

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 159

Behar | Drawing Down Abundance Through a Jew's Actions

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 Behar

Anticipate Him, Although He May Tarry

Jacob and Esau were twins from the womb, yet how vast was the distance between them, an infinite distance !

In Jacob's inner world, divinity shone, while in Esau, the forces of darkness dwelled.

When Jacob was 63 years old, he received the blessings from his father Isaac, and Esau, feeling aggrieved, decided to kill him.

Jacob fled from his father's house and went to Laban's home, and on his way, he reached Beit El, where he slept.

There, G-d revealed Himself to him and spread before him all the generations that would be in the future, from the first day to the last.

And thus is written: "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder was set upon the earth, and its top

reached to Heaven: and behold the angels of G-d were ascending and descending on it" (Genesis 28:12).

The Midrash explains that in this dream G-d showed to Jacob the four exiles, and we quote:¹

'And behold the angels of G-d ascending and descending on it' - Rabbi Samuel bar Nachman said, these are the ministers of the nations of the world, as Rabbi Samuel bar Nachman had said: G-d showed our forefather Jacob the ministering angel of Babylon going up seventy steps and then coming down, and that of Media fifty-two steps, and that of Greece one hundred steps and then coming down, and that of Edom went up a number of steps that Jacob couldn't count.

At that moment, our forefather Jacob was aggrieved and said,

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

1. Midrash Tanchuma (Vayeitzei, 2).

Parshat Behar - Anticipate Him, Although He May Tarry

perhaps this one (the minister of Edom) has no descent ?

[Meaning: Jacob saw the angels assigned to Babylon, Media, and Greece ascend on the stage of history, and after some years, disappear. But Esau's minister ascended and did not descend. Jacob was alarmed, would the nation of Israel be enslaved under him forever ?].

G-d said to him: "Do not fear, my servant Jacob, and do not be dismayed, Israel" (Jeremiah 46:27), even though you see him ascend, from there I will bring him down, as it is said: "Though you may soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars,

from there I will bring you down, declares the L-rd" (Obadiah 1:4).

The words of the Midrash explain that the last exile in which we find ourselves, is the hardest of all, an exile whose end we do not see. Upon seeing this Jacob our forefather was afraid, and was comforted by G-d: I promise you that your children will eventually be redeemed, whatever their spiritual state may be.²

This promise is also reiterated in our week's Torah portion.

But before continuing on, let us first share two stories, which may seem unrelated at first, but convey the divine message of encouragement and Redemption.

Wellsprings of Wisdom

2. Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, of blessed memory wrote (Michtav Me'Eliyahu, Part II, pages 51-52):

The attribute of Esau is the attribute of pride, together with the feeling that 'I and no other exist.' Thus, the existence of anyone outside of himself is deemed oppressive.

However, our Sages assured us that before the redemption arrives, the element of pride will end, evil will nullify itself, and Moshiach will be revealed.

Without a doubt, to a discerning eye, our times lead in this direction.

We have seen in the most recent generation where human arrogance has led, and in the present, we see how the leisure of life and material security have an instability.

Soon it will be clear to all that this world is shattered and that there is no longer any remedy for its repair.

This breakdown of human arrogance places us before an agonizing choice: either lose all

A Tale of a Jewish man

Rabbi Yaakov Ma'aberi once related:

In one of the military production factories, there worked a simple worker named Nissim. The work in the factory went smoothly, and the products were supplied to the military system to their satisfaction.

Then, one day, the CEO of the factory received a phone call announcing that the district safety officer would visit the factory next Sunday.

The CEO gathered the workers and asked them to prepare, clean and polish the factory. Sunday arrived, and the workers waited outside with the CEO for the safety officer's arrival.

The officer got out of his car and waved his hand in greeting.

Nissim approached the CEO and whispered to him: I know him well, we played tag together in summer camp. The CEO looked at him condescendingly and said: Nissim, enough with the nonsense.

The officer began his tour, and when his eye caught a glimpse of Nissim, he ran over to him and hugged him: "Nissim, how are you my dear friend?" The CEO swallowed hard in discomfort.

A month passed since that visit, and again the phone rang in the factory office: "Hello, this is the internal security Minister's office, the minister is scheduled to come for a visit at your factory next Sunday."

Once again, the factory was put in order, all the water pipes were spraying water in all directions, and soap bubbles were seen on every surface.

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

hope for repair entirely and to sink into despair or to come to the recognition of the spiritual truths, and to feel the nullification of our existence before the glory of G-d.

One however, who identifies with his inner point, that point about which G-d

says "I have not despised them, nor will I destroy them" (Leviticus 26:44), that point will come to greater revelation and will shine more and more until he comes to a complete repentance and is redeemed to everlasting joy.

Parshat Behar - A Tale of a Jewish man

Sunday arrived, and the workers waited outside with the CEO for the minister's arrival.

The minister got out of his car and waved his hand in greeting.

Nissim again approached the CEO and said: I know him too, we were together in summer camp, and we called him 'chocolate chip'.

The CEO looked at him and said: Nissim please, enough with the nonsense.

The minister began his tour, and when he saw Nissim, he ran right over to him and hugged him: "Nissim, how are you!" And again the CEO was shamefacedly proved wrong.

Half a year passed, and this time a military official knocked on the office door, the CEO opened it, and the official announced: The head of the Mossad will visit in two days.

Once more, the scenario repeated itself, with Nissim telling the CEO he knew the visitor.

The CEO looked at him and said: If he recognizes you, I'm

sponsoring us both to a trip in Europe.

When the head of the Mossad began his tour and saw Nissim, he ran to him and embraced him: "Nissim, how are you!"

As he promised, Nissim and the CEO went on a trip abroad.

During the trip, they saw a large group of people standing around and looking at something. Curiosity took them over, and they asked what was happening there.

They were told: The King of England is here, and we're all curious to catch a glimpse of him.

They approached to see, and sure enough, yet again, Nissim said to the CEO: "I know him", to which he was agitatedly told "Enough, you already got your trip abroad."

Nissim approached him, and when the King saw him, he ran to him and hugged him: "Nissim, how are you, how have you been?"

Nissim later left the jostling crowd and looked for the CEO, and saw him there, lying on the side, unconscious.

Parshat Behar - Man - The Driving Force

With great effort, he managed to revive him and asked him: "honorable manager, what happened to you?"

The CEO responded: "When

the King of England went over and hugged you, I heard two Chinese people asking who is the old man hugging Nissim?" and I simply couldn't take it any more..

Man - The Driving Force

It was G-d's blessed will to create a wonderful system composed of myriads of forces and countless worlds, and that there be within them endless creations, seraphim and angels, and the wide variety of creations that exist in our world, those of the realms of the inanimate, plant, animal, and human species.

G-d also determined that this entire wonderful system would be delivered into the hands of man.

Man would be the guide and leader, and the entire world would be balanced according to the details of his actions, his words, his thoughts, and the orders of his conduct - both for good and, G-d forbid, for the opposite.

When his actions, words, and thoughts are according to the divine will, he brings great

abundance to all the worlds and the upper lights.

But if, G-d forbid, his actions, words, and thoughts are flawed, and opposed to the divine will, he destroys many holy forces and worlds beyond measure.

This is an inner interpretation of the verse: "Your destroyers and demolishers will emerge from you" (Isaiah 49:17).

It is not only the forces of holiness that receive abundance from the actions of the Jewish people, but rather the forces of impurity too can receive abundance from the Jewish people.

Our holy sages revealed that before G-d created man, He consulted with the souls of the righteous and asked them: Is it worthwhile to create man?

Let's elaborate on this further.

The Righteous Took Responsibility

In His great humility, G-d turned to the souls of the righteous and said to them, "I wish to create man and to entrust such powers to him, that the entire conduct of creation be in his hands. Thus the entire creation would be influenced

by his deeds. If he walks in the way of the L-rd, engages in the study of Torah and the fulfillment of the commandments, he will draw abundance to all the worlds, and they all will exist and be nourished from the power of his good deeds.³

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

3. As mentioned, the angels also receive their vitality and abundance from the service of man.

The following story was shared by Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac of Komarna in "Netiv Mitzvotcha" (Introduction):

One of the great and righteous individuals who arose among the Jewish people, was Rabbi Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov, of blessed memory (the son of the holy Rabbi Yitzchak of Drohobych).

Rabbi Yechiel Michel served his Creator with self-sacrifice, and stood firm despite all the trials brought upon him from Heaven.

Despite being tried with many declines and sufferings, and having felt the taste of death a thousand times, he stood through them all with strength and joy in his heart, and did not feel any suffering or poverty.

He therefore merited that the pleasant and sweet light of the Divine Presence shone upon him, giving him a foretaste of the World to Come in this world, and his face was always radiant and joyful from the joy of Torah learning, prayer, and wearing Tefillin.

The holy Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk, testified about him, saying: "When Rabbi Yechiel Michel would don the prayer garment and fasten the straps of his garment, he drew abundance and vitality on high to eighty thousand legions of angels."

Two years before his passing, he required constant guard, lest his soul depart as a result of the great light of his cleaving to the Creator.

His custom was to eat the third Shabbat meal in his room with one of his sons, and afterward, he would go to his study hall to deliver words of Torah, together with songs and divine praises and finish his meal there.

One Sabbath, as usual, he sat to eat the third meal in his room, and no one was with him.

and Rabbi Yechiel Michel entered into intense spiritual devotion and ecstasy while murmuring the hymns of Shabbat.

A sublime light from the heavens above was revealed, clouds of purity began to form, and the wonderful air of the Garden of Eden could almost be palpably felt from afar.

Parshat Behar - The Righteous Took Responsibility

Even the souls of the righteous in the Garden of Eden will receive elevation and additional strength from the service of man in this world. If, however, he acts wickedly, he will destroy and ruin all the worlds. So, what do you say, is it worthwhile or not?"

The souls of the righteous answered: "Creator of the World, do create man, and we are ready to take upon ourselves the responsibility to return the souls of Israel to You in repentance."

G-d accepted their commitment, and created the world.

In the words of the holy Rabbi Nathan of Breslov:⁴

When the L-rd blessed be He desired to create the world, He consulted with the souls of the righteous, and then created the

world, as it is written: "They were the craftsmen..." (I Chronicles 4:23).

G-d consulted with the righteous because He foresaw that people would sin and provoke Him, which caused the angels to argue against the creation of man, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, etc." (Psalms 8:5) - for he is destined to sin before You and to provoke You (Zohar, Shemini 35b).

Because of this, G-d consulted and took counsel with the souls of the righteous, after which He decided to create man such that everything be dependent on him.

For the L-rd saw in the deeds of the righteous that they would withstand the tests of this world, and with their great strength they would bring all beings back to Him in repentance, and they

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

Precisely at that moment, his daughter entered his room, looked at her father and saw his spiritual ecstatic state and immediately ran in panic to her brother, Rabbi Yitzchak.

Rabbi Yitzchak ran swiftly to his father's room to distract him and to stop his ecstasy,

but as soon as he entered, his father, Rabbi Yechiel Michel, fell upon his shoulder and recited: 'Hear, O Israel; the L-rd is our G-d, the L-rd is One', and his holy soul departed purity. May his holy merit protect us.

4. Likutei Halachot (Choshen Mishpat, laws of guarantor - 4:4).

Parshat Behar - I Wish to Do Good for You

would repair the corruptions caused by other human beings.

Of all the righteous, the main reliance was on the soul of Moshiach (Messiah), who existed before the world, as he is the root of all the righteous of all generations, that he would complete all the repairs and correct all the corruption caused throughout the generations.

It turns out that Moshiach is the main guarantor for the whole world, as this concept is explained in the laws of guarantors in the Shulchan Aruch: Someone who consults with another whether to lend to someone, and the friend advises to lend to him, he becomes as a result a guarantor.

Therefore, Moshiach and all the righteous who are included in him, who advised the L-rd, to create the world, became guarantors, and

in the end will fulfill and complete their guarantee entirely.

Therefore, King David, who is Moshiach, prays to the L-rd, blessed be He:

"Guarantee your servant's well-being; do not let the arrogant oppress me" (Psalms 119:122). 'Guarantee' specifically, because he begs that the L-rd be with him to complete and fulfill his guarantee, saying, "Am I not the one who became a guarantor for everyone, and there is no one to stand by me but You alone". Therefore, he requests: 'Guarantee your servant's well-being'. Therefore, our sages teach us that Moshiach suffers afflictions for all of Israel, and is compelled to suffer afflictions, since he became a guarantor for everyone else.

I Wish to Do Good for You

Until now, we have learned that every Jew in particular, and the Jewish people as a whole, are the influencers of all existence, both for good and for otherwise.

Accordingly, when they walk in the way of the L-rd, they cause

abundance to all existence, and, G-d forbid, vice versa.

This is expounded in the Sifrei (Ha'azinu, section 319):

"The Rock that begot you, you were unmindful of" (Deuteronomy 32:18) - As much as I

Parshat Behar - And He Is Clothed in a New Robe

seek to do you good, you weaken my resolution.

You all stood by the sea and said: "This is my G-d, and I will glorify Him" (Exodus 15:2), but then you turned your back and said: "Let us make ourselves a leader, and return to Egypt" (Numbers 14:4).

I sought to do good for you, when you stood at Mount Sinai and said: "All that the L-rd has spoken we will do, and then listen"

(Exodus 24:7). I sought to do good for you, but you turned back again and said about the calf: "These are your G-ds, Israel" (Exodus 32:4).

Indeed, as long as I seek to do good for you, you weaken My resolution.

We should really begin our discussion with the first days of creation, but we will jump and focus on what transpired in the year 2964 to creation.

And He Is Clothed in a New Robe

The following tale is quoted in 'Otzar Aggadot Nach' (Volume I - Page 197):

The longtime disciple of Ahijah the Shilonite was Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was second only to his teacher in his vast Torah

knowledge, and the Torah was as sweet as honey in his mouth.

So great was the stature of the two in the wisdom of the Torah, that other sages of the generation were compared to grass of the field before them.⁵

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

5. "And it happened at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, and the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite, met him on the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field" (Kings I 11:29).

too, Jeroboam's Torah had no defect in it.

The Gaon Rabbi Yosef Chaim, explained (Ben Yehoyadah):

The Talmud asks (Sanhedrin 102a): What is 'a new garment' that Jeroboam wore referring to? Rav Nachman said, just as a new garment has no defect, so

'**Jeroboam's** Torah had no defect in it' - The intention here is that he would rule as is the law, and no one could open their mouth to refute his words. It had no defect, meaning that they could not open their mouths against it.

The omniscient G-d, knowing the depths of Jeroboam's future transgressions and that he would cause the people of Israel to sin, wanted to remove him from the world while he was still righteous.

He turned to the angel of death and said to him: 'Go and bring me the soul of Jeroboam the son of Nebat'.

When the ministering angels heard the decree of G-d they hurried and stood before Him and pleaded for the soul of Jeroboam, saying: "O L-rd, our master, how majestic is your name in all the earth" (Psalms 8:1), Your name is majestic because of him, and he is righteous. Let him be, that we may receive spiritual abundance through his merit.'

G-d answered the ministering angels: 'If you thus speak, I will spare his soul.' And so it was, G-d left Jeroboam alive.

A short time later, in the year 2964 to creation, King Solomon passed away, and his son Rehoboam sat on his throne and ruled over the people of Israel.

Jeroboam the son of Nebat saw that an opportunity for his reign

had come, and he gathered together advisors, wicked like himself, and said to them: 'I will be king over you and lead you mightily, but in order to reach kingdom, I need your help. Go and speak to the hearts of the people of Israel to listen to my voice and establish my kingdom.'

He brought together the leaders of the people and the scholars, the wicked together with the righteous, and turned to them and asked, 'Am I worthy in your eyes to be your king?' To which they all answered him: 'His highness is most worthy and esteemed in our eyes.'

He asked them further: 'Do you pledge to follow my commands and decrees?' They answered him: 'We will do whatever you tell us.' He further asked: 'What if I say to you, go and serve idols and turn your hearts away from the L-rd?'

The righteous men assembled immediately answered: 'We will never do such a thing to turn away from the L-rd, Creator of Heaven and Earth.'

The wicked who were assembled turned and said to the righteous: 'Why are you

alarmed? Do you really think that a great man like Jeroboam desires that we worship idols? Rather, he only seeks to test whether our loyalty truly lies with him.'

Thus, all were persuaded and convinced and agreed to accept Jeroboam's kingdom over them.

Sensing that the people's hearts were with him, Jeroboam turned and asked that they affix their signature on the statement that "Jeroboam the son of Nebat is king of Israel, and all his words we shall fulfill."

Many turned to the great sage Ahijah the Shilonite, Jeroboam's teacher, who was sitting with them, and sought his advice. Ahijah answered: 'G-d desires Jeroboam's kingdom and has informed me of this. It is best for us to fulfill the L-rd's will and accept the yoke of Jeroboam's kingdom.'

Thus, they all signed the document, and even Ahijah the Shilonite signed on Jeroboam's royal oath, believing that Jeroboam had said what he said only to test them.

On that day of Jeroboam's coronation there was great rejoicing among the people of Israel, and they gladdened their hearts with wine and became intoxicated.

In the end, Jeroboam led the Jewish people down a wayward path, and enticed them to sin the gravest of transgressions as written: "Jeroboam drove the people of Israel away from following the L-rd and made them commit a great sin" (Kings II 17:21).

G-d then turned to the angels and said to them: You have foolishly lost. Instead of receiving spiritual energy from Jeroboam, you received great impurity.

As brought in 'Midrash Talpiot' (Yud - Jeroboam):

When Jeroboam the son of Nebat was young and had not yet sinned, G-d said to the angel of death to gather him before his time so that he would die innocent and not guilty.

Immediately, the ministering angels came before the Holy One, blessed be He and said: 'L-rd, our Master, leave Jeroboam alive, for

Parshat Behar - His Figure Is Known in All Worlds

through his Torah study, we receive immense abundance.'

G-d said to them: 'Since you request that he not die, I will leave him.'

When, years later he sinned and made two calves of idol worship and caused the people of Israel to

sin, G-d said to the angels: "All the abundance that was bestowed to you on his behalf has been turned to impurity, it would have been better if he had died young and studied Torah with the great angels," to which the ministering angels immediately agreed.

His Figure Is Known in All Worlds

Before Jeroboam sinned, he managed to influence, through the power of his Torah, immense abundance to all the ministering angels in Heaven, and since he was their benefactor, all the ministering angels recognized him.

However, after he sinned, they sustained immense damage, and all the spiritual abundance that they were accustomed to turned into impurity.

This is true not only for Jeroboam, but every Jew is recognized in the higher worlds, both for good and for the better, as we encountered in the humorous tale of Nissim that we began with.

Nissim represents the soul of every Jew who had the merit in

his lifetime to study the Torah and fulfill the commandments.

When the soul ascends, it discovers that everyone knows it.

During his life, while studying the Talmud, he mentioned Abaye and Rava, Rav Papa, and Rabbi Zeira countless times, and even if he didn't feel it, every time he mentioned them and studied their Torah, he caused them great spiritual pleasure.

As a result of the spiritual pleasure he caused them, they recognize him, and when he goes about in the higher worlds, he will meet Abaye, who will inquire of him: "Nissim, how are you?"⁶

Similarly, he will meet the ministering angels, who also

Parshat Behar - His Figure Is Known in All Worlds

received great abundance from his Torah and divine service, and they too will recognize him and ask: "Nissim, how do you feel?"

One observing from the side may wonder: "Who is she that rises from the desert, yearning

upon her beloved?" (Song of Songs 8:5) - What connection and claim can an earthly being and a simpleton have with the lofty angels, the souls of the righteous, and the great halls of bright divine radiance?

— *~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~* —

6. Regarding this matter, the story is told of a rabbi who used to expound before his congregation in Halacha and Aggadah, and as was the custom of yesteryear, he would raise several difficulties on the Rambam and resolve them with great novelty.

After his passing, when he came to the world of truth, the angels came to take him to the Garden of Eden since he was a righteous and brilliant sage, but the rabbi refused to go to the Garden of Eden until the Rambam himself would come to greet him.

For as written in the Zohar (Vayechi 218b), when a great soul comes to the upper worlds, all the souls of the righteous come to greet him to receive him, especially those souls with whom he had connections of deep study, upon which all those Tannaim and Amoraim come to greet him with love and affection.

Since he, the rabbi, was constantly connected with the study of the Rambam in this world and endeavored to resolve all questions on him, he believed that it

was only fitting that the Rambam would trouble himself to come and greet him.

The Rambam donned his rabbinic mantle and descended to greet the rabbi and asked him what his request was.

"I am surprised that the Rambam did not bother to come and greet me being that I labored for forty years to resolve and solve all the challenges that arose against his rulings from the Talmud," the Rabbi said wistfully.

The Rambam replied "Where did you find a challenging law that I wrote?"

The rabbi proceeded to list all the difficulties he had raised on the Rambam's rulings.

The Rambam dismissed these all one after another, this ruling was taken from an explicit Mishnah, an explicit passage in the Talmud, and so on.

The rabbi was astonished and said: "Is this how difficulties on the Rambam are resolved? They require deep explanations and novelties!" (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch with

The Destruction of the First and Second Temples

Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned for 22 years.

352 years later, on the 9th of Av in the year 3338 to the creation of the world, the First Temple was destroyed.

The Talmud states (Yoma 9b): "Why was the First Temple destroyed? Because of three things that were then: idolatry, immorality, and bloodshed."

The Jewish people sinned these three transgressions, and because of this, they damaged the higher worlds and destroyed the Heavenly Temple, and consequently, the Temple down below was destroyed as well.

After seventy years, once again, the Jewish people merited to ascend on the proper path, and the Second Temple was built.

However, this time as well, sparks of 'baseless hatred' were observed, and this hatred damaged and darkened the higher worlds and brought about destruction down below.

Sadly, on the 9th of Av in the year 3830 to creation, the Second Temple was destroyed as well.

It is regarding the destruction of the Second Temple that we find a connection to in this week's Torah portion - Parshat Behar.

The Laws of an Estate Sale

One of the laws mentioned in our Torah portion is the law of 'selling a family estate'.

Thus it is stated: "If your brother becomes impoverished and sells some of his property, his nearest redeemer shall come

and redeem what his brother has sold. If a man has no one to redeem it and then becomes prosperous and finds the means to redeem it" (Leviticus 25:25-26).

These verse discuss the laws of the sale of inherited land:

Parshat Behar - The Laws of an Estate Sale

When the Jewish people merited to enter the land of Israel, each tribe received its portion in the land of Israel (see Joshua 13), and the tribal leader divided the area among the families of the tribe, each family receiving its own portion, called 'an estate'.⁷

Ever since then, every Jew was obligated to preserve the 'estate' he received from his forefathers, and it was forbidden for him to sell it unless in direst of circumstances, as stated above:

If your brother becomes impoverished and sells some of his property' - that is, only a Jew whose economic situation deteriorated and debts have overwhelmed him, becoming 'poor and needy', was allowed to sell from his estate. Even then, as a matter of honor and respect, he would keep a part of the estate for himself, as precisely stated: 'some of his property' - not all of it.

Even what he was allowed to sell was limited to the number of years until the Jubilee year (the price was likewise determined by the number of years until the Jubilee). And when the Jubilee year arrived, the estate returned to him, as it is said: "until the year of jubilee, and it shall go out in the jubilee and return to his property" (ibid., verse 28).

The Torah further states that the seller has a duty to redeem the field of the estate, but only after two years have passed from the day of the sale, after which he may redeem it even against the buyer's will. If he was not able to do so, there is a commandment for his relative to redeem it, as it is said: 'his nearest redeemer comes and redeems what his brother has sold'.

This is the simple explanation of the commandment.

However, when Rabbi Chaim Ben Attar - the Ohr HaChaim

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

7. In the words of Sefer HaChinuch (Commandment 339): "The ancestral fields are the fields that are the inheritance of each one of the people of Israel during the division of

the land, and also whoever merited additional land by the means of a daughter (who has no brothers) who inherited her father's lands (and married into a different tribe)."

Parshat Behar - Do What Is Right and Good

HaKadosh - came to these Torah laws of selling an estate, his soul was inflamed with holy fire, flames of holiness filled his being, and the

Torah secrets were revealed to him, teaching him that these verses speak (also) of the last and final exile, as we shall elaborate.

Do What Is Right and Good

Thus interpreted the Ohr HaChaim the Torah passage above:

“**These** verses hint to a great matter and insight to the inhabitants of the world.

If your brother becomes impoverished' - the hebrew word for impoverished 'ימוך' also carries the same meaning as 'מך' - falters as in the verse: "Through laziness the roof falters" (Ecclesiastes 10:18).

Therefore, this verse can also be translated as "Through laziness the one who makes the roof becomes impoverished.

This is as our sages say in the Talmud (Tractate Megillah 11a): You have, so to speak, caused G-d, about who it says: "Who makes the roof of His upper chambers with waters" (Psalms 104:3), to be 'impoverished'.

For when the lower beings deviate from the good path, the spiritual influences withdraw, and

the pillars of the divine holiness are impoverished, for their very essence depends on the lower beings.

Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel of blessed memory explained (Imrei Noam, Behar - Essay 3)

According to the words of the Ohr HaChaim, the verse: "And if your brother becomes impoverished" (Leviticus 25:35), refers to G-d, who is called the 'brother' of the Jewish people, as it is said: "For the sake of my brothers and friends" (Psalms 122:8).

The intention of the verse is, that when the Jewish people deviate from the path of good, G-d forbid, they cause G-d to become - as it were - impoverished and poor, as if He lacks the power to save them, G-d forbid (Rashi on Tractate Megillah ibid).

For the influences on High depend on the actions of the

Jewish people here down below in this lower world, and when, G-d forbid, there is spiritual weakness among the Jewish people, naturally, the spiritual influences withdraw and the pillar of holiness is impoverished.

The words of the Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: 'when the lower beings *deviate* from the path of good', teach us that the above is true not only when a person commits severe transgressions, but even when he merely veers slightly off the path of good.

For example, when one indulges in various desires, neglects the study of Torah, or fails to maintain the sanctity of their eyes, these actions too cause the spiritual influences to withdraw, and prevent G-d from delivering salvation to the Jewish people.

When these events occurred, and the pillars of the divine holiness were impoverished, as the verse continues "and he sells his property" (Leviticus 25:25) - 'his property' that which is uniquely his, refers to the Second Temple.

The Ohr HaChaim continues:

“The scripture informs us that the redemption is in the hands of the righteous one who is close to Him, as it is said regarding the righteous: "through those close to me I shall be sanctified" (ibid., 10:3), and he will redeem his brother's estate.

For the L-rd, blessed be He, calls the righteous 'brothers' as it were (Zohar, Shelach 160b), as it is written: 'For the sake of my brothers and friends'.

The redemption will occur through the righteous causing a spiritual awakening in the hearts of men, telling them 'is it good for you to sit outside, exiled from your Father's table, and what good is life in this world, apart from the Divine company of the eternal G-d, blessed be He, that you were accustomed to.'

The righteous will cause people to despise the desires of the transient, and will instead arouse in them spiritual desire, which will be felt by every living soul and cause that they improve their actions, and thereby, G-d will 'redeem His estate'."

Parshat Behar - The Customs of Lag BaOmer

The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh concludes:

“**For** this, the greats of the land, and the leaders of Israel, are destined to give judgment, and the L-rd will seek the disgrace of His desecrated house from them.”

The Customs of Lag BaOmer

This Sunday we will be privileged to celebrate the holy day of Lag BaOmer.

In a talk delivered by Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel of blessed memory, he said (Imrei Noam - Holidays, Lag BaOmer, essay 9):

The holy custom of Israel is to increase light by lighting large bonfires on Lag BaOmer. We have mentioned the explanation of the 'Bnei Yissaschar' for this custom - to honor the hidden light of the Torah that begins to be revealed on this day, as well as to honor the soul of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, through whom the hidden light of the Torah was revealed in the world with the writing of the holy Zohar.

To add depth to this custom, we preface with what our sages

The reason that G-d will seek the disgrace of His house from them, is because the righteous took upon themselves (before the creation of the world) the responsibility to return the souls of the Jewish people closer in repentance, as mentioned earlier.

taught (Yevamot 62b): that the reason for the tragic death of Rabbi Akiva's students was 'because they did not show honor to each other'.

From the fact that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, a student of Rabbi Akiva, did not die together with the rest of the students, it is proven that he did not behave like them, but rather loved others and honored everyone greatly, and traits of love and unity among the people of Israel were especially emphasized by him.

He also educated his holy students to always have love and unity with each other, and to look at each other with a good eye, as he said to them (beginning of the Idra Rabba in the Zohar - Naso 128a): 'We hold that the matter depends on love', meaning, we must

always behave only in a manner of love and unity, in order to correct the blemish of the previous students who had died.

To symbolize the trait of love and unity that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai had taught, we light large bonfires on the day of his passing, for the nature of the bonfire indicates unity, for the flames all gather and collect as one from all corners of the bonfire to become one big flame.

In addition: the holy Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, of blessed memory explains (Likutei Moharan, Part I, Torah 61 - 5) that the great fire of the bonfire symbolizes the unity of the Jewish people because it is created from the connection and union of many small flames.

Every Jew is the aspect of a small candle, as it is said: "The spirit of man is the candle of the L-rd" (Proverbs 20:27), and when many souls join together, they create a great bonfire of love and holiness. Since this was the way of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, we therefore light large bonfires on his holy yearzeit.

Therefore, on Lag BaOmer, each and every one of us has the great and holy obligation to strengthen ourselves in the love of our fellow Jew, to see the virtues of others and not their flaws, to behave with an added measure of respect towards one another, and to strive to increase love, peace, and unity in the world, in the way of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

Since Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai had a great love for people, therefore, G-d showered upon him an abundance of holiness and divine insights, and opened all the gates of Heaven to accept his prayers.

The rule in Heaven is, that the upper gates open and bestow abundance only upon one who has love for their fellow men, and include themselves with all of Israel in love and unity.

However, one who does not love people, and separates himself from the community of Israel, even if he is a scholar and separates himself from all worldly matters, G-d closes all the gates and withholds upper abundance from him.

In this context, the story is told of a Torah scholar who taught Torah to anyone who desired, and his door was always open at all times to anyone seeking to learn the word of G-d.

This behavior found favor in Heaven, and it was decided that he merited that Elijah the Prophet would reveal himself to him every day and teach him Torah novelties that were innovated in the Heavenly yeshiva.

One day, this Torah scholar felt that his practice of delivering lessons and teaching Torah to all those who sought him was stealing a lot of his time, and was therefore not able to learn as much as his heart desired.

Therefore, he decisively decided to lock his doors and isolate himself, and to study Torah as his soul wished.

However, from the day he began to isolate himself and stopped teaching Torah to others, Elijah the Prophet ceased coming to him to teach him Torah.

This Torah scholar was greatly saddened by this and

fasted many times so that it would be revealed to him from Heaven why he was punished with such a severe punishment. Elijah the Prophet was revealed to him in a dream one night and said to him: "One who closes his door to the Jewish people - G-d does not permit me to speak with him.

From the moment you prevented the public from coming to learn from you Torah and cared only for yourself, G-d forbade that I reveal myself to you and to teach you Torah."

Immediately, that Torah scholar understood his mistake, and once again opened his door to everyone, and returned to teach Torah to all seekers, and indeed, a short time later, Elijah the Prophet returned to reveal himself to him and to teach him Torah.

A similar story is told about the saintly Baba Sali, of blessed memory. He once felt unwell and was feverish, but nevertheless, out of his great love for the Jewish people, he accepted the large congregation that came to his house to receive advice and blessing from him.

The assistants were very concerned for the rabbi's health, and therefore, without informing him, they closed the doors of his house to the public, and informed everyone who had not yet entered, that the rabbi was not feeling well, and that it was no longer possible to enter.

However, the Baba Sali immediately sensed that something was amiss, and ordered them to immediately open the doors of the house wide and admit all the people who had come to seek his blessing.

He placed a wet towel on his feverish head, and received the entire congregation with a shining face and with patience until the last of them. He later explained to the assistants:

In the middle of receiving the public, I suddenly felt that the Divine Presence had withdrawn from me and I did not understand why.

After investigating the matter, I was informed that this was because you closed my doors to the people who had been waiting outside for several hours,

and therefore the Shechinah remained with them outside.

The Shechinah is found only where the Jewish people are, and does not dwell except on a person who connects to all of the people of Israel.'

This connection between the righteous and the common Jewish man is a main innovation of Chassidut:

Before our master, the Baal Shem Tov, the Holy, came into the world, rabbis isolated themselves in the innermost rooms so that the simple people, engaged in mundane affairs, would not 'contaminate' them.

One who needed advice had a great difficulty, since the rabbis were often not willing 'to descend' and give advice on mundane matters. As a result, the simple folk were left like sheep without a shepherd to guide them and illuminate their path, living lives of neglect and debauchery.

When the holy Baal Shem Tov saw this, his heart was embittered over the degraded state of the Jewish

people, and immediately decided to put an end to this phenomenon.

He enacted that all his great disciples, who served as city rabbis, would not live lives of isolation and separation from the people. They instead were to open their doors wide to anyone seeking advice and blessing in any area and regarding any matter.

From then on, they were to be involved in every detail of the common people's lives, and draw the people closer with love and affection, to teach them Torah according to their level of understanding, and most importantly, to do so in a pleasant and joyful way.

Simply said: rabbis are obligated to embrace the entirety of the Jewish people and give them the feeling that there is someone who loves them and cares for them wholeheartedly.

The disciples of our master, the Baal Shem Tov continued in this manner of love and closeness, as did their own disciples, most notably among them the Ba'al HaTanya.

As the Lubavitcher Rebbe, of sainted memory, writes in Hayom Yom (22 Iyar):

“Once the early Chassidim gathered, and the content of their conversation was: The Rebbe, our master the Alter Rebbe, removed the isolation.

Previously, the rabbi, the master of the academy, the Gaon - was isolated by himself, and the disciples were isolated by themselves. The path of Chassidut established by the Rebbe is the great divine achievement, that the Rebbe is not isolated, and the Chassidim are not isolated.”

The Alter Rebbe established that the rabbi must always be available to his disciples and to the people, to encourage them, to embrace them, and to give them a feeling that they are loved, precious, important, and that there is always someone who cares for them.

The parable for this is flowers. For flowers to grow beautifully, they need the warmth and light of the sun's rays. A flower that does not receive enough sun, quickly wilts and dries up.

Parshat Behar - The Redemption Will Surely Come

So too regarding the relationship between a rabbi and his disciples:

When the rabbi shines his rays of glory upon his disciples, brightens their faces, says a good word to them, and strengthens and encourages them, they grow beautifully. But if the rabbi isolates himself from his disciples and does not give them proper attention, they quickly wither, G-d forbid.

We must learn from the Holy One, blessed be He - if not for His embrace, which envelops the entire creation with His infinite love and divine energy, the creation would not exist even for a single moment.

A true rabbi always gives his disciples a feeling that they are loved,

precious, and important. Thus, even when he rebukes them with harsh and sharp words, they will know well that it is sourced in love and abundant affection, the way a compassionate father admonishes his sons harshly, to save him from corrupt paths and guide to straight and proper paths.

If the disciple does not feel this underlying love, it is often a sign that he has sinned against G-d, and these sins create a barrier between him and the righteous. When he returns in complete repentance and removes from himself the soiled garments of sin, immediately he will feel how he is enveloped from all sides by the love of his rabbi.

The Redemption Will Surely Come

Continuing with the interpretation of the verses relating to estates, the Holy Or HaChaim expounds further the verses:

“He shall calculate the number of years for which he sold the land and return the excess to the man to whom he had sold it, and return to his ancestral land.

If he does not have the means to retrieve the land to himself, then it remains in the possession of the buyer until the jubilee year. It is then released on the jubilee and returned to his ancestral land” (Leviticus 25:27-28).

The sale here refers to our iniquities, as it says: "Behold,

Parshat Behar - The Redemption Will Surely Come

because of your iniquities you have been sold" (Isaiah 50:1), and these iniquities are a debt on the person.

At the moment of payment of the debt, one needs to pay off what still remains, as it says, 'He shall calculate the number of years for which he sold the land'.

Thus, the years the Temple remained destroyed shall deduct from the measure of the iniquities of Israel.

“And return the excess” in the same manner the sages have said (Vayikra Rabbah, 21:5) regarding 'balanced repentance'; if a person enjoyed the transgression he shall penalize himself according to the amount he enjoyed from the sin and thus pay his debt, likewise shall G-d do when the time of redemption approaches.

What it says, 'If he does not have the means to retrieve the land

to himself' - refers to the time when G-d sees that the people do not have the strength to endure any more the pains of exile, and their spiritual debts are overwhelming, and they have no strength to bear, they will be 'released by the jubilee', which is the final predetermined time for the redemption, and 'return to his ancestral land', for the redemption from the exile will arrive even if the people of Israel are completely wicked sinners, G-d forbid.”

As the Chafetz Chaim of blessed memory wrote in 'Shem Olam (Sha'ar Hahitchazkut - Chapter 14): “With G-d, the deficiency of an unworthy recipient isn't a deterrent.

When G-d desires to redeem His people, he will not look at their misdeeds but will immediately "redeem Israel from all their iniquities" (Psalms 130:8).



Summary and Practical Applications

1. When it arose in G-d's will to create the world, He created a wonderful system composed of myriads of forces and countless worlds, within which exist creations without end. G-d then determined that this entire system be delivered into the hands of man, and with his power, and according to the movements of his actions, words, and thoughts he would lead creation, for better or worse. When the actions, words, and thoughts of man are according to G-d's will, abundant influence is bestowed to all the worlds, and even the souls of the righteous in paradise receive elevation and additional strength. However, if G-d forbid, man does the opposite, he destroys to an immeasurable degree the numerous worlds above, and the forces of impurity leech from him a great amount of energy.

2. It is G-d's will to influence good upon the world and if a Jew spoils their actions, the attribute of justice blocks this divine influence and prevents it from descending. This, as it were, 'weakens' the strength of G-d, and causes that G-d, as it were, becomes 'poor and destitute'.

3. When one merely veers slightly away from the good path, such as by: indulging in various desires, neglecting to invest in Torah study, not maintaining the

holiness of one's eyes, even these can cause the divine influence to be removed from the world, and prevent G-d from saving the Jewish people.

4. The righteous awaken the hearts of people to improve their deeds and better their evil ways. Thus, a true Jewish leader is like the sun, and his students are like flowers. When the rabbi spreads his rays of wisdom upon his students, shines his countenance upon them, says a good word to them, and strengthens and encourages them, they grow beautifully. However, if the leader isolates himself from his students and does not give them proper attention, they quickly wither, G-d forbid.

5. A true Torah leader gives his students the feeling that they are loved, precious, and important. Even when he reprimands them with harsh and sharp words, they know well that it is but reproof out of love and great affection, similar to a compassionate father who disciplines his children harshly, to save them from deviant ways and to guide them in the straight path. If the student does not feel this, it is a sign that he must return in repentance and cease wrongdoings, after which he will immediately feel enveloped by his rabbi's love.

6. Sins create a barrier and partition that separates a person from G-d, and by

Parshat Behar - Summary and Practical Applications

returning to G-d with all one's heart in repentance and soul searching, these partitions are nullified. A person must first acknowledge that he sinned, and angered and rebelled against G-d with his actions, thoughts, and speech, even if unintentionally, through which, he caused a tremendous flaw in his soul, and lowered it down to the place of impurity and evilness.

7. In order to merit that the repentance should be complete, one needs to return to G-d in all four stages of repentance, which are:

1. Forsaking the sin.
2. Regret over the past.
3. Confession.
4. Resolving in the future not to repeat the misdeeds again.

Confession needs to be made verbally, one who merely confesses with words

and has not resolved in his heart to forsake the sin, is akin to one who immerses for purity while holding an impure creature in his hand.

8. A penitent who sincerely desires to rectify his soul, should set times for the study of Torah, which is the greatest of rectifications, and the greatest of all cures. Even one who has sinned against his Creator severely, should know that the study of Torah study for its own sake, especially the study of the Talmud and the Poskim (halachic codifiers) with great effort and toil, has the power to rectify all iniquities, and to illuminate the darkness of one's soul.

This is especially true for one who has immersed himself in the holy mikveh waters, with repentance and the necessary preparations, and surely his Torah ascends before the Throne of Glory without any obstructions.

Shabbat Shalom!





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| Miami | 7:46 pm | 8:43 pm | 9:17 pm |
| Los Angeles | 7:37 pm | 8:38 pm | 9:08 pm |
| Montreal | 8:11 pm | 9:25 pm | 9:42 pm |
| Toronto | 8:28 pm | 9:39 pm | 9:59 pm |
| London | 8:41 pm | 10:09 pm | 10:12 pm |
| Jerusalem | 7:20 pm | 8:11 pm | 9:06 pm |
| Tel Aviv | 7:17 pm | 8:08 pm | 9:02 pm |
| Haifa | 7:18 pm | 8:09 pm | 9:03 pm |
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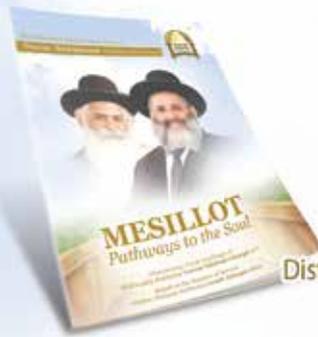
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