



Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 104

**Emor** | Refining Our Inner Worlds



# 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...

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Story About Wine . . . . .	1
Exile and Redemption . . . . .	7
The Purpose – The Giving of The Torah . . . . .	8
The Mitzvah of Counting The Omer . . . . .	9
The Students of Rabbi Akiva . . . . .	10
Everyone and Their Path . . . . .	11
The Twelve Tribes . . . . .	15
Transition Between the Worlds . . . . .	16
For A Man Goes Home To His World . . . . .	17
Then and Today . . . . .	19
Respect For One Another . . . . .	20
The Desired and Found . . . . .	24
<i>The Pathway</i> . . . . .	26



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# Parashat Emor

## A Story About Wine

**It** all started during the celebratory mitzvah feast held by the Ratchport community for the occasion of the arrival of the new rabbi, Rabbi Naftali Hertz HaLevi, to his position on the rabbinate.

**The** new rabbi's old friend, Rebbe Yechezkel Shraga of Shinawa, also participated in the feast. The two knew each other already from the time when Rabbi Naftali Hertz would dwell in the shadow of the tzaddik, Rebbe Chaim of Sanz, the father of Rebbe Yechezkel Shraga.

**The** feast was filled with all kinds of delicacies befitting kings and those of important status, and the atmosphere was extraordinarily uplifting.

**Suddenly** a cry was heard from one of the tables, "Wine *nesech*!" The cry of a lone voice that immediately sparked a wave of emotional and loud voices...

**The** bottle of wine over which the storm broke out was quickly moved, from hand to hand, until it reached the head of the table. Indeed, on the label of the bottle was illustrated no less and no more... a cross. Meaning the wine was made in a gentile winery, and if so, it's one hundred percent wine *nesech*!

**In** one moment, the entire uplifting atmosphere was shattered, and a feeling of great failure hung in the air and strained their hearts.

**Rebbe** Yechezkel Shraga of Shinawa took the bottle in his hands, looked at it carefully, examined it from all sides, and a thin and mysterious smile suddenly floated on his lips.

**The** surprising reaction of the distinguished guest immediately silenced the commotion.

**They** were all curious to understand the secret of the smile

and were waiting for the mouth of the tzaddik to explain.

**Rebbe** Yechezkel Shraga opened and said...

**Not** many years ago, a rich widow named Paula Zymorski lived in one of the upscale neighborhoods of Warsaw. The widow oversaw several businesses that her late husband started, among them a large winery.

**One** day a rich Jewish businessman came to the widow's home. As he approached the threshold of the house, a large stone hit his head and wounded him. He glanced at the place from where the stone was thrown and noticed the mischievous smile of the thrower, a young boy who was hiding behind one of the trees in the garden. It was the son of the widow.

**Hurt** and insulted, the Jew approached the widow while complaining about the "warm" reception he received from her son.

**The** widow, who was a kind-hearted and decent woman, was absolutely shocked by the

actions of her son and didn't spare the Jew words of apology and reconciliation.

**"It** seems that my many businesses haven't left me with enough time to invest in my son's upbringing," she said and let out a sigh...

**After** the Jew finished his business and left, she called her son over and scolded him with harsh words of rebuke. The boy looked at her with both amused and puzzled eyes as if saying, "What's wrong with you? Why are you so shocked by my actions?! Isn't he just a simple Jew!"

**Strong** shivers ran through the widow's body...

**She** took her son's hand in hers and went out with him to the garden that surrounded their spacious home.

**The** two, mother and son, then engaged in an interesting conversation...

**"What's** wrong mom? Why are you crying?" wondered the young boy. "He's nothing but

a Jew, and it's okay to hurt a Jew. Jews aren't anything."

**The** chills increased, and cold sweat covered her forehead...

**She** looked kindly at her son and said...

**"That's** not correct my son. It's forbidden to harm a Jew, even if they're not of our faith. We must love the Jews because they genuinely and wholeheartedly worship G-d, creator of heaven and earth..."

**After** a long silence, she continued and said...

**My** son, I want to tell you a story...

**One** of the kings of Europe had the opportunity many times to talk with the head and leader of our faith - the pope. The king was educated and wise, and even the pope was blessed with wisdom and knowledge. They would spend long hours discussing with each other the depth of the meaning of life, the different beliefs and religions, and the like...

**There** was almost no conversation between them that they didn't bring up the topic of the Jews and the Jewish religion, and whenever they brought up the topic, a serious argument would develop between them.

**The** king was on the side of bringing credibility to the Jewish religion, and the pope was completely against anything that had to do with Jews. The debate between them continued for many years until they decided to take action.

**One** day they invited three people to the pope's palace, each representing a different faith, a Jew, a Christian, and a Muslim. The three didn't know why they were called to the pope's palace, and they had no choice but to wait until they were called in.

**The** Christian was called to enter first. He entered and bowed, embarrassed and silent. The pope addressed him in a soft voice, "My son, don't be afraid. I only want you to answer my question, and then you will be free to return to your home." The Christian bowed again and waited. "Well,"

the pope asked, “which faith among the three is the correct one? Your faith, the Muslim faith, or the Jewish faith?”

A heavy stone was lifted from the Christian’s heart. “A simple question,” he thought with relief.

“**Certainly**, my faith is the correct and just faith!” he answered confidently.

“**And** which faith is the better of the remaining two?” the pope pressed. The Christian pondered for a short moment and decided, “The faith of the Jews.” The king and the pope nodded their heads and sent the Christian on his way.

**Next**, the Muslim was brought in, and the pope repeated the question. “My faith is the best,” the Muslim hastened to answer.

“**And** which is better of the remaining two?” asked the king with interest. The Muslim contemplated for a while and finally replied, “The faith of the Jews because my faith also originates from the faith of the Jews.”

**The** two were dismissed in peace, and the Jew was brought in, the last of the three...

“**My** faith is the correct one!” he called out in a proud and brave voice.

“**And** which faith among the remaining two is the correct one?” The Jew didn’t think for even a moment and immediately responded, “No faith is true or correct but mine!”

“**Why** do you think that?” the king asked curiously while leaning forward.

**This** time, as well, the Jew didn’t hesitate...

“**Faith** is a real thing. You can’t replace one faith with another faith because there’s only one truth. It’s true that human beings don’t know how to distinguish the truth in faiths, and therefore each one believes as they were educated and by what they learned, but there’s only one truth and correct faith... and it’s my faith.”

**The** king turned to the pope with a triumphant expression...

“You heard all three men ! Both the Christian and the Muslim claimed that their faith was the true faith, and both agreed that Judaism was also good because all other faiths originated from Judaism. The Jew also claimed that his faith is the real and correct one, yet strongly rejected other faiths. Truth and justice are with them. Judaism is a true and honest religion that brings love and reverence for G-d, the creator of heaven and earth...”

**The** mother finished her story and placed a loving hand on her son’s back...

**The** son remained silent and pondered at length the details of the story... “If that’s the case, why would you continue to hold on to the Christian religion and not switch to the Jewish religion ?” he finally asked in a low voice.

**The** mother deliberated as she chose her words and then said, “Because despite everything, I believe that every person must follow the ways of their ancestors and continue the tradition of faith that they left in their hands...”

**Sometimes**, a short and simple story penetrates more than a thousand words of reproach. The mother’s emotional words entered the son’s heart, and he was troubled by that deep and stimulating conversation for many more days...

**Everyone** felt the improvement in the behavior of the boy, Mrs. Zymorski’s son, although no one knew the reason...

**A** few years passed until it happened...

**One** day, the son left the house without leaving a trace.

**He** wandered and roamed until he came to the home of a Jewish teacher in a small, remote village near Lublin. The teacher welcomed the boy into his home and willingly responded to satisfy the spiritual hunger of the young Christian who first asked to learn the holy language, Hebrew.

**Not** much time passed, and the young man converted and changed his name to David.

**He** dedicated himself to studying the Torah and the order of

prayers. From there, he progressed step by step, with incredible speed, while showing an unusual capacity for absorption of material. Within a few years, he accumulated a lot of Torah knowledge and later even began to gather around him Jews who wanted to learn from him. No one knew where this gifted young man suddenly appeared from.

**That** was, until that day when two police officers appeared at the Beit Midrash and, in front of the shocked eyes of all those around, took him with them.

**Adding** to the mystery of his identity and his sudden appearance was now the mystery of his disappearance.

**In** the dark basement of the nearby church, David was accused of dishonoring the Christian religion and, not long after, was hung on a stake.

**After** a while, two priests of the church in Warsaw suddenly disappeared.

**One** day, the heads of the church received a letter that the

two had written and sent over from the land of Israel.

**In** the letter, the two former priests told about the long conversations they had with David in the prison before he was hung on a stake. Conversations that resulted in the decision to convert...

**The** second blow that the church received was even more difficult and painful than the first.

**They** sought to alleviate their terrible frustration in any way possible. The heads of the church in Warsaw got together and decided that the root of the problem lies in the futile education that the Zymorski widow gave to her son. In light of this, they determined that her products could no longer bear the symbol of Christianity...

**Rabbi** Yechezkel Shraga of Shinawa stopped his story for a moment...

**The** audience was captivated.

**He** then continued...

**Years** passed, and her winery was sold to a G-d fearing Jew, who is also one of my followers.



Parashat Emor - Exile and Redemption

He, too, was shocked at first when he saw the symbol on the label of the winery, but when he asked me whether to erase it or not, I told him the whole story, and then he decided to leave the symbol as a commemoration of the act of *kiddush Hashem* done by David, the son of the Zymorski widow.

**Look** again at the label, and you'll notice that the symbol isn't a

real cross, but only similar to it since the church forbade the widow to use the symbol of her religion !

**Now**, do you understand why I smiled... ?

**Thanks** to the widow's love for Am Israel, she had the privilege of having her son convert.

**We'll** focus this week on the power of *Ahavat Israel*...

**Exile and Redemption**

**In** the year 2238 since the creation of the world, Yaakov and his sons left the Land of Israel and went down to Egypt. From the moment they arrived, the Egyptian exile began.

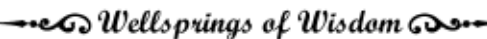
**In** the first hundred and two years of Am Israel in the land of Egypt, they possessed independence and equal rights.

**Then**,<sup>1</sup> after one hundred and two years, Paraoth, the king of Egypt, died, and the throne was

taken by his son, Malul...<sup>2</sup> From that moment, the cruelty began.

**From** the second he rose to power, the Egyptians began to ruin the lives of Am Israel and torture them for absolutely no reason. The abuse of the Egyptians exceeded even the power of human imagination...

**The** Egyptians took away every shred of even the most minimal freedom from them, and Am Israel was completely enslaved to Paraoth.



1. Seder HaDorot (Year 2340).  
2. After he rose to power, his name was changed to Paraoth, like all the kings of Egypt.

**Parashat Emor - The Purpose – The Giving of The Torah**

**As** a result of their slavery, the spirit of Am Israel was completely shattered. Little by little, they began to lose all light that sustained them, and bitter feelings of loss and self-hatred took their place...

**And** the years continued to pass...

**The** loss of identity deepened, and Am Israel continued to deteriorate at record speed. The terrible abyss, the fiftieth gate of impurity, was already visible and in close proximity...

**Shock** advanced through all reality. If they fall into the fiftieth gate, they're lost! They have no hope!

**Hashem** then revealed himself to Moshe Rabbeinu and

**The Purpose – The Giving of The Torah**

**From** the moment that Am Israel left Egypt, they began to yearn to finally receive the Torah. And, from all the yearning and longing to reach

commanded him, “Go, now!  
Let’s get to work!”

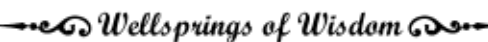
**It** took a whole year for the wicked Paraoh to submit to Hashem, and then Am Israel was informed that they were leaving Egypt.

**Rabbi** Zidkiah wrote<sup>3</sup> that when Am Israel was told to leave Egypt, we were also told that they would receive the Torah at the end of fifty days from their departure, as it was said, “When you shall bring the nation out of Egypt, you shall worship G-d on this mountain” (Shemot 3:12)...

**And** on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nissan, 2448 years since the creation of the world, Am Israel left Egypt...

that day, they began to count the days that had already passed.

**This** is what Rabbi Zidkiah wrote...<sup>4</sup>



3. Shibulei HaLeket (Seder Atzeret 236).

4. Shibulei HaLeket (Seder Atzeret 236).

**Parashat Emor - The Mitzvah of Counting The Omer**

**And** Am Israel, out of true love, would gather every day and count, saying, “One day passed... To days passed...” and so on every day, for it seemed to them that such a long time had passed because of the great love that developed within them to receive the Torah...

**And** on the fiftieth day, they merited their purpose.

**Their** feet stood at the foot of Har Sinai, and their souls heard the Ten Commandments.

**The Mitzvah of Counting The Omer**

**This** week, Bezrat Hashem, we’ll read parashat Emor.

**In** our parasha, there are 124 verses, including 63 mitzvot, twenty-four positive commandments, and thirty-nine negative commandments.

**As** well, in our parasha, we’re commanded the mitzvah of counting the Omer.<sup>5</sup>

**This** is how we were commanded... “And from the

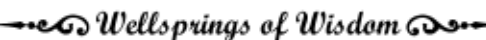
**It’s** said in the Zohar<sup>5</sup> that Am Israel wasn’t worthy to receive the Torah immediately upon their departure from Egypt because, in Egypt, they were immersed in the forty-ninth gate of impurity. Therefore, in order for them to be worthy to receive the Torah, they had to wait forty-nine days, and every day that passed, they exited one gate of impurity and entered a gate of purity.

**Then** they were worthy of hearing the Ten Commandments.

day after Shabbat, from the day you bring the raised sheaf offering, you shall count seven complete weeks” (Vayikra 23:15)...

**Every** Jew must count seven weeks from the 16<sup>th</sup> of Nissan (the day in which the Omer offering is brought) until Shavuot (which is the 50<sup>th</sup> day since bringing the Omer offering).

**And** the Zohar explains to us why we, too, were commanded



5. See Zohar (Emor 97a); Zohar Chadash (Yitro 39a).

6. Which is the 306<sup>th</sup> mitzvah out of the 613 mitzvot.

to count... That we, too, would be able to depart the gates of impurity and enter into purity.

**In** short...

**When** Am Israel was in Egypt, they were submerged in the gates of impurity and were required to purify themselves by counting 49 days till the giving of the Torah.

**We**, too, in the state we're in today, need to count 49 days in order to be worthy of receiving the Torah on Shavuot.

**But** we still need to understand... Our spiritual state today is much better than the state of Am Israel then, and if so, why do we need 49 days of counting ?

### The Students of Rabbi Akiva

**The** Gemara tells us<sup>7</sup> that Rabbi Akiva merited serving as Rosh Yeshiva for forty consecutive years.

**The** name of his holy yeshiva spread throughout the world, and students gathered to it from all corners of the world.

**Rabbi** Akiva's yeshiva continued to grow until it numbered twenty-four thousand students !

**However**, because they didn't respect each other, they were punished, and they all died

within 32 days,<sup>8</sup> and the world seemed desolate !

**And** since they passed away during the counting of the Omer, we also practice customs of mourning during this time... We don't conduct marriages,<sup>9</sup> we don't listen to songs with musical instruments, we don't cut our hair, etc...

**The** Shulchan Aruch writes<sup>10</sup> that it's customary not to get a haircut until the 33<sup>rd</sup> day of the Omer, for, which then,

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

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7. Yevamot 62b.

8. 24,000 students divided by 32 days equals 750 students a day...

9. See Teshuvat HaGeonim Shaarei Teshuva (Siman 278).

10. Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 493:2).

**Parashat Emor - Everyone and Their Path**

Rabbi Akiva's students stopped dying...<sup>11</sup> and therefore (since they stopped dying), we're accustomed on this day (the 33<sup>rd</sup> day of counting the Omer) to increase in our joy...

**Yet** the question arises... Rabbi Akiva had 24,000 students, and they all died between the first

day of counting the Omer until the 33<sup>rd</sup> day of counting the Omer, and since they all died, it's obvious that no more would die, and if so, it's not such a great feat that they stopped dying, and if so, why do we celebrate the 33<sup>rd</sup> day of the Omer?<sup>12</sup>

**Everyone and Their Path**

**Our** holy Torah is an eternal Torah, not only in a general sense but also in every detail and detail written in it. We have no idea how much content, how much richness, depth, and scope there is in every word written in the Torah. Every word is an entire world in and of itself!

**And**, within this entire wonderful reality, the reality of the Torah, there are two different paths...

**The** path of Halacha and the path of Aggadah.

**On** this matter, we found that Rabbi Shalom Meir Vlach wrote...<sup>13</sup>

**One** of the greats of Yerushalayim had just passed away, and the residents of Yerushalayim came to accompany him on his last journey.

**One** of the eulogists was Rabbi Chaim Leib Shmuelevitz, head of the Mir Yeshiva, and in his eulogy, he said the following...

**On** Moshe Rabbeinu's last day in this world, Hashem appeared to him and spoke to him. This is how

— *~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~* —

11. See Meiri on Yevamot 62b.

12. From the words of the Shulchan Aruch (and others) that wrote **פסקו** 'מלמות' (they stopped dying) it seems like

it was sudden and in the middle, for the word **פסקו** signifies sudden and in the middle.

13. Maayan HaMoed (Shavuot, p. 228).

it's said in the Torah, "And Hashem spoke to Moses on this very day, saying, 'Go up to this mountain, the crossing mountains, Har Nevo... and die on the mountain which you're going up'" (Devarim 32:48-50).

**On** the verse, Rashi writes, "In three places it's said, 'On this very day...'"

**1.** On the same day that the flood began, the Torah says, "On this very day Noach came... to the ark" (Bereshit 7:13). The reason for this is that people of his generation would say, "Noach thinks he'll be saved from the flood because of the ark? We'll make sure he doesn't get in the ark!"

**Hashem** then said, "I'll make him enter in the middle of the day (when everyone is awake), and everyone who has the strength to protest will come and protest."<sup>14</sup>

**2.** The second time was during the exodus from Egypt, where it was said, "On this very day

Hashem brought Bnei Israel out of the land of Egypt" (Shemot 12:51). The reason for this is that the Egyptians would say, "If we feel that they want to leave, we won't allow them to leave!"

**Hashem** then said, "I take them out in the middle of the day, and everyone who has the strength to protest will come and protest."

**3.** The third time was on the day of Moshe's death, when the Torah says, "On this very day" (Devarim 32:48), because Am Israel would say, "If we feel like it's about to happen, we won't let him go. The man who brought us out of Egypt and split the sea for us and brought down the *mann* for us and gave us the Torah, we won't let him go."

**It's** understandable that during the flood, they believed that they would be able to delay Noach from entering the ark, and in Egypt, that they thought they could stop them from leaving. But

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### ... Wellsprings of Wisdom ...

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**14.** In other words, Hashem decided that it would happen in the middle of the day so that anyone who thinks they

could stop it from happening would realize they're wrong. The same thing goes for the other two instances.

how can anyone think that they could delay a person from death ? !

**Rather**, the Torah wanted to reveal to us a great secret...

**If students understand how much they need their rabbi... If the public understands how much they need a leader... They can act in a way that will cause him to stay alive, to let him stay, and continue to guide them !**

**At** the same funeral, Rabbi Itzchak Zev of Brisk zt"l was also present, and the words of Rabbi Chaim Leib Shmuelevitz didn't find favor in his eyes...

**"I** didn't understand what the question was at all ? ! After all, Hashem decreed that Moshe would die precisely on Mount Nevo, and if Am Israel prevented him from ascending Mount Nevo, he would remain alive ! Am Israel then thought to prevent him from

going up, just as the generation of the flood thought to prevent Noach from entering the ark !"<sup>15</sup>

**His** words reached the ears of Rabbi Chaim Leib Shmuelevitz, and he responded, "The words of Gemara and Halacha are learned in one way, and the words of Aggadah are learned in another !"

**He** then added, "And I have explicit evidence from the Gemara..."

**The** Gemara says<sup>16</sup> that the first work that was done every day in the Beit HaMikdash was the work of "*terumat hadeshen*" (the removal of the ashes from the altar).

**One** of the Kohanim had to go up to the altar and pick up the ashes (made from the burning of the sacrifices) that had accumulated on top of the altar and place it next to the altar, to the east of the ramp through which

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*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

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**15. Not** that they thought they could stop him from dying, but they knew he had to go up the mountain before his death, and that's where he needed to pass away, so they wanted to stop him from going up, essentially halting his death.

**And** if so, yes, they could stop him from dying, and therefore, Rabbi Shmuelevitz's question doesn't even begin.

**16.** Yoma 22a.

they would use to go up to the altar, and there it would be swallowed up by the ground.

**Any** Kohen who wanted to do this work could do it, and if there were several Kohanim who wanted to do it, they would choose who would do it by racing one another to the top of the altar. Whoever the first Kohen to reach the top of the altar would be, he would do the work.

**But** then something terrible happened... and so, the Gemara tells...<sup>17</sup>

**One** day two Kohanim decided that they wanted to remove the ashes from the altar, and as usual, they began to run up the ramp, and one of them won. The other didn't want to give up so easily and took a knife out of his pocket and struck him in his heart...<sup>18</sup>

**Rabbi** Tzadok stood at the top of the hall and eulogized...

Am Israel, listen! In the matter of *Eglah Arufa*,<sup>19</sup> the Torah says, "For if someone is found dead on the earth... and your elders and your judges will go out" (Devarim 21:1-2). The reason they had to go out was to determine which city was closest to the dead person, in which that city had to bring an *eglah arufa* to atone for what had happened...

**Rabbi** Tzadok continued and shouted...

**And** us! Whose responsibility is it to bring an *eglah arufa*?! The residents of the city of Yerushalayim or the Kohanim of the Beit HaMikdash?

**Then** all those present began to cry and mourn for what had happened...

**The** Gemara casts two difficulties with the words of Rabbi Tzadok...

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*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

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17. Yoma 23a.

18. Because of this, the Beit Din terminated this way of choosing which Kohen would remove the ashes, and instead, it was done by doing a draw.

19. The customary procedure that was performed when an unknown person was murdered and found out in the field, and it was also unknown who the killer was.



Parashat Emor - The Twelve Tribes

1. The commandment of *eglah arufa* isn't upheld in the city of Yerushalayim.<sup>20</sup>

2. An *eglah arufa* is only brought when you don't know who the murderer is, and here, we know who the murderer is.

**If** so, what did Rabbi Tzadok want?

**The** Gemara then explains that Rabbi Tzadok wanted them to feel the pain of what happened and cause them to cry,

and he didn't mean for his words to resemble Halacha.

**Rabbi** Chaim Leib Shmuelevitz concluded by saying, "From this, we learn that it's permissible to ask questions on Aggadah that already have answers to them because Aggadah has a different path than Halacha, and the purpose of Aggadah is to open hearts and arouse emotions..."

**Before** we continue, let's preface...

### The Twelve Tribes

**When** Hashem created the world, the world couldn't stand and would collapse and sway back and forth.<sup>21</sup>

**Hashem** then said to the world, "What's wrong with you? Why are you collapsing and not standing straight?"

**The** world then replied, "I can't stand because I have no foundation for what to stand for!"

**Hashem** immediately replied, "True, now you have nothing to stand for. But know that I will create a righteous man in the future, and his name will be Avraham, and he'll love me truly and with all his heart, and thanks to him, everything will be worth it."

**The** world heard Hashem's response and said, "Even in the

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*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

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20. Because the verse says, "For if someone is found dead on the earth that Hashem Elokecha gave you to inherit," and all of the land of Israel

was given to the tribes of Am Israel as an inheritance other than the city of Yerushalayim.

21. See Zohar (Lech Lecha 86a).

**Parashat Emor - Transition Between the Worlds**

merit of Avraham, I cannot stand because the evil Esav will come from him, who will destroy the Beit HaMikdash and burn the Torah, and because of him (Esav), Avraham doesn't have the power to endure the world."

**Hashem** replied, "True, but from Avraham will come Yaakov Avinu as well, who will have the merit of bringing the twelve holy tribes, and thanks to them, the world will exist!"

**We** also found that it's written<sup>22</sup> that all the miracles that Hashem did for Am Israel, and will

do for them in the future, are all in the merit of the twelve tribes !

**So** too, everything that Hashem created is in the merit of the twelve tribes ! Twelve months in a year, twelve zodiac signs in the sky, twelve hours of the day, and twelve hours of the night...

**Hashem** said, "I didn't create the upper and lower worlds except in merit of the twelve tribes !

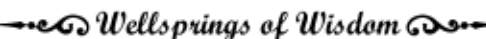
**It's** now understandable just how great the twelve tribes were... and in the year 2238 since the creation of the world, the twelve tribes went down to Egypt...

**Transition Between the Worlds**

**The** descendants of the sons of Yaakov Avinu multiplied and filled the land of Egypt. In the nature of things, their quantity was a multi-dimensional weight in the Egyptian existence.

**Not** only did they stand out because of their quantity, but, and above all, because of their captivating personality.

**Am** Israel had impressive and charming facial features. They were tall. Their foreheads were high and noble. Their eyes were bright and shining, producing wisdom and kindness. Their faces were radiant like the angels and covered with handsome beards, and above all, they were full of noble grace and humility.



**In** their wonderful and imaginative character hid wisdom and compassion, attentiveness and vision, solitude and illustrious leadership skills. They were shining stars in the blue sky of Egypt.

**And** the truth is that, although everything we've written is an external description of Am Israel, that's the only way we can describe such a great generation of holy individuals since we have no power to describe the true "inner world" of Am Israel at the time.

**Their** inner world was full of virtue and purity, and sparks burning from Avraham, Itzchak, Yaakov, and the tribes still blazed in their hearts.

**Then**, the oppression began...

**Their** inner world was then conquered by the cursed Egyptians. They were expelled from everything they had once known and were forced to enter into a new inner world. A world of sadness, bitterness, anxiety, and despair...

**And** there, where they were, there was no possibility of listening and hearing, as it said, "And they didn't listen to Moshe from the anxiety and difficult work" (Shemot 6:9).

**And** so, the years passed...

**Hashem** appeared to Moshe and said to him, "Tell Bnei Israel that in fifty days, I will give them the Torah."

**Am** Israel came out of Egypt. But in order for them to be able to hear Hashem's words, they had to come out of their inner world.

**When** they left Egypt, they began to leave their previous inner world and enter a new bright, and radiating inner world. And in the end, their new inner world was able to listen... and Hashem spoke over the Ten Commandments...

**This** same work that Am Israel went through also belongs to every generation. And especially in our generation...

## **For A Man Goes Home To His World**

**Shlomo** HaMelech wrote in his book, "For a man goes home

to his world" (Kohelet 12:5). These words are deeper than any sea

and have many explanations, but we'll explain them in one way...

**At** the time when it first arose in Hashem's thoughts to create human beings, He, first of all, created a place where they could live, what we know as our Earth. After He created the Earth, He then created human beings and placed them in it.

**When** looking superficially, it seems as if all human beings walk around the same world, breathe the same air, see the same landscapes, taste the same flavors, and so on...

**That's** how it looks to us in our eyes...

**Shlomo** HaMelech came and revealed to us... That isn't true! Each and every person has their own private world. Their ideals, morals, principles, and perceptions create a world in and of itself.

**Life** isn't in the outer world visible to our eyes, but only in the inner world of each and every one of us. Every person exists entirely within their own inner world. That's where they are, and that's where they live.

**Their** inner world is an entire world. A world with its own atmosphere, landscapes, and characters.

**The** air they breathe is the air that is inside the space of their own world. The landscapes they see are the landscapes of their world. Their attitude towards the people around them is as what's depicted in their inner worldview...

**For** example, someone who's constantly overcome by anger and suspicion creates around them a bounded and closed world in which anger and suspicion rule!

**The** air they breathe is an air of anger and suspicion. The landscapes they see are landscapes painted with anger and suspicion. And, of course, they suspect everyone around them...

**Since** they constantly living there, in their own inner world, they've already gotten used to it, and due so, they don't pay any attention to their condition or actions. One day they don't feel well and go to the doctor, and the doctor tells them, "Your blood

pressure is high. You have to stop being so stressed and suspicious of everyone!”

**They** respond, “Me?! I’m stressed and suspicious?! I’m a patient person and have trust in everyone!” And out of instinct, they turn around and try to look for the person the doctor was talking about...

**Well** really...

**From** the words of Shlomo HaMelech, we learn something amazing... **There are never two people living in the same world!** People are standing next to each other, and they’re in two entirely different places!

### Then and Today

**We’ve** already explained that in those forty-nine days when Am Israel marched on their way to the giving of the Torah, they refined their inner worlds, and then, at Har Sinai, they merited hearing the Ten Commandments.

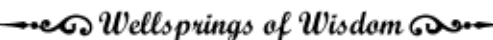
**Even** if they both sat together in Gan Eden, one next to the other, it’s possible that one will be in Gan Eden (because in their inner world, they’re also in Gan Eden) and one will be in Gehinom (because in their inner world, they’re also in Gehinom)...

**Like** what Rebbe Nachman of Breslov zt”l said, “It’s possible for someone to sit with their friend in Gan Eden and have all the pleasures in the world, and their friend won’t feel anything or have any pleasure...”<sup>23</sup>

**Now** let’s return to our first question, why do we need to count forty-nine days also today?

**Even** today, it’s incumbent upon us, during the forty-nine days of Sefirat HaOmer, to refine our inner worlds...

**In** one of HaRav Yoram Michael Abargel’s lectures, he said the following...<sup>24</sup>



23. Likutei Moharan I (Torah 191).

24. Imrei Noam (Yitro, Maamar 2).

**Parashat Emor - Respect For One Another**

**In** the books of kabbalah, it's explained that every year, when any of the holidays arrive, even Chanukah and Purim, the same spiritual lights that shone originally in the world during those events shine again in the world as if it was the first time that holiday happened.

**This** is alluded to in what's said in Megillat Ester, "And these days are remembered and performed in every generation and generation" (Ester 9:28). Meaning, that those spiritual lights that shone originally in the world during those days in which the holidays took place, come back and shine again in every generation and year when the date of that holiday arrives.

**Therefore**, on the holiday of Shavuot, the spiritual lights that shone and illuminated the world during the giving of the Torah return and shine again in the world.

**And** why is that important ?

**Respect For One Another**

**The** days of the Omer are divided into two parts.

**Because** every person whose inner world is pure and refined merits that while in their outer world, they hear the Ten Commandments, in their inner world, they actually on Har Sinai hearing the Ten Commandments directly from the mouth of Hashem...

**And** in order to be able to merit and hear the Ten Commandments on Shavuot, we must refine our inner world.

**Since** the Torah was given with divine speech, there's no end to the levels of attainment that can be reached by each and every person to hear according to their level, and that's why we're always considered distant in relation to Hashem.

**Every** year, we must work hard during all the days of the counting of the Omer to refine our inner worlds and enter a new inner world where hopefully, we'll be able to hear and see...

**During** the first part of the days of the Omer, until the 33<sup>rd</sup> day

Parashat Emor - Respect For One Another

of the Omer, customs of mourning are practiced (no weddings, no listening to songs with musical instruments, no haircuts, etc.) for the twenty-four thousand students of Rabbi Akiva who died within the short period from Pesach until Lag B'Omer, as *chazal* explained that this punishment came upon them because they didn't respect one another.

**Rabbi** Akiva's students were holy above any degree that we can imagine, but they lacked in their respect for one another. They wouldn't praise each other or compliment one another.

They always looked at each other unfavorably.

**In** their inner worlds, there was a very, very small want to belittle the other. Therefore, all their wisdom and holiness were of no use in saving them from the calamity that came upon them because when someone lacks respect for the other, everything they have is lost.

**Rebbe** Shneur Zalman of Liadi *zt"l* used to say that by belittling the other and raising oneself, one loses everything!<sup>25</sup> That is, you don't lose just a small part. You literally lose everything.<sup>26</sup>

—*~* Wellsprings of Wisdom *~*—

25. HaYom Yom (20<sup>th</sup> of Iyar).

**26. Deep** within the heart of each and every Jew, there's a pure and divine spark shaped from the light of Hashem Himself (see Ohr HaChaim - Vayikra 26:11), and this spark is implied in the letter *yud* (י), for it's the first letter of Hashem's name, and therefore the word *Yehudi* (Jew) begins with the letter *yud* and ends with the letter *yud*...

**More** so, the full name of Hashem, יהוה, is implied in the word *Yehudi* (יהודי), for the first three letters of יהוה are also the first three letters of Hashem's name (יהו), and from the last

two letters of יהוה we can receive the last letter of Hashem's name (ה) when we place the letter ו in the open space within the letter ה... All this comes to remind us of the deep connection every Jew has with Hashem no matter how far they may be from the path of Torah and mitzvot, and that there's no difference between disrespecting a Jew to erasing Hashem's name.

**The** behavior of disrespecting, dismissing, and putting down others only distances a person from Hashem. Our entry into the next world depends solely on whether we respect others or not.

## Parashat Emor - Respect For One Another

**Many** people, including rabbis and even *rashei yeshivot*, will arrive in Olam Haba only to find out that their names aren't among those who have a place in Gan Eden. When they'll ask why their name isn't written on the list, they'll be told that about them, the verse said, "Their name is erased forever and ever" (Tehillim 9:6). Immediately they'll raise their eyebrows in surprise, "Is it possible ? ! After all, I'm the famous rabbi who completed the Talmud with all of its commentators dozens of times, and I even have a yeshiva with hundreds of students ! Haven't you heard of me ? ! Don't you know how great I am ? !" Then they'll explain to them that they've been completely banished from Gan Eden and that they lost all their share in Olam Haba because they were used to disrespecting and humiliating others, and they would take pleasure in putting others down.

**Apparently**, they didn't know the words of the Alter Rebbe, that someone who puts others down loses everything.

**It's** absolutely forbidden to think, even once in your life, that you're better than someone else. Don't ever let the feeling of superiority or arrogance enter your heart.

**Someone** who feels that their better than others isn't on the side of *kedusha* (holiness). Everything they do, all the Torah they study, the prayers they pray, and all the mitzvot that they perform are all taken to the side of the *kelipah* (impurity).

**Chazal** (Taanit 20a) tell of Rabbi Elazar, the son of Rabbi Shimon, who was

traveling back home from visiting his rabbi and was rejoicing in all the Torah he had just learned.

**On** his way, he came across a man who was very ugly. The ugly man approached him and said, "Shalom Aleichem Rabbi." However, Rabbi Elazar ignored him and didn't say hello to him. Instead, he looked at him and said, "You're so ugly. Are all the citizens in your city as ugly as you ? !"

**Of** course, the ugly man was hurt by this and got offended, and answered Rabbi Elazar, "I don't know. But go and tell the one that made me (Hashem) how ugly His creation is." Rabbi Elazar understood that he had made a mistake and sinned and immediately ran after the man in order to apologize, but the man didn't forgive him. He only said, "I won't forgive you until you go to the one who made me and tell Him how ugly his creation is !"

**Chazal** go on to say that Rabbi Elazar went after the ugly man for a very long time and begged for his forgiveness until they reached the city where Rabbi Elazar lived.

**The** entire city went out to greet Rabbi Elazar when suddenly the ugly man came across them and said, "This is your rabbi ? ! If this is a rabbi, may there not be any more rabbis like him in Am Israel," and then told them everything that happened between them. Nonetheless, the citizens all begged him to forgive Rabbi Elazar in the merit of all the Torah he learned.



Parashat Emor - Respect For One Another

**This** “want” of belittling the other is called “death.” After all, someone who’s used to belittling others is spiritually dead!

**Then**, when the 33<sup>rd</sup> day of Omer comes, they stopped dying.

**This** hints to us that in the merit of the holiness of the 33<sup>rd</sup> day of the Omer, they gained a new inner world, a world of *Ahavat Israel* and respecting one another, and therefore, they stopped living

—*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*—

**The** ugly man said to them, “I’ll only forgive him for you, but on the condition that he won’t act this way anymore towards anyone else.”

**The** Tosafot (Taanit 20b) explain that the ugly man was Eliyahu HaNavi, who came to Rabbi Elazar precisely in the image of an ugly man in order to test him and to teach him not to contempt or disrespect anyone in the world.

**Apparently**, Eliyahu HaNavi knew that Rabbi Elazar was perfect in everything except for one thing and came to help him fix it and teach him to look only at the good in others and not at their shortcomings.

**I** once brought a young man from a traditional home to be tested at one of the best yeshivas in the country. The young man had remarkable character traits, outstanding behavior and conduct, and incredible *yirat shamayim*. In my opinion, he was a perfect fit for that yeshiva. When we arrived, I put him in the examiner’s office and waited outside until the end of the test. After he exited the room, I asked the rabbi what he thought of him and whether he would be accepted. That same rabbi replied with great

contempt and said that the young man wasn’t a suitable fit for the yeshiva at all.

**I** didn’t delay any longer so that the young man wouldn’t feel embarrassed and immediately headed to another yeshiva, just as good as the first, and Baruch Hashem they happily accepted him to their yeshiva.

**That** young man continued to learn and persevere in his Torah studies until he became a real talmid chacham and now serves in a very important rabbinical position, whereas that rabbi who tested him and completely disregarded him hasn’t received any satisfaction from any of his children to this day.

**Instead** of looking for more and more shortcomings and flaws in others, we have to look for good points in every Jew and give everyone the respect they deserve.

**We** need to begin to rejoice in the success of others, as well as praise and compliment them for what they do in order to raise them up, and by doing so, we’ll fulfill the will of Hashem and enter the holiday of Shavuot and accept the Torah and all its blessings after these days of the Omer.

**Parashat Emor - The Desired and Found**

in a world of “death,” and merited a new world.

**The** reason that it was precisely on the 33<sup>rd</sup> day of the Omar that they stopped dying is that on that day, the illumination of the unity that was revealed at the time Am Israel made it to Har Sinai, as it’s said, “And they traveled from Rephidim

and arrived in the Sinai desert, and they camped in the desert, and Israel encamped there alongside the mountain” (Shemot 19:2).

**Rashi** interprets the words “and Israel encamped there” - **As one nation with one heart**, but the rest of the encampments were filled with complaints and disputes.

**The Desired and Found**

**Let’s** conclude...

**Surely**, it’s appropriate for every Jew to always cry out to Hashem that He merit them to happily see and enjoy a new world.

**But**, even though this is desired, it’s a difficult thing to achieve. For our level, our job is to continue living in the same

world but to try to refine and purify the air of our world, and by purifying the air, we’ll be able to hear (an inner hearing) our voice during our prayers and studies, and this will bring us to the purity of our inner world.

**And** purification of the air is done by *Ahavat Israel!*<sup>27</sup>

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

**27. Rebbe** Yehoshua of Ostrov writes in his book Toldot Adam (p. 208)...

**Just** as Hashem’s love of Am Israel isn’t dependent upon anything, so too must our love for one another must be the same.

**Love** your neighbor as yourself. This is a fundamental principle in the Torah. It’s impossible to achieve perfection without being able to truly love others. We must continuously strive to love each member

of Am Israel as ourselves, not because of their virtues or for any other reasons, but rather because Hashem chose us from among all the nations of the world, and in essence, we are all one. Someone who loves another for any reason doesn’t love them for who they really are, but rather for that reason.

**Chazal** teach us that when someone prays for their friend, their own needs are fulfilled first (Bava Kama 92a). Such

As Rebbe Nachman of Breslov zt”l wrote,<sup>28</sup> “Through *Ahavat Israel*, the air is purified, and the more people you love, the more the air around you because warm and pleasant and is increased.”

**Through** all this, we learn that due to the love of the Zymorski widow (even though she was a gentile),<sup>29</sup> she created an atmosphere of peace and harmony, and her son was able to find the true faith...

## Shabbat Shalom !

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*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

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prayers don't stem from a love of oneself but rather from a love of others. With this, they fulfill the will of Hashem.

**Hashem** created the world in order to give to His creations. When someone prays for another, from a love of their inner world and that they were chosen from among all the nations, and not for any selfish reason, they're answered first. This arouses Hashem's love and desire to give to His creations. This love encompasses all forms of salvation.

**Each** one of us must fulfill the mitzvah of “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Though we may see faults in others, we mustn't dwell on them or give them any importance. The most important part of a Jew is their inner world, which is beyond our ability to comprehend. Even

the angels have no grasp of the inner world of each person in Am Israel.

**In** the future, during the time of Mashiach, the inner world of Am Israel will be revealed. It's like a precious gem. Before it's been cut, it seems like a simple rock. Only after it's been polished does its true beauty shine to everyone around.

**So** too, a Jew's spiritual beauty may not be apparent or clear to those around them, but in the future, their complete goodness will be revealed.

**This** concept is hinted at in the verse, “Love your neighbor as yourself. I am Hashem.” Our love for one another must be like Hashem's love for us... A love of the inner world within each Jew.

**28.** Likutei Moharan I (Torah 17:5).

**29.** See the continuation of the Likutei Moharan to understand why.

## *The Pathway...*

**1.** This week, Bezrat Hashem, we'll read parashat Emor. In our parasha, there are 124 verses, including 63 mitzvot, twenty-four positive commandments, and thirty-nine negative commandments. As well, in our parasha, we're commanded the mitzvah of counting the Omer. This is how we were commanded...

“And from the day after Shabbat, from the day you bring the raised sheaf offering, you shall count seven complete weeks”

(Vayikra 23:15)...

**2.** Every Jew must count seven weeks from the 16<sup>th</sup> of Nissan (the day in which the Omer offering is brought) until Shavuot (which is the 50<sup>th</sup> day since bringing the Omer offering). The Zohar explains that were commanded to count so that just as Am Israel departed 49 gates of impurity and entered 49 gates of purity, we, too, would be able to depart the gates of impurity and enter into purity.

**3.** The Gemara tells us that Rabbi Akiva merited serving as Rosh Yeshiva for forty consecutive years. Rabbi Akiva's yeshiva continued to

grow until it numbered twenty-four thousand students! However, because they didn't respect each other, they were punished, and they all died within 32 days, and the world seemed desolate! And since they passed away during the counting of the Omer, we also practice customs of mourning during this time... We don't conduct marriages, we don't listen to songs with musical instruments, we don't cut our hair, etc...

**4.** At the time when it first arose in Hashem's thoughts to create human beings, He, first of all, created a place where they could live, what we know as our Earth. After He created the Earth, He then created human beings and placed them in it. When looking superficially, it seems as if all human beings walk around the same world, breathe the same air, see the same landscapes, taste the same flavors, and so on... That's how it looks to us in our eyes...

**5.** Shlomo HaMelech came and revealed to us... That isn't true!

### *The Pathway...*

Each and every person has their own private world. Their ideals, morals, principles, and perceptions create a world in and of itself. Life isn't in the outer world visible to our eyes, but only in the inner world of each and every one of us. Every person exists entirely within their own inner world. That's where they are, and that's where they live. From the words of Shlomo HaMelech, we learn something amazing... **There are never two people living in the same world!** People are standing next to each other, and they're in two entirely different places!

**6.** In the books of kabbalah, it's explained that every year, when any of the holidays arrive, even Chanukah and Purim, the same spiritual lights that shone originally in the world during those events shine again in the world as if it was the first time that holiday happened. This is alluded to in what's said in Megillat Ester, "And these days are remembered and performed in every generation and generation" (Ester 9:28). Meaning, that those spiritual lights that shone

originally in the world during those days in which the holidays took place, come back and shine again in every generation and year when the date of that holiday arrives.

**7.** Therefore, on the holiday of Shavuot, the spiritual lights that shone and illuminated the world during the giving of the Torah return and shine again in the world. And why is that important? Because every person whose inner world is pure and refined merits that while in their outer world, they hear the Ten Commandments, in their inner world, they actually on Har Sinai hearing the Ten Commandments directly from the mouth of Hashem. And in order to be able to merit and hear the Ten Commandments on Shavuot, we must refine our inner world.

**8.** Surely, it's appropriate for every Jew to always cry out to Hashem that He merit them to happily see and enjoy a new world. But, even though this is desired, it's a difficult thing to achieve. For our level, our job is to continue living in the same world but to try to refine and purify the air of our

*The Pathway...*

world, and by purifying the air, we'll be able to hear (an inner hearing) our voice during our prayers and studies, and this will bring us to the purity of our inner world. And purification of the air is

done by *Ahavat Israel*! Every year, we must work hard during all the days of the counting of the Omer to refine our inner worlds and enter a new inner world where hopefully, we'll be able to hear and see...





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## Shabbat Times

### Emor

15<sup>th</sup> of Iyar, 5783



City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	7:38 pm	8:43 pm	9:10 pm
Miami	7:36 pm	8:32 pm	9:07 pm
Los Angeles	7:21 pm	8:22 pm	8:53 pm
Montreal	7:47 pm	8:58 pm	9:20 pm
Toronto	8:06 pm	9:15 pm	9:38 pm
London	8:14 pm	9:32 pm	9:44 pm
Jerusalem	7:06 pm	7:57 pm	8:49 pm
Tel Aviv	7:04 pm	7:54 pm	8:46 pm
Haifa	7:04 pm	7:55 pm	8:46 pm
Be'er Sheva	7:02 pm	7:53 pm	8:44 pm

### Pathways to the Heart

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

*Children only pretend to be good in front of their father because they're afraid of him, but when he's not home, they do whatever they want because they know that their mother will forgive them no matter what they do.*

*But, if you encourage your wife and give her backing, she'll have the authority to tell the children that she's taking note of everything they do, and when dad comes home, he'll take care of them properly. Only then do the children see that their mother is strong and they can't do whatever they want when dad isn't around. This is how you maintain a healthy home for life...*



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