

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 85

Miketz | Paving The Way To Redemption



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 Miketz

The Tables Have Turned

The pillar of tefillah of his generation was the holy tzaddik, Rebbe Yechiel Meir, the *Yehudi HaTov* of Gostynin. The key to salvation that was placed in his hands was nothing but the power of his prayers.

Admittedly, all the miracles and salvations that he would perform were revolved around the reciting of Tehillim. Hence the origin of the title given to him, “Baal HaTehillim.”

Dark clouds covered the sky of Polish Jewry. A group of antisemites in the government united to suppress the Jews of the country. They joined together to initiate and pass terrible decrees on Am Israel.

At that time, Am Israel weren't yet in their lowly state of degradation. Their power to stand up against their enemies, to give bribes, to use their many

connections, to build a fence, and withstand breaches was in full force. This caused their enemies to work in secret and to be extremely careful that no one outside would know of their plans so as not to give time for the Jewish lobbyists and its businessmen to save their nation before the blow.

Most of the time, their enemies wouldn't succeed. They weren't able to execute their plot until some information was leaked to one of the influential people in the community, resulting in them immediately preparing for the sacred war of saving Jewish lives and, with Hashem's help, win.

However, this time, the conspiracy of silence of those wicked people succeeded. No trace of their dark intrigues leaked out ahead of time. With stealth and secrecy, the wicked issued their decrees against the Jews, and when the influential Jews received

word of the new decrees, it was already too late to nullify them.

It was in the midst of *Yom Tov*, the first day of Sukkot, when a reliable source in the government told the head of the Warsaw Jewish community about the new decrees that aimed to embitter the lives of the Jews, but unfortunately, these terrible decrees had already received approval, and they had nothing left to do but to publicize them.

Immediately, from the greatest of Talmidei Chachamim and Rebbeim to the wealthiest tycoons and influential Jewish ministers and lobbyists were summoned. They all gathered in a secret meeting to discuss the emergency in the midst of the holiday in order to contrive a way to confront the face of evil.

These were not purely monetary decrees imposing taxes and fines but also malicious orders and unbearably severe restrictions on the development and continued existence of the Jewish nation, such as the limit on the number of children each family was allowed

to have, the forced displacement of Jewish residents beyond stifling ghetto walls, and worst of all, the imposition of death sentences for violators of these laws.

The danger that was inherent in those decrees didn't allow the nation's patrons to postpone the emergency assembly until after the holiday out of hope that they would be able to find some way to thwart these evil plots. However, by the time of the meeting, many of the participants had already gathered more details about the anti-Jewish plan of the authorities, and the picture, as it would be painted on the conference table, was darker than expected. It was clear that there was no hope, the decree was already issued, and there was no way of reversing it.

The possibility of nullifying the evil decree depended now only on the monarchy itself. Only it had the power to delay the implementation of the decree despite its acceptance and approval at all levels of government. However, there was no reason in the world for it to do so, thus arousing the wrath of the enemies of the Jews, who

comprised most of the senior authorities. None of the attendees of the meeting even fathomed such a possibility, and thus, they sealed their gathering with a broken heart and a sigh and prepared to return home without doing anything.

At that moment, Rabbi Gamliel, one of those present, stood up and stated, “In my humble opinion, I think it’s appropriate to send a delegation to the Yehudi HaTov of Gostynin, to inform him of the trouble that has fallen upon the people. Perhaps he could arouse the mercy necessary to bring about a miracle and nullify the evil decree through the power of his prayers!”

They all nodded their heads in agreement. They thus sent a delegation to Gostynin immediately following the second *Yom Tov* so that they would arrive on the morning of the first day of *Chol HaMoed*.

The Warsaw delegation was warmly received immediately upon its arrival, even before *tefillat shacharit*. The looks on the faces of the messengers were enough to understand that there was

something extremely urgent to discuss, and the heart of the tzaddik worriedly walked towards them.

With bated breath, the Yehudi HaTov listened to the dreadful news. Almost an hour after they had finished speaking, he was still sitting with his head bowed, and his eyes closed, with cold beads of sweat protruding out on his pale forehead...

Shaking off his thoughts, his eyes shone with a glimmer of determination. He was brimming with confidence and hope in the decision he had just made. He didn’t reveal his thoughts to the members of the delegation. He only stood up, wrapped himself in his *tallit*, and walked silently towards the Beit Midrash. The messengers then followed him to pray *shacharit*.

After *Hallel*, before the *Hoshanot*, the tzaddik signaled to the *chazzan* to wait. A deep silence filled the Beit Midrash. Everyone’s eyes followed the movements of the tzaddik, who put down the *lulav* and *etrog* and strode thoughtfully toward the *bimah* (platform).

The Yehudi HaTov stood on the *bimah*, turned to the muted, astonished crowd, and before he could utter a word, a well of tears flowed from his pure eyes without respite.

Shock fell upon the congregation. Their hearts began to throb with terror, their eyes puzzled with fear, their ears yearning to hear what the tzaddik had to say.

“Dear Jews,” the Rebbe began in a tearful voice, “This is a time of great trouble for our nation! Not long ago, we learned that a terrible decree had befallen us. Our enemies, the wicked gentiles of this country, have ordered evil decrees to terrorize us, decrees that the majority of the nation cannot withstand! The decrees have already been authorized by the hands of the government, and it’s not in the power of anyone to act and do anything to nullify them. It’s entirely in the hands of Heaven. We must put all of our efforts only in prayer and supplications. No bribes nor war will be of any use. We have one thing left... Prayer!”

Anxious cries broke out throughout the entire Beit Midrash,

and weeping louder than everyone were the members of the Warsaw delegation, for who knew how truly severe the decrees were more than them? After a long few minutes, the wailing subsided, and the tzaddik opened and said, “The Torah says, “If you lend money to My people... Therefore, if that person cries out to Me, I will pay heed, for I am compassionate” (Shemot 22:24-26). The Rashbam interprets: Although the lender possesses the collateral according to the law and they don’t have to return it except in exchange for payment of the loan – and although according to the letter of the law, I shouldn’t listen to the pleas of the borrower, I will nonetheless listen to his plea as I am compassionate!”

The Rebbe exclaimed, “Indeed, because we are full of sins, iniquities, and transgression, and deserve, according to the law, all those harsh, terrible, bitter decrees that have been decreed upon us. However,” the tzaddik roared from the depths of his heart, “the Rashbam was a great *Posek*, and his rulings are binding even in heaven! And he ruled that Hashem’s *middah* of compassion is such that

He listens and pardons the one who cries out, even though He doesn't have to according to the letter of the law, even if the one that cried out doesn't deserve it! Let us, therefore, rely on this *psak*, and even though we aren't worthy and aren't entitled to salvation, let us all, together, shout with all our might, "Hoshana!!!" We'll shout and scream without stopping until we're saved, and the evil judgment is torn to pieces! For we are coming with the power of His holy Torah!

The tzaddik finished his speech, turned to the *Aron HaKodesh*, and began to shout with all his might, as the entire congregation followed suit, "Hoshana! Hoshana! Hoshana! Hoshana!"

The roars grew louder and louder. The shouts were fused with wails, cries, and stormy sobs. Not a few moments passed, and Jewish passers-by, who were horrified by the voices and the crying, hurried to enter the Beit Midrash, and when they heard the news, they joined in...

As the crowd grew, so did the sounds. The terrible roar of the

crowd progressed into the street and reached the center of the city. The news about the cries and the yelling in the Rebbe's Beit Midrash spread like wildfire. Crowds of frightened Jews started running towards the Beit Midrash. They pushed their way in until there was absolutely no way to enter. Thus, people crowded outside, peering through the opened windows of the Beit Midrash, and they, too, contributed their voices to the deafening roars.

After all the Jews of the city had crowded the Beit Midrash, its entrances, the square in front, the courtyard in the back, as well as the streets around it, they stood and shouted, "Hoshana!" As the sound of cries reached the heart of heaven, the women also began to arrive. They and their children, who were trailing behind them or carried in their arms, and without saying a word, they began to devastate wails that shattered the firmaments...

An hour, two hours, and three hours had passed in this manner, but the tzaddik didn't let up. He shouted at the forefront, and all

the people shouted after him. Their throats were swollen, their voices were strained, their heads throbbing, and their strength was running out, but the tzaddik urged them to continue, “Don’t give up ! Don’t stop until the very last terrible decree is nullified !”

All the gentile craftsman in the marketplace closed their stores. All the merchants hurried to pack up their goods and leave. Great terror and anxiety fell upon the gentiles of Gostynin...

The terrible screams and cries which were heard throughout the city and shattered the heavens, the sudden, mysterious gathering of all the Jews of the city in the Beit Midrash cast a strange fear in the hearts of the gentiles, and they sought to flee immediately.

They stood in the market squares, in the taverns, and near their prayer houses, trembling, trying to think of a way to silence the Jews. They were impatiently hoping for a lull in the continuous roar of the crowd. Each additional moment that passed seemed to them like an eternity.

After hours passed and there was no sign of silence, the gentile crowd started pouring in the thousands into the city hall, demanding the governor’s quick intervention in the matter. Further bewilderment was added to their already perplexed state at the sight of the governor and the members of his entourage sitting in fear and at a loss, discussing the same matter.

Since no good suggestion was given to silence the outcry, the gentiles decided to send a distinguished delegation to the Beit Midrash to beg the Jewish rabbi to silence the congregation from their screams and cries. At the head of the delegation stood the governor himself, accompanied by very distinguished public figures and members of the city council.

The delegation nervously arrived at the Beit Midrash, but due to the large crowd, they were prevented from entering. They stood outside and sent their message through a Jew who was standing near them to say to the Rebbe that they’re ready to do for his sake and for the sake of his

community whatever he demanded of them, provided that they cease and desist from these terrible cries...

The Jew passed the message on from one person to another until it arrived before the tzaddik.

When the Rebbe heard their message, he immediately slammed his fist on the platform, silenced the audience from their cries, wiped his tears from his eyes, and in a voice full of joy, declared, “Baruch Hashem! The decree is nullified and won’t come down to the world! May the name of Hashem be blessed from now and forever!”

In astonishment, the Jews began looking around with their tear-stained eyes, wanting to know who revealed to their Rebbe that the decree was indeed annulled.

Reading the bewilderment on their faces, he explained, “I had complete faith in the mercy of Hashem that the shouting and crying would be useful to nullify the decree, but I myself was puzzled, how and when I would know that the pleas had been accepted and the evil sentence

had been reversed. I thought to myself that they would probably reveal this to us from heaven and give us a sign or miracle.

But now that I heard that fear and trembling had fallen on the gentiles around us, that terror had seized the inhabitants of Gostynin, and all the residents had fled from our presence, I immediately realized that a miracle was taking place.

According to the natural order of the world, Esav hates Yaakov. These gentiles around us should be filled with great joy and derive strength at the sight of the distress that afflicts us and at the sound of the shouting, crying, and wailing that gripped us. How is it that their hearts suddenly filled with fear and trembling, to the point that they’re ready to do whatever is required of them, provided that we wipe our tears from our eyes?!

This is nothing but a miracle from heaven! *Middat Hadin* has already transformed into *Middat HaRachamim*, and all the terrible decrees have been sweetened and

turned into kindness and mercy for us and for all of Am Israel !”

None of the people in power throughout the entire government knew how to explain what inclined the heart of the monarchy to shelve the new laws and not implement them...¹

It's one of the foundations of *emuna* to believe that there's no such thing as coincidence. Nothing happens by chance in the world. The Creator of the world supervises all His creations with miraculous *hashgacha pratit* (personal supervision/Divine providence), and surely every event that occurs and unfolds before a Jew has a purpose and a reason.

Everything Has A Mission

In the past, before there was flooring, the ground of everyone's homes was ordinary earth. Thus it was possible for all kinds of insects to walk around the house.

If the insects were harmless, then it wasn't so bad, but if the

We must know that when we encounter a Jew who is in trouble or a Jew who needs help, the encounter didn't happen by chance, rather Hashem sent them to us because we have the ability to help that person either through prayer or through our advice or by means of money, etc.

Thus, when the Warsaw delegation came to the Rebbe of Gostynin, he believed that if *hashgacha pratit* had sent them specifically to him, it was a sign that he had the ability to help, and he was right...

In the last few parashot, as well as in our parasha, we encounter the *avodah* of our holy forefathers in paving the way to redemption...

insects were dangerous, such as snakes or scorpions, then it was a real problem.

One of life's many struggles was getting rid of those harmful creatures and healing their bites or stings.

However, the holy *Amora*, Rav, revealed to us a few remedies...²

With all that Hashem created in His world, He didn't create even one thing for naught. He created a snail as a remedy for a sore. He created a fly to be crushed and spread on a wasp sting as its remedy. He created a mosquito as a remedy for a snake bite. He created the snake itself as a remedy for a rash, and He created a spider as a remedy for a scorpion sting, for one brings two spiders, one black and one white, cooks, crushes, and spreads them on the sting...

Before Rav revealed the remedy to us, he said, "Know that everything that Hashem created in His world has a special role and mission." And as an example, he brought these remedies.

But two things aren't so clear...

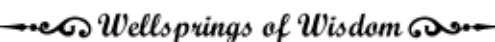
All of creation is divided into four forms, inanimate, vegetative,

animal, and human. And the animal realm itself is divided (by and large) into mammals, reptiles, birds, fish, and insects. Thus, if Rav wanted to teach us that every creature has a role, why did he bring examples only from the insects and not examples from the rest of creation?

Moreover, hundreds of years before Rav, Shlomo HaMelech wrote in his book, "He made everything beautiful in its time" (Kohelet 3:11), and the Midrash explains³ that everything that Hashem created in His world, He made beautiful – there isn't a creation in the world that doesn't have its own role and mission.

The Midrash continues and says that David HaMelech at first wondered why Hashem created fools, and in the end, he realized that He didn't create even one thing for naught.

If so, what did Rav add to our previous understanding of Shlomo HaMelech's words?



2. Shabbat 77b.

3. Midrash Shocheh Tov – Tehillim (Ch. 34).

Parashat Miketz - The Beginning of Redemption

The Beginning of Redemption

Avraham Avinu was 70 years old. Behind him laid a rich history of unceasing, devout *avodat Hashem*. Then, the miraculous event took place – the Covenant between the Parts.

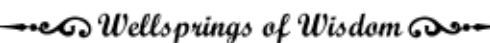
The sun began to set, and Avraham Avinu merited feeling the “daze of prophecy,” that wonderful feeling in which the physical body ceases for a moment from being a barrier that separates man from Hashem, allowing them to see the true reality and Divine visions.

In that formidable vision, Avraham Avinu was shown everything that the nations of the world would do to Am Israel throughout the generations, the thousands of years of persecutions, massacres, cruelties... The Torah describes this with the words, “Behold, terror, darkness, greatly fell upon him” (Bereshit 15:12), and within these words, all four exiles

are implied, as the Midrash says:⁴ “Terror” – this is the Babylonian exile. “Darkness” – this is the Median exile. “Greatly” – this is the Greek exile. “Fell upon him” – this is the Roman exile.

Rebbe Yehuda Aryeh Leib, the *S’fat Emet*, writes⁵ that in the Covenant Between the Parts, Avraham Avinu was told, “Surely know that your descendants will be foreigners in a land that is not theirs” (Bereshit 15:13), and the Midrash says:⁶ “Surely” – I will disperse them, “Know” – that I will gather them, meaning that Avraham Avinu was informed of both the exile and the redemption.

Not only about the Egyptian exile was Avraham informed in the Covenant Between the Parts, but also about the other four kingdoms and exiles. Hashem also explicitly informed Avraham Avinu at the beginning of his journey to Eretz



4. Bereshit Rabbah 44:17.

5. *S’fat Emet* (Lech Lecha 5664); See also *Siftei Daat* (Vol. 1, p. 60) by Rabbi Nechemiah Sheinfeld.

6. Bereshit Rabbah 44:18.

Parashat Miketz - Uplifting The Sparks

Israel, “I will curse the one who curses you” (Bereshit 12:3).

But why was it necessary to inform Avraham Avinu of all this? Why did he need to know that there’ll be exiles, that his children would be enslaved and severely tortured, and that he’ll face people who will hate and curse him?

The answer is, as we’ve already explained, that when a Jew happens to encounter another Jew in need of help, they must know that this is *hashgacha pratit* and a sign that they have the ability to help. Here too, since Avraham Avinu had the power to pave the way to redemption, to protect Am Israel, and save them from the persecutors of every generation, Hashem revealed all

this to him so that he would begin to act...

Thus Avraham Avinu began preparing the world for redemption by saving Lot from captivity, and through this, Moav was born, and from him descended Rut, the mother of the Kingdom of David, the origin of Mashiach ben David...

Likewise, Itzchak Avinu began preparing the world for redemption by digging the wells...

We won’t go into detail about all their preparations and what they achieved through their actions in this discussion. Instead, we’ll focus on the *avodah* of Yaakov Avinu and his holy sons...

And as usual, we’ll start from the beginning...

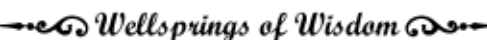
Uplifting The Sparks

Rabbi Yechiel Michal of Glogow zt”l writes...⁷

On the sixth day of creation, Hashem created man from the dust of the ground and blew into him a soul, as it says, “Hashem Elokim

then formed man, dust from the ground, and He blew into his nostrils the soul of life, and man became a living soul” (Bereshit 2:7).

Know that within the soul of Adam HaRishon, there were



7. Nezer HaKodesh 73:6.

Parashat Miketz - Uplifting The Sparks

sparks of *kedusha*, the souls of Bnei Israel. Thus, Am Israel is called by the title “Adam,” as the prophet said, “You are man (*adam*)” (Yechezkel 34:31), you are called “Adam,” that is, Adam HaRishon.

Then, the snake came and caused Adam and his wife to transgress Hashem’s command...

After Adam HaRishon sinned, the sparks of *kedusha* plunged from his soul into the abyss of the *kelipot*. The *kelipot* then immediately jumped on them and locked them in!

Hashem, the Merciful Father, who wished to repair His world, began to rescue them from captivity step by step. At first, the sparks of *kedusha* entered the realm of the inanimate, then the vegetative, then the animal, and finally, they entered the realm of humans, entering physical human bodies...

We’ll explain further...⁸

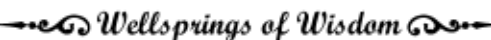
Generations upon generations, the sparks of *kedusha* were held

captive by the *kelipot*, until Avraham Avinu came and managed to rescue them and raise them to the realm of the inanimate and prepare them for the ascension to the next level. Thus we find that Avraham Avinu was commanded, “Arise, walk throughout the land” (Bereshit 13:17). The purpose of the command was to refine and uplift the sparks of *kedusha* within the earth of Eretz Israel (the realm of the inanimate).

Itzchak Avinu then came and lifted the sparks of *kedusha* to the vegetative realm. Thus it says, “Itzchak sowed in that land” (Bereshit 26:12).

Yaakov Avinu then came and raised the sparks of *kedusha* to the animal realm, and Yosef HaTzaddik and the holy tribes continued Yaakov’s work and prepared the ground for the sparks of *kedusha* to elevate to the human realm...

For more additional explanation, we’ll continue with the words of Rabbi Yechiel...



8. See at length in the book *Ye’ezor KeGever Chalatzav* (Ch. 3) by Rabbi Moshe Armoni shlita.

The Flock

After Itzchak Avinu finished his work in elevating the sparks of *kedusha* from the vegetative realm, they needed to enter the bodies of animals. Thus the sparks entered Lavan's sheep.

The Midrash reveals⁹ to us that Lavan had a total of 70 sheep !

The reason that the sparks specifically entered Lavan's flock was that although they had risen to the level of the animals, they were still under the authority of the *kelipot*, and since, in that generation, Lavan was the root of the *kelipot*, they entered the flock that was under his authority !

This secret was revealed to Yaakov Avinu, and Yaakov understood that "If I learned about this, it must be a sign that I have the ability to bring about their *tikuun* !"

Yaakov Avinu, after he unceasingly learned Torah for 77 years (that's 28,105 consecutive days !), entirely *leshem shamayim* (for its

own sake), only to give *nachat ruach* (satisfaction) to Hashem, left the Beit Midrash and made his way to Lavan, to continue the *avodah* of elevating the sparks of *kedusha*.

Yaakov arrived at Lavan's house, the root of the *kelipot*, and requested from him, "Please, give me the merit to marry your daughter, Rachel."

Lavan replied, "What do you think ? That you'll get her for free ? It'll cost you ! Seven years of work !"

Yaakov Avinu agreed !

Lavan broke out into a dance, "I always knew I was a great businessman !" But he didn't know that all the long years of preparation and the arduous journey Yaakov went through were only for the purpose of becoming the head shepherd of his sheep !

These are the words of the *Nezer HaKadosh*: Yaakov came to bring about the *tikkun*

Parashat Miketz - The Flock

of all the souls that were in Lavan's flock. Therefore, Yaakov cleverly performed several different kinds of tricks in placing the dotted and striped sticks before the flock in order to bring them under

his authority. For that tzaddik (Yaakov) didn't do so for money, *chas v'shalom*. Rather, his whole intention and purpose in this was only to bring the flock under his authority, the authority of *kedusha*...¹⁰

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

10. Rebbe Israel Hauptstein, the Maggid of Kozhnitz zt"l, said that he remembers the time when his soul was in one of Lavan's sheep. He said in these words, "How good it was when grandfather Yaakov stuck me with his staff!"

Likewise, the *Daat Kedoshim*, said that he remembers when his soul was reincarnated in Yaakov's sheep, and he even remembers how he got whipped by him when he wanted to deviate from the flock, and after all, the shepherd is responsible for his flock.

Rabbi Pinchas Friedman shlita asked: Why did Yaakov Avinu whip the sheep in which the pure souls of the Maggid of Kozhnitz and the *Daat Kedoshim* dwelled, for there's no doubt that even then, they were completely holy and pure?

He answered: Before Yaakov went to Charan, he made a promise to Hashem and said, "All that You give me, I will surely set aside a tenth for You" (Bereshit 28:22). He would set aside a holy tithe for Hashem from all that he had, even from human beings, as explained in the Midrash (Bereshit Rabbah 70:7): He set aside

the tribe of Levi – that is, he set aside the tribe of Levi to be holy to Hashem, for from them derive the Kohanim and the Leviim who work in the Beit HaMikdash.

The Torah says, "All tithes of cattle or sheep, of all that passes under the [shepherd's] staff, the tenth one shall be holy to Hashem" (Vayikra 27:32), and Rashi comments: "under the staff" – When the shepherd is wants to tithe the sheep or cattle, he passes them through a small opening one after the other, and the tenth he strikes with a staff smeared with red dye so that it should be recognized as being tithe. Thus he does to the lambs and to the calves of each year.

Hashem, who is the cause of causes and the source of sources, made it that all the souls of the tzaddikim who were reincarnated in Lavan's flock merited being Yaakov Avinu's tithes. When they received a blow from Yaakov Avinu, the most exalted of the forefathers, they fulfilled the verse, "The tenth one shall be holy to Hashem." Thus they were chosen to be the leaders of Am Israel until the end of all generations, just as the tribe of Levi, who were chosen to be the tithe of the tribes.

Ultimately, after 20 years of elevating the sparks, Yaakov Avinu merited having 600,000 flocks of sheep!¹¹

In more detail... It's said about Am Israel, "You are My flock, the sheep of My pasture, you are man" (Yechezkel 34:31) – That is, they rose from the level of sheep to the level of man, and they received their *tikkun* step by step. At first, they were 70 souls (70 of Lavan's sheep), and then these 70 souls were divided into many sparks until they were the 600,000 souls who left Egypt.

It was only when Yaakov fled from Lavan that Lavan learned

what damage Yaakov had caused to the *kelipot*, that he withdrew all the sparks of *kedusha* from them. Therefore he chased after Yaakov and begged him, "Please, come back with the sheep, and I'll give you everything you want!"

Even though Lavan had mastered the art of persuasion, Yaakov Avinu stood up to the pressure and continued on his way to the Land of Israel...

Then, the work of the holy tribes began...

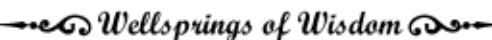
Before we continue, we'll clarify the point we wanted to convey in this discussion...

Be A Man

HaRav Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l writes...¹²

From all that has been said, we now understand how serious it is to evade various tasks that *hashgacha pratit* summons to a person during their life. If you come across, seeing, or hearing

about a Jew who's in any kind of distress and needs urgent help, know that Hashem Himself brought this to your attention because you have the ability to help them if you only truly want to. Therefore, don't avoid helping using all kinds of excuses



11. Midrash Rabbah 73:11.

12. Imrei Noam (Mishpatim, Maamar 7).

and look for someone else to take the mitzvah. Do it yourself!

Know that precisely at these times is a person tested to see to what extent they're truly connected to Hashem. Someone who avoids helping a Jew and cares only for themselves and their family members is certainly not connected to Hashem at all. However, someone who puts aside all their personal matters and devotes themselves with all their ability to helping a Jew escape their distress is certainly connected to Hashem with a true, strong bond that will never be severed.

This is remarkably consistent with the wonderful words said in the name of Rebbe Chaim of Sanz zt"l...

Regarding the angel who fought with Yaakov Avinu, it says, "A man wrestled with him" (Bereshit 32:25), and Rashi comments that this "man" was Esav's ministering angel, i.e., from the side of impurity. On the other hand, regarding the angel who encountered Yosef while he was searching for his brothers, it says,

"And a man found him wandering in the field" (Bereshit 37:15), and Rashi comments that this "man" was the angel Gavriel, i.e., from the side of *kedusha*.

Rebbe Chaim of Sanz asks, "In both places, it says the same word, 'man.' What then made Rashi say in one place that it was Esav's ministering angel and in another place that it was the angel Gavriel?"

Rebbe Chaim of Sanz explains that the first man wrestled with Yaakov Avinu the entire night; he didn't rush to any place. But suddenly, at the break of dawn, Yaakov asked him to do him a favor and bless him, but he avoided doing so with various excuses, saying, "Let me go, for dawn has broken" (Bereshit 32:27), and Rashi says that the angel said to Yaakov, "I must ascend so that I can sing songs of praise to Hashem." Since this man wasn't concerned about his time all night, and precisely when Yaakov asked him to do him a favor, he suddenly decided that he was in a hurry and was in no way able to help, from this Rashi

concluded that this man was nothing but Esav's ministering angel, from the *sitra achra*.

On the other hand, the second man, when he saw that Yosef was lost in the field, embarrassed, looking for something, but unable to find it, not only did he not ignore him, but he also approached him on his own initiative and offered him help. From this, Rashi concluded that surely this man was none other than the angel Gavriel from the side of *kedusha*.

The same goes for every person. Someone who always finds reasons to exempt themselves from doing acts of kindness and helping others, even if they ascribe their decisions to reasons that are seemingly "righteous," such as they're unable

to help because they're currently studying and fear committing *Bitul Torah*, and this is despite the fact that during many other things (like eating, sleeping, and useless conversations) they neglect their studies without any fear of *Bitul Torah*, testifies against themselves that they're nothing but from the camp of the wicked Esav who flees from doing kindness with others.

However, someone who's always ready and willing to help every Jew, even if that means that they'll have to put aside all their personal affairs, proves to be from the holy camp of the angel, Gavriel, who's ready and willing at any time to do kindness with Am Israel.

Let's return to the work of the holy tribes...

Fix Yourself

The holy tribes, the sons of Yaakov Avinu, matured. Yaakov then gathered them and told them about their great-grandfather, Avraham, and his *avodah* in repairing the inanimate realm, and about their grandfather,

Itzchak, and his *avodah* in repairing the vegetative realm, and about him and his *avodah* in repairing the animal realm.

He continued and said, "Know that we're now approaching the last stage of the *tikkun*, the elevating of

Parashat Miketz - Fix Yourself

the sparks of *kedusha* from the animal realm to the human realm, and I need you to help me.”

The holy tribes then took it upon themselves to join in the *avodah*, as it says, “His brothers went off to herd their father’s sheep in Shechem” (Bereshit 37:12).

Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk zt”l writes¹³ that in the Sefer Torah, in the verse, “His brothers went off to herd their father’s sheep in Shechem,”¹⁴ there’s a dot over the word “אָת” both over the letter “א” and the letter “ת”. Rashi explains that the dots over the word “אָת” comes to teach you that they (the brothers) went only to graze themselves.

This is a baffling thing to say about the holy tribes!

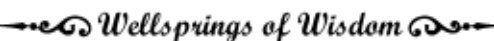
It seems that Rashi interpreted the verse as such because the thoughts and intentions of the tribes were always for the sake of Am Israel, to help them endure the bitter exile that they’re heading to, for in

their (the tribe’s) merit Am Israel will survive the exile. It’s known that Am Israel is called “sheep,” and that’s why it says, “His brothers went off to herd their father’s sheep,” – that is, they went to herd Am Israel, searching for a way to sustain them throughout the exile.

And Rashi reveals to us the action that they took to accomplish this task – they went to herd themselves. That is, to correct themselves, to bring about the complete *tikkun* for their souls, so that they’ll be flawless before Hashem, and thus their merit will be great enough to stand for and sustain Am Israel in their bitter exile.

And this is also the interpretation of the verse, “Yosef, when he was seventeen years old, herded the flock with his brothers” (Bereshit 37:2), that is, Yosef also attained this level.

Rebbe Shmuel Bornsztain, the *Shem MiShmuel* of Sochatchov zt”l



13. Noam Elimelech (Vayeshev).

14. The original Hebrew - "וַיֵּלְכוּ אֶחָיו לְרֹעוֹת אֶת צֹאן אֲבִיהֶם בְּשָׂכָם"

writes:¹⁵ The holy tribes, through their *tremendous avodah* in the *tikkun* of their souls, merited a wholly sanctified heart, a heart that burned constantly for closeness to Hashem.

Whereas Yosef merited sanctity of the mind through his *avodah*.

When Yosef was 17 years old, he dreamed, “We were binding sheaves in the midst of the field, and my sheaf arose and stood up straight, whereas your sheaves surrounded it and bowed down to my sheaf” (Bereshit 37:7). The meaning of the dream was,

“Although we’re all preparing the ground for the ascent of the sparks from the animal realm to the human realm, the primary *tikkun* of the sparks will be through me, because the most important thing is the sanctity of the mind. For the sanctity of the mind is greater and contains everything, including the sanctity of the heart. Therefore, your *avodah* (the *avodah* of the tribes) of the sanctity of the heart and desires bows down to my *avodah* of the sanctity of the mind!”

But the holy brothers understood that Yosef wanted to reign over them, and therefore, “They hated him even more” (Bereshit 37:8).

Paving The Way

The days went by after the holy tribes went to herd their father’s sheep in Shechem. Yaakov then called for Yosef and requested, “Go please, and see how your brothers are and how the flocks are faring, and bring me back word. He then sent him from the valley of Chevron, and he (Yosef) arrived in Shechem” (Bereshit 37:14).

Yosef searched for his brothers, but he didn’t find them, “And a man found him wandering in the field, and the man asked him, “What are you looking for?” (Bereshit 37:15). He answered, “I’m looking for my brothers. Could you tell me where they’re herding?” (Bereshit 37:16). He replied, “They have traveled on from here, for I heard them say,

‡Let us go to Dotan.’ Thus, Yosef followed his brothers and found them in Dotan” (Bereshit 37:17).

The brothers saw Yosef approaching them, “and they conspired to kill him” (Bereshit 37:18), and at the last moment, Reuven turned to his brothers and suggested, “We won’t kill him. Instead, we’ll throw him into a pit.”

The brothers seized Yosef and threw him into a pit, and the Gemara states¹⁶ that that pit was full of snakes and scorpions...

Yosef sat in the center of the pit, around him snakes standing upright, hissing at him in adoration, and scorpions wagging their tails with joy, “Blessed are we who merited basking in the presence of the *Tzaddik Yesod Olam!*”

Birds in the sky felt deprived, “We want to connect to the tzaddik too!” Thus they began to circle over the pit...

Suddenly, a group of exhausted and thirsty Arab merchants

approached, and because they saw that numerous birds gathered around the pit, they assumed that it was full of water. With great joy, they approached the pit to draw water...

They didn’t find water... They then lifted Yosef out of the pit and loaded him on a camel...

The brothers approached them and said, “That’s our servant! He didn’t behave properly, so we threw him into the pit, but now we want him back! Give him to us immediately!” But the merchants didn’t believe them and thus didn’t want to return him... When Shimon saw that they were refusing to return him, he shouted so loud that the ground shook. The merchants, extremely frightened, said to the brothers, “You said he doesn’t behave properly, right? Then sell him to us, and we’ll take him off your hands.” The brothers were pleased by the offer and happily sold him for enough money for each of them to buy a pair of shoes!

The Midrash says¹⁷ that Yosef was sold four times until he reached the slave market in Egypt, and there, they placed him in the center of the market, on a high platform, and offered him for sale !!!

“Yosef was taken down to Egypt, and purchased by Potiphar, an officer of Paraoth, the chief of the slaughterers... And Hashem was with Yosef, and he was a successful man” (Bereshit 39:1-2).

Potiphar was captivated by Yosef’s charm! He decided that instead of him being the master of the house and Yosef, the servant, from now on, the 18-year-old Yosef would be the master of the house !

Everyone’s credit cards, all business transactions, and complete control of the house would be in Yosef’s hands! And Potiphar expressed no opinions! Thus it says, “After his master saw that Hashem was with him... Yosef found favor in his eyes, and he made him his personal attendant and put him in charge of his household, placing in his hands

all that he owned. And since the Egyptian put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, Hashem blessed his house for Yosef’s sake... He left everything he possessed in the hands of Yosef. He didn’t concern himself with anything except for the bread he ate” (Bereshit 39:3-6).

The 18-year-old Yosef was a young, handsome man. There was no one like him in all of Egypt! “Yosef was beautiful in form and good-looking” (Bereshit 39:6).

As Yosef would walk in and out of the house, taking care of all necessary work, Zlicha, his master’s wife, “cast her eyes upon Yosef” (Bereshit 39:7), and saw a handsome, well-built young man, and she coveted him.

The *Shem MiShmuel* continues and says that the main test that Yosef faced in Egypt was whether he would succeed in maintaining the sanctity of his mind.

Thoughts of sin stormed towards his mind and attempted

to penetrate, but without success ! Yosef's mind was *davuk* (bound) to Hashem without cessation whatsoever !

For 31,536,000 seconds, thoughts stormed in Yosef's direction and tried to penetrate, "Lift your head and look at her ! Look how much she desires to be near you ! Stop being so religious..."

However, when the thoughts reached the brink of his mind, they immediately went ablaze by the raging fire that burned there from the fervor of his *kedusha*...

The year of tests was over, and Yosef HaTzaddik merited

through the power of his *avodah* to pave the way for all the souls in the Egyptian exile !

These are the words of the Midrash...¹⁸

Rabbi Huna said in the name of Rabbi Chiya bar Abba, "Sarah Imeinu descended to Egypt and guarded herself from immorality, and all the Jewish women were guarded in her merit. Yosef descended to Egypt and guarded himself from immorality, and all the Jewish males were guarded in his merit..."

And operation "Paving The Way" continued...

What'd You Just Say!?

Yosef executed downright *mesirut nefesh* in order not to sin, and as a result, he was sent to prison and thrown into a dark pit... But despite this, the entire time Yosef was there, he never stopped serving Hashem with joy.

Finally, after 12 long years of a wrongful prison

sentence, the time of redemption arrived...

Rosh Hashanah in the year 2229 from creation, Paraoth dreams a dream... He gets up in the morning and, "his spirit was troubled" (Bereshit 41:8), his heart beats with concern, a cold sweat covers his body, his thoughts are racing, he

feels that he can't contain himself because of this terrible dream. He immediately calls for all the sorcerers of Egypt and asks them to interpret his dream for him...

The sorcerers pull interpretations out of their sleeves... But no interpretation satisfies Paraoh. His edginess is increasing. Losing his temper, he issues a death sentence to all the wise men and sorcerers of Egypt. Immediately, all the slaughters and butchers draw their swords and begin slaying according to the word of the king...

A cold sweat creeps down the back of the chief cupbearer, "Who knows what else this madman is capable of..." He immediately runs to Paraoh and says, "I can help you. I know a professional dream interpreter..."

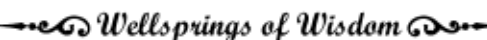
Yosef arrives and stands before Paraoh. Paraoh, pale and nervous, tells him, "In my dream, I was standing on the edge of the Nile, when all of a sudden, out of the Nile emerged seven

scrawny, poor-looking cows that swallowed seven healthy, plump cows, and then I dreamed that seven shriveled, thin ears of grain swallowed seven wholesome, healthy ears of grain. Since then, my head has been spinning..."

Yosef replies, "My lord, the king, before I interpret the dream for you, I must correct one detail in the dream. You dreamed that you were standing on the Nile, not on the edge of the Nile as you said." This is as it says, "He set it as a testimony for Yosef when He went forth to rule over Egypt. I heard a language (תֵּבֶשֶׁת - also meaning "edge") that I hadn't known before" (Tehillim 81:6).¹⁹

Yosef interpreted Paraoh's dream accurately, and the interpretation is already known to everyone who had the privilege of learning together with the preschool teacher...

However, even though Yosef interpreted the dream for Paraoh in a way that was acceptable to him,



19. See Agra DeKala (Miketz).

Parashat Miketz - It All Starts With Food

Yosef understood from this dream a completely different message! Thus Rabbi Shmuel Gorji zt"l, the *Minchat Shmuel*, writes...²⁰

Yosef understood that the "Nile" symbolizes the inanimate realm, the "ears of grain" symbolize the vegetative realm, and the "cows" symbolize the animal realm. He knew that the dream occurred in order to reveal to him that the elevating of all the sparks of *kedusha* from the inanimate, vegetative, and animal forms had been completed. They will now all ascend and enter human bodies, and

Paraoh is standing on them, not next to them!

That is, from now on, Paraoh's reign over them begins.

Yosef HaTzaddik was horrified, "Who can face the *kelipah* of Paraoh!? Who has the power to stand up against this filthy person?!"

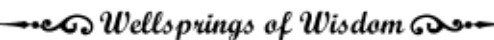
Then, he took a deep breath and realized, "If Hashem revealed this to me, it must mean that I have the power and ability to stand up against him!"

Thus, he went into action...

It All Starts With Food

HaRav Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l writes²¹ that every Jew should know that the basis of their *avodat Hashem* is the way they eat. Because the way a person eats has a significant impact on the rest of their *avodat Hashem*. When you eat or drink, blood is created, and that blood flows through your

veins, giving life force to your entire body, as it says, "For the blood is the life force" (Devarim 12:23), and "For the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Vayikra 17:11). In other words, the life force of a person depends on the blood that flows through their body.



20. *Minchat Shmuel* 47b in the name of the book *Zecher Tzaddik*.

21. *Imrei Noam* (Shelach Lecha, Maamar 7).

When you eat with *kedusha*, and by doing so refining and separating the bad parts of the food, and your body becomes nourished only by the good parts of the food, refined blood is formed in your body; and when your body receives its life force from refined blood, its material tendencies, wants, and desires are very few, and instead has a great inclination to spiritual matters.

On the other hand, when someone eats irreverently and not with *kedusha*, the bad portion remains part of the food, and as a result, unrefined coarse blood is formed in the body with the bad parts a part of it. When the body receives its life force from this coarse blood, its desire for materiality grows, and its desire for spirituality, Torah study, tefillah, tzedakah, etc., diminishes.

When you eat with *kedusha*, your eating brings you renewed

strength for *avodat Hashem*. On the other hand, when one doesn't eat with *kedusha* and fills their stomach without limit, not only will their eating not give them any strength for *avodat Hashem*, but it will also cause them great fatigue and terrible heaviness. Anyone who notices that their eating causes them to become sleepy should know that that's a clear sign that they don't eat enough with *kedusha*.

Yosef realized that the first action that needed to be taken was to make sure that the food that the world would eat was refined. Therefore, he took the position in charge of the "Minister of Preserving Food," and thus, when the years of famine arrived, everyone made a living through Yosef, and with his *kedusha*, he was able to make all the Egyptians circumcise themselves!

Let's return to the Gemara...

The Divine Niggun

The holy *Amora*, Rav, wanted to teach us about the divine *niggun* (melody) that plays

continuously, he said, "Know, with all that Hashem created in His world, He didn't create even

Parashat Miketz - Shabbat Shalom !

one thing for naught ! Everything that Hashem created in His world has a special role and mission.”

Every creation plays its own *niggun*, and from the joining of all the *niggunim* together, a magnificent choir that praises the Creator of the world forms, and if one of the creations in the choir is missing, its absence will be felt in the *niggun* !

“**Know,**” Rav continued, “that sometimes we don’t understand what a certain creation’s part is in the *niggun*. However, when the

time comes, and *hashgacha pratit* reveals to us the creation’s part in the *niggun*, we must know that if it was revealed to us, it’s a sign that in heaven, they want us to thank and praise Hashem for it ! Therefore, now that it was revealed to me, I thank and praise You, Hashem, Who created a fly for a wasp sting, a mosquito for a snake bite, a snake for a rash, and a spider for a scorpion sting !”

May we merit thanking Hashem, out of recognition and understanding, for all the works of His hands, amen !

Shabbat Shalom !



The Pathway...

1. One of the things that we should be aware of is how serious it is to evade various tasks that *hashgacha pratit* summons to a person during their life. If you come across, seeing, or hearing about a Jew who's in any kind of distress and needs urgent help, know that Hashem Himself brought this to your attention because you have the ability to help them if you only truly want to.
2. For that reason, don't avoid helping. Don't use all kinds of excuses and look for someone else to take the mitzvah. Do it yourself!
3. You should know that precisely at these times is a person tested to see to what extent they're truly connected to Hashem. Someone who avoids helping a Jew and cares only for themselves and their family members is certainly not connected to Hashem at all. However, someone who puts aside all their personal matters and devotes themselves with all their ability to helping a Jew escape their distress is certainly connected to Hashem with a true, strong bond that will never be severed.
4. Rebbe Chaim of Sanz zt"l explains that someone who doesn't ignore the call to help, but also acts on their own initiative and offers to help is certainly on the side of *kedusha*.
5. Someone who always finds reasons to exempt themselves from doing acts of kindness and helping others, even if they ascribe their decisions to reasons that are seemingly "righteous," such as they're unable to help because they're currently studying and fear committing *Bitul Torah*, and this is despite the fact that during many other things (like eating, sleeping, and useless conversations) they neglect their studies without any fear of *Bitul Torah*, testifies against themselves that they're nothing but from the camp of the wicked Esav who flees from doing kindness with others.
6. However, someone who's always ready and willing to help every Jew, even if that means that they'll have to put aside all their personal affairs, proves to be from the holy camp of the angel, Gavriel, who's ready and willing at any time to do kindness with Am Israel.
7. Every Jew should know that the basis of their *avodat Hashem* is the way they eat. Because the way a person eats has a significant impact on the rest of their *avodat Hashem*. When you eat or drink, blood is created, and that blood flows through your veins, giving life force to your entire body,

The Pathway...

as it says, “For the blood is the life force” (Devarim 12:23), and “For the life of the flesh is in the blood” (Vayikra 17:11). In other words, the life force of a person depends on the blood that flows through their body.

8. When you eat with *kedusha*, and by doing so refining and separating the bad parts of the food, and your body becomes nourished only by the good parts of the food, refined blood is formed in your body; and when your body receives its life force from refined blood, its material tendencies, wants, and desires are very few, and instead has a great inclination to spiritual matters.

9. On the other hand, when someone eats irreverently and not with *kedusha*, the bad portion remains part of the food,

and as a result, unrefined coarse blood is formed in the body with the bad parts a part of it. When the body receives its life force from this coarse blood, its desire for materiality grows, and its desire for spirituality, Torah study, tefillah, tzedakah, etc., diminishes.

10. When you eat with *kedusha*, your eating brings you renewed strength for *avodat Hashem*. On the other hand, when one doesn't eat with *kedusha* and fills their stomach without limit, not only will their eating not give them any strength for *avodat Hashem*, but it will also cause them great fatigue and terrible heaviness. Anyone who notices that their eating causes them to become sleepy should know that that's a clear sign that they don't eat enough with *kedusha*.





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Shabbat Times Miketz

30th of Kislev , 5783

City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	4:16 pm	5:22 pm	5:47 pm
Miami	5:20 pm	6:16 pm	6:51 pm
Los Angeles	4:32 pm	5:31 pm	6:03 pm
Montreal	3:58 pm	5:07 pm	5:29 pm
Toronto	4:28 pm	5:35 pm	5:59 pm
London	3:39 pm	4:56 pm	5:09 pm
Jerusalem	4:25 pm	5:16 pm	5:47 pm
Tel Aviv	4:21 pm	5:12 pm	5:42 pm
Haifa	4:18 pm	5:09 pm	5:39 pm
Be'er Sheva	4:23 pm	5:13 pm	5:44 pm

Pathways to the Heart

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

If you succeed in truly internalizing the profound teaching of the Alter Rebbe, that there is no reality other than Hashem, and that there is nothing in the world that occurs without His will and explicit permission, you will succeed in every aspect of life in general, and in educating your children in particular.

According to this foundation, there is no reason in the world to become angry. Inevitably, when your spouse or children do something not according to your liking, there is no reason to get mad, for every single thing that happens in the world (including what happens in your home), is supervised by our Merciful Father in Heaven, the Blessed Creator.



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