

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 50

Acharei Mot | Don't Get In-Between Tzaddikim



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 Acharei Mot** 

The Merit of a Father

Rabbi Yehonatan Eybeschitz was one of the greatest Ashkenazi Rabbis of his time.¹ He had five

children. His fifth, and youngest son, was named Binyamin Wolf.

 *Wellspring of Wisdom* 

1. Rabbi Yehonatan Eybeschitz was one of the sharpest Ashkenazi sages of his time. His father was the Kabbalist Rabbi Natan Neta of Krakow, who served as Head Rabbi of Eybeschitz (Moravia). After this city, Rabbi Yehonatan and his descendants received the last name, Eybeschitz.

Even at an early age, Yehonatan excelled in his learning with tremendous sharpness and an incredible memory. At the age of three, his father taught him the aleph-bet, and already on the first day, he remembered every letter and its name and was able to repeat them forwards and backward. The next day his father put him in *cheder*, where the class was learning the letters with their *nikud* (vowels).

With his sharp mind, he quickly grasped the pronunciations of the vowels. When they reached the letter ם (peh), the *melamed* (teacher) asked his little students, “How do you pronounce this letter when there’s a *tzere* (ֿ) under it?” “Peh!” the students answered. “Does anyone have any questions about this?” the *melamed*

asked. The children stayed silent. Only little Yehonatan jumped up and asked, “Yes! Why do we have to put a *tzere* under the letter ‘peh’ if it’s pronounced ‘peh’ even without the vowel?” The *melamed* turned to the other children and said, “This small child, whose first day it is in *cheder*, is smarter than you young boys?!”

Yehonatan then said to the *melamed*, “It seems that there is also room for questioning the *melamed*. Why did you wait to ask this question until we reached the letter ‘peh’ and not when we learned the letter ן (heh) with the vowel *tzere*...”

One morning when little Yehonatan was walking to his Talmud Torah, a teenage gentile boy, who saw the Jew as a wonderful victim, ran over to him and began beating him...

“Stop!” cried Yehonatan, “I’ll give you all the money I have...” When the bully heard this, he let the little boy get up. Yehonatan reached into his pocket, took

When Binyamin Wolf was fifteen years old, a strong desire arose in his heart to travel the world, sail to distant places, and observe different people and cultures...²

His father, Rabbi Yehonatan, knew that this trip wouldn't be good for him. He feared that when his son would arrive in the big cities, he would make bad friends, and they would lead him astray. Binyamin was very stubborn, and when Rabbi Yehonatan realized that nothing would stop him from traveling, he took a piece of parchment and wrote

on it, "You were born a Jew, and a Jew you will remain." He rolled up the piece of parchment and hung it around his son's neck.

Binyamin Wolf set out and began traveling the world... When he was twenty years old, he arrived in Vienna and began to wander its streets... He was a good-looking twenty-year-old boy, his wisdom and sharpness were evident on his face, and everyone he met was captivated by his charm...

Slowly he started to join the world of commerce. Money

❧ Wellspring of Wisdom ❧

out two small coins, and gave them to the gentile boy. "Here," he said. "Today is a Jewish holiday. On this day, any Jew who is beaten up by a gentile must give him all the money he has in his pockets." The bully laughed and said, "Who but the Jews would have such a crazy custom?"

Taking his money, he walked away thinking, "What a pity it was that I beat up such a small boy who only had a couple of small coins in his pocket. I'd better find a wealthy Jew to attack; I won't have an opportunity like this until next year." Suddenly, his eyes lit up, "There's my victim! He surely has a lot of money!" Passing by was the Jewish communal

leader of the city. He was the wealthiest man in town. Without hesitating, the bully ran up to him and started beating him mercilessly. A crowd quickly gathered, among them a policeman who seized the bully, gave him a swift blow to the head, and dragged him off to jail.

When he arrived before the judge, he was asked, "Why did you attack the Jewish community leader?" He replied, "It wasn't my fault. I only did it because a little boy told me there was a Jewish holiday today where all the Jews give money to anyone who beats them..."

- MiGedolei Israel (Vol. 1, p. 115).

2. Gedulat Yehonatan (Vol. 2, p. 200).

flowed in from all directions, and the more his wealth grew, thus did his *Yirat Shamayim* decline...

Heaven had mercy on him, and in a bad business deal, he lost all of his money and remained indebted to various merchants... An arrest warrant was later issued against him...

Binyamin Wolf fled for his life to his father, Rabbi Yehonatan... His father, of course, took pity on him. A few months earlier, Rabbi Yehonatan printed his book *Creti Upleti*, and from the money that he earned from the sale of his book, he paid off all of his son's debts and the arrest warrant was revoked...

But the little fire that burned in his heart didn't give him rest. Binyamin Wolf left everything and continued traveling the world...

He arrived in Vienna once again, but this time he went straight into governmental activities. When the king's ministers saw him, a tall, handsome man of wisdom who knew how to speak several languages and was very knowledgeable in economics, they were immediately

charmed and appointed him executive of the king's estate...

Binyamin Wolf rapidly became rich. He built for himself a stunning mansion with a beautiful garden out in front and called it "Eybeschitz palace." Inside, he made a treasury that contained most of his gold, silver, and precious stones and was said to be almost as grand as the king's treasury...

All the ministers of the kingdom loved him dearly. They wouldn't host a feast or throw any sort of gathering without first inviting him. Also, during their hunting expeditions, he was the center of attention. Every week he would hold a gathering in his mansion where many honorable ministers and other important people would come.

However, Binyamin Wolf's spiritual status deteriorated... He ate forbidden foods, desecrated Shabbat and Yom Tov in public, and even connected with gentile women...

Yet, his *Ahavat Israel* remained alive, burning within his heart. He

was generous and openhanded to every Jew that came his way. Vast sums of his money reached the hands of Jews in need. Moreover, he always spoke well of the Jews to his fellow ministers. Even several “nullified decrees” were credited to him...

Years passed by... When he was fifty-nine years old, he decided it was time to get married... He met a christian woman who was the daughter of an influential minister and proposed to her... She happily agreed, and they arranged for the wedding to be in another five months, the month of *Cheshvan*.

Rosh Hashanah arrived. The Jews held their holiday meals, and the joy of the day was felt in the air... Binyamin Wolf finished his dinner, pork chops with wine, wiped his mouth with a white handkerchief, put on pajamas, and went to bed...

Binyamin Wolf lied on his bed, closed his eyes, and then

suddenly, the room became filled with an immense light... His father, Rabbi Yehonatan, appeared to him in person and said, “My son, look where you’ve ended up! To what filth you’ve descended!” His father began to rebuke him...

The rebuke ended, and Rabbi Yehonatan disappeared... Binyamin Wolf then turned over on his side and fell asleep...

However, this occurrence repeated itself on the second night of Rosh Hashanah, as well as the following nights... Binyamin Wolf broke down. Thoughts of *teshuvah*, feelings of humility... He burst into tears, his whole body trembled, and then he cried out, “Father! Dear father! I promise to do *teshuvah*! I promise to leave everything and return to my original kingdom, to Am Israel...”³

Then, Binyamin Wolf turned to his father and asked, “Father, you passed away twelve years ago. Why did you only come to me now?”

Rabbi Yehonatan looked at his beloved son and answered...

But, to understand his answer, we'll have to go back a little...

Caution! Controversy!

Rabbi Yehonatan Eybeschitz was elected Head Rabbi of the "Three Communities" of Altona, Hamburg, and Wandsbek. That specific rabbinate was then considered one of the most important and respected positions in Ashkenazi Jewry.

In the month of Tammuz, 5509 (1749), a severe epidemic that affected mainly women, especially after giving birth, broke out in the congregation.

Horror, anxiety, and fear of death fell upon all the residents... They tried several different ways and medicines to stop the plague but to no avail...

In one of the cities lived a distinguished and hospitable Jew named Rabbi Getchlik HaCohen, and Baruch Hashem, the time came for his daughter to give birth. But in light of the terrible situation, she feared her death. Her father ran to Rabbi Yehonatan and wept before him.

He begged him to write an amulet for her, and after many pleas, Rabbi Yehonatan gave in and wrote one for her... His daughter then gave birth without any difficulties, and since then, the plague ceased...

A similar incident occurred to a poor man in the city named David Mamilsh, who had a very high fever, to which the doctors gave up hope... Rabbi Yehonatan then wrote him an amulet, and he was miraculously healed!

A Jew named Yosef Fregir lived in the same city as the daughter of Rabbi Getchlik HaCohen and the poor man, David Mamilsh. He took the two amulets and erased and added a few letters so that it would seem as if Rabbi Yehonatan was one of the followers of the false Mashiach, Shabbatai Tzvi... He handed over the amulets to Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Emden, the Ya'abetz, who was appalled by the sight of his eyes.

Parashat Acharei Mot - Caution! Controversy!

This then began a controversy that spread like wildfire throughout Am Israel, a controversy that truly caused the desecration of Hashem's name. It's said that this controversy was the reason for the decline of the honor of Torah in Europe, and it indirectly gave rise to the Haskalah movement.

This can be likened to a child who hears his father calling his mother "stupid" and his mother in turn calling his father "stupid." The child then understands that they're both right and that he's smarter than both of them...

This terrible controversy lasted for seven years, drawing in great rabbis in its whirlpool until it reached the High Court...

Rabbi Yehonatan answered his son, "I wasn't allowed to visit you until now because I was on

trial in the High Court with Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Emden."

Binyamin Wolf asked curiously, "And what was the verdict?"

Rabbi Yehonatan replied, "Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Emden was found not guilty because all his deeds were for the sake of heaven. He had no personal interests in the matter whatsoever.⁴ However, all the people who interfered in the controversy and took part in a disagreement not theirs were sentenced to *gehinom*."⁵

We have to know that the controversies between *tzaddikim* are one of the most concealed aspects concerning the reality of creation and one of the most hidden secrets...

Any Jew who interferes between them will only be

— *Wellspring of Wisdom* —

4. Rebbe Itzhak Isaac of Kamarna writes in his book *Netiv Mitzvotcha* (Netiv HaTorah 1:13) that sometimes a controversy erupts against a *tzaddik* because of a past *gilgul* (incarnation).

Rabbi Akiva Yosef Schlesinger zt"l also writes (*Etz Chaim Bobov* – Vol 15, p. 240) that Rabbi Yehonatan Eybeschitz was the

gilgul of Yehonatan ben Gershom [ben Moshe Rabbeinu] who made a mistake in his first *gilgul* by saying that it's better for a person to sell themselves to idol worship and not require the help of others (Bava Batra 110a). He thus suffered terribly by receiving a bad name, and this atoned for it...

5. Gedolei Chassidei Belz (Vol. 1, p. 193).

Parashat Acharei Mot - Controversy Between Tzaddikim

punished in the end. Your job is to stay quiet and cease all thoughts about the one you're "against"

because you'll never understand them...⁶

And so in our parasha...

Controversy Between Tzaddikim

"There is abundant peace to those who love Your Torah, and they encounter no adversity" (Tehillim 119:165).

On this verse, Rabbi Yaakov Israel Posen writes⁷ that no one should interfere in the *machloket* (controversy) between the *tzaddikim*, for all the controversies of *tzaddikim* end in peace, love, and friendship. However, anyone who isn't a *tzaddik* shouldn't interfere between them and should be very careful and guard their mouth so as not to shame a *talmid chacham* who they disagree with, for anyone who shames a *talmid chacham* has no cure for their punishment...

The Maharal Tzintz brings the following parable to clarify the difference between whether a *machloket* is between *tzaddikim* or not...⁸

Every king has officers of thousands and officers of hundreds appointed over his army. The command being that the lower rank obeys the higher rank in charge...

One day, it happened that two of the commanders of the king's army disagreed. One said that it's correct to attack the enemy in a specific way, while the other screamed at him, saying that they'd be committing suicide if they did so!

— *Wellspring of Wisdom*  —

6. Rebbe Avraham Yaakov HaLevi Horowitz zt"l said, "As long a person still tastes food, it's forbidden for them to speak about such matters! (Gedolei Chassidei Belz – Vol. 1, p. 193). His intention is that it's forbidden to express your opinion about who is right in the controversy or whose side you agree

with, for you're nowhere near their level nor understand what they're doing. Rather stay quiet, and everything will be fine...

7. Adraba (p. 416).

8. Derashot Maharal Tzintz (Vol. 1, p. 141).

One of the soldiers in the army, a man without intelligence, agreed with one of the commanders. Furious at the other commander whom he disagreed with, he struck and wounded him.

When the king heard this, he became angry at this fool and ordered him to be brought before him. When he arrived, the king asked him, “What were you thinking when you committed such appalling misconduct?!”

The soldier replied, “It’s my job to serve the king and hate his enemies, as I have faithfully done for several years in our war against the king of our enemy country.”

The king looked at the man and replied, “Only when the war is between your king and another king are you in the right to battle the enemy. But when your “enemies” are the two commanders who intend only for my best interest, each of them equally believing that their approach to the war will stand firm and thus bring me honor, their dispute will only end in peace and love, and ultimately fulfilling my will.

But not so with you, for you weren’t given the wisdom to know what will honor me and thus have no say in the dispute! You then deserve a punishment, for you have sent your hand against a commander appointed by the king!

The parable is clear... The whole purpose and intention of every controversy between *tzaddikim* is entirely for the sake of Hashem. One prohibits and one permits, but both of them intend entirely for the honor of Hashem and His Torah. If it seems to one of them that the other *talmid chacham* ruled incorrectly, he’ll argue, but only for the honor of Hashem.

However, whoever isn’t considered a *talmid chacham* to such an extent that all their actions are for the sake of Hashem, even though they’re close to or are fond of a certain *talmid chacham*, they shouldn’t interfere between them, even if they’re just agreeing with one of the sides.

We must learn to keep our mouths closed and never, *chas v’shalom*, even come close to the great sin of shaming a *talmid chacham*!

The Beginning of Creation

In the beginning, all of reality was filled with a supreme light, the light of Hashem Himself, which we can't grasp at all and has no beginning nor end, for it exists for eternity.

When Hashem desired to create His world, He *tzimtzem* (constricted) His light to the sides, so to speak, and in the middle, an empty space was created, and there He created His world. And by the word of Hashem, all the upper and lower worlds were created, as it says, "By the word of Hashem the heavens were made, and with the breath of His mouth, all their hosts" (Tehillim 33:6).

For further explanation...⁹

Before creation, Hashem's Ohr (light) was *Ein Sof* (infinite), and there

was no place for the creation of the worlds. Thus, it was necessary for Him, so to speak, to contract the *Ohr Ein Sof* to the sides, leaving an empty space, and within this empty space, He created all the worlds... And all the worlds were created by the word of Hashem...

From this, we learn that the *tzimtzum* was necessary for creation, and without it, there wouldn't have been a world at all!¹⁰

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov says¹¹ that this *tzimtzum* is the aspect of *machloket*...

In other words, when two people disagree, the difference between their opinions causes an empty space between them, and within that space, they can come to an agreement.

❧ Wellspring of Wisdom ❧

9. Likutei Moharan I (Torah 49).

10. Not only the creation of the worlds were formed from the *tzimtzum*, but every renewal must be preceded by a *tzimtzum*, for this is what gives it the place to come into reality...

Like the growth of a plant from a seed, after planting the seed in the soil, it rots in the ground, and slowly a strong tree

grows from it. This stage of decay is the *tzimtzum*. The same is true of the hatching of a chick from an egg. Only after the egg is broken (the *tzimtzum*) is there room for a new creation in the form of a chick to exist.

- Pri HaAretz (Parashat Acharei Mot) by Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk.

11. Likutei Moharan I (Torah 64).

Parashat Acharei Mot - I Don't Know

Thus it was with the creation of the world. Hashem *tzimtzem* His light to the sides, each portion (קֶלֶח) of the light parted

(קֶלֶח) to a different place (this is the aspect of *machloket* – מַחְלֹקֶת), and through this, He created His world.¹²

I Don't Know

In a distant city lived an extraordinarily wise man. Every form of wisdom that exists and all the mysteries of the world were revealed to him... Furthermore, he possessed the ability to perceive the powers hidden in every creation, from the smallest worm to the depths of man's heart... His name became renowned throughout all the lands.

stirring up the spirits of the people today?"

The passengers told them about the famous wise man and about his brilliance and virtues... The island families were in awe and thus decided to send a man of their own with the passengers to meet him and told him to come back and tell them what he saw.

On a small island, somewhere in the quiet Ocean, lived several families who moved there from the United States, cut off entirely from the rest of the world. One sunny day, a large ship suddenly approached the island, and the families greeted the passengers with excitement and inquired, "What's new in the world? What's

After a long journey, the man returned and said to them, "I stayed with the wise man for a few days, and I must tell, I have never seen such a talented painter like him in my life! What breath-taking paintings, what beautiful narratives he conveys through them!"

The islanders were livid, "Fool! Is someone so intelligent

 *Wellspring of Wisdom* 

12. Rabbi Eliezer Yosef Lederberg explains in his book *Ahavat Hashem* (p. 34) that the splitting of *Yam Suf* was also a *tzimtzum*. Hashem

tzimtzem the water to the sides, and through this, an empty space was created, and within it, Am Israel passed though...

praised only for his talent in painting?! That's the most trivial character within him..."

Chassidut explains this as follows...¹³ Although the creation of the world is a wondrous phenomenon without any ability to grasp it, and it's only in Hashem's power and ability to create a world out of nothing, this "greatness" of Hashem doesn't at all, whatsoever, express His true greatness. Someone who praises Hashem for creating the world is like praising someone extremely intelligent beyond belief only for their ability to draw beautifully.

Therefore, when Hashem desired to create the worlds, He had to *LeTzamtzem* (constrict) Himself, so to speak, and descend from His own greatness to interact with such inferior creations.

For that reason, we have to realize that we don't and can't understand or grasp Hashem's choices or actions at all. We don't know anything, and others don't know anything. Only

Hashem knows...

There was once a man who exclaimed, "I earned \$90 in a minute!" How, you ask? He got on a train, and in front of him sat a gentile. A conversation quickly developed between them, "What do you do for a living?" The gentile was a wealthy businessman. "What about you?" he asked. "I," said the Jew, "make a living by asking questions."

The gentile didn't understand... The Jew explained, "Listen, you're a learned man. I'll offer you a good deal. I'll ask you a question, and if you don't know the answer, you have to give me \$100. Then you'll ask me a question, and if I don't know the answer, I'll give you \$10."

The gentile agreed. After all, he's educated, he'll surely know the answer.

The Jew asked, "What animal has seven legs, three heads, and orange feathers?"

"I don't know," replied the gentile. He must've never heard

of such an animal. He then paid his debt...

“**Now** it’s your turn,” said the Jew.

“**Let’s** hear, what animal has seven legs, three heads, and orange feathers?”

“**I** don’t know either,” the Jew said and then returned \$10...¹⁴

Others don’t know, and neither does the one asking the question! No one knows except Hashem Himself, the Creator of the world!

Longing for Hashem

Hashem *tzimtzem* His light and created the entire world only so that Am Israel would serve Him, learn His Torah, and fulfill His mitzvot.

However, the Torah was only given 26 generations, 2448 years after the creation of the world, and all those generations were capable of existing only in the merit of their great desire and longing to serve Hashem.

Rebbe Natan of Breslov zt”l writes¹⁵ that the longing and yearning that every Jew has for *kedusha* is very, very precious in Hashem’s eyes, for through that longing, to truly draw near to Hashem, souls are created...

And this is the purpose of Pesach, which is the aspect of *chesed* (kindness), the trait of Avraham Avinu. During Pesach, the love and desire, longing and yearning for *kedusha* is revealed because it’s the beginning of Am Israel’s drawing near to Hashem, for it was still before the giving of the Torah, and at the beginning of drawing near, the main and most important thing is only your longing and yearning for *kedusha*, to truly draw near to Hashem, for you still doesn’t know at all what to do, for you haven’t yet received the Torah. Thus, the main for Am Israel before they received the Torah was only their longing and yearning for *kedusha*...



Wellspring of Wisdom

14. **Vehigadeta** (Haggadah Shel Pesach, p. 141).

15. **Likutei** Halachot (Hilchot Dam - 1).

And all the early *tzaddikim* who lived before the giving of the Torah longed and yearned for *kedusha* and to draw near to Hashem. This was their primary *avodat Hashem*. This is also hinted at in the 26 times that

”כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ” (for His lovingkindness endures forever) is mentioned in Tehillim (ch. 136), which is said of the 26 generations before the giving of the Torah when the world existed only by means of His lovingkindness...

The Giving of The Torah

In the year 2448, from the creation of the world, Am Israel received the Torah. Since then, the entire conduct of the world and its existence depends entirely on those who learn Torah.

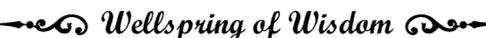
The conduct that existed until then, that the world existed by means of Hashem’s lovingkindness, had ceased! From then on, the world exists only in the merit of Torah study!

The Zohar says...¹⁶

“I placed My words in your mouth, and with the shadow of My hand, I have sheltered you. To stretch the heavens and to establish the earth and to say to Tzion, You are My people” (Yeshaya 51:16).

The moment a word of Torah leaves a Jew’s mouth, it ascends to heaven and is examined. They check to see to what extent his words of Torah truly come from within him, how big of a gap there is between his words and his actions and thoughts, as well as to see to what extent he learns for the sake of Hashem without any personal interests or for honor. If his Torah study is adequate, it causes immense *nachat ruach* (satisfaction) in the upper worlds and draws down sustenance and abundance of blessing and compassion.

When Am Israel learns Torah, the whole world is sustained in abundance. On the other hand, when Torah study



decreases within Am Israel, the world deteriorates, *chas v'shalom*.¹⁷

Therefore, those who study Torah have the power to control nature...

Rabbi Shlomo Levenstein shlita once recounted a true story that demonstrates this...¹⁸

Once, while walking down the street, a Jew approached me and asked, “Do you want to hear a story about Rabbi Shmuel Wosner?”

“**Of** course,” I replied.

He then said, “One of the students in our yeshiva had epilepsy. After two years without having a seizure, he started receiving *shidduchim* proposals. His father didn’t know if he should tell the matchmakers about his sons’ epilepsy or since he hadn’t had a seizure for a long time, there was no need to tell...”

His father and I (the one telling me the story) went to Rabbi Wosner’s

house to ask for his advice. We told the Rabbi the whole story and asked, “To tell or not to tell?”

Rabbi Wosner didn’t answer at first. He asked many in-depth questions to know more details about the situation. I felt like I was in an interrogation room. The Rabbi wanted to know for sure that we weren’t misleading him, that we weren’t trying to downplay the situation and conceal facts.

Rabbi Wosner closed his eyes for two whole minutes. He then opened them and said, “If it as you say that he hasn’t had a seizure for two years, then there’s no need to tell. But tell him that his seizures won’t return only as long as he lives in *shalom* with his wife.”

His father was filled with joy. They later found a suitable match for him and held a beautiful wedding. But after two years of marriage and having a child, the situation at home wasn’t so good.

 *Wellspring of Wisdom* 

17. See Ohr Hachaim (Vayikra 25:25) for a great explanation for this.

18. **U’Matok** HaOhr - Ma’amad Har Sinai (p. 358).

One day, he got up and left, and on that same day, he had a seizure in the middle of the road.

After I heard what had happened, I immediately called his father and said, "Do you remember what Rabbi Wosner said?"

We begged him to return home and make a genuine effort to improve his marriage, but it didn't find favor in his eyes at all. He yelled at us, "No way! I'm not going back. I've had enough!"

His condition deteriorated. He had another seizure and another one after that.

Four years without having even one seizure, and then suddenly having several consecutive seizures...

What happened?!

The answer is that Rabbi Wosner said that as long as they live in *shalom*, the seizures won't return...

Shortly after, he came to his senses and returned home to his wife and child. He truly did his best to fix things and to live with his wife in peace, and he succeeded... Several years have passed, and since the day they returned to live in *shalom*, he hasn't even had one seizure!

Don't Interfere

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov zt"l writes¹⁹ that *machloket* is one of the secrets of the creation of the world, for the world was primarily created through the empty space, as explained above. Without this, there would've only been *Ein Sof*, without any place for the world's creation. Hashem, therefore, *tzimtzem* the

light to the sides, forming the empty space, and created all of creation within it...

Since the time of the Giving of the Torah, all existence and sustenance of the world depends only on those who learn Torah *leshem shamayim*. At every moment, they recreate the entire

world. Therefore, just as during the world's creation, there had to be *machloket*, for example, the *tzimtzum* of the light to the sides, so too, now, there must be *machloket* between the *tzaddikim*."

Rabbi Eliezer Shlomo Schick zt"l writes²⁰ that every *machloket* that exists between the *tzaddikim* is only due to the empty space, for if all the *tzaddikim* held a single view, there would be no room for the creation of the world. Only through *machloket* between them, through them being divided, can the empty space be created, resembling the *tzimtzum* of light to the sides, which was created by means of speech, for *tzaddikim* create everything through their words...

For that reason, everyone should be very careful not to interfere in the *machloket* between *tzaddikim*, for their intention is only for the creation of the world.

We should also point out that all the troubles that Am Israel suffers are caused only by those ignorant

individuals who interfere in every *machloket* between *tzaddikim*. They ignite the fire of *machloket* and cause *lashon hara* to be spoken about each side, producing terrible decrees over Am Israel. The lack of unity within Am Israel is a result of their interference!

Once, when Rebbe Yechezkel Shraga Halberstam, the Shinover Rebbe, was learning with his father, the Divrei Chaim of Sanz, a heated Halachic argument broke out between them, during which the Divrei Chaim raised his voice at him. This hurt the Shinover Rebbe very much to the point where he left the house with great sorrow and went together with his assistant to one of his friends' homes in the city, where he sat and studied for several hours.

He then asked his assistant to go to his father's home to see what was happening there. The assistant did as the Rebbe said and found out that the Divrei Chaim wanted to go to his son and appease him, but a certain man from Krakow,

who was visiting Sanz at the time, prevented him from doing so, believing that it wasn't in his honor to go appease his son.

When the Shinover Rebbe heard this, tears began flowing down his cheeks. He then immediately got up and returned to his town. A few hours later, that same man from Krakow approached the Rebbe and fell at his feet, apologizing for his actions, saying that shortly after he prevented the Divrei Chaim from

going to his son, he received a telegram with the terrible news that his son had been killed in Krakow! He knew that it was because of the sorrow he caused to the Shinover Rebbe and hurried to apologize. The Shinover Rebbe forgave him and even traveled together with him to his son's funeral.

When they arrived, they found out that his son had been killed at the same moment that the Shinover Rebbe shed his tears!²¹

Honor Talmidei Chachamim

Rabbi Itzchak Isaac of Kamarna zt"l writes²² that Aharon HaKohen was truly a man of kindness. He was close to every Jew in Am Israel and was involved in all their happenings. He "loved peace and pursued peace," he gave himself over entirely to Klal Israel. He also merited having four holy sons, Elazar, Itamar, Nadav, and Avihu.

Nadav and Avihu were the holiest Jews in all of Am Israel, as the verse states, "Moshe said to Aharon, It is as Hashem spoke, saying: Through those that are close to Me shall I be sanctified, and in the presence of the entire nation shall I be glorified" (Vayikra 10:3), and Rashi comments: Moshe said to Aharon, "Aharon, my brother, I knew that the Mishkan was to be sanctified by those who



21. Kovetz Yikra Deoraita - Mivtzat HaTorah (p. 9).

22. Netiv Mitzvotcha (Netiv Emuna 3:24).

are most beloved by Hashem, and I thought it would be either through me or through you, but now I see that these two sons of yours (Nadav and Avihu) are greater than me and you!”

The light that shone on them was tremendous. They passionately served Hashem with the graceful fire of the holy of holies. They were completely removed from all materiality, secluded from all except for Hashem Himself...

In contrast, Moshe and Aharon didn't seclude themselves. Instead, they involved themselves entirely with all of Am Israel. Their *avodah* was primarily to separate, refine, and elevate sparks of *kedusha* and connect their souls to every Jew, whether ordinary or distinguished, with true humility...

Nadav and Avihu, however, disagreed with the method of leadership of Moshe and Aharon, saying to themselves, “When will these two elders pass away, and we'll be the leaders of the generation?”

Although their desires were for the sake of Hashem, and their power was great enough to eradicate all the *kelipot* and evil in the world, and to bring complete redemption to the world, nevertheless, because they didn't humble themselves before Moshe and Aharon, they died...

This is what happened...

On Rosh Chodesh Nisan, the Mishkan was established. Moshe calls for Aharon and commands him to sacrifice *korbanot* for the dedication of the Mishkan, “And it was on the eighth day that Moshe called for Aharon... He said to Aharon: Take, for yourself, a young calf, for a sin-offering” (Vayikra 9:1-2).

On that same day, Aharon's two sons, Nadav and Avihu, each took a fire-pan filled with red-hot coals, poured incense on them, and offered them to Hashem.

At that exact moment, two beams of fire soared out of the Holy of Holies and split into

four... Two entered the nostrils of Nadav, and two into the nostrils of Avihu and burned them!²³

All this because they expressed *machloket* in their hearts against the leadership of Moshe and Aharon!²⁴

Don't Compromise on Anything

Nadav and Avihu sinned and were punished. Yet, we still have to understand why the immense merit of their father, Aharon, didn't protect them?

We can find the answer to our question according to the words of HaRav Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l...²⁵

In the opening of our parasha, the Torah briefly mentions the matter of the death of Aharon's two sons (although the details of their death are mentioned in Parashat Shemini), saying, "Hashem spoke to Moshe after the death of the two sons of Aharon" (Vayikra 16:1).

In order to understand what this verse comes to teach us in our *Avodat Hashem*, we need to

contemplate the following as we read this verse... Why was the harsh decree that Nadav and Avihu would pass away during the lifetime of their father decreed upon Aharon?

The answer to this is found in what Moshe Rabbeinu says to Am Israel in his last days on earth, when he reproved them about the incident of the golden calf that they committed immediately after the Giving of the Torah, "At Aharon was Hashem very angry, to destroy him, and I also prayed for Aharon at that time" (Devarim 9:20).

Rashi explains that Hashem became angry with Aharon for allowing and helping Am Israel make the golden calf, and therefore decreed upon him extermination

 *Wellspring of Wisdom* 

23. Sanhedrin 52a.

24. **Rabbi** Menachem Azarya of Pano writes (Asara Maamarot – Chikur Din, Part 4, Ch. 18-19) that Pinchas and Eliyahu brought

about a complete *tikkun* for the souls of Nadav and Avihu. See there in detail...

25. **Imrei** Noam (Parashat Acharei Mot, Maamar 1).

(“to destroy him”), which denotes the extermination of his children, as it says, “I destroyed his fruit (offspring) from above and his roots from beneath” (Amos 2:9).

The original decree included all four sons of Aharon HaKohen. However, Moshe Rabbeinu stood in prayer with all his might to nullify the harsh decree but only succeeded in nullifying half. Elazar and Itamar survived while Nadav and Avihu passed away.

The Midrash says²⁶ that when Am Israel decided to make the calf, they first went to the Chur, the son of Miriam HaNeviah, and demanded that he make it for them. Not only did Chur not take part in their grave sin of *avodah zarah*, but he even stood firm and rebuked them vigorously for their evil and distorted desire. That ultimately cost him his life when they rose up against him and killed him.

Afterward, Am Israel approached Aharon HaKohen and demanded

that he make them the calf. After Aharon saw what they did to Chur for refusing to comply with their demands, it was clear to him that if he refused, they'd kill him too. He feared that if the verse, “Shall the Kohen and the Navi be killed in the sanctuary of Hashem” (Eicha 2:20), be fulfilled through him, for he was a Kohen and a Navi, then Am Israel wouldn't have a *tikkun* for such a sin. He, therefore, decided that it was better for them to worship the calf, for it's possible that they'll have a *tikkun* through *teshuva*, and thus he conceded and assisted them in making the calf.

Nevertheless, although Aharon's intentions were *leshem shamayim*, Rabbi Tanchum bar Chanilai says in the Gemara²⁷ that the verse, “The *botze'a* (covetous) blessed himself, though he angered Hashem” (Tehillim 10:3), speaks of the actions of Aharon. Rashi explains²⁸ that the word *botze'a* means compromise. That is, even though Aharon compromised to

 *Wellspring of Wisdom* 

26. Vayikra Rabbah 10:3, Midrash Tanchuma (Parashat Tetzaveh - 10).

27. Sanhedrin 7a.

28. Sanhedrin 6a.

make the calf for Am Israel with good intentions, that compromise still “angered Hashem,” and the decree of destruction that Hashem decreed upon him proved how much this compromise truly angered Hashem.

Now it's clear what the verse “after the death of the two sons of Aharon” came to teach us about our *Avodat Hashem*. The death of the two sons of Aharon was nothing but a result of that same compromise that Aharon made, and due to it, he made the calf. If so, this verse is nothing but an outcry towards us, “Beware of compromise! For it leads to death!”

Look at the difference between Aharon and Chur. Aharon, who compromised, was sentenced to have all his sons killed, almost cutting off his continuity in the world if it weren't for the prayers of Moshe Rabbeinu, who nullified half of the decree.

On the other hand, Chur, who stood like a fortified wall and

didn't compromise at any expense, although it cost him his life, merited Betzalel as a descendant, who already, as a child, knew how to combine the letters with which heaven and earth were created. Not only that, but Hashem chose him from among all of Am Israel to be responsible for building the Mishkan and its vessels, as it says, “Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: I have designated Betzalel ben Uri ben Chur, of the tribe of Yehuda.”
(Shemot 31:1).

According to what we've clarified thus far, another matter can be explained. The Mishna says²⁹ that the *Anshei Knesset HaGedolah* affixed that after the morning Yom Kippur prayers, parashat Acharei Mot would be read from the beginning of the parasha to the end of the third *Aliyah*. So too did the Shulchan Aruch rule as Halacha.³⁰

The Beit Yosef³¹ explains that the reason for this is that within these verses, the Torah instructs the



29. Megillah 3:5

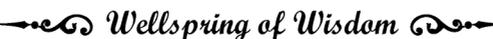
30. **Shulchan** Aruch (Orach Chaim 621:1).

Kohen Gadol on the entire order of work on Yom Kippur. Therefore, it's appropriate to read these verses on Yom Kippur. According to this explanation, the reading of the verse, "after the death of the two sons of Aharon..." has no particular relevance to Yom Kippur.

However, the Zohar³² explains that there is actually a unique significance in reading the verse that speaks of the death of Aharon's sons specifically on Yom Kippur, for the purpose of Yom Kippur is to atone for the sins of Am Israel, "For on this day He shall atone for you, to purify you from all your sins" (Vayikra 16:30) – and by means of Am Israel reading about the death of the sons of Aharon, and in turn, feeling sorrow, and even shed tears over the loss of these *tzaddikim*, Hashem will atone for all their sins, for anyone who feels sorrow and sheds tears over the loss of a *tzaddik*, Hashem declares, "Your iniquity shall be removed, and your sin shall be atoned for" (Yeshaya 6:7).

According to all the above, another reason can be said for reading about the death of the sons of Aharon on Yom Kippur, for the verse, "after the death of the two sons of Aharon," comes to warn us from compromising on Torah and mitzvot, as mentioned above. There isn't a more appropriate and worthy time to arouse the nation regarding this topic than on Yom Kippur when the heart of every Jew awakens to do complete *teshuva* for their sins and make better resolutions for the future. This is the most appropriate time to warn someone that if they genuinely want to do *teshuva*, they must distance themselves from making compromises and seeking exemptions in fulfilling the mitzvot of our Torah. The Torah is telling us that compromising will eventually lead you to all the sins in the world. It will entirely destroy your *Avodat Hashem* and will furthermore destroy all of Judaism as a whole.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains the saying of Hillel HaZaken in *Pirkei Avot* as follows...³³



31. Beit Yosef (Siman 621).

32. Zohar (Acharei Mot 56b).

33. Pirkei Avot 1:12.

“**Love** mankind and draw them close to Torah” – You must bring every Jew closer to the will of Hashem and to His Torah by revealing to them the beauty of the Torah and the value of its mitzvot to the point that they desire to properly keep all the mitzvot of the Torah on their own. Yet, at the same time, it's forbidden for you to bring the Torah closer to the will of the people by compromising and removing parts of it until it finds favor in their eyes, *chas v'shalom*.

Concerning those “rabbis” who constantly compromise and degrade the Torah, who remove parts of it so that it'll find favor in the eyes of the people of the generation, *chazal* say³⁴ that before the coming of the Mashiach, “the face of the generation will be like the face of a dog.” A dog always walks in front of its owner, but whenever it comes to a crossroad, it immediately turns back to see where its owner will turn so that it'll go there as well.

So too regarding those same rabbis who are called “the face of the generation,” who always try to find favor in the eyes of the people – they seemingly walk at the forefront while the people walk behind them, but whenever the generation develops a spiritual problem that requires fixing, they immediately turn their heads back to see what the public opinion is and what will find favor in their eyes, and according to their conclusions do they act, even if it requires removing parts of our Torah and its mitzvot.

So too regarding each and every one of us. We mustn't make any compromises and exemptions in our *Avodat Hashem* and complete only what suits us and finds favor in our eyes. It's our responsibility to accept the will of Hashem and His Torah, in its entirety, with all our strength and devotion and fulfill all of the Torah's mitzvot according to all their laws and details without compromising on even one letter.

Parashat Acharei Mot - Don't Compromise on Anything

So too regarding the study of Torah. We have to make our best effort to accept the yoke of Torah and set time every day for the study of Torah. Even if we need to work during the day, we must still do everything to free up time and devote significant, quality time to learn in the evening or at least listen to a Torah lesson in *Gemara*, *Halacha*, *Aggadah*, or whatever interests you. We have to remember that according to *Halacha*, no Jew in the world is exempt from learning Torah, whatever their occupation or circumstances may be...

The Rambam writes,³⁵ “Every Jew is required to study Torah whether they’re poor or rich, healthy or ill, young or old and frail. Even someone poor who lives off *tzedakah*, and a man who has a wife and children to support, must devote time to Torah study. Time during the day and time during the night.”

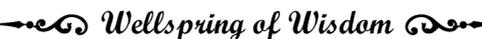
All the more so for those who are privileged to be *Bnei*

Torah, who have the privilege of learning Torah throughout the day. They have even more of an obligation to take advantage of every free moment to learn another page of *Gemara*, another *siman* in Shulchan Aruch, another chapter of Rambam!

They have to make sure to never be absent from any *seder* (study session) in the yeshiva or Kollel unless they truly have no option, and even then, only if they asked permission from their rabbi and he agrees.

But, if they didn't get permission, and instead their rabbi tells them to stay, and everything will be fine, they're obliged to listen to their rabbi and sit and learn. Whoever tries to convince their rabbi, even after his explicit instruction to stay and study, should look for a different rabbi.

Such was the behavior of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. None of his hundreds of students who sat and learned in his *Beit Midrash* ever



went anywhere without writing a request on a small piece of paper, passing it along to the Rebbe via his assistant, and getting his permission to leave. Whoever the Rebbe instructed to stay and continue learning yet continued to ask for permission received a piece of paper with a short and clear answer, "Look for another Rebbe."

Every *avrech* should get used to getting up early for *tefillah*, and after eating *Pat Shacharit* (morning meal with bread), go to the *Beit Midrash* and bury themselves the entire day in the Torah.

There's nothing more destructive to the soul of a child but to get up in the morning for Talmud Torah and see his father still in bed, or during the day see his father sitting at home doing nothing. These actions can ruin a child, engraving in his mind that his purpose on earth is to sleep and slack around.

But, when a child gets up for Talmud Torah and never finds his father at home at that time because he knows his father doesn't sleep a lot, rather he wakes up early for

Avodat Hashem, and during the day, he doesn't see his father at home because he knows his father is constantly learning Torah all day and only in the evening does he return home, this instills in the child the desire to be diligent in the study of the Torah, day and night, and to become stronger in *Avodat Hashem* with all his might.

This is the main spiritual legacy that Rabbi Ovadia Yosef zt"l left us, to be diligent in Torah study, day and night, and to take advantage of every free moment to study more pages of *Gemara* and *Halachot*, as well as to write more Torah insights.

Even when Rabbi Ovadia Yosef was already famous around the world, and the leadership of the entire generation lay on his broad shoulders, and thousands knocked on his door to seek his advice and blessings every day, he never left his books for even a moment, writing more rulings that illuminated all of Am Israel and will illuminate them for eternity. We must continue to walk in his holy path! May his merit protect us and all of Am Israel, amen!

The Pathway...

1. In the beginning, all of reality was filled with a supreme light, the light of Hashem Himself, which we can't grasp at all and has no beginning nor end, for it exists for eternity. When Hashem desired to create His world, He *tzimtzem* (constricted) His light to the sides, so to speak, and in the middle, an empty space was created, and there He created His world.

2. Not only was the creation of the worlds formed from the *tzimtzum*, but every renewal must be preceded by a *tzimtzum*, for this is what gives it the place to come into reality... Like the growth of a plant from a seed, after planting the seed in the soil, it rots in the ground, and slowly a strong tree grows from it. This stage of decay is the *tzimtzum*. The same is true of the hatching of a chick from an egg. Only after the egg is broken (the *tzimtzum*) is there room for a new creation in the form of a chick to exist.

3. Although the creation of the world is a wondrous phenomenon without any ability to grasp it, and it's only in Hashem's power and ability to create a world out of nothing, this "greatness" of Hashem doesn't at all, whatsoever, express His true greatness. Someone who praises Hashem for creating the world is like praising someone extremely intelligent beyond belief only for their ability to draw beautifully. Therefore,

when Hashem desired to create the worlds, He had to *LeTzamtzem* (constrict) Himself, so to speak, and descend from His own greatness to interact with such inferior creations. For that reason, we have to realize that we don't and can't understand or grasp Hashem's choices or actions at all. We don't know anything, and others don't know anything. Only Hashem knows...

4. Rebbe Nachman of Breslov zt"l writes that *machloket* (controversy) is one of the secrets of the creation of the world, for the world was primarily created through the empty space, as explained. Without this, there would've only been *Ein Sof*, without any place for the world's creation. Hashem, therefore, *tzimtzem* the light to the sides, forming the empty space, and created all of creation within it...

5. We have to know that the controversies between *tzaddikim* are one of the most concealed aspects concerning the reality of creation and one of the most hidden secrets. Any Jew who interferes between them will only be punished in the end. Your job is to stay quiet and cease all thoughts about the one you're "against" because you'll never understand them.

6. The whole purpose and intention of every controversy between *tzaddikim* is entirely for the sake of Hashem. No one should interfere in the *machloket*

The Pathway...

between the *tzaddikim*, for all the controversies of *tzaddikim* end in peace, love, and friendship. However, anyone who isn't a *tzaddik* shouldn't interfere between them and should be very careful and guard their mouth so as not to shame a *talmid chacham* who they disagree with, for anyone who shames a *talmid chacham* has no cure for their punishment.

7. However, whoever isn't considered a *talmid chacham* to such an extent that all their actions are for the sake of Hashem, even though they're close to or are fond of a certain *talmid chacham*, they shouldn't interfere between them, even if they're just agreeing with one of the sides. We must learn to keep our mouths closed and never, *chas v'shalom*, even come close to the great sin of shaming a *talmid chacham*!

8. We should also point out that all the troubles that Am Israel suffers are caused only by those ignorant individuals who interfere in every *machloket* between *tzaddikim*. They ignite the fire of *machloket* and cause *lashon hara* to be spoken about each side, producing terrible decrees over Am Israel. The lack of unity within Am Israel is a result of their interference!

9. The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains the saying of Hillel HaZaken in *Pirkei Avot* as follows...

10. "Love mankind and draw them close to Torah" – You must bring every Jew closer to the will of Hashem and to His Torah by revealing to them the beauty of the Torah and the value of its mitzvot to the point that they desire to properly keep all the mitzvot of the Torah on their own. Yet, at the same time, it's forbidden for you to bring the Torah closer to the will of the people by compromising and removing parts of it until it finds favor in their eyes, *chas v'shalom*.

11. The Torah is telling us that compromising will eventually lead you to all the sins in the world. It will entirely destroy your *Avodat Hashem* and will furthermore destroy all of Judaism as a whole. So too regarding each and every one of us. We mustn't make any compromises and exemptions in our *Avodat Hashem* and complete only what suits us and finds favor in our eyes. It's our responsibility to accept the will of Hashem and His Torah, in its entirety, with all our strength and devotion and fulfill all of the Torah's mitzvot according to all their laws and details without compromising on even one letter.

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Miami	7:29 pm	8:24 pm	9:00 pm
Los Angeles	7:11 pm	8:10 pm	8:43 pm
Montreal	7:31 pm	8:39 pm	9:03 pm
Toronto	7:51 pm	8:57 pm	9:23 pm
Jerusalem	6:57 pm	6:48 pm	7:38 pm

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Throw them away, and I'll compensate you later." When you tell your children such a thing, their whole life, wherever Hashem puts them, in China, in Japan, anywhere in the world, they won't mess with non-kosher food. They'll eat a banana or another fruit, but they won't get near anything not kosher.

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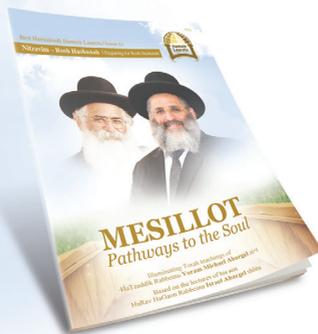
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