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Haazinu | Torah Without Ulterior Motives





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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... PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL

Parashat Haazinu - It All Started Over A Bowl of Soup



It All Started Over A Bowl of Soup

In a kollel in a quiet Jerusalem neighborhood sat a small group of *avrecheim* hunched over their books, not wasting even a moment of their time. One day, during their afternoon break, one of the *avrecheim* decided to go home and eat lunch with his wife.

When he got home, his wife served him a hot bowl of soup, and he sat down to eat. He took a spoon full of soup and brought it to his mouth. As he took his first taste of the soup, he almost spit it out all over the table.

There was an abnormal amount of salt in the soup...

It was unbearable to eat. It was like his wife had taken water from the Dead Sea instead of from the faucet.

He didn't know what to do...

Without showing his wife any sign of what he had just gone

through, he put the spoon down and began to think...

To say something to his wife? No way! She'll get insulted. Not to eat the soup? She'll know something is wrong and still get offended.

He decided to suck it up and eat the soup. He sat there and ate the entire bowl of soup until there was nothing left...

As he got up from the table to head back to the kollel, he thanked his wife for the food and added, "You know, maybe next time you could pay a little more attention will cooking..."

The *yetzer hara* was jumping with joy!

"Yes! Yes! Not only did I manage to make him arrogant, now that he thinks he's also sensitive to other people's feelings, but I also managed to make him shoot an arrow right into his wife's heart!"

Parashat Haazinu - Another One in My Trap

Another One in My Trap

After Rebbe Simcha Bunim of Peshischa zt"l passed away, his disciple, Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, took leadership of his chassidim. Rebbe Menachem Mendel led them for many years, illuminating on the ways of their Rebbe and advancing them to new heights in their avodat Hashem.

After Rebbe Menachem Mendel passed away, many of his chassidim returned to their hometowns and formed groups of chassidim who continued together, the ways of their Rebbe.

This is the story of one of those groups... 1

This group formed itself around one of the foremost disciples of Rebbe Menachem Mendel zt"l, Aryeh Shoeg.

For many years they continued, under his leadership, the ways of their previous rebbes. As time went on, their leader, Aryeh

Shoeg, began to feel unwell, and his strength had begun to weaken.

One day, the chassidim heard that their leader's health had taken a turn for the worse, and he was now lying in bed with no strength to get up.

In the beginning, Rebbe Aryeh tried to laugh off his weakness and thought to himself that he was just being lazy. However, his sickness continued to worsen until he laid in bed without any signs of strength, pale and feeble. One of the family members approached the group in order to inform them of the status of their leader, or in more simple terms, came to tell them to say their last goodbyes

before it was too late...

The group came together and entered the home of their leader to part ways with him... As the group surrounded his bed, only cries and sounds of sobs were heard. No one dared to speak... As the silence continued for what

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Parashat Haazinu - Another One in My Trap

felt like an eternity, one of the students suddenly built up the courage to speak...

"Rebbe! Chazal said that when departing from a friend, you should depart with words of halacha, for through so you will remember them. Rebbe, tell us a halacha, advice for life..."

The sick nodded his head and opened his mouth to say his last words when suddenly, he turned onto his side and gave them his back...

The group was stunned. They had no idea what had just happened. Not knowing what to do, they started to leave the room and return to their homes one by one.

That night, the doctor came to check up on the sick and informed the family that his condition had only worsened and that tonight they should be prepared for the worst. "But." continued doctor, "If he makes it through the night, there's a small chance that he'll get better..."

The family hurried to inform the group!

The group stayed awake the entire night, reciting Tehillim and praying for the recovery of their leader. The doctor entered the room of Rebbe Arveh in the early hours of the morning and found him sweating profusely and notified everyone that there's a good chance that he'll make it through.

As the weeks following passed, Rebbe Arveh's condition continued getting better and better until he was able to get out of bed and even held a feast, thanking Hashem for returning his health to him and allowing him to continue living.

During the feast, wine was served without limit, and as everyone knows, as wine enters secrets exit. One of the students dared to ask his Rebbe the question that everyone wanted to ask, "Rebbe! Why did you turn your back to us? Did you not think that it was your last chance to teach us something?"

"In all honestly," began Rebbe Aryeh, "I thought that those were my final moments!"

"Did you not have anything to say to us?" asked the student.

4 ... PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL So...

Parashat Haazinu - Another One in My Trap

"There was plenty for me to say! I was already prepared, from before you all had entered. Hashem had put amazing final words into my head that would have astonished you all." answered Rebbe Aryeh.

"Then why did you turn your back to us Rebbe?"

"I'll tell you," said Rebbe Aryeh...

"My entire life, I worked on establishing within me the traits of *emet* and modesty while distancing all traces of haughtiness and falsehood. As I was about to open my mouth, while you were all standing around my bed waiting to hear every word that I was about to say, I suddenly thought to myself maybe it wasn't Hashem that gave me what to say but the *yetzer hara*.

Maybe it was the *yetzer hara* that made me sick, to begin with, and then made me take a turn for the worse, which caused all of you to come to my bedside. He then put in my head those amazing final words, all so that I would say them, you all would be amazed, and then I would be content. I

would think to myself, "Look at what I managed to do. Now they will remember me forever!" I would then close my eyes for the last time, my head full of thoughts of *gaavah* and haughtiness.

There was no way I was going to let my life's work of humility go down without a fight!

Therefore, I decided to fight back against the *yetzer hara* and turn my back to you.

And evidence that I was right... As soon as the *yetzer hara* saw that I wasn't going to give in, there was no longer any need for me to die or even be sick, and therefore I was cured.

That's how I beat him! He wasn't able to catch me!"

This story was told over by Rebbe Yechiel Meir zt"l, the Rebbe of Gustinin, who finished by saying, "There was one thing that Rebbe Aryeh didn't know. The same moment that he revealed to everyone the reason he turned his back, the *yetzer hara* began to jump with joy, "Yes! Another one caught in my trap!"

Parashat Haazinu - Are You Listening?

Are You Listening?

Moshe Rabbeinu merited living for 120 years. On his last day, he stood before Am Israel and gave over the four parashot of Nitzavim, Vayelech, Haazinu, and Zot Haberacha.

He started parashat Haazinu with the verse, "Listen *Shamayim* (Heavens) to what I will say, and *Arets* (Earth), hear the words of my mouth" (Devarim 32:1).

Rashi explains that when Moshe Rabbeinu came to warn Am Israel against violating the commandments of the Torah, he assigned two witnesses — *Shamayim* and *Arets*.

"Listen *Shamayim* (Heavens) to what I will say, and *Arets* (Earth), hear the words of my mouth." Moshe said to them, "When I warn

Am Israel, you will be my witnesses." And why did Moshe choose them to be his witnesses? Moses thought to himself, "I am flesh and blood, tomorrow when I die, Am Israel can say, "We never accepted the Torah and its mitzvot," who can come and refute them?! Thus, *Shamayim* and *Arets* (Heaven and Earth) will testify against them - witnesses that will exist forever..."

We will, however, explain the verse in a different way...

The *Shamayim* and *Arets* mentioned in the verse refer to the two groups within Am Israel. The first group, *Shamayim*, refers to the Jews that toil in Torah learning every day in order to bring joy to Hashem,² and through their learning, they're able to turn their bodies into *Shamayim*.

2. Yisrolik was a young Jewish boy who just loved to learn Torah.

At the age of seven, he was already so advanced that he "graduated" from learning with his teachers and began individual lessons with the rabbi of the town.

In a very short time, he no longer needed even these lessons, but spent his time learning alone. He turned to the rabbi for help only when he came across a difficult text in the Talmud.

Yisrolik was such an ardent student that he was ready to learn day and night.

Parashat Haazinu - Are You Listening?

His father, Reb Shabse, was worried that his son would get sick from too much study and insufficient rest and sleep.

At first, Reb Shabse tried to insist that his son should leave the *beit hamidrash* (study hall) at a certain time. But when Yisrolik sat down and began to study the Talmud, he forgot about everything else, even about his promise to his father.

Very often, his father had to go out late in the night to bring him home. So Reb Shabse arranged with the *shamash* (caretaker) that when Yisrolik came to study after supper, he should give him one candle by which to learn, which should burn not more than one hour. When the candle would burn out, Yisrolik would have to go home and stay home till it was time for him to go to bed.

That evening, after supper, Yisrolik went to learn as usual.

More than an hour passed, and Yisrolik had not yet come home. Reb Shabse became worried. He tried to tell himself that Yisrolik must have gone to the rabbi about some problem in his studies, for he surely would not remain in the dark alone in the study hall.

But when another hour passed and Yisrolik had not yet come home, Reb Shabse hurried to the rabbi's house. Yisrolik was not there, so his father became quite alarmed. Both men then dashed off to the caretaker and woke him up. Seeing his two anxious-looking visitors, the caretaker was really frightened.

When they told him that Yisrolik had not returned home, he assured them that he had given Yisrolik a candle that burned only one hour, as he had been asked.

The three worried men rushed to the study hall. As they approached the *beit hamidrash*, they were astonished to see a light in the window.

They entered and found Yisrolik sitting, deeply engrossed in the Talmud, by the light of a small candle. He sat there swaying to the rhythm of his sweet voice, completely oblivious of anything around him.

Reb Shabse could not wait and burst out, "Yisrolik! Why did you not keep your word?"

Yisrolik stopped learning and looked up in surprise.

The candle light went out at once.

"Yisrolik, what is the matter with you? How dare you put out the candle while the rabbi and father are here. That is a terrible thing to do," said his father.

"I did not put out the light," answered Yisrolik, as tears filled his eyes.

The rabbi then began to speak to Yisrolik in a serious tone, "You know, Yisrolik, that the command to honor your parents is a big mitzvah. You promised to learn only as long as the candles burns and then go home."

"The candle burned, so I sat and learned," said Yisrolik tearfully.

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Parashat Haazinu - The Greatness of Torah Scholars

The second group, *Arets*, refers to the Jews that work for a living. Through their work, they can perform the mitzvot in general and the mitzvot associated with

Masa U'matan (work) in particular. By this, they're able to purify the *Arets* and draw Hashem's light unto it.

We'll explain...

The Greatness of Torah Scholars

The Midrash³ says that tzaddikim are even greater than the angels. The reason for this is simple. Angels are spiritual. They have neither wants or desires nor bad character traits. Angels were created only in order to serve Hashem, and they fulfill their

purpose precisely, without any deviation whatsoever.

Doing something you were created exactly for, without and opposition or difficulty, isn't hard, even more so when they don't have any other choice.

---- Wellspring of Wisdom 🗫--

"But when did you get more candles, or did the caretaker not keep his word?" Reb Shabse demanded.

"What are you saying, Reb Shabse?" burst out the caretaker. "I gave him only one little candle, and the rest I locked away."

Only then did the rabbi realize that something very extraordinary had happened.

While the caretaker went to fetch and light another candle, and Yisrolik went to place the Talmud back on its shelf, the rabbi said to the bewildered father...

"Reb Shabse, Yisrolik is a very special child. When he started to learn with such devotion, his sweet voice created great joy in heaven. Angels descended and

surrounded him, catching every word that left his lips. They kept the candle burning as long as Yisrolik was learning. But when we came and interrupted, the candle light went out."

From that time onwards, Reb Shabse never stopped his son from learning as much as he desired. He believed that his saintly son would grow up to be a great luminary in the world who would illuminate the darkness of the exile.

Yisrolik grew up to be the famous Rabbi Yisroel, the maggid of Kozshenitz, a great teacher to many...

- The Storyteller by Rabbi Nissan Mindel.
- 3. Midrash Tanchuma (Vayikra, 1).

Parashat Haazinu - The Greatness of Torah Scholars

On the other hand, Am Israel was created from two opposing dimensions, yet live while conducting these two dimensions simultaneously.

The spiritual dimension within every Jew is their heart, which strives to do the will of their creator while wanting to draw as close as possible.

The physical dimension is their bodies, which are filled with desires and immoral wants.

When a Jew merits and raises the spiritual dimension over the physical, sits and learns Torah, and connects themselves to the Torah for real, their body also connects to Hashem, and they're able to draw an abundance of Hashem's light unto themselves.

Day by day, their bodies also become purified until they merit removing their physical bodies and receive a spiritual body in exchange!

Therefore, those that toil in Torah are even greater than the angels. From the day they were created, angels received a spiritual body, but tzaddikim, only through trial and tribulation, do they receive a spiritual body!

Even though those who toil in Torah look like everyone else, walk like everyone else, and eat and drink like everyone else, we must remember that they're not like everyone else. They're something else entirely...4

We must add...

We're only talking about the body of a Jew and not the soul of a Jew. The soul of every Jew, and more specifically those of Torah scholars, are far higher and greater than any angel.

Now we can understand that for this reason, when Moshe Rabbeinu wanted to address

··· Wellspring of Wisdom 🗫 -

4. This is what the Chazon Ish zt"l wrote... Although the man who merits the knowledge of the Torah walks among us

and seems to us as a human being, he is truly but an angel living among mortals...

- Egrot HaChazon Ish (Vol. 1).

Parashat Haazinu - Hashem's Roar

those that learn the Torah, he called them *Shamayim...*

Before we continue to explain, we first need to precede...

Hashem's Roar

The Gemara⁵ tells us that every night, the angels in Heaven stand in shifts and sing before Hashem.

The Gemara then debates whether there are three shifts or four shifts...

There in the Gemara, Rabbi Eliezer says that the night is broken into three shifts,

and in every shift, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* sits and roars like
a lion

Simply, the Gemara is trying to tell us that in *Shamayim*, there are three interchanging shifts, and for every shift, Hashem sits and mourns over the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash.

The Tree of Life

When Hashem created Adam HaRishon, he took him and put him in Gan Eden. He then strolled with him throughout the garden. While they walked around, Hashem showed him the tree called *Etz HaChaim* - The Tree of Life.

We have no way of even imagining how the tree looked. But, what we need to know is that it was something extraordinarily spiritual and was the source of all life in the world.

The Zohar writes that the *Etz HaChaim* holds the secret of the name הוי״ה of Hashem. The name הוי״ה is made up of four letters...

Yud - י, (Upper) Heh - ה, Vav - ו, (Lower) Heh - ה.

The 1 - corresponds to the trunk of the tree.

The , - corresponds to the fruit of the tree.

The (lower) ה - corresponds to the roots of the tree.

Parashat Haazinu - The Tree of Life

The (upper) π - corresponds to the branches of the tree.

They finished walking around Gan Eden, and Adam and Chava made themselves at home.

The evil snake, however, had other plans...

He set in motion his evil scheme, and the rest is already known... Adam and Chava ate from the Tree of Knowledge, which caused inevitable staggering damage to the Tree of Life.

Even though the Torah doesn't illustrate the damage done to the Tree of Life, the *Anshei Knesset Hagedola* revealed to us exactly what happened, and this is what they said...

"Angels came down from heaven and cut down the tree, tore its leaves, ripped its branches, and dispersed its fruit..." However, at least they left its roots in the ground...

The sin caused not only the tree to be damaged but also the name of Hashem...

When the tree was cut down,

the letter י was damaged. When the fruits were dispersed, the letter vas damaged. When the leaves were torn, the (upper) ה was damaged.

Only the roots that stayed in the ground weren't damaged, and therefore neither was the (lower) π .

All in all, the sin of eating from the Tree of Knowledge caused two things to be damaged:

- 1. The four letters of הוי״ה were damaged.
- 2. The three letters of יה"ו were separated from the final π .

After Adam and Chava realized the severity of their sin, they became extremely embarrassed and hid between the trees in the garden...

The wind began to blow, and Hashem revealed himself to them, "Hashem Elokim called over to the man and said to him, אֵיָכָּה (where are you)?" (Bereshit 3:9).

The word אֵיֶכָּה is composed of two parts, "ה" - Hashem was asking them why they separated the last ה" from the letters ה" ה"ו...

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Parashat Haazinu - Sparks of Redemption

Sparks of Redemption

The Zohar continues and says that from the very moment that Adam HaRishon ate from the Tree of Knowledge, something horrifying happened... the *yetzer hara* entered his body.⁶ From that moment on, he began to have immoral desires...

Because Adam HaRishon ate from the Tree of Knowledge, he was forced to be reincarnated into our three forefathers, Avraham, Itzchak, and Yaakov, in order to fix what he damaged.

In the beginning, he was reincarnated into Avraham, who repaired the damage done to the branches and restored the letter π (upper), and therefore the letter π was added to his name.

Adam was then reincarnated into Itzchak, who repaired the damage done to the fruit and restored the letter '.7

He was then reincarnated into Yaakov, who repaired the tree itself and restored the letter 1.8

Even though they managed to repair these three letters, two things were still missing:

- 1. The lower π still had to be repaired.
- 2. יה"ו still had to be reconnected with the last ה.

In the year 2368, since the creation of the world, the soul of Moshe Rabbeinu came down into this world...

He worked tirelessly and relentlessly, but in the end, he was able to repair the damage done to the final π and reconnect all the letters of the name

And so, the years passed... Until...

---- Wellspring of Wisdom 🗫--

- $\pmb{6.}$ See our Mesillot on parashat Va'etchanan for more information on this topic...
- **7.** Therefore, he was the first to be circumcised after eight days. (For a deeper understanding see Tikkunei Zohar 111b).
- **8.** That's why Hashem added him the letter 1 -

Parashat Haazinu - Everything Was Damaged During the Destruction

Everything Was Damaged During the Destruction

On the ninth of Av, 3338 years since the creation of the world, something happened that will never be forgotten...

Even today, we still feel the effects of this horrifying event...

The first Beit HaMikdash was destroyed.

The Gemara says that the HaMikdash first Beit was destroyed for three reasons, idol worship, forbidden and immoral relationships, and murder...

Am Israel was exiled to different parts of the world. Everyone was devastated from witnessing the destruction of their precious Mikdash...

The years passed, and no one stopped longing to return their precious homeland and rebuild their beloved Beit HaMikdash. Seventy years later, the day came for them to receive what they longed for... Am Israel returned to their holy land and began to rebuild their sacred temple.

Their excitement didn't last long, though...

About 490 years from the destruction of the first Beit HaMikdash, on the ninth of Av, 3828 years since the creation of the world, the second Beit HaMikdash was destroyed...

Unlike during the time of the first Beit HaMikdash, the Gemara says that during the time of the second Beit HaMikdash, Am Israel was full of Torah, mitzvot, and Gemilut Chassadim (Acts of Kindness)... If so, why was the Beit HaMikdash destroyed?

The Gemara answers and says that it was destroyed because that generation was full of Sinat Chinam (Baseless Hatred), which is equivalent to the three sins of idol worship, forbidden and immoral relationships, and murder...

On this topic, HaRav Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l said...9

Parashat Haazinu - Everything Was Damaged During the Destruction

It's clear from the words of *chazal* that during the Second Temple, Am Israel engaged in Torah, mitzvot, and *Gemilut Chassadim*. Despite all this, none

of their Torah study or mitzvot protected them from the Beit HaMikdash being destroyed because they still had *Sinat Chinam* between them. ¹⁰ When a person

---- Wellspring of Wisdom 🗫---

10. When we investigate the root of the *Sinat Chinam* that destroyed the Second Temple, which still exists today and prevents its construction, let us note that many times, anger and hatred come as a result of an injustice that was done, or that we think has been done, against us.

However, if we're honest enough, we'll very well notice that we too sometimes do exactly the same things, and miraculously, while those around us we blame and accuse them openly without even thinking twice, we ourselves tend to be overly forgiving when it comes to our own acts of opposition or anger. We're even able to come up with fifty excuses and reasons to justify our actions.

It's worth remembering this next time before we go and blame others for something that they may have, or have not, done. It's possible that by doing so, we'll be able to cool down the flames of *Singt Chinam* a little.

In this regard, Rabbi Yosef Chaim zt"l, the Ben Ish Chai, told over a wonderful story in his book *Neeflaim Maasecha...*

This is a story of a thief that was sentenced to death by the king...

The thief turned to the king and said, "I accept the king's verdict, but before I am sentenced, I would like to inform the king that there is an amazing wisdom that no one knows but me, and if I die, my wisdom will be lost from the world. Therefore, I ask permission to teach it to the king so that it may remain in the world and not be forgotten forever."

"What is this wisdom?" The king inquired. The thief replied, "I know how to plant a seed in the ground and cause a tree to grow in only half an hour."

The king and his ministers were intrigued, and the king decided to look into the matter closely. They brought him an apple, he took out one of its seeds and ordered them to bring him a vessel full of water and a few plants, which he named for them. He then mixed the plants in the water and placed the seed inside.

Half an hour later, he said, "That's it, the seed is ready to be planted. There's only one catch, the man who plants the seed into the ground needs to have his hands clean from any theft and robbery. If he stole even once, the wisdom won't work, and the seed will not grow. I,

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Parashat Haazinu - Everything Was Damaged During the Destruction

lacks *Ahavat Israel* (Love of other Jews), all of their merits, from Torah and mitzvot, are thrown away.

Our custom is to study every day from the book *HaYom Yom* written by the Lubavitcher Rebbe,

which includes a collection of precious Chassidic sayings divided up by the days of the year, one saying for each day.

On the eighth day of Av, on the eve of the fast of Tisha B'Av,

therefore, cannot plant the seed because I have been judged as a thief..."

The thief turned to the minister, who was second in charge only to the king and asked him to please plant the seed in the ground.

The minister's face began to turn red...

"I can't lie... When I was a teenager, I would run errands for my father, and when he would ask how much everything costed, I would tell him that they costed more than they really did so that I could take the rest of the money for myself..."

The thief then turned to the Minister of Finance and said to him, "Take this seed and plant it into the ground."

The minister recoiled and began to stutter, "I'm in charge of the treasury. All the accounts of the kingdom are in my hands, and who, in my position, wouldn't have made a mistake or two..."

The thief turned to the king and said, "With respect, my king, please plant the seed into the ground so that I can teach you my wisdom."

The king responded in a low voice, "I remember that when I was a little boy, I saw that my father had an expensive string of pearls, and I very much so coveted them... In the end, I took them... My hands, too, are not clean... Let's bring someone else!"

The thief fell at the king's feet and said, "My lord the king, your minister of finance has admitted that his hands are not clean, the second in command, only to you, admitted that he stole from his father, and so did you... If so, why am I being judged and sentenced to death for what I stole only because of the poverty that befell me, and I wanted to fill my hungry soul?"

The king felt embarrassed and, realizing the wisdom of the thief, sent him free.

The Ben Ish Chai concludes...

So is it with every one of us...

If your friend has sinned against you and you get mad at them, why don't you first look at yourself, for you have also sinned against your friends once or twice.

You need to be embarrassed as the king was and forgive your friend...

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Parashat Haazinu - Hashem's Cry

the Rebbe chose to include the holy saying of the Maharash Rebbe, who said, "What's worth all the work of *Chassidut* and Yirat Shamayim if the main things is lacking... Ahavat Israel..."

Now let's return to the words of Rabbi Eliezer from the Gemara...

Hashem's Cry

The Zohar continues and tells us that when the Beit HaMikdash was destroyed, the name הוי״ה was again damaged, and the letters יה״ו were again separated from the final ה.

About this, the prophet said, "How (אֵיכָה) the city that was once so occupied, sat empty" (Echa 1:1). The word "אֵיכָּה" is made up of two parts, "אֹיך ה" - How did ה sit alone...

We already mentioned that the night is split into three shifts. These three shifts correspond to the three letters 1"7".

The first shift - corresponds to the first π .

The second shift – corresponds to the 1, that's in the middle.

The third shift – corresponds to the '.

Now we can better understand the Gemara...

The three shifts of the night correspond to the three letters היי. The night itself corresponds to the final ה, which Hashem sits and mourns over every night.

From the same moment that the Beit HaMikdash was destroyed, every night, Hashem sits and cries over the final π that sits alone, separated from the other letters "π.". ¹¹

Now let's go back a little.

---- Wellspring of Wisdom 🗫--

11. According to these words of the Zohar, it can be interpreted that really Rabbi Yehuda HaNassi and Rabbi Natan didn't disagree, rather, one spoke about

the period after redemption and the other spoke about the period of exile.

At the time of redemption when we are redeemed and the name הוי"ה is

Parashat Haazinu - They Left my Torah

They Left my Torah

For forty years, Moshe Rabbeinu taught the Torah over to Am Israel.

Forty years of pure, unblemished Torah learning with no outside annoyances... no cell phones, no work, no bothers whatsoever... They didn't have to clean, nor do laundry, nor ¬ buy clothes, or even make food. All they did was learn Torah...

Then... the last day arrived...

At the age of one hundred and twenty, Moshe Rabbeinu gathered all of Am Israel and taught them the four parashot of Nitzavim, Vayelech, Haazinu, and Zot Haberacha.

We'll focus on the first verse of our parasha, "Listen *Shamayim*

(Heavens) to what I will say, and *Arets* (Earth), hear the words of my mouth" (Devarim 32:1)...

Moshe Rabbeinu gathered Am Israel and told them that he wants to reveal to them the future...

"Know," he said. "The first Beit HaMikdash will be destroyed, and so will the second. After the second is destroyed, you will be exiled for a very long time until you merit to purify yourselves, and then the third Beit HaMikdash will be built, which will never be destroyed!"

If you're wondering how Am Israel can become purified, know that the main way to become purified is only by learning Torah. Even more so, if Am Israel would

complete, the night will be divided into four shifts. However, during the exile when the last letter π is separated, the night is divided into three shifts.

However, there is one night in the year, Seder night, where *Middat HaMalchut* and the name הוי"ה are complete, resulting then, in there being no disagreement and according to both opinions the night is divided into four shifts.

Thus, the *Baal HaHaggadah* asked, "What makes this night different from all other nights?" - This night is different from all other nights for it is complete with four shifts!

- Migdal David – Pesach (p. 91).

... PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL So... 17

Parashat Haazinu - Torah Learning - With the Right Intention

have preoccupied themselves with the Torah during the first and second Temples, they would have never been destroyed!

The Gemara says that our sages asked one another why the Beit HaMikdash was destroyed, and no one knew what to answer... They asked the prophets, and they too didn't have an answer...

Only Hashem had the answer, and this is what He told them...

The Beit HaMikdash was destroyed because you left my Torah and its ways and stopped listening to me!¹²

There in the Gemara, Rav Yehuda explains that this means that they didn't recite the blessing that was affixed before learning Torah...

Torah Learning – With the Right Intention

We have to understand. All this because they didn't recite a blessing?

We found that Rabbi Yoel Sirkis zt"l wrote¹³ that the meaning of this Gemara isn't that they didn't actually recite the blessing. Rather, the meaning is that when they were learning the Torah,

12. The Maharam Schick writes in his commentary on the Torah (Devarim, p. 2)...

What was so difficult to understand? After all, we already know that the First Temple was destroyed because they committed the three cardinal sins, and the Second Temple because of the sin of *Sinat Chinam...*?

Rather, the prophet's question was...

The *yetzer hara* of those generations was tremendous, and the tests were extremely difficult to withstand. Thus, all the sins that people committed derived

only from the pressure of the *yetzer hara*, and it's worthy to judge them as *shogeg* (sinning unintentionally). If so, why was the Beit HaMikdash destroyed?

To this Hashem replied...

True, after the *yetzer hara* arises, it's very difficult to fight against it. But, the accusation is, why did the *yetzer hara* arise in the first place?

For if they were engaged in Torah, it wouldn't have arised!

13. Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim, Siman 47).

Parashat Haazinu - Torah Learning - With the Right Intention

they weren't learning *L'shem Shamayim*. Instead, they learned with ulterior motives. ¹⁴

From the words of the Gemara and from the Bach, we learn that during the time of the Beit

14. Rabbi Hirschel was one of the disciples of the *Chiddushei HaRim* of Gur.

He was a great Torah scholar but was also stricken with suffering, pain, and poverty.

His brother, who lived in Yerushalayim, later passed away, leaving behind a widow with no children. Thus, he had to travel to Eretz Israel to perform the mitzvah of *Chalitzah* for his dead brother's wife. Being so, he decided that he would take the opportunity to immigrate to the Holy Land with his family and settle there.

When he informed his rabbi, the *Chiddushei HaRim*, about his plans to move to Eretz Israel, he gave him a folded-up letter and instructed him to hand it over to his good friend, the Chief Rabbi of Yerushalayim, Rabbi Shmuel Salant, as soon as he arrives.

This is what was written in that letter...

I testify that this *avrech*, the messenger of this letter, has been toiling in Torah for the sake of heaven in anguish since his childhood. Please assist him in all his needs

Rabbi Hirschel took the letter, said goodbye to his holy rabbi, and started his journey with his family to Eretz Israel.

While traveling by ship, in the middle of the sea, Rabbi Hirschel suddenly became intrigued to read his rabbi's letter, which he thought must surely have been Torah *chiddushim* or a question in Halacha. Rabbi Hirschel quickly pulled out the letter from his coat, and as he read the letter, his face turned red from embarrassment...

Rabbi Hirschel immediately became uncertain with himself whether or not to hand over the letter to the Chief Rabbi of Yerushalayim, for if he did, he would use his Torah learning for ulterior motives such as to acquire livelihood and honor and not *L'shem Shamayim*.

He then began thinking of a list of sayings by *chazal* on the matter...

The incident with Rabbi Tarfon where a man, who didn't know that he was Rabbi Tarfon, tried to kill him, and he told the man that he was Rabbi Tarfon, which saved his life. However, Rabbi Tarfon was then distressed over this matter for the rest of his life, for he used the Torah to save himself...

The saying in *Pirkei Avot* (Avot 1:13), "One who exploits the Torah shall pass away," etc...

The uncertainty in his heart increased, and his fears intensified, "What should I do? On the one hand, the Rebbe appointed me to be the messenger for the delivery of the letter. On the other hand, in delivering the letter, I will lose all my Torah and piety in the blink of an eye..."

Parashat Haazinu - Torah Learning - With the Right Intention

HaMikdash, Am Israel learned Torah, only they were missing the right intentions. Even though they knew they needed to learn the Torah with the right intentions, the *yetzer hara* managed to trick them and enter their minds... Kind of like what happened in the two stories that we started with...

His wife approached him and said, "My dear husband, I see that something is bothering you…"

"I'll explain to you why..." he answered.

His righteous wife replied, "I advise you to postpone the decision until we reach the Holy Land."

"However," Rabbi Hirschel claimed, "I'm afraid that I won't withstand the test and that the *yetzer hara* may overcome me... I think it's best that I tear up the letter now..."

His wife begged him, "No, not now."

Rabbi Hirschel declared, "I know that I will not be able to stand the test, and I don't want to exploit my Torah in any way!"

The decision was made. Rabbi Hirschel took the letter, tore it to shreds, and threw the tiny pieces of paper into the sea...

His righteous wife, standing on the deck of the ship, stared at the pieces of paper scattered across the blue water while wiping tears from her eyes at the sight of her "dream," seeing her husband among the sages of Yerushalayim, vanishing in the waves.

The ship slowly receded while the torn letter disappeared over the horizon...

The journey continued, and they progressed towards Eretz Israel, where no one knew of her pious husband, his toil in Torah, his holiness, or his humility. All of it was swallowed up by the sea.

After several weeks of journeying by sea, Rabbi Hirschel, his wife, and their six children arrived in Yaffo, and from Yaffo, they immigrated to Yerushalayim.

Immediately after arriving in Yerushalayim, the *Chalitzah* was arranged in the court of Rabbi Shmuel Salant. None of those present in the court even imagining that this *avrech* was a great *talmid chacham*!

As long as Rabbi Hirschel still possessed the small amount of money that he brought with him from abroad, he secluded himself in Torah study day and night. However, after a few weeks, the money ran out...

His righteous wife advised him to visit Rabbi Shmuel and request to be accepted to the yeshiva, all the while sighing at the thought of the letter.

A few days passed, and the *avrech* realized that his wife was right. He didn't

Parashat Haazinu - Torah Learning - With the Right Intention

even have a penny left and knew that being accepted to the veshiva would help their situation. But, so that things wouldn't be seen as even a subtle defect in *emuna*, the avrech quoted the words of the Missilat Yesharim to his wife, "It's not that the Hishtadlut (effort) produces the results, rather that it (the *Hishtadlut*) is necessary..."

He informed his wife that in order to fulfill his obligation of *Hishtadlut*, he would go to Rabbi Shmuel, but his emuna was only in Hashem.

Fortunately, Rabbi Hirschel appeared at Rabbi Shmuel's office at the perfect time when no one else was there.

Nervously submissively, and he approached Rabbi Shmuel and requested to be admitted to the yeshiva, and justified his request by saying, "Because I have no livelihood..."

"You want to learn in the yeshiva for the sake of money? Rabbi Shmuel wondered. "The purpose of being in the yeshiva is to learn Torah, not to get paid...

When you study Torah, money comes on its own. You don't need money in order to learn Torah... Well," Rabbi Shmuel continued, "do vou have a letter of recommendation from abroad that you are a Ben Torah and that you are at all an avrech who desires to toil in Torah?"

Rabbi Hirschel stood silently next to Rabbi Shmuel, remembering the letter that his rabbi gave him...

Even now, he didn't want to use the Torah for his own benefit, so he hid the matter of the letter from Rabbi Shmuel and just remained silent. The silence continued for a few minutes, after which Rabbi Shmuel said, "Take your time," and then went back to learning.

Suddenly, heavy footsteps were heard from the courtyard.

The Armenian letter carrier brashly entered the rabbi's office and placed a large bundle of letters from abroad written to the Chief Rabbi of Yerushalayim. Rabbi Shmuel took the letters while Rabbi Hirschel stepped back from his desk...

Rabbi Shmuel began to sort the letters, and suddenly he saw a letter from the Chiddushei HaRim of Gur. Rabbi Shmuel opened the letter and read, "Because my student, Rabbi Hirschel, traveled to Yerushalavim, to a place where nobody knows him, I gave him a letter of recommendation. But, because I fear that he will not deliver the letter, due to his humility, I have copied what I had written in the original letter. "I testify that this avrech, the messenger of this letter, has been toiling in Torah for the sake of heaven in anguish since his childhood. Please assist him in all his needs..."

"Unbelievable! Unbelievable!" Rabbi Shmuel exclaimed as he read the letter twice while looking admiringly at the avrech standing to his right, without Rabbi Hirschel even grasping what this letter was about.

..... PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL (Sound 21)

Parashat Haazinu - Learning Lishma

Since the Torah that they learned was without the correct intentions, the Torah wasn't able to

protect them from the *yetzer hara*, and therefore they began to sin, and the Beit HaMikdash was destroyed...

Learning Lishma

The reason the Mikdash was destroyed was because they learned without the right intentions.

After the Mikdash was destroyed, again the letters יה"ו were separated from the final

Therefore, if we want to hasten the redemption, we must actualize these two points:

- 1. To learn with the intention of reconnecting the four letters of הוי"ה. 15
- 2. To learn Torah with the correct intentions, like what Rebbe Elimelech of Lizensk zt"l wrote...¹⁶

"Listen *Shamayim* to what I will say" – In the future, when the Mashiach will come, Moshe

Rabbeinu will again teach Torah to Am Israel and will reveal to them all of its holy secrets.

Moshe Rabbeinu said to Am Israel, "Listen *Shamayim*," for those who learn Torah are called *Shamayim*, and commanded them to study the Torah.

When they learn Torah and are able to create *Chidushim*, that is, they "listen" to what is being passed down to them from up on high in "*Shamayim*," and then they open their mouths and speak them.

Through the learning of the Torah, you will be able to hasten the redemption and hear the secrets of the Torah by me (Moshe Rabbeinu) as you once did.

"You're accepted, you're accepted!" Rabbi Shmuel declared enthusiastically as he rose from his chair.

Needless to say, that same day, Rabbi Hirschel was admitted to the yeshiva and

learned Torah with diligence until the end of his life...

- Yerushalayim Shel Maalah (Vol. 3, p. 11).
- 15. See Degel Menachem Ephraim (Tzav).
- 16. Noam Elimelech (Haazinu).

Parashat Haazinu - Shabbat Shalom!

And this is "the words of my mouth" - you will cause me to again speak to you in the future, after the coming of Mashiach, soon in our days, Amen...

By learning the Torah, we can reconnect the final π to the letters יה"ו and complete the name הוי״ה, allowing the third Beit Hamikdash to be built!

Shabbat Shalom!



Parashat Haazinu - The Pathway...

The Pathway...

- **1.** The world was created to serve as a dwelling place for the *Shechina*. After the first sin, the Divine Presence departed from the world until the Mashiach will come, and the third temple will be built, at which the Divine Presence will return and never depart again. Meanwhile, the world is going through a process of purification, and the main purification is particularly by the study of Torah.
- 2. In the heart of every Jew is the desire to strive to do the will of their creator while drawing as close as possible. When a Jew merits and raises the spiritual dimension over the physical, sits and learns Torah, and connects themselves to the Torah for real, their body also connects to Hashem, and they are able to draw an abundance of Hashem's light unto themselves.
- **3.** Day by day, their bodies also become purified until they merit removing their physical bodies and receive a spiritual body in exchange! Therefore, those that

- toil in Torah are even greater than the angels. From the day they were created, angels received a spiritual body, but tzaddikim, only through trial and tribulation, do they receive a spiritual body!
- **4.** Even though those who toil in Torah look like everyone else, walk like everyone else, and eat and drink like everyone else, we must remember that they're not They're like everyone else. something else entirely... The Chazon Ish zt"l wrote that although the man who merits the knowledge of the Torah walks among us and seems to us as a human being, he is truly but an angel living among mortals...
- **5.** *Chazal* teach us that during the Second Temple, Am Israel engaged in Torah, mitzvot, and
- **6.** *Gemilut Chassadim*. Despite all this, none of their Torah study or mitzvot protected them from the Beit HaMikdash being destroyed because they still had *Sinat Chinam* between them. **When**

The Pathway...

someone lacks Ahavat Israel (Love of other Jews), all of their merits, from Torah and mitzvot, are thrown away. The Maharash Rebbe said, "What's worth all the work of Chassidut and Yirat Shamayim if the main things is lacking, Ahavat Israel...."

7. When we investigate the root of the *Sinat Chinam* that destroyed the Second Temple, which still exists today and prevents its construction, we notice that many times, anger and hatred come as a result of an injustice that was done or that we think has been done, against us. However, if we're honest enough, we'll notice that we too sometimes do exactly the same things... While we're quick to blame those around us and accuse them openly without even thinking twice, we ourselves tend to be overly forgiving when it

comes to our own acts of opposition or anger. We're even able to come up with fifty excuses and reasons to justify our actions.

- **8.** It's worth remembering this next time before we go and blame others for something that they may have, or have not, done. It's possible that by doing so, we'll be able to cool down the flames of *Sinat Chinam* a little.
- 9. We must remember that the way for Am Israel to become purified and merit the Mashiach and have the third Beit Hamikdash be built is only through the learning of Torah. Even more so, if Am Israel would have preoccupied themselves with the Torah during the first and second Temples, they would

have never been destroyed!



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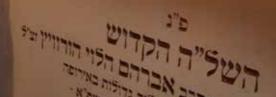


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Los Angeles	6:10 pm	7:05 pm	7:40 pm
Montreal	6:05 pm	7:06 pm	7:34 pm
Toronto	6:29 pm	7:29 pm	7:59 pm
London	6:09 pm	7:13 pm	7:35 pm
Jerusalem	6:01 pm	6:50 pm	7:31 pm
Tel Aviv	5:58 pm	6:47 pm	7:27 pm
Haifa	5:57 pm	6:45 pm	7:25 pm
Be'er Sheva	5:58 pm	6:47 pm	7:27 pm

Pathways to the Heart

From the Words of

HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l

We must pray to Hashem that already from the beginning, from the moment our children are born, theu will be educated with holiness and sanctity. Sometimes children are put in a daucare, and it turns out that the teacher doesn't do Netilat Yadayimin in the morning, and then when she feeds the children, the food is impure.

Therefore, it's better to choose a daycare where the workers have Yirat Shamayim, wives of avrechim, who have the basic knowledge of Netilat Yadayim and purity.



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