

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 86

Vayigash | Knowing Your Mission Depends On Your Kedusha



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 Vayigash

The Orphan

Rebbe Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl zt”l adopted an orphaned baby and raised him in his home. When his adopted son reached the age of marriage, the Rebbe looked for a good *shidduch* for him. One day, he went to visit his Rebbe, the Maggid of Mezeritch, and told him that he was searching for a wife for the orphan.

The Maggid of Mezeritch told him, “I adopted an orphaned girl, and she’s now reached marriageable age. What do you think, maybe we’ll make a *shidduch* between them?”

And so it was.

The Maggid of Mezeritch took it upon himself to provide for the couple for a few years, while Rebbe Menachem Nachum took it upon himself to bring them a dowry of several hundred rubles. Since Rebbe Menachem Nachum didn’t have the money, he set out to the surrounding towns to raise the money.

He began his journey, but he encountered many obstacles on his way. When he finally had the money in his hands, he started his way back home and, in the evening, stopped at a nearby town. That town happened to not have a mikveh. When he heard about this, he was shocked, “A Jewish town without a mikveh?!” He immediately gave all the money he had collected to the building of a mikveh for the town.

After he returned to the Maggid of Mezeritch empty-handed, the Maggid asked about the dowry. Rebbe Nachum recounted the incident with the mikveh and concluded that he suggests that the dowry for the couple be the merit of the mitzvah that he did with the money. But the Maggid didn’t agree, and Rebbe Nachum had to set out on a journey to raise the money for a second time.

This time he managed to collect a lot of money, enough for the

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dowry and for all the other needs of the wedding, and he still had forty rubles left over. Rebbe Nachum went to Maggid's home, handed over the dowry, and together they set a date for the wedding.

On his way out, he heard the Maggid say to his wife, "The father-in-law gave as he promised, and now we must give a gift to the groom as is customary. But since we have no money, I suggest that we sell the silver Shabbat candlesticks and buy the gift with the money."

"How then will I light Shabbat candles?" his wife asked.

"I'll buy you metal candlesticks," the Maggid replied.

His wife burst into tears, "I've been lighting Shabbat candles with these candlesticks for many years, and now I won't be able to honor Shabbat properly..."

Rebbe Nachum returned to the Maggid's home and placed on the table the money that he

had left so that they could buy the gift for the groom.

A content smile appeared on the face of the holy Maggid. He looked at Rebbe Nachum with his pure eyes and blessed him, "May you be blessed this year with a son who will light up the world with his holiness and righteousness!"¹

That year he had a son, the holy Rebbe Mordechai, known as the Maggid of Chernobyl, who enlightened the world with his Torah and *avodah*.

One of the missions assigned to Rebbe Mordechai, the Maggid of Chernobyl zt"l, from heaven, was to provide for all the hidden tzaddikim of his generation.

He would go on journeys through towns and villages and collect money from various people, and blessed was the person who merited Rebbe Mordechai taking from them, for they would immediately see miracles concerning everything they needed.

Rebbe Mordechai's nephew once asked to come along on one of his trips, as was his custom to collect money for the hidden tzaddikim, and he agreed to take it with him, but on condition that he wouldn't ask anything about what he saw. His nephew agreed to the condition, and they set out. On their way, they arrived in a city, and all the residents went out to greet the Holy Maggid with great honor.

A few days later, when he was preparing to leave the city, all the residents gathered again to bid him farewell. Among them was a very wealthy man who was a known miser. He hid among the crowd so that he wouldn't be seen and wouldn't have to give money to the Maggid. But suddenly, the Maggid pointed at him and said, "This Jew has yet to invite me to his home even once!"

Embarrassed, the wealthy man yelled out, "On the contrary! I would be honored to receive the Rebbe in my home!" The Rebbe agreed to the visit and promised to come to him the next day. Meanwhile, the wealthy man prepared a lavish feast, knowing

that the Rebbe would arrive accompanied by a large entourage.

The next day, the Maggid passed by the wealthy man's house with his chariot, but to the astonishment of the wealthy man and all the people of the city, who were already waiting there, the chariot didn't stop but rather continued on. The wealthy man chased after the chariot and shouted, "Rebbe! Why won't you come to my home as you promised?" The Maggid turned to him and said, "If you give me eighteen rubles, I'll enter your home. Otherwise, I cannot."

"Rebbe," the wealthy man begged, "I can give one or two rubles, but such a large sum, I just can't."

"Nothing less than eighteen rubles," the Rebbe replied. All the wealthy man's pleas were to no avail. He had no choice but to give eighteen rubles...

The Maggid got off his chariot and started walking towards the wealthy man's house, but when the Maggid saw that there were many steps to go up to the home, he turned

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to the wealthy man and said, “For the sum of only eighteen rubles, I’m not going up that many steps, only if you add another eighteen rubles will I go up to your home.”

The wealthy man couldn’t bear all the sums demanded of him by the Maggid. He thought of giving up on the visit but was ashamed of the hundreds of people waiting to see what would happen. He said to the Maggid, “I have to ask my wife if she agrees to give such a large sum.” He immediately ran to his wife and told her about his dilemma. After she heard what the problem was, she shouted at him, “Go back to the Rebbe right now and give him the amount ! On the contrary, you should be honored that the holy Maggid agrees to pay you a visit, and also, the blessings he’ll bless us are worth more than all the money in the world in my eyes.”

The wealthy man hastened and gave the Maggid the additional eighteen rubles. The Maggid then walked up to his home, accompanied by hundreds of his chassidim. They sat around the

tables prepared with an abundance of different kinds of foods and ate and sang with much joy.

After the Rebbe sat for a short time, he got up to leave. The wealthy man immediately approached him, followed by his wife, and asked the Maggid to bless them. The Maggid turned to them and said, “I bless you that all the curses written in the Book of Devarim will befall you.”

When the wealthy man and his wife heard the “blessing,” they broke down, “What’s life worth after such a terrible curse ? !”

The Maggid turned to the wealthy man and said, “I agree to nullify the curse on the condition that you write and sign a document that all your possessions are given to me as a gift.”

The wealthy man became very angry. He said to himself, “Not only did he take such a large amount of cash from me, but he also wants to take all my possessions now ! ?” But he controlled himself with all his strength and didn’t utter a word. His wife began to cry to her husband, saying, “What value do

all our possessions have if the curse of the Rebbe befalls us?! Give him all our possessions, and he'll remove his curse from us."

The wealthy man's heart pounded in anger. He felt that he was about to erupt, but the cries of his wife didn't give him rest, and with no choice, he sat down to write off all his possessions to the Maggid: luxurious homes, acres of land, silver and gold, even his shoelaces... He then handed the deed to the Maggid. The Maggid took the deed, put it in his coat pocket, and then said to the wealthy man, "The possessions are mine, but I allow you to continue using them."

Rebbe Mordechai got up and returned home.

The Maggid's nephew, who accompanied him, saw and heard all that had occurred. His curiosity skyrocketed, but he was forced to keep his promise and didn't ask anything, but his heart continued to thump with curiosity. After some time, he decided to go to the wealthy man to see what had transpired.

When he arrived at the wealthy man's home, he saw, to his utter dismay, dozens of poor people gathered around his table eating and drinking the finest foods and drinks to be found, and the wealthy man himself standing over them and serving them with honor and joy...

He couldn't resist. He approached the wealthy man to ask about the sudden, drastic change.

The wealthy man answered, "I don't know what brought me to this, but I know that after the holy Maggid paid me a visit, and I gave him all my possessions, my heart opened up, and everything changed for me. I stand in the street for hours every day and ask every poor person who passes by my house to come in. I make sure that they don't lack anything once they come in and even more so when they leave, food, drink, housing, clothing, whatever their heart desires.

When he heard the wealthy man's words, he was dumbfounded. He immediately returned home, went to his uncle, the holy Maggid, and asked him to explain the

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matter. The Maggid replied, “That wealthy man was so stingy because the *kelipah* of stinginess controlled him completely. After he gave me all his possessions as a gift, the possessions left the power of impurity and transferred them to me. Now that all his possessions are mine, there is nothing to hinder him from doing good deeds and increasing in charity...”²

All of that wealthy man’s money was under the hands of the *yetzer hara*, and Rebbe Mordechai had no choice but to take all his possessions, thus removing them from the hands of the *yetzer hara* and bringing them into the territory of *kedusha*.

In fact, we’ve found a source for Rebbe Mordechai’s actions in our holy Torah and about that in our parasha...

Time To Wake Up!

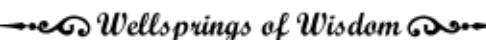
At some point, we got used to the reading of the weekly Torah portion. We’re familiar with the stories, and the ends of the stories are known...

It’s told about a villager who settled in the big city and was finally able to hear the reading of the Torah portion on Shabbat. When they read parashat Vayeshev, he tracked the plot against Yosef with bated breath...

As Yosef’s brothers sat in the field and decided to kill him, Yosef slowly walked toward

them... The villager firmly grasped his chair and whispered in terror, “Yosef, don’t approach them. It’s dangerous!” But Yosef didn’t listen to his advice and ultimately was seized, thrown into a pit, sold to Arabs, and disappeared in a cloud of dust towards Egypt.

A year later, the *chazan* read the parasha again. Again, Yosef went to Shechem to visit his brothers, who decided to kill him! This time the villager sat stiffly, withdrawn, and hissed through his pursed lips, “This time, I’m not



going to pity you! Last year they did the same thing to you, and you still haven't learned your lesson!"

This story contains much of the sad truth. We read the Torah portion as if merely

reciting words with no meaning, while the cycle of the Torah portions should be for us like the rotation of a drill, progressing deeper and deeper with each rotation!³

Yosef's Codes

Yosef HaTzaddik was 30 years old when he was appointed ruler of Egypt, and nine years later, his brothers arrived and stood before him.

Instead of immediately revealing himself to them, Yosef brought terror upon them, "Their hearts sank, and they trembled" (Bereshit 42:28), "They were afraid" (Bereshit 42:35), "The men looked at each other in astonishment" (Bereshit 43:33), "They rent their garments" (Bereshit 44:13)...

Only at the end, after his brothers had already decided to destroy all of Egypt, did he reveal himself to them.

But why did Yosef take so long to reveal himself to his brothers? Why didn't he reveal

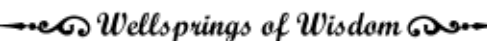
himself to them at the very beginning?

Also, why, after Yosef revealed himself to his brothers, did he tell them, "Hurry back to my father and tell him: Thus said your son Yosef: Elokim has made me master of all Egypt. Come down to me, do not delay" (Bereshit 45:9).

Why was it so important to tell his father that he was the ruler of all of Egypt? Did Yosef really think Yaakov Avinu would be happy about that? Did he really think that Yaakov HaTzaddik would be able to continue on knowing that his son had left the Beit Midrash and become a politician?!"

One last question...

In our parasha, the Torah tells us in detail that Yosef circumcised



the Egyptians and then sold them food, and by doing so, he was able to transfer all the possessions of Egypt to himself, and in the end, he also changed the place of residence of all the Egyptians, moving them

from city to city. Our holy Torah is eternal, and in telling us the story of Yosef's deeds, it wanted to convey an important message to us. What message does the Torah want to convey to us through his actions?

Knowing Your Mission

Rebbe Aharon of Strashele *zt"l* was one of the Alter Rebbe's greatest disciples and even said of himself that for nearly 30 years, he served at the feet of Alter Rebbe with all his might.

He testified as follows...

I heard from my teacher and Rebbe (the Alter Rebbe) who received from his Rebbe (the Maggid of Mezeritch), and he from his Rebbe (the holy Baal Shem Tov), that in these last generations, all world orders have changed.

For we found, during all previous generations of Am Israel,

three main groups... Torah scholars, merchants, and the completely unlearned.

And one's occupation is determined by the type of *neshama*. Talmidei chachamim were souls from the world of *Beriya*, merchants were souls from the world of *Yetzira*, and the simple, unlearned Jews were souls from the world of *Asiya*.

Since there was a complete, revealed division in the source of their souls, therefore, each person would recognize the aspect of their own soul and type of *avodah* in their occupation.⁴

...*~* **Wellsprings of Wisdom** *~*...

4. The *avodah* of the talmidei chachamim was to toil with all their strength in the holy Torah and uncover its hidden secrets... Toil that leads to the fear and love of Hashem.

The main *avodah* of the merchants was to sustain those who learned Torah, and by doing so, they would merit awakening in their hearts the love and fear of Hashem that is imprinted in the essence of every Jewish heart.

However, in these generations, the generations before the arrival of the Mashiach, all souls have descended to the world in a mixed form, and in each and every soul, there can be all the aspects mixed up, both a spark from *Beriya*, as well as a spark from *Yetzira* and *Asiya*. Therefore, in our generation, one's *avodah* isn't necessarily in order. When a spark from *Beriya* enters a person, they become like lofty angels, whereas when they're in *Asiya*, they're like a baked potato...

However, even then, when someone is in a state of *mochin dekatnut*,⁵ they must serve Hashem with submission, acceptance of the yoke of heaven, and joy.

This matter of finding one's mission and purpose in life started

already in ancient times, from the time Yaakov Avinu blessed his sons before his passing.

Yaakov Avinu merited twelve holy and pure sons who became the forefathers of the twelve tribes of Israel.

The kabbalists write that each tribe has its own mission, its own special role, and its own path that it walks down to serve Hashem.

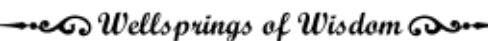
Nonetheless, the twelve tribes didn't know their special mission until the last day of Yaakov Avinu's life, when only then did he reveal to them the role of each and every tribe.⁶

However, as is well known, there is an exception to every rule...

The Estranged Brother

Following the sale of Yosef HaTzaddik by his brothers, he

arrived in Egypt, and there, he was sold to Potiphar,



The *avodah* of the simple, unlearned Jews was to serve Hashem with the acceptance of the yoke of heaven that stems from the simple *emuna* in Hashem, who punishes the transgressors of His will, and who rewards in abundance those who fear Him.

5. Mochin DeKatnut literally means "constricted consciousness," simply connoting the feeling of bitterness and struggle in everyday life in general and in *avodat Hashem* in particular.

6. Ateret David (Vol. 1, p. 207).

an officer of Paraoth, as a servant.

From the time Yosef entered Potiphar's house, an abundance of blessing descended into the home, and he became very wealthy. Potiphar understood why, so he wholeheartedly entrusted all his affairs to Yosef.

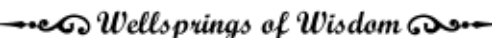
In one moment, Yosef was promoted from the rank of servant to the rank of guardian of all Potiphar's possessions. We don't know exactly what conditions and benefits he received as a result of his new position, but what is clear is that his quality of life improved immeasurably.

Then... Oh, precisely then... Yosef received an enormous test !

Yosef was extraordinarily handsome, as the Torah itself testifies, "Yosef was beautiful in form and good looking" (Bereshit 39:6), and this caused Potiphar's wife to chase after him.

Thus the Midrash says...⁷ The mistress of the house was with him at home, and she attempted every day to entice him with her comments and by changing her clothes three times a day. The clothes she put on in the morning, she wouldn't wear in the afternoon, and those she wore in the afternoon, she wouldn't wear in the evening. Why did she do this ? In order to seduce Yosef and cause him to look at her...

The temptations of Potiphar's wife, and the acts of violence she performed, lasted neither a day nor a week, nor a month nor six months, but a whole year, day and night, morning, afternoon, and evening, as it says, "And it was, as she spoke to Yosef day after day" (Bereshit 39:10). *Chazal* explain⁸ that wherever it says, "day after day," it's referring to twelve months. But nevertheless, Yosef overcame all the temptations and guarded his sanctity to the highest degree.



7. Midrash Tanchuma (Vayeshev - 5, 8).

8. Midrash Tanchuma (Vayeshev - 8).

For an entire year, he lived in great conditions and still managed to stand firm against the pressure of Potiphar's wife. Then, he was taken and thrown into prison, and there, in horrible conditions, anxious and terrified of the future, she also tried to bring him down into the *kelipot*... But even there, Yosef remained strong and withstood all the tests.

This type of strength of mind isn't something we typically find. Therefore, Yaakov Avinu praised Yosef before his passing, saying, "The blessings of your father... may they rest on the head of Yosef, upon the crown of him who was a *nazir* (separated) among his brothers" (Bereshit 49:26) – a *nazir* is a Jew who shines in his strength of mind and willpower. Blessed are you, Yosef, that you merited raising your level of strength of mind to perfection !

Since Yosef stood firm in all the tests that came his way, his dream that he had at the age of 17 came true !

Thus the Zohar HaKadosh⁹ interprets Yosef's dream, "Behold,

the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me" (Bereshit 37:9).

"The sun" – corresponds to the *sefira* of *tiferet*.

"The moon" – corresponds to the *sefira* of *malchut*.

"And eleven stars" – correspond to the *chassadim* and *gevurot*.

"Were bowing down to me" – the matter of bowing down signifies the drawing down of *shefa* (abundance of blessing) from above down below, and it was revealed to Yosef that a day would come when all ten holy *sefirot* will pour down *shefa* upon him, and he will thus attain a spirit of *nevuah* (prophecy) through them...

Then, Yosef stood before Paraoth, and there, it was revealed to him that from then on, all the sparks of *kedusha* came into Paraoth's possession (see last week's Mesillot). Then he realized that the course of life he had gone through was only for the purpose of allowing him to attain the power

of fortitude, determination, and willpower in his soul! Strengths that would help him bring all of Egypt – its domains, gold, and people, out from under the hands of the *kelipot* and into the realm of *kedusha*. For only a person who has attained true strength of mind has the ability to stand firm in the war against the forces of impurity.

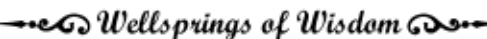
Thus the chassidim were used to interpreting the Mishna, “The brazen-faced to Gehinom, and the shamefaced to Gan Eden” – He who’s firm and brazen can even go to Gehinom and make the wicked do *teshuva*, and he need not fear that he’ll be influenced by them. But he who’s shamefaced, weak-minded, and succumbs to peer pressure, should do himself a favor and stay in Gan Eden because if he goes out, he’ll surely fall!

Rebbe Shalom Noach Berezovsky zt”l summarizes the above as follows...¹⁰

This was all part of Hashem’s intention in Yosef’s descent to Egypt, that he would prepare the land of Egypt for Yaakov and his sons to arrive. For as long as Egypt was under the control of the *yetzer hara*, how could Yaakov and the twelve holy tribes, together with the seventy souls, descend there? How could they enjoy all that was there? Therefore, Hashem sent Yosef to Egypt to prepare the ground so that Yaakov and his sons could arrive.

Yosef realized that the main grip of the *yetzer hara* on the Egyptians was through three lusts, food, women, and money. Thus he began to refine them. The lust for food – by having the food supplied through him. The lust for women – by circumcising all the Egyptians. The lust for money – by taking all their possessions from them...

Before we go into more detail about Yosef’s actions, let’s focus for a moment on our own lives...



Publicize Hashem

Every Jew must know that we're Hashem's messengers in the world and that He directs us, with *hashgacha pratit*, to places and events where He wants us to act.

In every place we arrive at, we must, according to our abilities, publicize the truth of His reality and His *hashgacha pratit*.

In truth, you don't need to put in so much effort or possess lofty knowledge in order to do this. It's enough for you to take a glass of water at a gathering where there are Jews who aren't so observant and remind them that there's a Creator to the world by blessing slowly and in a pleasant tone, "*Shehakol Nihya Bidvaro*," or by saying, "*Baruch Hashem*," and even more so if you speak about *emuna* and *hashgacha pratit*. You just publicized Hashem with ease!

Especially if you were privileged to be a talmid chacham, you must spread the light of Torah in your surroundings with all your ability and reveal the sweetness, pleasantness, and richness of

Torah, and endear the Torah on the precious Jews of Am Israel.

Or if one is wealthy and capable, they should use their money to increase the glory of Hashem and reveal His light in the world through a faithful partnership in spreading the Torah worldwide.

A Jew who arrived in a new neighborhood that doesn't have a synagogue shouldn't say, "Who am I to do anything about it?" Rather, they should get up and build a synagogue! Even if the city council tells them that they can't get a permit to build a new building, they shouldn't argue with them because one has to respect "authority," but they should make an effort, take a deep breath, and collect the funds, rent an apartment, break down a few walls, and behold, a synagogue!

That's exactly what HaRav Yoram zt"l did in the year 1999. A new neighborhood was constructed in Netivot. It was then called "Mishkenot Israel." There wasn't anything in the neighborhood, not a

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grocery store, not a health clinic, and not a synagogue. He rented an apartment (and informed the landlord that he was turning it into a synagogue), broke down a few walls, and built a synagogue. Thus, for many years, it was the only synagogue in the area.

“Take responsibility” – That’s required of every Jew!¹¹

After Yosef arrived in Egypt and saw that it was unfit to accept *kedusha* due to its impurity, he began his *avodah* of refining it...

It’s Worth Being Kadosh

HaRav Yoram Michael Abargel *zt”l* writes...¹²

In parashat Miketz, the Torah tells us about the great famine that Hashem brought upon Egypt. It was so harsh that the Egyptians, even the wealthiest among them, didn’t even have

bread to eat, as it says, “The famine spread over the entire face of the land” (Bereshit 41:56), and Rashi comments: Who are the “faces of the land?” These are the wealthy among them.

The hunger grew stronger, and the people of Egypt broke.

...*~* **Wellsprings of Wisdom** *~*...

11. A chassid once asked Rebbe Sholom DovBer of Lubavitch, “What is a chassid?”

The Rebbe replied, “A chassid is a lamplighter. In the past, there were fixed lamps in different places in the city, and in the evening, an appointed man would light them. He carried a flame at the end of a long pole which he would use to light the lamps. That’s how a chassid should behave, lighting up the souls of every Jew around him.”

The chassid then asked, “What if the lamp is fixed in the wilderness or at sea?”

To which the Rebbe replied, “It’s clear that the lamp must be lit in these places as well.”

“But Rebbe, I don’t see the lamps...” the chassid claimed.

“That’s because you’re not a lamplighter...” the Rebbe responded.

The chassid thought and then asked, “How do you become a lamplighter?”

The Rebbe answered, “One must begin with himself, discarding his materiality and cleansing himself. A coarse person sees the coarseness in others. A refined person sees the gentleness in others...”

- Sefer HaSichot 5701 (p. 116).

12. Imrei Noam (Miketz, Maamar 5).

They ran to Paraoth and began to yell, "We have nothing to eat!"

Paraoth answered them, "Go to Yosef. Whatever he tells you, do" (Bereshit 41:55).

The Midrash says:¹³ Since the famine was so strong, the Egyptians gathered and came to Yosef. They said to him, "Give us bread." He replied, "Elokim doesn't sustain the uncircumcised. Go circumcise yourselves, and then I'll give you bread."

They went to Paraoth, shouting and crying, "He said he would only give us bread if we circumcise ourselves!"

Paraoth said to them, "Fools! I already warned you that years of famine will come, and I told you to store plenty of food and grain!"

The Egyptians replied with tears in their eyes, "Our lord, the king! We gathered masses of grain, but everything spoiled! Not only the grain but even the sacks of flour we had at home spoiled!"

He said to them, "If so, go to Yosef. Whatever he tells you, do. If he has the power to decree on the grain that it'll spoil, lest he decrees to have us all killed. You have no choice. Go and circumcise yourselves..."

But we must understand, what did Yosef HaTzaddik see in forcing the Egyptians to circumcise themselves? After all, they're gentiles and are all exempt from circumcision...

There are two things that are called "disgrace," the foreskin and hunger. The foreskin, as it says, "We cannot do such a thing, to give our sister to a man with foreskin, for that is a disgrace to us" (Bereshit 34:14), and hunger, as it says, "You will no longer have to endure the disgrace of hunger before the nations" (Yechezkel 36:30).

This hints at the fact that when a person is immersed in lewdness and blemishes their *brit* and brings upon themselves the disgrace of the foreskin, the second disgrace,

the disgrace of hunger, follows after it. They cause themselves to lose their *parnasa* (livelihood) to such an extent that even bread is obtained with great difficulty. Someone who chases after women will ultimately find themselves fulfilling the verse, “For [lust] for a promiscuous woman [reduces one] to [begging for] a loaf of bread, and a married woman will snare a person of honor” (Mishlei 6:26), and as Rashi comments, “He is reduced to poverty and the lack of all good things.” And the Ibn Ezra comments, “He will lose all of his money until he has to ask for a loaf of bread from others.”

The wicked Egyptians were immersed in lewdness and severely blemished the *middah* of *yesod*. Therefore, the land of Egypt is called “The exposed land” (Bereshit 42:9).

When Yosef saw the decree of famine that Hashem had decreed on the Egyptians, he realized that they received this punishment due to

their being immersed in lewdness and blemishing the *middah* of *yesod* to an enormous extent, for the disgrace of the foreskin draws after it the disgrace of famine, as mentioned above. Therefore, he wanted to bring about their *tikkun* and remove the disgrace of the foreskin from them, and inevitably the disgrace of hunger would also be removed from them.

Thus, Yosef forced them to circumcise themselves, for the virtue of removing the foreskin is that it decreases lust, as the Rambam writes¹⁴ that one of the reasons for the mitzvah of circumcision is “To limit relations, and to weaken this organ as much as possible until one diminishes in this act... The bodily injury caused to that organ is exactly that which is desired; it does not interrupt any vital function, nor does it destroy the power of procreation. Circumcision simply counteracts excessive lust... The organ inevitably becomes weak when it

loses blood and is deprived of its covering from the outset.”

According to the above, we can now understand what Yosef said to the Egyptians in parashat Vayigash, “I have acquired today, you and your land, for Paraoh. Here is seed for you to sow the land: And when harvest comes, you shall give a fifth to Paraoh, and four-fifths shall be yours as seed for the fields and as food for you and those in your households, and as food for your children” (Bereshit 47:23-24).

That is, they were required to set aside twenty percent of the harvest (a fifth) for Paraoh, and eighty percent (four-fifths) was theirs to take home.

But why did Yosef divide the harvest specifically in that way? The answer is that the gematria of “*yesod*” is eighty, and Yosef wanted to hint to the Egyptians again that all the suffering of hunger that they were going through was only because they were blemishing the *middah* of *yesod*, and when they properly bring about the *tikkun* for this *middah*, the disgrace of hunger will be removed from them. That’s

why he told them to take eighty percent of the grain for themselves, precisely the gematria of “*yesod*,” because that eighty percent (*yesod*) is what they need to fix.

We learn from the abovementioned that all the *shefa* and *parnasa* of a person depend on preserving their *kedusha*, and when someone blemishes the *kedusha* of the *yesod*, they bring upon themselves financial crisis and lack of blessing. Everyone needs to know an important rule – Hashem never places His blessing where the boundaries of *kedusha* and modesty aren’t properly maintained. Many times, businesses, educational institutions, and even yeshivot and kollelim, enter financial distress until they finally close, all because they didn’t preserve the *kedusha* and modesty of the place properly.

On the other hand, in institutions, businesses, etc., where all standards of *kedusha* and modesty are properly observed, and there’s a complete separation between men and women, Hashem rests His Shechina there and pours down His blessing, and even while

Parashat Vayigash - It's Worth Being Kadosh

other similar business or institutions are going through financial distress, these places will always prosper and be blessed, just as the blessing rested on Yosef HaTzaddik, even at a time when there was a great famine throughout the entire world.

The preservation of a person's *kedusha* depends very much on the measure of guarding his eyes so as not to look at what Hashem doesn't want him to look at. Only after the eyes see forbidden sights does the heart begin to covet them and draw the person to falling. But, if someone truly guards their eyes, inevitably, their heart won't covet forbidden things, and they won't come to fall to any sin. *Chazal* say, "The heart and the eyes are the two agents of sin." It's written, "My son, give Me your heart, and let your eyes guard My ways" (Mishlei 23:26) – Hashem says, "If you give Me your heart and your eyes, I know that you're Mine!"

Anyone who guards their eyes properly will never lack *parnasa* because your *parnasa* depends on

the *kedusha* of your eyes, as it says, "The eyes of all look hopefully to You, and You give them their sustenance in its proper time" (Tehillim 145:15), that is, when a person's eyes look only to Hashem and don't look at forbidden things, Hashem will inevitably give them their *parnasa* in time of need.

The proof of this is Yosef HaTzaddik, as is told in parashat Miketz, that he became the richest man in the world, "Yosef was the ruler over the land; it was he who sold to all the people of the earth" (Bereshit 42:6). He earned this because he preserved the *kedusha* of his eyes in such a way that during all the years he was in Egypt he didn't raise his eyes to look at the forbidden sights that were scattered there in abundance, as his father Yaakov praised him, "A son of favor is Yosef, a son of favor upon the eye [of his beholder]. The daughters [of Egypt] would step [upon the wall] to gaze [at his beauty]" (Bereshit 49:22), and *Chazal* say:¹⁵ At the time when Yosef went

out to reign over Egypt, the daughters of kings peered at him through the lattice and threw at him necklaces, bracelets, and rings so that he would raise his eyes and look at them – even so, he didn't look at them...

From this, we learn that a Jew who merits guarding his eyes properly will never feel financial stress and will always be able to take on and fulfill

new commitments, in the aspect of, “I was young, and I have also grown old, and I have never seen a tzaddik¹⁶ forsaken and his children seeking bread” (Tehillim 37:25-26).

It was only after the Egyptians circumcised themselves that Yosef agreed to sell them food, and the very fact that the Egyptians received the food through Yosef was another step in the *tikkun*...

Food and Money

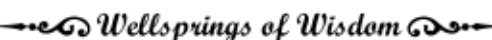
Yosef HaTzaddik caused the Egyptians to eat pure food, free from the control of the *yetzer hara*, and by means of this, he was able to prepare the land of Egypt for the arrival of Am Israel.

From this, we learn that one of the foundations of establishing a Jewish home is being careful in the food one eats as well as the food being brought into the home.

Sometimes someone finds themselves suddenly hungry in all

kinds of places. They search for a place where they can have lunch, and to their delight, they discover a restaurant with a “kosher” certificate. They immediately enter and order a meal...

The truth is that we shouldn't be satisfied with that. We can't be satisfied with the word “kosher.” Before eating, we must find out who supervises the place and whether he's really a rabbi who knows Halacha. Unfortunately,



16. That is, someone who preserves the *kedusha* of the *yesod*, as it says, “*VeTzaddik Yesod Olam*” (Mishlei 10:25).

there are many fake certificates out there as well as problems with many places with real certificates.

In order to eat at a restaurant, one must know that there is a *yirei shamayim* kosher supervisor who knows Halacha and to identify Halachic problems that arise...

We must know that *kashrut* isn't something simple or something to play around with.

The Ohr HaChaim writes¹⁷ that sometimes you'll find a *bachur* learning in yeshiva, truly transcending and sanctifying himself. You stand on the side in admiration and say, "Wow, he's going to be the next *Gedol HaDor!*"

Suddenly, he takes a 180-degree turn, gets thrown into some abyss, and you say, "I just pray that he continues to keep Shabbat..." You ask yourself how this happened. Just a month ago, you saw him blossoming, righteous, pure, holy... The answer

is that he ate non-kosher food, and it dulled his heart and mind and blemished his soul !

Today, in the age of technology, the world has advanced by many steps. There are millions of types of candies, chocolates, wafers, etc. You have to be very careful about the *kashrut* of everything.

A dear friend, an important *Dayan*, told me that he was asked to approve the *kashrut* of wafers made in Germany. Thus we traveled with a kosher supervisor who was very knowledgeable in Halacha.

They arrived at the factory and began to carefully observe the entire production process. Everything was strictly kosher until they reached the end of the process. There they met the head chef of the factory, stirring a certain sauce.

The kosher supervisor turned to him and asked, "Can you tell me what's in this sauce?" The chef initially tried to evade his

question, but finally, after much pressure, he admitted, “It’s pig’s blood. This is our secret. It adds an addictive flavor.”

If someone told you that this wafer or candy contains pig’s blood or a combination of animal fats, would you dare eat it?

Sometimes you have to eat out, that’s fine, there are many good places. But keep an eye out and pay attention to where you’re eating.

Today there are many products that are completely identical, only one has a *badatz* kosher symbol on it, and the other doesn’t. But some say, “What’s the difference? It’s exactly the same product from the same brand!” and then they buy it...

But many times, the product without the *badatz* kosher symbol contains powdered *chalav nochri*.¹⁸ And even though *Me’ikar HaDin* (according to the letter of the law) it’s permissible to eat powdered *chalav nochri*, this “heter” (permissibility) will cost you because, for anyone who eats it all

spirituality and feeling of the heart will be blocked! Tears of longing for Hashem won’t roll down their cheek nor even be roused during their tefillah! They’ll lose all desire for spirituality, absolute dullness.

Seemingly, what’s the problem? After all, it’s allowed, according to Halacha. But there are things that a *kelipah* easily clasps onto, and this *kelipah* settles inside the person’s soul and harms and oppresses them...

After one is careful in eating kosher food, it’s now possible to refine the greatest of lusts – the lust for money.

In exchange for food, Yosef demanded that they pay in money. The money ran out, and they started paying in gold, jewelry, and precious stones...

And after that also ran out, they began paying with animals – cattle, sheep, horses, mules, donkeys... Bread in exchange for animals, as it says, “They brought their livestock

to Yosef, and Yosef gave them bread in exchange for their horses, their flocks of sheep, their herds of cattle, and their donkeys. He provided them with bread in exchange for all their livestock in that year” (Bereshit 47:17).

But that, too, ran out...

Thus, they began paying with their land. Food for property !

In short, he turned all of Egypt into a rented-out country. No one had ownership of anything.

A person was extremely wealthy and then suddenly lost all their assets. They owned properties, fields, houses... Suddenly they had nothing. They walked around with a feeling of lowliness, submission, and humility. They had nothing to be haughty of anymore. Their high horse returned to its natural size !

But then, this, too, ran out...

Then he bought them all as slaves, and as they themselves asked of him, “Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our

land? **Buy us and our land in exchange for bread. We and our land will become slaves to Paraoh.** Give us seed, that we may live and not die, and let the land not become desolate: Yosef gained possession of all the land of Egypt for Paraoh, for every Egyptian sold their field because the famine was too much for them; thus, the land became Paraoh’s” (Bereshit 47:19-20). After everything came into his possession, he gave them land and seeds and said to them, “Go and earn for yourselves a livelihood.”

Rebbe Shalom Noach Berezovsky zt”l writes¹⁹ that the entire reality of famine comes into being only because of the power of the *kelipot* and the *yetzer hara*, which hinder the downpour of *shefa*, which causes *dinim* to rest on the blessing and *shefa*, and inevitably, the grain and produce cannot grow, and this is the root of hunger, that the *shefa* doesn’t come down to the world.

Thus, after Yosef had collected all the money, animals, and land

Parashat Vayigash - Recognition – A Necessary Step

and transferred it all to the territory of *kedusha*, he said to them, “I have acquired today, you and your land, for Paraoth. Here is seed for you to sow the land” (Bereshit 47:23) – Now you can sow the land and the grain will grow because the *shefa* can now come down to the world. For as long as the *shefa* was in the hands of the *yetzer hara*, it was impossible for anything to grow. But now, “here is seed for you to sow the land.”

This is what the Torah teaches us in this parasha, that all the

affairs of Egypt were under the authority of the *yetzer hara*, and the way to restore them to their *tikkun* was through the *tzaddik* taking everything from them and bringing them into the boundaries of *kedusha*, by which everything returned to their *tikkun*.

Thus we found a source for the actions of Rebbe Mordechai of Chernobyl zt”l in our holy Torah.

Now we’ll pay our debt and answer the two remaining questions...

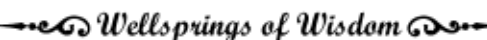
Recognition – A Necessary Step

The commentators on the Torah ask, “Why didn’t Yosef reveal himself to his brothers during their first meeting in Egypt?”

The answer to this is that Yosef knew that his mission was to pave the road for Am Israel so that they would be able to endure the Egyptian exile and that at the end of the exile, they would be redeemed from Egypt. Yosef

knew that as long as his brothers didn’t come to a true recognition of their sin, redemption would be delayed.

He knew that even if he revealed himself to them and showed them that he was right, that his dreams came true, they wouldn’t be moved by this. They would say, “Eh... A wicked person upon whom the hour is grinning!”²⁰



20. See Brachot 7b.

Parashat Vayigash - Recognition – A Necessary Step

Thus, Yosef began a long process aimed at bringing them to the recognition of sin! And in the end, he succeeded! They realized their sin and confessed, “They said to one another: In truth, we are guilty regarding our brother. We saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we didn’t listen. That’s why this distress has come upon us” (Bereshit 42:21).

Yosef managed to bring them to the point where they would correct themselves while still in this world. This is an eternal favor! To help a person correct themselves properly here in this world so that they’ll be accepted in the next.

In next week’s Haftarah, we’ll read the chapter dealing with David HaMelech’s last day on earth, “David’s life was drawing to a close” (Melachim I 2:1).

David HaMelech, after serving Am Israel faithfully, with *mesirut nefesh*, with perfection that can’t be surpassed, a man who fought all his life for Am Israel, and succeeded, yet he suffered a lot from his persecutors, and as he testified himself, “More numerous

than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without reason; many are those who would destroy me, my treacherous enemies” (Tehillim 69:5-9).

He was persecuted by many, and yet he had unprecedented *middot*, as he testified about himself, “And I, when they were sick, I would put on sackcloth and afflict my soul with fasting, and may my prayers return to me” (Tehillim 35:13). David HaMelech testified about himself that when he heard that one of his enemies was sick, he put on sackcloth and took upon himself a fast, and began to profusely pray and weep for him, “May he be healed!”

When David HaMelech’s final day arrived, he turned to the crown prince, Shlomo, and commanded him to fulfill a number of things. Amid his instructions, he told him about the actions of two people: Yoav ben Tzeruryah and Shimi ben Gera. He said to him, “Shlomo! Make sure to “relocate” them to a world that is entirely good.” This is baffling, considering what we mentioned above about David HaMelech...

Parashat Vayigash - No Need to Fear

Rather, David HaMelech knew with *Ruach HaKodesh* that because of the sin they had committed (here isn't the place to expand on the topic), they were obliterated from the next world entirely! All the mitzvot and good deeds they did and will do won't help them merit even an ounce of *Olam Haba*.

Since David knew that part of his mission in this world was to take care of their spiritual future so that they would have a share in *Olam Haba*, therefore, before his death, he looked for a way to help them, and it was revealed to him that the only possibility to nullify their terrible verdict was by judging them here in this world, and by means of that, they won't

be judged there, in the world of souls.

Just as Yosef cared for the eternal life of his brothers by bringing them to heartbreak out of recognition of their mistake, out of a true understanding that they had sinned, an understanding that caused their conscience to burn them alive, so did David HaMelech take care of the eternal life of Yoav and Shimi.

And precisely through this was the greatness of Yosef's love for his brother proven. Someone who truly loves another isn't someone who just caresses them, but rather someone who knows how to put a person in their true place with respect and help them arrive above clean and pure without blemish.

No Need to Fear

For the final question...

When Yosef said to his brothers, "Hurry back to my father and tell him, 'Thus said your son Yosef, Elokim has made me master of all Egypt,'" he intended to tell his father the following...

"Father, I know that you won't agree to come down to Egypt because you're afraid of the impurity within its boundaries and of the control of the *yetzer hara* over it.

But know, father, "Elokim has made me master of all Egypt"

Parashat Vayigash - No Need to Fear

(Bereshit 45:9) – Know that I have taken everything from them, and the control is already in my hands. Therefore, “Come down to me, don’t delay,” for you

no longer have anything to fear.²¹

Praiseworthy are the tzaddikim, and praiseworthy is their lot!

Shabbat Shalom !



The Pathway...

1. It's said in the name of the Baal Shem Tov that in these last generations, all world orders have changed. During all previous generations of Am Israel, there were three main groups... Torah scholars, merchants, and the completely unlearned. Talmidei chachamim were souls from the world of *Beriya*, merchants were souls from the world of *Yetzira*, and the simple, unlearned Jews were souls from the world of *Asiya*.

2. However, in these generations, the generations before the arrival of the Mashiach, all souls have descended to the world in a mixed form, and in each and every soul, there can be all the aspects mixed up, both a spark from *Beriya*, as well as a spark from *Yetzira* and *Asiya*. Therefore, in our generation, one's *avodah* isn't necessarily in order. When a spark from *Beriya* enters a person, they become like lofty angels, whereas when they're in *Asiya*, they're like a baked potato. However, even then, when someone is in a state of *mochin dekatnut*, they must serve Hashem with submission, acceptance of the yoke of heaven, and joy.

3. This matter of finding one's mission and purpose in life started already in ancient times, from the time Yaakov Avinu blessed his sons before his passing. Yaakov Avinu merited twelve

holy and pure sons who became the forefathers of the twelve tribes of Israel. The kabbalists write that each tribe has its own mission, its own special role, and its own path that it walks down to serve Hashem. Nonetheless, the twelve tribes didn't know their special mission until the last day of Yaakov Avinu's life, when only then did he reveal to them the role of each and every tribe.

4. However, as is well known, there is an exception to every rule...

5. Every Jew must know that we're Hashem's messengers in the world and that He directs us, with *hashgacha pratit*, to places and events where He wants us to act. In every place we arrive at, we must, according to our abilities, publicize the truth of His reality and His *hashgacha pratit*.

6. In truth, you don't need to put in so much effort or possess lofty knowledge in order to do this. It's enough for you to take a glass of water at a gathering where there are Jews who aren't so observant and remind them that there's a Creator to the world by blessing slowly and in a pleasant tone, "*Shehakol Nihya Bidvaro*," or by saying, "*Baruch Hashem*," and even more so if you speak about *emuna* and *hashgacha pratit*. You just publicized Hashem with ease !

The Pathway...

7. Especially if you were privileged to be a talmid chacham, you must spread the light of Torah in your surroundings with all your ability and reveal the sweetness, pleasantness, and richness of Torah, and endear the Torah on the precious Jews of Am Israel. Or if one is wealthy and capable, they should

use their money to increase the glory of Hashem and reveal His light in the world through a faithful partnership in spreading the Torah worldwide.

8. Every Jew is required to take responsibility. It's now up to us to make sure that we are completing our responsibility!





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Shabbat Times

Vayigash

7st of Tevet , 5783



City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	4:21 pm	5:27 pm	5:51 pm
Miami	5:25 pm	6:20 pm	6:55 pm
Los Angeles	4:36 pm	5:36 pm	6:07 pm
Montreal	4:03 pm	5:12 pm	5:34 pm
Toronto	4:33pm	5:40 pm	6:04 pm
London	3:44 pm	5:01 pm	5:15 pm
Jerusalem	4:30 pm	5:20 pm	5:52 pm
Tel Aviv	4:25 pm	5:16 pm	5:47 pm
Haifa	4:23 pm	5:13 pm	5:44 pm
Be'er Sheva	4:27 pm	5:18 pm	5:49 pm

Pathways to the Heart

From the Words of

HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l

We must always remember that which is written in the Haggadah, "Our exertion – This refers to our children." That is, it's worth putting in all the effort in the world in order to succeed in educating our children.

We must always put our children at the forefront of our minds, and remember that everything good that we do *leshem shamayim* (solely for Hashem's sake) provides us with the merit that our children will be even greater Talmidei Chachamim and even more kedoshim (holy). And know, that there is nothing in the world greater than meriting righteous children!



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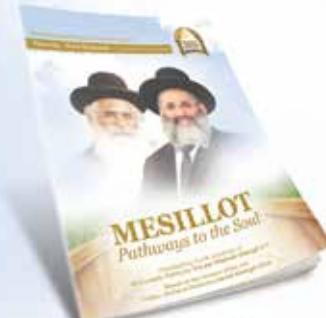
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