, zt"l. Rabbi Alt has written thousands of Torah articles on numerous topics for various websites and publications and is the author of 13 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.

One example of the power of language Rabbi Alt brings in his new book "Powerful Torah Insights" about Languages comes from the bracha of Barech Aleinu in Shemoneh Esrei. In this bracha, we ask Hashem for livelihood. The combination of the Hebrew letters in our davening activates spheres in the upper realms in a way that could not be accomplished if we davened in another language. This is one reason why it is important to daven in lashon hakodesh, even if we might not understand the words.

Lashon hakodesh is imbued with holiness. The Hebrew word "ikur" closely resembles the English word "core." Additionally, there is a parallel

between the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, "aleph" which is similar to the word "elevate." A parallel between English and Aramaic, another language imbued with holiness (see the chapter "Where Languages Meet"), is *mamon* (money) which in sound resembles the word money. "Manneh," which sounds like the word "money," was a currency in the times of Chazal. Also, "munin," which echoes the word money, represents *parnassa* (money).

Rabbi Alt makes the often-esoteric wisdom of Kabbalah at least partially accessible to the general reader, notes Rabbi Yitzchok Breitowitz of Yeshivas Ohr Somayach. In the chapter "Molecules and Mysticism: The Secret Life of Water," we are given a glimpse of the depth and richness lashon hakodesh provides. "Spiritual ideas and patterns are embedded within creation itself," says Rabbi Alt. The Hebrew word for water, "mayim" contains two mems and one yud. The gematria of yud is 10 while each mem is 40, adding up to 10 and 80, respectively. This gives us a 1:8 ratio. Thus, Torah's word for water reflects the chemical composition of water!

In this fascinating book, Rabbi Alt points to great Torah personalities who expressed the importance of mastering a language. One of these was Rabbi Mordechai Gifter. On the first day of English class each year at Telt, Rabbi Gifter would deliver an impassioned speech. He would emphasize that having English in one's schedule is not bitul Torah. He stressed that Torah Jews serve as ambassadors of the Torah to the broader world. When a Torah Jew is articulate—able to speak and write clearly—it brings immeasurable kiddush Hashem.

Another interesting feature of this book is found in the section of "Mysticism of Hebrew Grammar." In one of the exceptional essays, Rabbi Alt shares fascinating Torah on this topic:

The first set of three different vowels are the cholam (וְ), shuruk (וּ) and chirik (יְ). Each of these vowels represents different aspects associated with one of the three spheres of creation. The highest sphere occupied by divine angels corresponds to the cholam. The cholam, which is placed above the letter, occupies the highest position of all the vowels. This represents the formation of the divine and angelic

sphere. Additionally, the letters that comprise the word חֶלֶם (cholam) spell חֶלֶם (chalom), a dream, a state in which one may experience lofty divine disclosures.

The next lower sphere, which is occupied by the celestial sphere of the planets, corresponds to the shuruk. The shuruk is placed in a central position, just like the middle celestial sphere of the planets. This sphere connects the upper sphere and the lower sphere. Consequently, when we reorder the letters of the word שֶׁכֶּךָ we get שֶׁכֶּךָ, "connection" or "knot," alluding to the fact that its positioning ties together the cholam and the chirik. This is just like the sphere occupied by the planetary orbits that connect the spheres above and below it.

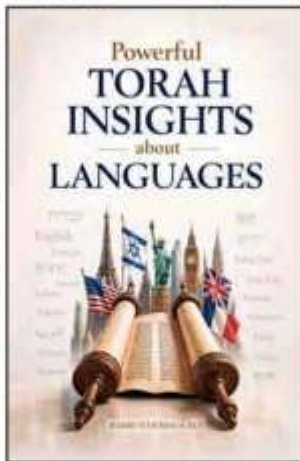
The lowest sphere, our physical world, corresponds to the chirik, which is placed beneath the letter, the lowest placement. Shuffling the letters of the word חֶרֶק, we get to the name חֶרֶק, who was buried alive underground, the lowest point, just like the chirik which is placed at the lowest point. Rearranging these letters again, we get the word חֶרֶק, distance, reflecting what the chirik vowel represents, this world, which is the furthest away from the upper worlds. The word חֶרֶק also spells חֶרֶק, to investigate and

question, hinting to humanity's constant drive in this physical world to search, question and expand knowledge.

"Powerful Torah Insights about Languages" explores this fascinating subject through 80-plus meticulous and well-researched essays written from a Torah point of view. Rabbi Alt helps readers along on a journey to connect language to Jewish thought through the Torah's infinite wisdom. His book is filled with insights into language that will enable one to appreciate lashon hakodesh more.

"Powerful Torah Insights about Languages" is available for purchase at www.amazon.com/dp/B08B5J8YQ, by sending a WhatsApp to +972 54 849 5217 or by emailing parshadt28@gmail.com. Rabbi Alt lectures, writes and teaches, and is passionate about inspiring Jews of all levels of observance. His shiurim can be found on various websites, including Kol Halashon. He can be reached at yalt285@gmail.com or on WhatsApp at +972 54 849 5217.

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England's End, Israel's Friend

The Jews were expelled from England by Edward I in the year 1290. More than 16,500 Jews were forced to leave the country, and for

over three centuries, no Jewish community existed there.

In 1655 the renowned Dutch rabbi and writer Menashe ben Israel⁴ (1604-1657)

⁴ He was given the name Manoel Dias Soerio when he was born. Born as a Marrano in Portugal, Menashe and his family escaped the Inquisition and moved to Amsterdam, where they returned to practicing Judaism publicly. For many Jews

looking for freedom to practice Judaism openly, Amsterdam became a safe haven. Its liberal laws granted its Jewish inhabitants to freely engage in commerce, and many of the Jews there amassed affluence and power. In a short time,

convinced Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector of England, to permit the Jews to return. Although Jews were allowed to resettle, they were not granted the right to become naturalized English citizens until 1753.



Menashe believed that the ultimate redemption of the Jewish people could not arrive until the prophecies in sefer Devarim and Daniel—that the Jews would be exiled to the ends of the earth—had been fulfilled. By opening England to Jewish settlement, he felt he would help spread the Diaspora and thereby hasten the coming of Moshiach.

Menashe convinced Cromwell that allowing Jews to return was important to the Christian religion. At the same time, Menashe hoped to provide a refuge for Jews fleeing the devastating Chmielnicki massacres.

Once permission was granted for Jewish settlement, twenty Marrano families openly declared their Judaism. With a Sefer Torah sent from Amsterdam, they opened a shul on Creechurch Lane in London, laying the foundation for the reestablishment of Jewish life in England.

Over the following centuries, England's Jewish community flourished. Its impact extended far beyond Britain's borders. In 1917, the Balfour Declaration, through which Great Britain agreed to help establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine, was a direct result of the influence of England's Jewish community. That declaration eventually led to the founding of the State of Israel.

Soul Searching



The kabbalists teach that the soul of Shlomo Hamelech was rooted in Moshe Rabbeinu. That was his source. Hillel Hazakein was rooted in Moshe's soul as well. The Chida⁵ tells us an allusion in the name Moshe, as it serves as an acronym for משה, שלמה, הלל.

Holland was turned into a world power through the influence of the Jews. Menashe grew up in this thriving, free Jewish community. He became a rabbi, established the first Hebrew printing press in Amsterdam and wrote many scholarly works. Among his many published writings were works on philosophy, faith and mysticism. One of his most popular works was *Conciliadore*, which uses traditional Jewish sources to resolve apparent contradictions in Chumash. Menashe wrote his sefarim in Hebrew, Portuguese, Spanish and Latin.

⁵ Maris Ha'ayin, Horiyos 6a.

⁶ He was the head of the Jewish community in Syria, Egypt, and Eretz Yisrael in the 13th century. When Rabbanim

R' Dovid Hanagid,⁶ grandson of the Rambam,⁷ shares an allusion where we see the connection of Hillel and Moshe. It says ויהי ביום ה'ששי לקטו לחם משנה שני העמר לאחד⁸ it happened on the sixth day that they gathered a double portion of food, two omers for each. The first letters of these words spell הלל-משה.⁹

We see a connection between Moshe and Hillel as both were highly distinguished in the trait of humility as Moshe was exceedingly humble¹⁰ and Hillel similarly had this trait as demonstrated in the episode, among others, where on Erev Shabbos Hillel humbly answered inconsequential questions from an obnoxious person.¹¹

R' Tzvi Hirsch of Liska¹² adds that the reason Hillel was very careful in the trait of anger was because Moshe got angry a few times like the Midrash¹³ says that Moshe got angry three times and the halacha was hidden from him. Hillel who was reincarnated as Moshe was exceedingly careful not to get angry and with that he rectified it.



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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 or on WhatsApp at +972 54 849 5217.

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demanded that the Rambam's Moreh Nevuchim be banned, he battled for his grandfather and as a result the ban was withdrawn. He moved to Eretz Yisrael, settling in Akko, but when the city was captured, he returned to Cairo, where he lived the remainder of his life.

⁷ In the sefer Midrash Dovid, in his commentary to Avos 2:7.

⁸ Shemos 16:22.

⁹ Otzar Hagilgulim, p. 170.

¹⁰ Bamidbar 12:3.

¹¹ Shabbos 31a.

¹² In his sefer Ach Pri Tevuah, end of Parshas Shemini.

¹³ Vayikra Rabba 13:1.