

Fascinating INSIGHTS

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Sacred Work, Sacred Soul

We know that most people work but work isn't merely a means to earn money for other pursuits, such as learning Torah, supporting a family or performing acts of kindness. Rather, the work itself is an integral part of a person's mission in this world. Through your work, you elevate sparks of kedusha. A person's work is a form of serving Hashem.

This idea is reflected in the gemara where some rabbis are identified by their professions, such as R' Yochanan



essential part of their spiritual mission.

Taking this concept a step further, one's work can also serve as a means of rectifying their soul. For example a person who earns his livelihood as a doctor may unknowingly be correcting mistakes from a previous lifetime. Perhaps, in a past incarnation, they harmed others, and now, through healing, they rectify those misdeeds.

Similarly, a therapist may unknowingly atone for having caused emotional harm in a past lifetime by now helping others find peace and healing.

Even a custodian working in a *yeshiva* or *shul* might be correcting a previous lifetime's actions. Perhaps they once disrespected a holy place by neglecting its cleanliness or contributing to disorder. Now, through their work maintaining the sanctity and order of a sacred space, they have the opportunity to repair that past misstep.

¹ Brachos 22a.

² Brachos 41a.

A Terse Verse

After the plague of דם, it states ויפן פרעה ויבא אל ביתו ולא שת לבו, Paroh turned away and came to his palace, he didn't take to heart the wonder that the stick turned into a snake or to the plague of דם.³ It seems out of order as first it should say that he didn't take it to heart and then he turned away, since he didn't pay attention to these and then he turned towards his house.

When we have a moment of inspiration we must not let it fade. How do we do this? By putting that inspiration into something tangible.

An example of this if we hear an inspiring talk about Lashon Hara.⁴ We can make it tangible by learning Shmiras Halashon daily or designating an amount of time daily where we are careful with our speech.⁵ If it's not made tangible, then the inspiration will just fade into oblivion.

Let's internalize the saying, "Inspirations never go in for long engagements; they demand immediate marriage to action."

The Ramban⁶ shown how this concept is expressed in the Torah. The pasuk says⁷ ואם תעוררו את האהבה עד שתחפץ. He interprets this to mean that when a person has an awakening of Ahavas Hashem, it's lacking unless he makes it concrete (חפץ in עד שתחפץ), an object, that which is concrete).



We must make inspiration real. After experiencing the wonders of the stick turning into a snake as well as the plague of דם, Paroh had an awakening. However, he didn't want it to make an impression on him. As a result, he turned to his house immediately afterwards, diverting his mind. Consequently, he didn't take it to heart, as it says ולא שת לבו. So now we see that the pasuk is in the proper order: ויפן פרעה ויבא אל ביתו ולא שת לבו.

We need to make sure that the Paroh found inside of us doesn't convince us to do the same. It can be in the disguise of a cell phone, computer or some other gadget. May we all merit to be protected!

Rabbi Alt merited to learn under the tutelage of R' Mordechai Friedlander ztz"l for close to five years and received semichah from R' 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 nine books including the recently released "Exhilarating Torah Insights on Recreation and Vacation." His writings, many 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. His shiurim can be found on various websites including Kol Halashon's. Rabbi Alt lives with his wife and family in Kiryat Yearim (where the Aron was for 20 years [Shmuel 1, 7:1,2]) where he studies, lectures, writes and teaches. The author is passionate about teaching Jews of all levels of observance.

³ Shemos 7:23, Rashi.

⁴ R' Gedalya Moshe of Zvhil once asked someone why he wasn't attending a certain Drasha. The man replied that when he gets inspired at such events, he returns to his old ways a few days later. R' Gedalya Moshe retorted Imagine one drowning and another tells him I can help you live for another half hour. He surely would take him up on the offer. Likewise, it would be wise for you to go to the Drashah, even if your inspiration will be short-lived.



⁵ This can be compared to a food that needs to be cooked in order to be eaten since the body can't do anything beneficial with it otherwise. Likewise, inspiration must be concretized into that which we can grasp.

⁶ Kisvei Ramban, Volume 2.

⁷ Shir Hashirim 3:5.