

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 89

Vaera | Choosing A Path In Life - Avoiding Hurdles



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 Vaera

The Innocence of a Jew

Rabbi Meir Lehman zt”l was one of the most famous leaders of Judaism in Germany. In the year 1854, he was appointed rabbi of the Jewish community in Mintz and served in this position until his death. He established a Jewish school in the year 1859, and in the year 1860, he founded the first and main Jewish journal in Germany as a counter to the publications of the reform movement and others who were against religion.

Along with his public involvement, Rabbi Meir Lehman was a great Torah scholar and the author of many important Torah books.

On one occasion, Rabbi Shabbtai Yodelwitz zt”l noted¹ that once a meeting was arranged for Rabbi Lehman with the

Emperor of Germany for a certain date and time. It was a pre-planned meeting together with the heads of the communities that they, too, were to come together, all led by Rabbi Lehman.

In those days, they didn’t have private cars, and to get from place to place, they used trains that covered long distances. The heads of the communities arranged to meet him at the train station to board the last train to the capital city together.

The appointed day arrived. Rabbi Lehman was sitting in his home anxiously waiting for the cart that was supposed to come to take him to the train station. Suddenly, a Jew knocked on the door and asked to speak with the rabbi. Rabbi Lehman’s wife replied, “Sorry... That’s not

1. Lehagid – Shemot (p. 27).

possible today. The rabbi is traveling to the capital city today, and his time is short and chaotic.”

The Jew pleaded loudly, “What’s the problem?! I only need two seconds. It’s a matter of life and death!”

When the rabbi heard that there was a Jew standing by the door who needed his help, he immediately called for him to come in.

“Rabbi, G-d bless you. I’ve heard more than fifteen lectures from you and I can repeat them all by heart, but since the rabbi’s time is short, I’ll only repeat one of them...”

The rabbi was in a hurry and a little angry. “I’m now leaving for a meeting with the emperor. It’s already 8:15, the journey takes more than an hour and a half, and the last train leaves at nine. Please say what you need and allow me to leave on time. I have no time for lectures...”

“No, Rabbi, this is a matter of life and death! I need to say...”

“Okay, say what you want,” responded Rabbi Lehman.

“Can I say half a lecture?”

“Please spare me from the lectures! I’ve already explained to you that my ride to the train station should arrive any minute, and I’m in a great hurry!”

“Rabbi, I’ll be brief!”

“No!”

“Well, I understand that the lecture will have to wait for another occasion...”

“What do you want then?” asked Rabbi Lehman.

The man then continued, “I had a grandson, and I really wanted to, since I had heard so many of the rabbi’s lectures...”

“Again with the lectures?! Please leave the lectures alone. I’m in a rush!”

“I wanted to honor the rabbi with being *sandak*.”

The cart stopped in front of the house, and the driver signaled to Rabbi Lehman to enter... “I

must leave now,” the rabbi said to the man as he stood up.

“**Excuse** me rabbi, just another moment. In the end, everyone told me that I should be the *sandak*.”

“**Well**, what do you want then?”

“**The** child passed away...”

“**Then** what matter of life and death is there? You want me to revive him like Elisha the prophet?! I have to leave. Here’s my ride. I have exactly half an hour left, and who knows if I’ll catch the train...”

“**Rabbi!** Rabbi! One more moment, please! Yesterday I had another grandson.”

“**Mazel** Tov! What do you need then?”

“**I** have a question. Should I be *sandak* again, or is there something to fear that the child will die again and I should give it to another person?”

Rabbi Lehman thought he was going to go crazy...

“**Give** to someone else!” he announced and ran towards the

cart in sorrow... “Who knows if the meeting will take place... Who knows if I’ll make it in time...”

The man ran after him, pulling on his coat... Rabbi Lehman didn’t know what to do with himself... This guy just won’t give it a rest.

“**Rabbi!** One more question! The rabbi can’t just leave me like this!”

“Hurry!!!”

“**I** forgot to ask... What name should I give the child?”

Rabbi Lehman’s patience ran out. “What do I care? Shimon, Zalman, Getzel, Berel, Shmarel, Dan, Yosef, Yaakov... What’s the difference which name!” He then turned to the driver of the cart, “Please go as faster as possible! Maybe there’s still a chance I’ll make it on time!”

The cart arrived at the station, and immediately the second siren sounded, announcing the departure of the train...

“**I** thought I was going to pass away,” stated Rabbi Lehman.

“What will I tell the emperor?
What a shame...”

“**What** will I say to all the heads of the communities that are supposed to meet me? A Jew grabbed me, and I couldn’t leave him...”

Everyone sat down sadly on the sides of the station and looked out in despair...

An hour or more passed, they were already on their way back to their homes, and suddenly the bitter news arrived that the train overturned and most of the passengers were killed...

Baruch Hashem that Rabbi Lehman wasn’t on the train!

“**I** was convinced,” said Rabbi Lehman, “for more than twelve years that that man was none other than Eliyahu Hanavi. Who else could it have been?”

But listen... “When almost thirteen years had passed, an old man entered my house. I only saw his face, and I immediately got up to greet him as if he was Eliyahu Hanavi! However, very quickly, I saw that he was just another Jew...

I then sat down next to him and said, “Now you can repeat as many lectures as you want. I have all the time in the world...”

The old man then responded, “Rabbi, I don’t have the strength to repeat the lectures. I just want to tell you that I listened to your advice, I didn’t sit *sandak* the second time, and the child is alive. You saved me. You rabbi saved the life of the child!”

Rabbi Lehman mused to himself. “He thinks I saved him, and I know that he saved me...”

“**And** now,” the old man announced, “the rabbi must come to participate in the boy’s Bar Mitzvah that will take place this coming Shabbat.”

“**I** wouldn’t miss it for anything,” exclaimed Rabbi Lehman.

That Shabbat, my wife and I stayed at that old man’s house and were happy in his company. And suddenly, during the reading of the Torah, when it was the turn of the Bar Mitzvah boy, the *chazan* announced, “The Bar Mitzvah boy, Shimon Zalman Getzel Berel

Shmarel Dan Yosef Yaakov will now read from the Torah..."

The crowd smiled.

It took half an hour just to bless the boy with a "*mi shebarach*" after his reading...

I asked the boy's father in a whisper, "Why did you give him eight names?"

"May the rabbi be healthy!" he stated. "That was the rabbi's wonderful advice just before he got on the cart..."

True story...

That child was given eight names by someone who just didn't understand. These weren't names expressing his inner essence - but just names.

However, with Moshe, things were different! *Chazal* reveal to us that Moshe had ten names!²

We must know that all the names mentioned in the Torah are

names that express the complete essence of the person. When someone says the name of a thing, for example, "I came to the Holy Land," everyone understands that we're talking about Israel. Or when saying "America," this word indicates all of America. There's no need for further explanations.

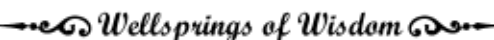
However, when the Torah wants us to understand who Moshe is, one word isn't enough.

Ten words are needed!

Why? Because every name of Moshe is a history in and of itself. Ten histories. Ten worlds!

- Ten names!

This week we won't explain the essence of each of his names, but we will focus on the most famous question about his names... Why was the name "Moshe," which was given to him by Batya, the daughter of Paraoth, chosen to be the name he's most referred by, including by the Torah itself?!



2. Moshe, Yered, Chever, Yekutiel, Avigdor, Avi Socho, Avi Zanuach, Tuvia, Shemaya ben Natanel, and HaLevi. (Vayikra Rabbah 1:3).

Gan Eden - The Source of Divine Pleasure

Gan Eden are two of the most successful pair of words to stimulate the imagination. “What was it like in Gan Eden? Did the unending peace not drive them crazy?!”

Well, for real, what it was like there, we don’t know. But we

found that the prophet Yechezkel said³ that Adam HaRishon and his wife didn’t live a life of peace and triviality at all. Rather, their lives, there, in Gan Eden, were lives of pure and spiritual drive and passion of holiness and divine pleasure.⁴

We’ll explain...

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

3. See Yechezkel 28:14.

4. **My** grandfather, Rabbi Yeshayahu of Gorlitz zt”l, was one of the Chassidim of the tzaddik Rebbe Zvi Hirsch of Ziditschov zt”l. For his livelihood, he engaged in trade, and his businesses branched out across Hungary, Austria, and Russia. At the end of the winter, he went to Russia to supervise the forestry business and the shipment of the chopped-down trees, and because of the melting of the snow and the muddy roads, he was prevented from traveling back home. Even blocks of ice floated in the rivers, endangering the sailors and requiring him to accept the fact that he would have to celebrate Pesach in Nicher.

Since he heard wonders about the leadership of the tzaddik Rebbe Avraham of Prohobitsch, he decided to join in his midst on the night of the Seder.

On the night of Pesach, when the Rebbe entered the Seder in his white clothes, everyone present saw that the *Shechina*

was upon him. Rabbi Yeshayahu stood in front of him and watched him in amazement. The Rebbe stood in silence and began the Seder by saying, “*Kadesh!*” Suddenly he fell backward on his chair. He sat like that for a few moments, and immediately those around him approached, helped him out of his chair, stood him on his feet, and took him out of the room.

Rabbi Yeshayahu stood surprised... “What just happened?! Why did they take him and where?!”

A little while later, the Rebbe was seen at the door, leaning on the arms of those helping him. He approached the table and continued. He blessed on the wine and leaned on his side to drink it.

He then got up and stated, “*Urchatz!*” and again fell down on his chair. Those around waited for a second and then again supported him and took him out of the room. Rabbi Yeshayahu again watched and wondered.

Parashat Vaera - Gan Eden - The Source of Divine Pleasure

The Rebbe sat down, washed his hands, stood up, and called, “*Karpas*” before again collapsing on his chair and being taken out again...

This time, Rabbi Yeshayahu couldn’t hold back and asked those present to explain what was going on. They explained to him that this is what happens every year. Every time the Rebbe is about to begin the next part of the Seder, he’s struck with fear and a trembling awe and begins sweating profusely until he’s needed to be helped out of the room to switch his drenched clothes and put on dry clothes !

The eight days of the holiday passed over Rabbi Yeshayahu with a feeling of supreme holiness and immense joy. Then, he approached the Rebbe and said, “Rebbe, I am now returning to my home, and I want to ask you, please bless me so that I may experience and feel, if only for once, awe for Hashem as you feel !”

The Rebbe heard, listened, and didn’t answer. He only shook his hand warmly, and Rabbi Yeshayahu got up and went on his way...

On his way home, he passed through the city of Ziditshov and went in to receive a blessing from Rebbe Zvi Hirsch. When he entered his room, he didn’t find him. He was told that the Rebbe left for a moment and that he would return momentarily.

In the room, on the side, stood a container of water from which the Rebbe used to

wash his hands from time to time. Still waiting, Rabbi Yeshayahu thought, “It’s only proper to prepare myself to properly greet the Rebbe.” He then remembered the awe he saw in Prohobitsch and said to himself, “I wish I had the privilege of feeling the same awe !”

Suddenly, he was struck with fear and trembling ! It seemed to him that his insides were on fire. Heat waves covered him, and rivers of sweat washed him. He felt that he was going up in flames.

At that moment, he needed to cool himself - to put out the fire with water. He drew water from the container, blessed, and drank, and drank, and drank until there was no more water ! And still, to no avail. The burning continued, almost to the point of suffocation.

He felt that he was about to die of awe !

In the meantime, the Rebbe entered and approached the container to wash his hands. He took the cup and suddenly noticed that the container was empty.

He looked at Rabbi Yeshayahu who was standing nearby, drenched in sweat and trembling all over. He smiled and said, “You coveted the awe of Prohobitsch and drank all the water ? !”

He then patted him on the back and said, “Well, that’s enough for you !”

At that moment, he was “cooled off.”

Hashem created our beautiful world in six days.⁵

After creating the world, Hashem wanted to establish a special place where His divine presence could dwell.

For that reason, Hashem created Gan Eden and, within it, a place for His divine presence to dwell.

And since Gan Eden was the place where Hashem decided to have His divine presence manifest, He created it with a special beauty, a divine beauty befitting a king's palace, and planted many beautiful trees in it to glorify and honor its place. He also planted within it two trees with heavenly virtues, the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge.

Then, after Gan Eden was created, Hashem created the body of Adam HaRishon on Har HaMoriah in Yerushalayim and breathed within to him the breath of life.

Hashem placed Adam in front of him and said to him, "I want you to serve before me, to guard the garden like a Kohen who works in the Beit HaMikdash. Do you agree to serve me?"

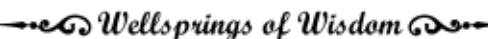
And, of course, Adam replied, "Yes!"

Then Hashem said, "I need you to serve me inside of Gan Eden. Therefore, if you want to serve me, you have to leave the environment you're currently in and enter Gan Eden."

"And know," continued Hashem, "Gan Eden is the most sacred place in all the worlds (because Hashem's divine presence dwells in it), and despite that, you can eat from all the trees in the garden, except for one tree, the Tree of Knowledge!"

Adam HaRishon entered and began his work to cultivate and preserve the garden of Hashem...

And for the sake of choice, Hashem created the forces of evil...



5. Torah Ve'Daat (Issue 173, p. 1).

The Creation of Choice

At the time when Hashem decided to create human beings, He also created two parallel systems...

One system of holiness and purity. Endless worlds of soul-satisfying beauty - Atzilut, Briyah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah of *kedusha*.

And one system of impurity and evil. Worlds of strong and powerful feelings of self-centeredness, lusts, and obscenities – Atzilut, Briyah,

Yetzirah, and Asiyah of impurity.

Just as the system of holiness consists of steps and levels one above the other, so does the system of impurity.

And all this just so that we'll have choice.⁶

We'll explain...

One of the strongest feelings in the human heart is the desire to move forward.

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

6. It was in the summer of 5774. I was invited to speak at the Yavne synagogue in Tel Aviv. Of course, I didn't take a taxi. I took 26 line to the "Carmelit" terminal by the sea and walked through Allenby Street to reach Yavne Street.

Suddenly a car pulled up next to me, and a bearded Jew shouted at me, "*Ze LeUmat Ze Asa Elokim!*"

What fear! What does he want from me? Today there are so many strange types. Everyone is dancing in the streets and yelling verses!

"I will never forget," continued the Jew. "You saved my life!"

Well, it was worth a second look. I looked, and I shouted, "Berel!"

Indeed, it was Berel! "Where do you need to go?"

To the Yavne Synagogue, I answered.

"Get in the car. I'll drive you, and we'll talk!"

He also drove me forty-one years ago!

It was in the year 5706, with the end of the World War. We were liberated from Siberia and found ourselves in a refugee camp in Berlin. There were survivors of the extermination camps and human shadows who lost their families and all their possessions. The war filled their entire past, and the future was so threatening and vague...

One day, Berel, who was from a prestigious Chassidic family, and now

Parashat Vaera - The Creation of Choice

his world was falling apart in front of him, turned to me and said, “Yankel, how do we continue?”

I said to him, “Listen to what chazal said... As is known, Sanchariv rose to power, conquered the world, and exiled everyone, including the ten tribes, to other parts of the world.

Yet, one city delayed him from completing his conquest. Only one city stood up to him... Jerusalem!

He mobilized his entire army, over two million soldiers and one hundred and eighty-five thousand commanders (Sanhedrin 95b), and set out on his conquest campaign!

On his way, he visited a temple of idol worship and promised that if he succeeded and conquered Jerusalem, he would sacrifice his two sons to it.

He arrived in Jerusalem - and lost. Not a trace of his huge army remained!

Who woke up in the morning? Five remained to run back to their country and tell what happened... Sanchariv, his two sons, and his two servants. In one night, he lost everything! His entire army and all the glory. In his eyes, a holocaust.

And what did he do? He returned to that same temple of idol worship and said, “I’ve lost everything, but I’m not going back on my promise. I’m ready to sacrifice my two sons...

His two sons, though, turned on him and killed him!

Berel, “*Ze LeUmat Ze Asa Elokim!* -

If there’s this much power for evil and impurity, without any doubt that it’s only because there’s this much power, and more, for holiness and purity!

Berel! We don’t have a family. We don’t have any possessions. We don’t even have clothes. Our pants are torn, and our shoes are worn, but Hashem is with us, and we are with him!

He heard... If he was convinced, I didn’t know...

But today, I know, and from his mouth, I heard. He picked himself up, built himself up, raised an exemplary family, and he has children and grandchildren who are all on the path of the Torah and mitzvot. And when he saw me from the window of his car, he remembered and shouted, “*Ze LeUmat Ze Asa Elokim!*”

And it’s exactly that that binds us to our obligation and duty!

When you see what power the *yetzer hara* has, you begin to understand just how much power we are required to give to the side of holiness.

And furthermore, when we see what passion we have for the pleasures of this world, we understand where we can reach if we just direct it to holiness!

- Ve’Hegadeta (Shemot p. 213).

And yet, if it was possible only in the system of *kedusha* to advance from level to level, then there would be many people who would prefer to walk in the ways of holiness, if only to advance...

What did Hashem do? He also created within the system of impurity the possibility to advance and to rise from also level to level. From the level of Asiyah of impurity to the level of Yetzirah of impurity, and etc...

And now that choice was given to us, we have one of two ways to go... Either walk down the path of life - the way of holiness, or down the path of destruction and the ways of impurity...

The choice is ours.

The Method That Has Proven Itself

When Rabbi Chaim ben Atar learned these words, “And the serpent was naked,” the secret of the power of the *yetzer hara* was revealed to him. This is what he wrote in his book *Ohr HaChaim*...

“**And** the serpent was naked” - We need to understand why the

After Adam HaRishon was admitted into Gan Eden, Hashem called the *yetzer hara* and said to it, “I commanded Adam not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. Go and tempt him to go against my word...”

In truth, this role that the *yetzer hara* was given wasn't an easy role at all... How can someone approach a Jew whose belief in Hashem burns in their heart like fire and make them go against Him?

But since Hashem created this entire world on the basis of having free choice and will, He therefore gave power to the *yetzer hara* to deal with the heart of a Jew!

And so the Torah tells us, “And the serpent was naked, more than any animal of the field that Hashem Elokim made” (Bereshit 3:1)...

Torah informed us that the snake was naked...

Chava walked among the trees of Gan Eden, and her eyes didn't stop looking at all the beauty, large and ripe fruits, an intoxicating smell wafting from them...

It's not known if she had time to eat one of the fruits, but it doesn't matter. The very fact that she could eat from them all without restriction and without limit filled her heart with joy and happiness.

And suddenly, a voice was heard from behind one of the trees... Pss, pss...

Chava turned around, and the snake was standing in front of her. "Chava, everything here looks so delicious, doesn't it?"

Chava answered, "Yes. Although I haven't had time to taste them yet, but with Hashem's help, I'll taste from all of them except from the Tree of Knowledge, of course," she hastened to say.

The snake heard her answer and was ecstatic, "Good thing she mentioned the Tree of Knowledge" - The first phase of the mission was successful. Now it's time to use all the cunningness that Hashem blessed me with...

The snake, with his acting talent, portrayed himself as a loving and joyful friend and turned

to Chava with a voice full of pity and said, "What?! You won't eat from the Tree of Knowledge?! What happened to you? You're so enthusiastic about the fruits of the garden but not from the Tree of Knowledge?! After all, the fruits of the garden have just a boring taste, completely standard and nothing special..."

"You're right!" Chava said. "They really are just fruit. Why did I get so enthusiastic about them?"

And the snake continued its attack. "Do you see the Tree of Knowledge?! You should know that its taste is something truly special, like nothing you've ever tasted before."

Then it happened... Something weird started to happen within Chava. Her vision became partially blurred, and her heart started beating fast... "Only eating from the Tree of Knowledge will make me feel happy..."

An inner voice whispered inside her, "It's forbidden. Hashem doesn't allow..." But the voice was lost in the great storm that

Parashat Vaera - Stay Away From The Yetzer Hara!

surrounded her... and she felt as if her body was running towards the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge all by itself...

Then, Chava ate... and in one moment, everything shattered! No happiness, no joy, no pleasure. Nothing! Just a call to stand up and stand trial before Hashem...

This is how the *yetzer hara* behaves with those who listen to it. It removes from them the desires of what's permitted and makes them get "tired" of them, and increases in their eyes the desires that are prohibited until there's nothing like them in the world...

And this isn't its only method of causing someone to fall. We found two more ways...

1. When it wants to cause someone to sin, it portrays the sin as a mitzvah and the mitzvah as a sin.

2. When someone realizes that they sinned and they want to repent, the *yetzer hara* immediately comes and reassures them, "Come on! After all, what did you do?! What a petty offense! What are you stressing about?!"

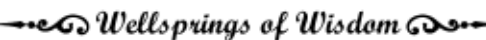
And that's its true power, to hide from a Jew the significance and enormity of a sin. For anyone who has even a spark of Judaism in them, if they knew what harm a sin causes, they wouldn't sin even if their life demanded it! And even more so, if they knew and understood the magnitude and value of a mitzvah, they wouldn't rest for even a second from fulfilling mitzvot.

The only problem is that the *yetzer hara* covers our eyes from seeing the truth...

Stay Away From The Yetzer Hara!

In a lesson given by HaRav Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l, he said the following...⁷

The words of the Baal Shem Tov are already known,⁸ who explained that the method of the



7. Betzur Yarom (Vol. 6, p. 12).

8. See Orech Le'Chaim (Lech Lecha).

Parashat Vaera - Stay Away From The Yetzer Hara!

yetzer hara is to portray sins as if they're a mitzvah.

For example, when the *yetzer hara* wants to convince someone to belittle another and humiliate them, it tells them that this person is a *rasha* and it's a mitzvah to do everything possible to get rid of them, as it's said, "And the evil will be removed from your midst" (Devarim 13:6).

Likewise, when the *yetzer hara* wants to cause someone to fall to the horrible sin of *eshet ish*, it approaches them and says, "There's a divorced woman here. What a poor woman. There's no one to do her shopping and no one to drive her children home. Her husband left her, and he hardly pays her even a little alimony. Whoever helps her is really doing a huge mitzvah." Then, that same person starts helping her every day, running after her all the time and serving her every need until he fulfills the verse, "He goes after her, then suddenly, he'll be

like a cow coming to be slaughtered" (Mishlei 7:22).

We must know that anyone who follows the *yetzer hara* will end up in an abyss with no end to their shame! Therefore, anyone who isn't careful in their every action and in every step they take, they'll end up being like a cow being led to be slaughtered by the *yetzer hara*!

Rebbe Nachman, in *Likutei Moharan*,⁹ says that there's a *kelipah* called "*Arich Anpin Dekelipah*" that attaches itself to someone when they look at a woman that has reached a very high level of impurity, even for a second, and even by accident, and once it attaches itself to someone its extremely difficult to get rid of. One look, and they won't be able to get her out of their mind. Wherever he goes, she'll follow him. He'll be in prayer, and she'll come. In the middle of *kriyat Shema*, she's there. Even when doing

Parashat Vaera - Do Not Covet!

kiddush, she'll come to him. All since he saw something that he shouldn't have, such as when he went to the gas station to fill up his car, and there he saw some filthy newspaper that's distributed to everyone who fills up at the station, and he didn't resist the temptation and took the newspaper and started looking through it. It's true that what's necessary is necessary. Someone who needs gas can go to the gas station and fill up, but who allowed them to take a newspaper in their hand and look through it?!

Therefore, when you see something filthy, stay away from it! Like what we've already learned from what happened with On ben

Pelet who, just by being neighbors with Korach, ended up turning against Moshe Rabbeinu, and if it wasn't for his wife who saved him, he would have perished along with the entire assembly of Korach. She was a strong woman who knew how to put her husband in his place. From this, we learn how much power a woman has to save her husband from all kinds of nonsense. Suddenly, her husband comes home at two in the morning. At first, he tells her that he was working or studying or his car got stuck. But then, she finds out that it wasn't true. A strong woman knows how to get her husband out of all this.

And all this is from the *yetzer hara*...

Do Not Covet!

As a result of their sin, Adam and Chava were expelled from Gan Eden.

One hundred and thirty years later, their third son Shet was born.

We don't have clear details of what happened in those years, but one thing is obvious, the taste of

the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge remained in their memory.

And yet, even though the Tree of Knowledge remained in their memory, we don't find that the *yetzer hara* returned and tempted them to eat from it again.

Parashat Vaera - Four Periods - Four Failures

The question is, why? Why didn't it try to trick them again?

The answer is simple, though...

The Tree of Knowledge is in Gan Eden, far, far, away from their reach, and the *yetzer hara* doesn't try to bring us down with things that are out of our reach.

We learn this from the words of Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra zt"l...¹⁰

The Torah commanded us, "Do not covet" (Shemot 20:14), and many people are puzzled by this commandment. How can someone not covet something that seems nice or something that they truly want?

I'll explain with a parable... Someone normal, who grew up in a village, when they see the king's daughter, they don't think

about marrying her. They know that it's impossible. Likewise, no one desires to marry their mother because they're accustomed from their youth to know that it's forbidden and wrong.

Likewise, when someone absolutely knows, downright, that the things that belong to others are outside the scope of their reach, the *yetzer hara* will no longer tempt them!

This is what the Torah commands when it states, "Do not covet" - Know that the possessions of others are beyond your reach! And if you understand so, no greed for them will arise in your hearts!

And the sons of Adam, Cain, and Shet flourished and multiplied and filled the earth...

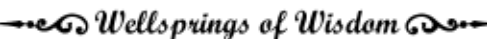
Four Periods - Four Failures

The beginning of the world's history is concentrated in four periods...

Enosh, Mabul (flood), Sedom, and HaPalega.

What do all these generations have in common? They all sinned against Hashem!

The *yetzer hara* struck again!



10. See his commentary on the Torah (Shemot 20:14).

Because these generations were rooted in sin, Hashem punished them... In the Enosh generation, the ocean rose and flooded a third of the world. In the flood generation, the whole world was flooded with water. Sodom was overturned. And the generation of HaPalega, the people were scattered all over the world...

Following the punishments that they received, they could

no longer sin because sin was beyond their reach. They just died and went out of reality...

But that isn't the purpose of our creation. Our purpose is to remain alive and yet understand that it's impossible to sin! That sin is outside the scope of a Jew!¹¹

And so, Am Israel went down to Egypt...

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

11. Sometimes we only understand this the hard way. Only then do we feel the misery caused as a result of the sin...

In this regard, Rabbi Yaakov Galinsky zt"l once said...

I once participated in a seminar that was held for baale teshuva. At the end of the seminar, a young man entered the hall with a camera in his hand. He turned to me and said, "I'm a journalist, and I've come to interview the participants."

As is known, at the end of the seminar, several participants come up and talk about their experiences and their conclusions. One of the speakers was one of the main entertainers in Israel who also participated in the seminar, and he talked about the intensity of the experience he had and announced that he

wanted to start a new life, a Jewish life, by observing the Torah and the mitzvot.

At the end of his words, the journalist approached him and said, "The move you are making is very interesting. Where did you get the strength to give up your status, honor, and money? That's real dedication. What self-sacrifice!"

Then that same participant replied, "You call my actions self-sacrifice?! Only an ultra-orthodox boy who sits in a yeshiva and studies Torah persistently and in purity has true self-sacrifice!"

The journalist was surprised... "I don't understand what you're saying..."

The participant then explained...

In my lifetime, I had time to get to know "this world" well and "enjoy"

Happiness, Wealth, and Honor...

In the year 2,238, since the creation of the world, Yaakov and his sons came to Egypt and settled in the district of Goshen. There, in Goshen, they established an orderly community life for themselves, studied Torah, and earned a living. Most of them were very rich and had a lot of money.

Because of all that, the Egyptians envied them. They were jealous of all the happiness that Am Israel had...

And yet, the time of the servitude had to begin. But how would it be possible? How is it possible to take a free nation of wise and intelligent people with

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

much of what it has to offer. What I discovered is that “this world” has nothing to offer. Behind all this glitter hides an empty and dark hole, empty of all happiness and joy.

Beneath this overwhelming and attractive cover, there is a heavy anguish, a lack of satisfaction, and a constant feeling that the soul lacks something from the inside...

This feeling haunted me for many years, and I tried in all kinds of ways to fill it, and I failed...

After everything I had done, I heard an inner voice whispering inside me...
“This is not it!”

And here, at the seminar, they revealed to me that I have a Jewish soul within me, which is filled only with studying Torah and observing mitzvot. Already in the short time that I’ve been here, I’ve already had time to feel the

same wonderful feeling of true joy and satisfaction.

That wonderful feeling of having something to get up for in the morning!

So tell me - the participant continued and said - What kind of self-sacrifice is needed to escape from this murky swamp of a world?!

However, an ultra-orthodox boy who, all his life, grew up within a framework of Torah and mitzvot sees only the “good” in this world...

If he nevertheless manages to overcome everything and continue to sit within the world of Torah, then he is “giving up” everything that “looks good” around him every second only to fulfill the will of Hashem!

I was very impressed by his answer - Rabbi Yaakov Galinsky finished his story...

- LeHagid (Bereshit p. 239).

positions and power and turn them into slaves?

Then, the *yetzer hara* struck again...

Paraoh, the king of Egypt, published an announcement through every social media outlet: The Royal Council is looking for construction workers to build two new cities, *Pitom* and *Ramses*. The payment will be given in gold coins, plus improved working conditions for those who qualify!

The rumor spread like wildfire, and all of Am Israel wanted to sign up...

The only ones who remained sane were the Leviim. They approached Am Israel and questioned, "You have everything you want, cash, flocks of sheep, clothes, and jewelry. Why are you running like crazy to be construction workers?"

Yet, Am Israel was surprised, "What happened to you Leviim?! The money we have is dull and colorless... but, there, with Paraoh, they pay with shiny gold! Don't recognize the happiness and joy that we'll get by accepting this offer?!"

Unfortunately for them, they didn't hear the cry of the *Ohr HaChaim*...

This is how the *yetzer hara* behaves with those who listen to it. It removes from them the desires of what's permitted and makes them get "tired" of them, and increases in their eyes the desires that are prohibited until there's nothing like them in the world...

They didn't know that this was just a plan by the *yetzer hara* to make them degrade everything they had and covet everything that Paraoh was offering them...

They then went to work freely and willingly. And since that was the case, the first day of work was a blessed day with great productivity.

Then the message came from the royal palace: In order to receive payment, we ask all employees to concentrate in one place, and the supervisors in charge of the payroll will pass between you and record the daily output of each employee.

They gathered and reported their output...

Parashat Vaera - A Different Kind of Servitude

Suddenly, the entire area was filled with people wearing ironed uniforms, their faces dark, and their eyes frozen and expressionless. They surrounded the entire nation of Am Israel...

A trumpet blast sounded...

Riding on a knightly and noble horse, Paraoth stood in the center and announced: In my own name, I announce that from

now on, you will all become slaves! Every day you will have to complete the same productivity that you had today! No excuses will be accepted! You've all been warned!!!

He then burst out into a chilling laugh and rode back to his palace...

And the terrible imprisonment and slavery in Egypt began...

A Different Kind of Servitude

If this was just physical servitude, it wouldn't have been so bad because the soul of every Jew is strong and stable and has wonderful abilities.

But, the problem was that the main part of their slavery was mental slavery!

In a room lit by candlelight, around a round table, sat all the most wicked people of Egypt discussing, "How do we wear out their souls? How do we turn it into dust?"

Then, they decided...

We don't really know how exactly they did what they did and

what forces of darkness they enlisted to help them, but one thing is clear... they succeeded in their plan, above all expectations...

They managed to remove from Am Israel all desire for what's permitted and make them completely revolting in their eyes and make them, in their place, desire everything prohibited to an unprecedented level...

Am Israel felt that they had no point in life... Ugh! Life was meaningless!

And in that terrible exile of complete enslavement, the years passed...

The Mashiach's Role

On Wednesday, the 7th of Adar, 2368 years since the creation of the world, at around nine o'clock in the morning, a son was born to Amram and Yocheved, and they called him Tov.

And since, at that time, Paraoth pursued every baby that was born and ordered that it be thrown into the Nile, Yocheved took her son Tov and hid him for three months. However, after that, she was no longer able to hide him, and on the 6th of Sivan - on the same day that he was to later ascend to heaven and receive the Torah - she prepared for him a basket and placed him among the reeds on the bank of the Nile with a prayer in her heart that Hashem watch over, and protect him.

At that same time, the daughter of Paraoth came to bathe in the Nile,

“And she saw the basket among the reeds... and she took it. She opened it and saw the child” (Shemot 2:5-6), and after he grew up “She called him Moshe” (Shemot 2:10).

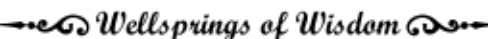
Rabbi Shimshon Hirsch on the verse, writes that Paraoth's daughter didn't call him Moshe after the action of drawing him from the water,¹² but to remind him of his role - Moshe (משה), which means the redeemer (המושיע). She wanted to remind him that he must always have a soft heart, be attentive to the sorrows of others, and always be there as a savior and helper in times of trouble for others.

And truly, this was Moshe's main role - To redeem and guide Am Israel out of the hands of the evil *yetzer hara*. And that's why specifically this name was chosen to be his for eternity...

Revealing the True Reality

Moshe Rabbeinu was eighty years old when Hashem appeared to him and said, “Now

is the time for redemption! Now is the time to reveal the true face of the *yetzer hara*! Now is the



12. “Moshe” (משה) also comes from the root of the word “to draw him” (משיתוהו).

Parashat Vaera - The Solution

time to rescue Am Israel from its hands! And I ask you, Moshe, to take over this rescue operation!”

Go and strike the land of Egypt with ten plagues, and by them, all their sins and iniquities will be removed, and life will return to its normal course of action!

The rest is history...

After the *yetzer hara*'s plan was foiled, Am Israel came out of Egypt...

Well, that was back in the day. But we, how can we save ourselves from the cruel clutches of the *yetzer hara*?

The answer is... Only by studying Torah.

The Solution

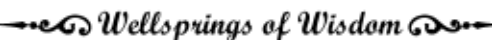
The following is an excerpt from our book *Imrei Noam* by HaRav Yoram Michael Abargel zt”l...¹³

Moshe Rabbeinu, on the day of his death, saw by means of prophecy everything that would happen to Am Israel throughout all the generations until the coming of Mashiach.¹⁴

Moshe saw all the difficult trials that the *yetzer hara* would lay before them. He also saw with what cruelty the gentiles would behave towards Am Israel, what plots they would plot against

them, and with what brutality they would beat them. He saw that Am Israel's wealth would become abandoned, and their blood would be spilled like water.

He also saw everything that is happening today during these days. He saw the horrifying sights of buses full of innocent men, women, and children exploding. He saw Jews being slaughtered in broad daylight and their blood running down the earth like water. He saw missiles being thrown into every corner of Eretz Israel and



13. *Imrei Noam* (Toldot, Maamar 5).

14. See *Sifrei* (Ve'Zot Haberacha 357).

endangering human lives without any mercy.

Moshe Rabbeinu saw everything, and his heart literally tore within him. He couldn't close his eyes and pass on from this world because of his grief for the people and nation for whom he completely gave himself over for. And while tears flowed from his pure eyes, he turned to Hashem and asked in pain, "Please tell me, how will Your children be able to endure these difficult exiles under the terrible and cruel decrees of the gentiles? How will Am Israel endure between the wicked children of Esav and Ishmael?"

And then Hashem answered him...

There is only one piece of advice for Am Israel by which

they can be safe even during the difficult times of exile. The advice is...

"Follow the heels of the sheep."

You need to follow in the footsteps of the holy and righteous forefathers and tzaddikim of every generation and keep well the pure traditions you received from them and do not abandon them!

By having Am Israel engage in the Torah regularly, everyone according to their ability and according to their heart's inclination - Torah, Midrash, Gemara, Halacha, Mussar, and Chassidut - they will be rewarded, and with their perseverance in studying Torah, the Torah will enlighten their eyes, and they will discover the emptiness that exists in the lusts of the world!

Shabbat Shalom!



The Pathway...

1. After creating the world, Hashem wanted to establish a special place where His divine presence could dwell. For that reason, Hashem created Gan Eden and, within it, a place for His divine presence to dwell. And since Gan Eden was the place where Hashem decided to have His divine presence manifest, He created it with a special beauty, a divine beauty befitting a king's palace, and planted many beautiful trees in it to glorify and honor its place. He also planted within it two trees with heavenly virtues, the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge.

2. Then, after Gan Eden was created, Hashem created Adam HaRishon and breathed within to him the breath of life. Hashem placed Adam in front of him and said to him, "I want you to serve before me, to guard the garden like a Kohen who works in the Beit HaMikdash. Do you agree to serve me?" And, of course, Adam replied, "Yes!" Then Hashem said, "I need you to serve me inside of Gan Eden. Therefore, if you want to serve me, you have to leave the environment you're currently in and enter Gan Eden." "And know," continued Hashem, "Gan Eden is the most sacred place in all the worlds, and despite that, you can eat from all

the trees in the garden, except for one tree, the Tree of Knowledge !

3. At the time when Hashem decided to create human beings, He also created two parallel systems... One system of holiness and purity. Endless worlds of soul-satisfying beauty, and one system of impurity and evil. Worlds of strong and powerful feelings of self-centeredness, lusts, and obscenities. Just as the system of holiness consists of steps and levels one above the other, so does the system of impurity. And the point of all these worlds ? So that we'll have choice.

4. With the knowledge that choice was given to us to choose between good and evil, we must first learn how the side of impurity works in order to get us to choose evil instead of good...

5. One of the ways that the *yetzer hara* tries to cause someone to choose evil is by removing from them the desires of what's permitted and makes them get "tired" of them, and increases in their eyes the desires that are prohibited until there's nothing like them in the world. Another way is that when it wants to cause someone to sin, it portrays the sin as a mitzvah and the mitzvah as a sin. Lastly, when someone realizes that they sinned and they want to repent, the *yetzer hara* immediately comes and reassures them, "Come on ! After all,

The Pathway...

what did you do?! What a petty offense! What are you stressing about?!”

6. This is the true power of the *yetzer hara*, to hide from a Jew the significance and enormity of a sin. For anyone who has even a spark of Judaism in them, if they knew what harm a sin causes, they wouldn't sin even if their life demanded it! And

even more so, if they knew and understood the magnitude and value of a mitzvah, they wouldn't rest for even a second from fulfilling mitzvot. The only problem is that the *yetzer hara* covers our eyes from seeing the truth...

7. However, now that we know the truth, and know that for the sake of choice, Hashem created the forces of evil, we can go forward and choose only good!





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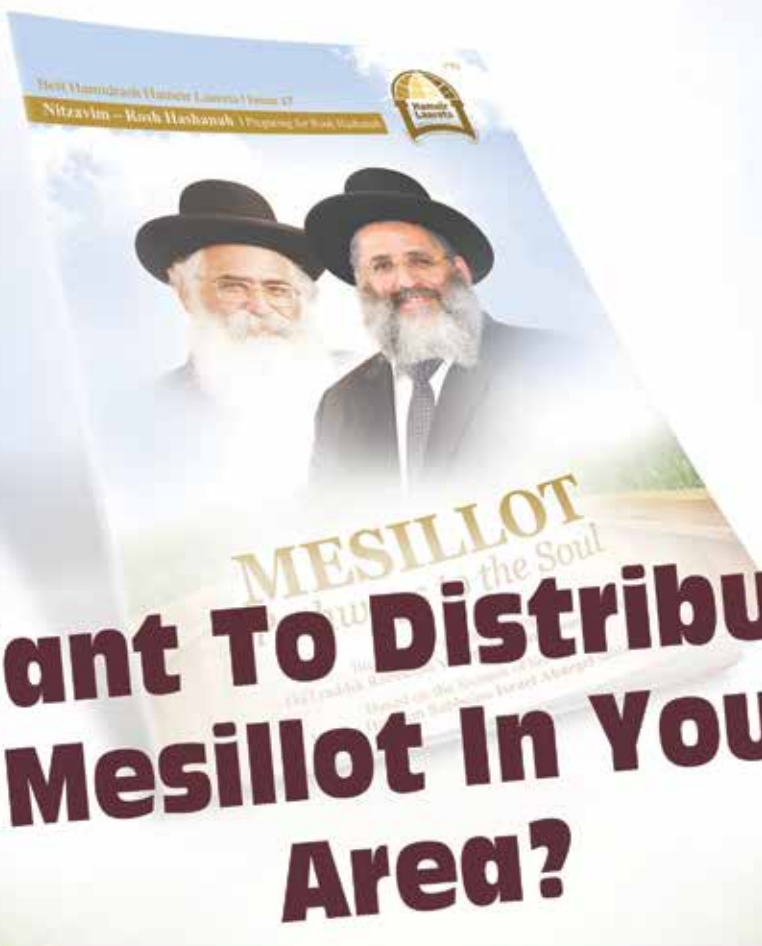
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City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	4:40 pm	5:44 pm	6:13 pm
Miami	5:37 pm	6:33 pm	7:09 pm
Los Angeles	4:53 pm	5:53 pm	6:25 pm
Montreal	4:25 pm	5:33 pm	5:58 pm
Toronto	4:54 pm	6:00 pm	6:26 pm
London	4:13 pm	5:26 pm	5:43 pm
Jerusalem	4:47 pm	5:38 pm	6:11 pm
Tel Aviv	4:43 pm	5:34 pm	6:06 pm
Haifa	4:40 pm	5:31 pm	5:03 pm
Be'er Sheva	4:44 pm	5:35 pm	6:08 pm

Pathways to the Heart

From the Words of
HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l

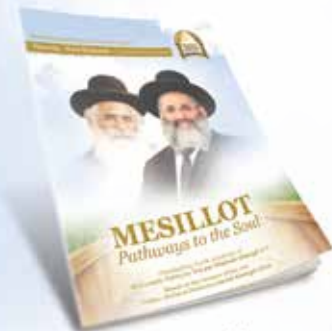
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