



Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 78

Lech Lecha | Finding Out Your Mission By Withstanding Tests



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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Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets

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Parashat Lech Lecha

Don't Rush

One of the most wondrous tzaddikim that arose in recent generations was the holy tzaddik, Rebbe Shlomo of Zvhil zt"l. His holiness, asceticism, and purity were extraordinary, and that's apart from his astonishing greatness in Torah!

One of his marvelous conducts was when people would come to him with a question or need for salvation, he would write it down, and the next day he would take all the pieces of paper with him to the mikveh. There, during his immersion, he would meditate on all the questions and requests and draw down salvation.

The tzaddikim of his generation testified to this, saying that his abilities and conduct were beyond understanding and that he would draw down answers from very lofty places in heaven.¹

Here's one of those questions that were asked to Rebbe Shlomo...²

Yaakov and Moshe were two talented yeshiva students who sat and toiled in Torah all day long.

Masechet after *Masechet*, their souls became more and more thirsty for Torah...

After an extensive period of time, they decided to visit Rebbe Shlomo of Zvhil.

— *Wellspring of Wisdom* —

1. This was his special conduct, although his son, Rebbe Gedaliah Moshe zt"l, who was appointed Rebbe after his father's passing, didn't behave the same. Some of the chassidim came to him and asked him why he doesn't conduct himself like his father, Rebbe Shlomo. To this, Rebbe

Gedaliah Moshe replied, "I actually do conduct myself like my holy father. Just as he never imitated anyone else's *avodat Hashem*, so too, I don't imitate anyone else's *avodat Hashem*..."

- Emet VeEmuna (p. 41).

2. Tzaddik Yesod Olam (Vol. 2, p. 114).

Parashat Lech Lecha - The Waiting Path

They entered with reverence into Rebbe Shlomo's room and requested, "We want the Rebbe to guide us in *avodat Hashem*."

Rebbe Shlomo replied, "Come back tomorrow after I immerse in the mikveh."

When they arrived the next day, he said to them, "I asked about your request in heaven, but they didn't pass on anything to me for your sake... If they didn't pay any attention to you in heaven, apparently you should wait, it's not yet time..."

The Waiting Path

In the book of Iyov, concerning the rebuke of Elihu, it says, "Wait with me a little, and I will speak to you, for there is still more to say on Hashem's behalf" (Iyov 36:2).

Every Jew must know that it's impossible to enter *kedusha* quickly and at once. You have to consistently serve Hashem for many days and years with simplicity, humility, and emuna, and throughout all those days, wait and hope almost endlessly until you truly enter *kedusha*.

Someone who merits and continues in their *avodah* with devotion, and although they don't see or feel any advancement, they don't give up or lose hope rather, they wait, hope, and long for, "When will I come and appear

before Hashem!" (Tehillim 42:3), for they know that as long as heaven isn't bringing them closer, it's a sign that they still aren't worthy...

Then, in the end, those same hopes, desires, and longings will purify them until they merit, and over the years, heaven will bring them into *kedusha*...

This is the path that all who desire to enter *kedusha* are destined to go through.

We didn't write this as an insight at all. This is all well known and felt to all those who've already begun their *avodat Hashem*... that you don't receive lofty attainments and levels on the first day of your *avodah*.

It's understood that in addition to waiting, you have to stand firm

in all the tests that are also decreed upon you from heaven, for those

very tests are your spiritual ladder of ascension.³

...*~* **Wellspring of Wisdom** *~*...

3. HaRav Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l writes (Betzur Yarum - Vol. 12, p. 155) that when someone decides to sanctify themselves, they should know that they're going to experience difficult tests. Whoever thinks that *avodat Hashem* comes easy, that at any rate they'll be a *talmid chacham* or be *kadosh*, without hard work on their part, they live very far from reality. Only someone who takes into account that they're going out to war with the *yetzer hara* will succeed.

Therefore, *Bnei Torah*, who know what purity is, what *kedusha* is, the *yetzer hara* tries to disturb them with every little thing. Because of that, they need constant *avodah* and to take great care to stand against the *yetzer hara*, and that's what makes them holy people.

We find a good example of this when it comes to *Baalei Teshuva*. When they still weren't observing Torah and mitzvot, many things wouldn't bother them at all, but after Hashem granted them the privilege to do teshuva, all kinds of tests suddenly arose in matters of *kedusha* and the like...

The reason for this is that as long as someone is on the side of the *yetzer hara*, the *yetzer hara* has no interest in provoking them, but when they begin to approach *kedusha*, the *yetzer hara* notices that they're escaping his hold and says to them, "Are you trying to run away from me?! I'll show you!"

Thus, *Baalei Teshuva* have a lot of tests. Although at the beginning of their journey, the first year or two, they get up early for tefillah, they're first at every mitzvah that comes their way. Afterward, they're usually on a decline. For example, they search for a place to pray *shacharit* at eleven o'clock...

How can that be? Well, the *yetzer hara* saw that they ran away from him, so he stands at the entrance of every place of *kedusha*. He disturbs them in tefillah, interferes with their family purity, interferes with their desire for food, and disturbs them with impure thoughts. He enters every place possible just to pull them back to where they were initially.

That's why *chazal* say (Brachot 34b), "In the place where *Baalei Teshuva* stand, even perfect tzaddikim cannot stand." For the *yetzer hara* has long despaired of the tzaddikim, he doesn't mess with them...

Who does he look for then? For *Baalei Teshuva* whom he's already familiar with for a long time now. He tests them constantly, and because of this constant war that they have with the *yetzer*, in the end, they merit very lofty levels...

We must know that difficulties are ladders... tests are ladders, challenges. There's no other way to ascend, only via ladders. When it's not difficult, it's not a test. When it's not a test, it's not a ladder.

Parashat Lech Lecha - The Waiting Path

When we go through life without tests, without challenges, it's not considered that we're moving. We're just walking around a roundabout, always going back to the starting point. It may seem to us as if we're ascending, but in truth, we're standing in the same low position as before.

Every test that comes our way from heaven – and not that, *chas v'shalom*, we intentionally bring upon ourselves – reveals to us the faith that Hashem has in us, the strengths hidden within us. When we look at loving parents who want to reveal the power of walking within their child, they distance themselves from the child and encourage them to walk by themselves. We know that the parents believe in the child and that they have the ability to walk. The test they put the child through reveals the belief that they have in them.

Thus, when Hashem presents us with a challenge, a test, this itself reveals Hashem's love and faith in us.

Every test is a ladder of ascension for our souls. But it's also a ladder to lower the *Shechina* down to our world. When all of our ladders stand upright, we'll be able to lower the *Shechina* down to us, and then our purpose, to create a dwelling place for Hashem here in our world, will be fulfilled...

In this regard, Rabbi Shabbtai Slovatizky (Lagaat BaNeshamot, p. 17) tells the following story...

I first met 'M' at the Chabad House. Someone brought him for a visit. A tall, intelligent young man with a delicate face. He managed the computer department for the European Common Market.

Sometimes it could take weeks, months, or even years until two people make a connection. Other times the connection is made instantly. It might have something to do with past lives or the source of the souls. Whatever the case, we had a strong connection at the start.

He wanted to learn the deepest concepts right away. We would sit together and learn Chassidut, and he would catch everything very quickly. He knew how to bring deep concepts down into the practical and relate them to the world and people around him. However, it was mainly how Chassidut changed the relationship between him and himself. A new world suddenly opened up before him. He began to understand himself better and find answers to his questions. Within a short time, he brought down Chassidut to the practical and began putting on tefillin, keeping kosher, observing Shabbat, etc...

Every few weeks, especially when he had to take vacation days from work, he would travel to Italy. Whenever I asked him what he did there, he answered, "I met friends." I always found something strange about those words, or more accurately, between the lines of those words. Every time he told me, "I'm going to Italy," he always looked down... He always brought it up quickly at the end of our conversation, as if wanting to relieve himself of a burden...

Once, before sunrise, at the end of a *farbrengen*, he approached me and wanted to talk.

Parashat Lech Lecha - The Waiting Path

“I’m all ears,” I said.

He opened up and said, “As you know, it’s been a while since I started becoming more observant. I’ve severed all ties to my past, with the exception of one thing. I’m capable of doing everything, but this, I simply can’t... If I sever this tie, I’m severing myself.”

I didn’t ask him what the tie was. I knew it was something I shouldn’t ask, something he had to tell me himself. He was obviously uncomfortable. Maybe it was the first time he stood up and looked at himself as he really was...

He lowered his eyes... I immediately remembered his trips to Italy, and it suddenly occurred to me that this might be the tie that he spoke about.

Ultimately, he mumbled, “I have a girlfriend, but she isn’t... Some of my friends spoke to me about conversion, but it’s not for me. Conversion is too holy to profane simply for the sake of my conscience. Conversion for the sake of marriage isn’t a real conversion. I’ve never even mentioned it to her. It’s been a few months since my conscience has been bothering me, but I simply can’t let her go... I went to a few different Rabbis for help, and each one told me what a terrible sin it is to intermarry. Some of them even described the punishment in *gehinom* that awaits someone like me, but nothing they said gave me the strength to sever the tie. I feel as if I just can’t withstand this test.”

He began trembling. I sensed the war raging inside him, between the loyalty to the *yotzer hara* and the loyalty to the

Yotzer (Creator). He lifted his head in silence, but his silence and the look on his face screamed loudly, “Save me !”

“Your problem,” I replied, “is the problem we all face. Its source is the strangest and most impossible match in the world – the match between the body and the soul. They’re completely different in their essence, in their desires, and their loyalties. Yet not only do they have to live together, each one has to complete the other. But, this incomprehensible match –works. When the time comes for someone to leave this world, neither wants to be parted from the other. You’re being pulled between the desires of the body and the desires of the soul.”

“What do I do? Where do I gain the strength to get myself out of this entanglement?” ‘M’ asked.

I answered, “The only solution is to dig deeper until you reach your roots. There you’ll find the strength you need, as well as the answer to your questions.”

“What are you getting at?” he asked.

“I mean that you need to go to the Lubavitcher Rebbe ! There you’ll find the strength to withstand the tests you face as well as the answers to your questions. Just as the answers to an individual’s questions are in their mind or heart, so with souls, their strength is absorbed from the “heart” of the souls of Am Israel, the souls of the *tzaddikim* in every generation.”

I didn’t have to plead with him much. A few days later, he had already arrived at the Rebbe’s Beit Midrash. He was very excited to see the Rebbe and waited

Parashat Lech Lecha - The Waiting Path

impatiently for his meeting with him during the distribution of dollars.

Sunday, a very long line waiting to see the Rebbe. Every person standing there with their own path in their life. But everyone, without exception, felt at home next to the Rebbe, and he, the Rebbe, accepted everyone equally, with love and affection, without bias to those important than those less.

Souls stood in line to receive dollars from the Rebbe. Every person was different from the other. Different problems, different questions, different thoughts. Everyone has a different path in their life, but they are all drawn to the source, to the head. People were standing in line with serious faces, shining eyes, and beating hearts. Between them stood ‘M’ serious, mumbling verses of Tehillim, repeating for the hundredth and one time the words he prepared to say to the Rebbe.

People moved slowly, and he was getting closer and closer. Then, he finally started walking up the stairs... His heart pounded, his stomach turned, and here he found himself in front of the Rebbe.

“**At first**,” he told me afterward, “the only thing I could see was the Rebbe’s holy eyes. Eyes that stared deep within my soul. All the words I’d prepared were immediately forgotten. In the Rebbe’s presence, my mind stopped working. I felt as if my ‘I’ was completely transparent before him. The Rebbe stared at me. I was unable to utter a word. The Rebbe gave me a dollar, but when I tried to take it, he wouldn’t let go.

We stood there like that, both of us holding opposite ends of the dollar bill, the whole time as the Rebbe stared at me with a look filled with love. I felt myself calming down. Somehow, I ended up letting out the words, “I have a problem.”

The Rebbe put his head closer to listen to me, “I’ve started to become more observant, but I have a girlfriend who isn’t Jewish, and I’m planning on marrying her...”

He choked... It was hard for him to express his emotions, yet he sensed that the Rebbe understood him even without words. He expected the Rebbe to reprimand him. He thought the Rebbe was going to explain to him about the severe transgression of intermarriage. But the Rebbe said nothing. His holy face was serious, yet there was an imperceptible smile on his holy lips.

“**I** envy you,” the Rebbe finally said.

At first, he didn’t grasp what the Rebbe meant, “The Rebbe is the holy of holies, and I’m small and insignificant. The Rebbe, who is on the highest spiritual plane, is envious of me, someone on the lowest?”

“**I** can’t remember the Rebbe’s exact words,” he told me, “but their meaning I remember very well. He engraved it deeply within my soul. The Rebbe said to me, ‘There are many ladders in life. The ladder is the individual’s free will. Hashem gives every person free will, a ladder reaching all the way to heaven. The test you’re facing is a challenge. It will elevate you to the greatest heights.’

The Rebbe continued, ‘I personally have never been presented with this test

Parashat Lech Lecha - The Disaster

Rather, we wrote this discussion to clarify the importance of these days of exile, in which many people are still walking in the

dark, searching for how to serve Hashem and give Him back a little for all the good He does for us...

The Disaster

On the sixth day of creation, Hashem created man, placed him in Gan Eden, and there, He gave him six mitzvot, all of which are hinted at in the verses, “Hashem Elokim commanded Adam, saying, ‘You may eat from every tree in the Garden, but from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, you shall not eat from it, for on the day you eat from it, you will surely die’” (Bereshit 2:16-17).

The Gemara⁴ expands on the matter, but we’ll focus on one of the six mitzvot, the prohibition of worshipping idols...

The Gemara says that Adam HaRishon was commanded not to worship idols, and this commandment is implied in the words, “Hashem commanded” (וְאָדָם יִצְוֶה).

However, since Hashem desired that man would advance

~ Wellspring of Wisdom ~

you face. If Hashem gives you a challenge, it means He believes in you. He gives you the strength to withstand the test and to succeed.’

Only then did the Rebbe let go of the dollar bill and allow me to take it.

I’m not sure what happened next, but a few seconds later, I found myself in the corner of the Beit Midrash, crying like a baby.

I could feel the tears cleansing me, washing away all the dirt. Someone came

over and gently asked me if I wanted a drink. Without waiting for a reply, he handed me a small bottle of water. I took a sip and calmed down. I returned to Belgium and became an entirely different person. My encounter with the Rebbe totally transformed my life.”

He took the challenge and ascended the ladder. Today, ‘M’ lives as a full-fledged Jew in Israel, where he is raising a fine Chasidic family...

4. Sanhedrin 56b

Parashat Lech Lecha - The Disaster

in spirituality and achieve the attainments he deserved, He created a small, annoying creature for him, the snake, who would battle against him.

The snake approached Chava and started a conversation with her, “The fruits that grow here look really tasty. Have you tried them already?”

Chava replied, “I can taste them all except for the fruit of one tree...”

The snake wondered, “Except for one tree?! Which tree?”

Chava answered, “This tree right next to us is called the “Tree of Knowledge,” and Hashem forbade us any contact with it!”

The snake asked, “Any contact?! What does that mean?”

Chava replied, “Not only did Hashem forbid us to eat from it, but He also forbade touching it. He also warned us that we would die if we preoccupy ourselves with it at all!”

The snake stared into Chava’s eyes with a look full of compassion and infinite mercy...

Chava felt worried, “What happened? What did I do?”

“**What** did you do?! You should know that at the beginning of everything, before all the worlds were created, there were two things in all of reality... Hashem and the Tree of Knowledge. Hashem ate from the Tree of Knowledge and received the wisdom and knowledge to create the world. After He created you, He was afraid that you too would eat from it and be His competitors. He then warned you not to preoccupy yourselves with it. That’s why I feel sorry for you, that by refraining from eating it, you’ll remain stuck in your place forever!”

Chava gave in and ate from the tree, and by her request, Adam ate as well...

Adam and Chava committed the sin of idol worship!

The moment they believed the snake, they turned the Tree of Knowledge into idol worship!

At that moment, all of creation trembled... the system of *sefirot*, souls, chambers, and angels.

All the pillars and foundations of the world, inanimate, vegetative, and living, descended from their lofty levels, and the forces of impurity penetrated them!

There are two general levels of idol worship:

1. Explicit idol worship – which gives reality to a certain “entity” and doesn’t recognize at all the reality of Hashem.

2. Joint idol worship – which joins the particular “entity” with

Hashem. Such as the faith of the Christians who have the faith of the “trinity,” which is complete idol worship!⁵

Here, with the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, they transgressed the sin of joint idol worship, for they said that Hashem and the Tree of Knowledge created the world!

Even though Adam HaRishon merited doing complete teshuva, and the creation as a whole was fixed, this sin caused a terrible disaster that began to develop over the generations...

~ Wellspring of Wisdom ~

5. **HaRav** Mordechai Eliyahu zt”l was very careful about anything that came close to *avodah zara* (idol worship). Any place that has a cross, he would move far away from it.

Once, when the Rav arrived at his home, already standing on the doorstep, he asked apprehensively, “What’s in the house?”

“**What** happened?” his wife asked.

“**Did** you buy anything new?” asked the Rav.

“**Yes**,” she replied, “a new tablecloth.”

She immediately ran to the table to check what was wrong with the tablecloth, and

as she examined it, she found that a part of the tablecloth’s decorations were crosses. She immediately removed the tablecloth from the table and threw it into its proper place, the trash can.

Then, HaRav Mordechai Eliyahu entered the house!

How did he feel that there was something wrong in the house?!

The answer is because he was so pure, anything that had even the smell of *avodah zara* bothered him greatly!

- Avihem Shel Israel (Vol. 5, p. 99).

Enosh's Teshuva

When Adam HaRishon was 130 years old, he had his third son, and he named him Shet.

Shet grew up, and at 105 years old, he had a son and named him Enosh.

Enosh's grandfather, Adam HaRishon, at 235 years old, held Enosh in his hands and looked at him deeply...

The kabbalist, Rabbi Menachem Azaria of Pano zt"l writes⁶ that at the birth of Enosh it is said, "Shet also had a son, and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call [idols] in the name of Hashem" (Bereshit 4:26).

As Adam HaRishon held Enosh in his hands, he saw with his *Ruach HaKodesh* that 695 years later, the holiness and

innocence that rested upon the world would be corrupted by Enosh, and he became very disappointed and depressed...

Hashem had mercy on Adam and said to him, "Know that as long as you live, Enosh won't sin, nor will any man commit idol worship. There will be no idol worship of any entity at all in heaven or earth, in the sea or on land, secretly or openly, even by thought..."

Adam HaRishon passed away at the age of 930 and was buried in the Cave of the Patriarchs.

After being buried, the 695-year-old Shet began to explore and observe the process of creation, which caused him to fall into the severe sin of joint idol worship.⁷

...*~* **Wellspring of Wisdom** *~*...

6. Maamar HaNefesh (Vol. 1, Ch. 1-2).

7. The Rambam writes that in the days of Enosh, humans made a great error, and the sages of that generation gave senseless advice, and Enosh himself was one of them.

This was their error...

They said that since Hashem created the stars and the spheres to conduct the destiny of the world and placed them in the heights and gave them honor and they are his servants, it's fitting to praise them and glorify them and give them honor.

For eight years, Enosh wandered around investigating his cursed philosophy and taught his “insight” to the masses.

After eight years, Enosh received a special enlightenment from heaven, which purified his heart, sanctified his mind, and refined his body. Since then, he

began to travel the world and called in the name of Hashem alone, for He, and only He is the true Elokim !

However, the hearts of the people were already blocked, and no one listened to him, and the world continued to regress and deteriorate in huge strides...

The Generation of The Flood

The generation of Enosh came to an end, and then a new generation began, the generation of the flood !

The heresy of this generation increased greatly...

The Gemara says⁸ that the blemish of the generation of the flood was that they said to Hashem, “What is the Almighty that we should serve Him, and what will we gain by praying to Him ?” (Iyov 21:15).

The people of the generation of the flood claimed that after Hashem created the world, He abandoned it and no longer oversaw it. From the time of creation, all orders of the world have been governed by the “laws of nature.”

Since everything is conducted by this system, “What will we gain by praying to Him ?”

However, there is one thing that isn’t run by the laws of nature – rain.

~ Wellspring of Wisdom ~

This is the will of Hashem, that we honor those whom Hashem honors, like the king who desires the honor of those who stand before him, for this is the honor of the king.

Since this thought entered their hearts, they began to build temples to the stars, offer sacrifices to them, praise and glorify

them with words, and bow down before them to find favor before the Creator...

See there for further explanation of what happened in those generations.

- Mishneh Torah (Avodat Kochavim 1:1).

8. Sanhedrin 108a.

They knew that everything related to the dimension of rain belongs to what is today called in science the chaos theory. It doesn't have fixed rules like other elements in science. It's impossible to predict the weather...⁹

The Gemara continues and says that the people of the generation of the flood said, "We don't need Him for anything, even for rain! We have rivers and springs as water supplies!"

Because heresy was so ingrained within them, there was no other choice...

Hashem brought the flood upon the world, and all of creation was destroyed...

At that time, Hashem said,¹⁰ "How long will the world be in darkness? Let the light come!"

Then, the preparations for the *tikkun* of the sin of Adam HaRishon began...

Nimrod – The Snake

To bring about the *tikkun*, Adam HaRishon had to return to this world and fight the heresy spread by the snake...

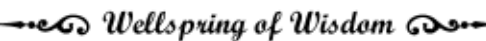
Let's start with the snake...

A great secret was revealed to us by the kabbalist, HaRav Moshe Cordovero zt"l, the Ramak...¹¹

After Adam and Chava sinned and ate from the

Tree of Knowledge, they were stripped of their spiritual garments.

These garments then fell into the hands of Nimrod, who was the *sod* (secret) of the rebellious snake, and from Nimrod, they reached the hands of Esav because the powers of impurity (the *yetzer hara*) found a better (eviler) prospect...



9. Shiurim VeHitvaaduyot - 5773 (Vol. 1, p. 504).

10. Bereshit Rabbah 2:3.

11. Ohr Yakar (Vol. 7, Parashat Bo).

Then, Yaakov Avinu managed to wisely take these garments from the snake, the *yetzer hara*, and Esav...

From his words, we learn that Nimrod drew his power from the snake for a long period... And in the snake's usual behavior, he filled the world with heresy...

HaRav Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l writes¹² that the evil Nimrod denied the very reality of Hashem and didn't keep his heretical beliefs to himself. Rather, wherever he went, he stood up and lectured to the masses that the world wasn't created at all but had existed since time immemorial and that there's no Creator.

Slowly, Nimrod began to gain strength until one day, he gathered everyone and announced, "It's

time to build a structure that will unite us all! A unique building for idol worship!"¹³

The generation of the Dispersion yearned to eradicate holiness from the earth and to entrench impurity throughout the land. They, therefore, sought to build a city and a tower, for just as there are places ready for holiness to rest upon, like Yerushalayim and the Beit HaMikdash, so too there are places ready for impurity to rest upon.¹⁴ They then built a city in place of Yerushalayim and a tower in place of the Beit HaMikdash.¹⁵

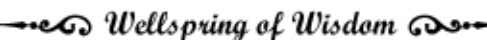
Just as the Beit HaMikdash will unite all the servants of Hashem, so will the tower unite all the idolaters...

Let's move on to Adam HaRishon...

The Shining Star

In the year 1948, from creation, the soul of Avraham Avinu descended into the world, and since the day of his birth, the tests began!

Nimrod had an army commander who was very devoted to his cause. His name was Terach. The king (Nimrod)



12. Imrei Noam (Parashat Noach, Maamar 6).

13. Avodah Zarah 53b; See Rashi there.

14. See Alshich on the Torah (Bereshit 11:4).

15. Megillat Setarim (on Megillat Ester 1:2).

Parashat Lech Lecha - The Shining Star

exalted him above all the monarchy's other people because of his great love for him.

When Terach was 70 years old, his wife, Amtelai, bore him a son, and Terach called him Avram, saying, "The king has exalted me over all the ministers of the kingdom."

Terach was overjoyed about his newborn son. He decided to gather all his servants and all the wise men and astrologers of Nimrod and prepared for them a luxurious feast.

They ate and drank until nightfall and then returned to their homes. On their way home, they saw an enormous star, one that they've never seen before, shining in the sky. The people gazed in wonder at the strange star, and suddenly, the star flew from the east and, in flight, struck four stars and swallowed them up.

The king's astrologers, who understood the wisdom of the zodiacs, knew the meaning of this strange event.

The next day they approached King Nimrod and said to him,

"Know that Terach had a son, and his *mazal* is extraordinary, and his descendants will kill you!"

Nimrod listened... and then sentenced the baby, Avram, to death!

The king's servants immediately brought Terach before him, and Terach requested, "My lord, the king, give me three days until I console my wife." After many pleas, Nimrod agreed and gave him three days.

On the third day, the king sent a message to Terach, "Send me your son, and if you refuse, I will kill your entire household!" Terach hurried and took one of his servants' children whom his handmaid bore to him on the day that Avram was born and brought him to the king." The king grabbed the child from Terach's hands and smashed his head against the ground, killing him instantly!

The deception remained hidden from then on, and the matter was forgotten from the heart of the king, for it was the will of Hashem that Avram should not be put to death.

Terach secretly took his son, Avram, his mother, and his nurse and hid them in a cave, supplying them with all that they needed month after month.

Hashem was with Avram, and he grew up in the cave for ten years, and the king and his ministers believed that they had killed Avram.¹⁶

Cry For Truth

Three-year-old Avram hides in the cave because Nimrod wants to kill him, and his heart begins to ponder and long for truth... Who created the world? What's the purpose of all this?

Since then, a very long path of searching for truth had begun, "Who is the Creator of the world?"

Every Jew has their own special spiritual purpose. Every Jew has their own path, their own look, their own mind, and their own way of thinking.¹⁷

Every Jew has a special spiritual path paved just for them. No one walks down the same trail.

~ Wellspring of Wisdom ~

16. Seder HaDorot (Year 1948).

17. **This** knowledge is also the most central foundation for perpetual *Shalom Bayit*. It's impossible to change someone to be like me, and it's impossible for me to be like him, for everyone has their own place.

When we learn to accept the other as they are, without conditions, we can succeed in beginning to find similar points in the other, and through those points, to become one. Whoever understands the above three sentences can live a hundred years without a single argument.

Whoever knows this foundation, that each person has their own uniqueness,

will succeed. Therefore, a business owner who wants to succeed, before making decisions about the business, should gather all the managers of every sector of the business, all of who are in charge of a particular area of the business, and consult with them. Sometimes, in this position, precisely someone you didn't expect, throws out an idea that you wouldn't have thought about even in the next three hundred years. This idea, together with the idea of another person, together with the thought of someone else, something perfect emerges. The result... The business grows and succeeds, for Hashem created a unique point within every person.

Since the creation of the world to this present day, 5783 years, two of the same creations have yet to be created.

Because of this, when a Jew merits recognizing their spiritual purpose, they must carry it out with completeness! It's forbidden for them to be ashamed of all those who don't understand them.

After all, the reason they don't understand them is because they have a different purpose in life, and therefore their view of the world is adjusted according to their purpose.

Every Jew who wants to succeed must remember the following sentence...

It's forbidden to let anyone or anything in the world diminish me!

Avraham Avinu also had a spiritual purpose... to correct the heresy created in the

world by Adam HaRishon after eating from the Tree of Knowledge.

Because this was his purpose, it was necessary for him to go down a very long path, in which he would be familiar with all types of heresy... he scrutinized them and recognized their senselessness!

In the end, it was also necessary for him to get into an argument with the evil Nimrod, who was the primordial snake himself, and defeat him.

Only then, after he had completed his long journey and merited attaining complete *emuna*, he went out to the people to teach *emuna* in Hashem!

Since he did everything "in order" – step by step, without jumping, he succeeded and brought the hearts of the masses closer to the pure *emuna* in Hashem.

Wellspring of Wisdom

Since each person has their own uniqueness, it's senseless to compare people to one another. Therefore,

it's also senseless to be jealous of another... There's no room for jealousy!

The Foundations of Emuna

HaRav Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l writes...¹⁸

From the time that Avraham Avinu understood that there's a Creator to the world and that He's the One who controls it as He pleases, and thus, it's fitting to serve only Him, he would walk among the people and speak to them about the true *emuna* in the Creator of the world.

The Midrash says¹⁹ that Terach was a manufacturer of Idols.

He once had to leave his shop to go somewhere quickly and left Avraham in charge. A woman came in with a bowl of fine flour and requested that he offer it before the idols. Avraham took a stick and broke all the idols in the shop except for the largest one and put the stick in its hand.

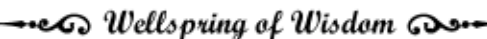
When his father returned, he asked, "Who did this!?" To which Avraham replied, "I won't

conceal it from you, father, a woman came in with a bowl of fine flour to offer it before them. I offered it before them, and then they began to fight over the flour. Thereupon the largest one arose, took a stick, and broke them all.

His father looked at him and said, "Why are you making a fool of me? Do you really think that the idols understand!?" Avraham responded, "Listen to what your mouth is speaking!"

When the wicked Nimrod learned that Avraham Avinu rebelled against his kingdom, refused idol worship, and believed only in Hashem, he immediately sent his servants to seize Avraham and throw him into the fiery furnace, but Hashem cooled the furnace and saved him.²⁰

This act of Avraham being thrown into the fiery furnace and coming out of it unscathed



18. Imrei Noam (Parashat Noach, Maamar 6).

19. Bereshit Rabbah 38:13.

20. Pesachim 118a.

provoked an immense *Kiddush Hashem* (sanctification of Hashem) in the world, and in his merit, many abandoned their false beliefs and returned to believing in the Creator of the world, Hashem.

Indeed, Avraham Avinu merited complete *emuna*, which consists of four foundations:

1. Complete *emuna* in the reality of Hashem. This is the most primary element in *emuna*, as the Rambam writes in the opening of the Foundations of the Torah...²¹ The foundation of all foundations and the pillar of wisdom is to know that there is a Primary Being.

2. Complete *emuna* that the world was created and is not eternal. And indeed, the very belief that the world was created already requires believing in the reality of the Creator who created it, for it's impossible for there to be anything created without there being one who created it, for certainly, one cannot create themselves. And

the One who created the world is Hashem.

3. Complete *emuna* that no corporality preceded the creation of the world from which Hashem created the world. Rather, He created the world from nothing, in the aspect of *yesh me'ayin* (ex nihilo).

4. Complete *emuna* that even after Hashem created the world, He didn't leave it in the hands of human beings without His supervision rather, He oversees it at all times and controls it as He wills, and there's nothing in the world that can even move without Hashem's consent and will.

Moreover, the holy Baal Shem Tov revealed that since the world was created, Hashem creates every detail of creation anew at every moment, and if *chas v'shalom* Hashem would cease to recreate a certain creation, even for one moment, it would immediately return to being absolutely nothingness as it was before, and it would disappear from reality.

The Alter Rebbe explains²² that this doesn't compare at all to a sculptor who creates a vessel and which, after being created, exists in and of itself, not relying on the sculptor in the least.

A sculptor that creates a vessel doesn't create it out of nothing, for the material from which the vessel was created (such as glass, metal, wood, etc.) existed beforehand. The sculptor only took the material and shaped it to his heart's desire.

Thus, the vessel can exist without the sculptor. But this is not the case when it comes to the creation of the world, for before Hashem created it, there was no such reality of matter. Hashem created the world from nothing.

Therefore, even after the world was created, it's not an actual, true reality at all... at every moment, it desires to return to the nothingness from which it was created, and only Hashem is the One who renews it again and again at every

moment and prevents it from disappearing from the world.

What we need to learn from all of the above is how much each and every person must strengthen themselves in the true *emuna* in the Creator of the world, that He controls, guides, and oversees everything that happens in the world, and that nothing happens without His will and consent.

And for this, we need no evidence, for our *emuna* is an innocent and simple *emuna* without any aspect of investigation or philosophy *chas v'shalom*. The well-known words of the Maharal of Prague zt"l ring when speaking of this topic, that Judaism in general, and *emuna* in particular begins where reason and logic end.

Since we believe that everything that happens in this world is under Hashem's complete supervision, we have no reason to complain or get angry about anything or anyone, for the truth is that

22. Tanya (Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmuna, Ch. 2; Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 25).

whatever or whoever seemingly harmed us in any way is nothing but a messenger of Hashem. He's the one Who decided what would happen.

No matter what occurs in our life, we must know, without a shadow of a doubt, that the One who decided that this would occur is solely Hashem Himself and no other.

And since we know that Hashem is the One who brought the "trouble" upon us, we're obligated to receive it with love and joy, for this is what Rabbi Akiva taught us,²³ "Everything that Hashem does, He does for the good," and he learned this from his rabbi, Nachum "Ish Gam Zu," who

received this name because he was accustomed to say,²⁴ "This too is for good" (*Gam Zu LeTova*), about everything "bad" that happened to him.

The Baal HaTanya explains²⁵ that what seems to our physical eyes as not good, truthfully, is very good, even more so than what seems to us as good...²⁶

He adds²⁷ that when we believe that the difficulties that come upon us are surely for good, and we, therefore, receive them with love and joy, through this, we sweeten the *dinim* (judgment) upon ourselves and turn them into revealed good.

Then, after Avraham Avinu defeated Nimrod, the revolution occurred...

— *~* **Wellspring of Wisdom** *~* —

23. Brachot 60b.

24. Taanit 21a.

25. Tanya (Likutei Amarim, Ch. 26).

26. **The** Baal HaTanya explains that what seems to us as good descends from *Alma DeItgalia* (the Revealed World) from the aspect of the ה"א of Hashem's name, and what seems to us as not

good, is actually something good that descends from *Alma DeItkasia* (the Concealed World), from the aspect of the ה"י of Hashem's name, therefore, its good is concealed and hidden. Whatever descends from *Alma DeItkasia* is good that is far greater and loftier than what descends from *Alma DeItgalia*.

27. Tanya (Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 11).

Leave Everything and Go!

Avraham Avinu's name began to become famous, and his noble spirit impacted all who came in contact with him.

The revolutionary change was extreme, very extreme.

Only a short time ago, he was an abandoned, lonely man, the enemy of the state, and then suddenly, he became beloved and admired, and people felt honored just to be in his presence.

When Avraham Avinu was 57 years old, Hashem appeared to him and said, "Avram, go for yourself, from your land, from your birthplace, and from your father's house to the land that I will show you" (Bereshit 12:1).

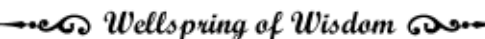
Rabbi Eliezer Shlomo Schik zt"l, the Moharosh, explained²⁸ that Hashem said to Avraham, "Praiseworthy are you for finding Me! Blessed are you that you merited to serve Me! But know

that you still haven't achieved perfection! In order to merit perfection, you must go to yourself, to the inner point that is unique to you! And in order to merit that, you must withstand tests!"

We've already clarified that tests are the ladder of ascension, and therefore, Avraham Avinu had to be tested with ten tests which brought him to perfection.

Likewise, every Jew who desires to ascend must go through tests tailored to their soul and spiritual purpose.

Rebbe Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl zt"l writes²⁹ that each and every person must go through tests, even if their thoughts are entirely with Hashem and are completely faithful to Him, nevertheless each person is tested with ten tests, as they said about Avraham,³⁰ "Avraham was tested with ten tests and withstood them all."



28. Zot HaTorah (p. 26).

29. Maor Enayim (Parashat Vaera).

30. Pirkei Avot 5:3.

Every Jew throughout their life experiences the aspect of the ten tests.

Once it's the aspect of being thrown into the fiery furnace, that is, the test of fire can be experienced in several forms... once it may be being coerced to convert to another religion, and withstanding the test and being burned alive, and another time it may be the "fire" of the *yetzer hara* that burns in one's heart to stray after the lusts of this world, and yet a different time it may be the "fiery furnace" of humiliation and embarrassment.³¹

A Jew must stand firm during every test that comes their way and be willing to give their lives on *Kiddush Hashem* (the

sanctification of Hashem's name) and overcome the fire of the *yetzer hara* and continue in their spiritual purpose despite the humiliations...

Once a person goes through a test in matters of modesty and withstands it, and receives wealth and honor, and another time goes through a test of anger and passes it, and receives an abundance of something else... thus throughout life...

The word "נְסִיוֹן" (test) comes from the word "נֶסֶם" (flag),

עֲשֵׂה לְךָ שָׂרָף וְשִׂים אֹתוֹ עַל-נֶסֶם

(Make for yourself [a figure of] a snake, and place it upon a **flag**)
(Bamidbar 21:8).

A flag expresses elevating to greater heights. They desire in heaven to elevate a person, to

Wellspring of Wisdom

31. Rebbe Nachman of Breslov zt"l writes (Sefer HaMiddot – Mamon, 62) that sometimes when a tzaddik has no *mazal* (fortune) regarding their *parnasa* (livelihood), adversaries are sent upon him from heaven, and through [withstanding] this [test], he is given the *parnasa* that is fitting for him.

That is, there are times when Hashem desires to give someone *parnasa* and

great wealth, but that person isn't worthy to receive it. Thus, Hashem brings about a guilty person to embarrass or shame them, and through this, the wealth that was originally allotted to them takes a sharp turn and descends to the person that Hashem desired to bestow upon.

Simply said, there are no accidents or coincidences in the world. Everything is supervised to the smallest details...

bring them to higher levels in the upper worlds – and the way to do so is by putting them through tests.

Suddenly, all kinds of humiliations come upon the

person, but they remain silent, and consequently, Hashem opens for them all the gates of abundance!

Now, let's return to Avraham Avinu...

The Dew of Your Youth

There's a disagreement in the Midrash³² as to what age Avraham Avinu recognized that Hashem existed...

One opinion says at the age of fifty, another opinion says at the age forty-eight, and a different opinion says at the age of three.

The Rambam says³³ that at the age of forty, Avraham knew his Creator.

In any case, Avraham Avinu searched for the truth for many years, and when Hashem finally revealed Himself to him, the quest came to an end.

Then, Avraham Avinu felt immense sorrow for all those years that went by in pondering and darkness.

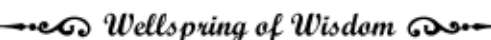
These are the words of the Midrash...³⁴

Because Avraham Avinu was afraid, saying, “My hands are full of iniquities, for I've worshipped idols all these years...”

Hashem said to him, “Yours will be the dew of your youth” (Tehillim 110:3) – Just as dew vanishes, so too will your iniquities vanish, just as dew is a sign of blessing to the world, so too are you a sign of blessing to the world.

The Zohar HaKadosh adds³⁵ that Avraham Avinu merited serving his Creator all the days of his life, all his days, without exception.

This is baffling, for many days went by where Avraham didn't even know his Creator, and



32. Pesikta Rabbati.

33. Mishneh Torah (Avodat Kochavim 1:3).

34. Bereshit Rabbah 39:8.

35. Zohar (Chayei Sarah 129a).

Parashat Lech Lecha - Double Consolation

according to the opinion that only at the age of fifty did he know his Creator, 17,885 days passed by without him knowing Hashem! If so, how did these days turn into merit and *avodat Hashem*?!

The answer to this is simple.

Hashem created the world in such a way that the concealed is far more substantial than the visible. The reason Hashem created it in such a way is that He desired that human beings search for Him.

We have no idea, nor words to explain, how precious a burning heart that searches out for the truth is in the eyes of Hashem.

When someone merits escaping indifference, apathy, complacency, mental fatigue, lack of desire, lack of energy, and begins to feel that there's a purpose to the creation,

that there's a reason for why everything happens, and begins to search for the truth, that entire period of searching, conducted with a true heart, is infinitely precious in the eyes of Hashem.

When that same person eventually merits finding the truth, all the knowledge and strengths they acquired during their search will become merits and help them in *avodat Hashem*, and as Hashem said to Avraham, "Just as dew (the period of searching) is a sign of blessing to the world, so too are you a sign of blessing to the world."

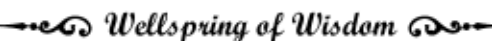
That entire period of searching essentially gave way to the mitzvah of *emuna* and the fulfillment of the Torah, and therefore, it's also considered *avodat Hashem*.

And this is also the reason for the long exile we are in as of now...

Double Consolation

The consolation for the exile and destruction of the Beit HaMikdash appears in the verse, "Comfort, oh comfort My people"

(Yeshayahu 40:1). The Midrash says³⁶ that as they were punished doubly, they'll be consoled doubly. Elsewhere, the Midrash says³⁷ that



36. Eicha Rabbah 1:57.

37. Yalkut Shimoni (Eicha - Remez 1018).

since its mitzvot are double, its consolations are double.

What does this double consolation mean? In what sense will it be double?

There's a double consolation in a quantitative sense... for example, someone whose house went up in flames can be consoled with receiving a different house in return, but if you give them a house that's twice as big and luxurious as the first, this is a double consolation... double in quantity.

But, there's also a double consolation in quality.

With ordinary consolation, the grief and sorrow remain, but it compensates for them. However, with double consolation, not only does it completely eliminate the sorrow, but it also reveals to the person that what seemed to them to be a sad and painful occurrence was actually good.

When the Torah speaks doubly, it refers to two dimensions, and indeed, the thing that characterizes the life of the Jew, the Torah and its mitzvot, the

destruction and the consolation, are the two dimensions that exist within them the physical dimension and the spiritual dimension.

A Jew is composed of these two dimensions, body and soul. Together, they create one reality – a Jew.

A Jew's completion is when they serve Hashem both with their body and soul.

These two dimensions also appear in every mitzvah. There's the spiritual side – the intention and emotion of the mitzvah, and the physical side – the manner in which the mitzvah is actually fulfilled.

This is the meaning of *chazal's* words, "It's mitzvot are double." Within each mitzvah there are two realities – a spiritual reality and a physical reality. When *chazal* say that Bnei Israel sinned doubly, they meant that they sinned regarding both dimensions – the physical and spiritual dimensions of the Torah and mitzvot.

Hence the punishment was also double, and the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash was expressed in two dimensions –

material destruction and spiritual destruction. There could've been a state of only material destruction, where, in the spiritual reality, the light would've remained revealed. However, "they were punished doubly" – not only with physical destruction but also with spiritual concealment.

But when the consolation arrives, it'll also be double – not only completion of the physical building but also completion of the revelation of the divine spiritual light.

This kind of consolation is not at all understandable during the period of exile.

The reason for this is that if we were able to see the good in the exile, we wouldn't feel sorrowful about it and consequently not ask Hashem to save us.

Hashem, therefore, created the reality in which the exile would seem to us like a bad thing so that our view of it would be completely negative.

But, when the redemption arrives, a double consolation will arrive with it, and then we'll see and feel, what is now beyond our understanding, the good that was hidden in the exile **and that precisely the exile itself was what gave us the *kelim* (vessels) to contain the light of redemption !**

Then our eyes will suddenly open, and we'll realize that even the darkest events of exile, even the undue humiliation of the glory of heaven and the glory of Am Israel, **were nothing but a hidden *keli* for the good that will be revealed at the time of redemption.**

Then we'll understand that even the horrors of exile stemmed from the concealed kindnesses of Hashem, and we'll then thank Him for it all, "I will thank you Hashem, although you were angry with me !" (Yeshayahu 12:1).

This is the double consolation... a consolation that turns sorrow into joy!³⁸

The Pathway...

1. Every Jew must know that it's impossible to enter *kedusha* quickly and at once. You have to consistently serve Hashem for many days and years with simplicity, humility, and emuna, and throughout all those days, wait and hope almost endlessly until you truly enter *kedusha*.

2. Someone who merits and continues in their *avodah* with devotion, and although they don't see or feel any advancement, they don't give up or lose hope rather, they wait, hope, and long for, "When will I come and appear before Hashem!" (Tehillim 42:3), for they know that as long as heaven isn't bringing them closer, it's a sign that they still aren't worthy. Then, in the end, those same hopes, desires, and longings will purify them until they merit, and over the years, heaven will bring them into *kedusha*. This is the path that all who desire to enter *kedusha* are destined to go through.

3. When someone decides to sanctify themselves, they should know that they're going to experience difficult tests. Whoever thinks that *avodat Hashem* comes easy, that at any rate they'll be a *talmid chacham* or be *kadosh*, without hard work on their part, they live very far from reality. Only someone who takes into account that they're going out to war with the *yetzer hara* will succeed. You have to constantly remember to stand firm in all the tests that are also decreed upon

you from heaven, for those very tests are your spiritual ladder of ascension.

4. We find a good example of this when it comes to *Baalei Teshuva*. When they still weren't observing Torah and mitzvot, many things wouldn't bother them at all, but after Hashem granted them the privilege to do teshuva, all kinds of tests suddenly arose in matters of *kedusha* and the like. The reason for this is that as long as someone is on the side of the *yetzer hara*, the *yetzer hara* has no interest in provoking them, but when they begin to approach *kedusha*, the *yetzer hara* notices that they're escaping his hold and says to them, "Are you trying to run away from me?! I'll show you!" Thus, *Baalei Teshuva* have a lot of tests. Although at the beginning of their journey, the first year or two, they get up early for tefillah, they're first at every mitzvah that comes their way. Afterward, they're usually on a decline. For example, they search for a place to pray *shacharit* at eleven o'clock...

5. How can that be? Well, the *yetzer hara* saw that they ran away from him, so he stands at the entrance of every place of *kedusha*. He disturbs them in tefillah, interferes with their family purity, interferes with their desire for food, and disturbs them with impure thoughts. He enters every place possible just to pull them back to where they were initially. That's why *chazal* say (Brachot 34b), "In the

The Pathway...

place where *Baalei Teshuva* stand, even perfect tzaddikim cannot stand.” For the *yetzer hara* has long despaired of the tzaddikim, he doesn’t mess with them. Who does he look for then? For *Baalei Teshuva* whom he’s already familiar with for a long time now. He tests them constantly, and because of this constant war that they have with the *yetzer*, in the end, they merit very lofty levels...

6. We must know that difficulties are ladders... tests are ladders, challenges. There’s no other way to ascend, only via ladders. When it’s not difficult, it’s not a test. When it’s not a test, it’s not a ladder. When we go through life without tests, without challenges, it’s not considered that we’re moving. We’re just walking around a roundabout, always going back to the starting point. It may seem to us as if we’re ascending, but in truth, we’re standing in the same low position as before.

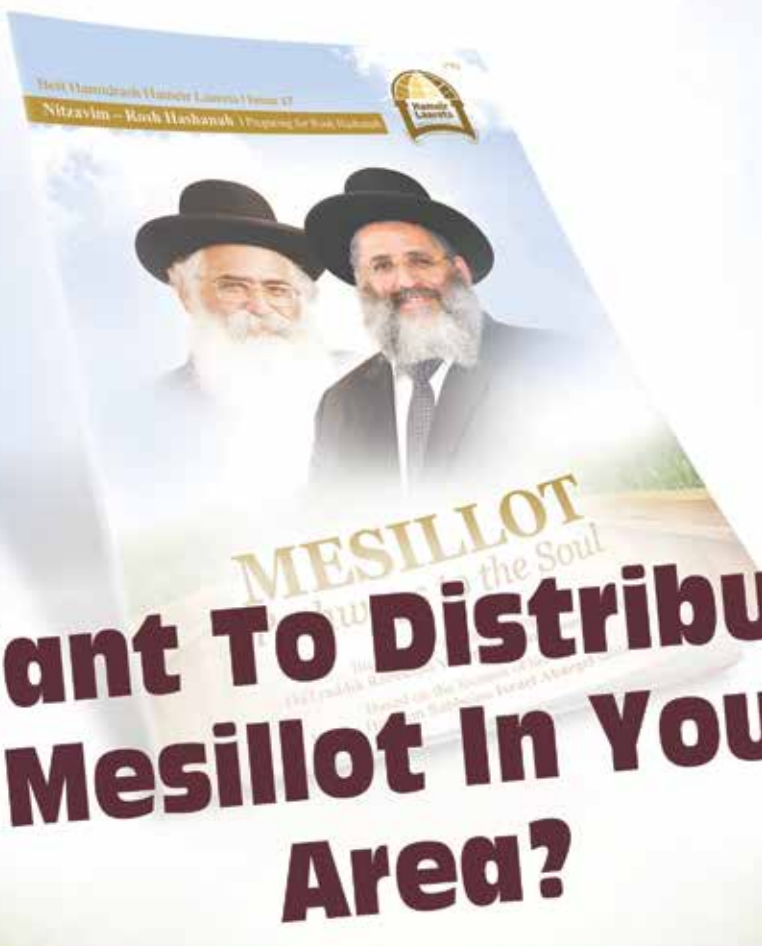
7. Every test that comes our way from heaven – and not that, *chas v’shalom*, we intentionally bring upon ourselves – reveals to us the faith that Hashem has in us, the strengths hidden within us. When we look at loving parents who want to reveal the power of walking within their child, they distance themselves from the child and encourage them to walk by themselves. We know that the parents believe in the child and that they have the

ability to walk. The test they put the child through reveals the belief that they have in them. Thus, when Hashem presents us with a challenge, a test, this itself reveals Hashem’s love and faith in us.

8. Every test is a ladder of ascension for our souls. But it’s also a ladder to lower the *Shechina* down to our world. When all of our ladders stand upright, we’ll be able to lower the *Shechina* down to us, and then our purpose, to create a dwelling place for Hashem here in our world, will be fulfilled.

9. What we need to learn from all of the above is how much each and every person must strengthen themselves in the true *emuna* in the Creator of the world, that He controls, guides, and oversees everything that happens in the world, and that nothing happens without His will and consent. Once we begin believing that everything that happens in this world is under Hashem’s complete supervision, we’ll then have no reason to complain or get angry about anything or anyone, for the truth is that whatever or whoever seemingly harmed us in any way is nothing but a messenger of Hashem. He’s the one Who decided what would happen.

10. No matter what occurs in our life, we must know, without a shadow of a doubt, that the One who decided that this would occur is solely Hashem Himself and no other.



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Lech Lecha**

11th of Cheshvan , 5783



City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	5:34 pm	6:35pm	7:03 pm
Miami	6:21 pm	7:14 pm	7:51 pm
Los Angeles	5:40 pm	6:36 pm	7:09 pm
Montreal	5:20 pm	6:23 pm	6:49 pm
Toronto	5:47 pm	6:48 pm	7:16 pm
London	4:11 pm	5:20 pm	5:40 pm
Jerusalem	4:32 pm	5:21 pm	5:57 pm
Tel Aviv	4:28 pm	5:17 pm	5:52 pm
Haifa	4:26 pm	5:15 pm	5:50 pm
Be'er Sheva	4:29 pm	5:19 pm	5:54 pm

**Pathways
to the Heart**

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

Sometimes you need to decrease your avodat Hashem in order to invest in your children. You need to sit down to learn with them, to talk to them about their day, to be an actual part of their life...

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