

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 143

Yitro | Filling the Void with Truth

MESILOT

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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Parshat Yitro

From the Educators Desk

The rays of sunlight that pierced through the window struck Eliezer's eyes with intensity. Eliezer was sensitive to sunlight and would usually try to avoid excessive exposure. However, this time, he felt nothing, his soul was soaring high on the wings of inspiration. The words he had heard stirred up his soul and opened up new vistas and avenues...

The Seminar lecturer stood in front of the classroom beside the blackboard, delivering the fifth workshop on child education. And he said: "As you know, one of the fundamental concepts in the world of Kabbalah are the ideas of 'light and vessel'. 'Light' is the influence that descends from above. And 'vessel' is the receptacle into which the light enters. Our primary task is to introduce the light into the vessel. Only when we do so, does the light gain significance and meaning...

However, if there is no place and ability for the light to enter, it is not of benefit, and remains hovering in the air...

And to apply this to education:

When I want to educate a child and to convey knowledge and proper behavior, it means that I want to influence him with wonderful 'light'. But for the light to be absorbed within him, the child must be a 'vessel' and prepared for it...

And as long as the child does not have a 'vessel', the things we convey to them, will hover above and beyond them and not be absorbed in them internally.

Parents who do not know this principle may shout at their children: 'I've already told you a thousand times before...' What this parent does not realize is that as long as his words are not absorbed inside the 'vessel' of the

child, from the child's perspective, he hasn't even been told it once !...

To transmit the 'light' almost anyone knows, it doesn't require great wisdom. A person who knows merely how to teach the 'light', cannot be truly called an educator.

A true educator is one who knows how to create the 'vessels' and receptors of information in the soul of the child...

Eliezer wiped beads of sweat from his forehead and thought: 'This is a great and demanding task, how can I stand up to the challenge?'

The lecturer, as if reading his thoughts, continued and said:

Indeed, few people are truly worthy of being called 'educators'. But in this education seminar, we did not come to weaken your resolve or depress the participants, in these lessons, we came to give you tools and ideas...

There's a great tip that may be helpful to you:

Know that sometimes the opportunity to be a 'vessel' is

presented by the child themselves. Which is to say that when a child's curiosity is aroused and they ask a question, we need to know that by this question they are revealing that they are a 'vessel'. And if we know how to utilize this opportunity, we can use it to draw 'light' into their 'vessel'...

The lecture ended, and Eliezer walked back home, immersed in reflections and thoughts...

Then, to his surprise, he met his son, Yehuda, at home. 'It is only 12 o'clock in the afternoon, why are you not at school, what are you doing here?'

Yehuda replied: 'Most of my class traveled to a yeshiva to be tested for next year, and since I was already tested previously, and was left almost alone, they released me home.'

'Okay, fine. But what did you do all morning?'

I prepared myself a grand breakfast. And after such a meal, it seems to me that I will not be able to eat any more for a month!

Parshat Yitro - My Soul Thirsts for You

'But you know dad, I felt something strange. I always dreamed of the day when I wouldn't need to go to studies and could sit back and relax at home. And today it happened, but instead of feeling at ease, I felt bored, and a sense of disquiet...

'Dad, I don't understand, why did I feel this way?'

Beads of sweat appeared again on Eliezer's forehead, and the lecturer's words suddenly

echoed in his ears: 'Know that sometimes the opportunity to be a 'vessel' is presented by the child themselves... when a child's curiosity is aroused and they ask a question, we need to know that by this question they are revealing that they are a 'vessel'... if we know how to utilize this opportunity, we can use it to draw 'light' into their 'vessel''

And Eliezer began to explain to his son...

My Soul Thirsts for You

It was a late morning hour, the busiest time of day in the marketplace and world of commerce, when suddenly Ephraim, the winemaker, burst out of his house in Slonim, and ran as though he was possessed to the prayer house of the Chassidim in town. Finding the study hall empty, Ephraim seized the first book of Psalms he found, opened it, and began to pour out his heart in tears.

At that moment, the pious and learned Rabbi Judah Leib, one of the great Chassidim and the scribe who recorded the teachings

of Rabbi Abraham of Slonim, author of 'Yesod HaAvodah', arrived at the study hall. Upon hearing Ephraim's cries emanating from the sanctuary, as he wailed and repeatedly cried out a soul-stirring outpouring from the depths of his heart, Rabbi Judah Leib hurried into the study hall.

There, to his astonishment, stood Ephraim: the simple craftsman, from the most unassuming among the Chassidic community, engulfed in unusual fervor and submission to the

divine, swaying back and forth, clapping his hands, jumping on his toes, and completely swept up in a sublime ecstasy.

'Is this Ephraim?!' Rabbi Judah Leib thought to himself. 'What has happened to him? In the middle of a weekday, during the busy work hours, to suddenly appear in the study hall and pour out his heart with 'My soul thirsts for You' - such a thing is unheard of!'

An hour passed before Ephraim calmed down from his fervor. He opened his eyes as if he were waking from a dream, and began to look around, as if he himself did not remember how and why he had come there. Suddenly, engrossed deep in thought, he raised his hands to heaven and cried out from the depths of his heart:

'**Oh**, Master of the Universe, nothing is hidden from You, and nothing is concealed from Your eyes!

You surely know the reason for my coming here, please save

me so that they, G-d forbid, have no control over me!'

At this astonishing conclusion to the inexplicable sight, Rabbi Judah Leib was unable to contain his wonder and approached Ephraim. When the latter noticed his presence, he lowered his eyes like a child caught in mischief. When asked to reveal his heart and explain his mysteries, he could not refuse and began to tell his story to Rabbi Judah Leib.

Ephraim earned his modest livelihood by producing homemade wine, which he supplied to the Jews of the city for Kiddush and Havdalah. Wine production required a special license from the authorities. Ephraim, despite his homegrown expertise in winemaking, lacked any formal education in the field and was therefore denied the necessary license.

Thus, he was forced to produce his wares clandestinely, turning the subterranean cellar of his house into a small winery. There, he engaged in the cultivation and preservation of the noble drink.

Parshat Yitro - My Soul Thirsts for You

Out of fear of the 'evil eye', bundles of straw were prepared at home for any eventuality, and at the slightest hint of danger, his household members would quickly cover the iron door that concealed the cellar entrance and scatter straw over it.

That very day, a non-Jewish acquaintance of Ephraim, hurriedly appeared at his house and revealed the secret that had been leaked to him.

In a short time from now,' the man whispered to the winemaker, 'the police are supposed to come here to conduct a thorough and meticulous search for the winery in your house !

Do not take this lightly or dismissively, for behind this search lies a severe accusation from none other than your own household assistant, Nikolai, the stove fitter. He is expected to join the search team, and all of your attempts to hide the existence of the cellar are doomed to fail !'

If you listen to my advice, it's better for you to leave everything and flee for your life,

thus at least saving yourself from the severe imprisonment awaiting you !'

For a moment, Ephraim's face turned deathly pale and his heart stopped beating. Just a week earlier, he had a dispute with the gentile stove fitter and expelled him from his house. The man had indeed promised to take revenge, but Ephraim had never imagined such a bitter and dangerous form of vengeance. Now the danger was imminent, and he realized that, naturally, there was no chance of escaping it. His rabbi, the tzaddik of Slonim, was not in the city at the time, and Ephraim was unable to turn to him in his distress. Therefore, Ephraim picked himself up and ran straight to the prayer house of the Chassidim, where he opened the Book of Psalms and began to pour out his heart before his Creator with a broken spirit and a crushed soul.

After some time spent reciting Psalms, he reached the verse: 'My soul thirsts for you,

Parshat Yitro - My Soul Thirsts for You

my flesh faints for you,' and Ephraim's spirit was seized by the deep meaning of the words.

His heart trembled within him, his senses were ignited, his spirit surged, and within a few minutes - he forgot where he was and of the danger looming over his head, completely lost in a holy fervor of longing for the Creator...

Thus, in that profound state of devotion and immense fervor, Rabbi Judah Leib found him in the study hall.

Imagine - Rabbi Judah Leib used to conclude whenever he told this story to the Chassidim - the character of a pious Jew, a simple craftsman of previous generations !

When faced with such great trouble and an imminent, tangible danger, when his entire livelihood was at stake, and his personal freedom was in grave danger - the simple winemaker did not think of resorting to trickery, did not seek advisors, nor did he go out to find himself advocates. Instead, he directed

his steps straight to the prayer hall, and to the Book of Psalms...

Yet even then, in that difficult and ominous hour, when a sharp sword lay upon his neck, and he found no refuge but in prayer and supplication to the Almighty - when he reached the words 'My soul thirsts for you,' he completely forgot about his distress and his prayer altogether and was swept up in a burning devotion to the Creator of the World !...

Indeed - Rabbi Judah Leib would continue - I do not need to go on and tell you the end of the story: do you not know that the Holy One, blessed be He, is omnipotent and that His hand is not too limited to save ? !

However, since you indeed wish to hear the end of the tale, I will tell it...

When Ephraim's wife saw from the window the group of policemen approaching their house, she quickly closed the entrance door to the cellar and began to scatter the bundles of straw over it. Meanwhile, the

front door to the house was broken down with a loud noise, and the policemen entered, led indeed by Nikolai the stove fitter, who had been a regular in their home for many years. As soon as Ephraim's wife saw him leading the procession, she clearly knew that all hope was lost, and she retreated to a corner, wringing her hands in utter despair.

Very soon, the informer pointed his hand accusingly toward the entrance of the cellar, inviting the policemen to follow him there. However, suddenly, the rage of the squad leader flared up; he was furious with him and began to scold him harshly for interfering with the search without having been asked.

'**Stand** quietly to the side,' the commander barked at him angrily, 'and do not dare to open your mouth unless asked!'

The policemen spread throughout the house and began searching thoroughly, rummaging in rooms and closets, in attics and basements, in holes and crevices, wherever their hands could reach - but they came up empty-handed,

not even finding a single bottle of wine. The commander's anger intensified to a boiling point, and he cast a terrifying glance at the informer, causing him to shrink in fear and trepidation.

After a moment, the gentile informer mustered courage and, violating the command, opened his mouth and said:

'**My** commander, in this section of the dwelling, there is a hidden entrance to the wine cellar!'

With evident hesitation, the commander turned towards the direction indicated, his policemen trailing behind him.

However, when the straw bundles scattered on the floor were revealed before their eyes, the commander became extremely enraged and shouted at the informer:

'**Liar!** Swindler! Isn't it obvious that everything here is covered with straw!'

'**The** straw is but a disguise for the cellar entrance!' the informer insisted, standing his ground.

Parshat Yitro - Creation of Man to Choose Good

'Not only are you a liar, but also a fool!' the commander screamed, growing increasingly furious - 'Do you not know that straw is harmful to wine? Who in their right mind, then, would risk their wine's quality by scattering straw around it?'

And without any further words, the irritated commander delivered two ringing slaps to the cheeks of the confused informer and shouted:

'Wasn't it enough that you deceived us once and dragged us all the way here, now you seek to deceive us a second time and concoct a tale about a cellar that never existed and was never created?'

He shoved the informer out of the house, chasing after him

and kicking him mercilessly with his studded boots...

Muttering apologies, the policemen left the house following their commander, and were never seen again at Ephraim's house from that day on and forever... ('Besod Avadecha', Part 7, Page 200)

Yehuda listened to the story with wide eyes... And at the end of it he said, 'Dad, your stories are sweeter than honey, but I didn't understand how it relates to my question...'

Eliezer, in response, continued to share with his son a profound explanation he read from the words of the Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler...

Creation of Man to Choose Good

On the 1st of Shevat in the year 2488, Moses gathered the people of Israel and began to teach them the Book of Deuteronomy, and finally, when they reached the 7th of Adar, he told them the Torah portion of 'V'zot Habracha' as

written: 'This is the blessing which Moses, the man of G-d, blessed the children of Israel before his death' (Deuteronomy 33:1).

Thus, within thirty-seven days, he taught them the entire Book of Deuteronomy.

Parshat Yitro - Creation Ex Nihilo

Behold, one of the lofty concepts he taught them is the concept of free choice, as written: 'Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse. The blessing, if you listen to the commandments of the L-rd your G-d, which I command you today. And the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of the L-rd your G-d' (Deuteronomy 11:26-28)...

Moses commanded and beseeched: If you observe the holy Torah, blessings will be bestowed upon you, and if, G-d forbid, you reject the yoke of Heaven, then, G-d forbid, curses will be bestowed upon you. Therefore, I ask of you: Choose the path of the Torah and its commandments, as said, 'Choose life' (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Indeed, we must know that the power of choice is the only matter that is entirely in a person's hands. All the events in a person's life are in the hands of Heaven, and only the power of choice is in human hands.

And the Talmud expounds (Berachot 33b):

Everything is in the hands of Heaven except for the fear of Heaven, as it is said, 'And now, Israel, what does the L-rd your G-d ask of you but to fear...' (Deuteronomy 10:12).

And the phrase 'everything is in the hands of Heaven' is to be taken literally - both the physical and environmental conditions in which one is born as well as the illnesses and pains that befall one - it is all in the hands of Heaven.

As Maimonides writes in the laws of Teshuvah (5:1) that The Holy One, blessed be He, placed in the hands of man the choice, whether to choose and do good or, G-d forbid, to choose and do evil.

After the power of free choice was created, the conditions were set for the creation of a world in which it would be used...

Creation Ex Nihilo

The world is like a giant rotating wheel at an amusement

park, with a fixed cyclicity of morning, afternoon, and evening,

Parshat Yitro - Sense of Deficiency - A Driving Force

in an order which mankind has become accustomed to.

It would be expected that these lives be devoid of renewal and of any desire for change.

How then can there truly be 'the power of choice', to choose change, freedom, and renewal?

Indeed, this question arises from a superficial and shallow perspective, because in reality, at every moment the power of free choice has an expression.

In the Book of Genesis at its beginning is said - 'In the beginning, G-d created the heavens and the earth' (Genesis 1:1).

The Ramban (there) explains the word 'created' as - 'brought forth in existence from nothingness.'

Rabbi Dessler learned Ramban's words, and was puzzled:

Since the Holy One, blessed be He, is perfect in all ways, and encompasses everything within

Him, how can we say that some new existence not included within Him was created from nothingness?

Rather, thus he explained: As is well known, the Holy One, blessed be He, created His world to bestow goodness upon His creations - that they feel joy and pleasure in their lives.

Behold, the feeling of joy and pleasure that He wanted to impart to His creations was specifically through the completion of a deficiency, that when the deficiency would be fulfilled, great joy and pleasure would be felt.

However, before the Holy One, blessed be He, there exists no aspect of deficiency or imperfection.

So G-d created 'the sensation of deficiency', and that is what's referred to as 'nothingness', 'existence from nothingness'.

Sense of Deficiency - A Driving Force

In every Jew's heart, the sensation of deficiency pulsates

powerfully, and they constantly seek ways to fulfill it.

Parshat Yitro - Sense of Deficiency - A Driving Force

This sensation of deficiency drives the power of choice: whether to fill the sense of deficiency through material means and lowly desires, or to fulfill it through the lofty

means of Torah and its commandments.

This sense of deficiency arises constantly, and thus, it turns out that a person has a constant power of choice!¹

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

1. This is how it is with a normal person. But sometimes a person's soul is so tired that it has no strength or desire to do anything, and in such a case, great 'wisdom' is needed to awaken him.

In this matter, Rabbi Shlomo Lewenstein said ('Matok Ha'or', Bamidbar 1 - p. 270):

In the year 1941, Rabbi Isaac Sher, the son-in-law of the Elder of Slabodka, arrived in the land of Israel.

At that time, a student in the 'Hebron' Yeshiva had sadly gone astray, leading other students adrift with him. The Yeshiva administration distanced him, but did not know what to do with him further.

Rabbi Gedaliah Eisemann decided to consult with Rabbi Isaac Sher, knowing that he was an extraordinary educator.

After presenting the case of that student, Rabbi Isaac asked for the student to be brought to him. The very next day the student was brought before him. Rabbi Isaac took a large sum of money from his pocket, equivalent to the generous monthly salary of an entire family, handed it to the student and said:

'Take this money, go to Tel Aviv to a certain Jew,' who was an acquaintance of Rabbi Isaac and dealt in room rentals, 'and rent from him a room for a week.'

'You can do whatever you want with this money,' Rabbi Isaac added and said -

'But I condition this on two things: first, every morning you must go to the sea, and since you are a Jerusalemite and do not know how to swim, get a little wet in the water and run on the beach for your health, and then rest in your room. Second, around twelve o'clock, take bus line fifty-four and go to Bnei Brak, where a Jew named the 'Chazon Ish' lives, and be there daily for the Mincha prayer.'

'Know that I will follow up on your fulfillment of these conditions,' he finished his words.

That was the entire request. Not even 'to pray with the Chazon Ish,' but just 'to be there for the Mincha prayer'...

The student agreed and promised to fulfill the agreement, took the money, and left.

Rabbi Gedaliah Eisemann could not contain his immense wonder: 'I don't

Parshat Yitro - Sense of Deficiency - A Driving Force

This is similar to a person who is hungry and eats, but within a few hours, the

sensation of hunger arises again, and they will need to eat again...

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

understand, what did you just do? If this student tells his friends about it, tomorrow there will be a long line asking for money... And most glaringly, I don't understand how you gave a yeshiva student money to go to Tel Aviv with?'

Rabbi Isaac Sher answered and said: "You did you not bring him to me to discover if the student will be the next 'Rabbi Akiva Eiger' or 'Rabbi Yaakov of Lisa', nor did you ask to check if he will be the author of the next 'Nesivos' or not..."

If so, leave the handling of this boy's matter to me, since I believe this is the right way to deal with him... Besides, I told him to go to the 'Chazon Ish', and I am convinced that it is impossible for a person to see the Chazon Ish and remain distant from holiness and the divine service as before.'

Rabbi Gedaliah then understood that each particular case must be judged on its own merits, and that a great person is needed to decide on each matter. Thus, he kept silent, waiting to see what would happen.

What indeed occurred?

The student kept his promise and arrived at the home of the 'Chazon Ish'

daily for the Mincha prayer. After prayers, the 'Chazon Ish' approached him and greeted him with 'Shalom Aleichem'.

'Who are you?' asked the 'Chazon Ish'.

The student, fearing that as a result of uncovering his identity, the 'Chazon Ish' would start discussing Torah learning with him, preferred to remain silent.

After a few moments of silence, the 'Chazon Ish' said: 'I'm not asking this for no reason, I just want to know if you have a place to eat and sleep.'

'Yes, yes, I have arranged it all with someone,' the student quickly replied.

And then something unforgettable happened... The 'Chazon Ish' raised his hand, pinched the student's cheek, and caressed it affectionately... and sent him on his way in peace.

When the student saw that the 'Chazon Ish' was so warm and inviting even to a stray yeshiva student as himself, he began to visit his house more often.

We cannot name that student, but today he is the head of an important Yeshiva, and he has students who are great in Torah !...

Thus, it is indeed impossible to see the 'Chazon Ish' without being changed...

Parshat Yitro - 'And You Will Be Like G-d'

Another way to frame this:
The power of choice of a person is vast, and it is up to them to define 'what it is that I lack'!

A person can choose to feel only his physical deficiencies, which are more apparent to the eye, and busy themselves with fulfilling them, silencing the feeling of spiritual deficiencies. Or they can choose to lend an ear to the needs of his soul and strive to fulfill them as best as he can.

'And You Will Be Like G-d'

On the sixth day of creation, the Holy One, blessed be He, created man and placed him in the Garden of Eden. And there, in the Garden of Eden, in the company of angels and seraphim, Adam stood out with his unique qualities.

His wisdom comprehended and encompassed the entirety of creation, from the very beginning of the chain of existence down to the lowest of all levels!

Thek fulfillment of the aspiration - the completion of the deficiency - generates great pleasure, however seeking the pleasure is not the reason for the aspiration in the first place.

A person freely chooses to aspire in a certain direction, and fulfilling the deficiencies in that direction will naturally lead to a feeling of pleasure.

After the creation of 'the sensation of deficiency', the Holy One, blessed be He, then created man...

With his wisdom, he understood the role and mission of every creature and was able to condense its essence into a single word - the word that became the name of that creature.

Adam was something else, something that is entirely beyond our comprehension, which we have no way to properly explain with our limited words...

All the creatures desired his closeness and to draw

Parshat Yitro - The Offerings of Cain and Abel

from his light and receive his holiness...

However, as he was wont to do, the serpent managed to intrude and find the point of weakness, of 'deficiency.'

He saw that within man pulsed a sensation of lack, of 'deficiency,' a persistent desire to progress, to move forward.

He approached him and whispered: 'Adam, do you want to complete your deficiency? I have a suggestion for you, eat from the Tree of Knowledge!

Yes, eat from the forbidden tree, "and you will be like G-d, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5), 'and it will complete your sense of deficiency.

The sensation of deficiency that pulsed powerfully in Adam led him to eat from the tree, be punished and ultimately be expelled from the Garden of Eden.

After which, this sensation of deficiency grew even stronger...

And the years continued to pass...

The Offerings of Cain and Abel

After being expelled from the Garden of Eden, Adam had two sons: Cain and Abel, and they divided the world between them. Cain, who enjoyed and appreciated working the land, received all the lands of the world, while Abel, who loved shepherding, was entrusted with the animals of the world...

To exist and thrive in the world, one needs all kinds of goods; wool, leather, milk, and meat. And so the two brothers, Cain and Abel,

established a partnership and bartering agreement between them so that each received all their worldly needs... and thus forty years passed.

Cain and Abel were great and righteous individuals and possessed a great awareness of G-d, and for 40 years, they served their Creator with all their might, each according to his understanding, and according to their perception.

Parshat Yitro - The Rectification of Adam

Yet despite this, during all this time, they felt the bubbling sensation of deficiency within them, that gave them no rest or respite...

They felt yearning and longing for G-d, and a strong desire and need to draw closer to the divine, to attain lofty levels, and to transcend physicality...

Ultimately, Cain, in his fortieth year, discovered the secret of the sacrificial offering, and brought an offering from the fruit of the ground...

Abel, seeing his brother Cain offering a sacrifice, hurried

himself and also brought from the firstlings of his flock...

Despite the two offerings being offered together, the outcome was drastically different - Abel's offering was accepted, while Cain's was not... 'And the L-rd turned to Abel and his offering: But to Cain and to his offering He did not turn' (Genesis 4:4-5).

In Cain's heart arose envy, 'Why was Abel's offering accepted, and mine not'? And tragically, Cain killed Abel...

And so, both of them, Adam and Cain, needed rectification...

The Rectification of Adam

Adam's sin was not a simple matter at all, and its rectification required many years and occurred across many generations.

In general, Adam's sin was rectified by the means of the events detailed in the Book of Genesis and the enslavement in Egypt.

To summarize it broadly:

As a result of Adam's sin, a great and tremendous flaw was

created in the inanimate, plant, animal, and human realms.

The subsequent generations were each tasked with rectifying the sins committed by Adam:

Noah tried to rectify Adam's sin but failed.

Abraham rectified and refined the realm of the inanimate by his divine service of digging wells.

Parshat Yitro - The Rectification of Adam

Isaac rectified and refined the realm of the vegetative by sowing the field and finding a hundredfold yield.

Jacob rectified and refined the realm of the animal by shepherding Laban's flock,

Joseph rectified and refined the realm of the human by ruling over Egypt and its multitudes of mankind...

Additionally, there was a need for rectification for the souls that were contained within Adam. This was done by the reincarnation of these souls in the subsequent generations who were meant to behave more nobly.

First, they reincarnated into the generation of Enosh, but instead of rectifying, they behaved even more wickedly.

And so, their bodies died, and their souls returned in reincarnation to the people of the generation of the Flood, but instead of sanctifying and purifying themselves, they

were once again corrupted and spoiled.

In a third attempt, these unfortunate souls descended into the men of the generation of the great Dispersion, but alas, they once again defiled and sinned in idolatry.

In a fourth and final attempt, they were reincarnated into the people of Sodom, and this regrettably failed too, as the great and grievous sins of the people of Sodom is all too well known.

Since they failed to rectify themselves in all of the four generations, their souls were reincarnated into the generation of the slavery in Egypt, and were decreed to suffer a harsh slavery like no other. This is what finally refined, rectified and atoned for these souls contained within Adam.

After some discussion regarding Adam's rectification, let us now return to the reincarnations and rectification of Cain...

Parshat Yitro - 'If Cain is Avenged Sevenfold'

'If Cain is Avenged Sevenfold'

As above mentioned, the sensation of deficiency pulsed mightily in Cain, and ultimately, he discovered the secret of the sacrificial offering. Since the world of vegetation belonged to Cain, he brought an offering from the fruits of the ground.

But instead of bringing the best and choicest fruits of the land, he brought the most inferior and least desirable, and his offering was not accepted...

If he had been worthy and refined, this rejection of his offering by G-d should have intensified his sensation of deficiency... 'When will I too merit to behold the grace of G-d? When will I too merit the goodness of G-d?'

And he would have consequently purified his soul from all impurities and follies of evil, and would have attained lofty and exalted levels...²

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

2. Every Jewish man and woman has a divine soul. A soul that inherently yearns, longs, and craves for the Creator of the World. And when they merit to preserve this fire, they merit drawing close to Him, as the following story illustrates.

Our neighbor, the protagonist of the story, told us:

I aspired to be accepted into the IDF's submarine unit. To be accepted into the unit, I had to pass intelligence and physical fitness tests. After the tests, there was a 'team exercise' where the abilities of each soldier were assessed individually, as well as collectively.

During this selection process, some participants dropped out voluntarily, others

were dismissed for not meeting the criteria threshold, and the remaining 'elite' ones started their training as submarine soldiers.

As part of this service, the soldiers need to remain in a submarine for days, weeks, and even months. During this time, they operate the mechanical, electrical, and warfare systems, and also cook, eat, sleep, and more. All these tasks are performed by the crew in a very confined space - inside the submarine, through full cooperation and utmost consideration for one another.

I worked hard to succeed and passed all the tests and training successfully. After about a year and a half of training, I was approved as a permanent member of the submarine crew.

Parshat Yitro - 'If Cain is Avenged Sevenfold'

At the beginning of my military service, I was traditional and was careful to lay Tefillin and pray every day. I always asked in which direction Jerusalem was, so I could direct my prayers towards it. My crewmates would check and show me the direction based on clocks and maps, and I would pray in that direction.

During our time in the submarine, I performed all my duties to the satisfaction of my commanders, thus climbing the military ranks and promotions ladder.

After a series of operational and secretive activities over long periods, we returned to base. We got out of the submarine and alighted ashore for a period of rest, base training, treatments, and submarine systems renewal.

During this break, I was sent to a refresher course at a military base in central Israel that lasted a month. My father gave me his car so I could travel to the course and return to sleep at my parents' house every day.

This way, I could also pray with a minyan every morning before the course, and in the evening after the course. Every day I drove to pray at the 'Itzkovitz' synagogue in Bnei Brak, where prayers are held around the clock.

The month in which I prayed with a minyan every day infused me with vitality and joy and even changed my worldview. Only then did I understand the purpose of life and felt that divine service is the oxygen of life.

At the end of the course, I returned to the submarine base with my head full of

thoughts: 'What will I do with myself? I understood that the feeling of 'deficiency' pulsating within me can only be filled by the means of a life of Torah and Mitzvot, but how would I be able to actualize it? Who would release me from the navy mid service? !

The army invested a lot in training me for my role in the submarine through courses and training. The 'submarine' role was a big responsibility and the army invested a lot of money and resources in training its soldiers...

As I walked from the soldiers' residence to the submarine, docked by the sea, a walk of about a quarter of an hour, many thoughts raced through my mind. Naturally, it was not feasible to leave this unit. Soldiers of the unit used to say that one can only leave here on a stretcher, meaning only due to a serious medical issue.

As I walked along the dock to the submarine, a special feeling entered me. I thought to myself: Surely, G-d created the sea, the land, and the entire world. He operates everything, He can help me leave here, not by the means of a stretcher.

I found myself saying and repeating dozens, maybe hundreds of times: 'If G-d wants, He can get me out of here. If G-d wants, He can get me out of here...'

And so I walked along the dock with an inner feeling of calmness. After all, I am in G-d's blessed hands, and He alone guides me along my path.

Parshat Yitro - 'If Cain is Avenged Sevenfold'

But he was unworthy, and instead of the sensation of deficiency, the sensation of envy was revealed within him...

This sensation led him to kill his brother, Abel, and through this terrible act, he flawed his soul, his

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

So I walked and spoke with G-d for a quarter of an hour until I reached the submarine. Then I entered to perform my role and the tasks under my responsibility.

That day I was called to the base command. I feared that I was being called to the command because of a serious breach I had committed or because of a violation of the military discipline.

I arrived at the command and found myself standing in front of a committee of several senior commanders.

'Do you know why you were called to the committee?' they asked me.

'I do not know,' I replied.

The senior among them explained to me that there had been a serious discussion about all the roles of the submarine forces, and following the committee's conclusions, it was agreed that they could forgo my stay in the submarine crew. Therefore, it was decided to relieve me of my post...

The committee waited for my response. They expected me to protest, as it meant I would no longer be a submariner...

I remained silent, thinking to myself: 'G-d, just today I spoke with You and

asked for Your help. And here, so quickly, You have fulfilled my request'.

The committee's spokesperson turned to me: 'Do you accept the decision?'

'Yes', I answered.

'Do you have anything to add or comment?'

'No'.

The officers on the committee were stunned by my reaction. They knew of my dedication to the role. The committee expected me to respond harshly, but I knew that this was my dream and hope. I knew then and there that the total control and guidance comes from G-d. I wanted to leave the committee room dancing, but I restrained and composed myself.

As per the committee's decision, I was transferred to the coastal unit to complete my military service there, which allowed me to return home every day.

Since then, I have clung to my faith and service of G-d, changed the direction of my life, and even changed my name.

All this to abandon my past and 'dive' into the sea of Torah and its commandments...

(Ein Od Milvado', part 1, p. 173)

Parshat Yitro - Cain Divided into Three...

spirit, and his life force, and therefore needed to be reincarnated.

This is the inner meaning of the verse: 'If Cain is avenged sevenfold' (Genesis 4:24)...

Cain Divided into Three...

Job wrote: "He changes the course of events with His plans" (Job 37:12)

The Ramchal (Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto) explained in 'Da'at Tevunot' (section 48):

Know that G-d desires to bring the world to its perfection, and therefore creates events and outcomes with the depth of His wisdom and counsel and continuously rolls the wheels to bring the world to this completeness.

This is what the verse means: "You have done many things, O L-rd my G-d, Your wondrous deeds and Your thoughts toward us" (Psalms 40:6), and as the prophet Isaiah said: "Your counsels of old are faithfulness

and truth" (Isaiah 25:1), and it is also said: "And devises plans so that the banished one will not be cast away from Him" (2 Samuel 14:14)...

And the way to repair the souls is by G-d reincarnating the flawed or lacking soul back into this world...

Rabbi Yoram Abargel, shared the following explanation regarding the reincarnations of Cain (Imrei Noam, Exodus - 6):

According to the teachings of the Arizal, after Cain killed his brother Abel, Cain's Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshama were each flawed and needed repair.

Therefore, Cain's Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshama reincarnated into three figures: Jethro, Korah, and the Egyptian.

Cain's Nefesh Reincarnated in the 'Egyptian'

We do not know precisely how to describe the palace of Pharaoh,

king of Egypt. But it was surely splendid beyond all imagination.

Parshat Yitro - Cain's Nefesh Reincarnated in the 'Egyptian'

Amidst all of this splendor and royal majesty Moses grew up. Around him bustled people from all over the world, kings, foreign ministers, and senators...

Our sages revealed to us that Moses was the reincarnation of Abel, hence, from his childhood, his heart yearned and thirsted for G-d.

Even though he resided in a royal palace, a feeling of deficiency constantly beat in his heart.

At the age of 12, Moses went out to his enslaved brothers and witnessed their suffering. His heart was full of mercy and compassion, and his pure eyes brimmed with tears, and he began to help them.

Suddenly, a most pitiful sight befell his eyes, he saw a group of Jews standing around in a circle, and in the center stood a cruel Egyptian, brutally beating a Jew...

Moses looked around, and was filled with disappointment; so many Jews stand here, yet none come to help ?!

"And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brothers. And he looked this way and that, and when he saw that there was no man, he killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand" (Exodus 2:11-12).

'And he saw that there was no man' - no Jew had the courage and self-sacrifice to save his fellow brother. This greatly angered Moses !...

In Avot of Rabbi Natan (chapter 20) it is written that Moses, at the age of 12, ascended spiritually to the higher realms and quickly gathered angels and established a court and asked them: Is it permissible for me to kill this Egyptian? And they ruled in his favor.

Moses returned to earth, his face burning like flames, and uttered one of the sacred names of G-d - and immediately killed him.

The Arizal revealed that in that Egyptian the Nefesh of Cain was reincarnated, and for his rectification, he had to be killed

Parshat Yitro - Cain's Ruach Reincarnated in Korah

by Abel, who was represented by Moses !...

After Moses struck and killed the Egyptian, he took care to bury him in the sand, as contrasted to

Cain, who did not bury his brother Abel after killing him, but was rather buried by the birds of the sky and the pure animals (Bereshit Rabbah, Parshah 22, Letter 8).

Cain's Ruach Reincarnated in Korah

And now the time had come to rectify Cain's Ruach, and G-d reincarnated it in Korah.

In the words of the Arizal in 'Sha'ar HaPesukim' (on the verse 'For sevenfold Cain shall be avenged'):

The Ruach of Cain was reincarnated in Korah, head of the tribe of Levi, as mentioned in the Zohar, because the Ruach was not reincarnated as a gentile. Yet, despite this, he became jealous of Moses and quarreled with him.

The end of Korah is known... "And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their

households, and all the people that associated with Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that associated with them, went down alive into the abyss, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation" (Numbers 16:32-33)...

By Korach, a reincarnation of Cain's Ruach, being swallowed up into the depths of the earth, the murder and spilling of Abel's blood into the depths of the earth by Cain was rectified.

Now we move on to the rectification of the third and highest level of the soul, Neshama...

Cain's Neshama Reincarnated in Jethro

The Arizal revealed that the Neshama of Cain was reincarnated in Jethro.

That same Neshama, which intensely felt a sense of

deficiency, but erred and descended into bitter and wicked jealousy, now returned and came into the world in the body of Jethro.

Parshat Yitro - Jethro in the Search of Truth

Since the feeling of deficiency constantly echoed within him, he began to seek ways to fulfill it. Initially, he may have tried to satisfy it by indulging it with his desires, but he quickly realized that it was not sufficient...

The deficiency, especially in a Jew, comes from the depths of the soul, from the abysses of search and inquiry, from the depths of hunger...

Jethro in the Search of Truth

Rabbi Eliyahu Ki-Tov zt"l explained.

The ways of various people and their paths upon the earth vary: there are those who walk confidently in established paths, those who walk in crooked ones, and yet those who walk about in circles seeking a path.

Those who walk confidently - their path is clear before them, sometimes for good and sometimes for evil. The righteous in his righteousness and the wicked in his wickedness. Both know the end of their path and

And no worldly enjoyment has the power to fill this void. All it can possibly do is to merely temporarily quiet the feeling, but afterward, once the moment passes, the feeling of deficiency intensifies to an even greater level...

Jethro began to travel the world in search of spiritual powers that might strengthen and fortify his soul and satiate this hungering feeling...

place their steps toward the goal at the end of their path.

Those who walk in crooked paths - have no goal before them and all they seek is merely to enjoy the moment... They expect everything to work out according to their desires, and not to toil or overly exert themselves.

Those who walk in circles seeking a path - are looking for the path, seeking solutions, seeking the purpose, and searching for the truth...

For most of his life, Jethro was not among those who walked

Parshat Yitro - Moses Illuminates Jethro's Soul

confidently, but was always searching for the path of truth. He would find a path that seemed right to him, and immediately dedicate himself fully to it, examining every step along the way to test it thoroughly. And eventually, when he found it to be a misguided path, he did not hesitate to destroy everything he had built there and abandon all he had acquired in its world, and rise and declare in a loud voice - I was mistaken! And to others, he warned - do not go this way, it is a path of lies and mistruths.

And so, from the day he matured and until the day Moses came to him fleeing from Pharaoh, Jethro did not leave a single idolatry in the world that he had not practiced.

He did not worship all of them together, but one after another.

Moses Illuminates Jethro's Soul

After Moses killed the Egyptian, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, decreed a death sentence for Moses.

He would serve one and become its priest until he realized that it was all foolishness and vanity, and then would take himself to another's worship, until he found that it too was mere vanity and foolishness... until he renounced all the idolatry in the world...

And so it is with every person - all the paths of the world and all its circles lead to the truth, and everyone can find it, some in a long and circuitous way and some in a short and direct route, it all depends only on the search for truth.

Jethro took a long journey in his circle. Although he had not yet found the truth, he had already discovered the falsehood of all the idolatries.

Henceforth, the truth was close at hand...

Moses narrowly escaped and arrived in Midian, where he met Jethro and married his daughter Zipporah.

Parshat Yitro - Moses Illuminates Jethro's Soul

From that point on, the rectification of Jethro by Moses began:

"**And** Moses was content to dwell with the man" (Exodus 2:21) - Moses came and enlightened Jethro's eyes, Moses guided him to the path of truth...

And the rectification of Cain's soul continued:

Cain robbed Abel of three things: his wife, his flock, and his honor, so when Moses arrived, Jethro, Cain reincarnated, returned the wife (his daughter Zipporah) and the flock to him. And in addition, Jethro repented fully and submitted himself before Moses, thereby returning the honor to him.³

Eliezer had just finished explaining this entire exposition, and turned to his son Yehuda and asked:

Do you understand what I just explained to you?

Yehuda, with a glowing face answered at once: Yes, father, I understand!

I now understand that one cannot learn merely from time to time, because at every moment a new sensation of deficiency exists that one must quench with Torah study. Even if I had lacked nothing until now, it doesn't mean that I won't lack it in the very next moment...

Wellsprings of Wisdom

3. And this is what Jethro meant when he came to the desert and sent a message saying: "I am your father-in-law Jethro..." (Exodus 18:6).

The Sages explain in the Midrash (Exodus Rabbah, 27:2):

'Do it for my sake, and if not for me, then for the sake of your wife, and if not for her, then for the sake of your sons'.

In our context this means: come out to meet me because I am akin to your

brother, for in you resides the soul of Abel and in me the soul of Cain, Abel's brother.

And if that is not enough, come out for the sake of your wife, my daughter, whom I have given to you to rectify the wife that I took from you,

and if even that is not enough, come out for the sake of the sons born to you from her, through whom I rectified what I transgressed by 'spilling the blood' of your descendants, by murdering you.

Parshat Yitro - Jethro - A Man of Truth!

Now I also understand that the main choice one has is which deficiency to place at the fore.

Therefore, in the story of Ephraim the winemaker, even though the deficiency and imminent danger that stood before Ephraim was 'the danger of imprisonment' and lack of freedom, however, when he came to the prayer hall in Slonim and began to pray, he discovered that the 'deficiency' that really bothered him was the lack of closeness to G-d...

And therefore, when he reached the verse in Psalms: "My soul thirsts for You" (Psalms 63:2), his 'material deficiencies' and vital needs disappeared, and his pure soul leaped toward G-d...

Eliezer's eyes sparkled with happiness and pride in his son Yehuda, and he thought to himself: Blessed be the L-rd, the 'lights' of wisdom have entered the 'vessels' of my child...

And he turned to his son Yehuda and continued...

Jethro - A Man of Truth!

Jethro was the high priest of Midian, and there had been no idolatry that he hadn't served and greatly excelled in.

However, he was never satisfied and constantly yearned for something essential - the point of truth.

Anyone born with a point of truth will not rest nor be quiet until they reveal and develop it. The point of truth is like oxygen for someone who grew up accustomed to it. However, not

many have been privileged to be connected to the truth. This world is called the world of falsehood, and in this world, those who lie succeed, while those who stick to the truth cannot be sure that success will smile upon them. And as The Tanya says (Likutei Amarim - Chapter 7): This world is mostly and almost completely evil, and the wicked in it prevail.

However, one who grew up with the attribute of truth, and it is the light that guides their path -

Parshat Yitro - Jethro - A Man of Truth!

will not move even the slightest from the truth. They will subjugate the powers of their soul to search for the truth, and after finding it, they will hold onto it tightly, and no one in the world will be able to move them from it ...

Such was Jethro - a man of truth.

It's true that the path of truth in this world is somewhat bitter, because they face a few more challenges, and experience more bitterness, but their success is eternal.

This is similar to businessmen who invest in acquiring a good reputation for honesty and reliability. As a result of their devotion to proper business practices, at the initial stage, they may earn a bit less, but retrospectively it's quite clear that they earn much more. Whoever buys from them once, from then on, will continue to buy only from them. This is because the customers found a place where they are treated with honesty and truth.

Jethro, at the beginning of his journey, completely devoted

himself to idol worship, dedicated himself and examined it from all angles, and worshiped it with all his heart, until he became a priest, but when he discovered that it did not stand the test of truth, did not spare his stature or status, and started all over again, with yet a new idolatry... And so on and on, in his search for the truth, he worshiped all the idolatries that existed in the world, until he discovered that their connection to the truth was completely nonexistent.

Indeed, he did not convert to Judaism immediately, it was a process, and it took him time to come to the truth, but as we said - someone who is truly committed to the truth will eventually find his path illuminated., and finally in our Parsha, he completely drew near and converted.

In the Talmud (Sotah 11a) we are taught that all of his descendants became great people. All his sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons sat in the Chamber of Hewn Stone in the holy Temple and gave rulings to all of Israel.

Parshat Yitro - Summary and Practical Conclusions

Where did this all come from? - From the point of truth.

May G-d grant us to be illuminated by its light...

Eliezer finished his explanation and looked at his son Yehuda, waiting to see if he had absorbed the profound lessons. Yehuda, still processing the depth of what he had heard, nodded slowly, the wheels of understanding turning in his young mind. He finally spoke, his voice reflecting newfound insight, "So, it's about choosing

what we lack and then striving to fill that void. And every choice shapes our path, just like Jethro's search for truth led him to a complete transformation."

Eliezer smiled, a sense of fulfillment washing over him. He had passed on more than just words to his son; he had imparted wisdom that would guide Yehuda through the complexities of life, always seeking the light of truth in a world often shrouded in mistruths and darkness."

Summary and Practical Conclusions

1. The Holy One, blessed be He, created His world in order to bestow goodness upon His creations - that they should feel joy and pleasure in their days of life.

The sensation of joy and pleasure that G-d wanted to grant His creations was specifically through the completion of what is lacking. When a deficiency is completed, joy and pleasure are felt. Therefore, G-d created in every person a sense of deficiency that they aspire to complete, and upon its completion, will feel great enjoyment and pleasure.

In other words - fulfilling the aspiration - completing the deficiency - is what generates pleasure.

2. In the heart of every Jew lies a sense of deficiency that pulses within them with great intensity, and they are always searching for a way to complete it. And this very sense of deficiency is what drives a person's power of choice: whether to complete this sense of deficiency by following material desires and lusts, or to complete it through Torah and its commandments.

3. This sense of deficiency is aroused very often, hence, it turns out that a person has a constant power of choice!

On a deeper level: the choice of a person is only to define 'what is lacking for him'. A person's power of

Parshat Yitro - Summary and Practical Conclusions

choice is very deep, and its role is to define what his deficiencies are, and those he will aspire to fulfill.

4. One who is born with an essential truth will not rest or be quiet until he finds it. The essential truth is like oxygen for those who are acquainted with it.

True, not many have been privileged to be connected to the ultimate truth. This world is called the world of falsehood, and often those who lie succeed, while those who stick to the truth cannot be sure that success will shine upon them, and even if they succeed, it is not easy.

5. But those who grew up with the attribute of truth, and the attribute of truth is the light for their path - will not move right or left without the truth. They will subjugate all the powers of their soul to search for the

truth. And after finding it, they will hold onto it tightly, and no one in the world will be able to remove it from them.

6. People who adhere to the truth are not swayed by money, status, or anything else, nothing constricts them.

They are dedicated to only one consideration, and everything revolves around one thing - the truth. Indeed, it's true that the path of truth in this world is somewhat bitter, because it faces many more challenges, and experiences more bitterness, but the success of this path is eternal.

7. The reward of people of truth is lofty and exalted, their offspring become great individuals, holy people and great scholars in Israel.

This all - from dedication and steadfastness to the essential truth.

Shabbat Shalom !



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**Shabbat Times
Yitro**

24th of Shevat, 5784



City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	4:56 pm	5:58 pm	6:27 pm
Miami	5:47 pm	6:41 pm	7:18 pm
Los Angeles	5:07 pm	6:04 pm	6:38 pm
Montreal	4:44 pm	5:50 pm	6:15 pm
Toronto	5:11 pm	6:16 pm	6:43 pm
London	4:33 pm	5:45 pm	6:04 pm
Jerusalem	4:58 pm	5:49 pm	6:24 pm
Tel Aviv	4:55 pm	5:46 pm	5:20 pm
Haifa	4:52 pm	5:43 pm	6:17 pm
Be'er Sheva	4:56 pm	5:47 pm	6:21 pm

Pathways to the Heart

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

If your child was rejected from school or Yeshiva due to your low spiritual standard at home, forgo your material comfort, and add more spirituality to your home so that your child will be accepted!

Is it not enough that you cut corners and are lax regarding yourself, do you wish that your child emulates you? At the very least make an effort that your children get educated on a bit of a higher spiritual level than you were taught, and advance and elevate your progeny.



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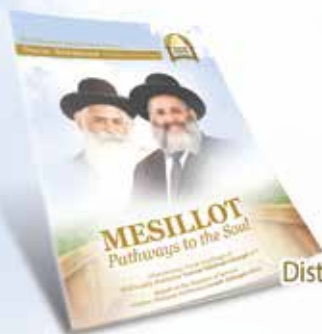
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