

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 152

**Shemini** | Refinement of Soul Through Torah Study

# 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 Shemini

## Sixty Thousand Stitches

**Rabbi** Yaakov Shaish recounted:<sup>1</sup>

**In** my neighborhood, in the 'Or HaChaim' neighborhood in Bnei Brak, a remarkable story recently occurred. A certain distinguished and important Jew, one of the well-known scribes in Bnei Brak, shared that for their 52<sup>nd</sup> wedding anniversary, his wife decided to surprise him with a particularly unique and interesting gift.

**Professionally**, she is a skilled seamstress, and over seven months, she sewed a unique tablecloth to adorn the Shabbat table. This was no ordinary tablecloth; it featured beautifully unique decorations, and for those familiar, suffice it that we say that the tablecloth contained sixty thousand stitches made by hand.

**On** Friday night, when he went to synagogue, his wife replaced the regular tablecloth with this special one and invited all their married children to the meal. The atmosphere was uniquely special. The Shabbat table was perfect, and when the scribe returned home from the synagogue, he was extremely moved and touched by everything she had prepared in his honor.

**That** Saturday night, someone knocked on the door. A young yeshiva student stood at the entrance, asking the homeowner for a favor. He was a beginner scribe, and he needed to make some sort of correction in a parchment of his, and since he wanted the correction to not be visible, leaving no identifiable mark, he asked for help with this repair.

## Parshat Shemini - Sixty Thousand Stitches

**The** older, experienced scribe willingly agreed, and invited the young man into the living room, laid the parchment he brought on the table covered with the tablecloth, and prepared to start the repair.

**However,** the protective plastic tablecloth that covered over the tablecloth caused the parchment to slip and slide, so the scribe lifted the plastic tablecloth, placing the parchment directly on the tablecloth itself.

**He** carefully made the correction, but suddenly, the parchment slid, and the entire bottle of black, indelible Torah scroll ink spilled on the brand new tablecloth.

**It** might sound ridiculous - the man told me - but spontaneously, I put on my hat and jacket quickly and fled the house. The young scribe took his parchment and ran out after me as well.

**On** the way, I bumped into my daughter and blurted out to her: 'I'm out in the park nearby, update me in half an hour what's happening at home'.

**The** two scribes sat in the garden, and the young yeshiva student was full of shame and embarrassment.

**Because** of his 'repair', the peace in the home would be now destroyed. The veteran scribe was also at a loss. What could he say? How would he appease his wife whose seven months of labor were ruined in one instant due to his carelessness and irresponsibility?!

**But** after fifteen minutes, his daughter called from the house and said: 'Dad, you can come home. Everything's fine, there's no problem here'.

**I** can't do it' - he replied to her - 'Please come here to me and explain'.

**The** daughter appeared in the neighborhood park a few minutes later.

**He** asked her anxiously: 'How did mom react? What happened at home?'

**The** daughter said: 'We didn't tell mom anything. How could we tell her? Seven months of work, and sixty thousand stitches to naught.'

Parshat Shemini - An Ideal Place!

**We** waited for her to enter the living room and see for herself what had happened.

**We** sat in the living room, and suddenly she came in, and just one look towards the tablecloth made it clear to her exactly what had happened.

**She** looked at the tablecloth for a long time, then approached it, folded it, and calmly placed it in the trash, saying with a smile: 'All this time I sewed sixty thousand stitches in the tablecloth, but now I'll make a first correction in myself...'

**An Ideal Place!**

**Rabbi** Elimelech Biderman once recounted:<sup>2</sup>

**As** is known, most Torah school teachers work out of a sense of an inner mission, understanding that the education of the next generation rests upon their shoulders.

**There** was once an episode with one such teacher who was fortunate to teach Torah to young children for many years.

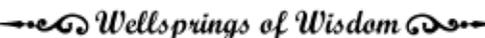
**Throughout** all those years, he almost never stopped a lesson midway, except for only the most urgent of cases, which happened rarely, if ever.

**However**, once, in the middle of the week before Passover, he stopped mid lesson, excused himself, and went to the teachers' room.

**The** principal of the school witnessed the teacher enter, pick up the phone, and call home.

**From** the other end, a voice was heard, and the teacher asked with great concern: 'Did you already throw my old and ragged suits out to the trash?'

**He** was answered in the affirmative, and he nervously continued to ask: 'Please go down urgently to check if the trash



2. Mentioned in the book "Hineni Beyadcha" (page 49) by Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael Pozner.

## Parshat Shemini - An Ideal Place!

room has already been cleared by the sanitation workers.'

**He** waited a tense minute or two, and was finally told something on the other side of the phone, and the teacher repeated calmly but with a dazed tone: 'So the city workers have already cleared everything.'

**After** a short silence, and a few closing words, he ended the call, and returned to his class to continue delivering his lesson.

**The** principal was puzzled by this unusual behavior and took the first opportunity to ask the teacher why he had left in the middle of the lesson for an inquiry about old and worn out suits.

**The** teacher shared:

**'Let** me tell you things openly.

**In** a few months, one of my children will be - G-d willing - getting married.

**The** expenses for the wedding are very great, and I borrowed a significant sum of money from a charity fund. I was looking for a suitable place to hide the money

for the time being, and I chose a buttoned pocket of an old suit.

**Today**, as I left the house, I heard my wife talking about her plans to throw away all the old suits because they were too worn out for use.

**At** the moment, I didn't give it much thought, because I had forgotten about the sum of money hidden in the suit pocket, but mid lesson, the memory suddenly flashed through my mind, together with the sentence I had overheard my wife saying that morning, and I was aghast.

**I** immediately went out to inquire if my old suits had already been thrown away, and if there was even a slim chance to retrieve the money.

**But** when I learned that the entire sum was lost, I said with acceptance 'what a shame to have such a loss', and immediately returned to my lesson.

**The** principal was astounded: 'You heard that a great sum of money was lost, yet immediately returned to your classroom, and

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continued giving the lesson as if nothing happened? How could you possibly have done that?'

**The** teacher replied simply: 'In my youth, I studied under Rabbi Gedaliah Eisner at the

Yeshiva of Chidushei Harim.<sup>3</sup> He always used to say to us: 'If not for the most trying times in life - why did a person come to this world.'

**He** so strongly ingrained and implanted this concept in us, that

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**3. Rabbi** Gedaliah Eisner served as a supervisor at the Yeshiva of Chidushei Harim. His life story is recorded in the book "Bimchitzat R' Gid'l" where his teachings are also recorded. Here is one of them (page 209):

**Once**, members of the Pressburg community were sitting in the study hall, discussing the greatness of their leader, the 'Chatam Sofer.'

**On** the side, sat a young boy who was responsible for cleaning the house of the 'Chatam Sofer.' Hearing their conversation, he said he disagreed with the praises being spoken.

**The** listeners were surprised by his words and asked him, "Why do you say that?"

**The** boy innocently replied: "My father was the synagogue's caretaker, and I vividly remember the Friday night meals I ate with him, and how my father would perform the 'Lechem Mishneh' (double bread) blessing according to Halacha (Jewish law).

**However**, now, eating at the table of the Chatam Sofer, I see that he does not perform the 'Lechem Mishneh' according

to Halacha, not as I saw by my father..."

**The** listeners were shocked and conducted an investigation which revealed that the Chatam Sofer had a different custom from the one practiced by the boy's father, that was firmly rooted in Halacha of course (as clearly explained in Shulchan Aruch chapter 274 several methods for breaking bread).

**The** matter was brought before the 'Chatam Sofer'... and his body began to tremble, and he gathered the entire community for a sermon.

**The** Chatam Sofer stood on the steps before the Ark and told them the story. Then, his face flushed with excitement, and he said: "Go and see how great the influence of parents is on their children. So deeply ingrained in this boy was what he saw in his home, to such an extent that even though he saw closely the great esteem the Torah greats had towards him, still, what he received from his father was most strongly ingrained in him.

**And** from here you shall learn - continued the Chatam Sofer - how great is the responsibility of the parents, since their

**Parshat Shemini - The Tabernacle was Complete**

even now, when faced with a trial of anger or great despair, it was obvious to me that I must react with acceptance and calmness, and that it is these moments of trial

that are the purpose for which I came down to live on this earth !'

**Before** we begin to study this week's Torah portion, let us first refresh our memory...

**The Tabernacle was Complete**

**At** Mount Sinai, we received the Ten Commandments, and on the following day (the 7<sup>th</sup> of Sivan), Moses ascended to the heavens to bring down the Torah, and stayed there for 40 days.

**Meanwhile**, at the foot of Mount Sinai, the Children of Israel worked on improving their character incessantly.

**With** tremendous labor and effort - they sanctified and purified themselves; with awe and trembling, they prepared themselves for the great and immense levels that were to come at the end of the 40 days.

**Finally**, on the last day, the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz, impurity overcame

them, and they failed dismally with the sin of the Golden Calf.

**In** Heaven, G-d turned to Moses and said: "Go down, for your people have corrupted their ways" (Exodus 32:7) !

**Moses** descended to the Israelite camp with the Tablets of the Covenant in his hands, and when he saw them worshipping the Golden Calf, he threw down and broke the Tablets.

**The** next day, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz, he burned the Golden Calf and judged the sinners in idolatry.

**On** the 19<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz, he ascended again to the heavens to try and annul the decree, however, it was not simple at all.

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*Wellsprings of Wisdom*...

actions so deeply affect their offspring. They must therefore utilize the ability to affect

their children deeply within their soul and instill in them Torah and the fear of Heaven.

**Parshat Shemini - The Tabernacle was Complete**

**Moses**, with his lofty and holy soul, the man who achieved all levels and was deemed 'the faithful shepherd',<sup>4</sup> was unable to find a way to mitigate the judgments and arouse heavenly mercy.

**Moses** decided: whatever may be, I will not move from here until I hear: 'I have pardoned you, Israel!'

**Finally**, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of Av, after 960 continuous hours of weeping and supplications, streams of fiery tears, and thousands of merits mentioned on behalf of the Children of Israel, G-d appeared to Moses<sup>5</sup> and said to him: "Carve for yourself two stone tablets like the first ones" (Exodus 34:1).

**The** next day, the 1<sup>st</sup> of Elul, Moses ascended to the heavens for the third time to receive the second set of Tablets, and after forty days - on Yom Kippur - G-d forgave the Jewish people with

joy and a "whole heart", saying: 'I have pardoned you', and gave Moses the second set of Tablets.<sup>6</sup>

**The** next day, the L-rd commanded Moses about the construction of the Tabernacle.

**Moses** gathered the Children of Israel and announced: "Jews, we must begin at once to build the Tabernacle, and whoever wants to contribute is welcome to."

**Within** two days, the Children of Israel brought all the raw materials needed for the construction of the Tabernacle, as it is said: "And they brought him more contributions in the morning, in the morning" (Exodus 36:3) - 'within two mornings they had already brought all the contributions necessary for the Tabernacle' (Rabbi Yochanan, cited in Midrash Rabbah - Terumah 4).

**And** in less than two months, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Kislev, the craftsmen

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4. As written: "Not so with My servant Moses; he is faithful in all of My house" (Numbers 12:7).

5. See Ramban, Exodus 33:17.

6. In the words of Rashi (Exodus 33:11): 'On the 10<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei, the

Holy One, blessed be He, was appeased and forgave Israel with joy and a whole heart, and said to Moses: 'I have forgiven as you requested,' and gave him the second tablets.'

**Parshat Shemini - And it Came to Pass on the Eighth Day**

completed the creation of all the Tabernacle parts and its vessels.

**However**, G-d revealed Himself to Moses and told him: 'For the time being, leave the contributions as is, do not set up the Tabernacle nor use its vessels.'

**Only** about three months later, G-d told Moses:

**"Now** the time has come; Set up the Tabernacle !

**Initially**, there will be seven days of dedication, during which you will set up the Tabernacle in the morning and take it down in the evening (every day for the duration

of the seven days), and during these seven days, only you (Moses) will serve in the Tabernacle.

**I** also desire that Aaron and his sons *dwell* in the Tabernacle throughout the seven days and not leave it at all."

**These** seven days of dedication began on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of Adar and concluded on the 29<sup>th</sup> of Adar (they are called 'the days of dedication').

**Our** Torah portion begins with a description of the following day, the 1<sup>st</sup> of Nissan in the year 2449 to Creation, the eighth and final 'day of dedication'.

**And it Came to Pass on the Eighth Day**

**On** the eighth day of the dedication of the Tabernacle, Moses set up the Tabernacle, and Aaron and his sons began to serve in it.

**Moses** called Aaron and commanded him to offer the sacrifices for the dedication of the Tabernacle:

**"Take** a young calf for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, both without blemishes,

*and offer them before G-d.*"  
(Leviticus 9:1-2).

**G-d** had also commanded that the Children of Israel:

**"Take** a goat for a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, both of their first year, without blemishes, as a burnt offering. And an ox and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before G-d, and a meal offering

*mixed with oil, for today G-d will appear to you.*

*And they took what Moses commanded and stood before the tent of meeting: and all the congregation drew near and stood before the L-rd" (Leviticus 9:3-5).*

*Then Moses continued and said: "This is what the L-rd commanded you to do, and the glory of G-d shall appear to you" (Leviticus 9:6).*

**On** this last verse, commentators ask:

**The** Torah already detailed all the sacrifices that were commanded to be offered on the eighth day; What is the intention of this last verse: "*This is the matter which the L-rd commanded you to do*" ?

**The** Torat Kohanim<sup>7</sup> answers as follows:

**Moses** told the Jewish people "*This is the matter which the L-rd commanded you to do*" - remove the evil inclination from your heart, and be all united in awe and in one counsel to serve before G-d.<sup>8</sup>

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7. Sifra, Shemini, Mekhilta of Miluim 6.

8. **Rabbi** Mordechai Garelitz, shared the following story ('Nahar Yotzeh Meden' - page 97):

**After** the passing of the Baal Shem Tov, on the holiday of Shavuot, in the year 5520, his only son, the righteous Rabbi Tzvi, began to lead the community of disciples, including the Maggid of Mezritch, who took refuge under his wing.

**The** leadership of Rabbi Tzvi was hidden and mysterious, a concealment within a concealment. As was his personality, Rabbi Tzvi was enveloped in silence all his days, so was his way of leadership.

**He** led the gathering of his disciples amidst deep silence, without opening his mouth or uttering even a single word.

**The** great disciples, who were accustomed to the way of leadership of the Baal Shem Tov, and to the gatherings he led, replete with Torah words, and lofty and sublime ideas - were now required to sit silently themselves as well, while their holy leader was hovering in higher worlds.

**As** the days passed, and the wall of silence was not breached, the disciples could no longer restrain themselves, and on one Shabbat, during a gathering, while Rabbi Tzvi was deeply engrossed in his lofty contemplations, they started to quietly repeat among themselves a Torah explanation from the Baal Shem Tov.

**Not** much time had passed, and before their eyes appeared, in all his glory and majesty, the figure of the Baal Shem

## Parshat Shemini - And it Came to Pass on the Eighth Day

Tov, as they had known him during his lifetime.

**His** piercing gaze needed no further explanations. It was clear that he was displeased with their conduct.

**Immediately**, the disciples took upon themselves not to repeat their action and not to break the silence in the presence of Rabbi Tzvi, their master, again.

**After** a year of this holy and wondrous leadership, during one of the gatherings together with the great and holy disciples, Rabbi Tzvi suddenly stood up from his place, removed the white cloak he was wearing, and placed it on the shoulders of Rabbi Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezritch, who was sitting to his right.

'**My** holy father revealed himself to me,' said Rabbi Tzvi, 'and informed me that the Divine Presence has passed over to your honor!'...

**They** did not get up from there, before the Maggid accepted upon himself the leadership...

**Upon** donning the mantle of leadership, the holy Maggid emerged from his secluded four cubits, where he had been immersed in the depths of the hidden and revealed Torah, with complete abstinence and detachment from the world and its surroundings, and was revealed before their astonished eyes as a wondrous leader to the generation, engaged with the world and its inhabitants.

**The** niceties of royalty in Mezritch were many times greater than that of Mezibuzh, yet this was not contradictory to the extraordinary modesty and satisfaction

with little, which characterized all that was related to the Maggid and his household.

**The** holy Maggid conducted his leadership with royalty, and this was a reflection of the leadership of the higher worlds.

**For** this reason, and also because of the Maggid's frail health which required extra care not to be burdened, the Maggid's attendants were appointed over the entrances to his house and its gates, and entry to the Maggid's room was not permitted to everyone at all hours.

**The** great disciples from the old brotherhood of Mezibuzh, gazed at the new form of leadership, with respect and caution. The new form of leadership, which was unknown until then and which was not exhibited by the Baal Shem Tov, aroused their critical senses.

**One** of the Maggid's companions, who had been close to him in the days preceding his leadership, and who had shared with him the same extraordinary detachment from the world and its fullness, that characterized the Maggid's service in those days, had found it hard to adjust to the new form of leadership. When the Maggid expressed his wish in front of him, that they continue to study a lesson together, as they had in the past, he hesitated to agree.

**After** the Maggid pressed him to explain his reason, he responded and said:

'**Since** you began your leadership, you started dealing with 'worldly matters' also, and I fear, therefore, that we will no longer find a common language to be able to continue our studies as before!'

Parshat Shemini - Processes of Coarseness

**He** is one and unique in the world, and likewise let your service before Him be unique and one.

**As** stated in the verse: "*And thou shalt circumcise the foreskin of your heart, for the L-rd your G-d is G-d over judges and L-rd over lords*" (Deuteronomy 10:16-7).

**And** if you serve G-d thus - "the glory of the L-rd shall appear to you" (Leviticus 9:6).

**The** Torat Kohanim essentially explains what Moses said to them. "We now stand before the

dedication of the Tabernacle, and with G-d's help, we will merit that the Holy One will rest His Shechinah (Divine Presence) upon us.

**Yet** despite this, know that not everyone will merit to see the Shechinah. 'Only one who has refined themselves and removed the evil inclination from his heart will merit that "*the glory of G-d shall appear to you*"!

**Let** us now proceed to expand what this process of refinement entails.

### Processes of Coarseness

**The** concept of 'Seder Hishtalshelut' (the process of Emanations) is mentioned extensively in Chassidic teachings.<sup>9</sup>

**It** refers to the structure and creation of the spiritual worlds, which emanate one from another.

**Kabbalah** details the entire process of emanation from the highest spiritual level to our lowest world.

**Knowledge** of the 'Seder Hishtalshelut' is essential to understand the spiritual aspects

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**The** Maggid nodded and shared with him the following insight:

**'Before** the creation of the world, the Holy One, blessed be He, sat and engaged in Torah with the souls of the righteous, so to speak.

**Imagine** that upon the beginning of the creation of the worlds, one of

the righteous souls stood up, left the group, and declared that he could no longer continue to study, since G-d started dealing with 'worldly matters'!...

**9.** The following is excerpted from 'Sichat Hashavua', Issue 181.

of creation and for every student of Kabbalah and Chassidut, and it explains how all reality emerged from its previous state of non-existence.

**This** is true regarding physical reality as well as all spiritual existence. Every defined existence, such as pleasure, will, wisdom, kindness, and all other attributes, are defined by some form and specifications, and as such are distant from the absolute unity of G-d.<sup>10</sup>

**For** all of creation in its various forms to come into being, there had to be many contractions of the divine light and emanations of this light from level to level below; This process is called "Hishtalshelut."

**Generally** speaking, this spiritual process is divided into four 'worlds': Atzilut, Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah.

**The** first world where creations begin to form is the world of Atzilut ('emanation') hence it serves as the source from which a more tangible reality can later emerge. However, even Atzilut is still included within the Divine realm of existence. The Divine light shines there abundantly, and there is yet no new creation, existence, or entity.

**Defined** reality with a sense of self begins to emerge in the lower world of Beriah ('creation'). Here, the Divine light is no longer the sole reality, allowing

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**10.** 'The order of the emanation' explains how the reality we know today was created and came into existence from 'nothingness' and 'absolute absence.'

**This** is also true for the spiritual reality, since it, too, had to come into being, since it is considered a reality of 'existence' outside of the 'absolute absence' of all beings before G-d.

**Every** reality we define as spiritual, such as pleasure, will, wisdom, kindness,

etc., since it has a definition and form, it is clear that it is far from the 'simple unity' of the Holy One, blessed be He.

**And** for it to be able to come into existence in the world, it needs to undergo many 'transmigrations' and 'contractions' from the moment it leaves its 'source' (from the Infinite G-d, blessed be He) until it receives a definition of some existence, and this all is the order of 'the emanation'.

**Parshat Shemini - The Concealment of the World of 'Asiyah'**

for the possibility of independent, separate existences. However, this is still an exceedingly subtle and spiritual existence. Its proximity to the world of Atzilut prevents the formation of a more substantial entity in Beriah.

**The** third stage of formation of reality is the world of Yetzirah ('formation'). As its name implies, it shapes the potential that was previously revealed in the world of Beriah. In Yetzirah, a defined reality already exists. The Divine light here is even more concealed, hence allowing more room for the feeling of a self-contained existence. However, the entity of Yetzirah is mainly expressed in the clear definitions it imposes on

existence, it's not yet a tangible 'existence' per se.

**The** fourth and lowest stage of the emanation process is the world of Asiyah ('making'). Here, reality is fully formed, entirely defined, and the sense of independent existence is fully present and felt by all creations.

**To** summarize: As the "Seder Hishtalshelut" progresses, reality becomes denser and more limited and defined:

**In** the 'world of Atzilut' - there is yet no existence; In the 'world of Beriah' - the possibility for existence is created. In the 'world of Yetzirah' - existence already takes form. Finally, in the 'world of Asiyah' - tangible reality as we know it, is complete and defined.

**The Concealment of the World of 'Asiyah'**

**So** far, it has been explained that our world - the world of Asiyah, is where the Divine light is completely concealed. This concealment allows the physical reality to perceive itself as an independent existence. For if the Divine light was revealed and

explicit in this world, the created being would cease to exist in its own sense, just as the light of a candle is nonexistent in the presence of the sun.

**The** concealment of the Divine light in this world enables a person and all physical beings

to appear and feel as independent existences.

**To** sharpen this point:

**In** the book of Isaiah, many prophecies reveal to us what the world will be like after the revelation of the Messiah. In one such prophecy, it is written: "*And the glory of the L-rd shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see together: that the mouth of G-d has spoken*" (Isaiah 40:5).

**It** is understood from this verse that when the Messiah comes, we will merit the revelation of the glory of the L-rd, implying that now, during our exile, we are in a state of concealment.<sup>11</sup>

**Now** the terms 'concealment and revelation,' mean that the thing being concealed exists in its entirety, but merely its presence is concealed or revealed.<sup>12</sup> As such,

when it is revealed from its concealment, the Divine light will not be something new, for it was already present in completeness.

**Similarly**, regarding the infinite Divine light: the light, on its part, exists in completeness everywhere. The contraction and limitation of His great light (through the process of Hishtalshelut) only acts so that this light be concealed and not palpably felt.

**Therefore**, in the future, with the coming of the Messiah, when there will be a revelation of the infinite Divine light here in this world, the scripture states: "*And the glory of the L-rd shall be revealed.*" There is no need to bring the light from somewhere else to this world. The light is already present in this world, in all its intensity.

**The** novelty in the future will be that the light will shine in revelation, "*shall be revealed*".

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

**11.** In "Besha'ah Shehikdimu" - 5672 (Volume II, page 637 and onwards) by the Rebbe Rashab of Lubavitch, of blessed memory, it is written that there are four pairs that indicate this idea, and they are:

concealment and revelation, something from nothing, essence and expansion, and power and action.

**12.** Topics in Chassidut - The Unity of G-d (page 311) by Rabbi Yoel Kahn.

**Parshat Shemini - The Great Divider - The Body !**

**This** is what Moses said to the Children of Israel: *"This is what the L-rd commanded you to do, and the glory of G-d shall appear to you"* (Leviticus 9:6) - The Divine light shines here in our world too, but since the evil inclination is

found in your hearts, it is concealed from you. Therefore, "remove the evil inclination from your heart, and be all united in awe and in one counsel to serve before G-d and then the glory of the L-rd shall appear to you".

**The Great Divider - The Body !**

**In** a discourse delivered by Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, he said:<sup>13</sup>

**According** to worldly terminology, the term 'body' refers to a tangible, physical entity and nothing more, but from a spiritual perspective, the 'body' is

a term for anything that conceals spirituality.<sup>14</sup>

**Having** understood this, we must now explain the concept of 'death'.

**According** to worldly terminology, death is the separation of the soul from the body, but from

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13. Michtav M'Eliyahu, Volume 4, page 351.

14. **In** "Sifrei" (Ha'azinu 306), it is said:

**"Thus** Rabbi Simai would say, all creatures created from the heavens - their soul and their body are from the heavens. All creatures created from the earth - their soul and their body are from the earth.

**Except** for the human, whose soul is from the heavens and whose body is from the earth.

**Therefore,** if a person practices Torah and does the will of his Father in Heaven, he is like the heavenly creatures, as it is said: 'I

said, "You are like angels, and all of you are children of the one above" (Psalms 82:6). But if he does not practice Torah and does not do the will of his Father in Heaven, he is like the earthly creatures, as it is said (in the continuation of the psalm): 'Surely you will die like a man, and fall like one of the princes'" (ibid., verse 7).

**It** is explained in the words of Rabbi Simai that even angels have a body (their soul and their body are from the heavens), which is difficult to fathom since it is known that they do not have a physical body at all. Rather, the intention is that there are aspects of concealment within their essence, and this concealment is called 'body'.

**Parshat Shemini - The Great Divider - The Body!**

a spiritual perspective, this is merely called the 'shedding of the physical garment'.

**If** so what is 'death' from a spiritual perspective?

**If** after shedding this garment, there still remains in the soul evil desires.

**For** the death of the physical body does not change the person's inner state fundamentally, rather what was important to the person and what they were involved with during their lifetime, continues to be important to them in Heaven.<sup>15</sup>

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

**15. The** Maharil Diskin once related ("Vehigadahl" - the Book of Esther, page 43):

**At** the time, the Russian monarchy summoned a meeting of rabbis to Petersburg. The Maharil Diskin traveled there along with three other great leaders of the generation. It was during the winter, and they traveled by a snow sled driven by horses. During the journey, they reached a steep hill, and the horses exerted themselves in climbing.

**Eventually**, the sled reached the top of the hill and began descending the other side, and suddenly, the horses broke into a wild gallop. The sled slid at an immense speed, and the driver lost control.

**The** experienced driver realized that this was going to end in disaster, so he quickly jumped off the sled and pulled with all his might on the horses' reins while shouting to the rabbis to jump off.

**The** rabbis took advantage of the slowdown and jumped, but the horses continued their gallop, and the sled smashed the driver to death...

**The** Maharil Diskin continued and said:

**The** driver was a simple man, illiterate, and ignorant of the Torah. When his soul ascended to heaven, there was a great uproar: 'Whoever saves a single life, it is as if he saved an entire world' (Sanhedrin 37a), and this man saved four lives, leaders of Israel! Even if he did what he did, this merit tipped the scales, and the gates of the Garden of Eden opened before him -

**He** entered, and what did he see? Righteous people sitting in the Garden of Eden and studying Torah.

**He** creased his nose and said: 'This is not for me!'

**So** they asked: 'What would you like instead?'

**His** wish was clear: 'Give me a sturdy wagon harnessed to four mighty horses, and the roads should be well-maintained, not muddy or broken, and may I not lack passengers, and may they pay me generously!'

**Immediately**, his wish was executed. And since then, he has been driving

## Man Goes to His Eternal Home

**King** Solomon wrote: "For man goes to his eternal home," (Ecclesiastes 12:5).

**These** words are deeper than the sea and contain great secrets.

**We** will explain one such aspect:

**When** G-d desired to create human beings, He first created a place where they could dwell, our globe - 'planet Earth'. After creating the 'globe', He created human beings and placed them within it.

**At** a superficial glance, all human beings move about in the world, breath the same air, see the same landscapes, and taste the same flavors.

**King** Solomon reveals to us: Know that every person has his own private world. His qualities and intellectual perception create a world.

A person's life is not in the external world that we see with our

eyes, but solely in his inner world. A person dwells entirely within his inner world, and that's where he is found, and where he lives.

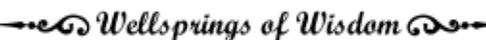
**His** inner world is an entire world with its own atmosphere, landscapes and places, and figures and characters.

**The** air one breathes is the air that is inside the space of their world, the landscapes they see are the landscapes of their inner world, and the figures and people around them are as they are depicted in their perception.

**Thus**, we learn a tremendous novelty:

**Never** do two people dwell in the same world; people may stand side by side, yet be in completely different places !

**Two** individuals may sit together in paradise, one alongside the other, yet it is possible that one will experience paradise, but the



these rushing horses on smooth roads, and angels ascend and descend his

wagon, paying generously, and nothing can compare to his happiness !...

**Parshat Shemini - Rectification After Death**

other one will be in hell (in his inner world he dwells in hell).

**In** the words of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov (Likutei Moharan, Part I, Torah 621):

**“Know** that it is possible for one to sit next to his

friend in one place in paradise, and he will experience all the pleasures and delights of all the divine worlds, while his friend will not feel anything and will experience no pleasure.”

**Rectification After Death**

**We** explained above that in the spiritual perspective, 'death' means the soul's attachment to bad qualities and desires - *"These sinners in their souls"* (Numbers 17:3).

**Therefore**, King Solomon calls the wicked - 'dead',<sup>16</sup> because their souls attached to the vanities of the world, and therefore are blocked from attaining any divine revelation.

**In** the words of Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler:<sup>17</sup>

**The** death of the body does not change the inner state of the person.

**The** wicked, who in the time of his vain life was attached to wicked

imagery, will remain attached to this evil imagination even when his soul separates from his body.

**Even** then, after his physical death, he will continue to yearn and crave those desires that filled his life, and will search for them everywhere, but he will not find them.

**There**, in the heavens, there is no remembrance of all the lowly vanities of this world.

**But** since his soul is attached to desires, it will feel hunger and lack, and that is what will drive it from one end of the world to

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

**16.** **In** the words of the Holy Talmud (Berakhot 18b): "The dead know nothing" (Ecclesiastes 9:5) - these are

the wicked who in their lifetime are called dead.

**17.** Michtav M'Eliyahu, Vol. 2, p. 26.

**Parshat Shemini - The Virtue of Regret and Refinement**

the other in search of these desires.<sup>18</sup>

**This** is the meaning of the punishment of 'Kaf Hakela' - a terrible exile of searching for what cannot be found.<sup>19</sup>

**The Virtue of Regret and Refinement**

**At** this stage, one already merits to see clearly the gravity of his sins of rebellion against his Creator, and

**Kaf** Hakela itself provides no rectification, but slowly over time the lowly vanities of the world are forgotten.

**The** following stage is the stage of regret and refinement.

he feels immense regret for it. He senses in his soul the absence of true existence, having attached

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

**18. This** is the intention of the holy words of our sages (Bava Batra 16a): 'He is Satan, he is the evil inclination, he is the angel of death' - the incitement of the evil inclination and the punishment are one and the same.

**Meaning** that the impurity created within the sinner by the act of sin is itself the force that punishes the person.

**It** is said that the destroying angels - which are the desires themselves and the impurity within them - will not give rest to the soul of the wicked but will chase him further and further, to the extent that it will be considered an elevation if they allow him to reincarnate into an inanimate stone. Meaning he will become like the inanimate and forget his desire for but a moment.

**19. Rabbeinu** Yonah wrote the following (Shaarei Teshuva, Gate 2 - section 17):

**In** the Book of Psalms, it is written: "As

sheep they are appointed for Sheol; death shall be their shepherd" (Psalms 49:15).

**This** interpretation of this verse:

'**death** shall be their shepherd' - 'The death of the wicked is not like the death of animals, while the death of animals is once, the death of the wicked shall shepherd on them every day... because to the soul of the wicked, corruption and loss will cling at all times until it is destroyed, fades, and perishes'.

**Rabbi** Dessler explained:

**Only** the animal dies once, because its death is merely the departure of the life-force from its physical body.

**But** a person attached to the sinful desires of this world dies continuously, even after shedding the physical garment, because the desires clinging to the soul are like its 'body' as we have explained. And the separation of those desires from his soul, one by one -

**Parshat Shemini - The Goal - Nullification of the Physical**

himself throughout his lifetime to nothingness and vanity, for whatever is against the Divine will is vanity, and became himself vain, as written: "And went after vanity, and became vain" (Jeremiah 2:5).

**A** profound regret fills him upon realizing that instead of sanctifying the Divine Name, he caused, G-d forbid, the desecration of the divine Name.

**And** it is this great sorrow that is his rectification, there is no greater sorrow than this.

**Yet**, ultimately he too has rectification, for when the impurity of the sins has been purified from his soul, if he has performed even a few commandments and good deeds for their own sake, without

any ulterior motives, these points of inner purity illuminate his soul, and through them, he merits to enjoy the radiance of the Divine Presence through them forever.

**As** Rambam (Maimonides) wrote in his commentary on the Mishnah at the end of Tractate Makkot, that by one pure commandment without any ulterior motives, a person merits the World to Come.<sup>20</sup>

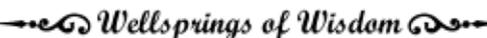
**The** above mentioned are the stages of a person's rectification after their passing, but our Torah portion urges us to seize and utilize the time while we are still alive!

**Remove** the evil inclination from your hearts - accustom yourselves from now on to be pure from all desires.

**The Goal - Nullification of the Physical**

**Indeed**, this is possible, and we have found several who have achieved this, the most famous

among them is Elijah the Prophet who was so purified that his body ascended to heaven.



each is felt by him as a new death. Hence he experiences many deaths, one after another, and each time he

experiences a terrible fear of death akin to death in this world...

**20.** Michtav M'Eliyahu, Vol. 4, p. 491.

**Rabbi** Dessler explained:<sup>21</sup>

**It** is understood from the straightforward reading of the scriptures that Elijah the Prophet ascended in a whirlwind to heaven, that is, with his body, and nothing of him remained behind but his mantle.

**However**, it is clear that above, the physical body as we understand it could not possibly continue to exist, because we have already explained that the 'body' is a form of concealment, and it is inconceivable that such a concealment would persist in the higher realms in the way that it exists down here.

**Rather** the explanation is as follows:

**Elijah** the Prophet achieved the purification of his body through the attainment of the absolute truth with utmost clarity

and exceptional strength, and reached the point where he viewed his body from a truly elevated perspective, seeing it merely as a vehicle for the higher world. As a result, at the peak of his spiritual achievement - at the end of his service in this world, this spiritual reality also impacted the physical reality, to the extent that even to the naked eye, the physical body no longer had any residue below.

**In** other words:

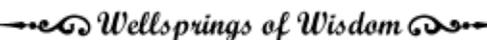
**When** a person realizes that all the things he desires are falsehoods and unworthy of value at all — this being the nullification of the physical self — then he will no longer desire unwanted and evil things, and thus the concealment over the divine will be nullified!

**What** remains to be clarified: How does one achieve this level?

### **Acknowledging the Truth**

**To** answer this question, we will provide two phases:

**The** first phase is that a person acknowledges that there are



21. Michtav M'Eliyahu, Vol. 4, p. 451.

## Parshat Shemini - Drawing Divine Light from the Upper Realms

unwanted desires or negative traits within their soul that prevent them from seeing the Divine light.

**This** should not be taken lightly, for there are many people who do not know at all what is the unholy desire or trait that is preventing them from being sanctified.<sup>22</sup>

**Indeed**, this knowledge is not a simple matter, sometimes a person needs divine assistance to reveal

what are their bad traits or desires, and this is often done through 'trials'.

**From** Heaven, a person goes through various trials - related to their personal divine service - and according to how they are able to cope with them, they learn to recognize themselves.

**And** we move on to the second phase.

## Drawing Divine Light from the Upper Realms

**We** wrote a series called "Chelev Ha'aretz" where we elaborate that the primary purification of the Jewish soul is through studying and engaging in the Torah.

**And** we quote from what we wrote there:

**In** His great mercy, G-d gifted us His holy Torah. The Torah is extremely spiritual, the epitome of spirituality, and like burning

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### *~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

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**22. To** bring an example: A person whose dominant trait is anger, and his mindset is one of suspiciousness, creates around him a confined and closed world where anger and suspicion reign!

**The** air he breathes is filled with anger and suspicion. The landscapes he sees are painted with anger and suspicion, and he suspects everyone around him.

**Since** he constantly lives there, within his inner world, he has become

accustomed to it and no longer even notices his condition. One day he doesn't feel well and goes to the doctor, and the doctor tells him: Your blood pressure is high, you must not be angry and suspicious!

**And** he reacts: Me?! Angry and suspicious?! I am a patient person and trust everyone! And out of instinct, he turns around looking for the person the doctor was talking about.

fire, due to its lofty status, it cannot tolerate physicality at all.

**Therefore**, the Torah cannot exist within a human body that is coarse and immersed in the desires of this world and its pleasures.

**Therefore**, in order for a person to merit that the holy Torah illuminate and effect its sublime wonders within him, it is necessary to prepare himself accordingly.

**Firstly**, the preparation a person should make when coming

to engage in the holy Torah or to fulfill the commandments, is to have the intention that they are binding and connecting themselves with the sanctity of G-d, the Torah and commandments' source and origin, and this is called 'studying Torah for its own sake'.<sup>23</sup>

**To** expand further:

**When** a Jew merits to engage in the Torah with the intention to fulfill all the words of the holy Torah, they draw down bounty and

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*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

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**23. As** Rabbi Yoel Sirkis wrote in "Bayit Chadash" (Orach Chaim, section 47:2 on the Tur):

**The** divine intention has always been that we should engage in Torah so that our soul would be united with the essence, spirituality, and the holiness of the source of the Torah.

**Therefore**, the Holy One, blessed be He, gave the Torah to Israel as a gift, that it should not be forgotten from us, in order that our soul and body be attached by its 248 limbs and 365 sinews to the 248 positive commandments and the 365 negative commandments in the Torah.

**If** the Torah scholars would engage in Torah with this intention, they would be a chariot and a sanctuary for the Divine Presence, and it would literally dwell among them, for they

would be the temple of the L-rd, and His Presence would literally establish its residence among them, and then the entire earth would shine with His glory, and thus there would be a connection between the heavenly assembly and the earthly assembly, and the Sanctuary would be united. See there at length for the entire detailed explanation.

**These** great words tremble every heart and soul and demonstrate that every Jew must intend in the recital of the blessings of the Torah in the morning upon rising from his sleep, "*who has chosen us from all the nations*", and brought us out of Egypt from slavery to freedom, and brought us close to Mount Sinai, and gave us His Torah, so that our soul would cling to the essence of the holiness of the Giver of the Torah, in order to be a chariot for His Divine Presence.

**Parshat Shemini - Studying Torah Brings Rectification of Character**

a light from the holy and supreme level of 'Keter' upon their animal soul to purify it immensely.

**And** when, in addition, they are awakened with a true *desire to fulfill* everything they learn, then they merit to draw down a doubled bounty from the holy and supreme level of 'Keter' upon their animal soul.

**This** light is caused by both the actual study which drew down from the "620 pillars of light" (613 biblical

commandments and seven rabbinical commandments. This is also the numerical value of the word "Keter"), and as well from the inner desire to fulfill G-d's commandments, which draws an additional light from the level of 'Keter', upon their animal soul.

**One** then merits that this light that shines upon their soul, separates and eliminates the evil parts of their soul.

**We** continue to quote from "Chelev Ha'aretz":

**Studying Torah Brings Rectification of Character**

**In** the Talmud (Kiddushin 30b), our sages taught, the verse states regarding the Torah: "And you shall place them" (VeSamtem) (Deuteronomy 11:18) - this allegorically is interpreted to mean - a complete remedy (Sam Tam), the Torah is likened to a life-giving potion.

**A** parable for this is a person who struck his son a great blow, placed a bandage on his wound, and said to him, son, as long as this bandage is on your wound, eat what you like, and drink what

you like, and bathe in hot or cold water, and you need not fear. However, if you remove it, it will cause swelling and infection.

**So** too, the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel, my children, I created the evil inclination, and I created the Torah as its antidote. If you engage in the Torah, you will not be delivered into its hand, as it is said: "If you do good (referring to the Torah which is called "a good portion" (Proverbs 4:2)) you will be

raised (above the evil inclination to overcome it) (Genesis 4:7).

**But** if you do not engage in the Torah, you will be delivered into its hand, as it is said: "Sin crouches at the entrance" (ibid), and not only that, but all the evil inclination's dealings are about you (how to cause you to stumble), as it is said: "And unto you shall be its desire" (ibid). And if you wish, you may rule over it, as it is said: "And you shall rule over it" (ibid).

**The** Meiri, in 'Beit HaBechirah' wrote on this passage, that even if one has sins due to the strength of their evil inclination and has developed bad traits and qualities, the Torah protects them, and through studying the holy Torah, a person

is given the strength to overcome their inclinations and to conquer them, because he who engages in the Torah is not delivered into the hands of their inclination.

**Therefore**, anyone who is attacked by their evil inclination and sees it oppressing them should pull themselves to the study hall. Even if this evil desire is made of iron, it will shatter; and even if it is stone, it will crumble.

**Thus**, by the power of studying the holy Torah for its own sake, a person will merit to draw divine light upon their animal soul, which will purify them from their impurities and elevate them from their degradation, and place them among the greats of the world.

**Shabbat Shalom!**



### Summary and Practical Applications

**A.** Our world - the world of Asiyah (Action), is a world in which the light of G-d is hidden. This concealment is what allows a person to appear and feel as an independent existence. This also gives a person the ability to want to sin and hence the right of choice.

**B.** If a person has merited and chosen good and all their days walked in the ways of G-d - they are blessed and lucky. But if they instead chose the other path and increased in a great number of sins, two paths lie before them: 1. Repentance, rectification, and purification of their soul after death. 2. Repentance, rectification, and purification of their soul in this world.

**C.** The first path - after a person's death, their inner state does not change. The wicked, who in their lifetime were attached to unholy illusions, will remain attached to those illusions even when separated from their body. And even after their death, they will continue to yearn and long for those illusions that filled their life, and will search for them everywhere. But there they will not find them, for there, in Heaven, there is no trace of the vanities of this world.

**However**, since their soul is attached to desires, it will feel hunger and lack, and this will drive it from one end of the world

to the other in search of those desires. And since they will no longer find them, they will acutely feel the magnitude of their sin and flaw, and their soul will begin to feel immense regret and sorrow. And this great sorrow is what will effect their rectification.

**D.** The second path - the primary one - is for those who purify themselves through the attainment of absolute truth with exceptional clarity and spiritual strength. When it becomes clear to a person that all the things they had desired are falsehoods, they have no desire left, and consequently, the concealment is nullified, and the person no longer has a desire to sin.

**E.** To reach this state of purification through two stages: The first step is when a person acknowledges that there are desires or negative traits within their soul that prevent them from seeing the Divine light. This is not at all simple, and sometimes a person needs help and assistance from Heaven to reveal what it is, and this is often accomplished through 'trials'.

**G-d** places a person in various trials - related to their personal divine service - and according to how they cope, they learn to recognize themselves.

**F.** The second step: Torah study for its own sake !

**Parshat Shemini - Summary and Practical Applications**

**In** His great mercy, G-d granted us the gift of the holy Torah. The Torah is highly spiritual, the epitome of spirituality, it is like a burning fire, and due to its lofty status, it cannot tolerate physicality at all. Therefore, when the human body is coarse and immersed in the desires of this world and its pleasures, the Torah cannot exist within it.

**Therefore**, to merit that the holy Torah illuminates and affects them, it is necessary for a person to prepare themselves appropriately. The initial preparation a person should make when coming to engage in the Torah or fulfill the commandments, is to intend that they are binding and connecting themselves to the sanctity of G-d - the Torah's source and origin. This is what is called 'studying Torah for its own sake'.

**G.** It is known that when a Jew merits to engage in Torah study with the intention to fulfill all the words of the

Torah, they draw down bounty and a light from the holy and supreme level of 'Keter' upon their animal soul to purify it immensely. One then merits that this light that shines upon their soul separates and eliminates the evil parts of their soul.

**H.** Every person who diligently follows the ways of the Torah, even if they have sins due to the strength of their evil inclination, and has developed negative traits, the Torah protects them. This means that it is impossible for their Torah study not to guide them back from these sins, so they do not remain stuck in them.

**By** the power of studying the holy Torah for its own sake, a person will merit to draw divine light upon their animal soul, which will purify them from their impurity and elevate them from their degradation, and place them among the greats of the world.





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New York	7:07 pm	8:08 pm	8:38 pm
Miami	7:22 pm	8:15 pm	8:52 pm
Los Angeles	7:00 pm	7:56 pm	8:31 pm
Montreal	7:10 pm	8:15 pm	8:42 pm
Toronto	7:32 pm	8:35 pm	9:03 pm
London	7:23 pm	8:34 pm	8:55 pm
Jerusalem	6:46 pm	7:37 pm	8:24 pm
Tel Aviv	6:43 pm	7:34 pm	8:20 pm
Haifa	6:43 pm	7:33 pm	8:20 pm
Be'er Sheva	6:43 pm	7:33 pm	8:19 pm

**Pathways to the Heart**

*From the Words of*

**HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l**

*That which is founded in falsehoods, will not maintain or last for long. Therefore, even children who were raised properly to Torah and fear of G-d, if it was not rooted in truth, it will not stand, G-d doesn't provide assistance where there is lies.*

*Children must be educated in the true path, with purity and holiness, and a clean mouth and speech. Through this, one's children will follow the ways of G-d in truth, as the Baal Hatanya blesses his followers that their children will be 'seed of truth'.*



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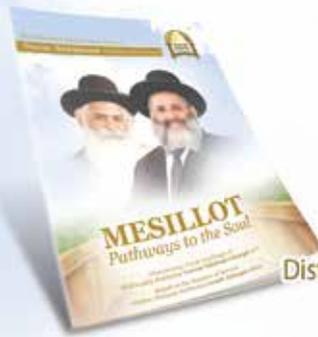
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