

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 37

**Yitro** | Revealing the Soul of The Torah



# MESILLOT

*Pathways to the Soul*

Illuminating Torah teachings of  
HaTzaddik Rabbeinu **Yoram Michael Abargel** zt"l

Based on the lectures of his son  
HaRav HaGaon Rabbeinu **Israel Abargel** shlita

# ...PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL...

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### Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets

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## Parashat Yitro

### Don't Miss the Opportunity

**The** young, Rebbe Avraham, was admired by all. His diligence in Torah and his holiness left a strong impression on everyone who came in contact with him.

**When** Rebbe Dan Landau of Plotzk heard about him, he quickly drove to him and offered his daughter in marriage. After the engagement, Rebbe Avraham adopted his father-in-law's surname, and since then, his name became Rebbe Avraham Landau.<sup>1</sup>

**At** the time that Rebbe Avraham was supported by his father-in-law in Plotzk, he would learn incessantly, together with all the other Talmidei Hachamim of the town, in the community's Beit Midrash. They crowded around the tables, young and old

alike, leaning continuously with the fire of their enthusiasm.

**Rebbe** Avraham enjoyed sitting and learning in his designated corner, not interested in anything around him. Plotzk was a large port city located on the Vistula River, and frequently, the many merchants who used the Vistula River to ship their goods would rest there.

**One** morning, when Rebbe Avraham was learning in the Beit Midrash, the door opened, and a Jew who looked to be in his 40's entered.

**That** Jew was dressed in merchant clothes and made the impression that he was one of those merchants transporting goods on the river from Warsaw to Danzig. The man didn't make a

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*~ Wellspring of Wisdom ~*

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**1. Later**, Rebbe Avraham Landau became famous as the Rebbe of Chekhanov, and

his son, Rebbe Ze'ev Wolf Landau, founded the Strikov chassidic dynasty.

## Parashat Yitro - Don't Miss the Opportunity

special impression on the learners, for they were accustomed to seeing such people who come to their city from time to time.

**The** man sat down at one of the tables, scanning the people sitting at the tables while flipping through a book. His gaze suddenly stopped on Rebbe Avraham sitting in the corner. His holiness struck him to the depths of his soul.

**The** man approached Rebbe Avraham, interested in knowing what he was learning. The man then began to debate with him about the Halacha of the certain issue which he was learning, revealing his great wisdom in Torah...

**Rebbe** Avraham was amazed to see the magnitude of this Jew's proficiency in Torah. But Rebbe Avraham didn't let him off so easily. He responded to every argument quickly and with great wisdom...

**The** man, who noticed Rebbe Avraham's greatness, asked him to lend him his *tallit* and *tefillin*

so that he could pray with them. Rebbe Avraham handed them to him with joy.

**When** the man finished his *tefillah*, he removed the *tefillin* and pulled off the *tallit*, not folding them or putting them back in their bags. Instead, he placed them on the table and quickly left the Beit Midrash without parting from Rebbe Avraham...

**Rebbe** Avraham looked up and noticed that the man was gone. He immediately ran outside and tried to find him, but in vain, the man disappeared !

**Rebbe** Avraham walked back to the Beit Midrash bewildered. When he picked up his *tallit* to fold it, he was taken aback. The *tallit* was soaked in sweat and tears, dripping water like someone who immersed in a *mikveh* !

**The** next day, Rebbe Avraham wrapped himself in that *tallit*... An immense light ignited in his heart, longing, yearning for Hashem... He prayed with complete *d'vekut*, his soul almost flew out of his body...

**That** merchant that learned with Rebbe Avraham was none other than the holy *tzaddik*, Rebbe Simcha Bunim of Peshischa, who at that time made a living by running the business of the famous philanthropist, Mrs. Tamar...

**When** Rebbe Bunim came to Rebbe Yaakov Itzchak of Peshischa, the Yehudi HaKadosh, he told him about Rebbe Avraham of Plotzk, saying, "I saw a great light shining there."

**When** the Yehudi HaKadosh heard this, he urgently wanted to meet with Rebbe Avraham and sent the "merchant," Rebbe Bunim, to invite Rebbe Avraham to come to him.

**Rebbe** Avraham accepted the invitation, and in the month of Elul, 5573 (1813), he prepared himself for the journey together with the "merchant," Rebbe Bunim.

**When** his father-in-law, Rebbe Dan, heard about Rebbe Avraham's plans, he told him that he also wished to go to visit the Yehudi HaKadosh of

Peshischa and asked him to wait for him until after Sukkot so that they could travel together.

**Rebbe** Avraham fulfilled his request and delayed the trip.

**Rebbe** Bunim returned to Peshischa alone... When he entered the room of the Yehudi HaKadosh, the Rebbe asked, "Did you bring the holy Rebbe Avraham with you?" Rebbe Bunim then told him about the aforesaid delay because of which he did not come.

**The** Yehudi HaKadosh sighed and said, "It's a great pity and a great harm that he didn't come, for I know that he is holy from birth, and if he had come to me, I would've given him all my light, and he would've shone his teachings on all Bnei Israel!"

**A** few weeks passed, and during Sukkot, the 19th of Tishrei, the Yehudi HaKadosh departed from the world!

**Great** sorrow filled the heart of Rebbe Avraham, "I missed my opportunity!"

**Parashat Yitro - Lovesick**

**Rabbi** Yosef Yehuda Leib Bloch writes<sup>2</sup> that when someone teaches, they can only pass on the *chomer* of the wisdom (the actual knowledge or external aspect of the wisdom), but not the *tzura* of the wisdom (what is learned from

having this knowledge or the “soul” or internal aspect of the wisdom). What someone feels in their heart, a wise heart, they cannot give over in words, for the soul of the Torah is not passed on solely through words...

**Lovesick**

**Rabbi** Yehuda, the *Nasi* of Am Israel, is marrying off his son, Rabbi Shimon !

**Chariots** loaded with passengers came rushing into the country. Hundreds of thousands of Jews from all over the world arrived to rejoice with him ! All of Am Israel was invited ! Even gentile kings sent many honorable diplomats...

**This** wedding was engraved in the hearts of the people ! The immense joy, the exuberant dancing, the splendor, the grandeur, the fine food, and wine...

**Bar** Kapara was one of the great disciples of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, and when he heard that his Rabbi's son, Rabbi Shimon, was getting married, he was extremely excited and waited anxiously for the wedding...

**But** Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi didn't invite him !<sup>3</sup>

**Bar** Kapara took ink and wrote on the walls of the wedding hall, “Two hundred and forty million *dinarim*,<sup>4</sup> and you couldn't invite Bar Kapara ! ?”

— *Wellspring of Wisdom* —

**2. Shiurei** Da'at (Vol. 2, Ma'amar - Chomer VeTzura).

**3. The** Gemara says that the reason Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi didn't want to invite Bar Kapara was so that he wouldn't make him laugh. For Rabbi Yehuda took upon

himself suffering in order to atone for the sins of his generation, and on the day that Rabbi Yehuda didn't suffer and laughed, calamity immediately came upon the world.

**4. According** to our calculations, that's about \$840,000,000 today ! (When adding

**When** Rabbi Yehuda saw that Bar Kapara got offended, he said to him, “Come to the *sheva brachot* that I’m holding tomorrow.”

**Bar** Kapara accepted the invitation. He approached Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi’s daughter and said, “Tomorrow, at the *sheva brachot*, I’ll drink wine, and your father will dance before me, and your mother will do ‘Lululu’... (as is the custom of some Sephardi denominations).”

**The** *sheva brachot* was spectacular, just like yesterday... The joy ascended to heaven, just like yesterday... Then, when the joy and dancing reached their peak, Bar Kapara approached Rabbi Yehuda and asked him, “Rabbi, what’s the meaning of the word *תועבה*” (abomination) (Vayikra 18:22)?”

**With** every answer that Rabbi Yehuda said, Bar Kapara refuted it until Rabbi Yehuda had nothing to answer !

“Please, Bar Kapara, tell me the answer.”

**Bar** Kapara replied, “If you dance before me and tell your wife to pour me a glass of wine, I’ll tell you!” And so he did... Bar Kapara explained, *תועבה* - *תועבה אַתָּה בָּךְ* (You’re straying after it).

**The** joy of the *sheva brachot* continued...

**Bar** Kapara approached Rabbi Yehuda again and asked him, “What’s the meaning of the word *תְּבִילָה*” (defilement) (Vayikra 18:23)?” Rabbi Yehuda didn’t know, and again Bar Kapara said to him, “If you dance before me and tell your wife to pour me a glass of wine, I’ll tell you!” While Rabbi Yehuda was in the middle of dancing, and Bar Kapara was holding a glass of wine, he explained, *תְּבִילָה* - *וְכִי תִבְלִין יֵשׁ בָּהּ ? !* (Does it have any spice ? !).

**The** joy continued with more vigor...

 *Wellspring of Wisdom* 

all of Am Israel as well as noble kings and diplomats, meaning that Rabbi Yehuda brought the finest food and wine, you get to at least a

million, if not more people. Thus it would’ve cost, maximum, \$840 per person. For Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, it was plausible to receive to such a bill !).

## Parashat Yitro - Lovesick

**Bar** Kapara approached Rabbi Yehuda once more and asked him, “What’s the meaning of the word “זִמָּה” (lewdness) (Vayikra 18:17)?” The same thing repeated itself... As Rabbi Yehuda was dancing and Bar Kapara was holding the glass of wine, he explained, זִמָּה הִיא ? - “זִמָּה” (What is she?).

**Ben** Elasa, Rabbi Yehuda’s son-in-law, was present at the time, and after Rabbi Yehuda danced for the third time, he could no longer tolerate the way Bar Kapara treated his father-in-law. Thus, he got up, called over his wife from the women’s section, and expressively left the *sheva brachot*...<sup>5</sup>

**Chazal** explained the matter as such...<sup>6</sup> The wedding was glorious on a global scale. Only the wealthy Roman noblemen could hold such an event.

**Bar** Kapara, who was Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi’s primary disciple and knew of Rabbi Yehuda’s immense holiness, tremendous asceticism, and extreme love for Torah, knew that all the money and gold in the world was vanity in the eyes of Rabbi Yehuda!

**He** wanted to prove this to everyone!

**Bar** Kapara approached Rabbi Yehuda's daughter and said to her, “You don’t know how much your father loves the Torah! His sparks are sparks of fire from the flame of Hashem. No amount of water can put out that love, and rivers cannot wash it away. If a man would give all the wealth of his house in exchange for that love, he would surely scorn him (Shir HaShirim 8:6-7)!<sup>7</sup> Tomorrow, I’ll prove it to everyone!”

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5. **Nedarim** 50b, Midrash Kohelet Rabbah 1:4.

6. **See** Siach David (End of the book, p. 2) by Rabbi Chaim David Mintzer, Ohel Moshe (Devarim I, p. 998) by Rabbi Moshe Yosef Shainerman.

7. **Rabbi** Gedalyahu Halevi Schorr would frequently tell the following story:

**Once**, when Rabbi Chaim of Sanz entered his Beit Midrash, he noticed a boy sitting next to a large Gemara, swaying back and forth enthusiastically...

**Bar** Kapara approaches Rabbi Yehuda and shows him that he doesn't know the meaning of one word in the Torah! The love of the Torah ignites in Rabbi Yehuda's heart! Nothing is important to him anymore, neither honor nor prestige...

**He** asks Bar Kapara to clarify the word for him. Bar Kapara tells him, not yet! "Dance before me." Rabbi Yehuda's love of Torah knows no bounds. He's ready to humiliate himself in

the middle of his son's *sheva brachot*, in which all Am Israel is present, an event in which so much money has been invested, provided he knows the meaning of one word in the Holy Torah...

**Anything** is worth it for him to know the meaning immediately and not delay it even until tomorrow. Right now, at this moment, Rabbi Yehuda must know the meaning of the word "תּוֹצֵבָה" and nothing stands in the way of the boundless love of Torah...

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**Rabbi** Chaim approached him and saw that he was learning about the issue of *Ye'ush Shelo MiDa'at* (Bava Metzia 21b) in which there were lengthy disagreements between Abaye and Rava.

**Rabbi** Chaim looked at the boy and said to him passionately, "Do you know, my son, who Abaye and Rava are? Hashem took from His treasury a torch of fire and casted it down to earth, that was Abaye. Hashem then, once more, took from His treasury a torch of fire and casted it down to earth, that was Rava..."

**That's** how Rabbi Gedalyahu lived!

**The** Rabbis of his generation said of him, "If a man would give all the wealth of his house in exchange for the love

that Rabbi Gedalyahu Schorr loved the Torah, he would surely scorn him."

**"We** saw in our father," his sons tell (in the introduction to his book "*Or Gedalyahu*"), "the love, sweetness, and pleasantness from learning Gemara, admiring the wisdom of the Torah and its greatness, in recognition that every word is the word of *Elokim Chaim*. He also explained to us many times that the love of Torah is not the love of the insights, or the love of the disputes, or the sharpening of the mind, rather it's the love of the Torah itself. A person who loves Torah comes close to it, clings to it, until they themselves become the living body of the Torah!"

-Marbitzei Torah MeOlam HaChassidut  
(Vol. 8, p. 240).

**Bar** Kapara's aim was to show all Am Israel what type of love of Torah Rabbi Yehuda had, to what level one can ascend with love of the Torah until nothing can withstand it, not feelings, not

family, not money, and not being embarrassed in front of all of Am Israel. Everything is vanity compared to the Holy Torah. Love of Torah without any limit or boundary was Bar Kapara's aim...

### Rabbi Meir Baal HaNess...

**The Shabbat Chatan** arrived. Rabbi Yehuda is sitting at the head of the table, and next to him is sitting his son, the *chatan*, Rabbi Shimon. Surrounding him are his great disciples and the rest of the guests.

**The** joy soared, and singing erupted spontaneously...

**According** to Halacha, it is forbidden on Shabbat to clap in the usual way, palm against palm. The reason for this is that it could cause one to fix an

instrument in order to play it... However, clapping in a different way, palm against the back of the hand is permitted.<sup>8</sup>

**The** Talmud Yerushalmi recounts the following story...<sup>9</sup>

**Rabbi** Yehuda HaNasi prepared a feast for his son, Rabbi Shimon, and all the guests were clapping on the back of their hands on Shabbat. Rabbi Meir passed by, heard the sound of clapping, and was shocked.<sup>10</sup> He approached the window and yelled, "*Rabbotenu*,

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**8. These** are the words of the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim - Siman 339:3): It is forbidden to clap, slap one's thigh, or dance, lest one come to fix a musical instrument. It is also forbidden to tap one's fingers on the ground or the table, or to snap, as singers do, or to shake a walnut for a child or to hit two walnuts together so that the child will be quiet. All of

this and anything similar is forbidden, lest one come to fix a musical instrument. Clapping using the back of the hand is permitted.

**9.** Beitza 5:2.

**10. See** *Beit Yosef* (Orach Chaim - Siman 339:3) where he explains Rabbi Meir's opinion.

it is forbidden to clap on Shabbat!”

**Rabbi** Yehuda heard his voice and asked, “Who came to trouble us in our home?”

**Rabbi** Meir heard his voice and fled. Rabbi Yehuda went to the window to see who it was. As Rabbi Meir was fleeing, the wind blew off his scarf and revealed the back of his neck. An intense light beamed from Rabbi Meir's neck into the eyes of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi...

**At** that moment, new Torah insights and lofty secrets were revealed to Rabbi Yehuda! He then told his disciples, “When I saw the back of Rabbi Meir's neck, I immediately merited receiving the vast light of the wisdom of Torah!”

**The** Yerushalmi continues... Rabbi Yochanan (who composed

the Talmud Yerushalmi) and Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish both said, “Rabbi Yehuda, because of the greatness of his holiness, always wore gloves to conceal his hands. Once, Rabbi Yehuda removed the glove from his hand, and we glanced at it... A sublime ray of light beamed from his finger, illuminating our eyes with the light of Torah!”

**This** story is astonishing! Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi was a treasure of knowledge! He was holy and pure! His love of Torah burned like fire in his heart! Yet, when he revealed the source of his light, he didn't attribute it to his great knowledge of Torah, nor his to his *Avodat HaMiddot*...

**Rather**, to seeing the back of Rabbi Meir's neck! ?<sup>11</sup>

**In** order to understand this, we must first give a short preface...

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**11. The** Gemara (Brachot 5b), tells about Rabbi Elazar ben Padat who fell sick, laying on his bed, unable to move.

**Rabbi** Yochanan came to visit him... Steep, winding stairs led to his house,

where in a dark basement, Rabbi Elazar lay...

**Rabbi** Yochanan entered, and a thick darkness greeted him... Rabbi Yochanan pulled up his sleeve and revealed his

## *Chomer and Tzura*

**Every** creation in the world is composed of body and soul.

**Not** only humans and animals, but also plants, and even inanimate objects, have the aspect of a soul, the spiritual force that unites their elements, holds their foundations in place, and sustains them with their purposes.

**These** two aspects, which are in everything, are called *chomer* and *tzura*. These two aspects complete everything in the world.

**Chomer** is the matter of the thing, in its separate parts. *Tzura*, on the other hand, is the spiritual force, which unites its parts, and sustains it with its purpose.

**Now**, we should know that spiritual matters also have body and soul, *chomer* and *tzura*.

**We'll** deal with one of the most spiritual things that were created, wisdom, which also has *chomer* and *tzura*.

**The** *chomer* of wisdom is the knowledge of the wisdom, expressed in letters, words, speech, writing, and thought.

**The** *tzura* of wisdom, its soul, is the innerness of this knowledge, what stands behind the words, and what's felt in the heart that words cannot explain.

**The** *tzura* of wisdom is its essence and true purpose. One who only knows the *chomer* of wisdom is not considered wise. Only their ear received the wisdom. It didn't enter their heart nor penetrate their soul. Only when one recognizes and knows

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### *~ Wellspring of Wisdom ~*

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arm... A strong, bright light emitted from his arm, expelling the darkness...

**Rabbi** Elazar Menachem Shach asks: Rabbi Yochanan's face was visible, not covered by any veil, his hands were also not concealed by gloves, so why did Rabbi Yochanan need to reveal his arm in order to illuminate

the house? Why did his face not glow wherever he went?

**He** answered: Herein lies a great fundamental principle. The face and hands are visible, and whatever is visible doesn't illuminate. Only something that is covered, has the power to illuminate...

- Avotenu VeLanu (Vol. 2, p. 94).

**Parashat Yitro - The Advisors**

the *tzura* of wisdom, delves into its depths, encompasses it on all sides, is the wisdom attained by one's heart, and becomes part of their soul...<sup>12</sup>

**Parashat** Yitro is Parashat *Kabbalat HaTorah*, which opens with the story of Yitro's coming close to Am Israel, "Yitro, the chief of Midian, the father-in-law of Moshe, heard all that Elokim had done for Moshe and for His people Israel, that Hashem had taken Israel out of Egypt" (Shemot 18:1).

**And** closes at the end of Parashat Ki Tisa with the verse, "Bnei Israel saw Moshe's face, that the skin of Moshe's face

radiated, and Moshe would return the veil to cover his face until he would come to speak to Him" (Shemot 34:35).

**Through** these two verses, we will understand that the main difference between someone with knowledge and someone with greater knowledge isn't in the quantity of knowledge but rather in their *tzura*, the difference in the degree of feeling and understanding of the wisdom known to both. The degree to which that wisdom has penetrated and is felt in the heart.

The degree of its lucidity...

**Let's** start from the beginning...

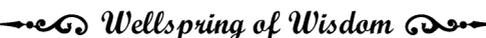
**The Advisors**

**Egypt** was the cradle of anti-Semitism in the world. There, for the first time in history, complaints were made about Jews living in a country.

**At** the head of the state stood the Egyptian oppressor, Paraoah.

When he realized that Am Israel was growing exponentially, he called his servant and said to him, "Bring me the three best horsemen in the army, immediately!"

**Three** tall, brawny men entered the palace, helmets in



Parashat Yitro - The Advisors

hand... “You called us, my lord, the king?”

“**Yes.** I have a job for you men. One of you will go to the land of Aram to bring my counselor, Bilam ben Beor.<sup>13</sup> The other will go to Midian to bring Yitro.<sup>14</sup> And the third shall go to the land of Utz to call for Iyov.<sup>15</sup> Don’t dare return without them!”

**The** soldiers set off...

**After** they arrived, Paraoth sat on his throne and spoke his mind to his three advisors, Bilam, Yitro, and Iyov, saying, “I have a very serious problem, and I’ll summarize it in one word... Jews!”

“**Behold,** the people of Bnei Israel are more numerous and powerful than us” (Shemot 1:9) – It doesn’t find favor in my

eyes that they’re a nation in themselves. I want my kingdom to have only one nation! Thus, I came up with a plan...

**We’ll** cause them such terrible suffering until they understand that it’s because they’re separate from us. Then, in order to become free of the suffering, they’ll agree to discard their Jewish identity and unite with us to be one nation!

**This** is what we’ll do...

“**Come,** let us deal wisely with them, lest they increase” (Shemot 1:10) – Only through deception will we succeed in oppressing and minimizing them. The first phase is to turn them into a poor, impoverished nation...

“**They** appointed tax officers over them” (Shemot 1:11) – We’ll enact a law stating that any person that doesn’t have pure

— *~* **Wellspring of Wisdom** *~* —

**13. Bilam** lived in Aram, as he himself told to anyone who was willing to listen, “Bilam set forth his parable and said: From Aram, Balak the King of Moav has brought me, out of the mountains of the east” (Bamidbar 23:7).

**14. Yitro** lived in the land of Midian, as it says, “Moshe grazed the flock of Yitro, his father-in-law, the chief of Midian” (Shemot 3:1).

**15. Iyov** lived in the land of Utz, as it says, “There was a man in the land of Utz named Iyov” (Iyov 1:1).

Egyptian blood flowing through their veins has to pay head tax, sales tax, property tax, etc...

**“For** the sake of their suffering” (Shemot 1:11) – In addition to that, we’ll expropriate Jewish businesses and property in the name of the law, prohibit them from owning any type of business, and forbid them from learning a trade of any kind.

**Slowly**, we’ll also resort to acts of violence and aggression against the Jews, until we succeed in turning them into slaves, “and they embittered their lives with harsh labor involving mortar and bricks, and with all the labor of the field” (Shemot 1:14).

**Now**, I ask you, my chief advisors, what do you think about the plan ?

**Iyov** remained silent...

**Bilam** rubbed his hands as if he was in a dream, and with a big smile on his face, said,

“Great idea ! This is exactly how it should be done !”

**Yitro** got up disturbed, “Paraoh, you’re crazy ! You can’t do that !”

**Paraoh** became enraged and wanted to kill him. Yitro then fled...

**The** Egyptian policy began ! The number of acts of abuse and humiliation increased...

**But** this behavior resulted in the opposite outcome that was expected !

**After** realizing that the Egyptians started to hate them and seeing their malice towards them, Am Israel also began to hate the Egyptians and kept their distance from them as much as they could.

**What** did Paraoh do then ?

**He** began to slaughter Jewish children. He ordered the midwives to kill every baby boy while still in their mother's womb,<sup>16</sup> thinking



**16. The** Midrash Shemot Rabbah (1:14) says: The midwives asked him, “How are

we supposed to know if the baby is male or female ?” Rabbi Chanina said: He gave

this would compel the women of Israel to marry the Egyptians, thus causing mass assimilation and a silent holocaust.

**He** further ordered all newborn baby boys to be thrown into the Nile River. Bnei Israel were like sheep to the slaughter, and their blood was spilled like water...

**However**, nothing helped... Bnei Israel stayed together, kept their faith, and the sense of estrangement from the Egyptian nation grew stronger, "The more they (the Egyptians) oppressed them, the more they (Bnei Israel) increased and spread" (Shemot 1:12).<sup>17</sup>

**Thus**, the years went by...

### **Yitro's Reward**

**Yitro's** unwavering opposition to Paraoth's will was an open rebellious act against his monarchy, which suffers a single fate; execution. In order to save his life, Yitro fled to Midian, leaving behind all the wealth, honor, and greatness

that came with being one of the king's chief advisors.

**The** Rambam, in his commentary on the Mishnayot, writes<sup>18</sup> that there are thirteen principles of *emuna*, one of them being that Hashem punishes the wicked<sup>19</sup> and rewards the righteous.

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### *Wellspring of Wisdom*

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them a sign. If the baby is facing downwards, know that it is a boy, for he is facing the earth from which he was created. And if the baby is facing upwards, know that it is a girl, for she is facing the ribs from which she was created.

**17. Emuna** VeDa'at 17a.

**18. Introduction** to Perek Chelek.

**19. An** amazing incident occurred in the city of Slotzk which caused great commotion at the time. A certain doctor

who threw off the yoke of heaven lived in the city. He would go out for a walk every evening for health reasons. Once, on a Thursday, he passed by the butcher shop and saw the butcher pleading with the customers to leave his store, "Whoever wants, can return in an hour." The customers dispersed without complaint, seemingly accustomed to this phenomenon.

**The** doctor was intrigued and asked the butcher where he was in a hurry to.

**Parashat Yitro - Yitro's Reward**

**“To** the synagogue!” the butcher answered, “For *tefillat mincha* and *arvit*, and for the *shiur* in between.”

**“But** today is Thursday, your busiest day of the week. The shop is full of customers, how can you forcibly expel your *parnasa* ? !”

**“First,** *parnasa* is from heaven,” the butcher replied, “And second, money isn’t everything. A Jew must take care of their *Olam HaBah* as well !”

**“There’s** no such thing as *Olam Habah*,” the doctor mocked.

**The** butcher shrugged him off and said, “For you there might not be. For me, I hope there will be...” Then started towards the synagogue.

**The** doctor got offended by the witty answer, “Listen good,” he mocked, “If you want to increase your share in *Olam HaBah*, I’m willing to sell you my share for one ruble...”

**The** butcher stopped, stared at the doctor with a skeptical look on his face and replied, “Why not, I’ll take that deal !” He pulled out a ruble from his pocket and handed it to the doctor who stared, puzzled, at the butcher walking away. He examined the ruble in his hand, put it in his pocket, and resumed his walk, perplexed by the innocent *emuna* of common people.

**Several** years passed by...

**One** day, an honorable woman entered the butcher shop. After making a brief

acquaintance she asked, “Did you perhaps know my deceased’s husband ?”

**Since** she introduced herself as the doctor’s widow, the butcher knew who she was talking about, “Only by sight,” he answered, “I didn’t need his services, Baruch Hashem.”

**“You** never spoke to him ?” she wondered. “Strange ! I’ll tell you why I’m asking. My husband passed away recently. After his death, I saw him in a dream frantic with worry. He said he was brought to trial before the Throne of Glory, and his sins were innumerable. They sentenced him to the lowest chamber of *Gehinom*. He protested saying, ‘It’s true that I have committed all these sins, but on the other hand, I saved many lives and healed the poor without taking payment. Anyone who saves one life from Am Israel, it is considered as if they had saved an entire world ! Where are all my mitzvot ? ! Is there no justice in the world of truth ? !’

**They** answered him, ‘True, your mitzvot had the power to diminish your punishment, but what can we do after you sold all your merits to the butcher for one ruble !’

**My** husband cried out, ‘Woe is to me ! Have mercy on me ! Maybe the butcher will agree annul the deal !’ The compassion of the High Court was aroused toward him, and they gave him permission to appear to me in a dream and ask me to request that you invalidate the deal.

**Parashat Yitro - Yitro's Reward**

**Truth** be told, I woke in the morning kind of frightened, but I shrugged it off after a few moments. But, when the same dream repeated itself three nights in a row, and my husband began to sob and plead desperately, I decided to come and ask if the dream was true or not. But if you say that you never spoke with my husband..."

**Throughout** her story, the butcher suddenly recalled the incident. Shocked, he said, "It's true, that's exactly what happened! I didn't realize at the time what a good deal I had made!"

"**If** so," the woman said, "take a ruble and go back on the deal!"

"**No** way!" the butcher heatedly replied, "I'm a simple butcher, I don't have many mitzvot. *Tefillah*, *tefillin*, Shabbat, kosher, you know, the regular... How I have always envied those who sit in the Beit Midrash in this world, and will sit in the Beit Midrash in the next world... Now that I have merited so many mitzvot of saving lives, my place there is guaranteed..."

**The** woman shrugged and said, "I'm only a messenger. When he comes to my dream, I'll tell him your answer..."

**The** next morning, the woman got up and went to the synagogue. She stood at the entrance until the end of the *tefillah* and waited for the Head Rabbi of the city, the Ridbaz, to exit. The Rabbi left the synagogue surrounded by the esteemed members of the city, and the widow impeded them and told her story. Her husband came to her again the night before in a dream, and when he heard the

butcher's answer, he let out a wail and urged her to go to the Head Rabbi of the city and invite the butcher to a *Din Torah!*

**The** Rabbi as well as the dignitaries of the city were shaken. The story very quickly made its way around the city. For the public interest, the Rabbi decided that the *Din Torah* would be held in the Great Synagogue.

**At** the designated time, the synagogue was completely packed, people were hanging from the rafters. Many people resorted to standing outside and looking on through the windows.

**Silence** enveloped the synagogue as the Rabbi and the *Dayanim* entered. They sat on the stage, and the plaintiff, the widow, was invited to state her case. She was embarrassed, so distant in her way of life from the Rabbi and his *Dayanim*, as well as the Torah observant crowd. She didn't even fully understand the concept of *Gan Eden* and *Gehinom*. But one thing she did know: her husband was very worried, trembling, begging her, pleading. "Evidently, the matter is very important to him," she said, putting a smile on the listeners' faces.

**The** Rabbi called over the butcher to come up on stage and tell over the incident as it was. How the doctor mocked and offered the deal, how he himself accepted the offer and realized that it was the best deal of his life. Of course, he didn't think of giving it up, "Your life takes precedence over the life of the other," he argued.

**Parashat Yitro - Yitro's Reward**

**The** Rabbi silenced the murmur heard in the synagogue. Some in favor of the butcher, and the majority pitying the soul of the deceased.

“**The** *Beit Din* will step out for a consultation,” the Rabbi exclaimed, “The verdict will be given in about half an hour.”

**The** Rabbi left with the *Dayanim* to the next room, and the synagogue became a place of restless disputes. Interestingly, everyone was of the opinion that a person couldn't be forced to give up a good deal that they had acquired. But it was debated whether it was obligatory to pity the deceased or not.

**The** arguments ceased at once with the entrance of the Rabbi accompanied by his *Dayanim*.

“**The** ruling contains three clauses,” the Rabbi declared.

“**The** first clause: The deal is invalid! *Olam Habah* is not property which can be passed on from hand to hand; bought or sold. *Olam HaBah* is the light that the mitzvot shone on one's soul and enable them to experience the wonderful spiritual pleasures, as well as receive the sublime and exalted attainments. How can a person who has not toiled and is not capable of experiencing these things merit them?!

**If** so, it's understood, that spiritual reward is not something that is for sale. The verdict is therefore that the widow will return the defendant the ruble, and the deal is void.”

**The** crowd sighed a sigh of relief and wished to disperse. But the Rabbi didn't finish.

“**The** second clause: Even though the sale was nullified, the doctor still lost his entire share in *Olam HaBah*.”

A groan of shock was heard throughout the congregation, “Why?! For what?!”

**The** Rabbi explained, “*Beit Din* has no choice, it must rule according to Halacha. This is an explicit verse in the book of Yechezkel, “And you, son of man, say to the members of your people: The righteousness of the righteous will not save him on the day of his transgression” (Yechezkel 33:12), and the Gemara (Kiddushin 40b) explains that the verse speaks of a righteous person who regretted their righteousness, i.e., their mitzvot, thus forfeiting their reward.

**It** is also explained at the beginning *Perek Chelek* (Sanhedrin 90a) that one who denies the existence of *Olam HaBah* is denied from their existence in *Olam HaBah*, and thus is the case before us. The deceased denied the reward to come and agreed to sell his share, therefore, even though the sale itself was invalid, his contempt and apostasy for *Olam HaBah* eradicated him from it. This is the Halacha, and it cannot be changed.”

**A** rumble of disappointment emerged from the crowd, “Both sides lost; the butcher lost his great hope, and the doctor lost both ways: he returned the ruble, and lost his share in *Olam HaBah*...”

**Parashat Yitro - Yitro's Reward**

**Since** Bilam and Iyov acted wickedly, they were punished. However, Yitro, who acted righteously, was rewarded.

**Thus** the Midrash says<sup>20</sup> that at that moment, Hashem examined what each of the three counselors advised regarding His beloved children. Bilam, who advised to massacre Hashem's children, was sentenced to die by the sword, "And Bilam ben Beor they slew by the sword" (Bamidbar 31:8).

**Iyov**, who remained silent, not expressing opposition to harming Hashem's children, was sentenced to a year of bitter

suffering. In one day, Iyov lost all his possessions, was inflicted from head to toe with boils, causing him to scratch his body with shards of clay until his entire body bled,<sup>21</sup> and buried seven sons and three daughters, all of whom died through strange deaths.

**And** for Yitro, who was horrified by the shocking idea of harming Hashem's children and gave his life just not to be affiliated with the plan, Hashem decreed that he would merit coming closer to Am Israel later in life and that his daughters would convert and marry into Am Israel...

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 *Wellspring of Wisdom* 

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"The third clause," the voice of the Rabbi arose, "Since this incident sanctified the name of Hashem, and many Jews were strengthened by seeing that there is a *Din* and that there is a *Dayan* and every deed will come to trial, we decree that this tremendous merit of *Zikui HaRabim* (accumulating merit for the public) will be credited to the doctor.

**And** since *Chazal* (Yoma 87a) say that one who *Mezake' Et HaRabim* does not fall into *Gehinom*, the doctor will be dismissed from *Gehinom*, and since we said that the merit of strengthening

the public will be credited to him, this occasion of strengthening the *emuna* of the masses will be adequate to acquire him a share in *Olam HaBah*.

A sigh of relief filled the synagogue. The butcher then made his way to the Rabbi crying out, "Rabbi, Rabbi, please acknowledge the fact that I also have a part in this *Zikui HaRabim*, and decree that my share also won't be deprived...

- Maayan HaEmuna (Vol. 2, p. 99).

**20. Shemot** Rabbah 1:9.

**21. See** the book of Iyov (ch. 1-2).

## Miracles

**Am** Israel was tortured under the new Egyptian rule. But then, the time of redemption finally arrived... Hashem revealed His strength and redeemed Am Israel! However, it's important to note that the redemption didn't occur instantly but in stages.

**In** order to understand the stages of redemption, we'll bring the words of HaRav Yoram Michael Abargel...<sup>22</sup>

**Hashem** revealed Himself to Avraham Avinu and said, "Know that your descendants will be foreigners in a land that is not theirs. They will enslave them and oppress them for four hundred years" (Bereshit 15:13).

**The** Kli Yakar explains<sup>23</sup> that Hashem was telling Avraham that the exile will occur in four stages...

**"Your** descendants will be foreigners" – Am Israel will be lowly among the gentiles as is a stranger among a group of companions...

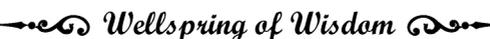
**"In** a land that is not theirs" – the *Shechina* will depart and be concealed from them, by way of what Chazal say,<sup>24</sup> "Anyone who resides outside of Eretz Israel is considered as one who doesn't have a G-d."

**"They** will enslave them" – Being lowly as is a stranger isn't enough. They'll also be enslaved.

**"And** oppress them" – Not only will they be enslaved, but they'll also be tortured for no reason.

**But** in the end, redemption will come...

**The** redemption also occurred in four stages. They're mentioned



22. Imrei Noam (Vaera, Maamar 1).

23. Shemot 6:6.

24. Ketubot 110b.

in the following verses, “Therefore, tell Bnei Israel, I am Hashem. I will take you out from under the burdens of Egypt, and I will save you from their slavery. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with acts of great judgments. I will take you to Me as a people, and I will be to you Elokim. You will know that I am Hashem Elokecha, Who is taking you out from under the burdens of Egypt” (Shemot 6:6-7).

“I will take you out from under the burdens of Egypt” – First, Hashem saved them from the most dangerous aspect; torture.

“I will save you from their slavery” – Simply

understood, He saved them from slavery.

“I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with acts of great judgments” – The main thing that causes distress to a stranger is loneliness. Thus, Hashem poured infinite love on Am Israel, taking them out of their sense of alienation.

“I will take you to Me as a people, and I will be to you Elokim” – The last and most primary stage of all, the *d’vekut* (clinging) to the *Shechina*...<sup>25</sup>

**On** the 15th of Nisan, 2448, Am Israel left Egypt...

**And** the miracles continued...

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 *Wellspring of Wisdom* 

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25. *D’vekut* to the *Shechina* is achieved primarily through the fulfillment of mitzvot in practice.

**Rabbi** Shalom Schwadron once recounted the following story:

**Once**, when I was in America, I was asked to give a lecture at a huge synagogue, in which the congregants somewhat kept mitzvot. Some of their children have already assimilated, *Rachmana Litzlan*.

**The** custom of the synagogue was that prior to the lecture, one must get

permission from the president of the synagogue. The “honorable” president troubled himself to meet me and called me to one of the rooms of the synagogue, he then asked me, “What are you planning on talking about tomorrow in your lecture?”

“**On** the observance of Shabbat,” I replied.

“**Shabbat ?!** How can you dedicate a lecture to such a topic, when half of the congregants come to the synagogue on Shabbat in their cars? No! Talk about something else.”

## Amalek

**From** Ramses they traveled to *Sukkot*, and continued their journey through *Etam*, *Pi HaCherot*, *Marah*, *Elima*, and *Yam Suf*.

**On** the shores of *Yam Suf*, Am Israel stood helpless... Hashem nullified all laws of nature, and Am Israel crossed the sea...

**The** resonance generated by this act was immense! "The nations heard, and they trembled. Terror gripped the inhabitants of Pelasht. Then the chiefs of Edom panicked, the mighty men of Moav were seized with trembling. All the

inhabitants of Canaan melted away (in fear)" (Shemot 15:14-15)!

**Am** Israel continued their journey...

**On** the 15th of Iyar, they reached the Sin Desert, and that day they ran out of the bread that they had taken with them from Egypt. Am Israel became worried and complained... Hashem heard their complaints and descended *Mann* for them.

**The** journey continued... *Dafka... Alush...* And when they reached *Rephidim*, they realized that there were no water sources, and they started to panic... "Was

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...*❧* Wellspring of Wisdom *❧*...

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**"On** the observance of *Taharat HaMishpacha* (Family Purity)" I suggested.

**"When** I give permission to speak, we have special demands not to harass the synagogue members, and in general, since many are far from keeping Torah and mitzvot, it's not worth talking for nothing."

**"I'll** talk about *Chinuch* (education)" I proposed.

**"No** way! The gentile public school contains the majority of the residents of the Jews, while the Jewish school only has a few students from our congregation. No one will listen to you, it's a waste of time and energy."

I got angry, "*Ribono Shel Olam!* Then what can I speak about in such a synagogue?" I asked.

**"Talk** about Judaism..." he replied. 12...

- LeHagid (Shemot, p. 66).

traveling all this way worth it? Is there anyone who cares about us?” Continuous doubt...

**Moshe** Rabbeinu notices the terrible doubts and confusions in their hearts... “Because Bnei Israel had quarreled and because they had tested Hashem, saying, Is Hashem in our midst or not?” (Shemot 17:7). Two days passed in this manner. The last bit of their water ran out, and the complaints began again... Hashem appeared to Moshe and commanded him, “Take your staff and strike the rock, and water will come out of it!” And so it was.

**Since** Am Israel had doubts in their *emuna* when they reached *Rephidim*, those doubts and fears spread throughout the air, traveling 1,000 miles and reaching Amalek. Those doubts entered Amalek’s heart and aroused his power, the power of doubt!

**Amalek** quickly gathered a variety of weapons, ammunition, horses, elephants, camels,

mechanical equipment, and supplies and prepared for the war against Am Israel...

**Rabbi** Shimon Bar Yochai revealed that this war was the most difficult war in history...<sup>26</sup> “Since the day the world was created until that time, and from that time until Mashiach comes, and even in the days of Gog and Magog, there won’t be another war like it.”

**The** reason was that this war was fought in the upper worlds and in our world.

**When** Moshe Rabbeinu saw that the war was taking place on two planes, he decided to take action. The war on the spiritual plane, he took for himself, “Tomorrow, I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of Elokim in my hand” (Shemot 17:9).

**And** the war on the physical plane, he gave to Yehoshua ben Nun, “Moshe said to Yehoshua,

**Parashat Yitro - Know What to Do!**

‘Choose for us men and go out to war with Amalek’” (Shemot 17:9).

**A** few lone Amalekim managed to escape... Beaten and bruised, they returned to their

territory... The sounds of victory echoed throughout the land...

**In** the distant country of Midian, Yitro walked in circles like a lion trying to escape its cage...

**Know What to Do!**

**Yitro** quickly got ready and set out... He stood near the camp of Am Israel and sent a messenger to his son-in-law, Moshe Rabbeinu, “Moshe, I have arrived...”

**Our** Parsha begins with the verse, “Yitro, the chief of Midian, the father-in-law of Moshe, heard all that Elokim had done for Moshe and for His people Israel, that Hashem had taken Israel out of Egypt” (Shemot 18:1).

**Rashi** comments: “Yitro heard” – What did he hear that caused him to come? – The splitting of *Yam Suf* and the war with Amalek!

**The** whole world was tumultuous following the miracles of the splitting of *Yam Suf* and the war with Amalek... But, the only

person, the **ONLY** person, whom the miracles affected, was Yitro.

**The** Torah praises him, saying, “Yitro heard.”

**This** needs clarification, for the difference between Yitro and the rest of the world wasn’t in hearing, for the whole world heard, as it says, “The nations heard” (Shemot 15:14), yet, Yitro came to convert, and the rest of the world didn’t! If so, the verse should’ve said, “Yitro came”?

**Before** we explain, we’ll preface with a story...

**Yossi** was born in a village. His life passed him by among the cornfields and the cattle ranches... One day, he decided, “I’m going to the big city!”

**As** he walked along the road, he noticed a long line of iron rods on the ground, without beginning and without end, and next to them, about 2 feet away, lay another line of strong, beautiful iron rods without end.

**Yossi**, a native villager, had never seen a train, nor had he ever heard of it. In the village, people rode donkeys, plowed with bulls... The news of this invention never reached his ears...

**Yossi** stopped and contemplated, “What a waste to lay here high-quality rods and screws! These rods can do wonders for plowing, and these screws will be perfect for strengthening the reins of the animals!” Yossi liked his idea and began disassembling the screws and iron rods...

**While** he was engrossed in his work, the train suddenly appeared from afar and came quickly towards him. The engineer, who noticed a man bent over the tracks, immediately honked every horn available and activated all

whistles in order to signal to the man to get off the tracks...

**Yossi**, on the other hand, didn’t understand. But suddenly, he began hearing something interesting, a loud thumping sound going up and down... For a moment, he remembered his wedding day and the country singer who entertained the guests...

**The** sounds that intensified from moment to moment caused the villager to turn his head towards the source of the noise. Unexpectedly, he noticed a large, round, beautiful eye approaching, with strange singing sounds... Here, when he saw the big eye, he immediately remembered the bride and groom's special carriage plaided with various ornaments and thought to himself, “Surely this is a wedding in the style of the noisy city people...”

**Then**, a certain thought crept into his mind, “We’ll rest a little from the toil and rejoice with the celebrants...” From thought to action, he got up on his feet and opened with a cheerful dance...

A bystander witnessing this incident surely would've said to himself, "This man must be deaf, and therefore doesn't hear the whistles of the train!!!" But what's the truth? Is he indeed deaf? After all, he hears perfectly! He's even dancing to the sounds... But yet, what bad hearing! His hearing will crush him and turn him into a pile of limbs in another moment...

**When** the engineer honks the horn, he means to get off the tracks!!! Anyone who doesn't understand the meaning of the horn doesn't hear a horn. They hear wedding singers...

### ***Emuna and Tzura***

**We** have already clarified that wisdom is divided into two parts, *chomer*, and *tzura*. The *chomer* of wisdom is the knowledge of the wisdom, expressed in letters, words, speech, writing, and thought.

**The** *tzura* of wisdom, its soul, is the innerness of this

**This** is, "Yitro heard." Everyone had indeed heard the miracles of the splitting of *Yam Suf* and the war with Amalek, "The nations heard, and they trembled. Terror gripped the inhabitants of Pelasheet." Everyone may have clapped and shed an excited tear... But everyone "heard" something different... Only one person heard the truth, Yitro! Because Yitro heard with hearing that begets doing! He understood, took to heart, and took action!<sup>27</sup>

**Wisdom** is primarily the inner understanding and what's hidden behind the words...

knowledge, what stands behind the words, and what's felt in the heart that words cannot explain.

**Regarding** the *chomer* of wisdom, there's no difference (for the most part) between one someone wise and another, and there's no difference in the degree of wisdom known to both.

Parashat Yitro - Emuna and Tzura

**But** regarding the *tzura* of wisdom, the difference is immeasurable. The main difference between someone with knowledge and someone with greater knowledge isn't in the quantity of the knowledge of the wisdom, but rather in their *tzura*. This is the difference in the degree of feeling and understanding of the wisdom known to both and the degree to which that wisdom has penetrated and is felt in the heart or the degree of its lucidity, which are outcomes of the understanding of the *tzura* of the wisdom.

**Chazal** called those who have the power to attain the *tzura* of wisdom and feel it in their hearts, people of form - *tzura* (אָנְשִׁים שֶׁל צוּרָה).

**“People of form”** are people who attain everything with its *tzura*. They see the *tzura* in everything. We should know that the difference between a person of *tzura* and a person not of *tzura* is evident in all their knowledge and feelings. Their *emuna* is also

completely different, deeper, clearer, and more internal than the one who lacks the power to attain the *tzura* of everything. Their *emuna* isn't internal and isn't established in their soul. Their *emuna* is *chomer* without *tzura*.

**Only** a “person of *tzura*” can reach true *d'vekut* to Hashem, because *d'vekut* to Hashem is attained only through the strength and clarity of *emuna*. Only a person of *tzura*, whose *emuna* is clear and imbued in the depths of their soul, can reach the virtue of *d'vekut*, as well as bring blessing to others, because their blessings derive from a clearer recognition of truth, for all their feelings and thoughts are deeper and arise from the innerness of their souls!<sup>28</sup>

**When** Yitro heard the miracles of the splitting of *Yam Suf* and the war with Amalek, he felt that there was something internal hidden within these occurrences, something ancient and concealed...

**This** made him drop everything and come to the Sin Desert! When he arrived,

he saw that Am Israel was preparing for the giving of the Torah!

### Patient and Kind

**The** 6th of Sivan, 2448, the 50th day from their exodus from Egypt. All the halls of heaven and the doors of the abyss were opened and revealed...

**Am** Israel stands in the midst of the awesome event in which the greatest divine revelation of all time took place, the giving of the Torah.

**At** that sublime hour of the hearing of the Ten Commandments, Am Israel merited the revelation of divine light in the tangible, “All the people saw the sounds, the flames, the sound of the shofar, and the mountain emitting smoke” (Shemot 20:15).

**The** scene comes to an end... Moshe Rabbeinu turns to Am Israel and says, “I’m ascending in order to bring the Torah down to the world. In forty days, I will return.”

**Am** Israel waited impatiently in the camp, counting the hours for the return of Moshe.

**Meanwhile,** the *yetzer hara* worked overtime...

**Am** Israel sinned by means of the golden calf. Hashem reveals Himself to Moshe and tells him, “As far as I’m concerned, it’s over...” – “Now leave Me alone and My wrath will burn against them and annihilate them. I will then make of you a great nation” (Shemot 32:10).

**A** tremor passed through Moshe's whole body... He bravely braced himself and then began to fight with all his might for the nullification of the decree...

**For** forty consecutive days, he prayed to Hashem with great *mesirut nefesh*, “I fell down before Hashem as before, forty

**Parashat Yitro - Patient and Kind**

days and forty nights, bread I didn't eat nor water did I drink... Because I was afraid of the anger and the fury that Hashem raged against you to annihilate you; and Hashem heard me (accepted my prayer)" (Devarim 9:18-19).

**Then**, on the 29th of Av, after 960 hours of prayer, Hashem revealed Himself to Moshe and said, "Hew two stone tablets for yourself just like the first ones. And I will write upon the tablets the words which were on the first tablets that you broke" (Shemot 34:1).

**The** next day, on Rosh Chodesh Elul, Moshe Rabbeinu ascended to heaven to receive the second tablets, and forty days later, on Yom Kippur, Hashem wholeheartedly, and with joy, forgave Am Israel. Hashem said

to Moshe, "I have forgiven them, just as you spoke," and handed him the second tablets.

**Thus** we find, that the beginning of the giving of the Torah was in Parashat Yitro when the first tablets were given, and the end of the giving of the Torah was in Parashat Va'etchanan when the second tablets were given.

**When** Moshe Rabbeinu descended from Har Sinai with the second tablets in his hand, his face radiated an intense light, and Am Israel was afraid to approach him, "When Aharon and all of Bnei Israel saw Moshe and beheld that the skin of his face radiated, they were afraid to approach him" (Shemot 34:30).<sup>29</sup>

**But** what caused Moshe's face to radiate light?

—*~* **Wellspring of Wisdom** *~*—

**29. Rashi** Comments: Come and see how strong the power of sin is! For before they stretched forth their hand to sin, what is it said of them (of Am Israel)? "The appearance of Hashem's glory was like a consuming fire at the top to the

mountain in the eyes of the Bnei Israel" (Shemot 24:17), and yet they weren't afraid and didn't tremble! But, after they sinned by making the golden calf, even at the sight of the rays of glory of Moshe they trembled and were freighted!

## Radiance of the Heart and Soul

“**Moshe** didn’t know that the skin of his face radiated” (Shemot 34:29). The Midrash asks,<sup>30</sup> from where did Moshe merit his rays of glory?

**Rabbi** Brachia HaKohen said in the name of Rabbi Shmuel that the tablets were six *tefachim* long and six *tefachim* wide.<sup>31</sup> Moshe would hold two *tefachim*, the *Shechina* would hold two *tefachim*, and from the two *tefachim* in the middle, Moshe received his rays of glory.

A person’s wisdom is evident from the radiance of their face, for the wisdom that is present in the innerness of their soul bursts out through rays of light that radiate from their face, illuminating their entire essence.

**This** is the reason why Moshe’s face radiated!

**The** rays of glory are the result of the light of his inner wisdom, which were stored in Moshe’s

soul, which have no words, and burst out and shine through his being, and illuminate his face... And the light of wisdom in Moshe Rabbeinu was so great that they burst out through rays of glory.

**Rabbi** Brachia reveals to us how Moshe Rabbeinu achieved his wisdom. The Torah has three parts:

**1.** The wisdom revealed to us. Every Jew who genuinely engages in Torah can attain it.

**2.** The part of the Torah that wasn’t given into our hands. One cannot attain it in its entirety nor discuss it as in a thing that is in one’s possession.

**It’s** impossible to grasp it in one’s mind. However, one is given the opportunity to peek at it, to see it shining before him, and to feel it in their soul from a distance.

**3.** The gate of understanding that it is impossible for a



**30.** *Shemot* Rabbah 47:6.

**31.** A *tefach* is about 3.15 inches.

**Parashat Yitro - Your Eyes Shall See Your Teacher**

person, even the most exalted and holy like Moshe Rabbeinu, to attain because it is the source of the Torah bound to the knowledge of the Creator.

**This** was the intention of Rabbi Brachia, “Moshe would hold two *tefachim*,” this is the first part, what is revealed.

“**The** *Shechina* would hold two *tefachim*,” this is the third part, hidden and concealed.

“**Two** *tefachim* in the middle,” this is the second part, where there’s a possibility of peeking at it...

**From** there, Moshe received his rays of glory. After Moshe Rabbeinu passed the first part, the study of Torah, merited entering

the second part... The light of the Torah that illuminated his being from this part of the Torah, which has no letters or words, and cannot be attained through speech or thought, only that was shone in the heart and soul of Moshe, this light from the supreme wisdom is what illuminated his soul and radiated rays of glory from his face.

**The** *tzura* of wisdom in his heart, for which any amount of words or expressions will not suffice, is that which burst from his face with the radiance of the rays of glory...<sup>32</sup>

**Am** Israel were afraid to approach him. Thus Moshe took a veil and covered his face, as it says, “He placed a veil over his face” (Shemot 34:33)...

**Your Eyes Shall See Your Teacher**

**The** second tablets were placed in the *Aron HaBrit*, and the first Rebbe, Moshe Rabbeinu, began to teach Torah to Am Israel.

**Since** he who wants to receive from his Rabbi the soul

of the Torah must see the *tzura* of his Rabbi, therefore, when Moshe Rabbeinu taught Am Israel, he removed the veil.

**Rashi** comments: He would take it off when he spoke to Am



Israel and when Hashem spoke with him.

**Rabbi** Itzchak Arama (1420 – 1494) writes<sup>33</sup> that the radiance of the face is a supreme, divine, splendid radiance that descends on a man who is filled with *Ruach Elokim*, with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge, as Shlomo HaMelech said, “A man’s wisdom lights up his face” (Kohelet 8:1). All the more so for of one who merited speaking with Hashem face to face that their radiance will be incredible, as chazal say,<sup>34</sup> “The face of Moshe was like the face of the sun.”

**Thus**, Moshe put a veil over his face.

**Although**, the veil indicated when Moshe was preoccupied

with the mundane tasks of life. And since Moshe Rabbeinu was the pinnacle of human perfection, and mundane matters didn’t occupy a place in his life at all, therefore the time that the veil was on his face was minute !

**For** when Moshe would learn straight from the mouth of Hashem, he removed the veil to strengthen his receptiveness of the Torah from Hashem, and when Moshe would teach Am Israel, he removed the veil to strengthen his influence on the receivers. Only during the very infrequent occasions when Moshe neither learned nor taught did he actually wear the veil.

**We’ll** now return to Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi...

### **The Virtue of Seeing the Face of the Tzaddik**

**Rabbi** Yehuda sat among his disciples and said, “The moment the wind blew Rabbi Meir’s scarf off his neck, I received an immense light...”

**We** have already mentioned that the essence of wisdom is its *tzura*. When someone teaches, they can only pass on the *chomer* of the wisdom, but not the *tzura*



33. Akedat Itzchak (Sha’ar 54).

34. Bava Batra 75a.

**Parashat Yitro - The Virtue of Seeing the Face of the Tzaddik**

of the wisdom. What they feel in their hearts, they cannot give over in words, for the soul of the Torah is not passed on solely through words...

**And** since the heart of a teacher desires to give of the abundance of their wisdom and to pass on what they feel in the depths of their soul to others, this wisdom bursts forth from all their essence, expressed through their facial expression and body movements, but not only through such but actually penetrates through their entire being and radiates from their whole body.

**A** student can attain this in their soul only by their *d'vekut* and closeness of soul to the Rabbi, and when they observe their Rabbi and hear his words, they feel what's in the heart of their Rabbi and hear the language of his soul. Then they feel the *tzura* of the wisdom through the language of the soul, which is transmitted from the soul of the Rabbi to the soul of the student without saying any words.

**This** is what Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi said, "I didn't merit

Torah," that is, I didn't attain the *tzura* of the wisdom, "to understand the *tzura* of the Torah," which is the essence of the Torah and only by understanding it is the Torah attained by one's soul, "until I saw the neck of Rabbi Meir," for by means of looking at his neck while studying Torah, he merited understanding the soul of the Torah that was stored in Rabbi Meir's soul.

**Thus** Rabbi Yochanan and Reish Lakish said that their wisdom was attained primarily from seeing the fingers of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. The wisdom stored within him burst through his whole body, and through a ray of light that penetrated them from Rabbi Yehuda's fingers, the radiance of their Rabbi's wisdom entered their hearts, and they merited attaining the *tzura* of the Torah.

**From** here, we learn how great the value of the *tzura* of wisdom really is, for Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, Rabbi Yochanan, and Reish Lakish didn't ascribe importance to their

great knowledge of Torah like they did to the light of the Torah they received from seeing Rabbi Meir's neck or Rabbi Yehuda's fingers, for by means of which they attained something of the *tzura* of the wisdom in the hearts of their Rabbi. They ascribed importance to this to such an extent that they said, "We attained Torah only because we saw Rabbi Yehuda's finger," for they knew to appreciate the *tzura* of wisdom to such a great extent such that they understood that all the spiritual attainments that they had attained beforehand only now received the light of the *tzura* of wisdom...

**With** *Hashgacha Pratit*, while dealing with the virtue of *tzaddikim* who attained the inner *tzura* of wisdom, this Shabbat, Parashat Yitro, is the *Hillulah* of the Kabbalist HaRav Ovadia Hadaya (author of *Shu"t Yaskil Avdi*), who merited reaching supreme heights on the scale of wisdom and knowledge as well as having

the secrets of the Torah being revealed to him. Rabbi Ovadia Hadaya served as Rosh Yeshivat HaMekubalim "Beit El" (some of his students included Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, Rabbi Meir Getz, and others) and authored many books.

**Therefore**, we thought it would be appropriate to end with the words of HaRav Yoram Michael Abergel...

**There** are *tzaddikim* who merited learning Torah for decades, and when their time came, they passed away with the words of Torah, as it is said of HaRav Ovadia Hadaya, who merited this unique passing...<sup>35</sup>

**Shabbat** day, Parashat Yitro, the 20th of Shevat, 5729, passed him by as usual. As was his custom, he went up to the Torah and read the Ten Commandments. In the afternoon, he went to his *Beit Midrash* for *tefillat mincha*, and when he returned home, he sat at his study table and began to learn Torah. Suddenly the book

**Parashat Yitro - Shabbat Shalom!**

fell out of his hand, he got up and laid down in his bed to rest a bit, and in those holy moments, his soul left his body in purity, during the hour of *Ra'ava DeRa'aven* (Will of Wills – the loftiest hour of Shabbat, the time of *mincha*) through

*Mitat Neshika* (death by way of a divine kiss). The *Shechina* simply passed by him, and his soul clung to her and ascended with her in a heavenly wind, without pain, without anguish... May his merit protect us, amen!

**Shabbat Shalom!**

## *The Pathway...*

1. The transmission of the Torah from generation to generation is done by the Rabbis of each and every generation and not by the study of the Torah alone. The reason for this is that true understanding of the Torah and to receive the soul of the Torah can only be done by seeing the face of the Rabbi. When a Rabbi sits and teaches he can only orally deliver the material wisdom of the Torah, but the form of the wisdom, what the Rabbi feels in his heart, can't be passed over in words. Therefore, it's essential for every person to have a righteous Rabbi who they can learn Torah from.

2. The essence of Torah wisdom is the attainment of its inner form. All creations in the world are made up of body and soul. Even the inanimate. Through the *chomer* and the *tzura* everything in the world reaches completion. *Chomer* - is the very thing itself, and *Tzura* - the spiritual power that sustains it.

3. The same is true in spiritual matters. One of the most spiritual things created is wisdom, which also has *chomer* and *tzura*. The *chomer* of wisdom is the knowledge of wisdom that is expressed in words and as well as in writing and thought. The

*tzura* of wisdom, and its soul, is the inwardness of knowledge that expands in the heart of the teacher and learner, and can only be felt in the soul. The *tzura* of wisdom is its essence and true being. When we recognize and notice the *tzura* of wisdom and delve into it, only then can it be perceived in our hearts and become part of our souls.

4. Only someone who has been privileged to attain the inner part of the Torah, its *tzura*, can reach true connection with Hashem. True connection with Hashem only comes by real clarity and strength of *emuna*. Only someone whose *emuna* is clear and imbued within the depths of their soul can reach the virtue of *d'vekut*. Therefore, everyone must look for such people, who have attained the *tzura* of the Torah, and learn from them.

5. The first Rebbe, Moshe Rabbeinu, was privileged to attain the soul of the Torah in its true form and therefore was privileged to have his face radiate. Our sages revealed to us that the Torah has three parts. The first part is the wisdom of the Torah that is revealed to us, that every Jew who learns Torah seriously can achieve it. The second part, the part

*The Pathway...*

of the Torah that wasn't given to us. It's impossible to obtain this part on your own. It's impossible to grasp this part in your mind. Yet, with all that, there is a possibility of glimpsing into this part and feeling its presence from afar. The third part is a gate of understanding that is completely impossible for anyone, even the most exalted and holy like Moshe Rabbeinu, to obtain. This is because it's the root of the Torah which deals with the knowledge of Hashem.

6. Moshe Rabbeinu, by the power of his *avodat Hashem* and devotion of his soul, was privileged to break all the differentiating barriers and had the privilege of attaining the second

part of the Torah. The light of the Torah that illuminated him was from this part of the Torah, which has no words and letters, and isn't perceived in speech and thought, only radiates within the heart and soul. This light illuminated his soul and shown through his face with rays of glory. It was the *tzura* of wisdom in his heart that erupted through his face in the radiance of the rays of glory.

7. From this we will learn what the true virtue of Moshe Rabbeinu was, and how far we are from achieving it. As we say in the thirteen principles of the Torah, "Moshe Rabbeinu is the greatest of all the prophets and his prophecy is true !





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## Shabbat Times



### Parashat Yitro

Shvat 20, 5782

City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	4:42 pm	5:46 pm	6:14 pm
Miami	5:38 pm	6:34 pm	7:10 pm
Los Angeles	4:54 pm	5:54 pm	6:26 pm
Montreal	4:27 pm	5:35 pm	5:59 pm
Toronto	4:56 pm	6:02 pm	6:28 pm
Jerusalem	4:48 pm	5:39 pm	6:12 pm

## Pathways to the Heart

From the Holy Words of HaRav Yoram zt"l

When a child takes everything for granted and doesn't feel gratitude, their soul becomes damaged...The SefatEmet wrote that there's no worse attribute than being ungrateful.

Every parent must acknowledge all the good that Hashem has done for them and pass on their gratefulness to their children so that they too will be able to recognize all the good that their parents do for them and, in return, thank them.



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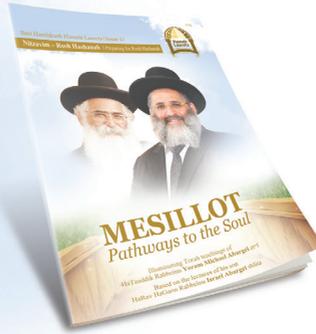
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