

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 131

Chayei Sarah | On Simchat Torah the greatness of every Jew is revealed



MESILOT

Pathways to the Soul

illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly parasha
by **Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l**

From the weekly lectures of his son,
Rabbi Israel Abargel shlita

...PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL...

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Parshat Chayei Sarah

Mother of Royalty

Our story¹ takes us back two hundred years to a small Eastern European town. Mr. Motl was willing to offer any sum to marry off his only daughter, Idale. This was no empty promise, as Mr. Motl, a wealthy man in the town, had quite a substantial fortune. As a result, many people sought to be his "friends" or at least acquaintances, trying to curry favor with him at every opportunity.

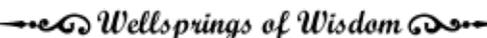
A man of his stature couldn't live in a modest hovel like the rest of the town's residents. His mansion was a testament to opulence, adorned with expensive stone and magnificent parquet flooring. Surrounding it was an extensive botanical garden, filled with various trees and flowers.

However, wealth, like many other things, has its drawbacks.

Alongside the ability to afford anything one desires, rich individuals often attract secret enemies consumed by envy. From this perspective, Mr. Motl was no different.

A handful of envious individuals started spreading rumors about Idale, his daughter. They claimed that she was involved in various questionable activities, especially because she assisted him in his business dealings, which sometimes involved non-Jewish merchants. Such rumors snowballed, and unlike money, began to grow the more they circulated.

Mr. Motl was oblivious to all of this. He was confident in his daughter's bright future and believed that he could select any groom he wished for her. In his rosy dreams,



1. As told by Rabbi Yaakov Kaminitzky (Zivug Mishamayim p. 255)

Parshat Chayei Sarah - Mother of Royalty

he already pictured himself sitting in a comfortable chair, surrounded by grandchildren, enjoying their playful antics.

However, to his great surprise, no suitors were eager to approach the luxurious doors of his mansion. Even when he tried to reach out to them, they always found some excuse to avoid him. It seemed that when it came to the practical matter of marriage, they hesitated for some undisclosed reason.

After many such days passing by in a strange and unexplainable silence, Motl decided to travel and visit the prestigious Yeshivas and find himself a suitor for his daughter. He was certain he would swiftly find the young and fortunate lad who would be privileged to join his family.

He was graciously received and offered some respectable names of Yeshiva students, and then he promptly turned to Moshe, the local matchmaker to facilitate the match for his daughter. In the meantime he stayed at a local inn. However, the hours turned to

days, and a week had already passed, yet for some inexplicable reason he received no word from Moshe the matchmaker...

Mr. Motl grew impatient, it was hard to imagine that anyone would refuse his daughter, especially in a time when poverty was a constant and unwelcome guest in many households.

He had important matters to attend to at home, but he found himself waiting, puzzled, in the inn. The entire situation was taking a toll on him, making him feel utterly powerless. Yet, even then, a glimmer of hope still burned in his heart, and he tried to console himself, putting his trust in the Creator that everything would turn out for the best.

Each new day brought fresh hope. Perhaps in another town and in another yeshiva, he would meet success. Instructing his coachman to hitch the horses, he would climb into the carriage and set out again each morning. Upon arrival at a new yeshiva, he would once again inquire about the best young men and engage the

services of a matchmaker. But, for some inexplicable reason, it always ended the same way.

He couldn't fathom who or what was behind this. Why did his daughter, who was so intelligent, capable, virtuous, and beautiful, have to remain single? Motl had never felt so helpless. A new reality was unfolding before him, revealing how all his wealth could be utterly useless.

Despondently, R. Motl returned home with a heavy heart, on the brink of despair. He no longer appeared as confident and self-assured as he had been before. Sadness began to appear more frequently on his face. Days turned into weeks, weeks into months, months into years and there was still no offers for Idale. He felt suffocated, unable to find peace within the four walls of his home. And at home his daughter of course, was not getting any younger. He prayed from the bottom of his heart to the Creator, asking Him to send his salvation and put an end to the suffering of his only daughter.

Evening descended upon the town. People who had finished their workday filled the synagogues, praying and learning, each according to their abilities. R. Motl sat in his corner with a gloomy expression. He was incapable of smiling at anyone. Suddenly, he heard a voice calling him uncertainly. Startled, he turned toward the voice and saw Shaya, a matchmaker, approaching him, mumbling: "Um... I want to propose a groom to you. But promise me, before I present him to you, that you'll think only of the benefit of your daughter!"

R. Motl had no choice but to agree. "Alright, I promise you! Have you found a match for my daughter?"

"Yes..."

And who is this person?"

Um... well... it's Arale the shmaiser!"

In those days, the lowest social class were the wagon drivers. However, even lower were their apprentices, whose task was to

whip the horses, and nothing more. An apprentice would be called a 'shmaiser,' or a 'whipper'.

R. Motl felt the blood drain from his face. Could anyone have imagined such a proposal even in jest just three years ago? And now, they were offering him a 'shmaiser'! R. Motl didn't know where to hide out of the deep shame.

With unsteady legs, R. Motl made his way back home. His home, which had once been his fortress, no longer brought him any joy. Deep down, he knew he had no choice but to accept proposal. He no longer had any demands.

However, how would he tell his beloved daughter about this shameful proposal? After dinner, which he couldn't taste at all, he called his daughter. "Idale, my dear and beloved daughter! I believe that in the whole region, it's difficult to find a girl like you. Your righteousness, virtue, modesty, and cleverness are truly rare! Truly, you deserve to marry the best young man in the entire region! But you know that, due to

some malicious rumors, whether you like it or not, we've received very few marriage proposals, to be more precise, none at all... For years, we've been searching for a groom for you, but the only proposal is Ahrale the shmaiser..."

Idale stood frozen in place, like an ice block. This was not at all the groom she had dreamed of. In her future dreams, her groom was a yeshiva student, perhaps even a city rabbi or head of a yeshiva, teaching people the holy Torah. But now, her life would amount to waking up early in the morning to prepare a piece of rye bread with garlic for her husband, so he'd have the strength to whip horses?

Adding insult to injury, Ahrale's family asked for time to even consider the proposal! A week later, the matchmaker Shaya knocked on R. Motl's mansion door with an answer: "Arale and his parents agree to the proposal"

It wasn't easy to accept such a proposal. It wasn't easy for Idale, and it wasn't easy for her parents. But was there any other option? They had no choice but to agree.

Parshat Chayei Sarah - The Fortieth Year in the Desert

The engagement took place, and the wedding day arrived. Idale, dressed in a white dress, in the moments preceding the chuppah, turned to the Al-mighty in prayer: "L-rd of the Universe ! You know that all the rumors about me are false. Today, I am not getting married to the man I dreamed of, but I accept Your will with love ! And I ask You in return, my Heavenly Father, to send me pure and righteous children, who will serve You in purity and holiness, studying Your Torah all their days !"

After finishing the prayer, Idale burst into tears, and her parents did the same. The chuppah ceremony took place, and Idale became the wife of Arale the 'shmaiser'.

The Fortieth Year in the Desert

Let us begin with the following question

In the year 2448 to the creation of the world, the people

Her prayer was accepted in Heaven. Idale became a mother to royalty. She was blessed with four illustrious sons, each of whom became great and outstanding rabbis:

- **Rabbi** Yisrael Heller, Rosh Yeshiva in Pinsk and Mir, and author of "Nachalat Yisrael."

- **Rabbi** Meir Heller, Rabbi of Kostyukovichi.

- **Rabbi** Yechiel Heller, author of 'Amudei Or', and Rabbi of Sovalek.

- **Rabbi** Yehoshua Heller, Rabbi of Polangen and Telz, and author of 'Chosen Yehoshua'.

How can we too merit to be blessed with upstanding and righteous children ?

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

2. In a talk by the Rabbi Vollach (Maayan Hamoed, The Passover Haggadah, p. 422), he

related the following: Something strange happened to our ancestors in Egypt some

Parshat Chayei Sarah - The Fortieth Year in the Desert

3,300 years ago. For generations, they had led lives set in a fixed routine. They suffered from a bitter slavery, along with cucumbers and melons which were freely available. Their way of life was fixed and predictable...

Suddenly, Moses our teacher appeared, and everything started changing at once, as if a hurricane had entered town. Events chased one other, Moses' encounters and the ten plagues, Pharaoh's consent and refusal, hope and despair, anticipation, and a weary souls. All this leading the way to the Passover sacrifice and the Exodus, the splitting of the sea, the Manna bread, the sweetened water, the battle with Amalek, and the giving of the Torah...

This reminds us so much of our times. Generations upon generations have lived a life in routine. And now, upheaval has come, a transformation. Foundations have been uprooted from their place, the Jews coming to the Holy Land, the beloved land of our forefathers. And here, events chase one another; there is no day of routine, rest, or calm. What is happening here? What is the meaning of all this?

This recalls forth a story told by an elderly Jewish man who emigrated from Russia. In his childhood, they had connected his village in Russia to the electrical grid. There was a cinema there, and the projector was operated manually. The operator sat in a booth and turned the projector handle slowly.

One day, the village residents gathered

in the cinema, took their seats, the hall darkened, and the screening began. Everything went smoothly until suddenly the image froze on the screen.

It turned out that the operator had fallen asleep...

They waited for a minute or two, and then began to grumble, shout, and be frustrated. The operator was locked in his booth, asleep like a log... They had no option, so they waited for him to wake up. There was nothing better to do, and they stared at the silent, frozen image on the screen..."

The movie was supposed to last for two hours. In the first quarter of an hour, they watched the screening as intended, but the next hour and a half was wasted on the frozen image. Then, the operator, woke up in a panic, and looked at his watch: "Oh no, the movie is just at the beginning, and there's only a quarter of an hour left for to screen it!" He began to turn the handle as fast as he could... And so, while for an hour and a half, they saw one still image, for the final quarter of an hour, the images flew by like hummingbirds, chasing one another in a frenzy, leaving the viewers astonished...

The same describes what is happening today. For generations, the image was frozen. The world continued on quietly in its routine. Quite suddenly, the redemption is drawing near, and there's a need to hurry and expedite the processes, settle all accounts, and complete all the procedures. There's no time to spare; the hour is pressing, and the Messiah is waiting!

Parshat Chayei Sarah - The Power Of Contemplation

year, the people of Israel approached the land of Edom, hoping to pass through their land and shorten their journey. Moses sent messengers to the king of Edom to request a 'travel permit': "Let us pass through your land. We will not pass through fields or vineyards, and we will not drink water from your wells. We will go along the king's highway; we will not turn aside to the right or to the left until we have passed through your territory."

However, the King of Edom was rather aggressive in his response: "You shall not pass through us, or else I will come out against you with the sword."

Rabbi Chaim Zaichik asks:³ Why were the Edomites so fearful? They were a large nation, armed with the latest technology of their time, while our people only requested to pass through the main road, without deviating, and even promised to pay for water. What provoked them so much?

The Power Of Contemplation

To answer this question, Let us begin with an introduction:

The Al-mighty created a wondrous world with majestic landscapes, exotic animals, beautiful flowers, and a variety of fruits and vegetables. In the words of the Rambam in the Foundational Laws of the of the Torah (Yesodei HaTorah):

"There is a commandment to love the Creator and stand in awe of Him, as it is written: 'Love the Lord your G-d.' And it is also written: 'You shall fear the Lord your G-d.' But what leads to the love of G-d and awe before Him? When a person contemplates His wondrous deeds and creations, observing His infinite wisdom in

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

Just as in Egypt, the revelation of Moses was sudden, so too in this redemption: "And suddenly, the Lord whom you seek will come to His sanctuary" (Malachi 3:1)...

And since this is the case, we must prepare to the best of our ability for His arrival, and each one should take proper stock of his soul...

3. In 'Ohr Chadash' vol. 2, p. 869

them, he will come to love the Creator and be inspired to comprehend His great Name."

As understood from the words of the Rambam, Contemplation helps us achieve love for the Creator. "Lift up your eyes on high [to the heavens], and see who has created these things." "The heavens declare the glory of G-d, and the firmament proclaims His handiwork." "And in my flesh, I see G-d." Through contemplation, a person connects with the object of their concentration and thus build for G-d a dwelling place in their heart.⁴

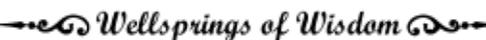
In 'Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh'⁵ is written the following:

Our holy books tell us that contemplation connects a person to the object they are looking at. When a person sees something even from afar, while the object may be out there, I see it here. Light rays reflecting off the object enter our eyes, where they are transformed

into electrical impulses that travel along nerve fibers to the brain. The brain processes this information and presents us with a complete picture.

If something obstructs the light rays from reaching a person's eyes (e.g., dark glasses), they will not see anything. On the other hand, if we project a specific image using a computer and send the corresponding signal along nerve fibers to the brain's visual center, the person will be convinced that the object is right in front of them. In essence, visual perception creates a tangible connection with the object seen, the actual image becomes engraved in the person's brain.

This adds depth to the Talmudic expression: "The words of 'so and so' *appear to me*." This means that it was possible to clearly visualize the other's words in one's mind, emphasizing that a vivid mental image is no less potent than actual sight.



4. Tanchuma Nasso, chap. 16

5. Vol. 6 p. 161

Complete Connection - in the Messianic Times

A true connection with the Creator awaits us in the days of the Messiah when all barriers separating us from G-d will disappear, as it is stated: "And your Teacher shall no longer be hidden from you, and your eyes shall see your Teacher (Isaiah 30:20)."

The Baal HaTanya writes⁶ that this will be the future reward of the righteous, who will merit seeing the light of the Creator without a 'garment' or concealment.

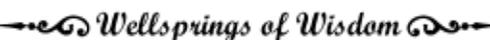
The Greatness of Torah Study

As The Baal HaTanya explains,⁷ this is why the Torah was given to the people of Israel through which we connect with the light contained therein, thus continually increasing the sanctity of our souls and reaching the highest levels of holiness.

It is also written, "The voice of your watchmen—they raise their voice, together they will sing, for they will see eye to eye when the Lord returns to Zion." "The sun will no longer be your light by day, and the shining of the moon will not give light to you, but the Lord will be an eternal light for you, and your G-d will be your glory."

Through this great vision that we will behold of G-d, we will attain a genuine, inner, and eternal connection with Him.

Similarly, the Ba"ch writes⁸ that G-d wanted us to engage with the Torah so that we would elevate and fortify our souls spiritually from the source of Holiness. If people would only have studied the Torah with this intention, they would've become a "chariot" and a dwelling place for the Divine



6. Tanya chap. 36

7. Ibid.

8. Orach Chayim chap. 47, 2

Presence (Shechinah), and then the Shechinah would reside among them. Consequently, the entire world would shine with the glory of the Creator, and the (first) Temple would not have been destroyed.

Everything For the Sake of Choice

As we mentioned earlier, the power of the Torah is immense. A person who studies the Torah elevates their soul. Moreover, Torah is a source of light and life. Those who engage with the Torah feel that it gives meaning to their lives, bringing joy and satisfaction.

The depth of this experience varies depending on an individual's preparedness. The more one learns, purifies themselves, and ascends spiritually, the deeper they sense the light and joy the Torah imparts.

So, why are there people who don't seek to study the Torah? And why do those who understand the greatness of the Torah and feel its, desire at times things which aren't permissible?

One of the fundamental principles of Judaism is the

And nowadays, during the time of exile, studying the Torah provides us with the means with which to receive the reward in the World to Come.

freedom of choice. The Al-mighty did not create us as programmed robots incapable of deviating from a predetermined course. Every person has the ability to choose how they act. "I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. And you shall choose life..."

If people didn't have the ability to sin, there would be no reason to reward them for refraining from sin. It is specifically when the two options exist, and a person, despite the temptation of the wrong path, chooses to do good, that they earn a reward. The greater the temptation, the greater the reward for resisting it. Similarly, the harder it is to fulfill a particular commandment, the greater the reward for doing so.

The Baal HaTanya writes⁹: "In front of one, He created

Parshat Chayei Sarah - Disseminating Light

everything. Just as there is a treasure of holiness from which all good and holy thoughts come, there is also a source of impurity from which all evil originates.”

This is how freedom of choice is created. When a person sins, they also taste the sin, but this taste comes from the forces of evil. The more powerful the evil, the stronger this taste is. Just as a connection with holiness occurs through one’s power of sight, so too with impurity. A person who defiles their eyes connects with the source of impurity and receives their life stimulus from there.

The forces of impurity, knowing this, make every effort to tempt a person to defile their eyes, using various methods of persuasion. 'Look at how graceful so and so is! This film is so educational!' 'What's wrong with watching this advertisement, I just want to know what to buy for my wife!' 'After all, one cannot be so closed-minded; the world is advancing!' And similar arguments. The more righteous a person is, the more sophisticated and clever the temptations of the evil inclination are.

Disseminating Light

The Al-mighty created our world for His glory to manifest within it. The main manifestation will finally occur during the Messianic Era when we will comprehend the Creator at the highest level possible to humans. Through their service to the Al-mighty, the Jewish people create dwelling places for the divine light, on which the Shechinah descends, preparing

the entire world for the Great Revelation.

One of the primary methods of creating a dwelling place for the divine light is through marriage.

Thus decreed the Supreme Wisdom, that when a man and a woman marry according to the Torah law and live in accordance with the Shulchan Aruch (the code

Parshat Chayei Sarah - And He Named Them Adam

of Jewish law), their home becomes such a source of light, and the Shechinah descends upon it.

To explain further: In the beginning of Creation, "the earth was without form and empty, with darkness over the face of the deep, and the Spirit of G-d hovering over the surface of the waters." The "Spirit of G-d" refers to the Shechinah hovering over the waters because there was no place yet for the Shechinah to rest.

On the sixth day of Creation,

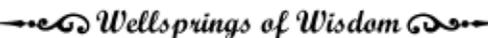
And He Named Them Adam

What follows are some lessons from the Torah regarding the creation of Adam and Eve.

On the sixth day of Creation, the Creator fashioned a man and placed him in paradise. This man, Adam, awakened to behold the wondrous world around him. However, something was amiss—every living creature had a counterpart, except for Adam himself.

Adam and Eve were created, and a place for the Shechinah to descend was established. "Rabbi Akiva said, 'When a man and a woman are worthy, the Divine Presence abides among them.'"¹⁰ Rashi explains that when a man and a woman marry, the Yud (י) representing man (איש) and Hei (ה) representing the woman (אשה) unite, and thus, G-d's name, Yud-Hei (יהי), is united at last. Thus the building of a Jewish home is really a dwelling for G-d Al-mighty.

When he realized this lack, the Creator caused him to fall into a deep sleep, and performed on him an operation, creating Eve, and thus came into being the woman. The Al-mighty, acting as the very first matchmaker, adorned Eve and presented her to Adam. Upon seeing her, Adam declared: "This time, bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman (Isha) because she was



9. In Likkutei Torah, Parshat Chukat, p. 65b

10. The Talmud, Tractate Sotah 17a

Parshat Chayei Sarah - The Great Separation

taken out of Man (Ish)." Through sight, the connection was formed between Adam and Eve.

According to the Torah a person desires and has a longing for marriage, due to the fact that "the woman was taken from man." Men and women were one soul in the heavenly realms, but when the time came for them to descend into this world, the Al-mighty separated them, sending each to a different place. As they matured, they felt that parental love and warmth were insufficient, and they began to sense a yearning for their other half. Only when they marry according to the laws of the Torah can this longing be satisfied.

The Torah states: "A man shall leave his father and

mother." Parents cannot satisfy this need in their child, they must seek it elsewhere. The Torah further states "and he shall cleave to his wife and they shall become one flesh." which implies that if spouses want this connection between them to endure and to experience the full sweetness of their shared life, they must have a complete union between their souls, such that no barrier remains between them.

As Adam and Eve lived in the world, the Yud (י) in Man's name and the Hei (ה) in the woman's name came together, and the source of the divine light shone forth. But the forces of evil couldn't stand idly by while this happened.

The Great Separation

Eve resided in paradise, while her husband was away. Suddenly, she heard someone calling her. When she turned, she saw the Serpent, representing the forces of evil.

Eve likely didn't know that looking at impurity created a

connection with it. She looked at the Serpent, and the contact was made, and from that moment on, the descent into the abyss had started.

The Serpent's persuasions and arguments took effect, and Eve decided to taste the forbidden

fruit. When a person sins, they feel a certain pleasure; that's the effect of sin. She then convinced Adam, who, intrigued by her persuasion of the wonderful taste, decided to partake as well.

The actions of the Serpent led to a disconnect between Adam and Eve. The Yud (י) from the man's name and the Hei (ה) from the woman's name separated, the place for the Shechinah was lost, and Adam and his wife, were banished from paradise.

When Adam saw the consequences of his sin, he repented. As the Talmud states:

"**Rabbi** Meir said: Adam was a righteous man. When he saw that he was sentenced to death, he fasted for 130 years,

separated from his wife for 130 years, and girded himself with fig branches for 130 years."

In light of what was said earlier, we can understand this passage: when the Serpent disrupted the connection between Adam and Eve, they ceased to be a united whole, as required by the Torah: "and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." Their family was shattered, during the following 130 years, Adam and Eve were separated, the Shechinah departed from them, and they were expelled from paradise.

In summary, the catalyst for the destruction of their home was the impairment of the sanctity of the eyes, when they looked at forbidden things.

Lesson for Generations

The Earth began to be populated by humans, giving rise to hope that perhaps now, people would come to understand their mistakes and begin to create "sparks of light", a dwelling place for the divine presence. However,

this did not happen. The forces of evil did not stand idly by, and they launched an offensive. Starting by tempting people to look where they shouldn't, they managed to infiltrate the family unit and dismantle it to its core.

"**And** it came to pass when man began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them. And the sons of the mighty saw the daughters of man, and they were fit in their eyes, and they took themselves wives from whomever they chose (Genesis 6:1,2)." This 'sight'

created contact between mankind and the "sons of the mighty" or the forces of evil, and people descended further, falling into the grip of the unholy forces.¹¹ And in this way, over two thousand years passed without any genuine union between husband and wife.

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

11. In the beginning, they were 'the sons of G-d,' after which came their great fall. Today too, the unfortunate and painful fall of the great still exists. A story to illustrate this point is related in Sefer Rachel by Rabbi Sha'ashua:

The childhood story of Naftali began happily and peacefully, just like countless other regular children, who grow up quietly and securely among the walls of proper and distinguished Jewish homes. Naftali was a child like any other. He wasn't overly mischievous, nor was he overly polished in an exaggerated manner. He didn't stand out with extraordinary talent, nor did he fail to meet expectations. He was a good child with a lovable character.

But inside, a dangerous worm was gnawing at him.

It is unknown when that destructive worm entered the depths of his soul. Whether this downturn had started already during infancy, or maybe in response to a particular event, or for

another reason is a task best left to those with experience in understanding souls.

His parents had grown weary. There were those unpleasant, even threatening phone calls from the school administration. The calls increased and escalated and Naftali's mother could tell from her son's demeanor that something was not right, it was in fact perhaps even worse than that.

She prayed. She also shed tears...

Naftali continued to deteriorate. It was not simple to see their child, flesh of one's flesh, an inseparable part of one's soul, sinking, slowly getting devoured in the grip of despair, with no way to help, not at all. The tragedy is frightening; The parents didn't know whether their words and pleas were falling on deaf ears, sealed shut by Naftali's obstinacy, or maybe something was seeping in anyway into his Jewish heart. They felt as one who tosses a stone into a smoldering flame, not knowing if the impact will awaken or possibly extinguish the remaining embers.

Parshat Chayei Sarah - Lesson for Generations

Naftali was busy with other matters, like how to avoid the yeshiva during the evening hours to rather spend the night somewhere with friends. He didn't even bother to consider how to deal with the yeshiva supervisor noticing and questioning his absence.

The supervisor noticed the change in Naftali, and after all the 'red lines had been crossed' from his perspective, he called Naftali's parents and described to them the difficult situation. He summarized the recent events and tried to spare the more detailed descriptions for the sake of the mother's delicate heart.

They turned for help to distinguished educators, and they sought advice from experts. At a certain stage, the experienced educational advisor, Rabbi David Friedman, was involved too. Efforts were invested, new hopes were had, deep discussions were held, and paths started getting paved to his heart. It started to seem that Naftali was finally ascending the proper path. However, the blessed change was merely temporary.

The supervisor from the yeshiva appeared at the house. He requested to speak with the parents behind closed doors. The conversation was terrible, accompanied by sighs, stifled sobs, and many tears from all sides. In conclusion, the supervisor whispered with a mournful and solemn voice, "I'm sorry, with all the pain, I can no longer keep him in the yeshiva. He's a bad influence on other boys."

"Bad influence on other boys." This ominous sentence struck fear

into the mother's heart. Those words reverberated within her throughout the night and squeezed out the last shreds of hope that had survived the previous waves of despair.

It was a terrible night, a night of sorrow and weeping. Naftali heard everything through the thin wall that separated his room from the living room. He promised himself to bring about a change, another promise that emerged on the barren hill of hopes and despair that had been accumulating between his mind and his heart.

The change came, but in an unexpected direction...

One Shabbat evening, the table was set nicely, with a shining white tablecloth in the center of the living room. Father stood at his place, and the family encircled the table in a well-organized formation, as olive branches surrounding them. However, one branch was missing - Naftali.

Where is he? They waited, and a little more. "We'll wait a bit more for him with the Kiddush; he must come..."

And he appeared, but what a dreadful appearance. At two in the morning, the door opened, and a disheveled, intoxicated Naftali staggered in. The pungent odor of alcohol filled the room. He had a half-smoked cigarette in his mouth, and in his hand, a cell phone. He collapsed on the bed, still wearing his weekday clothes, the family was in shock.

That ominous Shabbat evening marked a turning point in their lives. Another attempt

Parshat Chayei Sarah - Lesson for Generations

was made to seek help from the educational counselor, Rabbi David Friedman. They asked him to try once more to save Naftali from his downward spiral. Rabbi Friedman tried, but Naftali turned his back on him, expressing his determination: "Leave me alone; I don't want any involvement."

After consulting with his rabbi and enduring long, soul-searching nights, Naftali's father made a heart-wrenching decision. He said to Naftali, with a broken heart and a trembling voice, "Here in this house, you can only be a Jew. Violating the Sabbath in public, behaving like a Gentile, is not acceptable. If you want to stay, you must conform to holiness and be precious to all of us."

Naftali, trapped in the turmoil of his desires, decided to sever the last ties. Naftali ran away.

As far away as he could imagine, in his mind, the farthest place was Tel Aviv. He escaped with a frenzy of sensations, leaving everything behind. To cut loose, to discard, to break free.

He crossed the lines, and he also tried to burn the bridges behind him. So there would be no possibility of bridging the gap between his previous self and the current abyss.

Tel Aviv in its secular emptiness welcomed him with a thousand eyes, and he raged through it in madness. The bitterness pushed him to go as deep as possible. To descend, and if possible, to dive deep, preferably to crash and that's

it. So no remnants would be left to pick up. He was on fire.

After a few days of wandering, he joined a group of troubled boys who found refuge in the dilapidated apartment in South Tel Aviv. Some of them, like him, were rebellious runaways from good homes. Others were born secular. What united them all was the ease they enjoyed, the pleasures of youth. They were on the fringe of society. Troubled souls, lost, who knew no boundaries.

Tel Aviv provided him with the freedom he longed for, at least that's what he thought. His roommates in his apartment were pursuing the same dreams. They were all rebels, and the experiences were something Naftali could never imagine. The chaos that swirled within them, on the outskirts of their minds, was stirred up.

Freedom was something that had eluded Naftali, and he decided to seek it out in Tel Aviv. The city provided the thrill he was looking for. He didn't even think about the consequences of his actions. To be a free, secular youth, was the slogan he dreamed of in the yeshiva. Here, no one stopped him from pursuing that dream. But, the problem was that his roommates in the apartment had already realized the same dream. They were experienced, old-timers who had crossed every possible line.

This new freedom in Tel Aviv revealed itself differently from what Naftali had imagined. It allowed him to let loose, to indulge in every desire he could imagine.

Parshat Chayei Sarah - Lesson for Generations

To roll in every filth his imagination could conjure. To be truly, irrevocably free, that's what he yearned for. And Tel Aviv delivered it in abundance.

To be a secular youth living on the fringes of society was his essence. Tel Aviv offered that with abundance.

To be free and secular was the dream he had yearned for. But, the apartment quickly became a nightmare for Naftali. His roommates made sure of it. They teased, insulted, and hurt him. Tel Aviv, the sparkling city, turned into hell between one night and another. The apartment, neglected and run-down, choked him from every direction. His friends turned into ravenous wolves, causing him to feel vulnerable.

The roommates recognized his vulnerability instantly. The yeshiva's aura that he hadn't yet managed to shake from him. Youthful transgressors weren't too pleased to have him around; his presence weighed them down. They decided to make him the scapegoat for their own frustration.

Naftali's stay in the apartment became a prolonged nightmare. His friends cared to that. They annoyed him, insulted him, and caused harm. He felt suffocated by the noise, the insults, and the constant mockery.

Naftali was their victim.

The roommates teased him, trying to break him further. They exposed his vulnerabilities and insecurities. Naftali provided them with ample ammunition.

The same friends started to torment him, enjoying his suffering. They watched,

gloating as Naftali's despair grew. It was as if they were sipping on the bitter wine of his agony, slowly savoring it.

Naftali had become a victim, and his roommates found great pleasure in his suffering. He felt like a puppet with no control. He didn't realize how much his inflated ego could be crushed, pierced, and shattered. He didn't believe the extent to which human cruelty could degrade him.

All he felt was a desire to escape and a burning anger. He would take revenge on all of them for the horrors they inflicted on him. He would make them feel the same pain that had been gnawing at him.

Naftali's search for a suitable place to hide intensified.

Azrieli Towers seemed the most fitting in his eyes.

Late at night, the deserted corridor led him to the observatory floor. He reached the rooftop, where the view was breathtaking. Tel Aviv lay before him, spread out like a glowing carpet, sparkling with countless lights.

The night wind rustled his hair, while the eerie silence enveloped him. His eyes met the heavens, the starry night sky, the deep blackness filled with distant stars. The universe, in its infinite vastness, greeted him with indifference.

He felt like a small grain of sand on the seashore of time and space. The realization that his life, his pain, his rebellion were but a fleeting moment in the grand scheme of things weighed heavily on him.

The Dawn

The Most High, observing the behavior of humanity, declared, "How long will the world remain in darkness? Let there be light!" A soul was sent into the world: the soul of Abraham. Abraham embarked on his journey through the darkness of this world with the torch of faith, radiating beams of faith in all directions.

Thanks to these rays, darkness gradually receded, and people began to recognize the divine beauty of Creation, realizing who stood behind all this beauty. Gradually, sources of light started to appear in many places on Earth.

The task was immense, and to help him, G-d sent Abraham a faithful helper in the form of

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

Suddenly, in the midst of this vast, dark universe, Naftali felt a profound sense of loneliness, isolation, and insignificance. His troubles and despair seemed to melt into the expanse of the cosmos.

As he gazed into the abyss, a deep sense of humility overcame him. He understood the futility of trying to escape his problems through rebellion, and he saw that the answers he sought were not to be found in the heart of Tel Aviv.

Tears filled his eyes as he contemplated his place in the world and the choices he had made. He longed for the warmth and love of his family, for the sense of belonging he had once felt in the yeshiva.

Naftali made a decision that night. He would return home and face the consequences of his actions. He would

seek forgiveness and try to rebuild the bridges he had burned. The road ahead would be difficult, but he was determined to make amends.

As he descended from the rooftop, he felt a newfound sense of purpose and a glimmer of hope. The city of Tel Aviv, with all its allure and chaos, had given him a valuable lesson in humility. It was time to leave the rebellion behind and embrace a different path.

Naftali's journey back home would not be easy, but he was ready to take the first step. He would face his family, his community, and his past mistakes with a newfound sense of humility and a desire to make amends. The night on the rooftop had changed him, and he was determined to rebuild the bridges he had burned and find his place in the world once more.

Parshat Chayei Sarah - A Personal Source of Light

Eliezer. Eliezer, who had reached the highest level of sanctity, particularly in safeguarding the sanctity of his eyes, was privileged to receive Abraham's teachings in their entirety. Thus, he could assist Abraham in spreading the light

and establishing new places for the descent of the Shechinah (the divine presence). Our sages testify about Eliezer that he sat and learned in the yeshiva and fed others with the Torah he had learned from Abraham.

A Personal Source of Light

At the age of 140, Abraham had illuminated a significant portion of the world with the light of faith. Now, Abraham decided it was time to teach people how to establish a personal source of light—an abode for the Shechinah between spouses.

Abraham called his servant Eliezer and said to him, "The other half for my son is in Haran. I have people I can send there to find a wife for my son, but I want to send you because I want to show everyone how to build a family properly. You are my most outstanding disciple, so I

will instruct you now, and others will learn from your example. Abraham entrusted Eliezer with all the intricacies of the task of building a family. Therefore, our weekly chapter emphasizes that Eliezer was the "servant of Abraham." A servant has nothing of his own; everything belongs to the master. This signifies that everything Eliezer did, from the time he received his instructions until his return to Abraham, conformed to Abraham's guidance.

Now, let's see what Abraham told his servant.

What to Seek

Abraham addressed Eliezer, saying, "Many proposals have been made to my son, but none

fit. I haven't found any good manners in anyone. Go to Haran, to my family; they have good

Parshat Chayei Sarah - What to Seek

manners. Perhaps there you will find a worthy wife for my son." So, writes the Steipler: the primary quality to seek in a bride

is her G-d-fearing nature and her willingness to live with a husband who, after the wedding, will engage in Torah study.¹²

— *~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~* —

12. Anyone who exaggerates in matchmaking is committing a terrible injustice. In this matter, the illustrious sage Rabbi Baruch, may he live, spoke (wondrous things to people, Ch. 11, p. 333). He wrote, "Deciding on the match was difficult for Zechariah Rubin, in every aspect, no matter how minor or significant, regarding matchmaking. This was his eldest daughter. He conversed in recent times with every potential suitor presented to him. After each proposal, which seemed like a promising match, he initiated a communication journey to inquire about the family from various sources: he started with relatives, continued with neighbors, and eventually consulted regular acquaintances. He wanted to ensure that he had gathered the most information about the family that would become involved in the matchmaking process with his daughter.

If this stage had concluded without many such proposals, Zechariah would proceed to investigate the young man further, visiting him and speaking with him. He met with many individuals during this process:

- **He** talked with his family members.
- **He** discussed with his educators at the yeshiva.

- **He** consulted with the heads of the large yeshiva.

- **He** interacted with his fellow students.

- **He** spoke with neighbors and friends who had access to his room.

At each stage, he evaluated whether this young man was truly pure, untainted as snow, with no thought of wrongdoing or neglect of Torah study.

"**Are** angels standing by to marry into your family?" Some people, mocking and scoffing, thought they understood his matchmaking process. "Do you really think an 18-year-old young man is flawless? 'At eighteen, the groom for the chupah' as our sages said, but not for understanding, counsel, or heroism..." However, Zechariah believed that for his eldest daughter, the most perfect match was expected. When they suggested the young man 'Aryeh Tuvi,' they declared that the perfect match had arrived, the day when the most excellent proposal could be made on Earth. Zechariah's investigations all led to the same conclusion: 'Aryeh Tuvi' was indeed an excellent candidate. People marveled at him, and there were no words to describe him: 'Aryeh Tuvi... Arieh Tuvi...'

Parshat Chayei Sarah - What to Seek

This is exactly what Zechariah wanted to hear, exactly what he was seeking.

During this time, he was returning from work at noon toward his home. While traveling on the streets near his house, a sudden and muffled sound halted his car. Zechariah rushed to inspect what had happened, glanced at the side of the vehicle, and discovered that the car's tire had lost all its air—a puncture. He considered what to do and how to transport the crippled vehicle back home on the nearby street. A young man approached him and asked if he needed assistance. Zechariah replied positively, and the young man got to work, showing great curiosity about every detail and action.

In Zechariah's heart, he pondered the fact that a young man like this was not his daughter's preference. Even though it was noon, surely the intended groom must be occupied elsewhere, whether in Torah study or possibly resting. The young man had no business interfering with car repairs. Without a doubt, he was not interested in conversing with strangers.

Zechariah looked at the face of the young man, thinking, 'He probably doesn't belong to a yeshiva.' Not one thought in Zechariah's mind indicated that perhaps this young man was a Torah scholar, ready to stop on his way to help a fellow Jew. He did not consider that he might be an excellent young man and that his mind was open to various topics. Zechariah's mental image of "the good young man" who was intended for him portrayed the young man now sitting, deeply engrossed in studying

a portion of 'Reshit Chochmah,' and 'Rabbi Akiva's Letters.' A cup of tea stood nearby, hardly touched due to the profound focus on his studies, and beyond that, there was nothing in his world. The young man thanked Zechariah for the opportunity to help with the engine issues, and Zechariah expressed his gratitude for the young man's expertise and the fact that he would have been helpless without him. The punctured tire was repaired, and Zechariah headed home.

During the following evenings, Zechariah investigated the young man Arieih Tuvi from every possible angle. Everyone had nothing but praise for him, those who spoke from close familiarity recommended that Zechariah should take the matter seriously. They may not have known that the stage of investigation was still at the beginning. Zechariah clarified and found that Arieih Tuvi had no learning issues during his years in the pre-yeshiva program. He easily mastered Chumash and Mishnah in his initial years of yeshiva study, and according to the memory of teachers from over a decade ago, Arieih Tuvi had been very adept in learning. Even Arieih Tuvi's fellow students could not say for certain if he was particular about tooth brushing in the evening. However, they described him as a clean and orderly young man, out of the ordinary. His neighbors, friends, and acquaintances all attested that he was a nice and polished young man, unlike any other.

The matter proceeded step by step, with both parties eager to move forward.

Eliezer's Holiness

Arriving in Haran, Eliezer prayed to the Al-mighty: "And he said, 'Lord, the G-d of my master Abraham, send me good fortune this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham. I stand here at the well of water, and the daughters of the people of the town are coming out to draw water. May the maiden to whom I say, "Lower your jar that I may drink," and who replies, "Drink, and I will also water your camels"—may she be the one whom You have decreed

for Your servant Isaac. Thereby shall I know that You have dealt graciously with my master.'"

Eliezer prayed as follows: "Lord, You know that I guard my eyes to the best of my ability. I beseech You; I don't want to examine the local girls to find a wife for Isaac. So, as a reward for guarding my eyes, please send a worthy wife for Isaac as soon as possible!" His prayer was answered: "And it

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

Zechariah knew that ArieH Tuvi was the one. Everything was ready; the righteous had already given their blessings. However, one decisive step had yet to be taken: Zechariah had not yet seen the young man in person. He knew his appearance, his exact weight, and height, as well as the color of his suitcases, but they had not met yet. To maintain the custom, a time and place of meeting had been arranged, with an understanding that if everything proceeded as planned, they would meet again on the same evening to finalize the matter.

The entire community waited, hearts pounding, with bated breath. No one spoke, and not a sound could be heard. Suddenly, the sound of "the grapevine's"

soft knock reached the door of Zechariah's house. It was ArieH Tuvi himself, the young man who had personally helped him fix the car. This young man, the 'flower of the generation,' had already seen all these people, but he had not considered this matter at all...

Zechariah's agitated hand opened the door, ready to completely refuse him, but the pleasant tone of the young man's voice, smooth like his cheeks, aroused his senses: "Oh, are you the one from the puncture?"

"Yes," said Zechariah, realizing that this perfect young man, who was now fixing his puncture, was much more complicated to understand than he had thought about life...

Parshat Chayei Sarah - Fear Of the King of Edom

came to pass, when he had not yet finished speaking, that, behold, Rebekah... came forth."

Eliezer assessed Rebekah's virtue. Afterward, he met Rebekah's family and offered them various gifts. The engagement was concluded. The bride's family requested a one-year delay for the wedding, but Eliezer disagreed. It's not good to postpone the wedding, as it can create various problems. Those who marry within two months after the engagement are doing the right thing !

Eliezer returned to Isaac with Rebekah. Isaac and Rebekah

succeeded in creating their own source of light. "And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and he took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her. Thus was Isaac comforted after [his mother's] death." The Ba'al HaTurim writes, "And he brought her to the tent of Sarah his mother": Adam was displaced from the higher worlds due to Eve. In contrast, Isaac ("And he brought her to the tent") was granted the Shechinah's descent thanks to Rebekah.

Now let's return to our questions.

Fear Of the King of Edom

The King of Edom feared that when his subjects saw the people of Israel, there would be an "unhealthy" contact with holiness, and their materialistic values would be challenged. This is what "Or Chadash" says: When the Edomites saw the elevated nature of the children of Israel, witnessed the sanctity in their countenance, it could profoundly impact the hearts of the Edomites, changing

their perspective on life and their national pride. They might begin to feel inferior compared to the people of Israel, who are on a high moral level. Such a feeling would already be a defeat for them and a victory for the people of Israel, even from a physical standpoint. In physical warfare, it's not the body that fights, but the courage of the spirit, and that is ultimately what prevails.

Parshat Chayei Sarah - Fear Of the King of Edom

In light of the above, it's now clear that parents who safeguard the sanctity of their gaze, avoiding looking where they shouldn't, are connecting to the source of the highest sanctity. They draw sanctity to

themselves and their children from this source. Rabbi Nachman of Breslov writes: "A man who doesn't gaze at [other] women merits that his children will teach Torah." May the Creator grant us this blessing !



Summary and Practical Conclusions

1. The Creator fashioned this world to manifest His Glory, where people create sources of spreading His light by connecting with the Creator. This connection occurs through vision.
2. For this purpose, the Torah was given to us. By studying the Torah, a person increases their sanctity. When one learns Torah, they feel a special light and satisfaction, and the more they learn, the more they sense this light.
3. Just as connection with holiness occurs through vision, so does connection with impurity occur through vision. Knowing this, evil forces attempt to defile one's vision with all their might (as we see, the primary danger of all "advanced" technology today is the desecration of the sanctity of vision).
4. When a man and a woman enter into marriage according to the laws of the Torah and then live according to the Torah, they create a source of divine light within their family. The letter "Yud" (י) from the name of the man and the "Hei" (ה) from the name of the woman unite to create the name יה", and the Shekhina rests upon that home.
5. When a person seeks a life partner, the most crucial thing to pay attention to is good manners. When there are good manners, there's everything!

Shabbat Shalom !





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Shabbat Times Chayei Sarah

27th of Cheshvan, 5784

City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	4:23 pm	5:24pm	5:54 pm
Miami	5:14 pm	6:09 pm	6:46 pm
Los Angeles	4:34 pm	5:30 pm	6:05 pm
Montreal	4:00 pm	5:15 pm	5:41 pm
Toronto	4:30 pm	5:41 pm	6:11 pm
London	3:50 pm	5:10 pm	5:30 pm
Jerusalem	4:28 pm	5:17 pm	5:52 pm
Tel Aviv	4:24 pm	5:13 pm	5:47 pm
Haifa	4:22 pm	5:11 pm	5:45 pm
Be'er Sheva	4:25 pm	5:15 pm	5:49 pm

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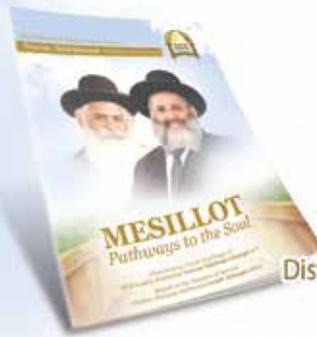
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