



Literary Link



Where Soul Meets Body: 'Astounding Torah Insights'

By Chaim Yehuda Meyer

Highlighting: "Astounding Torah Insights About the Human Body" by Rabbi Yehoshua Alt. Independently published. 2025. 240 pages. ISBN-13: 979-8281841320.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt has written an indispensable guide on the Torah's approach to the human body. Discussions in this thought-provoking book include the spiritual connection of the esophagus and trachea located in the neck, sources for the concept of shaking hands and different ways of breathing that are found in the Torah.

"Astounding Torah Insights About the Human Body" was a labor of love spanning five-plus years. Aside from the numerous insights into the human body discussed in Rabbi Alt's weekly newsletter, "Fascinating Insights," he saved sources from various seforim in anticipation of publishing this book. When Rabbi Alt saw an insight into the hand, he made a note of it. "There was a ton of hard work, siyata Hashem and loss of sleep. Baruch Hashem, this is the result you now hold in your hands." "Astounding Torah Insights," contains more than 70 essays on the human body."

How do we come to appreciate the workings of the body, as mentioned in Asher Yatzar, and that it all comes from Hashem?

The Chasam Sofer teaches that Asher Yatzar is a bracha achrona to show our appreciation for what Hashem has done for us: allowing our bodies to perform their functions. Most people give little thought to their digestive system because it isn't visible. If you study the intestines, you'll appreciate them. Additionally, if we speak about the wonders of the body, we will come to a deeper appreciation. This is what Dovid Hamelech instructed when he wrote (Tehillim 146:3), "Heamanti ki adabar," which can be understood that as you speak about something, you come to a deeper understanding and appreciation of it.

Rabbi Alt noted that a person can also come to appreciate the human body by visiting a hospital. Such an experience can enable us to appreciate the functions of our bodies. Furthermore, the Kli Yakar (Bamidbar 16:29) tells us that bikur cholim benefits the visitor in that it will instill in them a feeling for doing teshuva.

The Global Phenomena That Is the 'Fascinating Insights' Torah Sheets

The weekly Fascinating Insights Torah sheet covers a wide range of topics that include Shabbos, history, parsha, marriage, money, Moshiach and the redemption. Rabbi Alt is humbled by the fact that in addition to English, the "Fascinating Insights" Torah sheets are also available in French, Yiddish, German, Hebrew and Spanish. "Fascinating Insights" has been posted on numerous websites and fea-

tured in Jewish newspapers worldwide. It has been distributed in six continents and more than 40 countries. Thousands of people read these insights weekly. As Rabbi Alt put it: "You don't always know where people find your work or the effect it had on them."

There are many people worldwide who print the weekly "Fascinating Insights" sheets and distribute it in their shuls. For example, a few people in Paris distribute the French and Hebrew editions there while a Jew in Istanbul prints it out in a few languages to disseminate in his locale. The same has been done by others in the United States, England, Israel and other places. Feedback from "Fascinating Insights" can come from the most unexpected of places. Rabbi Alt has received emails and messages from people all over the United States, South Africa, Australia, Singapore, Morocco, Hungary and Turkey, among other places.

Interestingly, a librarian purchased a copy of one of Rabbi Alt's books for the library of his Reform temple. In another instance, a prisoner in upstate New York bought the "Death and the Afterlife" book. *How did the prisoner discover this book?* He saw an ad for the book featured in the weekly "Fascinating Insights" sheet, as it is also printed and distributed in many prisons.

"Each book I have written is a journey," noted Rabbi Alt. "It is a lot of hard work." Many of the topics and sources are unique and not commonly found elsewhere. Each book is filled with content. I'm grateful for the opportunity to share it and I hope to continue doing more, one step at a time. There are a lot of people who helped me along the way; it takes a village, as they say." This involves photographs, editing and financial contributions among other things. People from all over have expressed their praise and encouragement.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt has drawn on the works of many rabbonim and "made their often-esoteric wisdom at least partially accessible to the general reader," (Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz).

Rabbi Alt explains that his ability to take deep ideas and distill them for the everyday public comes with a tremendous amount of siyata dishmaya. "Hashem has enabled me to learn and teach for many years, especially in Yeshivas Neveh Zion here in Eretz Yisrael where I teach." Rabbi Alt learned under Rabbi Mordechai Friedlander, zt"l for close to five years and received semicha from Rabbi Zalman Nechemia Goldberg, zt"l. Articulating ideas in

a way that students will understand them also helps with the weekly "Fascinating Insights" sheet and the books.

Baruch Hashem, Rabbi Alt is able to empower readers to achieve a deeper understanding of Torah insights. Dovid HaMelech said, "וְתַחֲסִירוּ מִעַם מְאֹלָהִים"—"You have made him but slightly less than angels," (Tehillim 8:6). This pasuk can be reinterpreted, thereby, applying it to our generation where the Torah (מְאֹלָהִים, "Hashem's Torah") has been made available in small

"When a person goes to a baseball game," Rabbi Alt explained, "they're cheering on the team with 50,000 other fans. If a person doesn't use it in a ruchnius way, to be a tzelem Elokim, they descend to their *nefesh beheimus* (animal soul). A person has a desire to eat (that's their animal soul); when he saves that delicacy for Shabbos, he's exhibiting self-control. A seudas mitzvah is another example of transforming food towards spirituality. The same goes for eating to have strength to daven or learn. By hav-

ing in mind to eat l'shem shamayim he is transforming the physical into the spiritual. This should be at the forefront of your mind: "What is the ratzon Hashem?"

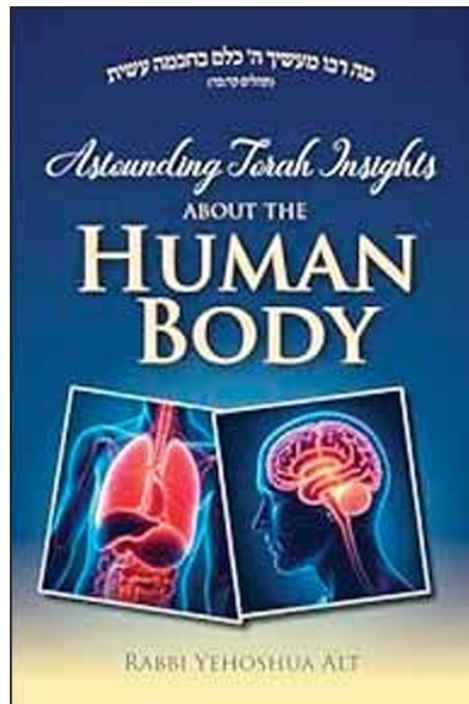
The Role of Mindset in Physical Healing

Can thoughts affect reality? "Absolutely," said Rabbi Alt. "A positive attitude can make all the difference in the world." "Be happy; it's part of the cure. And a person need not even be sick, rachmana litzlan," he pointed out. "If you're happy, you project happiness and you're someone others want to be around. This can lead to better health and a longer life. Happiness affects your relationships as well as increasing your ability to accomplish more. "The word שמחה means to be happy, but it's actually a contraction of two words: שם and חן. Where you put your mind makes all the difference in the world: If you focus on the right things then you will be happy." There are people on the top floor of the hospital who are happier than people who are on top of the Forbes 500 list.

"Astounding Torah Insights about the Human Body" is available for purchase at <https://amzn.to/3eyh5xP>, by sending a WhatsApp to +972 54 849 5217 or sending an email to parshadt28@gmail.com.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt has written thousands of Torah articles on numerous topics for various websites and publications and is the author of ten books. To join the thousands of recipients and receive Fascinating Insights free via email, obtain previous articles, feedback, comments, make suggestions, to sponsor this publication or if you know anyone who is interested in receiving these insights weekly, please contact Rabbi Alt at: yalt3285@gmail.com.

Chaim Yehuda Meyer is an attorney and writer living in New York. He has written articles for numerous Jewish publications covering community events, local politics, divrei Torah, book reviews and other matters of interest to the Jewish community. Mr. Meyer can be reached at howard.jay.meyer@gmail.com.



soundbites (וְתַחֲסִירוּ מִעַם מְאֹלָהִים). To bring people closer to Hashem, we need to make Torah more accessible: bite-sized and digestible. That means packaging deep truths into small, meaningful soundbites—Torah in chewable chunks—so they can absorb it one step at a time.

Elevating Oneself From the Animal Soul to a Tzelem Elokim

"Astounding Torah Insights" does an excellent job of making the connection between body and soul. A man is called various names from birth to old age, whereas the Torah calls an animal an "animal" at all stages. Without the Torah, a person cannot rise above himself. "Every person born into this world has to connect to something that's higher than themselves." You can't be limited to your own physicality. We all have this innate, spiritual yearning to connect to something that's higher than themselves.