

# Fascinating INSIGHTS

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### Actual Ashes

R' Chaim Vital once asked the Arizal if it was permitted to use the Holy Names of Hashem (*Sheimos Hakedoshim*)<sup>1</sup> or the *shevua* of the Kadmonim that they used for practical Kabbala for knowledge of wisdom and the like. The Arizal

answered that those sages that used the Holy Names of Hashem had the ashes of the Parah Adumah (which purifies a person from *tumas meis*, coming into contact with the dead) like R'

<sup>1</sup> The Chida writes that he saw in Italy a commentary of the Remak on the Torah written *Al Derech Sod* and a Sefer Hamitzvos written *Al Derech Sod*. Both of these were written in Italian. The Chida also writes that he saw from R' Chaim Vital that the Remak had to exert himself tremendously

because the external evil forces tried to prevent the Remak when he would be engaged in learning after *Chatzos Layla* alone with the Zohar. He got rid of these forces through the *Sheimos Hakdoshim*, Holy Names of Hashem (*Shem Hagdolim*, *Maareches Sefarim*, 94).

Tarfon, but we who are *timei meisim* are forbidden with these things.<sup>2</sup>



The Chida<sup>3</sup> writes, "One who wants to sanctify and separate himself from the ways of the world, even with great effort it won't help, because of the old and new impurities... It is obvious to me that the Arizal was purified with the ashes of the Parah Adumah through Eliyahu Hanavi and then wondrous Ruach Hakodesh rested on the Arizal..."

On a similar note, Eliyahu Hanavi would bring the ashes of the Parah Adumah to the Baal Shem Tov every Erev Yom Tov in order to purify him for Yom Tov.<sup>4</sup>

The Avodas Yisrael enlightens us: Through the reading of Parshas Parah, one gets a spiritual purification.<sup>5</sup>

On Shabbos Parshas Parah, the Beis Aharon would say that one must believe just as the ashes of the Parah Adumah purify to offer the Korbon Pesach so too when we read Parshas Parah it purifies each one according to his level, for the light of Pesach.<sup>6</sup>

In the words of R' Tzadok Hakohen:<sup>7</sup> Reading Parshas Parah helps to purify one's heart from the impurities of the Yetzer Hara.

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#### Baba Maasehs

R' Eliyahu Bachur, who lived from 1469-1549, was the youngest of nine brothers. Interestingly, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom David Cameron has said that he is a descendant of R' Bachur.

## Tishbi Izna, 1541



R' Eliyahu Bachur authored the Sefer Hatishbi, but his most famous work is called Baba Buch (literally translated as

"Grandmother's Book"). This is a book of stories in Yiddish that he wrote for Jewish women which relates the wondrous story of the adventures of Prince Boav of Antona. The book was published over 500 years ago and became a huge success, with many editions, spreading far and wide. From there spread the idea of what we call today *Baba Maasehs*.<sup>8</sup>

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#### Exhilarating Exile

The gemara<sup>9</sup> tells us that when Moshiach comes, the Batei Knaysiyos and Batei Midrashos will be uprooted and relocated to Eretz Yisrael. The Satmar Rebbe, author of the Divrei Yoel, is bothered by what the purpose of this miracle was. Miracles aren't done if it is unnecessary.

He explains that in the future the yetzer hara will be slaughtered. Since there won't be any yetzer hara, Avodas Hashem will be with ease. Now, we know the principle of *l'fum tzaara agra*, the reward is in proportion to the effort.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, in the time of Beis Hamikdash, we will long for the Avoda of galus when it was difficult as the Avoda we did in galus is more significant to us. As a result, Hashem will bring the shuls of chutz laaretz to Eretz Yisrael so that we can still connect and have that taste in the ultimate future. So even though when Moshiach comes, we will have the Avoda of the Beis Hamikdash but the Avoda of galus is on a higher plane since it was more difficult.

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.

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<sup>2</sup> Shulchan Aruch of the Arizal, Krias B'chochmas HaKabbala, 12. See the Karbon Nesanel at the end of Mesachta Rosh Hashana, *Os Samech*.

<sup>3</sup> Midbar Kedaimos, Maareches Alef, *Os* 26.

<sup>4</sup> Imrei Dvash, p. 16. The Tiferes Shlomo of Radomsk declared, "Whoever believes all the miracle stories about the Baal Shem Tov in Shivchei HaBaal Shem Tov (a sefer containing many stories of his wonder-working abilities) is a fool but whoever denies that he could have done them is a heretic." Similarly, R' Mordechai of Neshkiz said, "Even if a story about him never actually occurred, and there was no such miracle, it was in the power of the Baal Shem Tov to perform everything."

<sup>5</sup> Avodas Yisrael, Parshas Parah, s.v. *v'hinei b'Shabbos*. See Sefas Emes, Parshas Parah, 5641, s.v. *v'kavu*. Aruch Hashulchan, Orach Chaim, 685:7.

<sup>6</sup> Beis Aharon, p. 144.

<sup>7</sup> Pri Tzadik, Parshas Parah, 1. See also 7. During the years 2009-2012, when I lived in Long Beach, New York, I had the opportunity to eat a Shabbos meal several times at one of the locals there, a couple in their 70s. I was astounded when the wife told me that one of her grandparents stayed by R' Tzadok Hakohen's (who lived from 1823-1900) house for a period of time.

<sup>8</sup> Otzar Hayedios, Volume 3, p. 414.

<sup>9</sup> Megillah 29a.

<sup>10</sup> Avos 5:26.