

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 153

Tazria | The Path Inward For Each Individual

MESILOT

Pathways to the Soul

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly Parsha
of **Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel Zt"l**

From the weekly lessons of his son
Rabbi Yisrael Abargel Shlita

...PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL...

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Parshat Tazria

Not Just Another Number

Rabbi Dovid Braverman once shared the following story:¹

"**One** of my friends, a learned student, once confided in me that he owes his life to an elderly Holocaust survivor, whose name he doesn't even know.

I looked at him in astonishment and asked for an explanation. And he began to tell his story:

I went to study in a famous senior yeshiva that had hundreds of boys, and along with me, over a hundred new boys were accepted into the first class. Naturally, this yeshiva accepted the best students who had completed their studies in the junior yeshivas, those with strong minds and blessed talents.

Like many serious boys at that age,' he continued, 'I wanted not only to learn but also to stand out. To feel that I was worth something.

'**At** the beginning of my journey, I tried very hard to excel in my studies, to integrate among the learned and talented boys, and to demonstrate my strength in learning. But quite quickly I realized that there were boys more talented than me. It wasn't that I lacked talent, but there were boys significantly more talented than me. I felt that I was not finding my place among them. So, I tried to demonstrate my strength in 'righteousness.'

I endeavored to pray for long hours, to be meticulous about washing hands and saying grace after meals, but even there, I couldn't stand out. Very soon, it became clear to me that there were boys naturally more righteous than me, who stood out much more in their righteousness than I did. I felt terrible.

‘In my distress, I turned to yet a third path. While continuing to learn, I also tried to appear sociable, mingling with different kinds of boys. Yet it turned out that even in this realm, there were bigger socialites than me.

‘After half a year at the yeshiva, I felt like a nobody. I walked around in a low mood, completely despondent.

‘One day, as I was wandering the streets, I found myself passing by an old age home. For some reason, I entered the synagogue located inside the building and sat down to learn. Surprisingly, I actually felt good amidst the elderly who were sitting there learning. The atmosphere was pleasant. There, there was no competition. No one wanted to excel at something, or to show off their talents.

‘I remembered that Rabbi Pincus used to say that young men have various hair colors: some have black hair, some have brown hair, some are blond, and some are redheads. In contrast, the elderly have a uniform color: white.

‘The difference between the color white and other colors is that white is the original, unadulterated, natural, and authentic color. When one wants a different color - they must dye the white with the desired color. The color is then 'dyed.'

‘Young men have all sorts of calculations. They 'dye' their learning in all sorts of colors: to look important, so that they will be appreciated, or respected, or so that the head of the yeshiva will take them as a son-in-law for his daughter, or for another prestigious and wealthy match.

In the old age home, however, no one thinks that the head of the yeshiva will take him as a son-in-law. One sits for many hours and learns or listens to a Torah lesson - because that's what a Jew looks like and because that's what a Jew does.

‘The elderly are white because they are the 'essence!' They learn Torah for the sake of learning Torah. Not for any other calculation.

My friend continued and said:

‘I found this very appealing. I felt that people here learn

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pleasantly, sweetly, and with a special calm. I stopped going to the yeshiva and established my place of study in this old age home instead.

After a week, one of the elderly approached and asked me: What are you doing here? Why aren't you learning with your peers? When I first saw you here for a day or two, I thought it was a temporary thing, but now I notice you've started coming here regularly. You need to go through a bit more of life to learn here. This is not the place for young men like you.

I was stunned. I looked into his eyes and saw kind, compassionate, and caring eyes. I immediately realized that I was standing before a grandfather who wanted my best. Even though I didn't know him, I poured out my heart to him. I told him with tears in my eyes how I tried again and again, yet nothing 'worked' out for me. I told him about all the crises I went through and how I walk around the yeshiva feeling that I was not worth anything. That there is nothing special about me. I am just one in a thousand. Just another number among all the numbers.

I felt that the old man listened to my entire speech patiently and understood me, but for some reason, the last words I said made him react. His face became serious and even showed a bit of anger.

I wasn't mistaken in my assessment. The old man rolled up his shirt sleeve and asked me: 'Do you know how to read?' And he let me read the number that was tattooed on his arm. 'This number was given to me by Hitler, may his name be obliterated, and here you continue to do what Hitler failed to do!'

I was in shock and deeply shaken to my core. I couldn't believe my ears. A Jew who survived the Holocaust would never equate anything to it, nothing in the world could be compared to it!

Yet, here stands before me, a Jew who survived the Holocaust, telling a boy - who did no wrong - 'You are continuing Hitler's path! You are continuing what he failed to do!' In other words, he is casting upon me the most terrible curse of all: 'You are a Nazi!'

‘What does he want from me ?
What does he want from my life ?

‘Gradually, the old man softened, he sat next to me, and said: 'Young man, listen carefully to my words. I am many years older than you, with a bit more life experience, and you can learn a lot from what I am saying:

‘Hitler, may his name be obliterated, had a plan: 'The Final Solution'. Hitler knew that physically it would be hard - almost impossible - to succeed in killing all of the Jewish people. He would manage to kill a million, two, even six, but not all would die.

‘Therefore, the first action he took, immediately upon our arrival at the camps, right at the entrance, was to tattoo a number on each of us. This was to instill in each of us: 'You are worthless; you are just a number !' Just like the cows in the barn, each of which has a number on its ear.

‘Hitler wanted each person to feel himself as one eight-billionth of the world's population. You are worth nothing; you are merely a number.

‘The war, by the grace of Heaven, ended. We left Europe, one from a city and two from an extended family. Very few. But we decided: to take revenge on Hitler !

‘We started families with self-sacrifice, so that there would be more and more children in the world. I have, thank G-d, ten children. And the first thing I taught them is: none of you are a number. Each one is a unique and only son to the Creator of the world. Each one of you, personally, needs to feel as if he was the only person in creation !

‘I drilled into their ears, again and again, that each one has his own strengths, his talents, his challenges, his trials, and each one has a purpose in creation. And if someone does not fulfill his purpose - no one can do it in his place, and the mosaic called 'creation' will not be perfect, and the world will not reach its completeness. Each one is part of a universal pattern of the Creator, blessed be He, and each part must stand and function on its own.

‘Here the old man turned to me, placed his hand on my shoulder, and said as tears

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streamed from his eyes: 'I beg you, stop looking right and left! Stop being interested in what the one to your right or the one to your left is doing! You have your own strengths and your own tools. Take them, and with them, run forward'.

'**This** old man saved my life' - the man finished his story. 'I took his emotional words to heart, returned

to the yeshiva, and began to focus on improving myself. To be who I am, and thus - with the help of Heaven - I saw true blessing in my efforts.

The storyteller did not know the name of that old man, and so, neither do we! But this old man shared something very great and significant, and we will try to contemplate a bit on what he said.

A Pearl from Heaven

In Midrash Rabbah, the following story is brought:²

It was Friday, the sun was already in the middle of the sky, and still, Rabbi Shimon ben

Chalافتa had no money for his Shabbat needs.³

Rabbi Shimon ben Chalافتa got up and went to be alone with his thoughts.

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

2. Shemot Rabbah, 52:3.

3. **Rabbi** Shimon ben Chalافتa was among the Tannaim of the Mishnah, and during his lifetime, several miracles happened to him, which have been recorded by our sages.

A statement of Rabbi Shimon ben Chalافتa serves as the closing of the Six Orders of the Mishnah (Uktzin 3:12): 'Rabbi Shimon ben Chalافتa said, the Holy One, Blessed be He, did not find a vessel that holds blessing for Israel except for peace, as it is said: "The L-rd will give strength to His people; the L-rd will bless His people with peace" (Psalms 29:11).

On this matter it is quoted in the book 'Betzel Ilan Chayim' (1 - p. 195):

Many times Rabbi Chaim HaCohen, 'the Milkman', would advise people who came to him with all sorts of problems:

'**Do** you want blessing to dwell upon you? Strengthen yourselves in the attribute of peace! Be especially careful to respect your wife, for a man's wife is compared to the Divine Presence, and therefore when one honors their wife, they honor the Divine Presence. On the other hand, whoever causes his wife anguish, causes anguish and exile to the Divine Presence.'

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There, he stood and told G-d that he still had none of the necessary Shabbat needs and begged and pleaded with G-d to send him money.

The Holy One, Blessed be He, heard his prayer and a precious pearl fell from the heavens into his hands.

Rabbi Shimon ben Chalafta entrusted it to the shopkeeper and took the food supplies needed for Shabbat on account.

His wife rubbed her eyes in astonishment when her husband entered with baskets full of all good things. She turned to him and asked: "My dear husband, I know you had no money, so where did these supplies come from?"

And Rabbi Shimon replied: "The Holy One, blessed be He, sent it to me."

She said to him: "If you do not tell me where exactly it came from, I will not taste anything of them."

And he told her, "I prayed to G-d to send me money, and the Holy One, blessed be He, sent me a precious pearl."

She said to him: "No! I do not want this pearl! And I beg that we do not use it, but rather return it back to the heavens."

Her husband, Rabbi Shimon, was astonished and asked: "But why?"

His wife replied: "A miracle was performed for you, and they gave you a pearl, and since we received it through a miracle, surely they deducted it from our heavenly merits, as 'one for whom a miracle is performed, their merits are diminished', and

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

He would also often say:

'When a person wants to check if he has begun to correct his personal flaws, let him examine closely how he behaves with his wife and children.'

Once, a Torah scholar who was accustomed to pray with the kabbalistic intentions of the Rashash came before him,

and 'the Milkman' rebuked him: 'What sense is there to pray with the intentions of the Rashash, and yet you do not have a proper conversation with your wife and honor her properly! The wife is the reflection of the Divine Presence, and prayers lack strength unless one honors his wife appropriately...'

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I do not want to lose anything from the next world for the sake of this lowly world. Therefore, I request that you return the pearl so that our merits remain intact !"

Rabbi Shimon heard her arguments and was uncertain whether she was right or not, and went to consult with Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi.

Rabbi Yehuda heard the matter and said: "Go tell your wife not to worry. If because of this pearl you will lose any of your merits, I am prepared to donate and complete it from my own merits."

Rabbi Shimon returned and relayed Rabbi Yehuda's words to his wife. His wife heard this but responded: "Let us go to him together."

The woman stood before Rabbi Yehuda and contended: "Rabbi, you told my husband that you would complete for us what is missing from the heavenly reward. However, with all due respect, I do not understand how you can do that since we will not meet, as King Solomon said: 'For each man goes to his eternal home.' (Ecclesiastes 12:5).

It does not say 'for man goes to the homes of eternity' but 'for each man goes to his eternal home' - after death, each person goes to his own spiritual world, and therefore you will not see us at all. So how will you be able to complete it for us ?"

In the Midrash, her question remained unanswered !

Ultimately, Rabbi Shimon went and returned the pearl. The Midrash describes how he returned it: 'As soon as he stretched out his hand to return it, immediately an angel descended and took it from him'.

The Midrash continues to summarize:

Two miracles were performed for Rabbi Shimon. The first miracle was that a pearl descended to him from the heavens. And the second miracle was that he successfully returned the pearl.

And the second miracle is much greater than the first !

For such is the conduct in Heaven: "that which is given - is not taken back" (Tractate Taanit 25a), yet here the conduct was changed and was taken back from him.

A Solid Word

When Rabbi Yitzchak Blazer learned these words of the Midrash, he exclaimed with amazement (Kochvei Or, 7, Page 15):

‘Imagine the scene, the wife of Rabbi Shimon ben Chalafta standing with her husband before Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi - the divine sage who arranged the Six Orders of the Mishnah. She then argues that since every Jew has his own world, Rabbi Yehuda would not be able to complete for them what is missing.

We must understand the connection between the matters. Why does the fact that each one has his own world prevent Rabbi Yehuda from completing what is missing for them?

“And the Son of the Israelite Woman Went Out”

In Parshat Pinchas, G-d revealed to Moses that soon the Israelites would merit to enter the Land of Israel and settle within it, and G-d desired that each tribe settle in a specific region.

Now, each tribe consisted of several families, and each family

Could he not momentarily leave his world, go to theirs, knock on the door, enter, and give them the missing ‘pearls’ and ‘lights’?

In other words:

Rabbi Yehuda HaNassi gave them his word that he would complete for them what would be missing in the world to come, and she should have been calm since Rabbi Yehuda's word is a ‘word’, and if he said it, it would surely take place!

So why was she worried?

Before we bring an answer to this fascinating question, let us proceed.

had several sons, and already now, here in the desert, G-d wanted to distribute the Land of Israel to the various families.

This distribution was carried out, and the son of Shelomith bat Dibri was left without any portion in the Land of Israel -

since his father was an Egyptian man and only his mother was from the tribe of Dan.

He had approached the members of the tribe of Dan and claimed: My mother was from the tribe of Dan, therefore accept me among you. But the tribe of Dan did not agree, they said to him: *"Every man by his standard, with the insignias of their father's house"* (Numbers 2:2) and from what is written, we do not go according to the mother.

This son demanded a Torah judgment before Moses, and Moses ruled that the Tribe of Dan were right, this man did not deserve an inheritance in the land of Israel.

The strong reaction of this angered son was extreme, he left Judaism!

Thus it is said:

"And the son of the Israelite woman who was the son of an Egyptian man, went out among the children of Israel. The son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name of G-d, and cursed" (Leviticus 24:10-11).

The Torah defines his reaction with one word - 'אָצַי' (he went out). What is the meaning hidden in this word?

The book of Torat Kohanim brings two opinions (Rashi here quotes them):

The first opinion is that of Rabbi Levi who explained: 'אָצַי' - he went out from his world.

The second opinion is that of the Matnitah (the Tannaic scholars): 'אָצַי' - he went out as guilty from the court of Moses. He came to pitch his tent within the camp of Dan, they said to him what business do you have here? He said to them 'I am from the members of the tribe of Dan'. They said to him: *"Every man by his standard, with the insignias of their father's house"* it is written. He then entered the court of Moses to be judged and went out as guilty. He promptly stood and blasphemed G-d.

Rabbi Chaim Volkin wrote about this (Da'at Chaim - Page 2):

'At first glance, these two explanations (of Rabbi Levi and the Matnitah) seem to be two separate

Parshat Tazria - The Internal World of a Person

interpretations. However, at the heart of the matter, these two explanations are in agreement and even complement each other.

The world of the son of the Israelite woman had turned upside down overnight. He was sure that he would be part of his mother's tribe, the tribe of Dan, where he could build his home, realize his plans, and fulfill his aspirations. However, when he was found guilty by Moses' court, he suddenly found himself in a different world.

It turns out that his exit from Moses' court changed his entire internal 'world'. His internal structure was shaken and changed, and he went out from his previous state and 'world' that he built for himself. And this sudden exit that changed his entire essence - led him to blaspheme.

But if so, what was expected from him? If his internal world had collapsed before his eyes, how was he at fault? Why was he punished with death as described in the next verses?

The answer is simple: He was punished because he had neglected his internal world. This lad, the son of Shelomith had seen with his own eyes the miraculous Ten Plagues, the Exodus from Egypt, the Splitting of the Red Sea, and other miracles. He lived in a generation of great men, and was required to invest accordingly in his internal world. He needed to build and fortify a deep and true internal world, a world that would not be shaken by a passing wind nor a storm. A strong and courageous internal world that would not fail or falter in trials and tribulation.

And we shall elaborate...

The Internal World of a Person

Rabbi Chaim Volkin continued to explain (Da'at Chaim - Page 1):

Every person has a role, and a unique mission. For the purpose of this mission, G-d endowed them with the necessary

skills and characteristics, and a person must recognize that they are a unique individual with marvelous abilities, and that they are special in their own way.

Parshat Tazria - The Internal World of a Person

This uniqueness is referred to by our sages as one's 'world'. A world that is not influenced by the environment, nor swayed by the winds of bad character traits. A 'world' which a person feels responsibility for, and that testifies to the fact that one utilized the abilities given to him from Heaven.

It is a great obligation upon a person to strive to discover and fully understand his personality and 'world' to the fullest. To understand that he was placed here with one goal - to fulfill his role and to actualize his duty in his world.

As stated in the 'Mesilat Yesharim' in the beginning of the book (Chapter 1): 'The foundation

of piety and the root of perfect service of G-d is for a person to clarify and verify for himself what his obligation in this world is'.

A person must build 'his world' and develop it out of recognition and knowledge of what his duties and destiny are.

When this knowledge is clarified and explicit - the person will develop for himself 'his world', full and rich in deep inner content based on the maximum utilization of his qualities and abilities. 'His world' will stand firm and solid in its place, and no evil will disturb or penetrate it.⁴

Surely, we must expand on this subject.

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

4. A person needs to ensure that their inner world is solid and strong, and that no wind in the world will move them from their place. In this context, we find the following story ('Emunah Shlema - Devarim p. 245):

There was a Chassidic singer with a wonderful voice, who received a phone call one day asking him to come and sing at a wedding. He noted the date and the address where the hall was located and showed up on the night of the wedding at the hall.

He set up all the sound equipment - but suddenly his eyes darkened, he noticed that there was no partition in the hall between men and women. He immediately asked why there was no partition in the hall, and was told: 'It's not a problem, we sit families together, but we dance separately.'

The singer firmly told them: 'honored friends, I do not sing in mixed events! I don't sing without a partition!' They angrily said to him: 'Then why didn't you tell us

Parshat Tazria - The Internal World of a Person

from the beginning that you do not agree to sing in a mixed place?'

He on his part answered them - 'Who invites a Chassidic singer to a mixed wedding? I sing Chassidic songs of praises to the L-rd. How could you even consider inviting me to such a wedding? I am not willing to sing here under any circumstances!'

The bride came and told him: I really love Chassidic songs, and I invited you and agreed to pay you the amount you asked for. Now you must sing for us!

He told her: 'No need to pay me anything, I'm going home and don't need the money.'

The bride said to him in tears: 'But you are ruining my wedding, we will be left without a band!

He told her: I'm willing to dance and sing, I only ask that you put up a partition, that the wedding will be fully separated. Moreover, I'm willing to sing for you for free.

But without a partition, I am deeply sorry, but I am not willing to sing under any circumstances...

The bride's uncle, a lawyer by profession, approached the singer and threatened to sue him for ten thousand dollars for ruining the entire wedding.

The singer said to him: I am willing to myself pay ten thousand dollars, so long that I do not sing at a mixed wedding. And the singer got up and left.

Indeed the lawsuit did eventually come, and he was compelled to pay the ten thousand dollars in damages. Yet despite paying damages, he felt bad mainly about the fact that he had ruined the joy of the bride and groom.

After a year and a half, one day he received a phone call, asking him to come to a Pidyon Haben celebration.

He inquired if the event was fully separated, and they answered him affirmatively. He arrived at the hall and to his surprise, he found that the mother who invited him was none other than the bride of the mixed wedding,

He was very surprised, and the woman promptly said to him:

"That night, we managed to find a singer in the end, but the next day when we arrived at our new home, my new husband and I did some soul-searching. How could it be, that a singer was willing to pay so much money, and receive so much shame, just for his values?

This did not give us any rest, and we decided that we must search for the truth, and ultimately, we both came to the conclusion that if there are such Jews in the world, we want to belong to them, and we returned to Judaism.

Now we want to return to you the ten thousand dollars we took from you and ask that you sing for us some Chassidic songs... this time in full separation!"

Parshat Tazria - Welcome to the World of Mysteries!

Welcome to the World of Mysteries!

Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe wrote the following (AleI Shur, Volume I - Page 146):

In the Torah portion of Bereshit, the Torah describes the order of creation, and when it comes to the creation of man, it states as follows: "For in the image of G-d, He made man" (Genesis 9:6), meaning that the definition of man is being 'the image of G-d'.

Indeed, this 'image' distinguishes man from all other creations, and also distinguishes him from other human beings.

Every person has a unique spiritual image that is exclusive to him.

In this image are embedded one's desires and aspirations, strengths and character traits, pleasure and aversions, and the combination of all these together creates a reality called 'Man'.

The different natures in every person, is what creates them a different reality from others. And it is this reality that is called the

'internal world' of the person, and what is known as 'I'.

A person lives and dwells within his internal world. 'The true life of a person exists not in the external world visible to our eyes, but solely in their internal world. The person resides entirely within their internal world, there they are found, and there they live.

This internal world is a complete world, with its own atmosphere, with landscapes and places, and with characters and people.

The air he breathes is the air that is found within the confines of his world, the landscapes he sees are the landscapes of his world, and his relationship with the characters and people around him, are a true depiction of his perception in his inner world'.

For example: A person in whose spiritual image anger is prominent, inside him, in his heart and mind, images of anger are constantly depicted, whereas for the proud person images of

honor are instead depicted, and for the lazy, images of the hazards and risks associated with every good deed are portrayed.

The Holy One, blessed be He, sent us to this world,

so that within our internal world, we make a dwelling for Him.⁵

The first step in making this dwelling is to truly recognize oneself.

Awareness of Ourselves

Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, continued to explain (AleI Shur, Part I - Page 141):

At the beginning of any self-work stands the need for self-recognition. One who has not been accustomed to it from his youth - the gate of personal work will be closed before him. He may live a spiritual life, perform good deeds, and G-d does not withhold the reward of any creature. However, he will not be a son of ascension or a person of truth.

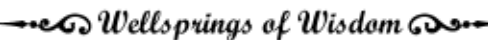
The first step in a person's work is to recognize himself, such recognition that will force him to start working productively such that it will lead to profound changes, in conduct and traits. Service that will

eventually cause him to correct and enlighten his own world.

Moreover, one who acquires self-awareness will also find the way to correct himself, for if not for correction - what is this knowledge for!

Indeed, this 'self-knowledge' is different from any other knowledge a person can acquire: every person is entirely a unique world, and the knowledge about his inner world he must find almost without any help from others.

'I' is a complete world. The 'I' is not just a collection of reactions to what happens outside of it and a collection of aspirations for what is outside of it. No! The 'I' is itself a world living its own life.



5. Midrash Tanhuma, Naso, 16): The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Man, "I

desire to have a dwelling in the lower worlds, just as I have in the upper worlds."

For most people, this inner world is completely hidden. Most people live their lives directed towards the external world, and are afraid to turn their life's direction inward, to themselves, even for an hour, mainly out of disdain for their own hidden and unknown world.

'Self-knowledge' cannot

be learned. It is an experience that visits every rational being who makes a conscious effort to be self-aware. There is no guide to achieving this experience.

However, one who merely knows a bit of the good traits and a bit of the bad traits active within him, does not know himself at all.

The Eternal Inner World

Until now, it was explained that every person has an inner world - a private world unique only to him. And in it, he lives and dwells.

Now we add and say that not only during one's lifetime does he live in his 'world', but even after one's passing, he will continue to dwell and live in his own personal 'world'!

As Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, wrote (Michtav M'Eliyahu, Part B - Page 62):

We must know that a person's death does not change his inner state. For even after passing, he will continue to live in his private world, and the things that were important to him during his life

will continue to be important to him there (in the upper worlds).

Therefore, a person who in his vain life was attached to unholy imaginations, will remain attached to his imagination even after he is separated from his body.

Even then, after death, he will continue to yearn and long for those imaginations that filled his life, and he will search for them everywhere. but, of course, he will not find them. For there, in Heaven, there is no remembrance of the empty vanities of this world.

However, since his soul is attached to desires, it will feel hunger and lack, and this is what

Parshat Tazria - The Reward is According to the Pain

will drive it from one end of the world to the other in search of the desires. (See there at length.)

After all this lengthy introduction, we return to the difficulty of Rabbi Yitzchak Blazer.

The Reward is According to the Pain

The wife of Rabbi Shimon ben Chalafta stood before Rabbi Yehuda and said: Rabbi, you told my husband that you would complete for us what is missing in the afterlife. I do not understand how you will be able to do this, for there we will not meet, and accordingly, you will not see us at all. And if so, how will you be able to complete for us what we lack?

In the Talmud her question remains!

Rabbi Yitzchak Blazer, once challenged: Why? Why does the fact that each and every one has a private world prevent Rabbi Yehuda from completing what is missing for them? Could he not leave his world for a moment, go to their world, knock on the door, enter, say 'hello', and give them the missing spiritual lights?

Rather, he explained:

We must know that the spiritual pleasure that G-d will bestow upon a

person as a reward for fulfilling His commandments will be tailored according to each person's private world. Each person will feel his reward according to 'what was woven for him alone as the reward of his performance of the commandments'.

Since the sensation of pleasure is built and tailored according to the private world of each person, it is understood why it is impossible to 'complete' this from another person's world.

As Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, once remarked (Likutei Moharan, Part I, Torah 121):

'Know that it is possible for one to sit next to his friend in one place in the Garden of Eden, and for one, there will be all the pleasures and delights and all the Divine worlds, and his friend will not feel anything and will have no pleasure'.

After these lengthy introductions, we continue on to this week's Torah portion.

Leper - in the 'Human' Level

This week's Torah portion, Tazria, opens with the subject of childbirth, as it is written: "When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male" (Leviticus 12:2), and immediately after that, the Torah brings all the laws of various afflictions.

The details of these afflictions begin thus: "When a person has on the skin of his body a swelling or an eruption or a spot, and it turns into a leprous disease on the skin of his body." (ibid. 13:2).

And later in the portion, the Torah uses the term 'human' - "When there is on a human a leprous disease." (ibid. verse 9).

The Torah commentators ask, since it is known there are four terms for man: Adam, Ish, Gever, and Enosh, and the greatest of them all is the term 'Adam', which

expresses the superiority of Israel, "And I will make you my flock, the flock of my pasture, you are human (Adam)" (Ezekiel 34:31)!

How then could it be that a Jew be at the lofty spiritual level of 'Adam', yet have 'a swelling' afflictions on his skin, since the impurity of leprosy is among the most severe impurities, and our sages say (Nedarim 64b) that 'a leper is considered as dead'?

We found that the Saintly Lubavitcher Rebbe explained this thus:⁶

The reason the Holy Torah specifically uses the term 'Adam', is to teach us a great secret -

When a person speaks lashon hara (evil speech), even unintentionally, the very speech drags him towards evil.⁷

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

6. Likkutei Sichot Vol. 22, p. 72 (Free translation).

7. In the "Yated Ne'eman" Shabbat supplement (Issue 45, Page 15) the following story was recounted:

Somewhere in one of the cities of Europe, lived a respected and wealthy family with a daughter of marriageable age. Like any good family, her parents invested effort and resources to find her a suitable match,

Parshat Tazria - Leper - in the 'Human' Level

hoping to see her establish a family that would bring them true Jewish pride and joy.

Fortunately, the desired groom was found, and an engagement party was held with the participation of the city's notables. However, the joy did not last long. Shortly after breaking the plate, a tradition in engagement ceremonies, the groom requested to cancel the engagement.

The bride's family was embarrassed. From the half-statements made and the few explanations they received, they understood that a harmful rumor had reached the groom's ears.

It was clear to them that the rumor was baseless. Someone, envious of their wealth, apparently sought to ensnare them. However, sadly, the groom took the rumors at face value and was adamant about canceling the engagement. And indeed, the engagement was canceled, leaving the bride and her family disgraced. After some time, by G-d's grace, they had the opportunity to break a plate again, their mouths full of prayer that G-d would complete this union and allow them to lead their beloved daughter to the wedding canopy, after the suffering and shame she endured.

The big day arrived, and the grand wedding was held with great splendor, but the immense joy was tinged with the fear of this all being undermined. The fear of baseless rumors did not give them peace. And then during one of the 'Sheva Brachot' days, the groom approached the joyful bride with a crumpled letter in his hand. The bride strained to see, and as she read, her face turned as pale as the white letter.

She was speechless, and her body began to tremble...

The letter contained disparaging and slanderous details about her health, her bad character traits, lack of fear of G-d, and irritable temperament.

In a quiet voice, she turned to her groom: Why are you showing me all this? Do you also want to divorce me in shame?

To her great surprise, the groom's face lit up with a smile, and he replied: No, not at all! Indeed, I heard these things before our wedding day. I read the letter with a heavy heart but gave you the benefit of the doubt. I thought about it deeply and decided that it was nothing more than slander, which of course I did not desire nor could I accept.

But - I wanted you to see the letter with your own eyes, so you could learn a lifelong lesson and moral. I wanted you to tangibly understand the immense power of slander, as the verse says: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:21).

Over the years, the blessed couple managed to build a wonderful family, always guided by the principle of guarding their tongues. G-d blessed them with sons and daughters, whom they raised and guided through life: teaching them to guard their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit. They always educated them to seek and pursue peace, and to avoid disputes.

Their son lived in a certain city, where a great dispute broke out, and he - reluctantly - got involved. Realizing his mistake and the strength of the dispute that surrounded him, he quickly packed his

Although the power of speech appears to be merely an external force - an external garment of the soul, it is nonetheless connected to the essence of the person's soul, to the extent that the distinction of man over animals is defined as one who 'speaks'. Therefore, when a person speaks lashon hara, this speech drags him into the depths of evil.⁸

In short: Speech penetrates into the depths of the person's heart and leaves its marks on his inner world !.

Regardless of who the person speaking is, whether a person of high stature or a person of low degree, the speech that comes out of one's mouth affects inner worlds !⁹

On this topic we elaborate even more.

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

belongings, took his family, and fled his city of residence. His parents had instilled in him the love of peace, together with the caution against slander and dispute.

Years later, when World War broke out, the city he fled from was erased from the map, while the city to which he migrated was not touched by the war at all !

He and his family, thank G-d, remained among the living and were spared the horrors of war. Today, the descendants of that couple are spread all over the globe, each one a living example and embodiment of true G-d-fearing Jews.

8. In contrast, a person accustomed to always speaking good words, evil cannot dominate him !

A person who always opens his mouth for good, even if a decree for evil was decreed upon him, it will be annulled.

Therefore, it is obligatory for every Jew to accustom himself to open his mouth for

good, and even when it seems that everything surrounding is darkness and gloom, he should speak words of hope and faith and then he will cause 'only goodness and kindness' to surround him...

(See 'Ben Yehoyada' on tractate Berachot 60b).

9. The Rebbe Rashab of Lubavitch, of blessed memory, wrote (Sefer HaMa'amarim 5659, Page 5):

The root of the speech is above the root of the emotions, and therefore when a person speaks words of love (to G-d, the Torah, and the Jewish people), he is aroused and moved to an even greater love.

For the root of speech is deeply embedded in the essence of the soul itself. This is also the reason that through Malchut, which is the aspect of speech, the worlds are created and the desire for G-d to have a dwelling in the lower realms is fulfilled.

On this matter, it is written in 'Reshit Chochmah' (Gate of Humility, Chapter 5:57):

The Virtue of Correct Speech

In a discourse delivered by Rabbi Yoram Michael Abergel, of blessed memory, he said (Betzur Yarum, Part 4, Chapter 21 - Page 139):

The power of speech is tremendous and one must learn well how to use it.

On one hand, we must strive to avoid idle talk that has no benefit, and even when we need to speak, we must ensure that the words are of quality and beneficial.

On the other hand, we must know that it is incumbent upon us to create around us an atmosphere of joy and a shining countenance, and this can only be done through correct speech.

Just as it is forbidden to speak forbidden words, so too it is forbidden to be silent when silence is forbidden, for silence too is bad

when there is no need to be silent, for example, when guests come to one's home, one needs to brighten their faces, to joke with them a bit - there is a commandment to do so. If he is silent, it may offend them, and it is not worth causing people distress. Instead, one can say a novel idea, or a beautiful Torah thought, that everyone will be happy from.

A person who knows how to speak correctly, about him is said: "Lips that answer correctly are kissed", since he is loved by everyone (Proverbs 24:26).

A person who is careful with clean speech, will merit, with G-d's help, to be a leader. It is written in the Talmud (Pesachim 3b) that two students sat before Hillel the Elder, in their time there were no books and most of their learning was by heart, he asked one of them to

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

Silence cancels anger, as does also a soft voice. Therefore, when a person sees that his anger is intensifying - he should either be silent or speak softly, and not raise his voice in anger.

For he who raises his voice at the moment

of anger - arouses the anger, while a soft voice and silence calm the anger. He also should not gaze at the face of the person who he is angry with, but speak to him without seeing his face, and then his anger will be driven away from his heart...

review before him the study they had learned, and the first student promptly said: 'Why are grapes harvested in purity, while the olives are not harvested in purity'? He turned to the second and also asked him to say the same law, and he said in an ever slightly different wording: 'Why are grapes harvested in purity while the olives are harvested in impurity'?

They had, apparently, both said the exact same thing, but Hillel the Elder, who had the great light in his eyes, looked for a moment and said I am certain that this first student will be a great decisor of Jewish law in Israel, since he was more careful than the other in choosing a clean word, and instead of saying 'and harvested in impurity', he said: 'and are not harvested in purity'. Meaning, the decision in heaven over who will be a leader, goes down to the tip of a letter in the topic of guarding one's speech.

From here we learn how much we need to be careful about this. There are many people whose mouths are open like a valley, and they speak whatever comes

to their mind without restraint, and because of this, they do not have divine assistance, not with their children, nor in livelihood, nor in attaining Torah, everything is taken from the person, all the blessings and all the divine abundance is taken when not careful to guard the sanctity of the mouth.

According to the holy Zohar (Tikkunei Zohar, Introduction page 13b), the mouth is the central channel of the menorah, and the three channels on each side are the ear, the eye, and the nose.

Hence a person should not say that the study is hard for him, or that he does not understand what he is learning, for truly nothing is hard. If a person sanctifies his mouth, everything will be easy for him to grasp.

Therefore, one must overcome the evil inclination with regard to speech anew each time. The Talmud (Chullin 89a) expounds on the verse in Psalms (58:2), "What should be a person's skilled craft in this world - to make himself as a mute'. Likewise, the

Parshat Tazria - Four Stages of Speech

verse in Psalms (39:1-3) states "I said, I will guard my ways, that I

will not sin with my tongue; I will keep a muzzle for my mouth."

Four Stages of Speech

Up to now, it has been explained that speech penetrates into the very heart of a person and leaves its mark on his inner world.

Now we add another detail:

There are four stages in the faculty of speech, namely: thought within thought, speech within thought, thought within speech, and speech itself.

Rabbi Shalom Dovber of Lubavitch explained these levels thus ("Besha'ah Shehikdimu" 5672, 2 - 312):

Thought within thought - is the 'thought of intellect', meaning what the intellect thinks to itself, where the light of the intellect shines, and the details of explanations are not so felt.

Speech within thought - is when one engages in thought, how to speak (like reviewing four times to oneself before delivering), which is the speech as it is to oneself. This is speech within thought, etc., where the letters of the explanations are already palpably felt.

Thought within speech - is what one thinks while speaking, where the physical and palpable letters are felt even more than in speech within thought, etc.

Speech - letters that are felt and received by another. See there at length for the wonderful and deep explanation.

Behold, just as speech has the power to penetrate our inner world and stir it, so does 'speech within thought' have the power to penetrate into the inner world and stir it.

There are many people who manage to guard their speech, and do not speak forbidden speech, such as gossip and slander.

However, sadly, they do not succeed in guarding the 'speech within thought', and in their thoughts, they speak all the evil speeches they can about others!

It is our duty to know that this speech (speech within thought)

Parshat Tazria - Four Stages of Speech

also penetrates into the very heart
of a person and leaves its mark in
their inner world!

May the Al-mighty merit us
to guard all stages and parts of
our speech in sanctity!



Practical Summary and Application

A. Upon creating the world, G-d created man in His image - and this image is what distinguishes man from all other creatures, and it also distinguishes him from other humans. Because every person has a unique spiritual image only to him, and in this, he is different from everyone else.

This image embodies all the desires and aspirations, powers, and traits, etc., of a person, and the combination of all of them together creates a single reality called 'man'.

B. Every person has a different nature, and this creates a different and distinct reality from his fellow. This reality is called a person's 'inner world', and it is what is known to him as 'I'. And a person's life is not as it appears to our eyes, the external shell, but his reality is only how the person lives in his inner world. There he is found, and there he lives.

Therefore, every external act of a person is an expression of a person's inner self. Therefore, our role in the world, what we do for G-d, within our inner world, is to make a

dwelling for Him, blessed be He.

The first step is to know oneself.

C. At the beginning of one's personal divine service there stands the need for one to have self-recognition. A person who has not yet achieved this - the gate of personal work will always be closed to him. Indeed, he will live his spiritual life like everyone else, do commandments like everyone else, and may even, G-d forbid, do the opposite. He will receive a reward for every commandment and otherwise for, G-d forbid, the opposite. But a person of distinction and a man of truth he will not be called.

Therefore, the first step in a person's work is to know himself, a recognition that forces him to start and work a productive work that leads to deep changes in his conduct and traits. Work that will cause him at the end of the process to correct and illuminate his own world.

D. This inner world is completely hidden from most people. Most people live in the external world,

and are afraid to turn their life's direction inward, to themselves, even for a brief hour, mainly out of aversion to their own hidden and strange world.

Yet, every person needs to strive with all his might 'to open' the door and 'enter' inside to 'know oneself'.

E. The power of speech appears to be only an external power - an external garment of the soul. Yet, it is connected to the essence of a person's soul, to the extent that a person is called a 'speaking creation'. Therefore, when a person speaks slander, the speech drags him into the evil itself. It doesn't matter who the person speaking is, a person of high stature or a person of lowly status, the speech coming from the mouth affects his inner world!

The speech penetrates into the very heart of a person and leaves its mark in his inner world! Therefore, when a person speaks slander, even unintentionally, the speech itself drags him into evil.

F. Similarly, when a person corrupts his speech, he creates within himself a 'stormy spirit'. It enters and penetrates into the inner world of the person, boils his blood, stirs his soul, and generates within him emotional distress and troubles.

G. Therefore, a person must know that the power of speech is a tremendous and mighty force and needs to learn how to use it. On one hand, we must strive to avoid idle talk that has no benefit, and even when we need to speak, we must ensure that the words are of quality and are beneficial.

On the other hand, we must know that it is our duty to create an atmosphere of joy and a cheerful demeanor all around us, and this can only be done through proper speech.

Just as it is forbidden to speak forbidden speech, so too it is forbidden to be silent when silence is forbidden, because silence too is a bad thing when one does not need to be silent, for example, when guests come to one's home, and one needs to brighten their

Parshat Tazria - Practical Summary and Application

faces, to joke with them a bit - there is a commandment to do so, and if he remains silent it will offend them. One should instead say some novel idea, or some beautiful Torah thought, which everyone will be happy to hear.

H. One must overcome the evil inclination in the matter of speech anew each time and even make himself as if mute, if necessary, and this is a very great art.

When a person sanctifies his speech, he becomes similarly sanctified.

Shabbat Shalom!





To the students of the yeshivot, the young men and members of the holy community Hameir La'arets may they be blessed.
In anticipation of the celebration of the yahrzeit of our holy grandfather,
Rabbi Chananya Abargel of blessed memory, father of Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel of blessed memory,
The completion of the fourth cycle of all parts of the holy Torah,

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Tazria**

5th of Nissan, 5784



City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	7:15 pm	8:16 pm	8:46 pm
Miami	7:25 pm	8:18 pm	8:55 pm
Los Angeles	7:05 pm	8:02 pm	8:36 pm
Montreal	7:19 pm	8:25 pm	8:51 pm
Toronto	7:40 pm	8:44 pm	9:11 pm
London	7:35 pm	8:48 pm	9:06 pm
Jerusalem	6:51 pm	7:41 pm	8:30 pm
Tel Aviv	6:48 pm	7:39 pm	8:26 pm
Haifa	6:48 pm	7:38 pm	8:26 pm
Be'er Sheva	6:47 pm	7:38 pm	8:25 pm

Pathways to the Heart

From the Words of

HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l

TEven one who was accustomed to light candles of wax, should make an effort to upgrade to oil lamps, for this is an important manner to fulfill the commandments, and offers one the merit that one will be blessed with scholarly sons.

If one G-d forbid loses in their business, for example goes bankrupt, or sustains losses on a large investment, it is a natural occurrence, he only lost stones and wood, or greathonor or a role.

With children however, we must not lose!



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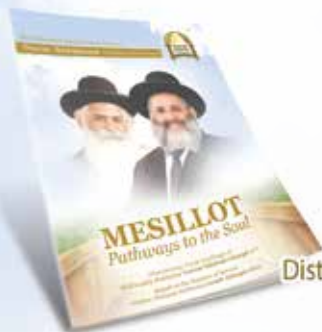
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