Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 53

# **Behar** | Redemption Through The Zohar





# 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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# ... PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL ....

Parashat Behar - True Justice



#### True Justice

**Tzfat** is one of the four most important cities in Eretz Israel. The city of Tzfat merited having Torah Giants, holy *tzaddikim* who served Hashem with all their might, choosing to live within its boundaries. One of those people was the holy Arizal...

**The** Arizal and his disciples sat and studied Torah in a vast open field. The Arizal began delivering his *shiur* (Torah lesson). Lofty, hidden secrets buried within the holy Torah were revealed to the listeners. A pleasant, blissful aura was felt in the air... Time felt as if it had stopped, and then suddenly...

**The** Arizal stopped his *shiur* and said, "Know, my disciples, that I just heard a *Bat Kol* (Divine voice) from heaven announcing that there'll be a vast swarm of locusts within the borders of Tzfat, and they'll eat everything in sight. There won't remain a remnant of food in the entire city..."

The Arizal continued, "I was terrified the moment I heard this. I hurried and asked them why. They answered me that the decree was made because of one poor man named Yaakov Altaratz, who lives in a small house that's about to collapse, whose body is thin and malnourished, and who often goes to sleep while his stomach is growling. His neighbors have outright ignored him as if he doesn't exist!

Last night Yaakov broke down, pouring out endless tears to Hashem about his condition... Huge dark clouds were formed in heaven because of his tears. A strong wind began to blow in the upper worlds, and dark angels emerged from their holes and flew rapidly before the Throne of Honor. They began screaming, 'I was created by the negligence of this neighbor! I was created by the snubbing of this neighbor every time he encountered Yaakov!

Parashat Behar - True Justice

**The** dark angels strongly demanded justice! Then, the terrible decree was authorized... To send locusts to the city and eliminate suitable for eating!"

**The** Arizal continued and said to his disciples, "We must hurry to gather money for him. Our actions will calm the *Middat HaDin* (attribute of judgment) and hopefully nullify the decree."

They, including the Arizal, immediately pulled out whatever they had in their pockets. The Arizal handed the money to Rabbi Itzchak Cohen and told him, "Run quickly to Yaakov's home and give him the money." Rabbi Itzchak did as his Rabbi ordered, and when he arrived at Yaakov's home, he found him sitting on the floor, crying his heart out. He asked him, "Why are you crying?"

**Yaakov** muttered, "I'm crying about my terrible fate. It's not enough that I'm poor, but now the clay jug that I use to fill water with, to have what to drink for the week,

broke, and I don't have enough money to buy another one."

**Rabbi** Itzchak gave Yaakov the money and said, "Know that your tears caused a terrible decree of annihilation on the entire city of Tzfat!"

**Shocked,** Yaakov begged Hashem to forgive his neighbors and nullify the decree.

**Rabbi** Itzchak returned to the Arizal in the field and told him what had transpired. The Arizal then smiled and said, "Baruch Hashem, the decree has been nullified!" The *shiur* then continued...

**Suddenly,** the sky darkened... A massive cloud of millions of locusts suddenly appeared... The Arizal calmed his frightened students, "Don't worry. The decree has already been nullified. Nothing will happen." A powerful wind then began to blow and carried all the locusts into the Mediterranean Sea!

**The** story question spread, and from that day on, the people of Tzfat were very careful to provide Yaakov with all his needs.<sup>1</sup>

# ... PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL ....

Parashat Behar - The Power Of The Zohar

**It** says in our parasha, "If your brother becomes impoverished and his hand falls to you, you

must support him, also the convert and the sojourner, and he shall live with you" (Vayikra 25:35).

#### The Power Of The Zohar

A rich man from Constantinople (Istanbul), who came to Tzfat to celebrate Pesach, was present at the time when the millions of locusts darkened the skies of Tzfat. He became filled with anxiety at the terrifying sight. But when he saw salvation, he was amazed and interested in knowing what happened... He was then told about the greatness of the Arizal...

**When** he returned to Constantinople, he told everyone about the event and about the holy Arizal and how he could reveal a person's sins from their youth.

**Among** the listeners was a wicked man who didn't leave a sin unturned. When he heard the rich man's words, he thought to himself, "Many times I've had thoughts of *teshuva* and feelings of remorse, maybe my way is wrong, maybe there really is someone above me, watching everything I do... Now I can find out the truth. I'll go to the Ari in Tzfat, and if he knows what

sins I've committed, then I'll know that there really is a spiritual reality, and I'll do *teshuva*. But if he doesn't know, then that's a sign that there's no judgment and Judge, and

I was right in all my way..."

The man set off...

In the middle of his journey, he sat down by a river, spread out a sheet on the ground, and ate a sandwich. He then poured a glass of wine and said, "Hacham Itzchak (the Arizal), I drink this glass in your honor and the honor of your disciples."

At that moment, in the distant Tzfat, the Arizal said to his disciples, "A few days ago, an evil man set out from Constantinople to come and test me. He is now eating on a riverbank and just drank a glass of wine in our honor." The Arizal then told them what day the man would arrive in Tzfat and described his appearance. "When he comes and asks about me, make sure to bring him straight to me. He's a

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Parashat Behar - The Power Of The Zohar

very lofty soul. He has a spark of Achav, the king of Israel, and he'll receive his *tikkun* through me."

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The man arrived on the day the Arizal stated and was quickly found by his disciples. They immediately brought him before their Rabbi. The man looked at the Arizal and asked, "Are you the seeing Rabbi, the one who reveals to people their sins?" The Arizal replied, "Wisdom is from Hashem alone. I am only an emissary to lead man in the way of righteousness."

**He** then said to the Arizal, "Know that I'm a very wicked man. If you tell me what sins I've committed, I will then know for sure that the Spirit of Hashem has spoken from you."

**The** Arizal turned to those in the room and requested that they step out. He then began revealing to the man every sin that he committed his entire life until that moment at precisely what day, time, and place.

**At** that moment, the man burst into uncontrollable tears. He fell

at the feet of the Arizal and wept, "Everything you said is true! I have sinned! I beg of you, please, show me the way to *teshuva!*"

**The** Arizal said to him, "Don't worry, I'll give you a *tikkun*. Immerse yourself in the *mikveh* and read ten pages of Zohar every day... The man merited becoming a complete *Ba'al Teshuva*...<sup>2</sup>

**Rebbe** Itzchak Isaac of Kamarna writes<sup>3</sup> that every person should learn five pages of *Zohar* every day. This will significantly benefit them and as well as enlighten and purify their souls while abolishing the impurities that derive from their negative *middot* and lusts. So too, will they merit closeness to Hashem...

**This** week, on the 18th of Iyar, was the *Hillulah* of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. Due so, we decided that this week we'll learn about the virtue of the *Zohar HaKadosh*.

**On** a side note: This discussion is based on the

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<sup>2.</sup> Shivchei HaAri (p. 50).

<sup>3.</sup> Netiv Mitzvotecha (Netiv HaTorah 1:31).

### .... PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL ....

Parashat Behar - The Estate

words of Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, the Ramchal, in his book, *Adir BaMarom* (pgs. 1-36).

Every time we brought the Ramchal, we intended to this source.

#### The Estate

**One** of the laws stated in our parasha is the law of "the sale of an estate," as it says, "If your brother becomes impoverished and sells his estate, then a close relative shall come and redeem that which his brother sold. If the man has no redeemer, but has acquired sufficient means and finds it enough to redeem it himself" (Vayikra 25:25-26).

**This** is the explanation of the verse...

On the 15th of Nisan in the year 2448, the time of redemption arrived. Moshe Rabbeinu requested that Am Israel gather in the city of Ramesses and from there leave Egypt together.

**Bnei** Israel gathered from all parts of Egypt in Ramesses, where they divided into twelve tribes. Each Jew stood together

with the people of their tribe and then set out...

Forty years of walking in the desert came to an end, and on the 10th of Nisan in the year 2484, Am Israel crossed the Jordan River and entered the land. Hashem then revealed Himself to Yehoshua bin Nun and said to him, "You have grown old, advanced in years, and much of the land still remains to be taken possession of... And now, divide this land as an inheritance" (Yehoshua 13:1-7).

**Each** tribe received its portion from Yehoshua, and the Nasi (leader) of the tribe divided it between each household in the tribe, each household receiving its own special portion called

an "estate."

**A** feeling of completeness filled their hearts, as Rabbi Elazar says...<sup>4</sup> Every person who doesn't own land Parashat Behar - The Secret Of Creation

isn't considered a complete person, as it says, "The heavens are the heavens of Hashem, and the earth He gave to man" (Tehillim 115:16).

**With** immense joy, Bnei Israel settled in their estates, established their homes, and sowed their fields.

It was then incumbent on every Jew to guard the estate they received from their ancestors and forbidden for them to sell it unnecessarily... "If your brother becomes impoverished and sells his estate" – that is, only a Jew whose financial situation deteriorated and became "impoverished" was allowed to sell their estate, but not their entire estate.

**Even** what they're allowed to sell can only be sold until the *yovel*, i.e., the 50th year since the entrance

into Eretz Israel (the price of the estate was determined by the number of years that remained until the *yovel*), and when the *yovel* arrived, the estate would return to the original owner, as it says, "Until the *yovel* year, and then released in the *yovel*, and he shall return to his estate" (Vayikra 25:28).

The Torah adds that it's a mitzvah for the seller to redeem the estate, but only after two years from the day of the sale. After two years, they can redeem it, even against the buyer's will. If he doesn't have the means to redeem it, then it's a mitzvah for their closest relative to redeem the estate, as it says, "If your brother becomes impoverished and sells his estate, then a close relative shall come and redeem that which his brother sold" (Vayikra 25:25).

#### The Secret Of Creation

**Parashat** Bereshit opens with the account of the creation of the world, from the creation of light on the first day to the creation of man on the sixth day, and ends with the Shabbat, "Elokim blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, for on it He abstained from all His

work, which Elokim had created to do" (Bereshit 2:3).

**Rabbi** Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, the Ramchal, writes... "Which Elokim had created to do" – this verse seals the creation of the world. The last words, "to do," are seemingly perplexing because "to

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Parashat Behar - The Tree of Knowledge

do" is in the future tense. It should rather say, "Which Elokim had created and did..."

**The** secret of this matter is that the six days of creation were only the beginning of the creation of the world. Creation itself didn't end.

**Hashem** desired that the power to end the act of creation would be specifically in the hands of mankind, and thus they would receive reward for their

deeds. Therefore, He created man with a *Tzelem Elokim* (Image of Elokim), thus granting him the power, through his good deeds, to draw down *shefa* (abundance) to all the worlds as well as elevate the worlds to their peak and thus ending the act of creation.

**In** addition, the animals that were created were also at a very high level, the level of humans after the sin!

# The Tree of Knowledge

Adam HaRishon stood up, and Hashem commanded him one negative mitzvah, the prohibition of eating from the Tree of Knowledge, "From the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for on the day you eat from it, you will surely die" (Bereshit 2:17).

If Adam HaRishon had withstood the test and not eaten from the Tree of Knowledge, he would've drawn down *shefa* to the entire world and brought it to its complete *tikkun*.

**But** the snake wanted to interfere... It managed to get Adam HaRishon to eat from the Tree of Knowledge and distance the world from its *tikkun*...

**Rebbe** Avraham Yaakov of Sadigura revealed<sup>5</sup> that at the time Adam HaRishon ate from the Tree of Knowledge, the *kelipot* awakened and wanted to devour him. The *dinim* (judgment) intensified to the point of mortal danger, and all the *shefa* descended to the place of the *kelipot* called "death."

Parashat Behar - The Tree of Knowledge

**The** *yetzer hara* went forth in wrath before the *Kiseh HaKavod* (Throne of Glory) and claimed, "Hashem, You warned him, 'For, on the day you eat from it, you will surely die.' I request that You bring him to justice!!!"

**In** order to calm him down and nullify the decree, Hashem gave him four lofty souls to rule over! One of the souls was the soul of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai!

The sin caused the whole world to descend spiritually. Man descended to the level of the animals that preceded the sin, as David HaMelech says, "Man (after the sin was banished from Gan Eden) does not reside in honor (then...) he is compared to the animals who live in silence" (Tehillim 49:13), and the animals descended to the level they're at today. However, a few animals didn't descend from their levels, such as the donkey of Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair and the like...<sup>7</sup>

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- **6. The** Sadigura Rebbe continues and says that the other three souls were the soul of the Arizal, the soul of the Baal Shem Tov, and the soul of Rebbe Israel Friedman, the Ruzhiner Rebbe.
- **7. Rabbi** Pinchas ben Yair once happened upon an inn. His hosts threw barley before his donkey for him to eat. The donkey didn't eat it. The hosts sifted the barley, but the donkey still didn't eat it. They separated the chaff from the barley by hand, but the donkey still didn't eat it. They wondered why the donkey wouldn't eat the barley. Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair said to his hosts, "Perhaps you didn't take *ma'aser* (tithe) from the barley." They tithed it and the donkey ate it. Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair said, "This poor animal performs

the will of its Maker, and you tried feeding it untithed produce?!" (Chullin 7a-7b).

Once, Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair's donkey was stolen, but refused to eat from the thieves food since they hadn't taken ma'aser from it. After three days of fasting, the thieves released the donkey, fearful that it would soon die and stink up their hideout. The donkey found its way back to Rabbi Pinchas and began braying by the door. Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair recognized its voice and requested that his family bring it in and feed it since it had not eaten in three days. They gave it barley but it wouldn't eat. Rabbi Pinchas mentioned that they too had not taken ma'aser and although it wasn't necessary for them to take ma'aser from Parashat Behar - The Decline

#### The Decline

**The** Ramchal continues and says that after Adam HaRishon sinned, an impure spirit descended upon all the creatures of the world, on which it is said, "The earth was unformed and void, and there was darkness over the surface of the abyss" (Bereshit 1:2).

**Darkness** covered the minds and hearts of human beings. Clouds of heresy shrouded their thoughts, strong winds of lust raged within, buds of despair started to sprout, and the forces of evil began their rule over mankind...

Hashem desired to repair them from the impurity that contaminated them and, therefore, poured a tremendous light of holiness upon them. But they didn't possess the vessels to contain the light, and like a magnet, they were drawn to impurity and consequently abolished that immense holy light. Thus, the flood was decreed upon the entire world...

**In** that generation, there lived a righteous man named Noach.

Hashem appeared to him and said, "I'm going to flood the entire world. No one will be able to escape it and survive. But since you've found favor in My eyes, I want you to build an ark and enter it, you, your family, and a pair of all the animals in the world..."

**The** flood began... Water burst out of boulders, the waves of the sea crashed furiously onto the shores, and the sky opened its gates for heavy rains to fall harshly upon the earth... Everyone who tried to survive by swimming through the raging waters ran out of air in the end... *Middat HaDin* (the attribute of judgment) collected its debt from the inhabitants of the world...

**On** top of the endless waters, a small ark, in which Noach and his family hid, drifted silently...

**The** Ramchal writes that Noach, with his good deeds, merited clinging to the Holy Shechina, and consequently, he

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animal food that was *demai* (doubtfully tithed produce), what could they do that

the poor donkey was stringent on itself... (Midrash Rabbah 60:8).

#### Parashat Behar - The Decline

was protected from the forces of *din*, the forces that wanted to destroy and wipe out everything in sight. Hashem placed him in an ark and closed its doors behind him, as it says, "And Hashem closed [the ark] for him" (Bereshit 7:16). Thus, the ark became a refuge from the *yetzer hara*, and it saved all the world's creations! Then, the immense power of Noach's ark was revealed!

**Noach** and his sons, together with their wives, stepped out of the

ark and prospered and multiplied.8 In those generations, there were righteous people such as Shem and Ever, but since they didn't involve themselves in the affairs of the people, their generation didn't benefit much from them, for they cared for themselves and didn't influence others. This meant that there would be no one to guide and teach the people of the world the ways of Hashem. Therefore, the descendants of those that left the ark also became wicked!

#### ---- Wellspring of Wisdom 🗫--

**8. Rabbi** Menachem Stein shlita told the following story...

**My** father was a Holocaust survivor, a son of one the disciples of the *Ketav Sofer*. Before the Holocaust, he was married to my mother's eldest sister. They had a four-year-old son. His wife and young son were murdered cruely. After the war he married my mother, his wife's sister.

**When** I married off my son, in the midst of the wedding, as hundreds of yeshiva boys were dancing, fulfilling the mitzvah of bringing joy to the *chatan*, and in the women's section *B'not Israel* were making the *kalah* happy, I suddenly saw my father burst into tears.

**I** asked him, "Father, what happened?" He answered, "I'm witnessing Divine visions!"

I wasn't used to this type of speech from my father. I asked him what he meant. As he wept, he told me, "Chazal (Midrash Tanchuma – Noach, 5) say of Noach that he saw three worlds... A world before the flood, a destroyed world during the flood, and a world after the flood. I also saw three worlds... A world before the Holocaust – Am Israel in its glory, Jewish communities and yeshivot, Talmidei Hachamim...

**Then** I saw a world in its destruction – a horrifying Holocaust, everything was destroyed. The Jewish communities were completely destroyed, Rabbis and Admorim were massacred, and millions of holy and pure Jews were slaughtered for the sanctification of Hashem's name.

**I** was sure that Am Israel was finished, Judaism was done for. The heads of

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Parashat Behar - A New World

**Thus** it says in the Mishna,<sup>9</sup> "There were ten generations from Adam to Noach, to demonstrate the great extent of Hashem's patience, for each one of those generations provoked Him continually until He brought the waters of the flood upon

them. There were ten generations from Noach to Avraham to demonstrate the extent of Hashem's patience, for each one of those generations provoked Him continually until Avraham Avinu came and received the reward of them all."

#### A New World

The Ramchal goes on to write... In the days of Avraham Avinu, a new avodah began. This is implied by the verse, "This is the account of the heavens and the earth בַּהְבָּרְאָם (when they were created), on the day when Hashem Elokim made earth and heaven" (Bereshit 2:4). The letter יה in the word "בַּהְבָּרְאָם" is smaller than all the other letters, and chazal say, "Don't read it "בְּהַבְּרָאָם" rather

"הַאַבְרָהָם" (for Avraham)." The small letter teaches us that from the time of Avraham Avinu, a new *avodah* began in the world, a lesser *avodah* than that of the earlier generations.

**During** those first twenty generations after the creation of the world, from Adam HaRishon to Avraham Avinu, the main *avodah* was to receive the immense holy light poured down on them from

#### ---- Wellspring of Wisdom ---

the state declared that within a few years no religious Jew would remain.

And now, I'm standing here at my grandson's wedding, a true *Ben Torah*. I'm witnessing hundreds of *Bnei Torah*, that were born "after the flood," dancing in honor of the groom with such Jewish pride. In the women section, *Bnot Israel* making the bride happy.

**I'm** witnessing a world in its reconstruction. Am Israel rose from the

dust, survivors built new homes, founded yeshivot and holy congregations, precious *Bnei Torah* engaging in Torah and *Avodat Hashem*. When I hid from the terror of the Nazis, I didn't dream that I would get to see this sight. And now that I'm witnessing this before my eyes, how can I restrain my emotions?!"

- Doresh Tov Shavuot (p. 373).
- 9. Pirkei Avot 5:2.

Parashat Behar - The Holy Forefathers

Hashem, day after day, until they attain lofty levels of holiness and wisdom, in their longevity, and by means of that, they'll reach their *tikkun*.

**However,** all those twenty generations chose to draw after the lusts of the world, thus drawing down on their souls' immense impurity, and that vast holy light departed from them...

**Therefore,** since a new kind of *avodah* began during the days of Avraham, we can no longer

arrive at the *tikkun* through the immense light but rather through endeavoring to purify the body.

**For** an added explanation... The twenty generations from the time of creation gravely damaged the world, caused great impurity to enter the human body, and caused the spirit of impurity and yetzer hara to darken the earth. Now, it's incumbent on every person to strive to escape their control, and that's done through purifying their body, studying Torah, and fulfilling the mitzvot...

# The Holy Forefathers

**Rabbi** Itzchak Isaac Sher, the Rosh Yeshiva of Slabodka, writes...<sup>10</sup> The forefathers of the world, Avraham, Itzchak, and Yaakov, and the twelve tribes, merited truly serving Hashem all their life and with all their might in a long chain of inner work, sanctification, and fixing their *middot*, until they reached spiritual perfection.

**Nevuah** (prophecy) and perfection are interconnected. If

there isn't perfection, there isn't *nevuah*. Our forefathers reached the highest levels of perfection and therefore received the purest of *nevuah*, that is, after many, many years of toil and exertion, until they merited entering the Holy of Holies, and on them, it's said, "The secret of Hashem [is revealed] to those who fear Him!" (Tehillim 25:14).

**Just** as we find that only after seventy years of *avodah* did

# .... PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL .... 13

Parashat Behar - Exile In Egypt

Hashem speak to Avraham Avinu saying, "Go, for your sake, from your land" (Bereshit 12:1), and thus with Itzchak Avinu, Hashem spoke to him only at the age of seventy-five, and when Hashem revealed Himself to Yaakov Avinu at Beit-El, he was seventy-seven years old...

**Therefore,** Hashem cherished them more than all of mankind and granted awe-inspiring promises

and blessings for them and their descendants after them for eternity. They merited being beloved by Him and elevated to the loftiest levels of *kedusha* until Hashem spoke to them with such great love and affection...

**In** the year 2238, Yaakov and his sons descended to Egypt... There too, *Ruach HaKodesh* continued to clearly shine above their heads!

# **Exile In Egypt**

**The** Ramchal continues and writes...

The time of exile had arrived, the days that Hashem had already stated to Avraham Avinu in the Covenant Between the Parts, "Know for certain that your descendants will be foreigners in a land that is not theirs. They will enslave and oppress them for four hundred years" (Bereshit 15:13).

**Am** Israel was handed over to the forces of impurity, the *yetzer hara*, who banished all sublime light and darkened the eyes and hearts of Israel. So

much so that even praying to Hashem wasn't in their power, and by means of obstructing the divine light, the exile began...

An ancient people, the people who wander among the gentiles, in a life of darkness within the borders of Egypt, a gloomy life of exile, a life of suffering, anguish, and hardship, a life subjected to cruelty, wickedness, and thick clouds of depression, a life in the shadow of death, did Am Israel sink, their strength weakening day

by day...

Parashat Behar - Preparation For The End

# **Preparation For The End**

**The** Gemara relates the following story...<sup>11</sup>

**On** one of the occasions that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi met with Eliyahu HaNavi, he asked him, "When will the Mashiach come?" Elivahu HaNavi said to him. "Go ask him yourself." Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi asked, "Ask the Mashiach?! Where can I find him?" Eliyahu replied, "At the entrance of the city of Rome." Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi asked, "Give me a sign so that I'll know it's him." Eliyahu told him, "He sits among the poor who suffer from illnesses. All of them untie all their bandages and then tie them all back again, but the Mashiach unties one bandage and ties one back, and so on. He thinks to himself, 'Perhaps I'll be needed to bring about the redemption. Therefore, I'll never tie more than one bandage so that I'll not be delayed."

**Rabbi** Yehoshua ben Levi went and found the *Mashiach*. He

said to him, "Shalom Alecha (greetings to you), my rabbi and my teacher. When will my master come?" The Mashiach answered, "Today!" Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi got up and started to dance with unprecedented joy...

**The** next day, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi came to Eliyahu HaNavi and said to him, "The *Mashiach* lied to me! He said he'll come today, but he didn't."

Eliyahu HaNavi said to him, "When the *Mashiach* said to you "today," he meant, "Today, if you will listen to His voice" (Tehillim 95:7). That is, only if Am Israel heeds to Hashem's words can he come "today."

**The** Ramchal explains that Hashem wanted the *Mashiach* to suffer from illnesses (for example, what he endures from the obstruction of lights that the *yetzer hara* obstructs). This is all for Am Israel's benefit, for by means of this, at the time of

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Parashat Behar - Two Stages To Redemption

redemption, the *yetzer hara* will be in his control and will not be able to escape, for wherever the *yetzer hara* has control, when the *kedusha* will elevate and take back control, the *yetzer hara* gets tied up in chains for the *kedusha* to take revenge...

**Moshe** Rabbeinu was chosen to be the first redeemer. When he was born, the *yetzer hara* sought him out intensely... His mother, Yocheved, weaved for him a basket and hid him in the Nile River.

**The** rest of the story is already known... Paraoh's daughter, Batya, took him out of the basket, cared for him, and raised him in the palace...

**Even** though Moshe Rabbeinu was prepared for redemption, to

take Am Israel out of Egypt, since he was under Egyptian control, he couldn't leave Egypt of his own will and was thus forced to flee...

When someone is under the control of impurity, it's impossible to escape leisurely, only by completely fleeing and escaping. Only after fleeing from exile can someone return and subdue the impurity that had originally controlled them.

**Therefore,** Moshe Rabbeinu, who was chosen to be the leader who would redeem Am Israel, was first forced to flee Egypt, and only then would he return and begin the process of redemption for Am Israel...

# **Two Stages To Redemption**

**HaRav** Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l writes<sup>12</sup> that when Hashem wanted to redeem Am Israel from the exile of Egypt, He redeemed them in two stages...

**Stage** 1 — By means of Am Israel fleeing from Egypt, as it says, "The people had fled" (Shemot 14:5). Am Israel

left Egypt by fleeing. They weren't redeemed slowly or leisurely.

**Stage** 2 – By means of leaving, as it says, "It was at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, and on that very day all of Hashem's regiments (Bnei Israel) left the land of Egypt" (Shemot 12:41).

Parashat Behar - Two Stages To Redemption

**But** we must understand why Am Israel had to go through the stage of fleeing from Egypt, for Paraoh had already told them, "Go out from amidst of my people!" (Shemot 12:31)...

The answer is that when the time arrived for Am Israel to be redeemed from the exile of Egypt, they were, however, immersed in the 49th level of impurity. They weren't able to escape the harsh impurity of Egypt that imbued them. Therefore, they were obligated to flee Egypt in order to succeed in escaping.

Yirmiyahu HaNavi said, "Hashem, [You are] my Strength and my Stronghold, ימְנוּסִי (and my Refuge) in a day of trouble" (Yirmiyahu 16:19) — "יִמְנוֹסִ" comes from the word "מְנוֹסִ" (to flee).

**That** is, there's a certain spiritual *avodah* that's in the form of fleeing. When a person knows that they're greatly immersed in the side of impurity, and it won't be easy for them to escape, the only

way for them to succeed in escaping is if they do so in the way of fleeing.

Since Am Israel were immersed in the severe impurity of Egypt and were unable to free themselves, they had to flee! However, this is only good as a beginning. One should not be satisfied with just fleeing, for true *teshuva* is not done under pressure. Any *teshuva* that is done with coercion or pressure can only last two or three weeks, possibly a month, but then it'll all collapse. Thus Am Israel had to go through stage 2, leaving slowly and with thoughtfulness.

**Many** people have done *teshuva* in the past under pressure, but before long, they stopped putting on tefillin... Therefore, *teshuva* should be done with reason, not frantically. While we were in Egypt, we had no sense of reason. We were engrossed in idol worship and all kinds of abominations. Thus we did *teshuva* hastily, but after we merited receiving the Torah and were completely purified, everything was done out of reason

# ..... PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL .... 17

Parashat Behar - Two Stages To Redemption

and good judgment, as the Ba'al HaTanya writes, 13 "The mind rules over the heart."

**Always** do things with reason, with logic, not with emotions. First and foremost, use your brain. And, of course, reason should always be truthful, not distorted. When *teshuva* is done in this manner, it'll have perpetual existence. But when *teshuva* is accompanied by depression that stems from harsh *musar* discussions, it's a sign that the *teshuva* derives from the *yetzer* hara.

Many Ba'alei Teshuva later returned to their previous ways, or their children didn't continue on their path because their teshuva derived from sadness and was done under pressure. When teshuva stems from the yetzer hara, it always breaks down the person. But teshuva that stems from kedusha only uplifts and brings joy. It in no way crushes the person.

True *tzaddikim* never break.

It's said that once, several of the Alter Rebbe's *chassidim* sat in a meeting. One of the *chassidim* stood up and said that they had recently brought the Alter Rebbe a pure silver tobacco tin. The Rebbe said, "Thank you," and then broke the lid of the tin and used it as a mirror to see if he had placed his head tefillin in the proper place.

**When** this story reached the ears of the Alter Rebbe's grandson, Tzemach Tzedek. immediately responded, "It's not possible that Grandpa broke the tin's lid because Grandpa would never break anything, nor himself nor others. Rather, Grandpa simply took out the pin that connected the lid to the tin and used the lid as a mirror, but he certainly did not break it." The Alter Rebbe was not irritable. He would not break people's hearts because no one would be able to remain a Ba'al Teshuva when using such a method! If you're capable of shaming a person in your lecture, your situation isn't good.

Parashat Behar - Your True Mission

**Also,** if you're going to speak harsh things about people who aren't Torah observant, you should

know that this causes great sorrow to Hashem. 14 Rather, always try to find the good within Am Israel... 15

#### **Your True Mission**

**Am** Israel stand at the foot of Mount Sinai. Hashem assigns a task to Moshe Rabbeinu, "Ask Bnei Israel if they want to want to receive My Torah and its mitzvot."

**Moshe** Rabbeinu approaches the people and asks them. This was

the response, "All the people responded in unison, and said, 'All that Hashem has spoken, we will do.' Moshe returned the words of the people to Hashem" (Shemot 19:8).

**Rebbe** Yehuda Aryeh Leib Alter writes<sup>16</sup> that the intention

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**14. See** the incident in Ketubot 111a – Rabbi Yochanan said to Rabbi Elazar, "Hashem isn't pleased that you said this about ordinary Jews..."

**15. A** Jewish barber with a large forelock, as was the custom of the gentiles, once passed by the home of the *tzaddik*, Rebbe Levi Itzchak of Berditchev, on the eve of Rosh Hashanah. Rebbe Levi Itzchak called him over and asked him, "Why do you have a forelock." The barber replied, "Since many of my clients are ministers, noblemen, and other high-class people, I have to make a good impression on them."

**The** *tzaddik* said to him, "I'll give you a *zehuv* (about \$5,000) if you cut off the forelock." The barber didn't agree. The *tzaddik* added another *zehuv* (about \$10,000), but he still didn't agree. Even when he raised it to ten *zehuvim* (about \$50,000), the barber still stood his ground.

**Rebbe** Levi Itzchak then offered him twenty *zehuvim* (about \$100,000), which was an enormous sum in those days, but the barber still shook his head, "No." The *tzaddik* then said to him, "If you cut off your forelock, I promise you *Olam HaBah*." When the barbe heard this, he immediately took scissors out of his pocket and cut off the forelock.

**Rebbe** Levi Itzchak raised his eyes and hands to heaven and screamed, "Master of the world! Look how great the *emuna* of your people is in You, even the simplest of them! How much time and effort does a person have to put into attaining one *zehuv*, all the more so until they attain twenty *zehuvim*, and yet what he didn't agree to do for twenty *zehuvim*,

he agreed to do for Olam Habah!"

- Sippurei Chassidim – Moadim (p. 18).

# ..... PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL .... 19

Parashat Behar - The Hidden Treasure

of Am Israel in saying, "All that Hashem has spoken, we will do," was as follows... We know that Hashem's will is that human beings bring about the *tikkun* and ascend all of creation, and we are willing to be His emissaries to carry out the mission. Since we are all standing here now, we accept

this upon ourselves willingly and wholeheartedly!"

**By** means of accepting the mission, they were privileged to be told at Mount Sinai, "I am Hashem Elokecha" (Shemot 20:2), for then Am Israel merited ascending above all the boundaries of nature to be only under the dominion of the Creator Himself.

#### The Hidden Treasure

**The** event at Mount Sinai concluded. Moshe Rabbeinu ascended to heaven to bring down the Torah, and there, the angels went to war with him. Thus the Gemara tells...<sup>17</sup> When Moshe ascended on High to receive the Torah, the ministering angels said before Hashem, "Master of the Universe, what is a mortal human being doing here among us?" Hashem said to them, "He came to receive the Torah." The angels said before Him, "The Torah is a hidden treasure that was concealed by You 974 generations before the

creation of the world, and You seek to give it to flesh and blood?"

**HaRav** Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l explains this Gemara as follows...<sup>18</sup>

When Moshe Rabbeinu ascended to heaven to bring the Torah down to earth, the guardian angels vehemently opposed it and asked Hashem for the Torah to remain in heaven.

It didn't bother the angels that the revealed aspect of the Torah would descend to earth. Their argument with Moshe was

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**<sup>16.</sup> Sfat** Emet (Yitro - 5640).

<sup>17.</sup> Shabbat 88b.

<sup>18.</sup> Imrei Noam (Lag BaOmer, Maamar 5).

#### Parashat Behar - Destruction

primarily about the concealed aspect of the Torah. Since this part of the Torah was entrusted to the soul of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai (Rashbi), the angels essentially came to prevent the descent of Rashbi's holy soul into the world.

**But** all the efforts of the angels were in vain. Moshe overcame them with his great power and snatched this holy soul from their hands, as hinted in the verse, "You

ascended on High and took a שֶׁבִּי (captive)" (Tehillim 68:19) – "שֶׁבְּי" (Shimon bar Yochai). Also, the other Rabbis who continued the path of Rashbi and passed on the secrets of the Torah in subsequent generations are alluded to in the word "שֶׁבִי" an acronym for אַבָּר שָׁלֹמה (Itzchak bar Shlomo – the Arizal), יַּצְּחָק בַּר יַצְּחָק (Shalom bar Itzchak – the Rashash), and last but not least, אורי הייים איים בייים בייים בייים איים בייים ב

ben Sarah – the Baal Shem Tov).

#### Destruction...

In the 89th chapter of Tehillim, the kingdom of the house of David is described, where it says, "It will be established forever like the moon" (Tehillim 89:38). Rebbe Yoel Baal Shem clarifies the verse as follows...<sup>19</sup>

**The** kingdom of the house of David is likened to the moon, for just as the moon shines brighter day by day until it shines entirely

on the 15th day of the month, so too the kingdom of the house of David, which began from Avraham Avinu, grew and shone brighter until it reached the 15th generation, the generation of Shlomo HaMelech, for in his days, *Elokut* (Divinity) shone openly, and the *Beit HaMikdash* was built...<sup>20</sup>

**The** Ramchal goes on to write that in that blessed period Am

#### ··· Wellspring of Wisdom ···

**19. Bnei** Issachar (Chodesh Nisan, Ma'amar 2). **20. He** continues and writes that just as the moons light, from the 15th onwards, decreases, so too from Rechavam (the son of Shlomo HaMelech) to Tzidkiyahu, was

15 generations that grew darker day by day. And since Tzidkiyahu, the 15th generation, arrived, darkness prevailed, "And Tzidkiyahu's eyes were blinded" (Melachim II 25:7)...

# .... PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL .... 21

Parashat Behar - The Two Paths

Israel merited having all the wisdom of the Torah and its secrets revealed before their eyes, clear as day. There was absolutely no darkness, everything they learned immediately entered their hearts forever...

**But** since their knowledge of *Elokut* was lucid, they were dealt with more meticulously. Thus, when their sins increased, the *Beit HaMikdash* was destroyed!

#### The Two Paths

**The** Ramchal writes that just as in the redemption from Egypt, Bnei Israel first had to flee and then leave, so too in the future redemption, they'll have to flee first. Fleeing, which is the secret of purity of the soul, is possible either through suffering or through *teshuva*...

**However,** the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash caused evil and darkness to cling to the souls of Am Israel, making *teshuva* much more difficult for them... Therefore, they would have to suffer.

**But** Hashem desires that Am Israel be redeemed with mercy. He, therefore, sent the soul of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai down to the world to compose the *Zohar HaKadosh*. He gave power

to the *Zohar* to be like Noach's ark, in which all who clung to it will be considered as if they have already gone through the first stage of redemption, fleeing from exile, and will be saved from the birth pangs of Mashiach, and nothing will be left for them but the second stage, leaving exile...

**The** Ramchal writes that one of the greatest *tikkunim* done in this world was the *Zohar HaKadosh*. It was composed for the purpose of the redemption of Am Israel, as the *Zohar* itself says, <sup>21</sup> "Since Am Israel will in the future taste from the Tree of Life, which is this book, the *Zohar*, they will leave exile with mercy."

**Now,** we'll tell a little bit about Rabbi Shimon...

Parashat Behar - Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai

#### Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai

**HaRav** Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l told the following...<sup>22</sup>

Rashbi's father, Yochai, who was from the tribe of Yehuda, was one of the *Gedolei HaDor* of his generation. He was also wealthy, respected, and close to the monarchy. His wife, Sarah, was also highly respected for being a descendent of the Hillel HaZaken. Unfortunately for the couple, however, many years after their marriage, they still hadn't succeeded in bringing a child to the world.

**After** many years Yochai realized that his wife was barren. He then thought about divorcing her so that he could have children and decided to approach a matchmaker to look for a modest wife from a good family for him.

A short time later, his wife, Sarah, found out about his plans, but in her humility, she said nothing about it to her husband. Instead, Sarah took upon herself

fasts and increased in prayers and giving *tzedakah* until Hashem would have mercy on her and send her salvation.

**Every** day, being alone in her home, she would beg Hashem to bless her with a holy child and thus save her from divorce. After shedding countless tears, Hashem heard her cry.

On the night of Rosh Hashanah, Yochai had a miraculous dream. He saw himself standing in a vast forest teeming with trees, some bearing fruit and some barren. He sat, leaning against one of the barren trees. When Yochai looked up, he saw a giant man with a terrifying appearance, carrying on his shoulder a huge jug of water. The man went through the whole forest and watered some of the barren trees but also skipped over some of the barren trees and didn't water them.

**When** the man reached the tree on which Yochai was leaning,

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**22. Imrei** Noam (Lag BaOmer, Maamar 1); The story is brought in *Nachalat Avot* (Vol. 3, Derush 146).

#### Parashat Behar - Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai

he took a dish filled with pure water out of his pocket, watered the tree with it, and blessed it. Suddenly, Yochai witnessed how that blessing was fulfilled, and the little amount of water quickly became abundant and completely covered the earth surrounding the tree on which he was leaning. Immediately, the tree grew a profusion of large, juicy apples, surrounded by fresh leaves that wafted pleasant scents into the distance.

**Yochai** was very happy about the sight he had seen in his dream and woke up with great joy. As soon as he awoke, a verse abruptly left his mouth. "He settles the barren woman in her house, a happy mother of children, Halleluyah" (Tehillim 113:9). He hurried to tell his wife about the wonderful dream he had and added, "I think the correct interpretation of the dream is very simple. The forest is our world, and the trees are the women. The trees that bore fruit are the women that bear children, and the barren trees are those barren women who haven't yet had children...

The giant man who watered the trees is the angel in charge of gestation, and those barren trees that the man watered are the barren women for whom it was decided in heaven on Rosh Hashanah to grant children. On the other hand, the barren trees that the man skipped over are the barren women who were decreed to remain barren..."

**Yochai** continued, "And you, my dear wife, are the tree on which I leaned on. The fact that the man watered you is a sign that you merited being mentioned favorably in heaven. They watered you from the wellspring of blessing to give birth to *tzaddikim* and Talmidei Hachamim!

**Although** there's one thing that I didn't understand in my dream... Why were all the other trees watered by the angel from the jug of water on his shoulder, and only our tree was watered from the little dish in his pocket?"

**The** couple decided to turn to their holy Rabbi, the *Tanna*, Rabbi Akiva, and tell him all the details of the dream, and he, with

Parashat Behar - Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai

his *Ruach HaKodesh*, will reveal to them the correct interpretation.

After Rosh Hashanah concluded, they went to Rabbi Akiva together, and Yochai told him all the details of his dream. Indeed, Rabbi Akiva interpreted the dream for them exactly as Yochai himself interpreted it.

**However,** Rabbi Akiva also explained why their tree was watered from the dish and not from the jug of water like all the other trees...

"Know, dear Yochai. Your dream is a parable for the women who bear children and those who are barren. Your wife, Sarah, is one of those who were destined to be barren and can never give birth under any circumstances. However, the numerous prayers and many tears that your wife shed before Hashem are what gave her merit and changed her from being barren to being able to bear children. The dish with the pure water you saw in your dream is the dish in which Hashem collected your wife's pure tears and, from them, watered her and gave her the ability to give birth to children. This year, with the help of Hashem, she will give birth to a son who will illuminate the eyes of Am Israel with his wisdom and good deeds!"

**Yochai** and his wife were ecstatic at the words of Rabbi Akiva and went home in peace.

Shortly after, indeed, Sarah, Yochai's wife, gave birth to a baby boy, and the whole house was filled with light from the majesty and splendor that radiated from him. All who saw him knew that he was blessed and that he would shine a great light upon Am Israel. On the day of his brit (circumcision), his parents prepared a lavish feast and distributed ample tzedakah. They called him "שָׁמְע" (Shimon) after the fact that Hashem שִׁמְע (heard) the cries and prayers of his mother.

**From** the day of his birth, his parents were very careful to guard him from anything profane and to raise him with the utmost holiness and purity. Already from the time the tender child began to speak, his parents accustomed him to speak

# ..... PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL (So... 25

Parashat Behar - The Escape

only things of *kedusha*. When he was five years old, they took him to study Torah and enrolled him in the school set up by Rabban Gamliel in Yerushalayim. There, he became

an ever-strengthening fountain of Torah, until he grew up and became one of the greatest holy *Tannaim* of his generation, the *Tanna HaEloki*, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

# The Escape

Hashem wanted Rashbi to have a large portion in the future redemption and thus privileged him with composing the *Zohar HaKadosh*. However, since Am Israel were at that time under Roman rule, Rashbi had to first flee and then return in order to escape the control of the Romans, just like Moshe Rabbeinu, who first fled and then escaped from under the control of impurity.

**This** is how the *Gemara* describes the story of his escape...<sup>23</sup>

**Once,** the holy *Tannaim*, Rabbi Yehuda, Rabbi Yossi, and Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai sat together, and with them also sat Yehuda ben Gerim, who was a *talmid chacham* but wasn't careful enough with his mouth. While Rabbi Yehuda praised the deeds of the Romans and Rabbi Yossi

didn't express his opinion on the matter, Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai condemned their deeds with full force. Yehuda ben Gerim went and related their words to his family, and slowly, from one person to another, they reached the monarchy, which in turn decreed to kill Rashbi for condemning them.

**For** that reason, Rashbi fled with his son Rabbi Elazar to a cave and hid there for thirteen years. Hashem performed a great miracle and created a carob tree for them as a source of food and a spring for drinking and bathing. In that cave, they toiled in Torah day and night with immense *mesirut nefesh* (self-sacrifice).

**Since** they had no change of clothes and feared that they would wear out over time, they

Parashat Behar - The Escape

would remove them every day, bury themselves in the ground up to their neck, and then engage in Torah study. Only during *tefillot* would they wear their clothes.

It's not hard for any sane person to understand what sorrow a person hiding in a cave goes through, eating only carobs, covering their entire body in dirt all day, etc., and not for a few days or weeks, but rather for thirteen years, including *Shabbatot* and *Chagim* and without any vacations. This type of grief is inconceivable, unbearable, and cannot be described in words...

**Nevertheless,** this immense sorrow didn't prevent Rashbi and his son from toiling in Torah day and night with great diligence and with unparalleled *mesirut nefesh*.

In the merit of their efforts and exertion in Torah study, despite the many hardships and the anguish that accompanied it, they were privileged from heaven for Eliyahu HaNavi to be revealed to them in the cave, and he would teach them the deepest, most hidden secrets of

the Torah that had never been revealed to anyone before. Rashbi began to elevate high up his spiritual ladder until he merited attaining attainments that are above any human intellectual ability...

**Chazal** sav<sup>24</sup> that after the of Rashbi's period "escape" ended, the time for "leaving" arrived. Rashbi left the cave with the tools worthy of bringing the redemption... Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair, his father-in-law, then met with him and took him to the bathhouse to clean him. There he saw that his flesh was full of fissures, puss, and blood. Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair was so in sorrow at the sight that he broke down and wept profusely. He said to Rashbi, "Woe is me that I have seen you like this." Rabbi Shimon replied, "Praiseworthy are you that you have seen me like this, for if you had not seen me like this, you wouldn't have found me like this."

**That** is, all the phenomenal wisdom that was revealed to me, all the lofty attainments that I attained, and all the immense

# PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL (27)

Parashat Behar - Studying The Zohar

levels that I reached, all of it was in the merit of the sorrow that I went through for the Holy Torah during those years that I was in the cave...

**The** Ramchal writes that we find that the fleeing of Rashbi created a reality of the ark, which was the Zohar HaKadosh which comprises all the souls of Am

Israel. It was then considered a general "fleeing" for all of Am Israel until, at the end of days, they would need nothing but to "leave." This is what is said, "For you shall not leave with haste, nor by fleeing, for Hashem will go before you" (Yeshaya 52:12)...

# **Studying The Zohar**

Yoram HaRav Michael Abargel zt"l writes25 that when reading the Zohar HaKadosh, even if you don't understand anything, it elevates your soul and purifies it from all filth, even the most severe, as Rebbe Moshe Chaim Ephraim of Sudilkov writes,26 "The words of the Zohar HaKadosh are capable of purifying the soul even if someone doesn't understand them at all." This is comparable to a person who entered a perfume store. Even though they didn't buy anything, they left with a good smell.

**It's** told that once, Rebbe DovBer, the son and successor of the Alter Rebbe, asked his assistant, who was a very simple Jew, "What do you enjoy studying more, Mishnayot or the Zohar?" The assistant replied, "Even though I understand the Mishna and don't understand the Zohar at all, I enjoy the study of Zohar more." Rebbe DovBer explained to him, "Indeed, the soul enjoys studying the Zohar *HaKadosh* more because it purifies and elevates it, and even though it seems that you don't understand what's written, that isn't true because your soul understands what it's learning."

**The** gematria of twice the word יוֹסֵף (Yosef) is the same gematria as twelve times הוי"ה (the

#### ---- Wellspring of Wisdom 🗫--

<sup>25.</sup> Imrei Noam (Lag BaOmer, Maamar 5).

<sup>26.</sup> Degel Machane Ephraim (Shir HaShirim).

Parashat Behar - Studying The Zohar

name of Hashem), as well as the gematria of the word שָׁבִי which is the initials of the name of the holy Tanna Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai אָמְעוֹן בֵּּר יוֹחָאי) the author of the Zohar. This implies that reading and learning the Zohar HaKadosh is very beneficial in helping a person guard their kedusha for the entire twelve hours of the day and the twelve hours of the night.

**At** the end of the Baba Sali's life, he moved to a larger house. Before the move, he asked the Rebbetzin if any furniture had been taken into the new house yet. The Rebbetzin replied that they hadn't moved anything yet and that the moving truck would only arrive tomorrow. The Baba Sali warned his family not to move anything into the new house before placing his set of the Zohar HaKadosh in it, and if *chas v'shalom* they don't heed to his words, he won't move into the new house. In order for the Shechina to rest in the house, the first thing that must be placed within it, before anything else, is the Zohar HaKadosh.

**After** the horrifying Holocaust that claimed a third of our people, the

**Kabbalists** great took upon themselves many fasts in order for Hashem to reveal to them why the Middle Eastern Jews were saved by Hashem from the Nazis. After many fasts, Eliyahu HaNavi was revealed to them and told them that the reason was that the Middle Eastern Jews would regularly learn the Zohar HaKadosh and therefore tremendous protection from heaven.

**From** this, we can learn that when many troubles come upon us from all directions and surround us on all sides, there is nothing more capable of protecting yourself and your family than learning Zohar. Even if you haven't yet been privileged to study this book, in any case, it's obligatory for you to have it in your home, for the very fact that the Zohar is found in your home, an abundance of kedusha and protection is poured down on your house. A house that has the Zohar within it won't be harmed by anything in the world.

**Moreover,** whoever clings to the *Zohar HaKadosh*, they and their family will be redeemed with mercy, as it says in the *Zohar*,

# ... PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL (Source 29)

Parashat Behar - Shabbat Shalom!

"Since Am Israel will in the future taste from the Tree of Life, which is this book, the Zohar, they will leave exile with mercy."

#### Shabbat Shalom!

# The Pathway...

- 1. Parashat Bereshit opens with the account of the creation of the world, from the creation of light on the first day to the creation of man on the sixth day, and ends with the Shabbat, "Elokim blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, for on it He abstained from all His work. which Elokim had created to do" (Bereshit 2:3). The Ramchal, writes that the verse "Which Elokim had created to do" seals the creation of the world. Yet, the last words, "to do," are seemingly perplexing because "to do" is in the future tense. It should rather say, "Which Elokim had created and did..." The secret of this matter is that the six days of creation were only the beginning of the creation of the world. Creation itself didn't end.
- **2.** Hashem desired that the power to end the act of creation would be specifically in the hands of mankind, and thus they would receive reward for their deeds. Therefore, He created mankind with a Tzelem Elokim (Image of G-d), thus granting them the power, through their good deeds, to draw down blessing to all the worlds as well as elevate the worlds to their peak and thus ending the act of creation.

- 3. When the time arrived for Am Israel to be redeemed from the Egyptian exile, they were, however, immersed in the 49th level of impurity. They weren't able to escape the harsh impurity of Egypt that imbued them. Therefore, they were obligated to flee Egypt in order to succeed in escaping. That is, there's a certain spiritual *avodah* that's in the form of fleeing. When a person knows that they're greatly immersed in the side of impurity, and it won't be easy for them to escape, the only way for them to succeed in escaping is if
  - they do so in the way of fleeing.
- 4. Since Am Israel were immersed in the severe impurity of Egypt and were unable to free themselves, they had to flee! However, this is only good as a beginning. You should never be satisfied with just fleeing, for true teshuva isn't done under pressure. Any teshuva that is done with coercion or pressure can only last two or three weeks, possibly a month, but then it'll all collapse. Thus, Am Israel had to go through stage 2, leaving slowly and with thoughtfulness.
- **5.** Many people have done *teshuva* in the past under pressure, but before long, they

# The Pathway...

stopped putting on tefillin... Therefore, *teshuva* should be done with reason, not frantically. While we were in Egypt, we had no sense of reason. We were engrossed in idol worship and all kinds of abominations. Thus we did *teshuva* hastily, but after we merited receiving the Torah and were completely purified, everything was done out of reason and good judgment, as the Baal HaTanya writes, "The mind rules over the heart."

**6.** We must remember to always do things with reason, with logic, and not with emotions. First and foremost, use your brain. And, of course, reason should always be truthful, not distorted. When teshuva is done in this manner, it'll have perpetual existence. But when teshuva is accompanied by depression that stems from harsh *musar* discussions, it's a sign that the teshuva derives from the yetzer hara. Many Ba'alei Teshuva later returned to their previous ways, or their children didn't continue on their path because their teshuva derived from sadness and was done under pressure. When teshuva stems from the yetzer hara, it always breaks down the person. But teshuva that stems from kedusha only uplifts and brings joy. It in no way crushes the person. True *tzaddikim* never break.

**7.** This week, on the 18th of Iyar, was the *Hillulah* of Rabbi Shimon bar

Yochai. Rebbe Itzchak Isaac of Kamarna writes that every person should learn five pages of *Zohar* every day. This will significantly benefit them and as well as enlighten and purify their souls while abolishing the impurities that derive from their negative *middot* and lusts. So too, will they merit closeness to Hashem...

**8.** When many troubles come upon us from all directions and surround us on all sides, there is nothing more capable of protecting yourself and your family than learning *Zohar*. Even if you haven't yet been privileged to study this book, in any case, it's obligatory for you to have it in your home, for the very fact that the *Zohar* is found in your home, an abundance of *kedusha* and protection is poured down on your house. A house that has the Zohar within it won't be harmed by anything in the world

**9.** The Ramchal writes that one of the greatest *tikkunim* done in this world was the *Zohar HaKadosh*. It was composed for the purpose of the redemption. Moreover, whoever clings to the *Zohar HaKadosh*, they and their family will be redeemed with mercy, as it says in the *Zohar*, "Since Am Israel will in the future taste from the Tree of Life, which is this book, the *Zohar*, they will leave exile with mercy."

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# Shabbat Times Behar

9

20<sup>th</sup> of Iyar, 5782

City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	7:53 pm	9:00 pm	9:24 pm
Miami	7:44 pm	8:41 pm	9:15 pm
Los Angeles	7:33 pm	8:35 pm	9:05 pm
Montreal	8:05 pm	9:20 pm	9:38 pm
Toronto	8:23 pm	9:34 pm	9:55 pm
Jerusalem	7:12 pm	8:03 pm	8:56 pm

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From the Holy Words of HaRay Yoram zt"l

A home built on patience is filled with happiness and translates into a good life. Instead of fighting, everyone tries to understand one another and judges them favorably. Children who are raised in a home with parents who are patient will grow up happy, healthy, and always cling to Hashem and His Torah.



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