

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 39

Terumah | Building A Jewish Home Through Generosity



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 Terumah

The Power of a Generous Heart

Rebbe Levi Itzchak of Berditchev (1740-1809) generally refrained from going to funerals for reasons he kept to himself. Even when it came to the funerals of *Gadolei Israel*, Rebbe Levi Itzchak refrained from attending.

One day, the town announced the passing of a man named Yechezkel Ber. Rebbe Levi Itzchak heard the news and asked his assistant to inform him of the appointed time of the funeral.

Rebbe Levi Itzchak accompanied the deceased to the cemetery and shed many tears over him. His *chassidim* were confused, “Why did our Rebbe want to attend this funeral? He doesn’t even go to the funerals of *Gedolei Israel*...”

One of the elder *chassidim* built up the courage and asked...

Rebbe Levi Itzchak replied, “Yechezkel Ber was brought to me three times for *Din Torah*, and in each one came out virtuous. That’s why I came to his funeral.”

“**What** were his cases about?” the *chassid* asked.

The Rebbe recounted the first *Din Torah* as follows...

A very wealthy Jewish merchant came to the city to buy goods. A considerable sum of money was in his pouch, some of which was his personal money, and some of which were loans he took for the big purchase. Feeling hungry, he entered a store to buy food, took out his pouch, and paid the shopkeeper.

He left the store, not noticing that he had forgotten his pouch with the large sum of money on the counter.

The shopkeeper noticed the pouch and opened it. His *yetzer hara* went wild... Stacks of money !

Chazal say¹ that a person constantly touches their pockets. The merchant randomly felt his pocket and felt no pouch, which means there's no money. He thought to himself that he probably forgot the pouch in the store after buying food.

The merchant made his way back to the store and asked the shopkeeper, "Excuse me, did you see a pouch with money here ?"

Although he stole because he couldn't resist the temptation, he couldn't get himself to lie. Troubled, he quickly found a way to get around lying. He signaled to the merchant with his hands that there was no wallet here !

The merchant left the store and began to sob profusely, "I'm doomed ! All the money I had is gone, including all the money I loaned. What will I do ? !"

While he was crying, Yechezkel Ber passed by. Yechezkel Ber turned to the merchant and asked what had happened. The merchant told him of the great trouble which had suddenly befallen him, that all his money had been lost or stolen and is in great debt.

Yechezkel Ber asked, "Does your pouch have any signs to prove that it was yours ?"

"Of course," the merchant replied, "I know exactly how it looked like and how much money is in it..."

"Wait here," Yechezkel Ber said. He hurried and bought a pouch similar to the one the merchant had described and put the said amount of money inside.

He returned to the merchant, who was still standing there full of grief and worry, and said to him, "Baruch Hashem, I found your pouch !"

The merchant's face lit up with joy. He tried to give Yechezkel Ber

a sum of money to express his gratitude, but Yechezkel refused to accept.

That night, knocks were heard on Yechezkel Ber's door. Yechezkel opened the door and saw a man standing on his porch.

“Please let me explain. I'm the shopkeeper from which the merchant you spoke with today bought food. He forgot his pouch in my store, and I couldn't resist the temptation of all that money. I'm not trying to justify myself. I've transgressed a terrible sin. Afterward, I even hardened my heart in the face of his terrible grief so as to not have a guilty conscience. But when I saw you “giving back” his pouch, I was attacked with feelings of regret. You didn't steal it nor find it, yet you pretended to find it and gave of your own money to a Jew you don't even know! You didn't even want to hear the words “thank you.” After witnessing your behavior, I felt my baseness with full force; I'm a thief and a crook!”

The shopkeeper continued, “I didn't come here to confess, rather I came to return the stolen money. Here's the entire amount you gave.”

“No!” Yechezkel Ber asserted, “I'm not taking the money. I try to be meticulous in fulfilling, ‘He who hates gifts will live’ (Mishlei 15:27). The money isn't mine. What I gave, I gave wholeheartedly. I won't take the money.”

The shopkeeper didn't give up so easily. He invited Yechezkel Ber to *Din Torah* at Rebbe Levi Itzchak of Berditchev's court. He wanted to oblige him to accept the large sum of money.

They both made their claims before the Rebbe, and Yechezkel Ber came out virtuous in his judgment. He didn't have to take the money that was in the pouch.

The *chassidim* heard about this wonderful *Din Torah*, which was won by Yechezkel Ber, the deceased, and a strong desire arose in them to know what happened in the other two *Dinei Torah*.

The elder *chassid* asked the Rebbe, and the Rebbe told the following...

Once, a Jew who was on the verge of bankruptcy came to Yechezkel Ber and began weeping before him, “Please, loan me ten-thousand rubles. If not, I’ll go bankrupt, and I’ll have no way of getting back on my feet!”

Yechezkel Ber said to him, “All right, but bring me a guarantor.”

The man laughed bitterly, “Guarantor?! Who will be a guarantor for me in my current situation?!”

“How can I give you a loan without a guarantor?”

“Listen,” the man said, “Hashem will be my guarantor.”

Yechezkel Ber agreed to the strange offer, “I’ll loan you ten-thousand rubles, and you have two years to pay me back on this date exactly. Hashem is the guarantor of this loan. If you don’t pay back the money, Hashem will pay it back.”

Two years passed, and the man didn’t pay back the debt. Three years passed by, four years, five... He still didn’t pay it back.

Six years after taking the loan, the man arrived.

“Forgive me, Yechezkel Ber,” he said. Until now, I wasn’t able to repay the debt. For years, my situation remained bitter, and only recently have I seen the light of success. Now, Baruch Hashem, I can pay you back the loan, and I apologize for this significant delay.”

Yechezkel Ber said to him, “If you had come in time, I would’ve taken the money. But you didn’t repay in time. You were four years late. The Guarantor has already paid off your loan. The same year that you had to repay the debt, I earned exactly ten thousand rubles more than expected. Since the Guarantor had already paid the debt, you’re exempt.”

“What are you talking about?!” exclaimed the stunned man. “I took a loan from you,

and I need to pay it back! I'm not a thief!"

Yechezkel Ber continued to refuse, "The Guarantor has already paid off the debt. You don't pay back a debt twice..."

Yechezkel Ber was again summoned to *Din Torah* at Rebbe Levi Itzchak of Berditchev's court and again came out virtuous.

"**Two** *Dinei Torah* have already been ruled in his favor. What occurred in the last *Din Torah*?" the elder *chassid* asked.

The Rebbe of Berditchev then told the following story...

There was a Jew who labored hard for his livelihood but saw no sign of blessing. As the poverty intensified, the man decided to change his location to change his *mazal*. He desired to sail across the ocean to America. The problem was that his wife objected.

"**What** will we do in the meantime until you return?" The woman asked. "You'll come back

from faraway America after five years, but long before that, we'll have already starved to death!"

The man had no solution, but he didn't want to give up on the plan to sail to America. What did he do? He lied.

He told her, "You have nothing to worry about. I've already talked to Yechezkel Ber. He agreed that if I take care of his trading business in America, he'll give you a thousand rubles every week."

The man departed, and the woman remained home.

On Thursday, the woman knocked on Yechezkel Ber's door.

"**I'm** Reuven's wife," she said. "I came to get the thousand rubles you're supposed to pay me. My husband told me before he left that you would pay me every week on Thursday. I hope you'll keep your word so that my ten children and I won't suffer from starvation."

Yechezkel Ber listened but had absolutely no idea what she was talking about. "Who's

Parashat Terumah - The Power of a Generous Heart

Reuven? Why would I have to pay this woman who I don't even know?" he thought to himself.

But Yechezkel Ber felt that the woman was sincere. Something's hiding behind this story.

He asked her, "Please, tell me, slowly, all the details. Okay?"

She told him about her husband who traveled to America "on his mission" and said that the payment from him, Yechezkel Ber, would arrive every week just in time, without any delays.

"Of course," Yechezkel Ber said, "A deal's a deal. It wouldn't occur to me to unfairly delay a payment. Here are the first thousand rubles, and please come back every week to receive what you deserve."

Every week, Yechezkel Ber gave her a thousand rubles and sustained her and her children.

Three years later, Reuven returned from America with a large sum of money. Great shame and regret continuously bothered his entire trip. He assumed that the

condition of his wife and children was awful. Who knows how poverty-stricken they are after having left them so irresponsibly.

At midnight, he secretly approached his home, wanting to see the state of his family. Are they still alive and well, or have they, *chas v'shalom*, died of starvation?

He peeked through the window, and to his utter surprise, the house looked quite tidy. Crying or suffering wasn't heard from within the home.

In the morning, Reuven officially arrived, with hugs, kisses, and presents. To his astonishment, the house's interior looked much more beautiful than it was before he left three years earlier. The family looked well-fed and satisfied and were dressed in fine clothing.

The biggest surprise was that his wife didn't greet him with loud rebukes and an angry face, as he deserved.

"What's going on here? Why is she not furious? How did they manage all this time?" he thought to himself.

At first, he didn't ask any questions. "If she isn't angry, what's the problem? Why make her angry?!" he contemplated.

After a day or two, he couldn't take it anymore. He almost exploded. He had to know the answer to the mystery.

Since he didn't want to cause any unnecessary arguments, he asked general questions, "How did things go in my absence? How did you get along with money?"

"Things went very well," the woman replied. "Yechezkel Ber gave us a thousand rubles every week, as you said. He was never late and never refused..."

Reuven was shocked, "A stranger, who doesn't owe me a ruble, gave my family a thousand rubles every week for three years?!"

Reuven calculated the amount that he gave his family and proceeded to Yechezkel Ber's home.

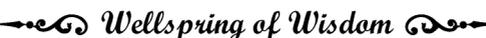
"Forgive me, Yechezkel Ber, forgive me," he said with tears in his eyes. "Thank you so much for supporting my family all this time. Thanks to you, they didn't suffer starvation. Now, Baruch Hashem, I can give you back your money. Here's the exact amount."

"Sorry," Yechezkel Ber said, "but I don't receive gifts. I gave the money wholeheartedly, and I don't want it back."

Reuven took him to *Din Torah* at Rebbe Levi Itzchak of Berditchev's court, and Yechezkel Ber won his case for the third time...

"Even though it isn't my custom to attend funerals," Rebbe Levi Itzchak continued and said, "the generosity of Yechezkel Ber forced me to attend his funeral."²

The generosity of Yechezkel Ber succeeded in attracting the light of Rebbe Levi Itzchak because generosity has the power



Parashat Terumah - Hashem Desires You

to draw down *Elokt*, light, and abundance to this world. This is

exactly what our *parasha* is about...

Hashem Desires You

As is known, the Zohar is arranged by order of the weekly parasha. And here, Parshat Terumah in the Zohar opens as follows...³

“Hashem spoke to Moshe saying... Speak to Bnei Israel and have them take for Me terumah from every man whose heart impels him to generosity” (Shemot 25:1-2).

Rabbi Chiya opened, “For Hashem has chosen Yaakov for Himself, Israel as His treasure” (Tehillim 135:4). How beloved are the children of Israel before Hashem ! For He desired them and desired to cling and connect to them, and made them a unique nation in the world, as it is written, “Who is like Your people, like

Israel a unique nation in the world” (Shmuel II 7:23), and they desired Him and attached themselves to Him. This is what is written, “For Hashem has chosen Yaakov for Himself,” and, “For the portion of Hashem is His people” (Devarim 32:9). And He gave unto the rest of the nations, rulers over them, and He took Israel as His portion.

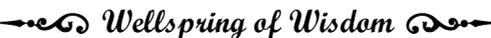
When Rebbe Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov learned this Zohar, he wrote,⁴ “I do not know how these opening statements benefited us here.” That is, what is the connection between this knowledge and Parashat Terumah ?

Before we continue, we’ll preface...

It’s All Up to Moshe Rabbeinu

HaRav Yoram Michael Abargel wrote⁵ that at the beginning of

creation, the whole world was full of water, as it says, “The earth



3. Zohar 126a.

4. **Agra** DePirka (Letter, 208).

5. **Imrei** Noam (Terumah, 2).

was formless and void, and there was darkness over the face of the abyss, and Ruach Elokim hovered over the face of the water” (Bereshit 1:2).

The Midrash explains⁶ that the water would praise Hashem and sing before Him beautiful, powerful melodies, as it says, “Above the voices of the many waters, the mighty breakers of the sea” (Tehillim 93:4).

But still, Hashem desired to create us with the power of speech so that we would praise and sing before Him, not only through melodies but also with words.

The Midrash explains this with a parable... A king built an enormous palace and invited mute people to stay there. They would get up early in the morning and greet the king with hand gestures and melodies. The king then said, “If these people had known how to speak, how much more so would their praise be beautiful !”

After Hashem created the world and everything in it, He created Adam HaRishon. He took him and showed him all the trees of Gan Eden and said to him, “Look at My works, how beautiful and praiseworthy they are ! Everything that I created, I created for you. Make sure that you do not corrupt and destroy My world, for if you corrupt it, there is no one to repair it after you.”⁷

However, Adam HaRishon didn't keep Hashem's mitzvah and sinned by eating from the tree of knowledge and was therefore expelled from Gan Eden. And because of his sin, the *Shechina* departed from the earth up to the first heaven.

The generations after Adam HaRishon angered Hashem as well, each of them causing the *Shechina* to depart even higher. The sin of Cain caused the *Shechina* to depart to the second heaven. The sin of Enosh - to the third heaven. The sin



6. Bereshit Rabbah 5:1.

7. Kohelet Rabbah 7:13.

of the generation of the flood - to the fourth heaven. The sin of the generation of the Tower of Bavel - to the fifth heaven. The sin of the people of Sedom - to the sixth heaven. The sin of the Egyptians in the days of Avraham - to the seventh heaven...⁸

This caused great sorrow to Hashem, for Hashem's main desire was to have a dwelling place in our lower world, but these generations caused the complete opposite and forced the *Shechina* out of our world.

Thus, in Noach's generation, Hashem decided to bring a flood upon the world since He had, so to speak, longed for that water that filled the world at the beginning of creation and sang before Him with holiness and joy. In contrast, humanity, whom He created with the power of speech to praise Him, used that power to anger Him and sin before Him. The Midrash we mentioned above with the parable of the king goes

on to say that after the king seated men that could speak in his palace (instead of the mute men who were there at first), they suddenly stood up and said, "This palace is not the king's but rather ours!" The king immediately ordered to remove those men and bring back the mute men who were there at first.

Hashem revealed Himself to Noach and told him that He wanted to bring a flood upon the world. Hashem's intention in telling him was for Noach to understand His pain about the departing of the *Shechina* from the world and to do something about it. But, Noach didn't understand this and only cared for himself and about what would happen to him during the flood. When Hashem told him to build an ark to save himself, he was immediately comforted but wasn't mindful of the *Shechina's* sorrow at all. The Gemara says⁹ that even Noach was condemned to be wiped out in



8. **Shir** HaShirim Rabbah 5:1.

9. Sanhedrin 108a.

the flood, but he was spared since he found favor in Hashem's eyes.

The first person in history to internalize and take Hashem's pain to heart was Avraham Avinu. Avraham Avinu understood that Hashem was hurt that His desire to dwell in our world didn't come to fruition. Thus he decided to act with great vigor in order to render the world worthy once again for Hashem to dwell within it. For this purpose, Avraham Avinu opened

his tent before every passer-by and fed delectable foods to all who entered, in order to bring people closer, and took advantage of this to teach them about the existence of the Creator of the world and the path of holy *emuna* in Hashem, until he succeeded in bringing tens of thousands under the wings of *emuna* in Hashem *Echad*.

Avraham Avinu managed to cause the Shechina to return through his holy work.¹⁰ In his

—**Wellspring of Wisdom**—

10. Rebbe Asher Freund spent a large part of his life bringing *shalom* between husband and wife. He would spend hours and even days mediating between spouses in a quarrel. The quarrel between the couple clouded his mood, but it was particularly the knowledge, that while there's a quarrel between a husband and his wife, the *Shechina* cries and wails. Decades ago, everyone knew that there was an address for difficult family disputes, and from there, you don't leave without *shalom*.

One of the Rabbi's regular visitors once said that he once sat in the waiting room to speak with the Rebbe. He said that the Rebbe's door was open, and a woman, who had a serious fight with her husband and therefore left the house, was sitting inside. The Rebbe spoke with her and asked her to return home. The woman said she couldn't.

Rebbe Asher pleaded with her to return home, but she stubbornly refused.

Rebbe Asher asked her if she had eaten breakfast, and she answered negatively. Rebbe Asher entered the kitchen and made her a salad, an omelet, toast and butter... He ordered her to do *netillat yadayim* and eat. He himself spread the butter on the slice of bread and stood there waiting for her to eat.

After she finished eating, he asked her once again to return home. This time she didn't argue with him and returned home.

The entire incident took about forty-five minutes.

The visitor that told the story entered Rebbe Asher's room and asked, "People are sitting here waiting to ask you very serious questions. She can eat in a

Parashat Terumah - It's All Up to Moshe Rabbeinu

merit, the *Shechina* descended from the seventh heaven to the sixth heaven and came a little closer to our world. After Avraham stood six more *tzaddikim*, who continued to bring the *Shechina* back down to our world. Itzchak Avinu - from the sixth heaven to the fifth. Yaakov Avinu - from the fifth heaven to the fourth.

Yaakov merited raising twelve holy sons, the tribes of Hashem, chariots for the *Shechina*, and from all of them, Yaakov Avinu chose his son Levi to be the head of the yeshiva to teach the Torah of Hashem. Thus the Rambam writes,¹¹ "Avraham taught this *emuna* to his son Itzchak, who kept teaching and encouraging others. Itzchak

conveyed it to Yaakov, whom he ordained to teach the *emuna*. He too kept teaching and encouraging all who joined him. Yaakov instructed all his sons, setting apart Levi, whom he appointed as head of the yeshiva to teach the way of Hashem, etc..."

Levi merited lowering the *Shechina* from the fourth heaven to the third.

One of Levi's sons was named Kehat. His *avodah* wasn't revealed by *Chazal*, but it is known that he was extremely holy. These are the words of the *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh*...¹²

He was named קָהָת because he would cause people to מְקַהָת (clench) their teeth in envy when

~ Wellspring of Wisdom *~*

different room without you troubling to feed her. Why let everyone wait forty-five minutes?"

The Rebbe wouldn't usually reveal what was behind his behavior. However, this time, he decided to explain.

"I saw that the *Shechina* was in great sorrow because of the dispute between her and her husband. I didn't want the *Shechina* to be in pain, so I did what I

did to eliminate the sorrow of the *Shechina*. What, am I obligated to answer those who are waiting for me? I wanted to alleviate the sorrow of the *Shechina*. When I finish with that, I'll be available for everything else..."

- R' Asher (p. 344).

11. Hilchot Avodat Kochavim 1:3.

12. Bamidbar 16:1.

they beheld his exceptional level of holiness.

Kehat merited lowering the *Shechina* from the third heaven to the second.

Kehat's son was named Amram. His *avodah* was also not revealed by *Chazal*, but it is known that he was pure from all trace of sin; even in the deepest aspect of his thoughts, he had no desire of doing anything against the will of Hashem.

Thus *Chazal* say,¹³ "All human beings died because of their sins except for four people

who were free from all sin, and *Middat HaDin* couldn't punish them. The only reason they died was because of the sin of the tree of knowledge in which death was decreed upon all of humanity. They were Binyamin, the son of Yaakov, Amram, the father of Moshe, Ishai, the father of David, and Kilav, the son of David.

Amram merited lowering the *Shechina* from the second heaven to the first.

All that remains is to finish the job and bring the *Shechina* back down into this world. This task was assigned to Moshe Rabbeinu...

Ma'amad Har Sinai

The Maggid of Mezeritch said to his son Rebbe Avraham HaMalach, "Know, my son, that a small hole in the body is a large hole in the soul."

That is, when the body is weak, suffers, and is tormented, the powers of the soul disintegrate and don't have the strength to give of its light!

Am Israel in the Egyptian exile; the body was horribly tormented there. Beatings and torture, hard labor, lack of food and sleep...

Obviously, the powers of the soul disappeared... Am Israel deteriorated rapidly, until they reached the terrible mental status called "a slave!"

It's difficult to explain to a "free man" the mental feeling of a slave. The understanding and consent that his whole existence in the world is only to serve the will of his master!

Then, Moshe Rabbeinu arrived on Hashem's mission...

On the 15th of Nisan, 2448, he took Am Israel out of Egypt and began to work with them... It's not known how he worked with Am Israel, how he raised their souls and uplifted their spirits from the abysses of despair, how he healed pools of pain, how he ended dark thoughts of terror...

But despite this lack of knowledge, fifty days later, all of Am Israel reached the level of *Nevi'im* (prophets) at *Ma'amad Har Sinai* and merited the

greatest, most sublime divine revelation that ever was and ever will be!

The *Shechina* descended back into the world! As it says, "And Hashem descended upon Har Sinai" (Shemot 19:20).

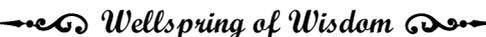
The world reached its *tikkun*, and the *Shechina* was revealed in the hearts of Am Israel! These are the words of Rabbi Meir Simcha of Dvinsk, the Ohr Sameach...¹⁴ At that time it was said, "Every place where I permit you to mention My Name, I will come to you and bless you" (Shemot 20:21), and the *Shechina* manifested on Am Israel... Bnei Israel themselves were the dwelling place of Hashem, "They are the Temple of Hashem" (Yirmiyahu 7:4).

But then, the *satan* arrived...

The Satan Went to War

Ma'amad *Har Sinai* finished, and Moshe Rabbeinu went up to receive the Torah. Am Israel remained in the camp...

The *satan* sat in his seat, grinding his teeth. Although he usually sends his messengers to sow seeds of evil, cruelty,



lust, and negative *middot* in the world, this time, he himself decided to go to war!

Since he recognized the immense virtue of Am Israel and knew that it would be very difficult to defeat them, he decided to employ his most secret weapon, the weapon armed and ready for war against the last generation, movies...

The *satan* directed the world's first film...

The *satan* turned off the lights of heaven, and through the

darkness, the funeral ceremony of Moshe Rabbeinu was seen; how the angels carried his stretcher, shedding warm tears on Moshe's body...

The film was more successful than expected, and the *Erev Rav* made for themselves a golden calf... Moshe Rabbeinu returned to the camp with the *Luchot HaBrit* in his hands, and when he saw the golden calf, he immediately broke the tablets...

Following the sin of the golden calf, the *Shechina* departed once again...

Make for Me a Mishkan

After making the golden calf, Moshe ascended Har Sinai again to beg Hashem to forgive Am Israel for this grave sin and remained on the mountain for forty days.

Hashem desired to forgive Am Israel and told Moshe to descend the mountain, carve out new tablets, and go back up the mountain with them.

On the 1st of Elul, Moshe ascended Har Sinai again with the two tablets and remained on the

mountain for another forty days until Yom Kippur. On that day, Hashem joyfully forgave Am Israel for the sin of the golden calf. He said to Moshe, "I have forgiven them, just as you spoke" (Bamidbar 14:20). Thus, Yom Kippur was set as a day of forgiveness and atonement for generations.

Hashem said to Moshe, "My *Shechina* will not be revealed as it was revealed at Har Sinai, but build me a

Mishkan, and within it, I will reveal My light, and from there it will spread across the world...”

Moshe Rabbeinu listened and was amazed... But before we continue, a small preface...

I Have Built a House of Dwelling for You

Rabbi Itzchak Isaac Eliezer Hirshovitz, may Hashem avenge his blood (he was killed in the Holocaust), writes¹⁵ that Shlomo HaMelech’s soul deeply yearned for Torah and wisdom even since his childhood. The more he learned Torah, the more love and thirst he had for the word of Hashem.

At first, he learned Torah from Shimi ben Gera. But when Shimi became despised by the kingdom of David, his father sent him to Natan HaNavi, to teach and educate him properly. But very quickly, this source was also a disappointment for Shlomo. Even his father couldn’t quench his thirst for the word of

Hashem. He desired to be like Moshe Rabbeinu in Torah and like Betzalel in wisdom.

Since he desired to reach the heights of Moshe, he fasted like him for forty days until the gates of Torah were opened to him.

At the age of twelve, he was anointed king over Israel after he had eradicated those that rebelled against his father’s kingdom, just as he had commanded him before his death.

Indeed, with the greatness of his wisdom, he understood how big of a responsibility it was to judge and lead Am Israel and was afraid lest he distorts justice and leads Hashem’s nation down crooked paths for he was still young in years. Even the building of the *Mikdash* (Temple) no longer talked to him, for he didn’t see himself ready for such a task...

Shlomo and all the ministers of Israel went up to Givon, the dwelling place of the *Mishkan*,

to ask Hashem to bring upon him the spirit of Moshe in Torah and of Betzalel in wisdom. They sacrificed offerings there, and their souls clung with love to Hashem that entire day...

That night, Hashem appeared to Shlomo and said to him, “Ask, what shall I grant you?”

Shlomo responded, “Give me wisdom and knowledge, and an understanding heart to examine judgment!”

It found favor in the eyes of Hashem that he asked for wisdom and knowledge and not for wealth and honor. He said to him, “You have been granted wisdom and knowledge, and I give you wealth, possessions, and honor, the like of which no king before you has had, nor shall any after you have” (Divrei HaYamim II 1:12).

When he awoke from his sleep, a new heart and spirit emerged within him, and hidden wisdom, which was concealed from all, was revealed to him. As immense was his wisdom, so was his desire for Torah.

He stood before the *Aron HaBrit* in the hope that he would be able to attain the Torah in its entirety, just as Moshe heard the voice of Hashem speaking to him from there. And so it was. Standing there before Hashem, he attained in a short hour what he did not attain his whole life. From then on, the entire Torah was revealed before him as it was at its giving at Har Sinai...

In the 4th year of Shlomo’s reign over Israel, in the 480th year from Am Israel’s exodus from Egypt, Shlomo began building the house of Hashem in Yerushalayim on Har HaMoriah...

It took him seven years to build, finishing it during the 11th year of his reign... At the *Chanukat HaBayit* (dedication of the house) that Shlomo HaMelech prepared, standing “before the Altar of Hashem,” he said, “Hashem, Elokei Israel, there is none like You Elokim in the heavens above and on the earth below” (Melachim I 8:23).

Then he said in wonder, “Will Elokim really dwell on earth? Behold, heaven and

the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How then will this house that I have built contain You?" (Melachim I 8:27).

It is explained in *Chassidut* as follows...¹⁶ Shlomo HaMelech saw that at that moment, the *Ohr Ein Sof* itself illuminated the *Beit HaMikdash*, as it says, "The glory of Hashem filled the House of Hashem" (Melachim I 8:11).

Moshe's Wonderment

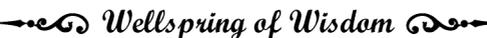
Hashem revealed Himself to Moshe Rabbeinu and said to him, "Am Israel have sinned through the golden calf and removed the *Shechina* from their midst. For Me to return to dwell within you, tell Bnei Israel to set apart from their possessions, and build me a *Mishkan*, and I will dwell within it.

Thus is says at the beginning of our Parsha, "Speak to Bnei Israel and have them take for Me terumah from every man whose heart impels him to generosity shall you take My terumah" (Shemot 25:2).

Shlomo wondered: Heaven and the heaven of heavens are not sufficient enough vessels to contain Your *Ohr Ein Sof*, and if so, how can a small house, in our little world, be a sufficient vessel for revealing Your *Ohr Ein Sof*?

We'll put aside Shlomo's wonderment and return to Moshe Rabbeinu...

When Moshe heard this, he was amazed. Thus the Midrash says,¹⁷ "At the moment when Hashem said to Moshe, "Make Me a *Mishkan*," he was dumbfounded and said, "The glory of Hashem fills the upper and lower worlds, and He said to make Him a *Mishkan*?" Additionally, he saw that Shlomo would build the *Beit HaMikdash*, which would be greater than the *Mishkan*, and he said before Hashem, "Will Elokim really dwell on earth?" (Melachim I 8:27). Moshe reasoned, "If about the *Beit HaMikdash*, which is so



16. **Sugiyot** BeChassidut (Achdut Hashem, p. 93).

17. **Shemot** Rabbah 34:1.

Parashat Terumah - The Heart

much greater than the *Mishkan*, Shlomo said this, then how much more so when it comes to the *Mishkan*...”

These are the words of Rebbe Naftali Tzvi of Ropshitz...¹⁸ How can Hashem, who has no measure or limit,

dwell within a *Mishkan* of “twenty planks on the northern side...” (Shemot 26:20)?

Hashem answered Moshe, “The answer to your perplexity, ‘from every man whose heart impels him to generosity shall you take My *terumah*.’”

The Heart

HaRav Chaim Vital writes¹⁹ that in the beginning, Hashem’s light-filled all reality, and when His will to create His world arose, He *tzimtzem* (contracted) His light to the sides, and within the space that was formed, He created His world.

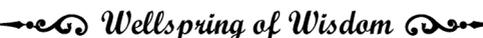
Then He created man to merit knowing his Creator through his *avodah*.

Hashem created man with 248 organs and gave each organ a specific role. The role of the eye to see, the ear to hear, the palate to taste, the legs to walk, etc...

Obviously, Hashem created an organ in man whose role is to know Him.

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov writes that this organ is the heart !

These are his words...²⁰ Before creation, Hashem’s light was *Ein Sof* (infinite). Hashem desired that His Kingship be revealed, and there can’t be a king without a nation. Thus, He created human beings who would accept the yoke of His Kingship. Yet, it’s impossible to perceive His revealed Kingship other than through *middot* (His *middot*, i.e., His



18. **Zera** Kodesh (Terumah, 77b).

19. **Etz** Chaim 1:2.

20. **Likutei** Moharan I (Torah 49).

Parashat Terumah - The Heart

mercy, kindness, judgment, etc., for we couldn't perceive Him without Him interacting with us through these *middot*. As well as our *middot*, i.e., humility, holiness, etc., for man cannot perceive Him without good *middot*, for through (His/our) *middot* we perceive His *Eloku*t and know that there's a Master, a Ruler, a Leader, and a Director.

And the artist of these *middot* is the heart, i.e., the wisdom of the heart, as it is written, "I have placed wisdom in the heart of all who are wise of heart" (Shemot 31:6).

And thus it is stated in *Chassidut*²¹ that the *Ohr Ein Sof* cannot be perceived at all by the

mind, but the will of the heart can perceive it.

For the heart is the place where intellectual attainment touches the emotions. There, longing awakens in man for what is greater than him. Just as the flame of a candle constantly ascends as if it wants to part from the wick and return to nothingness, so too the heart burns with the soul's desire to return to its source; to the simple light that preceded creation...

And through the power of longing and yearning for Hashem, we draw down and reveal that light.²²

We'll return to the Zohar...

— *Wellspring of Wisdom* —

21. Yam HaHochma (5772, p. 769).

22. When HaRav Yehuda Pataya was seven years old, he would go with his father on *Shabbat Kodesh* to hear the Torah lesson of HaRav Yosef Chaim, the Ben Ish Chai, which lasted more than two hours and consisted of all the aspects of the Torah: *pshat*, *remez*, *drash*, and the last half hour was devoted to *sod*.

On *Motzei Shabbat*, the boy, Yehuda, would bitterly cry because he didn't understand the part of the lesson in which

the *sod* was taught. "These tears," thus he later told his disciple, HaRav Salman Mutzafi, "stood for me that I would merit engaging in this precious wisdom..."

At the age of twenty-three, HaRav Yehuda began to delve into the wisdom of *Kabbalah*. For seven whole years, HaRav Yehuda learned the holy book *Etz Chaim*, the foundation of *Kabbalat HaAri*. He delved deeply into the learning until he was proficient in all the details of the higher worlds and the intentions of

Hashem's Generous Heart

Parshat Terumah opens with the verse, “Speak to Bnei Israel and have them take for Me terumah from every man whose heart impels him to generosity shall you take My terumah” (Shemot 25:2).

Rebbe Yaakov Itzchak, the Chozeh of Lublin, explains that the words “whose heart impels him to generosity” are speaking about Hashem!

That Hashem generously impelled His heart to receive *nachat ruach* “from every man!”

Every Jew who serves Hashem with joy and a happy heart elevates Hashem, so to speak.

These are his holy words: One must serve Hashem and elevate Him, so to speak, through Torah learning and fulfillment of mitzvot. And don't say, “How can a simple, coarse person like me elevate Hashem, so to speak?”

For thus it is written, “from every man whose heart impels him to generosity” – Hashem saw all the future generations, and saw every individual, personally, as well as the last generation in its lowliness... Yet, He impelled His heart to create them and desires their *avodah*!

And this is what is written, “from every man whose heart impels him to generosity” – Hashem generously impelled His heart to receive *nachat ruach* from every person, “shall you take My terumah” – you can elevate Me (“תרומה” – terumah, comes from the root word “רום” – elevation), so to speak, for I desired to receive *nachat ruach* from you as well!

Came Rabbi Chiya and revealed that this was because of Hashem's love for His nation, Israel.²³ Rabbi Chiya opened, “For

 *Wellspring of Wisdom* 

the holy names of the *tefillah* by heart. After completing the *Etz Chaim* for the first time, after studying for seven consecutive years, he learned

the book another six times for about nine years...

- Ish MiBeit Lechem Yehuda (p. 34).

23. Zohar 126a.

Parashat Terumah - It's Up to You

Hashem has chosen Yaakov for Himself; Israel as His treasure” (Tehillim 135:4). How beloved are the children of Israel before Hashem! For He desired them and desired to cling and connect to them, and made them a unique nation in the world, as it is written, “Who is like Your people, like Israel a unique nation in the world” (Shmuel II 7:23), and they desired Him and attached themselves to Him. This is what is written, “For Hashem has chosen Yaakov for Himself,” and, “For

the portion of Hashem is His people” (Devarim 32:9). And He gave unto the rest of the nations, rulers over them, and He took Israel as His portion.

Thus Hashem explained to Moshe: It is in the power of generosity to draw down the *Shechina* back into this world... This is what is written, “Speak to Bnei Israel and have them take for Me terumah from every man whose heart impels him to generosity.”

It's Up to You

Moshe Rabbeinu announced, “My fellow Jews! We are starting to build the *Mishkan*. Anyone who wants to donate is welcome. I've appointed several wise *tzaddikim* who will receive the donations and deal with the building of the *Mishkan*...” “Betzalel and Aholiav, and every wise-hearted man whom Hashem has endowed with wisdom and understanding to know how to do all of this holy

work” (Shemot 36:1). Anyone who wishes to take part can bring the donations to them...”

Bnei Israel brought everything that was needed for the *Mishkan* within two days!

Thus Rabbi Yochanan said...²⁴ What is the meaning of the verse, “They continued to bring donations every morning” (Shemot 36:3)? – Within two



mornings, they brought all the donations needed for the *Mishkan*.

Then, something miraculous happened... All that was needed for the building of the *Mishkan* had already been collected, yet Am Israel continued bringing donations. With a passionate heart, they pleaded, “Accept our donations !”

Moshe Rabbeinu proclaimed throughout the camp, “Let no man or woman do anymore work for the terumah of this holy task” (Shemot 36:6)! Only then, “the people stopped bringing” (Ibid.).

Rebbe Naftali Tzvi of Ropshitz asked two questions...²⁵

1. Am Israel understood that their *terumah* for the *Mishkan* was no longer necessary, and if so, why did they continue to bring ?

2. When Moshe Rabbeinu wanted to prevent them from continuing to bring, he proclaimed throughout the camp, “Let no man or woman do anymore work.” Seemingly, he

should've proclaimed, “Let no man or woman bring anymore,” for he wanted to prevent them from bringing ?

He answered: When Am Israel heard about the construction of the *Mishkan*, they were very enthusiastic and wanted to contribute.

Immediately, they took what they had, ran to the appointed men, and brought them their donations.

Those appointed men were very holy *tzaddikim*, and when a Jew would bring something to them, they would praise Hashem that He chose His nation, Israel, saying, “Look at Your holy people ! Is there any other nation like Yours in the world ! ?”

And when that Jew who brought the donation heard the heartfelt words that came out of the mouth of the craftsmen of the *Mishkan*, they became enthusiastic about bringing more...

Parashat Terumah - It's Up to You

And once again, they would praise Hashem and His nation, Israel, and through these praises,

their inner Jewish point, the essence of good found in every Jew, aroused within them!²⁶

~ Wellspring of Wisdom *~*

26. In 1967, the Jewish nation in Israel experienced a miraculous victory against five Arab countries who attacked; in only six days, we liberated the *Kotel* and tripled Israel's size. Standing at the newly liberated *Kotel*, full of gratitude to Hashem, an emotional young Rabbi Itzhak David Grossman, made a resolve that he would dedicate his life to helping other Jews to learn about their Jewish heritage.

Based on Rebbe's advice, he moved to a troubled area he had never even heard of before, called Migdal HaEmek. A northern Israeli town, which was very secular, crime-ridden, and drug-infested at the time.

Naively, the young twenty-three-year-old who had grown up sheltered in Mea She'arim got to work. Asking around for the Yeshiva or Talmud Torah, he was informed that there was no such thing in Migdal HaEmek. The locals mockingly directed the Rabbi to the disco bar. Thinking the 'disco' was some sort of Yeshiva, he went inside. There he saw young people drinking, dancing, Purim all year long. Rabbi Grossman stood there with his *peyot* and *chassidic* garb, unintimidated. He became the center of attention; all eyes turned to him. They asked him, "Maybe somebody died, and you need ten men to recite the *kaddish*!" He replied that he had recently moved to

town and wanted to meet his neighbors. The young people, surprised, replied, "Are you crazy? Live here? The Rabbis want to live in Yerushalayim, not here!" Rabbi Grossman smiled and said, "You're my brothers and sisters; if you live here, then I can live here too." After this event repeated itself a few times, he invited the youth to his house, which became the new 'disco.' Slowly, he managed to win over these young people's hearts.

One evening, a young man went to see him and told him that there was a massive problem in the town. Many young Jewish girls who suffer from dire poverty allow themselves to be trafficked to the nearby Arab city of Natzeret. Rabbi Grossman asked, "How could such a thing happen? Who organized this disgrace? Where does it occur?" The young man showed the Rabbi the parking lot where it was taking place, and he was shocked by the number of cars that drove back and forth. When the Rabbi wanted to meet the person in charge of this network, he was told that a man named Pinchas was responsible. Even the police were afraid of the infamous Pinchas.

Without hesitating for a moment, Rabbi Grossman went to visit Pinchas. Pinchas opened the door, visibly annoyed. "I want to say *l'chaim*, have a drink with you, may I come in?" asked Rabbi Grossman.

Parashat Terumah - It's Up to You

Not only through praise did they succeed in arousing Am Israel, but also by building the *Mishkan*, for every time they would use a hammer, the sound of the hitting struck the hearts of Israel...

When Moshe wanted to prevent Am Israel from bringing more *terumah*, he realized that as long as the craftsmen praised Am Israel and built the *Mishkan*, the hearts of Israel would continue to burn a passionate fire...

Therefore, he proclaimed throughout the camp saying, "I ask of the craftsmen to rest a little until Am Israel cool down from the holy fire burning within them..."

Through the power of generosity of Am Israel, Hashem *tzimtzem* His *Shechina* between the two poles of the *Aron*!

Let's connect this to our personal lives...

—*❧* **Wellspring of Wisdom** *❧*—

Surprised and amused, Pinchas let in the Rabbi. "Pinchas, why are you doing this with our girls?" "What can I tell you, Rabbi? It's my job; I make a lot of money." "Go work in a factory; I can get you a job!" Angrily, Pinchas retorted, "Get up at 6 a.m. to work and listen to someone else tell me what to do? Never! Whoever tells me what to do, I kill them!" The Rabbi pressed him further, "Do you have a dream, an ambition? What do you like to do?" After thinking for a moment, Pinchas said, "If I had my own truck, I could work on my own with a good salary; that would make me happy!"

After hearing this, Rabbi Grossman went and sold his apartment in Yerushalayim and bought a brand-new truck with the money. Rabbi Grossman went back to Pinchas and said, "Here, take these keys; the truck belongs to you now. You have

what you need to leave your former lifestyle. I arranged with *Beged Ohr*, the local clothing factory, to hire you to care for their shipping needs. What do you say?" At that moment, Pinchas turned around his life and became a true *Baal Teshuva*. He was honored that someone believed in him. He accepted the work and became an honest man. Pinchas rose to fame, cleansing the city of organized gangs and Arabs; they feared Pinchas.

To this day, Rabbi Grossman *shlita*, the Chief Rabbi of Migdal HaEmek, also known as the disco Rabbi, works tirelessly to draw in the lost youth through love and action. His *Migdal Ohr* network of schools and prisoner rehabilitation programs continues to lead tens of thousands of Jewish souls to find shelter under the wings of the *Shechina*.

Today's Mishkan – The Jewish Home

Through the power of generosity, Am Israel drew down the *Shechina* into the *Mishkan*, and through the power of generosity, we draw down the *Shechina* into the Jewish home.

For this is what *Chazal* say,²⁷ “If the אִישׁ (man) and הַאִשָּׁה (woman) merit, the *Shechina* rests between them. In the אִישׁ there's the letter ׀ of the name אִישׁׁ, and in the הַאִשָּׁה there's the letter ׀ of the name אִשׁׁ. If they merit living in true *shalom*, the name אִשׁׁ descends and rests within the home.”

In order to infuse the name אִשׁׁ in our homes, we must act with generosity!

For it has become clear that the door was opened for the *Shechina* to rest within our world by virtue of generosity.

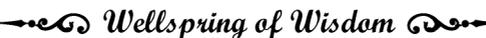
Rebbe Eliezer Shlomo Schick, the Maharosh, writes²⁸ that if you want to merit a successful

marriage, train yourself to be generous and give in at home.

And you must know that your wife should always be right. Even though it's very difficult for you to accept this, for, after all, you're a human being, and you know that there are times when you're right, and she's not. However, if you want to live a successful and happy marriage, you must be generous and give in at home, and agree with her in everything.

Obviously, this is not the case when it comes to the observance of *Halachot* and mitzvot, for in these matters, you should stand firm and not move left or right, because when it comes to the *Halachot* of the Torah, it is forbidden to give in to anything.

But when it comes to mundane and trivial matters, it is forbidden to be stubborn and insist on your opinion under any circumstances, rather you should always give in to



27. Sotah 17a.

28. **Otzar** Shalom Bayit (p. 197).

your wife, and in turn, you will have a successful and happy marriage. For example, if she wants a blue sofa and you want a gray one, or she wants a particular table, and you want a different table, always give in because these matters are not your business; they're hers.

So too when it comes to shopping, always be generous, even if you scream that you don't have enough money, remember what *Chazal HaKedoshim* say,²⁹ "As soon as a man doesn't have what to give his wife, she cries out, and thus quarrels and disputes in the home begin, and *chas v'shalom*, if one doesn't catch it in time, the result can be divorce, and this will cause great distress."

Therefore, always remember what *Chazal* say,³⁰ "A woman – when she has no food in her house, she immediately cries out. You must always remember this. And if you don't want to remember, and try to be wise, ultimately, you'll find yourself outside."

Therefore, if you want to live a successful and happy marriage, be generous, give in at home, and know that she's always right. And always give her more than you have, as *Chazal* say,³¹ "A man should always eat and drink less than what is within his means, and he should honor his wife and children more than what is within his means." That is, eating, drinking, clothing, and honor should be granted to his wife much more than he grants himself. Though I know that this is very difficult to accept and fulfill, nevertheless, I advise you, and may Hashem be with you, if you want to succeed in your marriage, accept these words, and be very generous and always give in at home. Then you'll be sure that your wife will always want to stay with you because she sees that her husband gives her everything she asks.

For this, *Chazal* say³² that a woman isn't satisfied except in the house of her husband. Because



29. Temurah 16a.

30. Ibid.

31. Chullin 84b.

Parashat Terumah - Not At Her Expense

when she sees that her husband provides her with everything she needs, then she desires to stay close to him always and no longer wants to leave him. But, when she asks for something and the husband skimps on her, and moreover, humiliates and fights with her. Then, little by little, hatred towards her husband enters her heart, and the love cools down, until one day she gets up and runs away from home

and returns to her parents, and then you'll need many marriage counselors to help you bring her back home.

Therefore, be wise, and don't argue with your wife, rather always make an effort for her to be right, and if you go down this path, you'll be very, very successful in your marriage and be extremely happy in your home.

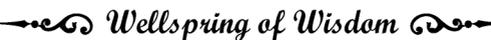
Not At Her Expense

To illustrate how greatly the *tzaddikim* regarded the honor of one's wife at home, we'll finish with the following two occurrences that were told by Rabbi Meir Sofer, a very close acquaintance of Rabbi Yaakov Israel Kanievsky...³³

For years I was a *sofer stam* (scribe), and one day the Steipler asked me to fix a Sefer Torah for him. I agreed, of course, and until I got ready to leave for the Steipler's home, he was already

standing in the doorway of my apartment with the Sefer Torah in his hand. We sat down and checked the Sefer Torah, and since it required corrections that were time-consuming, I suggested leaving the Sefer Torah in my house in order to fix it.

"Where will you place the Sefer Torah in the meantime?" the Steipler asked me. I pointed to a shelf in the bookcase, where the Sefer Torah could be properly preserved.



32. Midrash Rut Rabbah 2:15.

33. Otzar HaSippurim LeMechanchim VeLeMartzim (Vol. 1, p. 431).

The Steipler looked at the bookcase and said, “No, this is not a good spot; you will need to find another place!”

“**Why?**” I wondered...

The Steipler explained to me simply, “I see that your wife has placed beautiful, valuable items here. A woman wants beautiful items to sit on the shelf in the living room. You cannot place the Sefer Torah here at the expense of your wife...”

Another occurrence which he recounted... An *Yirei Shamayim*

Jew, who was a very renowned professor in his field, prayed in the Lederman Synagogue in Bnei Brak for many years. All the *tzaddikim* of the Lederman Synagogue, including the Steipler, greatly admired his *Yirah* and righteousness.

That professor lived in the Ramat HaChayal neighborhood in northeast Tel Aviv and would come every Shabbat by foot from

his distant home to pray at Lederman.

One hot summer Shabbat, the professor prepared a *kiddush* for all the members of the synagogue in honor of the birth of his granddaughter. The *kiddush*, in which particularly fine foods and refreshments were served, was held at the home of the synagogue’s *gabbai*. The Steipler entered the *kiddush* and sat down next to me. The congregants sat and enjoyed the delicacies and listened to the *drasha* of one of the greatest *Talmidei Hachamim* of Lederman.

Suddenly, the Steipler hinted with his hand and said, “Enough!”

The *Talmid Hacham* instantly ended his *drasha*. The Steipler explained to those around him, “We’re eating, drinking, and enjoying the *drasha*, but at home, our wives and children are waiting for us. They’re hot, hungry, and want to start the Shabbat meal. So we need to hurry...”



The Pathway...

1. At Mount Sinai, Hashem drew His presence into the lower worlds. Yet, after the sin of the golden calf, His presence returned to the upper worlds. Hashem told Am Israel that if they want His presence to return as it once was, they must build Him a mishkan. By the power of their generosity, Hashem will give the mishkan the capability of drawing His presence within it.

2. Hashem created man with 248 limbs and gave each limb a role and mission. For example, the function of our eyes is to see, the ears to hear, etc. The role of the heart is to recognize and know Hashem. Therefore, through the heart, you can feel, recognize, and know Hashem, and thanks to the generosity of the heart, it's possible to draw His presence to the lower worlds.

3. When the human heart burns with a longing for Hashem, every act of holiness only increases that longing, causing a greater longing for spirituality and holiness. In contrast, when that longing for Hashem is reduced, then so too is the longing for holiness and

spirituality reduced. It's, therefore, our role to continue to ignite that inner fire at every moment and never let it stop.

4. Just as through the power of generosity it's possible to draw down Hashem's presence to the mishkan, so too is it possible to draw Hashem's presence into the personal mishkan of each and every one of us, which is the Jewish home. This is necessary because all the peace of our homes depends on Hashem's presence being there, which is done by acts of generosity.

5. Generosity at home doesn't mean just spending or giving money, but spending and giving with your mind and emotions. That is, a husband must always be generous and forgiving. When in a quarrel or argument, the wisdom of the husband is to give up and make his wife always right (even if she isn't) and certainly to never be adamant under any circumstances. Rather, a husband should always give over to his wife. This is a true recipe for a successful marriage.





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Parashat Terumah

Adar 4, 5782



City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	4:59 pm	6:02 pm	6:31 pm
Miami	5:48 pm	6:43 pm	7:20 pm
Los Angeles	5:08 pm	6:07 pm	6:40 pm
Montreal	4:47 pm	5:53 pm	6:19 pm
Toronto	5:14 pm	6:19 pm	6:47 pm
Jerusalem	5:00 pm	5:51 pm	6:27 pm

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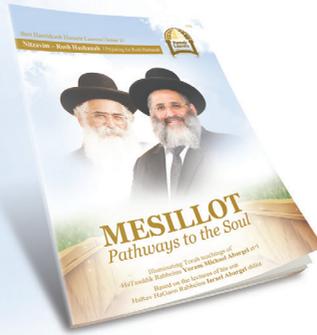
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