

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 70

**Ki Tetze** | Tzniyut - Modesty



# MESILLOT

## *Pathways to the Soul*

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly parasha  
by **Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l**

From the weekly lectures of his son,  
**Rabbi Israel Abargel shlita**

# ...PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL...

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Dedicated in Honor of  
Yonatan ben Tali  
and His Entire Family  
May he have success  
in all his endeavors, amen.

### Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets

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## Parashat Ki Tetze

### In the Spider's Web

**There** was once a young *bachur* who lived in Jerusalem and studied Torah day and night. When he met his future wife, he decided to stipulate with her that even after the wedding, he would continue to learn. Of course, she agreed, and they got married.

**After** the wedding, he continued to study, and his wife worked in a small business, making the money they needed to live without the need to work too hard. They gave birth to seven daughters, and the husband continued to learn without interruption...

**One** day, after his eldest daughter came of age, his wife approached him and said, "Until now, I let you learn, but now we have to marry off our daughter. Go and gather the money needed for it."

**The** husband knew his wife was right and began to prepare himself for a distant journey. As he

left the city, he didn't get far before he noticed an old man standing before him smiling cheerfully.

**The** old man then greeted him joyfully, "*Shalom Aleichem* Rabbi ! Why have you left your studies and set out to another city ?"

**He** answered him, saying, "What can I do ? I have seven daughters, and the oldest one needs to get married. Who will pay for the wedding if not me ? It's also a mitzvah !"

**The** old man replied, "What about the Torah ?"

**The** rabbi remained silent.

**The** old man continued and said, "It's money you need ? I'll give you whatever you lack as long as you return to your studies !" The old man then pulled out a thick leather wallet from his pocket and handed him ten thousand gold coins !

**The** rabbi returned home in good spirits and full of optimism.

**When** he returned home, his wife looked at him with uncertainty, "What are you doing home so early?!"

**He** immediately began to tell his wife everything that had happened between him and the old man outside the city. They married off their daughter, and from whatever was left of the money, they were able to live off comfortably while he continued his studies with great diligence.

**The** day arrived, and his second daughter reached the age of marriage. His wife again came and said to him, "There's a time for everything. The money ran out. Now's the time to bring more!"

**He** packed his bags and made his way out of town. Outside the town, he again met that same old man.

**"Where** are you headed?" asked the old man.

**"The** money ran out, and my second daughter has grown up."

**Again,** the old man took out his wallet and handed him a bundle of cash, "Just return to your learning!"

**He** took the money, returned home cheerfully, and married off his second daughter. The story repeated itself for the marriages of six of his daughters. As soon as he left the city, he met the old man who gave him money and ordered him to return to his studies.

**The** day arrived for his final daughter to get married. His wife approached him and said, "Go and return quickly. You don't even have to take anything with you!"

**He** immediately got up and left the city, knowing that he would be back home soon. When he reached the outskirts of the city, he looked in every direction but didn't see the old man. Thinking that maybe he sinned and didn't merit the help anymore, he began to cry. He continued on his travels, crying and walking. When he had almost arrived at the city that he had intending, he suddenly saw the old man standing with his arms crossed and smiling...

**He** hurried to him happily and exclaimed, “*Shalom Aleichem!*”

**The** old man answered him “Hello” passively.

**He** asked pleadingly, “Why did you leave me? I’m in great sorrow!”

“**What** do your problems have to do with me!” replied the old man.

**The** rabbi didn’t understand... “What have I done to be treated this way?”

**The** old man turned his face and said nothing.

“**Please!** Tell me your name so that I may at least thank you.”

**The** old man answered angrily, “Why do you need to know my name? Leave me alone!”

**The** rabbi suddenly became serious, and in an authoritative voice, he said, “I order you by the power of the Torah to reveal your identity!”

**With** no choice, the old man said, “I’m the *yetzer hara!*”

**Nervously**, the rabbi asked, “Why did you help me six times with money for the weddings of my daughters?!”

**The** *yetzer hara* stayed quiet and didn’t answer.

**The** rabbi again ordered him to answer.

**He** answered and said, “I passed through the land and saw a great city, peaceful and complacent, all its citizens complete in their *avodat Hashem*. The city had two *Beit Din*’s (Rabbinical courts). One dealt with the laws of *Issur and Heter*, and the other dealt with monetary laws. The judges overlooked all aspects of the city, fixed whatever needed to be fixed, taught Torah to the masses, and all the citizens listened to everything their rabbis said.”

“**How** did I overlook this city and not pay any attention to it until now,” said the *yetzer hara* as he continued to tell the story. “How did I allow them to have so much good without intervening?!”

“**I** immediately started to spin my web and plan their downfall...”

**At** first, I penetrated the personalities of the rabbis and took from them their humility... This caused each of them to begin to think and feel that they were better and more important than the other...

**While** I was busy with my plans, I suddenly noticed you approaching the city. I was afraid that you would catch what was going on and demand them to restore their humility. That's why I met you at the beginning of your journey and gave you money so that you would return home.

**I** continued my work and managed to cause disputes between the two courts. Each one stated that they were better than the other and deserved more respect. The citizens looked on in astonishment.

**You** then set out to marry off your second daughter. I rushed to set you back on your way home so that I could return to my work. This time I attacked each court separately and managed to cause the judges to fight between them, causing

each one to think that they deserved to be the head judge.

**When** you arrived for your fourth daughter, I had already been able to reach the point where after the judge had ruled his decision, the litigant would erupt against him and say, "Who put you in charge of us and gave you the right to choose between right and wrong!?"

**When** you set off for your fifth daughter, the citizens had already hated the rabbis but would still say hello to them in the streets.

**By** the sixth marriage, they had stopped saying hello to one another, but I was still afraid that they might turn back and you would bring peace between them.

**But** now, my work is complete. Since the people of the city no longer have wise rabbis to guide them, they stopped studying Torah and observing mitzvot. I trapped them in my web!

**As** far as I'm concerned, you can enter the city. You no longer can save them!"

**With** his last word, he disappeared...

**Shocked**, the rabbi quickly ran to the city, crying and praying to Hashem for help. When he arrived, he searched for the central synagogue, and when the citizens gathered, he ascended the *bimah* and stared at the crowd...

**“Please** listen to what I have to tell you ! I haven’t come for money, not even a penny. I only have a story to tell you. Now, please listen !” He

then began to tell them the whole story from beginning to end !

**“Know,”** he said. “You’ve been trapped and bound, confined and imprisoned, however, *only in a spider’s web*. Break free, and Hashem will be at your sides to support you !”<sup>1</sup>

**This** is a profound story, and its roots are planted deep in our parasha. But, in order to understand it, we’ll first have to preface...

## Hashems Gift to Yaakov Avinu

**His** entire life, Yaakov Avinu served Hashem with all his might. Yet, even though he devoted all his time to prayer and Torah, he couldn’t attain perfection until he

was given it as a gift through trials and tribulations.<sup>2</sup>

**When** Yaakov was ninety seven years old, after leaving the house of Lavan, he met Esav and then

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### Wellspring of Wisdom

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1. Maayan HaShavua - Devarim (p. 342).

2. **The** Gemara (Ketubot 67a) says, “*Lefum Gamla Shichna*” (According to the camel, its burden), meaning that even though the camel’s main purpose is to carry loads and people on its back, not all camels are equal. The larger the camel, the more that is demanded of it.

**What** Chazal wanted to teach us is that the higher and holier the soul of a

person is, the more their path is longer and windier... In order to gain perfection, they must first go through many trials and tribulations.

**Every** Jew who faces trials and tribulations, frequent wars with their wants and desires, and many difficulties in life must know that all this is only a testament to the great power that lies within them waiting to be revealed and break free...

**Parashat Ki Tetze - The Name "El" Shines on Every Jew**

continued on his way to Sukkot, where he stayed for eighteen months.

**He** then left Sukkot and moved to Shechem, bought a plot of land there, and built an altar, "He erected there an altar and called it *El Elohay Israel*" (Bereshit 33:20).

**At** the time that Yaakov Avinu built the altar, Hashem revealed himself to him and told

him that He wanted to give him a gift that the name "El" would shine on him and all of his descendants... !

**Hashem** continued and said, "From now on, you and your descendants will be called by the name Israel." Isra-El.

**Now** we just need to understand what this name "El" is...

**The Name "El" Shines on Every Jew**

**The** existence of all the worlds and their subsistence is brought about by the abundance of blessings that Hashem brings down into them.

**Also**, the blessing that descends into our world descends through the name "El," which is why we call Hashem "Eloha" (אלוה).

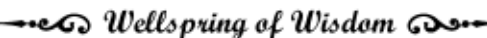
**When** Yaakov built the altar, Hashem appeared to him and called him "El."

**To** clarify, Hashem gave Yaakov a gift that the name "El" would shine on him and all of his

descendants, and in essence, all the abundance of blessings that descends into this world would forever come through them !

**For** this reason, *Chazal* said, "Every family in the world isn't blessed except for the sake of Israel. Even ships at sea aren't blessed except for the sake of Israel."<sup>3</sup>

**Rabbi** Itzchak said, "How great are Israel for Hashem brings them close to him, more than any other nation, and because of them He sustains and nourishes the entire world !"<sup>4</sup>



3. Yevamot 63a.

4. Zohar 152b.



**Thus**, because the name “El” shines in every Jew, the name through which abundance and

blessing are brought to the world, therefore a Jew is the source of all blessing!

### **You Are the Source of Blessing**

**HaRav** Yoram Michael Abargel zt”l once told us the following story that illustrates this point...<sup>5</sup>

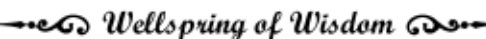
**An** elderly Jew born in Morocco told me that many years after immigrating from Morocco to Eretz Israel, he had the opportunity to return to Morocco to visit the tombs of tzaddikim. On the way, he also visited his hometown, where he lived in his youth. There he met an old friend who happened to be Arab and asked him about the state of life in his hometown.

**The** Arab answered him, “Honestly, and I’m not the only one saying this. Rather, the entire city agrees that from the day the last Jews left the city and immigrated to Israel, all blessing left the city. Every business collapsed, and the city’s economic

state dropped miraculously. We all know very well that the blessing of the entire world depends solely on the Jews,” the Arab concluded.

**I** remember that my father and grandfather would tell us about the years they lived in Morocco in the neighborhoods with the Arabs. They told us that every Arab who owned a field in which they would grow crops was careful to give the first crops that grew as a gift to their Jewish neighbors, not because they wholeheartedly liked them but because they clearly knew that by the Jew enjoying the fruits from the field, blessing would spread to their field because a Jew is the source of all blessing.

**But**, even though every Jew has the name “El” shine through



5. Imrei Noam (Parashat Vezot HaBeracha, Maamar 5).

them, sometimes it stops shining...

**Let's** now move on to this week's parasha...

### **The Secret of Am Israel**

**Our** parasha starts with the verse, “When you go out against your enemies, guard yourself from every evil thing” (Devarim 23:10). The meaning of the verse is that when we have to go to war against an enemy, we must beware of all sin and iniquity.

**The** Torah continues and warns, “For Hashem your G-d walks in the midst of your camp to rescue you and deliver your enemies before you. [Therefore,] your camp shall be holy, and nothing immodest should be seen among you, lest He turn away from you” (Devarim 23:15).

**From** here, we learn that not only do we have to beware of all transgressions, but also, and in particular, we must guard ourselves against immodesty.

**In** simple terms, we are told that Hashem will bring about our victory in battle, but only on the condition that we beware from all immodesty, for immodesty causes Hashem to leave our presence, “lest He turn away from you.”

**The** Torah continues and says...

”כִּי יִהְיֶה בְּךָ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִהְיֶה טָהוֹר  
מִקְרָה לְיִלָּה וַיֵּצֵא אֶל מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה לֹא  
יָבֹא אֶל תּוֹךְ הַמַּחֲנֶה”<sup>6</sup>

**This** is how Rebbe Aryeh Leibish Halberstam explained the verse...<sup>7</sup>

**Every** Jew has the holy name אֵל (El) shine through them. However, when a Jew sins and goes down the wrong path and ruins their modesty, then this holy name is overturned and made into the name לֹא (Lo),

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*~ Wellspring of Wisdom ~*

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**6.** “If there is a man among you who is not pure [because of] a nocturnal incident, he must go out of the camp; he may not enter into the midst of the

camp” (Devarim 23:11). And, only after that man is cleansed, can he return into the camp.

**7.** Aryeh Shaag (Vol. 1, p. 316).

Parashat Ki Tetze - War Time

which is the name of an impure  
*klippah*.

**The** Torah taught us this secret in this verse... “If there is a man among you who is not pure” (Devarim 23:11) -

”כִּי יִהְיֶה בְּךָ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִהְיֶה טָהוֹר”  
For they have strayed from the path of purity and clung to the path of impurity controlled by the name לֹא.

“**He** must go out of the camp”<sup>8</sup>  
- Because he caused Hashem to leave him and damaged the name

El that shines through him, causing it to leave the camp.

“**He** may not enter into the midst of the camp”<sup>9</sup> – In its place, the name Lo will come into the camp.

**Basically**, the name El shines through every Jew only when they stay within the bounds of modesty. However, when a Jew violates the bounds of modesty, then the name אֵל (El) leaves them and becomes לֹא (Lo)...

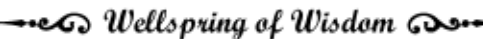
**War Time**

**As** we already said, in our parasha, the Torah teaches us that when Am Israel is forced to go to war with their enemies, they need not fear nor worry !

**Even** though the enemy may have a massive number of trained soldiers, state-of-the-art weapons, and they’re ready to attack, we have nothing to fear because

Hashem goes before us, guards us, saves, and protects us !

“**For** Hashem your G-d walks in the midst of your camp to rescue you and deliver your enemies before you. [Therefore,] your camp shall be holy, and nothing immodest should be seen among you, lest He turn away from you” (Devarim 23:15).



8. **The** verse literally states אֵל (El) must leave the camp –  
”וְיָצָא אֵל מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה”

9. **The** verse literally states לֹא (Lo) will enter into the camp –  
”לֹא יָבֵא אֵל תוֹךְ הַמַּחֲנֶה”

**Parashat Ki Tetze - Modesty - A Way of Life**

**“I** will deliver your enemies before you” - Instead of having to run after our enemies, Hashem will put them before us, and they will stumble before us in fear.

**“Your** camp shall be holy” - The condition for all this is the holiness in our camp. When there is holiness in the camp, Hashem will go out before us, and when Hashem is with us, there’s nothing to worry about! Danger begins only when our holiness is impaired...

**“Nothing** immodest should be seen among you, lest He turn away from you” - As soon as we lose our modesty, Hashem will disappear from within us... And if Hashem isn’t with us, there’s nothing that we can do...

**Therefore**, we all need to take it upon ourselves to act modestly in every aspect of our lives, and thanks to this, Hashem will never leave our sides!

**Now** let’s learn what modesty really is...

**Modesty - A Way of Life**

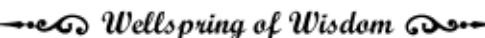
**The** world tends to attribute the concept of “modesty” to the way someone dresses, which is true, however, it’s only one of the many elements of modesty. The truth is, the concept of modesty is multifaceted and touches on many matters.

**Modesty** is a way of life...

**The** general rule is that modesty means not to stand out in any way.

**One** of the main character traits of Am Israel is their modesty. It’s what testifies that we’re the children of Avraham, Itzchak, and Yaakov. Like the Gemara says, “Anyone without shame, it’s for sure that their ancestors didn’t stand by Har Sinai.”<sup>10</sup>

**Rabbeinu** Bechaye wrote that Hashem created the entire world and gave us His Torah all



so that we would embrace the *middah* of modesty.<sup>11</sup>

**In** the merit of our modesty, Hashem did all the miracles for us when we left Egypt!

**There** are many people who keep the mitzvot and avoid transgressions just because they feel embarrassed... If they were to remove their embarrassment, they

would leave the Torah entirely and do whatever they felt like doing, eventually ending up in very dark places... Just like the prophets rebuked Am Israel, “They didn’t feel shame, nor did they feel embarrassed” (Yirmiyahu 6:15)...

**From** all these sources, we see that shame, embarrassment, and humility are also part of modesty... and we’ll explain...

### **Modesty - Not to Stand Out in Any Way**

**The** following is an excerpt from our book *Chelev Haarets*...<sup>12</sup>

**It** should be noted that modesty is divided into two parts: Avoiding bad and doing good.

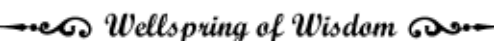
**1.** Avoiding bad deals with guarding yourself not to stand out or attract attention in any way or situation at all. This applies both to men and women.

**2.** Doing good deals with living a life of simplicity and lack of pretension at all times and in

every place. Even when doing something great for the good of all of Am Israel, no one recognizes or notices their deeds at all.

**All** of our actions, in every matter, should be calm, concealed, discreet, and as modest as possible. Even if you were blessed with many great talents, you must conceal them as much as possible, like what’s written, “The glory of Hashem is something hidden” (Mishlei 25:2).

**By** way of parable, someone who Hashem has blessed with



11. Kad HaKemach.

12. Chelev Haarets (Vol. 2, p. 143).

## Parashat Ki Tetze - Modesty in Thought

great wealth, silver, gold, diamonds, and rare stones certainly wouldn't place them in a window, visible to everyone. Rather they would hide them from all eyes...

**The** same with *avodat Hashem*. All of our actions should be synonymous with the verse, "Walk

discreetly with your G-d" (Micha 6:8). Meaning that whoever fulfills their *avodat Hashem* discreetly is always with Hashem. According to the value of something is the amount of concealment it receives.

**Let's** now start with the basis of modesty, not to stand out or attract attention, and this takes place in thought, speech, and action...

### Modesty in Thought

**On** the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nissan, 2448 years from the creation of the world, Am Israel left Egypt.

**They** stocked up on matzot and began their journey in the desert... For thirty days, they ate the matzot, and then, one day, in the heart of the desert, the matzot ran out!

**The** pressure rose immensely, "The entire congregation of Israel complained against Moshe and Aharon in the desert... You brought us out to this desert to cause this entire congregation to die of starvation" (Shemot 16:2-3).

**Moshe** Rabbeinu looked up to heaven, and Hashem revealed Himself... "Go tell them that from now on, they will get *mann*."

**Moshe** repeated the words of Hashem to Am Israel and then added, "What are we? Your complaints aren't against us but against Hashem" (Shemot 16:8), and Rashi interpreted the words "What are we" as "What importance do we have."

**Moshe** and Aharon merited modesty of thought. Although everything they did was out of divine enlightenment, no good deed they did caused them to let their thoughts take over and demand honor or glory.

**Everything** they did was completely according to the will of Hashem, and immediately afterward, they would hide their

good deeds, even from themselves. They always looked at themselves as if they were starting their *avodat Hashem* right now, and

the deed they wanted to do was their first good deed.

**This** is real modesty of thought...

### The Torah - In the Hands of the Modest

**The** main measure of a person in the next world is according to the degree of modesty they have.

**Therefore**, the Torah can't dwell within, nor can it be obtained but by a humble and modest heart. This is the secret to success! And so, did the Rambam reveal to us...<sup>13</sup>

**Know**, someone who wants to obtain the crown of Torah must be diligent with two things:

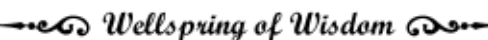
**A.** To study specifically in a *Beit Midrash*, for *Chazal* have said, "Whoever learns in a *Beit Midrash* will not hurriedly forget their learning.

**B.** To learn modesty and in private without being noticed by others.

**Therefore**, what did our ancestors and rabbis do? They would spend most of their nights studying Torah. The night is a time when the world is sleeping, the world is still, the world is peaceful... There's no noise. Banks don't work. Stores aren't opened. Everything is idle... Then, they would delve into the sea of Torah.

**HaRav** Yoram zt"l told us<sup>14</sup> that with noise and commotion, nothing is achieved.

**From** the day Am Israel began to be exposed to publications, exposed to the world, to computers and offices, things were never the same... Many homes were destroyed. Children strayed from the path of Torah and mitzvot. Am Israel began to fall apart. The



13. Mishneh Torah (Talmud Torah 3:12).

14. Betzur Yarom (Vol. 3, p. 218).

## Parashat Ki Tetze - Modesty in Speech

secret of Am Israel is modesty. When the walls of modesty were damaged, all outside forces were able to take over...

**This** is what happened during the Haskalah. That was such a great generation, the Rama of Pano, the Maharal of Prague, the Kli Yakar, the holy Shlah, and other greats of that generation. But suddenly, the Haskalah came... They said, "You can study Torah but also concentrate on achieving social status, rank, becoming

known and famous..." This caused countless damages that we're still dealing with until today...

**We** must remember that the key to success is modesty !

**As** we already said, modesty is a method, a line of thinking, and a way of life. Whoever has modesty, Hashem never moves from them. He's with them, side by side, hand in hand. Modesty is what carries us to all achievements !

### Modesty in Speech

**Modesty** in speech is also divided into two parts: Avoiding bad and doing good.

**The** first part, avoiding bad, means that your speech should be clean and that you never use rude or vulgar words.

**Our** mouths are what connect us to Hashem. We stand in prayer every day and say, "Heal us Hashem, and we will be healed, save us and we will be saved," asking for good health. "You bestow knowledge to man." "Return us," "Bless us," asking for

a livelihood... We ask Hashem for all our needs in prayer. Our mouths are the channel in which we draw down blessing from Hashem... If suddenly something unclean were to pass through that same channel... You can easily understand that there's a problem here.

**If** the pipe that carries our drinking water were for one hour to be mixed up with the pipe that carries our sewage water, even if the water company were to tell us that they completely cleaned and sterilized the entire pipe, none of



us would dare drink from it...

Why? Because it's dirty!

**Our** mouths are a pipe. Through this pipe, we draw down blessing, health, livelihood, life, family, knowledge, and everything we need... Everything goes through this pipe... Suddenly a bad word or forbidden speech... It's like putting a sewer in the pipe...

**The** second part – to speak words of *Hashgacha Pratit*, meaning, to associate everything with Hashem. For example, when getting a raise at work, you shouldn't praise your employer (of course, you should say thank you). You should first say, "Thank you, Hashem, for thinking about me and answering my prayers for a higher salary! Thank you for always giving me what I need!" By doing so, we learn to always associate everything with Hashem (for everything comes from Him), and by outcome we will also increase our emuna that Hashem is always watching over us.

**This** point is well characterized by Yosef HaTzaddik, who was a symbol of modesty and humility.

He received many gifts from Hashem. He was handsome, wise, and mighty. One day Hashem decided to put him through tough trials, and because of this, Yosef went through many difficult days, days of darkness, days of hardship, and suffering. He spent twelve years in prison, and even during those years, that same wicked woman who harassed him for a whole year in Potiphar's house continued to harass him there.

**After** thirteen years of suffering, in which he didn't fall even once, after thousands of trials and tribulations without stumbling even once, he is taken out of prison and brought to Paraoth. Surprised, he asks, "What happened?"

**And** they answer him, "Don't ask. Paraoth is disturbed by a dream he had."

**Okay...** Well, it's not respectable to stand before the king like this, filthy, twelve years without a shower, without a haircut...

**He** finally showered, got a haircut, got prepared... and...

**Parashat Ki Tetze - Modesty in Deed**

**Yosef** stands before Paraoh... Paraoh looks at him and says, “I heard that you can hear a dream and solve it” (Bereshit 41:15)...

**Yosef** looked back at Paraoh and calmly answered, “Not me, Hashem will answer the peace of Paraoh” (Bereshit 41:16)... “You think it’s me ! ?... I know nothing.” Yosef stands before Paraoh in a historic moment, a moment that will change his life forever. In another minute, he’ll either return to prison for the rest of his life or be released to freedom...

**To** rule over Egypt ? ! Who would have even thought of such a thing.. ?

**Paraoh** wanted to test Yosef... Normally when you praise someone,

they immediately stand up straight, pull back their shoulders, “Of course, it was all me, I did it all by myself” ... Paraoh tested Yosef, “I heard that you’re the best at solving dreams...” Paraoh expected to see Yosef change his attitude, to become big-headed... Instead, Yosef tells him, “Not me. From where am I supposed to know...”

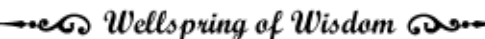
**Yosef** had to take into account that if he said, “I don’t know anything, you have the wrong person,” Paraoh would get angry, “Why did you bring him here ? ! Throw him back into prison !”

**However**, Yosef understood that the key to everything is modesty ! Yosef knew that this is the right way of life, and he succeeded !

**Modesty in Deed**

**In** parashat Vayetze, the Torah relates how Leah’s oldest son, Reuven, went out for a walk in the field, “And he found *Dudaim* in the field, and brought them to Leah his mother” (Bereshit 30:14).

**When** Rachel saw the *Dudaim* that Reuven brought to his mother, she asked her for some,<sup>15</sup> but to her surprise, Leah was in no hurry to give her any... Rather she yelled at her, saying, “You took my



15. *Dudaim* are known to be a *segula* for pregnancy.

husband, now you want to take my sons *Dudaim* ? !” (Bereshit 30:15).

**Wait** a minute... How could this be ? ! We already know that Yaakov only wanted to marry Rachel in the first place, and only because Lavan deceived him did he marry Leah. How then can Leah tell Rachel, “You took my husband ? !”

**More** so, *Chazal* describe how Rachel acted with selflessness when she found out about her father’s plan to marry Leah off to Yaakov instead of her. She did everything she could to help Leah get away with it... She even gave Leah the signs that Yaakov gave her so that Leah wouldn’t be humiliated in front of him. How could Leah forget such self-sacrifice by her sister Rachel ? How could she have the nerve to say the words, “You took my husband ?”

**Before** we answer this, let’s preface...

**In** all honesty, Leah loved her sister Rachel. However, she always wondered, how could it be that after everything Rachel gave up and after everything she

did for her, she still didn’t merit having children ?

**Leah** thought to herself that Rachel was probably being tested to see if she holds herself high and has feelings of satisfaction and pride for what she did...

**Leah** wanted to prove that her sister’s heart was pure and that she did everything without even once thinking about herself, rather only to help Leah. Being so, she decided to put her to the test...

**When** Rachel asked for the *Dudaim*, Leah looked up to heaven and said, “Hashem, if Rachel starts a fight with me, and says that the opposite is true, that I am the one who took *her* husband, then that is a sign that she still remembers what she did for me and that she’s arrogant because of it.

**But...** if Rachel stays silent and doesn’t answer me, that’s a sign that she’s already removed her good deed from her heart and never felt that because of it, she’s any better than anyone else. And, if so, she deserves children !”

**Parashat Ki Tetze - We Must Act**

**Leah** then turned to her sister and said angrily, “You took my husband!”

**Rachel** listened and didn’t say a word...

**That** same year Rachel gave birth to a son, Yosef.

**Every** one of us, no matter how observant, has done mitzvot and good deeds. We have all helped someone at one time or another. We have all given to charity in some way. Every one of us has our own pile of mitzvot... What we learn from Rachel, though, is that it isn’t enough just to do the right thing. It’s very likely that for many of our mitzvot, the thought popped up in our heads... “Did anyone notice what I did?”

**We** must learn from Rachel that every mitzvah must be solely for Hashem and to make him happy and not in order to

gain respect or appreciation from others...

**If** you’ve ever helped your friend, you shouldn’t remind them every time you see them or use it against them in any way. This only diminishes the mitzvah...

**Each** person should make every effort to hide their mitzvot and do them only with modesty and humility in order to please Hashem. Don’t be quick to go and tell everyone you know about the mitzvah that you just did. Sometimes it’s better to just keep it between you and Hashem.

**The** point of the mitzvot aren’t to show off or make yourself better than others... Hashem gave us the mitzvot in order to draw us closer to him, and only He knows who really is close to Him...

**We Must Act**

**Now** that we understand the importance of modesty, there are probably those that are

thinking to themselves, “Well, if modesty means hiding, let’s then go hide in a cave

and manage our lives from there.”

**But** that’s a bigger mistake than publicizing yourself!

**We** have to know that even though modesty means concealing, real modesty requires us to still act for the common and individual good of Am Israel.

**If** someone merited that Hashem blessed them with wisdom and they achieved receiving the title of *talmid chacham*, they have to toil tirelessly and nonstop in the Torah, yet this shouldn’t prevent them from going out to teach and draw others to Hashem and his Torah.

**Also**, someone who Hashem has blessed with wealth shouldn’t think to themselves, “If I contribute so much, everyone will come after my money.” Rather, they should give before even being asked. While people give one, they should give a hundred. This is the reason Hashem gave them wealth. This should all

be done to increase the honor of Hashem in the world and to spread His Torah worldwide. This is the way of the truly modest.

**These** principles of modesty must be taken by every one of Am Israel!

**You** arrive in a new neighborhood that doesn’t have a synagogue, do not say, “What can I do?” Instead, take action, and establish a synagogue! Even if they tell you that you don’t have the permits to build a new building, don’t fight them. Take a deep breath, gather everyone you know, and tell them, “Let’s open a synagogue!” Collect money, rent a house, take down some walls, and behold, you have a synagogue!

**In** 1999, my father did exactly this. A new neighborhood was built in Netivot. It was then called *Mishkenot Israel*. There was nothing there at that time. Opening a supermarket wasn’t in his ability, but a synagogue was. He rented an apartment, tore down

**Parashat Ki Tetze - Staying Strong**

a couple of walls, and opened a synagogue. He appointed my brother Chaim Yosef as the Rabbi. Only about fifteen years later did

synagogues begin to be built in the area...

**This** is the purpose of Modesty!<sup>16</sup>

**Staying Strong**

**With** everything being said, we must take it upon ourselves to work on attaining this trait of modesty and use it to ultimately draw closer to Hashem. In the world we live in today, all of our surroundings fight against the trait of modesty, whether in thought, speech, action, or dress. We have drifted far from the

roots of modesty that our ancestors had implanted for us.

**Even** against all odds, must we work on achieving this fundamental trait that characterizes us as Jews, as Isra-El!

**Yet**, we must also remember that even if, G-d forbid, we fall or stumble, we must not despair.

— *~ Wellspring of Wisdom ~* —

**16. Once** a chassid asked Rebbe Shalom Dov Ber of Lubavitch, “What is a chassid?” The Rebbe replied, “A chassid is a lamplighter.”

**In** the past, lamplighters were employed to kindle the kerosene street lamps. The lamplighter would go around with a long pole and light the wick of every street lamp. So too, a chassid must light the soul of every Jew that they come in contact with.

**The** chassid pressed further, “What if they’re in an isolated desert or at sea?”

**“There** too must they light the lamp,” responded the Rebbe.

**“But**, I can’t see the lamp,” professed the chassid...

**“Ah**,” said the Rebbe, “This means that you aren’t yet a lamplighter.”

**The** chassid then asked, “How do I become a lamplighter...?”

**To** this, the Rebbe responded, “A person must begin with himself. They must leave behind their materialism and clean off. An unrefined person only sees the un-refinement of others. But, someone refined takes notice of only the refinement in others.

- Sefer HaSichot 5701 (p. 116).

Instead, we must get up and overcome whatever comes our way!

**HaRav** Yoram Michael Abargel zt”l said,<sup>17</sup> “We must know that every person in this world goes through both ups but also downs in their lives. Even tzaddikim go through certain

downs from time to time. However, our greatness is measured by the fact that we don’t remain down but manage to overcome the fall, and rise from it, and return even stronger than before...”

**Let’s** now return to the story that we started with...

### **Fall Seven Times, Stand Up Eight**

**When** the *yetzer hara* decided to destroy the city, he went after the modesty of thought of the sages, which ultimately led them to ruin their modesty of speech, and in return, the name “El” left them...

**From** then on, the road was paved for the *yetzer hara*, and he was able to come in and do whatever he wanted, so much so that he wasn’t afraid to reveal his plan to the rabbi.

**The** rabbi didn’t despair, though. He entered the city and revealed to them the source of their mistake... The desire to achieve social status and

become known and famous. But on the contrary, this desire only reveals a flaw in modesty.

**The** rabbi went on to say, “Do not despair, for it has already been said, ‘Seven times a tzaddik falls, and rises’ (Mishlei 24:16).”

**Every** Jew – “Your nation, everyone is a tzaddik” (Yeshaya 60:21) – has to contend with the trials and tribulations that are thrown at them, and the main thing is never to despair or give up!

**If** you just recognize your mistakes and return to your natural place, to Jewish modesty, you will

**Parashat Ki Tetze - Fall Seven Times, Stand Up Eight**

merit that the name “El” will also      you, it will be said, ‘Israel by you  
return to its natural place, and on      I am honored!’ (Yeshaya 49:3).”

**Shabbat Shalom !**



## *The Pathway...*

1. Every person has a purpose that they need to reach. But, in order to reach their purpose, they must first tread down the path that was paved specifically for them and know that in order to reach their goal, they must go through trials and tribulations. However, by doing so, they will ultimately achieve complete perfection and reach the purpose for which they were created.

2. Every Jew who faces trials and tribulations, frequent wars with their wants and desires, and many difficulties in life must know that all this is only a testament to the great power that lies within them waiting to be revealed and break free... All our hardships are only for our good and are what drive us forward.

. The world tends to attribute the concept of “modesty” to the way someone dresses, which is true, however, it’s only one of the many elements of modesty. The truth is, the concept of modesty is multifaceted and touches on many

matters. Modesty is a way of life... The general rule is that modesty means not to stand out in any way.

4. There are many people who keep the commandments and avoid transgressions just because they feel embarrassed... If there were to remove their embarrassment, they would leave the Torah entirely and do whatever they felt like doing, eventually ending up in very dark places... Just like the prophets rebuked Am Israel, “They didn’t feel shame, nor did they feel embarrassed” (Yirmiyahu 6:15)...

5. Modesty is divided into two parts: Avoiding bad and doing good. Avoiding bad deals with guarding yourself not to stand out or attract attention in any way or situation at all. This applies both to men and women. Do good deals with living a life of simplicity and lack of pretension at all times and in every place. Even when doing something great for the good of all of Am Israel, no one recognizes or notices their deeds at all.

*The Pathway...*

**6.** All of our actions, in every matter, should be calm, concealed, discreet, and as modest as possible. Even if you were blessed with many and great talents, you must conceal them as possible, like what is written, “The glory of Hashem is something hidden” (Mishlei 25:2).

**7.** The main measure of a person in the next world is according to the degree of modesty they have. Therefore, the Torah can’t dwell within, nor can it be obtained but by a humble and modest heart. Whoever has modesty, Hashem never moves from them. He’s with them, side by side, hand in hand. Modesty is what carries us to all achievements!

**8.** Our mouths are what connect us to Hashem. We stand in prayer every day and say, “Heal us Hashem, and we will be healed, save us and we will be saved,” asking for good health. “You bestow knowledge to man.” “Return us,” “Bless us,” asking for a livelihood... We ask Hashem for all our needs in prayer. Our mouths are the channel in which

we draw down blessing from Hashem... If suddenly something unclean were to pass through that same channel... You can easily understand that there’s a problem here.

**9.** Every one of us, no matter how observant, has done mitzvot and good deeds. We have all helped someone at one time or another. We have all given to charity in some way. Every one of us has our own pile of mitzvot... It isn’t enough, though, just to do the right thing. It’s very likely that for many of our mitzvot, the thought popped up in our heads... “Did anyone notice what I did?” We must learn that every mitzvah must be solely for Hashem and to make him happy and not in order to gain respect or appreciation from others...

**10.** Each person should make every effort to hide their mitzvot and do them only with modesty and humility in order to please Hashem. Don’t be quick to go and tell everyone you know about the mitzvah that you just did. Sometimes it’s better to just

*The Pathway...*

keep it between you and Hashem. Hashem gave us the mitzvot in order to draw us closer to him, and only He knows who really is close to Him...

**11.** With everything being said, we must take it upon ourselves to work on attaining this trait of modesty and use it to ultimately draw closer to Hashem. In the world we live in today, all of our surroundings fight against the trait of modesty, whether in thought, speech, action, or

dress. We have drifted far from the roots of modesty that our ancestors had implanted for us.

**12.** We must know that every person in this world goes through both ups but also downs in their lives. Even tzaddikim go through certain downs from time to time. However, our greatness is measured by the fact that we don't remain down but manage to overcome the fall, rise from it, and return even stronger than before...





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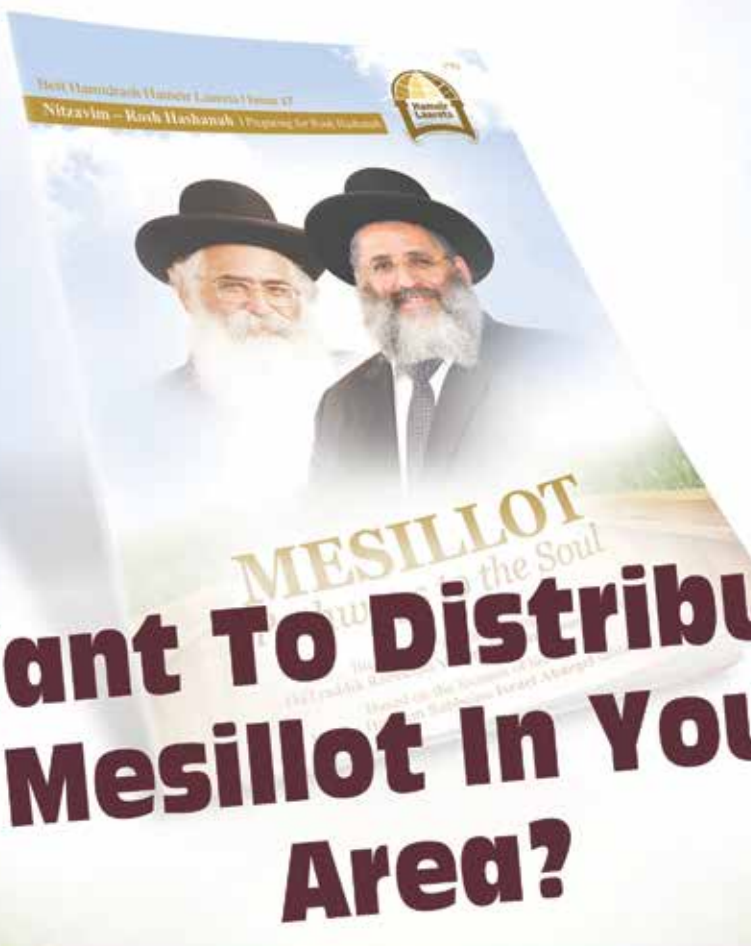
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# Shabbat Times

## Ki Tetze

14<sup>th</sup> of Elul, 5782

City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	6:56 pm	7:55 pm	8:26 pm
Miami	7:13 pm	8:05 pm	8:43 pm
Los Angeles	6:49 pm	7:44 pm	8:19 pm
Montreal	6:58 pm	8:00 pm	8:27 pm
Toronto	7:20 pm	8:21 pm	8:49 pm
London	7:13 pm	8:18 pm	8:39 pm
Jerusalem	6:17 pm	7:26 pm	8:12 pm
Tel Aviv	6:35 pm	7:23 pm	8:09 pm
Haifa	6:34 pm	7:23 pm	8:08 pm
Be'er Sheva	6:35 pm	7:24 pm	8:09pm

### Pathways to the Heart

*From the Words of  
HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l*

*Parenting should always  
be on the path of humility...*

*Anyone who behaves  
rudely, no one can tolerate  
them, not even their  
children tolerate them.*

*However, someone who  
acts humbly, everyone  
loves and respects them.*



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