

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 150

Vayikra - Purim | Three Powers Rule Man's Soul

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 Vayikra - Purim

Kings Shall Bring You Gifts

About two hundred years ago, a new confrontation with the evil inclination began.

Until that period, the main temptations were in emotions and desires, but now the rules of the game have changed. The evil inclination, having suffered numerous defeats, decided that it had enough and it drew upon a new weapon, named 'Enlightenment!'

The evil inclination knew that when one studies the wisdom of the nations of the world for the sake of learning and broadening

horizons, it defiles the divine soul, causing the extinguishment of all divine feelings.¹ And it succeeded. Oh, how it succeeded!

Jews who saw in the wisdom of the nations of the world the essence of their existence, devoted all their lives and efforts to 'become wise' as much as possible. And from this movement of 'Enlightenment' a new generation was born, a generation of Jews who abandoned the yoke of holiness. The righteous men of that generation were shocked and terrified by the rapid 'conquest' of this new evil inclination. They tried with all their might to wage a

Wellsprings of Wisdom

1. In the words of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi (Tanya, Likkutei Amarim - Chapter 8):

“However the wisdom of the nations, defiles the wisdom, understanding and knowledge of his divine soul with the ‘kelipat nogah’ impurity of these wisdoms, which have fallen there from the ‘leftovers’ of the holy wisdom...

“Unless one uses them as a spade to dig with, meaning to earn a livelihood from these foreign wisdoms to enable their service of G-d, or one who knows how to use these wisdoms for the service of G-d and His Torah.

“This is the rationale of Maimonides and Nachmanides, of blessed memory, and their colleagues who engaged in these wisdoms.”

fierce war against it, but the forces of impurity were given immense power, and the war became more and more complicated day by day.

The 'Enlightened' ones, seeing the 'war' becoming increasingly complex, drew the despicable 'weapon', the weapon of the primordial serpent - 'Slander'. The first poisoned arrows of slander they aimed at the righteous men of the generation, who stood like a fortified wall against their destructive influence, defending the house of Israel from falling into their net. The wicked waged their war against the righteous through malicious plots and slanders to the authorities, which involved real danger to life.

It was during this period in history that the following story transpired:

His name remains unknown, but his despicable actions are engraved in the book of chronicles.

And thus it is written about him:²

This unnamed Jew, greatly excelled in his wickedness, forbidden desires, and shameful lusts. And in addition to all this 'filth', he became an 'informer', he began to betray the righteous men of the generation as well as simple people with terrible betrayals.

Numerous people died because of him, many widows and orphans were left without bread because of him. And there was no end to the troubles he caused people, and the great wealth he took from them.

One day, several righteous men gathered together for an important meeting. At the entrance of the room, a group of Jews stood and asked for permission to enter, and when permission was given, they entered the room and burst into bitter tears.

'So and so, the wayward Jew, has crossed every line, and yet another Jew has been killed following his latest slander'.

The righteous men sat there aghast, each gathered in his thoughts, and then they all proclaimed together: A Jew such as this, according to the law, deserves the death penalty. We have also checked and verified that there is not even a spark of holiness left in him anymore.

They sought to eliminate him from the world through prayer, but alas, their prayers returned empty.

They gathered together and contemplated, 'Why aren't we succeeding in removing this wicked individual?' Until they were told from heaven that a Rabbi Ze'ev of Zbariz³ had spread and afforded his spiritual protection over that lowly and wayward Jew, and so long that he protected him they could do nothing to him.

At once the righteous men decided to travel to Rabbi Ze'ev Wolf to persuade him of the importance of the matter. They arrived at his village on a Friday morning and told him about the matter.

He heard their words and replied: 'Here by me, the illumination of Shabbat has already begun - we will talk about it on Sunday, and meanwhile stay with me for Shabbat'.

The memory of that uplifting Shabbat remained etched forever in the hearts of those fortunate enough to have participated.

On Sunday after the morning prayer, they entered his study and asked him once again to 'sanctify G-d's name' and to eliminate the wicked nuisance that was plaguing the larger

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

3. Rabbi Yechiel Michel, the great Maggid of Zlotchov had five sons and one daughter.

He merited that all of his sons established illustrious Chassidic courts that illuminated the skies of Jewry in various Jewish communities:

Rabbi Yosef - in Yampil, Rabbi Mordechai - in Kremenets, Rabbi Zev - in Zbariz, Rabbi Yitzchak - in Radywyl, and Rabbi Moshel'e - in Zvhill.

Our story involves his third son, the righteous Rabbi Zev of Zbariz, known as 'Rabbi Velvele Zbarizer'.

Parshat Vayikra - Purim - Kings Shall Bring You Gifts

Jewish community for a long period of time through prayer, as it is said: 'The L-rd preserves all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy' (Psalms 145:20).

But instead Rabbi Ze'ev of Zbariz opened with the following response:

It will be a regular day like all other days, the workers will do their work, the merchants their trade, the roads - will be full of cars, and the streets - with people running after the race of life. And suddenly, a sweet and pleasant voice will be heard, and in the hearts of the Jews will arise mixed feelings of joy and fear, and they will ask each other: 'What is this wonderful voice that penetrates our bones, and revives us?' And it will soon become clear that it is the shofar of the Messiah.

Hearts will tremble with excitement and anticipation. And behold, he will appear and from his holy countenance will emanate rays of light, and from his pure eyes will flow endless

streams of love and compassion. And everyone will feel that suddenly they have found what they have been missing all these years 'For we have always yearned - for you!'

And the Messiah will proclaim: 'Dear Jews - anyone who wants to come with me to Jerusalem - let them come'. And all the nation of Israel, men, women, and children, will leave their lands, houses, and possessions and will follow the Messiah like a child clinging to his mother.

The joy that will fill their hearts will rise and spread throughout their entire beings. Waves of joy will wash over all those present with great force, and their feet will break out in a fiery and passionate dance. Circles upon circles of dancers, in flame and fervor, will fill the streets. And as it is said: 'Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make

them rejoice from their sorrow'
(Jeremiah 31:13). ⁴

But there will be one Jew who will be ashamed to follow alongside the Messiah, and it is this 'informer' Jew you came for. He will hide in some remote unknown location abroad so that the Messiah and all the righteous will not see him.

Meanwhile, all the kings and rulers of the gentile nations will be seized with terror, dread, and immense fear. 'What will we say to the King Messiah and how will we explain all the killings and burnings of Jews, the thousands of years of persecutions, and the imposition of taxes and various strange and new decrees day by day'.

And they will gather together to devise a plan. One of the kings will stand up and say: 'I have an idea! Let's take all our crowns and give them to the King Messiah and tell him that from now on he is the king'.

And they will all laugh at him, 'Fool, he is already the king now'. Until one of the wise men among them will stand up and say: 'I have an idea! In order to appease King Messiah, we must prove to him that we have repented and from now on we love Jews. Therefore, I suggest we take a Jew and dress him in royal attire and mount him on a royal horse and adorn him with silver and gold jewelry, and bring him to King Messiah, and tell him: Our lord the king, see how much we love and honor your people, see how much we respect and appreciate Jews!' And they all rejoiced at the idea, and immediately they went out to the streets to look for a Jew. But they will not find any Jew because they all went up to Jerusalem. In haste and under pressure, they will contact 'Interpol'⁵ and demand from them to find a Jew immediately! Special units will go out searching and eventually, they will succeed in

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

4. The Ya'abetz described (quoted in 'Mittar HaShamayim, page 248):

'Then, in the days of the Messiah, the young people will rejoice in dance. And

due to the great joy, even the elders will be drawn after the young to rejoice with them in their dance.

5. The International Police Organization.

finding one Jew! - this 'informer' Jew.

Against his will, they will take him, dress him in royal clothes, cover him with heaps of silver and gold, and seat him inside a royal chariot. And the royal procession will set out in great splendor and majesty. At the end of the journey, they will arrive in Jerusalem. The pure and clear air, the electrifying holiness, and the indescribable beauty will cause them to stop in their tracks, powerless.

Only after very long minutes, will they muster the courage to advance a little further. And behold, from afar, they will see the Messiah standing on a platform surrounded by tens of thousands of Jews listening to his deep and inspiring lessons.

They will send to tell him: Here we are, the kings of all nations wish to bring you a gift. And upon this, David prophesied and said: 'Kings shall bring presents to you' (Psalms 68:29). They will approach the Messiah, open the door of the chariot, and pull out this 'informer' Jew.

Rabbi Ze'ev continued and said: You all can probably imagine the huge bursts of laughter that will spontaneously rise from the throngs of Jews assembled there, 'what a gift?!'

But the Messiah will be very moved by this gift. 'Why are you all laughing?' he will say. 'Don't you see how much good is in him?!'

In every Jewish man and woman, even if they have transgressed a hundred times the entire Torah - there is a lot of good, and a lot of holiness!'

Rabbi Ze'ev Wolf concluded and said: 'And you want me to kill the gift of the Messiah?' and he denied their request and refused to curse the wicked sinner and slanderer.

To elaborate further the point that rises from this story:

The Messiah will be a righteous person who will find good in every Jew. The power of the Messiah will be that he will succeed in focusing only on the good in every Jew and completely ignoring the bad. And by the power of this trait, he will

succeed in bringing all the people of Israel to full repentance !

In the words of Rabbi Gedaliahu Rabinowitz:⁶

I have received from my teachers that the Messiah will have the ability to find credit in all of Israel, and by judging them favorably, he will bring about thoughts of repentance to all and they

will as a result be entirely righteous'.

In the Book of Esther, we also encounter this wonderful attribute: the effort of Mordechai and Esther to defend their fellow Jews and nullify decrees.

In our discussion that follows, we will focus on one aspect of this vast subject.

The Lineage of Haman

In a small village named Korinus, lived a lowly couple, their names: Hamdatha and Amathlai bat Orbatay.

Fortunately for us, they disappeared from the stage of history and nothing is known about them !

All we do know, are two items of information:

The first - that the village of Korinus tried to be an organized village, albeit without much success.

As part of these initial efforts, they established a bathhouse and a barber shop, and its inhabitants looked for someone who would agree to take on the role of the bathhouse attendant and the barber. and eventually chose Hamdatha.

The second - Hamdatha felt that his days were nearing to an end and he was about to die and he immediately called his beloved son Haman.

With a pale face and trembling lips he told him: 'My

dear son, Haman, listen to me well.

Know that despite having several children, I chose only you to inherit all my assets. My great fortune is located inside the box at my side'. And at these words Hamdatha breathed his last and final breaths.

Haman, deeply moved, approached the box, opened it with trembling hands, and pulled out: a scissors, a comb, and a razor.

'**Ah!** What luck I have!' he cried out with searing pain.

Haman took his wife and ten children and moved to the village of Kartza.

Haman merited and the saying of our sages 'Change your place, change your luck' was fulfilled in him to his detriment. When he had lived in the village of Korinus, while he was poor and destitute, he still had bread and onion for breakfast. But after moving to the village of Kartza, even that he did not have.

In the entire region, it was known: Haman son of Hamdatha, the poor and destitute, who doesn't even have bread and onion for his daily meal.

Haman somehow remained alive, and from time to time people took pity on him and threw him a few coins.

And what do you think he did with the money?

He would enter a tavern, order a strong drink, and get drunk. His head would fall in a drunken stupor on his arm beside his empty glass, and from his mouth would emerge curses against the Jews. And in this manner, he would fall asleep until midnight when the owner would shake him and say, 'Hey, we are closing, go home!'

Rabbi Yisrael Yaakov Kalpholtz detailed Haman's early life:⁷

'**Haman** saw that in his village there was not enough for his livelihood and he left his wife and children and went to

seek his livelihood in a land far away.

Amidst his wanderings, he arrived at a city where he heard people discussing among themselves and saying:

The army commander is looking for strong men, who will go out in battle, and their reward will be paid generously by the army'.

Haman thought to himself:

I will go to the army commander and join his troops, and the money I will receive will sustain my children and wife'. And he promptly joined the mercenary troops.

One day they went out to fight against the enemy, and they sustained many losses in battle and had to retreat and they fled to the desert.

But they took no bread or food with them, nor was there any water to be found for them to drink, and they hungered greatly and thirsted mightily.

Haman saw that his situation was bad and went to

beg from his comrades for a piece of bread. But all the men he asked turned their backs on him in rejection.

And so he went about, hungry and thirsty, his knees faltering and his whole body weak.

A Jewish man chanced upon him and looked at his emaciated appearance and asked 'What's wrong with you?'

Haman answered: 'I am hungry and my mouth is dry, for two days nothing has come to my mouth'.

The kind Jew said: 'I still have some stale bread and a little water left - take half of it, so that your soul may be revived and you may live.'

Haman brought the water to his mouth, ate the bread, and his hunger was satiated, and his eyes brightened. He turned to the Jew standing in front of him and said to him: 'You saved me from death, and I have not a penny to repay you for your kindness, except myself. Therefore, I shall be your servant for all the days I live on this earth.'

Haman cut his finger until blood flowed from it, dipped a

Parshat Vayikra - Purim - The Strength of Ahasuerus

thorn in the blood, and wrote on a piece of paper: 'I, Haman son of Hamdatha, commit to be your servant forever.' and gave the paper to his benefactor and left.

Soon he heard that the king had sent additional support to the army legions, they had subdued the enemy, and had successfully expelled them, and all the soldiers were free to return to their homes, and Haman returned to his village.

He turned to his wife and said: 'Let us move from this place to the big city, perhaps there I will find a more profitable livelihood.'

He took his wife and sons and they traveled about to find a city to dwell in.

Along their journey something terrific and most unusual happened.

As they stumbled along the dirt road, they happened upon a

great and wonderful treasure: all the gold and silver of the kings of Judah and the sacred treasures of the Temple in Jerusalem!

Haman was overjoyed and said: 'This is my lucky day!' He bought himself a house and many orchards and came to Shushan the capital, and lived there. His fame spread far and wide and about him it was said, 'There is no one as rich as Haman in all of the land'.

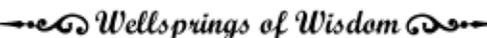
It was made known to Ahasuerus that one of the richest men in the world had come to dwell in Shushan the capital, and he proceeded to appoint him as his adviser and one of the seven premier princes of the kingdom.

Let us now briefly introduce one of the main characters of the Megillah- none other than King Ahasuerus himself.

The Strength of Ahasuerus

Rabbi Avigdor Miller once wrote:⁸

The Book of Esther begins with a description of Ahasuerus's



8. 'Ohr Olam' (Part 6 - Page 230).

ascent to the throne, and the reason is that the ascent of Ahasuerus is the beginning of the miracle.

One might mistakenly think that the beginning of the Megillah, which describes the grandeur of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, is just an introduction and serves as a background to the characters who are about to appear, and Ahasuerus's kingdom is an insignificant factor in the miracle of Purim, but the truth is quite to the contrary.

Therefore, the Megillah devotes much detail to describe the power of Ahasuerus, his royal majesty, and his great wealth, so much so that in the third year of his reign he made a great feast that lasted one hundred and eighty days, something that was unprecedented.

The Megillah describes the lavish expenses at the king's order, the luxurious furnishings of the royal palace: 'white, green, and blue draped hangings' (Esther 1:6), all to impress us with the great might and power of Ahasuerus.

This description of Ahasuerus's power is vital to understanding the

miracle, and if one skips out this part in the reading of the Megillah, they are missing the very essence of the Megillah.

The description of Ahasuerus's honor and his kingdom multiplies in significance in light of the fact that Ahasuerus was not a person who was expected to have such great power.

He was not a conqueror, nor was he even a man of average skills, yet this 'nobody' found himself to be the greatest ruler the world had ever known. His kingdom extended from India to Ethiopia, or in other words: Ahasuerus was king over all civilization that existed at that time.

People who get accustomed to superficial thinking tend to 'understand' and 'justify' historical events, and when some event occurs, they rationalize that indeed, it was expected and most natural. And likewise they may look upon the ascension of Ahasuerus to the throne of the Persian kingdom over all its provinces, to be a natural and standard event.

And it is for this very reason then, that it is important to start reading the Megillah from 'It happened in the days of Ahasuerus', to understand that the miracle actually began from the event where Ahasuerus ascended to the throne, and that it was not according to the way of nature.

It was the hand of G-d that took this 'nobody' and placed the royal crown of all of civilization on his head.⁹

The Meteoric Rise of Haman

From that day when Haman settled in Shushan, his meteoric rise in the Persian royal court began.¹⁰

In those early days, he walked through the palace corridors, met with ministers and state leaders, and even with Ahasuerus - the supreme leader of the mighty empire.

During a royal feast in the third year to the reign of Ahasuerus, his status was strengthened even more,

One bright day Ahasuerus found himself king over all one hundred and twenty-seven provinces that existed then in the civilized world.

And in this way as well, the story of Purim becomes an even more tangible miracle, and the hand of G-d is recognizable in its entire course, even to those who otherwise may have 'closed' their eyes.

And we now return to Haman.

and from that day onward King Ahasuerus primarily consulted with him on all of his personal matters.

Haman had solved an urgent problem that the insolent Queen Vashti had presented:

"Then Memuchan (a byname of Haman) presented himself before the king and the princes, saying, 'Not only against the king has Queen Vashti done wrong'" (Esther 1:16).

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

9. So thoughtless was Ahasuerus that he was capable of sentencing an entire nation to death, during a casual conversation with his friend,

all just to flatter one of his ministers...

10. 'Umatok Haor' - The Book of Esther (Page 612) by Rabbi Shlomo Levenstein.

The foolish King Ahasuerus listened to his words and silenced everyone: 'Listen to these words of wisdom spoken by Haman.'

As the verse states "And the matter pleased the king and the princes; and the king did according to the word of Memuchan" (Esther 1:21).

Haman was filled with satisfaction, and his heart soared with pride:

'Now everyone will know how great I really am; Now everyone knows that I am the smartest, most talented, and most successful person in the whole world! After all, only I successfully advised King Ahasuerus and soothe his anger in one of his most difficult moments as king - when his very own queen publicly refused to obey his direct orders before the world's most senior leaders.'

As a final confirmation of his lofty status and great stature as

the most powerful man in the kingdom, the king gave Haman a formal promotion:

"After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman the son of Hamdatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him. And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and prostrated before Haman; for the king had so commanded regarding him" (Esther 3:1-2).

Never in history had there been an event where a king who rules over the whole world, commands all of his subjects to bow in reverence to a second in command!

Haman reached the pinnacle of human aspiration: immense and awesome honor, wealth, and power.

You must surely think that Haman was happy.

But we'll see shortly that this was not the case.

But All This is Worthless to Me

As mentioned above, Haman was a very wealthy and vile man.

This unholy combination created a terrible outcome, and

he showed 'symptoms of wealthy despicable people'.

One of these symptoms was his keeping of a distance.

He was careful not to walk in the streets because it was not honorable for him to walk among lowly and mundane people.

However, after the king's decree: 'to bow down to Haman', he changed his mind and said: 'Even a person as great as me needs the admiration and appreciation of other human beings', and he began to stroll in the streets and enjoy the honor that all who saw him bestowed upon him, as they stopped to bow down to him.

However, one day Haman sat with his family and poured out his heart:

'**You** all know what great fortune I am lucky to have, and you all know of my greatness.'

"**And** Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and of the multitude of his children, and of all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had

advanced him above the princes and servants of the king" (Esther 5:11).

And Haman continued and confessed:

'**Yet** with all this, I have no pleasure in life. I am the most miserable, the most wretched. Out of sheer bitterness - I've had enough of my life.'

His family looked at him understandingly, 'If only he knew how many times we felt this way too'.

Outwardly they sympathized with his sorrow and asked him: 'Why, what are you missing?'

And Haman recounted: In the recent census, it was estimated that in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus there are close to six billion residents. And all of them, without exception, bow down to me!

All, except for one single Jew, a unique and respected Jew, who stubbornly refuses to bow down to me.

Haman slammed the table with all his might - the drinking

cups that flew from the table shattered on the ground - "Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordechai the Jew sitting at the king's gate" (Esther 5:13).

His face turned red like the color of red wine, and he shouted fiercely: "We must destroy all the Jews, the people of Mordechai, throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus" (Esther 3:6) !.

How Can the Decree Be Annulled ?

The first three chapters of the Book of Esther tell of the rapid rise of Haman the son of Hamdatha and the terrible decree that was issued.

The third chapter ends with a description of the feelings among the Jews in the capital city of Shushan.

And thus it is written: "The runners went out hastily by the king's command, and the decree was given in the capital of Shushan. And the king and Haman sat to drink; and the city of Shushan grieved" (Esther 3:15).

Immediately thereafter, the fourth chapter begins:

He rose from his seat and rushed to Ahasuerus's palace. Everyone who saw him immediately bowed their faces to the ground.

He entered Ahasuerus's chamber and, after about a quarter of an hour, he emerged beaming and waving an official document with the new decree.

"When Mordechai perceived all that was done, Mordechai tore his clothes, and put on a sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried out a loud and bitter cry" (Esther 4:1).

We must understand: didn't all the Jews of Shushan know about the decree ?

Why is there specific mention of Mordechai's knowledge - 'And Mordechai knew all that was done' ?

Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac Yehuda Yechiel of Kamarna, explained this in 'Ketem Ophir' (Esther 4:1):

While all the Jews knew about the decree, they still had some hope that it would be annulled.

For Mordechai however, it was different:

'Mordechai knew by the Divine Spirit that rested upon him that this decree was issued against the people of Israel in the heavenly court before G-d, and that Haman, the evil earthly human being, was only a puppet used to carry out the will of Heaven.

Mordechai, knowing this, was greatly alarmed, and thought to himself 'How can these judgments be sweetened?'

And he knew that this is achieved by subduing the powers

of evil above, and that by subduing the evil powers above, the decrees below are annulled.

Therefore, he wore 'sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry'.

'By wearing sackcloth on his flesh (with the intentions mentioned in Ketem Ophir there, verse 2), the impure powers are weakened and subdued until these powers are returned to holiness and whitened like snow'.

In other words: Mordechai felt that it was necessary to sweeten and elevate the evil to holiness, which he intended to do by 'wearing sackcloth', and thus annulling the decree as a matter of course.

Mordechai and Esther Disagree

The news spread quickly: 'Mordechai is wearing sackcloth', and it even reached Esther's ears.

Esther, understanding the depth of Mordechai's intent, but disagreeing with his actions, sent him fresh clothes.

As it says: "And Esther's maidens and her eunuchs came

and told her, and the queen was greatly distressed, and she sent garments to clothe Mordechai and to remove his sackcloth, but he did not accept" (Esther 4:4).

In Ketem Ophir, this is further explained as follows:

'And she sent garments' - this is surprising, did Esther

think that Mordechai was wearing sackcloth because he lacked clothes, that she needed to send him clothes ?

Rather, this is what Esther said to Mordechai:

"**You** wish to transform the impure powers by wearing the sackcloth.

But know Mordechai, that due to the sins of those below, the time is not right to transform the impure powers.¹¹

The decree must instead be annulled in a different manner: by drawing a great and abundant G-dly light from the highest source, and by the power of this great and immense illumination, the forces of

evil immediately die and are cut off from any source of life...

And this was Esther's intention in sending him clothes - to indicate that now the time was not suitable for 'sackcloth' and 'transforming', and rather the way to annul the decree is to draw down the great G-dly light by gathering the nation of Israel and bringing them to repent.

However, as the verse ends off by:

'**He** did not accept' - Mordechai did not agree with her words and instead wished to continue with the process of transforming the evil and turning it into power of holiness."

Esther Sends a Messenger

Esther did not give up, but 'called on Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains whom he had appointed to attend

her, and gave him a command concerning Mordechai, to find out what this was and why it was' (Esther 4:5).

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

11. The fact that she sent to Mordechai to remove the sack, was because she understood by the divine spirit that rested upon her, that it was not the time for transforming the evil,

but rather to cut off and eradicate it and destroy its 'fruit from above' (Amos 2:9).

Therefore, she felt that clothes were appropriate and not sackcloth.

Parshat Vayikra - Purim - Drawing Down an Upper Light

In Ketem Ophir, this verse is explained in great detail, but we bring a point relevant to our discussion:

Esther sent Hatach to tell Mordechai as follows:

'King Saul had mercy on the finest of the sheep and on the wicked King Agag the Amalekite. King Saul had thought it was necessary to transform the evil and to turn it into holiness, not to entirely annihilate it.

But King Saul was mistaken, since there are times when it is impossible to transform it to

good, and the evil must instead be entirely eliminated.

And you, Mordechai, are a descendant of King Saul, so be careful not to repeat the same mistake.'

Hatach hurried at once and went to Mordechai to relay to him Esther's stern words.

Mordechai heard Esther's words and accepted her directive.

After having agreed upon making every effort to entirely eradicate the evil powers that threatened the Jewish people, they now deliberated upon the details of how to do just that...

Drawing Down an Upper Light

Mordechai turned to Hatach and sent him back to Esther.

"The copy of the decree to destroy them that was given in Shushan, he gave him to show to Esther, and to tell her and demand that she should go before the king, make supplication before him, and request before him for her people" (Esther 4:8).

The reason Mordechai had to implore Esther to exert herself to annul the decree is because the method of eliminating the impure and evil powers by drawing down the light of wisdom requires much effort and exertion.

In the words of Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac Yehuda Yechiel of Kamarna in Ketem Ophir (Esther 4:11):

Parshat Vayikra - Purim - No Entry to the Inner Chamber !

It is well known that all the great and wondrous miracles performed by the holy Baal Shem Tov, for the good of all living beings, were achieved through the unifications he effected in the Shechinah above, and that repaired the blemish of the specific person in need.

And once a specific blemish was repaired through heavenly unifications, healing, life, and miracles were drawn down, as is well known.

This is performed by the righteous by ascending to the higher worlds, unifying and binding all the worlds together, and drawing down the Infinite Light to recreate creation, and repair the blemish.

This act of ascending to the higher worlds is what the four

Tannaim who entered the Pardes did (Chagigah 14b), and as the commentators explain, they ascended to the heavens through the use of Divine Names.

For this, one needs extra caution, because not always is it an opportune time and one might make a slight error, and then be rejected, as happened to some of the Tannaim, as discussed there in the Talmud.

Mordechai wanted that Esther "Go before the king, make supplication before him, and request before him for her people", that she make unification in the highest worlds to raise up the divine attribute of 'Kingship' to its lofty and original position in the highest and loftiest of Divine levels, and this would automatically erase all evil decrees...

No Entry to the Inner Chamber !

Regarding this last instruction Esther replied to Mordechai:

The people of Israel inflicted upon the Divine Presence so great of a flaw, that

now it is not an opportune time to ascend on high, for there is a present danger in performing unifications, due to the many sins of the lower beings, and one

Parshat Vayikra - Purim - The Three Leading Forces in Man

might die from it, or at the very least fall from the higher level.¹²

As Esther said: 'All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put them to death' (Esther 4:11)...

The servant went back to Mordechai and told him Esther's

words. Mordechai heard Esther's words and agreed with her this time as well.

Esther, you are right, the time now is not appropriate for heavenly unifications, and therefore 'do not think to yourself' (same verse 13).

To understand these words of Mordechai, we quote what we wrote in 'Chelev Ha'aretz'.

The Three Leading Forces in Man

In the holy Zohar (Midrash HaNe'elam, Vayera 109a), there is a discourse ('Vaya'al Lot Mi'tzoar') that is necessary in order to understand the human soul.

As brought there, Rabbi Judah said, "There are three controlling powers in a person:

1. The Soul of intellect and wisdom, which serves the holy soul.

2. The Soul of desire, which desires and craves all evil desires.

3. The Soul of the body that directs and involves the body.

Rabbi Judah said, "Come and see, the evil inclination rules only over these two forces that we mentioned (the craving soul and the soul of the body).

—*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*—

12. To summarize: Esther argued to Mordechai that the wickedness of Haman cannot be transformed, and must be annihilated.

But after Mordechai agreed with her that the evil powers that Haman represented

need to be annihilated, Esther argued that ultimately this cannot be done, for in order to annihilate Haman, a supreme light needed to be drawn down, and due to the sins of the generation, it was not possible to draw down this light.

The craving soul always chases after the evil inclination. And it

arouses the soul of the body to cling to the evil inclination as well.

The Intellectual Soul - An Intermediate Soul

The first Soul is gifted with the power of holy intellect, and it is the intellectual soul that serves and is a chariot to the divine soul.¹³

From this soul, divine understandings descend spontaneously, while at its root, these understandings aren't an

intellectual attainment, but rather are lofty indescribable lights.

These understandings descend to a person only after they purify the soul properly and appropriately.

On the other hand, if one does not work to purify the soul, then the intellectual soul may

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

13. Every Jew has two souls, a divine soul and an animal soul.

The divine soul is literally a part of G-d above, and all its desire and longing is to return and be included again in G-d.

On the other hand, the animal soul wishes the complete opposite, and its concern and desire are for things that provide pleasure to the body.

To bridge the gap between these two souls, which are so opposed to each other, there is an intermediary soul called the rational soul, and it stands between the divine soul and the animal soul.

The awareness of the rational soul is expressed when a person acts because of his intellect and not merely because of his physical and emotional needs.

On one hand, it is not enslaved to the body and its urges, and is able to adapt and change its inclinations according to the knowledge it reaches, and thus is close to the divine soul.

On the other hand, it is not alien to the consciousness of the animal soul, since its concepts and understandings are in worldly concepts that are not related to higher divine recognitions.

Therefore, the rational soul can translate the language of the divine soul into the language of the animal soul so that even the animal soul can be impressed by the divine presence and thus correct itself.

And it is this rational soul that stands between the two souls pulling each in their own direction, that is where a man has free choice...

Parshat Vayikra - Purim - The Bodily Soul

become a chariot to the animal soul, and can ultimately cause a

person to stray away from pure faith, G-d forbid.

The Bodily Soul

After learning about the first soul of intellect, we move on to discuss the bodily Soul.

We'll begin with an introduction:

The great Kabbalist Rabbi Chaim Vital wrote ('Sha'arei Kedusha', Part 3 - Gate 2):

In the animal soul there are four dimensions, which compose the soul.

These are: the inert soul, the vegetative soul, the living soul, and the speaking soul.¹⁴

And the duty of a Jew is to rectify and purify all the dimensions of their soul.

To explain the first two dimensions:

The human body is composed of the four basic elements of nature, and the inert soul unites and connects these various and disparate elements to be one.

In addition, this soul stores within it all the experiences a person goes through all his life, both experiences of failures as well as successes.¹⁵

The vegetative soul is responsible for the growth of a person's body.

It itself is divided further into three parts which are: the part that

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

14. The speaking soul is part of the rational soul.

15. As long as a person does not heal his silent soul from its pain, he will not succeed in attaining true insights.

Therefore, anyone who wants to make

complete repentance must know how to learn to release the past.

There is the stage of abandoning sin, confession, regret, and resolution for the future, but to achieve spiritual levels, this is not enough, one must find the inner strength to move forward, and that is only by releasing the past...

nourishes, the part that grows, and the part that reproduces.

It is in this soul, that all traits - good and bad - are rooted.

This vegetative soul is referred to in the language of the Zohar above as 'the bodily soul'.

This soul is responsible for the functioning of the physical body and all its physical conditions, such as eating, sleeping, mating, etc.

This soul has pleasure from what is before it, but does not bother to seek pleasures if it lacks any, as this soul does not initiate evil.

The Soul of Desire

The third dimension of the animal soul, the living soul, is responsible for many different actions.

These are generally divided in two: external and internal.

The external aspect of the living soul is further divided in the powers of movement and sensation.

The internal aspect of the living soul is also divided into two powers, the imaginative and the excitable.

In 'Etz Chaim' (Gate 50 - Chapter 10) it is written that the soul of desire is composed of the two powers, of sensation and the excitable.

And it is with this soul that the war between the two inclinations occurs.

In the holy words of the Zohar (Midrash HaNe'elam, Vayera 110a):

'When a person lies in bed at night, the soul of desire arouses the evil inclination and contemplates its desires, and clings to its every bad thought. And these thoughts penetrate into the heart and cling to it.

And the soul of desire continues down this wayward path, until it arouses the body, to get up and commit the transgression.

To summarize: When the excitable power wants something, it arouses the power of sensation

and eventually all of the limbs of the body, both the visible and the hidden ones, to complete and perform the

will of the excitable power of the soul of desire, the 'living' part of the animal soul.

The Excitable and Imaginative Powers

It has been explained that within the inner aspect of the 'living' soul, there are two powers: the power of imagination and the power of excitement. And it was also explained that the beginning of the incitement of the evil inclination is by the power of excitement.

To be more precise:

The excitable power has an internal engine that drives it, which is the power of imagination.

Every person has aspirations and a desire to obtain new pleasures at all times, and the power of imagination is the ability to create an image of these desires.

In other words: The desire to obtain pleasure animates the 'power of imagination', and it

creates enticing images that fill one's entire being.

And it is this power of imagination that arouses the power of excitement, after which the path to improper action is very short.

Indeed, this power of imagination is central to a person's growth or, G-d forbid, his spiritual decline.

When used incorrectly, one can fall to the most difficult inclinations, and the darkest places, to the extent that the person wonders and asks: How did I reach such places? How did I reach such a low level?!

However, on the other hand, a person who purifies their power of imagination, can reach a level of Divine Inspiration and even to levels of prophecy.

As it is said about the prophets: "And to the prophets, I

(G-d) will be imagined" (Hosea 12:11).¹⁶

The Ascent of the Imaginative Power

The following is stated in Ketem Ofir (Esther 4:13):

“Know that the first condition for attainment is 'the divestment of physicality' -to completely remove all one's thoughts from contemplating any matter of the concerns of this world, just as if one's soul has departed.

And then the power of imagination will turn one's thoughts, to imagine and picture and attach his soul to the higher worlds with the lofty images of the understanding.

One then literally ascends to the higher worlds, and his intellectual spirit and thoughts ascend from world to world to the root where his soul is engraved.

This continues, until one reaches the source of all intellect,

the supreme source, where all the pictures and the essence of all lights are engraved,

One then sees in their thought, a complete picture of all the palaces of the celestial angels in their watch.

All this by the power of imagination, which is animated by the intellectual soul, to enliven and imagine the higher worlds until one sees them almost palpably.

Afterwards, one is able to unify upper attributes, and receive the light of the ten Sefirot from the root of his soul, and bring down this light from level to level, until this light and influence reaches the intellectual soul encloded in the body.

Thus, the matters that the intellectual soul saw, will be

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

16. The Kabbalist Rabbi Avraham Abulafia wrote ('Otzar Eden Ganuz' - Page 120): **'I** will reveal to you this wondrous secret, hidden from the eyes of even most of the

wise men of our generation... That the imaginative power is the tool for attaining prophecy, together with all its attainments, imaginations, parables, and riddles.'

pictured physically, such that even the power of imagination in the physical body, will see those spiritual illuminations, and his physical eye will also see these spiritual matters.”

And while Mordechai desired to thus transform the evil powers through the imaginative powers, he had no choice but to agree to Esther that this was not the time or place to do so.

As he sent to Esther: "Do not imagine in your soul" (Esther 4:13) - ‘You are right Esther, now is not the time to unify the upper and lower worlds through sackcloth and ashes - transformation by the imaginative power of the soul.

Now is the time to entirely eradicate the evil powers of Haman and his wicked royal edicts by public prayer and fasting.

Shabbat Shalom !

Summary and Practical Applications

A. Every aspect of a person's existence is guided by three forces - the guiding forces of the soul.

The first is the soul of intellect and wisdom.

The second is the soul of desire, which is inclined towards all forms of bad desires.

The third is the Soul of the body guidance that directs and involves the body, and is known as the physical soul.

B. It is known that every Jew has two souls, a divine soul and an animalistic soul.

The divine soul is literally a part of G-d from above, and its only desire is to return and be absorbed back into

G-d. The animalistic soul on the contrary, is entirely the opposite, and all its concerns and desires are focused solely on things that provide pleasure to the body.

To bridge the gap between these two contrasting souls, a mediating soul was given to the person, called 'the intellectual soul.'

This soul mediates between the divine soul and the animalistic soul, and the consciousness of the intellectual soul is revealed when a person acts based on their intellect and not by their physical and emotional needs.

C. The intellectual soul is the primary guidance of man.

Parshat Vayikra - Purim - Summary and Practical Applications

When used in the service of G-d, it becomes a throne and chariot to the divine soul. Through it flows and descends divine insights and illuminations spontaneously.

However, if G-d forbid, it is misused, it becomes a throne and chariot to the animalistic soul, causing a person to stray from the proper faith.

D. The second guidance comes from the soul of desire, which is a combination of two powers present in the living soul: the powers of movement and sensation.

The battle between the inclinations occurs in this soul of desire. The soul of desire is what stimulates the evil inclination and causes it to contemplate evil thoughts which penetrate the heart and sticks to it.

The desiring soul does not have the capacity to sin in action since the tools of action belong to the third soul - the physical soul. However, it causes a person to dwell in these thoughts until it stimulates the body's power, and the body physically sins.

E. The third guidance is derived from the Soul of the body.

This soul is responsible for the functioning of the physical body and all its physical states, such as the need for eating, sleeping, mating, etc.

This soul enjoys what it has, but if it doesn't have readily available pleasure, it won't bother to seek it - because this soul does not initiate evil.

F. Every person has an internal engine that drives them, and it is called the 'power of imagination.'

Every person has aspirations and the desire to obtain new pleasure, and the power of imagination has the ability to create an image of that desire, and from there, the path to forbidden action is very short.

parenthetically: One must know that even impure imaginations are forbidden on their own even if they do not lead to action, due to the sin of: 'And you shall not stray after your hearts.'

G. We must know that the power of imagination is a very important and central force in a person's growth or, G-d forbid, the opposite.

When this power is used incorrectly, one can fall into the hardest temptations and into the darkest places, G-d forbid.

On the other hand, a person who merits purifying their power of imagination can reach the level of Divine Inspiration and even levels of prophecy.

H. Forbidden foods that a person eats blemish the plant-like soul.

Sins that come through desire blemish the animate soul.

Sins in speech blemish the speaking soul.

Finally, sins in thought (such as anger and pride) blemish the intellectual soul, may G-d save us, and bestow us with proper and divine attributes.

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Miami	7:15pm	8:08pm	8:46pm
Los Angeles	6:49pm	7:45pm	8:19pm
Montreal	6:52pm	7:56pm	8:23pm
Toronto	7:15pm	8:17pm	8:46pm
London	6:00pm	7:09pm	7:31pm
Jerusalem	5:36 pm	6:27 pm	7:12 pm
Tel Aviv	5:34 pm	6:24 pm	7:08 pm
Haifa	5:33 pm	6:24 pm	7:07 pm
Be'er Sheva	5:33 pm	6:24 pm	7:07 pm

Pathways to the Heart

From the Words of

HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l

One should make an effort to wear a large kippah that is visible from all sides, not a small one the size of a nickel.

Once a Torah scholar came before the Chazon Ish and cried to him that his children left the fold. The Chazon Ish told him that this happened because he wasn't careful to place a large kippah on his childrens' head when they were younger.

When I see a young man come to study in the kollel with a tiny kippah, I send someone over to tell him to change it at home to a larger one.



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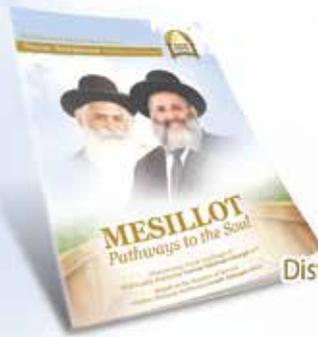
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